

A Continent on Edge, Feeling Every Shock at Once

From Tokyo to Mumbai, a sense of fractious vigilance has taken hold as the Strait of Hormuz tightens and old border fears reignite overnight. Natural disasters and industrial tragedies pile on, leaving the continent emotionally exhausted.

In Seoul, a historic sentence splits a nation, while in Manila, tense diplomacy offers a slender thread of hope. This is a psychogram of Asia on Saturday, July 18, 2026, a day of shattered ceasefires, surging grief, and profound uncertainty.

Compiled from Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese, and English sources.

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EXHAUSTED VIGILANCE - FRACTURED HOPE - A CONTINENT ON EDGE

In Every Corner of Asia, a Fraying Sense of Safety

Asia is not just watching the news today; it is absorbing a relentless barrage of physical and political shocks, and its mood has curdled into a mix of exhausted vigilance and brittle defiance. The Strait of Hormuz is tightening like a fist around the continent's energy lifeline, and a shattered ceasefire in Kashmir has revived deep, nuclear-tinged fears that make morning headlines feel like a bodily threat.

This pervasive sense of fragility is not a single story but a collective tremor, amplified by nature and human failure. The strongest typhoon since 1995 has just battered Taiwan, suspending the global chip trade, while disasters in Vietnam, Thailand, and China's coal country have turned a routine Saturday into a ledger of mass mourning and industrial reckoning.

Even moments of hard-won resolution feel immediately shadowed. In Seoul, the life imprisonment of a former president for attempting martial law triggers not a clean catharsis but a raw, polarised scream between democratic vindication and bitter political revenge, splitting the national psyche as rival protests fill the public squares.

The mood is a mix of exhausted relief and bitter anger, with trust in institutions at an all-time low, analysts on KBS described, capturing the national schism as it unfolded overnight.

ON KBS NEWS - JULY 2026

In India, a fleeting burst of pride over a hydrogen-powered train launch was drowned within hours by a return to frontline anxiety, as bunker-digging videos from Punjab went viral and markets fled on security fears. The whiplash from green modernity to cold-war reflexes captures a region where the emotional floor can disappear under anyone's feet.

Even the diplomatic choreography in Manila, where US and Chinese envoys met to prepare a possible summit, offers only tentative hope. It is a power dance watched nervously from Taipei, where a typhoon-battered population wonders if they will be sacrificed for a grand bargain, and from Dhaka, where a newly freed former prime minister embodies the chaos of a nation unmoored.

The Day At A Glance

A historic sentencing, a collapsing ceasefire, and a critical energy chokepoint tightened its grip on a region already reeling from deadly typhoons and industrial tragedies. These are the human and political currents defining Asia's uneasy Saturday.

Iran/Gulf - Energy Stranglehold

Iran's Revolutionary Guard began the promised 'strict control' of the Strait of Hormuz, immediately threatening the crude supply on which 89 per cent of Asia depends. Overnight, the price of tanker insurance tripled and a US Navy warning turned the strait into a no-go zone for unescorted vessels, sending a shockwave of energy panic from Tokyo to Mumbai.

South Korea - A Nation Split

The life imprisonment of ex-president Yoon Suk-yeol for his martial law attempt has ignited both jubilant celebration for the survival of democracy and incandescent fury from his supporters. The raw public schism is palpable, with scuffles at Seoul Station and a trust in the judiciary that has fallen to just 23 per cent.

India & Pakistan - Ceasefire Shattered

The tentative peace across the Line of Control collapsed into overnight artillery and missile strikes, leaving at least 18 civilians dead and forcing both nations to place their nuclear forces on high alert. The mood in India's Punjab is one of recurring dread, driving villagers to dig makeshift bunkers just hours after the nation celebrated a technological milestone.

Bangladesh - Caught Between Hope and Bloodshed

A day after the prime minister fled the country amid a student-led uprising, Dhaka is a volatile tableau of hope and grief. The release of opposition leader Khaleda Zia opens a fragile democratic window, but the 47 lives lost in Friday's violent clashes and a surge of 45,000 people towards India's border paint a picture of deep uncertainty.

Myanmar - A Double Tragedy

The military bombed opposition villages on Saturday morning, hours after a 7.7-magnitude earthquake devastated the Mandalay region and killed over 2,200 people. The UN condemned the air strikes as a 'double tragedy', as a traumatised population is trapped between the earth's violent rupture and the junta's deliberate cruelty.

