ASIA INTELLIGENCE BRIEF — FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2026

The Suppliers And The Growers

Korea's market was up 1.83% nine minutes after the open and closed down 0.60%, undone by reports that Nvidia is reviewing a memory specification. Indonesia rose 1.04% on growth it makes at home.

China's exports jumped 23.9%, filling its ports with the very boom that frightens Seoul. There are two Asias in these numbers, and they had opposite days.

Compiled from a sweep of the region's largest outlets in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese and English. There is no sport.

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A REVERSAL IN SEOUL · FULL PORTS IN CHINA · CALM IN JAKARTA

Two Asias

Friday split the region cleanly in two. One half supplies the artificial-intelligence boom and flinched all day at decisions taken in California, and the other simply grew.

Start in Seoul, where the Kospi opened 1.09% higher at 6,365.07. Nine minutes later it was up 1.83%, back above 6,400, with foreign investors buying.

It closed down 0.60% at 6,258.77. The cause was narrow and revealing.

SK Hynix fell 4.88% to 1,422,000 won, still weighed down by a report from earlier in the week that Nvidia has tested its next processor with less memory than announced. An American engineering decision took five percent off Korea's second-largest company.

Samsung Electronics closed 0.22% higher, splitting from its rival for the first time this week. Naver dropped 7.08% after reporting operating profit fractionally below last year's.

> *Nvidia has tested at least three versions of its next-generation Rubin Ultra over recent weeks, some carrying memory capacities below the specifications the company originally announced.*
>
> THE INFORMATION, REPORTED IN ASIAN MARKETS · AUGUST 2026

Japan told a quieter version of the same story. Some 679 companies reported results, and the Nikkei still slipped 76.55 points to 65,606.71.

SoftBank's quarterly net profit fell 17.7% to 347.3 billion yen as costs rose at its British chip designer Arm, and its shares fell over 2% after dropping more than 4% the day before. Together with Advantest, that pair pulled roughly 293 points off the index.

Then to China, where the ports answered the question the markets keep asking. July exports rose 23.9%, ahead of the 22.2% forecast, with a surplus of 112.5 billion dollars.

What is filling those ships is precisely the boom that frightens Seoul. Beijing's confidence carries a barb, because that surplus is what its trading partners keep demanding it reduce.

And then the other Asia, which had a completely different day. Jakarta's index closed 1.04% higher at 6,409.65, after the economy grew 5.29% in the second quarter.

Vietnam expanded 8.18% in the first half, with July factory output up 14.5% and foreign investment at a five-year high. Neither country's growth depends on anyone else's product roadmap.

Taiwan is the sharpest case of all, an index where one chipmaker is more than 40% of the value. Being indispensable is not the same as being in control.

For readers in Latin America, the lesson is about where demand is set. A supplier's prosperity is real, and the decisions that govern it are taken somewhere else.

The Day At A Glance

Here is Friday's news, in order of how much it matters for the economy and markets, after a sweep of the region's largest outlets in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese and English. We have skipped what was already covered this week, and there is no sport.

South Korea · Nine Minutes of Confidence

The Kospi was up 1.83% shortly after the open and closed down 0.60% at 6,258.77. SK Hynix fell 4.88%, still weighed by a report that Nvidia is testing less memory in its next processor.

China · The Ports Answer the Question

July exports rose 23.9% against a 22.2% forecast, with imports up 27.5%. The trade surplus was 112.5 billion dollars, above estimates near 107 billion.

Indonesia · The Other Asia

Jakarta's index closed 1.04% higher at 6,409.65 with ten sectors advancing. Second-quarter growth came in at 5.29%.

Japan · Six Hundred and Seventy-Nine Sets of Numbers

A vast earnings day moved the Nikkei barely at all, closing down 76.55 points at 65,606.71. Fujikura guided to a 58.4% profit rise, Obayashi to a 10.4% fall.

Japan · SoftBank Profit Falls

First-quarter net profit fell 17.7% to 347.3 billion yen on rising costs at Arm, with the shares off over 2%. With Advantest, the pair took about 293 points off the index.

Vietnam · Eight Percent and Rising

The economy grew 8.18% in the first half and 8.39% in the second quarter. July industrial production rose 14.5% and foreign investment hit a five-year high.

Korea · The Chip Twins Split

Samsung closed 0.22% higher at 231,000 won while SK Hynix fell 4.88% to 1,422,000. It was their first divergence of the week.

Indonesia · A Stimulus and a Governor

The government is preparing a package worth 26.34 trillion rupiah, and the tax take has risen to 9.32% of output. A new central bank governor is due to be named.

