



Weekly Asia Pacific Monitor

(26 May-30 May 2025)

Weekly Asia Pacific Monitor is based on daily screening of 28 newspapers published from different countries of the region. The document provides a brief summary of interaction among Asia Pacific countries in security, economy and diplomacy sectors.

Consortium of Asia Pacific Studies (CAPS)

DEFENCE/SECURITY

Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan met in Beijing to discuss restoring diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan. They emphasized security cooperation against militants and expanding China-Pakistan projects into Afghanistan. Pakistan remains cautious about Afghanistan's growing ties with India but welcomes China's role in promoting regional stability.

Pakistan will appoint an ambassador to Afghanistan for the first time since the Taliban took power in 2021. This follows a recent high-level meeting in Beijing, where China hosted foreign ministers from both countries to boost regional ties and increase its influence in South Asia.

Pakistan's economy is showing cautious recovery with improved manufacturing, strong remittances, easing inflation, and better agricultural output supporting growth. Fiscal discipline, social programs, and sustainable development initiatives like Green Sukuk further bolster optimism despite geopolitical challenges.

Ceasefire holds as India and Pakistan tensions shift-to-diplomacy. aiming to reduce Pakistan's steel import deficit by 30% and boost local employment. This deal, coming amid heightened India-Pakistan tensions, marks a deepening of Russia-Pakistan ties and reflects Russia's neutral stance in the ongoing regional conflict.

India has approved the development of its first indigenous stealth fighter, the AMCA, to counter China's J-20 and Pakistan's incoming J-35A jets plan.

Pakistan has launched its first government-backed Bitcoin reserve and national wallet, supported by new regulations and surplus electricity for crypto mining, marking a major step into the digital economy. This initiative aims to boost blockchain innovation and financial inclusion under the guidance of Special Assistant Bilal Bin Saqib.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan discussed boosting defense ties and regional security, with Azerbaijan showing support for Pakistan amid India tensions. Pakistan's army chief also met Iranian officials to enhance border security and trade. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is on a regional tour to strengthen diplomatic and economic relations.

Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Asim Munir are touring regional allies to strengthen ties and counter India's claims amid recent tensions. The trip focuses on diplomacy, defense cooperation, and promoting peace.

U.S. ramps up its military footprint in Australia as tensions with China rise. The U.S. is expanding its military presence in northern Australia as it looks to project power and provide a deterrence against the increasing threat of China in the Asia-Pacific.

US-Australia relationship “strong as ever”, says Hegseth as he meets Deputy PM. US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has called the alliance with Australia as “strong and robust as it has ever been”, as he met Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles in Singapore.

Australia will keep pushing US to drop Trump tariffs after court ruling, trade minister says. Don Farrell says the government has been consistent in its view that tariffs on Australian imports to the US are unjustified

New report slams long-term defence budget. A new report warns Australia will be unprepared for near-term conflict due to the government's focus on future military capabilities.

‘Paper ADF’: Dire warning to Australia. Australia must boost its immediate readiness to go to war or risk having a “paper ADF”, a leading defence think tank warns.

AUKUS in space: Morrison proposes ‘Pillar 3’ for pact. Scott Morrison has proposed expanding the AUKUS security partnership through a ‘Pillar 3’ initiative that he says will enhance deterrence and make Australia a more valuable ally.

Investing in the Australian Defence Force's cyber warfare workforce. As part of Defence’s transition to an integrated and focused force, cyber warfare personnel will now have multiple career pathway opportunities within Defence. The transition to a new skills-based pay structure will help Defence build a fit-for-purpose cyber warfare workforce.

Australia awards \$16.5 million in defence grants. The Australian government has awarded grants to more than 50 businesses across the country that provide priority

defence capabilities with the funding supporting hundreds of jobs and a future made in Australia.

Australia to host Republic of Fiji Military Forces company. Australia and Fiji are strengthening their Defence partnership through a rotation of Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) personnel spending the next five months in Australia.

Combat Systems Micro-credentials launched to strengthen Australia's defence capability. South Australia's Deputy Premier, Susan Close MP, has officially launched Australia's first suite of credit-ready Combat Systems Engineering Micro-credentials, marking a major step in upskilling the national workforce to enhance Australia's defence capabilities.

China's Jiu Tian UAV is a high-altitude drone that carries and launches swarms of smaller attack drones, extending the PLA's strike range. It represents a new approach to swarm warfare and could potentially overwhelm defenses.

Japan Enhances Anti-Drone Capability with Mobile Laser Weapon at DSEI 2025. The development of Japan's directed energy weapon (DEW) system is advancing steadily, reflecting Tokyo's commitment to next-generation defence technologies. Presented at DSEI Japan 2025, the prototype, known as the "Vehicle-Mounted High-Power Laser Demonstration System," represents a step forward in the country's efforts to address emerging aerial threats, particularly drones.

Europe-Japan GCAP fighter racing against China's rising air power. The UK, Japan and Italy are turbocharging their sixth-generation Global Combat Air Program (GCAP) stealth fighter ambitions in a race to outpace China's fast-rising and now battle-proven airpower.

Japan scrambles jets as China conducts Carrier Aircraft Operations in East China Sea. In a massive show of force, the Chinese aircraft carrier "Liaoning" was seen conducting aircraft & helicopter takeoff and landing operations close to the Japanese coast in the East China Sea. The Japanese Ministry of Defence said that Air

Self-Defence fighters had been scrambled in response, though there was no reporting of violations of Japanese airspace.

Handover Ceremony of OSA (Official Security Assistance) FY2023 Project for the Republic of Fiji. On May 26, 2025, at the Stanley Brown Naval Base located in Suva, the capital of the Republic of Fiji, the Handover Ceremony for OSA (Official Security Assistance) was held, with the attendance of Mr. TAKADA Isami, Chargé d’Affairs ad interim of Japan to the Republic of Fiji.

