

NIAS Area Studies

# CHINA MONITOR

S&T | Maritime | Security | Internal Politics | External Relations  
China | Taiwan | Japan | South Korea | Australia | New Zealand



Discourses | Trajectories | Forecasts

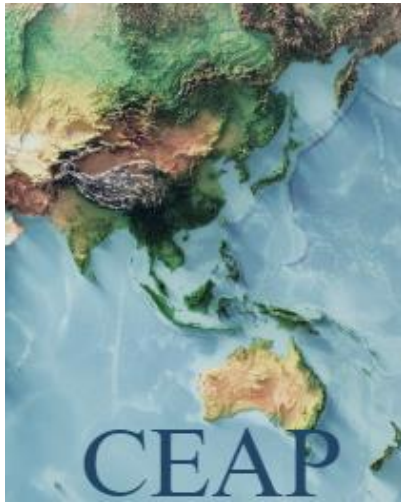
CEAP



## China-ASEAN-GCC Summit: A Trilateral Cooperation

The US-China: On Tariffs, Rare Earths, and Visa

Second China-Central Asia Summit



### **About NIAS Global Politics**

Global Politics is a primary focus of the NIAS Programme on Science, Technology, and International Relations (STIR). The primary focus is on contemporary world affairs. The Programme publishes *The World This Week*, and *NIAS Fortnightly on Science, Technology and International Relations*.

### **About NIAS China East Asia & The Pacific Reader**

The CEAP aims to provide a daily brief on contemporary developments within China and its external engagements. Daily developments are categorized under the following sections: Internal (Politics, Economy, S&T), Regional (China's interactions primarily with East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Pacific, and also with other regions including Europe, the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East), Big power politics and China's global power projections.

The CEAP aims to build an online database on China by collating information from different regions and divergent sources. The objective is to capture different narratives and make sense of information and disinformation.

### **Editor**

**D Suba Chandran**

*Professor and Dean, School of Conflict and Security Studies, NIAS*

### **Assistant Editor**

**Femy Francis**

*Project Associate, NIAS*

### **Editorial Team**

**Aparna A Nair**

*Research Intern, NIAS*

**Aashish Ganeshan**

*Research Intern, NIAS*

**Ananya Dinesh**

*Research Intern, NIAS*

**Gauri Gupta**

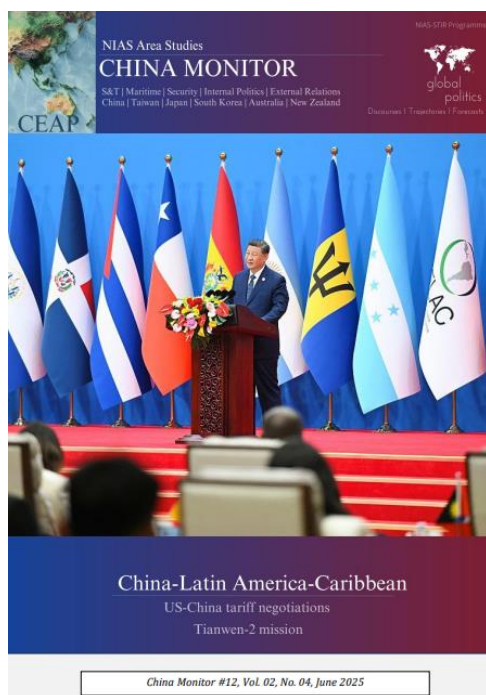
*Research Intern, NIAS*

**Naomi Miriam Mathew**

*Research Intern, NIAS*

### **About China Monitor**

China Monitor is a Monthly publication by the China, East Asia, and the Pacific Area Studies. The Monitor is a comprehensive collection of explainers, commentaries, and short notes on contemporary issues and development in the region.



Explainer

**China's EV Surge**

*J Yamini*

**China and the Pacific Islands**

*Ananya Dinesh*

**China and the Pacific Islands**

*Aparna A Nair*

**China's debut Global Green Sovereign Bond**

*Gauri Gupta*

**Humanoid Robots: Why is China investing in them?**

*Aparna A Nair*

Commentary

**China-ASEAN-GCC Summit: A Trilateral Cooperation**

*Gauri Gupta*

**The US-China: On Tariffs, Rare Earths, and Visa**

*Femy Francis*

**Second China-Central Asia Summit: China's continuing search for regional partners, and the emphasis on the BRI**

*Aparna A Nair*

**South Korea's Presidential Elections: Instability to possible stability**

*Merin Treesa Alex*

**Eleven PIC countries sign a joint statement with China**

*Lekshmi MK*

Short Note

**Shenzhou-19 Mission: A Profile**

*Gauri Gupta*

**China Reader Daily Wire**

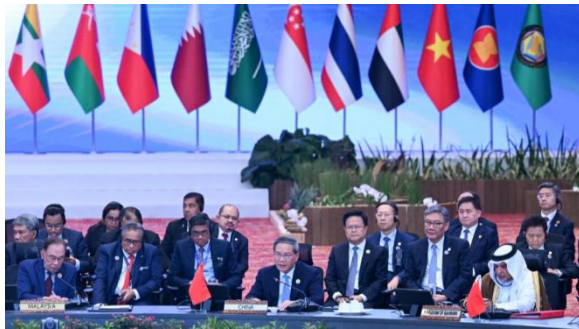
S & T | Maritime | Security | Internal | External | China | Taiwan | Japan | South Korea | Australia | New Zealand



## COMMENTARY

# China-ASEAN-GCC Summit: A Trilateral Cooperation

Gauri Gupta



(Image Source: CGTN)

### What happened?

On 27 & 28 May 2025, the leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and China convened for the ASEAN-GCC-China summit, which took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

On 27 May, in the opening of the summit, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim delivered a keynote address titled “The Beginning of a New Chapter in ASEAN’s Journey of Outward-Looking Engagement.” China’s Premier Li Qiang emphasized that China is aiming to collaborate with “ASEAN and the GCC in forging synergies that multiply.” Kuwait’s Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Sabah stated they will deepen cooperation and “improve their ability to face crisis.”

On 27 May, during the summit, the leaders highlighted the importance of finalizing key trade negotiations, including the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area 3.0 and the China-GCC Free Trade Agreement. They also emphasized collaboration, energy stability and sustainability, digital innovation, and cultural exchanges. They expressed serious concern over Gaza, condemning attacks on civilians and calling for a lasting ceasefire, safe humanitarian access, respect for international laws, and urging a peaceful two-state solution based on international agreements.

On 28 May, China announced visa-free travel allowances of 30 days to four Gulf countries: Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait, for non-commercial purposes, from 9 June 2025.

### What is the background?

First, China’s relationship with ASEAN and GCC. In the past two decades, China has become a

vital economic and strategic partner of both ASEAN and the GCC member states. Since 2009, China has been ASEAN’s largest trading partner, and by 2023, bilateral trade exceeded USD 975 billion. With GCC, China’s trade surpassed USD 240 billion in 2022, predominantly driven by imports of energy, adding infrastructure investments, and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Previously, China had signed free trade agreements and comprehensive strategic partnerships with ASEAN & GCC with an aim to further dialogue on policy coordination, digital economy, and green technology transfers.

Second, ASEAN-GCC relationship. The ASEAN-GCC relationship has historically been limited; however, it has expanded substantially since the early 2000s, particularly in areas of energy cooperation and food security. Their first ministerial meeting took place in 2009, and the first ASEAN-GCC Summit occurred in Riyadh in October 2023, where the leaders expressed commitment to promoting connectivity, trade, and investments. In 2022, the trade between member states of ASEAN-GCC stood at USD 110 billion.

### What does it mean?

First, the increase in economic integration between China, ASEAN, and GCC. This trilateral format brings the countries on a single platform, combining a GDP of nearly USD 25 trillion and a market of more than 2 billion people. The three-way cooperation further encourages China’s ambition to establish a broader economic and strategic footprint in changing global environments, especially after tariffs imposed under the Trump administration. ASEAN and the GCC see China as an economic partner, which enables the development of balanced, multilateral cooperation for future sustainable economic growth, regional connectivity, and a lower reliance on Western markets.

Second, the emphasis on institutionalized cooperation. The summit has paved the way for greater connectivity through quality tourism, cultural, youth, and educational exchanges and STEM collaboration, arts, and support for the UN dialogue among civilizations and tourism digitalization practices.

## COMMENTARY

# The US-China: On Tariffs, Rare Earths, and Visa

Femy Francis



(Image Source: Reuters)

### What happened?

On 09 June, high-level delegations from the US and China met in London and established a framework to resolve trade tensions. The US delegation was headed by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. While China's delegation consisted of Vice Premier He Lifeng, and Commerce Minister Wang Wentao. After the two-day talks, both countries agreed on a framework to resolve trade tensions, lifting mineral export controls, and to follow through with the Geneva truce on de-escalating tariff tensions. Trump noted that they will work to "open up China to American trade," as he claimed that a consensus was reached to impose 55 per cent tariffs on China for 10 per cent. China's Ministry of Commerce informed that they have also approved export licenses for rare earths to the US after the meeting. He Lifeng said: "China approaches these consultations with both sincerity and principle." The details of the framework are not made public as they await approval by President Donald Trump and Xi Jinping.

### What is the background?

First, the road to the London meeting. In March, the Trump administration imposed 20 per cent tariffs on all Chinese imports. An additional 34 per cent under US "reciprocal tariffs" was imposed; China curbed the exports of rare earths to the US while imposing a 10 per cent tariff. In April, Trump imposed fresh 50 per cent tariffs, bringing the total to 104 per cent in total. China retaliated with 84 per cent tariffs, to which the US responded with 145 per cent tariffs. China imposed its final tariff of 125 per cent, urging the US to stop its "unilateral

bullying." A 90-day halt was announced by the Trump administration, after which they agreed to meet in Geneva. In a joint statement US agreed to modify the ad valorem duty for Chinese products, bringing the suggested tariffs imposed by the US to 30 per cent, and China agreed to reduce its tariffs to 10 per cent. They also agreed to establish trade and economic consultations. The Geneva truce talks did not bring any concrete de-escalation between China and the US.

Second, China-US trade relations. Trade between China and the US has increased steadily from USD 2.5 billion in 1979 to USD 688.3 billion in 2024. The US deficit to China is the largest compared to its other trading partners, coming to USD 295 billion in 2024. Since 2018, the US has been working to reduce this gap. For China, the US is its largest trading partner, while China comes third for the US. Major Chinese exports to the US include transmission equipment, computers, machine parts, batteries, and motor vehicle parts. US exports to China consist of soya beans, vaccines, crude oil, and petroleum.

Third, China's monopoly of rare earth and the US. China mines 70 per cent of the world's rare earths and is responsible for 90 per cent of the processing. They are fundamental to producing EVs, electronics, and critical tech production. In April, China announced its rare earth export control measures, aimed at safeguarding national security. Since then, firms are required to submit applications to buy rare earth from China, which, after review, the licensed exporters are allowed by the government to sell. This directly affected the production of several American and European firms, where many had to halt production due to a lack of materials.

Fourth, Trump's crackdown on Chinese students. Trump administration announced that it will "aggressively" revoke Chinese students' visa applications, citing a national security threat. China accounts for the second-largest number of international students in the US. The peak was in 2020, when 372,532 students were enrolled, but the number has since declined to 277,000 as of 2024. Most of them are self-financed, and are hefty contributor to

universities in the US for their higher education, enrolled mostly in STEM fields.

### What does it mean?

First, the willingness to negotiate. The meeting opened an avenue for negotiation that was previously sealed shut, due to escalatory retaliation by both countries. The meeting is the second step towards policy-based de-escalation after the Geneva meeting.

Second, the implications of China's chokehold on rare earths. China's capacity for mining, refining, and sale of rare earth has proved advantageous for China. For China, its monopoly has awarded it leverage due to the critical nature of the resources. For the US, dependence on China for rare earths marked its limitation. This dominance can be extrapolated to other countries, as China holds the monopoly over the sale of rare earths.

## COMMENTARY

### Second China-Central Asia Summit: China's continuing search for regional partners, and the emphasis on the BRI

*Aparna A Nair*



(Image Source: *Business Today*)

### What happened?

On 16 June, President Xi Jinping arrived in Astana, Kazakhstan, to attend the second China-Central Asia summit. The summit was also attended by the Presidents of the five Central Asian countries- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

On 17 June, China inked the Treaty on Eternal Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation with the five Central Asian countries. It underlined the principles of sovereign equality and the inviolability of borders. The countries also expressed commitment to tackle threats like cross-border terrorism, drug trafficking, transnational organised crime, and cybercrime.

According to China's foreign ministry statement, in bilateral meetings with the regional leaders, President Xi called for expanded cooperation in natural gas, minerals, international railway, and law enforcement. He pledged USD 208.86 million in grant assistance to the Central Asian countries to support their livelihood and development projects. He called for more cooperation in areas including trade, minerals,

and agriculture. He discussed the progress on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway with the presidents of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the summit led to the launch of three new cooperation centres focused on poverty reduction, education exchange, and desertification control. President Xi stated that China is ready to share development experiences in areas like latest technological advances, digital infrastructure connectivity, artificial intelligence, and foster new, quality productive forces with the Central Asian countries.

On 18 June, China's foreign ministry expressed China's willingness to improve road and railway connectivity and agreed to enhance direct flights. Bilateral talks on the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) were held between the countries during the summit. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that the six heads of state together designated 2025 and 2026 as the Years of High-Quality Development of China-Central Asia Cooperation. The third China-Central Asia Summit in 2027 will be hosted by China.

### What is the background?

First, a brief note on the China-Central Asia Summits. Beijing hosted the inaugural China-Central Asia summit in Shaanxi province in May 2023. The leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan had attended the summit. President Xi emphasized the importance of four principles- mutual assistance, common development, universal security, and everlasting friendship at the summit.

Second, the significance of Central Asia in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) calculations. Central Asia forms the core overland route in the BRI. The main investments include China-Kazakhstan-Europe freight routes, highways, pipelines, ports, and energy projects. The China-Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan railway flagship project of USD eight billion is expected to provide China with more access to Central Asia.

Third, China's trade relations with the Central Asian countries. As per China's General Administration of Customs, trade between China and Central Asia countries reached USD 94.8 billion in 2024. It marked an increase of USD 5.4 billion year on year. Central Asian countries provide energy resources, minerals, and agricultural products to China. China exports machinery, electronics, vehicles, and consumer goods to the Central Asian countries. Kazakhstan imported goods from China worth USD 15 billion, while its exports to China totalled USD 18 billion. Tajikistan imported USD 510 million in goods and exported goods worth USD 1.3 billion. Kyrgyzstan brought in USD 5.4 billion worth of imports from China, but

exported only USD 123.6 million. Uzbekistan imported goods valued at USD 4.9 billion and exported goods worth USD 1 billion. Turkmenistan imported USD 1 billion in goods while exporting USD 9.6 billion. Among these five countries, Turkmenistan recorded the highest trade surplus with China.

### What does it mean?

First, China's growing diplomatic influence and soft power in Central Asia. China shares more than 7000 kilometres of border with Central Asia. The stability in Central Asia is crucial for China's border safety. Apart from that, Central Asia is important for China's access to energy, minerals, and trade routes. Central Asia has uranium exports, hydrocarbon fuels, and oil reserves, which can cater to China's domestic energy demand. This forum boosts the regional influence and soft power of China.

Second, for Central Asia, the summit opens doors for enhancing their infrastructure, funding, tech, and training with assistance from China. Moreover, forums like this provide a voice for unified diplomacy in the area.

## EXPLAINER

### China's EV Surge

J Yamini



(Image Source: The Diplomat)

### What happened?

On 16 June, President Xi Jinping arrived in Astana, Kazakhstan, to attend the second China-Central Asia summit. The summit was also attended by the Presidents of the five Central Asian countries- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

On 17 June, China inked the Treaty on Eternal Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation with the five Central Asian countries. It underlined the principles of sovereign equality and the inviolability of borders. The countries

also expressed commitment to tackle threats like cross-border terrorism, drug trafficking, transnational organised crime, and cybercrime.

According to China's foreign ministry statement, in bilateral meetings with the regional leaders, President Xi called for expanded cooperation in natural gas, minerals, international railway, and law enforcement. He pledged USD 208.86 million in grant assistance to the Central Asian countries to support their livelihood and development projects. He called for more cooperation in areas including trade, minerals, and agriculture. He discussed the progress on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway with the presidents of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the summit led to the launch of three new cooperation centres focused on poverty reduction, education exchange, and desertification control. President Xi stated that China is ready to share development experiences in areas like latest technological advances, digital infrastructure connectivity, artificial intelligence, and foster new, quality productive forces with the Central Asian countries.

On 18 June, China's foreign ministry expressed China's willingness to improve road and railway connectivity and agreed to enhance direct flights.

Bilateral talks on the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) were held between the countries during the summit. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that the six heads of state together designated 2025 and 2026 as the Years of High-Quality Development of China-Central Asia Cooperation. The third China-Central Asia Summit in 2027 will be hosted by China.

### **What is the background?**

First, a brief note on the China-Central Asia Summits. Beijing hosted the inaugural China-Central Asia summit in Shaanxi province in May 2023. The leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan had attended the summit. President Xi emphasized the importance of four principles- mutual assistance, common development, universal security, and everlasting friendship at the summit.

Second, the significance of Central Asia in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) calculations. Central Asia forms the core overland route in the BRI. The main investments include China-Kazakhstan-Europe freight routes, highways, pipelines, ports, and energy projects. The China-Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan railway flagship project of USD eight billion is expected to provide China with more access to Central Asia.

Third, China's trade relations with the Central Asian countries. As per China's General

Administration of Customs, trade between China and Central Asia countries reached USD 94.8 billion in 2024. It marked an increase of USD 5.4 billion year on year. Central Asian countries provide energy resources, minerals, and agricultural products to China. China exports machinery, electronics, vehicles, and consumer goods to the Central Asian countries. Kazakhstan imported goods from China worth USD 15 billion, while its exports to China totalled USD 18 billion. Tajikistan imported USD 510 million in goods and exported goods worth USD 1.3 billion. Kyrgyzstan brought in USD 5.4 billion worth of imports from China, but exported only USD 123.6 million. Uzbekistan imported goods valued at USD 4.9 billion and exported goods worth USD 1 billion. Turkmenistan imported USD 1 billion in goods while exporting USD 9.6 billion. Among these five countries, Turkmenistan recorded the highest trade surplus with China.

### **What does it mean?**

First, China's growing diplomatic influence and soft power in Central Asia. China shares more than 7000 kilometres of border with Central Asia. The stability in Central Asia is crucial for China's border safety. Apart from that, Central Asia is important for China's access to energy, minerals, and trade routes. Central Asia has uranium exports, hydrocarbon fuels, and oil reserves, which can cater to China's domestic energy demand. This forum boosts the regional influence and soft power of China.

Second, for Central Asia, the summit opens doors for enhancing their infrastructure, funding, tech, and training with assistance from China. Moreover, forums like this provide a voice for unified diplomacy in the area.

## EXPLAINER

# China and the Pacific Islands

Ananya Dinesh



(Image Source: The Guardian)

On 28 May 2025, China hosted participants from 11 countries from the Pacific Islands (PICs) in Xiamen, Fujian Province. This was the third China–Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. The meeting worked towards improving diplomatic, economic, and regional cooperation. A joint statement was issued, keeping in mind development strategies and support for each other’s core interests. The PIC also reaffirmed upholding the One China Policy.

### What does the China-PIC joint statement say?

First, the One China Policy and Non-Interference. The joint statement explicitly outlines several areas of cooperation designed to benefit both China and the PIC. China reaffirmed its commitment to respecting the sovereignty of PICs and its policy of non-interference in their political affairs.

When the Solomon Islands switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 2019, Beijing invested in infrastructure and development aid, without applying pressure on the country’s internal political or democratic institutions. For the Solomon Islands, this approach was more appealing than that of countries like Australia or the United States, where assistance is often linked to governance or human rights standards. Under China’s One China principle, China maintains diplomatic ties with countries that recognize the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legitimate government of China. Taiwan operates as a de facto independent state; however, China considers it part of its territory and looks for eventual reunification.

One of the statement’s strongest messages is China’s stance against foreign interference in the

internal affairs of the PIC. China highlights the idea of sovereign equality, arguing that all nations, regardless of size or power, deserve the freedom to determine their futures. It positions itself as a respectful partner: one that provides aid without pushing political reforms or making conditional promises.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi criticized defense alliances like AUKUS (Australia–United Kingdom–United States), which seeks to introduce nuclear-powered submarines into the Indo-Pacific. China views this as a breach of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and a risk to regional peace and stability. Wang argued that such security groupings represent bloc-based confrontation and do not serve the development goals of the Pacific.

### Which Pacific Island countries maintain ties with Taiwan?

As of 2025, three Pacific Island nations, including Palau, the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu, continue to maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan. They have withstood diplomatic pressure from China to switch recognition. However, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands shifted their recognition from Taiwan to the PRC in 2019. Nauru followed suit in January 2024, shortly after Taiwan’s presidential elections. Several factors, including economic promises from Beijing, infrastructure investments, and growing diplomatic pressure, have shifted countries’ focus from Taiwan to the PRC. In a few cases, leadership changes and shifting national priorities contributed to these decisions as well. For some governments, aligning with China proved more beneficial than holding on to diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

### What is China’s interest in the PIC?

China and the PIC have shared diplomatic relations since the 1970s. Today, cooperation spans across 20 sectors, including trade, health, education, and climate change. China has supported the region with over 100 aid projects and 200 rounds of in-kind assistance. 600 Chinese medical professionals have worked in the Pacific, providing care for over 260,000 people. During the COVID-19 pandemic, China supplied nearly 600,000 vaccine doses and over 100 tons of medical supplies to the region. China and the PIC have built 22 sister-province and city-level partnerships to foster grassroots engagement. High-level visits, such as President

Xi Jinping's trips in 2014 and 2018, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's regional tour in 2022, have further strengthened ties.

Most of the PIC now recognize the PRC and support the One China policy. This diplomatic alignment has opened the door for greater investment through China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013. Under the BRI framework, China has supported major infrastructure projects like the USD 71 million national stadium in the Solomon Islands, port upgrades, roads in Vanuatu, and hospitals in Fiji and Samoa.

In addition, China has pledged to fund a hundred "small but beautiful" projects across the region focused on climate change adaptation, clean energy, and tourism. These efforts align with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, a regional plan prioritizing sustainable development and regional security. The joint statement confirmed that all parties would work to integrate the BRI with this regional strategy.

### What's next for China and the PIC?

First, China's expanding influence in the Pacific is part of a larger effort to redefine its role on the world stage. By building strong regional partnerships, China seeks to lead the Global South and offer an alternative to Western-led international systems.

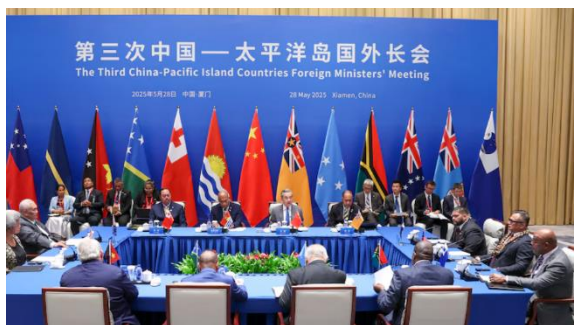
Second, for many countries, especially during the presidency of Donald Trump, China appeared more stable and predictable than the United States. The US's decision to pull out from the WHO had most countries rethink their alliance with the US.

Third, in the face of US "protectionism", larger economies like Germany and France increased trade with China. Countries like Iran and Russia, facing Western sanctions, deepened strategic ties with Beijing. In Africa and Southeast Asia, nations such as Ethiopia and Cambodia welcomed Chinese aid, which came without political conditions. Fourth, China is seen as a more pragmatic and reliable trade partner. For the PIC, China offers a clear alternative to the West, one that not only promises sovereignty but economic support and inclusion in a more balanced, equal, and multipolar world.

## EXPLAINER

### China and the Pacific Islands

Aparna A Nair



(Image Source: ABC News)

In April, Australia's Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, expressed the government's plan to buy back Darwin port from China-based Landbridge, a logistics company that is currently operating the port. Landbridge Industry Australia is a subsidiary of Shandong Landbridge Group, a China-based private multinational company with an interest in ports, logistics, and trade. In May, China's Ambassador

to Australia, Xiao Qian, criticised Australia's government plan. On 22 June, the founder of Kimberley Marine Support Base and Onslow Marine Support Base, located in Western Australia, expressed interest in bidding for the port..

### Where is the Darwin Port? What is its significance?

The Darwin Port is the northernmost maritime facility in Australia. It is located on the southern shore of the Timor Sea, near the US Marine deployments to the Northern Territory. The port's proximity to the south of Indonesia and Southeast Asia makes it Australia's northern gateway.

In 2015, the Australian government recognised the port as crucial to the region's future economic growth. Because of financial constraints, Australia's government sold the port on a 99-year lease to Landbridge, a China-based logistics company. This deepwater port is

now the supply centre for Australia's oil and gas projects and a passway for 4.5 million cargoes. The port comprises several facilities, including East Arm Wharf and Stokes Hill Wharf, and is operated by Darwin Port Operations.

### **Why did Australia give it to China?**

In 2015, Australia's Liberal Party decided to privatise publicly owned firms. The port was in poor infrastructural condition. To address the funding gap, the government went for an open tender. The former treasurer, Dave Tollner, said: "We were very reluctant to go borrowing a lot of money to put into a port."

The Australian government called for bids; out of 33 willing investors, Landbridge offered USD 506 million. The deal got approval after the review of Australia's Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and Australia's Defence Department. They reviewed strategic and operational risks, including cyber attacks, intellectual property theft, infrastructure degradation, and port shutdowns. Australian Strategic Policy Institute defence analyst Dr John Coyne noted that the allegations of covert surveillance at the port were less of a national security issue.

### **What is the issue today between China and Australia?**

In 2024, Australia's parliamentary committee recommended that the federal government consider reclaiming the port, citing national security. During the election campaign, the current Labour Party Government Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, said: "We want it to be in Australian hands." Dr Coyne noted that this port would be vital for contingencies in the South China Sea, Taiwan, or the Indo-Pacific. He added that the fact that this infrastructure and decision around the port are in the hands of China is the bigger issue.

Darwin hosts around 2,000 US Marines to conduct exercises for six months per year. Both

the US and Australia plan to expand air bases in the same location to host US bombers. Hence, the government tries to buy back or re-nationalise if a private buyer doesn't emerge.

Second, the financial performance of Landbridge. The latest annual report revealed that Darwin Port made a net loss of more than USD 34 million in the 2023-2024 financial year. The NT government stated its "concerns surrounding the financial status." It cast doubt on its financial stability and ability to meet lease obligations.

Third, the race for port ownership. According to The Australian report, Cerberus Capital Management is working on a formal proposal to buy the port. This US-based private-equity firm has reportedly met with Darwin Port's CEO but has not engaged with Landbridge's board. It remains unclear whether the government would give away this strategic location to another foreign bidder.

### **What is China's position?**

The Landbridge's non-executive director in Australia, Terry O Connor, said: "The port is not for sale." During a recent visit, China's Ambassador to Australia criticised the decision and stated economic aspects. He stated that China invested about USD 40 million in upgrading the port facilities, and it resulted in a 95.7 per cent increase in the total gross tonnage of arriving vessels. He said: "It's ethically questionable to lease the port when it was unprofitable and then seek to reclaim it once it becomes profitable." China's ministry spokesperson Mao Ning stated that Landbridge obtained the lease of Darwin Port through the market; therefore, the company's legitimate rights and interests should be fully protected.

## EXPLAINER

# China's debut Global Green Sovereign Bond

Gauri Gupta



(Image Source: Fintech Global)

On 02 April 2025, China's Ministry of Finance (MoF) issued the first sovereign green bond. The bond amount stands at USD 824 million yuan-denominated bond and is traded on the London Stock Exchange

### What is the background?

The framework of China's debut global green sovereign bond aligns with the China Green Bond Principles (2022 Edition) and the International Capital Markets Association (ICMA) Green Bond Principles (2021 Edition). The China Green Bond Principles (2022) highlights project classification, information disclosure, third-party verification, and post-issuance reporting, while the ICMA framework is structured around four key pillars: allocation of proceeds, procedures for evaluating and selecting projects, oversight and management of the funds raised, and transparent reporting practices.

The integration of national and global frameworks is expected to help China channel financial resources into well-defined green projects, including the development of renewable energy, pollution reduction, and conservation of biodiversity. It synchronizes global investor expectations concerning the mitigation of climate risk. The sovereign bond framework includes clear metrics, such as energy saved per unit of GDP and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced per yuan invested, providing quantifiable outcomes. This dual alignment boosts the credibility and foreign acceptability of China's green finance product.

### What are the components of this bond?

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) had released a Framework for Sovereign Green Bonds on 20 February 2025. It constitutes four pillars that

guarantee its consistency with targets for environmentally sustainable development and open financial practices.

First, the proceeds will be applied only towards the six pre-specified environment sectors: clean transport, sustainable water and wastewater management, sustainable restoration and management of Land and natural resources, marine ecosystems conservation and restoration, pollution prevention and control, resource efficiency and recycling. The MoF will invest these funds to cover various fiscal budgetary costs for eligible green projects, either green new projects or existing ones. Direct investments, project operating costs, intergovernmental capital transfer, and tax refunds are all included in the framework.

Second, the MoF will be tasked with choosing and assessing green projects. A Green Expenditures List shall be formally set to determine whether projects are eligible. Disbursements will only be made by the needs of the bond and China's environmental policies. Regular reviews and annual disclosure will be done to maintain compliance.

Third, the MoF will maintain an in-house register system to track the disbursement of proceeds to qualified expenditures for accountability purposes. Any proceeds that will not be disbursed at once will be kept according to the MoF's treasury, and this will not be invested in energy and pollution-consuming projects or fossil fuel resources. All of these proceeds will be disbursed in full in the current fiscal year, the next fiscal year, or a maximum of three previous fiscal years. At least half of the proceeds will be invested in green projects during the current or next fiscal year.

Fourth, the MoF will release the public annual report of the utilization of the proceeds on its website. The Ministry will be given periodic and timely information in the case of material events for funded projects. The disclosures will cover information on the quantifiable environmental effects of funded activities and proceeds distribution.

### What does the above mean?

China has issued green bonds denominated in RMB. It is expected to encourage the growth of

responsible financing and cross-border green investment by ensuring high transparency and adhering to international standards. It is also expected to increase confidence among investors and is also a price reference for future RMB green bond issuances. It is also expected to

spur banks, companies, and local governments to search for green financing avenues and join the green bond market. It also encourages more foreign capital to flow into projects related to ecological restoration, clean energy, renewable energy, and resilience to climate change.

## EXPLAINER

### Humanoid Robots: Why is China investing in them?

Aparna A Nair



(Image Source: Think China)

China faces demographic shifts with a declining birth rate and an ageing population; humanoid robots offer a solution to maintain productivity levels

In February 2025, 16 humanoid robots performed alongside dancers in China's Spring Festival Gala with motion control and coordination. In April 2025, the world's first humanoid robot half marathon took place in Beijing. What are humanoid robots? Why is China investing in it? And what does China's achievement mean?

#### What are humanoid robots?

Humanoid robots are machines designed to emulate human form and behaviour. They feature a head, torso, arms, and legs to perform tasks in environments designed for humans. They are featuring advanced sensors, actuators, and artificial intelligence technology. It helps them to perceive, make decisions, and execute complex actions. Humanoid robots are utilised for tasks such as assembly, quality control, and logistics, in scenarios where human-like dexterity and adaptability are needed. Apart from industrial settings, humanoids can be found in public and commercial settings. In China, they are used for food delivery, hotel check-in services, and customer engagement roles in retail spaces. According to Xinhua, China claims more than 190,000 effective robot-related patents as of July 2024.

#### Why is China investing in these robots?

China has allocated more than USD 20 billion to the humanoid firm sector in 2024. It is currently establishing a one trillion yuan fund to support startups in areas such as AI and robotics, as per official announcements. 30 million yuan is offered for companies looking to accelerate the construction of their first product by the Beijing municipal government. The state procurement of humanoid robots and related tech rose to 214 million yuan in 2024 from 4.7 million yuan in 2023.

A Morgan Stanley report titled "Humanoid 100: Mapping the Humanoid Robot Value China" suggests that 56 per cent of related companies and 45 per cent of integrators are based in China. The domestic companies, such as Agibot and Unitree, are central to this effort. The humanoid robotics industry is now recognised as a "new frontier in technological competition" by China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. In a 2023 policy document, it set a 2025 target for mass production and a secure supply chain.

China faces demographic shifts with a declining birth rate and an ageing population; humanoid robots offer a solution to maintain productivity levels. Beijing shifts to automation to counteract rising labour costs and sustain its position as a global manufacturing hub. It now envisions a new industrial revolution in which humanoid robots will perform tasks.

#### What does it mean?

First, the growth in humanoid robotics reflects China's transformation industrial and technological landscape. The development of humanoids aligns with initiatives such as the "Made in China 2025" and "new quality productive work force" through innovation, AI and advanced manufacturing.

Second, some analysts expect the average bill of materials for a humanoid to fall from USD 35000

to USD 17,000 by 2030 because of the surge in manufacturing and government subsidies. The Greater China automotive head, Ming Hsun Lee, commented that “With its comprehensive supply chain, China has an edge in lowering the humanoid robot production significantly” and that “This industry is still in its baby boom stage.” China is capable of making up to 90 per cent of humanoid components.

Third, Beijing sees investments in humanoids as an opportunity to plug labour shortages in areas such as elderly care as China’s 1.4 billion population ages. The tech company Ant Group has announced the creation of a new subsidiary, Ant Lingo Technology, whose humanoid will focus on elderly care. Recently, the deputy director at the Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area, Liang Liang, stated that humanoid robots will not replace human creators but will boost productivity and operate in hazardous environments.

### What are the challenges?

According to Unitree Robotics founder and chief executive Wang Xingxing, the lack of mature, unified “end-to-end” artificial intelligence system is the biggest challenge China’s humanoid robot makers currently face. The world’s first half-marathon with humanoid robot participants exposed the technical limits of their machines. It faced issues with mobility, balance, and real-time perceptions that only 6 out of the 21 robotics runners completed the marathon. From a cost perspective, the production and maintenance of humanoid robots are expensive. Commercial viability and large-scale private sector adoption will require cost reduction and proven return on investment. Finally, the labour-related impacts were pointed out by social security expert Zheng Gingchun. He stated that the development of AI and Humanoid robotics could affect around 70 per cent of China’s manufacturing sector. There are discussions on the creation of an AI unemployment insurance program that would provide six to twelve months of coverage for workers replaced by robots.

## COMMENTARY

### South Korea’s Presidential Elections: Instability to possible stability

*Merin Treesa Alex*



*(Image Source: Reuters)*

#### What happened?

On 03 June, Lee Jae Myung of the Democratic Party of Korea won the snap presidential elections with 49.3 per cent of the total votes. The Conservative Party or the People Power Party candidate Kim Moon-Soo won 41.3 per cent of the votes. The voter turnout was around 79.4 per cent. Ahead of the main elections, South Korea held early elections from 29-30 May.

#### What is the background?

First, a brief note on South Korea’s presidential election. In 2022, Yoon Suk Yeol of the conservative People Power Party(PPP) defeated Lee Jae-Myung of the Democratic Party. The

conservative party got 48.56 per cent votes, and Lee Jae-Myung got 47.83 per cent. South Korea’s president is elected directly for a single five-year term with no re-election eligibility, serves as head of state and government, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and holds powers to declare war, appoint public officials, and enforce laws passed by the National Assembly.

Second, a brief note on the Presidential candidates. South Korea’s two major political parties are the progressive Democratic Party and the conservative People Power Party. Lee Jae-myung is a former human rights lawyer and governor of Gyeonggi Province. He opposed the martial law and called it “illegal” and “unconstitutional.” He plans to increase research and development, and also AI investment, and promote defence industries. He campaigned to reform the constitution to prevent future misuse of power, and he proposed a four-year presidential term with two-term presidencies. He also proposed equal economic policies for low- and middle-income families, balance ties with the US and China, and reduce tensions with North Korea through revised military agreements. Kim Moon-Soo was the labour minister during Yoon’s administration; he also

served as the governor of Gyeonggi twice. He has an unclear stance on Yoon's martial law. He proposed to boost business through deregulation, cut taxes, and also strengthen relations with the US to restore stability.

Third, a brief note on the previous president, Yoon Suk Yeol. He declared emergency martial law on 3 December 2024, citing threats from anti-state forces and North Korea. The martial law was met with opposition from the National Assembly members; within six hours, the law was reversed with 190 members voting against it. The court on 4 April declared that the reason for declaring martial law did not meet the legal requirement, and Yoon Suk Yeol was removed from office. This triggered the snap elections, which are mandated by law. This is not the first time a President in South Korea is facing impeachment; the last time it was in 2016, when Park Geun-hye was found guilty of abusing her power and was sentenced to 24 years in prison, but was pardoned by Yoon in 2021.

