

CLAWS Newsletter



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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

As the 4th Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) convened from October 20 to 23, Beijing's political leadership showcased a message across key areas: internal Party discipline, the newly adopted 15th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development, and strategic positioning in an increasingly complex external environment. Notable legislative amendments to cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI) governance highlight the Party's consistent efforts to adapt to the rapid pace of technological advancements and competition. Meanwhile, ongoing anti-corruption campaigns targeting high-ranking generals, coupled with administrative reshuffles, underscored the Party's continued reliance on discipline mechanisms to assert control. A significant flashpoint emerged in Hainan, where disputes over state-enterprise land sparked tensions between the expansion of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and protesting villagers voicing rural grievances.

16 Oct (Xinhua): Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, also the chairperson of the **China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED)**, **addressed its annual general meeting**, asserting that China is 'committed' to sharing 'wisdom and strength' in tackling environmental challenges. Ding's remarks come as many developing countries grapple with escalating pollution challenges, while the Trump administration shows little to no interest in environmental diplomacy. While China often highlights its rapid green transition as a model for others, its approach—driven by state planning, coercive enforcement, and opaque data practices—raises questions about feasibility, sustainability, and whether such methods can be replicated in more open political systems.

20 Oct (State Council): State Council announces administrative personnel changes in food security and Hong Kong-Macao affairs. Chen Junsheng was appointed deputy director of the National Food and Strategic Reserves Administration, succeeding Liu Xiaonan. Wang Linggui was removed from his position as deputy director of the State Council Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office.

20-23 Oct (Xinhua): The fourth plenary session of the CPC's 20th Central Committee convened to finalise the blueprint for the 15th Five-Year Plan. The deliberations concluded with the adoption of recommendations aimed at shaping the country's economic and social development strategy for the coming years. Xi Jinping delivered key addresses outlining directives for the implementation of the plan for the 2026-2030 period. Notably, this plenary session recorded a "record low" attendance, with only 168 out of 205 full members and 147 out of 171 alternate members present, reflecting ongoing personnel shifts within the Party. This drop in attendance is largely attributed to a broader purge of senior officials, including a notable impact on the military leadership.

23 Oct (State Council): State Council announces major administrative appointments and removals across multiple departments. Tan Quan was appointed assistant minister of public security. Duan Yijun assumed the position of director of the National Religious Affairs Administration, replacing Chen Ruifeng and relinquishing his prior role as deputy head of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission. Gao Xiang became president of Dalian University of Technology at vice-ministerial rank, succeeding Jia Zhenyuan. Wang Dongwei was removed from his post as vice minister of finance, while Wang Shuxin stepped down from the presidency of Chongqing University. These personnel transitions signal repositioning within governance hierarchies.

24 Oct (Guancha.cn): **Han Zhanwu removed from deputy directorship of State Tobacco Monopoly Administration** following corruption investigation. Han was placed under investigation during October for suspected serious violations of Party discipline and statutory law, culminating in formal removal from office. This action exemplifies ongoing anti-corruption enforcement.

25 Oct (United Daily): **A 5.5-magnitude earthquake struck Hunchun, Yanbian Prefecture, Jilin Province**, which shares a border with North Korea. The seismic event occurred at 7:45 pm with the epicentre at 560 kilometres.

27 Oct (Xinhua): State Council announces **five administrative appointments** across industry, housing, asset management, intellectual property, and emergency response sectors. Ke Jixin was appointed vice minister of industry and information technology. Chen Shaowang assumed the role of vice minister of housing and urban-rural development. Pang Xiaogang became deputy head of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission. Rui Wenbiao was appointed deputy head of the China National Intellectual Property Administration, replacing Lu Pengqi. Wang Wei assumed the deputy directorship of the National Fire and Rescue Administration.

27 Oct (State Council): A **book on “In-depth Study of Xi Jinping’s Important Expositions on Social Security”** compiled by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and published by the People’s Publishing House. It is a 15-chapter compilation of Xi’s social security-related statements, structured around experience, contextual situations, missions, and reform mechanisms. It is to establish an authoritative direction for deepening social security reform while framing service delivery through Party-endorsed conceptual frameworks.