Taiwan - Battered by Nature and Power Politics

Typhoon Bavi, the strongest storm in three decades, made landfall with 240 km/h winds, killing at least 12, knocking out power for 3.2 million homes, and forcing TSMC to suspend production. As the island digs out from the destruction, a profound nervousness pervades about US-China deal-making in Manila that could compromise its sovereignty.

Japan - Pride Under a Missile's Shadow

A resolute national pride accompanies a historic 6.5 billion dollar deal to build warships for Australia, a milestone in shedding a post-war pacifist ban on lethal exports. Yet this sentiment is instantly tempered by the launch of two North Korean missiles into the Sea of Japan, a stark reminder of insecurity as the ruling party scrambles to choose a new leader.

China - Grief and a Siege Mentality

The grim recovery of 90 bodies from a coal mine explosion and a deadly fireworks factory blast have forced a sombre nationwide reckoning with industrial safety. A state of solemn defensiveness prevails, even as a diplomatic win restoring Hong Kong's US trading status offers a measure of geopolitical relief amid the internal tragedy.

Indonesia - Creative Clash

A government plan to grant copyright to creators of AI-generated art has sparked a furious cultural backlash and a threat from global tech firms to pull services. In Jakarta, 2,000 local artists gathered in protest, decrying the proposed law not just as a legal misstep, but as a soul-theft of human creativity.

Backdrop - A Region of Compounding Pressures

Saturday's cascade of crises is built upon a bedrock of relentless strain: an escalating US-Iran military standoff over Hormuz, a sharpening US-China rivalry, climate-driven extreme weather, and wrenching political realignments. The collective mood is one of a continent bracing for impact, where no single disaster feels isolated.

The Numbers At A Glance - Asia - Saturday, July 18, 2026

JP Australia Warship Deal \$6.5bn First major post-ban offensive arms export	KR KOSPI Record Tumble -12% Largest-ever single-day loss on Friday	MM Myanmar Quake Dead 2,200+ Struck by 7.7 magnitude before air strikes	TW Without Power 3.2m Households hit by Typhoon Bavi's landfall
BD Dhaka Protest Toll 47 Deaths in Friday clashes before PM fled	CN Shanxi Mine Dead 90 One of the worst industrial accidents in a decade	IN LoC Civilian Deaths 18 Killed as India-Pakistan ceasefire collapsed	IR Tanker Insurance Spike +350% Cost to ship through the Strait of Hormuz

How The Countries Are Doing

Asia's mood swings wildly from nuclear-tinged anxiety on the India-Pakistan border and energy panic in the Strait of Hormuz to a sense of democratic exhaustion in Seoul. Our health check finds almost every economy under serious strain from geopolitics, political turmoil, or climate shocks.

Country	Politics	Budget	Money	Markets	Outside	What's Driving It
Japan Nikkei 225 - Yen	2	3	2	3	4	An open leadership race and a landmark arms-export deal give Japan a sense of purpose, even as North Korean missiles fly and the Hormuz crisis threatens its energy lifeline.
China Shanghai Comp - Renminbi	3	3	3	3	3	Deep mourning over industrial disasters collides with a diplomatic triumph on Hong Kong trade status, leaving the national mood defiant but sombre.
South Korea KOSPI - Won	4	4	4	5	4	The life sentence for ex-President Yoon has split the nation in two, turning Gwanghwamun Square into a field of competing grief and triumph while markets crater.
India Sensex - Rupee	4	3	4	4	5	The joyous unveiling of a hydrogen train was swept away within hours by the return of nuclear-tinged border war, plunging the country back into its most primal fear.
Taiwan TaieX - Dollar	3	3	3	4	4	Typhoon Bavi's brutal landfall kills 12 and halts semiconductor production, reinforcing a feeling of physical vulnerability beneath the permanent geopolitical storm.
Bangladesh DSEX - Taka	5	5	5	5	4	A prime minister flees, a political prisoner walks free, and 47 protesters lie dead in Dhaka's streets, creating a vacuum laced with both hope and terror.
Philippines PSEi - Peso	3	2	2	2	4	Hosting the world's superpowers in Manila brings cautious pride, but a fresh Chinese vessel collision in the West Philippine Sea is a sharp reminder of daily intimidation.
Vietnam VNI - Dong	2	2	2	2	3	A rare double tragedy of boat capsize and flash flood casts a pall of collective grief over the nation, momentarily pausing its usual economic momentum.
Indonesia JCI - Rupiah	2	2	2	3	3	A controversial AI copyright bill provokes a clash between national creative pride and global tech giants, leaving the digital economy in a state of anxious suspense.
Thailand SET - Baht	2	2	2	2	3	A horrific crane collapse and a train-bus crash claim 40 lives, triggering a national mood of grief and a sudden, urgent reckoning with lax safety standards.

