



Huayang Biweekly Brief

The South China Sea and China

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AUGUST 16

South China Sea Fishing Activities Resume After Annual Moratorium.

The annual summer fishing moratorium in the South China Sea ended on August 16, marking the resumption of fishing activities. The Hainan Coast Guard conducted coordinated sea-air patrols with vessels and drones and stepped up enforcement against illegal fishing involving “three no” vessels (no name, no certificates, no port of registry). Meanwhile, Sansha City deployed additional fisheries support vessels to assist fleets operating farther offshore in the South China Sea.

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CCG Vessel *Chuanshan* Prepares for Tropical Storm in Waters off Huangyan Dao.

While conducting a routine law-enforcement patrol in the waters off Huangyan Dao, the CCG vessel *Chuanshan* stepped up safety precautions and implemented comprehensive storm-preparedness measures. Coast guard crews reinforced storm mooring lines and conducted safety inspections to address potential hazards. The vessel continued to monitor weather and sea conditions and remained on 24-hour emergency standby.

CCG Vessel *Hailing* Conducts Firefighting and Rescue Drills.

While conducting routine patrol and watch duty, the CCG vessel *Hailing* used a break between patrol operations to conduct deck drills on the use of firefighting suits, knot-tying, flag signaling, and self-rescue and mutual-rescue techniques. The training strengthened the crew’s emergency-response capabilities to operational readiness to safeguard China’s maritime rights and interests.

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China Responds to U.S.-Philippine Illegal Fishing Reporting Center in Palawan.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said China had noted reports that the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines had announced the establishment of a center in Palawan to assist Filipino fishermen report suspected illegal fishing activities, adding that China would closely follow developments. He said exchanges and cooperation

Key Takeaways

- Fishing resumes in South China Sea following the annual moratorium, with the Hainan Coast Guard and Sansha City supporting lawful, orderly and safe fishing operations.
- China and Indonesia held two strategic dialogues, advocating an Asian security model aimed at maintaining regional peace and stability.
- PLA Southern Theater Command responded to Philippine air incursions and joint patrols.
- China rejected Philippine defense chief’s allegations of interference in the country’s domestic affairs.
- Chinese sources rejected foreign media speculation about radar facilities near Lingyang Jiao, describing the construction as civilian in nature.



Maritime patrol vessels stand watch on the Chinese side of the Beilun River estuary. During the drill, the two sides completed a series of exercises involving the receipt and relay of distress alerts, verification of the distressed vessel's situation, cross-border search-and-rescue coordination and notification, and coordination for the transfer of injured crew members. The drill proceeded smoothly, with efficient communication throughout, reflecting the search- and-rescue principle that "distress is a command, time is life, and unity is strength." Photo credit: GXNEWS.

between countries should help enhance mutual understanding and trust among regional countries and contribute to regional peace and stability. China does not oppose normal cooperation between the U.S. and the Philippines, he added, but such cooperation should neither target any third party nor harm its interests.

China and Vietnam Conduct Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Communications Drill.

The Guangxi Maritime Search and Rescue Center of China and the Vietnam Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Center Region I conducted a joint maritime search and rescue communications drill. The exercise simulated a Chinese-flagged container ship, *YH*, suffering a main-engine control failure and becoming distressed in waters off Ha Long Bay, Vietnam. Through information sharing, distress verification and emergency coordination, the two sides tested their emergency communications and coordinated response capabilities.

Both sides agreed to use the exercise as an opportunity to deepen maritime cooperation, jointly ensure safe, convenient, efficient and unimpeded shipping along China-ASEAN international routes, and develop a pioneering area for China-ASEAN maritime cooperation.

Timor-Leste President José Ramos-Horta Meets with Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun.

Timor-Leste President José Ramos-Horta met with visiting Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun in Dili. Ramos-Horta expressed gratitude for China's long-standing support and assistance since Timor-Leste gained independence and called for deeper practical cooperation between the two countries' armed forces. He reaffirmed Timor-Leste's commitment to the one-China policy and expressed readiness to work with China and other regional countries to build the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship, and cooperation.

