

# 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.

China's latest fortnight reflects Beijing's continued drive toward political centralisation, military preparedness, technological self-reliance, and strategic economic stabilisation under Xi Jinping's leadership. Domestically, intensified anti-corruption investigations targeting rising provincial leaders and former Covid-era officials underscore the Party's emphasis on political discipline and loyalty ahead of the 2027 leadership reshuffle. Simultaneously, revisions to the National Defence Mobilisation Law and high-level policy meetings linked to the 15th Five-Year Plan highlight China's growing focus on whole-of-society security preparedness, economic resilience, and infrastructure modernisation. In the security domain, the PLA continued reforms in logistics, pilot training, and technical personnel development while expanding operational activities through carrier deployments and joint exercises with regional partners. Externally, deepening China-Pakistan defence cooperation and Beijing's efforts to shape international security discourse through the Xiangshan Forum indicate sustained geopolitical activism. In science and technology, advances in hydrogen storage, quantum systems, ultra-deep shale gas, satellite networks, and offshore wind infrastructure demonstrate China's accelerating push for strategic technological autonomy and long-term

industrial competitiveness amid intensifying global competition.

## **Internal Politics and Society**

### **25 April (People's Daily) China's national political advisory body holds leadership meeting**

Wang Huning chaired the 50th Chairperson's Council meeting of the 14th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing. The meeting focused on service-sector development under China's 15th Five-Year Plan, ecological conservation, and advancing Beijing's Taiwan reunification agenda through cross-Strait integration and patriotic united front efforts. The meeting reflects Beijing's attempt to integrate economic modernisation, political mobilisation, and Taiwan-related strategic messaging under the Party's broader national rejuvenation framework.

### **27 April (Xinhua) Draft revision to China's National Defense Mobilization Law submitted for first reading**

China has introduced a draft revision to its National Defense Mobilization Law for first reading before the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Originally implemented in 2010, the law governs China's national defense mobilization system, including the obligations of citizens and organisations

during wartime or emergencies. Beijing stated that the revision is necessary to address new security challenges, improve legal coordination, and make defense mobilization more scientific and efficient in line with Communist Party directives. The revision reflects China's growing emphasis on whole-of-society military preparedness under Xi Jinping. It also signals Beijing's intent to strengthen legal mechanisms for rapid wartime mobilisation amid intensifying geopolitical competition and contingency planning over Taiwan and regional security crises.

### **30 April (People's Daily) China's State Council appoints, removes officials**

China's State Council announced a series of senior bureaucratic reshuffles involving key ministries and regulatory bodies. Song Youchun was appointed vice minister of housing and urban-rural development, while Sui Hongbo became vice minister of veterans affairs. Shang Rui was named deputy head of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), replacing Yuan Ye. Liu Haoling was appointed vice chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, and Huang Guo became head of the State Drug Administration. Additional changes were made in forestry administration and the civil affairs system. The reshuffle reflects Beijing's continued

emphasis on tightening administrative control over strategic sectors including finance, pharmaceuticals, state-owned enterprises, and social governance. Such personnel adjustments also indicate the Chinese Communist Party's preference for bureaucratic rotation to reinforce political loyalty.

### **6 May (SCMP) Party boss of China's emerging tech hub under investigation for corruption**

Fei Gaoyun, the Communist Party chief of Hefei and a prominent member of China's emerging "seventh-generation" leadership cohort, has been placed under investigation for "serious violations of discipline and law", according to China's top anti-corruption watchdog. Fei, 54, had built a reputation as a capable crisis manager and technocrat, rising through the ranks in Jiangsu province before becoming Hefei's party secretary in 2025. His career advanced despite criticism over the 2019 Yancheng chemical plant explosion, which killed 78 people and exposed regulatory failures under his watch. Hefei's strategic importance as a technology and EV hub, home to firms like Volkswagen, iFlyTek, and Nio, had made Fei a politically significant figure before his abrupt downfall. Fei's investigation reflects how Xi Jinping continues using the anti-corruption campaign not only for

governance discipline but also to tighten central political control ahead of the 2027 leadership reshuffle. The targeting of a rising younger cadre suggests that political reliability now outweighs technocratic performance in China's elite politics.

### **11 May ([People's Daily](#)) Chinese premier chairs State Council executive meeting**

Chinese Premier Li Qiang chaired a State Council executive meeting focused on sustaining China's economic recovery and ensuring a strong start to the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–2030). The meeting emphasised front-loaded macroeconomic policies, boosting domestic demand, upgrading the service sector, and accelerating infrastructure development in areas such as power grids, computing networks, logistics, and communications. Authorities also stressed employment stabilisation, social welfare expansion, scientific research, and risk management related to real estate, local government debt, and financial institutions. The meeting additionally reviewed transportation development and approved draft regulations implementing the Mineral Resources Law. The meeting reflects Beijing's dual-track strategy of stabilising growth while pursuing long-term technological and infrastructural modernisation. It also indicates persistent concern within the Chinese leadership over

structural economic vulnerabilities, particularly debt risks and the fragile property sector.