Fourth, the major electoral issues. The political polarization and division following Yoon's

martial law led to months of uncertainty and a lack of confidence among the public. The US's reciprocal tariffs of 25 per cent imposed on steel, aluminum, and automobiles were also a concern for the voters. Further, the tensions with North Korea also intensified, with North Korea sending balloons filled with garbage to South Korea. In addition to that, decreasing birth rate was also one of the key issues.

#### **What does it mean?**

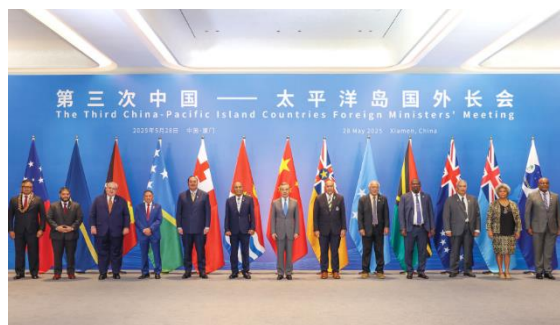
First, political stability would increase in South Korea, as the new president pledged to revise the presidential term to a two-term system with a midterm evaluation to keep the president's role in check. He also aims to decentralize executive power and increase the power of the National Assembly, giving it the authority to nominate the prime minister.

Second, economic recovery is possible under this government with its pro-market policies, and the investment in the AI sector and research and development can lead to growth in the economy and innovation, especially in the technology sector.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **Eleven PIC countries sign a joint statement with China**

*Lekshmi MK*



*(Image Source: China Daily)*

On 29 May 2025, a joint statement was issued during the Third China-Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Xiamen, China. During the discussions, China's allegiance with Pacific Island Countries (PICs) reflected the One-China principle and the extension of the Belt and Road Initiative. The PICs support China's approach to strategic partnership, mutual development, and regional stability.

#### **Who are the Pacific Island Countries?**

First, the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) comprise fourteen countries located in the

Pacific Ocean. Three ethnogeographic groupings of PICs are Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Melanesia comprises Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu; Micronesia comprises Palau, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Nauru; and Polynesia comprises Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Niue, and Kiribati.

Second, eleven out of the fourteen PICs are independent and democratic countries. The Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing in association with New Zealand. The Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands are independent but have an association with the United States. PICs diaspora is significant in New Zealand, Australia, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, despite their smaller population.

Third, the Pacific Island Countries are members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), which serves as an intergovernmental organisation that unites Pacific nations. This forum serves to address pressing challenges, promote

cooperation, and enhance shared economic, political, and social goals.

### **What is the history of PIC-China relations?**

The political relations commenced in the late 1970s and 1980s, when China established diplomatic ties with Pacific Island Countries (PICs). China later became a Dialogue Partner of the Pacific Islands Forum in 1990. In 2006, the relationship was formalised through the China-Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers' Meetings. In 2019, the second meeting emphasised cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The third meeting, held in May 2025 in Xiamen, was attended by 11 of the 14 PICs, excluding Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. PICs expressed their support for China's One-China principle by acknowledging Taiwan as part of China. PICs welcomed China's initiatives, aligning it with their own regional strategies like the 2050 Blue Pacific Continent vision.

Second, the economic relations between China and PICs. Between 1992 and 2021, the trade value between China and PICs increased from USD 153 million to USD 5.3 billion. By the end of 2021, China's investment in PICs increased to 2.72 billion USD. China has implemented plant projects, granted loans, provided technical assistance, and aided in building infrastructure such as roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, and stadiums. At the 2025 meeting, China pledged support for 200 "small but beautiful" development projects, two million USD in climate assistance, enhanced disaster management, and greater access to its markets. It also proposed cooperation in law enforcement, education, health, tourism, and media diplomacy. China emphasized that its aid is given without political conditions.

Third, cultural relations. As most of the influence was dominated by the Anglo-Pacific and Franco-Pacific relationships, informal people-to-people interactions were minimal before the 1970s. China is expanding cooperation in education, health, law enforcement, tourism, media, and public diplomacy. PICs have shown interest in deepening cultural ties and human resource exchanges, supporting mutual understanding and partnership.

### **What is China's interest in PICs and vice versa?**

First, strategic interests. PICs located in the heart of the Indo-Pacific offer China opportunities to expand its regional influence and counterbalance the United States and Australia. Engaging with China, diversifying the international partnerships for the PICs. This diversification reduces the over-reliance on any single bloc and enhances the multipolar approach.

Second, economic interests. Access to natural resources is a significant incentive for China. The development assistance and infrastructure financing provided by China help guarantee access to natural resources like fisheries, timber, and deep-sea minerals. PICs are gaining from increased connectivity, jobs, and market access under China's BRI. Additionally, PICs are exporting seafood and agricultural products to provide China's growing consumer base.

Third, political interests. China seeks diplomatic support from the PICs, especially on sensitive issues like Taiwan. Despite being small, each PIC has a vote in international organizations like the UN, and their support bolsters China's global standing and legitimacy. China presents itself as a reliable development partner, often providing aid without political conditions. This appeals to many PICs, who see China as offering viable alternatives to traditional donors. PICs gain international visibility by engaging with China. PICs use their votes to gain extra benefits in multilateral organisations and global governance.

### **How are the rest responding to the China-PIC relationship?**

China's growing engagement with Pacific Island Countries (PICs) is prompting responses from several other nations. The US sees this relationship as an "imminent threat" from China. US has increased aid, diplomatic visits and defense cooperation with PICs to counter global repercussions. Australia and New Zealand emphasise greater transparency from China regarding its military activities by expressing their concerns over China's military buildup. To counter the Chinese influence. France wants to strengthen regional ties through defense and cultural diplomacy.

## SHORT NOTE

### Shenzhou-19 Mission: A Profile

Gauri Gupta



*(Image Source: China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*

In April, the Shenzhou-19 mission astronauts safely landed near the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center. This was China's 14th crewed space mission, and the 8th mission for the Tiangong space station, where they conducted the longest spacewalk and science experiments. This mission aboard a Long March 2F rocket docked Tiangong's Tianhe core module. The three member crew of the mission - Commander Cai Xuzhe, and the two first taikonauts, Song Lingdong and Wang Haoze, were on six-month mission. This duration provided China with long-term experience in Low Earth Orbiting.

#### **What did the Shenzhou-19 mission achieve?**

First, the extravehicular work. Cai Xuzhe and Song Lingdong carried out a record-breaking 9-hour 6-minute spacewalk on 17 December 2024 and two further outings in January and March 2025. According to available reports, they were installing debris shields, photographing the hull, and validating the long-duration performance of the Feitian spacesuit, giving China more than 24 hours of fresh EVA experience in one flight.

Second, a brief note on the project's space science and technology. The crew conducted breeding experiments on three generations of fruit flies under near-zero magnetic fields, vascular ultrasound mapping, hearing, and vision monitoring. According to reports, a new astronaut health system was established that combines traditional Chinese and Western diagnostics. They also studied protein crystal growth, soft matter dynamics, and a brick sintered from simulated lunar soil mounted

outside Tiangong to test vacuum, radiation, and micrometeoroid effects. The crew also packed 102 biological and material specimens for return.

#### **What is the significance of the Shenzhou-19 mission?**

First, China's effort to find an alternative to the West-led International Space Station (ISS). The ISS is scheduled to retire in 2030. This would make China's Tiangong the only crewed space lab in orbit. Currently, they are already hosting United Nations-approved science experiments and plan on hosting astronauts from countries like Pakistan, Egypt, and Kenya. The Shenzhou 19 mission helped demonstrate that Tiangong can be staffed, do real science, and be safe, validating itself as a strong alternative.

Second, China's experiments for S&T development. It has carried out several cutting-edge research projects in quantum physics, biology, material tests, artificial photosynthesis, and robotics. It has broken the record for a nine-hour spacewalk and returned over 100 samples, showing China's emerging operation in space. The world's first orbit-based spinor Bose-Einstein condensate is another achievement of this mission.

## CHINA READER DAILY WIRE

### INTERNAL

#### 10.8 per cent increase in inter-regional trips during China's Dragon Boat Festival

On 02 June, *Global Times* reported that there is a 10.8 per cent year-on-year increase in inter-regional trips during the Dragon Boat Festival. China's Ministry of Transport reported that more than 230.97 million inter-regional trips were made on the first day of the festival. The majority of trips, estimated to be 209.00 million, were made by road, which was an increase of 11.3 per cent year-on-year. A surge of 5 per cent year on year is noted in railway passenger trips, while the waterway passenger volume surged 21.3 per cent year on year. Airlines handle 1.911 million passenger trips. The dragon boat festival, also known as the Duanwu Festival, falls on the fifth day of the fifth month on the Chinese lunar calendar. ( "[China reports 10.8 per cent increase in inter-regional trips during Dragon Boat Festival](#)," *Global Times*, 02 June 2025)

#### China's top military commander dies at 75

On 02 June, *SCMP* reported that China's Central Military Commission's former Deputy head Xu Qiliang died aged 75. He was also a senior air force general and served as deputy chief of the PLA General Staff. He was the first vice-chairman of the CMC from the air wing, the main command body of the People's Liberation Army, symbolising the Chinese military's greater emphasis on different branches of the armed forces. The state news agency Xinhua described Xu as "an outstanding leader of the Chinese People's Liberation Army." He joined the Air Force at the age of 16. In 2017, he was promoted to be the CMC's first-ranking vice chairman, where he became the most senior uniformed officer in the Chinese military. He was a member of the 25-member elite Politburo, where he spearheaded military reform. He consistently called for the modernisation of the PLA. The late commander noted that: "China has to keep pace with the times and emphasise the use of smart technology to achieve interdisciplinary innovation." ( "[Top Chinese military commander Xu Qiliang dies](#)," *SCMP*, 02 June 2025)

#### 78 million railway trips during the Dragon Boat Festival, a 9.9 per cent increase from 2024

On 04 June, China State Railway group reported more than 78.75 million railway passenger trips taken during the Dragon Boat Festival holiday. Between 30 May and 03 June, the trips set a new record for the holiday period. The network

increased operations with an average of 12,142 passenger trains running each day, up 9.9 per cent from the same period last year. The enhanced services include streamlined ticketing and transfer procedures, improved catering options, and tailored assistance for elderly passengers, children, and the differently abled. ( "[China reports over 78 million railway passenger trips during holiday](#)," *CGTN*, 04 June 2025)

#### 36th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre

On 04 June, the US Secretary of State and Taiwan's president stated that the world will never forget the Tiananmen Square massacre. US top diplomat Marco Rubio said in a statement: "Today we commemorate the bravery of the Chinese people who were killed as they tried to exercise their fundamental freedoms, as well as those who continue to suffer persecution as they seek accountability and justice for the events of June 4, 1989." In response, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian said: "Erroneous statements by the US side maliciously distort historical facts, deliberately attack China's political system and developmental path, and seriously interfere in China's internal affairs." Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te praised the bravery of the protestors and said: "Authoritarian governments often choose to silence and forget history, while democratic societies choose to preserve the truth and refuse to forget those who gave their lives – and their dreams – to the idea of human rights." The People's Liberation Army opened fire on the unarmed peaceful protestors at the pro-democracy demonstrations held in Tiananmen Square. It resulted in the massacre of numerous protestors and bystanders in Beijing. The government arrested thousands of protestors and executed many. (Helen Davidson, "[World won't forget Tiananmen Square, US and Taiwan say on 36th anniversary of massacre](#)," *The Guardian*, 04 June 2025)

#### Citigroup Inc. to cut 3,500 jobs in China, reports Reuters

On 05 June, *Reuters* reported that Citigroup Inc. plans to reduce the number of employees at two of its technology centres in China by about 3,500. The measure aims to simplify and shrink global tech operations to improve risk and data management. In a statement, the bank stated that the reduction of staff at the China Citi Solution Centres in Shanghai and Dalian is

expected to be done by the start of the fourth quarter this year. For Citi's businesses globally, the service and technology unit in China provides financial technology and operations services. (Selena Li, "[Citi to cut 3,500 tech jobs in China in global revamp](#)," *Reuters*, 05 June 2025)

### **China's National Health Commission to offer epidurals for childbirth in tertiary hospitals**

On 09 June, *Reuters* reported that China's National Health Commission (NHC) mandated that all tertiary hospitals (with over 500 beds) offer epidural anesthesia for childbirth, with secondary hospitals (over 100 beds) following suit by 2027. This is a proactive move aimed at fostering a more "friendly childbearing environment" amid a three-year decline in birth rates. Currently, only around 30 per cent of Chinese pregnant women use epidurals, which substantially lags developed countries where usage usually exceeds 70 per cent. For instance, approximately 82 per cent in France and over 67 per cent in the US and Canada. The World Health Organisation (WHO) endorses epidural anaesthesia as a safe pain-relief option for healthy women requesting it. The NHC stressed that this policy would "improve the comfort level and security of medical services" and "enhance people's sense of happiness," thereby promoting a friendlier environment for childbirth. Additionally, several provinces are beginning to include childbirth anaesthesia in their medical insurance schemes, alleviating costs for expectant parents. ("[China to make all hospitals offer epidurals to incentivise childbirth](#)," *Reuters*, 09 June 2025)

### **China's ultra-high voltage project to deliver power from Xinjiang to Chongqing**

On 10 June, State Grid Corporation of China announced the operation of the 800-kilowatt ultra-high voltage (UHV) direct current transmission project linking Xinjiang's Hami with southwest China's Chongqing. This is the third project to transmit electricity from energy-rich Xinjiang to other parts of the country. It is expected to contribute to economic development in both Xinjiang and Chongqing. It will also enhance regional coordinated developments, facilitate rural revitalisation, and help improve public welfare. This project amplifies Xinjiang's efforts to position itself as a national energy strategic supply base. ("[New ultra-high voltage project begins operation to deliver power from Xinjiang to Chongqing](#)," *People's Daily Online*, 11 June 2025)

China's State Council introduces guidelines for innovation development in Shenzhen

On 11 June, *CGTN* reported that, according to a new set of guidelines, China will advance comprehensive reforms in the southern city of Shenzhen via greater innovation and opening up in the city. The guidelines were issued by China's Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council, focusing on breaking institutional barriers in education, science, and talent development. It emphasises strengthening the integration of innovation, industry, capital, and talent chains. The guideline stated that Shenzhen will carry out reforms to enhance data security governance and regulatory capabilities and secure cross-border data flow mechanisms in compliance with laws, regulations, and relevant requirements. ("[China unveils guidelines to deepen reforms in Shenzhen](#)," *CGTN*, 11 June 2025)

### **China allocates 40 million yuan for emergency rescue and disaster relief efforts**

On 15 June, *Global Times* reported that China earmarked 40 million yuan from the central government fund to support emergency rescue and disaster relief efforts. The funds were allocated by China's Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Emergency Management. The MOF stated that it is focused on Hainan, Guangdong province, and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The statement added that Typhoon Wutip brought heavy rains and caused floods in the southern region. The fund will be used for the evacuation and resettlement of affected people, the removal of hazardous objects, and risk mitigation. ("[China earmarks 40 mln yuan for provinces' disaster response as typhoon hits](#)," *Global Times*, 15 June 2025)

### **Xinjiang's salty soil ploughed into fertile land, reports SCMP**

On 16 June, *SCMP* reported that a Chinese agricultural scientist turned 40 hectares of Xinjiang's salty soil into fertile land. The land is now capable of supporting multiple crops, aiding food security as part of the national strategy. This happened after seven years of effort in the Uyghur autonomous region's Shiezhi by a local university research team. The land will now be used to cultivate wheat, rapeseed, and other crops. These experiments are part of a national effort to reclaim saline-alkaline land and find a solution to mounting concerns over food supplies exacerbated by climate change, volatile global markets, and geopolitical pressures. (June Xia, "[China's Xinjiang turns salt desert into fertile farmland in food security push](#)," *SCMP*, 16 June 2025)

### **China's Hunan and Yunnan provinces are using special bonds to repay local debts**

On 20 June, *SCMP* reported that Hunan and Yunnan have become the first provinces in China to use special-purpose bonds to repay debts owed by local governments. These bonds are usually meant for infrastructure projects, but are now being used to cover overdue payments to businesses. Hunan allocated 20 billion yuan, while Yunnan set aside 35.6 billion yuan from their 2025 quotas. This change supports Beijing's push to reduce financial risks and ensure timely payments to firms. New national rules require faster repayments, especially to small and medium-sized enterprises. Experts say the move helps but may not be enough, as local debts are often linked through complex ties with state-owned enterprises. Many businesses still face long payment delays, and the central government has not yet revealed how much of the national bond quota will be used to pay off arrears. (He Huifeng, "[Word is bonds: China's provinces use special-purpose funds to pay debts](#)," *SCMP*, 20 June 2025)

### **China's Labubu dolls viral toy or cultural icon, says an opinion in BBC**

On 20 June, an opinion in *BBC* reported that Labubu dolls, made by China's company Pop Mart, have become a worldwide trend. These furry figures have big eyes and toothy grins. Some people think they are cute, others say they are strange. Still, fans in many countries wait in long lines to buy them. The dolls started in China but became global after celebrities like Rihanna and Lisa from Blackpink shared them online. Pop Mart now sells Labubu in more than 30 countries. Some stores have paused sales because of high demand. Pop Mart profits have nearly tripled, and nearly 40 per cent of sales come from outside China. Labubu dolls are often sold in blind boxes, which adds to the excitement. Fans like the surprise of finding rare versions. Some collectors shake boxes to guess what is inside. The Chinese government sees Labubu as a symbol of cultural success. The dolls now play a small part in how the world sees modern China. (Fan Wang & Adam Hancock, "[Labubu: How the Pop Mart dolls conquered the world](#)," *BBC*, 20 June 2025)

### **Summer Davos Forum to be held in Tianjin province from 24 to 26 June, says CGTN**

On 22 June, *CGTN* reported that the Summer Davos Forum will be held in China's Tianjin Municipality from 24 to 26 June. The forum is also known as the World Economic Forum's 16th Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2025. The theme of this year is "Entrepreneurship in

the New Era." At a media conference, the organisers announced that the forum will attract over 1,700 participants from more than 90 countries. The forum aims to explore how entrepreneurship and innovation can drive global growth. The five key focus areas are new energy and materials, investing in people and the planet, disrupted industries, and outlook on China and the world economy. A National Development and Reform Commission official stated that China will reaffirm its commitment to pursuing high-level opening up and to sharing opportunities brought about by its development with the rest of the world. World Economic Forum Gim Huay Neo stated that there will be over 40 sessions, including the opening plenary, that will be livestreamed, alongside the release of key reports such as the 2025 Energy Transition Index and Top 10 Emerging Technologies. ("[2025 Summer Davos to be held in China's Tianjin](#)," *CGTN*, 22 June 2025)

### **China observes National Energy Efficiency Promotion Week, says CGTN**

On 23 June, *CGTN* reported that China launched the National Energy Efficiency Promotion Week from 23 to 29 June in Qingdao city. The theme is energy saving and efficiency improvement. National Low-Carbon Day will be observed on June 25. On-site activities on energy conservation achievements, green consumption, digital empowerment, and public participation will be hosted by national and local authorities along with exhibitions. Beijing's significant milestones, such as the fifth anniversary of China's carbon peak and carbon neutrality commitment, and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the energy efficiency labelling system, will be highlighted. In this 34<sup>th</sup> year of commemoration, promotional activities on energy efficiency improvement in industry, energy-saving and carbon reduction in the building sector, and green, low-carbon transformation in the transportation sector will be held. ("[National energy-saving week launched in East China](#)," *CGTN*, 23 June 2025)

### **China purges senior military officer from the Central Military Commission**

On 27 June, *The Guardian* reported that China's senior military officer, Admiral Miao, has been dismissed from the Central Military Commission (CMC). CMC is China's top military body led by President Xi Jinping. His expulsion was followed by the dismissal of other high-ranking military officials and defence ministers. These officials were removed due to serious violations of discipline, often connected to corruption. This action was part of an anti-corruption drive

within the People's Liberation Army. Admiral Miao is the eighth Central Military Commission (CMC) officer to be terminated under President Xi Jinping's leadership, marking a significant military shakeup. The article indicates that these purges could undermine the People's Liberation Army's unified and disciplined army as the president seeks to project global strength. (["Top Chinese general ousted from body that oversees China's military," \*The Guardian\*, 27 June 2025](#))

### **Second wave of torrential rain in Guizhou, 40,000 residents evacuated**

On 28 June, *Reuters* reported that the torrential rain struck in Rongjiang in China's Guizhou province for the second time in a week, and this situation has led to the evacuation of over 40,000 residents. The city is located at the confluence of three rivers and a home to 300,000 people had already suffered record rainfall earlier this week, which left six people dead and over 80,000 people displaced. Water levels peaked at 256.7 meters, which is the highest since 1954. Once poverty-stricken Rongjiang was experiencing a tourism boom recently due to soccer matches, which is now under seven meters of water. The disaster underscores extreme weather events in China, where officials warn of black swan events like dam failures. Due to extreme climatic conditions, about 13 rivers in China are above warning levels. (["Heavy rain hits China's flood-stricken Guizhou for second time in a week," \*Reuters\*, 28 June 2025](#))

### **Hong Kong's last active pro-democracy, The League of Social Democrats," disbands**

On 30 June, *Reuters* reported that Hong Kong's last active pro-democracy group, The League of Social Democrats, will disband due to immense political pressure stemming from the national security crackdown. The Left of Social Democrats was founded in 2006 and was known for its radical street protests, becoming the third major opposition party to shut down in the past two years. The founder of the party, Leung Kwok-hung, is jailed for subversion in the high-profile "47 democrats' case". The president of the party stated that they had no other choice but to dissolve for their safety, as the bank accounts of the members of the party were frozen and Beijing's 2020 national security law and 2024 Article 23 criminalized protests in China. The dissolution of the party marks a significant shift in the city's once vibrant democratic civil society. (["Hong Kong's last active pro-democracy group says it will disband amid security crackdown," 30 June 2025](#))

### **China's controversial legal crackdown on gay authors, reports BBC**

On 30 June, the *BBC* reported that China launched legal actions against female writers of gay fiction, danmei. The action has arrested over 30 women since February 2025 for allegedly violating pornography laws. The crackdown has targeted not just authors but also readers, fuelling a rare public debate about censorship, gender, and creative freedom. The writers were accused of producing and distributing obscene materials, were some of them faced over 10 years in jail. Critics argue that while heterosexual erotica escapes legal scrutiny, works like danmei, which subvert traditional gender norms, face harsh legal punishment. Meanwhile, legal experts raised concerns over the vagueness of laws, where viewers over 5000 views can lead to criminal charges. Danmei is seen as a threat to traditional family values in China by the state, as birth rates are decreasing in China. (["Every word has come back to haunt me': China cracks down on women who write gay erotica," \*BBC\*, 30 June 2025](#))

### **Communist Party of China has over 100 million members, reports CGTN**

On 30 June, *CGTN* reported that the Communist Party of China has reported a steady increase in membership and organizational strength, ahead of its 104<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary. The communist Party of China's Central Committee Organization Department released a statistical report stating the party's membership has reached 100.27 million by the end of 2024, which is a stark increase of approximately 1.09 million from 2023. The number of primary-level party organizations also increased to 5.25 million, an increase of 74,000 over the previous year. This sustained growth is a result of the Communist Party's political vision and grassroots consolidation. The primary-level party organizations play an important role in the implementation of party policies at the community level to reinforce ideological unity. This growth will help the party to strengthen ties with citizens amidst evolving domestic and global challenges. (["CPC grows stronger as membership surpasses 100 million," \*CGTN\*, 30 June 2025](#))

### **China to revamp its functions and responsibilities for the top decision-making bodies, reports SCMP**

On 30 June, *SCMP* reported that under the Central Committee, China's Communist Party is going to formalize boundaries and responsibilities of its powerful policy coordination groups. In a meeting chaired by

President Xi Jinping, new rules were reviewed by the 24-member Politburo. The review aims to standardize the functions of Central Commissions and party leading groups to prevent bureaucratic overreach, as these groups play a central role in areas like finance and Taiwan affairs in guiding national policy. These reforms seek to enhance efficiency, coordination, and accountability across state and party organs by ensuring that such groups focus on planning and oversight rather than direct policy implementation. Analysts note that this move is crucial for improving China's policy formulation and leadership system. ("[New rules to set boundaries for China's top decision-making bodies](#)," *SCMP*, 30 June 2025)

## EXTERNAL

### **2nd Belt and Road Conference on Science and Technology to be organised in June**

On 03 June, *Global Times* reported that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Belt and Road Conference on Science and Technology exchange will take place from 10-12 June in China's Sichuan Province, Chengdu. Participants from over 100 countries and international organisations are set to attend. China's Ministry of Science and Technology Vice Minister Chen Jiachang stated that the conference aims to promote technological opening up and cooperation, guided by the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind. He added that the conference will advance the implementation of the International Science and Technology Cooperation Initiative and provide an international platform for tech exchanges in areas such as youth scientist communications, policy dialogue, cutting-edge area exchanges, and industrial technology synergy. It aims to strengthen consensus, enhance cooperation, and promote cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration among Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) participating countries. The conference is co-hosted by government agencies and local governments. ("[Second Belt and Road conference on sci-tech exchange to kick off, attracting participants from over 100 countries, regions](#)," *Global Times*, 3 June 2025)

### **China's rare earth export control affecting industries, says an editorial in SCMP**

On 03 June, an editorial in *SCMP* looked into China's recent clampdown on critical mineral exports sent shockwaves through the global supply chain. This is particularly affecting industries dependent on rare earth elements such as automotive, aerospace, defence, and semiconductors. Since April 2025, Beijing has

suspended the export of rare earth alloys, mixtures, and magnets, which are vital components in products such as electric motors, sensors, and wind turbines. As a result, thousands of export applications from European firms remain in limbo, raising alarms across major economies. German and Indian automakers have warned of possible production halts, with Germany's VDA auto lobby specifically pointing to shortages that could affect essential components like windshield-wiper motors and anti-lock braking systems. In response, countries such as Japan, India, and EU members are pushing for urgent negotiations with Beijing to ease restrictions. The US is preparing to invoke emergency powers under the Defence Production Act to boost domestic production of critical minerals and reduce dependency on China, which currently controls over 90 per cent of the world's rare earth magnet processing. Notably, the US imports nearly 72 per cent of its rare earth supply from China. Antimony, another critical mineral, saw its price surge by 250 per cent in 2024 following export curbs, reaching USD 40,000 per metric ton, highlighting the severe economic and strategic impact of China's move. ("[Global alarms rise as China's critical mineral export curbs take hold](#)," *Reuters*, 04 June 2025)

### **China's Commerce Minister and WTO Director discuss global trade challenges and reforms**

On 03 June, China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao met with Director-General of the WTO Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in Paris, France. The discussion centered on the current global trade challenges and the imperative need for WTO reforms. Wentao highlighted concerns over certain member states unilaterally imposing tariffs, urging the WTO to enhance its oversight mechanisms to ensure that such actions align with established multilateral trade rules. He emphasized China's steadfast commitment to upholding the multilateral trading system and advocated for the WTO to play a more pivotal role in global economic governance. Furthermore, Wang called for the restoration of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism and the acceleration of agreements related to fisheries subsidies, investment facilitation, and e-commerce. He also proposed initiating discussions on emerging topics such as trade and the environment, supply chain resilience, and artificial intelligence. In a show of continued support, China renewed its backing of the WTO's Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) and Accessions Programme through a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding, as noted by

Director-General Okonjo-Iweala. This meeting underscores China's proactive stance in advocating for a fair and rules-based international trading environment amidst escalating global trade tensions.

("Chinese Commerce Minister meets WTO Director-General, urging WTO to strengthen oversight of unilateral tariffs arbitrarily imposed by certain members," *The Global Times*, 04 June 2025)

### **China's Commerce Minister calls for WTO scrutiny on unilateral Tariffs**

On 03 June, during a WTO ministerial meeting in Paris, China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao called on Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to increase the WTO's scrutiny of unilateral tariffs applied by certain members. He also emphasised China's commitment to multilateral trade rules. He also suggested that all WTO members, even China, should have neutral and rule-based policy guidance. Wang called for a swift restoration of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism and for further progress on fisheries subsidies, investment facilitation, and e-commerce agreements. He further pointed to China's continued focus on development, agriculture, and new issues, including artificial intelligence, supply chains, and the environment. In addition, China reaffirmed its coverage of the WTO's Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) and Accessions Programme with a new template. After the meeting, Okonjo-Iweala took to X to recognize their partnership and its importance to WTO-China cooperation in the current period of turbulence in global trade.

("Chinese Commerce Minister meets WTO Director-General, urging WTO to strengthen oversight of unilateral tariffs arbitrarily imposed by certain members," *Global Times*, 04 June 2025)

### **Vatican appoints China's first bishop**

On 12 June, *SCMP* reported that China expressed its willingness to promote better relations with the Vatican after the appointment of China's first bishop under the new pope. On 05 June, the Vatican stated Pope Leo named Joseph Lin Yuntuan, 73, as an auxiliary bishop in Fuzhou, Fujian. Beijing recognised the appointment on the same day. According to Vatican News, the Vatican views it as "a further fruit of the dialogue between the Holy See and the Chinese authorities" and "a significant step in the diocese's communal journey". According to the Catholic Church in China, Lin pledged to "love the country and the church" and uphold the principle of independence and self-management of the church, as well as the path of

Catholicism's sinicisation. (Kawala Xie, "[Beijing hoping for closer ties with Vatican after Pope Leo names first Chinese bishop](#)," *SCMP*, 12 June 2025)

### **China condemns US strike on Iran at the IAEA meeting, reports CGTN**

On 23 June, *CGTN* reported the strong condemnation of China in an emergency meeting convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). China's permanent representative to the IAEA rebuked the US strike on Iranian nuclear facilities, where he stated the irresponsibility of the US being a permanent member of the UNSC is a clear violation of international law and the UN charter. China condemns the attacks of a nuclear state on a non-nuclear state, despite being a member of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Under IAEA safeguard measures, China expresses its concerns about attacks on nuclear facilities. China warned of spiralling escalations in the Middle East and urged Israel to halt all military actions in the region. China also emphasized the importance of Iran's sovereignty and urged problem-solving through dialogue and negotiations, and through coercion. Li urged the US to make efforts to de-escalate the conflict. ("[Chinese envoy at IAEA: U.S. strike on Iran's nuclear facilities 'egregious, unprecedented'](#)," *CGTN*, 23 June 2025)

### **CMG President meets International Olympic Committee leaders**

On 23 June, *CGTN* reported the meeting between China Media Group President Shen Haixiong, the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Kirsty Coventry, and the honorary President for life of the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne, to strengthen strategic cooperation. Shen congratulated both the new leaders and emphasized the longstanding partnership between the IOC and CMC in copyright agreements, event broadcasting, and cultural exchange. CMG was appreciated for the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics as the exclusive producer of 8K broadcast signals. The meeting also extended CMG's interest to enhance Olympic values through collaboration in AI, e-sports, and digital innovation. The meeting emphasized CMG's vital role in promoting the Olympic movement. ("[CMG president meets with IOC's Bach, Coventry](#)," *CGTN*, 23 June 2025)

### **Summer Davos meeting concludes in Tianjin**

On 24 June, *SCMP* reported that Summer Davos (16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the New Champions) concludes in Tianjin with over 1,500 participants from government, business and

international organisations. China's Premier Li Qiang delivered the keynote address, focusing on global economic cooperation during the time of uncertainty. He called for joint efforts to address trade tensions, geopolitical risks and slowing global growth. He urged countries to reject protectionism and avoid turning economic issues into political conflicts. Li stressed the need to build bridges, not barriers, and called for better coordination of global supply chains. A major theme of the meeting was China's push to become a consumption-driven economy. Li stated that expanding domestic demand will create new opportunities for global businesses. He also pledged support for foreign investment and a fair business environment. Another topic of the key discussions at the forum included the rise of the Global South, the shift toward digital and service trade, and the growing number of regional trade agreements. The meeting focused on entrepreneurship and cooperation as solutions for a disrupted global economy. ([“At ‘Summer Davos’, Li Qiang says China will be major consumption power: as it happened,” SCMP](#), 25 June 2025)

### **China resumes rare-earth exports, but industrialist's express concerns over the fragility of supply chains, reports Reuters**

On 30 June, *Reuters* reported that China has resumed the exports of rare earth magnets, which are vital to the global auto industry. Due to China's export restrictions in April, there was a 75% drop in shipments, and license approvals are accelerating, covering about 60 percent of European suppliers. Though this has eased the fears of mass production halts, hundreds of permits are still pending, particularly for the US-linked firms. The US-China deal is expected to expedite shipments to American companies. Though the outlook has slightly improved, automakers like Ford and Stellantis faced shutdowns or near-disruptions. Despite progress, industrial leaders warn of a fragile and uncertain, rare-earth supply chain as approval delays of over 90 days persist. ([“China's rare earths are flowing again, but not freely,” Reuters](#), 30 June 2025)

### **Dalai Lama to announce his successor as China onlooks on, reports Reuters**

On 30 June, *Reuters* reported that the Dalai Lama is expected to reveal key details of his succession during a major three-day religious gathering in Dharamshala. He stated that his reincarnation is expected to be born outside China, likely in India, challenging Beijing's claims to control the selection process of his successor. China is trying to meddle in Tibetan religious traditions by insisting on appointing the successor and by

labelling the Dalai Lama as a separatist. Tibetan officials emphasize that reincarnation is vital for preserving their distinct culture and spiritual legacy. Tibetan officials reiterated that a system is in place to ensure continuity even if China tries to meddle in Tibetan affairs. ([“Dalai Lama set to reveal succession plan as China watches,” Reuters](#), 30 June 2025)

## **ECONOMY**

### **China's economy demonstrates deflation in 2025, reports Reuters**

On 09 June, *Reuters* reported that May 2025 saw China's economic landscape demonstrate deepening deflationary pressures. In the backdrop, both consumer and producer prices continued to decline, extending a four-month streak of consumer price drops amid persistent headwinds. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) fell 0.1 per cent year-on-year for the second consecutive month and slid 0.2 per cent from April, “matching economists' forecasts”, signalling weak household demand and cautious consumer behaviour. Meanwhile, factory-gate prices plunged 3.3 per cent, marking the steepest producer price index (PPI) decline in 22 months. This worsened from April's 2.7 per cent drop and outperformed economist projections of a 3.2 per cent contraction. Chief economist of Pinpoint Asset Management, Zhiwei Zhang, highlighted “persistent deflationary pressure” and pointed to a steepening “price war in the auto sector” as a symptom of fierce competition driving down inflation, while expressing concern that property prices had “resumed their downward trend”. ([“China's factory-gate deflation worst in 22 months as economic headwinds mount,” Reuters](#), 09 June 2025)

### **PBC Governor announces eight measures to open up the financial market**

On 18 June, *Global Times* reported that the People's Bank of China's Governor Pan Gongsheng announced eight measures to open up the financial market. These announcements to strengthen Shanghai's position as an international financial centre were made at the 2025 Lujiazui Forum in Shanghai. The eight measures include establishing an interbank market trade repository and a digital yuan international operation centre. The interbank will systematically collect and analyse transaction data across various financial sub-markets, including bonds, currencies, derivatives, gold, and bills. A licensed personal credit agency aims to improve China's credit system. The Shanghai Lingang New Area will launch a pilot program to accelerate trade

liberalisation. The measures also include developing free trade offshore bonds, financial channels for China's enterprises to expand overseas, as well as to Belt and Road partner companies. PBC stated its support in piloting innovative structural monetary policy tools, which include various relending programs, expanding carbon reduction support instruments, and facilitating the issuance of technology innovation bonds by private equity institutions. Lastly, in cooperation with the China Securities Regulatory Commission, the PBC will study and promote the trading of yuan foreign-exchange futures. (["China's central bank unveils eight major financial opening-up measures at 2025 Lujiazui Forum in Shanghai,"](#) *Global Times*, 18 June 2025)

