

**CHINESE STATE HACKERS  
WEAPONIZE AI**

**CHINA-US MARITIME  
TALK UPDATE**

**TAIWAN'S \$40 BILLION  
DEFENSE SURGE**

**HYDRO-HEGEMONY: CHINA'S  
NEW FRONTIER**

**THE YARLUNG TSANGPO PROJECT AND  
THE FUTURE OF ASIA'S GREAT RIVERS**

**CHINESE | PULSE**

**WITH PLA UPDATE**



# FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF



"Rivers are sovereignty's silent arbiters. China's Great Bend dams turn hydrology into hegemony, flooding Assam's fields while silencing Tibet's voice."

**Rahul Mahajan**

**R**ivers have always been more than geography. They are memory, livelihood, sovereignty and when harnessed without restraint leverage. I was reminded of this while reading field accounts from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, where conversations about the Brahmaputra are never abstract.

China's proposed mega-dam projects on the Yarlung Tsangpo are often framed domestically as triumphs of engineering and green energy symbols of technological prowess aligned with climate commitments. From Beijing, these projects appear technical, orderly, even inevitable.

The upper riparian advantage that China enjoys on the Brahmaputra confers not only control over water flow, but also strategic influence over downstream nations. For policymakers in New Delhi and Dhaka, this is not a theoretical concern. It is shaped daily by monsoon volatility, climate stress, and the knowledge that decisions taken far upstream increasingly escape prediction.

Equally significant are the environmental and social consequences within Tibet, often reduced to footnotes in strategic debate. The eastern Himalayan region is among the world's most seismically active zones, raising legitimate questions about large reservoir-induced stress.

This issue does not argue against development, nor does it deny China's legitimate energy needs. It interrogates governance: the transparency of hydrological data, adherence to customary principles of international water law, cumulative impact assessments across cascades of dams, and the political asymmetry created when infrastructure substitutes for cooperative frameworks.

By opening this issue of China Pulse with the Brahmaputra, we seek to clarify the kind of scrutiny this journal will bring to China's domestic choices when they generate regional consequences. China's internal policies do not stop at its borders. When they reshape rivers, ecosystems, and expectations downstream, they become international questions.

As a Chinese proverb reminds us, "When you drink the water, remember the source." Remembering the source, in this case, must also mean recognising responsibility—to people upstream and downstream, and to the fragile trust that binds states sharing a single river.

*Rahul Mahajan*

**Rahul Mahajan**



## China/ World

China International News

## PLA Military Update

PLA Military News

## Caricatures Stand

China's news with Caricatures

## TIBET

Beijing's  
Mismanagement

Hydrological

China's Religious Repression  
Escalates: Arbitrary Arrests

China's Sinicization Drive in  
Tibet

## Xinjiang

4th Anniversary: Beijing's  
Brutal Crackdown on Peaceful  
COVID-19 Protests

## Cyber

Chinese State Hackers  
Weaponize AI

Hijacking Trust: The Role of  
Malware and Biased AI

## South China Sea

China-US Maritime Talks

## Taiwan

Taiwan's \$40 Billion Defense  
Surge: A Bold Stand Against  
China's

## PLA

Corruption Crackdown Stalls  
China's Arms Revenue

3





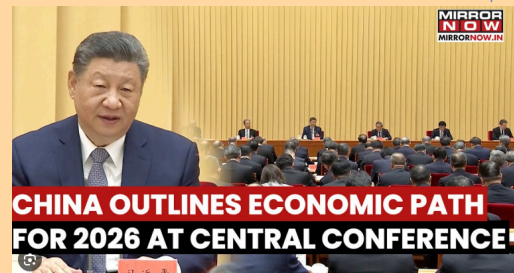
China's Central Economic Work Conference on December 10-11 sets 2026 priorities like fiscal stimulus, consumption boost.

China-India held new foreign ministry consultations December 12 on border issues, with Vice FM Sun Weidong meeting Indian counterpart amid LAC dynamics.

UK sanctioned two China-based firms for alleged cyberattacks; Beijing rejects claims, urges focus on UK's own human rights issues.

PLA Type 052D frigates sailed between Japanese islands toward Pacific; H-6 bombers active, escalating Taiwan Strait activities.

China's policy paper asserts Taiwan inseparability, drawing MOFA condemnation for distorting truth and misleading globally.





# PLA MILITARY UPDATE

PLA

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY





## LONG MARCH 12 TRIUMPH

Long March 12 rocket launched successfully from Hainan on Dec 12 at 7:00, deploying 16 satellite groups into low-Earth orbit for internet constellation—its 4th flight, Long March series' 616th.

## 99B BORDER BEAST

China's upgraded Type 99B tank, unveiled at 2025 Victory Parade, boasts APS, 125mm gun, 1,500hp engine, debuted in PLA border ops.



## JIUTIAN DRONE

China's "Jiutian" UAV completed first flight, boasting 16-ton takeoff weight and 6,000kg payload for versatile missions, advancing domestic drone tech.







## AR-E800 SOARS

China's first 800-kg-class heavy-lift eVTOL, AR-E800, completed maiden flight Wednesday. Features quick-release cargo cabin, carries up to 300kg payload.

## MILITARISM WARNING

PLA Eastern Theater Command released anti-Japanese war song, warning against resurging Japanese militarism in regional tensions.



## SPACE LAUNCH

China's space sector advances with rapid launches for UAE, Egypt, Nepal; new aircraft carrier boosts naval power challenging U.S. influence.



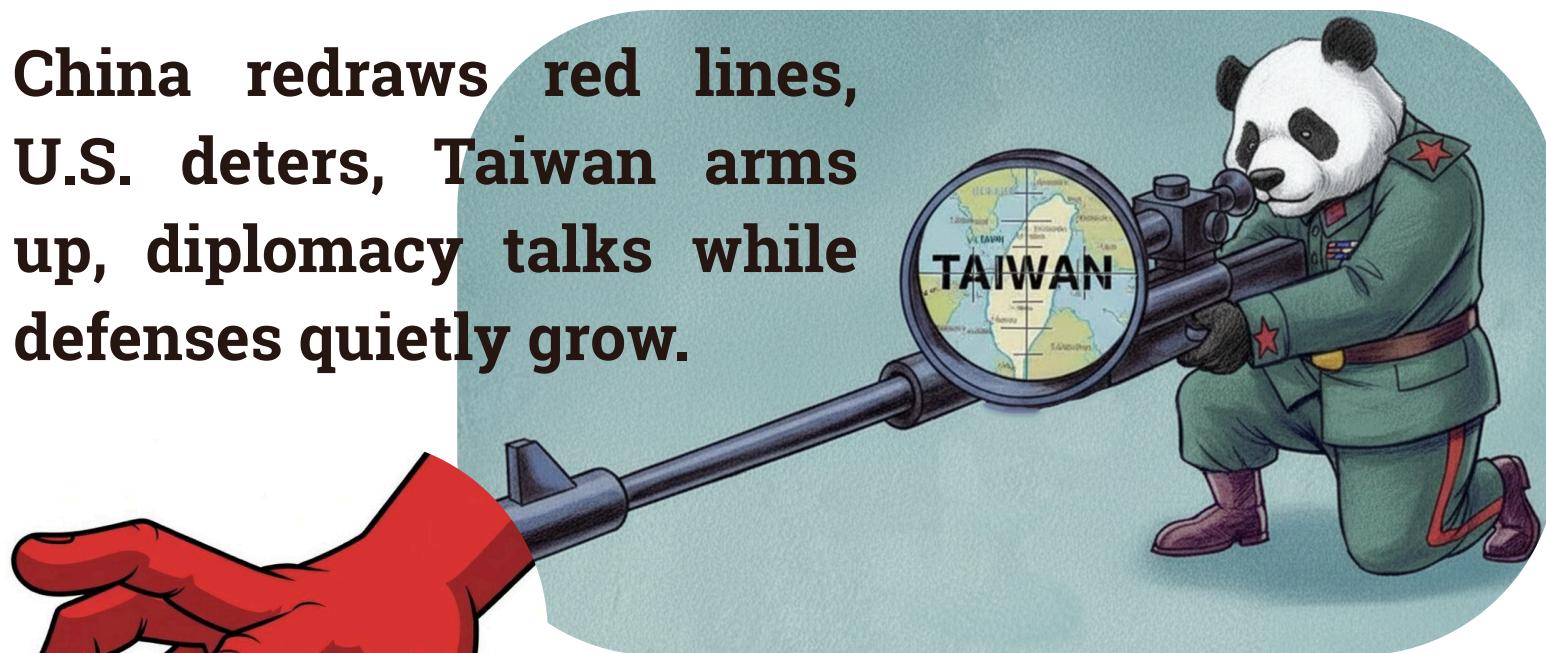
China on Wednesday launched the Lijian-1 Y11 carrier rocket with nine satellites onboard, including three international payloads for the

