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Indo-Pacific Insights

Centre for Governance Studies





1st July 2026

A bi-weekly roundup of key events

Myanmar Revives Long-Stalled Myitsone Dam Plan

Myanmar plans to restart the China-backed Myitsone hydropower project in Kachin State, aiming to complete the $3.6 billion development within approximately eight years. Construction was suspended in 2011 following strong public opposition over environmental damage, community displacement and China's influence. The renewed initiative follows President Min Aung Hlaing's visit to China. However, continuing armed conflict and potential local resistance may complicate implementation.

Secret Military Training Highlights Deepening China-Russia Defence Ties

China reportedly provided covert military training to around 200 Russian personnel in 2025 with approval from senior Russian officials. The programme included a three-week course in Beijing covering radiological, biological and chemical protection. Some participants were later deployed in Ukraine, raising European concerns about Beijing's support for Moscow. China denied the allegations and maintained that it remains neutral in the conflict.

2nd July 2026

India and Japan Expand Strategic Partnership in Technology and Security

India and Japan signed agreements to strengthen cooperation in artificial intelligence, critical metals, energy resilience, economic security and defence. The two countries also approved their first defence co-development project and adopted joint documents on AI and energy. The initiatives combine Japan's technological strengths with India's software capabilities while reinforcing strategic cooperation amid growing uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific.



New Undersea Cable to Strengthen India-Asia Digital Connectivity

Microsoft, Lightstorm, Tata Communications, Singtel, ASEAN Cableship and NEC will jointly construct the 3,600-kilometre I-2SEA undersea cable. The network will connect India with Malaysia and Singapore and support increasing demand for artificial intelligence, cloud services and data processing. The cable is expected to begin operations in late 2029, expanding India's digital connectivity with Southeast Asia.

Washington Backs Pakistan's Right to Respond to Terrorism

The United States said Pakistan has the right to defend itself against terrorist attacks amid continuing violence along the Afghan border. Pakistan accuses Afghanistan's Taliban government of sheltering militants involved in cross-border attacks. Kabul denies the allegations and argues that Islamabad is shifting responsibility for its domestic security problems. Washington also acknowledged the heavy human cost terrorism has imposed on Pakistan.

3rd July 2026

Cook Islands Minerals Become a Focus of US-Pacific Strategy

The United States has made access to the Cook Islands' seabed minerals a diplomatic priority as it seeks alternative supplies for defence, battery and clean-energy industries. The islands contain deposits of polymetallic nodules but have only authorised exploration. Washington has signed a research and supply-chain framework with the Cook Islands while warning Pacific governments about strategic risks associated with China.





Taiwan Tests Readiness for Blockade, Disaster and Invasion

More than 370 Taiwanese military and government officials participated in an exercise simulating a Chinese blockade, earthquake, sabotage, disinformation, infrastructure failures and invasion. The drill tested whether authorities could maintain essential services during simultaneous military and civilian emergencies. Officials practised drone defence, food distribution, emergency communications and civil-military coordination as Taiwan seeks to strengthen national resilience.

4th July 2026

Erdogan Warns Against Disruption of US-Iran Agreement

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged regional countries to support a US-Iran agreement and accused Israel of attempting to undermine it. Speaking alongside Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Erdogan argued that regional governments must participate in any lasting settlement. He also announced plans to deepen Turkish-Pakistani cooperation in defence, technology, energy, transport and critical minerals.





Chinese Coast Guard Patrol Intensifies Pressure Around Taiwan

China deployed coast guard vessels east of Taiwan for what it described as law-enforcement patrols within Chinese jurisdictional waters. Taiwan rejected the operation as an unlawful expansion of Beijing's authority and sent ships to monitor the Chinese vessels near Hualien. Taipei also instructed commercial ships to ignore any Chinese boarding demands, increasing the risk of further regional tensions.

5th July 2026

Kim Oversees Missile Tests as North Korea Modernises Its Navy

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the launch of a strategic cruise missile and weapons tests aboard the newly built destroyer Kang Kon. The evaluations covered anti-ship, anti-submarine, air-defence and electronic warfare systems. Kim ordered the vessel to complete its trials and enter service within two months as Pyongyang accelerates the development of larger and more advanced warships.