Japanese Navy Advances with AI-Driven Uncrewed Surface Vehicle for Autonomous Operations. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), in partnership with Japan’s Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA), revealed the development of a new AI-enabled uncrewed surface vehicle (USV) designed for multipurpose combat support.

ICEYE and IHI unite to bolster Japan's satellite prowess. The Polish-Finnish company ICEYE has entered into a collaboration with the Japanese company IHI Corporation, which specialises in heavy industry. The aim is to create a constellation of SAR satellites for both civilian and military use.

South Korea Mulls Replacing Delayed Aircraft Carrier Program with Drone Carrier. SBS, a major Korean news outlet, recently reported that the Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) is reviewing plans to refloat the program by turning the vessel into a drone carrier.

South Korea begins KF-21 Boramae fighter jet assembly marking shift in global defense market. South Korea’s Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) announced that the country had begun final assembly of the first mass-produced KF-21 Boramae multirole fighter aircraft.

Joint Ground Forces Engineer-Troops Training Exercise Taking Place in South Korea. The first independent Joint Ground Forces Engineer-Troops Training Exercise is being organized from May 19 to May 30, 2025. The exercise aims at expanding defense relations and cooperation between Mongolia and the Republic of

Korea and enhancing the capacity of the two countries in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

North Korea detains four officials over failed launch of naval destroyer. North Korea has detained four officials who it says are responsible for the failed launch of its second naval destroyer, which outside observers say was damaged much more than the country has disclosed.

Pakistan, US deepen security engagement through Anwar-Hegseth meeting. Prime Minister Anwar met US Defence Secretary Hegseth and Boeing's chief in Singapore. The discussions focused on expanding defence cooperation and strengthening strategic ties.

France honours Prabowo with highest military award. French President Macron awarded Defence Minister Prabowo France's highest military honour. The move highlights deepening defence and strategic ties between France and Indonesia.

US defence chief seeks stronger Asian security ties. US Defence Secretary urged Asian allies to enhance cooperation amid rising China tensions. He emphasized US commitment to regional stability at the Asian security forum.

Defence in focus as RI-France eye future cooperation. France and Indonesia discussed future joint military production and technology sharing. Talks aim to elevate the bilateral defence partnership to a strategic level.

US pushes Australia to raise defence spending. Washington is pressuring Canberra to boost its defence budget in line with NATO levels. The US argues that increased spending is essential amid growing Indo-Pacific threats.

US defence chief urges Asia to match Europe's 5% defence spending. Pete Hegseth called on Asian countries to spend 5% of GDP on defence. He cited European examples and growing regional threats to justify the call.

Singapore hosts defence ministers' meeting. Singapore hosted defence leaders from Five Power Defence Arrangements and others. The meeting addressed multilateral defence cooperation and regional security strategies.

China expands naval strike capabilities. China has upgraded its destroyers with airborne early-warning systems. This significantly extends its maritime strike range and surveillance capability.

What Macron's visit means for Indonesia's defence future. Macron's visit indicates French interest in Indonesia's defence market and capabilities. It may lead to enhanced cooperation on military technology and joint projects

North Korea in 'strongest strategic position' in decades, U.S. intel report says.

North Korea stands in its "strongest strategic position" in decades, a U.S. intelligence report showed, as the recalcitrant regime has been doubling down on its pursuit of advanced weapons that can threaten U.S. forces and allies in Northeast Asia and the U.S. mainland.

Japan Eyes K-RACER Drone to Tackle Military Logistics Challenges.

According to information published by the Australian Defence Magazine (ADM) on May 27, 2025, Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI) is in advanced discussions with Japan's Ministry of Defence regarding the possible acquisition of the K-Racer autonomous transport drone.

Europe welcomes Japan's shift to non-US arms suppliers. European defence companies indicate that Japan has been rapidly opening its doors to non-American military equipment suppliers since the election of US President Donald Trump.

North Korea warns Trump's Golden Dome missile shield could 'turn outer space into a nuclear war field'. North Korea has issued a quick and strong response to US President Donald Trump and his plans for a proposed "Golden Dome", insisting it could make outer space a "nuclear war field".

North Korea's state security minister to attend high-level meeting in Russia, KCNA says. North Korea's minister of state security, Ri Chang Dae, left Pyongyang on Monday to attend a meeting of senior security officials in Russia, the North's KCNA state news agency reported.

North Korea Unveils New Air-to-Air Missile and Aerial Bombs. North Korea has revealed a new air-to-air missile that shows significant progress in its military technology. On May 15, 2025, during a live-fire drill, the missile was tested, where a MiG-29 fighter jet successfully launched it under the watchful eye of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

US Congress's think tank raises estimate for size of North Korean nuclear arsenal. North Korea has produced enough fissile material to build up to 90 nuclear warheads, and may have already assembled approximately 50 of them, according to a new report by the U.S. Congress's think tank.

Bangladesh to procure 6 improved KSS-I submarines from South Korea to protect its maritime territory. According to BDMilitary on May 21, 2025, the Bangladesh Navy is engaged in advanced negotiations with South Korea for the acquisition of six Improved Jang Bogo-class submarines under a defence procurement program valued at approximately \$2 billion.

South Korea to Supply Composite Armour to Boost Protection of Türkiye's Altay Tank. South Korea's Samyang Comtech officially secured export approval to supply advanced ballistic armour for Türkiye's Altay main battle tank. As reported by South Korea's Defence Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA), this marks the company's first direct international armour contract for a foreign-developed tank.

Japanese GSDF Conducting Live Fire Anti-Ship Missile Drills. Japan's Ground Self-Defence Force's First Artillery Brigade publicly announced it will be conducting live-fire training exercises employing its truck-mounted Type 88 long-range surface-to-ship missile systems over the period June 19 to 30, 2025.

Honeywell Strengthens Position in Japan's Defence Market with Advanced F124 Turbofan Engine. Honeywell announced its advanced F124 turbofan engine is being proposed for several key programs that support the modernisation of the Japan Air Self-Defence Force's fleet, expanding Honeywell's presence in Japan's defence market.