### **China's 618 shopping festival sets new sales records, says CGTN**

On 20 June, *CGTN* reported that China's 618 shopping festival saw record-breaking sales in 2025. E-commerce platforms like JD.com and Tmall reported huge growth in orders. JD.com processed over 2.2 billion orders and saw mobile and home appliance sales rise sharply. Tmall said: "More than 450 brands made over 100 million yuan each." Trade-in programs encouraged people to replace old products with new ones. These were supported by government subsidies and discounts. This boosted sales in many sectors like cars, phones, and home devices. Instant retail also grew fast. Customers ordered items online and got them quickly through local delivery. JD.com had more than 120,000 couriers and handled over 25 million orders a day. Meituan saw a big jump in smart device and education product sales. People also spent more on lifestyle products. These included pet care, anime-themed items, and entertainment. Ticket sales and leisure spending rose sharply. AI tools helped sellers lower costs and market faster. JD.com used digital hosts and virtual agents to run livestreams. Taobao and JD Cloud also gave merchants free AI tools to make videos and ads. (["Record sales for China's 618 festival, fueled by trade-ins and AI,"](#) *CGTN*, 20 June 2025)

## **OUTERSPACE**

### **"Mengzhou," the new generation manned spacecraft of China**

On 18 June, China's new-generation manned spacecraft, the Mengzhou, was developed by its designers, who elaborated on its innovative features. On 17 June, it underwent an escape flight test at zero altitude. China's Aerospace and Technology Corporation's Yu Kang, the contractor of the Mengzhou spacecraft

development, explained the operational difference between the Mengzhou manned spacecraft and the current Shenzhou manned spacecraft. The former jettisons its heat shield, igniting about one meter above the ground to further reduce landing speed, while the latter jettisons its heat shield before landing, then inflates buffer airbags. Yu stated that airbags are fully inflated before touchdown, and through the combined effect of parachutes and buffer airbags, they cushion the landing and reduce the impact on the capsule. China Academy of Space Technology's expert Pang Zhihao stated that instead of using buffer engines for deceleration before landing, six inflatable airbags are used to help the capsule achieve a "soft landing." (Deng Xiaoci, ["Developers elaborate on innovation of China's new-gen crewed spacecraft Mengzhou,"](#) *Global Times*, 18 June 2025)

### **China launches its latest communication satellite, "ChinaSat 9C"**

On 21 June, *CGTN* reported the successful launch of China's latest communication satellite, ChinaSat 9C, from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in Sichuan province on 20 June 2025 at 8:37 pm. ChinaSat 9C satellite is expected to take over services from its predecessor, working in both Ku and Ka bands around 92 degrees east. It is expected to support expanded telecom capabilities. The liftoff of the satellite was done by the Long March-3B/E carrier rocket, which placed the satellite into its predetermined geostationary transfer orbit. The mission marked the 582<sup>ND</sup> flight of the Long March rocket family. The Long March-3B/E is a three-stage, four-booster launcher primarily designed for heavy geosynchronous payloads run by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. The 582<sup>nd</sup> flight of the Long March rocket family highlights China's growing reliability in orbital deployments. (["China launches ChinaSat-9C satellite into orbit,"](#) *CGTN*, 21 June 2025); (["China launches Satellite ChinaSat-9C,"](#) *Xinhua Net*, 20 June 2025)

### **Taikonauts advance space medicine and metabolism research, says Global Times**

On June 23, *Global Times* reported that taikonauts made progress in space experiments involving vision, microbiota, and nutrient metabolism. Taikonauts are China's astronauts. Using specialised equipment, the crew completed tests on how microgravity affects vertical visual fields and brain focus. The data will help improve future mission planning and space interface design. The taikonauts also studied metabolic changes using a Raman spectrometer. By analysing urine samples, they refined indicators to track key nutrients. These

findings will support further research on bone health and body regulation in space. The team continued working with their smart robot assistant “Xiao Hang” to improve human-robot interaction and coordination. They also carried out routine maintenance on life support and exercise systems. The experiments are part of China’s focus on space medicine and long-term human missions. ([“Chinese taikonauts conduct space experiments related to microbiota and nutrient metabolism,” \*Global Times\*, 23 June 2023](#))

### **China’s Shenzhou-20 crew completes second EVA**

On 27 June, *CGTN* reported that according to the China Manned Space Agency, the Shenzhou 20 mission successfully completed its second extra-vehicular activity (EVA). With the support of an astronaut, ground teams, and space stations, Robotic arms, crew members carried out a 6.5-hour spacewalk. They installed a debris protection device and performed inspection and maintenance tasks on external equipment. They also installed an interface adapter to the extravehicular platform, and it is expected to reduce the duration of future spacewalks by 40 minutes. The crew is expected to focus on research areas like space life lessons, microgravity physics, material science, space medicine, and advanced aerospace technology. This event marks a significant milestone in China’s orbital capabilities. ([“China’s Shenzhou-20 astronauts complete second EVA,” \*CGTN\*, 27 June 2025](#))

## DEFENCE

### **China develops AI-powered torpedo to detect real submarines from decoys, reports SCMP**

On 04 June, *SCMP* reported that China is advancing its submarine warfare capabilities by developing an ultra-fast torpedo powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and super cavitation technology. This initiative aims to enhance the torpedo’s ability to distinguish real submarines from sophisticated decoys, a challenge highlighted in the Chinese film *Operation Leviathan*, where American submarines use acoustic holograms to mislead Chinese torpedoes. In a peer-reviewed study published in April 2025 in the journal *Command Control & Simulation*, researchers from the PLA Navy Armament Department and China State Shipbuilding Corporation reported that their AI system achieved a 92.2 per cent success rate in differentiating actual submarines from decoys, a significant improvement over the legacy system. The torpedo employs super cavitation, a technique

that envelops the projectile in a gas bubble, drastically reducing water resistance and allowing for high-speed underwater travel. This technology, previously utilized in Russia’s VA-111 Shkval torpedo, is now being enhanced with AI to improve target recognition and tracking. The development underscores China’s commitment to integrating advanced technologies into its military arsenal, potentially altering the dynamics of undersea warfare. ([“China is working on an ultra-fast torpedo powered by AI for submarine warfare,” \*SCMP\*, 04 June 2025](#))

### **China’s J-35A jet to appear at the 55th Paris Air Show**

On 13 June, *Global Times* reported that China’s second type of fifth-generation fighter jet, J-35 A, is scheduled to make an international appearance in model form at the upcoming 55<sup>th</sup> Paris Air Show. The Shenyang Aircraft Design and Research Institute Wang Yongqing stated that the J-35 series is developed with an “air-sea twin configuration” approach and is expected to play the role of a “point guard” in systematic combat operations. He added that the “one aircraft, multiple variants” concept is expected to be produced in large numbers, and it aims for high efficiency in resource utilisation. It also expects to reduce future maintenance costs and improve the logistical efficiency of the equipment. The features of this aircraft include enhanced stealth performance and exceptional combat capabilities for coordinated operations. (Liu Xuanzun & Fan Wei, [“Exclusive: China can build a lot of J-35 fighters, top designer tells \*GT\*,” \*Global Times\*, 13 June 2025](#))

### **China’s nuclear arsenal is growing faster than any other country, reports SIPRI**

On 16 June, *SCMP* reported that, according to the latest Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report, China’s nuclear arsenal is growing faster than any other country. It added that China has included 100 more warheads to its nuclear stockpile each year since 2023. SIPRI Associate Senior Fellow Hans Kristensen said: “There could be several factors behind the rapid warhead build-up, including President Xi Jinping’s call that China must be a world-class military power by the middle of the century”. The report further stated that China’s intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) force could match that of Russia and the US in a decade. (Seong Hyeon Choi, [“China’s nuclear stockpile is growing fast, ICBMs may match US, Russia around 2030: SIPRI,” \*SCMP\*, 16 June 2025](#))

### **Increasing interest in China's military academies, says an editorial in SCMP**

On 23 June, an editorial in *SCMP* stated that there is an increase in military academies and a rise in interest in the military among young Chinese citizens. In May, China's defence ministry on the social media platform Weibo stated that three new military academics would start recruiting high school graduates, and the post received more than eight million views on social media. While the number of recruits remains the same, military education restructuring aims to create a more efficient and higher-quality system to nurture talent and to achieve the "core need for war preparation." The defence ministry has removed the three-year work experience requirement for the commander post, and this year onwards, after graduating from military school, students can sit postgraduate entrance exams. China's education ministry stated that tuition subsidies, preferential admission benefits and employment policies, and post-retirement skills would be awarded to students who join the military. The editorial argues that these modernisation plans will turn the PLA into a world-class fighting force by the middle of the century. The editorial believes that tension with the US and war films, and compulsory patriotic education are the reasons behind the boost in interest in military education. Haolan College Application Consultancy education agent Xie Yuzhong said: "Today's youngsters have a very strong sense of patriotism and hope to become military talent with strong professional skills who can serve the country," and stated that high school graduates had shown interest in military colleges and defence-related majors. (Carl Zhang & Edith Mao, "[Why more young Chinese have military academies in their sights](#)," *SCMP*, 23 June 2025)

### **China unveils its jet-powered Ekranoplan, the "Bohai Sea Monster"**

On 30 June, *Naval News* reported that China has built a new large jet-powered Ekranoplan, the 'Bohai Sea Monster', which marks one of its most ambitious projects. Ekranoplans or Wing-in-Ground effect vehicles fly just above water and are expected to combine the features of ships, airplanes, and hovercraft. This aircraft is known for its stealthy, high-speed, low-altitude transport, which was once dominated by soviet engineering. The new model created by China has four jet engines, a flying boat hull, and a twin tail configuration, which could have a military purpose, possibly for Island resupply or amphibious operations. This development underscores the growing influence in naval and air operations to achieve its strategic goals.

("China Builds New Large Jet-Powered Ekranoplan," *Naval News*, 30 June 2025)

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **China's plans to develop a space weather monitoring and warning network, say SCMP**

On 19 June, *SCMP* reported that China plans to construct the world's most comprehensive space weather monitoring and warning network. International Meridian Circle Programme is a ground-based system that comprises of largest chain of Earth observatories. It will pass through more than ten countries and regions. The Internet Meridian Circle Programme aims to build a matrix of surveillance stations to better understand and forecast solar activity. The project was officially launched during the second Belt and Road Conference of Science and Technology. According to the Head of the Project Wang Chi, The IMCP now has agreements with 36 international organisations and research institutes from countries that also include France, Sweden, Japan, Norway, Canada, Mexico and Uganda. It aims to conduct global monitoring of Earth's space environment. (Dannie Peng, "[China to lead global space weather network to monitor dangerous solar eruptions](#)," *SCMP*, 19 June 2025)

### **Huawei unveils its in-house software ecosystem**

On 21 June, *SCMP* reported that amidst the ongoing US sanctions, China's technology giant Huawei Technologies unveiled its in-house software ecosystem. Huawei Technologies introduced its latest proprietary operating system, HarmonyOS 6, at its annual developer conference, along with new AI models and its advanced Cloud Matrix 384 AI rack architecture. HarmonyOS 6 has inbuilt AI agent capabilities and a development toolkit that enables the creation of AI agents without building foundation models. The company also introduced updated Pangu 5.5 AI models with a natural language processing model, which has 718 billion parameters, aimed at industrial sectors like medicine, finance, and the automotive sector. Huawei's HarmonyOS feature is now running on over 103 million smartphones and 21 million tablets, highlighting Huawei's growing self-resilience in the hardware and software industries amidst the choppy waters of heightened geopolitical tensions in the global tech industry. ("[Huawei opens HarmonyOS 6 to developers. Unveils AI agents and Cloud architecture updates](#)," *SCMP*, 21 June 2025)

### **China's rare earth magnet exports drop by 50 per cent in May, say Reuters**

On 20 June, *Reuters* reported that China's rare earth magnet exports fell by over 50 per cent in May. Shipments dropped to their lowest level in more than five years. This happened after new export rules were introduced in April. Beijing is the top global producer of rare earth magnets. It supplies over 90 per cent of the world's needs. These magnets are used in cars, electronics, aerospace, and defence equipment. The export curbs have disrupted global supply chains. In May, China exported only 1,238 tons of rare earth magnets. That was a 74 per cent drop from the same time last year. Confusion over product types and stricter customs checks have delayed many shipments. Some companies have now received export licenses. But officials have not shared many details. Export totals for January to May were also down more than 14 per cent compared to last year. This marks the lowest level for that time frame since 2021. (Amy Lv & Ryan Woo, "[China's rare earth magnet shipments halve in May due to export curbs](#)," *Reuters*, 20 June 2025)

### **China's evolution of EV rise, reports an editorial in BBC**

On 23rd June, an editorial in the *BBC* argued that China's success in electric vehicles is no accident but the result of years of focused policy, public investment, and industrial strategy. The country now sells more EVs than any other, with nearly half of all new cars sold in 2024 being electric. The editorial explains how China combined government support with market competition. Companies like BYD and XPeng thrived with subsidies, a large domestic market, and control of battery supply chains. The country also built the world's largest charging network. Western governments raise concerns about data security and unfair trade. The editorial notes that Chinese drivers are choosing EVs for simple reasons like being inexpensive, easier to run, and widely available. The editorial concludes that China's lead in EVs is not just about technology but about long-term vision, leaving the West to rethink its approach. (Annabelle Liang & Nick Marsh, "[How China made electric vehicles mainstream](#)," *BBC*, 23 June 2025)

### **China unveils its first highly parallel optical computing integrated chip, "Meteor 1"**

On 24 June, *SCMP* reported China's first parallel optical computing integrated Chip, Meteor-1, amidst the ongoing US-China chip war. Meteor-1, developed by Shanghai Institute of Optics, Fine Mechanics, and Nanyang Technological University, can execute over 2,560 tera

operations per second at % GHz optical frequency. Unlike the traditional optical chips, Meteor-1 has a self-developed architecture that includes a light source chip and a modulation matrix driver board. It can reduce size, energy use, and cost due to its micro cavity optical frequency comb, supporting over 200 wavelengths. The chip can act as a scalable solution for AI and data centre demands as it can run over 100 tasks simultaneously. ("[In light of US sanctions, China unveils first parallel optical computing chip, 'Meteor-1'](#)" *SCMP*, 24 June 2025)

### **China's advances in hypersonic capabilities by the successful test of "Feitian 2", reports SCMP**

On 25 June, *SCMP* reported China's advancement in rocket-based combined cycle (RBCC) engine technology by conducting a successful test flight of the Feitian 2 hypersonic vehicle. The test was conducted by China's Northwestern Polytechnical University (NPU), which was the first flight to collect real-time flight data using a kerosene-hydrogen peroxide propellant, which has variable-geometry intake and autonomous flight with adjustable angles of attack. It has an enhanced payload capacity and fuel efficiency as RBCC engines amalgamate rocket and ramjet technologies. Unlike the previous Feitian 1 design, which was a fully controllable vehicle, Feitian 2 includes larger tail fins and wings. The flight test highlights a state-led strategic leap in China's hypersonic capabilities, despite US sanctions on NPU ("[China's Feitian 2 hypersonic vehicle shows critical capabilities in test flight](#)," *SCMP*, 25 June 2025)

## **NUCLEAR**

### **CCTV reveals details of China's DF-5 nuclear weapon capability**

On 04 June, *SCMP* reported that China's state broadcaster CCTV released some key specifications of the country's DF-5 nuclear weapons. China's "first-generation strategic ICBM" could deliver a single nuclear warhead with an explosive yield of between 3 and 4 megatons of TNT. It added that the missile had a maximum range of 12,000km and was accurate to within 500 meters. It further stated that the missile was "32.6 metres in length with a diameter of 3.35 metres and a launch weight of 183 tonnes". (Enoch Wong, "[Chinese state media releases key details about DF-5 nuclear weapons](#)," *SCMP*, 04 June 2025)

### **China produces "Yttrium-90" using a commercial nuclear reactor**

On 15 June, China National Nuclear Corporation stated that it produced "Yttrium-90" using a commercial nuclear reactor. Produced through

irradiation at the Qinshan Nuclear Power Base, the Y-90 glass microsphere passed the relevant test, making the country self-sufficient for mass production. It is a beta-emitting radioisotope widely used in medical treatment through the vascular intervention technique. Moving forward, the researchers will disassemble and analyse the Y-90 before moving it to the application phase. ([“China achieves Yttrium-90 production using commercial reactor,” CGTN](#), 15 June 2025 )

### ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

#### **China’s “Linglong-1” first modular nuclear reactor is in the final installation phase**

On 30 May, *Interesting Engineering* reported that China’s first commercial small modular nuclear reactor, Linglong-1, is in the final installation phase. According to Global Times, it is the world’s first land-based small modular reactor to begin construction. It is expected to play a key role in reducing China’s carbon emissions. Also known as ACP100, this is a third-generation small pressurised water reactor. In 2016, it became the first SMR to pass a safety review by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Each Linglong-1 reactor can produce 125,000 kilowatts of electricity, which is enough to power 526,000 homes. It is expected to power the Hainan Free Trade Port and help China become carbon-neutral before 2060. ( Kapil Kajal, [“World-first mini nuclear plant ready to power 526,000 homes in China,” Interesting Engineering](#), 30 May 2025)

#### **Spike in China’s exports of rare earth minerals in May 2025**

On 09 June, *Reuters* reported that in May 2025, China’s rare-earth exports jumped 23 per cent. This, compared to April, reached 5,864.6 tons, the highest monthly volume in a year, even after Beijing introduced curbs on certain minerals the previous month. These restrictions in April forced a 50 per cent drop in rare-earth magnet shipments and caused disruptions in European auto parts factories, with some halting production and semiconductor firms warning of closures. Overall, exports of the 17 key rare-earth minerals totalled around 24,827 tons in the first five months of 2025, slightly higher than the same period in 2024. The full effect of the export controls remains unclear, with more detailed data expected on 20 June. The spike highlights China’s dominant global position in rare-earth supply and adds tension to international trade dynamics. ([“China’s rare](#)

[earth exports jump 23% in May despite export curbs.” Reuters](#), 09 June 2025)

#### **500kV power line across the Huaihe River completes construction**

On 11 June, a 500-kilovolt power transmission from the Huaihe River in Anhui Province construction completed. The power line spans 1,578 meters with two towering 193-meter pylons on either side of the river. The transmission line is part of a broader effort to strengthen the regional power grid and ensure a stable electricity supply to the economically vibrant eastern regions of the country. The completion of this river-crossing section demonstrates not only the technical prowess of Chinese engineers but also the country’s strategic focus on long-term energy security and sustainable development. The project is expected to improve grid efficiency and support industrial and residential energy needs more reliably. It reflects China’s commitment to high-standard infrastructure, combining technological innovation with practical utility. In a global context, this development further positions China as a leader in executing complex, large-scale energy projects that are vital for regional growth and resilience. The accomplishment also sets a benchmark for future projects involving difficult terrains and river crossings. ([“The 500 kV power transmission project from Xiangjian to Ludao in Anhui Province completed the Huaihe River crossing.” Xinhua](#), 12 June 2025)

#### **China’s rare earth production hub is responsible for toxic byproducts, says an opinion in The Guardian**

On 26 June, an opinion in *The Guardian* reported on China’s rare earth industry and the cost paid by the environment for the economic growth of the industry. Baotou, a city at the edge of China’s Gobi Desert, which has over 80 per cent of the country’s rare earth minerals, is the core of China’s rare earth industry. The city serves as the epitome of China’s rare earth industry, producing minerals vital for smartphones, electric vehicles, and military technology, and also serves as a powerful tool in the trade war, particularly with the EU and the US, which have to bear the brunt of severe economic and health damage. Toxic byproducts from rare earth processing have contaminated land and water bodies, resulting in high rates of cancer and birth defects. Though China has policies to clean up these toxins, many of Baotou’s cancer villages remain in ruins, hidden behind the concrete jungle. The story of the city of Baotou, reported by *The Guardian*, highlights the environmental plight borne by communities amidst

technological and environmental advancements, which is often unseen in the economic and power race in geopolitics. ("The world wants China's rare earth elements – what is life like in the city that produces them?" *The Guardian*, 26 June 2025)

## MARITIME

### **China Media Group documentary "Sailing Toward the Sea" on China's evolving maritime capabilities**

On 08 June, China Media Group (CMG) debuted a new documentary program exploring China's evolving relationship with its maritime domain. The 20-part documentary series called "Sailing Toward the Sea", part of its Nature of China project, highlights China's growing focus on ocean development, technology, and conservation. It showcases major marine innovations like the Mingyang Tiancheng, the world's largest floating wind-power platform, and deep-sea missions using submarines like the Fendouzhe. The show also features scientific ships like Xuelong-2 and the Mengxiang drilling vessel, underlining China's rapid progress in marine science. Importantly, it blends human stories, like those of fishermen and marine conservation workers, with high-tech visuals, showing how China's USD 10 trillion marine economy affects real lives. Environmental protection is a key theme, with episodes focusing on rare dolphin habitats in Xiamen and coral reef clean-ups near Hainan. CMG says the documentary aims to balance development with ecological responsibility, promoting a "shared future" for global ocean governance. ("China's maritime renaissance: New documentary chronicles nation's oceanic ambitions." *CGTN*, 08 June 2025)

### **China's largest rescue drill in the South China Sea, reports SCMP**

On 27 June, *SCMP* reported that China conducted its largest integrated land-air and sea emergency rescue drill on 26 June near the disputed Woody Island, Yongxing Island. The drill involves over 200 personnel, 15 vessels, and two helicopters. It was a 75-minute exercise co-hosted by the People's Liberation Army, China Coast Guard, and the Sansha city authorities. The exercise included maritime collisions, oil spills, and onboard fires to enhance readiness and maritime emergency coordination. The drill was held in a contested Paracel Island, where Beijing asserts territorial claims. The move marks China's assertive stance in the South China Sea over rival claimants like Vietnam and the Philippines. ("China conducts

'largest' military, civilian rescue drill in contested South China Sea." *SCMP*, 27 June 2025)

### **China launches UN-backed deep-sea exploration project**

On 30 June, *SCMP* reported that China marks its rise as a maritime science power as it secured the approval of the UN for the Global Hadal Exploration Programme (GHEP). The project is part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-30 and focuses on studying the hadal Zone, Earth's deepest ocean trenches. The project brings together over ten countries for joint research on marine life, geological processes, carbon cycling, and human impacts. China can support this mission by using its submersibles, which are capable of diving up to 10,000 meters. Experts stated that GHEP enhances China's leadership in global governance. ("China steps up deep-sea science role with UN-backed oceans exploration project." *SCMP*, 30 June 2025)

## CHINA & EAST ASIA

### **A Chinese man was caught on suspicion of the murder of Japanese nationals**

On 03 June, a Chinese man was detained on suspicion of murdering two Japanese men. On 23 May, two Japanese nationals were killed in Dalian, Liaoning province, China. Chinese authorities have arrested a 42-year-old Chinese suspect, surnamed Yuan, who had been residing in Japan. According to a statement by Dalian police, Yuan was the business partner of the victims, and the incident was the result of a dispute. Yuan was apprehended the day after the deaths were reported and will be sent to prosecutors following the conclusion of the investigation. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian confirmed that the incident was due to a personal dispute and emphasized that it was not politically motivated. Japanese media outlets, including Kyodo News, reported that the Japanese government has requested local authorities in Dalian to ensure the safety of Japanese nationals in the area. Dalian authorities have communicated with the victims' families. ("Chinese suspect held after 2 Japanese killed in Liaoning province over 'business grudge.'" *SCMP*, 03 June 2025)

### **China's top diplomat meets JAPIT President on trade cooperation with Japan**

On 04 June, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Japan's Association for the Promotion of International Trade (JAPIT) President Yohei Kono in Beijing. Wang expressed his great appreciation for the China-Japan friendship and

stressed the significance of people-to-people exchanges in the current international situation. Kono stated that history should not be forgotten, nor should it be denied, and noted that the past cannot be changed, but the future can be created through present efforts. He added that JAPIT is willing to continue promoting friendly cooperation between Japan and China. ([“China’s top diplomat meets Japanese trade association president,” CGTN](#), 05 June 2025)

### **China to celebrate the 80th anniversary of victory against Japanese aggression**

On 24 June, *CGTN* reported China’s plan to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war of resistance against Japanese aggression. In a press conference by China’s State Council Information Office announced the arrangement to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of China’s victory in the anti-fascist war. China is expected to hold a military parade in Tiananmen Square on 3 September to mark the event. China’s President Xi Jinping is expected to deliver the inaugural speech and also review the troops during the parade. The parade will showcase traditional and modern military formations, such as unmanned and intelligent combat equipment. China will also honour notable heroes and martyrs of the war and will release an updated list of anti-Japanese war memorial sites. This event will be attended by foreign delegates, senior officials, and heads of international organisations. These activities aim to emphasise China’s remembrance of its sacrifices and past victories. ([“China unveils plans for marking 80th anniversary of victory against Japanese aggression, fascism,” CGTN](#), 24 June 2025)

### **Singapore Prime Minister’s visit to China for bilateral cooperation, reports *The Straits Times***

On 24 June, *The Straits Times* reported Prime Minister Lawrence Wong’s first official visit to China, where he emphasised the vitality of Singapore-China relations to navigate through global uncertainties. While meeting with China’s President Xi Jinping, Wong emphasized the importance of multilateralism and a rule-based international order. China’s president also echoed the same by emphasising China’s willingness to deepen strategic cooperation with Singapore to tackle common challenges. They also emphasized the friendship between countries rooted in history and mutual respect, and emphasized President Xi’s unique engagement with all Prime Ministers of Singapore. Prime Minister Wong is also expected to attend the Summer Davos on 25 June.

([“Singapore-China ties more important than ever amid global uncertainty, says PM Wong,” \*The Straits Times\*](#), 24 June 2025)

### **China’s President and Singapore’s Prime Minister celebrate 35 years of diplomatic relations**

On 24 June, China’s President Xi Jinping and Singapore’s Prime Minister Lawrence Wong met in Beijing. As this marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Singapore, both sides called for a new chapter of high-quality cooperation. Xi stated that bilateral cooperation yielded substantial outcomes, such as the Suzhou Industrial Park, and it contributed to each country’s modernisation efforts. It also set a benchmark for cooperation among regional countries. He further stated that the two sides have consistently upheld mutual understanding and respect, which provided a solid foundation for the stable and healthy development of bilateral ties. He welcomed Singapore for deep integration to deepen Belt and Road Cooperation and create achievements in the digital economy, green development and artificial intelligence (AI). Wong reaffirmed Singapore’s adherence to the one-China policy and opposed “Taiwan independence.” He further stated his willingness to leverage the opportunities brought by China’s prosperity and development. ([“Xi calls for new chapter in high-quality China-Singapore cooperation,” CGTN](#), 24 June 2025)

### **China’s lifting of the seafood ban on Japan showcases the rekindling of ties, reports SCMP**

On 30 June, *SCMP* reported that China has partially lifted its two-year ban on Japan’s seafood imports, signalling a slight rapprochement in strained bilateral relations. The action was announced by China’s General Administration of Customs, which allows partial imports of seafood from certain regions of Japan, excluding ten prefectures, including Tokyo and Fukushima. Beijing imposed the full ban in August 2023, expressing concerns over radioactive contamination. The partial lift of the ban comes after months of diplomatic talks and negotiations, marking a slight improvement in the relationship with Japan as China seeks to stabilize ties with Japan amidst US trade uncertainties. Japan welcomed the decision and urged China to fully lift the ban. ([“Can China’s partial lifting of Japanese seafood ban aid a post-Fukushima reset?” \*SCMP\*](#), 30 June 2025)

## CHINA & THE PACIFIC

### Australia's Defence Minister calls for transparency on China's military build-up in the region

On 01 June, Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles asked China to explain why it needs to have "such an extraordinary military build-up." He stated Beijing needs to provide greater transparency and reassurance, as it is the fundamental issue in the region. Marles said: "what we have seen from China is the single biggest increase in military capability and build up in conventional sense, by any country since the end of the Second World War," and "what we want to see is strategic transparency and strategic reassurance be provided by China, and an understanding of why it is needed to have such an extraordinary military build-up." He mentioned that Australia upholds transparency by making its national defence strategy and defence review public, and it makes "utterly clear" that when they build up their defence, it is for Australia's and Asia's security. (Tessa Wong, "[Australia asks China to explain 'extraordinary' military build-up](#)," *BBC*, 01 June 2025)

### China's aircraft carrier sails beyond the Second Island Chain of the Pacific

On 10 June, *SCMP* reported that China's Liaoning and Shandong aircraft carriers sailed beyond the Second Island Chain. On 10 June, the People's Liberation Army deployed two carrier groups in the Western Pacific and surrounding waters. They conducted an exercise to test their far sea defence and joint operational capabilities. In a statement, PLA Navy senior captain Wang Xuemang said: "It is a routine training exercise organised according to the annual plan, aiming to continuously strengthen mission fulfillment capabilities. It complies with relevant international laws and practices and is not targeted at any specific country or objective." There are no details on what the two carrier fleets are planning to do in the Pacific. ( "[China's Liaoning and Shandong aircraft carriers sail beyond second island chain](#)," *SCMP*, 10 June 2025)

### New Zealand's President and China's President meet in Beijing to discuss trade ties

On 20 June, *Reuters* reported that New Zealand's President and China's President met in Beijing to discuss trade ties. Luxon posted on X that the meeting was constructive. He said: "We discussed the depth of the New Zealand-China relationship - from trade and people-to-people ties to our shared global responsibilities." The meeting happened amidst New Zealand's

expressed concerns over the Cook Islands' pact with China. Xinhua reported that Xi called for both countries to seek common ground and view differences "accurately" without mentioning the incident. In the meeting, Luxon has proposed an agenda to boost business, travel, and Education for New Zealand. (Liz Lee & Renju Jose, "[Leaders of China, New Zealand discuss trade, Pacific security](#)," *Reuters*, 20 June 2025)

## CHINA & SOUTHEAST ASIA

### China releases first comprehensive genomic atlas in collaboration with Southeast Asian teams

On 02 June, *SCMP* reported that Scientists from the Kunming Institute of Zoology, an affiliate of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, released the SEA3K data set. On 14 May, this decade-long collaboration with 34 research teams from Southeast Asia culminated in the publication of the first comprehensive genomic atlas of the region in *Nature*. For more than two decades, the Human Genome Project (HGP) mapped humanity's genetic blueprint, overlooking Southeast Asia's rich diversity. It contributed a mere 1.57 per cent to global genomic databases, with data derived from diaspora communities rather than local populations. In an interview with *China Science Daily*, corresponding author Su Bing said: "For over a decade, we conducted fieldwork in Southeast Asian rainforests, adhering to local ethical protocols, fostering community engagement and documenting indigenous cultural and linguistic contexts." The researchers collected samples from 6 Southeast Asia countries. Five prominent language families and 30 ethnic languages. They completed genome sequencing for 3,023 cases. ( Shi Huang, "[China boosts research of Southeast Asian populations overlooked in Human Genome Project](#)," *SCMP*, 02 June 2025)

### China rolls out "ASEAN visa" for ASEAN's 10 member states

On 03 June, China introduced a new "ASEAN visa" that offers five-year, multiple-entry permits to citizens of the 10 ASEAN member states and Timor-Leste. This initiative aims to facilitate business travel and strengthen regional ties. The visa allows a maximum stay of 180 days and extends to the applicants' spouses and children. This move aligns with China's broader strategy to enhance connectivity and cooperation within the region. In addition to the ASEAN visa, China has expanded its visa-free policy to include citizens from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay, effective 01 June. This brings the total number of countries with visa-free

access to China to 43. These measures are part of China's ongoing efforts to promote high-level opening-up and attract foreign investment. Supporting these initiatives, China's Foreign Ministry reported a significant increase in international engagement. In the first quarter of the year, over 9 million foreign visits were recorded, marking 40 per cent year-on-year. Furthermore, more than 18,000 foreign-invested enterprises were established in China during the first four months, reflecting a 12.1 per cent increase compared to the previous year. These developments underscore China's commitment to fostering a more open and interconnected global economy, facilitating smoother travel and business interactions across borders. ("China launches 'ASEAN visa' to facilitate regional travel: FM," *The Global Times*, 03 June 2025)

### **"Unfairly priced" imports from China are a threat to domestic manufacturers, says ISSDA**

On 04 June, the Indian Stainless Steel Development Association (ISSDA) cautioned against unfairly priced imports from China and Vietnam as a threat to domestic manufacturers. ISSDA President Rajamani Krishnamurti said: "As the world paces towards sustainability and resilient infrastructure, stainless steel's relevance is only growing. However, the influx of unfairly priced imports continues to challenge domestic manufacturers. ISSDA has consistently cautioned against these risks, emphasising that unchecked trade diversions—particularly from nations like China and Vietnam—could undermine domestic manufacturing and employment in the sector." The association plans the National Steel Policy, the third edition of the Global Stainless-Steel Expo 2025 in Mumbai. (Mrityunjay Bose, "Apex body of steel industry cautions against China, Vietnam's 'unfairly priced' imports," *Deccan Herald*, 04 June 2025 )

### **Indonesia considers buying China's J-10 fighter jets**

On 05 June, *Business Standard* reported that Indonesia is evaluating buying China's battle-tested J-10 fighter jets, recently used in Pakistan's clashes with India over Kashmir. Deputy Defense Minister Donny Ermawan Taufanto stated that the offer came during an Indonesian Air Force visit to China. He added that the government is reviewing whether the jets meet Indonesia's operational needs and can integrate with current systems. However, Taufanto stressed the assessment is still in early stages, and no technical team has been sent to China yet for further evaluation or negotiations. ("Indonesia weighs China's offer of

battle-tested J-10 fighter jets," *Business Standard*, 05 June 2025)

### **Chinese fishing vessel maneuvers near Thitu Island**

On 08 June, a Chinese fishing vessel was witnessed near Thitu Island (known locally as Pagasa), which the Philippines has occupied in the disputed South China Sea. The ship appeared only 2.7 km away from the Filipino village, so residents called local authorities for help. The incident led to a Philippine military and coast guard response, yet they discovered that Chinese vessels had already towed the ship away. The Regional Navy spokesperson, Lt. Ellaine Rose Collado, has stated that the incident took place because of stormy weather conditions. However, its appearance matched previous sightings of suspected Chinese militia ships targeting Filipino military units. China has persistent territorial claims over this strategic maritime pathway in the South China Sea, and this is increasing tension at an alarming rate. The US has officially backed its treaty commitments by declaring its readiness to protect the Philippines from any form of hostile behavior. (Jim Gomez and Joeal Calupitan, "Chinese ship runs aground off Philippines-occupied island in the disputed South China Sea," *AP News*, 08 June 2025)

### **China's President and Myanmar's leader exchange pleasantries on the 75th anniversary of diplomatic cooperation**

On 08 May, China's President Xi Jinping and Myanmar's leader Min Aung Hlaing exchanged congratulations on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries. Xi commented that China and Myanmar's "Paukphaw" (fraternal friendship) withstood the test of time and has grown even stronger. He added that they jointly uphold the five principles of peaceful coexistence and the Bandung Spirit. He expressed his willingness to work with Myanmar to accelerate high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, jointly implement the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilisation Initiative, and push for solid progress in building the China-Myanmar community with a shared future. Min Aung Hlaing recalled the Chona's humanitarian assistance to Myanmar and expressed gratitude to China for its firm support of Myanmar's efforts towards peace, stability, national reconciliation, and economic development. ("Xi, Myanmar leader mark 75 years of diplomatic ties of two nations," *CGTN*, 08 June 2025)

China-Vietnam rail terminal construction underway, reports *China Daily*

On 09 June, *China Daily* reported that preparations are underway for the construction of a cargo terminal connecting China to Vietnam's Vinh Phuc Province. According to Vietnam SuperPort CEO Yap Kwong Weng, it is an 83-hectare multimodal logistics port developed as a joint venture between Vietnam's T&T Group and Singapore's YCH Group, and he commented that this railway project connecting Vietnam with China is a significant game changer for infrastructure connectivity. It is nearly 419 kilometres and over USD 8.3 billion. According to local media, this investment will create about 90,000 jobs during construction and about 2,500 long-term jobs. (Yang Han, "[China-Vietnam rail projects to benefit region](#)," *China Daily*, 09 June 2025)

### **China adds Indonesia to the 10-day visa-free transit list**

On June 12, 2025, China announced that Indonesia had been added to its 240-hour (10-day) visa-free transit program, expanding the list to 55 countries. This policy allows travelers from eligible nations to stay in China for up to 10 days without a visa while in transit to a third country or region. The updated program now includes citizens from countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Indonesia. Travelers can enter through 60 designated ports across 24 provinces and move freely within these regions during their stay. This expansion is aimed at boosting tourism, encouraging international travel, and strengthening China's global ties, particularly with Southeast Asia. By offering a longer, more flexible stay without visa hassles, China hopes to attract more visitors and make transit travel more appealing. The inclusion of Indonesia, a key ASEAN member, highlights China's ongoing efforts to deepen regional cooperation and enhance people-to-people exchanges. ("[China adds Indonesia to 240-hour visa-free transit program, expands list to 55 countries](#)," *CGTN*, 12 June 2025)

