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CHINESE PULSE



THE CHINA SPY QUESTION

Nvidia inquiry raises questions over access to US AI secrets.

CORRIDOR OF CONTROL
China–Pakistan media pact raises press freedom concerns.

WHEN DHAKA BECAME 'DELHI'
Livestreamers passed off a Dhaka neighbourhood as Delhi.

TARBELA FLOODS AGAIN
A second flood puts dam oversight under scrutiny.

POWER PLAY IN SHENZHEN
What great-power diplomacy means for India.

FROM THE

EDITOR IN CHIEF



Rahul Mahajan

The deals make headlines. The consequences deserve a closer look.

Who gains access to power, and who can demand answers when that power is misused? These questions connect the stories in this November edition of Chinese Pulse.

Our cover story, "The China Spy Question," examines the scandal surrounding Nvidia founder Jensen Huang's departure and allegations of Chinese intelligence interest in his business networks. Espionage remains unproven. The scrutiny nevertheless raises serious questions about personal access, corporate oversight and the security of technologies shaping the AI age.

Closer to India, we examine China–Pakistan media cooperation, the oversight failures surrounding Tarbela and the expanding reach of Chinese weapons across South Asia. Our investigation into livestreams reportedly presenting Dhaka neighbourhoods as Delhi also considers how misleading content harms national reputations and the dignity of people being filmed.

The human consequences deserve equal attention. Rahile Ömer's story demands verifiable answers about a girl detained at fourteen. Reports concerning genetic surveillance and the vulnerability of Uyghurs abroad raise further questions about consent, accountability and protection across borders.

In Shenzhen, APEC brings trade, technology and great-power diplomacy together. For India, developments there matter alongside the immediate challenges of Himalayan water security, regional partnerships and technological independence.

Understanding China requires careful attention to both its capabilities and the consequences of its policies. Our responsibility is to examine the evidence, distinguish allegations from established facts and keep the people affected by these decisions in view.

Rahul Mahajan

Rahul Mahajan

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Jensen Huang has resigned as Nvidia's chief executive after reports tied him to a woman US officials suspect of working for Chinese intelligence. Beijing calls it a smear, but the case exposes how influence can travel through business networks into the heart of America's AI industry.



The China Spy Question Inside America's AI Industry: Scandal Topples Nvidia's Founder

For 33 years, Jensen Huang was Nvidia. On November 12, he was gone, toppled by a scandal that US officials link to Chinese intelligence. The question now reaches far beyond one boardroom: how deep can Beijing reach into the networks around America's most strategic technology?

The Fall of a Founder

Huang stepped down as president, chief executive and board member of the company he co-founded and built into the engine of the AI boom. His exit followed reports of two extramarital affairs, one with Alice Huang, a former Megaspeed executive whom US officials reportedly believe was an asset of China's Ministry of State Security. Jensen Huang is not accused of knowingly helping a foreign service, and nothing proves Nvidia's secrets reached Beijing.

A New Leader at the Top

Nvidia named Colette Kress, its chief financial officer since 2013, as interim chief executive while she keeps the finance role, and gave longtime director Harvey Jones the new post of board chair. The board will consider internal and external candidates for the permanent job. Shares fell more than 4% on the day. Kress inherits not just a company but a national-security spotlight.





Beijing's Denial, Beijing's Narrative

China's Foreign Ministry has dismissed the spy claims as baseless smears. Spokesperson Mao Ning went further, accusing Washington of fabricating them to justify a technology "blockade". The state-run Global Times framed the resignation as proof of politicisation in the US tech sector. The message is consistent: recast a counter-intelligence case as American containment, and shift the debate from Chinese espionage to US restrictions.



The Strategy Behind the Access

A former US counter-intelligence analyst argues that Beijing never needed to approach Huang directly; the alleged route ran through business. Megaspeed, an Nvidia partner, has been linked to deals that appeared to evade export limits. It denies wrongdoing and says Alice Huang left in 2025, while Singapore has barred her from re-entering for downplaying her role. Meanwhile, Chinese AI firms are reportedly renting Nvidia computing abroad before the rules tighten.

Doors Begin to Close

Washington is already hitting back. House Speaker Mike Johnson speaks of a growing consensus on limiting chip exports to China, lawmakers are pushing at least four bills, and Huang is expected to testify before Congress. For Beijing, an alleged effort to gain access may end up closing doors. The affair may never prove espionage, but it has shown that a foreign intelligence service need not break into the vault if it can get close to the people who hold the keys. With its founder gone, Nvidia and Washington must now prove that vigilance reaches from the server room to the boardroom, before the next set of keys changes hands.







CORRIDOR OF CONTROL?

China and Pakistan's Information Pact Puts Free Speech on the Line

Beijing and Islamabad promise stronger media cooperation and protection against misinformation. But in a country already living with censorship, surveillance and curbs on journalism, the real question is who will control information, and whose voices will be heard.

Pakistan and China have launched the China-Pakistan Information Corridor (CPIC), promising closer cooperation between their media, universities and businesses. Launched in Islamabad on October 26, 2026, it links news-sharing networks, fact-checking mechanisms and research institutions. But for millions of Pakistanis facing internet restrictions, surveillance and shrinking space for independent journalism, it raises a troubling question: will it improve access to reliable information, or strengthen government control over what citizens can read and say?



Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning and Ambassador Jiang Zaidong attended the launch. Officials called CPIC a complement to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), carrying cooperation from infrastructure into public communication. According to Arab News, it includes an 18-outlet news exchange and a dedicated fact-checking mechanism, resting on four pillars: media, business, think tanks, and culture and youth. Supporters expect better reporting, exchanges and trade. Those benefits are plausible, but only if participating institutions stay independent and criticism of government remains allowed.

Pakistan's digital record makes this urgent. In September 2025, Amnesty International documented a vast surveillance and censorship network built with technology from several countries, including China. It identified a Chinese-built national firewall using Geedge Networks technology, able to inspect or restrict about two million internet sessions at once, while the Lawful Intercept Management System can reportedly monitor more than four million phone connections simultaneously. These are capabilities, not proof of constant monitoring, but they reveal the scale of the infrastructure and the weakness of independent oversight.





The cost reaches far beyond politics. Freelancers need reliable connections to serve foreign clients, students need learning resources, and small businesses depend on online payments and advertising. The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation estimated that internet and social-media restrictions cost Pakistan about $892 million in 2024; another method put losses near $1.6 billion. For a country promoting technology-led growth, repeated disruption contradicts its own ambitions.

Journalists face equal risk. Freedom House's 2026 assessment rated Pakistan's internet Not Free, scoring it 27 out of 100, citing website blocking, VPN restrictions and prison sentences for critical posts. In that climate, a government-backed fact-checking mechanism could become contentious if its decisions are opaque or politically driven. Reporting on corruption, Chinese investment, labour conditions or security failures must stay open to scrutiny. There is no evidence yet that CPIC itself operates as a censorship system, but Pakistan's record makes safeguards essential.

Cooperation with China is not inherently harmful. Better translations, academic exchanges, genuine fact-checking and wider business links could benefit both societies. The danger comes when governments become the main judges of acceptable information. Islamabad should disclose how CPIC's fact-checking works, who funds participating institutions, and whether independent journalists can challenge official narratives without retaliation. Beijing, too, should recognise that public trust cannot be manufactured through favourable coverage. Credibility depends on transparency and the freedom to report uncomfortable facts.

Pakistanis should be able to question economic projects, investigate public spending and debate relations with China without fear of being branded as spreaders of misinformation. CPIC's real success will not be measured by how well two governments promote their friendship, but by whether Pakistanis gain more access to information, stronger economic opportunities and the freedom to speak for themselves.





WHEN DHAKA BECAME 'DELHI' ON CHINESE LIVESTREAMS

India has long been a target of misinformation, distorted narratives and attempts to undermine its international image. However, a disturbing new incident emerging from Dhaka, Bangladesh, exposes how social media can be weaponised to manufacture a deliberately negative perception of the country. According to an investigation by Bangladesh's newspaper Prothom Alo, more than 150 Chinese nationals have reportedly been livestreaming from some of Dhaka's poorest neighbourhoods while falsely telling Chinese audiences that they are broadcasting from Delhi, India. This is not merely a case of mistaken geography or irresponsible content creation. If the reported allegations are accurate, it represents a calculated attempt to mislead viewers, exploit poverty, violate local residents' privacy and project a fabricated image of India before millions of potential viewers. The incident raises serious questions about digital propaganda, cross-border misinformation and the responsibility of social media platforms.



Dhaka Presented as Delhi: A Deliberate Distortion?

The investigation identifies Sector 12 and Tekpara in Uttara, northern Dhaka, as major locations where Chinese livestreamers have been operating. These densely populated, economically disadvantaged settlements, characterised by tin-roofed houses and narrow surroundings, are reportedly being presented to Chinese audiences as parts of India's national capital. The scale of the activity is particularly concerning. More than 150 Chinese nationals are reportedly involved, with many carrying two smartphones: one for broadcasting and another for reading scripts or managing content. Their broadcasts reportedly run from early morning until late at night, creating a continuous stream of misleading visual material. The central question is simple: why would creators repeatedly misrepresent the location of their broadcasts if their intention were merely to produce ordinary travel or lifestyle content?

Insulting India Through Fabricated Narratives

Chinese streamers allegedly misrepresented poor neighbourhoods in Dhaka as Delhi, making derogatory remarks about cleanliness, law and order, and local drinking habits. By falsely associating Bangladesh's poverty with India, they risk reinforcing negative stereotypes and deliberately distorting India's image before Chinese audiences.

Poverty Exploitation and Violations of Human Dignity

The controversy is not just about India. The people of Bangladesh are also victims of this activity. Residents of the targeted neighbourhoods have reportedly complained that livestreamers enter homes without permission and film private spaces, sometimes even directing cameras towards bathrooms. When confronted, the streamers allegedly apologise and leave, only to return later. Local guides are reportedly being paid between Tk 700 and Tk 800 daily to help the Chinese creators navigate these settlements. This raises an uncomfortable question: are vulnerable communities being turned into unwilling performers in a foreign digital propaganda operation? Poverty should never become a commercial spectacle, and ordinary residents should not have their dignity and privacy sacrificed for online engagement, advertising or promotional activities.



