

Taiwan to buy 292 V-BAT drones from Shield AI for navy and coast guard

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Taiwan to buy 292 VTOL drones from Shield AI - Taipei Times

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Taiwan News

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Taiwan to buy 292 VTOL drones from Shield AI

DEFENSE PROCUREMENT: Taiwan could become the largest operator of V-BAT drones outside the US once they are delivered, the Ministry of National Defense said

By Lo Tien-pin and Jake Chung / Staff reporter, with staff writer

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The navy and the coast guard are acquiring 292 units of MQ-35A V-BAT vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) surveillance drones manufactured by US-based defense technology company Shield AI, making Taiwan one of the largest buyers of the drone. The Coast Guard Administration budgeted NT\$1.2 billion (US\$37.1 million) to buy 12 drones, which have been delivered, Shield AI said in a report on Oct 13. The navy is planning to spend NT\$36 billion under a four-year program code-named Project Yuan Xiao (遠鴉) to acquire 280 V-BAT drones, the Ministry of National Defense's fiscal 2027 report showed.

A V-Bat vertical takeoff and landing drone developed by Shield AI is exhibited during a demonstration in Den Helder, the Netherlands, on July 9 last year.

Photo: EPA

The combined procurement is expected to cost NT\$37.2 billion. The navy's order alone would exceed the 250 V-BAT drones that Shield AI had sold to the US and other NATO countries as of 2024, the ministry's report said.

The US military and coast guard combined are estimated to operate about 300 V-BAT drones, while the Netherlands, Armenia, Poland and other countries each operate fleets of several dozen drones, it said. Taiwan

could become the largest operator of V-BAT drones outside the US once deliveries are complete, it said. The drones are intended to help maintain operational capability if Chinese attacks disrupt Taiwan's command structure, the report said. Of the navy's planned procurement, 212 drones are earmarked for the Coastal Combat Command and Hsiung Feng anti-ship missile units. The package also includes 140 control systems and 82 ground transport vehicles, allowing missile units to use drones for reconnaissance and maintain precision-strike capabilities even when relocating or if their radars are destroyed, the ministry's report said. The navy cited the V-BAT's performance during the war in Ukraine, saying that it had completed 130 successful reconnaissance missions despite strong Russian electronic interference. At a briefing in Taipei on Oct 2, Shield AI president and cofounder Brandon Tseng (曾國光) said the share of V-BAT components supplied by Taiwanese companies was expected to rise to 25 percent from 16 percent. Aerospace Industrial Development Corp will handle logistics, maintenance and training for Taiwan's drones, he said. The procurement is expected to bolster Taiwan's defense capabilities in peacetime and during conflict, while giving Taiwanese companies a greater role in the supply chain for advanced US-made drones, he said.

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Drone firm executives detained over alleged use of China-made chips

2026-10-12

Two executives of drone supplier Jiin Ming Industry Co (錦明實業) have been detained and held incommunicado over the company's alleged use of prohibited China-made chips and camera lenses in drones supplied under recent military contracts, the Taoyuan District Prosecutors' Office said today.

In a statement, prosecutors said they raided the offices of Jiin Ming — headquartered in Taoyuan — as well as those of its subsidiaries and its suppliers on Thursday last week.

The raids followed a report that the company had breached its procurement contracts by putting the prohibited components into drones delivered to the military.

During the raids, prosecutors summoned

Taiwan monitoring China pneumonic plague rumors, premier says

2026-10-13

The government would continue monitoring online rumors that a pneumonic plague outbreak has spread from Russia into China and could enhance existing quarantine measures, Premier Cho Jung-tai (卓榮泰) said today. During a legislative meeting, Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Wang Ting-yu (王定宇) said rumors were circulating that the disease had spread across several Chinese provinces. He asked Cho whether the government was prepared to prevent the disease from spreading to Taiwan, given the frequent exchanges between Taiwan and China, and how concerned the government was about the alleged outbreak. The Ministry of Health and Welfare implemented border quarantine measures after briefing the Executive Yuan

BigBang draws 120,000 fans to Taipei Dome concerts

2026-10-12

South Korean boy band BigBang drew 120,000 fans to three concerts at Taipei Dome from Friday through yesterday, as the band thanked them for their support over their 20-year career.

The Taipei Dome concerts were part of BigBang's "2026-2027 World Tour XX: Cosmos."

Friday's concert was BigBang's first performance in Taiwan in 11 years.

During the encore, group leader G-Dragon (GD) shouted "I love you" in Chinese and said he was especially happy to perform in Taiwan with bandmates Taeyang and Daesung.

"Taipei, I'm very grateful to you all," GD said in Chinese, asking fans to wait for the band's return.

Daesung thanked

Chinese naval carrier group enters western Pacific

2026-10-15

A Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy aircraft carrier group was being monitored after entering the western Pacific, the Ministry of National Defense said today, after Beijing yesterday criticized Taiwan for using a water cannon against a Chinese fishing boat near the Pratas Islands (Dongsha Islands, 東沙群島). A Chinese naval task group led by the aircraft carrier Liaoning (遼寧) yesterday sailed to the western Pacific for training, Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency quoted the PLA Navy as saying. "The drill is part of the annual routine training plan aimed at testing and improving the troops' combat readiness and enhancing their ability to

By Fang Wei-li and Fion Khan

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