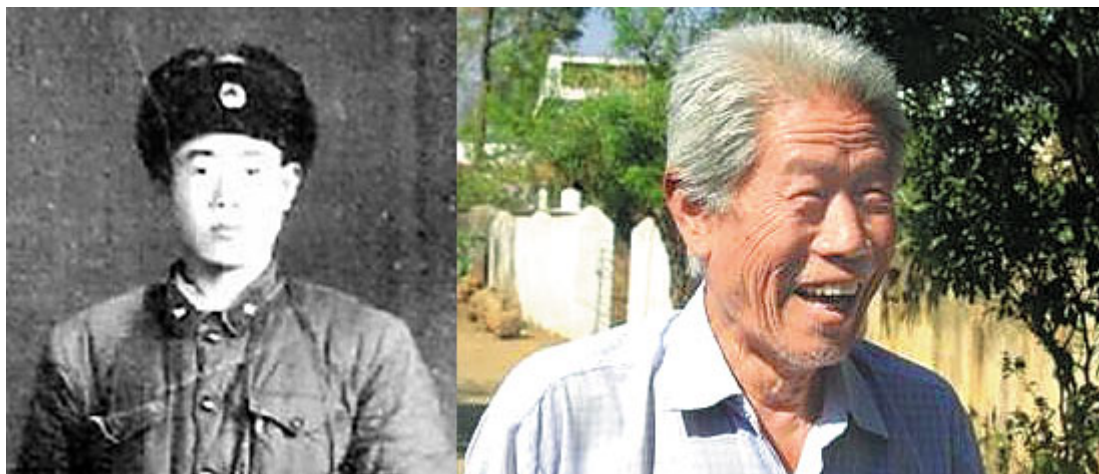


## Veteran held in India for 54 years allowed to return



Wang Qi in the early 1960s and today. [Photo/China Daily]

After being held in India for 54 years, Chinese veteran Wang Qi was ready to make his long-awaited trip back home on Saturday.

According to the Chinese embassy in India, 77-year-old Wang had left his home in central India's Madhya Pradesh and arrived in New Delhi on Friday afternoon.

He was eager to return to hometown in Shaanxi province and would start the journey as early as Saturday, said the embassy.

In 1963, Wang, a Chinese army surveyor, got lost, crossed the border and was captured by Indian authorities. He was moved from one jail to another for nearly seven years

When he was finally released in 1969, police escorted him to the remote village of Tirodi in Madhya Pradesh and told him to start a life there. He married a local woman, and they had three children and grandchildren.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said on Monday that China had been "pushing India" to complete procedures to return the veteran. In 2013, the Chinese embassy in India issued him a 10-year Chinese passport and a living allowance every year since then, Lu said.

Vikas Swarup, the Indian External Affairs Ministry's spokesman, said on Thursday, "The ministry is helping Wang and his family members—including his son Vishnu Wang, daughter Anita Wankhede, daughter-in-law Neha Wang and grandson Khanak Wang—to visit China to meet his extended family."

"We are working with the Chinese embassy in Delhi and the Indian embassy in Beijing to ensure that all formalities are completed and arrangements are in place," he said.

A China Central Television report on Friday said that Wang is eager to taste

noodles, a local specialty in Shaanxi, after arriving home.

Wang's plight was highlighted last month in a special report by the BBC.

On Feb 4, Luo Zhaohui, China's ambassador to India, spoke by telephone with Wang and expressed sympathy over his suffering over the years. Yan Xiaoce, a counselor at the Chinese embassy in India, visited Wang's village on the same day, according to the embassy.

Liu Shurong, another Chinese veteran, underwent the same plight as Wang and lives in the same village. But Liu said he had no intention to return to China because he no longer has family there, the embassy said.