Taiwan · Concentration as a Condition

One chipmaker accounts for more than 40% of the market's total value. No domestic sector is large enough to offset a turn in chip sentiment.

Region · Tonight's Trigger

The United States July employment report lands after Asian markets close. It will set the tone for Monday across the region.

The Numbers At A Glance · Asia · Friday August 7, 2026

KR Kospi **6,258.77** Down 0.60%	**KR** SK Hynix **-4.88%** Spec review	**CN** Exports **+23.9%** vs 22.2% seen	**CN** Surplus **$112.5bn** Beat estimates
ID Jakarta **6,409.65** Up 1.04%	**ID** Q2 growth **5.29%** Home-driven	**JP** Nikkei **65,606.71** Down 76.55	**VN** H1 growth **8.18%** Factories +14.5%

OUR SIMPLE HEALTH CHECK · 10 ECONOMIES

How The Countries Are Doing

This is our simple country-by-country health check, updated Friday after a session that split the region between chip suppliers and domestic growers. Each country is rated from 1 to 5 across five areas, where a lower number is better and a higher one means more strain.

COUNTRY	POLITICS	BUDGET	MONEY	MARKETS	OUTSIDE	WHAT'S DRIVING IT
South Korea Kospi · won	3	2	2	4	4	A 1.83% rally became a 0.60% loss as SK Hynix fell 4.88%, still weighed by a report that Nvidia is testing less memory in its next processor; the market answers to decisions made abroad.
China CSI 300 · yuan	3	3	3	3	3	July exports rose 23.9% and the surplus hit $112.5bn, filled by the global AI build-out; that same surplus is the standing grievance of its largest trading partners.
Indonesia JCI · rupiah	2	2	2	1	2	The index closed up 1.04% at 6,409.65 while North Asia fell; 5.29% second-quarter growth, a 26.34tn rupiah stimulus and a rising tax take; a new central bank governor due.
Japan Nikkei · yen	3	4	3	3	3	679 companies reported and the index still slipped 76.55 points; SoftBank's profit fell 17.7% on Arm costs, and two stocks alone took 293 points off the market.
Vietnam VN Index · dong	2	3	2	2	2	Growth of 8.18% in the first half with July factory output up 14.5% and foreign investment at a five-year high; a tenth of national output pledged to infrastructure by 2030.
Taiwan Taiex · NT$	3	2	2	4	4	One chipmaker is more than 40% of the market's value, so global chip sentiment moves the whole index; the purest version of the supplier's exposure.
Thailand SET · baht	3	3	3	3	3	The OECD sees growth of only about 1.5% this year, the slowest of the larger Southeast Asian economies; heavy dependence on imported energy remains the weak point.
Philippines PSEi · peso	4	3	3	3	3	The regional laggard, with growth weakening across most sectors and public spending carrying the load; governance questions have weighed on investment.
Malaysia KLCI · ringgit	3	3	3	3	3	Growth has moderated through the year from a strong start; electronics exports help, but the market has lagged its neighbours over recent months.
India Nifty · rupee	2	3	2	2	3	The central bank held at 5.25% this week with a neutral stance and raised its growth view; domestic demand keeps it apart from the chip cycle.

How to read the colours: 1 = calm, 2 = fairly good, 3 = mixed, 4 = some strain, 5 = serious strain. Each country's number is the average across the five areas. Updated August 7.

DEEP DIVE · WHO SETS THE DEMAND · 04

A SPEC REVIEW IN CALIFORNIA · FULL PORTS IN CHINA · CALM IN JAKARTA

Three Ways The Split Could Develop

Three ways the divide between Asia's chip suppliers and its domestic growers could develop through 2027. The chances add up to 100%.

Part 1 · What Friday Exposed

Korea lost a 1.83% rally because an American company is testing its next processor with less memory in it. Taiwan carries the same exposure in concentrated form, with one firm making up more than 40% of its index.

Japan reported 679 sets of results and moved barely at all, its direction set by two stocks. These are the suppliers, and their prosperity is real.

Meanwhile Indonesia rose 1.04% on 5.29% growth and Vietnam is running above 8% with factory output up 14.5%. Neither is meaningfully in the chip trade.

China sits in between, its ports filled by the same boom, its surplus the thing its partners want reduced. The question is which position proves more durable.