Lockheed Martin, Fujitsu Limited agree to MOU for SPY-7 component. US contractor Lockheed Martin and Japanese company Fujitsu Limited confirmed in a release that they had reached a memorandum of understanding (MOU) establishing Fujitsu as a source for the SPY-7 Subarray Suite Power Supply Line Replaceable Unit (PS LRU).

Japan eyes US defence gear purchase ahead of another round of tariff talks.

Japan is considering using the purchase of U.S. defence equipment as a bargaining chip in tariff talks, its top tariff negotiator Ryosei Akazawa said on Thursday as he heads for a fourth round of the negotiations in Washington.

Japan in Talks to Procure Kawasaki K-Racer Drone for Military Logistics.

Japan's Ministry of Defence is in talks with Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI) over the potential acquisition of the K-RACER drone to support military logistics missions.

Australia's defence minister Marles to meet US, Japan counterparts.

Australia's Defence Minister Richard Marles will meet with his U.S. and Japanese counterparts at an Asian security forum in Singapore, the first trilateral talks since elections in Australia and the Trump Administration took office.

North Korea replaces senior military officials at party meeting.

North Korea has replaced senior military officials, including directors of the armed forces' artillery and security bureau, during a meeting of the ruling party's central military commission, state media reported.

Hanwha to boost South Korea missile defence with K-THAAD MFR.

Hanwha Systems has entered into a contractual agreement with the Agency for Defense Development (ADD) of South Korea to build an advanced Multi-Function Radar (MFR) for the L-SAM-II system, also known as 'South Korea's K-THAAD'.

British engines to power South Korean warships.

Rolls-Royce has announced that its MT30 marine gas turbines will power the Republic of Korea Navy's next generation of Ulsan-class frigates.

Russia provided North Korea with air defense system: Seoul.

Russia has provided North Korea with an air defense system and other military support since late last year, according to an international monitoring report released Thursday by South Korea's Foreign Ministry, Yonhap News reported.

North Korea accuses US of posing a threat to global peace, security. North Korea has accused the US of posing a threat to global peace and security through unilateral and militaristic hegemonic policies, state-run media.

North Korea and Russia's vice ministers discuss cooperation in Pyongyang. Russia's Vice Minister of Internal Affairs Vitaly Shulika and Ri Song Chol, North Korea's vice minister of public security, held a meeting to discuss expanding cooperation and exchange, state media reported.

Japan Minister of Defense Calls on Minister for Defence for Singapore. Japan Minister of Defense Nakatani Gen called on Minister for Defence Mr Chan Chun Sing at the Shangri-La Hotel on the sidelines of the 22nd Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD).

Japan ramps up F-35 force posture. The Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) has strengthened the force posture along its northern coastline by initiating the deployment of new Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II fifth-generation fighter aircraft to Komatsu Air Base in Japan's main island of Honshu.

Hegseth calls North Korea 'formidable threat' as USFK role set to broaden. US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth warned Saturday that North Korea poses a formidable threat to the Indo-Pacific region, as senior military voices suggest American forces in South Korea may need to prepare for a broader regional role.

Macron to China: Keep North Korea out of Ukraine war or risk NATO coming to Asia. French President Emmanuel Macron warned China that NATO could become more deeply involved in Asia if Beijing does not do more to stop North Korea from taking part in Russia's war on Ukraine.

Russia has provided N. Korea with Pantsir air defense system, jammers since troop deployment: report. Russia has provided North Korea with its air defence system, electronic warfare jamming devices and other military support since late last year, in blatant violations of UN sanctions amid their deepening ties, an international monitoring report released by Seoul's Foreign Ministry showed.

North Korea Conducts Nuclear Strike Drill. North Korea conducted missile drills simulating a nuclear counterstrike against U.S. and South Korean forces after criticizing the United States for conducting a drill that simulated a North Korean nuclear strike on the U.S. homeland.

Political scientist Andrew Nathan told Nikkei that if U.S. policies under President Trump weaken America, China might feel compelled to fill the resulting power vacuum. However, he noted that Beijing does not currently have a fixed ambition to become the world's leading power.

U.S. defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, in a landmark speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue, warned of an “imminent” military threat from China. He emphasized that deterrence through strength is crucial while cautioning Indo-Pacific nations against balancing ties between Washington and Beijing.

The U.S. plans to offer India a customized F-35A stealth fighter to counter rising Chinese and Pakistani airpower. As China fast-tracks J-35A jets to Pakistan, India views the F-35 as vital for deterrence, while also weighing Russia’s Su-57E co-production offer amid growing geopolitical competition.

India now plans to buy the more advanced S-500 system, which can target hypersonic missiles and satellites. However, purchasing the S-500 risks US sanctions under CAATSA, making the decision complex.

India is engaging with defence manufacturers from the UK, France, and Japan to co-develop fighter jet engines, aiming to enhance its defence capabilities amid rising regional tensions. This effort complements India’s indigenous stealth fighter program (AMCA) and reflects a push for technology transfer and self-reliance, following recent aerial clashes with Pakistan and challenges in procuring engines from the US.

India’s defence production hit a record ₹1.46 trillion in 2024-25, with exports rising over 14% to ₹24,000 crore, driven by increased private sector participation and the launch of the AMCA stealth fighter program. Full utilization of the modernisation budget and historic contract signings underscore India’s push for self-reliance and military upgrade.

India is collaborating with defense manufacturers from the UK, France, and Japan to co-develop fighter jet engines. It is aiming to strengthen its defense capabilities amid rising regional tensions.

India is reviving the Kailashahar airfield in Tripura to counter China’s development of Bangladesh’s nearby Lalmonirhat airbase, securing the vulnerable

Siliguri Corridor. This move enhances both civilian connectivity and military readiness amid growing India-China regional tensions.

India has approved the development of its first indigenous stealth fighter, the AMCA, to counter China's J-20 and Pakistan's incoming J-35A jets plan.