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Hainan Coast Guard Completes Summer Fishing Moratorium Enforcement Campaign in the South China Sea.

The Hainan Coast Guard completed its 2026 enforcement campaign for the summer fishing moratorium in the South China Sea. During the campaign, it investigated 18 fisheries-related cases involving 18 vessels, more than 13,000 kilograms of catch and 18 individuals. The campaign helped curb fisheries-related violations and reinforce compliance with the fishing moratorium.

The 57th JWG-DOC Meeting Held in Manila, Philippines.

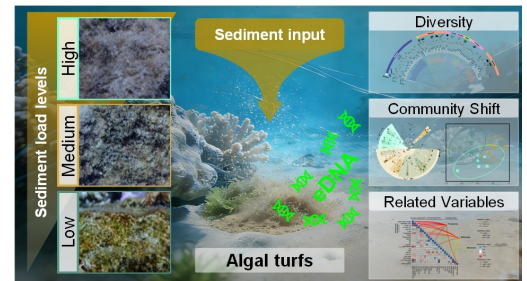
From August 19 to 21, China and ten ASEAN parties held the 57th meeting of the Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (JWG-DOC) in Manila, the Philippines. The parties continued to advance consultations on the *Code of Conduct in the South China Sea* (COC). The meeting was co-chaired by Tan Qingsheng, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Datin Paduka Dr. Adina Kamarudin, Director-General of the Department of Maritime Affairs of Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

AUGUST 20

Study Reveals Effects of Sediment Load on Biodiversity of Coral Reef Algal Turfs.

A research team specializing in coastal eco-environments and ecological security at the State Key Laboratory of Tropical Oceanography and Island Reef Ecology, South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, reported new findings on coral reef conservation. The team conducted systematic field surveys across sediment-load gradients on representative coral reefs in the South China Sea.

The study shows that sediment load was closely associated with lower diversity among primary producers in algal turfs. In long, sediment-laden algal turfs, the increasing dominance of cyanobacteria and decline of eukaryotic algae may weaken the primary productivity base of coral reef ecosystems. These changes may also exacerbate ecological degradation by suppressing grazing herbivorous fish. These findings provide an important scientific basis for comprehensively assessing the ecological risks posed by sediment inputs to coral reef ecosystems.



A research team from the State Key Laboratory of Tropical Oceanography and Island Reef Ecology at the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, investigated the effects of sediment load on the biodiversity within coral reef algal turfs using environmental DNA metabarcoding. Sediment input is among the most serious threats facing coral reef ecosystems globally. Over 40% of the world's coral reefs are currently at risk from sediment input, which can reduce water clarity and light availability, directly smother corals and inhibit their growth, and disrupt feeding by fish. Photo credit: SCSIO.CAS.



The Second Ministerial Meeting of the China-Indonesia Joint Foreign and Defense Dialogue was held in Jakarta. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Defense Minister Dong Jun co-chaired the meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono and Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsuddin. The two sides conducted in-depth strategic discussions and reached consensus on a range of important issues. They agreed to translate the consensus reached at the meeting into tangible outcomes, set an example for the solidarity and self-strengthening among developing countries, and contribute to safeguard peace and development. Photo credit: MFA, PRC.

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China and Indonesia Convene High-Level Strategic Dialogues in Jakarta.

China and Indonesia convened two key bilateral dialogues in Jakarta: the Second Ministerial Meeting of the China-Indonesia Joint Foreign and Defense Dialogue and the first Conference of the China-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Dialogue Mechanism. At the “2+2” dialogue, the two sides jointly advocated a security model for Asia characterized by sharing weal and woe, seeking common ground while setting aside differences, and resolving disputes through dialogue and consultation. They also agreed to safeguard the overall momentum of regional cooperation and maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea.

PLA Southern Theater Command Responds to Philippine Air and Maritime Activities in the South China Sea.