Taiwan Revives Ideological Military Training Amid Chinese Pressure

Taiwan has restored "anti-communist" patriotic classes for military academy graduates after more than two decades, citing increasing military threats and infiltration attempts by China. The programme will include lectures from security, justice and China-policy officials to strengthen graduates' understanding of national threats and military responsibilities. The decision came as Taiwan reported tracking more than 110 Chinese military and coast guard vessels across the first island chain, alongside a new Chinese patrol east of Taiwan.

6th July 2026

Deadly Prison Violence Erupts in Sri Lanka

At least 25 people were killed, and around 100 were injured during two days of clashes between rival inmate groups at Negombo Prison, north of Colombo. The violence reportedly began between convicted prisoners and detainees, while four prison guards were among those killed. Security forces struggled to restore control, and several injured people suffered gunshot wounds and cuts. Authorities launched investigations, but the immediate cause of the unrest was initially unclear. The incident was described as Sri Lanka's deadliest prison violence in years.



Canberra and Suva Establish Mutual Security Pact

Australia and Fiji signed the Ocean of Peace Alliance, requiring each country to assist the other if attacked. The agreement is Fiji's first formal defence alliance and makes it Australia's fourth ally, alongside the United States, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. The two nations also concluded the Vuvale Union treaty to deepen economic and security cooperation, with Australia committing more than A$1 billion to Fiji over ten years. The agreements come amid increasing competition with China for influence in the Pacific.

India Names Hafiz Saeed in Pahalgam Attack Case

India's National Investigation Agency has charged Hafiz Saeed, founder of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, over the April 2025 attack near Pahalgam that killed 26 people. Authorities accused him of planning a cross-border conspiracy and charged him both personally and as the leader of LeT and its affiliate, The Resistance Front. The attack triggered a four-day military confrontation between India and Pakistan. Islamabad has denied involvement and called for an independent investigation. Saeed has been imprisoned in Pakistan since his 2020 conviction for terrorism financing.

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Seoul Proposes Deeper Defence Partnership with NATO

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung proposed expanding defence cooperation with NATO beyond conventional arms sales. Speaking at the alliance's Defence Industry Forum in Ankara, he called for joint research into advanced technologies, collaborative weapons production, and shared operation of defence systems. Lee described the initiative as a "South Korea–NATO Defence Industry Partnership 2.0," aimed at combining South Korea's technological capabilities with NATO members' defence expertise and strengthening long-term industrial and security cooperation.



India and Indonesia Expand Strategic and Economic Cooperation

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto strengthened bilateral ties during talks in Jakarta. The two countries signed agreements covering the BrahMos missile system, agriculture, critical minerals and other strategic sectors. They also agreed to advance cooperation in food security, maritime safety, trade and investment. Both leaders described the partnership between the two major democracies as beneficial for regional stability and prosperity, while pledging to accelerate negotiations on a preferential trade agreement.

Taiwan Defends Military Readiness as Essential for Security

Taiwanese security official Lin Fei-fan said the island's military and civil-defence preparations are defensive measures, not provocations against China. He argued that Beijing's growing military capabilities and continued pressure around Taiwan require stronger public readiness. Taiwan has increased defence spending and expanded nationwide resilience drills under President Lai Ching-te. Lin warned that delaying preparation could leave citizens unable to respond during a crisis, adding that peace would be possible if China abandoned its military ambitions toward Taiwan.

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Pakistan Calls for Continued Compliance with US–Iran Peace Framework

Pakistan urged the United States and Iran to honour their commitments under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding after President Donald Trump declared the interim agreement "over." The 14-point deal, reached in June, was designed to halt the conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said the agreement remains an important foundation for mutual respect, regional stability and shared prosperity, and called on all parties to preserve the diplomatic framework.





