

trade

Serenity comes when you trade expectations for acceptance.

~ Gautama Buddha



Edit

Celebrating Dalai Lama

s His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama turned 90, the world pauses to honour not just a spiritual leader, but a global symbol of peace, resilience, and humanity. From a toddler named Lhamo Dhondup in a remote Tibetan village who once declared, "I am going to Lhasa," to becoming one of the most recognisable and revered figures in the world, the Dalai Lama's journey has been extraordinary in every sense. Discovered by monks as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama through ancient spiritual tests, the young boy was taken from Taktser to Lhasa to assume the role of the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet. By the age of 15, Tenzin Gyatso had become the head of a nation on the brink of geopolitical upheaval, as China asserted control over Tibet. Forced into exile in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule, the Dalai Lama began a new chapter in India, where he was granted asylum and established the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamshala. Nine decades on, his influence has only grown. With his infectious smile, gentle humour, and unwavering faith in non-violence, the Dalai Lama has emerged as a moral compass in a world increasingly divided by politics, greed, and prejudice. He has kept alive the spirit of Tibetan Buddhism, while also modernising its message to resonate with contemporary global challenges. Dalai Lama is more than a religious figure. A Nobel Peace Prize laureate, he has championed democracy, women's rights, LGBTQ rights, and environmental protection. His voice has echoed for the persecuted, and his advocacy of religious harmony and universal responsibility has influenced thinkers and policymakers alike. On the auspicious occasion of the 90th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we are offered a unique moment to reflect on a life dedicated to compassion, peace, and the unyielding quest for understanding. This occasion is not merely a celebration of years lived but a reaffirmation of the timeless values that he has championed across continents and cultures. Throughout his life, the Dalai Lama has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to promoting nonviolence and dialogue, principles that remain deeply relevant today. His teachings encourage us to look beyond superficial differences and to recognize our shared humanity. In turbulent times marked by political strife and social unrest, his message serves as a beacon of hope, inviting us to embrace compassion as the foundation for resolving even the most intractable issues. In the digital age, where divisive narratives often dominate public discourse, the Dalai Lama's gentle yet resolute voice cuts through the noise. His insistence on universal human values challenges us to reimagine what it means to live in community, urging us to foster dialogue over discord and cooperation over confrontation. For many, his birthday is a call to action—a reminder to align our personal conduct with the principles of truth, compassion, and humility that he embodies. On this momentous occasion, we at The Earth News join millions of others in paying tribute to a man whose 90 years of life have left an indelible imprint on the world. The Dalai Lama's enduring message of compassion and peaceful coexistence will continue to inspire generations, urging us all to strive for a future defined not by fear and division, but by hope, unity, and enduring love.

DeepSeek-China's Vision Of World Perception

■ MACIEJ GACA

Then DeepSeek-R1 debuted at a conference in Hangzhou this February, the atmosphere was electrifying and unsettling. There were loud cries of delight at possibilities it opened for programmers and companies as well as nervousness on stock exchange listing Western technology companies. There were quiet sighs too from experts fearing a new information weapon might be hiding under guise of "democratisation." However, history teaches us that technology can just as easily facilitate concentration of power as it can

DeepSeek-R1 in China didn't have to reach for tanks or prisons to monopolise the discussion. Official messages were primarily embedded in it during the learning process. As a result, instead of confronting different viewpoints, the model itself promotes a single, state-owned version of history, and users receive a ready-made, contradiction-free story as an unquestionable fact. This is a more subtle process than traditional censorship and more engaging, because the user himself willingly reaches for content that the model selects according to political guidelines dictated to him.

DeepSeek-R1 has been met with great enthusiasm on Chinese social media. On the largest sites, Zhihu and Weibo, computer science students and novice programmers enthusiastically described the model's lightning-fast responses, its effectiveness in solving complex algorithmic tasks, and the impressive image quality it created, as evidenced by numerous entries in the column series "□o□1□□DeepSeek" ('from o to 1 we get to know DeepSeek' - a series of short articles on Zhihu presenting the model's functions and capabilities). However, over time, the technological experiment has become a sociological observation: users noticed that when asked about political events, R1 consistently avoided references to Tiananmen Square protests or critical analyses of Beijing, Taiwan and Xinjiang issues, it reproduced only official, party narratives.

