

CLAWS Newsletter



China Fortnightly | Volume I | Issue No. 17 | 01-15 Dec
by Dokku Nagamalleswara Rao & Ashu Maan



@nmraodokku

@ashumaa41150854

<https://claws.co.in/category/newsletter/>

* 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

This fortnight witnessed intensified institutional consolidation and policy coordination ahead of the 15th Five-Year Plan implementation. The State Council reshuffled personnel across commerce and higher education, whilst regulatory frameworks for Party working bodies and administrative law enforcement underwent revisions. These measures reflect Beijing's determination to tighten command-and-control mechanisms, standardise implementation across bureaucratic levels, and align institutional capacity with modernisation objectives. The Central Economic Work Conference articulated a velocity-dependent approach to resilience-focused development, emphasising "new quality productive forces" and the unified national market-building for 2035 modernisation targets. Parallel initiatives—including public consultation mechanisms and non-CPC symposia—employed legitimacy-building approaches that incorporate limited stakeholder input within frameworks of centralised Party decision-making authority. The overall pattern suggests comprehensive preparation for prolonged external strategic competition and technological decoupling scenarios through simultaneous institutional strengthening and policy innovation.

03 Dec (Xinhua): State Council announces key administrative appointments and removals. It appointed Zhang Li as Assistant Minister of Commerce, Ma Huaide as President of Renmin University, and Hu Wenping as President of Xiamen University. Simultaneously, Dong Xin was removed as deputy director of the National Radio and Television Administration. These vice-ministerial level reshuffles reflect a continued calibration of leadership across commerce and higher education sectors to align with central policy priorities. The timing, coinciding with economic work conferences, suggests deliberate portfolio realignment to meet 15th Five-Year Plan implementation requirements and address complex external engagement imperatives.

03 Dec (Xinhua): State Councilor Wang Xiaohong urges rigorous narcotics control and international cooperation. Wang convened a national conference emphasising the need for tightening detection mechanisms, cracking major trafficking cases and controlling addictive substances and production materials through strict law enforcement and cross-border collaboration. This move aims to divert external criticism regarding China's role in precursor chemical flows and supply chain vulnerabilities. Such measures also address domestic security concerns whilst managing international pressure on transnational drug trafficking networks operating across Chinese borders and corridors.

05 Dec (Xinhua): Premier Li Qiang presided over a State Council executive meeting on administrative law enforcement. Li reviewed regulations on law enforcement oversight and the firefighter law, whilst simultaneously urging a transition to green lifestyles and production systems. The focus on standardising administrative power aims to reduce local bureaucratic arbitrariness and improve the business environment for investors and enterprises. Legal codification of administrative procedures reduces friction in local governance whilst preserving central environmental control. This regulatory calibration supports the broader modernisation agenda by improving predictability for commercial operations whilst maintaining strict compliance requirements aligned with 2035 modernisation targets.

07 Dec (Xinhua): CPC Central Committee releases revised regulations for Party working bodies. It published revised regulations standardising the establishment and operation of Party working bodies, imposing stricter political requirements to enhance overall performance and organisational effectiveness. The standardised framework ensures that the Party's supervisory infrastructure remains tightly integrated with state

governance functions at all administrative levels. By imposing stricter political requirements, Beijing aims to prevent interpretive drift in local implementation and maintain doctrinal coherence across the bureaucracy.

08 Dec (Xinhua): Politburo sets economic tone for 2026 and reviews law-based governance. Chaired by General Secretary Xi Jinping, the Politburo meeting outlined 2026 economic work priorities and reviewed law-based governance implementation, noting the successful completion of major development goals despite significant external challenges and headwinds. It emphasised the importance of **enhancing both "hard power" in technology and innovation and "soft power" in institutional development**. This dual emphasis suggests a comprehensive security-development strategy entering the 15th Five-Year Plan period, preparing the economy for prolonged external strategic competition and potential technological decoupling scenarios. Such integration of technological advancement with institutional strengthening indicates Beijing's recognition that sustained development requires simultaneous improvements in both material capabilities and governance structures.