NZ behind most comparable countries on space spending per capita. The Government is spending almost 20 times less on space per head than the United States, and half that of the United Kingdom.

NZDF welcomes Supreme Court decision on readiness requirements. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has welcomed the decision by the Supreme Court decision in Chief of Defence Force v Four Members of the Armed Forces.

Russia and India vow joint fight against terrorism. Indian lawmakers have made a three-day visit to the Russian capital to discuss the recent standoff with Pakistan.

Indonesia reportedly considering buying Chinese and Russian fighter aircraft. The procurement would reportedly include dozens of J-10 fighters modified in China, while resuming a stalled deal to purchase Su-35 fighters from Russia.

Russia ranks among top five global arms exporters – Putin. The president has called for an expansion of the range of services in the industry.

Sovereignty and anti-fraud efforts highlighted at Moscow cyber conference

The international PHDays Fest featured discussions on Big Tech “authoritarianism” and combating cybercrime.

UK to step up cyberattacks on Russia and China – minister. Defense Secretary John Healey has said London will increase hacking operations as part of a new military command.

‘Terrorism and dialogue cannot go together’ – India on talks with Pakistan

New Delhi has urged Islamabad to “hand over” terrorists and vacate the “occupied” part of Kashmir.

Trump's trade offer led to India-Pakistan ceasefire – White House. The US commerce secretary has said the truce between the two South Asian nations happened due to the president's intervention.

India surpasses Japan as fourth-largest global economy – New Delhi. The South Asian nation's economy has grown to \$4 trillion, surpassed only by the US, China, and Germany.

Indian Army shows off locally manufactured drones (VIDEO). The South Asian nation's military has showcased its homegrown UAVs after its recent clash with Pakistan.

India clears way for own fifth-generation fighter jet. New Delhi has granted approval for developing a stealth aircraft as it pivots toward reducing dependence on defense imports.

ECONOMY

Australian Economy Braces for Shifts From US-China Trade Dynamics. Australia's economic scene is in flux as the central bank eyes policy shifts due to US-China trade tensions and leadership changes at big mining firms.

Australia Floods Recovery Could Take Several Months, PM Says. It could take several months to get back to normal life due to devastation of floods.

China is spearheading a new economic bloc with ASEAN and GCC nations to counter U.S. protectionism, aiming for deeper trade, infrastructure, and financial cooperation. Premier Li Qiang highlighted the bloc's strategic potential amid global tensions, with analysts viewing it as a step toward a possible "Asian Union."

A U.S. court has blocked former President Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs, ruling he overstepped his authority, offering only temporary relief to China and other nations. Though the administration has appealed, analysts warn Trump could still reimpose tariffs through alternative legal channels.

China and Europe's semiconductor leaders met in Beijing to strengthen collaboration and boost supply-chain resilience amid increasing U.S. tech

restrictions on China. Both sides emphasized safeguarding global semiconductor stability and rejected unilateral trade practices, pledging deeper cooperation and a fair business environment.

Indonesia aims for EU trade progress amid softened green rules. Jakarta sees opportunity as the EU eases its green regulations. This may help Indonesia achieve breakthroughs in CEPA negotiations.

China's GEM invests \$8B in Kalimantan battery hub. Chinese firm GEM will build a global battery recycling facility in Kalimantan. The \$8 billion investment supports Indonesia's green industry ambitions.

ASEAN seeks unified front in US tariff talks, expands China ties. ASEAN plans to approach US tariff negotiations collectively. Simultaneously, the bloc is strengthening economic engagement with China.

China debt pressures mounting on developing nations. A report warns of unsustainable debt burdens from Chinese loans. Low transparency and high interest rates are worsening financial stress.

RI consumers cutting back amid economic strain. Indonesians are trading down to cheaper goods due to rising living costs. Economic pressures are changing consumer behaviour across sectors.

Manpower Ministry bans age limits in job ads. Indonesia has banned age restrictions in recruitment postings. The move aims to reduce employment discrimination and improve job access.

Malaysia, Vietnam to finalise digital economy MoU. Both countries aim to sign a digital economy MoU by August. The pact will focus on innovation, tech exchange, and digital trade.

Malaysia's Economy Minister attends ASEAN Summit. Minister Rafizi represented Malaysia at the 46th ASEAN Summit. He engaged in regional talks on economic growth and digital integration.

ASEAN-China-GCC ties seen boosting global economic certainty. Closer ASEAN-GCC-China ties are expected to stabilize global markets. Experts believe the tripartite relationship enhances economic resilience.

BRICS adopts climate finance framework. BRICS countries have agreed on a joint stance for climate funding. This marks the first unified framework for sustainable development finance.

Indonesia-France sign equestrian sports cooperation deal. The deal aims to develop equestrian sports and training programs. It is part of broader cultural and economic collaboration efforts.

Brunei ranks fifth in Malaysia's tourist arrivals. Brunei remains a top tourist source for Malaysia. Tourism links continue to strengthen bilateral economic exchanges.

India's economy grew 7.4% in Q1 2025, led by construction and manufacturing. While global tariff uncertainties pose risks, strong domestic demand and easing inflation are expected to support future growth.

China and Japan made progress in talks to resume Japanese seafood exports to China, but the import ban on some products remains until Japan meets China's safety and monitoring requirements.

India's image as a rising democracy and global power is largely built on disinformation, not institutional strength. From manipulating Kashmir narratives to using media, fake operations, and Bollywood propaganda, India systematically distorts facts to vilify Pakistan and shape global opinion in its favor.

India is pushing to finalize an interim trade deal with the U.S. by June 25 to mitigate tariff risks and boost exports. The agreement could open access to key sectors and enhance bilateral trade, aiming for \$500 billion by 2030.

Israel expects to finalize several economic agreements with India this year, focusing on fintech, investment stability, and innovation-driven sectors, while a full FTA may take more time. Despite regional challenges, Israel forecasts 4% GDP growth, citing strong economic fundamentals and resilient investor confidence.