Taiwan Warns of Gradual Shift in Regional Security Balance

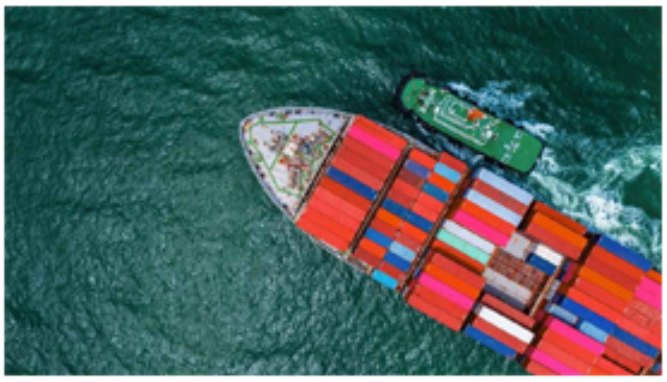
Taiwanese official Kuan Bi-ling warned that China's steadily intensifying "grey-zone" activities could quietly establish a new reality in the Taiwan Strait without triggering open war. She said Beijing's military and coast guard operations are also increasing pressure on Japan and the Philippines. Over time, these actions could affect shipping routes, insurance assessments and frontline security. Kuan cautioned that treating each incident as below crisis level may allow the international community to become accustomed to changes that gradually undermine the existing regional order.

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India and Australia Seek Stronger Energy and Security Partnership

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Melbourne to advance cooperation on energy, defence, and regional security. A major focus was on finalising arrangements for Australia to supply uranium for India's civilian nuclear-energy programme under international safeguards. The leaders also discussed deeper military coordination, maritime security, critical minerals, renewable energy, and green hydrogen. The talks reflected the two countries' expanding strategic partnership amid growing geopolitical uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific.





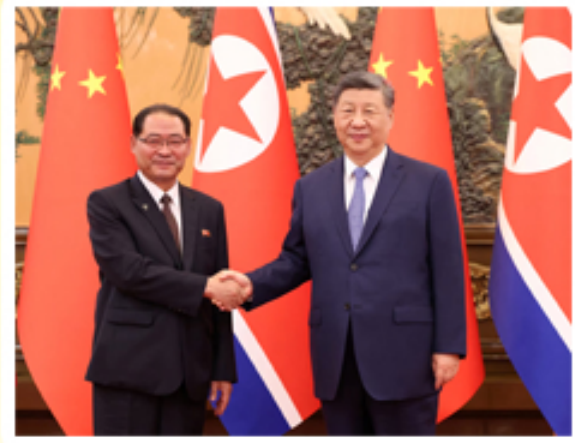
Asian Economies Prioritise Resilience Over Choosing Sides

Asian policymakers and investors are increasingly pursuing resilience and pragmatic partnerships instead of aligning exclusively with Washington or Beijing. At Reuters NEXT Asia in Singapore, speakers described geopolitical fragmentation as a lasting reality requiring long-term planning. Thailand intends to cooperate with different partners based on national interests and investment quality. Investors are also prioritising policy stability, strong domestic markets, secure supply chains, and technological capacity. Despite US-China tensions, business leaders believe Asia's growth, manufacturing strength, and economic diversity will continue attracting investment.

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China and North Korea Move to Deepen Strategic Cooperation

Chinese President Xi Jinping met North Korean Premier Pak Thae Song in Beijing during his three-day visit marking the 65th anniversary of the countries' friendship treaty. Xi called on both nations to maintain strategic coordination amid global instability and accelerate agreements reached with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in June. Those agreements seek to expand political, economic and cultural cooperation. The meeting highlights renewed efforts by Beijing and Pyongyang to strengthen their long-standing partnership.





Pyongyang Orders Broader Military and Nuclear Modernisation

North Korea has approved new steps to expand and improve its nuclear capabilities as part of a broader military modernisation drive. The decision was made during an enlarged meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Military Commission, chaired by Kim Jong Un. Kim argued that lasting security requires a powerful military able to deter emerging threats. The meeting also outlined plans to upgrade combat systems, strengthen military intelligence, modernise bases and improve the technical infrastructure of the armed forces.