> *The boom in Chinese trade slowed a touch in July, but the big picture is that export and import values remain elevated, helped by soaring global demand for electronics and green technology.*
>
> CAPITAL ECONOMICS · ON THE JULY TRADE FIGURES · AUGUST 7 2026

Part 2 · Possibility A — The Boom Broadens (40%)

In this case artificial-intelligence demand keeps expanding and pulls the whole region up with it. Suppliers earn well and the domestic growers gain from the trade that follows.

Asia rises together rather than in halves. For Latin America, it means firm commodity demand and a buoyant Pacific.

Part 3 · Possibility B — The Split Widens (35%)

Here the suppliers keep swinging on foreign decisions while Indonesia, Vietnam and India compound quietly. Capital rotates toward the markets that make their own weather.

Regional averages stop meaning very much. For Latin America, it is a reminder that domestic-demand economies can outperform without any headline story.

Part 4 · Possibility C — The Cycle Turns (25%)

In this path chip demand cools and takes Korea, Taiwan and Japan's exporters with it. China's export run fades as the build-out slows.

The suppliers absorb the shock and the growers slow with the wider trade. For Latin America, it would mean weaker exports and softer prices.

POSSIBILITY	CHANCE	THE SUPPLIERS	THE GROWERS	WHAT IT MEANS FOR LATIN AMERICA
A · Boom broadens	40%	Earn well	Gain from trade	Firm demand, buoyant Pacific
B · Split widens	35%	Keep swinging	Compound quietly	Domestic demand can outperform
C · Cycle turns	25%	Absorb the shock	Slow with trade	Weaker exports and prices

Source: Rio Times desk · drawing on Electronic Times, Hankyung, Kabushiki Shimbun, Kompas, Reuters, CNBC and Capital Economics. Not financial advice.

WHAT WE ARE WATCHING · 05

OUR OPINION ONLY · NOT FINANCIAL ADVICE

Eight Things We Are Watching

These are just our own opinions, not financial advice. In short: we like the domestic growers, respect the suppliers' earnings while distrusting their calm, and watch what Nvidia decides about memory.

WHAT	HOW WE SEE IT	OVER WHAT PERIOD	WHY
Korean chipmakers	◆ MIXED	12 months	Earnings are strong, but a foreign specification review can take five percent off in a session.
Chinese exporters	▲ POSITIVE	12 months	July exports beat again at 23.9%, carried by global demand for electronics and green technology.
Indonesian shares	▲ POSITIVE	18 months	Growth of 5.29%, a stimulus package and an improving tax take, with little chip exposure.
Vietnamese assets	▲ POSITIVE	18 months	Growth above 8% with factory output up 14.5% and foreign investment at a five-year high.
Japanese shares	◆ MIXED	12 months	A vast earnings season is being overwhelmed by the direction of two heavyweight stocks.
Taiwanese shares	▼ CAREFUL	12 months	More than 40% of the index sits in one company, leaving no domestic offset when chips turn.
Thai and Philippine assets	▼ CAREFUL	12 months	Both are lagging the region, with slow growth and heavy reliance on public spending.
Regional concentration	▼ CAREFUL	18 months	Too much of Asia's market direction now rests on a handful of memory and foundry names.

POWER PLAYERS · 06

SIX FORCES · IN THE NEWS TODAY

Six Forces Shaping The News

Six companies, institutions and forces whose decisions are shaping the region today.

Nvidia

Chip designer · United States

A report that it tested its next-generation Rubin Ultra processor with less memory than announced kept 4.88% off SK Hynix days later. It is the clearest illustration of where demand in this trade is actually set.

SK Hynix

Memory maker · South Korea

The company fell to 1,422,000 won as investors worried about supply prices, dragging the whole Korean market from a gain into a loss. Its weight makes it the country's single most consequential share.

China's customs administration

Trade data · China

Its July figures showed exports up 23.9% and a surplus of 112.5 billion dollars, both above forecast. The numbers are the strongest evidence yet that the artificial-intelligence build-out is real.

Indonesia's government

Economic policy · Indonesia

It is preparing a stimulus package worth 26.34 trillion rupiah while the economy grows at 5.29% and the tax take improves. A new central bank governor is due to be named this week.

SoftBank Group

Investor · Japan

Quarterly net profit fell 17.7% to 347.3 billion yen as costs rose at its British chip designer Arm. With Advantest it accounted for roughly 293 points of the Nikkei's decline.

Vietnam's planners

Public investment · Vietnam

They have shifted the argument from setting growth targets to delivering them, pledging a tenth of national output to infrastructure by 2030. First-half growth came in at 8.18%.

