



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

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Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific.
Press the reply button for your feedback and comments.

EX. PM Hasina Announces Return and the Bangladesh-India Diplomatic Tightrope



Figure 1: The press conference held by FCC in Delhi where former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina spoke virtually.

The former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has announced to return to homeland by this winter. She has been living in self-imposed exile in India since August 2024. Hasina was ousted by violent youth protests over unemployment, corruption, and the quota system in government jobs.

On November 17, 2025, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal in Dhaka sentenced former Prime Minister Hasina to death in absentia. She was convicted on multiple charges of crimes against humanity for ordering a lethal security crackdown on student-led anti-government protests in 2024. Hasina has been accused of the Interim government pursuing naked political vendettas rather than genuine judicial accountability.

Since Hasina's precipitous landing on Indian soil, Bangladesh-India relations have deteriorated. Earlier, the Interim government in Dhaka and now the newly elected government have sought her extradition from India.

In her audio address on August 6, 2026, from India, Hasina announced her imminent and determined return to Bangladesh. She said, "Whatever fate awaits me, I will return to my people." As per India's External Affairs Ministry, the Indian government doesn't endorse anything related to Hasina's press conference. The event was organized by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia (FCC South Asia), a private media entity. Bangladesh government "outraged" over Hasina's press conference and a new row in India-Bangladesh relations.

In a striking and diplomatically novel development, India invited Bangladesh's Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to attend the upcoming BRICS summit — a notably bold diplomatic gesture, given that Bangladesh is emphatically not a member of the BRICS grouping. India has been confronting an acute and increasingly delicate challenge in managing its neighborhood relations at a moment of heightened regional flux; it remains to be seen precisely what implications Tarique's prospective visit to Delhi will carry for the trajectory of Delhi-Dhaka relations — and whether it signals a pragmatic Indian recalibration toward the new political reality in Dhaka. [Read More](#)

Japan's 2026 Defense White Paper Warns China's Military Expansion

Japan's Ministry of Defense released its Defense White Paper 2026, stating that China's massive military buildup is a serious concern. China has been spending enormous amounts on its defense budget without any transparency for more than 30 years. China has expanded its military activities and intensified operations in the areas surrounding Japan, including the East China Sea — particularly around the Senkaku Islands — the Sea of Japan, and the western Pacific Ocean, pushing beyond the so-called first island chain to the second island chain.

Furthermore, China's growing cooperation with Russia and North Korea, and their participation in military activities close to Japan, pose a grave and direct concern for Japan's security.

The defense paper also states that Japan must address its security challenges by using all of its national strengths and by working closely with its ally, the United States, like-minded countries, and by pushing to strengthen its own defense industry and military production capacity. [Read More](#)

The Mecca Joint Defense Agreement and Geopolitical Implications

Three countries — Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan — have signed a defense pact that declares an armed attack against any one of the three will be regarded as an attack against all. That is a NATO Article 5-type commitment, but there is no clear plan yet for how each country would actually help the others. While the three countries have different expectations and needs on the global stage, Saudi Arabia needs real defense protection against Iran as its reliance on the US security guarantee grows, Pakistan needs to raise its standing amid India's rise, and Türkiye seeks influence in South Asia and wider West Asia. Pakistan has nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia has energy resources and wealth, and Türkiye has a strong defense industry — and

together these strengths make this security partnership unusually powerful and significant.

This three-way pact is one of the most significant security developments outside of NATO in recent years. It brings together a nuclear power, an energy superpower, and a major military producer under one mutual defense umbrella — at a time when the Middle East is under pressure from the Iran conflict and the Western alliance is showing visible cracks. Whether this pact becomes a serious security architecture or remains a political statement will depend on whether the three countries can align their very different national interests when a real crisis arrives. [Read More](#)

Myanmar Leader Visit Thailand Seeking Legitimacy

Myanmar's military ruler-turned-President Min Aung Hlaing visited Thailand in effort to secure political legitimacy for his deeply contested regime. He met with Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and other senior officials, and both sides signed several memorandums of cooperation including migrant workers and shared river water management.

Earlier in his regional tour, he visited India, China, and Laos — assembling a circuit of neighboring capitals in a bid to normalize his administration's standing on the regional stage. The retired military general who violently seized power in a February 2021 coup imprisoned the country's

democratically elected political leaders, most prominently the internationally revered Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, alongside scores of other civilian officials, activists, and members of parliament. The international community has roundly and unequivocally condemned his military coup and the systematic atrocities perpetrated against Myanmar's civilian population — including indiscriminate airstrikes, mass displacement, and credible allegations of crimes against humanity documented by United Nations investigators and international human rights organizations.

Nevertheless, Hlaing conveys his efforts to restore the democratic process and work toward economic growth and development; he refused to accept ASEAN's five-point consensus plan. It remains to be seen whether Hlaing can seek legitimacy from ASEAN.

Indo-Pacific Quiz

Recently, the US has intervened to prop up which country's currency?

- a. Japan
- b. India
- c. South Korea
- d. Pakistan

What was the name of the atomic bomb the US dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945?

- a. Thin man
- c. Fat man

b. Little boy

d. Trinity

Consortium Highlights

- ❖ New Read: [Japan's Strategic Shift: From Pacifist to Provider](#)
 - ❖ Upcoming Podcast: Saudi-Türkiye-Pakistan Defense Pact and regional Implications
 - ❖ CIPR announces the availability of Fall Internship 2026
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Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for August 2, 2026, Newsletter Quiz

Q. China fought a war in 1962 and occupied approx. 38,000 sq. km. from which country?

b. India

Q. Which Pacific Island country reclaim traditional name “Naoero?”

c. Nauru

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