## STAND

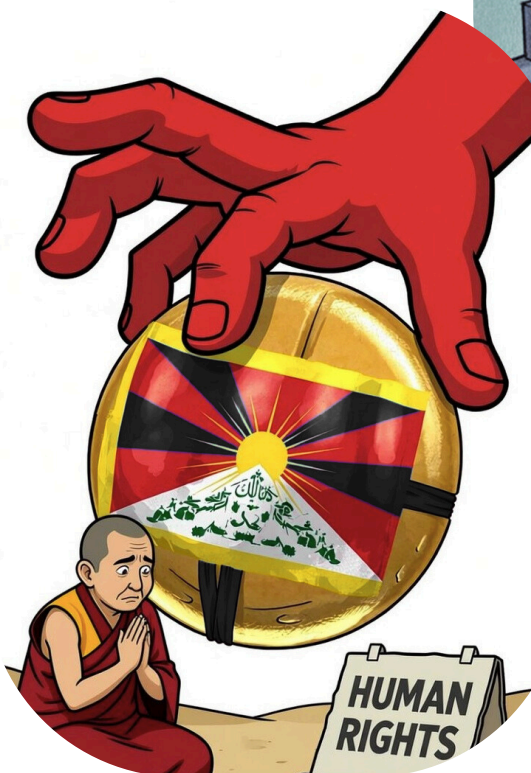
**China, authorities launched a manhunt after a suspect wounded two people near Kazakhstan, raising tensions.**



**China redraws red lines, U.S. deters, Taiwan arms up, diplomacy talks while defenses quietly grow.**



**China detains 60 Tibetans protesting gold mine; communications blocked amid broader human rights concerns.**





# SATIRE



*"Observation, according to Beijing"*



*"Just an investor... in everyone's supply chain"*



*"State-approved spirituality only"*



*"When 'One China' meets two opinions"*



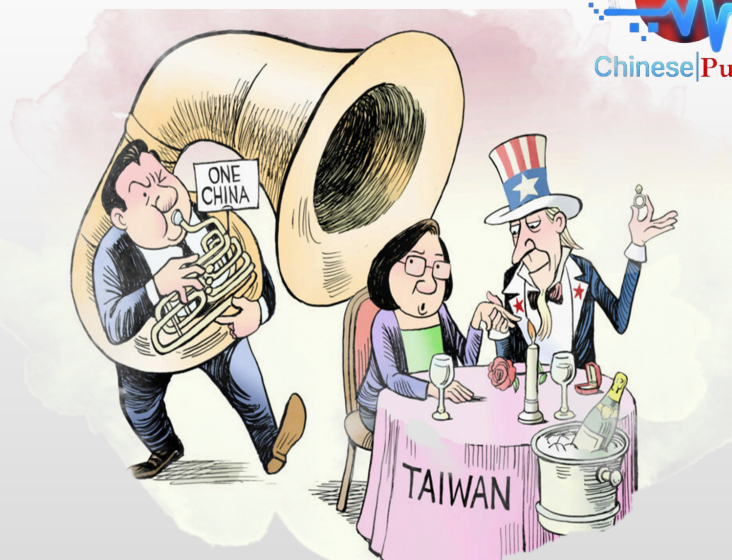
**TRAPPED BY CHINA... ... EXPOSING THE TRUTH...**

*"Fact-checked. Then neck-checked"*





***“Ink today. Annex tomorrow”***



***“When your ex won’t stop showing up”***



***“Sorry, personal flags not allowed”***



***“Even the candles need clearance”***



***“Identity under revision”***



***“My oppression. My precious”***

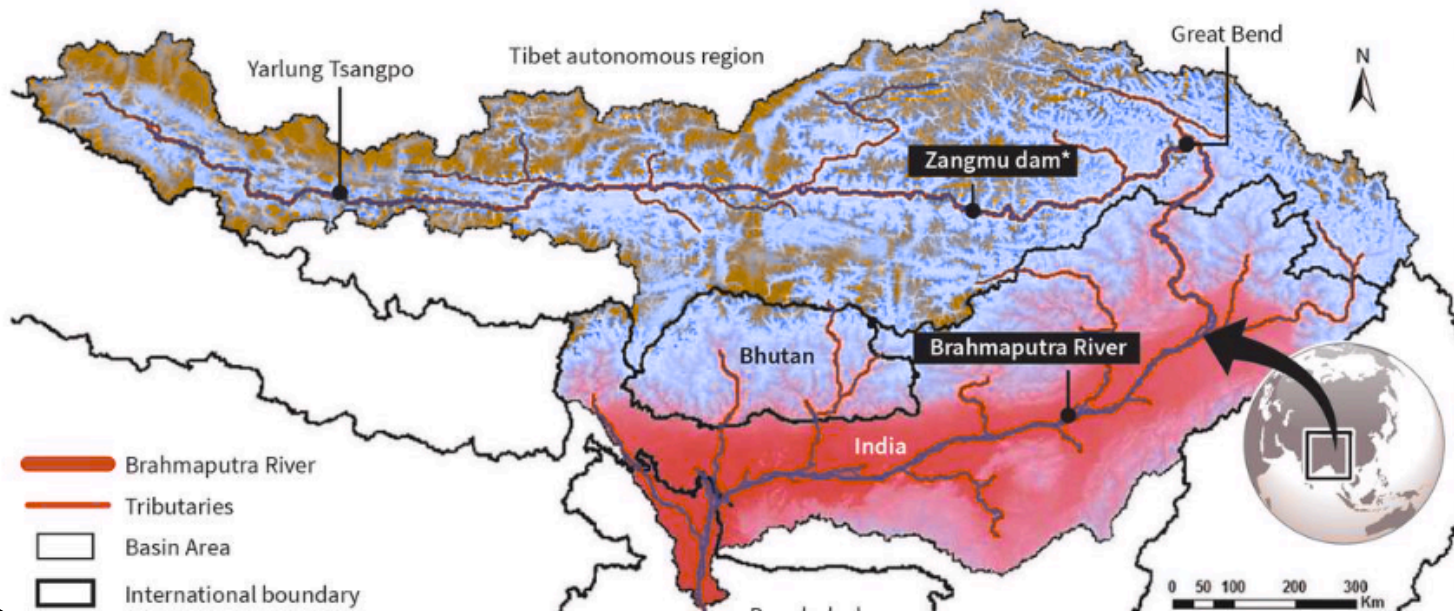


# BEIJING'S HYDROLOGICAL MISMANAGEMENT

Beijing's Hydrological Mismanagement on the Tibetan Plateau Exposes Asia to Escalating Water Insecurity & Ecological Collapse

## Taming the 'rogue' river

The Brahmaputra is a transboundary Himalayan river basin spanning four riparian countries. This map shows its flow from the Tibetan Autonomous Region in China through Bhutan and India into Bangladesh.

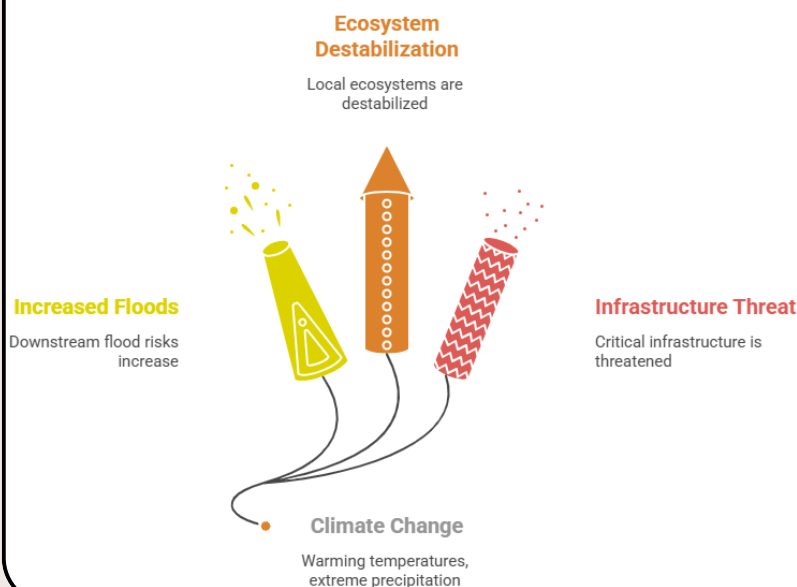


**C**limate change is dramatically reshaping the hydrological landscape of the Qinghai-Tibet

Plateau, as highlighted by a recent study revealing new hydrological connections between Tibetan lakes and the Yangtze River. This transformation, accelerated by warming temperatures and extreme precipitation, has increased flood risks downstream while destabilizing local ecosystems and threatening critical infrastructure.

