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* China Fortnightly, a segment of the CLAWS Newsletters, offers a concise overview of key developments in China, blending sharp analysis with expert insights.

Internal Politics & Society

China's political calendar this fortnight signalled tightened coordination between Party-led consultative bodies and the legislature, targeted cadre reshuffles, and a security-first approach to AI in government. The CPPCC under Wang Huning emphasised ideological alignment around Tibet/Xinjiang, religious work, and foreign affairs, while scheduling key meetings and enforcing discipline. The State Council's appointments indicated recalibration in education, health, and culture portfolios. Beijing moved an English-language media veteran into the Hong Kong liaison office to sharpen external messaging. The NPC Standing Committee set an agenda dense with governance and regulatory revisions, and cyberspace and environmental tax tweaks loom large.

01 Oct (Xinhua): — The 41st CPPCC Chairpersons' Meeting, presided by Wang Huning, aligned consultative work with **Xi Jinping's recent directives on the War of Resistance commemoration**, "eight central regulations" study, Tibet/Xinjiang governance, religion, and foreign affairs. The meeting set end-Oct for the 14th Standing Committee session and removed Yi Huiman from the CPPCC Economic Committee deputy director post and membership, underscoring discipline enforcement. A collective study on "Global Climate Change and Response" heard a report by Chen Zhenlin, Director, China Meteorological Administration. Vice chairpersons including Wang Yong, Su Hui, and Shao Hong spoke on implementing Xi's guidance. The throughline is political-ideological consolidation as the CPPCC readies research and consultation to support 15th Five-Year Plan priorities and narrative work on sensitive fronts.

01 Oct (Xinhua): — The **State Council reshuffled key portfolios**, appointing Ren Youqun as Vice Minister of Education, Shu Huihao as Vice Minister of Civil Affairs, Zheng Zhe as Vice Director of the National Health Commission, Zhang Liping as Vice Director of the State Council's Office of Counselors, and Tang Wei as Vice Director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage. It removed Wu Yan (Vice Minister of Education), reassigned Shu Huihao from Assistant Minister of Finance, and dismissed Cao Xuetao (NHC Deputy Director), Wang Weimin (Counselors' Office Deputy Director), and Ren Jingdong (NEA Deputy Director). The moves suggest tightening managerial control and cross-portfolio optimisation across education, social governance, health, advisory, and energy systems ahead of policy pushes.

10 Oct (People's Daily): — The CAC and NDRC issued **Guidelines for deploying and applying AI large models in government**, steering usage toward services, social governance, office work, and decision support, with province-led, intensive deployments and city/county reuse of higher-level compute and models. The document mandates "assistive" positioning, full-cycle management, prevention of model "hallucination," and strict security responsibility systems, barring state or work secrets from non-confidential models to avoid leakage via data aggregation. This centralised, risk-containment architecture prioritises burden-reduction and guards against "digital formalism," signalling cautious institutionalisation of generative AI within state workflows.

11 Oct (SCMP): — **Beijing named Sun Shangwu, 56, a former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily, as Deputy Director of the Central Government's Liaison Office in Hong Kong**, with a remit reportedly focused on publicity and engagement with English-language platforms to "tell the Hong Kong story well." He fills the vacancy left by Lu Xinning's transfer to Guangxi's CPC Standing Committee in Aug last year. Elevating an English-language media operator into a senior liaison role points to a strategic effort to professionalise narrative management in Hong Kong and sharpen international messaging amid evolving public opinion terrain.

15 Oct (China Daily): — The NPC Standing Committee, chaired by Zhao Leji, will hold its 18th session on 24–28 Oct to review draft revisions to the Maritime Law, Organic Laws of Villagers’ and Urban Residents’ Committees, and amendments to the Cybersecurity Law and Environmental Protection Tax Law. Agenda items include a draft law on procuratorial public-interest litigation; a State Council-submitted draft on farmland protection and quality improvement; and reports on financial work, 2024 state-owned assets management, and criminal punishment execution, alongside inputs from the SPC, SPP, and NPC committees. The dense docket signals regulatory tightening across cyberspace, environmental taxation, grassroots governance, maritime rules, and agricultural land preservation as institutional guardrails for the 15th Five-Year Plan are refined.