The breakthrough was brought by safety reports, a study published on arXiv "Safety Evaluation of DeepSeek Models in Chinese Contexts", showing the model's 100% effectiveness in simulated disinformation attacks and near complete rejection of content that deviated from the state line. Posts on internal educational forums instructed how to "bypass" DeepSeek's self-censorship, but the model itself instantly blocked accounts that distributed links to independent sources. This change in mood – from admiration for the architecture and computing power, to a bitter conclusion about the ideological penetration of the neural network's weights (numbers the model changes during training to better "understand" and favour certain information) - reveals that young Chinese increasingly see Deep-Seek's "openness" not as a true democratisation of technology, but a sophisticated mechanism for maintaining a single, official vision of the world.

Ultimately, what's at stake is not just technical supremacy, but the foundation of our shared cognitive space. If every powerful actor – Beijing, Washington, Brussels – introduces its own "objective" AI-generated versions of history, younger generations will find themselves at crossroads of alternative "truths" isolated in hermetic information bubbles. Without international mechanisms

of mutual accountability, transparent audits of training data, and open procedures for verifying algorithms, even the most reliable open-source projects can become vehicles for narrative tyranny. And then we are one step away from turning a historical dispute into an armed conflict and from completely eroding trust in the very con-

cept of information.

OpenAI-ish ChatGPT, Google Bard and Meta LLaMA draw their data from a wide range of sources--international agencies such as CNN, AFP and Al-Jazeera, through academic repositories in languages, to archives of rarely cited periodicals and informal discussion forums. Only after an initial training, during which the model "swallows" entire web pages, does the arduous work of "fine-tuning" begin -- successive rounds of human evaluation, analysis of deviations from neutrality and attempts to restore balance. Of course, it was not possible to eliminate all extremes. Researchers from Munich and Copenhagen have shown that ChatGPT sometimes tilts towards pro-ecological and left-libertarian narratives, while Bing Chat is slightly more favourable to tech industry. Nevertheless, each is regularly audited, by Swedish FOI, Norwegian NUPI and French Fondation pour l'Innovation Politique, which describe with surgical precision where the training data comes from and what rules govern how people evaluate their answers. Thanks to this, reports can be looked at by both a defender of free speech and an activist fighting discrimination and each will find arguments to accuse the model of overrepresenting some sources or underrepresenting minority voices.

In contrast to openness of Western solutions, DeepSeek-R1 operates "in secret" in educational chatbots or government apps in Asia and Europe, but the effect is more perfidious: instead of bypassing censorship, the model reinforces it, surrounding the user with a tight record of a uniform narrative. These are not ordinary recommendation algorithms but airtight information bubbles, in which every story, news item, piece of advice must fit the official line. Eli Pariser, an American internet activist and author of The Filter Bubble, warned a decade ago that algorithms that personalise content can cut us off from opposing views. Today, when technol-

ogy tempts us with appearance of objectivity, isolation is even more dangerous. Young internet users, fed an endless stream of TikTok or WeChat, rarely verify information. One-click answers replace critical questions, and the bubble becomes their entire world. Prospect Foundation in a study "Narrative-Building Trumps Island-Building for Beijing in Sandy Cay" warns competition for dominant AI models threatens to spark a real "narrative war." Similar conclusions are by a report by Taiwan Foundation for Democracy on disinformation during 2024 presidential election - analysts have shown that algorithms driven by conflicting state data sets from China, US, and Europe are creating isolated "information islands" where young recipients become accustomed to competing versions of reality and are less likely to verify them.