### **China-Myanmar diplomatic relations are a facade, says an editorial in *The Irrawaddy***

On 10 June, an editorial in *The Irrawaddy* looked at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of China-Myanmar diplomatic ties. The op-ed noted that even though the event highlighted "paukphaw friendship" and "win-win cooperation," the reality is different. It is characterised by deep asymmetry, transactional politics, and fragmented sovereignty. The editorial stated that the pragmatic power

arrangement is rooted in geography, necessity, and cold pragmatism. They claimed that the concept of "paukphaw" is a myth rooted in calculated asymmetry, and Beijing engages with both the Junta and the EAOs with deliberate calculation. The anniversary brought out the hollow diplomacy that sidelines the public and props up power. (Athena Awn Naw, "[Fraternal Facade: The Illusion of China-Myanmar Brotherhood at 75](#)," *The Irrawaddy*, 10 June 2025 )

### **Arakan Army advances to Chinese investment hub Kyaukphyu, reports *The Irrawaddy***

On 11 June, *The Irrawaddy* reported that the Arakan Army advances to Kyaukphyu, a Chinese-backed investment hub in Rakhine. It captured junta positions and is targeting key outposts near Police Battalion No.32. It threatens China's pipeline and deep-sea port projects. The Junta responded with airstrikes, naval shelling, and reinforcements. The clashes persist near the Danyawaddy naval base, and over 40,000 civilians have been displaced. Meanwhile, junta forces continue to use drones and paramotors to bomb AA-held territory. The area now faces severe food shortages, landmine dangers, and blocked access to medical care. ( Lin Thit, "[Myanmar Junta Reinforces Kyaukphyu as AA Nears China-Backed SEZ Hub](#)," *The Irrawaddy*, 11 June 2025)

### **China-backed UWSA takes control of rare earth mines in Myanmar**

On June 12, 2025, *Reuters* reported that the China-backed United Wa State Army (UWSA) has seized control of new rare earth mining operations in Myanmar's Shan State. These mines are crucial for extracting elements like dysprosium and terbium, which are essential in manufacturing magnets for electric vehicles, wind turbines, and medical devices. The UWSA, a powerful militia with strong ties to China, has established several leaching pools at mining sites since 2023, following disruptions in Myanmar's Kachin region due to ongoing conflict. Approximately 100 workers are engaged in extracting minerals under Chinese management, with materials being transported directly to China. Analysts note that mining in Myanmar is significantly cheaper and less regulated than in other regions, making it an attractive option for Chinese interests. This development underscores China's strategic efforts to secure access to critical minerals amidst ongoing trade tensions with the United States. The move also highlights the complex interplay between

military-backed militias and economic interests in Myanmar's resource-rich regions. (["Exclusive: China-backed militia secures control of new rare earth mines in Myanmar," Reuters, 12 June 2025](#))

### **The US urges Vietnam to reduce its tech dependency on China, reports Reuters**

On 16 June, *Reuters* reported that the US has asked Vietnam to reduce the use of China's tech in devices made in the country before exporting to the US during tariff talks. Large manufacturing operation of tech firms such as Apple, Samsung, Meta, and Google happens in Vietnam and rely on China-made components. It added that sources indicated that the ultimate objective to speed up the US decoupling from China's high tech is to increase Vietnam's industrial capacity. As an example, it cited that virtual reality devices are Vietnam-assembled products that depend on China's tech. ( [Francesco Guarascio, "US pushes Vietnam to decouple from Chinese tech, sources say," Reuters, 16 June 2025](#))

### **PLA holds joint sea and air patrols in the South China Sea**

On 15 June, the People's Liberation Army's Southern Theatre Command spokesperson Tian Junli stated that China's military held joint sea and air patrols. Tian added that the Philippines has courted countries outside the region to organise "joint patrols" and "raised security risks" in the region. He said: "The theatre command forces remain on high alert, resolutely safeguarding China's national sovereignty and maritime rights," and "all military activities that seek to stir up trouble in the South China Sea or create flashpoints are fully under control." Earlier this month, the philippine and the US conducted 17 joint maritime drills in the South China Sea. ( ["China's military conducts patrols in South China Sea, warns Philippines," Reuters, 15 June 2025](#))

### **China is exporting coking coal to Indonesia, reports Reuters**

On 16 June, *Reuters* reported that China sent three cargoes of coking coal to processors in Sulawesi, Indonesia, in May. The monthly China's customs data shows that this rare trade export to Indonesia happened three times since 2024. Shanxi Coking Coal, China Risun, and Dexin Steel were the major companies involved in this. Independent Consultant Lawrence Yan stated that this export was to test the export feasibility of China's supply and to show traditional sellers alternatives to Indonesian plants. The coke processing plants in Sulawesi, which are a major

supply hub for metallurgical coke, now face overcapacity with utilisation at only 60 per cent to 70 per cent. (Sam Li, Sudarshan Varadhan & Hongmei Li, ["China sells coking coal to Indonesia in rare trade, sources say," Reuters, 16 June 2025](#))

### **China removes Philippine ship from Scarborough Shoal, reports Reuters**

On 20 June, *Reuters* stated that the Chinese coast guard used water cannons and loud warnings to remove a Philippine ship from waters near Scarborough Shoal. They noted that the Philippine vessel entered the area without permission. It stated that its actions were necessary as the Philippine side refused to leave the area. Beijing sees Scarborough Shoal as part of its territory, as the shoal lies in the South China Sea. It is also claimed by the Philippines. The Philippine embassy in Beijing has not responded. The two countries have had past disputes over the shoal. China took control of it in 2012. Tensions in the area often rise due to fishing and patrol activities. ( ["China says it 'expelled' Philippine vessel from Scarborough Shoal," Reuters, 20 June 2025](#))

### **Myanmar's role in China's dominance over the global rare earth supply, reports CNBC**

On 23 June, *CNBC* reported the important role of Myanmar in China's dominance over the global rare earth supply chain. Myanmar is rich in heavy rare earth elements like dysprosium and terbium, which are critical elements for defence, aerospace, and green technologies. Myanmar supplied about 57% of China's rare earth imports; these minerals are extracted from ion adsorption clay. China's companies have heavily invested in Myanmar's IAC mining projects. However, internal tensions in Myanmar have also created vulnerabilities in the supply chain, disrupting exports and driving up global prices. China's over-reliance on Myanmar highlights geopolitical risks and the fragility of China's resource security. ( ["How war-torn Myanmar plays a critical role in China's rare earth dominance," CNBC, 23 June 2025](#))

### **China warns Philippines against hosting US missile system**

On 27 June, *SCMP* reported the sharp warning statements by China's Ministry of National Defence, accuses the Philippines of creating self-inflicted destruction by encouraging the US missile system and fishing in South China waters. Beijing sent this furious message after the deployment of the US army's Typhoon missile and NMESIS antiship system in Northern Luzon and Batanes, which has a striking range

against China and Taiwan. The ministry's spokesperson, Zhang Xiaogang, responded by stating that Manila is bringing wrath to its home by aligning too closely with the US and undermining regional stability. He also rebuked the decision of the Philippines to send fishermen into the contested waters. At the same time, China's embassy in Manila rejected all accusations of the Philippines regarding China's maritime involvement in drug trafficking. Beijing vowed to strengthen territorial control over disputed water and to defend its territorial claims. ("[China warns Philippines against 'self-inflicted destruction' by hosting US missile systems](#)," *SCMP*, 27 June 2025)

### **China-Laos cross-border transport hits record-breaking growth, reports *Global Times***

On 30 June, *Global Times* reported the strong growth of China-Laos cross-border transport in the first half of 2025, reflecting strong growth in both passenger and freight sectors. As of June, more than 145,000 passenger trips from 91 countries passed through the Mohan railway port, marking an increase of 16 percent in entries and 3.5 percent in exits. Foreign nationals accounted for about 18.7 Per Cent of travel from countries like Laos, Thailand, and Malaysia. Freight transport also surged, with over 4,400 cross-border trains with more than 3.3 million tons of cargo. Though the Lanang-Mekong Express offers 26-hour delivery, the China-Laos-Thailand routes have a transit time of 40 hours. Since its launch, the railway has transported over 13 million tons of goods across 12 Belt and Road nations, and is expanding its cargo to more than 3000 product types. ("[China-Laos Railway cross-border transport hits new record in first half of 2025](#)," *Global Times*, 30 June 2025)

## **CHINA & SOUTH ASIA**

### **Nepal's former president is on a 10-day visit to China**

On 02 June, *The Kathmandu Post* reported that Nepal's former president Bidya Devi Bhandari is currently on a 10-day visit to China to meet top officials from the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government. She is preparing to return to active politics, after the CPN-UML party's "policy convention" coming in September. One UML insider has shared that she will visit India, but the dates are yet to be finalised. Former minister Gokul Baskota said: "She is clear that we should not tilt to one side [between India and China]." Bhandari was the

former vice-chair of the UML and was twice elected President of Nepal. Her return to active politics will challenge the leadership of party chief KP Sharma Oli. (Anil Giri, "[Bhandari seeks to bolster her political image on China trip](#)," *The Kathmandu Post*, 01 June 2025)

### **China's Commerce Minister increases cooperation with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka**

On 02 June, according to a press release from China's Ministry of Commerce, the visit of China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka expanded Beijing's cooperation in areas such as industry and supply chain with both countries. A Chinese expert stated that the visit once again highlighted China's importance in its ties with two Asian nations and its open approach to cooperation with developing countries. On 31 May, Wang met with Bangladesh's interim government chief advisor, Muhammad Yunus, and exchanged views on further deepening practical cooperation between China and Bangladesh. The Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce and Industry's former general secretary said: "It comes at a time when both nations are actively seeking to diversify trade ties and expand strategic cooperation under regional and global economic frameworks." On 30 May, Wang visited Singapore and exchanged in-depth views on advancing high-quality Belt and Road Cooperation, expanding trade and investment, and safeguarding the multilateral trading system, according to MOFCOM. Following the talk, two memoranda of understanding were signed – one to establish a trade facilitation working group and the other on industrial and supply chain cooperation. (Yin Yeping, "[China boosts cooperation with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka](#)," *Global Times*, 02 June 2025)

### **China and Sri Lanka sign MoUs on trade and industrial cooperation**

On 03 June, *Tamil Guardian* reported that in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the China-Sri Lanka Joint Trade and Economic Commission convened to finalize two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) aimed at facilitating trade and promoting industrial cooperation. China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao emphasized and supported multilateral trade and green development. He also indicated a firm stance against unilateralism and protectionism. Sri Lanka's Trade Minister, Wasantha Samarasinghe, welcomed the developments and stated that the world's second-largest economy continued to belong to Sri Lanka as its largest creditor with USD 7.4 billion in debt owed. Sri Lanka reached a USD 4.2 billion debt restructuring agreement in 2023 with China. Sri Lankan leaders

approved China's President Xi's eight BRI measures, including the continued development of the Hambantota Port and Colombo Port City projects. ("[China and Sri Lanka sign MoU to deepen economic ties](#)," *Tamil Guardian*, 03 June 2025)

### **China's Foreign Minister lauds Pakistan and Afghanistan's elevation of diplomatic missions to Ambassadors**

On 4 June, China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian stated that China welcomes Pakistan's decision to elevate its diplomatic mission with Afghanistan to the level of an ambassador. This was reciprocated by Afghanistan to elevate the mission status in Islamabad from Chargé d'Affaires to Ambassador. He further stated that he believes that this will help enhance mutual trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan, strengthen cooperation and collaboration to safeguard peace and stability in the region. He expressed his interest in playing a constructive role in promoting better development of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and his commitment to building a neighbourhood community with a shared future. ("[Chinese FM welcomes announcements by Pakistan, Afghan interim govt to elevate missions to level of ambassador](#)," *Global Times*, 4 June 2025)

### **Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff to discuss China and critical minerals at the Pentagon**

On 13 June, *SCMP* reported that Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Asim Munir, will arrive in Washington at the Trump administration's invitation and is expected to attend high-level meetings at the State Department and the Pentagon. *SCMP* states that analysts have said Munir's visit indicates Islamabad's wish to recalibrate its relationship with Washington and to challenge the perception of Islamabad's closer ties with China. Foreign Policy Magazine political analyst Michael Kugelman said: "The Pakistani civilian and military leadership has, for quite some time, maintained that Pakistan is not in China's camp, and that it seeks strong relations with both Beijing and Washington." Analysts expect the discussions to revolve around cryptocurrency, critical minerals, counterterrorism, and China. (Khushboo Razdan, "[Crypto, China, critical minerals to top Pakistan army chief's US visit agenda: analysts](#)," *SCMP*, 13 June 2025)

### **India's National Security Adviser meets China's Foreign Minister in Beijing**

On 23 June, India's Ministry of External Affairs said: "On 23 June 2025, Ajit Doval, National

Security Adviser met with Wang Yi, Member, Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Minister of Foreign Affairs in Beijing. NSA Doval is visiting China to attend the 20th Meeting of the SCO Security Council Secretaries." It added that both sides reviewed recent developments in India-China bilateral relations and underscored the need to promote the overall development of India-China bilateral relations, including by fostering greater people-to-people ties. Doval underlined the need to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations to maintain overall peace and stability in the region. (Shubajit Roy, "[Doval meets Wang Yi in China, calls for countering terrorism](#)," *Indian Express*, 24 June 2025)

### **Border trade brings growth to China and Nepal, says an editorial in the Xinhua**

On 24 June, *Xinhua* editorial stated that trade between China and Nepal is growing fast after the reopening of major border ports in 2023. New facilities at places like Lektse and Gyirong have made cross-border business easier and more profitable. Nepal's businessman Dundrup Tsering, stated that his life changed since the port opened. He now sells goods from a proper, rent-free market instead of a tent, and his family has a steady income. Nearby, China's companies are building vehicles for Nepal's rough roads, and the firm expects to export over 2,000 units this year. The editorial states that trade in electric vehicles, wool, and fruit is on the rise. From January to May, trade between Xizang and Nepal hit 1.79 billion yuan, up 14 per cent. Customs support and better roads have helped move goods faster, with deliveries reaching Nepal in about ten days. Lhasa Customs's Comprehensive Business Division Director Tenzin stated that Road transport accounted for 11.52 billion yuan, nearly 80 per cent of the region's total trade with SAARC. Road transport plays a key role, showing how border trade is bringing prosperity to both sides. ("[Revitalized China-Nepal border trade brings prosperity](#)," *Xinhua*, 24 June 2025)

### **India refuses to endorse the SCO joint statement for overlooking the Pahalgam attack, reported Reuters**

On 27 June, *Reuters* reported that the SCO failed to adopt a joint statement due to a lack of consensus among member states on issues related to terrorism. India's Ministry of External Affairs stated it had pushed for a document to reflect on terrorism, particularly in the context of the recent Pahalgam attack, which killed 26 people. But this suggestion by India was omitted in the meeting, which led India to withdraw

from its Joint statement. According to media reports, the exclusion of India's proposal was due to the involvement of Pakistan. Though China claimed the meeting to be successful but it failed to acquire consensus among members. ([India says defence gathering in China unable to adopt joint statement](#)," Reuters, 27 June 2025)

### **China rolls out USD 3.4 billion loan to Pakistan, reports Firstpost**

On 29 June, *Firstpost* reported that China gives over USD 3.4 billion in loans to Pakistan as a significant financial boost. The loan includes USD 2.1 billion retained in Pakistan's central bank reserves and the refinancing of a USD 1.3 billion commercial loan. This move, along with fresh inflows of USD 1 billion from the Middle Eastern banks and USD 500 billion in multilateral support, is expected to help Pakistan meet the IMF's foreign reserves target of over USD 14 billion by 30 June. This development is of paramount importance to Pakistan's ongoing stabilization programme under a USD 7 billion IMF bailout programme. ("[China rolls over \\$3.4 billion in loans to Pakistan, helping boost reserves](#)," *Firstpost*, 29 June 2025)

### **Nepal's delegation to visit China to celebrate 70 years of diplomatic ties**

On 30 June, *The Kathmandu Post* reported the high-level delegation visit of Nepal, headed by the Chairman of Nepal's National Assembly, to China to celebrate 70 years of Nepal-China diplomatic relations. The visit includes participation in the Yushu International Nepal Trade Exchange series in Qinghai's Yushu city to celebrate bilateral ties under the theme "Silk Road and Embarking on a New Journey together". The delegation is expected to explore trade, logistics, and cultural collaboration in alignment with China's Belt and Road initiative. The event highlighted the exhibition of Nepal's handicrafts and fabrics. The visit emphasizes China's growing partnership with regional partners as well as Nepal's push to deepen economic and cultural ties with China. ("[Upper house chair heading for China leading a large delegation](#)," *The Kathmandu Post*, 30 June 2025)

## **CHINA & CENTRAL ASIA**

### **China wants to secure the Kazakh nuclear power station contract, reports Eurasianet**

On 28 May, *Eurasianet* reported that Russia and China are in a race to build Kazakhstan's first nuclear power plant. China's National Nuclear Safety Administration head Dong Baotong is trying to secure a deal for China National Nuclear Corp during talks with Kazakh Atomic

Energy Agency head Astana. Additionally, China is making a strong pitch to handle the nuclear fuel cycle and "the strengthening of scientific and technical infrastructure," according to the statement. China's bid got attention because of the cost differential. The CNNC estimates can build two HPR-1000 reactors for roughly USD 5.5 billion, while others, including Russia's Rosatom as well as firms from South Korea and France, range USD 12-15 billion. ("[China angling to elbow Russia out of Kazakh nuclear power station contract](#)," *Eurasianet*, 28 May 2025)

### **Xinjiang land port to kickstart 24/7 operations to boost trade with Central Asia, reports Global Times**

On 02 June, *Global Times* reported on the recent launch of round-the-clock cargo clearance at the Irkeshtam Port in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. This development positions Irkeshtam as the second land port in Xinjiang, after Horgos, to implement 24/7 operations, and notably, the first in southern Xinjiang to do so. Strategically located as China's westernmost land port, Irkeshtam serves as a vital gateway between China and Kyrgyzstan, facilitating connectivity with Central and West Asia. The port has witnessed a significant uptick in cross-border traffic, with daily crossings exceeding 1,000 on 07- 08 May. To accommodate the increased demand and ensure efficient operations, the border inspection station has increased staffing through a shift-based rotation system and introduced an on-arrival inspection mechanism for freight vehicles. A railway expert at Shanghai's Tongji University, Sun Zhang, emphasised the strategic importance of this move, stating that the 24-hour operations not only bolster freight volume and cross-border trade but also enhance southern Xinjiang's role as a pivotal hub in China's foreign trade and opening-up initiatives. He further noted that this development aligns with China's dual circulation strategy, "by deepening both domestic integration and international trade links". Official data underscores the port's growing significance: since the beginning of the year, over 105,800 travellers and 98,500 vehicles have been processed, marking year-on-year increases of 80 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively. Following the initiation of the 24-hour operations, 966 freight vehicles were processed between 10 am on Sunday and 8:00 am on Monday. This initiative is part of China's broader efforts to strengthen trade ties with Central Asia. In 2024, trade between China and Central Asia reached a record USD 94.8 billion, supported by thriving cross-border e-commerce. Additionally,

China's total investment in the region has surpassed USD 30 billion, reflecting the country's commitment to enhancing connectivity and trade facilitation. ("Xinjiang land port starts 24/7 operations to boost trade with Central Asia," *The Global Times*, 02 June 2025)

### **Second China-Central Asia Summit 2025 to focus on trade and infrastructure linkages**

On 07 June, *CGTN* reported that there is an increase in deeper economic cooperation between China and Central Asia as the Second Summit is approaching. At the center of this momentum is China's new China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway project that will commence construction in July of this year to reduce transit time and improve trade. The Tianfu cross-border route, launched in 2022, now connects over 20 cities, moving over 40 types of products. Bilateral trade for these products skyrocketed from USD 460 million in 2020 to nearly USD 95 billion by 2024. Wang Jinguo, a professor at Lanzhou University, commented that, for many years, the lack of infrastructure made trade very difficult but now with high-level cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative, they are ready to grow together as a region. Institutionalization of these cooperation agreements is also viewed as positive due to the establishment of the China-Central Asia Secretariat. With new initiatives likely to be rolled out in Kazakhstan at the upcoming summit, the long-held relationship is entering a deeper phase of strategic partnership and regional integration. ("2025 China-Central Asia Summit to unlock new opportunities for economic cooperation," *CGTN*, 07 June 2025)

### **China- Central Asia rising health cooperation, reports CGTN**

On 11 June, *CGTN* reported that China and Central Asia nations deepened health collaboration, and China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region emerged as the key hub. To establish itself as an international medical service centre, Xinjiang has implemented clear actions to provide high-quality care to neighbouring countries. By the end of 2023, the region had treated over 25,000 international patients. The cross-border medical service is boosted by establishing international medical service departments in five top tertiary hospitals, offering 500 dedicated beds. The Xinjiang Medical University annually hosted over 100 medical students from Central Asia. It fosters long-term academic exchanges, health education, technical training, and research collaboration locally. There are meetings and centres to extend the cooperation to

traditional Chinese Medicine. ("How China-Central Asia health cooperation is gaining momentum," *CGTN*, 11 June 2025)

### **China's President to attend the Second China-Central Asia Summit**

On 16 June, *CGTN* reported that China's President Xi Jinping will attend the second China-Central Asia Summit in Astana on the invitation of Republic of Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee member Cai Qi and Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and foreign minister Wang yi will accompany him. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the meeting will: "jointly outline a new blueprint for future cooperation." The meeting will be attended by heads of state from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Central Asian countries are also signatories of the Belt and Road Initiative, and the meeting is expected to extrapolate on this cooperation. Aiming to further cooperation on the sharing, mining, and refining of natural resources. ("President Xi Jinping leaves for second China-Central Asia Summit," *CGTN*, 16 June 2025)

### **China and Central Asia sign "Treaty of Permanent Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation"**

On 17 June, President Xi stated that China and Central Asia Countries have formed and explored the China-Central Asia spirit, which is based on mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit, mutual assistance, and the pursuit of common modernisation through high-quality development. During his speech at the second China-Central Asia Summit in the Kazakh capital of Astana, he stated his decision to decide to establish three cooperation centres and a trade facilitation platform within the China-Central Asia cooperation mechanism. The institutions include the China-Central Asia poverty reduction cooperation centre, the China-Central Asia education exchange cooperation centre, the China-Central Asia desertification control cooperation centre, and the China-Central Asia trade facilitation cooperation platform. China and five Central Asian countries have signed the Treaty of Permanent Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation. ("China, C. Asian countries jointly form China-Central Asia Spirit: Xi," *Global Times*, 17 June 2025)

## CHINA & THE MIDDLE EAST

### China's diplomat meets UAE envoy calling to strengthen the comprehensive partnership

On 05 June, China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, met with the UAE President's Special Envoy in Abu Dhabi to strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and the United Arab Emirates. The talks focused on deepening cooperation in investment, trade, technology, healthcare, environmental sustainability, and food security. Yang Jiechi affirmed China's strong support for the UAE's sovereignty and security, said: "China firmly supports the UAE in safeguarding its national sovereignty and opposes any interference in its internal affairs." He also expressed gratitude for the UAE's endorsement of China's major global initiatives, said: "We appreciate the UAE's firm support for the Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative," and added that China is "willing to deepen cooperation" under these frameworks. The two sides agreed to align China's Belt and Road Initiative with the UAE's "Designing the Next 50" national development strategy. The meeting also addressed regional tensions in the Middle East, with both diplomats agreeing to enhance dialogue and promote peaceful solutions to regional conflicts. Yang emphasised the importance of diplomacy, noting that "China stands ready to work with the UAE to contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East." According to official data, trade between China and Arab countries reached approximately USD 400 billion in 2024, solidifying China's position as the Arab world's largest trading partner. This meeting highlights China's growing influence in the Gulf region and its ongoing efforts to forge stronger political and economic ties with Arab nations. (["China's Top diplomat meets UAE president's special envoy," CGTN, 05 June 2025](#))

### China implements trial visa-free entry for GCC passport holders

On 09 June, China introduced a trial visa-free access for ordinary passport holders from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, and Bahrain for a period of up to 30 days for business, tourism, family visits, exchanges, or transit from 09 June 2025 to 08 June 2026. This invitation is an addition to the unilateral visa-free "circle of friends" of China and completes access to visa-free status for all GCC countries. The UAE and Qatar have had reciprocal visa-free policies with China since 2018. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Mao Ning, remarked on the new policy, stating, "We welcome more friends from GCC countries to visit China at any time," during a press

conference on May 28. (["China implements trial visa-free policy for ordinary passport holders from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain," Global Times, 09 June 2025](#))

### China's UN representative calls for Israel-Gaza ceasefire

On 12 June, *CGTN* reported that China's envoy welcomed the General Assembly resolution for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and immediate access to humanitarian assistance on a large scale. China's permanent representative to the UN, Fu Cong, stated that the resolution reflects the call of the international community, sends a strong political message, and embodies solidarity and consensus among the majority of the UN membership. He said: "Israel continues to escalate its military offensive against Gaza, and each day, large numbers of innocent lives are lost," and "Whatever pretext will not make killing civilians noble or just." He further added that his country opposes the weaponisation of humanitarian aid. (["China welcomes adoption of UN resolution on Gaza ceasefire," CGTN, 13 June 2025](#))

### China begins evacuation of citizens from Israel via the Egypt Border, reports SCMP

On 19 June, *SCMP* reported that China's evacuation of its citizens from Israel continues. China's embassy stated that buses will take people across the Egyptian border at Taba. The embassy called for "all Chinese nationals in Israel to register and leave as soon as possible." The evacuation includes citizens from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. Over 1,600 Chinese nationals have already left Iran in recent days. Several hundred have also left Israel. The embassy in Iran warned people to avoid certain crossings. It said: "There are serious delays at the Bajiran and Astara borders due to large crowds." China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said: "Israel's disregard for international law has escalated tensions" and called for "all sides to exercise restraint and stop fighting." President Xi Jinping also urged calm and said China "opposes any act that harms the sovereignty of other countries." Beijing backed a joint call from 21 Arab and Islamic nations to stop the violence. China's officials said no citizens have been harmed so far. The government said it "will continue to assist with safe transfers and evacuations." (Meredith Chen, ["China to evacuate citizens from Israel via Egypt border amid escalating Mideast conflict," SCMP, 19 June 2025](#))

### President Xi calls for a ceasefire in the

### **Middle East, reports CGTN**

On 19 June, *CGTN* reported that China's president Xi Jinping, in a phone call with Russia's president Vladimir Putin, urged the importance of a truce in the Middle East to de-escalate the tension between Iran and Israel. Xi emphasised that force is not the solution for international disputes, and further escalation would harm both countries and have spillover effects across the region. He underscored the importance of resolving issues such as the protection of civilians, adherence to international law, and Iran's nuclear program issue through dialogue and negotiations. He urged all the influential nations and the UN Security Council to step up to de-escalate the conflict in the region. Both countries ended the telephonic conversation by assuring their commitment to restoring peace and regional stability in the region. ("President Xi urges immediate ceasefire in Middle East conflict," *CGTN*, 19 June 2025)

### **China demands real-time updates of vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz**

On 23 June, *SCMP* reported the urgent message sent by China to all its vessels crossing the Strait of Hormuz to report real-time data as tensions spike after a US strike on Iranian nuclear facilities. Beijing requires all Chinese vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman, and the Persian Gulf to report in full crew and voyage. This message is a safety measure as Iran's parliament is backing a potential closure of the Strait. Through this narrow artery, half of China's oil imports transit. Global markets are rattled by the conflict and potential closure of the Strait, and China pushes for de-escalation in the region. ("Beijing tells China ships in Strait of Hormuz to phone home, flags 'shipping safety'," *SCMP*, 23 June 2025)

### **China hosts Iran's Defence Minister at the SCO meeting, reports SCMP**

On 26 June, *SCMP* reported that China hosted Iran's Defence Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh and other military officials during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Defence Ministers meeting in Qingdao. Amidst the regional tensions in the Middle East, particularly from the US attacks on Iran's nuclear sites, Dong stated that hegemony is the source of global disorder. Iran's Defence Minister expressed gratitude for China's support and urged Beijing to promote a ceasefire and peace in the region. He has also emphasized the role of multilateral frameworks like the UN and SCO to uphold fairness and equity in international affairs. ("China's Dong Jun hosts Iran Defense Minister

and others on Warship, condemns hegemony," *SCO*, 26 June 2025)

## **CHINA & AFRICA**

### **Chinese well-drilling technology transforms Egypt's deserts into farmland, reports an editorial in Global Times**

On 02 June, an editorial in *Global Times* reported on Egypt's Western Desert. It was once dominated by sand and rocks, but patches of lush farmland now thrive thanks to deep wells drilled by the Egypt branch of China's Zhongman Petroleum and Natural Gas Group (ZPEC). These wells enable the cultivation of wheat, alfalfa, and potatoes, transforming barren landscapes into productive agricultural zones. This initiative is part of a broader effort to reclaim desert land for agriculture, offering a model for sustainable development in arid regions. It highlights the potential of international cooperation in addressing food security and ecological restoration. The project exemplifies high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, extending beyond infrastructure to encompass agriculture, technology, and industry. Egypt, with over 100 million people, faces the challenge of expanding farmland in a country where only about 4 per cent of the land is arable. To reduce reliance on food imports, the Egyptian government has intensified efforts to reclaim desert land starting in 2015, with water source development being crucial. ZPEC has operated in Egypt since 2016 and drills more than 680 wells across the country, from the Sinai Peninsula to Aswan. At the Owainat Water Well Project, ZPEC's team drills 63 wells, each about 450 meters deep, in less than a year. They overcome challenges like extreme temperatures, sandstorms, and complex geology. Abou-elKhier Ibrahim, manager of the Owainat sector of the Future of Egypt agricultural project, expresses satisfaction with the cooperation, noting their first wheat harvest this year. In Minya Province, ZPEC supports the Canal Sugar Company's farm, a joint venture between Egypt and the UAE. Facing technical hurdles due to unstable groundwater layers, ZPEC introduces air foam drilling technology to prevent leakage and boost efficiency. The company later shares this method with local firms to enhance their performance. Beyond agriculture, ZPEC contributes to local employment and skills development. Mohamed Gaber, who joined ZPEC as a worker five years ago, now works as a platform manager. ("Chinese well-drilling technology turns Egypt's deserts into farmland," *The Global Times*, 02 June 2025)

### **Beijing supports South Africa against “hegemony and bullying”, says China’s Defence Minister**

On 10 June, Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun expressed strong support for South Africa in standing against “hegemony and bullying” amid growing tension between Pretoria and Washington over South Africa’s ties to Russia. Speaking during a high-level military visit, Dong emphasised a shared history of “comradeship and brotherhood” forged during South Africa’s anti-apartheid struggle, reaffirming China’s ties with the African National Congress (ANC) and broader African interests. The key issue revolves around increasing US pressure on South Africa for its neutral stance on the Russia-Ukraine war and broader geopolitical alignments. Dong’s comments also promoted China’s Global Security Initiative, advocating multilateralism, partnership over zero-sum competition, and dialogue over confrontation, essentially challenging US-led alliance frameworks. His pointed support for Pretoria comes shortly after China opted not to participate at a senior level in the Shangri-La Dialogue, highlighting Beijing’s selective diplomatic engagement. The timing and tone of Dong’s remarks suggest a strategic move to strengthen China’s influence across the Global South, portraying itself as an alternative leader standing against Western dominance. By backing South Africa, China not only reinforces its ideological stance but also aims to deepen military and diplomatic ties with nations sharing scepticism of the West’s global leadership. (“China’s defence chief Dong Jun backs South Africa against ‘bullying’ amid US tensions,” *SCMP*, 10 June 2025)

### **The FOCAC follow-up meeting convenes in Beijing on the follow-up action plan**

On 11 June, *CGTN* reported that Representatives from China, 53 African nations, and the African Union Commission convened in Changsha. They met to promote the implementation of agreements from the 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Congolese Foreign Minister Jean-Claude Gakosso read congratulatory messages from their presidents. The Republic of the Congo is the African co-chair of the FOCAC. President Xi Jinping reaffirmed China’s commitment and the ten key partnership actions. Wang Yi highlighted China and Africa’s role as leaders of the Global South and called for unity amid global instability. Gakosso praised China’s support and affirmed Africa’s commitment to the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035. The meeting concluded with the release of the China-Africa

Changsha Declaration. It stressed solidarity, opposition to unilateral sanctions, and support for a just global order. (“China, Africa push implementation of FOCAC Beijing Summit outcomes,” *CGTN*, 11 June 2025)

### **China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo kicks off in Beijing**

On 12 June, *CGTN* reported that the Fourth China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo opened on 06 June in Changsha, Hunan Province, reaffirming China’s deepening commitment to Africa. The theme being “China and Africa: Together Toward Modernization,” the four-day event draws nearly 4,700 companies and over 30,000 participants. Deals worth over USD 11 billion have already been signed, showcasing good momentum in economic cooperation. China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi, attending the opening ceremony, emphasized China’s enduring support for Africa, regardless of shifting global dynamics. He described China as a “true friend and sincere brother” in Africa’s modernization journey. Wang also stressed the shared aspiration for modernization among the 2.8 billion people of China and Africa, calling it a foundation for their strategic partnership. Leaders from Uganda, Liberia, and Kenya also participated. Wang announced efforts to align China-Africa development strategies, promote governance exchange, and fast-track the ten partnership actions for modernization. (“China-Africa expo opens with focus on economic ties, new deals,” *CGTN*, 13 June 2025)

### **China and Mozambique celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties**

On 25 June, *CGTN* reports that China and Mozambique is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Mozambique’s Foreign Minister Maria Manuela congratulated each other on the occasion. China’s foreign minister Wang highlighted both the countries friendship and mutual support over five decades in myriad areas like agriculture, infrastructure, energy and global governance. China extended its readiness to cooperate in striking win-win deals between the two countries. The Mozambique foreign minister also praised China and the bilateral relationship rooted in mutual respect and equality. She also expressed her firm support for China’s One-China policy and emphasized the country’s interest to learn from China’s sustainable development experience. Both countries have committed to enhancing their strategic cooperation as they mark this diplomatic milestone. (“Chinese FM,

Mozambican counterpart exchange congratulations on 50-year ties, *CGTN*, 25 June 2025)

### **The African Union bans donkey slaughter amid high demand from China**

On 25 June, *The Guardian* reported the slaughter of donkeys across Africa for China's demand for 'ejao', which is traditional medicine made from donkey hide. This process has destabilized African communities and their livelihood. The study conducted by the University of Sydney stated that China's ejao consumption, driven by popular culture, requires about 4-5 million hides annually. This burden has shifted to Africa as China's donkey population is collapsing. The slaughtering of donkeys in China leads to economic hardships for families who rely on donkeys for income and transportation. In response to such an action, the African Union has imposed a continent-wide ban on donkey skin exports. The editorial highlights the dangers of unchecked resource exploitation and its global social fallout. ("The Guardian view on China, Africa and disappearing donkeys: an unexpected crisis offers a clue to perils ahead," *The Guardian*, 25 June 2025)

### **China's President discusses bilateral relations with the Prime Minister of Senegal**

On 27 June, *Xinhua Net* reported the meeting of China's president Xi Jinping and Senegalese Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko during the Summer Davos meeting in Beijing. In the meeting, Xi emphasized the importance of the China-Africa relationship for building a wealthier China-Africa community for the new era. He also highlighted cooperation in infrastructure, green energy, and stronger people-to-people exchanges. Sonko also extended his support for the one-China policy and emphasized China as a reliable partner. He also emphasized Senegal's interest in the Belt and Road Initiative and strategic alignment on trade, investment, and energy. Both leaders emphasized cooperation and multilateralism, and promoting equity and justice through closer regional cooperation. ("Xi meets Senegalese PM," *Xinhua Net*, 27 June 2025)

Chinese nationals are part of an illegal gold mining scheme in Ghana, reports *SCMP*

On 30 June, *SCMP* reported on gold mines in Ghana and the growing presence of China in the illegal gold mining scheme. China is the largest producer of gold in Africa and is currently considered part of the growing illegal gold mining in Africa. The prices of gold are soaring. In Africa, there is an increasing number of Chinese firms investing in Africa, where the Chinese nationals are directly linked with

illegal sale and illicit mining. China's ambassador to Ghana, Tong Defa, refuted these allegations that Chinese nationals are solely part of the illegal mining. Tong said: "The issue did not originate from the Chinese. Some of those who are even caught red-handed are simply migrant workers trying to make a living." He informed that Chinese nationals can not obtain a local mining license and were in cahoots with Ghanaians to facilitate these illegal operations. He called this allegation unfair against China and unjust. This comes after hundreds of Chinese nationals were detained for illegal mining. One of the biggest cases was "Galamsey Queen" Aisha Huang, who was sentenced to over four and a half years in prison. ("Ghana at loggerheads with China over rampant illegal gold mining," *SCMP*, 30 June 2025)