27 Oct (Xinhua): **Jiang Chaoliang, former NPC Standing Committee member, expelled from the Party and removed** from public office for corruption. The CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and National Commission of Supervision jointly announced Jiang’s expulsion following a comprehensive investigation into serious Party discipline and legal violations. Jiang, former vice chairperson of the NPC Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, was found to have “lost ideals and convictions”, engaging systematically in power-for-money transactions and family-based corruption. Investigation documented his exploitation of official positions for personal enrichment through business operations, loan approvals, project contracting, and employment decisions, accumulating illegal financial gains and material benefits. This enforcement action exemplifies the Party’s continued utilisation of anti-corruption mechanisms as instruments of hierarchical discipline and political control, signalling that elite vulnerability extends across legislative ranks.

28 Oct (Global Times): National People’s Congress Standing Committee **reviewed draft amendments to legislation**, including the **Cybersecurity Law**, **Environmental Protection Tax Law**, and organic **laws governing villagers’ and urban residents’ committees**, alongside **maritime law** revisions and **environmental codes**. The legislative package reflects comprehensive institutional adaptation across multiple governance domains.

31 Oct (Guancha.cn): **Violent confrontation erupted in Hainan Province** as a state-owned rubber enterprise allegedly destroyed villagers’ betel nut trees without consent. In Qiongzong Li and Miao Autonomous County, a clash between residents and

representatives of China Hainan Rubber Industry Group Co.—a major state-owned enterprise—escalated into property destruction and police intervention. Villagers accused Hainan Rubber of illegally cutting down local betel nut trees, triggering organised protests where residents piled severed timber outside company premises, demanding accountability. This incident exposes underlying tensions between SOE expansion imperatives and rural livelihood protection, revealing institutional vulnerabilities in managing land disputes and resource conflicts at the periphery where state enterprises exercise dominant economic leverage over smallholder populations.

Security & Defence

During the second half of October, China's defence and security posture reflected sustained strategic engagement across multiple theatres. Key developments included arms transfer confirmations with Southeast Asian countries, particularly Indonesia's acquisition of J-10 fighter jets; routine but symbolically significant naval visits to Thailand, demonstrating peacetime military-to-military coordination in the region. Operationally, the PLA conducted contested airspace management over the South China Sea against Australian reconnaissance platforms while maintaining systematic training regimens around Taiwan. Meanwhile, defence diplomacy with Global South states intensified through bilateral engagements by Defence Minister Dong Jun across Africa and Southeast Asia, reinforcing Beijing's broader strategic network outside traditional Western alliance frameworks. A notable point of analytical interest emerged regarding external assessments of comparative military capabilities, where international rankings triggered strategic discourse on the relationship between quantitative metrics and operational effectiveness.

16 Oct (Global Times): Indonesia confirms acquisition of Chengdu J-10 fighter jets from China, with Defence Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin announcing that aircraft will operate from Jakarta, though withholding procurement timelines and delivery schedules. The J-10, positioned as a cost-effective, combat-proven platform, represents a significant capability upgrade for Indonesian air operations and reflects Jakarta's hedging strategy between Chinese and American defence acquisitions following earlier evaluations of US F-15EX compatibility. This transaction signals complex defence exchanges within Southeast Asia and underscores Beijing's efforts to position itself as a competitive supplier in the regional arms market amid broader geopolitical alignment dynamics.

16 Oct (China Military Online): PLA Navy 83rd task force conducts four-day goodwill visit to Thailand, with training ships Qi Jiguang and amphibious dock landing ship Yimengshan docking at Sattahip naval base in Chonburi province. This visit came after a goodwill visit to Cambodia, followed by activities in Singapore on [28 October](#). Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jianwei presided over ceremonies attended by 1,700 personnel, including Royal Thai Navy representatives, Chinese community members, and school students. The task force conducted exchanges at the Royal Thai Naval Academy, toured the HTMS Chakri Naruebet aircraft carrier, and engaged in collaborative drills and cultural activities. These institutionalised peacetime exchanges serve dual functions: operationalising interoperability frameworks while projecting relational proximity through choreographed diplomatic ceremonies that reinforce Bangkok's strategic positioning within China's broader regional architecture.

