

# China trying to undermine Tibet's identity, want to make world aware about it: Tibetan girl who was jailed for protesting

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DHARAMSHALA:

On October 21, 2015, a 15-year-old Tibetan girl along with her sister was picked up by Chinese authorities in the Tibetan county of Ngaba and were put behind bars for three years for publicly displaying portraits of the Dalai Lama and demanding a "free" Tibet.

In June last year, the girl, Namkyi, arrived in India weeks after entering Nepal following a 10-day arduous journey on foot with a "firm" resolve to make people across the world aware about 'Chinese repression' in Tibet, according to her account.

Namkyi, now 24, says she is currently studying at 'Sherab Gatsel Ling', an educational institution run by the Tibetan government-in-exile in Himachal Pradesh's Dharamshala.

"What the Chinese government is showing to the entire world about Tibet is in total contrast to the real situation. The Tibetan people are living under increasing fear and repression," she told a small group of journalists.

"China has been trying to undermine Tibet's identity," she alleges.

Tibetan activists have been accusing China of denying religious freedom and trying to stamp out Tibet's cultural heritage and identity. Beijing has been rejecting the charges.

"I want to tell the world

what is happening in Tibet. I want to be the voice of the Tibetan people to let the world know about their pain and anguish, about the Chinese repression," Namkyi said. The girl, born to a typical nomadic family in Charo village, also recalled her and her sister Tenzin Dolma's detention following their demonstration at a key locality in Ngaba, "calling for 'Free Tibet' and seeking the swift return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet."

"Not more than 10 minutes into our march, four or five police officers came from behind and snatched the portraits (of the Dalai Lama) from our hands," she said about the October 21, 2015 protest.

"We did not let go of the portraits and resisted the police action. Finally, the police dragged us down the road and told us to be silent. But we shouted our slogans continuously," she said.

"They handcuffed our hands, put us into the police van and took us away to the detention centre of Ngaba County. Then they took us to another detention centre in Barkam city."

Namkyi claimed she and her sister were subjected to severe torture.

"We were interrogated in a small room where a heater was switched on with excessive heat. Different interrogators asked various questions such as who incited us

to hold the protest; where did we get the portraits of the Dalai Lama and whether we had any acquaintances from outside, etc," she said.

"Despite mental and physical torture, we only responded that both of us freely decided to hold the protest, and no one incited us, and also that our family members knew nothing about it," she said. Namkyi said the trial started nearly a year after the arrest.

"That day (when the trial began), we both saw each other for the first time since our arrest," she recalled, adding the court sent them to prison.

"After three months in prison, I worked in a labour camp where copper wires were produced, and my sister made cigarette boxes at first, and then we were shifted to a wrist-watch manufacturing camp," she said.

"Later, we learned that our family had sent food and clothes for us, but we never got anything from the prison authorities."

"On 21 October 2018, we were released from prison after completing the prison term," she said.

Namkyi alleged that the Chinese authorities "troubled" her family members and relatives because she and her sister took part in the protest.

"On May 13, 2023, I started my journey of escape with my aunt Tsering Kyi without telling anyone," she said,

adding they first crossed over to Nepal through a border point and then came to Dharamshala on June 28.

In India for close to 10 months, she feared for the safety of her family members back home.

"I am worried that my family may be targeted," she said. Namkyi said her main aim now is to "let the world know the real situation in Tibet".

"People are living in pathetic conditions in Tibet. I want to be their voice to the world. I want to visit various countries and tell them what is going on in Tibet," she added.

Tibetan activists said people from their community have been facing intense surveillance, and possessing pictures of the Dalai Lama or mentioning him in public is not allowed.

Namkyi said she had the opportunity to seek the blessings of the Dalai Lama last year and he had underlined the need to work towards protecting the identity and cultural heritage of Tibet.

Political head of Tibet's government-in-exile Penpa Tsering said people in Tibet are living in fear and they face intense surveillance in their daily lives.

"People are living in fear because they could get blacklisted anytime. Once they get blacklisted, they land up in a lot of problems," he said.

