CENTRE FOR NORTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
O.P JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

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About CNEAS

The 21st century, oft referred to as the Asian century in international politics is so called owing to the rise of powerful economies from what was once seen as the ‘Orient’. Countries in Northeast Asia, be it the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Japan, Republic of China (ROC)/ Taiwan, South Korea or North Korea exert myriad types of influences on the international system. The various types of relationships among the countries of the Northeast Asian region also impact international politics as these range from conflicts over disputed islands, espionage, perceived historical injustices such as the Nanjing massacre to rising volumes of trades in the region to potential nuclear crises to balancing between acts of cooperation and conflict.

The history, culture, society and politics, all of which are different from that of the Western world become interesting aspects of study as all of this impact the posturing of the countries of the region in their respective foreign policies. Given the fact that India has active conflicts as well as partnerships with countries of the region, a better understanding of Northeast Asia from the lenses of security to economics to diplomacy to culture becomes pertinent.

The Center for Northeast Asian Studies looks at the countries of the region with fine lenses to offer understandings beyond what is provided by Western literature and theories of international politics. Tools such as track 2 discussions, seminars, lectures, primary research, historical and archival studies, along with a reliance on the languages of the region are used to understand international relations.

Team CNEAS
Defense

China allegedly gains fractional orbital bombardment capability, U.S dramatically revises China’s future nuclear warhead count

Reports emerged in October that China had tested a new space capability called fractional orbital bombardment capability with a hypersonic missile in August, which can deliver nuclear warheads on a low trajectory in the atmosphere, potentially reaching a target more quickly and with greater maneuverability. The reported test comes at a time when U.S.-China tensions have risen manifold and Beijing has stepped up its intimidation tactics against Taiwan, which is a self-ruling U.S ally and a renegade province in the eyes of Beijing awaiting reunification. The test is significant because there is an uncertainty regarding the United States missile defense system’s ability to track and take down a hypersonic missile.

Amidst all this, the United States have revised China’s future numbers of nuclear warheads. The 2021 China report published by the Pentagon claims that Beijing could have 700 deliverable nuclear bombs by 2027, and 1,000 by 2030—which is significantly higher than the number of 400 (by 2030) that Pentagon had predicted only a year ago. With an increasing array of nukes, China aims to have the “capabilities to counter the US military in the Indo-Pacific region and compel Taiwan’s leadership to the negotiation table on Beijing’s terms” by 2027.

Poll find most Taiwanese optimistic about Japanese and American military intervention should China invade Taiwan

In a poll survey released on 2 November, over 58% of the Taiwanese responded optimistically to a question on whether Japan would send military aid for Taiwan’s defense in the event of a Chinese attempt at forceful reunification. On the flipside, 35% of the respondents said they did not think Japan would send troops to Taiwan’s rescue. The survey conducted by the Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation also found that 65% of the respondents believed the United States would dispatch troops for Taiwan’s defense, while 28.5% disagreed. Meanwhile, 28.1% of the respondents agreed that China would one day invade Taiwan, while 64.3% disagreed. The figure of 28.1% is more than double that of the previous survey, signifying a greater realization among Taiwanese about possible Chinese attack.

The most noteworthy aspect of the survey is the Taiwanese people’s optimism for Japanese intervention, despite knowing that Japan’s pacifist constitution strictly limits the overseas activities of its Self-Defense Forces. However, recently Japan had released its annual white paper on defense – the Defense of Japan – where for the time Japanese strategists linked the security of Taiwan to the security of Japanese archipelagos. The geopolitical signal from Japan, therefore, has not been lost on the Taiwanese people.
North Korea’s tests SLBM amidst elections in Japan

On 20 November, North Korea confirmed reports that it had tested a new type of submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). The North Korean state media claimed that the test included “advanced control guidance technologies,” “flank mobility” and “gliding skip mobility” capabilities.

North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 20 November released this photo showing a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) being fired in waters of the Sea of Japan the previous day. Image Source: Japan Times

Analysts from Japan also claimed from their assessment that the weapon tested was likely to be solid fueled, which makes the missile easier to transport and difficult for spy satellites to trace. It has been also claimed that the new weapon bears a striking resemblance to the North’s KN-23 missile which is a short-range missile that follows a quasi-ballistic trajectory making it difficult to intercept. Observers of the Korean peninsula had expected North Korea to fire its SLBM from a new submarine which is believed to be capable of launching multiple SLBMs. The submarine was seen for the first time in 2019 and observers believe it can potentially give the North a second-strike capability in the event of an attack on the country. Since the test was conducted from the same submarine that had tested North’s first SLBM five years ago, analysts have concluded that Pyongyang is still struggling with the technology.

