

Dalai Lama backs Olympics, more freedom

by UPI

DHARAMSHALA, India - The Dalai Lama, in exile in India, says let the Olympic Games begin, despite questions about human rights in China. It had been thought by some that the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader would oppose the Summer Olympics in Beijing because of China's sway over Tibet and reported human rights abuses in the communist country. However, in a statement issued Monday on the International Campaign for Tibet's Web site, the Dalai Lama expressed his desire to see the athletic competition take place, while advocating for greater freedoms. "Since such international sporting events, and especially the Olympics, uphold the principles of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, equality and friendship, China should prove herself a good host by providing these freedoms," he said, while reminding the international community it is important to work toward positive changes in China after the competition as well. Speaking from exile in India, he said several rounds of talks his envoys have held with Chinese leaders, while clearing some Chinese doubts, have produced "no concrete result at all" on fundamental issues. "These are major obstacles the Chinese government deliberately puts in the way of its policy of unifying nationalities which discriminate between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples," said the Dalai Lama, whose comments came on the 49th anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising.

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