

# The Tibet Policy and Support Act of USA

December 26, 2020

In news

Recently, the US Senate passed the Tibet Policy and Support Act(TSPA) of the USA

## Key provisions of the act

- TSPA makes it US policy to oppose attempts by Beijing to install its own Dalai Lama in a manner inconsistent with Tibetan Buddhism in which the succession or identification of Tibetan Buddhist lamas, including the Dalai Lama, should occur without interference.
- The proposed TSPA is an amended version of the Tibet Policy Act of 2002, which came into existence during the Bush Administration (though he opposed it)
- The Act also makes it US policy to hold senior Chinese officials “responsible for, complicit in, or have directly or indirectly engaged in the identification or installation of a candidate chosen by China as the future 15th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism” to have committed “a gross violation of internationally recognized human rights”, attracting sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.
  - The Act, named after a Russian tax lawyer who died after being imprisoned while investigating Russian tax officials for fraud, authorises US officials to impose travel bans globally.
- It also calls for the creation of a new US consulate in Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region
- The legislation makes reference to the Chinese government’s ‘Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas’ in 2007

- It also refers to China's installation of a 6-year-old boy in 1995 as the 11th Panchen Lama, and to statements by the present Dalai Lama explaining the traditions to be followed in the selection of a Dalai Lama, and that the authority to recognise the reincarnation of a Dalai Lama lies with him and his officials
- It recognises the Central Tibetan Administration, whose Prime Minister Lobsang Sangay takes credit for ensuring that the Senate took up the legislation for vote.
- It seeks to introduce key provisions aimed at protecting the environment and water resources on the Tibetan Plateau.
- The TPSA recognizes the importance of traditional Tibetan grassland stewardship in mitigating the negative effects of climate change in the region as opposed to the Chinese government's forced resettlement of the nomads from grasslands.
- In addition, it calls for greater international cooperation to monitor the environment on the Tibetan plateau.

### Present Dalai Lama

- The Dalai Lamas, who have been spiritual leaders of the Tibetan people since the 17th century, come from the Gelug school.
- The incumbent and the 14th Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India ever since his 1959 escape from Tibet, which had been occupied by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1950-51.
- He has been leading the movement for "genuine autonomy" for Tibet and the Tibetans.

### China's response to TPSA

It said that TPSA severely breached international law and basic norms governing international relations, interfered in China's internal affairs, and sent a wrong message to 'Tibet

independence' forces.

After the passage of the Bill through the Senate, China said it “resolutely opposes” the “adoption of Bills containing such ill contents on China. Issues related to Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong... are China’s internal affairs that allow no foreign interference”.

### Current US-China relations

- The relations between USA and China have become much more difficult over the last two decades, particularly worsening in the Trump Administration, and more so in 2020 over matters ranging from the pandemic to trade tariffs, and its cross-world coalition-building against Chinese superpower ambitions.
- Recently, the Holding Foreign Companies Accounting Act, targeting Chinese investments in the US, was signed into law . The law symbolizes the US counteract to Chinese economic domination.
- The US president also signed Hong Kong Autonomy Act which further spoils the relations between the two countries
- President Trump is not expected to take a Bush-like view on the TSPA, which introduces stronger provisions on Tibet, plus teeth in the form of a threat of sanctions, including travel bans on Chinese officials.