華陽海洋研究中心
Huayang Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance

Huayang Biweekly Brief

The South China Sea and China

Volume 1, Issue 7 (2026)

NOVEMBER 1

CCG Conducts Law-Enforcement Patrol near Dongsha Qundao.

On October 31, China Coast Guard (CCG) vessel 3102 conducted a law-enforcement patrol near Dongsha Qundao under China's jurisdiction. According to Taiwan media reports on November 1, a Taiwan coast guard vessel approached the CCG vessel and requested its departure, with the two vessels reportedly coming within approximately one nautical mile of each other.

NOVEMBER 2

CNOOC Plans to Resume Production at Lingshui 17-2 Gas Field.

China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Ltd. expects to gradually resume production at its deep-sea gas field, Lingshui 17-2 in the South China Sea in the fourth quarter of 2026, according to an earnings briefing on October 30. The recovery followed a fire on May 12 and a subsequent explosion at the project's second-phase facilities, which forced an operational shutdown.

Lingshui 17-2, also known as Deep Sea No. 1, is CNOOC's first wholly owned and operated deep-water gas project. Located in the Qiongdongnan Basin, approximately 150 kilometers south of Hainan, the gas field has a combined annual production capacity of 4.5 billion cubic meters across its two development phases.

NOVEMBER 3

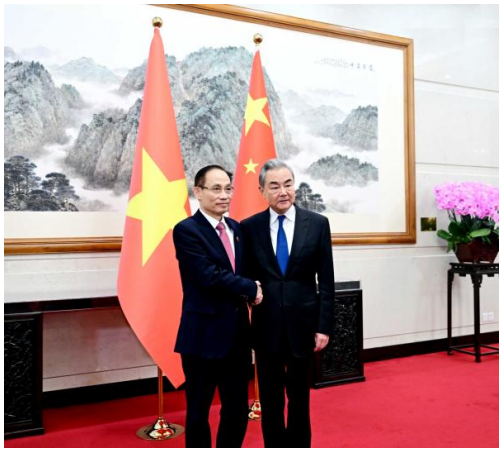
Chinese and Philippine Foreign Ministers Agree to Maintain Dialogue and Manage Differences.

Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese Foreign Minister, held a phone call with Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro at her request.

The two sides reached a basic consensus on improving and developing bilateral relations. They agreed that sound and stable ties serve both countries' interests and meet regional

Key Takeaways

- China maintained diplomatic engagement with the Philippines and Vietnam while advancing practical maritime cooperation through regional and international platforms.
- COC negotiations made progress, but unresolved issues have delayed their conclusion beyond 2026.
- Chinese naval and coast guard vessels maintained their presence near key South China Sea features, while the CCG conducted coordinated anti-smuggling operations.
- China reaffirmed Xiamen's bid to host the BBNJ Secretariat amid the Belgium-Chile joint proposal, emphasizing COP-led decision-making, operational efficiency, and equitable geographical representation.



Chinese and Vietnamese foreign ministers met in Beijing on November 4, 2026. Photo credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

expectations, and pledged to maintain diplomatic dialogue. Both sides also agreed to overcome internal and external interference and oppose malicious provocations and actions that undermine diplomatic efforts. They further agreed to manage differences responsibly, stabilize the situation, and seek to expand common interests.

China Maintains Maritime Presence Around Key South China Sea Areas.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) reported the presence of 80 People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and CCG vessels near several features in the South China Sea from October 1 to 31: 24 near Ren'ai Jiao, 41 near Huangyan Dao, 11 near Xianbin Jiao, and four near Zhongye Dao.

In a separate update, the AFP reported the presence of 29 PLAN and CCG vessels from November 3 to 8: 10 near Ren'ai Jiao, eight near Huangyan Dao, six near Xianbin Jiao, and five near Zhongye Dao.

NOVEMBER 4

Chinese and Vietnamese Foreign Ministers Discuss Maritime Issues.

Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese Foreign Minister, met in Beijing with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung, who was visiting China for the 11th Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The two sides agreed to strengthen multilateral coordination through regional platforms, including East Asia cooperation, properly handle maritime issues, and jointly maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea.



CCG vessel Sandu departs Sanya for a port visit to Malaysia. The visit includes exchanges on maritime search and rescue, tabletop exercises, and communication drills with the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency. Photo credit: CCTV.

NOVEMBER 5

CCG Vessel Makes First Official Port Visit to Malaysia.