After a failed anti-Chinese uprising in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet and

came to India where he set up the government-in-exile.

Tibet's government-in-exile based in Dharamshala represents over one lakh Tibetans living in around 30 countries.

The Chinese government officials and the Dalai Lama or his representatives have not met for formal negotiations since 2010.

Beijing has been maintaining that it freed "serfs and slaves" from a brutal theocracy in Tibet, bringing the region on the path of prosperity and modernisation.

China has in the past accused the Dalai Lama of indulging in "separatist" activities and trying to split Tibet and considers him as a divisive figure.

However, the Tibetan spiritual leader has insisted that he is not seeking independence but "genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet" under the "Middle-Way approach".

Relations between the two sides strained further due to protests against China in Tibetan areas in 2008.

The US and several democratic countries have been consistently supporting the Tibetan cause, notwithstanding China's strong objection.

In 2020, the US came out with legislation reaffirming the absolute right of the Tibetan people to choose a successor to the Dalai Lama and the preservation of Tibet's environment.

# Health secretary urges states, UTs to link ABHA IDs with health portals

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Union Health Secretary has urged states and union territories to take necessary action to link Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) with various health portals, such as Reproductive Child Health (RCH), National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), among others.

As per the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) dashboard, total ABHA IDs created in the country as on April 3, 2024 is 5,894.60 lakhs, Health Secretary Apurva Chandra said.

However, total beneficiaries linked with ABHA under Non-communicable diseases (NCD), Sickle cell, RCH, NIKSHAY, National Viral Hepatitis Control Program (NVHCP) and Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) are only 827.99 lakhs, 0.89 lakhs, 15.78 lakhs, 2.46 lakhs, 0.056 lakhs and 0.17 lakhs, respectively, he said.

"This shows that though the states have taken huge interest in creation of the IDs but non linking of health records with these IDs is not allowing the stakeholders, including the patients, from reaping the benefits of digital health records," the health



secretary said. "You are, therefore, requested to kindly take necessary action for linkage of existing beneficiaries with ABHA in the various portals and do regular review of the progress at your level," he stated in a letter to all the state and UT governments.

Chandra said the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 27, 2021 and all the health facilities in the country are to take part in this mission.

Further, via Health Facility Registry and Health Professional Registry, the ABDM platform has to be utilised to the optimum extent, he said in the letter.

"In this regard, all states and UTs have been requested in the past through a letter on June 13, 2023 for the 100 per cent compliance in ABHA seeding on various portals. Some states and UTs have

shown impressive progress in the creation of ABHA IDs," he said.

Chandra said currently, beneficiaries are being linked with ABHA under various health portals like NCD, Sickle Cell, Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), NIKSHAY, NVHCP and PMNDP, etc.

Additionally, states and UTs have to link the beneficiaries under the IDSP-IHIP (Integrated Health Information Platform) portal, the health secretary said in the letter.

Under the ABDM, citizens can create their ABHA numbers, to which their digital health records can be linked. This will allow patients to hassle-free access and digitally share their health records.

This will enable creation of longitudinal health records for individuals across various healthcare providers, and improve clinical decision making by healthcare providers, officials said.

# CRPF head constable killed in Manipur cremated in Bengal village



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

PANCHAL (WB): CRPF head constable Arup Saini who was killed in a militant attack in Manipur was cremated with full honours in his native village in West Bengal's Bankura district on Sunday.

Two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) per-

sonnel were killed and two others injured after militants attacked a camp of security forces in Manipur's Bishnupur district in the early hours of Saturday, police said.

Saini's cremation was marked by a traditional gun salute and offering of wreaths by senior officers.

Senior CRPF officers and Bankura's Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Tiwari were present there.

Militants had attacked an IRBn (India Reserve Battalion) camp at Naranseina in the Moirang police station area. The attack began around 12.30 am and continued till about 2.15 am, officials said.

The militants also hurled bombs, one of which exploded in the outpost of CRPF's 128 battalion. CRPF sub-inspector N Sarkar and head constable Saini were killed in the attack.