Senior Colonel Li Jianjian, spokesperson for the PLA Southern Theater Command Air Force, said three small Philippine aircraft—an Islander, a C-208, and a PA-31T—had entered what China considers the territorial airspace of Huangyan Dao without Chinese government approval. Li said the Southern Theater Command deployed air and naval forces to track and monitor the aircraft and issue radio warnings in accordance with laws and regulations. He described the Philippine action as a serious violation of China’s sovereignty that could easily lead to misunderstanding and miscalculation and urged the Philippines to immediately cease what he called infringements and provocations. Li added that theater command forces remained on high alert and would resolutely safeguard China’s sovereignty and security, as well as regional peace and stability.

From August 19 to 25, Philippine, U.S. and Australian naval and air units conducted the 19th Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MMCA) within what the participants described as the Philippines exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea. From August 21 to 25, the PLA Southern Theater Command also conducted routine naval and air patrols in the South China Sea.

On August 26, Southern Theater Command spokesperson Senior Captain Zhai Shichen said the Philippines had co-opted countries outside the region to conduct so-called joint patrols. He reiterated that theater command forces would resolutely safeguard China’s territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests and firmly uphold regional peace and stability.

AUGUST 24

Chinese and Philippine Scholars Release Joint Report on South China Sea Cooperation.

The Shanghai Institutes for International Studies released a report titled *South China Sea Cooperation: A Joint Study by Chinese and Philippine Scholars*. Jointly prepared by scholars from China and the Philippines, the report looks beyond disputes over territory sovereignty and maritime rights and interests to systematically examine the significance, potential areas, and pathways for China-Philippines cooperation in the South China Sea. It aims to provide a practical basis and policy recommendations for efforts to transform the South China Sea from a “sea of disputes” into a “sea of cooperation.”

AUGUST 26

China Rejects Philippine Defense Chief's Interference Claims and Reaffirms Non-Interference Policy.

Ji Lingpeng, spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, responded to remarks by Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., who accused China of interfering in Philippine domestic affairs and the Chinese Embassy of spreading disinformation. Ji described the allegations as baseless, accused Teodoro of “distorting facts and smearing China,” and strongly condemned the remarks. He reiterated that China has consistently adhered to the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs and has never interfered in Philippines' internal affairs and has no interest in doing so. Ji said that the South China Sea issue does not constitute the entirety of China-Philippines relations. He added that China remains committed to properly managing maritime disputes through dialogue and consultation. Ji said the embassy would continue to safeguard China's national interests and dignity and push back against groundless accusations, defamation and smears.

AUGUST 27

Chinese Experts Dismisses Radar Speculation near Lingyang Jiao.

The *Global Times* reported, citing an informed source, that a structure under construction on Yagong Dao near Lingyang Jiao in the Xisha Qundao was a civilian facility, countering foreign media speculation that it might be intended for radar or early-warning purposes. Reuters reported that satellite imagery captured on August 17 showed a three-pronged structure under construction on Yagong Dao. Satellite imagery provider Vantor said the structure's exact purpose remained uncertain but noted similarities to military radar facilities elsewhere in the South China Sea. The informed source described the construction at Lingyang Jiao as a civilian development project aimed at improving local living conditions and supporting economic development. The source said public-service facilities for meteorological observation, maritime rescue and medical care could support navigation, fisheries and disaster prevention in the South China Sea.



Chinese and Philippine scholars jointly prepared a report on South China Sea cooperation. The report argues that, amid profound shifts in the global geopolitical and security landscape and deepening regional economic integration, China and the Philippines should work to overcome challenges such as the limited binding force of regional legal mechanisms, disparities in governance capacity, and external interference. It also suggests that the two countries institutionalize and sustain long-term cooperation on environmental governance in the South China Sea through joint marine scientific research, environmental monitoring, data sharing, and scientific and technological cooperation. Photo credit: Shanghai Institute for International Studies.



The CCG conducted law-enforcement patrols in the territorial sea of China's Huangyan Dao and surrounding areas. Since the beginning of August, the CCG has stepped up such patrols, dealt with vessels engaged in illegal incursions in accordance with laws and regulations, and strengthened control over relevant waters to safeguard China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests. Photo credit: CCG.GOV.CN.

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China Reiterates Position on Philippine Resupply Missions to Ren'ai Jiao.