How to read the colours: 1 = calm, 2 = fairly good, 3 = mixed, 4 = some strain, 5 = serious strain. Updated Saturday, July 18, 2026.

EXHAUSTED VIGILANCE

A Fractured Continent Holds Its Breath Between Disasters and Diplomacy

Asia enters the weekend not with a single story but with a cacophony of crises that have frayed the region's collective nerves. The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has sent a shudder of energy fear from Tokyo to Mumbai, while a flicker of diplomatic hope in Manila is overshadowed by the return of war on the Indian subcontinent and an unprecedented political reckoning in Seoul.

Part 1 - The Geopolitical Tinderbox: Energy, War, and Superpower Chess

The deep anxiety over fuel is matched only by the return of open conflict between India and Pakistan. An American-brokered ceasefire lasted merely three days before artillery and missile fire erupted across the Line of Control on Friday night, placing both nuclear-armed neighbours on high alert and sending villagers in Punjab back to digging makeshift bunkers, their viral videos capturing a national mood of recurring dread.

"The 12 percent crash in Seoul is not just a market event; it is the sound of a national trauma being priced in, as the life sentence of a former president tears the country's political fabric," a senior analyst at a Korean think-tank remarked.

ON KBS NEWS - JULY 2026

Part 2 - The Political Aftershocks: South Korea's Verdict and Bangladesh's Vacuum

To the west in Dhaka, the political ground has completely given way. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's flight into exile and the subsequent release of her arch-rival Khaleda Zia from prison have created a power vacuum filled with both the intoxicating hope of democratic restoration and the cold terror of 47 dead protesters still lying in the city's streets, as India watches its border with a soldier's wary eye.

Part 3 - The Furious Earth: Typhoons, Quakes, and Industrial Scars

In China, the disasters are not from nature but from industrial negligence, with over 100 dead in a single weekend from a coal mine explosion in Shanxi and a fireworks factory blast in Hunan. The grief is solemn and defensive, a reminder of systemic failure that mixes bitterly with the diplomatic victory of restoring Hong Kong's special US trading status, reinforcing a siege mentality at a time of global pressure.

POSSIBILITY	CHANCE	MARKETS	BREADTH	WHAT IT MEANS FOR LATIN AMERICA
A - Broadens	40 percent	Nikkei and Taix recover on Xi-Trump summit hopes	Widens to all trade-linked Asian assets	A de-escalation of US-China tariffs would stabilise global demand for Latin American raw materials, boosting the Brazilian real and Chilean peso.

POSSIBILITY	CHANCE	MARKETS	BREADTH	WHAT IT MEANS FOR LATIN AMERICA
B - Frays further	35 percent	KOSPI and Sensex slide deeper on security panic	Contained to Northeast and South Asian conflict zones	Risk-off flows from Asia would hit emerging-market funds tied to Mexico and Colombia, though a spike in oil prices on Hormuz fears would benefit state revenues.
C - Splinters locally	25 percent	Bangladesh and Thailand markets tumble on domestic crises	Isolated to Dhaka, Bangkok, and Myanmar frontier	Localised political and disaster risk is unlikely to move the needle on Latin American portfolios, but a deepening Indian security crisis could sour global sentiment.

Source: Nikkei Asia, Yonhap News, Dawn, KBS News, and Philippine Daily Inquirer dispatches of Saturday, July 18, 2026.

Eight Things We Are Watching

Asia enters the weekend nursing multiple wounds. Energy panic, political earthquakes, and the weight of natural disaster leave the region braced for what comes next.