### **17 May ([SCMP](#)) Wang Xiaodong, derided over Covid-19 handling, comes under corruption cloud**

Former Hubei governor Wang Xiaodong, who faced public criticism during the initial Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan in 2020, is now under investigation for corruption by China's top anti-graft body, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). Wang, accused of "serious violations of discipline and law," served as Hubei governor from 2017 to 2021 and became infamous for misstating mask production figures during a key press conference at the height of the pandemic. After leaving Hubei, he was moved to a semi-retirement advisory role in Beijing.

His investigation follows corruption charges against former Wuhan mayor Zhou Xianwang and former Hubei Communist Party chief Jiang Chaoliang, both linked to alleged bribery involving "especially huge amounts." The cases highlight Beijing's continuing anti-corruption drive targeting officials associated with the pandemic-era governance failures in Wuhan.

The probe reflects Xi Jinping's dual strategy of sustaining political discipline and retroactively assigning accountability

for Covid-era mismanagement. It also signals that former provincial leaders, even after retirement-style postings, remain vulnerable to anti-graft purges tied to political loyalty and governance performance.

### **24 May ([SCMP](#)) Owners of Chinese mine where 82 died in blast accused of ‘serious violations’ of the law**

The owners of the Liushenyu Coal Mine in China’s Shanxi province, where a massive blast killed at least 82 miners and injured over 120, have been accused by local authorities of “serious violations” of the law. All four mines operated by the Shanxi Tongzhou Group were ordered to suspend operations pending investigation. Reports revealed a pattern of negligence, including previous fines for safety violations, workers entering mines without protective gear, and malfunctioning safety systems. Critically, only 144 of the 247 miners underground carried tracking devices, while mine maps reportedly did not match actual tunnel layouts, severely hampering rescue operations. Survivors also alleged that many miners were unregistered and safety compliance was poorly enforced. Rescue teams continue searching for trapped workers amid risks of gas leaks and secondary explosions. The disaster

highlights persistent structural problems in China’s coal sector, where production pressures and local protectionism often override safety compliance. It also exposes deeper governance weaknesses in regulatory enforcement despite Beijing’s repeated emphasis on industrial safety reforms.

### **Security & Defence**

#### **27 April 2026 ([People’s Daily / PLA Daily](#)) Tibet Military District brigade revises high-altitude logistics training after transport exercise shortfalls**

A logistics brigade under the Tibet Military District introduced a new integrated training model following shortcomings identified during a cross-day plateau transport exercise. According to the report, a recent emergency transport mission involving simulated road damage and hazardous terrain exposed coordination problems between drivers and accompanying support personnel, resulting in delays in mission completion. PLA officials attributed the issue to personnel belonging to different units with separate training schedules and evaluation systems. In response, the brigade established a joint training coordination mechanism integrating transport, repair, and fuel-support elements into unified training plans

tailored to plateau conditions and operational requirements. The revised system embeds multiple operational training tasks into real transport missions, including emergency refuelling, fuel transport, and field repair drills. PLA authorities stated that the changes improved training efficiency, vehicle utilisation rates, and coordination among support units operating in high-altitude environments. The report offers a relatively rare public acknowledgement of operational shortcomings within PLA logistics training and highlights continued efforts to improve plateau sustainment coordination and combat support integration.

**1 May 2026 ([South China Morning Post](#))  
China delivers first Hangor-class attack submarine to Pakistan Navy**

China hosted the commissioning ceremony for the first Chinese-built Hangor-class attack submarine for the Pakistan Navy in Sanya. The submarine, PNS/M Hangor, is based on China's Type 039A diesel-electric attack submarine design and is equipped with air-independent propulsion (AIP), allowing longer underwater endurance. The ceremony was attended by Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, senior Pakistani naval officials, and representatives from the Chinese and Pakistani navies. The Hangor-class programme, first agreed upon in 2015, involves the acquisition of eight submarines,

with four being built in China and four in Pakistan. The project reflects continued expansion of China-Pakistan defence industrial cooperation, particularly in naval platforms and maritime systems. Chinese-origin systems already form a major component of Pakistan's naval and air force modernisation programmes, including frigates, submarines, and combat aircraft.