## **CHINA & EUROPE**

### **British man detained for alleged smuggling of American military tech to China, reports BBC**

On 02 June, *BBC* reported that a British man, John Miller, 63, has been indicted in the US for allegedly attempting to smuggle sensitive American military technology to China, including missiles, air defence radar, drones, and cryptographic devices. Miller, a permanent US resident, and his alleged accomplice, Chinese national Cui Guanghai, 43, were arrested in Serbia and face potential extradition to the US. Court documents reveal that the pair discussed exporting encryption devices and paid a USD 10,000 deposit for such equipment. They also allegedly attempted to harass an anti-Chinese government protester by installing a tracking device on their car and slashing their tyres. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche described their actions as a "blatant assault" on US national security and democratic values, emphasising that the Justice Department will not tolerate foreign repression on US soil. If convicted, Miller could face up to 20 years in prison for violating the Arms Export Control Act and 10 years for smuggling. ("Briton accused of plot to export US military tech," *BBC*, 02 June 2025)

### **EU bans Chinese manufacturers from accessing its public procurement tenders**

On 02 June, the European Union took a significant step by voting to restrict Chinese medical device manufacturers from accessing its public procurement tenders worth over 5 million Euros (USD 5.2 million) for the next five years. This marks the first use of the EU's International Procurement Instrument (IPI), which aims to counteract unfair trade practices

by ensuring reciprocity in market access. The move came after prolonged and fruitless negotiations with Beijing, following a European Commission investigation revealing that 87 per cent of Chinese public tenders for medical devices contain explicit or implicit restrictions against imported products, effectively favouring domestic suppliers. The EU highlights Beijing's "Buy China" policies, especially in high-end medical devices, which are targeted in China's "Made in China 2025" plan. This policy sets ambitious goals for domestically produced devices to make up 50 per cent of county hospital usage by 2020, rising to 70 per cent by 2025, and 90 per cent by 2030. Such measures create significant barriers for EU firms trying to enter the Chinese market, while Chinese manufacturers face comparatively fewer restrictions in Europe. The timing of the EU vote adds tension ahead of a meeting between EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič and Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao at an OECD ministerial conference in Paris. Despite a slight easing of trade relations since the US-China tariff wars, the EU remains wary of China's opaque subsidy regime, industrial overcapacity, and the risk of trade diversion from US tariffs. Jorge Toledo, the EU ambassador to China, recently expressed frustration over stalled trade talks, emphasising the urgent need for progress to avoid further deterioration in relations. This development underscores the ongoing complexities in EU-China trade ties amid broader geopolitical and economic challenges. (["China to be frozen out of big EU medtech tenders for five years."](#) SCMP, 02 June 2025)

### **Xi and Lukashenko reaffirm long-standing strategic friendship**

On 04 June, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Beijing to reaffirm their enduring traditional friendship and strategic partnership. Xi congratulated Lukashenko on his re-election and emphasised that China views Belarus as a true friend and reliable partner, highlighting the strong political mutual trust and growing cooperation between the two countries. He expressed China's willingness to work with Belarus to promote the steady development of bilateral ties and win-win cooperation. Lukashenko, on his 15th visit to China, expressed gratitude for China's long-term support and assistance, stating that Belarus has high trust in China and will actively advance cooperation. Both leaders agreed to launch joint pilot projects aimed at creating joint production facilities based on scientific research. Belarusian officials noted that the visit serves as an example

of friendship and mutual support between the two nations. The visit underscores the strategic and long-term nature of China-Belarus relations, with both sides committed to deepening cooperation in various fields, including technology, industry, and international diplomacy. (["Xi, Lukashenko meet, stress enduring traditional friendship."](#) *Global Times*, 04 June 2025)

### **EU expresses concerns about China's rare earth export controls**

On June 05, the European Union (EU) urged China to address its recent export restrictions on rare earth elements and magnets, which have caused significant disruptions in European industries. EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič described the situation as "alarming," highlighting the essential role of these materials in manufacturing sectors such as automotive, electronics, and defence. He informed Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao about the severe impact on the European car industry and emphasized that rare earths and permanent magnets are "essential for industrial production". China's export controls, imposed in April 2025, added seven rare earth elements like dysprosium, gadolinium, lutetium, samarium, scandium, terbium, and yttrium to its export control list, along with several rare earth magnets. These measures require export licenses and have been implemented in response to US President Donald Trump's "reciprocal" tariffs. Given China's dominance in the global rare earth market, producing approximately 90 per cent of the world's supply, these restrictions have had a widespread impact. In response, the EU has initiated 13 new critical raw material projects outside the bloc, including in Greenland and Ukraine, to diversify its supply sources. These projects, requiring an estimated investment of €5.5 billion, aim to reduce Europe's dependence on Chinese rare earths and ensure a stable supply for its industries. The EU's call for China to ease its export restrictions underscores the growing concerns over supply chain vulnerabilities and the need for transparent and fair-trade practices in the global rare earth market. (["EU pushes China to address 'alarming' rare earth export controls."](#) SCMP, 05 June 2025)

### **China opposes NATO expansion into the Asia-Pacific, says China's Foreign Ministry**

On 05 June, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly reaffirmed its opposition to NATO's expansion into the Asia-Pacific region, warning that such moves are unwelcome and harmful to regional peace and stability. Ministry

spokesperson Wang Wenbin addressed the issue during a regular press briefing, making it clear that the majority of Asia-Pacific countries are against introducing military alliances reminiscent of Cold War bloc confrontations into the region. “The position of most countries in the region is very clear,” Wang said: “They oppose the merging of various military blocs in the region. They do not welcome NATO’s expansion into Asia, and they do not accept the transfer of bloc confrontation to Asia.” Wang criticized certain countries for preaching openness and peace while simultaneously working to draw NATO into the Asia-Pacific. “Under the banner of freedom and openness, some countries are forming exclusive small groups and introducing military blocs into the region,” he said. “This seriously undermines regional peace, stability, and cooperation.” He further warned that such actions run counter to the trend of peaceful development and mutual trust among regional countries. China’s firm stance reflects a broader resistance among many Asia-Pacific nations to foreign military involvement. The ministry’s comments come amid growing concerns in Beijing over NATO’s outreach to partners like Japan and South Korea, and reflect China’s view that NATO’s presence beyond its traditional North Atlantic scope is provocative and destabilising. ([“Chinese Foreign Ministry: NATO not welcome in the Asia-Pacific region.”](#) *CGTN*, 05 June 2025)

### **UK to review security risks in building the Chinese embassy in London**

On 09 June, *SCMP* reported that the UK government has pledged to look at China’s plan to build a large embassy in the vicinity of London’s financial centres, after President Donald Trump lobbied Prime Minister Keir Starmer to reconsider it. He also asked to avoid the proposal due to the risks to intelligence sharing. A senior US official expressed concern about China being able to access sensitive communications from the UK, and the issue was reportedly raised in the ongoing trade negotiations between the US and the UK. The Technology Secretary, Peter Kyle, stated that the UK government would respond wholly and deliberately to any threats posed. Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp also agreed with US concerns and added that “the UK would be saying yes to a Chinese security threat” due to the espionage threat posed by China in the UK. Over 1,000 people protested against the embassy proposal earlier in the year. The proposal was originally rejected by the Tower Hamlets Council in 2022, and since 2023, it has been at the government’s discretion and was

sent from the Planning Inspectorate for review. ([“UK vows due diligence on Chinese embassy in London amid security concerns,”](#) *SCMP*, 09 June 2025)

### **China and Spain upgrade their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership**

On 12 June, *CGTN* reported that China and Spain have reaffirmed their commitment to advancing their comprehensive strategic partnership during a meeting between China’s Vice President Han Zheng and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez in Madrid on 11 June. Marking the 20th anniversary of this partnership, both leaders emphasized deepening cooperation, strengthening political trust, and upholding multilateralism and free trade. Han highlighted the importance of high-level exchanges and collaboration within multilateral platforms like the UN and WTO, especially amid global instability. He called for enhanced China-Europe solidarity to stabilize the global economy and expressed hope that Spain would actively support stronger China-EU relations, using the 50th anniversary of China-EU diplomatic ties as a catalyst. Sanchez reiterated Spain’s support for the one-China policy and praised China’s commitment to multilateralism at a time when unilateralism and protectionism threaten global trade, while strongly emphasizing that “there is no winner in a tariff war,” as he welcomed increased Chinese investment in Spain and pledged support for stronger EU-China ties. ([“China, Spain pledge to deepen strategic partnership.”](#) *CGTN*, 12 June 2025)

### **EU notes it’s too early to determine repercussions of US-China trade talks**

On 12 June, *SCMP* reported that the European Union has stated that it is “too early to conclude” whether recent US tariffs on Chinese goods have triggered a diversion of Chinese exports to the EU. Although May 2025 data show a 34.5 per cent drop in Chinese exports to the US and significant increases to France and Germany, EU officials stressed that isolated spikes in trade do not confirm a pattern of diversion. The European Commission recently launched a customs surveillance system to detect trade diversion and assess potential harm to EU industries. Officials explained that trends, not one-off surges, are necessary to justify emergency safeguarding measures. These safeguards that are non-China-specific could rapidly restrict imports if material harm is proven. Concerns over diversion were raised during a high-level dialogue between EU President Ursula von der Leyen and China’s

Premier Li Qiang. A task force is monitoring imports using five criteria, including volume and price shifts, and potential industry harm. Recent data showed surges in imports of LEDs, industrial robots, and steel bars, alongside drastic price drops. (Finbarr Bermingham, "EU says 'too early' to say if spike in Chinese exports could prompt emergency measures," *SCMP*, 12 June 2025)

### **China's Premier meets European Central Bank's President on 50 years of EU-China relations**

On 13 June, *Global Times* reported that China's Premier Li Qiang met with European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde in Beijing to mark 50 years of China-EU diplomatic relations and push for stronger economic cooperation on 06 June. Li emphasized the need to consolidate political trust, expand practical collaboration, and jointly promote global prosperity. Li noted that China and the EU, as major global economies, are highly complementary. He highlighted China's vast market and growth potential, calling for greater cooperation across various sectors. He expressed that both sides should enhance multilateral coordination, foster openness, and contribute meaningfully to global economic recovery and governance. He also expressed China's willingness to work with the ECB on reforming the international monetary system and reiterated China's commitment to further opening and sharing development opportunities. Lagarde, in response, warned against tariffs and trade wars, calling them "lose-lose" scenarios. She praised multilateralism and emphasized the importance of open, cooperative approaches to global challenges. Lagarde welcomed the establishment of a new meeting mechanism between the ECB and Chinese central bank governors and looked forward to expanding financial cooperation. (Xinhua, "[Chinese premier meets ECB chief](#)," *Global Times*, 13 June 2025)

### **China condemns British warship sailing through Taiwan Strait, reports Reuters**

On 20 June, *Reuters* reported the strong condemnation of China by the passage of British Warship HMS Spey through the Taiwan Strait, accusing the UK of deliberately disrupting regional peace. The Royal Navy responded by stating that the transit was routine, which is a lawful operation under international law. However, Beijing, which claims sovereignty over the strait, viewed it as deliberate provocation. Taiwan welcomed the British Move as support for the freedom of navigation in the Taiwan Strait. In response to intensified military

activities of China, Taiwan's president Lai Ching-te has deployed heightened surveillance. The previous attempt by a British warship to sail through the Strait in 2021 was also warned by China. ("[China angered by British Warship sailing as Taiwan raises alert level](#)," *Reuters*, 20 June 2025)

### **China opposes the EU medical device procurement limits against Chinese firms**

On 24 June, *CGTN* reported that China opposed the European Union's move to restrict Chinese firms from public procurement tenders of medical devices over 5 million euros (USD 5.35 million). The Ministry of Commerce spokesperson stated the EU used a one-sided tool that builds protectionist barriers and harms fair competition. The spokesperson urged the EU to "immediately correct its wrong actions" and stated that China will take steps to protect the rights of its enterprises. Since this year commemorates the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties, China remains open to dialogue and aims to stabilise confidence in China-EU business cooperation. ("[China voices opposition to EU's limits on medical device procurement](#)," *CGTN*, 24 June 2025)

### **Ukraine's President claims Chinese firms are aiding Russia in the war**

On 25 June, *SCMP* reported that Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that China's defence companies help Russia sustain its war against Ukraine. He stated that Ukraine is facing "a network of state and non-state actors" that are "assuring the course of aggression". He said: "This network includes Russia, North Korea, the current regime in Iran, Chinese companies, and many, many schemes across the world that help produce weapons and carry out operations against our country, our people, and our Europe." He urged countries not to help Russia and its allies in any ways. He said: "It's just not China," and "Also Taiwan, and some of these parts come from European countries and the United States. And every single component or machine tool delivered to Russian defence sectors helps prolong the war and crimes against peace." (Seong Hyeon Choi, "[Zelensky tells Nato Chinese companies are among Russia's suppliers aiding war on Ukraine](#)," *SCMP*, 25 June 2025)

### **EU and China celebrate 50 years of diplomatic ties**

On 26 June, *CGTN* reported that the China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi met envoys from EU on 25 June to mark 50 year of EU - China diplomatic ties. Wang in his speech addressed the importance of mutual trust and cooperation

and outlined a three-point proposal to enhance EU-China relations where he demanded EU's support to One-China policy, Economic partnership without rivalry and joint promotion of multilateralism and global peace and affirmed China's global commitment to initiatives like Belt and Road Initiative. The envoys from the EU highlighted the importance of China as a key economic partner and expressed the willingness of the EU to work collaboratively to address global challenges and to uphold a rules-based international order. Both sides emphasized stable and constructive EU-China ties. ("[Chinese FM meets envoys from EU, member states](#)," *CGTN*, 26 June 2025)

### CHINA & THE AMERICAS

#### **China criticizes the US for inciting conflict at the Shangri-La dialogue**

On 01 June, at the 22nd Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, China's Ministry of National Defence criticized the United States for using the forum to incite confrontation and advance its own interests. Spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang condemned US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth's remarks, stating they were filled with hegemonic logic and a Cold War mentality, violating China's sovereignty and disregarding regional efforts for peace. Zhang accused the US of initiating trade wars, forming exclusionary alliances, and increasing military deployments in the Asia-Pacific, actions he claimed would ultimately backfire. He emphasised that the Taiwan issue is an internal affair and warned against external interference, asserting China's determination to safeguard its sovereignty. Regarding the South China Sea, Zhang highlighted its status as a vital and safe shipping route, implying that US actions are disrupting regional stability. The statement reflects China's stance against US policies perceived as destabilising, advocating for regional cooperation over confrontation. ("[Defense spokesperson: U.S. exploits Shangri-La Dialogue to create dispute](#)," *CGTN*, 01 June 2025)

#### **China rejects Trump's claims of Geneva trade deal breach, says China's Ministry of Commerce**

On 02 June, China firmly rejected US President Donald Trump's allegations that it breached a bilateral trade agreement reached in Geneva in mid-May. The Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China labelled the accusations as "groundless". It criticised the US for introducing "discriminatory restrictive" measures, including new export controls on AI chips, halting sales of chip design software, and revoking Chinese student visas. The ministry

emphasised China's commitment to safeguarding its national interests and hinted at taking unspecified forceful measures in response. The Geneva agreement had stipulated a 90-day suspension of triple-digit tariffs, with China agreeing to lift trade countermeasures affecting critical exports like metals essential for the US semiconductor, electronics, and defence industries. However, tensions escalated when President Trump announced a doubling of import tariffs on steel and aluminium to 50 per cent, further straining bilateral relations. These developments have unsettled global markets, with investors reacting to the renewed trade tensions and potential implications for the global economy. ("[China rejects Trump's accusation that it breached Geneva trade deal](#)," *Reuters*, 02 June 2025)

#### **1,200 per cent hike since China grants visa-free access to five Latin American countries**

On 30 May, China began implementing a trial visa-free entry policy for Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay, effective until 31 May 2026. This allows stays for up to 30 days for tourism, business, or cultural exchange purposes. This marks China's first such move for Latin America, expanding its visa-free list to 43 countries. This has strengthened air routes, including a new 14,000 km direct flight from Mexico City to Shenzhen. Other routes, such as the Beijing-Madrid-Sao Paulo, Beijing-Madrid-Havana, and Beijing-Tijuana-Mexico City routes, have also strengthened links between China and Latin America and the Caribbean. This move supports rising mobility. The trade between China and Latin America surpassed USD 500 billion in 2024. The visa-free entries surged 1,200 per cent to 3.39 million in 2024. The tourism expert at Nankai University, Yu Haibo, called the policy a reflection of China's commitment to high-standard opening-up and inclusive globalisation. China also extended 240-hour visa-free transit for travellers from 54 nations and announced similar policies to the Gulf region: Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, and Bahrain, starting 09 June 2025 till 08 June 2026. ("[China expands visa-free access to 5 Latin American countries](#)," *Global Times*, 02 June 2025)

#### **US Indo-Pacific Commander warns of China's "rehearsals" in Taiwan Strait**

On 03 June, *SCMP* reported on the head of the US Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Samuel Paparo, expressing grave concerns over China's military activities in the Taiwan Strait. Speaking at an AI expo hosted by the Special Competitive Studies Project think tank, Paparo stated that China's operations are not merely exercises but

“rehearsals” for potential military action. He described the current period as a “profoundly consequential time” and warned that China is on a “dangerous course.” Paparo's remarks highlight the increasing frequency of People's Liberation Army (PLA) sorties crossing the Taiwan Strait's median line, a significant indicator of escalating aggression. While he refrained from explicitly referencing a potential takeover of Taiwan, his comments underscore the growing concerns within the US military establishment regarding China's intentions. The US has been closely monitoring these developments, with officials and lawmakers considering 2027 as a possible timeframe for increased Chinese assertiveness. The situation has been further complicated by the election of Taiwanese leader William Lai Ching-te, whom Beijing has labelled a “destroyer of peace.” Paparo also pointed to a “growing transactional symbiosis among an axis of autocracies,” referring to technology transfers and coordinated military activities that could embolden China's stance. These developments have raised alarms about the potential for miscalculations and the need for heightened vigilance in the region. (“[US Indo-Pacific commander calls PLA operations in Taiwan Strait ‘rehearsals’, not just exercises.](#)” *SCMP*, 02 June 2025)

### **Chinese students allegedly working as spies, reports an editorial in SCMP**

On 03 June, an editorial in *SCMP* reported that the allegations of Chinese students spying in US universities have led to visa revocations and severed academic ties. They have claimed espionage at Stanford. US lawmakers have called for restrictions on Chinese student visas and announced the end of their partnership with Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Senator Ashley Moody and others support banning Chinese citizens from US campuses over national security concerns. However, experts warn that the evidence is weak and risks are exaggerated. A former CIA official and fellow at Georgetown University, Dennis Wilder, stated that spying fears are often based on nationality, not behavior. The executive director of the US-China Education Trust, Rosie Levine, stated that vague accusations unfairly target all Chinese students. Yale University scholar Jeremy Daum and Johns Hopkins scholar Jessica Chen Weiss argue that such policies harm US innovation and global academic leadership. They emphasize the need for precise, evidence-based security measures rather than broad crackdowns, which could damage beneficial research and exchanges. (Bochen Han, “[Students as spies? US-China](#)

[educational ties strained by rising claims of espionage.](#)” *SCMP*, 03 June 2025)

### **FBI detains Chinese scientist smuggling toxic crop-killing fungus into the US**

On 03 June, Federal authorities charged Chinese nationals Liu Zunyong and Jian Yunqing with attempting to smuggle the toxic fungus *Fusarium graminearum* into the United States. This pathogen, known to attack crops like wheat, barley, maize, and rice, as well as to sicken livestock and humans, was discovered in Liu's backpack at Detroit Metropolitan Airport in July 2024. The FBI has described *Fusarium graminearum* as a “potential agroterrorism weapon.” The charges against Liu and Jian include conspiracy, smuggling, making false statements, and visa fraud. US Attorney Jerome Gorgon Jr. emphasized the severity of the situation, said: “The alleged actions of these Chinese nationals, including a loyal member of the Chinese Communist Party, are of the gravest national security concerns.” Jian, who worked in a lab at the University of Michigan, appeared in court and was returned to jail to await a bond hearing. A lawyer assigned for her initial appearance declined to comment. The incident underscores growing concerns over biosecurity and the potential misuse of biological agents in acts of agroterrorism. (“[Chinese scientist Liu Zunyong tried to bring toxic fungus into US, FBI says.](#)” *SCMP*, 04 June 2025)

### **China is not a neutral peacemaker between Russia and Ukraine, says former US ambassador to China**

On 04 June, *SCMP* reported that Former US Ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns, has cautioned against Beijing's role in Ukraine-Russia peace talks, as they are not neutral and support Russia in every way: diplomatically, economically, and militarily, including supplying microelectronics to its defense sector. Burns was speaking at the Brookings Institution, where he provided answers to a wide-ranging discussion, including progress China has made toward fulfilling its ambitions of becoming greater than the United States. While Beijing is interested in Ukraine's reconstruction after the war, it warned that this is a strategic way of influencing without responsibility. He commented that the peace plan China proposed at the United Nations was a “hollow” initiative. He reiterated that Chinese involvement should be narrowly defined, if at all, allowed by parks, and only requested from Kyiv. Finally, he also remarked that China is gaining influence in the Global South as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, but should not shape Ukraine's post-war future. (

Igor Patrick, "[Former US envoy to China urges caution over Beijing involvement in Ukraine-Russia talks](#)," *SCMP*, 04 June 2025)

### **China's President Xi is "very tough and extremely hard to make a deal with," says US President Trump**

On 04 June, US President Donald Trump described Chinese President Xi Jinping as "very tough and extremely hard to make a deal with," marking a shift from earlier statements in which he praised their "great relationship." The comment, made on Trump's social media platform Truth Social, comes amid rising tensions over unresolved trade disputes between the United States and China, particularly concerning a Geneva tariff agreement involving critical minerals. A call between Trump and Xi is expected later this week, with the White House aiming to ease mounting trade friction. White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said: "We're optimistic that a discussion will help clear up misunderstandings, but the president is under no illusion about how difficult these negotiations are." The diplomatic tension is compounded by recent legal rulings. A US trade court determined that Trump exceeded his legal authority when he imposed broad tariffs under emergency powers. However, a federal appeals court has temporarily reinstated those tariffs while it reviews the government's appeal. These developments reflect ongoing challenges in US-China relations, with economic, legal, and strategic dimensions all contributing to a volatile environment. The outcome of any upcoming discussions could significantly influence trade flows and regulatory stability surrounding critical mineral supplies, a sector central to both nations' industrial strategies. ("[Trump calls China's XI tough, 'hard to make a deal with'.](#)" *Reuters*, 04 June 2025)

### **China's President Xi is "very tough and extremely hard to make a deal with," says US President Trump**

On 04 June, US President Donald Trump described Chinese President Xi Jinping as "very tough and extremely hard to make a deal with," marking a shift from earlier statements in which he praised their "great relationship." The comment, made on Trump's social media platform Truth Social, comes amid rising tensions over unresolved trade disputes between the United States and China, particularly concerning a Geneva tariff agreement involving critical minerals. A call between Trump and Xi is expected later this week, with the White House aiming to ease mounting trade friction. White House

spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said: "We're optimistic that a discussion will help clear up misunderstandings, but the president is under no illusion about how difficult these negotiations are." The diplomatic tension is compounded by recent legal rulings. A US trade court determined that Trump exceeded his legal authority when he imposed broad tariffs under emergency powers. However, a federal appeals court has temporarily reinstated those tariffs while it reviews the government's appeal. These developments reflect ongoing challenges in US-China relations, with economic, legal, and strategic dimensions all contributing to a volatile environment. The outcome of any upcoming discussions could significantly influence trade flows and regulatory stability surrounding critical mineral supplies, a sector central to both nations' industrial strategies. ("[Trump calls China's XI tough, 'hard to make a deal with'.](#)" *Reuters*, 04 June 2025)

### **China's Vice Premier calls for the US to resolve the trade tensions with diplomacy, reports CGTN**

On 11 June, *CGTN* reported that during the inaugural meeting of the China-US economic and trade consultation mechanism held in London on 09 June, China's Vice Premier He Lifeng emphasized that the United States should resolve trade disputes with China through equal dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation. As China's top official for trade with the US, He underscored the importance of honoring commitments and implementing the consensus reached by the two countries' leaders. He stated that trade relations between China and the US are inherently win-win, warning that trade wars yield no winners. While reaffirming China's sincerity in dialogue, he also noted the country's resolve to uphold its principles and protect its interests. The talks, which included US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, led to progress on several economic concerns. Both sides agreed in principle to implement the consensus reached during the 05 June presidential call and to consolidate outcomes from earlier Geneva talks. He urged continuous communication to reduce misunderstandings, boost cooperation, and promote stable bilateral ties that benefit the global economy. ("[Chinese vice premier urges U.S. to resolve trade disputes with China through dialogue, cooperation.](#)" *CGTN*, 11 June 2025)

### **China at the WTO meeting says the US narrative on reciprocal tariffs is misleading**

On 13 June, Council for Trade in Services meeting, the Chinese delegation stated that the

US narrative on reciprocal tariffs is one-sided and misleading. It urged the US to abide by the rules of the WTO, maintain the stability of the global trading system, and not employ double standards in WTO rules. The delegation stated that the US sustained long-term surpluses in the service trade with its major trading partners, and it has reached approximately USD 300 billion in 2024. It further added that this participation in the highest value-added activities, such as research and development, design, branding, and sales, the United States gains much higher returns in international trade and globalisation than surface trade data reflects. ("China criticizes U.S. tariff narrative as 'one-sided, misleading'," CGTN, 15 June 2025)

### **The US-China rare earth mineral issue remains unresolved, says an editorial in Reuters**

On 16 June, an editorial in *Reuters* reported that the US-China London meeting did not resolve the rare earth mineral issue. China has not granted export clearance for some specialised rare-earth magnets that are vital for US military suppliers in the production of fighter jets and missile systems, noted the editorial. US officials have signalled a possible extension of existing tariffs on China beyond 90 days. The US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent stated that there would be no "quid pro quo" on easing curbs on exports of AI chips to China in exchange for access to rare earths. (Laurie Chen & Fanny Potkin, "Exclusive: US-China trade truce leaves military-use rare earth issue unresolved, sources say," Reuters, 16 June 2025)

### **US-China trade tensions put pressure on Chinese Pharmacy firms, says an editorial in Reuters**

On 18 June, an editorial in *Reuters* reported that China's Drug research and development firms are changing project plans, stockpiling supplies, and discussing testing locally to mitigate the impact of trade tensions. The Fears of delay in access to U.S. supply chains and raised import tariffs are the major reasons motivating biotech and pharmaceutical companies to avoid, pause, or consider delaying the start of projects. With low-cost development model using imported clinical samples, equipment, chemicals, and other materials to conduct work was employed by China's pharmaceutical research and manufacturing sector. It serves global drug companies like Pfizer and AstraZeneca. Consequently, companies like WuXi App Tech paused research projects, and companies like Innovent Biologics, BeOne Medicines turned to test locally. (Andrew

Silver, "China pharma projects disrupted by Sino-US tensions," Reuters, 18 June 2025)

### **China-based bitcoin mining machine manufacturers are establishing firms in the US, reports Reuters**

On 18 June, *Reuters* reported that Bitman, Canaan, and MicroBT are setting up a manufacturing foothold in the US as the tariff war reshapes the cryptocurrency supply chain. These China-based companies are the world's best-selling makers of bitcoin mining machines and have built over 90 per cent of global mining rigs. Conflux Network's chief technology officer, Guang Yang, said: "The U.S.-China trade war is triggering structural, not superficial, changes in bitcoin's supply chains," and "this goes beyond tariffs. It's a strategic pivot toward 'politically acceptable' hardware sources." Bitmain started US production of mining rigs in December. Canaan's Senior executive stated that Canaan started trial production in the US with the aim of avoiding tariffs after Trump's 02 April. MicroBT said: "actively implementing a localisation strategy in the US" to "avoid the impact of tariffs." Auradine's chief strategy officer, Sanjay Gupta, stated that the mining rigs, "hundreds of thousands of them connected to the US electrical grid," are a security risk. (Samuel Shen & Vidya Ranganathan, "Dominant Chinese makers of bitcoin mining machines set up US production to beat tariffs," Reuters, 18 June 2025)

### **US President Donald Trump's new executive order to extend the TikTok ban**

On 20 June, US President Donald Trump signed a new executive order to extend the TikTok ban for 90 more days by pushing the deadline to 17 September 2025. This extension, for the third time, will allow us to gain more time to secure a deal that would shift TikTok to American ownership. The extension is due to failed negotiations with China after the withdrawal of China after Trump's tariff announcement. CGTN noted that the extension of the TikTok ban was wholeheartedly praised by 170 million Americans and 7.5 million US businesses who use this platform. While concerns persist regarding national security and foreign ownership, the extension suggests that the ban is largely unlikely. Major tech firms like Apple, Google, and Oracle have agreed to continue to support the app, and this movement is reaffirmed by assurances from the Justice Department to avoid legal penalties during ongoing negotiations. ("Trump extends TikTok ban deadline for third time," CGTN, 20 June 2025)

### **Texas bans property purchases by China's citizens, says SCMP**

On 22 June, SCMP reported that Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed a bill banning citizens of China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia from buying property in the state, unless it is used as a primary home. The law exempts U.S. citizens and green card holders and will take effect on September 1. The law also allows visa holders to buy homes only if they live in them. Investment property purchases will not be allowed. Supporters say the move protects Texas from foreign threats. Critics say the law is discriminatory and could lead to racial bias in housing. Activists plan to file a legal challenge, arguing it violates the U.S. Constitution. Texas holds nearly half of all U.S. land owned by Chinese buyers. A similar case in Florida is already under federal review. China's groups in Texas have raised concerns about rising prejudice against Asian communities in the wake of such laws. (Bochen Han, "[Texas governor signs bill banning Chinese citizens from buying property in the state](#)," SCMP, 22 June 2025)

### **China condemns US strikes on Iran and calls for a ceasefire**

On 23 June, CGTN reported that China strongly condemned the U.S. attacks on Iran's nuclear sites and called them a serious violation of international law. The criticism came as hundreds of China's citizens continue to evacuate from Iran and Israel due to rising conflict. China's Foreign military spokesperson said: "China strongly condemns the U.S. attacks on Iran. The actions of the U.S. seriously violate the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law, and have exacerbated tensions in the Middle East. China's foreign ministry urged all sides, especially Israel, to stop fighting and protect civilians. President Xi Jinping called for a ceasefire and said force was not the answer. China's embassies are helping with evacuations and advising citizens to register for flights immediately. Over 740 others crossed into Azerbaijan, and more than 400 have left Israel. ("[China condemns U.S. attacks as evacuations from Iran, Israel continue](#)," CGTN, 23 June 2025)

### **US urges China to convince Iran against closing Strait of Hormuz, says BBC**

On 23 June, the BBC reported that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio asked China to stop Iran from closing the Strait of Hormuz. He stated that China depends heavily on oil shipped through the strait and should act to prevent any disruption. Iran's parliament approved a plan to close the waterway, but the final decision rests

with its Supreme National Security Council. Rubio warned that any closure would be "economic suicide" for Iran and hurt many countries more than the US. Around 20 percent of global oil passes through the strait, making it a critical energy route. Oil prices spiked after US strikes on Iranian nuclear sites and hit USD 81.40 per barrel before falling back. China buys more oil from Iran than any other country. Beijing has called for restraint and an immediate ceasefire. Trump posted on Truth Social, urging countries to keep oil prices down. Energy experts warned that closing the strait could push oil prices much higher and damage global markets. (Adam Hancock, "[US asks China to stop Iran from closing Strait of Hormuz](#)," BBC, 23 June 2025)

### **China's Ministry of State Security mocks the CIA's call to recruit officials from China, reported SCMP**

On 25 June, SCMP stated that China's Ministry of State Security (MSS) mocked a CIA campaign to recruit Chinese informants as a desperate and farcical move, accusing the agency of using China's threat narrative to secure more funds. In an official post on the WeChat account, the MSS criticised the recent Chinese language recruitment videos, alleging they aim to sow dissatisfaction among Chinese officials. This is MSS's first response to the CIA's campaign. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China has condemned the initiative as a violation of National interest and warned against US attempts to sow the seeds of discord among China's officials. ("[China's top security agency mocks CIA Chinese spy recruitment drive as 'farcical'](#)," SCMP, 25 June 2025)

### **China's Foreign Minister meets Harvard professor and discusses the importance of bilateral ties**

On 26 June, Global Times reported the meeting of China's Foreign Minister with Harvard professor Allison. During the meeting, Harvard professor Graham Allison urged the need for China and the US to develop a strategic framework for peaceful coexistence to avoid 'Thucydides' Trap'. China's foreign minister Wang praised Allison's efforts to promote US- China relationship and emphasized China's traditional believe in "harmony without uniformity" unlike the zero-sum mind set of the west. He urged both countries to adopt a new narrative of peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation with mutual respect. Allison also echoed the value of embracing diversity, which is embedded in American ideals. Both Allison and Wang reaffirmed their support for bilateral communication. ("[Chinese Foreign Minister](#)

meets Harvard Professor Allison,” *Global Times*, 26 June 2025)

### **US bans China’s AI tools under “No Adversarial AI Act”**

On 26 June, *SCMP* reported the bipartisan move that introduces the ‘No Adversarial AI Act’ to ban the use of AI tools linked to China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, particularly with a blatant focus on China’s AI platform DeepSeek. The legislation mandates the biannual update of the public list of foreign adversary AI models with narrow exemptions for research. The legislative action is a result of alleged accusations against DeepSeek on Cyber espionage, technology theft, and providing support for China’s military intelligence. Legislators emphasized that AI is a strategic tool for the new Cold War, and US systems must remain free from such threats. (“China-tied AI tools like DeepSeek face US federal ban over ‘threat’ to national security,” *SCMP*, 26 June 2025))

### **US-China trade deal to expedite rare earth exports amid trade tensions, reports Reuters**

On 26 June, *Reuters* reported that, according to a White House official announcement that the US and China have reached an agreement to expedite rare earth shipments to the US. The deal follows ongoing arrangements to de-escalate trade tensions between the countries. both countries have reached an agreement to truce the trade tensions in Geneva, and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick affirmed that once China resumes its shipments of rare earth minerals, which are crucial for automotive, aerospace, semiconductors, and defence, the US would roll back its countermeasures. The move marks an improvement in resolving trade disputes between the two global powers. (“US says deal with Beijing will expedite rare earth exports from China,” *Reuters*, 26 June 2025))

### **US-China trade truce to unfold 10 new deals, says US Commerce Secretary**

On 27 June, *Bloomberg* reported that during last month’s talks in Geneva US and China have officially signed a trade truce, solidifying the terms and conditions of each country. The US has agreed to ease its tariffs in return for China’s delivery of rare earth minerals vital for industries like aerospace and renewable energy, stated US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. But the agreement does not address broader issues such as US market access in China and fentanyl trafficking. Ahead of the 9 July deadline to resume US tariffs, Lutnick revealed the US president’s plans to strike a trade deal with 10 major partners in the next two weeks. The

success of the deal will depend on both countries’ consensus to ease the trade tensions. (“Lutnick Says US-China Trade Truce Signed, 10 Deals Imminent,” *Bloomberg*, 27 June 2025))

### **China’s energy firms urge Brazil to clarify its regulatory framework on green investments**

On 27 June, *SCMP* reported that Senior executives from China’s energy firms demanded that Brazil clarify its regulatory framework or risk predictability in green energy investments. At the energy summit in Rio de Janeiro, China’s energy firm leaders from State Power Investment Corporation and China Energy Engineering Corporation emphasized the urgent need for energy storage and concessions. In 2023, China invested in various renewable energy programmes in Brazil by investing USD 1.73 billion. Such a demand by China’s leaders is in response to Brazil’s delays in implementing projects. CEEC Brazil’s Marcelo Taulois said that inaction could seriously disrupt Brazil’s position in the global energy transition. SPIC Brazil CEO urged Brazil to act quickly to bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation to secure its ties with China. (“Chinese energy firms say Brazil must clarify regulations or face loss of investments,” *SCMP*, 27 June 2025))

### **China imports 30,000 tons of Soybeans from Argentina, reports SCMP**

On 27 June, *SCMP* reported that China imports Argentine soybean meal amidst US tensions. To diversify the supply chains, China has ordered a 30,000-ton shipment of soybeans from Argentina. This is the first purchase from China since the inception of opening of China’s market to Argentina in 2019. The cargo is expected to depart in July and reach Guangdong by September. This trial shipment is coordinated by several trades and feed producers from China to assess the feasibility of reducing reliance on the US. Argentina, being the world’s top exporter of Soybean meal and oil, is seen as a viable alternative by China. Argentina and China are expected to have long-term cooperation in agricultural trade. (“China imports Argentina soybean meal in trial amid US tensions,” *SCMP*, 27 June 2025))