The North Korean test is crucial because it happened at the backdrop of Japan’s election season where the ruling conservative government of LDP had promised greater defense spending in its campaign trail.

Japan Times, Japan today
(Anubhav Goswami)

Japan Times, Korea Times, Korea Herald
(Anubhav Goswami)
COVID-19
Taiwan gets an additional 1.5 million vaccine doses from U.S
The United States has come to the aid of Taiwan’s slow vaccination drive by delivering an additional 1.5 million coronavirus vaccine doses to Taipei on 1 November. The additional jabs have taken the total number of shots donated by Washington to Taipei to 4 million. American donations to the self-ruled island nations have geopolitical significance. Recently, Taiwan had alleged that China is attempting to block her vaccine purchases for political reasons, a claim denied by Beijing. The Biden administration had also claimed that Beijing is trying to strengthen its geopolitical clout in cross-strait relations through its vaccine diplomacy. In an apparent dig at China, the Biden administration has quipped that American vaccine-diplomacy “do not come with strings attached” and were not donated to “secure favors or extract concessions”.

Taiwan’s COVID handling had been exemplary. However, it has been denied a global audience to share its experience of handling the pandemic by China. China has for years blocked the island from participating in the World Health Assembly to delegitimize its de-facto sovereignty. Now the alleged blocking of jabs for Taiwanese are seen as Beijing’s newest efforts to stand between Taiwan and the wider world. In this context, the U.S move is a rebuttal to China’s strong-arm tactics to intimidate Taiwan.

South China Morning Post, Taipei Times
(Anubhav Goswami)

Vaccination for children aged 3-11 launched across China, Japan parents hesitant on kids’ vaccination
In Japan, the general perception of vaccination for kids has been skeptical. A recent survey by Nomura Research Institute Ltd in Japan found that about half of Japanese parents with children below the age of 12 plan to take a wait-and-see stance when it comes to getting their children vaccinated against COVID-19. Of the 1,953 parents questioned, 53.5 % were skeptical about inoculating their children.

In neighboring China, however, the government has launched a nationwide COVID-19 vaccination campaign for minors aged three to 11. China is hit by another wave of covid-cases and Beijing is trying to contain the rebound by aggressively vaccinating its population in a bid to build herd immunity. Experts said it is necessary to speed up the vaccination drive among children to contain the spike in covid cases. The notices issued by provincial health commissions read those children between the age of three and 11 will receive two shots of vaccines produced by China's Sinopharm and Sinovac.

Japan Times, South China Morning Post, Global Times
(Anubhav Goswami)
‘To live with Covid-19’ or not to live with Covid-19: Contrasting viewpoints from South Korea and China

At a time when Beijing has stuck to its “zero case” strategy against the Covid-19 pandemic, South Korea has established a panel on 13 October to debate a strategy on how to "live with COVID-19" in the long-term. For some time now, Seoul has been planning to phase out coronavirus restrictions and reopen the economy amid rising vaccination levels. Under the proposed "live with COVID-19" strategy, the government aims to relax covid restrictions for fully vaccinated citizens, while encouraging home isolation and recovery for asymptomatic and mild COVID-19 patients aged below 70. This is in sharp contrast to China's containment of new infections by way of strict border controls, contract tracing and lockdowns, either at block level or entire city level, while promoting vaccination programs.

Talking more on the proposed strategy, South Korean Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum said that the government intends to "turn COVID-19 into a controlled infectious disease and no longer a fear of the unknown". The Prime Minister, however, added that mandatory mask-wearing would not be immediately scrapped under the new policy.

*Japan Times, South China Morning Post*  
(Anubhav Goswami)
Economic & Trade

China, Russia Push Again for Easing International Sanctions on North Korea

Beijing and Moscow called for lifting of trade sanctions on Pyongyang in a United Nations Security Council draft resolution. The sanctions were first imposed on North Korea by the UNSC in 2006, after its first nuclear test. They were made tougher following further tests done over the years. The draft resolution moved by Beijing and Moscow calls for easing sanctions to ‘improve the quality of life’ of civilian North Koreans. The sanctions proposed to be lifted are related to agriculture products, seafood, oil products, and textile commodities.

