

# News story: Royal Navy and Royal Marines train alongside partner naval forces

Around 60 Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel exercised with their counterparts from other countries during the five-month annual French naval deployment to the Indian Ocean and Far East, including the first ever four-part maritime exercise involving France, Japan, the UK and US.

The two-staged exercise named Forager Deux and Arc 17 took place in the sea and in the skies near to Japan, Guam, and Tinian, with the purpose of enhancing joint operating between the UK and international partners and deepening Defence cooperation.

In addition to UK maritime personnel, the exercise also included two Royal Navy Merlin Mk3 helicopters from the UK's Commando Helicopter Force, which as part of a week-long practice assault moved 330 French, Japanese and American troops to and from Tinian.

UK forces have been on board French assault ship FS Mistral since March as part of the Jeanne d'Arc 2017 French task group, which has visited Singapore, Sri Lanka, Japan, Guam, Australia and Vietnam.

Minister of State for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

Working shoulder-to-shoulder with French forces, as well as personnel from other partners' navies, shows the flexibility of our world class Armed Forces.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines play an important role carrying out Britain's commitment to international maritime security, as well as protecting our own shores.

Several instalments of training and Defence Engagement have taken place as part of this deployment.

This week, UK personnel worked alongside French and Egyptian armed forces when the Jeanne D'Arc task group arrived in Egypt to take part in Exercise Cleopatra. The cross-decking exercise, which saw UK Merlins land on the Egyptian warship ENS Nasser, was the latest in a series of multilateral amphibious exercises that the UK has taken part in throughout the five month deployment.

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## [75,000 people relocated in rain-ravaged NE China county](#)

Over 7,500 houses have collapsed or suffered damage and 75,000 residents have been relocated since rainstorms starting hitting Yongji County in northeast China's Jilin Province on Thursday.

Torrential rain started to fall in Yongji at around 9 a.m. Thursday, with the average precipitation reaching 175.4 millimeters from Thursday to Friday noon, when the rain decreased, local disaster-relief headquarters said Friday.

Rain-triggered floods damaged cropland and several transportation routes in the county, with many services, including power, gas and water supply suspended in much of the county.

A total of 75,000 people were evacuated and 260,000 people were affected.

The local government has formed 14 disaster-relief teams to relocate the victims and disinfect disaster areas to prevent disease.

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## [HK high court disqualifies 4 legislators over invalid oaths](#)

The High Court of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) on Friday disqualified legislators Law Kwun-Chung, Leung Kwok-hung, Lau Siu-lai and Yiu Chung-yim from office for their invalid oaths.

The court ruled that the oaths the four took on Oct. 12, 2016 at a swearing-in ceremony of the new Legislative Council (LegCo) were unlawful and of no effect.

The disqualification is effective from Oct. 12, 2016, according to the court.

On Oct. 12, 2016, Lau deliberately took her oath in a slow-paced manner, while Law, Leung and Yiu read out extra words that are not included in the LegCo oath according to the Oaths and Declarations Ordinance of Hong Kong, or read the oath in an abnormal tone.

The Department of Justice of Hong Kong SAR government submitted an application for a judicial review to the High Court on Dec. 2, 2016, requesting the court to rule whether the four LegCo members' oaths comply with the Hong Kong Basic Law and whether they are still qualified to serve.

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## Several detained after child suffocates on school bus

Several people have been detained in connection with the death of a 3-year-old on a school bus in north China, police said Friday.

The accident happened Thursday in Tang'erli Township of Bazhou City, Hebei Province. According to police, the girl was left on the shuttle bus after it reached a local kindergarten on Thursday morning. Kindergarten staff did not find her on the bus until 3:30 p.m. She died after medical efforts failed.

The kindergarten was later found to be operating without a license. It has been closed, and police have detained several people, including the person in charge of the kindergarten, the driver and a teacher. Five local officials have been suspended from their posts and are under investigation.

The Hebei provincial department of education has issued an emergency circular, demanding private kindergartens to strengthen management over school buses.

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## Warm words won't tackle the drugs crisis – Diane Abbott

**Diane**

**Abbott MP, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary**, responding to the launch of the Government's new drugs strategy, said:

"Rising drug-related fatalities, drug crime and a cocktail of new drugs means that a new effective strategy is overdue. But this isn't it.

"Commitments to treat addiction and tackle the social ills that accompany it are meaningless from a Government which has cut drug treatment services and centres. There is no new money now.

"At the same time, this Tory Government expects law enforcement agencies to deal with multiple new drugs and sources of supply, but has spent seven years slashing funding to the police and border force with further cuts in the

pipeline.

"Warm words won't tackle the drugs crisis. Resources are needed, and mustn't be diverted from other hard-pressed budgets. Labour in government will tackle the drugs crisis and review the priorities to ensure they are appropriate."