Security & Defence

PLA signaled a dual track this fortnight: heightened patrols and sharper messaging in the South China Sea alongside steady far-seas deployments. Unmanned maritime systems featured prominently, with journals touting sonar-evasive submersibles and AI-enabled swarming concepts. PLA Daily acknowledged joint-operations gaps, prioritising cyber-information systems and system-of-systems integration. Offshore, the 48th Gulf of Aden escort group deployed, while friction spiked near Thitu Island. Concurrently, Zhurihe’s “Mini Taiwan” complex expanded, underscoring rehearsal for urban and node-targeting operations.

1 Oct (Xinhua): PLA Southern Theater Command steps up combat-readiness patrols over Huangyan Dao to ‘counter infringements’ while asserting sovereignty. The command said naval and air forces have reinforced patrols and vigilance since September to strengthen control and management of surrounding areas and airspace. It framed the measures as aimed at firmly safeguarding China’s sovereignty and security and maintaining South China Sea stability. The move suggests a calibrated bid to normalise heightened presence and deterrence around a sensitive feature under the rubric of stability operations.

3 Oct (SCMP/PLA journals): China showcases sonar-evasive unmanned submersibles with zero-radius turning as core to multilayered maritime strike networks. A military journal described disruptive, intelligent systems displayed at the 80th-anniversary parade, operating below 90 decibels and pairing with submarine-launched missiles, smart mines, and “mother-daughter” vehicles. Ordnance Industry Science Technology detailed unmanned submersibles, surface vessels, and unmanned minelayers for covert blockades, autonomous target identification, and saturation attacks, with future underwater charging for long endurance. Reports highlighted AI-enabled three-dimensional coordination and the AJX002 minelaying system (59–65 ft, pump-jet) for asymmetric sea denial. The emphasis points to rapid maturation of attritable unmanned mass to complicate sea-control contests and enforcement operations, adding governance challenges for maritime security regimes.

7 Oct (The Defense Post): Satellite imagery shows expansion of “Mini Taiwan” at Zhurihe, including a 280-m tunnel linking mock presidential and Judicial Yuan buildings. Based on a Japanese think tank’s analysis reported by Sankei Shimbun and cited by Taipei Times, the replica of Taipei’s government district has nearly tripled since 2020, with ongoing additions. Imagery since 2022 shows urban warfare drills with armored vehicles, street defenses, and brigade-level exercises around a mock presidential office, plus a replica port and warship reportedly used as missile targets. The investment suggests intent to refine urban and command-node targeting for a “Taiwan contingency”, integrating combined-arms manoeuvre with precision-strike rehearsal.

11 Oct (MND/PLA Navy): PLA Navy dispatches the 48th escort task group—destroyer Tangshan, frigate Daqing, supply ship Taihu—to Gulf of Aden missions. Spokesperson Jiang Bin said the group will undertake escorts off Somalia as “concrete actions” to build a maritime community with a shared future and safeguard sea lanes and regional stability. The PLA Navy has conducted such missions since December 2008, institutionalising blue-water sustainment, replenishment, and coalition-adjacent operating patterns. The continuity underscores a steadying-presence narrative while preserving far-seas proficiency and logistics habits applicable to broader expeditionary tasks.

