

CHINA ISSUES NAMES FOR 15 PLACES IN ARUNACHAL

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Arunachal Pradesh is shown on Chinese maps as “Zangnan” or “South Tibet”, and in 2017, Beijing issued six official names for places there, which was at the time seen as a retaliatory move after the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, visited the State.

Indian concern

The 15 new “standardised” names, along with their exact coordinates and a map, were released on Thursday by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, days ahead of a new border law coming into force.

India in October expressed concern over the new law, which takes effect on January 1, 2022, saying that “China’s unilateral decision to bring out a legislation which can have implications on our existing bilateral arrangements on border management... is of concern to us”.

The law was proposed in March, a year into the Line of Actual Control (LAC) crisis, and was seen as an attempt to legitimise the Chinese military’s trans-gressions in Eastern Ladakh.

It calls for various Chinese civilian and military agencies to take steps to “safeguard” Chinese territory, and has coincided with stepped-up plans by China to bolster its control along disputed areas, including by constructing “frontier” villages and civilian settlements.

Using standardised maps across different levels of government is part of the broader effort. The 15 places named on Thursday included eight residential areas, four mountains, two rivers and one mountain pass, the Communist Party-run *Global Times* reported.

The paper quoted Zhang Yongpan, an expert on border issues at the influential Chinese Academy of Social Sciences as saying that “since the Zangnan area has been illegally occupied by India, the Indian government has also established some illegal names in the area.”

The eight towns on the list were Sengkezhong and Daglungzhong in Cona county of Shannan prefecture, Mani’gang, Duding and Migpain in Medog county of Nyingchi, Goling, Damba in Zayu county of Nyingchi, and Mejag in Lhunze county of Shannan; the mountains were Wamo Ri, Deu Ri, Lhunzhub Ri and Kumingxingze Feng; the two rivers were Xenyogmo He and Dulain He, and the mountain pass on the list was Se La.

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