CCG vessel *Sandu* (5308) departed Sanya, Hainan Province, on November 5 for a four-day official port visit to Penang, Malaysia. The vessel arrived in Penang on November 10 and concluded its visit on November 13. During the visit, the two sides agreed to establish a regular dialogue mechanism, sign a memorandum of understanding on maritime law enforcement cooperation at an early date, and establish maritime liaison channels at the regional operational level. This visit marked the first official port visit by a CCG vessel to Malaysia and the second consecutive year of official

exchanges between the two countries' coast guard agencies. It aimed to deepen exchanges and cooperation between the two agencies, enhance coordination in maritime law enforcement, and jointly safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea.

NOVEMBER 6

China Hosts the 7th Symposium on Global Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance.

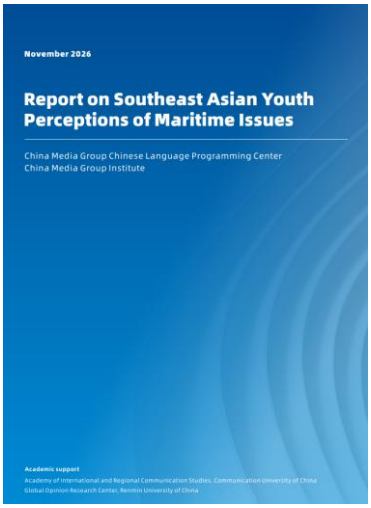
The 7th Symposium on Global Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance was held in Sanya, Hainan Province, from November 6 to 8. The symposium was jointly hosted by the Huayang Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance (Huayang Center), the National Institute for South China Sea Studies (NISCSS), the China Oceanic Development Foundation, and the Hainan Institute for Free Trade Port Studies, with the Chinese Global Programs Center of China Media Group (CMG) as co-organizer. More than 400 participants from over 30 countries and regions, including experts and scholars, government officials, representatives of foreign embassies and consulates in China, international organizations, maritime-related agencies, and media organizations, attended the symposium. More than 8,000 online registrations were recorded for the event.

The three-day symposium focused on global ocean governance, maritime security and cooperation in the South China Sea, implementation of the *Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction* (BBNJ Agreement), and the Hainan Free Trade Port. Seven practical maritime cooperation achievements were announced at the closing session, covering marine ecological protection, disaster prevention and mitigation, offshore renewable energy, port and shipping logistics, and deep-sea technology.

CMG held a parallel event themed "A Blue Ocean Promise—A Global Narrative in Sanya" during the symposium. Participants from China, Southeast Asia and Europe discussed BBNJ implementation and China's contributions to international ocean governance, including the sharing of deep-sea research capabilities and marine scientific resources. A report titled "*Report on Southeast Asian Youth Perceptions of Maritime Issues*" was also officially released at the event.



The 7th Symposium on Global Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance was held in Sanya, Hainan Province. The symposium brought together over 400 participants from more than 30 countries and regions. Photo credit: Huayang Center.



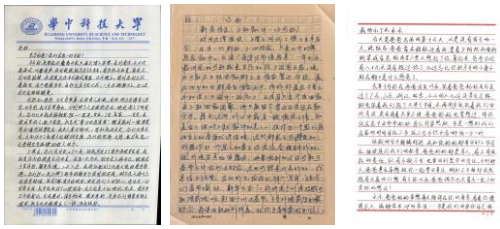
Report on Southeast Asian Youth Perceptions of Maritime Issues. Photo credit: CMG.



Global Maritime Security Report 2025-2026 released by Huayang Center. Photo credit: Huayang Center.



At a regular press briefing on November 12, China's Foreign Ministry highlighted the country's role as one of the first signatories and Parties to the BBNJ Agreement and its status as the largest assessed contributor to the Agreement's budget. Photo credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.



Letters written by China's service members stationed in the Nansha Qundao. Photo credit: People's Daily Overseas Edition.



The Sea We Call Home: A New CGTN Documentary on the South China Sea. Photo credit: CGTN.

Huayang Center Releases Report Highlighting China's Role in Sustaining Peace and Stability in the South China Sea.

During the 7th Symposium on Global Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance, the Huayang Center released the *Global Maritime Security Report 2025-2026*. Drawing on contributions from nine maritime experts affiliated with think tanks in China, the United States, Belgium, Australia, and other countries, the report examines how developments in the South China Sea affect global maritime security and ocean governance. Its preface highlights China's efforts to advance consultations on the *Code of Conduct in the South China Sea* (COC) and promote practical regional cooperation.

NOVEMBER 9

Letters from Nansha Qundao Highlight the Dedication of Chinese Service Members on Remote Reefs.