New Zealand will not be 'guilt-tripped' over environment, resources minister says. Shane Jones is unapologetic about his plan to double mineral exports to \$3bn over the next decade despite criticism over potential environmental impacts

RBNZ Set to Make Sixth Rate Cut and Signal Bias to More Easing. New Zealand's central bank is set to cut interest rates for a sixth straight meeting and signal it's open to further easing as US trade barriers dim the economic outlook.

Govt Supports Farmers Fueling Economy. New Zealand dairy farmers are ending the 2024/25 season on a high, with increased production and record milk prices delivering real gains to the rural economy and every Kiwi household, Agriculture Minister Todd McClay says.

Fiji stands at a pivotal moment in its journey towards a digital economy-Kamikamica. Fiji stands at a very pivotal moment as it embarks on a journey towards a digital economy, where innovation and technology can propel and enhance the quality of life for every Fijian.

New Zealand cut the rate, but not the Kiwi. As expected, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand cut its key rate by 25 basis points to 3.25%.

Fast-track to where? The new law opening up New Zealand to a mining boom. Critics say the country's unique biodiversity is at risk as the government plans to boost mineral exports to \$3bn by 2035.

Australia, New Zealand dollars fall as US court blocks Trump tariffs. The Australian and New Zealand dollars fell on Thursday after a U.S. court blocked President Donald Trump's sweeping import tariffs.

DIPLOMACY

Envoy for free trade deal to boost Pak-South Korea ties. Stressing the importance of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and South Korea, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Park Kijun, on Friday said that such an arrangement could significantly strengthen bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

China's ambassador hits out at Australia's 'questionable' Darwin Port return plan. Xiao Qian says Landbridge Group, which has a 99-year lease, has made significant investments in the port and contributed to the local economy.

Norwegian princess moves to Australia for university. Norway's Princess Ingrid Alexandra is moving to Australia for her university studies, enrolling in a degree programme at the University of Sydney.

Indonesia is planning to send its pilots to China for J-10C fighter jet training, suggesting a potential acquisition of 42 aircraft. This action reflects Jakarta's strategy to diversify its airpower by incorporating platforms from China, Russia, and France amidst rising regional tensions.

China hosted Pacific island leaders in Xiamen to strengthen ties and weaken Taiwan's diplomatic influence in the region. The meeting included representatives from Beijing-friendly Pacific countries amid growing geopolitical competition.

China has expanded its military presence in the Indian Ocean to secure trade routes and strengthen regional ties, prompting India and the U.S. to increase naval activities. This growing footprint challenges India's dominance and signals a more assertive Chinese naval posture in the region.

China pledged \$2 million to boost climate resilience and law enforcement cooperation with Pacific Island countries, launching 100 small projects to support sustainable development and tackle climate impacts.

Malaysia invites Myanmar conflict groups for talks. PM Anwar has invited Myanmar's conflicting parties to Kuala Lumpur. The dialogue aims to promote ASEAN's peace-building role in Myanmar.

Macron, Prabowo discuss strategic partnership. Macron and Prabowo met to deepen bilateral cooperation. Talks focused on defence, education, and industrial collaboration.

France's Macron calls for Asian coalitions amid US-China tensions. Macron urged Asian nations to form coalitions to avoid polarisation. He warned of deepening divides between Washington and Beijing.

RI, France target centennial of diplomatic relations. Indonesia and France plan to mark 100 years of ties in 2030. The goal is to enhance collaboration in security, climate, and culture.

Southeast Asian leaders hold talks with China and Gulf states. ASEAN leaders met with China and GCC counterparts to boost ties. Discussions centred on trade, energy, and geopolitical cooperation.

ASEAN-China-GCC talks reflect shifting global alliances. Trilateral talks show ASEAN's growing role in shaping global balance. The dialogue aimed to foster multipolar cooperation in turbulent times.

Asian leaders voice tariff concerns, urge unity. ASEAN leaders warned of US tariff threats and called for cohesion. They advocated regional solidarity to protect economic interests.

Anwar praised for bold ASEAN diplomacy. Malaysians applauded PM Anwar's proactive diplomacy at ASEAN summits. He championed firm stances from Gaza to the South China Sea.

ASEAN vision 2045 lacks implementation urgency. The vision proposes ambitious goals for 2045 development. However, analysts say concrete action plans remain vague.

Prabowo supports PNG's ASEAN bid. Indonesia's Defence Minister endorsed Papua New Guinea's membership. The move could expand ASEAN's reach into the Pacific.

Govt helps Indonesian students in US amid visa policy change. Indonesia is assisting students affected by US visa suspensions. Efforts include diplomatic outreach and emergency support measures.

Stunting declines in Indonesia but risks remain. National stunting rates have dropped, showing health improvements. However, poor nutrition and healthcare access still threaten progress.

Brunei, Vietnam deepen bilateral ties. The countries pledged to enhance cooperation in trade and security. Recent meetings reaffirmed their long-standing diplomatic partnership.

Brunei King meets Malaysian PM and monarch. The Sultan of Brunei hosted high-level meetings with Malaysian leaders. Talks focused on boosting regional solidarity and bilateral cooperation.

ASEAN-AIPA meeting boosts regional cooperation. The 103rd ASEAN-BAC and AIPA interface fostered stronger legislative ties. Discussions focused on integrating economic and political priorities.

Regional cooperation highlighted by Brunei's monarch. Sultan Hassanal emphasized unity and mutual support in ASEAN. His remarks came during key summits and bilateral visits.

India has historically dominated South Asia, but recent political shifts in neighbors like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives have led them to strengthen ties with China. This regional loss limits India's influence and forces it to work harder to maintain stability.

India and Vietnam are strengthening defense ties through joint exercises, training, and maritime cooperation to counter China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific. Vietnam's planned purchase of BrahMos missiles highlights deepening strategic trust and reduced reliance on Russian arms.

Indonesia is considering buying 42 used Chinese J-10 jets to quickly strengthen its air force. This decision was taken due to delays and cancellations of previous fighter acquisitions from Russia, France, and the U.S.