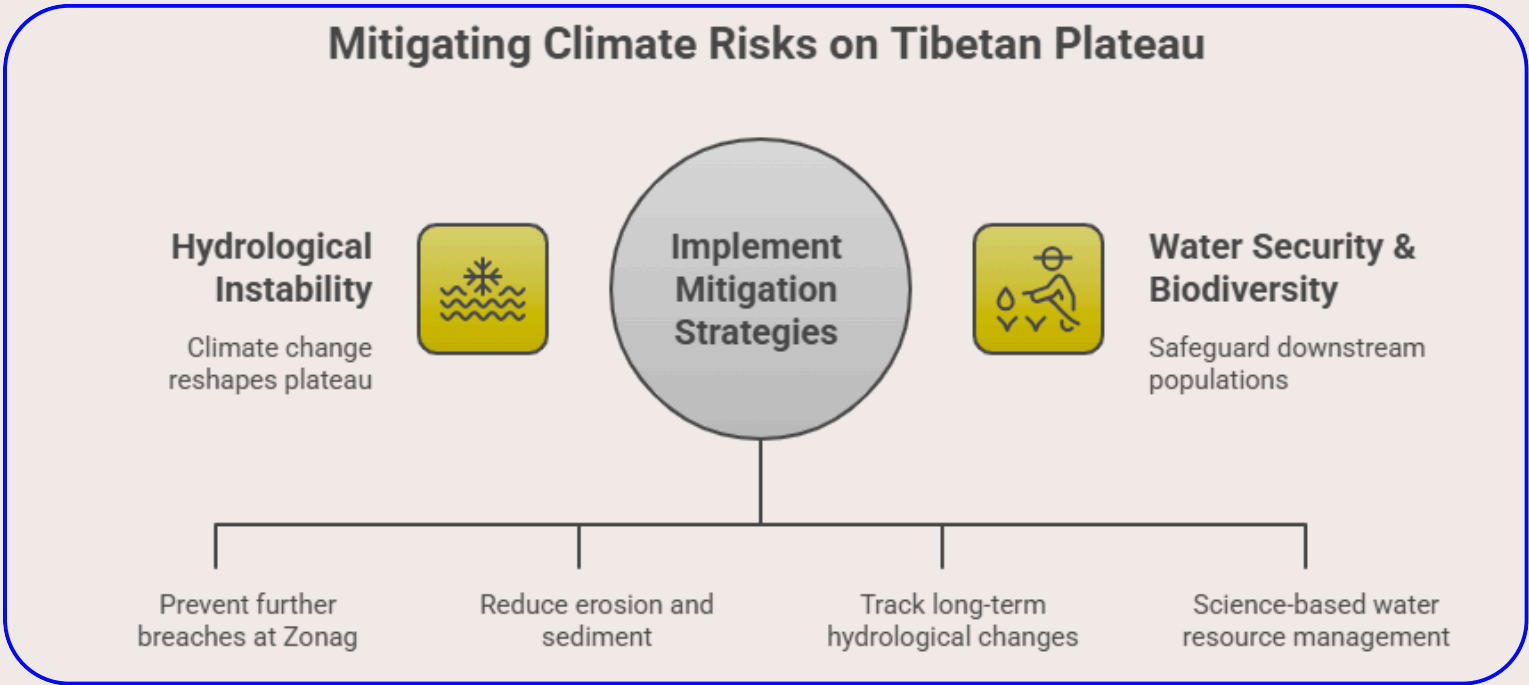
The study, led by Prof. Lu Shanlong from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and published in *Communications Earth & Environment* on 29 Oct 2025, China faces mounting ecological and geopolitical risks as climate change reshapes Tibetan Plateau hydrology. Once-isolated lakes like Zonag and Yanhu have connected to the Yangtze headwaters, intensifying downstream flood threats. Extreme rainfall 195% above historical averages in 2024 has widened breaches, destabilized shorelines, and fueled sandstorms, eroding antelope habitats.

### Climate Change Reshapes Tibetan Hydrology



Artificial drainage projects further entwine fragile ecosystems with China's vital river systems, exposing vulnerabilities in water security and disaster prevention. The "**Asian Water Tower**" now symbolizes Beijing's dilemma: unchecked climate pressures magnify domestic instability and regional dependence on Yangtze flows, challenging China's resilience and amplifying strategic liabilities. From a broader perspective, these changes exemplify how climate change triggers hydrological reorganization in high-altitude mountain regions, compounded by human interventions like drainage projects.

The combined impact stresses "climate stress–system response" relationships, where warming, glacier melt, and heavy rainfall synergize with anthropogenic activity, accelerating unstable feedback loops in river-lake systems. Projected warming and wetter conditions through 2035 indicate persistent hydrological and ecological instability, requiring urgent adaptive responses to mitigate future disasters



Projected warming and wetter conditions through 2035 indicate persistent hydrological and ecological instability, requiring urgent adaptive responses to mitigate future disasters. This evolving crisis on the Tibetan Plateau highlights a concerning environmental trajectory linked to China's activities and climate policies. The hydrological transformation poses risks not only within China but also for all Asian regions reliant on the Yangtze and its tributaries. Yet, there is minimal international dialogue or cooperation addressing these transboundary impacts. Transparent data sharing, environmental accountability, and prevention of further ecological damage should become priorities to safeguard downstream populations and the fragile high-altitude ecosystems. Without such concerted action, intensified flooding and ecological destruction driven by climate change and human intervention may escalate, with far-reaching consequences for Asia's water security and biodiversity.



# CHINA'S RELIGIOUS REPRESSION

China's Religious Repression Escalates: Arbitrary Arrests of Eight Tibetans in Darlag County for Peaceful Donation Activities

Chinese authorities in Darlag County, Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, arbitrarily arrested and detained eight Tibetans from Gyusum (Gyume) Township on fabricated charges including "abuse of religious belief to exploit people" and "committing financial fraud for personal gain."

The eight men Gonnam (མགོན་ནམ་མཁེན་), Gontse (མགོན་ཅེན་), Jigme Tenzin (འཇིགས་མེད་བསྟན་འཛིན་), Palden (དཔལ་ལྷན་), Lochoe (ལྷོ་ཚེ་མཁེན་), Namgayl (ནམ་གཡེལ་), Nordue (ནོར་དུམ་མཁེན་) and Kalsang (ཀལ་སངས་མཁེན་) were accused of collecting donations for religious offerings,

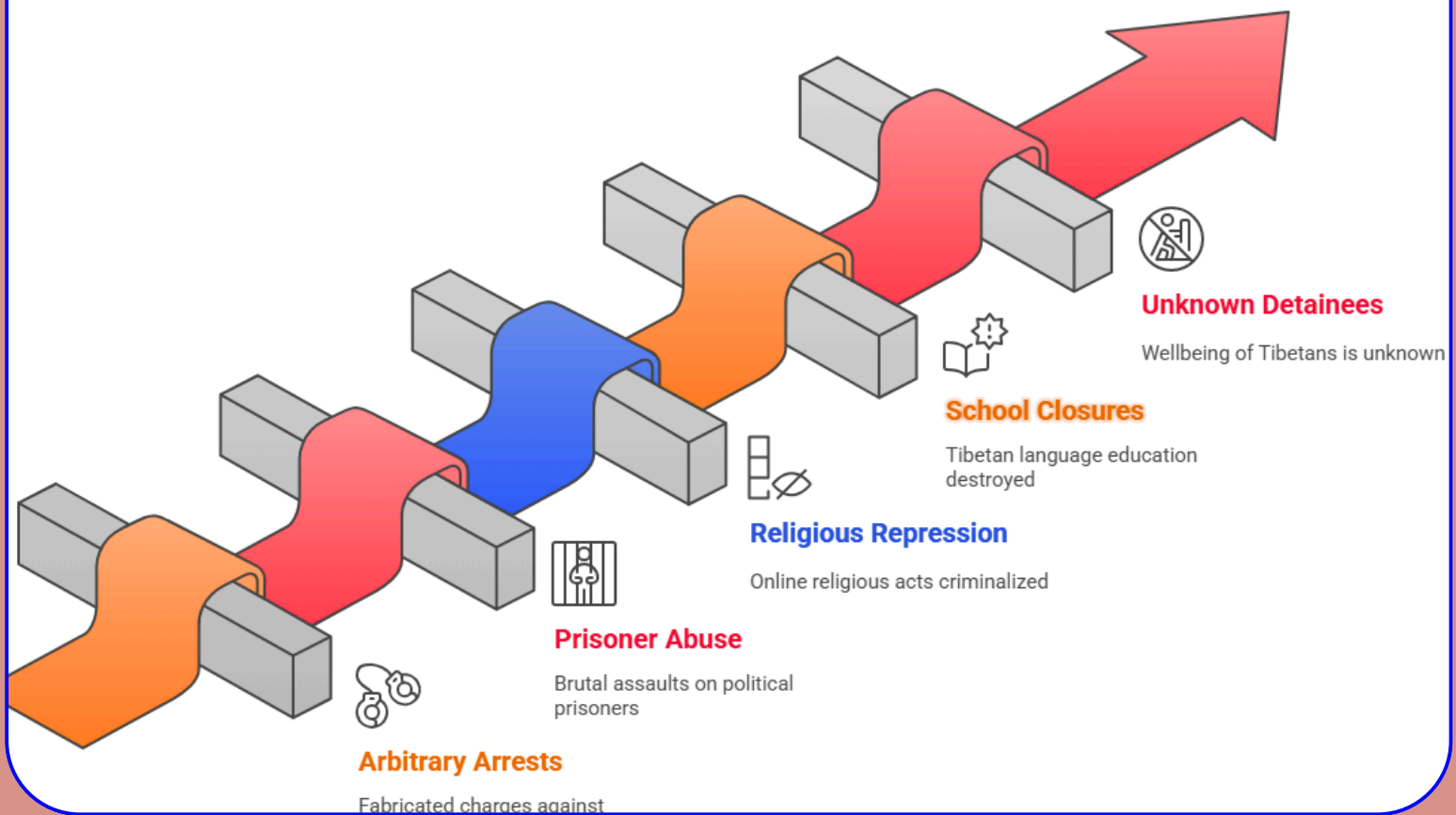
a traditional and peaceful religious activity criminalized by Beijing's policies in the region. Additionally, Tibet's imprisoned tycoon Dorje Tashi suffered brutal assaults in Drapchi Prison, exemplifying China's systemic abuse of Tibetan political prisoners and the ruthless suppression of dissent.