18 Oct (MoND): PLA Southern Theater Command escorted the Australian P-8A reconnaissance aircraft away from using tactical countermeasures. Senior Colonel Li Jianjian, spokesperson for the air force of the PLA Southern Theater Command, confirmed that an Australian P-8A supposedly intruded into "airspace over Xisha

Qundao” ... “illegally”, prompting naval and air force tracking, monitoring, and interception operations. Beijing characterised the Australian response, dismissing the action as “unsafe and unprofessional” as blame-shifting, arguing Australia had initiated the transgression. This incident reflects the contested epistemic space surrounding South China Sea airspace operations and demonstrates the routine application of dissuasive protocols against surveillance activity.

20 Oct (China Military Online): **Guided-missile destroyer Baotou (Hull 133) attached to the 47th naval escort taskforce** conducts a technical replenishment stop at Port of Mombasa, Kenya, with five-day maintenance and resupply operations in East African waters. Crew undertook equipment inspection, equipment maintenance protocols, courtesy calls, cultural and sports exchanges, and navigation drills. The operation sustains China’s persistent maritime presence in global commons operations and demonstrates logistics management integration across an extended operational reach. It reinforces that China is gearing up its capacity for sustained out-of-area naval operations.

21 Oct (Global Times): Chinese **GT published an opinion piece and an orchestrated response** on the ranking of the World Directory of Modern Military Aircraft (WDMMA), which challenged the assessment **placing India third globally in air force power** behind the US and Russia and ahead of China. The WDMMA ranking, featured in Newsweek, utilised a “TruVal Rating” formula incorporating modernisation, logistical support, attack and defence capabilities across 103 countries and 129 air services rather than simple quantitative metrics (US Air Force: 242.9; Russian Air Force: 114.2; Indian Air Force: 69.4). Beijing’s response emphasised the distinction between quantitative force structure and operational capability realisation, cautioning that analytical hype regarding capability shifts could generate miscalculation risks absent by strategic prudence. The comment that “only the actual battlefield capabilities of militaries, not their paper strength”, says something. This framing reflects Beijing’s broader challenge to external validation frameworks that measure relative strategic position.

24 Oct (MoND): **China-Malaysia “Peace and Friendship 2025” joint exercise** concluded after a nine-day training cycle, featuring humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and maritime security missions across Malaysia’s disaster response infrastructure, Port Klang, National Hydrographic Centre, Subang Air Base, and Strait of Malacca waters. Participating forces conducted live-force drills, exchanges, deck receptions, open ship days, and cultural-sports activities focused on non-traditional security threat management and regional stability preservation.

25 Oct (MoND): The **23rd Corps Commander Level Meeting** was held at the Moldo-Chushul border meeting point, with PLA and Indian Army representatives engaging in talks on the western section Line of Actual Control management. The statement is brief and simply an update on the event. The statement reveals that it focused more on the exchange of views and no outcomes on de-escalation, further modalities on buffer zones and patrolling.

25 Oct (Military Exercise Database): **PLA 72nd Group Army deploys new all-terrain vehicle-mounted air defence missile system**, unveiled through China Central Television coverage of an air defence company conducting inaugural live-fire testing following 30+ simulated launches. The Dongfeng Mengshi wheeled tactical platform carries a rotating radar apparatus and dual missile launchers, representing mobility enhancement for air defence support to motorised formations. This system joins six

categories of air and anti-ballistic missile equipment (HQ-11, HQ-20, HQ-22A, HQ-9C, HQ-19, HQ-29) unveiled at the September 3 V-Day parade, adding components to the multi-layered air and aerospace defence architecture with long-range, medium-range, and short-range coverage.

27 Oct (United Daily): **PLA Eastern Theater Command air force conducts combat-oriented training around Taiwan**, with multiple J-10 fighter formations executing combat manoeuvres in designated airspace and multiple H-6K bombers conducting simulated confrontation exercises over air and sea areas surrounding. Although this training is characterised as routine preparation measures, it is an orchestrated one right before the Trump-Xi Meeting.

