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CHINA

PLA Western Theatre Command Air Force Unit Conducted Training

In early October, an Air Force Battalion from Western Theatre Command (WTC) Air Force organised mobile training that involved numerous vehicles at an altitude of 5000 meters on the Tibetan Plateau. The instructor leading the battalion during the training was a representative of the Communist Party of China (CPC). During the mobilisation training, the battalion organised combat exercise at an unidentified location. According to news reports, it was an extremely difficult terrain for the convoy of vehicles used during the mobilisation training. The instructor of the training used walkie-talkie to guide and instruct the battalion on the move. During this mobilisation training, the air force battalion crossed snow-capped mountains and traversed mountain passes in several days and nights. Reportedly, in recent years, the facilities for the troops have improved during their high-altitude training exercise. For instance, equipment vehicles are now moved into insulated garages, oxygen cylinders are connected to their beds, and hot water is available 24 hours a day.

Key Tasks for Chinese Military Modernisation in the 15th Five Year Plan

Beijing hosted the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China from 20 to 23 October 2025. Reportedly, during the

proceedings, the work report presented by Chinese President Xi Jinping was discussed and deliberated. The "Proposal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development" was approved. With regard to national defence and army modernisation, the plenary session re-affirmed the proposal to achieve the goal of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the army as scheduled and promotion the modernisation of national defense and the army with high quality. The plenary session concluded that national defense and military modernisation will be conducted in accordance with the new "three-step" strategy of promoting political military construction, reforming and strengthening the army, strengthening the army with science and technology, strengthening the army with talents, and governing the army according to law. It was acknowledged that it is necessary to "accelerate the construction of advanced combat effectiveness, promote the modernization of military governance, and consolidate and improve the integrated national strategic system and capabilities".

JAPAN

Japan-Philippines RAA Applied for First Time

A Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) signed between Japan and the Philippines was activated for the first time on 11 October to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the Philippine island of Cebu, which was struck by an undersea

earthquake on 30 September. During a teleconference with his Philippine counterpart, Defence Minister Gen Nakatani [offered](#) his condolences and formally conveyed Tokyo's acceptance of the Philippine request to activate the RAA. A [unit](#) of the Japan Air Self-Defence Force's Air Support Command comprising one KC-130H transport aircraft and 30 personnel already operating in the Philippines as part of a bilateral exercise, Doshin-Bayanihan5-25, was diverted to the affected areas around Cebu for the supply of relief goods.

JAIMEX '25 Held in Yokosuka

On 21 October, India's indigenously-built Shivalik-class Guided Missile Stealth Frigate INS *Sahyadri*, which is currently on long-range deployment to the Indo-Pacific region, [participated](#) in the 2025 edition of the Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JAIMEX)-25 with three vessels from the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Forces (JMSDF). The exercise was held in two phases: a sea phase and a harbour phase. The sea phase saw the *Sahyadri* practice advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare and missile defence drills, while enhancing interoperability by undertaking flying operations and underway replenishment. The *Sahyadri* was joined by the destroyer JS *Asahi*, the replenishment ship JS *Omi* and the submarine *Jinryu* (SS-507). During the harbour phase in Yokosuka, both sides engaged in cross-deck visits, collaborative operational activities and other cultural interactions such as a combined Yoga session.

TAIWAN

Taiwan's Defence Modernisation and Cyber Intrusion by PLA

President Lai Ching-te [outlined](#) some of his plans for Taiwan's defence in his Double Tenth Day Speech on 10 October 2025. He promised to "strengthen Taiwan's air defense capabilities and build a 'T-Dome' system to create a safety net" for Taiwan. He also reiterated his promise to increase Taiwan's defense budget "to 3 percent of GDP next year and 5 percent by 2030." In a separate event, the media [reported](#) that "an average of 2.8 million cyber intrusions per day" has targeted Taiwan's government networks this year until now. The targets were "government institutions, critical infrastructure, industrial supply chains, policy operations, foreign cooperation, and sensitive technologies." The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been identified as the source of these attacks, which is said to have utilised "civil-military integration and public-private collaboration" for the purpose.

Retired Army Personnel Found Guilty for Espionage

An 81 year old retired Army Lieutenant General Kao An-kuo was [found](#) guilty of spying for China and preparing a plan to assist China during its invasion of Taiwan. He "planned to form a group to attack government establishments during a Chinese blockade" and disrupt "government installations if China gained control over the airspace and waters surrounding Taiwan." He also toyed the idea of setting up "an armed force to

execute the plan,” but did not pursue it. His group had his friend, Liu Yi-chin, a lady who was a contact person between him and China, and his adopted son. They had recruited three more persons, but failed to further expand the group. The Army Lieutenant General is said to be “the most senior former military officer,” found guilty of spying for China. He has been handed down a sentence of seven years and six months in prison. His friend will serve a six year and 10 months sentence and adopted son six years. The other three members have also received imprisonment of varying time period. The agencies confiscated USD134,000 illegally earned by him. It was concluded that the Army Lieutenant General’s motivations were his political convictions whereas greed motivated others. They have the right to appeal to a higher court.

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

South Korea Celebrates Armed Forces Day

On 1 October 2025, South Korea [celebrated](#) its 77th Armed Forces Day. The South Korean President Lee Jae Myung attended the parade organised to celebrate this occasion at the Gyeryongdae military compound located in Gyeryong, South Chungcheong Province. President Lee called upon to develop more sophisticated defence technology and reduce dependence on the foreign powers. Notably, he talked about the return of the wartime Operational Control (OPCON) of the South Korean military which is currently under the control of the United

States. President Lee Jae Myung also urged for restructuring the South Korean army and build a “smart, elite and powerful military”. The South Korean president reiterated his commitment for a “[solid alliance](#)” with the United States. The military parade on the event of Armed Forces Day also showcased various defence equipment of South Korea, such as tanks, howitzers, fighter jets, rocket launchers and surface-to-surface bunker buster.

North Korea’s Naval Power

North Korea has been increasing its naval power. In October 2025, it was reported that the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un [inspected](#) the newly launched 5,000-tonne destroyer, named Choe Hyon. He urged the North Korean forces to prepare the naval power of the country to “thoroughly” counter the threats from the enemy countries. Reportedly, Choe Hyon is equipped with sophisticated military equipment such as cruise missiles and tactical ballistic missiles. Developing naval power is part of the North Korean quest to [attain](#) self-reliance in defence. During his visit to Choe Hyon, Kim Jong-un also called upon the new generation of North Korean sailors to develop in them the spirit of anti-colonial freedom fighters who fought against the Japanese colonial regime on the Korean Peninsula (1910-1945). Notably, Choe Hyon was a Korean nationalist and independence movement leader after whom this naval destroyer has been named in North Korea.