The Commercial and Digital Propaganda Angle

One Chinese national, identified as Fangyou, reportedly described the broadcasts as part of product-promotion activities on Chinese platforms such as WeChat and Douyin.Some livestreamers have also allegedly promoted Chinese air-conditioner brands while broadcasting from the neighbourhoods. This creates an important distinction between commercial content and potentially coordinated misinformation. Product promotion is not inherently problematic. However, deliberately misrepresenting one country's location as another to generate attention, reinforce stereotypes or sell products raises serious ethical concerns. The incident also demonstrates how digital platforms can allow misleading narratives to travel beyond geographical boundaries without conventional journalistic scrutiny. When manipulated visuals are repeatedly circulated, audiences may begin accepting fabricated impressions as genuine representations of another





Why India Must Take Digital Misinformation Seriously

For India, this incident should serve as a reminder that national reputation is increasingly contested in the digital information space. India does not need fabricated images or exaggerated promotional narratives to establish its standing. Its economic growth, technological capabilities, democratic institutions, cultural influence and international partnerships provide substantial evidence of its global importance.

Nevertheless, misinformation cannot simply be ignored. Indian authorities, digital platforms and media organisations should monitor demonstrable instances of deliberate geographical misrepresentation, document evidence and seek appropriate corrective action. At the same time, Bangladesh's authorities must investigate residents' complaints, protect their privacy and ensure that foreign visitors follow local laws. The objective should not be hostility towards Chinese citizens or ordinary Chinese people. Responsibility must rest with those individuals and organisations involved in deceptive conduct, wherever the evidence leads.

India Must Not Become a Victim of Manufactured Reality

The reported Dhaka livestreaming controversy is a troubling example of how poverty, technology and misinformation can intersect to create a distorted image of another nation. If Chinese creators are deliberately presenting Bangladesh's neighbourhoods as Delhi while attaching insulting and fabricated descriptions to India, the practice deserves unequivocal condemnation. India's image must be judged by facts, not by staged livestreams, misleading geographical claims or commercially motivated stereotypes. The world deserves authentic information, Bangladesh's residents deserve dignity and privacy, and India deserves protection against deliberate misrepresentation.



A country's reputation should never be built or destroyed through manufactured images. In the digital age, defending the truth is also a matter of defending national dignity.

CHINA UPDATE

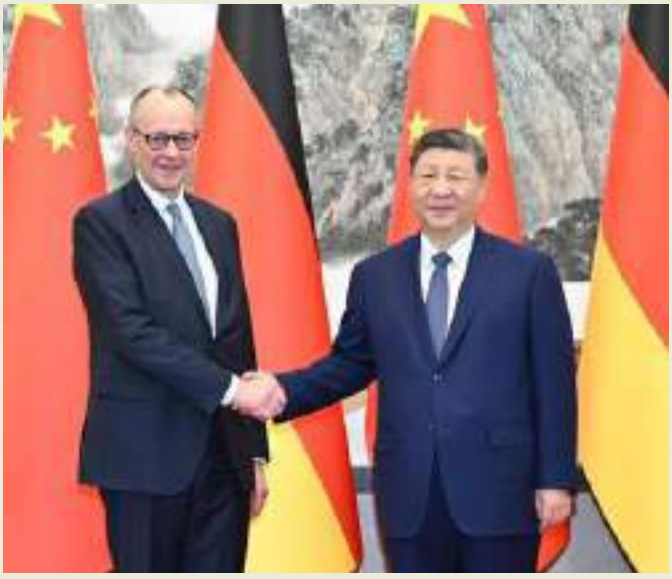
Nov 2026 ● www.chinascoop.org ● Chinese Pulse

Xi and Putin Address Trade Tensions at APEC

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for open trade and stable supply chains at APEC in Shenzhen on 18 November, while Russian President Vladimir Putin criticised Western sanctions. Their speeches preceded planned three-way talks with US President Donald Trump on trade, technology and international security.



Xi Jinping and German President Steinmeier Discuss Economic and Strategic Cooperation

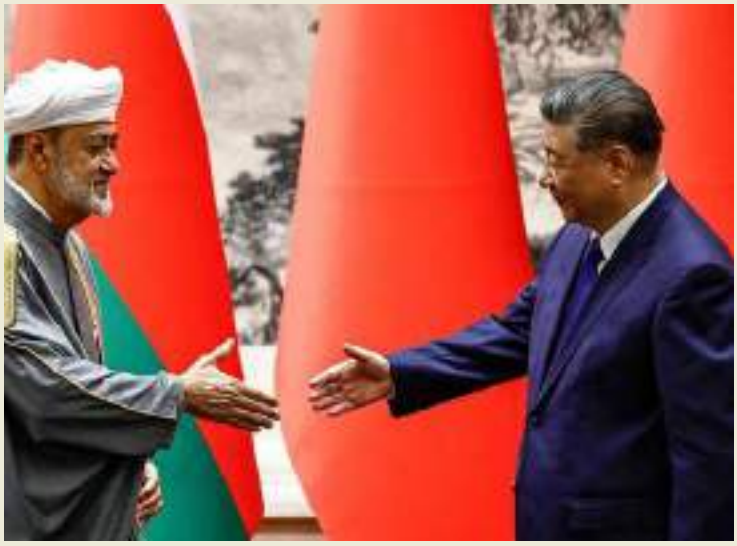


Chinese President Xi Jinping met German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Beijing on October 30, 2026. Their discussions focused on bilateral relations, economic cooperation and international affairs, highlighting Germany's importance to China's European partnerships in manufacturing, automotive industries and advanced technology.

CHINA UPDATE

Nov 2026 ● www.chinascoop.org ● Chinese Pulse

Xi Jinping and Oman's Sultan Discuss Strategic Partnership and Middle East Stability



Chinese President Xi Jinping met Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq in Beijing on November 2, 2026. Their discussions focused on bilateral cooperation, regional stability and Middle Eastern diplomacy, highlighting Oman's mediation role and China's strategic interests in Gulf energy and shipping routes.

China Steps Up Middle East Diplomacy Through Separate Talks with Iran and Saudi Arabia

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Iranian security official Ali Bagheri Kani and Saudi National Security Adviser Musaed Al-Aiban separately in Beijing on November 2. Discussions focused on regional conflict, political negotiations, Iran's sovereignty, energy security and protecting vital shipping routes.



CHINA UPDATE

Nov 2026 ● www.chinascoop.org ● Chinese Pulse

Rubio and Wang Yi Discuss Trump–Xi Engagement and Nuclear Security



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a telephone conversation on November 11, discussing upcoming Trump–Xi engagements and international security. Washington also raised nuclear security and possible trilateral talks involving Russia, topics absent from Beijing's account.

China Deepens Mekong Regional Cooperation

Foreign ministers from China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam met in Beijing on November 3–4. Discussions covered trade, water resources, infrastructure, artificial intelligence and regional security, reinforcing cooperation across the Mekong region and China's growing economic and diplomatic influence.



CHINA UPDATE

Nov 2026 ● www.chinascoop.org ● Chinese Pulse

Former Armed Police Chief Stripped of Advisory Roles

China removed former People's Armed Police commander Wang Ning from the CPPCC Standing Committee and his role as vice-chair of its foreign affairs committee on 4 November. His removal adds to scrutiny of senior security officials, although the report provides no publicly disclosed charges.

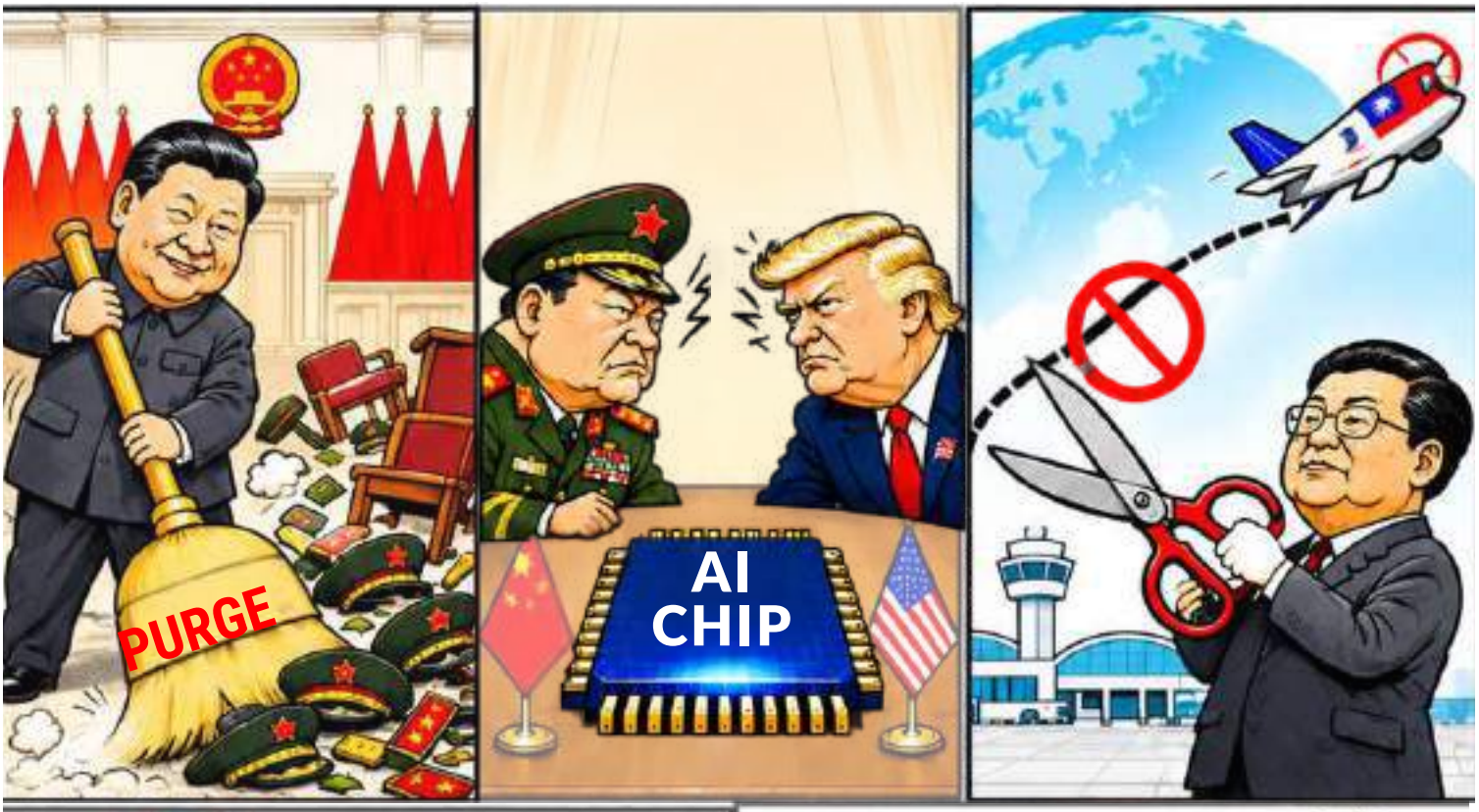


China Reinforces Party Control Over Public Institutions



China's new public-institution regulations take effect on 1 December. Covering state-established bodies in education, healthcare, research and culture, they require adherence to Communist Party leadership and Xi Jinping Thought, stronger internal Party organisations, and expanded supervision of institutional activities.