30 Oct (China Diplomacy): **Defence Minister Admiral Dong Jun attended the 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and 15th China-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting** in Kuala Lumpur, October 30–November 2. Dong addressed the ADMM-Plus with a speech on “Future-Oriented China-ASEAN Defence Cooperation” at the informal meeting. This forum provided a platform for articulating China’s defence priorities and bilateral exchanges across the ASEAN spectrum.

External Affairs & Diplomacy

Following the 4th Plenary Session, China’s foreign diplomacy surged in mid-October, strategically positioning itself across key geopolitical landscapes. High-level engagements extended beyond traditional state-to-state relations to include political party diplomacy, with a particular focus on countries in the Indian Subcontinent, ASEAN, Central Asia, and the West. Beijing also recalibrated its economic ties with the US, offering trade concessions to mitigate the impact of tariffs and sanctions. Diplomatic efforts aimed at balancing relations with Western powers over investment security and sanctions, while deepening partnerships with France, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand. Major infrastructure projects, such as the China-Laos Railway and Mekong River operations, underscored China’s interests and its leveraging of regional connectivity. China demonstrated active participation in ASEAN summits, highlighting its focus on trade and economic exchanges.

16 Oct (MoFA): China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian made a **positive statement on the question of the Pakistan-Afghanistan temporary ceasefire**. Lin noted China supports ‘constructive dialogue’, endorsed the implementation of ceasefire provisions and suggested “returning to the track of political settlement”. This diplomatic statement reflects China’s broader objective of maintaining regional equilibrium in the Hindu Kush-Pamir region and consolidating influence as a mediating interlocutor.

16 Oct (MoFA): **Vice President Han Zheng meets French diplomatic adviser Emmanuel Bonne in Beijing**, reaffirming commitment to implementing the consensus reached between Xi Jinping and French leadership while emphasising independent policy trajectories, enhanced mutual trust, and pragmatic cooperation. Han suggested France assume a constructive role in EU-China bilateral architecture, signalling Beijing’s interest in differentiated European partnerships that resist bloc consolidation dynamics. Bonne’s reciprocal endorsement of high-level exchanges and multilateral coordination suggested French receptivity to maintaining strategic autonomy in great-power relations.

17 Oct (MoFA): **Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with Canadian counterpart Anita Anand**, leveraging the 55th anniversary of China-Canada diplomatic relations and the 20th anniversary of strategic partnership frameworks as inflexion points for relationship recalibration. Wang called for dialogue across all levels, resolution of mutual concerns,

and expanded collaboration in trade, agriculture, tourism, and energy sectors. Anand signalled willingness to strengthen high-level exchanges and utilise diplomatic-economic dialogue mechanisms, indicating cautious restoration of bilateral pragmatism despite recent geopolitical turbulence.

17 Oct (IDCPC): **Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of CPC (IDCPC)**, met the delegation from **Sri Lanka's Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) political party**, led by Political Bureau Member **Bimal Rathnayake** and Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development. The two sides held exchanges on implementing leadership consensus through inter-party channels and comparative experience-sharing in party governance frameworks. This engagement reflects Beijing's systematic cultivation of Sri Lankan political-party relationships, transcending formal governmental structures, building institutional ownership across the political spectrum for pro-China policy orientations.

20 Oct (Xinhua): **Xi Jinping appoints seven ambassadors and a WTO permanent representative** across strategic geographic and institutional posts. Yu Jinsong was appointed ambassador to Morocco, replacing Li Changlin; Chen Feng to Romania, replacing Han Chunlin; Jiang Xiaoyan to North Macedonia, replacing Zhang Zuo; Zhang Zuo to Malta, replacing Yu Dunhai; Yang Shu to Grenada, replacing Wei Hongtian; and Sun Xiangyang to Ecuador, replacing Chen Guoyou. Li Yongjie assumed the portfolio of WTO permanent representative, alongside deputy UN representation in Geneva.

21 Oct (MPS): **Four-nation Mekong River law enforcement patrol (158th mission)** launched involving China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, with three Chinese, three Laotian, and two Myanmar vessels operating coordinated interdiction operations targeting online gambling, telecom fraud, and drug production-trafficking networks. Commanders' meetings and information exchanges held in Xishuangbanna reflected operational planning synchronisation and threat assessment harmonisation. It is important to note that within a week of the joint patrol, Myanmar conducted airstrikes on telecom fraud operations near the Thai border, many of which are run by Chinese criminal syndicates.