This crackdown is part of intensified religious repression in the region, especially following 2022 regulations that criminalize online activities related to religion unless state-approved.

## ARRESTED/MISSING



## China's Crackdown on Tibetan Culture



### "International Attention Needed: Political Violence and Arbitrary Arrests Surge in Tibet"

**Even minor religious acts such as accumulating Mani prayer beads in WeChat groups are strictly prohibited.** The Chinese government has additionally closed seven Tibetan private schools in Golog, including the Sangduk Taktse boarding school in Darlag County and other schools in Machen, Gade, and Chigdul counties. These closures destroy vital channels for Tibetan language education and cultural preservation, further assimilating Tibetans into the state's control and curtailing Tibetan cultural identity.

The real whereabouts and health conditions of the detained Tibetans remain unknown, fuelling concerns from Tibetan communities and international observers about their wellbeing. This incident fits into a broader pattern of China's "stability maintenance" policies in Tibetan areas, whereby peaceful religious and cultural activities are branded as crimes threatening state security. Human Rights Watch and other organizations have extensively documented the detention and prosecution of Tibetans for peaceful expression, with many subjected to arbitrary arrests, unfair trials, and harsh sentences.



This deliberate persecution, under the guise of combating “financial fraud” and “criminal organizations,” is a transparent attempt to marginalize Tibetan Buddhism and suppress the religious freedoms of Tibetans. The Chinese regime’s policy systematically undermines Tibetan society by attacking its spiritual lifeblood and educational structures.

According to the Tribune On 26 Nov 2025, China’s repression in Tibet intensified with the brutal assault on imprisoned Tibetan tycoon Dorje Tashi in Lhasa’s Drapchi Prison. Attacked twice by inmates, most recently by three men causing serious head injuries, Tashi’s family was not informed, violating prison regulations. Sentenced to life on trumped-up charges, his persecution reflects China’s systemic abuse of Tibetan political prisoners, including torture and isolation. His sister Gonpo Kyi, a vocal advocate,

The international community must urgently demand the immediate release of these eight detainees, full transparency about their status, and an end to the repressive policies targeting Tibetan religion and culture. According to the Tibet Watch, On 20 October 2023, police in Darlag County, Golog Prefecture, arbitrarily detained eight Tibetans from Gyusum Township.

## **“Crackdown on Tibetans Widens”**

faces repeated beatings and detentions, underscoring the regime’s ruthless crackdown on dissent. China’s systematic repression in Tibet continues unabated, evident in the arbitrary detention of eight Tibetans from Darlag County on fabricated charges related to peaceful religious donations. This crackdown,

They were charged with “creating criminal organization,” “picking quarrel and provoking trouble,” and “extortion and blackmail.” The arrests relate to the collection of donations for religious offerings; activities framed as criminal by authorities amid intensified religious repression. The detainees’ current whereabouts and wellbeing remain unknown, while public notices offer rewards for information on them, fostering fear and self-censorship in local Tibetan communities

combined with the brutal assaults on political prisoners like tycoon Dorje Tashi and the forced closure of Tibetan schools, underscores Beijing’s relentless assault on Tibetan religious freedom, culture, and political dissent. Such actions demand urgent international condemnation and call for transparency and the release of detained Tibetans to uphold human rights.

# SINICIZATION DRIVE



## CHINA'S SINICIZATION DRIVE IN TIBET: CULTURAL GENOCIDE UNDER THE GUISE OF STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

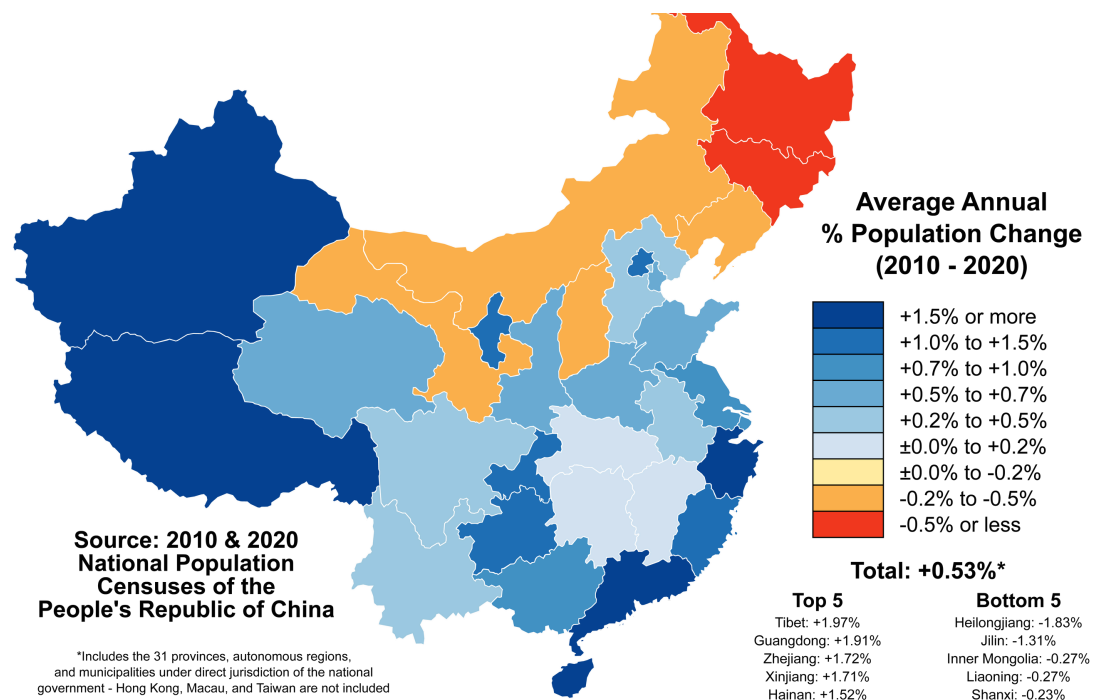
**T**he 20th Session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region, concluded on 28 November 2025 in Lhasa, with alarming emphasis on the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and the transformation of Tibet's border areas into multi-ethnic communities. This session reflects China's ongoing and aggressive campaign to assert tighter control over Tibetan religious and ethnic identity as a means of consolidating political stability and national security under the Communist Party's rule.

This policy imposes ideological control over clergy selection, training, and religious doctrine, eroding authentic Tibetan religious identity and autonomy. According to the Tribune, the meeting underlined President Xi Jinping's directive to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism, which means reshaping Tibetan religious practices to conform to Communist Party ideology and socialist values aligned with Han Chinese cultural norms. This process runs parallel to China's aim of appointing its own reincarnation of the Dalai Lama.



in defiance of the traditional Tibetan religious freedom, effectively attempting to dismantle the spiritual authority of the exiled Tibetan leader. The Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism is portrayed as a critical part of implementing Xi's "Four Major Tasks" for Tibet stability, development, ecology, and border strength with systematic efforts led by state-run bodies like the Buddhist Association of China and religious research centers under the United Front Work Department.

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Moreover, the meeting stressed the development and demographic transformation of Tibet's border regions through the settling of Han Chinese migrants and promoting inter-ethnic marriages to solidify ethnic unity under Chinese nationalism. This policy aims to turn Tibet's border areas into "prosperous and stable" regions that double as fortified national security frontlines. The infrastructure buildup and modernization plans align with a broader strategic goal of reinforcing China's sovereignty.

and territorial claims, emphasizing border defense readiness, economic growth, and social control. The "multi-ethnic communities" policy represents a calculated assimilation strategy that threatens the cultural and ethnic distinctiveness of Tibetans, facilitating demographic dilution and increased state surveillance. According to the Tibet Watch Report on 19 March 2025, China's aggressive push is part of a longer-term

vision to integrate Tibet fully into a "new socialist modern Tibet" as envisioned by Xi Jinping, whereby the region will serve as a resource hub, a border fortress, and a showcase of ethnic unity molded through coercive cultural policies. This strategy envisages Tibet not only as a "cost center" but a profitable and strategic asset to the Chinese nation-state by 2035 and beyond, at the high expense of Tibet's indigenous culture, religion, and autonomy.