The proposal also includes lifting a ban on North Koreans working abroad and exempting inter-Korean rail and road cooperation projects. Meanwhile the US has said that it remains committed to imposing UNSC resolutions regarding sanctions on North Korea aimed at limiting its ballistic and nuclear programs.

The US State Department spokesperson also called upon all UN members to fulfil their sanction obligations under existing UNSC resolutions to limit North Korea’s ability to acquire resources and technology needed to continue the programs. With the multiple military tests done by the Kim regime in recent months, the chances of easing of sanctions remain low.

Deutsche Welle, The Korea Herald
(Divyanshu Jindal)

Energy Crisis Looms Over Northeast Asia’s Energy Security in a La Nina year amidst Ongoing Global Energy Shortage

Late November to mid-January this year is expected to bring harsher winters for Northeast Asia this year due to the La Nina phenomena. The La Nina pattern brings colder, deep water up from the bottom of the sea. Among other spillover effects, the region might witness a surge in fuel prices, power shortages, and possible curbs on supply to heavy industry, as the bitter winter elevates heating demand. This development comes when the world is already witnessing a global energy crisis. In October, the European and Asian gas prices were at an all-time high and the coal prices soared due to shortages across China, India and Germany.
China has been stockpiling domestic coal and gas reserves and the run-up to the recently concluded COP-26 conference witnessed nations like Australia and India sticking with coal as the main energy source for years to come. The Japanese trade ministry has been conducting meetings with major gas and oil firms to prepare for the winters.

Taiwan and India mulling semiconductor plant and trade deals
According to various news outlets, Taiwanese and Indian officials have recently discussed setting up a US $7.5 billion chip plant in India. It is expected that the investment agreement will lead to a long-sought free trade deal eventually. In recent years India has looked to attract investments in higher end technology and has pushed towards self-reliance in the semiconductor domain. India and Taiwan signed a bilateral investment agreement in 2018. However, there has been signs of hesitancy as New Delhi remains wary of economic retaliation from Beijing, amidst already sour relations due to conflicts between the two Asian giants in border areas. Taiwan too has flagged concerns on the supply of water and electricity and suggested that it may be more feasible for India to start creating a chip design sector first before proceeding to building fabs.

Taiwan News, The Economic Times
(Divyanshu Jindal)
Foreign Policy & International Relations

North Korea Tests Ballistic Missile: Raises Global Concern Over Emerging Arms Race in the Korean Peninsula

A ballistic missile fired by North Korea has raised concerns about a renewed arms race in the Korean peninsula region. The unidentified ballistic missile is reported by multiple sources to have been fired from Sinpo, a major naval shipyard. The test was done on October 19, with a missile fired into the sea east of the peninsula. North Korea is known to be developing a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). The test came in light of a similar test done by South Korea in September. Pyongyang had unveiled the missile in January this year. The test has increased tensions between several nations. Japan lodged its protest to North Korea through its embassies in Beijing (Japan and North Korea have no diplomatic ties).

In recent years North Korea has undergone rapid development in its military technology albeit reeling under international sanctions. While North Korea has blamed the US and its hostile intent towards the Kim regime, the Biden administration maintains that it is willing to engage with North Korean officials, however it seeks denuclearization of the Korean peninsula before sanctions on North Korea would be eased. The unfolding events are expected to cause a ramping up of military technology and stockpiling of missiles by all other Northeast Asian nations in coming years.

Asia Times, BBC News, NPR
(Divyanshu Jindal)

AUKUS Implications on Northeast Asian Geopolitics

With the 15 September 2021 AUKUS (Australia-UK-US) defense pact announcement, the global geopolitical landscape has observed a ripple effect. Northeast Asian geopolitics too cannot stay isolated with the recent developments in the Indo-pacific theatre. The AUKUS agreement is a tripartite defense and security agreement which covers a broad range of areas such as Artificial Intelligence, cyber warfare, underwater capabilities, and long-range strike capabilities.