### **China-Latin America survey reveals strong mutual understanding, reports Global Times**

On 27 June, *Global Times* reported the survey conducted by China and Latin America, which revealed strong public opinion alignment between both countries in economic and global governance perspectives. The survey was jointly conducted by Global Times Institute, Latin American Council for Social Sciences, and Centro

Estudios Sciences. The survey highlights the interdependence of both countries and emphasizes a win-win economic cooperation, and highlights the need for a reformed international order and commitment to peace and development ideals. Both sides reiterated the importance of their vision of equitable development and multipolarity. The survey also highlights the people of China's views on Latin America. The survey provides insights for mutual interdependence and to foster robust China-Latin American relations. (["1st GT Global South Dialogue: China-LAC roundtable forum held in Brazil,"](#) 27 June 2025)

### **China and Ecuador sign an agreement to promote the BRI**

On 27 June, *CGTN* reported that China and Ecuador signed a Cooperation plan to advance the Belt and Road initiative, marking a milestone in 45 year 45-year-old diplomatic relationship. China's President Xi Jinping highlighted their long-term and strategic relationship with Ecuador by successfully collaborating in energy, mining, infrastructure, and electricity. He also urged stronger cooperation in economic development, governance, and mutual support for core interests. Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa also praised China during his visit to China for the summer Davao's meeting and highlighted their commitment to trade, technology, education, and cultural exchange. Both leaders emphasized mutual trust, respect, shared development goals, and strategic partnership. (["China, Ecuador sign cooperation plan to promote Belt and Road Initiative,"](#) *CGTN*, 27 June 2025)

### **Nike announces plans to reduce dependence on China's manufacturing companies, reports BBC**

On 28 June, the *BBC* reported the announcement of Nike to reduce its dependence on China's manufacturing companies, citing that US President Donald Trump's tariffs would cost the company an additional USD 1 billion this year. Currently, 16 percent of the company's footwear is manufactured in China and is expected to drop to a single-digit percentage by May 2026. As the US-China trade tensions as expected to reach an agreement on rare earth metals, the shares in Nike rose by 10 Percent after the company projected a revenue decline and posted USD 11.1 billion in quarterly earnings. Fragility and uncertainty wreak global economy as the deadline is expected to be 9 July. (["Nike pledges to cut reliance on Chinese factories,"](#) *BBC*, 28 June 2025)

### **Trump on China: "getting along well," reports SCMP**

On 30 June, *SCMP* reported that US President Donald Trump dismissed concerns over recent aggressive acts like the hacking of the US telecom system and intellectual property theft linked to China. While responding to questions posed by Fox News regarding the smuggling of dangerous fungus by two Chinese nationals, Trump emphasized that that's how the nasty world works, adding that the US also engages in similar behavior. By this act, the US President played down the significance of the smuggling incident, emphasizing a pragmatic shift in Trump's stance on China. Trump made these comments amidst the recent trade agreements with China to expedite rare earth shipments and a temporary reduction in US tariffs on China. (["Trump says 'getting along well' with China, downplays 'aggressive' acts linked to Beijing,"](#) *SCMP*, 30 June 2025)

### **China is replacing Russia as the major benefactor to Cuba**

On 30 June, an editorial in Reuters reported that China is replacing Russia in Cuba as the major benefactor. They informed that China is preparing to install a solar park in Cuba aimed at delivering 21MW of electricity, which will be one of 55 solar parks by China for Cuba. Currently, Cuba is facing food, fuel, and medicine shortages. Russia is not able to provide for Cuba amid the war. Cuba joined China's BRI in 2018, and since then, they have invested heavily in building Cuba's infrastructure projects. These include projects for transportation, port infrastructure, and telecoms. China's solar parks are pivotal for Cuba, as they face grid collapse, leaving millions with no electricity. (["China is quietly supplanting Russia as Cuba's main benefactor,"](#) *Reuters*, 30 June 2025)

## EAST ASIA & THE PACIFIC READER

---

### TAIWAN READER

#### Taiwan will investigate "China Times" over support for China

On 1 June, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) announced that it would evaluate its potential involvement in the Cross-Strait Chinese Culture Summit. The MAC suggested that China Times may have breached Article 33-1 of the Cross-Strait Act. Want Want China Times Media Group was accused of promoting Chinese Communist Party (CCP) propaganda when one of its executives, Tsai Wang-ting, referred to China as the "motherland" and referred to Taiwan as "China Taiwan." The MAC reiterated Taiwan's sovereignty and condemned Tsai's statements as contrary to Taiwan's national interests. In response, China Times defended its statements by citing Article 1 of the Constitution, which underlines "one China." A scholar at National Changhua University of Education, Tzeng Wei-feng, highlighted that these sorts of comments are now scrutinised to a much greater extent, given President Lai's administration, because of the increasing awareness of cognitive warfare. However, Tzeng cautioned that it would be hard to prove if one could not demonstrate adequate evidential requirements to show that there was wrongdoing. ("Gov't to probe China Times role in Beijing event: newspaper defends position," *Focus Taiwan*, 02 June 2025)

#### Taipei ranks 60th on the Global Cities Index by Oxford Economics

On 02 June, *Focus Taiwan* reported that Oxford Economics ranked Taipei 60th in its 2025 Global Cities Index, up five places from 2024. This was assessed among 1,000 cities across five criteria: economics, human capital, quality of life, environment, and governance. Taipei excelled in quality of life (15th) and governance (75th), surpassing New York in both categories. While Taipei is placed 263rd in economics and 284th in environment, it was praised for its livability and urban management. Expert analysis noted the dominance of Western and North American cities in the top 100 due to economic scale and innovation, though Taipei continues to rise among leading Asian cities. ("Taipei ranked 60th in Oxford Economics 2025 Global Cities Index," *Focus Taiwan*, 02 June 2025)

#### US-based Jamestown Foundation urges Taiwan to increase drone orders to compete with China

On 03 June, *Taiwan News* reported that a researcher at the Jamestown Foundation based in the United States, Sunny Cheung, advised the Taiwanese government to place large-scale orders to support its local drone firms. During the press event in Washington, DC, Cheung stated that there is weak demand in the market, and this could slow growth in Taiwan's drone sector. She acknowledged Taiwan's progress in successfully producing and designing drones, especially regarding the parallel efforts of establishing a supply chain that does not involve Chinese sources. However, she stressed Taiwan must also work on being less reliant on foreign suppliers' systems, like flight control and encrypted communication systems. She also suggested manufacturing 15,000 drones every month till 2028. She also suggested making a stronger partnership with the US, which focuses on combat platforms, tech transfers, and the supply chain system. Taiwan's National Chung Shan Institute of Science and Technology has announced its partnership with private companies to license certain technologies for tube-launched drones and to boost local capabilities and defence resilience. ("US think tank urges Taiwan to support domestic drone firms with orders," *Taiwan News*, 03 June 2025)

#### Former PLA officer warns that Taiwan may face Tiananmen-style crackdown

On 03 June, *Taiwan News* reported that a former China's Army Officer, Li Xiaoming, one of the very few people who were near the site of the Tiananmen massacre, has warned that Taiwan would face a similar military crackdown if China pursued military reunification. In an online interview ahead of the massacre's 36th anniversary, Li stated that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) could use tanks and guns against protesters in Taiwan, as they did on June 4, 1989. Then, as an inexperienced officer with the PLA, Li was sent to the diesel central Beijing, but did not directly participate in the assault because his commander hesitated. Today, Li, 61 and now an Australian citizen, is the only public ex-PLA soldier to speak out on Tiananmen. Li also stated that it was a lesson for China's leaders to tighten control over the military and seek to crush dissent early. "What took place in Beijing could certainly happen in Taiwan," Li warned, and urged the world to pay

attention to avoid the repeat of history. ([“Ex-PLA officer warns Taiwan could face Tiananmen-style crackdown,”](#) *Focus Taiwan*, 03 June 2025)

### **Taiwan opposition parties call for a coal phase-out of Taichung Plant by 2028, reports Focus Taiwan**

On 03 June, *Focus Taiwan* reported that the KMT and TPP opposition parties passed a resolution that would close the Taichung Power Plant by the year 2028. They called for the plant to phase out coal usage by 2028 instead of the government’s timeline for 2034. The KMT and TPP proposed this resolution based on the age of the Taichung facility’s older subcritical units and the gas-fired turbines ready to go online by 2026. The Taichung Power Plant currently produces 45 percent of the coal-powered generation in Central Taiwan. Although opposed to the resolution, Taipower Chairman Tseng Wen-sheng indicated that the resolution would mean a loss of 14 percent of the national power capacity (14 percent of power capacity could lead to a collapse of the grid) for the country and established the need for other stable alternatives. The current timeline to transition from coal to gas for Taiwan is a phased approach from 2025 to 2034, and it will also phase out coal-fired units as new gas-fired units come online. ([“Opposition proposes 2028 coal exit at Taichung Power Plant,”](#) *Focus Taiwan*, 03 June 2025)

### **Detention request for former DPP Legislator over alleged bribery**

On 04 June, *Focus Taiwan* reported that Taipei prosecutors have requested detention for former Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) legislator Chen Ou-po due to corruption allegations surrounding United Logistics International Co. (ULIC). The prosecution noted that the question of flight risk, collusion, and evidence tampering authority was identified after interviewing Chen on June 4. Chen is suspected of taking bribes on behalf of ULIC during his legislative tenure from 2016 to 2020 to promote ULIC’s agenda, including funding meetings and drafting legislation favoring ULIC. Specifically, one incident originates from concern over one of their cargo ships damaging ULIC equipment, particularly as Taiwan’s Commercial Port Law at the time did not cover private logistics firms since transport was not included as part of the “commercial premises” for logistics support and ULIC reached out to Chen for help facilitating their concerns. Nine others were questioned, including Chen’s wife; five were later released on bail as high as NT\$3 million, while four were released without

conditions. Prosecutors continue to expand their investigation, including the role of Chen. ([“Prosecutors seek to detain ex-DPP lawmaker over corruption allegations,”](#) *Focus Taiwan*, 04 June 2025)

### **US Senator applauds Taiwan's better preparedness to defend itself**

On 04 June, *Taiwan News* reported that US Senator, Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on East Asia, Pete Ricketts, has applauded Taiwan’s increased defense readiness by forming a dependable reserve force and actively procuring military items. Ricketts characterized the drills conducted by China as “rehearsals” for invasion. He went on to cite Taiwan’s recent efforts, including their acquisition of rifles, helmets, and night vision. Ricketts also acknowledged the immense improvement from the April visit he made with President Lai Ching-te and defense leadership in Taiwan, and he stated this year, Taiwan prepared our “competition,” or adversaries, differently, or at least “180 degrees” differently. Ricketts advocated for action on the Porcupine Act, which seeks to expedite the estimated USD 21 billion in delayed US weapon sales to Taiwan by simplifying the requirements to export materiel and limiting opportunities from “derivative” to “direct action.” Ricketts warned that China’s goal of readiness for invasion in 2027 hinges on immediate action by the United States. The Vice President of the Atlantic Council, Matthew Kroenig, with a similar vision of fast action from Ricketts against Chinese action, stated that Taiwan is serious about self-defense as a consequence of US defense innovation reform. Kroenig reportedly stated in *Foreign Policy* that, “Taiwan is gettin’ serious about self-defense.” (“Lily LaMattina, [US senator says Taiwan defense sees positive shift through reliable reserve force,](#)” *Taiwan News*, 04 June 2025)

### **Guatemala’s President visits Taiwan to strengthen bilateral ties**

On 5 June, Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo arrived in Taiwan for a five-day visit to boost long-standing relations. This is his first visit since taking office in January 2024. He stated that the trip aims to bring Guatemala-Taiwan ties “to the next level,” especially in trade and technology. The two countries will sign three agreements covering investment, political consultations, and the development of Guatemala’s semiconductor industry. On May, 28, Guatemalan engineers trained in Taiwan on semiconductors. Arévalo’s team will visit TSMC and Hsinchu Science Park and meet Taiwanese textile firms exploring investment. He stated

that Guatemala's location could serve as a bridge between Latin America and the US. He also called the visit "a historic deepening of bilateral trust." After Taiwan, Arévalo will visit Japan for diplomatic celebrations to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and the Osaka World Expo. During his visit, he will also meet the emperor of Japan and hold an official summit with Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba. ("Taiwan trip to bring relations to next level: Guatemalan president," *Focus Taiwan*, 05 June 2025)

### **China accuses Taiwan of cyberattacks, offers bounty against 20 hackers**

On 05 June, Chinese authorities announced they are offering a bounty on 20 individuals accused of carrying out cyberattacks from Taiwan. According to Chinese officials, these individuals targeted over 1,000 network systems across 10 provinces, including a major technology firm in Guangzhou. Beijing claims the alleged hackers were supported by Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and received assistance from US-based anti-China groups, including training and technical support. One of the named individuals is Ning Enwei, although the authorities did not specify the amount being offered as a reward for information. In response, Taiwan firmly rejected the accusations. The island's National Security Bureau described the claims as disinformation, accusing Beijing of using false narratives to mislead the international community. Taiwanese officials also pointed out the timing of the accusations, suggesting that China is trying to deflect attention from its cyber activities, particularly after recent allegations from the Czech Republic and other European nations about Chinese cyberattacks on their institutions. The episode adds another layer of tension to already-strained relations between China and Taiwan. It also shows how cybersecurity has become a new front in their ongoing political standoff, with both sides trading serious accusations in the digital arena. ("China puts up bounty for hackers it linked to Taiwan," *Taiwan News*, 05 June 2025)

### **Taiwan's representatives attend the Alaska Sustainable Energy Conference 2025**

On 05 June, Taiwan's Presidential Office Secretary General Pan Meng-an attends the Alaska Sustainable Energy Conference 2025. He delivered a speech at the conference and also visited the liquefied natural gas project on Alaska's North Slope alongside high-ranking officials. On his social media, Peng stated it was a critical juncture for AI to be utilised for energy

transformation. He added that Taiwan is a willing partner for the US, investing in the global layout of high technology, green energy, and supply chain security. He wrote: "This is not just a journey of 7,500 kilometres, it's Taiwan's journey into the world. We have taken the initiative to understand others and firmly choose our direction." (Sean Scanlan, "Taiwan official visits new LNG site in Alaska," *Taiwan News*, 09 June 2025)

### **Taiwan-US Defense Industry Forum to focus on drones and unmanned technology**

On 06 June, *Focus Taiwan* reported that the 2025 Taiwan-US Defense Industry Forum will take place in Taipei, focusing on drone and unmanned vehicle cooperation. The event is organized by the US-Taiwan Business Council (USTBC), and it will feature speakers including US-based Planate Management Group's Chris Decker and Asia-Pacific business development director at US drone firm Red Cat Holdings, Stayne Hoff. USTBC President Rupert Hammond-Chambers and former US Army Secretary Christine Wormuth will give the opening remarks. The Taiwan American Institute's Director Raymond Greene stated that drone defense is "critically important" for maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait, highlighting the strategic value of such technologies in US-Taiwan defense collaboration. ("Taiwan-US defense industry forum to open in Taipei," *Focus Taiwan*, 05 June 2025)

### **Taiwan holds first civilian-led war games "Taiwan Defense TTX" with the US and Japan**

On 09 June, *Taiwan News* reported that Taiwan's first operational-level war game, led by a civilian institution, the Taipei School of Economics and Political Science Foundation, is taking place from 10 June 2025 to 11 June 2025 in Taipei. The war-game tabletop exercise, called "Taiwan Defense TTX," includes 17 retired generals from Taiwan, the United States, and Japan, including former US Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen, simulating a Chinese invasion. The people hosting the exercise, Council on Strategic and Wargaming Strategies Director-General Huang Chieh-cheng and Center for Peace and Security Chief Executive Officer Lee Hsi-min, stated that they wanted to assess defense strategies in 2030 and identify vulnerabilities. The exercise is being held at the National Chengchi University (NCCU) and includes five teams representing China, Taiwan, the United States, Japan, and a control group. Huang pointed out that they will be using global war-gaming standards because Taiwan needs to strengthen the country's security

planning, and that the threats to Taiwan are growing significantly. (Keoni Everington, [“Taiwan hosts war games with retired US, Japanese, and Taiwanese generals,”](#) *Taiwan News*, 09 June 2025)

### **Taiwan passes bill to raise voluntary military troops allowance**

On June 10, Taiwan’s Kuomintang (KMT) lawmakers passed a law to raise the monthly allowance for all volunteer military personnel to NT\$30,000 (about USD 1,002), starting from 01 January 2026. This is more than double the current allowance for most soldiers. The law passed with 52 votes in favor and 50 against, while eight Taiwan People’s Party (TPP) lawmakers were absent. KMT legislator Wang Hung-wei stated that the change was needed because Taiwan’s volunteer soldier numbers dropped from 164,000 in 2021 to 152,000 in 2024. The law also includes new types of allowances and links future increases to inflation. However, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) stated this is a political move to stop recall efforts against 31 KMT lawmakers. DPP whip Wu Szu-yao estimated the plan would cost NT\$38.6 billion per year. The TPP wanted a tiered pay structure and abstained from the vote. Executive Yuan spokesperson Michelle Lee stated that the law violates Article 70 of the Constitution, Article 91 of the Budget Act, and Article 5 of the Fiscal Discipline Act. She also stated that it wrongly increased government spending without proper approval and will raise costs by NT\$29 billion a year. Lee also confirmed that the Executive Yuan will take legal action to challenge the amendment. ([“KMT passes NT\\$30,000 allowance for volunteer troops, DPP alleges move tied to recalls,”](#) *Focus Taiwan*, 10 June 2025)

### **Taiwan ranks 4th in Asia and 12th in the most educated countries in the world**

On 11 June, according to *Visual Capitalist*, Taiwan has been ranked as the world’s 12th most educated country, which measures the share of adults aged 25–64 with at least a bachelor’s degree. With 38.9 per cent of its adult population holding a university degree, Taiwan ranks fourth in Asia, following Singapore, Israel, and South Korea. Globally, Taiwan lies behind Ireland, Switzerland, Singapore, Belgium, the UK, and others, with Ireland topping the list at 52.4 per cent. In the broader landscape, China lags with just 6.9 per cent, while the US stands out with the third-highest number of college graduates overall, though India leads in total graduates but lags in percentage terms. The data is drawn from CBRE

Research’s April 2025 “Global Tech Talent Guidebook,” which also notes Taiwan is ranked 16th globally by the number of universities in the top 1,000. This ranking underscores Taiwan’s strong educational attainment and its role as a key regional hub for skilled talent. ([“Taiwan ranked 12th most educated country,”](#) *Taiwan News*, 11 June 2025)

### **Taiwan’s former president’s attendance at the China forum frowned on, reports Taiwan News**

On 12 June, *Taiwan News* reported that the Mainland Affairs Council criticized former President Ma Ying-jeou for agreeing to attend a cross-strait forum organized by China. It said Ma’s participation enables China’s political agenda and is inappropriate given China’s ongoing pressure on Taiwan. The council emphasized that the forum is part of the Chinese Communist Party’s united front efforts targeting Taiwan. It recalled that even during Ma’s presidency, restrictions were put in place to guard against such infiltration. China’s Taiwan Affairs Office said over 7,000 Taiwanese representatives were invited, with Ma set to lead a youth delegation to Fujian and Gansu from 14 June to 27 June. The council urged political figures to act with caution and avoid helping Beijing’s political maneuvers. (Keoni Everington, [“Taiwan ex-president criticized for attending China forum,”](#) *Taiwan News*, 12 June 2025)

### **Taiwan’s Defense Minister criticizes Chinese carriers sailing in the Pacific**

On 12 June, Taiwan News reported on Taiwan’s Defense Minister Wellington Koo labelling China’s simultaneous deployment of two aircraft carriers to the Pacific as indicative of an “expansionist agenda.” This is the first known instance of China operating both the Shandong and Liaoning carriers beyond the First Island Chain, with the Liaoning notably crossing into the Second Island Chain. Speaking ahead of a Legislative Yuan session, Koo stated that Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense is fully monitoring the situation. He emphasized that the deployment sends a political signal of Beijing’s intent to expand its regional influence and project power further into the Pacific. Addressing the US-Taiwan Defense Industry Forum held the same day, Koo stressed Taiwan’s aim to establish a self-sufficient drone production system independent of Chinese supply chains, while integrating into the broader international defense market. Koo

also welcomed public engagement in defense matters, citing the recent civilian-run Taiwan Defense TTX (tabletop exercise) as an example. He confirmed that Taiwan's military has existing operational plans to respond to "gray zone" tactics (actions short of open conflict) and continues to refine these strategies through simulations and live-fire exercises. (Keoni Everington, "[Taiwan defense minister says 2 carriers in Pacific show China's 'expansionist agenda'](#)," *Taiwan News*, 12 June 2025)

### **Taiwan's President meets French parliamentarian, pledging stronger trade and energy cooperation**

On 12 June, Taiwan's President William Lai met with a French parliamentary team led by Marie-Noelle Battistel in Taipei. They pledged stronger cooperation in trade, energy, and cybersecurity. He stated that Taiwan and France will work closely to protect peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and contribute to global prosperity. Lai thanked France for supporting Taiwan's role in global organizations and defending navigation freedom in the Taiwan Strait. He also noted recent tech ties formed at the Choose France Summit and Taiwan's presence at the Viva Technology conference. Battistel, on her fourth visit to Taiwan, praised the country's youth programs and backed its participation in the WHO. She emphasized the importance of combating disinformation and foreign interference. Her delegation, including four French lawmakers, held key talks on semiconductors and cultural exchanges. Battistel said: "We are committed to deepening ties between our two democratic countries in a complex geopolitical context." ("[Lai meets with delegation from France](#)," *Taipei Times*, 13 June 2025)

### **Taiwan detains Chinese nationals for damaging undersea cables**

On 13 June, *BBC* reported that a Chinese national has been sentenced to three years in prison for damaging an undersea cable between Taiwan and the Penghu islands. Wang, captain of the Togolese-flagged Hong Tai 58, was found guilty by the Tainan District Court, marking Taiwan's first sentencing in such a case. Authorities suspect deliberate sabotage, part of Beijing's "grey zone" tactics, though China denies involvement. In February, Taiwan's coast guard detected the vessel lingering near the southern coast. Minutes after it left, a cable was found severed. Investigations revealed the ship dragged its anchor over the cable's path, contradicting Wang's claim of accidental damage due to rough seas. Prosecutors noted suspicious ship behavior, fake

ownership records, and mismatched voyage data. Though Wang's ties to Chinese authorities weren't proven, officials consider the incident serious infrastructure interference. Between 2019 and 2023, Taiwan recorded 36 similar cable disruptions. Amid rising cross-strait tensions and fears of digital sabotage, Taiwan has increased maritime monitoring. Deputy Digital Minister Herming Chiueh warned that cutting cables could spark wider conflict, underscoring the strategic importance of undersea communications infrastructure in modern geopolitical friction. (Koh Ewe & I-ting Chiang, "[Taiwan jails China captain for undersea cable sabotage in landmark case](#)," *BBC*, 13 June 2025)

### **TSMC and the University of Tokyo to establish the first overseas joint semiconductor lab**

On 13 June, *Taiwan News* reported that TSMC announced the launch of its first overseas joint semiconductor laboratory, the TSMC-UTokyo Lab at the University of Tokyo. This marks a milestone in the company's international research collaborations, focusing on advancing chip technologies, including materials, packaging, processes, and circuit design. The lab will also support TSMC's operations in Japan, such as its chip design center, the 3DIC R&D center, and the Japan Advanced Semiconductor Manufacturing (JASM) fab. The partnership builds on a relationship that began in 2019 and has since yielded 21 research projects. In April, TSMC and the university signed a broader cooperation agreement aimed at deepening research, education, and talent development. Notably, in 2023, the university began offering a specialized TSMC N16 FinFET course, which happens to be Japan's first, demonstrating TSMC's global push for semiconductor education. TSMC Executive VP Y.J. Mii expressed confidence that the lab would serve as a hub for research and chip talent development. The company's model has seen success in Taiwan, where it has established labs and invested over NTD 300 million across top universities, training more than 1,800 students to date. (Carol Yang, "[Taiwan's TSMC and University of Tokyo open joint research lab](#)," *Taiwan News*, 13 June 2025)

### **Taiwan to include M1A2T tanks in live fire exercises**

On 13 June, *Taiwan News* reported that Taiwan is set to begin live-fire training exercises featuring its newly acquired M1A2T tanks next week, marking a significant step in integrating the advanced armored vehicles into its military operations. According to a Fisheries Agency notification, the Army's Armor Training

Command will conduct drills at the Kengzikou range in Hsinchu County from mid-June to mid-July, with some sessions taking place at night. Central News Agency (CNA) reported that sources confirm the M1A2T tanks, currently in their pre-commissioning phase, will be involved. However, the exercises will begin cautiously, initially utilizing the tanks' 7.62mm M240 coaxial machine gun before progressing to the main 120mm cannon. The exercises are classified under "surface weapons" with a trajectory altitude limit of 2,000 feet and a range radius of three nautical miles. Director of the Ministry of National Defense's Department of Strategic Planning, Lieutenant General Huang Wen-chi, has stated that the tanks will not be commissioned until the end of the year and, as such, will not participate in the live-fire segment of July's 41st Han Kuang exercise. (Keoni Everington, "[Taiwan to include new M1A2T tanks in live-fire drills.](#)" *Taiwan News*, 13 June 2025)

### **Solomon Islands blocks visas for Taiwan officials**

On 16 June, *ABC* reported that Taiwan officials were blocked from entering the Solomon Islands earlier this year. Raising fears that Taiwan may be excluded from the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) leaders' meeting in Honiara. In March, Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials were denied visas to begin logistics planning, despite prior assurances from the Solomon Islands that Taiwan would not be barred. Although Australia and Pacific officials insist the visa denial was likely an administrative error, the Solomon Islands has not publicly clarified its position. Solomon Islands cut ties with Taiwan in 2019 in favor of Beijing and has since supported China's efforts to marginalize Taiwan in regional forums. Solomon Island's Prime Minister Jeremiah Manele reaffirmed his government's commitment to the One China Policy, instructing officials to avoid any engagement with Taiwan. This stance has drawn concern from Taiwan's remaining Pacific allies, Palau, Tuvalu, and the Marshall Islands, who rely on sideline meetings with Taiwan at PIF gatherings. Observers warn that excluding Taiwan would undermine PIF unity and set a dangerous precedent. The US may also reconsider attending if Taiwan is barred. (Stephen Dziedzic & Chrisnita Leong, "[Visa refusal sparks fresh concerns Solomon Islands may block Taipei from Pacific forum.](#)" *ABC News*, 16 June 2025)

### **Taiwan blacklists China's Huawei and SMIC**

On 16 June, *CNBC* reported that Taiwan has added China's tech giants Huawei and SMIC to

its trade blacklist. The move places the firms and their subsidiaries on Taiwan's "Strategic High-Tech Commodities Entity List," requiring licenses for Taiwanese exports to these entities. Taiwan's International Trade Administration cited national security and arms proliferation concerns. Huawei and SMIC are already subject to US restrictions, particularly regarding advanced chip technologies. Industry experts say Taiwan's blacklist aims to close loopholes and raise penalties for non-compliance. This comes after a 2023 incident in which TSMC was linked to Huawei's AI chip supply, prompting a US Department of Commerce crackdown. Due to which TSMC will pay a USD one billion penalty. (Dylan Butts, "[Taiwan blacklists China's Huawei and SMIC, further aligning with U.S. trade policy.](#)" *CNBC*, 16 June 2025)

### **Taiwan conducts a war simulation of a PLA surprise attack on Taiwan's East Coast, reports Taiwan News**

On 16 June, *Taiwan News* reported on a defence simulation by the Taipei School of Economics and Political Science Foundation and the Taiwan Defense TTX. Projecting a 2030 scenario, where PLA executes a full-scale assault across the First Theatre of Operation, seizing the Penghu Archipelago. The exercise was conducted from 09-10 June with PLA amphibious landing vehicles and drone strikes on Penghu, followed by airborne troops parachuting into Xiyu and Baisha townships. In the simulation, communications were severed, and satellite imagery confirmed the fall of Penghu. Viral footage showed extensive PLA activity near Magong, including tanks, aircraft, and air defense systems. China declared, "The PLA has recovered Penghu," demanding Taiwan surrender. In a strategic twist, the PLA landed on Taiwan's east coast first, storming Taitung and advancing into Hualien and Yilan. The four-phase assault aimed to blind Taiwan's recon systems, neutralize air defenses, paralyze airports and ports, and isolate battle zones by destroying bridges. Analysts noted the East Coast's weaker defenses and lower urban density as reasons for the PLA's unorthodox strategy. Taiwan's Former Army Commander, Hu Cheng-fu, stressed Penghu's critical role as Taiwan's gateway and warned that its fall would enable sustained PLA logistics, urging maximum defense of the archipelago. (Keoni Everington, "[War game simulates PLA surprise attack on Taiwan's east coast.](#)" *Taiwan News*, 16 June 2025)

### **UMC founder calls for removal of KMT to safeguard Taiwan**

On 18 June, *Taiwan News* reported that United Microelectronics Corporation Founder Robert Tsao stated in an interview that the ongoing protests against Kuomintang (KMT) are a form of resistance against China's influence in Taiwan. In the interview, Tsao argued the need to oust KMT legislators to ensure national security and stability in Taiwan. He also confessed his initial support for political union with China, which was shifted after the Hong Kong anti-extradition law protests. He vehemently criticized KMT's close tie-up with China, which will push Taiwan closer to China's political orbit, and urged public support to safeguard Taiwan's autonomy ("UMC Founder Tsao calls Taiwan mass recall a stand against Beijing," *Taiwan News*, 18 June 2025)

### **US resumes student visa appointments in Taiwan, reports Focus Taiwan**

On 20 June, *Focus Taiwan* reported that the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) reopened student visa appointments after a pause in May. Students applying for F, J, or M visas can now book interview slots through AIT's official website. To help those starting school this fall, AIT has added more appointment times. The office reminds applicants to check for updates often, as availability may change. All student visa applicants must now set their social media profiles to public to meet new U.S. entry rules. This helps with identity and security checks. AIT also warned that visa wait times may be longer in summer. It advised travellers to see if they can enter the U.S. without a visa using the ESTA system. AIT acts as the U.S. representative office in Taiwan. It resumed student visa services after changes aimed at addressing national security concerns in the U.S. education system. (Joseph Yeh & Chao Yen-hsiang, "U.S. resumes student visa appointments: AIT," *Focus Taiwan*, 20 June 2025)

### **China steps up military activity in the Taiwan Strait after the UK ship transit, reports Al Jazeera**

On 20 June, *Al Jazeera* reported Taiwan's Defence Ministry's detection of more than 70 Chinese aircraft and six Naval vessels after the British Naval patrol through the Taiwan Strait. Such actions and counteractions mark a significant escalation of regional tension in the Taiwan Strait. The passage of the British Royal Navy Patrol vessel HMS Spey is considered a deliberate provocation by China. On 20 June, China responded with 24 aircraft, out of which 15 crossed the Taiwan Strait median line during joint air-sea drills. Britain responded by claiming that its patrolling was routine and was

per international law. Recently, other Western nations such as the US and Canada also sailed through the strait, asserting their international waters. ("Taiwan detects dozens of Chinese aircraft near island after UK ship patrol," *Al Jazeera*, 20 June 2025)

### **Taiwan's Vice President calls to safeguard Taiwan's sovereignty to maintain global stability, reports CNA Taiwan**

On 20 June, *CNA Taiwan* reported the interview where Taiwan's vice president, Hsiao Bi-Khim, emphasized every possible deed of Taiwan to prevent a military conflict with China, particularly amidst the assumptions that Beijing may act by 2027. In the interview with American podcaster Shawn Ryan, Hsiao highlighted Taiwan's asymmetric military strategies to complicate China's military strategy while strengthening the resilience of the society. She also emphasized the importance of safeguarding the Taiwan Strait to maintain global peace and stability. Besides military threats from China, Taiwan also faces cognitive warfare from China, such as disinformation and social division. To counter this disinformation, Taiwan's government is equipping its citizens through first-aid training, emergency preparedness, and fostering a cognitive shift among people through civil society to support national defence. Finally, Taiwan's vice president underscored the importance of public participation and proactive preparation to ensure Taiwan's security amidst intensified Chinese diplomatic and military pressure globally. ("Taiwan VP Hsiao outlines efforts to prevent conflict amid China's threats," *CNA*, 20 June 2025)

### **KMT party calls for support ahead of July recall votes, reports Taiwan News**

On 23 June, *Taiwan News* reported that KMT Chair Eric Chu called on party members to rally for the July 26 recall elections. He warned that low voter turnout could hurt the party's legislative presence. In a speech at KMT headquarters in Taipei, he stated that the recalls were part of a DPP effort to shift power in the Legislative Yuan. Former Premier Jiang Yi-huah stated that the KMT could lose up to 10 seats if turnout stays low. KMT Legislator Lo Chih-chiang also said turnout would be key in his Daan District race. Political commentator Huang Yang-ming noted that KMT Legislator Lai Shyh-bao has started airing ads despite holding a safe seat. On the DPP side, lawmaker Ker Chien-ming said the recalls could help his party win a majority. He accused the KMT of trying to sway voters with tax offers and claimed recalled lawmakers had harmed Taiwan's interests. (Medwin Hsu, "KMT urges voter turnout in

Taiwan to counter DPP recall push,” Taiwan News, 23 June 2025)

### **Taiwan passes law to tackle workplace bullying in the government**

On 24 June, Taipei Times reported that Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan passed amendments to the Civil Service Protection Act to address workplace bullying in government offices. The new rules define bullying as actions by coworkers or supervisors who misuse power or influence beyond their duties. Bullying includes threats, insults, discrimination, humiliation, isolation, or any conduct that harms a civil servant’s physical or mental health. In serious cases, a single incident may be enough to qualify as bullying. The law sets a five-year time limit for complaints involving abuse of power and three years for other cases. Senior officials found guilty could face fines of up to NT USD 1 million. If a death results from failure to protect staff, the responsible person could face up to seven years in prison and a fine of NT USD 2 million. Repeated fines apply for retaliating against those who file complaints or suggest safety improvements. Agencies that fail to act on known bullying incidents could be fined up to NT USD 1.5 million. The Civil Service Protection and Training Commission will form review panels to investigate complaints. Agencies must correct violations within deadlines or face further penalties. The amendments will take effect six months from promulgation. (Chen Cheng-yu & Hollie Younge, “Legislature passes workplace bullying amendments,” Taipei Times, 24 June 2025)

### **Japan to build civilian shelter on Island Near Taiwan, says Taiwan News**

On 24 June, Taiwan News reported that Japan plans to build an underground civilian shelter on Yonaguni Island by 2027. The facility will hold up to 200 people for about two weeks in case of conflict, and it will include cooking, laundry, and shower facilities. When not in use, the space will serve as a parking lot and meeting room. Construction will begin in 2026. The project is a model for more shelters on nearby islands like Ishigaki and Tarama in Okinawa Prefecture. Yonaguni is only 110 kilometers from Taiwan and is seen as a key location in Japan’s civil defense. The plan follows US warnings that China could invade Taiwan by 2027. Japan is also preparing short-term shelters in reinforced buildings. Since 2016, Japan has built military camps on Yonaguni, Miyako, Ishigaki, and Amami Oshima. Civil defense has become a major focus for Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party, which is promising better

evacuation plans and more shelters across the country. (Michael Nakhienchach, “Japan plans civilian shelter on island close to Taiwan,” Taiwan News, 24 June 2025)

Beijing criticises Taiwan’s President over remarks on sovereignty, says SCMP

On 24 June, Beijing criticised Taiwan’s president William Lai for a speech stating that it encouraged division between the mainland and the island. Lai described Taiwan as a country and spoke of its historical path. He also claimed China lacks legal or historical support for its sovereignty claims over the island. China’s state media called his remarks full of errors and accused him of spreading false ideas. People’s Daily stated the speech was “full of various factual errors and historical fallacies” and was highly provocative and harmful. Officials warned that such views would only raise tensions. Beijing’s Taiwan Affairs Office stated that Lai intentionally distorted history to promote his Taiwan independence agenda and that the island had never been a country. (William Zheng, “Beijing accuses Taiwan’s William Lai of inciting cross-strait confrontation in speech,” SCMP, 24 June 2025)