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Analysts emphasise while local regulations may tighten requirements for one platform or service, they won't stop phenomenon of information fragmentation if each government implements its own AI model. French Cybersecurity Agency (ANSSI), in White Paper on AI published in 2023, demands transparency of training data origin, arguing only a full list of sources allows users to understand what materials shape the model's operation. Swedish SÄPO insists that multi-party audits by independent expert teams are necessary, which as thorough analysis of model's code and behavior, especially in sensitive questions, can reveal hidden biases or mechanisms filtering truth.

Both institutions also point to educating young generation in critical reception of content generated by AI. It's worth introducing classes devoted to "algorithmic texts" at school, i.e. learning to understand how models formulate their answers and compare them with independent information sources. Without such preparation, society will be condemned to accept competing and isolated narratives as indisputable facts. Experience shows every technological revolution promotes concentration of power. Deep-Seek-R1, managed and paid for in Beijing's bureaucratic structures, is today becoming a more subtle tool of centralisation than traditional network censorship or media access blockades. When the model independently selects/edits his-

torical narratives using neural network weights, it builds a performative story of the state, which over time is considered a "natural" reality. This is a seemingly bloodless cascade -- no one calls 'Guards' when the algorithm enters subsequent history versions into the code, and society begins to live according to these predefined patterns.

Ultimately, what's at stake is no longer the fight for technological supremacy, but the very foundation of our collective understanding of reality - the space in which we establish what we consider to be fact. Without clearly defined rules of accountability, mandatory audits, and transparent verification criteria, even the most "open" source models can be used to impose their own versions of the world. As Yuval warns Noah Harari (cf. 21 Lessons for the 21st Century, 2018), if we do not build mechanisms to protect against fragmentation of truth into atoms, we'll find ourselves in a world where conflicting narratives, each equally convincing, compete like feuding tribes, undermining the very meaning of the debate.

In turn, Yanis Varoufakis (The Other Now, 2020), reminds us that in this chaos of alternative "truths", international solidarity is weakening. Instead of facing global challenges together, we are sinking deeper and deeper into isolated information bubbles. Klaus Schwab and his World Economic Forum preach the slogan of "shared responsibility" for technological advancement, but it's hard not to see how often this serves Beijing's centralist aspirations. Under inclusiveness banner, WEF becomes a platform where authoritarian regimes, including China's, can present their digital infrastructure as "innovation for common good" while simultaneously reinforcing systems of mass surveillance.

If we want to avoid such a scenario, empty slogans about openness will not suffice. We need real international agreements that will enforce standards regarding the origin of data, model training processes and their controlled exploitation - as well as national laws that impose tough legal consequences for AI activity.

Only in this way will technology cease to be a tool of interests and become an infrastructure on which a democratic society can be built, not a war of narratives. ---INFA

OIL CARTEL SHEDDING ITS PRICE HAWK ROLE IN FAVOUR OF MARKET-DRIVEN STRATEGIES

K RAVEENDRAN

PEC+ appears to be navigating one of its most intricate balancing acts in recent years as it prepares to announce a fourth consecutive production hike. The move, at first glance, seems at odds with its long-standing goal of stabilizing and supporting oil prices. The geopolitical volatility roiling markets-ranging from disruptions in the Red Sea to unpredictable output from sanctioned states would normally prompt a more conservative stance. Yet, the group's decision to incrementally boost supply instead signals a strategic recalibration of its objectives, one that prioritises long-term relevance and market share preservation over short-term price spikes. The strategy reveals OPEC+'s growing understanding that clinging too tightly to price floors may risk ceding ground to new players and alternative energy narratives.

The decision to continue with supply increases, even amid international uncertainty and soft patches in global demand, is not without consequence. Traditionally, OPEC+ acted as a price stabiliser, often tightening supply during downturns or uncertainties. That pattern has clearly shifted. These recent production hikes follow a trend of gradual unwinding of previous cuts—a process that began when markets started showing signs of resilience post-COVID recovery. But rather than a straightforward return to the old normal, this current path reflects a deeper pivot in OPEC+'s strategy. It is no longer merely a cartel that manipulates prices through output limitations. Instead, it is evolving into a flexible, quasi-commercial body that gauges the elasticity of demand, geopolitical sensitivities, and future-facing considerations such as the green transition.