Caricatures









A Chinese redesign, a Pakistani bill

In July, a government inquiry found that the contractor, Power Construction Corporation of China Ltd, HEI and HEM, proposed replacing the approved cofferdam design with a rock-filled structure, despite the contract not permitting such a change. WAPDA approved the change. That barrier failed in August 2025. The project's cost has since risen from Rs82 billion to Rs316 billion. Pakistan's taxpayers carry that bill. The inquiry also found irregular payments for temporary works rather than permanent works, which weakened the government's ability to seek compensation from the contractor. In other words, Islamabad could not even make Beijing's state-owned champion pay for its own redesign.

A government that lives on rollovers

Why so little accountability? Pakistan's finances depend on Beijing's goodwill. China has become Pakistan's largest creditor with almost $29bn in loans, according to the World Bank. Days before the breach, finance ministry sources said China will roll over $4 billion in loans. A government that survives on rollovers does not audit its lender's companies too closely.





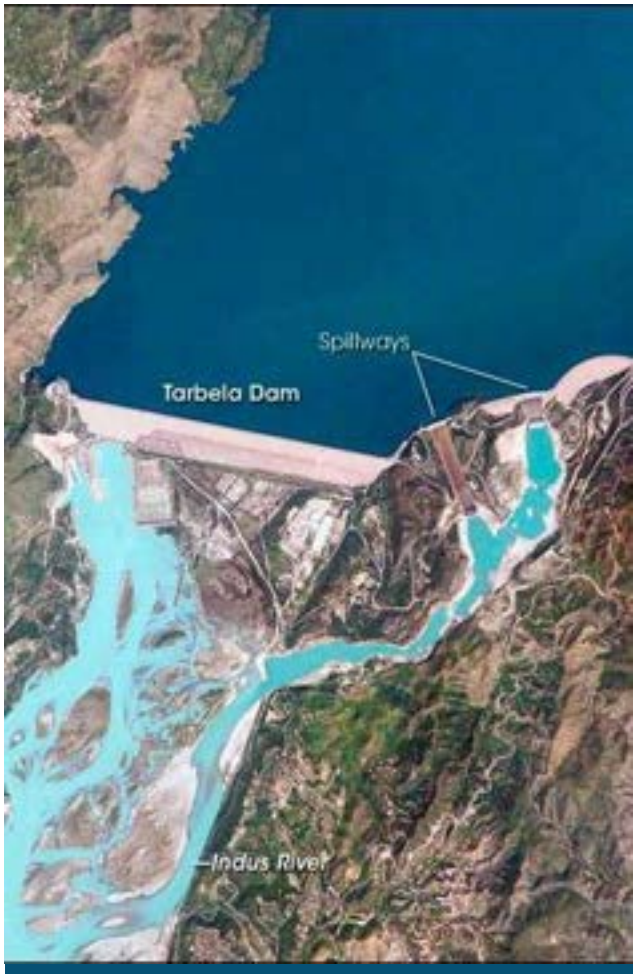




SHOWS WHO REALLY RUNS PAKISTAN'S DAMS



A Chinese state contractor redesigned a barrier it was not allowed to touch, Islamabad signed off, and now water has broken in again. The pattern shows what Pakistan has become to Beijing.



On 9 November, reservoir water poured into the 1,530MW Tarbela Fifth Extension (T-5) site in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and work stopped. India Today reported that a protective bund at the under-construction

Tunnel-5 collapsed. WAPDA, Pakistan's state water and power authority, says a weak rock mass collapsed during excavation work and denies that the main tunnel was damaged. The cause of this breach is still under investigation. The pattern around it is not.

A state organised around Chinese interests

Pakistan's security apparatus increasingly bends to Beijing's priorities. In March 2024, a suicide bombing in Shangla killed five Chinese engineers. Afterwards, civil work at the sites of the Dasu and Diamer-Bhasha Dams was suspended, as was work at Tarbela-5. Xi Jinping later told Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif that "China hopes Pakistan will take effective measures to ensure the safety of Chinese personnel". Islamabad responded with a special security unit tasked exclusively with protecting Chinese citizens and a new WAPDA force for water projects, particularly those from China. When a Chinese life is at risk, the Pakistani state mobilises. When a Chinese design fails, the blame is shared.

Why Beijing cares

For China, the Indus is strategic ground. Chinese firms are building a chain of dams on the river: Tarbela-5, Dasu and Diamer-Bhasha. The river runs alongside the Karakoram Highway, which links Pakistan to China. Building a client state's water and power systems gives Beijing leverage over a nuclear-armed neighbour of India, and a land route towards the Arabian Sea.

Beijing and Islamabad will keep calling this an "iron brotherhood". But the new inquiry is departmental: WAPDA is investigating itself. If PowerChina's work is implicated again, will Pakistan name it? The answer will show whether Pakistan is China's partner or its client.









India Reached the Moon on Its Own Terms. Beijing's Space Diplomacy Can't Buy Its Trust

As Beijing prepares to fly a Pakistani astronaut aboard Shenzhou-24, an Indian scientist's praise for Chinese cooperation exposes a larger paradox: India can recognise its rival's science, but trust remains elusive amid border tensions and military-space competition.

India has reached the Moon, explored Mars, studied the Sun and demonstrated satellite docking without relying on China. Yet an Indian scientist's praise for Beijing's openness to international experiments has become a talking point in Chinese state media. The contrast is striking. India can acknowledge a strategic rival's scientific achievements even as security disputes complicate cooperation, while China prepares to fly a Pakistani astronaut to its space station. The deeper issue is not whether India respects Chinese science, but whether Beijing's cooperation can overcome the mistrust surrounding its relationship with India.



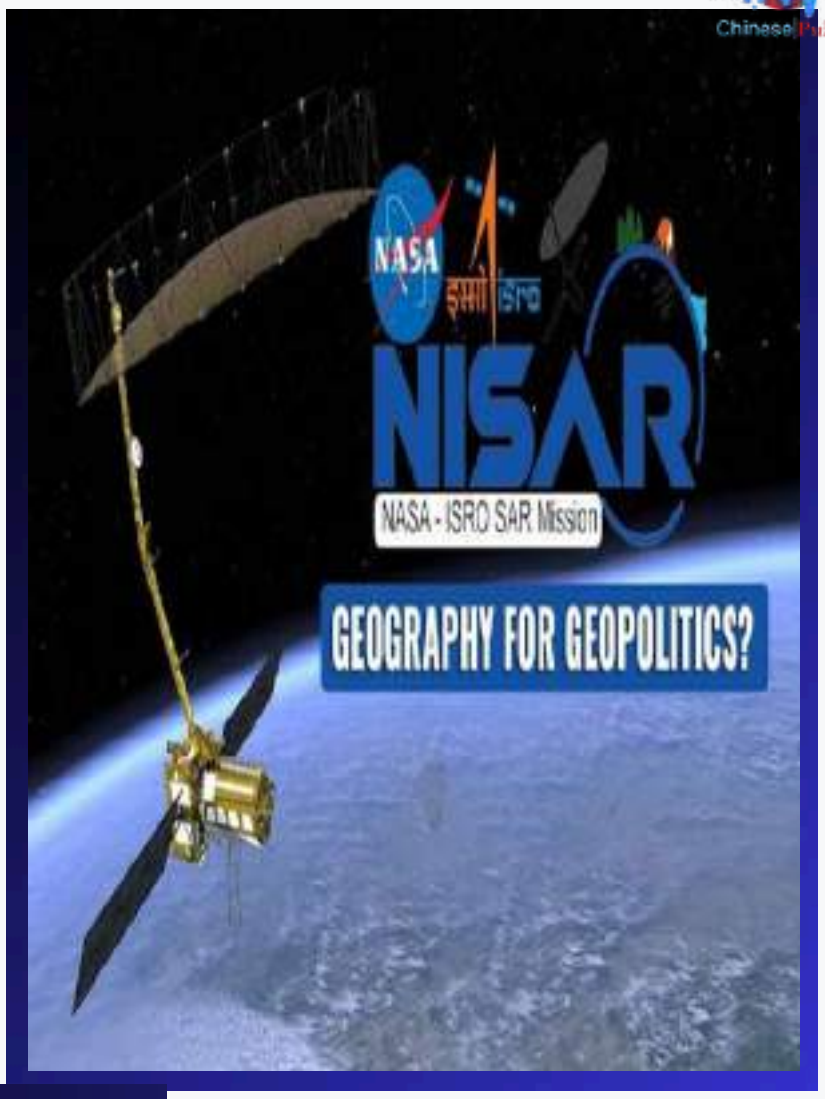
Shenzhou-24: Science Meets Strategy

On November 7, 2026, China announced that a Pakistani astronaut would join Shenzhou-24 as a payload specialist, becoming, according to Reuters, the first foreign visitor to its Tiangong space station. The mission follows a February 2025 agreement; the astronaut's identity and launch date remain unannounced. For Pakistan, it is a major scientific opportunity. For Beijing, it shows how access to advanced infrastructure deepens diplomatic influence, positioning China as the partner for countries seeking capabilities beyond their own reach.