The leaders of the three nations in the pact have described this arrangement as ‘an enhanced trilateral security partnership’. While some like Japan (and India) have reacted positively, the deal has infuriated some others, like China (and France).

For Japan, the AUKUS deal is a sign of renewed US commitment to the region. Australia’s involvement can embolden Japan’s security so as to envision a
deterrence architecture of the Indo-Pacific, according to some experts. South Korea has been vying for building a significant defense industry of its own, and Australia having nuclear technology for submarine propulsion systems can give boost to Seoul’s bid to take ahead its own nuclear programs. On the other hand, China has called the pact ‘highly irresponsible’ and claimed that it represents a move towards a Cold war style arms race.

*The Japan Times, APLN, The Strategist*
*(Divyanshu Jindal)*

**Turkey-South Korea vow to Bolster Ties**
South Korea’s Prime Minister and Turkey’s Foreign Minister met in Seoul in October and vowed to bolster ties between the two countries. Turkish FM Mevlut Cavusoglu was welcomed by Kim Boo-Kyum, the South Korean PM. The two leaders affirmed strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the defense industry. The Turkish minister also met his counterpart Chung Eui-Yong, South Korea’s foreign minister and discussed areas of investments, trade, and travel. The meeting also gave emphasis to Turkey’s ‘Asia Anew’ initiative, which aims to establish stronger ties with Asian countries. A document approving the sale of Altay Tank’s power pack was signed by South Korea’s minister for the defense acquisition program. South Korean Foreign Minister asked Turkey’s support in the peace process of the Korean peninsula and to increase cultural exchanges between the two countries.

*Hurriyet Daily News, The Korea Herald*
*(Divyanshu Jindal)*
Culture & Soft Power
Korea’s cultural power displayed by the KOCIS calendar in 2022
Korea has released a webtoon-themed calendar to promote its cultural heritage in the world. The Korean culture and information service (KOCIS) affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism has launched a webtoon calendar on November 5 to grow Korean cultural presence overseas. 12 rising stars of the webtoons have collaborated with KOCIS to depict various cultural practices and values of the Korean people and its history.

Source: Korean.net

KOCIS director Park Jung-Youl said “despite the pandemic, Korea’s diversity of cultural content delivers joy and consolation to the world, through this webtoon-themed calendar, I hope that more countries will enjoy Korean webtoons and discover other aspects of Korean culture”

Korean.net
(Narender Kumar)

Haruki Murakami’s disappointment with the Nobel Prize
Harukists were anticipating the first Nobel Prize in literature to the best-selling author of ‘Norwegian Wood’, Haruki Murakami. However, to their disappointment, the prestigious award went to Tanzanian-born novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah in 2021.

Source: the Japan Times
Murakami gained much popularity for his book ‘Norwegian Wood’ and emerged as one of the leading contenders for the prize in 2007. Since then, his fans have been eagerly waiting for him to receive the award, but their expectations have resulted in much disappointment. This year, Murakami was again the favorite contender with Canadian author Margaret Atwood, best known for her 1985 novel ‘The Handmaid’s Tale’.

There are various suggestions as to why Murakami has failed to get his hand on the prize such as ‘lack of political statements in his work’ and the Swedish Academy who are said to be favoring authors who shed light on the unjust social structures and vulnerable communities’. Gurnah’s work was commended due to his focus on colonialism and the trauma of the refugee experiences. Similarly, in 2015, Belarusian author Svetlana Alexivich secured the prize for her work ‘polyphonic writings, a monument to suffering and courage in our time’. her work covers from 10-year Soviet war in Afghanistan to the tragedy of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The wait for the Harukists’ continues in the future and Tomohiro Osaki comments that Murakami’s career is at the crossroads at this point and his chances of winning the prize remain slim.

*the Japan times*
*(Narender Kumar)*
Climate Change

China’s Climate Policy Impacts the Globe

China produces far greater emissions than other countries in the world. BBC reports that the war against climate change lies heavily on China’s response to the growing production of emissions in China. It will be impossible to fight against Climate war without corporate and emission policy changes in China. In 2020, China’s president XI Jinping said that “his country would aim for its emissions to reach their highest point before 2030 and for carbon neutrality before 2060”. The prediction has been confirmed as China’s official position ahead of the COP26 global climate summit in Glasgow.