The CRPF personnel were deployed to provide security to the IRBn camp.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: A central government delegation is on a three-day visit to Bangladesh beginning Sunday to further boost bilateral ties on governance matters, according to an official statement.

The visit is being undertaken on the invitation of the Bangladesh Ministry of Public Administration and will focus on the mid-career capacity building programs in field administration for Bangladesh civil servants, said the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry on Sunday. "V Srinivas, Secretary of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances



(DARPG) will lead a four-member delegation to Bangladesh from April 28-30, 2024 for bilateral discussions regarding renewal of memorandum of understanding (MoU) between National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) India and Bangladesh Ministry of Public Administration for the period 2024-2029,"

it said.

The NCGG and the Bangladesh Ministry of Public Administration have collaborated for conducting capacity building programs for Bangladesh civil servants since 2014.

Under the bilateral collaboration, 71 capacity building programmes were held and 2,600 Bangladesh

civil servants have visited the NCGG since 2014, the statement said.

"The Bangladesh government has emphasised on the utility of these training programmes and conveyed interest in renewal of the MoU between NCGG and the Bangladesh Ministry of Public Administration under which these training programmes are being organised for the next five years when it expires in 2025," it added.

During the three-day visit, Secretary Srinivas will hold bilateral meetings with Minister of Public Administration, Senior Secretary Ministry of Public Administration, Director General of the

Civil Services Administration Academy, Director General of the Public Administration Training Centre, Director General Governance Innovation Unit in the Prime Minister's Office and the Additional Secretary Career Planning and Training Wing of Ministry of Public Administration.

Srinivas will address the participants of the law and administration courses and faculty of Bangladesh Civil Services Administration Academy on "Institutionalization of SMART Governance to Enhance Public Service Delivery", the statement added.

# Put aside other issues, vote for PM Modi as he got COVID vaccines for us during pandemic: Fadnavis

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday appealed to people to put aside other issues and vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he kept everyone alive by making vaccines available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fadnavis sought votes over vaccines during his addresses at Madha and Barshi towns in Solapur district. The senior BJP leader held his first rally at Barshi, part of the Osmanabad parliamentary constituency, where Archana Patil of the NCP is contesting against incumbent MP Omraje Nimbalkar of the Shiv Sena (UBT).



Madha falls under the Madha Lok Sabha constituency, where the BJP has renominated its sitting MP Ranjitsinh Nimbalkar against Dhairyasheel Mohite Patil of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP).

"Put aside other issues and vote for Prime

Minister Narendra Modi as he kept us alive during the pandemic. He took the initiative and under his leadership, India not only produced its own vaccine but also supplied it to other countries," said Fadnavis.

He was referring to India's 'Vaccine Maitri'

programme under which anti-COVID jabs were supplied to several nations.

The country was not in a strong position before Modi came to power, he said.

"Earlier, people from Pakistan could easily come here and carry out terror

attacks. The then prime minister would go to the US to complain about Pakistan, but nothing would happen. After Modi came to power, we retaliated by surgical strike and carried out airstrike to send out a strong message," he said.

Today, India is prospering while Pakistan is heading towards bankruptcy, Fadnavis said.

Madha and Osmanabad Lok Sabha seats will go to polls in the third phase of general elections on May 7.

Elections to the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra have been scheduled in five phases of the general elections between April 19 and May 20. Votes will be counted on June 4.

# Child trafficking racket busted in Mumbai; doctor among seven held

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: The Mumbai police have busted a child trafficking racket and arrested a doctor and six others involved in selling an infant and a toddler, an official said on Sunday.

The crime branch on Saturday arrested the accused, Dr Sopanrao Khandare, Vanadana Amit Pawar (28), Sheetal Ganesh Vare (41), Sneha Suryavanshi (24), Naseema Haneef Khan (28), Lata Survaade (36) and Sharad Maruti Devkar (45), the official said.