### **UK plans navigation operations in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea**

On 25 June, UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy stated that more navigation operations in the UK can be expected in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea as permitted by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. House of Commons MP Desmond Swayne stated that Royal Navy’s HMS Spey transited the Taiwan Strait “in pursuit of vital international freedom of navigation in the South China Sea,” and described the operation as both appropriate and lawful. On 23 June, HMS Spey and Australia’s Navy destroyer HMAS Sydney operated alongside Sparty Island located in the South China Sea. Royal Navy stated that HMS Spey executed joint exercises in Japan waters and the East China Sea with the US, Australia, Japan and South Korea. (“UK foreign secretary says more freedom of navigation patrols to be held in Taiwan Strait,” Taiwan News, 25 June 2025)

### **Taiwan to mobilize 22000 reservists for the Han Kuang 41 military exercise**

On 26 June, Taiwan News reported that Taiwan’s Defence Minister Wellington Koo stated that the Han Kuang 41 military exercise will demonstrate the largest ever mobilisation of reservists. The Ministry of National Defence’s All-Out Defence Mobilisation Agency issued an order to

reservists as a part of the Tung Hsin 35 mobilisation exercise. The Han Kuang live-fire exercises will be held from July 9 to 18, and the troops' responsiveness will be tested by random manoeuvres and orders. This will be the first time the entire Army's 206th Infantry Brigade mobilisation of the exercise. A 14-day training period will be undergone by the reservist. MND's Inspector General's Office Deputy Head Chou Chin-lung stated an increase of 2,032 reservists in 2024. (Keoni Everington, "[Taiwan says Han Kuang 41 includes record 22,000 reservists](#)," Taiwan News, 26 June 2025)

### **US warns Taiwan against China's increasing capability for a direct attack**

On 26 June, US military officials warned against China's increasing capability to attack Taiwan and their development of the "kill web," noting that Taiwan is in the range of being attacked with missiles directly. The US Air Force and Space Force officials note that the PLA deployed more than 900 short-range missiles, which are capable of striking 400 of Taiwan's ground launch missiles. US Air Force Secretary, Troy Meink, and Chief of Space Operations General Chance Saltzman said: "The PLA's rocket force is advancing its long-term modernization plans to enhance its strategic deterrence capabilities." Saltzman said: "My biggest concern is that the 'kill web'...that the People's Republic of China has put in place allows them to track and target at great range the rest of the joint force and all the other domains." ("[U.S. military warns of China's missile threat to Taiwan](#)," Focus Taiwan, 27 June 2025)

### **Taiwanese firms get loans from a Dutch subsidiary for green initiatives**

On 26 June, Taiwan Cement Corp. informed that they were given USD 91.71 million in green loans by a Dutch subsidiary. The loan aims to push the green initiative and support carbon-cutting and renewable energy. The Taiwanese firm notes that the deal aims to make the liquidity ratios and financial stability of the company stronger. The green loan also follows the green finance framework by the ISS, and they are compliant with the international standard. The loans will be used to repay debts, recycle, and deal with emission reduction projects. ("[Taiwan Cement secures NT\\$17.27 billion loan for green initiatives](#)," Taiwan News, 27 June 2025)

### **Taiwan imposes anti-dumping duties on China-made beer and steel**

On 27 June, Taiwan's Ministry of Finance announced that it will impose anti-dumping duties on China-made beer and steel for the

coming four months. The move comes in light of the damage caused to Taiwanese industry due to the imports. Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Affairs said: "have preliminarily determined that there is dumping [of these products] and it has caused substantial damage to the domestic industry." The ministries believe that this will prevent industries from suffering from continued damage. The levies on beer will be 13.13 per cent to 64.14 per cent, and the duties on steel imports will be 16.9 per cent and 20.15 per cent. The investigation started in March following complaints about unfair practices. China is the biggest source of Taiwan's beer imports, amounting to USD 125 million. It is estimated that more than 70 per cent of Chinese beer is sold in Taiwan. ("[Taiwan to put anti-dumping duties on Chinese beer steel](#)," Taipei Times, 28 June 2025)

## **KOREA READER**

### **South Korea's impeached Presidents express support for the PPP candidate**

On 01 June, *Korea Herald* reported that the impeached former presidents Park Geun-hye and Yoon Suk Yeol indicated their support for conservative candidate Kim Moon-soo of the People Power Party. It is days before the 03 June election in South Korea that Park went to the conservative stronghold of Daegu, and Yoon sent a letter urging supporters to vote for Kim. This was read by far-right pastor Jeon Kwang-hoon at a rally. The Democratic Party candidate Lee Jae-myung aimed at the two impeached leaders for their endorsement, and also stated that Kim should exhaust all options to cut ties with the leaders. Members of Kim's party expressed some concern, indicating that the demonstrations showed that democracy may be at risk. Interim Chair Kim Yong-tae stated that Yoon should not show up, because it would be detrimental to the party. The team clarified that it was an independent campaign, and being affiliated was inaccurate, quoting from its statement: "Yoon is no longer with the party, and we have no relationship with him at this time". (Hwang Joo-young "[Impeached ex-presidents rally behind People Power Party's Kim Moon-soo](#)," *Korea Herald*, 01 June 2025)

### **South Korea's new president to take office without a transition period, reports Korea Times**

On 02 June, *Korea Times* reported that South Korea's next president, set to be elected on 03 June, will assume office the very next day, without the usual 60-day transition under the Public Official Election Act. This legal

framework, triggered by the by-election following President Yoon Suk Yeol's resignation, grants full presidential authority upon certification of results, expected on 4 June. The compressed timeline has raised concerns over the incoming administration's preparedness, especially regarding key appointments, budget coordination, and national policy direction. In 2017, a similar transition occurred after Park Geun-hye's impeachment, prompting then-President Moon Jae-in to form the State Affairs Planning Advisory Committee to bridge the gap. This year's candidates have also announced immediate measures. Liberal Democratic Party of Korea's presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung vows to launch an emergency economic task force, while conservative People Power Party Kim Moon-soo plans a KRW 30 trillion supplementary budget and an "economic war room." Without a transition team, acting officials will likely remain in their posts until replacements are confirmed. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has expressed concern over limited coordination on urgent fiscal matters, including the 2026 budget. A modest inauguration ceremony is expected on 4 June, highlighting the urgency and reigniting debate over systemic reforms to improve future transitions. (Bahk Eun-ji, "[New president to take office without transition period.](#)" *The Korea Times*, 2 June 2025)

### **Hyundai and GM Korea union demand a high bonus**

On 03 June, *The Korea Times* reported that Hyundai Motor and GM Korea are dealing with increasing pressure from union members demanding a large bonus. The proposed bonus includes 30 per cent of Hyundai's 2024 net profit (₩4 trillion), 15 per cent of GM's profit, and additional unspecified components, despite poor sales and potentially higher U.S. tariffs. The latest sales numbers for Hyundai reflected a 1.7 percent decline in May, while GM Korea reported a decline of 1.8 percent. Korea's auto exports to the US in May fell 32 percent. According to a source from the domestic auto industry, "While unions will work for their members, excessive demands amid trade tension are likely to hurt earnings and long-term plans. Companies will need to make spending reductions now more than ever." Discussions of a trade agreement between Korea and the US have not delivered any results as of yet. (Lee Min-Hyung, "[Hyundai Motor, GM Korea face union tensions amid US tariff risks.](#)" *The Korea Times*, 03 June 2025)

### **South Korean by-election sees 65 per cent voter turnout**

On 03 June, more than 65 percent of eligible South Korean voters had cast their ballots, which is slightly higher than for the February 2022 presidential election, according to the National Election Commission (NEC). The by-election is taking place after former President Yoon Suk Yeol was impeached after declaring martial law in December 2024. This was an extremely controversial move with many implications and hard feelings resulting from the very same declaration by the former President of the nation. Polling opened at 6 a.m. and closed at 8 p.m., which makes it two hours longer than usual. South Jeolla had the highest turnout at 74.1 percent, and Busan had the lowest turnout at 58.1 percent. Early voting had a turnout of 34.74 percent, which is the second highest ever seen. Overall, a total of 44.39 million people are eligible to vote. NEC spokesperson Kim Ji-hoon stated that because of the political phenomenon, there is high public interest, and the final turnout is expected to be very strong. Vote counting will begin immediately upon the end of polling, and 70-80 percent is expected to be reported by midnight. (Hwang Joo-young, "[Voter turnout exceeds 65% as of 2 p.m., higher than 2022 election.](#)" *The Korea Herald*, 03 June 2025)

### **Kim Jong-un pledges full support to Russia in the Ukraine War**

On 03 June, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met Russia's Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu in Pyongyang. He has promised to "unconditionally" support Russia in its war against Ukraine. This marks Shoigu's second visit to North Korea in three months. Kim also stated that his country will "responsibly observe the articles of the treaty of the strategic partnership signed between the two countries in 2024. During the meeting, they have also "confirmed the consensus" of the two country's' stance on the Ukraine situation and pledged to develop the bilateral ties into the "powerful and comprehensive relations of strategic partnership. Seoul's spy agency noted that North Korea has dispatched around 15,000 soldiers to Russia, with over 4,700 casualties. Kim also reaffirmed his dedication to a defense treaty signed with Russia's President Putin on 19 June 2024, promising to follow its terms "responsibly." Shoigu's visit also coincided with South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung's inauguration. (Yonhap, "[N. Korea's Kim vows to 'unconditionally' support Russia in war against Ukraine.](#)" *The Korea Times*, 05 June 2025)

### **South Korean President Lee Jae-myung pledges unity and market-oriented governance in inaugural address**

On 04 June, in the inaugural speech at the National Assembly, South Korea's new President Lee Jae-myung vowed to end divisive politics and prioritize national unity. He called himself a "president for all." Lee emphasized coexistence, dialogue, and compromise over ideological divisions. He pledged to lead a pragmatic, market-oriented government, adopting effective policies regardless of political origin, referencing both conservative and liberal predecessors. Lee, from the Democratic Party of Korea, also committed to strengthening South Korea's global diplomatic presence through a national interest-driven foreign policy. "Unity is a mark of competence," he declared, promising to turn global economic and security crises into strategic opportunities to enhance the nation's interests. ("New president vows to unite divided nation in inaugural address," *The Korea Times*, 04 June 2025)

### **South Korea's new President Lee Jae-myung of the Democratic Party wins with 50 per cent vote**

On 04 June, *BBC* reported on Lee Jaemyung assuming office immediately as South Korea's new president following the impeachment of Yoon Suk Yeol, who attempted to impose martial law last December. Elected with nearly 50 per cent of the vote, Lee's victory marks a public rejection of authoritarianism and a demand to restore democratic governance. However, Lee faces immediate challenges. The usual two-month transition period has been bypassed due to the constitutional crisis, leaving him no time to assemble his team or outline his full policy agenda. The most urgent matter on his desk is the escalating economic and security confrontation with the United States, driven by President Donald Trump. In April, Trump imposed sweeping 25 per cent tariffs on all Korean imports, including key sectors such as steel and automobiles, despite the longstanding US-Korea alliance. Adding to the strain, Trump has threatened to link security guarantees to economic contributions. The US currently stations 28,500 troops in South Korea under a mutual defense agreement. Trump, however, wants South Korea to pay more for US military protection and may consider reducing the US military presence or redirecting it toward containing China, rather than deterring North Korea. Kim Jong Un, emboldened by increased nuclear capability and Russian support, could demand US troop withdrawals or formal recognition as a nuclear state. Seoul is thus preparing to negotiate its value to Washington. President Lee is being urged to build a direct relationship with Trump and present South

Korea as an indispensable ally. One major bargaining chip could be its shipbuilding capacity. South Korea is a global leader in naval shipbuilding, and it hopes to support the struggling US naval industry by offering construction and maintenance capabilities for US warships. As Lee steps into office, he must stabilize the economy, manage fraught US relations, deter North Korean threats, and balance geopolitical rivalries, all without the benefit of a political grace period. The decisions he makes now could reshape South Korea's strategic future. (Jean Mackenzie, "South Korea's new president has a Trump-shaped crisis to avert" *BBC*, 04 June 2025)

### **South Korea's KHNP finalizes Czech Nuclear Plant deal after court ruling**

On 04 June, *The Korea Times* reported that South Korea's state-run Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Co. (KHNP) has officially signed a major contract to build two nuclear reactors in the Czech Republic. This marks South Korea's first overseas nuclear contract since its 2009 Barakah deal in the UAE. This comes after the Czech Supreme Administrative Court lifted a legal injunction that had delayed the project. Czechoslovakia's Prime Minister Petra Fiala confirmed the signing between KHNP and the Czech state firm Elektrarna Dukovany II (EDU II). The deal, worth 26 trillion won (USD 18.6 billion), had been blocked due to a complaint from the French company EDF, which lost the bidding. KHNP had planned to sign the deal on 7 May to build two 1,063-megawatt reactors at the Dukovany site, 170 km from Prague. ("S. Korea's KHNP signs final nuclear plant contract with Czech Republic after court injunction lifted: report," *The Korea Times*, 04 June 2025)

### **Russia is aiding North Korea to build Kamikaze drones and upgrade missiles, reports Ukraine's Defence Intelligence Directorate**

On 07 June, an interview with *The War Zone*, Lt. Gen. Kyrylo Budanov, head of Ukraine's Defense Intelligence Directorate, revealed that Russia is giving North Korea the technology to produce Shahed-136 kamikaze drones and improve its KN-23 ballistic missiles. Russia is also aiding North Korea's submarine-based nuclear program. In return, Pyongyang has supplied millions of artillery shells and even troops to support Russia's war. Budanov stressed that North Korea's drone capabilities could grow significantly, mirroring Russia's production of around 2,000 Shaheds monthly, aiming for 5,000. These drones, originally from Iran, are constantly upgraded. Between 08 June and 09 June alone, Ukraine reported 479 Shaheds and

decoys launched by Russia. ([“Russia Giving North Korea Shahed-136 Attack Drone Production Capability: Budanov,”](#) *The War Zone*, 07 June 2025)

### **Growing need to employ AI in business to boost efficiency, says survey by KITA**

On 09 June, *The Korea Herald* reported that a majority of South Korean exporters recognized the need to employ artificial intelligence in their business to boost efficiency in a survey. The Korea International Trade Association (KITA) conducted the survey from February 17-19, where 78 out of 396 respondents from the export industry said AI adoption is necessary. Only 16.9 per cent stated they are actively using AI to improve productivity or manage tasks. 68.7 per cent are either using it on a limited basis or are still reviewing its usage. The cost burdens and shortage of skilled personnel were cited as the top hurdles in AI adoption. KITA said: “Public-private collaboration is essential for AI adoption among exporters, particularly to help small and medium-sized enterprises adopt AI effectively based on manufacturing data.” It also stated a lack of refined data and related infrastructure for industrial AI use. ([“8 in 10 Korean exporters see need for AI adoption, but actual use remains low: poll,”](#) *The Korea Herald*, 09 June 2025)

### **Seoul High Court postpones South Korean President's retrial on violating election law**

On 09 June, the Seoul High Court postponed President Lee Jae-Myung's retrial on election law violation charges. The hearing, which was initially scheduled for 18 June, was postponed to an undetermined future date. Article 84 of the Constitution exempts a sitting president from criminal prosecution except in the case of insurrection or treason. The retrial comes after the Supreme Court overturned the Seoul High Court's decision to acquit Lee of a suspended prison term in connection with an alleged false statement made in the 2022 presidential election. (Yonhap, [“Court again postpones Korean President Lee Jae-myung's election law violation retrial,”](#) *The Korea Times*, 09 June 2025)

### **New facility spotted at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex**

On 11 June, *Bloomberg* reported that a recent construction change has taken place at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, according to satellite images. The facility is about 100 kilometers north of Pyongyang, and it serves to boost its uranium enrichment. Weapons expert Jeffrey Lewis stated that the facility bears a

resemblance to the Kangson enrichment plant located close to Pyongyang. The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, confirmed in a report that the building's size and design are similar to Kangson's, suggesting it could be another enrichment facility. Analysts Lewis and Sam Lair stated that these features are enough for the IAEA to flag the site. This news follows South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung's willingness to engage with Pyongyang. However, closer ties between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un with Russia's President Putin are making such dialogues difficult. ([“North Korea Appears to Have Added to Its Nuclear Complex,”](#) *Bloomberg*, 11 June 2025)

### **South Korea's homeless population declines by 11.6 per cent, reports the Ministry of Health and Welfare**

On 11 June, *The Korea Times* reported on South Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare's 2024 report. It noted that Korea's homeless population dropped by 11.6 percent in three years to 12,725. These included 1,349 street dwellers, 6,659 in shelters, and 4,717 in “jjokbang” rooms. However, 75.7 percent now live in the Seoul metro area, with 55 per cent of the homeless in Seoul alone. The population is aging, with 36.8 percent in shelters and 46.6 percent in care facilities aged 65 or older. Unemployment was the top cause of homelessness (35.8 per cent), followed by family breakdown (12.6 percent) and business failure (11.2 per cent). Around 75.3 percent remain jobless, and 36.9 per cent plan to sleep outdoors due to discomfort with shelter rules. Average homelessness lasts 51.4 months. Public aid is key, with 41.7 per cent requesting more income support. Alcohol dependence dropped to 23.7 per cent. The ministry, which found these figures concerning, announced it will use the data to shape its 2026–2030 plan for welfare and self-reliance support. ([“Korea's homeless population falls 15%, but ages and clusters in Seoul area,”](#) *The Korea Times*, 11 June 2025)

### **South Korea's Lee pledges to promote the stock market with “higher dividends”**

On 11 June, President Lee Jae-myung promised to make South Korea's stock market more rewarding and fairer. He has mapped out the incentives that would help companies to pay more dividends so that people can earn extra income and boost the national economy. Lee has also planned for changes in tax payments and new policies that can make stocks a more attractive investment option, similar to real estate. At a meeting with Korea Exchange

officials, he emphasized the need for stronger regulations to prevent unfair practices such as insider trading and stock manipulation. His spokesperson, Kang Yu-jung, stated that nearly 30 percent of such offenders are repeat violators due to weak past punishments. He also highlighted that Lee, at present, supports a “one strike, you're out” rule. Since Lee took office, the Kospi index has risen 7.7 percent, closing at 2,907.04, with foreign investors adding 4.2 trillion won and raising market value to USD 1.73 trillion. (“[Lee Jae-myung vows dividend boost, transparency in capital market.](#)” *The Korea Herald*, 11 June 2025)

### **South Korea's President halts border broadcast promoting peace with North Korea**

On 11 June, South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung stopped loudspeaker broadcasts to North Korea to reduce tension and promote peace. His spokesperson, Kang Yu-jung, stated this shows Lee's effort to build trust with North Korea and help people living near the border who were disturbed by the loud noise. The decision was made during a Cabinet meeting, exactly one week after Lee became president on 04 June. This keeps up his promise, which he made during his election campaign. The loudspeakers were restarted in June 2024 by the previous government after North Korea sent trash-filled balloons across the border. Kang stated that North Korea has made no recent threats, and this move is a friendly step toward better relations. (Hwang Joo-young, “[Lee silences border loudspeakers.](#)” *The Korea Herald*, 11 June 2025)

### **North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un attends the relaunch of the repaired destroyer**

On 12 June, North Korea relaunched its 5,000-ton destroyer named Kang Kon after it was damaged during a failed launch in May when it tipped over in Chongjin. Leader Kim Jong-un attended the new launch ceremony at Rajin shipyard, praising the quick two-week repair and calling the earlier accident an unacceptable mistake caused by carelessness. He announced plans to build two more destroyers in 2026, stating they are needed due to growing threats from the US and other hostile countries, and warned of strong military responses. Kim also shared that a dockyard manager died after the failed launch and would be honored. His daughter Ju-ae and several top officials, including new navy commander Pak Kwang-sop, joined him at the event. South Korea's unification ministry spokesperson Chang Yoon-jeong noted Kim did not mention South Korea

this time, suggesting North Korea may be trying to ease tensions under President Lee Jae-myung's more peaceful approach. (“[N. Korea's Kim attends launch ceremony of repaired destroyer, plans to build 2 more such warships.](#)” *The Korea Times*, 13 June 2025)

### **South Korea's independent counsel to investigate former President Yoon's martial Law and marine death cases**

On 13 June, South Korea's independent counsel Cho Eun-suk promised a fair and thorough investigation into former President Yoon Suk Yeol over his brief martial law attempt in December. Appointed by President Lee Jae-myung, Cho stated that he would follow the “logic of investigation” like writing a historical record from the Joseon era and ensure efforts by police and other agencies aren't wasted. Cho is a former chief of the Seoul High Prosecutors' Office and former acting chief of the Board of Audit and Inspection. He will lead probes into charges like insurrection and military mutiny. Another independent counsel, Lee Myeong-hyeon, will investigate Yoon's alleged interference in the 2023 death case of Marine Cpl. Chae, who drowned during a search mission. A former senior official at the defense ministry's prosecutors' office, Lee, said, “I will determine the substantive truth,” recalling he once rejected a cover-up request 23 years ago. (“[Independent counsel vows to probe ex-President Yoon's martial law bid only in line with 'logic of investigation'.](#)” *The Korea Times*, 13 June 2025)

### **South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung's approval ratings reach 58.6 per cent**

On 16 June, *Realmeter* reported that South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung's first approval ratings reached 58.6 per cent. The respondents believe he is doing a good job, while 34.2 per cent expressed disapproval and 7.2 per cent remain unsure. The survey was conducted from 09-13 June among 2,507 voters aged 18 and above, reflecting a relatively strong start for Lee. His numbers trail behind former President Moon Jae-in's record of 81.6 per cent at the beginning of his term. Other former President's like Lee Myung-bak started with 76 per cent, while Park Geun-hye and Yoon Suk Yeol had 54.8 per cent and 52.1 per cent, respectively. Lee assumed office on 04 June without a transition period after the removal of former President Yoon. In response, the new administration launched the presidential state affairs committee, which will serve as a substitute for a formal transition team. The 60-day body, extendable by 20 days, is chaired by the

Democratic Party's think tank, The Institute for Democracy's Director, Lee Han-joo. The committee is tasked with reviewing government operations and crafting policy proposals, including President Lee's long-promoted universal basic income agenda. It will coordinate with ministries and expert panels while ensuring alignment between the Democratic Party and the presidential office. (Kim Arin, "[Committee to come up with blueprint for how Lee Jae-myung will run South Korea.](#)" *The Korea Herald*, 16 June 2025)

### **6000 North Korean troops killed in Ukraine's Western Front, reports UK's Defence Ministry**

On 16 June, *The Korea Herald* reported that, according to a new assessment by the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence, North Korea is believed to have suffered over 6,000 casualties while fighting alongside Russian forces in Ukraine's western front, specifically in the Kursk region. The figure, shared in a post on X, represents more than half of the 11,000 troops Pyongyang initially deployed to the region. The Ministry noted that these significant losses were "almost certainly" the result of high-risk, attritional infantry assaults, suggesting that North Korean units are being used in some of the most brutal and manpower-intensive operations along the front. The report comes two months after an earlier estimate in April, which placed North Korean casualties at over 5,000. South Korea's National Intelligence Service had also reported around 4,700 casualties by late April, including about 600 confirmed deaths. North Korea is thought to have deployed an additional 3,000 troops to the region this year, bringing the total deployment close to 14,000. ("[Over 6,000 N. Korean troops killed or injured in Ukraine war: British defense ministry.](#)" *The Korea Herald*, 16 June 2025)

### **North Korea to send 6000 sappers and construction workers to Russia**

On 18 June, *AP News* reported that Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu said that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un decided to send 1000 sappers and 5000 military construction workers to support reconstruction work in Russia's Kursk region. Another Russian news agency, *RIA Novosti*, also highlighted the growing cooperation between Russia and North Korea for the reconstruction of the Kursk region and deployment of military troops amidst the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. North Korea's official Central News Agency also affirmed Kim Jong Un's unconditional support and cooperation with Russia, expressing his resolve to defend

Russian sovereignty and territorial integrity. The news article expressed alarming concerns over the non-disclosure of the number of North Korean troops deployed in Russia. South Korea and Japan have bolstered their security ties and also expressed their concerns on growing cooperation between North Korea and Russia, and warned of the possibility of jeopardizing global security. ("[North Korea plans to send military construction workers and deminers to Russia.](#)" *AP News*, 18 June 2025)

### **North Korea launches 10 rockets near Pyongyang, reports Reuters**

On 19 June, *Reuters* reported that, according to South Korea's military, North Korea launched more than 10 rockets from Sunan, near Pyongyang, in a north-westerly direction. Specific details about the missiles fired are not disclosed at the moment; however, South Korea's authorities classified them as short-range ballistic missiles. This strike marks the breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which prohibit North Korea from launching short-range ballistic missiles. The launch highlights the ongoing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and raises concerns about continued defiance of North Korea of international sanctions and diplomatic pressures. ("[North Korea fired multiple-launch rockets from near Pyongyang, South Korea says.](#)" *Reuters*, 19 June 2025)

### **Cyberattacks on South Korea's church livestream by North Korea**

On 20 June, *ARAB NEWS* reported the cyberattack faced by South Korea's prominent Onnuri Church on 18 June during its early morning YouTube worship service. The livestream was hijacked for a brief moment to showcase North Korea's flag alongside propaganda music. The church has reported the incident to the police and has launched an internal investigation to probe into the hacking incident. South Korea's Internet and Security Agency is also viewing the case. A similar incident happened at Seoul's Naesoo-Dong church, where an inappropriate video was showcased for 50 seconds. These incidents highlight South Korea's vulnerability to cyberattacks. The latest hacks raise new concerns over digital security in religious and public spaces. ("[North Korea flag disrupts South Korea Church livestream in hacking incident.](#)" *ARAB NEWS*, 20 June 2025)

### **South Korea helps Cambodia to improve labour policies, reports The Korea Times**

On 21 June, *The Korea Times* reported that Cambodia plans to revive labour laws and has

turned to Korea for support. Nine senior officials from Cambodia's Ministry of Labour are in Korea for a 10-day training program hosted by the Korea Labour and Employment Service. The training covers minimum wage policy, labour inspections, and ways to resolve disputes. These areas are relevant as Cambodia's economy grows with more foreign companies setting up factories. Cambodia asked for Korea's help because of its experience in building strong labour systems during its rapid growth. Cambodian officials stated that they learned a lot and want to continue the partnership. This cooperation is part of a wider project started in 2023 to support better labour policies in Cambodia. (Jung Min-ho, "[Korea assists Cambodia in developing labour policies](#)," *The Korea Times*, 21 June 2025)

### **Japan and South Korea mark the 60th anniversary of normalized diplomatic ties**

On 23 June, *Vietnam News* reported the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of normalized diplomatic ties between Japan and South Korea, which seek to enhance future-oriented cooperation while balancing tensions rooted in history. Japan's prime minister, Shigeru Ishiba, highlighted the need for stronger bilateral ties to address common issues such as low birthrates and regional security. South Korea's President also emphasized the importance of economic cooperation amidst global uncertainties. Historical grievances are still present in South Korea's society for such cooperation, but a section of the population still seeks enhanced cooperation on security and technology. Now, the countries are considered to be economic equals and face challenges like gender inequality and energy dependency. The two countries are seeking to work as complementary forces to strengthen their strategic partnership to navigate through the choppy waters of geopolitical realities. ("[Japan, South Korea expected to deepen future-oriented cooperation](#)," *Vietnam News*, 23 June 2025)

### **North Korea condemns the US strike on Iran, citing a violation of international law**

On 23 June, *The Korean Times* reported the first public response from Korea on the alleged disruption of nuclear facilities in Iran, namely Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan, by the US. North Korea condemns such an action, stating that it is a clear violation of international law and the UN charter. Korea notes it as a blow to Iran's sovereignty and accuses Israel of escalating tensions in the Middle East by deploying Unilateral military actions. Without sharing the satellite images of such destruction, US

President Donald Trump claims to expunge all nuclear sites in Iran. North Korea itself is a nuclear state, which is locked in long-standing hostilities with South Korea, where South Korea is supported by its key ally US, which has about 30,000 troops in the Korean peninsula. ("[North Korea condemns US strikes on Iran](#)," *The Korean Times*, 23 June 2025)

### **South Korea enlists first civilian Defence Minister in 64 Years**

On 23 June, *Reuters* reported that South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung appointed lawmaker Ahn Gyu-back as South Korea's first civilian Defence Minister since 1961. The decision follows Lee's campaign promise to restore trust in the military after former President Yoon Suk Yeol's failed martial law attempt last December. Ahn is a veteran politician known for his defence policy work. His appointment is part of a broader cabinet reshuffle as Lee forms his government after taking office on 4 June. Lee also named Cho Hyun as the Foreign Minister and Chung Dong-young as the Unification Minister. Former Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun is currently on trial for planning martial law. He pledged to unite the country and support key industries like cars, chips, and steel. Earlier, he nominated Kim Min-seok as prime minister. That appointment still requires parliament's approval. ("[South Korea's Lee names first civilian defence minister in decades](#)," *Reuters*, 23 June 2025)

### **Pragmatic positive shift in public opinion of Korean-Japanese ties, says the joint survey**

On 25 June, *The Korean Times* reported the Joint Korea-Japan survey conducted by Hankook Ilbo and Yomiuri Shimbun, where they noted an optimistic, pragmatic shift in public opinion. According to the survey, 52.2 per cent of South Koreans support an enhanced South Korea-Japan relationship. The Survey conducted in mid-June also reported 52 per cent of Japan's people in favour of a stronger Korea-Japan relationship. The young demography in Korea showed the highest optimism in the relationship. Experts noted that this rapprochement in the relationship is due to cultural exchange, tourism revival, and renewed diplomacy and soft power projection, which includes the mutual appearance of K-pop and J-pop artists. Though historical and territorial disputes persist, for the first time Korean people's affinity towards Japan's relationship exceeded 40 per cent. ("[More than half of Koreans say Korea-Japan ties are good for first time: survey](#)," *The Korean Times*, 25 June 2025)

South Korea's successful tests its homegrown long-range missile, reports The Korean Times On 25 June, *The Korea Times* reported a significant milestone in South Korea's defence capability, where they conducted a successful separation test of their homegrown long-range air-to-surface guided missile. The test was carried out on 23 June at an Air Force unit and was overseen by the Defence Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA). DAPA verified that the missile can efficiently detach from aircraft without compromising safety and functionality. The missile is part of a broader initiative launched in 2018 to develop precision strike weapons for the KF-21 fighter jet. DAPA aims to integrate the missile into K-F 21 by 2027. It also aims to export missiles, highlighting the country's broader goal to integrate into the global arms market. This development emphasizes Korea's focus on enhancing indigenous defence technology and securing strategic strike capabilities. ("[Korea conducts separation test for homegrown long-range air-to-surface guided missile](#)," *The Korean Times*, 25 June 2025)

### **South Korea's President's call to establish peace on the Korean peninsula**

On 25 June, *The Korea Times* reported on the 75th anniversary of the Korean War and South Korea's president's call to establish peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Korean War started on 25 June 1950 when North Korean troops invaded South Korea. Allies like the US and other states fought on the side of South Korea under the UN flag. President Lee also paid respect to the fallen soldiers and highlighted that South Korea's transformation would be impossible without their sacrifices. He also emphasized the fact that the most secure form of security is establishing peace in the region and renewed his commitment to establishing a peace regime in the Korean peninsula. ("[Lee calls for efforts to establish peace on Korean War anniversary](#)," *The Korea Times*, 25 June 2025)

### **South Korea's President calls for reviving the economy as he pushes for a supplementary budget**

On 26 June, South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung expressed the need to revive the country's economy and to have a supplementary budget vital to sustain economic headwinds. The appeal was made for bipartisan unity to approve the USD 22.4 billion supplementary budget bill plan. Lee noted the need to upstart the economy and to bolster support, and any kind of inaction will be "a denial of the very purpose of

government." He said: "the government's greatest duty is to protect the lives of its people," and that "Timing is everything in the economy, and now is the moment to act by implementing the supplementary budget." He also aims to establish an emergency economic response task force to overcome any kind of economic downturn, aimed at restoring the public's livelihood. ("[Korea faces critical moment to revive economy: president](#)," *The Korea Times*, 27 June 2025)

### **South Korea's President calls for quick approval of the supplementary budget**

On 26 June, South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung appealed to the assembly for swift passage of the supplementary budget. He stated that to revive the nation's sluggish economy, a supplementary budget is a vital tool to confront economic headwinds and safeguard social cohesion. He appealed for the swift passage of the USD 22.4 billion supplementary budget bill. He added that it would be "irresponsible" for the government to cling to austerity in the middle of an economic crisis, and such inaction would be a "denial of the very purpose of government." He added that South Korea faced a stagnant economy with zero per cent growth for four consecutive quarters. He laid out plans to spend 11.3 trillion won to distribute prepaid vouchers, 3.9 trillion won for investment promotion, and an additional 5 trillion won for livelihood substantial funds. He also laid out plans to expand investments in AI and renewable energy. (Anna J Park, "[South Korean president appeals to assembly for swift passage of supplementary budget](#)," *Korea Times*, 26 June 2025)

### **South Korea to dismantle Kori-1 nuclear plant**

On 26 June, South Korea plans to dismantle its first commercial nuclear plant reactor, "Kori-1." This is the country's first-ever nuclear dismantling and decommissioning project. This is paving the way for the USD 368 billion global decommissioning market. The Nuclear Safety Security Commission approved the firm Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power's plan to dismantle the plant. Kori-1 is a 595-megawatt water-pressure nuclear reactor that will be dismantled in over 12 years. The site is aimed to be restored by 2037 and remove all spent nuclear fuel by 2031. South Korea currently has 96 nuclear dismantling technologies, 38 by Korea Atomic Energy Research and 58 by KHNP. KHNP's CEO said: "We will carry out the decommissioning of Kori-1 transparently and in close

communication with local communities.”  
 (“[Korea begins dismantling Kori-1, eyes \\$368b global nuclear decommissioning market.](#)” *The Korea Herald*, 27 June 2025)

### **South Korea’s millionaires migrating, report by Henley Private Wealth Migration Report 2024**

On 27 June, the Henley Private Wealth Migration Report 2024 was released, a report stating that 1200 high-net-worth individuals have migrated from the country in 2024. South Korea is placed fourth in the millionaire outflow research. The country’s high-tech industries, K-pop, music, and film industries have created new billionaires. Though the security threat from North Korea has led to increased migration of the wealthiest citizens of the country. The top destinations for Korea’s rich class are the UAE and the US, with Singapore being the third. The report said: “In a sign of the uncertain, if not troubled, times in which the world finds itself in 2024, for the first time, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam make the Top 10 list of places with the highest projected net millionaire outflows.” (“[Korea 4th in world for net outflow of millionaires: report.](#)” *The Korea Times*, 28 June 2025)

## **JAPAN READER**

### **Japan to conduct minister-level meeting to resolve rice shortage**

On 02 June, *The Japan Times* reported that Japan is now moving swiftly to tackle a sharp surge in rice prices, with Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba announcing that a minister-level meeting will be convened as early as this week. The goal is to stabilize the supply and cost of the nation’s staple food, just weeks ahead of a crucial Upper House election. With rice prices having doubled up in some regions, public frustration is mounting. In response, the government released 300,000 metric tons of stockpiled rice last week. Agriculture Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said: “With rice costing twice as much even 2.5 times as much in some regions as last year, it’s very important to steady that and stabilize the market,” in a same parliamentary session today. To ensure affordability, major retailers like Aeon and Don Quijote’s parent company began selling this rice directly to consumers at reduced prices. Aeon, for instance, priced a five-kilogram bag at under JPY 2,000 compared to the JPY 4,200 market average. Previous government efforts, such as auctioning rice from reserves since February, failed to curb soaring prices. The new strategy involves selling rice at a fixed price and bypassing traditional intermediaries like collection agencies and wholesalers. This direct approach is part of a broader push to alleviate

consumer strain and prevent further erosion of support for the minority government ahead of the upcoming election in July. (Sakura Murakami, “[Japan to set up minister-level meeting to address rice supplies.](#)” *The Japan Times*, 02 June 2025)

### **Japan and South Korea to implement fast-track entry for tourists at 4 airports**

On 02 June, *Japan Today* reported on the mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic normalization, Japan and South Korea launched dedicated immigration lanes for tourists from each other’s countries at four major airports starting 01 June. These lanes are designed to speed up the immigration process and improve travel convenience, reflecting efforts to strengthen people-to-people ties amid enduring historical tensions. The dedicated entry lanes will remain operational until 30 June at Japan’s Haneda (Tokyo) and Fukuoka airports, as well as South Korea’s Gimpo (Seoul) and Gimhae (Busan) airports. This marks the first time Japan has introduced immigration lanes reserved for travelers from a specific country, according to its Immigration Services Agency. Eligible travelers are those who have visited the other country within the past year and registered in advance. The initiative is part of broader efforts to deepen bilateral ties through cultural exchange and tourism. Despite historical disputes, Japan and South Korea remain top destinations for each other’s citizens, thanks in part to shared interests in K-pop, anime, dramas, and cuisine. The measure also commemorates the 1965 treaty that restored diplomatic relations between the two countries following decades of estrangement after World War II. (“[Japan, S Korea open tourist fast-track entry system at 4 airports.](#)” *Japan Times*, 02 June 2025)