An Indian Scientist's Praise, With Caveats

Against this backdrop, China's Global Times highlighted comments from Indian astrophysicist Jayant Murthy, who leads the Spectroscopic Investigations of Nebular Gas (SING) project, selected in 2019 under a United Nations–China cooperation initiative with researchers from India and Russia. Murthy welcomed China's decision to open its orbital facilities to international researchers, but acknowledged that political considerations and administrative caution had hindered the project.

His appreciation reflects scientific openness, not an endorsement of Chinese foreign policy. Still, the project's reported difficulties with Indian export approvals raise a key question: can scientific cooperation flourish when strategic trust between governments remains fragile?



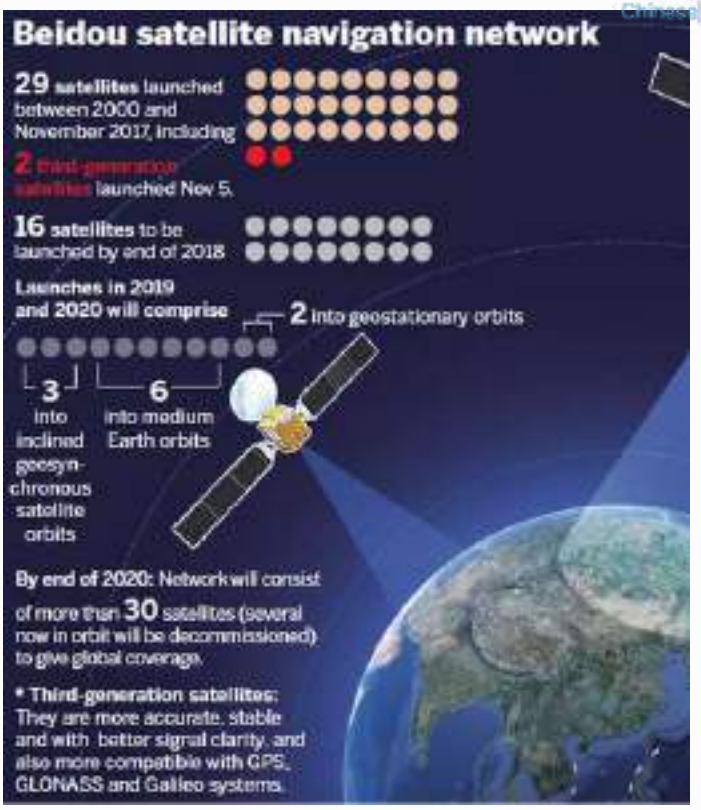


India's Achievements Speak for Themselves

India's international engagement should not be mistaken for dependence. Chandrayaan-3 made a historic lunar landing in August 2023, Aditya-L1 advanced solar research, and the 2025 SpaDeX mission demonstrated autonomous docking. In June 2025, Shubhanshu Shukla flew to the International Space Station aboard Axiom-4 and conducted seven Indian experiments, and the NASA-ISRO NISAR satellite launched in July 2025. India is an independent and internationally connected space power: partnerships matter, but national capability is the foundation of strategic independence.

The Military Shadow Over Space Diplomacy

India's caution cannot be separated from the China-Pakistan security relationship. A Jamestown Foundation investigation documented Pakistan's reported access to military-grade services from China's BeiDou navigation system, which can support aircraft, naval operations and precision weapons. This does not prove Shenzhou-24 has military aims, but it shows that civilian space deals exist within a wider strategic contest. The deadly 2020 Galwan clash also damaged trust, though diplomacy has since eased relations.



Cooperation Must Run Both Ways

India's appreciation of Chinese science shows professional openness despite geopolitical differences. That openness deserves reciprocal transparency, not to be portrayed as proof that New Delhi must accept Beijing's terms. China can promote cooperation while pursuing strategic interests; India can encourage research exchanges while safeguarding sensitive technology. The real test is whether both can separate peaceful research from security risks.



India does not need China's approval to claim its place in space. Its achievements already speak for themselves. The question is whether Beijing and New Delhi can build enough confidence to turn scientific goodwill into real cooperation.



The future of Asian space cooperation should rest on reciprocity, transparency and trust, not political pressure disguised as scientific openness.

IRON BROTHERS, WIDER REACH



China Deepens Its Pakistan Bet as India Watches Closely

China and Pakistan are strengthening their strategic partnership across political, economic and security fronts. The November 1–3 visit to Islamabad of Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, carried significance beyond diplomatic courtesy, signalling a shared intention to expand institutional ties, accelerate connectivity and tighten security coordination amid growing regional competition.

Liu met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir, discussing bilateral relations, regional security, trade, investment and infrastructure.

POLITICS BEYOND GOVERNMENT DIPLOMACY

Sharif stressed sustained exchanges between the CPC and Pakistani political parties, building relationships that endure beyond government-to-government meetings. Talks also covered governance, capacity-building and cultural

exchanges, while Dar emphasised people-to-people ties. For Beijing, this offers another channel of influence in Pakistan; for Islamabad, China's development and governance experience offers a model to draw on.

CPEC REMAINS THE BACKBONE

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship of China's Belt and Road Initiative, links western China with Pakistan's transport and maritime infrastructure, especially the strategic Gwadar port. Its next phase, CPEC 2.0, is expected to focus on industry, agricultural modernisation, technology and special economic zones, and China has signalled willingness to help improve security for corridor projects.

Trade is also being eased. The two countries recently agreed to operationalise a green channel at the Sost-Khunjerab border for agricultural products, simplifying trade with China's Xinjiang region. The recently launched China-Pakistan Information Corridor further extends cooperation into media and institutional exchanges.







SECURITY TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Security featured prominently in Liu's talks with Field Marshal Munir, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to closer cooperation. The emphasis is tied to China's growing economic footprint: militant attacks on Chinese personnel and projects have made protecting CPEC a major concern for Beijing.

Deeper security cooperation therefore serves both economic and strategic ends, safeguarding infrastructure while strengthening the wider relationship. Notably, the visit reinforced existing commitments rather than producing new treaties; official statements announced no fresh defence or economic agreements

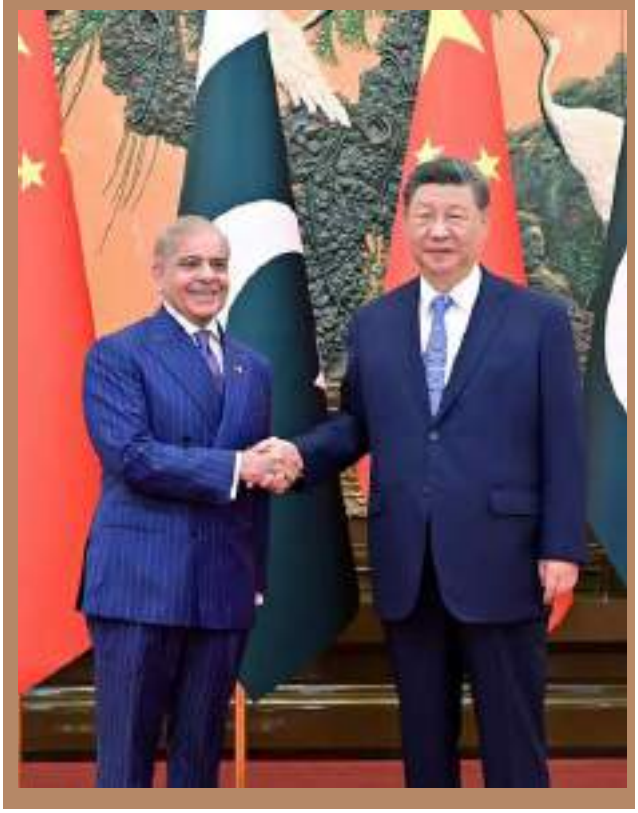
WHY INDIA IS WATCHING CLOSELY

The deepening partnership has direct implications for India's security. New Delhi's principal objection remains CPEC, parts of which pass through Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, territory India claims. Closer coordination between China's political leadership and Pakistan's military establishment, and growing Chinese involvement in Pakistan's infrastructure, technology and security, could strengthen Beijing's long-term position in India's neighbourhood, adding to the challenges on India's western and northern borders.

India has not remained passive. It has consistently objected to CPEC, strengthened border infrastructure and surveillance, raised military preparedness and expanded strategic ties with the United States, Japan, Australia and France. Through the Chabahar port in Iran and the International North-South Transport Corridor, it is also building regional trade links that bypass Pakistan, protecting its territorial interests while widening its economic and diplomatic reach.







A PARTNERSHIP WITH REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Liu's visit shows that China and Pakistan intend to stay closely aligned across political, economic and security institutions. Beijing sees Pakistan as central to its connectivity strategy; Islamabad values Chinese investment, technology and diplomatic backing. Yet the partnership will be judged by delivery: security, financial sustainability and real benefits for Pakistan's people will decide how far these commitments go.

The message is clear. The expanding China-Pakistan relationship demands sustained diplomatic vigilance, stronger domestic capabilities and a long-term regional strategy. No longer simply a bilateral friendship, it is increasingly shaping South Asia's strategic balance.

From DNA To Domination



THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEBATE SURROUNDING CHINA'S BIOTECH INDUSTRY

From Uyghur genetic surveillance and forced-labour allegations to threats of retaliation, China's expanding technological reach is raising troubling questions about human rights, national security and global accountability.

What happens when technology designed to save lives becomes a tool for controlling them? On October 29, 2026, Washington formally expanded restrictions against three Chinese biotechnology companies BGI Genomics, MGI Tech and Shenzhen BGI Technology, also known as BGI Group over alleged involvement in forced labour and genetic surveillance targeting Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang, known to many Uyghurs as East Turkistan. According to Reuters, American authorities moved to block imports from these companies under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Days later, Beijing threatened countermeasures against a separate American ban on Chinese electronics-testing laboratories.

Together, these developments expose a disturbing question: how far has China's ruling Communist Party allowed technology, commercial ambition and political repression to become intertwined?

WHY AMERICA TARGETED CHINA'S BIOTECHNOLOGY GIANTS

The American restrictions were not merely another episode in Washington's trade confrontation with Beijing. According to the Associated Press, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security accused the three companies of involvement in activities connected to forced labour, including genetic-testing programmes supporting Xinjiang authorities.