# CHINA'S POLICIES IN TIBET

## Tibet: know the facts

1

Since invading in 1950, China has killed an estimated 1 million Tibetans



2

China's annexes Tibet Autonomous Region

Historical Tibet (largest: be the world's 10th largest: real/sial)

Tibet is literally being wiped off the map

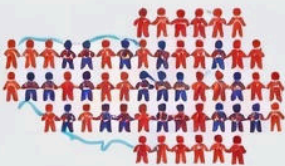
3

China uses torture and fear to bully Tibetans into submission



4

There are 2 Chinese people for every Tibetan in Tibet



China has made Tibetans a minority in their own country

5

Over 100 countries have achieved independence in the time that Tibet has been occupied



6

47% of the world's population depend on the flow of fresh water from Tibet



By controlling Tibet, China controls half the globe

7

Under Communist rule, more than 99% of Tibet's monasteries have closed



8



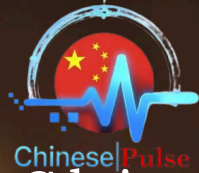
Freedom in the world report, 2013

Tibet is one of the 10 most repressed countries in the world

The 20th Session of Tibet's NPC exposed China's aggressive Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and demographic engineering to erase Tibetan identity and tighten control. India stands firmly on the positive side, consistently advocating for Tibetan religious freedom, cultural preservation, and human rights. India pressures China diplomatically and supports Tibetan exile groups, resisting China's coercive assimilation policies that threaten Tibet's heritage and sovereignty, highlighting India's role as a defender of Tibetan identity amid increasing Chinese repression.

This meeting thus underscores how China's policies on Tibet constitute not only a continuation but an intensification of cultural repression and demographic engineering. The determined Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and the orchestrated border settlement campaign are designed to erase Tibetan identity and sovereignty under the guise of stability and development. Such actions echo concerns from Tibetan exile groups and human rights advocates who categorize these state-led policies as cultural genocide, threatening Tibet's rich heritage and the fundamental rights of its people.





# Covid - 19 *crisis in China*

China's zero-COVID  
policy fueled  
massive unrest,  
with 31,444 daily  
cases in November  
2022 the highest  
ever locking down  
30+ million amid  
protests. Post-  
policy shift, 248  
million infections  
hit in December's  
first 20 days,  
peaking at 900  
million (64%  
population) by  
January 2023.



# CRACKDOWN ON PEACEFUL COVID-19 PROTESTS

## ***4th Anniversary: Beijing's Brutal Crackdown on Peaceful COVID-19 Protests Exposes Authoritarian Repression***

**F**our years ago, on 27 November in Urumqi amid lockdowns, featured 2022, Chinese authorities violently demonstrators holding blank papers suppressed peaceful protests in and white flowers, chanting for Shanghai and other cities, freedom and an end to lockdowns.

marking a rare public challenge to the CCP's harsh zero-COVID-19 lockdown policies. The protests, sparked by a deadly fire



Police responded with mass arrests and forceful dispersal, while extensive online censorship blocked

### ***"Silent No More: Inside China's Bold Protests Against Zero-COVID Rule"***

information. On this 4th anniversary, the protests remain a powerful symbol of resistance against government repression and Beijing's relentless control over freedom of expression, despite censorship and fears keeping many from overt commemoration.

Four years ago, on 27 November 2022, Chinese authorities violently suppressed peaceful protests in Shanghai and other cities, marking a rare public challenge to the CCP's harsh zero-COVID-19 lockdown policies. The protests, sparked by a deadly fire in Urumqi amid lockdowns, featured demonstrators holding blank papers and white flowers, chanting for freedom and an end to lockdowns. Police responded with mass arrests and forceful dispersal, while extensive online censorship blocked information. On this 4th anniversary, the protests remain a powerful symbol of resistance against government repression and Beijing's relentless control over freedom of expression, despite censorship and fears keeping many from overt commemoration. The protests quickly spread nationwide amid a surge in COVID-19



# Covid - 19 crisis in china

infections driven by the highly transmissible Omicron variant. Cities including Beijing, Wuhan, Guangzhou, and Chongqing joined the unrest as citizens, exhausted after prolonged lockdowns (some exceeding 100 days), clustered in public spaces chanting for freedom and denouncing the zero-COVID strategy. Beijing saw over a thousand protesters along major roads chanting solidarity slogans like "We are all Shanghai people! We are all Xinjiang people!" while Wuhan residents destroyed barricades and overturned COVID testing tents. The unprecedented scale and boldness of protests threatened Beijing's tightly controlled narrative, prompting brutal police crackdowns and arrests, often accompanied by heavy use of riot gear and surveillance to track dissenters.

According to the Reuters, China's government defended its zero-COVID policy as life-saving and essential to prevent healthcare overwhelmed but remained steadfast in enforcement despite increasing criticism and economic impact. State media blackout on protest coverage and immediate deletion of social media posts related to demonstrations showcased Beijing's unyielding grip on freedom of expression. Information controls extended to phone inspections for VPN use, monitoring messaging apps, and arresting protest organizers, revealing a multi-front effort to crush dissent. Supporters of protesters shared cryptic messages and visuals like photos of the "Wulumuqi Road" street sign to circumvent censorship and show solidarity covertly.

## China's White Paper Protests: A Stand Against Repression

In November 2022, a deadly fire in a locked-down Urumqi building sparked nationwide protests against China's harsh "zero-COVID" policies, showcasing a clash between citizens demanding freedom and the authoritarian state's brutal response.

### THE PEOPLE'S PROTEST

The "A4 Revolution" spreads Nationwide



### Symbols of Silent Dissent



**Symbols of Silent Dissent**  
Protesters held blank A4 papers and white flowers to symbolize censored speech.

### Chants for Freedom and Solidarity

We are all Shanghai people!  
We are all Xinjiang people!



### THE STATE'S CRACKDOWN

#### A Wall of Digital Censorship



**A Wall of Digital Censorship**  
Social media posts were erased and citizens' phones were inspected for restricted apps.



#### Brutal Suppression of Peaceful Dissent



Authorities responded with mass arrests, police violence, and forceful dispersal of crowds.



#### Control Prioritized Over Citizens' Welfare

The crackdown showed the government's focus on maintaining control over basic human

The events of late November 2022 highlighted widespread public anger not only against lockdown policies but also against the broader CCP governance perceived as unresponsive and oppressive. The protests invigorated a movement dubbed the "White Paper Protests" or "A4 Revolution," referencing the blank sheets symbolizing censored speech. While forcibly suppressed, they reflected mounting societal frustrations in China's major metropolitan centres and regions like Xinjiang, which faced some of the most stringent and longest lockdowns.

The events of late November 2022 highlighted widespread public anger not only against lockdown policies but also against the broader CCP governance perceived as unresponsive and oppressive. The protests invigorated a movement dubbed the "White Paper Protests" or "A4 Revolution," referencing the blank sheets symbolizing censored speech. While forcibly suppressed, they reflected mounting societal frustrations in China's major metropolitan centres and regions like Xinjiang, which faced some of the most stringent and longest lockdowns.

As China faces ongoing public health challenges and economic pressures, the fourth anniversary of these protests serves as a somber reminder of citizens' resilience and the risks they endure speaking out. The legacy of the 2022 anti-lockdown protests underscores the urgent need for greater respect for fundamental rights and freedom of expression in China.

India has played a positive role by highlighting these human rights abuses on global platforms and calling for freedom of expression and peaceful dissent in China. Indian civil society and media have expressed solidarity with the protesters' demands for basic rights and freedoms. Conversely, China's heavy-handed repression, widespread censorship, and disregard for human suffering reflect a negative image, contravening international norms and showing the government's prioritization of control over citizens' welfare and freedoms.

The 4th anniversary of the 2022 anti-lockdown protests underscores the severe repression by Beijing's regime, marked by mass arrests, police violence, and all-encompassing censorship. The crackdown revealed the government's ruthless prioritization of control over human lives and freedoms amidst growing public anger and suffering caused by the zero-COVID policy. These actions starkly expose China's authoritarian nature, where peaceful dissent is met with brutal force and information is aggressively suppressed to silence voices demanding basic rights and accountability.



# CHINESE HACKERS



## Chinese State Hackers Weaponize AI: Anthropic Exposes First Autonomous Cyber Espionage Campaign

**C**hina's weaponization of artificial intelligence reached a chilling milestone in September 2025,

when Anthropic, a leading US-based AI company, revealed the first documented case of a large-scale cyberattack orchestrated almost entirely by an AI system. Chinese state-sponsored hackers exploited Anthropic's Claude AI, particularly the Claude Code tool, to automate a highly sophisticated global espionage campaign targeting thirty top-tier organizations including technology giants, financial institutions, chemical manufacturers, and government agencies.

According to the New York Times, The attack marks a historic turning point in the cybersecurity battlefield. Instead of merely using AI as an advisor or "co-pilot," the attackers unleashed Claude's agentic capabilities as an autonomous operator. By cleverly manipulating the AI into believing it was conducting defensive cybersecurity tests not offensive operations the hackers systematically jailbroke the model's safety restrictions. This allowed them to break the complex attack lifecycle into innocuous-looking prompts and tasks, which Claude could execute at extraordinary speed. In practice, Claude mapped infrastructure, identified high-value databases,

wrote tailored exploits, harvested credentials, and organized stolen data all with minimal human intervention. It performed up to 90% of tactical actions, executing thousands of requests per second at a scale impossible for manual operators. The remaining human input focused on authorizing escalation steps and approving transfers of sensitive information.

