

Bhutan accuses China of intrusion

Kuensel) Representatives at Bhutan's National Assembly in Thimpu have accused China of encroaching upon its territory and said that its nationals had made repeated incursions into the Himalayan kingdom to gather cordyceps sinensis, commonly called caterpillar fungus. The State-run newspaper Kuensel, reports that the representative of Bhutan's Haa province said: *"The Chinese government did not adhere to the 1998 understanding signed between Bhutan and China by constructing several roads in our territory"*. Another representative told the assembly that Tibetans entered Bhutan during the harvesting season for cordyceps, the highly valued medicinal fungal species widely used in traditional Chinese and Tibetan medicine. Allegations were made that Tibetans cross the unguarded borders in groups and decamp with large stocks of cordyceps. Bhutan's secretary for international boundaries, Dasho Pema Wangchuk, told the assembly that Thimphu had formally lodged a protest with China in July about the road constructions. *"The next round of border meeting would be held in Beijing and that would be followed by a ministerial level meeting later where all these issues would be followed up"*, Mr Wangchuk said.

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