Official findings allege that BGI Group and BGI Genomics conducted testing linked to coercive labour transfers, while MGI supplied genetic-testing capabilities. Under the legislation, imports connected to listed entities are presumed prohibited unless stringent conditions are met. The three additions brought the U.S. list to 190 entities, illustrating the extensive corporate network under scrutiny. BGI and MGI rejected the allegations, denying involvement in forced labour. Yet the central concern remains: when companies provide powerful biological technologies to authorities accused of systematic repression, their responsibility cannot simply end at the laboratory door.

FROM MEDICAL RESEARCH TO INSTRUMENTS OF CONTROL

For Uyghur families, the implications extend far beyond international trade. DNA contains deeply personal information, revealing biological relationships and identities that individuals cannot replace like passwords. Al Jazeera previously reported Human Rights Watch findings about Chinese authorities collecting DNA, fingerprints and other biometric information across Xinjiang. Meanwhile, The Guardian documented the retraction of genetics research papers amid concerns over consent and the use of samples from vulnerable populations, including Uyghurs. These revelations raise questions about whether scientific progress can be separated from an authoritarian state's surveillance ambitions. The danger is not genetic research itself; it is the potential transformation of intimate biological information into another instrument of government control. When meaningful consent and independent oversight disappear, medical innovation risks becoming an extension of state power.



BEIJING'S RETALIATION THREAT DEEPENS INTERNATIONAL DISTRUST

Instead of reassuring international partners about transparency, Beijing has responded confrontationally to Washington's latest technology restrictions. On October 29, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission voted to exclude Chinese laboratories from testing electronic equipment for the American market, with implementation planned for December 2028. According to Reuters, regulators cited security concerns and the lack of reciprocal access for American laboratories. The following day, Reuters reported China's warning of countermeasures if Washington proceeded. This electronics-testing dispute is separate from the BGI forced-labour import restrictions, but both reflect deteriorating technological trust. Beijing says it favours negotiations, yet threatening retaliation while dismissing foreign concerns risks reinforcing suspicions that political pressure matters more to its leadership than transparent accountability.

THE WORLD CANNOT IGNORE THE HUMAN COST

China's ambitions extend beyond genomics. Investigations have connected Xinjiang's coercive labour programmes to international manufacturing supply chains, including textiles and solar materials. Al Jazeera highlighted research linking solar production to forced-labour concerns, demonstrating how alleged abuses can travel through otherwise ordinary commercial products. As Chinese technological and industrial companies expand internationally, governments and businesses face a responsibility to investigate their supply chains rather than accept assurances without scrutiny.



Washington's restrictions alone cannot protect every vulnerable community, and allegations require evidence and fair examination. But the underlying warning is unmistakable: when a government accused of mass repression gains unprecedented access to human DNA, surveillance systems and global markets, the consequences can cross borders. The world must decide whether technological progress will protect human dignity or help powerful governments strip it away. For Uyghurs, that question is not theoretical. It is about freedom, security and the right to live without fear.

Bangladesh: Chinese Weapons Across Three Military Services

Bangladesh operates Chinese-origin F-7BGI fighter aircraft, K-8 trainers, MBT-2000 and VT-5 tanks, short-range air-defence systems, Type 056 corvettes and Ming-class submarines. Dhaka's preference reflects competitive prices, established military relationships, training support and the need to modernise equipment without relying exclusively on Western suppliers. The Jamestown Foundation has documented the depth of China-Bangladesh defence cooperation, including submarine facilities and joint exercises. India must monitor these developments, particularly around the Bay of Bengal, while recognising Bangladesh's sovereign right to modernise its military.

Sri Lanka: A Long History of Chinese Military Assistance

Sri Lanka has historically used Chinese F-7 fighter jets, K-8 trainers, Y-12 transport aircraft, artillery, rocket launchers and naval patrol craft. During its civil war, Chinese military supplies provided Colombo with relatively accessible equipment for combat operations. The relationship has continued through broader diplomatic and defence engagement. For India, Sri Lanka's importance lies in its location along major Indian Ocean shipping routes, although Chinese weapons sales do not establish that Colombo is part of any anti-India military arrangement.

Nepal: Limited Weapons, Significant Geography

Nepal has received Chinese-origin small arms and ammunition, while proposals involving armoured personnel carriers, tactical vehicles and rifles have also attracted attention. Kathmandu's interest





reflects military equipment needs and a desire to diversify international partnerships. Unlike Pakistan or Bangladesh, Nepal is not a major operator of sophisticated Chinese combat platforms. Nevertheless, its position between India and China makes even limited defence cooperation strategically relevant.

Afghanistan: Chinese Weapons Through Historical Networks

Chinese-origin Type 56 rifles, Type 69 anti-armour weapons, mortars and grenade launchers have circulated in Afghanistan for decades. Much of this equipment entered through historical military assistance, indirect transfers and battlefield capture, particularly during conflicts beginning in the Soviet–Afghan War. Affordability, durability and availability explain their widespread use. However, possession of Chinese weapons by Afghan armed groups does not necessarily demonstrate recent direct Chinese government supply.

Maldives: Defence Cooperation Without Major Combat Weapons

The Maldives signed a military assistance agreement with China in March 2024 covering non-lethal equipment and military training. The agreement reflects Malé's intention to diversify security partnerships and strengthen its defence capabilities. Unlike Pakistan or Bangladesh, the Maldives has no publicly verified major Chinese-made combat weapons in operational service. Bhutan, meanwhile, has no confirmed major Chinese weapons in its military inventory.





Why Countries Choose Chinese Weapons

Several factors explain China's growing defence exports: competitive prices, financing arrangements, accessible military technology, established relationships and the possibility of joint production. China also benefits. Weapons sales generate revenue, create long-term servicing relationships and strengthen diplomatic engagement. SIPRI identifies China as the world's fifth-largest major arms exporter during 2021–2025, accounting for 5.6% of international major arms transfers. Pakistan received 61% of China's exports during that period.

What This Means for India

China's weapons exports have created an extensive network of defence relationships around India, but each neighbouring country's motivations and level of military dependence differ. For New Delhi, the challenge is to strengthen military preparedness, expand indigenous defence production and deepen regional partnerships without assuming that every Chinese arms purchase represents hostility.

The real strategic significance of China's weapons trade lies not only in the aircraft, missiles and warships it delivers, but in the lasting military relationships built around them. India's security will depend on understanding those relationships and responding with technological strength, diplomatic confidence and sustained strategic preparedness.



ARMING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHINA'S WEAPONS WEB IN SOUTH ASIA

From Pakistan's advanced fighter jets to Bangladesh's submarines and Sri Lanka's military aircraft, Chinese weapons are becoming an important factor in South Asia's changing security landscape.

China's Arms Expansion South Asian Security

China is expanding its military influence across South Asia not only through diplomacy and infrastructure investment, but also through fighter aircraft, missiles, tanks, submarines and defence cooperation. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are established users of Chinese-made weapons, while Nepal, Afghanistan and the Maldives have different levels of military engagement with Beijing. Behind these relationships lie affordable equipment, financing, strategic partnerships and China's ambition to strengthen its position in the region. For India, the concern extends beyond weapons themselves to the long-term military dependence and geopolitical influence they may create.

Pakistan: The Centre of China's Military Partnership

Pakistan is China's most important defence customer. Its military operates J-10CE and jointly developed JF-17 fighter aircraft, PL-15E missiles, HQ-9/P and LY-80 air-defence systems, VT-4 tanks, SH-15 howitzers and Chinese-built frigates. Cooperation also includes the Hangor-class submarine programme. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China supplied 80% of Pakistan's major arms imports during 2021–2025. Pakistan buys Chinese weapons to modernise its armed forces, counter India's military capabilities and obtain equipment through a longstanding strategic partnership. For Beijing, Pakistan provides a major export market and an important regional security relationship.

satire

China–Japan row over Taiwan sparks travel warning and cancellations.



Official housing figures showed a slump in the property sector.



Data showed China's October exports declined 1.1%.



Report highlighted factory-gate deflation and industrial overcapacity.



Taken at Fourteen

RAHILE ÖMER AND THE QUESTIONS CHINA WILL NOT ANSWER





Leaked police files show a Uyghur schoolgirl was detained in 2017, aged just 14. A report now says she died in a camp. Beijing has offered no answer.

Fourteen is an age for classrooms, friendships and plans for the future. For Rahile Ömer, it became the age at which she was taken away. Leaked Chinese police records show she was detained on September 28, 2017. Her photograph, a teenage face staring into a police camera, became one of the images through which the world came to see China's mass detention of Uyghurs. Now the outlet Uygur Haber reports that she died in the camp where she was held. That claim has not been independently confirmed, and that uncertainty is itself part of the story.

A face behind the statistics

Rahile's image surfaced through the Xinjiang Police Files, published in May 2022: photographs, detention records, internal instructions and official speeches taken from police computer systems. A BBC investigation found more than 5,000 photographs taken between January and July 2018, with at least 2,884 of those pictured recorded as detained. Journalists checked the material against relatives' accounts and contacted officials named in the files. Among the identified detainees in that collection, Rahile was the youngest, though not necessarily the youngest person held in Xinjiang.



Guilty of being a daughter

Why would a schoolgirl be detained? According to Uygur Haber and analysis by researcher Adrian Zenz, Rahile was the youngest daughter of a detained government employee. Her record was reportedly linked to a notice from the Integrated Joint Operations Platform, a police system that pools surveillance data and flags individuals for action. Speaking to PBS NewsHour, Zenz said the files show no wrongdoing by Rahile herself; her detention was tied to her father's. Holding a child responsible for a parent's alleged conduct is collective punishment, and Beijing has never explained it.



A death without a record

The report of her death leaves the most basic questions open. When did she die? Who told her family? Is there a death certificate? What happened after her photograph was taken? Uygur Haber provides none of these details, so no date, cause or account of her final days can be confirmed. Yet the absence of proof does not weaken the demand for answers; it strengthens it. China should disclose where Rahile is and how she is, or, if she has died, release records that can be independently examined.







