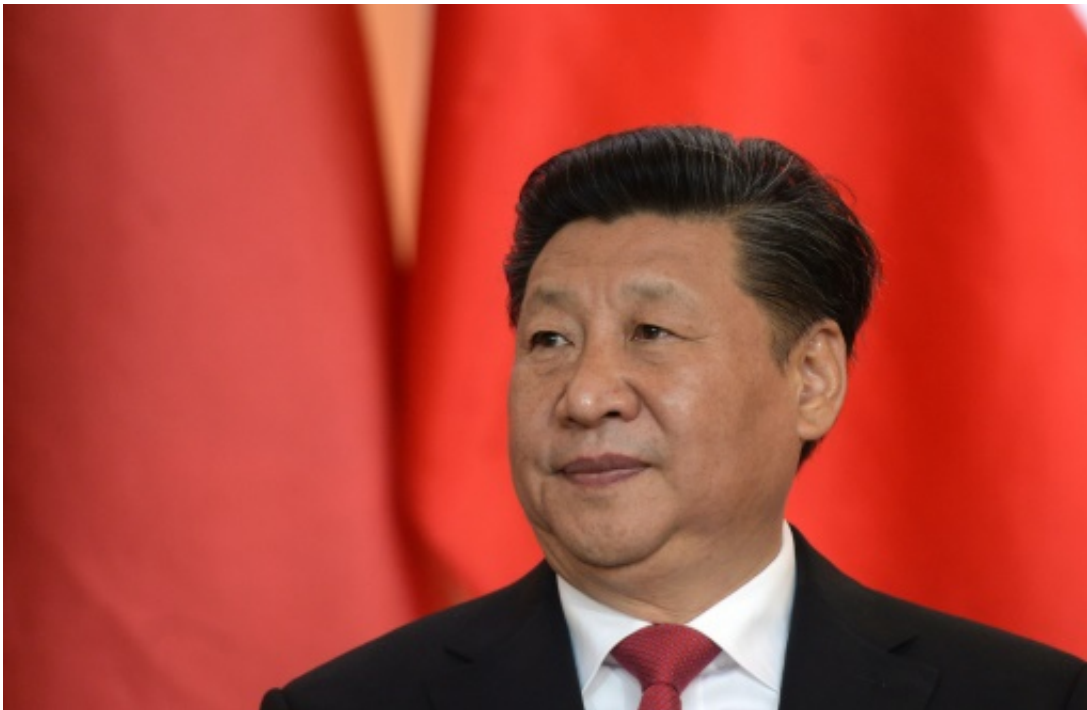


China censors 'crush talk of beetle named after President Xi'

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Chinese national Cheng-Bin Wang told AFP that he greatly admired President Xi's actions in China, and saw the newfound beetle as a symbol of the Communist chief's achievements

Chinese censors have stepped in to crush underfoot talk of a newfound beetle species named after President Xi Jinping, reports said Tuesday—to the dismay of its loyal discoverer.

The *Rhyzodiastes* (*Temoana*) *xii* was identified in China's southern

island province of Hainan by Cheng-Bin Wang, a Chinese national affiliated with the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague.

In peer-reviewed animal taxonomy journal *Zootaxa* he declared: "The specific epithet is dedicated to Dr Xi Jin-Ping, the President of the People's Republic of China, for his leadership making our motherland stronger and stronger."

His eight-page paper, published last month, described his find in minute detail, including the "lustrous" sheen of its body and its "genital segment... with handle moderately long and narrowly rounded at tip".

Wang told AFP that he greatly admired Xi's actions in China, and saw the beetle as a symbol of the Communist chief's achievements.

"The *Rhyzodiastes* (Temoana) is very rare—you might not encounter a single one even after 10 field collection sessions—and it also eats rotten wood for food," he said in an email.

"So it's a metaphor for Xi Jinping, a rare person you only encounter once a century, and specifically his controls on corruption (eating rot), which will allow Chinese corruption to gradually disappear," he explained.

But Chinese censors have ordered the internet wiped clean of references to Wang's bug, the China Digital Times said.

The US-based website, which tracks censorship in China, cited authorities telling media: "All websites find and delete the article 'Entomologists Report: Scholars Use 'Daddy Xi' to Name a New Type of Beetle' and related information."

"Daddy Xi", or "Xi Dada", is an avuncular nickname for the [president](#) that was once pushed in official propaganda but has since been

downplayed.

A search for the beetle's Chinese name on China's Twitter-like Sina Weibo social media platform Tuesday yielded only a message stating that no search results could be shown due to "relevant laws and policies".

The "xii" beetle is not the first new species to be named after a head of state. A trapdoor spider discovered in 2012 was named *Aptostichus barackobamai* after US President Barack Obama, while a sea slug found in 1999 was named the *Mandelia mirocornata* for former South African president Nelson Mandela.

Wang was distraught at the censorship, saying: "Hello! Beloved President Xi! This is a rare beetle! The name of the species will exist forever! A tremendous honour!"

His gesture had been "deliberately vilified", he told AFP, calling online mockery that his beetle was a stinkbug "nonsense" propagated by people with "no culture".

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