**7 May 2026 ([People's Daily / PLA Daily](#))  
PLA Rocket Force school expands dual-mentor system for technical NCO training**

The PLA Rocket Force Sergeant School is expanding a "dual-mentor" training model aimed at developing more specialised technical personnel for informationised and intelligentised warfare. Under the system, students receive instruction from both academic faculty and experienced senior non-commissioned officers from operational units. PLA officials stated that the programme is designed to strengthen both theoretical knowledge and practical operational skills among students transitioning from operational units into advanced technical education. The school has also established innovation workshops where students participate in research projects, equipment modification efforts, and technical problem-solving activities under joint supervision. According to the report, the initiative includes dynamic

evaluation systems and incentive mechanisms to improve training outcomes. Several students trained under the programme have reportedly achieved strong results in military competitions and technical assessments related to command, operations, and equipment handling. The initiative reflects broader PLA efforts to professionalise technical NCO education and strengthen specialised personnel development for increasingly technology-intensive military systems.

**8 May 2026 ([China Ministry of National Defense](#)) Beijing Xiangshan Forum preparatory meeting convenes international security representatives**

China hosted the Beijing Xiangshan Forum Navigator Meeting 2026 in Beijing, bringing together more than 120 representatives from over 40 countries and international organisations ahead of the 13th Beijing Xiangshan Forum scheduled for later this year. The meeting was jointly organised by the China Association for Military Science and the China Institute for International Strategic Studies under the theme “Global Security Governance: Challenges and Approaches.” Discussions focused on international order, Asia-Pacific security, military applications of emerging technologies, and international security cooperation. Participants included defence officials and scholars from countries

including Brazil, Germany, France, Russia, Singapore, and South Africa, alongside representatives from institutions such as Peking University, Tsinghua University, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

**10 May 2026 ([People’s Daily](#)) China announces upcoming joint military exercises with Thailand and Mongolia**

China’s Ministry of National Defense announced upcoming bilateral army exercises with Thailand and Mongolia scheduled for late May and early June. The China-Thailand “Strike-2026” exercise will focus on joint counterterrorism operations in mountainous and jungle environments, including battlefield medical support, unmanned systems operation, and live-fire drills. Meanwhile, the China-Mongolia “Grassland Partners-2026” exercise in Inner Mongolia will centre on joint operations against illegal armed groups. Chinese defence officials stated that both exercises are routine bilateral engagements intended to strengthen military cooperation, operational coordination, and regional security collaboration.

**12 May 2026 ([People’s Daily / PLA Daily](#)) PLAAF introduces standardised pilot training handbook to improve combat-oriented instruction**

A unit under the PLA Air Force Aviation University has introduced a new “Standardised Teaching Handbook” aimed at reforming pilot instruction and improving the consistency of flight training. According to the report, the handbook standardises training procedures, instructional terminology, assessment criteria, and evaluation methods across different instructors and training stages. The reforms are intended to shift flight education away from experience-based teaching toward a more structured and combat-oriented training system. PLA instructors stated that the updated framework incorporates operational feedback from frontline aviation units, revised tactical training requirements, and data-driven evaluation tools integrated into flight training management systems. The report also noted that the handbook has undergone multiple revisions to better align training with operational scenarios and improve pilots’ decision-making, situational awareness, and adaptability across different aircraft types and combat environments. The reforms indicate continued PLAAF efforts to standardise pilot generation pipelines and align aviation training more closely with operational combat requirements.

**20 May 2026 ([People’s Daily / PLA Daily](#))  
PLA Navy’s Liaoning carrier strike**

## **group conducts training in Western Pacific**

The Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning carrier strike group departed for the Western Pacific to conduct routine training exercises, according to the PLA Navy. The drills reportedly include long-range tactical flight operations, live-fire exercises, support and screening operations, and integrated rescue training aimed at improving combat-oriented operational capabilities. PLA Navy officials described the deployment as part of an annual training plan conducted in accordance with international law and standard international practices.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **27 April 2026 ([People’s Daily](#)) China commissions first large-scale salt cavern hydrogen storage project**

China’s first million-cubic-metre salt cavern hydrogen storage demonstration project has officially begun operations in Pingdingshan. The project was jointly developed by the Wuhan Institute of Rock and Soil Mechanics, Chinese Academy of Sciences and China Pingmei Shenma Group. Researchers drilled to a depth of 1,418 metres and constructed a salt cavern with a dissolved volume exceeding 30,000 cubic metres, capable of storing up to 1.5 million standard cubic metres of hydrogen.

According to project officials, the facility achieved several technical milestones, including the use of layered salt rock formations for hydrogen storage, domestically produced hydrogen-resistant equipment, and an integrated real-time monitoring system covering surface, wellbore, and underground cavity conditions. Chinese researchers stated that the project is intended to support large-scale hydrogen storage and renewable energy integration as part of broader hydrogen industry development efforts.