23 Oct (MOFCOM): China, through its commerce ministry spokesperson, expressed its **dissatisfaction with the EU sanctions' inclusion of Chinese enterprises in the 19th Russia sanctions package**. The statement says it opposes unilateral measures and affirms Beijing's opposition to secondary sanctions lacking UN authorisation. First-time sanctions targeting Chinese oil refineries and trading houses represented an escalation beyond previous financial-sector targeting. Beijing warned of countermeasures safeguarding enterprise interests and energy security, signalling willingness to weaponise regulatory instruments and economic retaliation.

26 Oct (Xinhua): **China-US economic and trade delegations reached an understanding** in Kuala Lumpur talks, with Vice Commerce Minister Li Chenggang reporting discussions on export controls, Section 301 maritime-logistics-shipbuilding measures, reciprocal tariff extensions, and fentanyl-related law enforcement cooperation. The engagement on core trade disputes indicated both sides' willingness to explore negotiated pathways despite persisting structural tensions, reflecting tactical recalibration.

26 Oct (People's Daily): **Premier Li Qiang sought Singapore Acting President Eddie Teo's cooperation on the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 implementation**. It will cover cooperation in the digital economy, green development, and artificial intelligence.

Li noted the implementation should take across the ASEAN membership, emphasising economic integration and emerging-sector cooperation. The multi-stakeholder approach signalled differentiated engagement calibrated to individual partner capacities and

27 Oct (Mission of PRC – ASEAN): **Premier Li Qiang attended the 5th RCEP Leaders' Meeting** and spoke on the commitment to the regional architecture and ASEAN centrality frameworks. Li's address outlines what China is seeking from the grouping: one broader vision for opening the regional market; two, greater market access, government procurement, digital, green industrial and supply chains; three, stability of the regional multilateral trading system, positioning Beijing as a multilateral system "defender" against protectionist drift.

27 Oct (Xinhua): **Premier Li Qiang meets Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese**, affirming bilateral trends and commitment to building a mature, comprehensive strategic partnership, while maintaining strategic communications and mutually-beneficial cooperation expansion. The engagement signalled Beijing's tactical normalisation of Australia relations following earlier security tensions, suggesting compartmentalisation of economic cooperation from defence-security competition.

27 Oct (MoFA): **Premier Li Qiang engages European Council President Antonio Costa** on China-EU relationship navigation of opportunities and challenges, emphasising the necessity of maintaining relationships on the "correct" trajectory requiring both sides' commitment. The engagement reflected Beijing's differentiated EU strategy, maintaining high-level bilateral channels while managing institutional relationship tensions.

27 Oct (MoFA): Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** made remarks on "Implementing the Global Governance Initiative for a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity" at the Lanting Forum. Wang Yi sought a partnership in this regard. Wang's framing of GGI as an alternative to Western-centric institutional architectures signalled Beijing's systematic positioning of development-oriented governance frameworks as a counterweight to existing multilateral system structures.

28 Oct: **Vice President Han Zheng undertakes official visits to [Saudi Arabia](#) and [Kuwait](#)** (Oct. 28-Nov. 2) and Second World Summit for Social Development in Qatar (Nov. 3-5), at the invitations of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, respectively. Han's sequential Gulf engagement prioritised high-level bilateral consultation with strategic energy-sector and financial partners.

28 Oct (MoFA): **Premier Li Qiang addressed the 28th China-ASEAN Summit** in Kuala Lumpur, outlining the need for consolidating strategic trust through ASEAN-China Code of Conduct acceleration; promotion of deeper interest convergence through CAFTA 3.0 upgrade utilisation; and forging people-to-people bonds through exchanges and institutional mechanisms. Li announced the China-ASEAN digital academy, AI cooperation platform, and maritime development-technological cooperation centre establishment, positioning Beijing as an institutional innovation driver within regional architecture. Simultaneously, Premier witnessed the signing of the CAFTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol with Malaysian Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, advancing trade-investment liberalisation frameworks and signalling a tangible commitment to economic integration deepening.