Japan has been allowed by India to inspect debris from China's PL-15 missile, offering rare insight into its advanced technology. The move highlights growing regional concerns over China's airpower.

China launched the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) in Hong Kong on Friday, with 32 signatory countries and support from over 80 nations and 20 international organizations. The move comes as U.S. unilateralism under Trump's "America First" policy challenges traditional global frameworks.

New Zealand Foreign Minister arrives Kathmandu on two days' visit, ahead Everest Day. New Zealand Foreign Minister arrives Kathmandu on two days' visit, ahead Everest Day

New Zealand Deputy PM Winston Peters to visit India from May 29-30. New Zealand Deputy PM Winston Peters to visit India from May 29-30. He is expected to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Japan to spend \$6.3 billion for tariff relief package. Japan's government plans to spend 900 billion yen (\$6.3 billion) in state funds for an emergency relief package to cushion the blow from U.S. tariffs, Kyodo news agency reported.

Japan signals intent to reach tariff deal with US in June. Japan's chief trade negotiator Ryosei Akazawa indicated his aim to advance tariff talks with the United States in time for a June meeting between US President Donald Trump and Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, per Bloomberg.

Japan offers LNG, shipbuilding support in US tariff talks. Japan is offering financial and technical support, including investment in an Alaskan LNG pipeline and shipbuilding expertise, during trade negotiations with the United States.

OpenAI to set up shop in South Korea. OpenAI has established a legal entity in South Korea and plans to open an office in Seoul in the coming months. The

company is hiring staff to support collaborations with local businesses and policymakers.

Iran-South Korea trade reaches \$56m in early 2025. According to a report by the Iran-South Korea Joint Chamber of Commerce, citing data from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA), South Korea exported approximately \$55.7 million worth of goods to Iran between January and April 2025. Imports from Iran stood at \$505,000 during the same period.

US demanded South Korea resolve trade imbalance in recent talks, media reports say. United States demanded that South Korea resolve the large trade imbalance between the countries during recent trade talks, South Korean media reported.

S. Korean-Japanese business leaders will hold an annual conference. South Korean and Japanese business leaders will hold the 57th South Korea-Japan Business Conference on May 27, 2025, which will be the 57th South Korea-Japan Business Conference.

Japan loses top creditor position for 1st time in 34 years. Japan has lost its long-held title as the world's largest creditor nation for the first time in 34 years, falling behind Germany despite posting record-high net foreign assets, Kyodo News reported.

Japan shows interest in investing in Iran despite the sanctions cloud hanging overhead. Japan has expressed continued interest in investing in various projects in Iran, said Maekawa Nobutaka, special representative of the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), Trend reports.

Korea to bolster developing nations support with the World Bank. Korea will work to strengthen cooperation with the World Bank as part of efforts to help developing nations advance their agriculture and food technologies, Seoul's Ministry of Economy and Finance said.

Korea and Nagaland take first step towards economic partnership at Joint CSR-Economic Cooperation Seminar. The Embassy of the Republic of Korea and KOTRA, India-Korea Business Cooperation Centre, New Delhi, in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Nagaland, successfully organized the first-ever 2025 Korea-India Joint CSR-Economic Cooperation Seminar.

Japan's top trade negotiator to leave for the US for talks. Japan's top trade negotiator Ryosei Akazawa will leave for Washington later this week to hold talks with the US on tariff measures, local media reported. Akazawa, who serves as minister in charge of economic revitalization, is expected to meet with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Friday.

Japan is reportedly offering to buy up to \$6.94 billion worth of US semiconductors. Japan is reportedly offering to buy up to \$6.94 billion worth of U.S. semiconductors as part of ongoing trade negotiations with Washington, according to the Asahi newspaper, which cited an unnamed source.

Chey, Ishiba push for stronger Korea-Japan economic ties. Chey Tae-won, chairman of both the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and SK Group, met with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on May 27 to discuss strengthening bilateral economic cooperation and countering rising global protectionism.

Pakistan invites Japanese firms to invest in mineral sector. Pakistan's Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal invited Japanese companies to explore investment opportunities in the country's mineral sector during meetings with public and private stakeholders in Tokyo.

Japan and China agree on procedures for resuming seafood imports. The Japanese and Chinese governments have reached an agreement on procedures to resume imports of fishery products from Japan, bringing China closer to ending a ban imposed in 2023 over the release of treated wastewater from the disaster-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Japan PM Ishiba, Trump discuss tariffs in phone call. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba stated that he held a phone conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday, during which they exchanged views on tariff-related issues. Ishiba also said the talks were "meaningful" as the two leaders further deepened their understanding of each other's views.

Japan to send a senior official to Alaska energy conference. Japan's Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Yoji Muto said that a senior official will attend an energy conference in Alaska early next week, where the proposed \$44 billion Alaska LNG project is expected to be discussed.

Japan to recruit 100,000 Bangladeshi workers over next 5 years. Japan plans to recruit at least 100,000 workers from Bangladesh over the next five years to address its growing labour shortage, officials and business leaders announced during a seminar in Tokyo.

Korea, Japan to boost cooperation. South Korean and Japanese business leaders from have agreed to expand bilateral economic cooperation across various fields, including artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, biotechnology, and energy.

South Korea Industrial Production Unexpectedly Declines. South Korea's industrial production fell by 0.9% month-on-month in April 2025, defying market expectations of a 0.5% increase as manufacturing output weakened.

BOK slashes growth forecast by half to 0.8%. The Bank of Korea nearly halved its economic growth projection for this year to 0.8 percent, reflecting deepening challenges both at home and abroad. In a bid to support the struggling economy, the central bank also delivered a quarter-point base rate cut.

Japan says progress has been made in U.S. tariff talks. Japan's chief trade negotiator Ryosei Akazawa said progress was made toward reaching a deal during his fourth round of tariff talks with his American counterparts, but declined to provide specifics.

