

# EAST ASIA MILITARY MONITOR

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## CHINA

### Tibet Military Region Border Defense Regiment Conducts Border Patrols

Recently, officers and soldiers of a border defense regiment of the Ali Military Sub-district (MSD) in Tibet conducted border patrols. They were patrolling an area located at an altitude of 5500 meters. The Ali Military Sub-district frequently organises its officers and soldiers to conduct regular patrolling of the border areas. The Ali region under Tibet Military Region of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Western Theatre Command (WTC) is at an extremely high altitude, and patrols are often conducted on the plateau with low oxygen levels, extreme cold, and complex terrain. These patrols are not one-off events, but part of daily training and duties of the border defense troops, and are conducted multiple times every year. The terrain is complex, the climate is unpredictable, and the area is covered in snow and ice year-round and is prone to frequent natural disasters such as avalanches and landslides. It is a critical area for border control. Usually, patrolling in this area takes several hours of arduous trekking. Reportedly, during the border patrols, the officers and soldiers inspect the surrounding environment and check the border facilities to ensure they are intact. The patrolling team uses high-tech equipment such as drones to conduct reconnaissance of the border line.

### PLA Eastern Theatre Command Hold Live-Fire Drills around Taiwan

In late December 2025, China conducted "Justice Mission 2025," a massive two-day live-fire military exercise encircling Taiwan. The drills simulated a full blockade of key ports, featuring 130 PLA aircraft, 14 PLAN warships and eight Chinese Coast Guard ships. According to a press statement of PLA's Eastern Theatre Command (ETC), the drills covered the Taiwan Strait and north, southwest, southeast and east of the island. Referring to the drills as "a legitimate and necessary step to safeguard China's sovereignty and national unity", a senior spokesperson, Col. Shi Yi stated that the exercises focused on combat patrols, port blockades and "joint seizure of comprehensive superiority". Reportedly, the exercises disrupted regional travel, affecting over 100,000 airline passengers. Taiwan condemned the drills as "provocative", placing its forces on high alert and showcasing defensive systems.

## JAPAN

### Land Forces Summit 2025 held in Tokyo

On 18 December, the 2025 version of the Land Forces Summit was held in Tokyo, where chiefs of the American, Australian, Indian, Filipino and Malaysian Armies were hosted by General Yasunori Morishita, Chief of Staff of the Japan Ground Self-Defence Forces (JGSDF). The Summit saw an exchange of views on strategic issues and agreed on the necessity of accelerating multinational defence cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in order to

preserve the peace and tranquillity of the region.

The Indian Army was represented at the summit by the Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, who addressed the summit virtually. In his remarks he proposed a new framework to enhance Indo-Pacific land power cooperation called IKIGAI (which is a Japanese word meaning ‘the purpose of one’s life’). IKIGAI, which stands for Interoperability and Information Sharing (I), Knowledge and Professional Military Education (K), International Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (I), Generative Technology Partnerships (G), Assurance for Security Partnerships (A) and Integrated Logistics and Sustainment (I), ‘reflects a common purpose among Indo-Pacific nations to harness collective land power to support regional peace, stability and prosperity’. Gen. Dwivedi also underscored ‘three key pillars of convergence underpinning effective cooperation – Shared Diagnosis, Shared Principles and Shared Actions’. During the Summit, the land forces chiefs of Japan, the United States of America, Australia and the Philippines held a separate meeting where they agreed to work closely together on shared perspectives concerning peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. Gen. Morishita of the JGSDF stated that such cooperation was even more vital given the absence of multilateral security frameworks, while General Charles Flynn of the US Marine Corps lauded the importance of summits such as the LFS to ‘align the directions of all sides’.

## Japan MOD Announces Penalties for Kawasaki Heavy Industries

Japan’s Ministry of Defence on 26 December announced that it was imposing a ‘suspension of designation’ order on supplier Kawasaki Heavy Industries, which would prevent it from bidding on defence-related projects for a specified length of time (2.5 months in this case). This follows revelations that the defence industry manufacturer had been consistently falsifying performance data relating to submarines it manufactures, particularly with regard to data on power plant performance. By the firm’s own admission, falsified fuel efficiency data for diesel-electric engines was reported in a total of 66 instances, spanning a thirty-year-period from 1988 to 2021. In a separate announcement, the Ministry of Defence also laid out penalties levied on 11 service members from the Maritime Self-Defence Forces, who were revealed to have been receiving gifts from Kawasaki Heavy. The items received by the MSDF members included luxury goods and sports accessories. The source of the funds used to pay for the gifts has been revealed to be a slush fund the manufacturer had apparently amassed after years of fictitious billing for non-existent subcontractors. The punishments announced by the MOD range from minor suspensions of duty to pay cuts.

## TAIWAN

### US Massive Arms Sales to Taiwan

In December 2025, the Trump administration announced a massive USD

10 billion weapons package for Taiwan, marking the largest single arms sale in US history. The deal includes advanced HIMARS rocket systems, ATACMS missiles, self-propelled howitzers, and drones. The announcement made by the US State Department during a televised address, drew immediate condemnation from Beijing. China also [launched](#) the “Justice Mission 2025” military exercise on 29 December encircling Taiwan, as a response to the US arms sales. Apart from the military drill, China sanctioned US defence firms as well.

In a separate event, President Donald Trump [signed](#) the amended Taiwan Assurance Act of 2020 into the Taiwan Assurance Implementation Act. Prior to the amendment, the state department would conduct “a one-time review of its guidance governing relations with Taiwan” whereas the amended law required it “conduct a review ‘not less than every five years’.”

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

### Violation of South Korean Air Defence Zone

In December 2025, it was reported that the air forces of China and Russia [violated](#) the air defence zone of South Korea. According to the South Korean military, two military aircrafts of China and seven Russian military aircrafts entered into the South Korean air defence identification zone (KADIZ) for a short period on 9 December. According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) of South Korea, the military jets of Beijing and Moscow did not violate the territorial

airspace of South Korea but Seoul had to fly its fighter planes to avoid any accidental clash. The South Korean media reported that similar incidents of violation of air defence zone of South Korea by China and Russia have also happened in the past. Reportedly, since 2019, the Chinese and Russian military aircrafts have [flown](#) closer to the South Korean and Japanese airspace on a regular basis and without notification in advance.

### North Korean Nuclear Weapons Programme

In December 2025, it was reported in the South Korean media that the United States and China may agree to give [legitimacy](#) to the North Korean nuclear weapons programme. Reportedly, the omission of the strategy to seek denuclearisation of North Korea in the recently published official documents on national security of Washington and Beijing raised alarms in South Korea. Evidently, there was no mention of North Korea’s denuclearisation in the newly released National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States. The muted response of the second Donald Trump administration on the issue of denuclearisation of Pyongyang is in sharp contrast to the previous Joe Biden administration. Similarly, there is an apparent shift in China’s official stand on North Korea’s nuclear weapons. According to a media report, Beijing is probably giving priority to its conflict with the United States and may tacitly [recognise](#) the North Korean nuclear weapons programme.