28 Oct (MoFA): FM **Wang Yi held talks with Kazakhstan's FM, Yermek Kosherbayev**, in Beijing, consolidating strategic mutual trust and advancing high-quality cooperation. Wang acknowledged Kazakhstan's constructive Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and China-Central Asia Mechanism roles while expressing willingness to strengthen these platforms' capacity for regional peace promotion. Kosherbayev's congratulations on the PRC's 76th founding anniversary underscored institutional alignment within Central Asian security frameworks.

30 Oct (Xinhua): President **Xi Jinping meets US President Donald Trump** in Busan following the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, characterising the bilateral relationship as a complementary modernisation partnership where nations function as successful partners and prosperity collaborators. Xi reaffirmed readiness to build solid relationship foundations and create development atmospheres, indicating Beijing's strategic interest in stabilising great-power relations despite underlying structural competition. Xi emphasised historical and contemporary imperatives for partnership-based rather than competitive frameworks.

30 Oct (Xinhua): President **Xi Jinping attends the 32nd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting** in Gyeongju and pays a state visit to South Korea, marking the first presidential state visit to the ROK in 11 years and the initial Xi-Lee Jae-myung summit since Lee's presidency assumption. Xi's attendance emphasised China's regional economic cooperation prioritisation and commitment to building an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future, underlining Beijing's strategic investment in regional institutional architecture alongside bilateral relationships.

31 Oct (Xinhua): Defence Minister **Dong Jun meets US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth** in Kuala Lumpur, building upon Xi-Trump summit momentum through concrete military-to-military implementation of leadership consensus. Dong sought the US to honour non-containment pledges, Taiwan independence opposition, and regional-global peace-security positive energy injection, indicating Beijing's determination to lock military relationship constraints through high-level bilateral mechanisms.

31 Oct (IDCPC): **China-France political parties dialogue** convenes in Beijing, addressing "Mutual Trust, Cooperation and Win-Win Outcomes: China-France Ties Facing the Next 60 Years", with CPC International Department head Liu Haixing outlining the fourth plenary session guiding principles. Liu emphasised CPC's willingness to implement leader consensus, strengthen governance experience mutual-learning, and promote healthy and stable China-France relations. French participants represented Renaissance, Republican, Socialist, Horizons, and Union of Democrats parties, alongside business community representatives. China is looking to France to open up its high-value market post-restrictions from the US and EU, and expressed investment cooperation and influence on France to focus on independence advancement commitment.

31 Oct APEC: **Xi met Japan's PM Takaichi Sanae** during APEC. Xi urged Japan to honour four key political documents and foster a peaceful, cooperative future. He outlined five strategic pillars: enhancing win-win cooperation, advancing digital and green economies, strengthening people-to-people ties, promoting multilateralism, and managing differences constructively. While there is not much on what China will honour in reciprocity. **Xi met Canada's PM Mark Carney** and called for balanced, long-term cooperation in trade, energy, and people-to-people exchanges. Carney emphasised Canada's commitment to pragmatic engagement and strengthening relations, with a

focus on agriculture, energy, and climate issues. [Xi met Thailand's PM Anutin Charnvirakul](#) and highlighted infrastructure projects, trade expansion, green economy, and countering transnational crime as key areas of cooperation. Anutin reflected on bilateral exchanges and multilateral coordination.

Economy, Finance, Trade & Commerce

China's economic policy during mid-October to early November 2025 demonstrated a simultaneous pursuit of structural transformation and counter-cyclical stabilisation amid external trade frictions and tariff escalations. Key developments centred on accelerated infrastructure investment as a macroeconomic stabiliser offsetting weakening export demand; regulatory crackdown on sectoral irrational competition threatening industrial modernisation objectives; and financial sector opening and consolidation through foreign institutional participation expansion. Supply-chain resilience emerged as a critical strategic focus, with digital transformation frameworks and trade model innovations—particularly market procurement trading and AI-enabled platforms—reframing global commerce architecture beyond efficiency toward supply-chain resilience and geographic diversification. Concurrently, Beijing's financial sector liberalisation signals pragmatic recalibration toward long-term foreign capital retention despite US tariff pressures, while Germany's trade reorientation toward China (displacing the United States as largest trading partner) underscores broader patterns of trade bloc fragmentation and relative insulation of China from Western tariff regimes through non-aligned market diversification strategies.