Ministry of National Defense spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang said Ren'ai' Jiao is part of China's Nansha Qundao and that China and the Philippines had reached a provisional arrangement on the humanitarian resupply of living necessities to the Philippine vessel *BRP Sierra Madre* (LT-57). He stressed that China would stop, in accordance with laws and regulations, any attempt to deliver construction materials or build fixed facilities or a permanent outpost on the reef. Zhang again called on the Philippines to tow away the vessel and cease all provocative acts.

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Three Offshore Oil and Gas Projects Advance to Environmental Review.

The Ministry of Ecology and Environment announced that it was preparing to review the environmental impact assessments documents for three offshore oil and gas projects operated by CNOOC in the South China Sea. The Huizhou 27-5 project includes a new drilling and production platform linked to the existing HZ26-6 DPP platform by a 13.8-km subsea multiphase pipeline and a 13.8-km subsea cable. The Wenchang 10-3 Phase II project includes a 24.5-km pipeline from WC10-3 WHPA to WC9-2/9-3 CEP, a 21.7-km pipeline from WC8-3 WHPA to WC9-7 DPP, and a 7-km subsea cable from WC16-2 WHPA to WC10-3 WHPA. The Liuhua project involves 14 adjustment wells in existing subsea production systems, including six at LH4-1 SPS and eight at LH21-2 SPS.

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CCG Conducts Routine Patrols and Law-Enforcement Drills around Huangyan Dao.

The CCG conducted law-enforcement patrols in the territorial sea of Huangyan Dao and surrounding waters. It said that since the beginning of August, it had strengthened patrols, dealt with vessels engaged in illegal incursions in accordance with laws and regulations, and strengthened control over the area. CCTV reported that a formation including the CCG vessels *Wanshan*, *Dahao* and *Haiou* conducted formation navigation and interdiction drills, with *Wanshan* operating less than three nautical miles from Huangyan Dao. The formation also carried out fisheries law-enforcement inspections. During its transit, it practiced onboard inspection and apprehension, intercepting vessels attempting to force passage, and forcibly towing vessels away.



About Huayang Center

The Huayang Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance (Huayang Center) is a comprehensive maritime policy research institution dedicated to promoting the peaceful use and sustainable development of the oceans. It engages in interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research on maritime issues. Huayang Center is chaired by Wu Shicun, Founding President of the National Institute for South China Sea Studies (NISCSS) and Chairman of the Academic Committee of NISCSS. Headquartered in Sanya, Huayang Center also operates an office in Jiangdong New District in Haikou, with a liaison office in Beijing, and a branch-Huayang Center for Yellow Sea Studies-in Yancheng City, Jiangsu Province.

The Huayang Center is committed to the mission of advancing global ocean governance and sustainable development, contributing to China's goal of becoming a maritime power, and supporting Hainan's "ocean-oriented development" strategy. Focusing on the implementation of national maritime strategies, marine conservation and sustainable use, the maintenance of peace and stability in the South China Sea, and the promotion of international maritime cooperation and public diplomacy, Huayang Center is committed to the long-term goal of building a world-class think tank. It undertakes interdisciplinary research, policy advisory, professional training, international exchanges, and provides consulting services to maritime-related institutions and enterprises.

The Huayang Center's research team brings together leading experts and scholars from both China and abroad in the fields of international relations, international law, regional security, marine science, environmental protection, marine biology, and energy & resources. Led by Chairman and Chief Expert Dr. Wu Shicun, the Huayang Center's research team is distinguished by its youthfulness, international outlook, multidisciplinary expertise, and cross-sectoral approach.

The Huayang Center upholds the core values of "talent aggregation, results-oriented and innovation-driven development." Guided by the founding mission of building a "small team, big network-rooted in Hainan, serving the nation, engaging the world," the Huayang Center adheres to the philosophy of "attracting talent through meaningful work, advancing development through research, and overcoming challenges through focused efforts." Since its establishment, the Huayang Center has launched a series of signature initiatives-including the Huayang Exhibition, Huayang Briefing, Huayang Talk, Huayang Report, Huayang Team, and Huayang Culture-that have earned widespread recognition and acclaim from relevant decision-making bodies and peers in the field.

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