



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

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CHINA MILITARY DIGEST

JULY 2026

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Central Military Commission (CMC) appoints PLA Generals

On July 3, at the PLA's annual promotion ceremony at the Bayi Building in Beijing, Xi Jinping [confers](#) the rank of PLA General to Zhang Shuguang, Secretary of the CMC Commission for Disciplinary Inspection and Director of the CMC Supervisory Commission, and Wang Gang, Commander of the Air Force. Zhang Shengmin, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), presided over the ceremony. Available information shows that newly appointed General Zhang Shuguang (张曙光), born in 1964, previously [served](#) as Director of the Case Review Bureau under the Disciplinary Inspection and Supervision Bureau of the Central Military Commission Discipline Inspection Commission. In 2018, he was appointed Secretary of the Discipline Inspection Commission of the Northern Theatre Command Air Force, and in 2021, he was promoted to Secretary of the PLA Ground Force Discipline Inspection Commission. He was promoted to the rank of PLA Lt. General in 2021. In October 2021, he was elected a member of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) at the 20th National Congress of the CPC. He is now promoted to the post of Secretary of the CMC Discipline Inspection Commission and Director of the CMC Supervision Commission. The second one, PLA General Wang Gang (王刚), born in 1965, has previously [served](#) as Chief of Staff and

Deputy Commander of the PLA Air Force and currently, he is Commander of the PLA Air Force. Earlier he held various positions in the PLA including Director of the Military Training Department of the PLA Air Force Headquarters, Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the PLA Air Force, Chief of Staff of the PLA Air Force, and Deputy Commander of the PLA Air Force. In 2016, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Major General, and in 2022, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Lt. General.

Chinese and Russian Navies holds Joint Maritime Exercises

China and Russia [conducted](#) "Joint Sea-2026" exercise- a routine drills for training cooperation between Chinese and Russian navies- from July 6 to 13, 2026. For the exercises, the two navies' participating formations assembled at the Qingdao naval port. Russian Pacific Fleet deployed a cruiser "Varyag", a frigate "Marshal Shaposhnikov", a diesel-electric submarine "Ufa", and a rescue vessel "Igor Belousov" for the exercise. Whereas, the Chinese Navy participating formation was largely from the PLA Northern Theater Command that included the guided-missile destroyers "Kaifeng" and "Anshan", the guided-missile frigate "Wuhu", the comprehensive supply ship "Kekezilihu", the submarine rescue ship "Yangchenghu", and a submarine. Besides, the two navies deployed ship-borne helicopters and marine-corps units to take part in the drills. The exercise is divided into three phases:

force assembly, in-port planning, and maritime maneuvers. Exercise drills [covered](#) live-fire and field training scenarios such as joint reconnaissance, air defense and anti-missile operations, anti-ship strikes, submarine rescue, and coordinated command. These drills are high-intensity maritime combat operations. Besides these maritime drills, the two sides conducted wargames, professional seminars, ship visits, and mission coordination in Qingdao prior to the exercise, integrating communication and tactical procedures. Since its inception in 2012, the “Joint Sea” series of military exercise has evolved into a high-level joint combat exercise integrating surface ships, submarines, naval aviation, and logistics forces.

China-Russia maritime joint patrol ends after Pacific mission

Following the China-Russia “Joint-Sea 2026” maritime exercise, the China-Russia maritime joint patrol was [held](#) from July 13 to 29, 2026 carried out by the Chinese and Russian navies. The fleet set sail from Qingdao, Shandong province, on July 13 and conducted joint patrols in the western Pacific Ocean, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan after transiting the Miyako Strait, the Etorofu Strait, and the Soya Strait. The formation comprised the Chinese Navy’s guided missile destroyers ‘Kaifeng’ and ‘Anshan’, the comprehensive supply ship ‘Kekexilihu’, and the Russian Navy’s frigate ‘Ryzhi’.

During the patrol, the two sides carried out a series of joint drills, including helicopter cross-deck landing exercises, joint counterterrorism operations, humanitarian rescue missions, and maritime inspection and capture exercises. Chinese naval vessels also conducted multiple combat-oriented training exercises under simulated real-time maritime and aerial scenarios. The first iteration of this joint patrol [began](#) in 2021 focusing on the security and stability of vital strategic maritime passages. This joint patrol also marked the first time a joint Chinese-Russian naval formation simultaneously transited the Tsugaru Strait and circumnavigating the Japanese archipelago. During the patrol, the Chinese and Russian sides conducted joint drills covering exercises such as cross-deck landings for ship-based helicopters, joint counter-terrorism operations, humanitarian rescue, and visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) operations. The joint maritime patrol concluded on July 29, 2026.

Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun visited Thailand

Chinese Defense Minister [visited](#) Thailand on July 24, and during the visit, he paid courtesy calls on the Prime Minister of Thailand Anutin Charnvirakul. At the meeting, Dong Jun acknowledges the positive outcomes of the Prime Minister’s recent high-level meetings with the Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. In his turn, Anutin [advocated](#) for the establishment of a “2+2” ministerial

consultation framework, involving the foreign and defense ministers from both nations. The mechanism aims to align security policies, improve intelligence sharing, the expansion of defense industries and cracking down on transnational crime, particularly online call centers scams affecting citizens of both countries. Dong Jun acknowledged Thailand's key economic and security role in the region, emphasizing that Beijing willingness to deepen defense collaboration. Both parties welcomed the agreed Terms of Reference (TOR) for a Joint committee on Military Cooperation, Equipment and Technology. On defense sector development, Anutin highlighted Thailand's drive for self-reliance and invited Chinese industrial participation in research, joint production, technology transfer and the upcoming Defense & Security 2027 exhibition. On the same day, he [held](#) talks with the Thai Defense Minister Lieutenant General Adul Boonthamcharoen, and the two sides had in-depth exchange of views on bilateral and military-to-military ties, prevailing international and regional situation, and issues of common concern. Dong Jun noted that China is willing to work with the Thai side to maintain close strategic communication, deepen practical cooperation such as joint exercise and training, personnel exchanges, and humanitarian disaster relief, and elevate China-Thailand military cooperation to a higher level. The two sides agreed that, under the strategic guidance of the two

heads of state, efforts should be made to upgrade the quality of military cooperation between China and Thailand.

Chinese Defense Minister visits Brunei

After concluding visits in Thailand, Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun [visited](#) Brunei on July 28, 2026. During the visit, he had a meeting with Haji Mohd Yussof, Coordinating Minister for National Security, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Defense. On the same day, Dong Jun also [met](#) Brunei's Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah. During his meeting, Dong Jun said, China-Brunei military cooperation now faces important development opportunities, urging the two sides to build on the positive momentum to elevate all-dimensional cooperation, and deliver more tangible outcomes to contribute to building a China-Brunei community with a shared future and opening new prospects for bilateral relations. With his counter-part Haji Mohd Yussof, Dong Jun had an in-depth [exchange](#) of views on the bilateral ties, military ties, the prevailing regional and international situations, as well as issues of mutual concern. Prior to the Chinese defense minister [visit](#) to Brunei, the PLA Navy sent a task group to Brunei for port-call in July 24 that comprised the training ship Qijiguang (Hull 83) and the amphibious dock landing ship Kunlinshan (Hull 998). The Chinese task group commander met the First Admiral Sahibul Bahari bin Haji Zainal Abidin Commander

of the Royal Brunei Navy. The task group visited the Brunei Naval Training Center, the military museum, and the Defense Academy for exchanges. The two navies conducted activities such as mutual ship visits, deck receptions, and friendly sports matches, and participate in local public welfare performances and consolation visits.

PLA Air Force concluded its 2026 Air Force Pilot Recruitment

The PLA Air Force Pilot Recruitment Bureau [announced](#) that all selected candidates admitted to the Air Force pilot program in 2026, and they will be transported en masse to the Air Force Aviation University for registration on July 31 and August 1. This time the selected candidates for pilot training program hails from China's 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities. This time the cut-off percentage for the selection reached a historic high, and 46% of the admitted cadets came from country-level high schools, and 82 candidates from 15 ethnic minority groups. This year's selection process incorporated methods such as big data and artificial intelligence to assist in evaluations. It followed a comprehensive assessment system that covered physical fitness, flight potential, and psychological traits. All selected candidates were transported to the Air Force Aviation University from six designated boarding points: Shenyang, Shijiazhuang, Jinan, Nanjing, Changsha, and Chengdu. On their

arrival at the Air Force Aviation University, the candidates toured the facilities where the flight cadets' study, train, and live, gaining firsthand insight into the modern landscape of Air Force pilot training.