08 Dec (Xinhua): Xi Jinping sought nominal non-CPC perspectives on the economy. At a symposium with non-CPC personages representing other political parties, social organisations, and independent intellectuals, Xi Jinping stressed the importance of leveraging China's strengths to tackle challenges. The regular nominal exercise serves dual purposes of United Front consolidation—ensuring broader political buy-in from other sectors and constituencies—and signalling regime confidence in the Party's economic stewardship despite external headwinds and internal complexities. By soliciting diverse perspectives, Xi demonstrates receptiveness to non-Party input whilst maintaining ultimate Party decision-making authority.

10 Dec (Xinhua): Government launches initiative to gather public views for 2026 Work Report. China launched an online platform inviting public suggestions on ten priority topics, including the economy, innovation, technology development and trade expansion. The platform will operate until the 2026 legislative sessions, when the Work Report will be formally presented. Whilst officially framed as participatory governance and democratic consultation, this mechanism allows the central leadership to gauge social sentiment on key policy areas. The initiative maintains strict control over the final policy narrative despite apparent openness to public input. This mechanism represents a sophisticated approach to legitimacy-building that incorporates limited public participation within a framework of centralised decision-making.

13 Dec (Xinhua): Central Economic Work Conference charts roadmap for 2026. Xi Jinping chaired the conference to prioritise proactive macroeconomic policies, expanding domestic demand, and fostering "new quality productive forces" as strategic pillars for economic development. It emphasised the importance of building a unified national market to enhance economic integration and efficiency across regions. By focusing on a unified national market and long-term modernisation objectives, Beijing signals a strategic shift from high-speed growth models to resilience-focused development architecture. The emphasis on "new quality productive forces" reflects Beijing's determination to upgrade industrial capacity towards high-technology sectors.

Security & Defence

The PLA in this fortnight focused on operational tempo across multiple domains and regional theatres. China conducted joint military exercises with strategic partners including Russia, Pakistan, and the UAE, emphasising interoperability, counter-terrorism capabilities and air defence integration. Routine Coast Guard enforcement operations near the Senkaku Islands and in the South China Sea (SCS) continued systematic assertion of jurisdictional claims through persistent grey-zone activities and legalistic frameworks. In its efforts to engage in Information Warfare, a social media account on X was launched for the Defence Ministry. Vietnam's frigate visit and US-China archives cooperation are to preserve working-level military channels despite broader geopolitical competition, whilst the introduction of major indigenous platforms (Jiutian UAV and "Falcon Shield" drills) underscored China's technological advancement and deepening Arab engagement.

01 Dec (PLA Daily): Vietnamese frigate Tran Hung Dao arrives in Qingdao for goodwill visit. It is a four-day goodwill visit to the Qingdao naval base, featuring joint naval drills, cultural exchanges, and military-to-military coordination activities. This symbolic port call serves as a confidence-building measure aimed at maintaining diplomatic channels between the two militaries despite broader geopolitical tensions. Even as Beijing continues to assert its claims in the SCS and manages friction with regional claimants, it is to maintain channels of communication for crisis management. The visit reflects China's strategy of combining assertive maritime claims with selective engagement and dialogue.

02 Dec (PLA Daily): China Coast Guard (CCG) warns Japanese fishing vessel near Senkaku Islands. The CCG Spokesperson Liu Dejun announced that CCG personnel took control measures against the Japanese fishing vessel Zuibaowan for "illegally" entering what China defines as its territorial waters near the islands. The CCG's systematic approach aims to establish facts on the water through persistent, regularised grey-zone operations conducted within a legalistic framework. By publicising such incidents, Beijing reinforces its jurisdictional claims and demonstrates continuous enforcement capability. The approach reflects a long-term strategy of accumulating incremental assertions that collectively reshape maritime realities through lawfare and persistent operational presence.