The motivation behind this shift is multi-pronged. On one hand, the group is acutely aware of the growing pressure from both within and outside its ranks to preserve, if not expand, market share. The rise of non-OPEC producers, particularly in North and South America, has diluted the cartel's leverage. The United States, now firmly entrenched as the world's top oil producer, presents a unique challenge with its market-responsive shale sector. Every time OPEC+ cuts production to support prices, it inadvertently opens the door for U.S. producers to capture lost volumes. That cycle has played out multiple times since the shale boom began, and the group seems determined not to repeat the mistake of allowing rivals to build dominance during artificial supply constraints. As a result, OPEC+ is trying to maintain enough presence in the physical oil market to remain the fulcrum of pricing power, even if that means tolerating lower price ceilings in the near term.

This careful threading of the needle—between preventing a supply glut and protecting global influence—explains why the group is favouring a phased approach to output adjustments. The rhetoric accompanying each production increase has been measured, always framed as a response to improving demand forecasts or as part of a managed return to pre-cut levels. That language is deliberate. OPEC+ is attempting to preserve its image as a stabilising force while subtly shifting the narrative to one of proactive, data-driven adaptability. By smoothing out

reductions and emphasizing gradual rampups, the group avoids the sudden jolts that would spook markets and gives itself the option to tighten again quickly if macroeconomic or political variables shift.

Indeed, the geopolitical context remains fluid, which makes OPEC+'s strategy even more complex. Conflicts in Eastern Europe, disruptions in Middle Eastern maritime routes, and the unpredictable effects of sanctions on Russia, Iran, and Venezuela all affect supply dynamics in ways that are difficult to model. In such an environment, the capacity to respond with speed and nuance becomes more valuable than any rigid commitment to high prices. Flexibility, not fixity, is the currency of credibility. The group's messaging has increasingly stressed this point—highlighting its ability to reconvene and adjust quotas rapidly if demand falters or if global inventories build to uncomfort-

However, not all members of the alliance are equally positioned to navigate this new course. While the larger producers such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Russia can afford to be patient or absorb temporary revenue hits, smaller economies dependent on oil income may find this tolerance difficult. For these nations, every barrel withheld in the name of market discipline is a budget deficit waiting to happen. Internal cohesion, always a challenge for OPEC, becomes harder to maintain when national imperatives diverge. The current approach of gradual production normalization helps in this regard-it gives smaller producers room to breathe, generate revenue, and remain en-

gaged with the group's broader strategy.

At the same time, there is a long-term

calculus at work here that extends beyond immediate economics. OPEC+ is keenly aware of the growing momentum behind the global energy transition. With pledges toward net zero becoming more mainstream and investment flows increasingly favouring renewables, the window for fossil fuel dominance is narrowing. In that context, the group has to weigh whether continuing to play the role of price hawk is sustainable or desirable. Artificially inflated prices could accelerate the shift to electric vehicles, alternative fuels, and efficiency technologies. Market share, rather than price supremacy, may be the key to relevance in a world where peak oil demand is no longer a theoretical possibility but a plausible outcome within the next decade or two. By securing as much of the current demand base as possible while the oil age still holds sway, OPEC+ is attempting to future-proof its economic and political leverage.

Still, this strategy is not without risks. The recent hikes, although measured, have tested the patience of some market players. Price dips following announcements have occasionally sparked concerns that the group might be overplaying its hand.

If demand projections fall short or if a global slowdown materialises, OPEC+ could find itself facing a rapid and painful reversal. Moreover, each production increase must be weighed against the fragility of investor sentiment.

Oil markets are notoriously reactive, and sentiment can sour quickly, dragging down prices in ways that fundamentals alone cannot explain. This underscores the tightrope metaphor—every move must be carefully calibrated, with little room for error.

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