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China's Submarine Missile Test Signals Stronger Nuclear Deterrence

China tested a ballistic missile from a nuclear-powered submarine in the South Pacific, demonstrating progress in its sea-based nuclear capabilities. Analysts said the launch allowed Beijing to assess complex command, communication and stealth operations needed for a credible retaliatory strike. The missile carried a dummy warhead, but regional countries and the United States criticised the exercise. China described it as routine training conducted under international law. The test also highlighted Beijing's expanding nuclear triad and ability to potentially target Guam and Hawaii.





Hormuz Tanker Traffic Declines as US–Iran Tensions Return

Tanker movements through the Strait of Hormuz slowed on July 10 after renewed clashes between the United States and Iran disrupted an already fragile truce. Ship-tracking data indicated that several vessels reversed course as operators reassessed growing security risks. The escalation raised fresh concerns over global oil supplies and maritime trade through the crucial waterway. Although crude prices eased slightly, they remained set for weekly gains of around 4–5 percent as uncertainty over shipping safety and diplomatic negotiations continued.

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Fourteen Nations Reject China's South China Sea Claims

Fourteen countries, including the United States, Japan, and the Philippines, jointly declared that China's sweeping claims in the South China Sea lack legal foundation. The statement marked the tenth anniversary of the 2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling, which rejected Beijing's claim to historic rights across much of the disputed waterway. The participating governments reaffirmed that the decision is final and legally binding under international law. China has repeatedly refused to accept the ruling, calling it invalid. The renewed declaration reflects continuing regional concern over maritime confrontations, freedom of navigation, and growing tensions involving Chinese vessels in contested regional waters.



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Trump Proposes US Control of the Strait of Hormuz

US President Donald Trump said Washington would probably take control of the Strait of Hormuz and seek payment from countries benefiting from its protection. He described the United States as a potential "guardian" of the strategic waterway, which is central to global oil supplies. Trump's remarks followed renewed missile and drone exchanges between US and Iranian forces, rising energy prices, and Tehran's suspension of shipping permits. Iran said normal traffic could resume only after American military intervention ended. The escalation has weakened a recent interim agreement designed to reopen the strait, halt hostilities, and support another sixty days of negotiations.





China Warns Europe Over South China Sea Arbitration Support

China urged European governments to stop endorsing the 2016 South China Sea arbitration ruling, warning that continued support could damage relations and cooperation with Beijing. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said recent statements by several European countries and the European Union distorted facts and unfairly targeted China. Beijing considers the tribunal's decision illegal, invalid and non-binding, despite its rejection of China's expansive maritime claims. China also summoned diplomats from the countries involved and the EU delegation to lodge formal protests. The warning highlights growing diplomatic friction as Western governments reaffirm international legal limits on Beijing's claims in the disputed waters.

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Russia Plans Alternative Grain Routes After Ukrainian Attacks

Russia is preparing to redirect grain exports from the Sea of Azov after Ukrainian attacks disrupted shipping along a route carrying roughly one-quarter of the country's grain shipments. Traffic remained restricted on July 14, creating the most serious interruption to Black Sea grain trade since the war began. Moscow's Agriculture Ministry said export volumes and domestic food supplies should remain stable because cargoes can move through alternative Black Sea and Baltic ports. Exporters pledged to meet contracts, although some replacement terminals have also faced Ukrainian drone strikes. The disruption comes as Russia begins harvesting crops across its southern agricultural regions.





US Revokes Licence Allowing Iranian Oil Sales

The United States revoked a general licence permitting Iranian oil sales after attacks on commercial tankers in the Strait of Hormuz. A US official described Tehran's actions as unacceptable and warned that they would carry consequences. The decision immediately restored restrictions on Iranian crude exports, increasing pressure on the country's finances and threatening fragile diplomatic efforts. Oil prices climbed more than three percent following the announcement. Washington nevertheless said negotiators remained committed to pursuing a final agreement with Iran. The move highlighted how maritime tensions could disrupt energy markets, weaken the existing truce, and further escalate confrontation between the two governments.

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