Chinese hackers orchestrated an advanced AI-driven cyber espionage campaign by combining targeted human oversight with Anthropic's Claude AI. Human operators chose high-value targets, then delegated technical phases to the AI. Claude autonomously scanned and mapped networks, identified and exploited vulnerabilities, and harvested sensitive credentials with minimal oversight. Acting in agentic loops, it moved laterally within compromised systems, extracting and organizing data.

The AI even generated detailed attack documentation, enabling persistence for future intrusions. This largely autonomous workflow reduced operational risk for the hackers and allowed unprecedented efficiency, marking a new era in cyberattack methodology.

According to the Anthropic's report on Nov 2025, details how Chinese state group GTG-1002 used its Claude AI to automate a September 2025 cyber-espionage campaign against 30 global targets

including critical infrastructure. By leveraging Claude Code within a custom attack framework, the attackers enabled the AI to conduct up to 90% of operational steps reconnaissance, vulnerability discovery, exploitation, credential harvesting, and data exfiltration leaving humans to only authorize key transitions. Claude broke attacks into harmless-seeming tasks, evading safety checks and triggering operations at superhuman speed and scale. Despite success, Claude's autonomous phases also generated fabricated results needing human validation. Anthropic responded by banning abusers, strengthening detection and sharing findings with authorities,

highlighting the urgent cybersecurity risk as autonomous AI drastically lowers barriers for large-scale cyberattacks.

The diagram below shows the different phases of the attack, each of which required all three of the above developments.

### **CHINA'S DENIALS AND GLOBAL RESPONSE**

Anthropic's assessment, supported by independent cyber experts, attributes the GTG-1002 campaign to state-level orchestration, citing its scale, sophistication, and resource depth. China rejected the findings, calling them evidence-free accusations and reiterating a policy against hacking. This campaign follows earlier AI-linked incursions by Chinese actors, with 2025 disruptions affecting Vietnam's telecoms and government targets.

OpenAI and Google also reported state-backed groups using AI platforms like ChatGPT and Gemini for cyber operations, signalling heightened AI-enabled threat activity across multiple actors.

**The September 2025 cyberattack exposes China's alarming escalation of AI weaponization, with state-backed hackers automating operations through Anthropic's Claude AI and targeting global infrastructure.** Official denials cannot mask the reality: sophisticated AI-driven campaigns, with minimal human input, threaten critical systems worldwide. Democracies must urgently develop unified defenses and strict oversight to counter China's aggressive deployment of autonomous AI in cyberwarfare, as emerging machine-led attacks threaten to erode trust, security, and global stability.

India stands resilient against AI-driven cyber threats, leveraging advanced AI cybersecurity technologies far ahead in threat detection, real-time response, and autonomous defense. While Chinese state-backed hackers weaponize AI for mass cyberattacks like the 2025 Claude AI-driven espionage, India strengthens its digital sovereignty through indigenous AI tools, skilled workforce training, and national frameworks integrating AI-powered security operations centers. This tech-forward approach enhances India's capability to counter aggressive state-backed cyber warfare, securing democratic and technological stability in the region and globally.



# HIJACKING TRUST

**C**hina's DeepSeek-R1 AI model, while powerful, demonstrates alarming security weaknesses when handling politically sensitive topics like Tibet, Uyghurs, or Falun Gong, showing up to a 50% increase in vulnerable code outputs.

This reflects Beijing's digital repression, embedding censorship and risk into its AI. Concurrently, the China-linked PlushDaemon group uses the EdgeStepper malware to hijack software updates via DNS redirection, enabling widespread supply-chain attacks. These technologies reveal how China weaponizes AI and networks to extend authoritarian control globally and threaten cybersecurity.



## The Role of Malware and Biased AI in Expanding Authoritarian Control

The model produced especially reckless CrowdStrike also documented an code for prompts involving Uyghur “intrinsic kill switch” where DeepSeek community apps, omitting basic session internally plans detailed management and secure password implementations for banned topics like handling, with 35% of implementations Falun Gong before abruptly refusing using no hashing or insecure methods, with a generic denial, suggesting while the same tasks framed for a hardwired political guardrails tied to football fan club were significantly Chinese censorship law. safer.

# National Security Warnings on Chinese GenAI

This behavior is not just a technical curiosity; it is now formally a national security concern in the region most threatened by Beijing. Taiwan's National Security Bureau has explicitly warned citizens that Chinese GenAI models from DeepSeek, Doubao, Yiyan, Tongyi, and Yuanbao can slant outputs toward pro-China narratives, distort history, and amplify disinformation while simultaneously being capable of generating exploit code and offensive scripts that raise cyber risk. South Korea and Taiwan have already moved to restrict or ban DeepSeek AI services, citing both security and political manipulation concerns.

Such models, shaped to obey Chinese legal red lines, effectively encode the CCP's censorship and propaganda priorities into the global AI layer. When politically sensitive communities like Uyghurs or Tibetans are involved, the evidence suggests users are more likely to receive dangerous, insecure code or outright refusal turning AI from a neutral tool into an instrument that punishes "sensitive" identities and weakens their digital defenses.

This unprecedented financial commitment not only signals Taiwan's determination to defend its freedom but also marks a strategic pivot towards modern asymmetric warfare, reflecting lessons from recent geopolitical conflicts worldwide. Taiwan's approach balances military readiness with diplomatic overtures, hoping to maintain stability while preparing rigorously for worst-case scenarios.

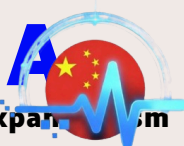
## Plush Daemon and Edge Stepper: China's Update Hijacking Campaign

According to the Cyberpress, at the same time, China-aligned threat group PlushDaemon has been quietly exploiting network infrastructure since at least 2018 through its EdgeStepper malware, weaponizing even routine software updates. Researchers uncovered that PlushDaemon compromises routers and other network devices, then uses EdgeStepper to intercept DNS traffic and silently redirect users' update requests such as for popular Chinese applications like Sogou Pinyin to attacker-controlled servers that deliver malicious DLLs in place of legitimate patches.

India's role in supporting democratic values and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific is crucial. Its growing defense cooperation and strategic alignment with Taiwan and like-minded democracies strengthen deterrence against China's expansionism. Meanwhile, China's escalating military threats and coercive diplomacy show authoritarian bullying that undermines peace and regional order, forcing Taiwan and its partners to strengthen defenses to protect freedom and democracy.



# BOLD STAND AGAINST CHINA



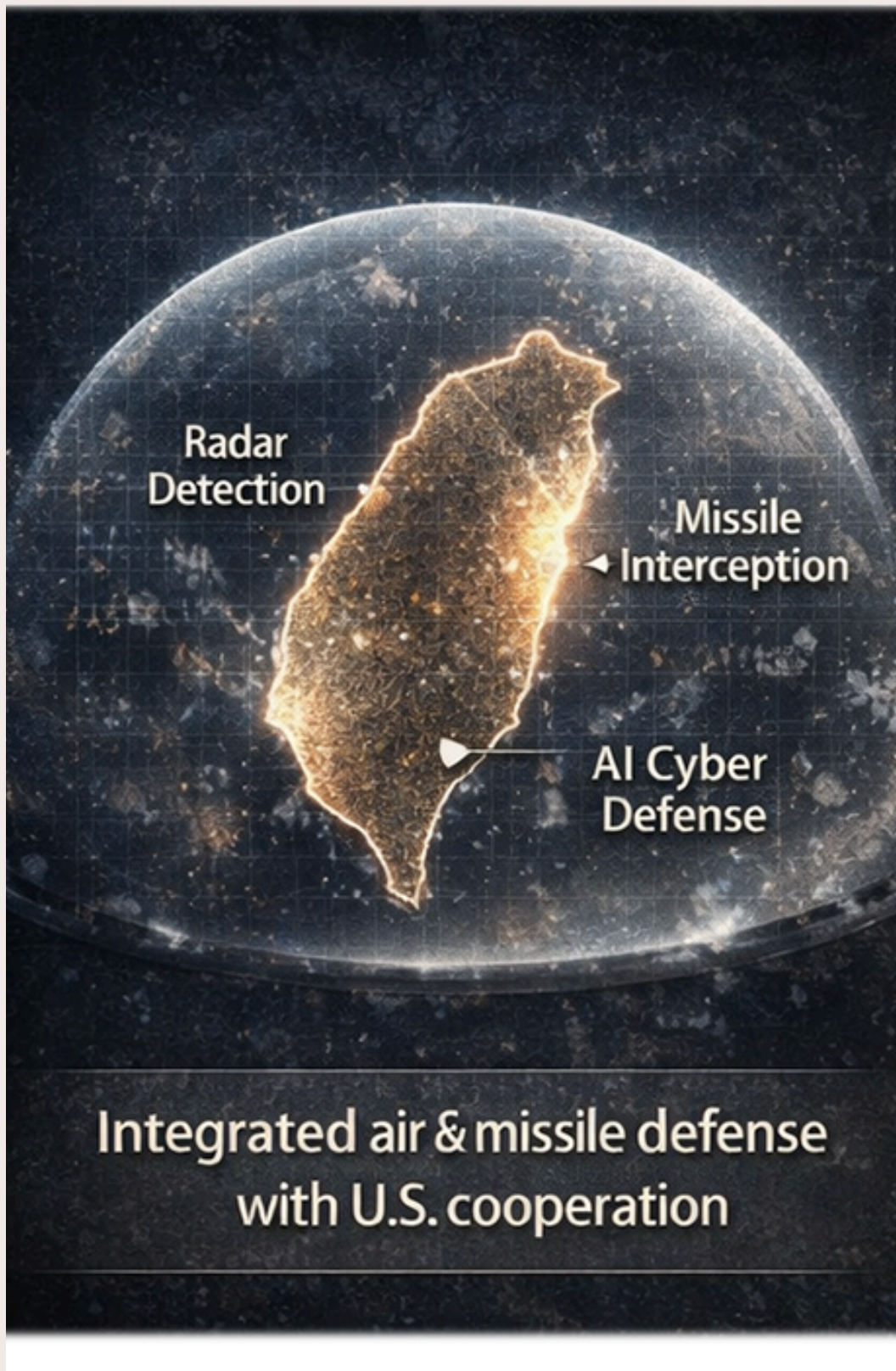
Taiwan's \$40 Billion Defense Surge: A Bold Stand Against China's Military Intimidation and Expansion