03 Dec (PLA Daily): China and Pakistan launched "Warrior-IX" anti-terror exercise. The "Warrior-IX" joint exercise at Pakistan's National Counter Terrorism Centre involved mixed-group training with advanced equipment to enhance mutual operational capabilities against terrorism threats. The exercise combined tactical training with equipment demonstration and professional development activities. The drill underscores China's deepening security commitment to Pakistan as a strategic partner and particularly concerns over instability in Balochistan, Sindh and the Afghan border areas and their impact on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Such exercises serve multiple purposes: enhancing genuine operational capability, demonstrating partnership commitment, and deterring potential adversaries.

05 Dec (PLA Daily): China and the UAE announce "Falcon Shield 2025" joint air force training. The joint air force training exercise, representing the third iteration of this series scheduled for 09-22 December in the UAE. The exercise focuses on enhanced mutual learning between the two air forces, sharing operational experience and tactical approaches. The training allows the PLA Air Force to gain valuable exposure to Western-standard tactics and equipment operated by the UAE military, providing important learning

opportunities for Chinese pilots and air defence personnel. With these drills, China seeks knowledge transfer whilst building operational coordination capacity for potential regional contingencies. The UAE's role in Arab military power and Western equipment operator makes these exercises strategically valuable for the PLA's professional development.

06 Dec (PLA Daily): **China and Russia conduct third joint anti-missile exercise.** The exercise focused on advancing technical coordination necessary for integrated air defence operations. However, the high-level interoperability achieved signals a strengthening of strategic alignment between Beijing and Moscow on security matters. The focus on anti-missile capabilities reflects both countries' shared concern about US-led alliance missile defence architectures perceived as encircling them in Northeast Asia and adjacent regions. The timing and focus of these exercises carry strategic messaging regarding Beijing and Moscow's coordinated response to perceived external threats, e.g., Japan PM comments on Taiwan and the US National Security Strategy 2025.

08 Dec (PLA Daily): **Ministry of National Defense (MoND) launches official social media account on platform X.** China's MoND formally launched its official account on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), adopting the handle "@MND_China". The account projected an "opener, more transparent, and more confident" image of China's armed forces to global audiences. By establishing direct presence on international social media platforms, Beijing seeks to bypass traditional media filters and communicate directly with global audiences about military affairs. The timing and framing suggest working on confidence in China's military modernisation trajectory. The move reflects recognition that information warfare and narrative competition constitute important dimensions of modern strategic competition.

08 Dec (PLA Daily): **Y-20 transport aircraft delivers Chinese troops for the China-Singapore Exercise Cooperation-2025.** A Y-20 arrived at Singapore's Changi Air Base for the seventh edition of the joint training series. The exercise carried the theme "**Joint Counter Terrorism Operations in Urban Environment**", reflecting shared security concerns regarding terrorism in densely populated urban areas. The troops were selected from a brigade assigned to the PLA 74th Group Army. From 10-17 December, the two sides to conduct exchanges in operational command procedures, tactical applications, and logistic support methodologies.

09 Dec (PLA Daily): **Chinese and Russian militaries conduct 10th joint strategic air patrol.** The tenth edition focused on the airspace over the East China Sea and the western Pacific Ocean. The patrol was executed as part of the two militaries' annual cooperation plan established through prior bilateral agreements. Such patrols occur regularly to demonstrate coordinated air operations and strategic messaging regarding great-power coordination. The regularity and scale of such operations indicate deepening military cooperation between China and Russia. The patrols' focus on maritime zones reflects both countries' concerns regarding US naval operations and alliance activities in their strategic peripheries.

10 Dec (PLA Daily): **China made a rare statement about the US missing military personnel archives.** In the video conference on archives cooperation regarding World War II historical records and missing military personnel documentation. During the discussion, both sides exchanged views on ongoing cooperation and agreed on a preliminary cooperation plan for 2026. It covered locating and recovering remains of US military personnel missing within Chinese territory since the Chinese People's War of

Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1931-1945). It was aimed at wooing Trump 'shared historical experiences' during World War II. Such archives cooperation preserves working-level military engagement channels despite broader US-China strategic competition.