12 Oct (Al Jazeera): Manila alleges Chinese coastguard rammed BRP Datu Pagbuaya near Thitu Island; Beijing blames a “dangerous approach”. The Philippine coastguard said a Chinese ship fired water cannon and “deliberately” struck the fisheries bureau vessel’s stern, causing minor damage with no injuries; videos were posted by Commodore Jay Tarriela, and Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan vowed not to cede territory. China’s coastguard spokesman Liu Dejun said the Philippine ship ignored repeated warnings and bears full responsibility. The incident near Thitu (Zhongye/Pag-asa) highlights persistent contestation despite a UN-backed tribunal ruling, with tactical risk-taking shaping the local balance of presence and narratives of culpability

13 Oct (PLA Daily via SCMP): PLA Daily urges “deep integration” across equipment, forces, and cyber-information systems to fix joint-operations shortfalls. The commentary by Li Jianhua argues deficiencies persist in integrating equipment, battlefields, personnel, and training, calling to strengthen force organisation, weaponry and equipment, positional facilities, C2 communications, comprehensive support, and regulations and systems. It stresses accelerating transformations in warfare elevate cyber-information systems’ centrality, warning that mechanised-era thinking risks a “dimension-reduction strike” against formidable adversaries. The framing aligns with Xi Jinping’s modernisation push and signals institutional urgency to turn reforms into practical, system-of-systems joint combat power.

External Affairs & Diplomacy

China advanced multilateral positioning via parliamentary outreach and diplomatic mechanisms while framing Xi’s Global Governance Initiative as the thematic anchor across partners in Eurasia and Europe . Regulatory fine-tuning introduced a new “K visa” to attract young foreign S&T talent, suggesting targeted openness amid tighter system control . High-level engagements with the DPRK, Switzerland, Ghana, and Sri Lanka emphasized policy continuity, economy-linked cooperation, and endorsement of one-China positions . Commerce signaling to Washington mixed firmness with conditional openness to talks, highlighting supply chain security narratives and calibrated export controls.

8 Oct (Xinhua): Zhao Leji video address: Zhao Leji, NPC Standing Committee Chairman, addressed the second meeting of parliamentary leaders of the “Group of Friends of Neutrality,” endorsing neutrality as a platform to deepen trust, cooperation, and multilateralism amid the UN’s 80th anniversary and global turbulence . He foregrounded Xi Jinping’s new Global Governance Initiative—alongside the Development, Security, and Civilization initiatives—framed around sovereign equality, international rule of law, people-centered approaches, and action orientation, claiming broad welcome . He urged parliaments to shoulder responsibility for fairer global governance and a community with a shared future, aligning legislative roles with China’s multilateral agenda . Bilaterally, he highlighted recent Turkmenistan leadership engagement in China and pledged to implement heads-of-state consensus toward a China–Turkmenistan community of shared future, signaling deeper Central Asian energy and governance linkages.

8 Oct (People's Daily): China–Italy committee: Wang Yi and Antonio Tajani co-chaired the 12th Government Committee meeting, citing recent Italian leadership visits, an action plan for the comprehensive strategic partnership, and the mechanism's 21-year history as the first such China–Europe platform. Wang proposed upgrading to “Version 2.0” via three vectors: strategic guidance and innovation, stronger platforms for exchanges and enterprise linkages, and practical local cooperation to energize trade and cultural ties. Tajani lauded the partnership's tangible gains, invoked historic emissaries (Marco Polo, Matteo Ricci), and affirmed support for free trade, resilient supply chains, and peaceful dispute resolution, labeling China a preferred partner. The subtext signals Beijing–Rome intent to ring-fence pragmatic cooperation within a choppy EU–China context, using subnational and sectoral channels to sustain momentum.

9 Oct (People's Daily): Alien entry rules: The State Council's Decision amended alien entry–exit rules to add a K visa for young foreign S&T talents, contingent on meeting criteria set by competent authorities and submitting supporting documents, effective 1 Oct 2025 under Order No. 814 signed by Premier Li Qiang. The adjustment, adopted 16 Jul and promulgated 7 Aug, targets precision-talent attraction while keeping gatekeeping with line agencies, reflecting selective openness for innovation capacity.

9 Oct (Xinhua): Li–Kim meeting: In Pyongyang, Li Qiang conveyed Xi Jinping's greetings to Kim Jong-un on the WPK's 80th anniversary, referencing Kim's presence in Beijing last month and reaffirming the strategic, long-term view of China–DPRK ties. Li called for intensified high-level exchanges, practical cooperation, and multilateral coordination to “defend and practice multilateralism,” echoing governance narratives used across China's regional diplomacy. Kim reaffirmed one-China commitments, opposition to “Taiwan independence,” and support for China's Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet positions, while backing deeper exchanges and multilateral coordination to benefit both peoples. The engagement underscores synchronized political signaling and issue linkage—sovereignty, stability, and development—within a shifting Northeast Asian security environment.