The police had received a tip-off that Vare, a resident of Vikhroli, had allegedly sold a five-month-old baby for Rs 2 lakh, he said.

Vare was apprehended



from Govandi, following which the police arrested Dr Khandare, who allegedly helped her sell the infant, the official said.

The baby was later rescued from Guhagar in Ratnagiri, he said.

Investigations revealed that the accused had also sold a two-year-old girl, and she has also been res-

cued, the official said.

The gang was also allegedly involved in trafficking children in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, he said.

A case has been registered under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and Indian Penal Code, the official said.

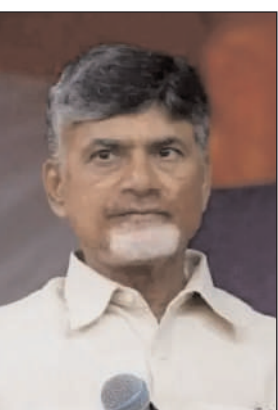
# Naidu promises Rs 1 lakh Haj aid if NDA elected to power

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NELLORE (ANDHRA PRADESH): TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday said that soon after NDA, constituting TDP, BJP and Janasena, forms the government in Andhra Pradesh, financial aid of Rs 1 lakh will be extended to Muslim pilgrims who visit Mecca.

The opposition leader gave this promise at Nellore in the eponymous district during an interaction with the Muslim community.

"Soon after the NDA comes to power in the state, Rs 1 lakh financial assistance will be extended to every Muslim who visits



Mecca on Haj pilgrimage," said Naidu, during the interaction with the Muslim community.

Reminding that the erstwhile TDP government had accorded a state festi-

val status to Rotiyyaan ki Eid, a Muslim festival in Andhra Pradesh, he noted that Hyderabad Muslims are far ahead when compared to their community members from other places, attributing it to his party's policies.

Further, Naidu asserted that though TDP was part of the NDA earlier too, it never allowed any kind of injustice to be done to the community.

He recalled that the TDP had established Urdu university in Hyderabad and also built Haj Houses while alleging that YSRCP chief and Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy did not

make any attempt to build even a single mosque in the past five years.

Similarly, Naidu asserted that the YSRCP government had extended unconditional support for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and other initiatives by the Union Government.

Naidu added that the Muslim community is known for their trust, courage and belief in hard work.

Elections for the 175-member Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh are scheduled on May 13 and the counting of votes will be held on June 4.

# Indian Navy assists Panama-flagged crude oil tanker after it comes under missile attack

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Indian Navy swiftly assisted a Panama-flagged crude oil tanker with 30 crew members including 22 Indians after the vessel came under missile attack from Houthi militants.

Indian Navy's destroyer INS Kochi responded following the attack on the vessel, MV Andromeda Star, on April 26, officials said, adding all the crew members are safe.

The US Central Command said Iranian-backed Houthi militants launched three anti-ship ballistic missiles from Yemen into the Red Sea in the vicinity of merchant vessel Maisha and MV Andromeda Star.

MV Andromeda Star is a Panaman-flagged and Seychelles-operated vessel.

The vessel reported minor damage, the US Central Command said.



"A mission deployed Indian Naval destroyer INS Kochi responded to a maritime security incident involving the attack on Panama-flagged crude oil tanker MV Andromeda Star on April 26," the Indian Navy said.

The vessel was intercepted by the Indian Navy ship and an aerial rescue involving a helicopter operation was undertaken to assess the situation, it said.

An Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of the Navy was also deployed to carry out "residual risk assessment", the Navy said in a statement.

"A total of 30 crew including 22 Indian nationals are reported to be safe and the vessel is continuing its scheduled transit to the next port," it said.

"The swift action of the Indian Navy ship reiterates the commitment and resolve of the Indian Navy in safeguarding the seafarers plying through the region," it added.

The fresh incident comes amid growing global concerns over attacks on various commercial vessels in the Red Sea by the Houthi militants.

In the last few weeks, the Indian Navy extended assistance to a number of merchant vessels in the Western Indian Ocean following attacks on them.