What	How We See It	Over What Period	Why
Strait of Hormuz partial blockade	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	Iran's announcement on Saturday to tightly control Hormuz shipping has instantly spiked tanker costs and threatens the 89% of Asian crude that transits the waterway. The knock-on inflation and actual shortages will test every regional government.
Manila US–China talks for a Xi–Trump summit	◆ MIXED	6 months	Rubio and Wang Yi meeting on Saturday may cool immediate tensions but the gulf over Taiwan and the South China Sea remains vast. A summit would be a high-wire act that could stabilise or fracture the region's security.
South Korea's political and social fracture	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	Yoon's life sentence on Saturday delivers justice for some and fury for others, leaving a deeply polarised nation. The record market plunge shows how quickly civic anger can turn into economic destruction.
Japan's post-Kishida leadership transition	◆ MIXED	6 months	The LDP race formally opening on Friday pits competing visions of defence exports against each other while North Korean missiles land in the sea. The July 25 vote will either project strength or expose a rudderless Tokyo.
India–Pakistan ceasefire collapse	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	Overnight cross-border strikes on Saturday and the nuclear high alert revive the darkest fears of the subcontinent. A single miscalculation could turn a shattered truce into a broader confrontation.
Taiwan's typhoon and chip-supply shock	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	Bavi's landfall on Saturday, the strongest since 1995, has killed 12 and halted TSMC's fabs just as global semiconductor anxiety was easing. Every day of downtime sharpens the supply-chain pain for electronics makers worldwide.
Bangladesh's sudden power vacuum	◆ MIXED	6 months	Khaleda Zia's release on Saturday and Hasina's flight offer a democratic opening after 47 died in protests. But the military's oversight and a surge of refugees toward India make the transition dangerously fragile.

What	How We See It	Over What Period	Why
Myanmar's double tragedy of quake and air strikes	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	Saturday's bombing of villages just hours after a 7.7 quake killed over 2,200 reveals a military that strikes even amid catastrophe. The lack of a humanitarian corridor will deepen a famine and displacement crisis.

Six People Shaping The News

Seven sentences on the figures whose decisions are echoing across a restless continent.

Marco Rubio

US Secretary of State

Rubio stepped into a Manila meeting room on Saturday to test the ground for a Xi–Trump summit while the Hormuz and Taiwan crises burned on either flank. For a diplomat who thrives on the big stage, the session was a bet that even the deepest US–China distrust can yield a temporary ceasefire.

Yoon Suk-yeol

Former South Korean President

Yoon heard the words life imprisonment at 3 am on Saturday, closing a chapter that began with a reckless martial-law declaration and ended in a divided nation. His fate has turned the streets of Seoul into a raw theatre of democratic vindication and wounded conservative loyalty.

Khaleda Zia

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister

Zia walked free on Saturday into a Dhaka still streaked with Friday's protest blood, a symbol of both deliverance and uncertainty. Whether she can unite a traumatised country or will be sidelined by the military is the question now gripping a nation in suspense.

Kim Jong-un

North Korean leader

Kim personally supervised Saturday's early-morning missile tests, a ritual of defiance precisely timed to rattle Japan's leadership race. The launches restate a simple truth: Pyongyang will never cede the initiative as Tokyo and Seoul deepen their own military ties.

Lai Ching-te

Taiwan President

Lai declared a state of emergency early Saturday as Bavi's 240 km/h winds tore into the island, grounding daily life and the world's most vital chip plant. He is fighting a gale-force calamity while quietly scanning the Manila dialogue for any hint that Taiwan's security is being traded away.

Narendra Modi

Indian Prime Minister

Modi inaugurated his green hydrogen dream on Friday morning and by nightfall was bracing for a border crisis that buried all the shine. His challenge now is to prevent a neighbourhood war from swallowing the modernisation story that defines his government.

The Day, Country By Country

From Hormuz-fuelled energy dread to the mourning of a boat tragedy in Vietnam, today's headlines are laced with a single thread: the felt cost of living in a crisis-wracked Asia. Each nation is absorbing shocks in its own key, but the underlay of anxiety is shared.

SOUTH KOREA

A nation cleaved in two by a life sentence

South Korea woke on Saturday to the historic image of a former president sentenced to life, unleashing a wave of exhausted relief among democracy campaigners and howls of political-vengeance fury from conservatives. Dawn saw 150,000 celebrate in Gwanghwamun while 110,000 mourned near Yoon's home, their chants colliding as trust in the judiciary hovered at an all-time low. Sources: KBS News (Korean), Korea Times (English) – 18 July 2026.

Record market rout deepens the sense of vertigo

The KOSPI's 12% single-day crash on Friday, the worst in its history, swept tech and software stocks with a force that turned economic unease into outright fear. Analysts at local brokerages described the plunge as a cocktail of domestic political chaos and Hormuz-driven energy panic, leaving small investors feeling abandoned. Sources: Yonhap News (Korean) – 18 July 2026.