DAILY BRIEFING · 07

BY COUNTRY · MARKETS · TRADE · ECONOMY · CORPORATE

The Day, Country By Country

All thirteen stories from Friday's sweep, with no sport, and leaving out what was already covered this week. The sweep drew on the region's largest outlets in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese and English.

SOUTH KOREA

Nine Minutes of Confidence

The Kospi opened 1.09% higher at 6,365.07 and stood 1.83% up at 6,411.69 by 9.08am, then closed down 37.61 points, or 0.60%, at 6,258.77; the Kosdaq slipped 0.36% to 798.81. Sources: Korea Exchange via Hankyung, Electronic Times · August 7.

Undone by a Chip Specification

SK Hynix fell 4.88% to 1,422,000 won, still weighed by a report from earlier in the week that Nvidia tested its Rubin Ultra processor with less memory than announced; Samsung closed 0.22% higher and Naver fell 7.08%. Sources: Electronic Times, The Information · August 5-7.

CHINA

The Ports Answer the Question

July exports rose 23.9% from a year earlier against a 22.2% forecast, slowing from June's 27%; imports rose 27.5% versus 27.9% expected, down from June's 36%. Sources: Reuters, CNBC, customs administration · August 7.

A Surplus That Doubles as a Grievance

The trade surplus was $112.5bn, above estimates near $107bn but narrower than June's $125.6bn; last year's total exceeded $1tn, a standing complaint from Washington and Brussels. Sources: CNBC, Associated Press · August 7.

INDONESIA

The Other Asia

Jakarta's index closed up 65.94 points, or 1.04%, at 6,409.65 with ten sectors advancing, infrastructure leading at 2.17%; turnover reached 16.06 trillion rupiah. Sources: Indonesia Stock Exchange via Kompas · August 7.

Growth Made at Home

Second-quarter growth was 5.29%, a stimulus package worth 26.34 trillion rupiah is in preparation, and the tax take rose to 9.32% of output from 8.42%; a new central bank governor is due. Sources: Pasardana, Bisnis · August 7.

JAPAN

Six Hundred and Seventy-Nine Sets of Numbers

A vast earnings day saw Fujikura guide to a 58.4% rise in recurring profit and Olympus to 48.9%, against declines flagged at Obayashi and Infroneer; the Nikkei still fell 76.55 points to 65,606.71. Sources: Kabutan, Kabushiki Shimbun · August 7.

Two Stocks Set the Direction

SoftBank's first-quarter net profit fell 17.7% to 347.3 billion yen on rising costs at Arm and its shares fell over 2% on Friday after dropping more than 4% the day before; with Advantest the pair took about 293 points off the index. Sources: Kabutan, TradingKey · August 7.

VIETNAM

Eight Percent and Rising

The economy grew 8.18% in the first half and 8.39% in the second quarter, with July industrial production up 14.5% year on year and manufacturing up 15.0%. Sources: SSI Research, national statistics · August 2026.

Ambition Turned to Delivery

Realised foreign investment reached a five-year high and the government has pledged about $60bn, a tenth of national output, to infrastructure through 2030; the index rose 0.19% to 1,768. Sources: SSI Research, Trading Economics · August 7.

TAIWAN · INDIA

Taiwan · A Market Inside One Company

The benchmark index carries more than 40% of its value in a single chipmaker, leaving no domestic sector large enough to offset a turn in global chip sentiment. Sources: Trading Economics · August 2026.

India · Apart From the Chip Cycle

The central bank held its key rate at 5.25% with a neutral stance this week and raised its growth forecast, with demand at home keeping it clear of the memory swings. Sources: Reserve Bank of India, Business Standard · August 5.

THAILAND · PHILIPPINES · REGION

Thailand · The Slowest of the Six

The OECD expects growth of only about 1.5% this year, the weakest among the larger Southeast Asian economies, with heavy dependence on imported energy a persistent drag. Sources: OECD, Pheim Asset Management · 2026.

Philippines · The Regional Laggard

Growth has weakened across most sectors with government spending carrying the load, as agriculture contracted and construction declined. Sources: Pheim Asset Management, McKinsey · 2026.

Region · Tonight's Trigger

The United States July employment report lands after Asian markets close and will set the tone for Monday across the region. Sources: Rio Times desk · August 7.

