

# EAST ASIA

## MILITARY MONITOR

VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 7

JULY 2026



- **China Tests Ballistic Missile from Nuclear-Powered Submarine**
- **Party Secretary of Tibet meet Troops Stationed in Tibet**
- **Japan, Vietnam Defence Ministers Meet in Tokyo**
- **Japan MSDF Conducts First Tomahawk Launch Test**
- **Chinese Research Vessels near Taiwan**
- **South Korean Tanks gets NATO Certification**
- **North Korea to Commission New Warship**



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES  
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

**MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE  
STUDIES AND ANALYSES**

No. 1, Development Enclave,

Rao Tula Ram Marg, Delhi Cantt., New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191, Website: [www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in)

## CHINA

### China Tests Ballistic Missile from Nuclear-Powered Submarine

On 6 July, the [People's Liberation Army Navy \(PLAN\)](#) test-fired a ballistic missile from a nuclear-powered submarine deep into the Pacific Ocean. Both the identity of the launch platform and the type of missile was not disclosed by the PLAN. However, experts [speculate](#) that the submarine could be Type 094 SSBN and a JL-2 or JL 3 missile was launched. While Beijing defended the test as a "routine arrangement" under annual training and provided short advance notice, the move sparked regional and international concern. The United States monitored the event, calling for meaningful [arms control](#) discussions, while regional powers including Japan, Australia, New Zealand, strongly criticised the launch. Taiwan's presidential office termed the tests as "an attempt by China to intimidate the international community". This rare open-ocean test was China's first known submarine-based missile test since 1982 and highlights Beijing's expanding naval capabilities and signals a potential shift toward more frequent long-range missile testing.

### Party Secretary of Tibet meet Troops Stationed in Tibet

On 31 July, Wang Junzheng, Secretary of the Autonomous Region Party Committee and First Secretary of the Party Committee of the Tibet Military District, [visited](#) troops stationed in Tibet. He met frontlines troops and inquired in detail about equipment development, duty performance and

combat readiness, as well as their daily lives. He urged them to hone their skills and remain loyal to the Party. He noted that Tibet is a vital border region inhabited by ethnic minorities and bearing the crucial responsibility of safeguarding China's southwestern frontier. He acknowledged the hard work and dedicated efforts of the officers and soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Armed Police (PAP) stationed in the region and called for implementing Xi Jinping's thinking on strengthening the military and the strategy of building the military through political work in the new era.

## JAPAN

### Japan, Vietnam Defence Ministers Meet in Tokyo

General Phan Van Giang, Vietnam's defence minister and Deputy Prime Minister, [visited](#) Tokyo for a dialogue with his Japanese counterpart Shinjiro Koizumi on 13 July. During the dialogue, the two sides agreed to commence talks on the joint development and production of high-speed landing craft as part of their greater cooperation in the defence sector. The two sides agreed on the importance of freedom of navigation, opposition to unilateral change in the status quo and promotion of regional peace and security through bilateral cooperation. Giang stated that he hoped to take forward the concrete declarations made by the two sides in order to 'develop a relationship befitting our comprehensive strategic partnership'. Before his meeting with Koizumi, Giang met Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru

Kihara. Both sides agreed to coordinate responses to regional issues such as the Iran crisis and nuclear and missile programmes run by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea).

### **Japan MSDF Conducts First Tomahawk Launch Test**

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Forces (MSDF) reportedly [conducted](#) its first live-fire test of US-produced Tomahawk cruise missiles on 28 July, with the MSDF destroyer *Chokai* (DDG-176) launching the missiles in the course of a drill in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of the United States of America. The *Chokai*, equipped with the US-made Aegis Combat System, usually carries RIM-161 Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) anti-ballistic missiles, but is the first of eight destroyers upgraded to carry the Tomahawks as part of Japan's overall adoption of Aegis-equipped vessels. The successful test gives Japan the capability to conduct 'deep strikes' into enemy territory in order to prevent it from launching missile strikes from within its territory. The Defence Ministry has already stated that it intends to upgrade all eight Aegis-equipped destroyers to carry Tomahawk missiles, as the *Chokai* returns to its home port in Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture after spending a year in the US for the Tomahawk upgrades.

## **TAIWAN**

### **Chinese Research Vessels near Taiwan**

After Japan and the Philippines [decided](#) to begin negotiations to delimit their maritime boundary in the contested waters east of

Taiwan, China's research vessel activities in this maritime region has reportedly gone up. China does not recognise the claims of Japan and the Philippines in the said maritime region and considers Taiwan its province, thus, denying it any independent locus on the matter. Commentators have argued that China's deployment of scientific research in the region are not solely for oceanic research, but has a military motive, which is "to prepare to deny foreign naval vessels access to strategically important waters." Raymond Greene, Director, American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), [underscored](#) the need for Taiwan to develop a "hornet's nest of air, surface and subsurface drones," which, in his view, would "help deter conflict and provide security." He remarked that drones could be a "game-changing opportunity" for Taiwan to strengthen its security. He underlined that Taiwan and the US could together "anchor" "democratic" drone manufacturing, which would contribute to enhancing "the collective deterrence posture of the free world." Meanwhile, the US House of Representatives [passed](#) an appropriations bill for next fiscal year which has a US\$500 million provision for Taiwan under Foreign Military Financing (FMF). The Taiwanese media reported that the army [intends](#) to buy a total of 235 the Clouded Leopard Eight-Wheeled Armoured Vehicle, over the period of six years from 2027 to 2033. The vehicle is reported to be new variant, introduced as a "40mm automatic grenade launcher infantry command/combat vehicle." It is to be manufactured domestically.

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

### South Korean Tanks gets NATO Certification

The South Korea-made K2 main battle tanks have gained popularity across the world and in July it was reported that this weapon system has received [recognition](#) from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for its high quality standards. Manufactured by the South Korean company Hyundai Rotem, it received Allied Quality Assurance Publications (AQAP)-2110 certification from the NATO. This certification is a crucial qualification for the export of weapons to the NATO member states and it would enhance the chances for South Korea to supply defence equipment to this multilateral security alliance. This would also help Seoul to increase exports of arms to the West Asian and Latin American countries. Notably, NATO has been increasing its defence expenditures in the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and security policies of the United States. In this regard, South Korea has been looking for opportunities to enhance defence exports to the NATO.

### North Korea to Commission New Warship

According to the reports in July, North Korea is planning to [launch](#) a new warship named Kang Kon. The North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was reported to have monitored the launch of strategic cruise missiles and various other weapon systems

from this 5,000-tonne naval destroyer and has ordered for the commissioning this warship into the Navy within a period of two months. The South Korean military was closely monitoring the development and expansion of naval power in North Korea. Earlier, North Korea had commissioned its other 5,000-tonne warship named Choe Hyon which was deployed in the West Sea. According to the South Korean sources, Kang Kon could be deployed in the East Sea and would be probably commissioned on 9th September this year to mark the foundation of the North Korean regime. The North Korean state media [reported](#) that Kang Kon is equipped with “naval artillery, automatic machine guns and electronic warfare means”.