The system behind the photograph

The wider files contradict Beijing's claim that these facilities were voluntary vocational training centres. A Voice of America fact-check describes armed security procedures, interrogation photographs and instructions authorising guards to open fire in certain escape situations. A BBC reconstruction of one facility showed security arrangements far removed from any school. China has dismissed the leaks as fabricated. None of this proves what happened to Rahile, but it shows why independent scrutiny is essential.

A name, not a question mark

Readers should not have to choose between an unverified death report and official silence. The standard must be evidence, independent access and accountability. A child's right to grow up safely cannot depend on her ethnicity, her faith or her father's file. Beijing owes Rahile Ömer's family the truth about why she was taken and what became of her, and her community should not have to beg for it.





PLA MILITARY UPDATE



PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

PLA MILITARY UPDATE



CHINA MOBILISES 279 AIRCRAFT FOR SUSPECTED RED SWORD EXERCISE

Satellite analysis identified 279 Chinese military aircraft across 11 western airbases, including J-20 fighters, H-6 bombers and KJ-500 aircraft, suggesting large-scale air-combat coordination.

CHINA EXPANDS NAVAL DRILLS AROUND TAIWAN

China conducted unannounced naval exercises across the Western Pacific, involving over 100 vessels at peak strength. Taiwan reported simulated attacks and blockade-related operations by PLA forces.





CHINA REPORTS FIRST GJ-21 DRONE FLIGHT FROM SICHUAN

China reported on 30 October that its GJ-21 stealth drone took off and landed aboard the Type 076 amphibious assault ship Sichuan for the first time during sea trials

PLA MILITARY UPDATE



PLA CONDUCTS PHZ-11 ROCKET ARTILLERY DRILL IN TIBET

A PLA rocket artillery unit under the Xizang Military Command conducted PHZ-11 live-fire exercises on the Tibetan Plateau, practising individual firing, coordinated battery salvos and rapid reloading to improve operational readiness and precision-strike capabilities

PLA BRIGADE MANDATES COUNTER-DRONE TRAINING

A brigade of China's PLA 75th Group Army made counter-drone training compulsory after a thermal-imaging drone detected concealed infantry during an exercise that resulted in simulated casualties, PLA Daily reported.





CHINA AND INDONESIA COMPLETE JOINT COUNTERTERRORISM EXERCISE

Chinese and Indonesian troops completed the third Sharp Knife joint training series in Guangzhou. The exercise featured mountain counterterrorism, covert infiltration, coordinated rescue missions, search operations and clearance drills to strengthen military cooperation.

China's Water Politics and India's Hydropower Push in Arunachal Pradesh



Development, Security and the Battle for Public Trust

India's expanding hydropower programme in Arunachal Pradesh is more than an electricity initiative. It represents an effort to improve local livelihoods, build roads, create employment, strengthen flood protection and safeguard national water security against China's growing upstream control. Beijing's massive dam construction in Tibet has intensified concerns over the Brahmaputra river system, while competing narratives threaten to complicate India's development plans.Yet the real challenge is not simply countering Chinese influence: it is ensuring that Arunachal's indigenous communities become genuine beneficiaries of development, with their land, environment and rights protected. India's strongest response to Beijing will be infrastructure built through transparency, public confidence and lasting local prosperity.

China's Upstream Dam Raises Strategic Concerns

The Siang River enters Arunachal Pradesh from Tibet, where it is known as the Yarlung Tsangpo, before flowing into Assam as the Brahmaputra. China's massive hydropower development near the Indian border has transformed the river into an increasingly sensitive geopolitical issue. In July 2025, Beijing began construction of a project estimated to cost nearly $170 billion, raising questions about downstream water availability, flood risks and the sharing of hydrological information. A Jamestown Foundation analysis highlighted uncertainty surrounding the project's environmental consequences and the absence of a comprehensive water-sharing agreement. For India, these concerns are not theoretical. Millions of people in northeastern India depend on the Brahmaputra basin for agriculture, transportation and livelihoods.

India's Hydro power Development: Beyond Electricity

India is pursuing several hydropower projects across Arunachal Pradesh, including the proposed 11,200 MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project and the 1,720 MW Kamala project. The Kamala project received central government investment approval in April 2026, with an estimated expenditure of ₹26,069.50 crore. Its planned benefits extend beyond power generation. The government has outlined approximately 196 kilometres of roads and bridges, improved connectivity, employment opportunities, local development funding and investments in essential community infrastructure. Arunachal Pradesh is also expected to receive 12% free electricity, with an additional 1% earmarked for local area development. These are significant commitments for remote communities that have long faced difficult terrain, limited infrastructure and restricted economic opportunities.

Local Employment, Roads and Better Living Standards

Hydropower projects could create new economic opportunities for Arunachal's young population. Construction requires technicians, engineers, drivers, transport workers, equipment operators and local service providers. Improved roads could reduce travel difficulties and expand access to markets, hospitals and educational institutions. In February 2026, the Arunachal Pradesh cabinet approved employment-reservation provisions and lifetime annuity arrangements for affected families associated with certain hydropower projects. These measures



show that development policy is increasingly addressing local participation and longer-term financial benefits. However, the promises must translate into actual jobs, compensation and infrastructure. Employment projections cannot be treated as accomplished results before projects become operational.

China's Narrative and the Information Battle

Beijing has defended its own upstream hydropower programme, arguing that it will not damage downstream interests. Yet independent research has questioned the transparency of China's project information and the strength of its assurances. A critical distinction must be maintained: although China's official messaging seeks to reduce international concern about its upstream projects, there is currently insufficient verified evidence to establish that Beijing orchestrated the local protests against Indian dams. Nevertheless, competing narratives over hydropower create an information environment in which China could benefit strategically from delays to India's water-security planning. The appropriate response is public disclosure, independent scientific assessment and direct engagement with affected communities not dismissing every critical voice as foreign propaganda.

Local Support Must Become the Foundation

Arunachal Pradesh's communities are not united behind a single position. Some residents have supported preliminary studies and potential development benefits. In June 2026, 110 households reportedly signed an agreement supporting pre-feasibility work for the Siang project. Others have strongly opposed the proposal because of possible displacement, environmental damage and threats to ancestral land. Protests were still being reported in October 2026. These concerns deserve serious consideration. India's democratic strength lies in recognising that local communities are stakeholders, not obstacles. Genuine consent, fair compensation, rehabilitation and environmental safeguards will determine whether hydropower becomes a lasting success.

National Security and Regional Stability

Hydropower also carries strategic significance for India's northeastern frontier. Reservoirs designed with adequate safety margins could help moderate certain flood events, improve dry-season water management and strengthen energy security. Reliable electricity and transport infrastructure could support economic activity across Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. But these benefits require rigorous technical assessment, particularly in a seismically active Himalayan region. India must demonstrate that its projects combine national security with scientific responsibility and local welfare.



Development Through Trust, Not Fear

China's upstream hydropower expansion has created legitimate concerns for India. Arunachal Pradesh's development cannot remain hostage to regional uncertainty, but neither should national security become a justification for overlooking indigenous rights. India's opportunity is to establish a better model of development: transparent projects, meaningful public participation, secure livelihoods and measurable benefits for local families.

The strongest answer to China's growing influence is not simply a bigger dam. It is a stronger Arunachal Pradesh where development protects the people, strengthens national sovereignty and earns the confidence of the communities it is intended to serve.



X CORNER



PLA Live-Fire Drill in Tianshan Mountains

Chinese PLA Xinjiang Command soldiers perform multi-weapon live-fire shooting assessment in the Tianshan Mountains, using rifles, machine guns, and anti-tank rockets.



PLA's Largest Air Drill in Years Revealed by Satellites

Satellite images show over 300 PLA aircraft massed at 11 western bases for Red Sword 2026, testing integrated large-scale airpower.

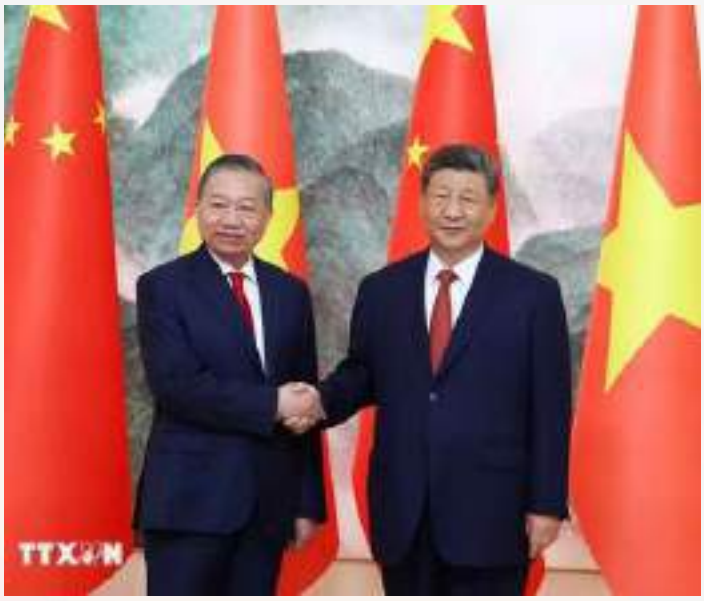


China's GJ-11 Stealth Drone: The Most Menacing Flying-Wing UCAV in Service

China's GJ-11 stealth flying-wing UCAV is called the world's most menacing-looking drone by a PLA account. Recent PLAAF 77th anniversary footage reveals its design, internal weapon bays, and a claimed first live-fire strike, confirming its operational status for deep-strike and SEAD missions.B

IMPORTANT VISITS

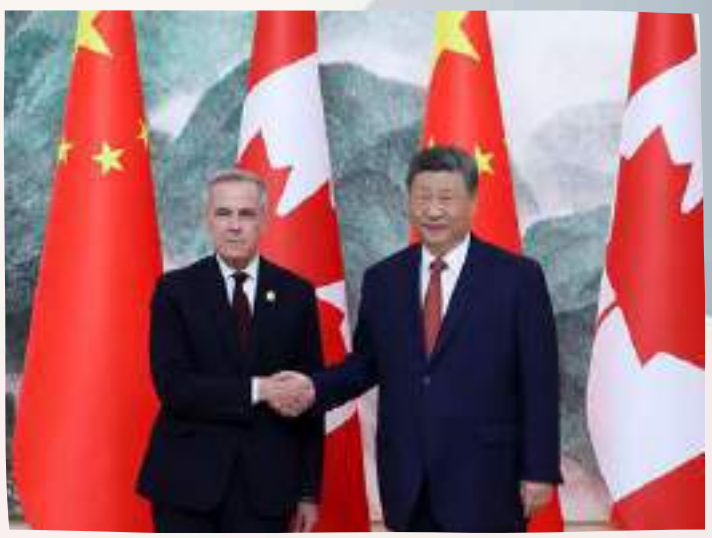
Vietnamese President To Lam Meets Xi Jinping in Shenzhen



Vietnamese President To Lam met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Shenzhen on 17 November 2026, ahead of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. To Lam called for faster progress on cross-border railway projects and stronger electricity links. Xi pledged China's support for Vietnam's hosting of APEC in 2027.