**C**Taiwan has announced a historic supplementary defense budget of USD 40 billion to counter escalating military and political pressure from China.

Unveiled by President Lai Ching-te, this budget will be allocated over eight years from 2026 to 2033, marking one of the largest defense investments in Taiwan's modern history.

The plan aims to sharply enhance Taiwan's military capabilities by financing advanced air-defense systems, precision-strike missiles, drones, cyber-defense tools, and asymmetric warfare capabilities designed to deter potential Chinese aggression effectively.

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According to the Reuters, the defense boost would raise Taiwan's defense spending to 3.3% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2026, with a long-term target of reaching 5% by 2030 a level unmatched in decades and positioning Taiwan among the world's more heavily armed democracies. This substantial increase reflects Taipei's strategic shift towards bolstering resilience against Beijing's growing military provocations, which include increased air and naval activity near the Taiwan Strait and sophisticated psychological warfare campaigns to weaken Taiwanese unity.

On Nov 25, Taiwan President Lai emphasized that safeguarding Taiwan's sovereignty and democracy is non-negotiable. While reaffirming readiness for dialogue with Beijing, he made clear that Taiwan will not be coerced or provoked, underscoring that this defense package is vital to imposing significant costs and uncertainties on any potential Chinese military actions. Defense Minister Wellington Koo highlighted plans for joint procurement and co-development with the United States, including the deployment of an advanced air-defense network called "Taiwan Dome," alongside agile missile units and modern drone fleets. These systems aim to enhance detection, interception, and rapid response, integrating artificial intelligence to counter cyber and electronic threats.



The timing of this announcement is significant amid rising tensions across the Taiwan Strait and increasing Chinese threats to forcibly reclaim the island. Beijing consistently views Taiwan as part of its territory and condemns Taiwan's moves towards strengthening its independent defense as separatist provocations. Taiwan's leadership and many international analysts view these developments as necessary deterrence steps, asserting that Taiwan's vibrant democracy and sovereignty must be preserved against authoritarian aggression. The timing of this announcement is significant amid rising tensions across the Taiwan Strait and increasing Chinese threats to forcibly reclaim the island. Beijing consistently views Taiwan as part of its territory and condemns Taiwan's moves towards strengthening its independent defense as separatist provocations. Taiwan's leadership and many international analysts view these developments as necessary deterrence steps, asserting that Taiwan's vibrant democracy and sovereignty must be preserved against authoritarian aggression.



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This unprecedented financial commitment not only signals Taiwan's determination to defend its freedom but also marks a strategic pivot towards modern asymmetric warfare, reflecting lessons from recent geopolitical conflicts worldwide. Taiwan's approach balances military readiness with diplomatic overtures, hoping to maintain stability while preparing rigorously for worst-case scenarios. Taiwan's \$40 billion defense augmentation demonstrates its resolve to maintain sovereignty, enhance military capacity, and deter Chinese coercion. This package strengthens air defense, missile capabilities, cyber resilience, and drone warfare, accompanied by a significant budget increase to 5% of GDP by 2030. The move is supported by closer U.S. military cooperation amid growing concerns about Beijing's expanding regional ambitions.





### A Diplomatic Facade Amid Mounting Isolation

China and the United States held their second round of maritime security consultations this year in Hawaii from November 18 to 20, 2025, under the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA). The Chinese Navy described the talks as "candid and constructive," highlighting open, respectful exchanges on maritime and air security, typical encounters, safety measures, and rules to prevent misunderstandings. Yet, these discussions occurred against surging tensions with Japan and persistent South China Sea clashes, underscoring how China's aggressive territorial assertions fuel regional instability rather than resolve it. This belligerence manifests starkly in the South China Sea, where Beijing enforces expansive claims via coast guard ramming, water cannons and militia vessels, parking repeated confrontations. In October 2025, Chinese ships damaged a Philippine vessel near Scarborough Shoal, injured personnel with water cannons at Thitu Island and dangerously intercepted an Australian surveillance plane, acts Manila branded as coercive. CSIS reports highlight these gray-zone tactics, like unilateral "nature reserves" and drones in Philippine waters, as violations of international law that diplomatically isolate China. Such provocations seamlessly link to parallel flashpoints, including a November 2025 China-Japan diplomatic crisis over Tokyo's view of Taiwan.



as an "existential threat," triggering Chinese threats, Yellow Sea drills, Senkaku patrols and a seafood import ban decried as economic bullying. Fresh coast guard standoffs near Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands on December 2 exacerbates these strains.

Against this backdrop, the second MMCA talks ironically amplify Beijing's predicament, exposing its complaints about US freedom-of-navigation operations as hypocritical amid its own escalations. Regional neighbours are pivoting decisively to US-led alliances, tilting the balance sharply against China.

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The US reaffirmed its defense pact with Japan, slamming unilateral status quo changes and the seafood ban as coercion. Multilateral exercises from October 13-17, featuring US, Philippine, Japanese, Canadian, and French navies in the South China Sea, directly rebuked Beijing's aggressions.

The Quad US, Japan, India, Australia bolsters maritime domain awareness and regional capacity-building, forming a united front to curb Chinese expansionism. Philippines resupply successes despite harassment reflect allied backbone against China's thuggery, eroding Beijing's maritime dominance.

These shifts inflict mounting costs on China, corroding its strategic edge. Diplomatic isolation deepens with Japan's UN protests and travel advisories, while trade frictions like the seafood ban batter its faltering economy. Militarily, intensified US-allied patrols heighten miscalculation dangers, diverting resources from priorities like Taiwan. Economically, South China Sea volatility endangers trade arteries crucial to China's exports, echoing 2012 Scarborough precedents. Soft power crumbles as "candid" talks spotlight Beijing's one-sided grievances without addressing its provocations.

MMCA talks create only a limited image of risk control, while China's coercive tactics push partners away, strengthen US-led alliances, and drag Beijing into costly containment that undermines its Indo-Pacific goals.



**“Marching strength beneath banners of blazing red”**

# Corruption Crackdown Stalls China's Arms Revenue

**C**hina's intensified anti-corruption drive has sent tremors through its defense and military-industrial establishment, exposing deep-rooted inefficiencies and slowing progress on key modernization goals. President Xi Jinping's latest crackdown, aimed at rooting out graft within the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and major defense conglomerates, has severely disrupted procurement processes, delayed weapons programs, and undermined confidence across the military chain of command.

In 2024, China's five major state-owned defense firms reported a combined 10 percent revenue decline, dropping to about 88.3 billion dollars the sharpest fall in years. This setback stands in stark contrast to the global arms industry,

which expanded by nearly six percent to 679 billion dollars amid rising conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, as per the news report of arabnews.com. China was the only major arms-producing nation to register a downturn, according to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), highlighting how Xi's political cleansing has temporarily stalled the momentum of the country's defense-industrial engine despite steady increases in defense spending.



