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- **China's Military Training for 2023 begins**
- **President Xi interacts with Armed Forces**
- **Japan launched Intel Satellite to watch North Korea**
- **India-Japan Inaugural of Veer Guardian Exercise**
- **Component of Taiwan made Anti-Ship missile sent to China for repair**
- **South Korea and the US issue "Strategic Vision" Statement**
- **North Korea Defence Budget 2023**



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CHINA

China's Military Training for 2023 Begins

Amid rising threat perception in Beijing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) started the [annual military training](#) for its troops on 4 January. The focus of this year's training would be on "new qualities and integrated combat capacity", which is considered significant for winning future wars. The new qualities are new equipment that are being introduced into the PLA such as the Z-20 helicopters, unmanned combat aerial vehicles such as CH-4 and others, and Z-10 attack helicopters. The commander of the PLA Army, General Li Qiaoming presided over the PLA Army training mobilisation, where various units of the ground forces participated in the training exercises. Reportedly, more than 1000 officers and soldiers were assigned to the [combined arms brigade](#) under the PLA 82nd Group Army. These training mobilisation began following Xi Jinping's [signing of mobilisation](#) order, which instructed the troops to carry out the plans and tasks in the order. According to the order, the troops must "follow the evolution of technology, warfare and rivals, redouble their efforts to better combine training with combat operations, and strengthen systematic training and the use of technologies to develop an elite force that is capable of fighting and winning wars".

President Xi interacts with Armed Forces

Days after PLA began its annual military training, President Xi Jinping on 19 January

[interacted with armed forces](#) via video link. During the meeting he interacted with [soldiers from several troops](#) undertaking border defence, coastal defence, air defence, stability maintenance and emergency response duties. It is noteworthy, that Xi [remarked](#) to the soldiers under Xinjiang military command, the unit involved in managing border areas along Eastern Ladakh in the Western Sector of the India-China boundary, that the area has been constantly changing. Also, he inquired about their border patrol and management work and urged them to persist in their efforts. Speaking to soldiers from a patrolling Chinese navy formation, Xi asked about their [emergency response readiness](#) and ordered air defence soldiers to remain alert and increase their combat preparedness.

JAPAN

Japan launched Intel Satellite to watch North Korea

On 26 January, Japan launched an [intelligence-gathering satellite](#) to watch movements at a military site in North Korea. The satellite was launched by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in a H2A rocket from the Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan. According to media reports, the rocket carried the IGS-Radar 7 reconnaissance satellite which is part of Tokyo's effort to build up its military capability. Further, the Intelligence Gathering Satellite is powered to capture images on the ground 24 hours a day and even in severe weather conditions. Praising the successful launch, Prime Minister

Kishida stated that “the government will maximise the use of IGS-Radar 7 and other reconnaissance satellites to do the utmost for Japan’s national security and crisis management.”.

India-Japan Inaugural of Veer Guardian Exercise

The inaugural edition of India-Japan bilateral air exercise, called ‘[Veer Guardian 2023](#)’ was conducted in late January. The bilateral air exercise presented an opportunity for both Air Forces to deepen mutual understanding. India took part in the exercise with Su-30 MKI aircraft while the Japanese side participated in the exercise with its F-2 and F-15 aircraft. During the exercise, both sides engaged in complex and comprehensive aerial manoeuvres in multiple simulated operational scenarios. They did air combat manoeuvring, interception and air defence missions, both in visual and beyond visual range settings. Also, there were opportunities of ground interactions between the two personnel enabling the participating contingents to get important insights into each other's best practices and unique capabilities.

TAIWAN

Component of Taiwan made Anti-Ship Missile sent to China for repair

Taiwanese media expressed concern about a Swiss company sending a part of a Taiwan-made anti-ship missile to China for repair. As per the reports, Taiwan’s National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology “[developed the Hsiung-Feng III anti-ship missile](#).” This missile is

also known as the “Carrier Killer.” It has “[supersonic speed, a range of up to 400 km, and a 225 kg warhead](#)” and has an optical device called theodolites, which is used to calibrate the missiles. This device is manufactured by a Swiss company, [Leica Geosystems](#). Recently, Taiwan sent this device to the company for repair. The company in turn sent it to China for the repair job. This has caused concern that sending theodolites to China for repairs may expose “[sensitive data from missile tests and endanger Taiwan’s national security](#).”

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

South Korea and the US issue "Strategic Vision" Statement

On 27 January, the Army chiefs of South Korea and the United States issued a "strategic vision" statement on expanding areas of cooperation between the two countries. The statement [highlighted](#) that the two sides will collaborate on military science, technology, and space. This is in line with efforts to upgrade bilateral ties to a "global comprehensive strategic alliance," as agreed upon by their leaders in a previous summit. Further, the [bilateral cooperation](#) referred to in the agreement includes a joint effort in the fields of aerospace research as well as military science and technology. Following the signing of the document, South Korea's Army Chief of Staff Gen. Park Jeong-hwan met with U.S. Army generals to explore ways to strengthen ties and [deepen interchange and collaboration](#).

In a separate development on 30 January South Korea Defence Minister Lee Jong-

sup and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg discussed security situation on Korean Peninsula and the need for accelerating defence cooperation between South Korea and NATO. While, delivering a talk at the [Chey Institute for Advanced Studies](#), NATO Secretary General also urged South Korea to increase military support to Ukraine.

North Korea Defence Budget 2023

In the second week of January, North Korea's parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly [passed the annual budget](#) where defence expenditure accounted for 15 percent of North Korea's total annual budget. According to state-run media Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), the defence budget is consistent with the previous year 2022 and aims to bolster deterrence capability both in quality and quantity. However, as North Korea continues to struggle economically, authorities did not elaborate how the defence budget will be funded. It is noteworthy that North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un has avowed to increase the country's nuclear and missile capability in 2023 and the budget is seen as an important step in that direction.