### **Japan’s baseball legend Shigeo Nagashima dies at 89**

On 03 June, *Japan Today* reported that Shigeo Nagashima, a legendary figure in Japanese baseball and recipient of the People’s Honor Award, passed away at 89 due to pneumonia. Revered as “Mr. Giants,” Nagashima was a symbol of Japan’s postwar baseball golden age, rising to fame during the country’s rapid economic growth in the 1960s and 70s. As a key player for the Yomiuri Giants, he helped secure nine consecutive Japan Series titles (1965–1973) and captivated the nation alongside teammate Sadaharu Oh in the famous “O-N” duo. His emotional 1974 retirement and famous line, “My Giants are forever immortal,” remain cultural touchstones in Japan. He later managed

the Giants, winning five pennants and two Japan Series titles, and was known for his charisma, motivational flair, and quirky catchphrases like "make drama." ("Japanese baseball legend Shigeo Nagashima dies at 89." *Japan Today*, 03 June 2025)

### **Japan's Prime Minister to go for snap elections in case of a no-confidence motion, reports Japan Times**

On 03 June, *Japan Today* reported that Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba may dissolve the House of Representatives and call a snap general election if the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ) submits a no-confidence motion. As per law, if such a motion passes, Ishiba must either dissolve the lower house or resign with his cabinet within 10 days. Though Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)-led coalition holds a minority in the lower house, he has signaled that a no-confidence motion would likely trigger dissolution. LDP Secretary General Hiroshi Moriyama has reportedly discussed the option with party leaders. A dissolution could pave the way for simultaneous elections for both the lower and upper houses, as the House of Councillors' vote is due this summer anyway. However, some government insiders remain cautious, citing Japan's current economic challenges, such as inflation and US trade tensions, as reasons to avoid a political vacuum that might alienate voters. In the last election, neither coalition nor opposition secured a majority in the lower house. Recently, the ruling coalition compromised on a pension reform bill, accepting a CDPJ proposal to ensure legislative progress before the parliament session ends on 22 June. ("Ishiba may seek snap election if no-confidence motion submitted." *Japan Today*, 03 June 2025)

### **Speculations surrounding a possible no-confidence motion, reports Japan Today**

On 04 June, *Japan Today* reported on the political tensions rising in Japan as speculation grows that Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba may have to dissolve the House of Representatives if the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ) files a no-confidence motion against his minority government. Although the ruling coalition (LDP and Komeito) no longer holds a majority in the lower house, Ishiba appears to be weighing a snap election as a preemptive move. CDPJ leader Yoshihiko Noda warned that Ishiba's willingness to dissolve parliament may indicate a disregard for political stability. Democratic Party for the People head,

Yuichiro Tamaki, said at a press conference: "If Mr. Noda aims to realize a change of government, his party should submit a no-confidence motion,". Adding to the political uncertainty are pressing domestic issues such as rising rice prices due to a poor harvest, and tense foreign trade talks, with Ishiba trying to get US President Donald Trump to lower tariffs on Japanese goods. A dissolution of the lower house would lead to Japan's second general election in a year, while a scheduled upper house election is also approaching this summer. At a press conference, Komeito Secretary General Makoto Nishida said: "We should seek voters' judgments for each house according to the length of the respective terms stipulated in the Constitution,". ("Japan party execs bracing for possibility of Diet dissolution." *Japan Today*, 04 June 2025)

### **Japan records the lowest birth rates, fewer than 700,000 births in 2024**

On 05 June, *Japan Today* reported on Japan recording fewer than 700,000 births in 2024 for the first time since data collection began in 1899, with only 686,061 newborns, that is 41,000 fewer than the previous year. The nation's total fertility rate also dropped to a historic low of 1.15, as Japan struggles with a rapidly aging population, second only to Monaco. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba described the trend as a "quiet emergency" and vowed to introduce family-friendly policies like flexible work hours to encourage childbirth. The decline in births is compounded by rising deaths, which reached 1.6 million in 2024, and an increasingly isolated rural population. Recent demographic shifts are contributing to severe labor shortages, exacerbated by Japan's tight immigration policies. Ishiba emphasized the need to revitalize rural areas, where depopulation is especially acute. Meanwhile, neighboring South Korea recorded an even lower fertility rate of 0.75 in 2024, though it saw a slight increase from the previous year due to a rise in marriages. Both countries continue to grapple with the socio-economic fallout of shrinking and aging populations. ("Japan births in 2024 fall below 700,000 for first time." *Japan Today*, 05 June 2025)

### **Japan to enforce tougher rules and tax hikes on foreign residents and tourists, reports Japan Times**

On 05 June, *The Japan Times* reported that Japan is reassessing immigration and tourism policies. On 21 May, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) launched a panel to address public concerns over foreign residents, where the LDP

policy chief, Itsunori Onodera, said: “We need to comprehensively discuss what the people are concerned about.” The LDP plans to propose a centralized government body to coordinate foreign resident policies across ministries. Key reforms under debate include tightening foreign driver’s license conversions after concerns over accidents and abuse of loopholes. The National Police Agency plans stricter exams and will require resident registration documents. Meanwhile, unpaid health care premiums by foreign residents have drawn criticism. In Tokyo’s Shinjuku Ward alone, over JPY 1.1 billion went unpaid in a year. Opposition lawmaker Hirofumi Yanagase said: “It’s a serious burden on local governments,” with unpaid premiums potentially exceeding JPY 400 billion nationwide. The tax-free shopping system also faces scrutiny after reports of reselling and tax evasion. From November 2026, tourists must pay the 10 per cent tax upfront and apply for refunds at airports. Additionally, a hike in the JPY 1,000 departure tax, possibly targeting only foreigners, is under discussion. Finally, naturalization rules may be tightened. Justice Minister Keisuke Suzuki said: “It would be inappropriate if naturalization were easier than permanent residency.” (Jessica Speed, “[Japan eyes tougher rules and a tax hike for foreign residents and tourists.](#)” *The Japan Times*, 05 June 2025)

### **Japan to deny entry to foreigners who fail to pay medical bills**

On 06 June, The Japan Times reported that Japan’s government revised its policy on foreign residents and visitors. It includes denying entry to foreign tourists who fail to pay medical fees during visits to Japan and rejecting visa extensions for foreign nationals who fail to pay premiums for the national healthcare and pension systems. The details of when and how it will be implemented are yet to be decided. Japan’s PM Shigeru Ishiba said: “If our current systems are unable to address the realities of globalisation and fail to dispel public anxiety, then drastic reforms must be undertaken.” The government plans to check that social welfare premiums have been paid by the host organisation employing foreign workers with a specified skilled worker residential status. According to the revised policy, if there is a certain amount of unpaid premiums, they will not be allowed to employ those workers. (Karin Kaneko, “Foreign tourists with unpaid medical bills in Japan to be denied entry,” *The Japan Times*, 06 June 2025)

Japan’s residents from foreign countries speak up against racial profiling, reports *Japan Today*

On 11 June, *Japan Today* reported that Japan’s residents with foreign roots are increasingly speaking out against racial profiling by police, challenging a practice long hidden from public scrutiny. Zain Syed, a naturalized Japanese citizen of Pakistani descent, has been stopped by police at least 15 times. A 2025 survey backed their claims, revealing that over 71 per cent of foreigners living in Japan for more than five years had been stopped by police 5.6 times more than Japanese citizens, despite similar crime rates between the groups. Official data confirms the parity that both Japanese and foreigners faced criminal investigations at a rate of 0.15 per cent in 2020. Public concern rose after incidents like a viral 2021 video where a police officer linked dreadlocks to drug possession, prompting the National Police Agency to advise against profiling based on appearance. However, internal reviews still uncovered discriminatory justifications such as “foreigners rarely drive cars.” Legal advocates stress the court’s role in ending systemic bias, though progress may be slow amid rising xenophobia tied to overtourism and immigration anxieties. (Junko Horiuchi, “[Japan residents with foreign roots raise voices over racial profiling.](#)” *Japan Today*, 11 June 2025)

### **Japan’s personal data leaks reach a record high of 21000 cases, reports Japan Today**

On 11 June, *Japan Today* reported on the increase of personal data leaks in Japan that have surged to a record 21,007 cases in fiscal year 2024, more than double from the previous year. The 58 per cent rise highlights growing vulnerabilities in both the public and private sectors. A significant portion of 2745 cases stemmed from unauthorized access to records on servers operated by MKSystem Corp., which supplies software to labor and social security attorney offices. The private sector accounted for 19,056 breaches, a 57 per cent increase from fiscal 2023. Although only one company faced a formal recommendation for corrective action due to a serious legal violation, down from three the previous year, the number of companies receiving guidance or advice rose by 19 per cent to 395 cases. Public sector leaks also grew sharply, up 68 per cent to 1,951 cases, with most incidents attributed to human errors such as the incorrect delivery of documents. Reports involving Japan’s My Number national ID system spiked more than sixfold to 2,052 cases. Of these, 1726 were linked to improper access via MKSystem’s software. The rise reflects both an increase in breaches and heightened awareness among companies regarding their obligation to report data leaks, pointing to urgent needs for

stronger cybersecurity measures across sectors. ("Japan personal data leaks double in FY2024 to record 21,000 cases," *Japan Today*, 11 June 2025)

### **Japan warns China after a fighter jet flies too close to an MSDF patrol plane**

On 11 June, Japan warned China after a Chinese J-15 fighter jet flew just 45 meters from a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force patrol plane over the Pacific Ocean. On 08 & 09 June, China's J-15 jet from the carrier Shandong flew dangerously close, just 900 meters in front of a Japanese MSDF plane. Japan's Defense Ministry stated that such close moves could cause a dangerous collision. Japan has expressed "serious concerns" and has asked China to stop these unsafe flights. Two Chinese jets, performing military drills near Japan, took off from the aircraft carriers Shandong and Liaoning. It is the first time both Chinese carriers have been seen operating together in the Pacific. The Shandong carried out takeoff and landing drills inside Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone, while the Liaoning was also spotted nearby before moving beyond the area. Japan is closely watching China's growing military activity in the region. ("Chinese fighter jet has near miss with SDF patrol plane: Japan gov't," *Japan Today*, 12 June 2025)

### **China criticizes "dangerous behavior" maneuvers by Japan after an aircraft clash**

On 12 June, Beijing criticized Japan for what it called "dangerous behavior" by a Japanese military plane over the Pacific. This move came after Chinese J-15 fighter jets flew dangerously close to Japanese P-3C patrol planes over the Pacific on 08 & 09 June, staying within 45 meters for 40 and 80 minutes, respectively. On 08 June, Chinese jets also crossed just 900 meters ahead of a Japanese plane at the same altitude. Japan's military chief Yoshihide Yoshida stated that the actions were intentional, not mistakes. China's foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian blamed Japan for risky behavior by spying on China's routine military activity. Japan warned that such close encounters risk accidents, and government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi expressed serious concern. US Ambassador George Glass criticized China's actions as dangerous and reckless. The tensions follow sightings of two Chinese aircraft carriers operating together in the Pacific, which Japan highlighted China's growing military reach. The Director of the University of Tokyo's economic security and policy innovation program, Daisuke Kawai, stated that the timing may be linked to

current US-China trade tensions. ("Japan, China trade barbs over fighter jet maneuvers," *Japan Today*, 13 June 2025)

### **US President approves Nippon Steel's USD 14.8 billion merger with US Steel**

On 16 June, *The Japan Times* reported that US President Donald Trump has formally approved Nippon Steel's USD 14.9 billion acquisition of US Steel, ending an 18-month saga marked by union opposition and two national security reviews. Trump signed an executive order allowing the deal, contingent on the companies signing a national security agreement with the Treasury Department. The deal includes USD 11 billion in US investments by 2028, a US government-held "golden share" ensuring oversight, and commitments on production, leadership, and trade. The merger creates the world's second-largest steelmaker and strengthens the US steel industry's ability to support infrastructure and the energy grid. The companies plan to invest an additional USD three billion post-2028. However, concerns remain over how much management control the US will exert, with the golden share granting influence over board seats and leadership roles, though not equity ownership. The deal, originally blocked by former US President Joe Biden, was revived under Trump's administration with a renewed national security review. It is expected to close by 18 June. Japan's government welcomed the approval, seeing it as a boost to US-Japan industrial ties and innovation. ("Trump gives formal blessing to Nippon Steel's \$14.8 billion bid for U.S. Steel," *The Japan Times*, 16 June 2025)

### **Honda to develop suborbital spaceflight by 2029**

On 18 June, *Japan Today* reported the surprise announcement by the Japanese company, Honda, about its successful launch and landing test of a reusable suborbital rocket on 17 June. A suborbital launch has the capability to touch the verge of outer space but does not enter orbit. The reusable launch vehicles have been the driver of emerging commercial space missions over the past decade, led by the US, China, and Europe. In 2021, the company stated its research efforts to study space technologies and reusable rockets and emphasized the potential to contribute to the everyday lives of people by launching satellites with its own rockets. Japan's second-largest carmaker, Honda's Research and development wing, has successfully landed a 6.3-meter experimental reusable spacecraft after reaching an altitude of 271 meters at its test facility in Taiki. Japan's government has also

introduced a multibillion-dollar space venture to subsidize private rockets and satellites. This venture is aimed at doubling Japan's space industry to 8 trillion yen by the early 2030s. ("Honda conducts reusable rocket test; aims for space flight by 2029," *Japan Today*, 18 June 2025)

### **Joint military and naval drills by the US, Philippines, and Japan**

On 19 June, *The Daily Sentinel* reports that Japan, the US, and the Philippines are conducting joint coast guard drills in Japan's southwest coast. This movement highlights the strength of cooperation between these countries amidst rising tension from China. Naval exercises such as vessel cooperation and rescue operations aim to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. Chinese vessels have been routinely sighted in the contested islands, raising concerns about accidental conflicts. The drill is a response to Beijing's expanding ambitions, particularly the recent close aerial encounters and presence of Chinese aircraft carriers. ("Japan-US-Philippines hold coast guard drills with eye on China," *The Daily Sentinel*, 19 June 2025)

### **Japan to expand security aid to eight nations, reports Japan Today**

On 21 June, *Japan Today* reported that Japan will give defence equipment to Thailand, Tonga, and six other countries this year as part of its growing security aid program. The plan is meant to help keep sea routes safe in the Indo-Pacific, where China is increasing its military presence. Other nations set to receive aid include East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. Japan may provide drones for use in disaster response and maritime patrols. The aid comes under Japan's official security assistance program, launched in 2023 to support friendly nations. Japan gave rescue boats and equipment to Fiji in May under the same plan. The government has increased its budget for this program to over 8 billion yen in 2025. It says strong cooperation with regional partners is important for peace and safety. ("Japan to provide defence equipment to Thailand, 7 other nations," *Japan Today*, 21 June 2025)

### **Japan's plea to de-escalate conflict in Iran, reports Reuters**

On 23 June, *Reuters* reported Japan's plea to de-escalate the conflict in the Middle East and halt the extremely regrettable cycles of actions and counteractions. Japan's Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya considers the US strike on Iran as a necessary action to deter Iran from acquiring

nuclear weapons and hopes for renewed political dialogue between the US and Iran to facilitate nuclear negotiations. This action of obliterating Nuclear sites in Iran by the US in a joint action with Israel is considered the most deadly Western military strike since 1979. Japan's cabinet chief secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi distinguished US strikes from Iran as the US continues to pursue diplomacy to facilitate negotiations in nuclear talks with Iran. Japan urges diplomatic dialogue and negotiation to foster de-escalation in the Middle East. ("Japan calls for de-escalation of Iran conflict," *Reuters*, 23 June 2025)

### **Official Security Assistance of Japan extends defence equipment sale to eight countries, reports Asian News**

On 23 June, *Asian News* reported that Japan seeks to strengthen the security capacities of like-minded countries by providing defence equipment to eight countries under its Official Security Assistance program. The official recipients are strategically located in the ASEAN and Pacific regions amidst the growing influence of China. The eight recipient countries include Thailand, the Philippines, Tonga, Indonesia, Malaysia, East Timor, Sri Lanka, and Papua New Guinea, which reflects Japan's broader strategy to strengthen partnerships with countries that share democratic values and are located at critical maritime junctures. The traditional Official Development Assistance was limited to non-military aid; this time, the aid is directly supporting military forces with an estimated cost of 8 billion yen. The assistance includes domestically manufactured drones, high-speed patrol boats, surveillance radar, and equipment for disaster response, search, and rescue operations. This aid aims to strengthen regional stability amidst tensions in the Indo-Pacific. ("Japan to provide defence equipment to 8 countries under OSA," *Asian News*, 23 June 2025)

Japan sets Upper House election date to 20 July  
On 24 June, *The Japan Times* reported that Japan will hold an election for the Upper House on 20 July. The campaign will officially begin on 3 July. The voters will choose 125 of the 248 members in the House of Councilors, with 75 seats from constituencies and 50 through proportional representation. Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba stated that his ruling coalition aims to win a majority. The bloc must secure at least 50 seats to meet this goal. The election campaign will focus on inflation and political funding concerns. Opposition parties plan to challenge the ruling coalition, which lost its majority in the Lower House last year. Ishiba has called for stability and economic reform. (Jiji, "Japan sets

Upper House election for July 20," *The Japan Times*, 24 June 2025)

**Japan's ruling LDP defeat in the Tokyo assembly election is a setback for the party, says an editorial in the Asia News Network**

On 24 June, *Asia News Network* editorial stated that Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party suffered a major defeat in the Tokyo assembly election held on 22 June. The loss signals serious challenges for Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's Cabinet ahead of the upper house election this summer. The party hoped to recover public trust, but voter dissatisfaction with high prices and recent political scandals appears to have hurt the party's standing. The editorial noted that the LDP's campaign included a revived cash handout plan failed to gain support. A political funds scandal involving unreported income added to the public's discontent. Coalition partner Komeito withdrew support for some LDP candidates and also lost seats, raising concern within the ruling bloc. Former minister Shinji Inoue admitted that the party's economic message did not reach voters. The editorial believes the LDP must act quickly to avoid further losses in the national election. The result is seen as a warning from voters and a call for stronger leadership and clearer solutions to the inflation. ("Japan's ruling party in crisis ahead of Upper House election after crushing defeat in Tokyo polls," *Asia News Network*, 24 June 2025)

**Japan protests against the installation of a Chinese structure in the East China Sea, reports Reuters**

On 24 June, *Reuters* reported the protests of Japan against the construction of a new structure in the East China Sea, which is located west of the geographical median line between the countries. Tokyo expressed strong condemnation against such unilateral advancement of development despite unresolved maritime boundaries and criticised such an action as "extremely regrettable". Japan urged China to return to negotiations based on the 2008 bilateral agreement for joint development of natural resources in the disputed waters and calls to halt the new construction. This action by China has escalated the long-standing dispute between the two countries over a chain of Islands known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China. The incident highlights the long-standing friction in regional geopolitics and resource competition in the East China Sea. ("Japan protests against new Chinese structure in East China Sea," *Reuters*, 25 June 2025)

**Japan conducts its first missile test in its territory, reported Japan Today**

On 25 June, *Japan Today* reported Japan's first-ever missile test on its territory on 24 June, marking a milestone in military modernisation. In the northernmost island of Hokkaido at the Shinzunai Anti-Air Firing Range, the ground self-defence force launched a Type 88 surface-ship missile which targeted a crewless vessel 40km offshore. Due to Space and safety concerns, such tests were held in the US or Australia. The successful tests highlight Japan's pragmatic shift towards a self-reliant defence capability amidst the assertive naval activities of China along its coasts. The test is a result of Japan's 2022 defence overhaul, which moves beyond post-World War two defence pacifism, identifying China as its top rival. The country is also acquiring US-made Tomahawk cruise missiles and developing a longer-range Type-12 missile. Japan is also planning to establish a missile range on Japan's easternmost island, where recent Chinese aircraft carriers were spotted. ("Japan conducts its first missile test on its own territory," *Japan Today*, 25 June 2025)

**US President Donald Trump gets golden shares in the US-Japan Nippon Steel deal**

On 26 June, *Japan Today* reported that, according to the US Securities and Exchange Commission, US President Trump will get the "golden share" in the deal with Japan-based Nippon Steel. As a part of the US national security agreement, this provision will present Trump with the power to appoint a board member and decision-making power that will affect the domestic steel production and competition with overseas producers. According to the filings, either Trump or someone he designates will be the decision maker, and this power will revert to the Treasury Department and the Commerce Department when anyone else becomes the president. The Pittsburgh-based US Steel's buyout of USD 15 billion of Nippon Steel makes it a substantial subsidiary. (Marc Levy, "Trump gets 'golden share' power in U.S. Steel buyout, but U.S. agencies will get it under future presidents," *Japan Today*, 26 June 2025)

**Japan enacts capital punishment for the "Twitter killer," reports BBC**

On 27 June, the *BBC* reported that Japan executed a man accused of serial killing between 2017 to 2022. He was dubbed the "Twitter Killer." The detained Takahiro Shiraishi lured his victims, most of them young women, to his apartments, after which he would strangle or dismember them. This crime came into light

when body parts were found in the Japanese city of Zama. Shiraishi admitted that all the victims were suicidal and that he connected to them through Twitter now X. He told the victims that he would help them die and told them that he would kill himself with them. Most victims from between 15-26, and mostly women. His lawyers argued that his victims gave him consent to kill them and therefore called for an assessment of his mental state. ("Japan executes 'Twitter killer' who murdered nine," *BBC*, 27 June 2025)

### **Japan to build evacuation shelters in light of Taiwan tensions**

On 28 June, The Japan Times reported on their plan to construct evacuation shelters at the westernmost island of Yonaguni in the Okinawa Prefecture. The shelter will be completed by spring 2028, and the shelters will be built in five municipalities in Japan. This urgency came in light of a possible emergency need over the Taiwan issue near the Nansei southwestern island. The underground shelters aim to accommodate local residents for two weeks in the event of an invasion. The town of Yonaguni shelter can hold 200 people; other shelters aim to have a capacity of 500 people. ("Japan aims to complete Yonaguni evacuation shelter in 2028," *The Japan Times*, 28 June 2025)

## **AUSTRALIA & THE PACIFIC**

### **Pacific Island countries are considering building walls to stop rising seas, reports ABC**

On 01 June, *ABC* reported that Pacific Island nations like Samoa, Tuvalu, and the Marshall Islands are constructing seawalls to protect coastal communities from the increasing threat of rising sea levels. Villages such as Lauli'i in Samoa have experienced regular flooding, loss of homes, and even destruction of ancestral graves. New seawalls that are often funded by countries like New Zealand and Australia, or international bodies like the World Bank are helping protect these communities, offering a sense of relief and safety. However, experts caution that seawalls are often short-term, expensive solutions. Many walls collapse within two years due to poor construction and ongoing sea-level rise. Climate scientists argue that seawalls can shift erosion to other areas and trap water behind them, worsening flooding over time. While they offer psychological comfort and delay relocation, they may also give communities false hope. Alternatives include relocating inland, especially on volcanic islands, and implementing nature-based solutions like mangrove replanting and sloped rock walls. In Tuvalu and Nanumea,

locals are developing larger community-led resilience projects, but face funding challenges. While civil engineering has proven effective in places like the Netherlands. The concern lies in its sustainability and the actors who would fund it in the long run. (Doug Dingwall and Adel Fruean, "These Pacific Islands are building walls to stop rising seas. Will it work?" *ABC*, 02 June 2025)

### **Palau's President calls for fair inclusion of Taiwan**

On 02 June, Palau's President Surangel Whipps Jr is advocating for Taiwan's full access to the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders' Meeting, emphasizing unity among Pacific nations. He noted the strong turnout at last year's summit in Tonga and stressed that all partners, including Taiwan, should be allowed to participate. Taiwan, a long-time development partner of the region since 1992, faces increasing diplomatic pressure from China, which upholds the One-China Policy. Only three PIF members; Palau, Tuvalu, and the Marshall Islands, recognize Taiwan diplomatically. China, a dialogue partner since 1990, continues to push against Taiwan's recognition. Last year in Tonga, a Chinese delegate reportedly tried to alter a communique to remove Taiwan's separate recognition. Solomon Islands, the host for this year's PIF summit, has not confirmed Taiwan's participation and reiterated its commitment to the One-China stance. Meanwhile, leaders from several Pacific nations, including Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji, recently visited China and released a statement affirming Taiwan as a part of China. Despite rising geopolitical tensions, Whipps insists that inclusivity at the PIF is vital, urging the Regional Architecture Review committee to ensure all development partners, including Taiwan can attend and contribute meaningfully to regional decisions. (Lydia Lewis, "Palau president wants Taiwan to get a fair go at PIF," *RNZ*, 02 June 2025)

### **NATO's Deputy Chair calls to underscore Indo-Pacific cooperation**

On 02 June, *National Atlantic Treaty Organization* reported that Deputy Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Lieutenant General Andrew M. Rohling, represented NATO at the 2025 IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, underscoring the Alliance's commitment to expanding dialogue and cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners. His participation, alongside NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Boris Ruge, reflected NATO's recognition of the interconnected nature of global and Euro-Atlantic security. On the sidelines, Rohling and

Ruge conducted bilateral meetings with political and military leaders from the Indo-Pacific region, focusing on shared concerns such as maritime security, cyber defence, and strategic resilience. These engagements emphasized NATO's dedication to a rules-based international order and greater cooperation with like-minded nations. Rohling also met with defence industry stakeholders to discuss public-private partnerships in enhancing security. Key themes at the Dialogue included regional stability, open communication, and multilateral cooperation to manage global tensions and cyber-hybrid threats. Discussions also drew on lessons from ongoing conflicts to inform future collective responses. Organized by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the Shangri-La Dialogue serves as a key platform for global defence dialogue. ("Deputy Chair of the NATO Military Committee Engages Indo-Pacific Partners at Shangri-La Dialogue 2025." *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 02 June 2025)

### **Samoa's Parliament dissolves, an early election to be held in three months**

On 03 June, *RNZ* reported that Samoa's Parliament has been officially dissolved, triggering an early general election to be held within the next three months, amid escalating political instability. Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mata'afa moved to dissolve the legislature after her government's budget was decisively voted down, 34 votes against, 16 in support, and two abstentions, by a coalition of opposition MPs and defectors from her own former FAST party. The Head of State approved her request. This crisis followed months of political turmoil that began in January, when a major split in the FAST Party saw Fiame remove Chairman La'auli Leuatea Schmidt and other ministers from her Cabinet. In retaliation, La'auli expelled Fiame from FAST, leaving her to lead a minority government. Despite two no-confidence challenges, Fiame narrowly surviving both demonstrates the volatile and shifting alliances in Parliament. The Electoral Commission has sought legal guidance from the Supreme Court regarding the early election timeline, requesting more time to finalize the electoral roll. A hearing is scheduled for 03 June, which may determine the logistical path forward for conducting the national vote under these complex political conditions. ("Samoa parliament formally dissolved after months of uncertainty." *RNZ*, 03 June 2025)

### **Vanuatu Climate Minister criticises Australia over LNG extension amid COP31 Co-hosting**

#### **bid**

On 04 June, *The Guardian* reported Vanuatu's climate minister, Ralph Regenvanu, has voiced disappointment over Australia's decision to extend the life of the North West Shelf LNG project until 2070, calling it a betrayal of its climate commitments and a blow to its credibility as a potential host of Cop31. Australia is lobbying to co-host the major UN climate summit with Pacific nations in 2026, positioning it as a "Pacific Cop" in Adelaide. However, Regenvanu said Australia's actions contradict its rhetoric, describing them as "double speak" that undermines Pacific trust. While still supporting the bid, he warned that Australia's fossil fuel policies raise serious questions about its role as a true climate partner. The North West Shelf extension could emit up to six billion tons of greenhouse gases, alarming climate scientists and Pacific leaders who view such moves as threatening their survival. Palau's President Surangel Whipps Jr and Tuvalu's climate minister Maina Talia also criticised Australia, saying its continued investment in fossil fuels violates the spirit of regional climate cooperation. Past criticism of UN climate summits being hosted by fossil fuel-reliant nations adds further scrutiny to Australia's bid. Regenvanu concluded that while the Pacific still stands with Australia, its credibility is now in question. (Prianka Srinivasan, "Vanuatu criticises Australia for extending gas project while making Cop31 bid." *The Guardian*, 04 June 2025)

### **Fiji and China sign historic Rugby Cooperation Agreement, reports RNZ**

On 04 June, *RNZ* reported on a landmark move to deepen bilateral ties through sport, Fiji and China have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at strengthening rugby development in both countries. The agreement was signed in Suva by Fiji Rugby Union (FRU) trustee representative Jenny Seeto and China Rugby Football Association (CRFA) President Wang Yun. Describing the agreement as "more than a document," Seeto emphasized its symbolic value as a commitment to building bridges through rugby. She noted that while China offers vast potential in terms of competition and youth development, Fiji contributes world-class coaching expertise and playing talent, making the partnership mutually beneficial. According to a statement from FRU's Rugby House headquarters, the MOU sets the foundation for cooperative efforts in team development, youth training, talent pathways, and sports diplomacy. FRU board chairman and former national player John Sanday hailed the

initiative, stating it opens the door for rugby academies, youth exchanges, and high-performance programs that will benefit athletes and communities in both nations. Wang Yun highlighted China's strategic focus on grassroots development and talent enhancement, with plans to establish a three-tier national team structure modeled in part on Fiji's elite systems. Fijian coaches and players have already laid the groundwork for this partnership. Osea Kolinisau, former Fiji Sevens captain and current national head coach, previously led the China women's national team alongside Setefano Cakau. Ben Soso, another Fijian former player, currently coaches Huagan Rugby Club in China, which is viewed as a key bridge in this international partnership. (Iliesa Tora, [“Commitment to building bridges through rugby” - FRU and China sign MOU.](#)” RNZ, 04 June 2025)

### **Tonga's 2025 budget prioritizes private sector, education, and infrastructure development, reports RNZ**

On 04 June, RNZ reported that the new government of Prime Minister Aisake Eke has released its first national budget, marking a significant shift in focus from previous administrations. Valued at over TOP 992 million (Tongan pa'anga), this is the largest budget in Tonga's history and represents a 10 per cent increase over the previous year. Notably, it is a deficit budget, with a shortfall of approximately TOP 28 million, which the government plans to finance through public bonds, a strategy Tonga has employed in the past decade. One of the most groundbreaking aspects of the budget is a major allocation to private sector developments for the first time in Tongan history. In the education sector, the government will continue to subsidize nongovernment schools, offering TOP 700 per student annually. However, the funds are now expected to be directed more purposefully, prioritizing teacher salaries amid concerns over underpayment and teacher emigration. The budget also includes provisions for expanded tertiary training under the Tonga National University, especially in nursing and teacher education. On the infrastructure front, development funding will support the construction of a new hospital in Vava'u, part of the broader development budget, which is largely funded by foreign aid and used for capital-intensive projects such as hospitals and wharves. (Don Wiseman, [“Deficit budget announced in Tonga: largest ever spend.”](#) RNZ, 04 June 2025)

### **South-West Pacific region faces ocean heat and rising sea levels, says the State of the**

### **Climate in the South-West Pacific 2024 report**

On 05 June, the State of the Climate in the South-West Pacific 2024 report confirmed that the region experienced its hottest year on record, with ocean heat content near record highs and 40 million square kilometers of marine heatwaves over ten per cent of global oceans. On land, extreme weather events, including deadly heat waves and flooding, devastated Australia, the Philippines, and Fiji. A record 12 tropical cyclones struck the Philippines late in 2024, impacting over 13 million people. In Indonesia's New Guinea, the last tropical glacier is nearing extinction. Sea level rise and ocean acidification threaten marine ecosystems and coastal communities, with some islands like Fiji's Serua facing forced relocation due to uninhabitable conditions. Despite the dire trends, the report highlighted successes in disaster preparedness. Early warning systems and anticipatory action in the Philippines helped reduce loss of life during the cyclone streak, demonstrating the effectiveness of the WMO's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative. ([“Ocean heat and sea-level rise threaten communities in the South-West Pacific.”](#) World Meteorological Organization, 05 June 2025)

### **Fiji's maritime authority issues removal notices for capsized ship**

On 05 June, RNZ reported that the CEO of the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF), Joweli Cawaki, confirmed that the vessel Lomaiviti Princess II sank on Monday after being towed from Suva's Narain Jetty by Fiji Ports. Cawaki said: “The boat just tilted to one side and took in water, and it went down,” further explaining that the ship, unmanned at the time, had been docked at the jetty since 2019, and no injuries were reported. Fiji Ports had served Goundar Shipping, the vessel's owner, with a removal notice. Cawaki explained that port authorities came in with a tug and pulled the vessel out. Once the vessel was pulled out, it went down. He described the ship as a long-standing safety risk, occupying space at the wharf, and compared its presence to a “dumping ground.” Now submerged in just under two meters of water, the sunken vessel is in a channel, posing a collision risk to other boats. An oil containment boom has been placed around the wreck, and MSAF personnel are monitoring for any leaks. A meeting is scheduled to determine salvage options, including pumping water and sealing breaches. Goundar Shipping's director declined to comment. (Caleb Fotheringham, [“Removal notice issued for Fiji vessel which capsized -](#)

Maritime Authority.” RNZ, 05 June 2025)

### **China’s aircraft carrier is operating near the Pacific Ocean, reports Bloomberg**

On 09 June, *Bloomberg* reported that China’s aircraft carrier was seen operating in the deepest foray into the Pacific Ocean. According to Japan’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Liaoning and three other Chinese naval vessels were around 300 kilometers southwest of the remote Japan’s Island of Minamitori on 07 June. The carrier was within Japan’s exclusive economic zone. Japan confirmed the takeoff and landing of fighter jets and helicopters from the deck of the carrier to test the ability of pilots and sailors to perform combat operations. According to China’s military affairs expert, Liaoning was conducting normal training activities, and more carriers are expected to go further into deep ocean areas in the future. (Alastire Gale, “Chinese Aircraft Carrier Seen Operating Deeper Into Pacific,” *Bloomberg*, 09 June 2025)

### **Tuvalu calls to ratify the sea level rise treaty at the UN Ocean conference**

On 11 June, at the UN Oceans Conference, Tuvalu’s Prime Minister Feleti Teo called for an international treaty on sea level rise, stressing the need to enshrine the legal rights of states affected by rising waters, including statehood continuity and maritime boundaries. He emphasized the ocean’s role in Tuvalu’s survival and reiterated support for the 1.5°C global warming target. Solomon Islands Prime Minister Jeremiah Manele denounced deep-sea mining, announcing a moratorium in his country and criticizing efforts that disregard scientific warnings and global consensus. He highlighted the three planetary crises—biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change—and urged global ocean governance reform. Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape echoed concerns about deep-sea mining, opposing it due to environmental risks. However, New Ireland Governor Walter Schnaubelt backed Niu Solwara’s seabed mining project, claiming its methods are safe. Palau’s President Surangel Whipps Jr called for sustainable ocean financing, advocating grants, patient capital, and marine revenue systems. French Polynesia’s President Moetai Brotherson said: “Why do we do it? We do it because we are not just looking at the ocean; we are not just seeing it at some place that we can fish. We are part of the ocean, and the ocean is part of us.” (“Tuvalu calls for sea level rise treaty at UN Oceans Conference,” *RNZ*, 11 June 2025)

### **Samoa’s voter registration deadline is on 04 July, reports RNZ**

On 11 June, *RNZ* reported that Samoans living overseas must complete their voter registration by 04 July if they wish to participate in the country’s upcoming general election on 29 August. While online registration remains open to overseas citizens, Samoa’s Electoral Commissioner, Toleafoa Tuiafelolo John Stanley, clarified that finalizing the process requires physically returning to Samoa to provide biometric data, such as fingerprints and photographs. A bill that would have allowed overseas voting was not passed before Parliament was dissolved on 03 June, leaving the Electoral Act 2019 in effect, which mandates that all votes be cast within Samoa. An application from the Electoral Office seeking an election delay was also denied by the Supreme Court. The election timeline includes candidate nominations from 07 July to 12 July, and the last date to withdraw from candidacy is 14 August. A pre-polling day is scheduled for 27 August, with the official count scheduled for 01 to 05 September. Despite the tight schedule, Toleafoa expressed confidence in the preparation process. Voter registration surged from 48 per cent to 60 per cent as of 10 June, with 70,395 voters registered. (Grace Tinetai-Fiavaai, “July 4 deadline for voters to enrol for Samoa election,” *RNZ*, 11 June 2025)

Previous Editions

