🕈 🕅 🕯 🎎 CHINA DAILY Thursday, August 21, 2025 | 3

XIZANG AUTONOMOUS REGION

Xi's enduring bond with Xizang mirrors region's dramatic transformation

Over decades, the President has guided policy development to bring about economic vitality and improve livelihoods

Nestled in the mountains of Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, a small village recently received a special letter from Beijing - thousands of kilometers away - reigniting villager Dawa Gyaltsen's cherished memories from four years prior.

"Learning that the village has undergone new changes in recent years and villagers' incomes have increased, I feel

happy for you," the letter read.

Dated June 2025, the message came as a reply from the President Xi Jinping. It arrived in a year of special significance: the 60th anniversary of the founding of Xizang autonomous region.

For Dawa Gyaltsen, the letter was both a personal treasure and a source of motivation. "In recent years, we have vigorously developed the 'peach blossom economy'. Our roads are wider, and our lives are richer. We'd be honored if President Xi could revisit us and see these changes" he said.

His mind drifted back to 2021, when Xi, during an inspection tour of Xizang, visited his home in Galai village - examining the grains bag by bag, sampling traditional Tibetan cheese, and engaging in a

heartfelt conversation. Galai, a picturesque village in Nyingchi, boasts over 1,000 peach trees, some dating back more than six centuries. Yet, it was only in recent years that rural tourism blossomed into a pillar industry, transforming local livelihoods.

"In the past, wild peach trees were felled for firewood. Today, we've come to realize that 'lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets," Penpa, the village's Party chief, told Xi.

Peach blossoms, long revered in Chinese culture as emblems of pastoral beauty, now draw flocks of visitors to Galai each spring for its vibrant festival, aided by the convenience of a nearby highway. This "peach blossom economy" has become a reliable source of prosperity for the villagers.

With pride, Dawa Gyaltsen recounted his family's diversified income streams from transportation services and construction equipment to dividends from Peach Blossom Valley tourism.

"That adds up to several hundred thousand yuan - a happy family indeed," Xi said with a smile.

Xi's connection with Xizang stretches back decades. In 1998, as Fujian province's deputy Party chief, he first set foot in the region while overseeing developmental support initiatives. The poor and dangerous road conditions left Xi with a deep impression. "At a narrow section, we had to get off to move two logs to get through. Those officials heading to Medog had to arrive there by horse," he later recalled.

Medog, also in Nyingchi, cradled deep in the Himalayas, was once China's only county without highway access. Xi kept a close watch on its progress. In March 2013, during his first participation in the annual session of the national legislature after taking office as general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, Xi joined lawmakers from Xizang in a deliberation session.

He asked Padma Chodron, a lawmaker hailing from Medog, whether the highway had opened.

When I told him it would open soon, he nodded with a smile," Padma Chodron recounted.

That same year, the 117-kilometer Medog Highway finally ended the county's isolation, revolutionizing travel, education, and healthcare access. Under Xi's leadership, Xizang has witnessed sweeping advancements in policy, infrastructure and economic vitality.

From 2012 to 2024, the region's road network nearly doubled to 120,000 kilometers, linking every town and village. Nine pillar industries — spanning clean energy, cultural tourism, and ecological development — now flourish, propelling the regional GDP to 276.5 billion yuan (\$38.7 billion) in 2024, a staggering 155-fold increase from that of 1965. By 2024, the urban and rural per capita disposable income were 121 times and 199 times the 1965 level, respectively.

In Xizang, as across China, all rural residents have been lifted out of extreme poverty. Daily life has become markedly more prosperous and modern — for example, all townships and 70 percent of villages now have access to 5G networks.

"From carrying water in buckets to turning on taps, from oil lamps to electric lights, and from dirt paths to paved roads our farmers and herders now live vastly better lives," Xi observed.







Above: President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, arrives in Lhasa, capital of the Xizang autonomous region, on Wednesday to attend activities connected with the region's 60th founding anniversary, XINHUA

Middle: President Xi Jinping waves at a cheering crowd of local residents in Lhasa on Wednesday. XINHUA

Left: Two women pose before a flower arrangement celebrating the 60th founding anniversary of the Xizang autonomous region at the Jokhang Temple Square in Lhasa on Tuesday. LI LIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Progress: Ecological conservation and people's livelihood on top of agenda

He said that major projects such as the hydropower project in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River and the Sichuan-Xizang Railway should be advanced in an orderly and effective manner with vigorous efforts.

To safeguard the "roof of the world" and "Asia's water tower", Xi called for coordinated efforts to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, expand green development and pursue economic growth, while strengthening ecological conservation.

Over the past six decades, Xizang has progressed from subsistence to well-being, and onward to a prosperous new life. The per capita disposable income of urban residents has increased 122-fold, while that of rural residents has risen 200-fold.

To enhance the sense of fulfillment, happiness and security among people of all ethnic groups in the region, Xi said it is important to consolidate and expand the achievements in poverty alleviation, and earnestly address people's livelihood needs in employ ment, education, healthcare, social security, elderly care and child care.

He also called for post-disaster reconstruction to be continued in Dingri county, which was struck by a magnitude 6.8 earthquake in early January.

Noting that upholding the Party's leadership is crucial for work related to Xizang, Xi said that officials and people of all ethnic groups should follow the Party and foster a healthy political atmosphere of integrity within

On Wednesday afternoon, Xi met with representatives from all ethnic groups and all walks of life in the plateau region, urging concerted efforts to write a splendid chapter of Chinese modernization in Xizang.

He also held separate meetings with representatives of cadres who had come to work in Xizang from other parts of the country, local officials at various levels and from various departments, judicial workers and police officers, as well as patriotic members of religious circles, among others.

Xi also met with military officers ranked colonel and above, along with representatives of grassroots role models and civilian personnel from troops stationed in Lhasa. He conveyed his greetings to all military personnel in Xizang on behalf of the CPC Central Committee and the CMC

On Wednesday evening, Xi, together with officials and people of all ethnic groups in the region, watched performances at a gala staged to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Xizang autonomous region.

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