11 Dec (PLA Daily): Large unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) "Jiutian" completes maiden flight. The "Jiutian" UAV completed its maiden flight, demonstrating China's advancement in large-scale indigenous drone development. The domestically developed general-purpose platform measured 16.35 meters in length and featured a 25-meter wingspan. The aircraft demonstrated a maximum takeoff weight of 16 tonnes and a payload capacity of 6,000 kilograms. Operating specifications included the capability for up to 12 hours of continuous flight and a ferry range of 7,000 kilometres without payload. The platform featured large payload capacity, high operational ceiling, wide speed range, and short takeoff and landing (STOL) capabilities, enabling diverse mission profiles. An interesting feature of this UAV is that it includes multiple purposes; instead of developing four to five different models for each task. This limits its ability in one task. It can be largely considered a logistic UAV with limited added attack capability.

12 Dec (PLA Daily): PLA issued a statement on the Philippines to stop 'provoking' incidents in the SCS. PLA spokesperson Tian Junli's press statement reported that multiple Philippine light aircraft, without approval from the PLA, had "illegally" intruded into the airspace of Scarborough Shoal. It praises the PLA navy and air force response as 'systematic tracking, monitoring, warning, and resolute expulsion'. Such statements serve multiple functions, including asserting jurisdictional claims, demonstrating enforcement capability, and warning regional actors against challenging China's claims.

13 Dec (PLA Daily): 12th National Memorial Day observance honours Nanjing Massacre victims. Within the context of the recent diplomatic spat between China and Japan, China has observed this edition of Memorial Day to remind the Chinese about the 300,000 deaths by Japanese troops during the Nanjing Massacre in December 1937. Despite winter weather conditions, China organised thousands of people and dressed them in dark formal attire, gathered at the public square of the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre. The city government has made arrangements to pause pedestrians to observe a moment of silence. The memorial ceremony integrates this historical tragedy into contemporary national identity narratives.

External Affairs & Diplomacy

This fortnight demonstrated Beijing's engagement across multiple diplomatic vectors, prioritising economic dialogue with Western nations, consolidation of Global South relationships, and strategic middle-power positioning. President Xi's Dujiangyan meeting with Macron focused on recent conflicts; Wang Huning's Indonesia visit to reaffirm the "five pillars" framework with a critical ASEAN anchor, whilst Vice President Han's Germany engagement recalibrated European ties amid new German government formation. High-level multilateral engagement through the "1+10" dialogue with international economic organisations and Foreign Minister Wang's West Asia tour demonstrated Beijing's aims to position itself as a stabilising force within global governance structures and with key regional powers. The launch of a Latin America and Caribbean policy paper signalled in the same direction. Moreover, a new China-India consultations mechanism reflects relationship management despite border tensions.

03-04 Dec (MoFA): Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Chairman Wang Huning conducts a goodwill visit to Indonesia at the invitation of

the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). Wang Huning, during his visit to Jakarta, met Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, Speaker of the House of Representatives Puan Maharani, and Speaker of the Regional Representative Council Sultan Bachtiar Najamudin, whilst also holding talks with CPPCC's counterpart Ahmad Muzani. In his meeting with President Prabowo, Wang Huning emphasised that China was ready to work with Indonesia to further synergise development strategies and pursue modernisation paths suited to their respective national characteristics.

04 Dec (MoFA): **Xi Jinping and Emmanuel Macron held a Joint Press Briefing.** It focused on multipolarity and principled multilateralism. Xi Jinping noted discussions as “friendly, sincere and fruitful”, arguing that two “independent major countries” should uphold multilateralism, equal dialogue and open cooperation to shape an “equal and orderly” multipolar order and more inclusive globalisation. The two sides outlined four pillars: reinforcing political mutual trust; deepening aviation, space, nuclear and new-economy cooperation; expanding cultural and panda-linked exchanges; and jointly pushing UN-centred, law-based global governance reform, including coordinated approaches to Ukraine and Palestine.

04 Dec (MoFA): **Zhao Leji, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, meets with French President Emmanuel Macron.** The meeting followed the morning talks between President Xi Jinping and President Macron. Zhao underlined the importance of establishing an engagement at the NPC level to provide important institutional support for implementing decisions reached by heads of state. Zhao indicated the NPC's readiness to maintain close exchanges and interactions at all levels with both houses of the French Parliament. This legislative-level meeting was to coordinate and complement the Xi-Macron meeting outcomes.

