

# China Will Disrupt Elections In India

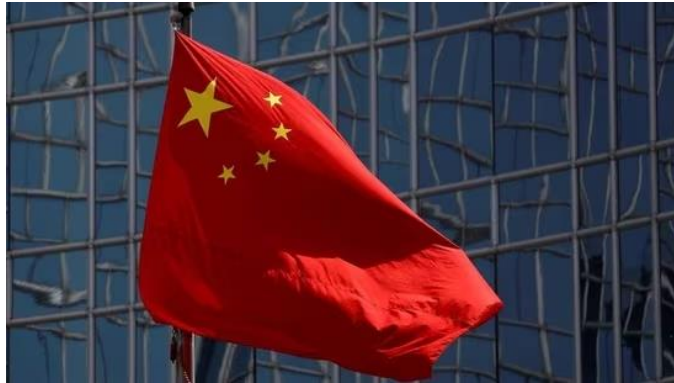
## Why In News

- China will use **artificial intelligence (AI)** to disrupt elections in India, United States, and South Korea this year, according to a **warning by Microsoft**.
- The year is lined up with key elections. While a fierce rematch between **Joe Biden and Donald Trump** is underway in the US presidential elections, India is set to conduct the world's largest democratic exercise between April and June. The year has already seen key elections in Taiwan and Pakistan. South Korea too is set to have its parliamentary elections on April 10.



## What Does Report Says

- For years, **China along with countries** like North Korea, Russia, and Iran has been accused of running **influence operations in the US** and other countries to influence voter's behaviour. The influence operations have often involved disinformation campaigns.
- In its warning, **Microsoft said that China has already conducted** a dry run of its AI-driven election disruption in the Taiwanese presidential election in January of this year. **William Lai** of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a candidate deeply resented by the Chinese government, won the election.
- China will increase the usage of **AI-driven audio and video content** mainly memes to disrupt the election by influencing voters.



- Microsoft’s Threat Intelligence Team said that China will at a minimum create and distribute **AI-generated content** that “benefits their positions in these high-profile elections”.
- The report said that the impact of **AI-generated content** was minor at the moment but that could change.



## CHINESE APT ATTACK TRANSFORMATION

Detections for Evolving China-  
Backed State-Sponsored Attacks

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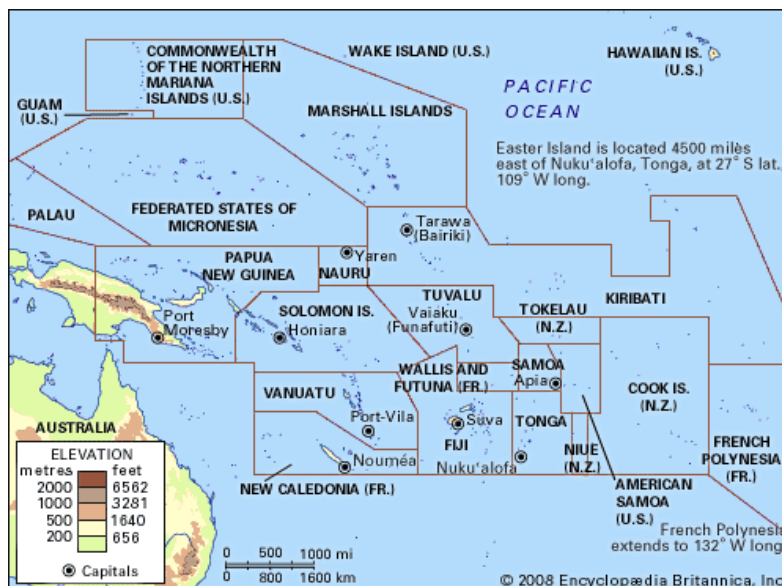
- The report added, “**While the impact of such content** in swaying audiences remains low, China’s increasing experimentation in augmenting memes, videos and audio will continue – and may prove effective down the line.”
- Microsoft further said that **Chinese state-backed cyber groups** are expected to be joined by North Korea in these operations.



- The report said that a **Beijing-backed group called Storm 1376** was very active in January's Taiwanese presidential election and pushed a series of AI-generated memes about William Lai, the pro-independence candidate abhorred by Beijing who won the election. These memes spread false accusations against Lai of embezzlement of government funds.



- China has been running influence operations in countries like the US and Canada for years. These operations are primarily centred around trying to prevent candidates Beijing **perceives as anti-China** from winning and peddling a favourable view of China among the target audience. At times, negative perceptions about adversaries like the US have also been fuelled through such operations.



- In December 2023, an **intelligence assessment released by the US government** stated that China tried to shape the outcome of specific contests in the 2022 midterm elections, reported NBC News.

- Microsoft claimed that Chinese cyber actors broadly **selected three target areas over the last seven months**: one set of Chinese actors extensively targeted entities across the **South Pacific Islands**, and a second set of Chinese activity continued a streak of cyberattacks against regional adversaries in the **South China Sea region**. A third set of Chinese actors compromised the **US defence industrial base**, the company said.
- China-based threat actors continued to target entities related to China's **economic and military interests** in and around the **South China Sea** and compromised government and telecommunications entities in the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, as per Microsoft.

### ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS



- A Chinese cyber actor called **Flax Typhoon** also targeted entities related to US-Philippines military exercises and has since targeted entities in Philippines, Hong Kong, India, and the United States in the early fall and winter of 2023, Microsoft said.



- Chinese influence campaigns continued to refine **AI-generated or AI-enhanced content**. The influence actors behind these campaigns have shown a willingness to both amplify AI-generated media that benefits their strategic narratives, as well as create their own video, memes, and audio content,” Microsoft said.