China is the largest contributor to the emission of carbon dioxide in 2006 while also being responsible for more than a quarter of the world’s overall greenhouse gas emission. China had promised to keep global warming at 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, and ‘well below’ 2C at the Paris agreement in 2015. However, the Beijing administration had failed to limit the production of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide emissions leading to further global warming in the world.

Experts have argued that China’s commitment to keeping global warming at 1.5C and well below 2C is possible. Nevertheless, it will require a huge shift from coal-based energy to renewable energy resources. President Xi Jinping said that China will reduce the use of coal from 2026 and will not build coal-fired power plants abroad. However, China continues to build 60 new coal plants across the country, contradicting its commitment to reducing coal-based energy.

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Although China is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gases in the world. However, it is also the largest consumer of solar power. Currently, China drastically leads the globe in solar power with more than three times more usage of solar energy than its competitor - the United States.
Mongolia, an often-ignored East Asian state, has been reeling under the impacts of the current Climate crisis - increasingly since the 1940s. Its woes have been added on to by extreme water pollution and the “Dzud” phenomena, which signifies drought-like summer conditions in Mongolia, followed by extremely cold. Naturally, mitigating climate change has been a national priority for Mongolia and one of its biggest creditors and benefactors in the same has been the World Bank Group.

In a meeting held on November 2, 2021, between Mongolian President Ukhnaaagiin Khürelsükh, World Bank Managing Director of Operations Axel van Trotsenburg and the World Bank Vice President for East Asia and Pacific Manuela Ferro on the sidelines of the COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference, the Mongolian President thanked the World Bank officials for the organisation’s continued support to Mongolia. The event also commemorated 30 years of the Mongolia-World Bank partnership, and in a bid to reinvigorate the partnership, the World Bank expressed its commitment towards provisign all-round support (including expert advice) in implementing and financing the Mongolian National Campaign to Plant One Billion Trees.

President of Mongolia Ukhnaaagiin Khürelsükh addressing COP 26 World Leaders Summit (Image Source : Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mongolia)
Human Rights

The vibrant democracy of South Korea remains without a law that prevents discrimination and upholds equality among one and all. Discussions surrounding an Anti-Discrimination Act and its promulgation by the current government as a law have been in the works since 2006, and in June 2020, the Korean Human Rights Commission once again reinvigorated the debate around the need for an anti-discrimination law in the country. However, there exists a reluctance among the Korean political elites to pass the law, which is why civilian dissent is on the rise.

The South Korean Coalition for Anti-Discrimination Legislation, which comprises 161 civil society groups that have come together with the agenda of having the law passed this year itself, has carried out a long protest march from Busan to Seoul on 9 and 10 November 2021. The final location of their protests has been right in front of the National Assembly in Seoul, but the future of the law remains bleak.

As per the comments made by Song Koo-Hwan, the Chairman of the Korean Human Rights Commission, the ‘People’s Perceptions of Discrimination Survey’ conducted by the Commission in 2020 concluded that 9 out of 10 respondents deemed a legislation to ensure equal rights was necessary, and that the non-enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act was deeply regretful.

With the growing popular sentiment in favor of upholding values of equality and eliminating direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, medical history, age, origin, ethnicity, race, skin color, physical condition, marital status, and sexual orientation, the leading Democratic Party of Korea has upon its hands the urgent task of overcoming its hesitance to fulfill the will of the people.

Hankyoreh, The Korean Herald
(Anushka Saxena)

North Korea and U.N: The Never-ending Game of Chess

Source: Reuters
The report authored by the U.N. Special Rapporteur for human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was dismissed by many government-affiliated institutions in Pyongyang, calling it “malicious slander.” The report written by Tomas Oeja Quintana, the U.N. Rapporteur, highlighted the plight of vulnerable sections of society in North Korea in the light of COVID-19 and the strict antivirus protocols imposed by the authoritarian regime to curb the spread of the virus.

Quintana, in his report, urged the U.N. to review its sanctions on North Korea imposed in view of the possession of nuclear arsenal. He stated in his report that COVID-19 further isolated North Korea from the rest of the world; and Pyongyang’s brutal anti-epidemic measures such as completely closing the state borders and slashing on domestic travel has adversely affected North Koreans. “Sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council should be reviewed and eased when necessary to both facilitate humanitarian and lifesaving assistance and to enable the promotion of the right to an adequate standard of living of ordinary citizens,” expressed Quintana, in his report to the U.N. General Assembly.