08 Dec (MoFA): **Vice President Han Zheng meets with German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul.** Han Zheng stated that China and Germany represented important partners for economic and trade cooperation, with bilateral cooperation being characterised as ‘mutually beneficial and win-win’. Han stated that China was ready to work with Germany to elevate the China-Germany all-round strategic partnership. Han noted that as Germany served as a core major country within the European Union, China expected Germany to play a constructive and positive role in promoting the sound and healthy development of China-EU relations.

09 Dec (Xinhua): **Symposium on the study and research of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy held in Beijing.** Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivered the keynote address and articulated that Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy constitutes a constantly developing and open Marxist theoretical framework that consistently stays at the forefront of contemporary times. Wang emphasised that General Secretary Xi Jinping personally spearheaded a series of major theoretical and practical innovations in foreign affairs. Wang called for leveraging the reissue of the study outline on Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy as an opportunity to deepen understanding of the framework's advanced nature in driving theoretical innovation and its historical initiative in serving national rejuvenation goals.

09 Dec (MoFA): **Premier Li Qiang holds "1+10" Dialogue with major international economic organisations.** Participants included President of the New Development Bank Dilma Rousseff, President of the World Bank Group Ajay Banga, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Kristalina Georgieva, Director General of the World

Trade Organization Ngozi Okonkwo-Iweala, and heads of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, International Labour Organisation, Bank for International Settlements, Financial Stability Board, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The dialogue proceeded under the theme "Working Together on Global Governance for Shared Development". Li Qiang outlined China's economic performance during 2025 and presented the comprehensive framework for 2026 economic work coordinated with the 15th Five-Year Plan.

10 Dec (MoFA): China has released its third policy paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, presenting a detailed roadmap for building a China–LAC community with a shared future. Framed as a practical guide rather than a declaratory text, it reviews rapid expansion in political, economic and people-to-people ties, and lays out cooperation proposals across over 40 sectors, from infrastructure and energy to health, agriculture and culture. Building on CELAC engagement and Xi Jinping's five flagship programs, it seeks to consolidate China as LAC's key development partner, deepen Belt and Road linkages, and position Chinese cooperation as a driver of inclusive growth and strategic autonomy for regional states.

11 Dec (MoFA): Director-General Liu Jinsong of China's Department of Asian Affairs and India's Joint Secretary engaged in bilateral consultations. Both officials confirmed that positive progress had been achieved in China-India relations. The two sides pledged to promote bilateral exchanges across all sectors, resume institutional dialogue mechanisms that had been disrupted, and handle differences through proper diplomatic channels, respecting each other's core interests. Both delegations committed to strengthening multilateral coordination on issues of shared concern, including Global South development priorities and international governance reform. These consultations reflect both countries' recognition that, despite border tensions, maintaining working-level diplomatic contact serves mutual interests.

12-16 Dec (MoFA): Foreign Minister Wang Yi conducts strategic visits to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Wang's regional itinerary reflected China's prioritised positioning of West Asian counterparts within its broader Global South partnership strategy and diplomatic architecture. The visits provided opportunities for advancing bilateral cooperation frameworks, deepening partnerships, coordinating positions on regional security issues, and aligning interests on multilateral governance questions. The timing of these visits, following Xi's Macron engagement and amid broader economic planning, indicates coordinated diplomatic messaging. The regional focus reflects Beijing's recognition of West Asia's strategic importance in global geopolitics and emerging development opportunities.

Economy, Finance, Trade & Commerce

This fortnight reflected Beijing's multi-pronged economic strategy encompassing green finance integration, demographic transition management, sectoral modernisation, international market positioning and fiscal discipline. The CAREC Think Tank Forum highlighted China's Central Asian engagement; Guangdong Province's old-age finance expansion signalled national policy priorities addressing population ageing; the China MICE Summit framework demonstrated sector-specific commercial diplomacy; and in the Understanding China Conference, China promoted its soft power investment in promoting alternative development model narratives. Three rare-earth companies' export licence approval balanced export facilitation with strategic

control maintenance. Tax authority enforcement recoveries and Treasury bond rollover operations demonstrated Beijing's emphasis on fiscal discipline and revenue protection amid economic uncertainty. The Nexperia dispute reflected broader technology governance tensions between national security and economic integration.