Japan, US To Hold New Round Of Trade Talks Before G7 Summit. Japan and the US agreed on Friday to hold another round of trade talks before next month's G7 summit, with Japan's top tariff negotiator emphasizing that any deal must include concessions on all American tariffs, including those on automobiles.

Ishiba, Cambodian Leader Affirm Economic Cooperation. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and his Cambodian counterpart, Hun Manet, met in Tokyo on Friday and issued a joint statement announcing an economic cooperation package.

Japan interested in expanding maritime economic co-op with Iran, says envoy. Japan is interested in enhancing bilateral cooperation with Iran, particularly in maritime-based economic development, Tokyo's ambassador to Tehran said during a meeting with senior Iranian officials.

China's no-sail zone is concerning. South Korea has voiced concerns to China over its establishment of a "no-sail zone" in a shared area of the Yellow Sea, according to a statement from Seoul's foreign ministry. The US outlet Newsweek reported that China had barred ships from entering certain parts of the Yellow Sea, located between mainland China and the Korean Peninsula.

7 MoUs to be signed during Yunus's Japan visit. Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus is scheduled to leave Dhaka for Tokyo, Japan, for four-day visit on Tuesday. Both the countries will sign a total of seven MoUs. Besides, Bangladesh will sought \$1 billion from Japan as budgetary support in the form of 'soft loan'.

Uzbekistan, Republic of Korea expand cultural cooperation. A delegation from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan is participating in the 67th Miryang Arirang Festival, currently taking place in the city of Miryang, Republic of Korea. Given that 2025 has been declared the Year of Mutual Cultural Exchange between the two countries, the discussion highlighted the ongoing work in culture and the arts and upcoming projects.

Korea, seeking key meeting, pledges W5b to UNESCO. South Korea will contribute a total of 5 billion won (\$3.6 million) to UNESCO's fund promoting

intangible cultural heritage around the world, as it bids to host a meeting of the UN cultural body in the country.

Turkmenistan, South Korea ink deal for fertilizer production plant.

Turkmenistan has inked a significant deal with South Korea's Daewoo Engineering & Construction to whip up a new fertilizer production complex by 2029, looking to enhance industrial and agricultural capacity through foreign investment and cutting-edge technologies.

N. Korea pursues unofficial technology transfer to upgrade key western port. North Korea recently requested technical assistance from civilian companies in the Chinese city of Dalian to modernize equipment at Nampo Port.

FM visits Japan to strengthen Pakistan-Japan economic partnership. To pave the way for deeper economic collaboration, new trade linkages, and increased visibility of Pakistan's potential in international forums, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has arrived in Japan for a high-level official visit.

Japan lodges a protest with China over maritime research in disputed waters.

On Tuesday, Tokyo lodged a protest with China over its maritime research in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), according to a report.

Japan's EEZ claim based on Okinotori Reef violates international law; it has no right to interfere in the Chinese research ship's operation, Chinese FM. When asked to comment on the presence of a Chinese maritime research ship in waters near Okinotori Reef, which the Japan Coast Guard claims as part of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said that, according to UNCLOS, Okinotori is a reef, not an island. As such, it is not entitled to an EEZ or continental shelf.

Japanese government urges universities to take in students affected by Harvard ban. Japan's government on Tuesday called on its universities to support students affected by a US policy move barring Harvard University from enrolling foreign students under its student visa program, according to local media.

Japan PM Ishiba Pledges to Support Gaza. Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba told a visiting senior U.N. official Tuesday that the country will work to improve the humanitarian situation in the war-torn Gaza Strip.

The Continental shelf agreement emerges as a new variable in Korea-Japan relations. A decades-old resource-sharing agreement between Korea and Japan is set to become a key point of contention in bilateral relations. With the possibility of either side unilaterally ending the 1974 Joint Development Agreement (JDA) over the continental shelf, the agreement's future is now closely tied to shifts in regional geopolitics and international maritime law.

Korean Foreign minister discusses security, economic ties with new Canadian counterpart. Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul spoke by phone with his new Canadian counterpart Tuesday and discussed efforts to promote bilateral partnership in security, the economy and other areas, Seoul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

South Korea-Iran ties can be developed in various fields: South Korean ambassador. The envoy made the remarks in a meeting with the mayor of Sanandaj city, the centre of Iran's Kordestan province. He announced his country's readiness to invest in various fields, including tourism, culture, and especially the field of medicine.
Ishiba and Tomasdottir agree to deepen cooperation between Japan and Iceland. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Icelandic President Halla Tomasdottir met in Tokyo and agreed to deepen cooperation between their countries in a wide range of fields, including the economy and security.

A meeting of the Ambassador of Turkmenistan with President of Tsukuba University and the Chairman of the Japan-Turkmen Joint Committee for Economic Cooperation. On 27 May 2025, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Japan A.Bayramov had a meeting in Tokyo with President of Tsukuba University of Japan Kyosuke Nagata and Chairman of the Japan-Turkmen Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation Hiroyuki Tsubai.

Jakarta, S Korean province mull sustainable development cooperation. The provincial governments of Jakarta and Chungcheongnam-do, South Korea, are

hoping to build cooperation to advance economic growth, sustainable development, and cultural exchange.

US dollar hits two-year low against ruble. The Russian currency's rally has been fueled by rising oil prices and optimism regarding the Ukraine peace talks, analysts say.

Hack fest in Moscow sparks BRICS cyber ties. Positive Hack Days 2025 has become the staging ground for a major deal between Indonesia and Russia's top cybersecurity firm.

South Korea backs Uzbekistan's transport modernization with new grant. South Korea has pledged support to modernize Uzbekistan's transport infrastructure, including a smart bus system and BRT network for Tashkent. The initiative aims to strengthen economic ties between the two countries, focusing on sustainable transport solutions.

Kuwaiti, Japanese leaders call for 2-state solution in meeting amid Israel's war on Gaza. The Japanese prime minister and the Kuwaiti crown prince today called for a two-state solution amid Israel's continued bombing of Gaza. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met in Tokyo and discussed bilateral and regional issues.