SECTOR WATCH · CALENDAR

Pipeline, Sectors, And The Calendar

ITEM	TYPE	WHEN	STATUS
Kospi reversal	Markets	Today	+1.83% to -0.60%
SK Hynix on spec review	Corporate	Today	-4.88%
China July trade	Data	Today	Exports +23.9%
China trade surplus	Data	Today	$112.5bn
Jakarta index	Markets	Today	+1.04% to 6,409.65
Japan earnings day	Corporate	Today	679 companies
SoftBank Q1	Corporate	Today	Profit -17.7%
Vietnam H1 growth	Data	2026	8.18%
Indonesia stimulus	Policy	Pending	Rp26.34tn
US July payrolls	Data	Tonight	Sets Monday's tone

Sector Watch · Four Things to Track

WHO SETS THE DEMAND

A specification review in California moved Korea's second-largest company by five percent. Supplier prosperity is real and governed elsewhere.

THE DOMESTIC GROWERS

Indonesia and Vietnam rose on growth they generate themselves. Neither is meaningfully exposed to the memory cycle.

CHINA'S DOUBLE POSITION

Its ports are full because the boom is genuine. That same surplus is what its trading partners want reduced.

CONCENTRATION RISK

One company is more than 40% of Taiwan's index, and two set Japan's direction on a 679-company earnings day.

Calendar · Next 30 Days

DATE	EVENT	WHY IT MATTERS
Tonight	US July employment report	The next trigger for Asian trading
This week	Indonesia's new central bank governor	Sets the monetary tone
Coming weeks	Nvidia's Rubin Ultra memory	What Korea's pricing depends on
Coming weeks	Japan's remaining earnings	Whether breadth beats two heavyweights
Coming months	China's export run	Whether it survives without typhoon effects
Coming months	Vietnam's infrastructure spend	A tenth of output pledged to 2030
Sep 14	Korea after-hours ETF trading	Exchange acts on volatility
Ongoing	Taiwan's concentration	One firm, more than 40% of the index

Oct 5-7	Reserve Bank of India meeting	Whether the hold becomes a cut
Ongoing	Thai and Philippine growth	The region's two laggards

WHERE ASIA STANDS · OUR TAKE

What Today Tells Us

Our take after Friday, drawing on the region's largest outlets in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese and English, is that there are two Asias in these numbers. They had opposite days.

Korea's market was up 1.83% nine minutes after the open and closed down 0.60%. SK Hynix fell 4.88%, still weighed by a report that Nvidia is testing its next processor with less memory.

Japan reported results from 679 companies and moved barely at all, its direction set by SoftBank and Advantest. Taiwan carries the same exposure in its purest form, with one firm worth more than 40% of the index.

China's July exports rose 23.9% with a surplus of 112.5 billion dollars. Its ports are full precisely because the artificial-intelligence build-out that frightens Seoul is genuine.

That is a complicated kind of strength. The surplus is exactly what Washington and Brussels keep asking Beijing to reduce.

Then the other Asia, which had a good day and barely noticed the drama. Jakarta closed 1.04% higher on second-quarter growth of 5.29%, with a stimulus package in preparation.

Vietnam is running above 8% with July factory output up 14.5% and foreign investment at a five-year high. Neither country's fortunes depend on anyone else's product roadmap.

For readers in Latin America, the lesson is about where demand is set. A supplier's prosperity is real, and the decisions that govern it are taken somewhere else.

Sources & Method

SOUTH KOREA	Korea Exchange via Hankyung · Electronic Times · Seoul Data Lab · August 7 2026 (Korean).
CHINA	General Administration of Customs via Reuters · CNBC · Associated Press · August 7 2026 (Chinese/English).
INDONESIA	Indonesia Stock Exchange via Kompas · Bisnis · Media Indonesia · Pasardana · August 7 2026 (Bahasa Indonesia).
JAPAN	Kabutan · Kabushiki Shimbun · TBL Advisory · Rakuten Securities · August 7 2026 (Japanese).
VIETNAM	SSI Research · Trading Economics · national statistics office · August 2026 (Vietnamese/English).
SOUTHEAST ASIA	Pheim Asset Management · McKinsey · OECD · The Diplomat · 2026 (English).
CENTRAL BANKS	Bank of Japan · Bank Indonesia · Reserve Bank of India · People's Bank of China · August 2026.
LATAM LINK	Brazil's and Mexico's central banks · IDB · S&P; Global · B3 · BMV.

Method. We swept the region's largest outlets in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese and English, then put the stories in order of how much they matter for the economy and markets. Every item is dated at source, and closing levels are taken from the exchanges themselves. The country health check was updated August 7. We skip anything covered earlier in the week, and there is no sport. The opinions are our own — not financial advice.

Compiled from major Asian outlets in the region's main languages · All times local unless noted