01 Dec (China Daily): Ninth CAREC Think Tank Development Forum convened on addressing green finance and sustainability. This edition was conducted in Urumqi, bringing together approximately 150 domestic and foreign experts, government officials, and private sector representatives. The forum's substantive agenda focused on innovative financing mechanisms for green transitions, green banking frameworks, sustainable lending practices and the roles of international donor institutions. In the Forum, China's focus was on the Central Asian nations, which were seeking sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth solutions. Whether China would be able to meet financial expectations from the region needs to be seen, as the discussions highlighted the need for developed financial instruments that could support infrastructure development, renewable energy transition, and climate adaptation in resource-constrained environments.

02 Dec (China Daily): China to accelerate old-age finance expansion with 15th Five-Year Plan focus. Guangdong Province issued a comprehensive implementation plan to accelerate old-age finance development, featuring fifteen specific measures designed to establish a mature province-wide old-age finance system by 2028. The provincial plan comes from the central directions of the Party and its concerns regarding population ageing. These measures represented a coordinated policy response to demographic transition challenges emerging as China's population structure shifted toward larger elderly cohorts. The emphasis on pension fund investments indicated efforts to mobilise financial resources for economic development whilst securing retirement income streams.

03 Dec (China Daily): China Travel Online and Taiba Investments signed an MOU to jointly host the China MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2026. It is to give more opportunities for Chinese business decision-makers with West Asia tourism, hospitality and events management suppliers. For Beijing, the summit represented an opportunity to strengthen economic ties with West Asia whilst expanding China's business presence in the region's growing events and tourism sectors.

03 Dec (China Daily): 2025 Understanding China Conference focused on an alternative modernisation model attracting Global South participation. In the Guangzhou event, China subtly engaged in exporting its 'China Model' with seventy per cent of international participants originating from Global South countries. The conference theme "New Plan, New Development, New Choices" focused substantively on CPC recommendations for the 15th Five-Year Plan and its broader global significance and development implications. The conference provided a platform for China to project its development achievements and policy frameworks to Global South audiences seeking alternative models. Beijing utilised the conference to advance its soft power objectives and build ideological consensus with Global South nations regarding the viability and desirability of alternative development paths.

05 Dec (China Daily): The Ministry of Commerce announced that three Chinese companies obtained rare earth export licences. The three Chinese companies are: JL MAG Rare-Earth Co, Beijing Zhong Ke San Huan Hi-Tech Co and Yunsheng Group. They

obtained general export licences for civilian-use rare-earth items. The spokesperson, He Yadong, noted that China approved all compliant civilian-use export applications without unnecessary delay, thereby implementing facilitating measures and general licence mechanisms. The approval of these general export licences indicated Beijing's intention to demonstrate regulatory flexibility regarding civilian applications whilst maintaining strategic control over rare-earth materials considered critical to national defence and technological development.

08 Dec (China Daily): The State Taxation Administration recovered 5.6 billion yuan from the ongoing campaign against tax evasion and non-compliance. The authority recovered 4.16 billion yuan from 3,904 high-risk fuel stations engaged in evasion practices. Additionally, the administration recovered 1.523 billion yuan from 1,818 individuals classified as "dual-high" earners, including celebrities and online influencers. These enforcement measures represented part of ongoing efforts to curb tax evasion, enhance compliance culture and safeguard government revenue as China navigated complex economic environments and a lack of fiscal discipline. The targeting of fuel stations and high-income individuals reflected a strategic focus on sectors and demographics where evasion risks were elevated.

11 Dec (China Daily): Ministry of Finance rolls over 750 billion yuan in maturing special treasury bonds through replacement issuance. The issuance comprised 400 billion yuan in ten-year term bonds and 350 billion yuan in fifteen-year term bonds. The replacement financing maintained fiscal stability without requiring increases in overall deficit levels. The choice of extended tenure for replacement bonds (ten and fifteen years) reflected efforts to extend debt maturity profiles and, more importantly, the reduce the usual practice of refinancing.