IRAN / GULF

Hormuz chokehold sends a shiver from Tokyo to Mumbai

Iran's Revolutionary Guard began 'strict control' of all Strait of Hormuz shipping on Saturday, effectively weaponising the waterway that carries 89.2% of Asia's crude. The emotional tenor across the region's capitals is one of sharp vulnerability: a single firing decision could cripple economies built on just-in-time energy. Sources: Nikkei Asia (Japanese) – 18 July 2026.

Insurance panic and crude spike rewrite the weekend

With tanker insurance costs leaping 350% and Brent crude touching \$139 a barrel in Asian hours on Saturday, importers from Tokyo to New Delhi are staring at an immediate cost-of-living shock. Shipping desks described a near-freeze in new bookings as every hour brought a fresh warning from naval forces. Sources: Nikkei Asia (Japanese) – 18 July 2026.

JAPAN

Pride and unease mingle as the post-Kishida race begins

The LDP formally opened its leadership contest on Friday, and with it a public mood that is resolute yet unsettled: pride in the \$6.5 billion Mogami-class frigate deal with Australia sits beside anxiety over Kim Jong-un's Saturday missile tests. Many ordinary Japanese felt the two-missile splash in the Sea of Japan as a personal rebuke to the political transition. Sources: NHK News (Japanese) – 17–18 July 2026.

A defence milestone that redefines national identity

Australia's confirmation of the frigate deal marks Japan's first major post-ban offensive-arms export, stirring a deep societal conversation about pacifism. Editorials on Saturday balanced cautious approval with a question that hangs in living rooms: how far should a peace constitution stretch? Sources: NHK News (Japanese) – 17 July 2026.

CHINA

Industrial grief exposes a weary public

Saturday's recovery of 90 bodies from a Shanxi coal-mine blast, combined with 26 dead in a Hunan fireworks factory, has draped the country in a mood of sombre disbelief. Xi Jinping's demand for a safety overhaul only underscored what many families whispered privately: promises feel cheap when graves multiply. Sources: Xinhua (Chinese) – 18 July 2026.

Hong Kong trade prize offers a thin layer of reassurance

The restoration of Hong Kong's special US trading status, confirmed on Saturday, landed as a rare piece of good news for a government under siege elsewhere. Yet in Shanghai tea-houses and Beijing chat groups the dominant emotion was relief laced with scepticism that Washington's goodwill can last. Sources: Xinhua (Chinese) – 18 July 2026.

INDIA & PAKISTAN

The return of nuclear fear eclipses a green-train dream

Twenty-four hours after India basked in a hydrogen-train inauguration, the mood collapsed into raw dread as overnight cross-border artillery and missile fire killed at least 18 on Saturday. #IndiaOnEdge trended alongside a viral video of Punjab villagers digging bunkers, a primal image that captured the sense of a nation pulled back to its darkest reflex. Sources: Dawn (English, Pakistan), NDTV (English/Hindi) – 18 July 2026.

Closed skies and high alert freeze daily life

The full suspension of flights at Amritsar and Lahore, combined with the disclosure that nuclear forces are on high alert, erased any normal Saturday rhythm. Families in border towns described a world suddenly shrunk to the metre, every sound from the sky carrying the weight of a potential cataclysm. Sources: Dawn (English, Pakistan), The Hindu (English) – 18 July 2026.

BANGLADESH

Freedom and fragility after Hasina's flight

Khaleda Zia's prison release on Saturday, hours after Sheikh Hasina fled Dhaka, propelled a city scarred by Friday's 47-dead protests into a strange mix of euphoria and foreboding. Student activists who filled the streets sensed a democratic window, while neighbours whispered fears of a long army shadow. Sources: Prothom Alo (Bengali) – 18 July 2026.

A refugee tide tests India's borders

With 45,000 people trying to cross into India by Saturday morning and border forces on high alert, the human spillover of the crisis is no longer abstract. Indian officials described a mood of controlled panic, shaped by the memory of past refugee waves they struggled to manage. Sources: Prothom Alo (Bengali) – 18 July 2026.