A special series titled "*Letters from the South China Sea*" has been launched by the People's Daily Overseas Edition. This installment, focusing on the Nansha Qundao, presents excerpts from letters written by service members stationed on the islands and reefs. Since 1988, the PLAN has been stationed in the Nansha Qundao under orders to guard and develop the reefs. Dating from 1998 to 2026, the letters recount their experiences of prolonged separation from family, demanding living conditions, and dedication to their duties.

NOVEMBER 10

CCG Conducts Anti-Smuggling Operation in the South China Sea.

The South China Sea Branch of the CCG coordinated an anti-smuggling operation involving coast guard forces from Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hainan, with a focus on the Leizhou Peninsula and the Qiongzhou Strait, according to a November 10 report. During the operation, the CCG investigated 21 cases, detained 24 vessels, apprehended 91 suspects, and seized 105,000 cartons of smuggled cigarettes, along with frozen goods and seafood. The operation strengthened maritime law enforcement coordination and efforts to combat maritime crime.

NOVEMBER 11

CGTN Releases Documentary Highlighting Life in the South China Sea.

CGTN released a new documentary titled "*The Sea We Call Home,*" featuring five stories about life in the islands and fishing communities of the South China Sea. The documentary follows fishermen and their families as they seek freshwater on remote islands, navigate traditional fishing routes passed down through generations, explore coral reefs and fishing grounds. It also documents how local livelihoods are evolving alongside changes in the marine environment.

NOVEMBER 12

China Reaffirms Xiamen's Bid Amid Belgium-Chile Joint Proposal.

China has nominated Xiamen to host the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, competing with Brussels, Belgium, and Valparaíso, Chile. On November 6, Belgium and Chile announced a joint candidature proposing to locate the Secretariat in Valparaíso, while placing the physical and technical infrastructure of the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) in Brussels.

On November 12, China's Foreign Ministry said the joint candidature had been announced without prior consultation with the Parties to the Agreement and raised six major concerns over the proposal, citing its inconsistency with the BBNJ Agreement, procedural justice, established international practice, equitable geographical distribution, fair competition, and Chile's original commitment to the Global South. The Ministry argued that decisions on the Secretariat's location, CHM arrangements, and subsidiary body meetings fall under the authority of the Conference of the Parties (COP). It warned that bundling separate decisions could undermine procedural justice, while locating the Secretariat and CHM on different continents could increase operational costs and reduce efficiency. The Ministry reaffirmed China's readiness to host the Secretariat in Xiamen.

NOVEMBER 15

Huayang Center Hosts International Seminar on Belgium-Chile Joint Candidature for BBNJ Secretariat.

The Huayang Center hosted an international seminar titled "*Hosting the Secretariat of BBNJ Agreement: Progress and Prospects*" in Haikou. Over 100 experts, scholars, and media



At the international seminar "Hosting the Secretariat of BBNJ Agreement: Progress and Prospects," Wu Shicun, Chairman of the Huayang Center and the Academic Committee of the NISCSS, noted that the Belgium-Chile joint bid had introduced uncertainty into the Secretariat's location selection. He called for a thorough assessment of the additional costs, coordination challenges, and potential impacts on efficiency and transparency arising from locating the Secretariat and the CHM in different cities. Photo credit: Huayang Center.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang and ASEAN leaders attended the 29th ASEAN-China Summit in Manila, the Philippines, on November 16, 2026. During the meeting, China and ASEAN reaffirmed their commitment to the early conclusion of the COC to promote lasting peace and stability in the region. Photo credit: South China Morning Post.

representatives from China (including Hong Kong), the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Togo, Nigeria, and Sri Lanka participated online and in person. Discussions focused on the potential implications of the Belgium-Chile joint candidature, the consistency of the proposed division of institutional functions with the BBNJ Agreement, and its implications for the Global South. Participants stressed that the COP should make decisions through a transparent, fair, and inclusive process, taking into account efficiency, financial sustainability, and equitable geographical representation.

China and ASEAN Make Progress in COC Negotiations.

China and ASEAN have reached provisional agreement on approximately 80% of the negotiating text for the COC, according to Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro. At a press conference following the first day of the 49th ASEAN Summit on November 15, Lazaro confirmed the progress but acknowledged that differences among the parties and the time required for negotiations had prevented the agreement from being finalized this year. At the 29th ASEAN-China Summit the following day, Chinese Premier Li Qiang expressed hope for the early conclusion of the COC to provide a solid institutional foundation for lasting peace and stability in the South China Sea. Talks will continue under Singapore's ASEAN chairmanship in 2027.

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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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