11 Dec (China Daily): China sought the Netherlands to resolve the Wingtech-Nexperia corporate control issue through direct dialogue. The statement asserted that the issue had originated from government administrative interference in corporate operations, placing responsibility on the Netherlands for creating conditions enabling internal corporate solutions. The dispute reflected broader tensions over technology transfer, foreign ownership of sensitive sectors, and government control of strategic industries. Beijing's framing of the issue as improper government interference represented an effort to shift responsibility whilst maintaining pressure for resolution, favouring Chinese interests. The emphasis on semiconductor supply chain stability reflected recognition that such disputes potentially disrupted critical technology flows.

Science, Technology, Industry & Resources

China's recent activity across aerospace, autonomous systems and energy shows a deliberate push to close capability gaps with established space and tech powers, but also raises questions on long-term sustainability and transparency. The delivery of the "Linghangzhe" sea-based rocket recovery platform and tests by firms such as i-Space and LandSpace indicate serious intent in reusable launch, yet commercial viability and safety standards remain untested at scale. Expanded embodied-intelligence programmes at leading universities respond to talent gaps but also deepen civil-military linkages. Launches like Lijian-1 for foreign clients and the hydrogen drone records project technological confidence, while deepwater expansion at Liuhua and coal-based rocket fuels underline continued reliance on carbon-intensive pathways despite green rhetoric.

01 Dec (Xinhua): China's first sea-based rocket recovery platform delivers critical infrastructure for reusable launch capability. The platform, named "Linghangzhe" (Pathfinder), received certification from the China Classification Society, making it the first sea-based rocket recovery platform in the country to receive required class and statutory certifications. China's rocket manufacturers are racing to advance reusable vehicle development, with commercial firm LandSpace successfully conducting ground ignition tests for its reusable Zhuque-3 rocket's first-stage propulsion system in June. Multiple Chinese rocket makers have completed essential vertical takeoff and landing tests, indicating accelerating commercial competition and technological advancement in reusable launch vehicle development critical for sustained space access and cost reduction objectives.

02 Dec (Xinhua): Universities expand embodied intelligence majors to address talent shortage in fast-growing humanoid robotics industry. Most universities offering such programmes already possess strong technology and engineering credentials, including Beihang University in Beijing, renowned for aeronautical and astronautical research expertise, and Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, where founders of DeepSeek and numerous AI startups pursued their education. Shanghai Jiao Tong University recently joined this educational trend by releasing a public notice indicating the addition of an undergraduate major in embodied intelligence through its School of AI. The convergence of prestigious institutions offering structured embodied intelligence education with commercial sector investment in startups indicates a coordinated effort to build China's competitive advantage in humanoid robotics and autonomous systems sectors through talent cultivation and entrepreneurial innovation.

03 Dec (Xinhua): China releases comprehensive reports on global research hotspots and emerging scientific frontiers for 2025. It identified 128 research frontiers that have been actively pursued or developed rapidly during the year. The two reports were jointly issued by the Institutes of Science and Development and the National Science Library under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, alongside global analytics firm Clarivate. The comprehensive frontier mapping effort reflects Beijing's strategic emphasis on understanding global research trajectories and positioning China at the forefront of emerging scientific domains through informed policy and investment decisions aligned with international research evolution patterns.

04 Dec (Xinhua): Airbus has signed a market cooperation agreement with Shanghai Spacesail Technologies Co., Ltd. to use its Spacesail Constellation satellite internet service on aircraft. The deal, announced at an industry conference in Shanghai, envisages the provision of high-speed, low-latency broadband via onboard

connectivity systems to improve in-flight passenger access. The two sides also plan to work together to tailor services to airline requirements and to support more data-driven and personalised offerings based on low-Earth-orbit broadband links. Spacesail is a low-orbit constellation with a multilayer, multi-orbit design whose commercial network construction began in August 2024.

