

XI JINPING CALLS FOR BUILDING 'IMPREGNABLE WALL' FOR TIBET

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China's President Xi Jinping on Saturday outlined plans to "solidify border defence" and build an "impregnable wall" to ensure the stability of Tibet.

Speaking at the Central Committee's two-day central symposium on Tibet, the Party's most important policymaking event for the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), he called for "sinicising Tibetan Buddhism" and deepening the government's "patriotic education" initiatives to combat separatism. His remarks in Beijing also underlined the need to "solidify border defence", but did not specifically mention the ongoing tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Earlier this month, China's Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi made a rare visit to inspect "border infrastructure" in Tibet, which Chinese media has linked to the recent tensions.

Mr. Xi called for "efforts to ensure national security and enduring peace and stability, steadily improve people's lives, maintain a good environment, solidify border defence and ensure frontier security," state media reported.

'Patriotic education'

Mr. Xi also highlighted the need for "maintaining the unity of the motherland and strengthening national unity as the focus" of the Party's work in Tibet, and outlined a number of initiatives to expand what the Party calls "patriotic education".

"It is necessary to strengthen the education and guidance of the masses, extensively mobilise the masses to participate in the struggle against separatism, and form an impregnable wall for maintaining stability," he said. "Ideological and political education" will be strengthened in schools at all levels, with the idea, Mr. Xi said, of "burying the seeds of loving China in the depths of the hearts of every youth". He called on officials to "actively guide Tibetan Buddhism" and "promote" its "sinicisation".

The initiatives are part of wider moves by the Communist Party to strengthen what it calls ideological discipline.

In Tibet, "anti-gang" campaigns by the authorities, ostensibly aimed at law and order, have further reduced the space for "dissenting views", a Human Rights Watch report said in May.

Under the campaign, courts in Tibet have used "gang crime" charges to sentence at least 51 Tibetans to up to nine years in prison since 2018, the report said, including for "protesting issues related to religion, environmental protection, land rights, and official corruption", all of which have been labelled as crimes related to what the party calls "splittism".

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