

# 'NEXT DALAI LAMA MUST BE CHOSEN WITHIN CHINA'

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## Dalai Lama

The successor of the Dalai Lama has to be decided within China and any interference by India will impact bilateral ties, Chinese authorities have said.

In first clear assertion on the sensitive issue, Chinese officials and experts said the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must be approved by the Chinese government and the selection should take place within the country based on a more than 200 year-old historical process.

"The reincarnation of Dalai Lama is a historical, religious and political issue. There are established historical institutions and formalities for the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama," Wang Neng Sheng, an official in the rank of Vice-Minister in Tibet, told a group of Indian journalists in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama is 84 years old now and the issue of his successor has gained prominence in the last couple of years in the wake of his health issues.

"The Dalai Lama's reincarnation is not decided by his personal wish or by some group of people living in other countries," he added.

## 'Draw of lots'

Mr. Wang, the Director General at the government of Tibet Autonomous Region, said the current Dalai Lama was recognised by Beijing and his successor must be found through the "draw of lots in golden urn process" within China.

Echoing Mr. Wang's views, Zha Luo, director at Beijing-based China Tibetology Research Centre, a government-run influential think tank, said any refusal by India to recognise the next Dalai Lama to be chosen within China will impact bilateral ties.

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