10 Oct (Xinhua): China–Switzerland dialogue: Wang Yi and Ignazio Cassis held the fourth strategic dialogue in Bellinzona during the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties, noting progress on FTA upgrade talks, a renewed currency swap, and a Year of Culture and Tourism. Both sides emphasized equality, innovation, and win–win cooperation, with Switzerland reiterating one-China policy adherence and endorsing Xi's global governance initiative and China-advocated International Mediation Institute. They agreed to accelerate FTA upgrades and expand cooperation in AI, green development, digital economy, finance, and services, alongside continued visa facilitation and cultural–educational exchanges. This positions the Swiss track as a high-trust European channel for rules, finance, and innovation despite broader transatlantic sensitivities.

13 Oct (FMPRC, China Daily): Li meets Ghana President, SL Prime Minister: Meeting Ghana's President Mahama, Li Qiang framed the upgraded strategic partnership, BRI alignment, and China's zero-tariff policy for African countries as levers for trade, infrastructure, energy, agriculture, and digital cooperation, with Ghana reaffirming one-China. With Sri Lanka's PM Amarasuriya, Li prioritized neighborhood diplomacy, Colombo Port City and Hambantota projects, and expanded trade, green, digital, agriculture, and maritime cooperation, with Sri Lanka reaffirming one-China and support for China's governance initiative. Both tracks pair development finance and market access with political alignment, aiming for durable, sector-diversified ties and calibrated risk containment.

14 Oct (MOFCOM): MOFCOM on US tariffs: MOFCOM criticized newly announced US tariff and restrictive measures while affirming that China's rare earths–related export controls are

lawful, not bans, and will continue approving qualified applications to stabilize supply chains . Emphasizing “fight if fight; talk if talk,” the spokesperson urged Washington to correct practices, show sincerity, and use the consultation mechanism to manage differences and advance stable ties . The stance couples deterrent signaling with procedural engagement, preserving bargaining space while contesting unilateral pressure .

15 Oct (People’s Daily): **China–Iceland geothermal:** Xi Jinping and President Halla Thomsdottir met during her visit for the Global Summit on Women, releasing a joint statement to strengthen geothermal and green transformation cooperation under UNFCCC–Paris principles and common but differentiated responsibilities . The document commits to scaling geothermal deployment, circular economy, green value chains, innovation, gender equality, and plastic pollution control, with inter-governmental and industry collaboration and multilateral process coordination . This deepens a niche, high-credibility climate partnership leveraging Icelandic expertise and China’s market, aligning climate mitigation with industrial upgrading .

Economy, Finance, Trade & Commerce

Beijing’s macroeconomic messaging this fortnight leans on confidence-building while foregrounding reform, demand expansion, and innovation to keep the recovery on track. Top leadership pressed for unclogging bottlenecks, boosting effective investment, and curbing “disorderly, irrational competition,” pairing domestic circulation with stabilising trade and FDI. Engagements with multinational CEOs amplified a “high-level opening-up” narrative, with assurances that long-term growth fundamentals remain intact. Together, the moves suggest pre-15th FYP calibration: targeted policy fine-tuning to steady expectations, support private enterprise, and anchor foreign investor sentiment amid a complex external environment.

10 Oct (Xinhua): **Vice Premier He Lifeng courts global CEOs, reiterating “high-level opening-up” and steady long-term fundamentals.** He Lifeng, member of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau and Vice Premier of the State Council, met leaders from Abbott Laboratories (United States), Prudential plc (United Kingdom), and SK Group (South Korea) to discuss the global and Chinese outlook and expanding investment in China; he underscored a stable foundation, multiple advantages, resilience, and unchanged long-term growth trends, inviting deeper cooperation and expanded investment to share development opportunities; participating executives voiced optimism and plans to deepen their China presence, indicating a coordinated investor-relations push to stabilise FDI expectations across healthcare, finance, and advanced industry as Beijing balances openness pledges with policy predictability.