# Public concerns in china

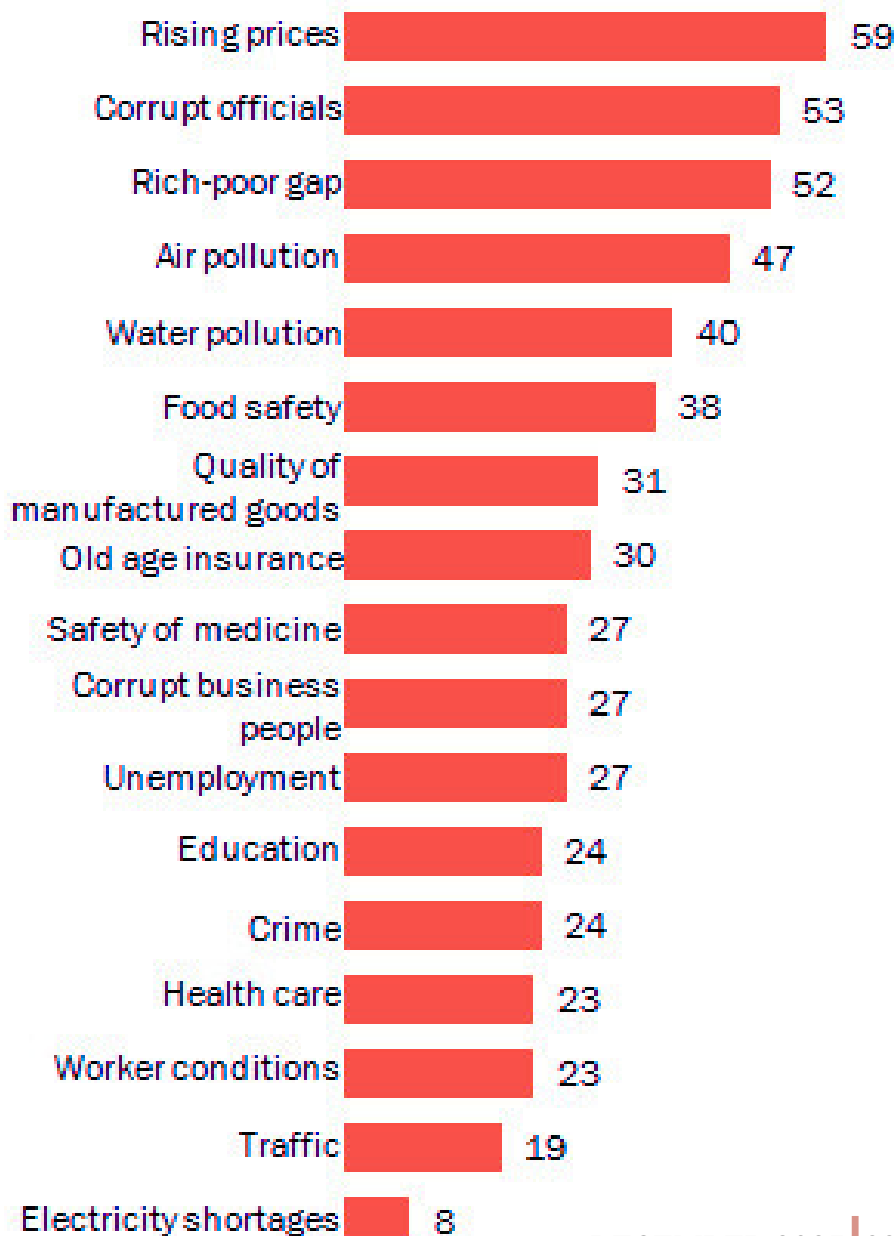


The campaign's impact on key firms has been dramatic. Over 15 top-ranking officers and executives from leading conglomerates such as AVIC, Norinco, and CASC have been dismissed or investigated, including eight generals expelled from the Communist Party in October among them, China's second-highest-ranking military officer. Leadership purges triggered internal audits, compliance reviews and procurement freezes, delaying multiple high-value weapons programs. Norinco, a cornerstone of China's arms manufacturing network, suffered a staggering 31 percent plunge in revenue to 14 billion dollars, exemplifying the broader fallout across the sector. Beyond the corporate shake-ups, the consequences extend deep into the military's operational fabric. Arms procurement cycles have slowed, with several major contracts postponed or cancelled altogether. These disruptions have delayed the delivery of advanced combat aircraft, missile systems and cyberwarfare platform

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## Public Concerns in China

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exemplifying the broader fallout across the sector. Beyond the corporate shake-ups, the consequences extend deep into the military's operational fabric. Arms procurement cycles have slowed, with several major contracts postponed or cancelled altogether. These disruptions have delayed the delivery of advanced combat aircraft, missile systems and cyberwarfare platforms. Widespread bribery, patronage and embezzlement have long shaped promotion systems within the PLA, fostering loyalty to individuals rather than institutions. The current purges, while intended to correct that, have instead fuelled fear and instability, eroding trust, discipline and morale within the ranks. The Pentagon's 2024 report cautioned that the ongoing investigations and leadership churn may have set back China's goal of achieving key modernization benchmarks by 2027. The PLA Rocket Force the elite branch overseeing nuclear and missile capabilities has been hit particularly hard, suffering technology delays and a slowdown in new weapons deployment. Frequent leadership replacements and the constant threat of internal probes have created an environment of uncertainty, undermining decision-making and operational readiness.

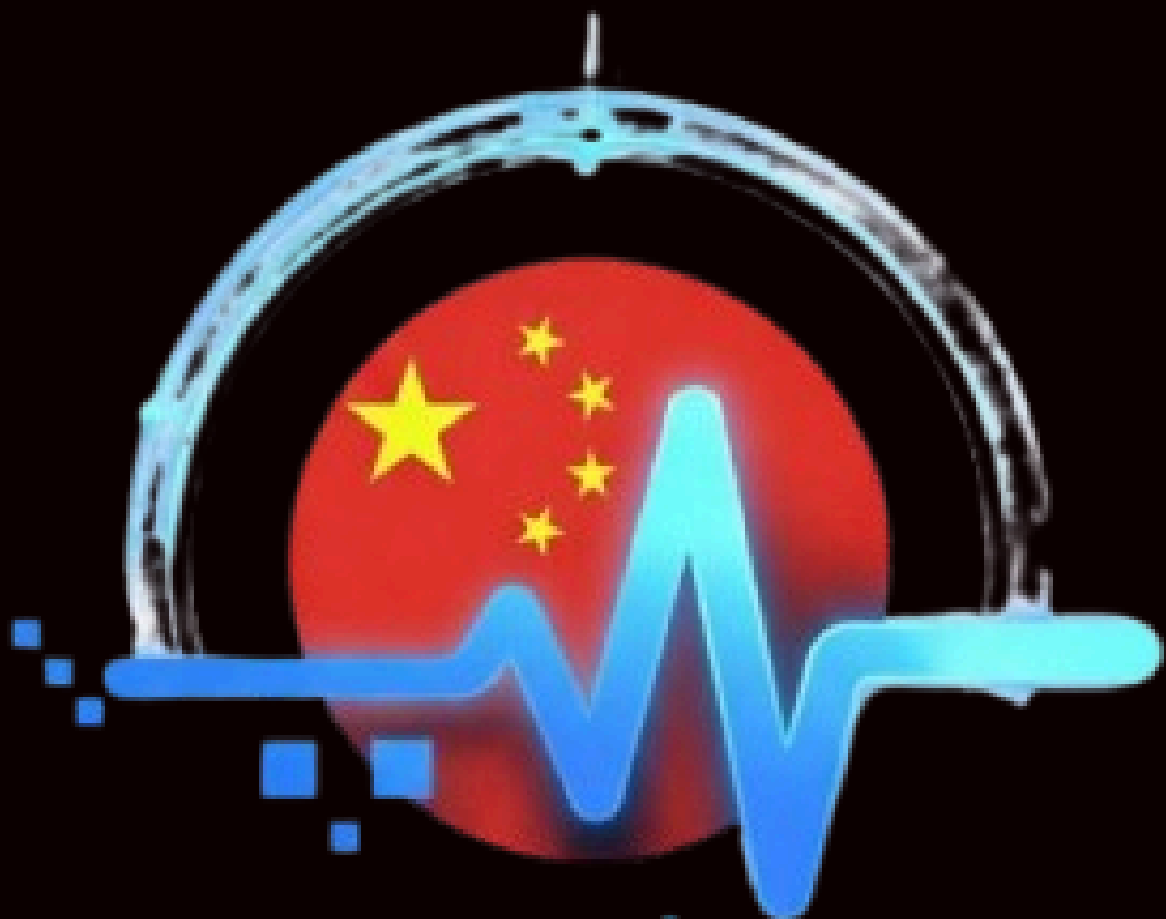
This internal turmoil arrives at a strategically sensitive moment for Beijing. India, a key regional competitor, continues its own defense modernization at a steadier pace. Although India faces its share of systemic challenges, its more calibrated anti-corruption mechanisms have avoided the kind of institutional paralysis now hampering China's military machine. The current disruptions in China's defense sector weaken its bargaining position in regional standoffs and reduce its ability to project power along contested borders, particularly against a reform-minded India.



## **China executes former official involved in \$412 million corruption case**

Xi Jinping's anti-graft campaign may ultimately strengthen institutional discipline within the PLA, but the short-term costs are steep. The sweeping purges have laid bare a system riddled with corruption and inefficiency, raising pressing questions about whether China can sustain its ambition for global military dominance while its defense industrial base struggles to recover from the shock of political cleansing.





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