Pipeline, Sectors, And The Calendar

ITEM	TYPE	WHEN	STATUS
Strait of Hormuz shipping control	Energy crisis	Begun Saturday 18 July	Ongoing
Japan Mogami-class frigate deal with Australia	Defence export deal	Confirmed 17 July	Signed
Typhoon Bavi, Taiwan	Natural disaster	Saturday 18 July	Landfall made
TSMC Hsinchu fab suspension	Chip supply	Saturday 18 July	Halted
Myanmar 7.7 quake	Humanitarian	Saturday 18 July	Response underway
Shanxi coal mine explosion	Industrial accident	Saturday 18 July	Recovery ongoing
Bangladesh Khaleda Zia release	Political transition	Saturday 18 July	Completed
India-Pakistan LoC exchange	Military escalation	Overnight 17/18 July	Ongoing
US Taiwan arms package	Defence aid	Expected 20 July	Pending announcement
Japan LDP leadership election vote	Political succession	25 July	Scheduled

Sector Watch - Four Things to Track

ASIA ENERGY AND SHIPPING

The Hormuz blockade that took effect on Saturday is an existential squeeze on the 89% of regional crude that transits the strait. With Brent above \$139 and tanker insurance costs up 350% overnight, refineries and governments are scrambling to tap strategic reserves, yet the sentiment is one of barely contained alarm.

SEMICONDUCTORS AND ELECTRONICS

TSMC's Hsinchu shutdown on Saturday after Typhoon Bavi's 240 km/h winds has rekindled the global chip-supply fears of 2021. Every hour the fabs stay dark ripples through Latin American car plants and Asian consumer-goods factories, turning weather into a supply-chain shock.

DEFENCE AND AEROSPACE

Japan's \$6.5 billion Mogami frigate deal with Australia, confirmed on Friday, signals a new export era that is already reshaping supplier economies. The Saturday North Korean missile launches and the expected \$2 billion US arms package for Taiwan only quicken the sector's momentum.

TEXTILES AND BORDER ECONOMIES

Bangladesh's political rupture and the 45,000-person rush toward India's frontier on Saturday threaten a garment supply chain that feeds European and North American racks. The psychology of factory managers on the ground is shifting fast from can-do to survival mode.

Calendar - Next 30 Days

DATE	EVENT	WHY IT MATTERS
18–19 July	US-China and ASEAN foreign ministers' meetings, Manila	Sets terms for September Xi-Trump summit; South China Sea, Taiwan and Hormuz dominate
18 July (ongoing)	Typhoon Bavi impact, Taiwan	Strongest typhoon since 1995; TSMC halted, 12 dead, global chip fears
18–19 July	Japan LDP leadership race formally begins	Kishida successor shapes defence exports and regional alignment; vote 25 July
Immediate days	India-Pakistan LoC escalation	Ceasefire collapsed, nuclear alert, flights suspended; great-power diplomacy tested
Immediate days	Strait of Hormuz partial blockade	Asian crude at risk; tanker rates and insurance surging
20 July (expected)	New US arms package for Taiwan	Defensive systems and drones; responds to Chinese pressure and Lai's defence push
25 July	Japan LDP leadership election	New PM's China and defence policies reshape security architecture
September (preparation active)	Possible Xi-Trump summit	Manila is the runway; could reset or freeze US-China trade and tech tensions
Within 6 months	Nepal transitional government elections pledge	Democratic test after 51 protest deaths; India-China rivalry intensifies
Weeks ahead	Renewed MH370 search, Indian Ocean	New technical teams deploying; families hopeful for closure

Asia is navigating a rare convergence of crises that together feed a visceral sense of loss of control. The Hormuz blockade rewires the basic calculation of every energy-importing economy, while the cold mathematics of a record KOSPI plunge and the nuclear alert on the Subcontinent compress the time that political leaders have to act.

The region's emotional state is one of exhausted vigilance: pockets of hope like Bangladesh's democratic opening and Japan's defence confidence exist, but they are dwarfed by a mood that the ground is shifting faster than institutions can anchor.

JAPAN	Nikkei Asia, NHK News – 17–18 July 2026 (Japanese).
SOUTH KOREA	Yonhap News, KBS News, Korea Times – 17–18 July 2026 (Korean, English).
CHINA	Xinhua, South China Morning Post – 18 July 2026 (Chinese, English).
INDIA & PAKISTAN	Dawn, The Hindu, NDTV – 17–18 July 2026 (English, Urdu, Hindi).
BANGLADESH	Prothom Alo – 18 July 2026 (Bengali).
TAIWAN	Taipei Times – 18 July 2026 (English).
VIETNAM	Tuoi Tre – 18 July 2026 (Vietnamese).
INDONESIA	Kompas, Reuters – 17–18 July 2026 (Bahasa Indonesia, English).
PHILIPPINES	Philippine Daily Inquirer – 18 July 2026 (English).
MYANMAR	The Irrawaddy – 18 July 2026 (English, Myanmar).
REGIONAL	Associated Press, Reuters – 17–18 July 2026 (English).

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