14 Oct (Xinhua): **Premier Li Qiang presides over an economic symposium, signalling a reform-and-demand push with innovation and external stability at the fore.** Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council, chaired a symposium on the economic situation to hear experts and entrepreneurs on the economy and related work, stressing confidence, pragmatic problem-solving, and completing annual economic and social targets; priorities included removing bottlenecks via reform, expanding domestic demand and domestic circulation, boosting effective investment, stimulating market vitality, and addressing disorderly and irrational competition, alongside accelerating the application of S&T achievements, stabilising foreign trade and foreign investment, and enhancing comprehensive overseas services; he urged entrepreneurs to focus on innovation and asked scholars to feed advice into the 15th Five-Year

Plan (2026–2030), reflecting a calibrated effort to marry cyclical support with structural upgrades while telegraphing policy continuity into the next planning cycle.

Science, Technology, Industry & Resources

China emphasized platformized governance of scientific infrastructure through a national evaluation that ties funding to measurable open-sharing performance. Utilization metrics and full integration into a central platform signal tighter managerial discipline and accountability. In parallel, Sohu showcased a superconducting quantum computer entering commercial service via a cloud platform, claiming significant performance and global reach. The article frames a coordinated, full-stack ecosystem spanning academia, telecom, and hardware as a strategic differentiator. Together, these developments project capability, scale, and narrative leadership across science infrastructure and quantum computing.

1 Oct (Ministry of Science and Technology): 2025 evaluation tightens open-sharing compliance with incentives and penalties, as the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Finance—per the State Council’s 2014 Opinions and 2022 Implementation Rules—assessed 344 units across 26 departments covering 53,000 instruments ($\geq$ ¥500,000) and 71 major facilities via the National Center for Science and Technology Infrastructure. Participating entities improved versus 2024: average effective operation reached 1,599 hours, external service 273 hours, and 100% instrument integration on the national network platform, with facilities operating stably.

Results: 50 units (e.g., Institute of Biophysics, CAS) “Excellent”; 100 (e.g., Institute of Subtropical Agriculture, CAS) “Good”; 100 (e.g., Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry, CAS) “Qualified”; 3 (e.g., Fifth Institute of Electronics, MIIT) “Poor.” Policy levers include post-subsidy rewards for Excellent/Good and one-year rectification for Poor, with potential cuts to instrument procurement funds if unmet. Guidance directs departments to strengthen planning for facility construction and purchases, standardize open operations, and build high-level technical teams under the Science and Technology Progress Law. Strategically, this shifts labs from asset ownership to platformized access, using fiscal carrots-and-sticks to lift utilization and align institutional behavior with national tasking.

13 Oct (Sohu): Sohu touts a superconducting quantum computer entering commercial service via the “Sky Eye” cloud, reportedly offering access in 60+ countries and using a “Zu Chongzhi” processor with 105 qubits. Claims include coherence up to 72 microseconds and two-qubit gate fidelity of 99.62%, positioning a “computing beast” in a dilution refrigerator. On quantum random circuit sampling, it asserts performance “100 trillion times” faster than the world’s fastest supercomputer and “one million times” faster than Google’s 67-qubit “Sycamore,” collapsing “30,000-year” estimates to seconds. Traffic metrics cited: 37 million visits and 2 million tasks since launch; ecosystem actors include the University of Science and Technology of China (Zu Chongzhi/Jiuzhang), China Telecom Quantum Group (cloud), and Guodun Quantum (hardware). The narrative contrasts a U.S. “multi-point blossoming” (Google, IBM, Microsoft) with a coordinated model of “concentrating efforts on major tasks,” aiming to convert lab milestones into platformized, exportable services. Analytically, this messaging seeks to own the full stack—from basic research to cloud.

About the Author

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