Carney Meets Xi in Shenzhen

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Shenzhen on 17 November. They agreed to extend their trade arrangement through 2028, expanding tariff relief to about C$400 million in Canadian pork and seafood exports. Canada will extend tariff relief on certain Chinese steel and aluminium products.



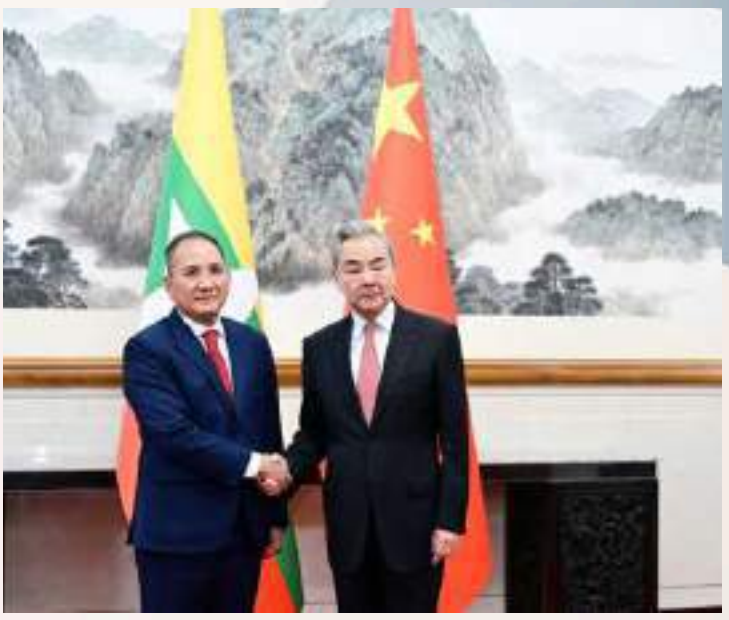
Li Qiang Advances China–ASEAN Trade Ties in Manila



Chinese Premier Li Qiang attended the China–ASEAN Summit in Manila on 16 November 2026, urging closer supply-chain ties and better regional transport links under the upgraded trade pact. India held its own ASEAN summit the next day, underscoring Southeast Asia's importance to both countries' economic diplomacy.

Myanmar Minister Visits Beijing for Economic Corridor Talks

Myanmar minister U Aung Kyaw Hoe met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on 3 November. Both sides backed faster progress on the China–Myanmar Economic Corridor. For India, the talks highlight Myanmar's importance as a transit partner for the Kaladan project, which aims to link Sittwe port with Mizoram.





Beyond the Border, Still in Danger: The Hidden Cost of China's Security Push



China's expanding intelligence cooperation with Tajikistan raises fears of Uyghur surveillance, cross-border repression and forced returns, as documented cases in Türkiye show how vulnerable Uyghur families abroad remain.

A BORDER THAT NO LONGER OFFERS SAFETY

For Uyghurs fleeing repression, crossing China's borders does not always mean escaping its reach. Beijing's push for stronger intelligence cooperation with Tajikistan has renewed fears that security partnerships could expose refugees and diaspora communities to surveillance, detention and forced repatriation.

On October 19, 2026, Chinese Premier Li Qiang urged Tajik President Emomali Rahmon to strengthen intelligence sharing, law enforcement coordination and joint action against terrorism, separatism and extremism, Reuters reported. No agreement targeting Uyghurs was announced, but the proposal raises a critical question: could expanding security cooperation make neighbouring countries dangerous for Uyghurs seeking protection?

CHINA'S SECURITY NETWORK REACHES CENTRAL ASIA



Tajikistan shares a mountainous frontier with Xinjiang, known to many Uyghurs as East Turkistan. Beijing views instability there as a threat, particularly after deadly attacks on Chinese nationals in Tajikistan in 2025.

China frames its agenda as combating the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism. But human rights groups have documented how such broad allegations have been used against Uyghurs engaged in peaceful political or religious activity. The concern is not legitimate border cooperation, but whether shared intelligence could help authorities identify activists, track them or detain them without safeguards.



SURVEILLANCE AND RAIDS ABROAD



The pressure on Uyghurs overseas is already documented. Human Rights Watch reports that Chinese authorities monitor diaspora communities, intimidate activists and pressure relatives in Xinjiang, silencing many who might speak out.



Türkiye, long a refuge for Uyghurs, shows another troubling trend. A November 2025 Human Rights Watch investigation found Turkish authorities increasingly labelling Uyghur residents as public-security threats through immigration codes, often without credible individual evidence.

This has exposed Uyghurs to detention, immigration raids and possible deportation. The organisation identified 33 publicly reported cases of Uyghurs held in Turkish deportation centres between December 2018 and October 2025. For some families, even ordinary daily life has become a source of fear.



ZINNETGUL TURSUN: A MOTHER'S DISAPPEARANCE

In June 2019, Turkish authorities deported Uyghur mother Zinnetgul Tursun and her two young daughters, Hilal Shehinur and Banu Abdullah, to Tajikistan. According to Human Rights Watch, Tajik authorities then returned the family to China. Her sister has had no news of their whereabouts since.

The case shows how deportation through a third country can deliver Uyghurs into danger even when China is not the first destination.



THE GROWING COST OF TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

The danger lies where Chinese security demands meet the immigration practices of neighbouring states. When intelligence is exchanged without transparent safeguards, refugees may be unable to challenge allegations or learn whether the information against them came from Beijing.

China denies systematic abuses in Xinjiang and says its policies address genuine threats. Yet documented intimidation, forced returns and arbitrary detention demand independent scrutiny. The harm reaches beyond detainees: fear of surveillance silences Uyghur journalists, discourages political participation and keeps families apart.



PROTECTING UYGHURS BEYOND BORDERS

Security cooperation must never override refugee protection. The disappearance of Zinnetgul Tursun and her daughters shows what happens when safeguards fail. As Beijing extends its security reach, the real question is whether Uyghurs who escape China's borders can ever find safety beyond them.





POWER PLAY IN SHENZHEN

WHAT APEC 2026 MEANS FOR INDIA

DECISIONS ON TRADE, TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY COULD RESHAPE INDIA'S STRATEGIC CHOICES."

The 2026 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Shenzhen comes at a critical moment, as geopolitical rivalry, protectionism, technological competition and economic uncertainty reshape the global order. The first-ever trilateral meeting between US President Donald Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, alongside Trump-Xi talks, has put the summit at the centre of world attention.

China, hosting APEC for the first time in 12 years, wants to present itself as a champion of free trade and multilateralism. Yet the summit raises a fundamental question: can economic cooperation survive a fragmenting world order? For India, though not an APEC member, the stakes for trade, manufacturing and Indo-Pacific strategy are high.

APEC 2026: BEYOND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Established in 1989, APEC's 21 economies account for about 60 per cent of global GDP and nearly half of world trade. Its consensus-based, voluntary framework promotes trade, investment and cooperation. Under the theme "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together", China is prioritising openness, innovation and cooperation, with discussions expected on the Shenzhen Declaration, artificial intelligence, the digital economy and the long-proposed Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).



TRUMP-XI-PUTIN: THE GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSION

The Trump-Xi-Putin meeting is the summit's most closely watched event. Trump-Xi talks are expected to cover tariffs, semiconductor restrictions, AI, rare-earth minerals and regional security, while the trilateral brings nuclear security and wider conflicts into focus. Stable US-China ties matter for global economic predictability. But engagement is not agreement: the three powers have different priorities, and turning dialogue into results will be hard. The summit shows how economic diplomacy and geopolitical competition now run side by side.



CHINA'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

China aims to use the summit to strengthen its global standing by championing free trade, advancing AI and digital cooperation and widening its diplomatic reach. Persistent disputes over trade practices, technology curbs and regional security, however, may limit what it can deliver.



INDIA AND APEC 2026: STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

India applied for APEC membership in 1991, but its bid remains pending amid limits on expansion. Its absence keeps it out of a key forum shaping Asia-Pacific economics, yet the summit still matters for India in five ways.

- First, manufacturing and supply chains: As firms diversify production, India has openings in electronics, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and renewables, if it improves infrastructure, logistics and regulation.Second, Indo-Pacific connectivity: India's Act East Policy complements cooperation with ASEAN, Japan, Australia and South Korea, creating openings in maritime links, digital infrastructure and trade.
- Third, technology: APEC's focus on AI and the digital economy aligns with India's ambitions in semiconductors and digital public infrastructure.
- Fourth, strategic autonomy: India must balance economic engagement with China against strategic preparedness and stronger Indo-Pacific partnerships.
- Fifth, membership: Sustained diplomacy with existing members can build support for India's eventual inclusion.



CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

APEC has limits: great-power rivalry, tariff disputes and technology curbs can stall cooperation, and its voluntary commitments lack enforcement. For India, the priority is clear: stronger manufacturing, deeper ASEAN ties and tighter integration into Indo-Pacific supply chains.

Though outside APEC, India cannot stay disconnected from forces shaping its own neighbourhood. The emerging order will be decided not only by military power, but by manufacturing, technology and trade.



CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA CORNER

TRENDING ON WEIBO



Questions India's Rafale Capabilities and Reliance on France

Post claims India's Rafale fighter jets have hidden vulnerabilities at long range and rely on France for key technologies, raising questions about India's dependence on its French supplier.



Indian Air Force Officer Accused of Trading Military Secrets for Nude Photos

An Indian Air Force wing commander allegedly shared classified operational plans with a suspected Pakistani intelligence officer in exchange for nude photos, according to Delhi police filings cited by media.