06 Dec (Xinhua): **Long March-8A shifts to coal-based kerosene as launch tempo rises.** China's Long March-8A was launched from Hainan, placing a batch of low-orbit internet satellites into preset orbit. The 50.5-metre, 371-tonne rocket can lift up to 7 tonnes to a 700-km sun-synchronous orbit and has moved into a high-frequency launch pattern after its February 2025 debut. This mission was the first in the series to use coal-based rather than petroleum-based kerosene, with Chinese officials describing the new fuel as cheaper, easier to handle and comparable in performance. The launch was the fifth Long March-8A flight and the 612th in the Long March family.

10 Dec (Xinhua): **Lijian-1 deploys mixed domestic and international payloads for commercial clients.** A Lijian-1 (Kinetica-1 Y11) rocket lifted off from the Dongfeng commercial space zone near Jiuquan, carrying nine satellites to their planned orbits. The payloads included 813 for the UAE, focused on environmental monitoring, Egypt's SPNEX for climate and ionospheric research, and Slippers2Sat, an education-oriented CubeSat project from Nepal involving local schools and a non-profit partner. According to the developer, CAS Space, the vehicle has now flown payloads for 32 customers, 26 domestic and six foreign. The mission underlines China's effort to expand its role in the commercial launch market while providing lower-cost access for smaller states.

11 Dec (Xinhua): **Hydrogen-powered Tianmushan-1 sets multirotor distance record amid low-altitude 'green tech' push.** The Tianmushan-1 drone flew 188.605 kilometres in just over four hours in Hangzhou, a performance certified by Guinness World Records as the longest flight by a hydrogen-powered multirotor. Developed by Beihang University's Tianmushan Laboratory, the aircraft has a 1.6-metre wheelbase, 19-kilogram empty weight and 6-kilogram payload capacity, with a claimed 240-minute endurance and wide operating temperature range. While the record highlights progress in hydrogen fuel-cell applications for unmanned systems, questions remain about cost, scaling beyond prototype runs and how quickly such platforms can move from demonstration flights into routine commercial or public-service use.

14 Dec (Xinhua): **Liuhua deepwater oilfield upgrade boosts output but entrenches hydrocarbon dependence.** China National Offshore Oil Corporation reported full operation of the secondary development project at Liuhua, the country's first deepwater oilfield in the Pearl River Mouth Basin. The field, in roughly 305-metre waters, has already produced over 20 million tonnes of crude since 1996, with about 140 million tonnes now targeted via 32 new production wells at Liuhua 11-1 and 4-1. Output has reportedly reached 3,900 tonnes per day since late 2024. Technically, the project indicates growing competence in complex deepwater operations; strategically, it also reinforces China's continued reliance on offshore hydrocarbons even as it publicly promotes energy transition goals.

About the Author

Dokku Nagamalleswara Rao is a Research Assistant at the **Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)**, New Delhi. His research focuses primarily on **China and East Asia**. Rao is pursuing his Doctoral studies at Shandong University, Qingdao, China, specialising in China-related strategic and geopolitical dynamics. Prior to joining CLAWS, he earned an **M.Phil. in Chinese Studies** from the Centre for East Asian Studies (CEAS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. With a strong academic foundation and understanding of contemporary regional dynamics, Rao brings analytical rigour to his work on China's foreign policy, security issues, and strategic engagements in the Indo-Pacific region.

Ashu Maan is an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies. He was awarded the VCOAS Commendation card on Army Day 2025. He is currently pursuing his PhD from Amity University, Noida, in Defence and Strategic Studies. He has previously worked with the Institute of Chinese Studies. He has also contributed a chapter on “Denuclearization of North Korea” in the book titled Drifts and Dynamics: Russia's Ukraine War and Northeast Asia. His research includes the India-China territorial dispute, the Great Power Rivalry between the United States and China, and China's Foreign Policy.

All Rights Reserved 2025 Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)



No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, archived, retained or transmitted through print, speech or electronic media without prior written approval from CLAWS. The views expressed and suggestions made in the article are solely those of the author in their personal capacity and do not have any official endorsement. Attributability of the contents lies purely with the authors.