Saudi-Japan Partnership Council: A strategic energy alliance. Saudi Arabia and Japan agreed on 20/5/2025 to establish a strategic partnership council to strengthen bilateral relations in different sectors, including energy. The framework is designed to support Saudi Vision 2030 and Japan's Green Transformation goals through co-financing projects and technology transfer.

Russia's Putin praises Abe, says late Japanese PM wanted peace treaty. Russian President Vladimir Putin paid tribute to former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, saying he knew the slain Japanese leader had dreamt of finally concluding a post-World War Two peace treaty.

Japan-Laos Summit Meeting. Mr. ISHIBA Shigeru, Prime Minister of Japan, held a summit meeting with H.E. Dr. Thongloun SISOULITH, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, who was visiting Japan.

China removes remaining buoy from Japan's exclusive economic zone. China has removed a buoy it had installed inside Japan's exclusive economic zone off a remote southwestern island, the Japan Coast Guard, meaning all such objects that had irked Tokyo have been cleared from its EEZ.

Japan-Thailand Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Working Lunch. Mr. IWAYA Takeshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Maris Sangiampongsa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, who is visiting Japan to attend the Nikkei Forum 30th FUTURE OF ASIA.

Bangladesh, Japan for concluding EPA soon to boost economic, trade ties. Bangladesh Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba today announced that the two nations will conclude an Economic Partnership Agreement in the coming months to further strengthen economic and trade relations between the two friendly nations.

Poland looks to build a digital alliance with Korea. Poland is extending its strategic ties with South Korea beyond defence to the realm of digital innovation. A high-level Polish government delegation recently visited Korea's IT hub of Pangyo in Seongnam, signaling a strong intent to cooperate in areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), and recommerce.

7th Bahrain-Korea Business Forum: Strategies to diversify Bahrain-Korea economic cooperation. The Embassy of the Republic of Korea held the '7th Bahrain-Korea Business Forum' in Manama on May 28th, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Economic Development Board (EDB), Bahrain Chamber, and Bahrain-South Korea Friendship Society (BKFS). More than 100 participants from both countries, representing public and private sector entities, were present.

Bangladesh seeks deeper strategic, economic ties with South Korea. Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser Dr Anisuzzaman Chowdhury today underscored the need for sustained diplomatic engagement and deeper strategic ties between Bangladesh and South Korea, highlighting the broad spectrum of cooperation shaping the future of bilateral relations.

Pakistan invites Japanese collaboration in value-added sectors to spur growth. In a concerted diplomatic and economic outreach to Japan's public and private sectors, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal has invited Japanese collaboration in the country's under explored mineral sector, with a strong emphasis on joint ventures in exploration, processing, and value addition.

Việt Nam considers Japan a trusted partner in new era: Deputy PM. Việt Nam considers Japan a trusted partner in the new era of development, Deputy Prime Minister Nguyễn Chí Dũng told Japanese PM Ishiba Shigeru during a meeting in Tokyo.

Kuwait, Japan elevate bilateral relations to comprehensive strategic partnership level. Kuwait and Japan agreed to raise the level of bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership. This came in a recent statement issued by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of the official visit of His Highness Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al Hamad Al-Sabah to Japan.

Bangladesh, Japan sign 6 agreements during Yunus' Tokyo visit. Bangladesh and Japan have signed six memoranda of understanding (MoU), focusing on economic assistance, investment and other areas of cooperation, on the third day of Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus's visit to Tokyo.

Ukraine to receive nearly \$3 billion from frozen Russian assets transferred by Japan. Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers has approved the attraction of nearly \$3 billion from Japan, secured by revenues from frozen Russian assets. This was announced by Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal during a government meeting on May 30, according to his Telegram channel.

Japanese, Chinese Students Interact at Beijing Event. About 500 Japanese and Chinese university students have deepened friendships at an exchange event held at a university in Beijing, singing, dancing and offering traditional art performances.

Mushahid commends Russia's neutral role in Pakistan-India conflict. Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed met Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on the sidelines of the Eurasian Forum and discussed a range of issues with him.

President Asif Ali Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further expand bilateral cooperation with Russia in trade, investment, technology, and people-to-people exchanges. He said it while addressing a ceremony in Islamabad, to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Russian Federation in the Great Patriotic War. The President highlighted the growing momentum in Pak-Russia relations and expressed confidence that recent high-level interactions between the two countries have laid a solid foundation for deeper engagement and greater understanding.

Pakistan 'alarmed' by escalation in Russia-Ukraine war, urges dialogue & diplomacy. A glimmer of hope for peace that some diplomatic efforts in the Ukraine-Russia war had created has been overshadowed by a new intensification in hostilities, Pakistan told the United Nations Security Council on Thursday, warning that there is no military solution to the conflict.

Moscow wants to rekindle Russia-India-China format as NATO fuels discord – Lavrov. The foreign minister has suggested reviving cooperation amid an easing of tensions between New Delhi and Beijing. Lavrov emphasized Russia's "genuine interest" in reviving the RIC trilateral dialogue.

Mineral desire: Moscow has enough to satisfy India. With global power dynamics shifting and Arctic resources surfacing, New Delhi has a timely chance to deepen ties with Russia.

Asian security officials to convene in Moscow. The delegations are among over 100 attending a Russia-hosted forum on cyber and regional security.

Russia and China agree on Putin-Xi talks agenda. Russia and China have begun work on a program of talks between the leaders of the two countries, which will take place in September. Deputy Head of the Russian Foreign Ministry Andrei Rudenko told RIA Novosti.

Indonesia, Russia closely connected at regional and global levels — MFA. According to First Deputy Foreign Minister of Indonesia Anis Matta, Jakarta and Moscow have long been cooperating in various fields.

Major Russian city to ban migrants from driving cabs. St Petersburg is set to bar many foreign nationals from courier and taxi work until 2026.