It is not new for Pyongyang to vehemently oppose U.N. reports on the human rights situation in the region and completely deny all observations. “The ‘special rapporteur’, not being content with distorting our reality, has pointed a finger at our ‘people’s livelihood’ and viciously picked on the most realistic and appropriate anti-epidemic measures taken by our state for our own specific need in order to cope with the global epidemic,” expressed an unidentified spokesperson for the Korea Association for Human Rights Studies. Pyongyang had previously called the U.N. report on the malnourishment of children in North Korea as a “sheer lie.”

UN accuses China over the Human Right issue in Xinjiang

On 21 October, 43 countries at the UN accused China for human rights abuse in the Xinjiang region. Western countries like the US, have been constant opposition of China’s reaction in the Xinjiang. Human Rights Watch describe these mass detentions, torture, forced labor, and other abuses committed against Muslims in Xinjiang crime against humanity.

Source: Reuters

Reuters reported: French UN Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière to the General Assembly rights committee read part of statement which said: “widespread and systematic human rights violations accusing China of detaining more than 1 million people in
camps." The accusation included, “reports documenting torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, forced sterilization, sexual and gender-based violence, and forced separation of children."

In response, China's UN ambassador, Zhang Jun said: "To the US and a few other countries: Your desperate attempts to cover up your own terrible human rights record will not work." He further added, "No matter how many times repeated, lies are still lies … You are using human rights as a pretext for political maneuvering to provoke confrontation."

*Reuters, HumanRightWatch*  
*(Sukanya Bali)*
Science & Technology

The Human Immunodeficiency Viruses (HIV), that weaken the body’s immune response and cause AIDS, have disproportionately impacted many lives across the globe. In a startling feat towards the global fight against AIDS, Japan’s Tsukuba Primate Research Center, under the National Institutes of Biomedical Innovation, Health and Nutrition, has developed a vaccine that can kill HIV in monkeys. The vaccine has been made from a combination of weakened AIDS virus and a bacterium; a specified mixture of whose genes generate a specific immune response within the body. The research itself, conducted under the wing of Dr. Yasuhiro Yasutomi, Director of the Tsukuba Primate Research Centre, began with an experimentation on crab-eating macaques (classified as Old-World monkeys), and then on Monkeys themselves.

The success of the experiment has been demonstrated by the near perfect survival rate against the HIV infection in both monkeys and macaques, after the vaccine was administered to them. Consequently, the Research Centre has now declared its intention to conduct human trials for the vaccine within a period of five years. The research couldn’t have come at a better time as well, since the 1st of December is annually designated as World AIDS day, and with the 33rd AIDS day approaching, the vaccine invented by the Japanese presents a new ray of hope for the world.

Source: The Scientist Magazine

China: Shenzhou-13 with three Chinese astronauts, heads to a new space station

On 14 October, the Shenzhou-13 spacecraft was launched to the Tianhe core module of China’s permanent space station (Tiangong) in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China. Three Chinese astronauts Zhai Zhigang, Wang Yaping, and Ye Guangfu set to spend six months on China’s space station. This is China’s second crewed mission.

On 7 November, Shenzhou-13 spacecraft conducted its first in-orbit emergency evacuation drill after entering space for 23 days. China Central Television (CCTV) reported: “The exercise mainly simulated a situation where the three taikonauts are
required to evacuate to the Shenzhen-13’s reentry module, in case the Tianhe core module has internal pressure loss after encountering a sudden impact.” The aim of the drill is to ensure that taikonauts can safely evacuate in case of damage and loss of pressure in the core module.

Source: Global Times

On 12 November, Shenzhou commander Zhai Zhigang and colleague Wang Yaping did a 6.5-hour extravehicular activity. SpaceX reported: “One of the main tasks during the excursion was installing a dual-arm connector to Tianhe's 32.8-foot-long (10 meters) robotic arm. The connector will allow the existing arm to join with a smaller, 16-foot (5 m) arm that will arrive in orbit along with the second space station module, Wentian, in mid-2022.”

Space.com, Global Times
(Sukanya Bali)