### **9 May 2026 ([People's Daily](#)) Chinese research institutions propose large-scale "Space Cloud" satellite information network**

The Aerospace Information Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Sciences, together with more than 100 research institutes, universities, and aerospace companies, released a joint proposal to develop a "Space Cloud" ecosystem centred on a satellite network potentially involving over 1,000 satellites. The initiative aims to integrate remote sensing, communications, computing, and artificial intelligence capabilities into a unified space-based information service system through common technical standards and interconnected satellite infrastructure. According to the proposal, the system would shift away from traditional single-

satellite operations toward coordinated multi-satellite networks capable of near real-time data processing and information services. Chinese researchers stated that the network could support emergency response, low-altitude economy applications, 6G communications, and integrated air-space-ground information services. Officials also identified key technical challenges, including onboard AI, distributed computing models, and interoperability standards.

### **11 May 2026 ([People's Daily / Science and Technology Daily](#)) Beijing Science Expo highlights advances in quantum computing, energy systems, and tech commercialisation**

The 28th China Beijing International High-Tech Expo concluded in Beijing after hosting more than 800 domestic and international companies and institutions, with participation from representatives across 72 countries and regions. Organisers stated that 148 scientific and technological achievements were unveiled, alongside 57 signed projects valued at approximately RMB 590 million. Among the notable exhibits was a 100-kilowatt free-piston thermoacoustic Stirling generator developed by the Chinese Academy of Sciences for multi-source silent power generation applications, including cold-region heating and specialised energy

supply. Another key exhibit was the “Lingkai-1” modular dilution refrigerator developed by Zhongke Quantum Instrument (Beijing) Technology Co., Ltd., designed to provide ultra-low-temperature cooling for quantum computing systems. The expo also featured new technology insurance products, investment initiatives, and international participation from firms including AstraZeneca and Sanofi.

**14 May 2026 ([People’s Daily / Science and Technology Daily](#)) China confirms major ultra-deep shale gas field in Sichuan Basin**

Sinopec announced that the Ziyang Dongfeng shale gas field in the Sichuan Basin has been officially certified with proven geological reserves of 235.687 billion cubic metres, marking the discovery of China’s first ultra-deep shale gas field exceeding the 100 billion cubic metre threshold. The field is located within Cambrian Qiongzhusi shale formations at depths of 4,500–5,200 metres. Chinese researchers described the formation as technically challenging due to unclear reservoir characteristics, difficult drilling conditions, and high-pressure, high-temperature environments. Sinopec stated that it integrated artificial intelligence into seismic exploration and developed domestic ultra-deep drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies for the project.

China’s total proven shale gas reserves have now exceeded 4 trillion cubic metres, with annual production surpassing 27 billion cubic metres. Officials project shale gas output could exceed 50 billion cubic metres annually by 2030.

**15 May 2026 ([People’s Daily / Science and Technology Daily](#)) Chinese researchers develop prototype gas–solid hydrogen battery using hydrogen anions**

Researchers at the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences announced the development of what they describe as the world’s first gas–solid hydrogen anion prototype battery using hydrogen gas and metal electrodes. The system uses magnesium and hydrogen as active materials and operates by storing both electricity and hydrogen simultaneously. During discharge, hydrogen gas is reduced into hydrogen anions while the metal electrode forms metal hydrides; the process reverses during charging, releasing hydrogen and regenerating the metal. The research team stated that the battery can function across a wide temperature range and demonstrated the technology by powering an LED with a stacked 10-cell battery pack producing over 2.4 volts. According to the researchers, the system achieved an energy efficiency of 93.9 percent and may offer an alternative

approach to hydrogen storage without requiring high-pressure conditions.

**22 May 2026 ([People's Daily / Science and Technology Daily](#)) Construction begins on China's 20 MW floating offshore wind turbine platform**

State Power Investment Corporation announced the start of construction for the "Tuqiang" floating offshore wind turbine demonstration platform in Zhuhai. The project is described as the world's first 20-megawatt floating wind turbine platform designed for deep-sea deployment using a steel-concrete hybrid structure. Developed

under a national key research programme, the platform is intended to operate in harsh offshore conditions, including typhoon-prone waters and complex seabed environments. According to project data, the turbine is expected to generate approximately 55 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, enough to supply around 16,000 households. Chinese researchers stated that the project site experiences currents of up to 2.3 metres per second, wave heights reaching 23 metres, and extreme wind speeds exceeding 77 metres per second.

### **About the Author**

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