TRENDING ON TikTok

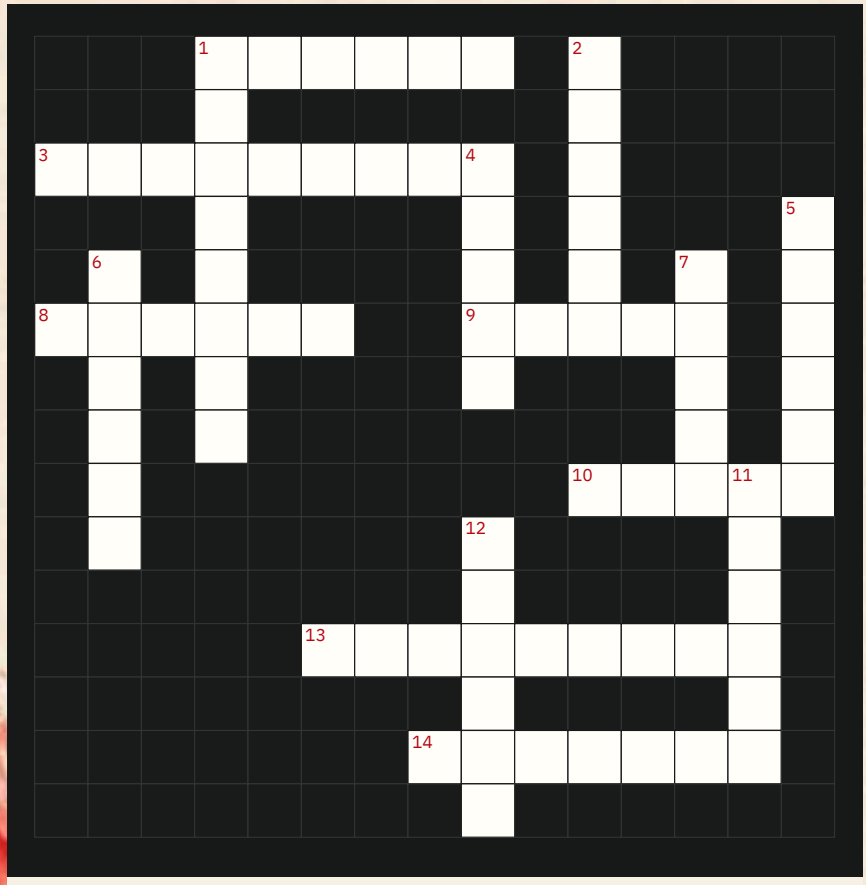
5,000 Chinese Recruits Face Nighttime Readiness Test in Xinjiang

More than 5,000 Chinese military recruits in Xinjiang faced a nighttime emergency drill on November 4, testing rapid responses in cold, low visibility and difficult terrain after roughly 50 days.

CHINA CRISS CROSS

PEOPLE.
POLICY.
POWER.
PUZZLED.

The November issue in 15 clues



One letter per square. Ignore spaces and punctuation.

ACROSS

1. Islandthat Alice Huang visited eight times, according to the cover story. (6)
3. City where the China–Pakistan Information Corridor was launched. (9) River that gives its name to a regional cooperation framework in China Update. (6)
8. Xinjiang city that hosted the Karakoram-2026 joint exercise. (5)
9. Name the Yarlung Tsangpo takes in Arunachal Pradesh. (5)
10. Singapore-based Nvidia cloud partner named in the cover story. (9)
13. Pakistani dam where water entered the Fifth Extension works in November. (7)
14.

DOWN

1. Chinese space station named in the Shenzhou-24 feature. (8)
2. People whose safety abroad is examined in the Tajikistan feature. (6)
4. Bangladeshi capital presented as Delhi in the livestreaming story. (5)
5. Arunachal Pradesh monastery town central to the border and succession feature. (6)
6. Chinese satellite navigation system discussed in the space diplomacy feature. (6)
7. Abbreviation for Pakistan's water and power authority in the Tarbela story. (5)
11. US chipmaker at the centre of this edition's cover story. (6)
12. Pakistani port identified as a strategic part of CPEC. (6)

ACROSS

1. TAIWAN
3. ISLAMABAD
8. MEKONG
9. KORLA
10. SIANG
13. MEGASPEED
14. TARBELA

DOWN

1. TIANGONG
2. UYGHUR
4. DHAKA
5. TAWANG
6. BEIDOU
7. WAPDA
11. NVIDIA
12. GWADAR

Knowledge Blitz

15 QUESTIONS FROM THIS ISSUE



LEVEL 1 / EASY

01 Which US chipmaker is at the centre of the cover story?
02 Which city was passed off as Delhi in the livestreaming story?
03 Which Pakistani dam's Fifth Extension flooded in November?
04 What is the name of China's space station in the Shenzhou-24 feature?
05 Which Indian connectivity project aims to link Myanmar's Sittwe port with Mizoram?

LEVEL 2 / MODERATE

01 Where was the China–Pakistan Information Corridor launched?
02 From which Chinese amphibious assault ship did the GJ-21 reportedly first take off and land during sea trials?
03 What is the planned generating capacity of Arunachal Pradesh's Kamala hydropower project?"
04 Which Central Asian country did Li Qiang urge to increase intelligence sharing?
05 Which former People's Armed Police commander lost his political advisory roles in November?

LEVEL 3 / HARD

01 Which three Chinese biotech companies does the issue name in its account of the 29 October US import restrictions?
02 On what date do China's new public-institution regulations take effect?
03 Which three pillars underpin China–Pakistan cooperation examined in Liu Haixing's visit?
04 What two CPPCC positions did Wang Ning lose?
05 What five areas does the APEC feature identify as important for India?

ANSWER KEY BELOW / ROTATE THE PAGE TO READ

EASY

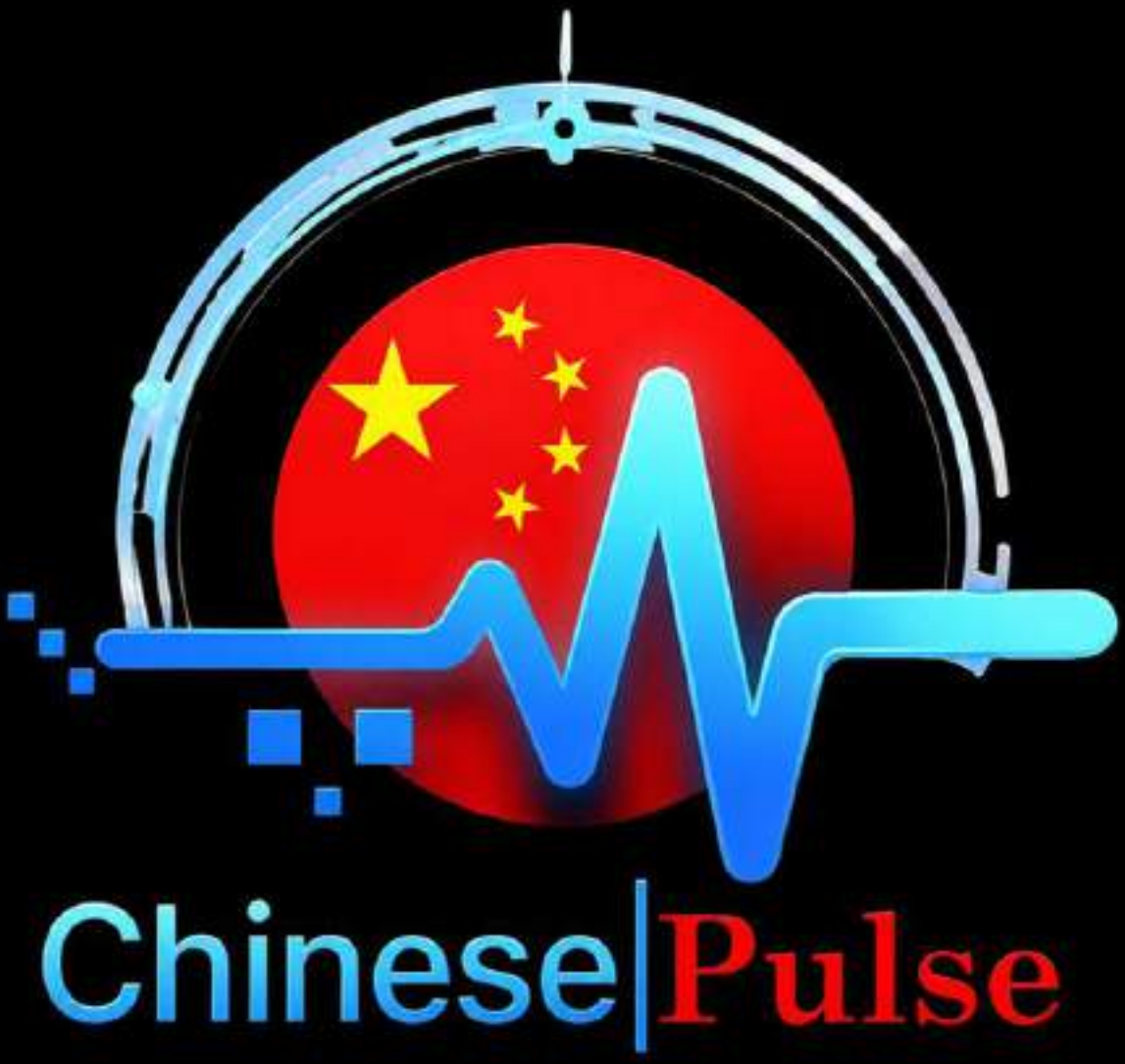
1. Nvidia
2. Dhaka
3. Tarbela
4. Tiangong
5. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project.

MODERATE

1. Islamabad
2. Sichuan
3. Tajikistan
4. 1,720 WW
5. Wang Ning

HARD

1. BGI Genomics, MGI Tech and Shenzhen BGI Technology
2. 1 December 2026
3. Political, economic and security cooperation
4. CPPCC Standing Committee membership and vice-chair of its Foreign Affairs Committee
5. Manufacturing and supply chains, Indo-Pacific connectivity, technology, strategic autonomy and APEC membership.



“EVERY CLAIM OF PROGRESS DESERVES ONE QUESTION: WHO PAID THE PRICE?”

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