16 Oct (PBOC): People's Bank of China renews bilateral currency swap agreement with Central Bank of Iceland, establishing 3.5 billion yuan (approximately \$493.18 million) or 70 billion Icelandic krona facility with a five-year validity period. The arrangement objectives centre on strengthening financial cooperation, facilitating bilateral trade-investment frameworks, and safeguarding financial market stability. This persistent engagement with small Nordic economies reflects Beijing's systematic approach toward financial infrastructure deepening and establishing bilateral payment mechanisms, maintaining currency swap architecture across geopolitically diverse jurisdictions and reducing dependency on dollar-mediated settlement systems.

17 Oct (MOFCOM): Ministry of Commerce releases 2025 Report on WTO Compliance of the US, expressing its concern regarding US actions, presenting them as undermining the multilateral trading system foundations. One of the stressing points in the report was seeking 'the US to revoke its non-compliant measures, such as the "reciprocal tariffs", as soon as possible'. Interestingly, China's rare earth export control measures are characterised as a "normal framework strengthening step" lacking country-specific targeting. This bifurcated messaging reflects Beijing's strategic positioning between the rhetoric of defending multilateral institutions and defending its regulatory autonomy against characterisation as protectionist measures.

23 Oct (MIIT): Li Lecheng, Secretary of the Party Leadership Group and Minister of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, **published an article: "Strengthening the Armament of the Party's Innovative Theories and Unswervingly Promoting New Industrialisation"** in the journal New Industrialisation. Some of the interesting insights of Li's article are: one, warns against sectoral irrational competition threatening enterprise survival and industrial integrity; two, characterising competitive dysfunction as capable of destroying enterprises or industries overnight; and outlines an industrial modernisation strategy essential for achieving new industrialisation in the 15th Five-Year Plan.

24 Oct (Xinhua): China displaced the US as Germany's largest trading partner during January-August 2025, according to Germany's Federal Statistical Office data. The US tariff and trade barrier escalation strained transatlantic economic ties, which were utilised by China. German exports to the US are around \$117 billion, a decline of 6.5 per cent year-on-year. Germany-China bilateral trade proved more resilient, reaching \$193 billion during the period. The 15 per cent US tariff imposition on most EU exports (effective August 1) was seen as the primary export slump driver, noting sharp demand contraction for German automobiles, machinery, and chemicals.

29 Oct (Xinhua): Vice Premier He Lifeng announces China's expansion of high-level financial sector opening, welcoming increased foreign financial institution participation and long-term capital investment during a meeting with National Financial Regulatory Administration International Advisory Council members in Beijing. For decades, the US and the West have been pushing China to open up its financial sector, particularly insurance. This selective, high-level opening is limited and targeted.

Science, Technology, Industry & Resources

In mid-October, China's science and technology efforts centred on a series of space launches and ocean research initiatives. The *Long March* rocket series completed its 600th mission, underscoring China's bid to strengthen its dominance in both government and commercial spaceflight. Crewed missions also advanced with the deployment of *Shenzhou-21* and the integration of Pakistani astronaut training, reflecting Beijing's push to expand space cooperation. Arctic exploration emerged as another strategic focus, with the *Fendouzhe* submersible conducting manned dives beneath the ice-covered Arctic Ocean—making China the first nation to achieve continuous deep-sea operations in such conditions. Meanwhile, preparations for a crewed lunar landing by 2030 progressed across the *Mengzhou* spacecraft, *Lanyue* lander, and *Long March-10* rocket. Complementing these space efforts, the decade-long *Deep Blue Voyager 2035* program advanced ocean research and science initiatives, reinforcing China's efforts in marine resource exploration.

16 Oct (Xinhua): Long March rocket series completes 600th space launch, with Long March-8A deploying internet satellites into orbital deployment. Serving as China's backbone launch vehicles, the series has delivered nearly 1,400 spacecraft and conducted over 86 per cent of China's space missions to date. Among 24 rocket variants developed since Long March-1 maiden flight, 11 are classified as new-generation launchers, accounting for 40 per cent of the most recent 100 missions and emerging as a critical force supporting high-density launch operations. Long March rockets support major aerospace projects, including crewed spaceflight, the BeiDou navigation constellation, and deep-space exploration missions. New-generation crewed Long March-10 rocket designed for 2030 lunar landing missions reportedly achieved advances in ground testing; heavy-lift launch vehicle planning-phase development anticipated to augment space-access capability substantially.

19 Oct (ICSTI): Lijian-1 Y8 carrier rocket launches three satellites from the northwest China commercial aerospace innovation zone, deploying Pakistan Remote-Sensing Satellite-2 (PRSS-2), AIRSAT-03, and AIRSAT-04 into planned orbital positions. The launch from the commercial aerospace pilot zone reflects continued expansion of commercial launch operations and international satellite deployment partnerships, particularly with Pakistan as a strategic space cooperation partner.

23 Oct (CASTC): Long March-5 rocket launches new communication technology test satellite from Wenchang Space Launch Site, carrying multi-band and high-speed

communication technology validation payload into planned orbit. The launch from Hainan Province constituted the 602nd Long March mission, consolidating demonstrated operational tempo across heavy-lift launch platform variants supporting experimental and operational satellite architectures.

27 Oct (ICSTI): **Arctic scientific expedition aboard Tansuo-3 research vessel** completes 56-day survey with Fendouzhe deep-sea manned submersible, returning to China after pioneering operations in heavily ice-covered Arctic Ocean regions. Fendouzhe completed 43 dives and jointly coordinated underwater operations with Jiaolong submersible, together conducting world-first manned deep-dive exploration of Gakkel Ridge in Eurasian Basin, where sea-ice coverage exceeds 80 per cent. Maximum dive depth reached 5,277 metres, with collections of water, sediment, rock, organism samples and extensive observational data supporting research on rapid Arctic climate change and polar life adaptation mechanisms.

30 Oct (Qiushi): **Shenzhou-21 crewed spaceflight mission crew confirmed as astronauts Zhang Lu (commander), Wu Fei and Zhang Hongzhang.** Zhang Lu served as Shenzhou-15 crew member; Wu Fei and Zhang Hongzhang, both from the third-batch Chinese astronauts, undertake their first spaceflight mission after careers as China Academy of Space Technology engineer and Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics researcher, respectively. Mission constitutes the sixth crewed flight since the space station application-development phase initiation and the 37th crewed spaceflight programme mission. Six-month orbital assignment includes Shenzhou-20 crew rotation, space science and application work, extravehicular activities, cargo handling, space debris protection installations, extravehicular payload deployment-recovery, science education-public welfare engagement, and in-orbit experiments.

30 Oct (Zhengshang Reference): **China confirms 2030 crewed lunar landing objective**, outlining testing schedule for integrated crewed lunar programme development. Upcoming tests include Lanyue lunar lander integrated testing, Mengzhou manned spacecraft thermal and maximum dynamic pressure escape testing, and Long March-10 rocket low-altitude and technology verification flights. Preliminary prototyping of key flight hardware—Long March-10 rocket, Mengzhou spacecraft, Lanyue lander, Wangyu lunar extravehicular suit, and Tansuo crewed lunar rover—completed; payload designs finalised and ground-based infrastructure (launch site, tracking network, landing site facilities) advancing under accelerated development timelines.

31 Oct (Xinhua): **Research vessel Xiangyanghong 10 commences “Deep Blue Voyager 2035”** decade-long global ocean expedition program, departing from Shekou Port in Shenzhen for an initial voyage covering the Shenhui Area. The 4,500-tonne independently designed and constructed vessel, launched by China Ocean Mineral Resources R&D Association and Advanced Institute for Ocean Research under Southern University of Science and Technology, initiates a ten-year scientific programme promoting international cooperation and public engagement in marine research. First voyage research activities include seawater sampling, nearshore sediment surveys, and deep-sea water sampling, generating data across marine geology, geophysics, geochemistry, and biology disciplines.

About the Author

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