

Holding Several Moods at Once

From a Japanese diplomatic summons to a ferry rescue in the Lombok Strait, Asia spent Thursday holding several moods at once. The region was at once guarded, grieving, proud and quietly hopeful.

This dossier reads the emotional currents beneath the headlines of Thursday, August 13, 2026, across a stretch of the world that rarely pauses.

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

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ASIA - THE DAILY PSYCHOGRAM

A Region Braced, Yet Still Breathing

Asia began Thursday with its attention split between the sea, the sky and the street. Some nations were formally protesting, others were counting their rescued, and many were simply trying to get through the day.

In Tokyo, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi summoned the Russian ambassador to deliver a formal protest over President Vladimir Putin's visit to Iturup Island, one of four disputed territories. The gesture was precise, procedural and cold, a reminder that sovereignty disputes here are never far from the surface.

Around Taiwan, the familiar arithmetic of pressure resumed: 18 Chinese military aircraft sorties, 11 naval vessels and three official ships detected by 6 a.m. Yet the mood carried a sliver of quiet pride, because the island's digital affairs ministry said it had successfully handled AI-assisted cyberattacks against government agencies last month.

The region is not one story but many, and on Thursday it refused to settle into a single emotion.

ON THE REGION'S MOOD - AUGUST 2026

Further south, the mood was heavier: floods in Myanmar killed at least 23 people in Sagaing Region, airstrikes killed 19 civilians in Rakhine and Chin states, a Yangon hospital reported 54 severe diarrhoea cases including one death, and in the Philippines roughly 3.14 million people felt the weight of monsoon weather while a soldier was killed in Sulu.

Yet relief also flickered through the day, as Indonesian rescuers brought passengers ashore after the Putri Yasmin ferry caught fire in the Lombok Strait, South Korea unveiled a housing package that lifted the KOSPI by as much as 4.4 per cent, and China's C919 jet completed its first scheduled international commercial flight to Mongolia, with Asia holding several moods at once.

The Day At A Glance

Thursday, August 13, 2026, unfolded as a day of diplomatic formality, weather emergencies and small triumphs. Here is what the region was feeling, country by country.

Japan - Diplomatic Indignation

Foreign Minister Motegi formally protested Russia's ambassador over Putin's visit to Iturup Island, one of four disputed Northern Territories. The protest was calm but unambiguous, reflecting deep public sensitivity over sovereignty.

Taiwan - Guarded Alertness

Taiwan tracked 18 Chinese aircraft sorties and 11 naval vessels, while its digital affairs ministry said AI-assisted cyberattacks on government agencies had been handled. The mood blended vigilance with a measure of technical self-assurance.

Myanmar - Exhaustion and Dread

At least 23 people died in Sagaing floods, 19 civilians were killed by airstrikes in Rakhine and Chin, and 54 severe diarrhoea cases were reported in Yangon. The compounding disasters have left communities feeling besieged.

Philippines - Stretched Resilience

About 3.14 million people have been affected by monsoon weather, with classes and work suspended in Manila. A soldier was also killed in Sulu, adding grief to an already heavy national moment.

Indonesia - Relief After Rescue

Passengers from the Putri Yasmin ferry were rescued after it caught fire in the Lombok Strait and were taken to ports in Lombok and Bali. The rescue offered a rare moment of relief amid broader concern over fuel subsidy restrictions.

Vietnam - Ascending Confidence

President Tô Lâm completed a state visit to New Zealand, meeting the governor-general and prime minister in Auckland. Meanwhile, China spent nearly US\$1 billion on Vietnamese durian in the first half of the year, feeding a sense of economic momentum.

China - Techno-National Pride

The domestically developed C919 passenger jet completed its first scheduled international commercial flight from Beijing to Mongolia. The milestone was widely read as a symbol of technological arrival.

South Korea - Hopeful Energy

A government housing package aimed at young buyers landed on the same day the KOSPI rose as much as 4.4 per cent. For many younger Koreans, it felt like a rare day of possibility.

Singapore - Sober Reckoning

Opposition leader Pritam Singh was struck off the advocates' roll after his conviction for lying to a parliamentary committee. The move cast a long shadow over the political landscape.

Backdrop - Regional Markets Breathe

Asian shares rose in early trade after a softer US inflation reading eased fears of higher rates. Brent crude slipped to \$87.90 as forecasters cut demand-growth estimates, giving the region a fragile sense of relief.

The Numbers At A Glance - Asia - Thursday, August 13, 2026

JP Corporate goods inflation, July 7.2% Year-on-year rise in Japan's corporate goods price index, slightly slower than June's 7.3%.	TW PLA aircraft sorties detected 18 Chinese military aircraft sorties recorded around Taiwan by 6 a.m. local time on Thursday.	MM Flood deaths in Sagaing 23 At least 23 people killed in Sagaing Region flooding, with two still missing.	PH People affected by monsoon 3.14m About 3.14 million people affected by recent weather systems in the Philippines.
ID Ferry passengers rescued 106 Passengers rescued from the Putri Yasmin ferry after it caught fire in the Lombok Strait.	VN China H1 durian spending US\$1bn China spent nearly US\$1 billion on Vietnamese durian in the first half of the year.	KR KOSPI gain 4.4% South Korea's KOSPI led regional gains, rising as much as 4.4% on Thursday.	HK Suspected bid-rigging amount \$500m Hong Kong's Competition Commission widened a probe into suspected bid-rigging involving this sum.

How The Countries Are Doing

Asia enters mid-August with nerves stretched in places and relief breaking through in others. Diplomacy, disasters, and a welcome rally after softer American inflation set the emotional weather.

Country	Politics	Budget	Money	Markets	Outside	What's Driving It
Japan Nikkei - yen	3	2	2	2	3	A formal protest over President Putin's visit to Iturup Island channels indignation through correct diplomatic channels while corporate inflation stays warm.
Taiwan Taiex - dollar	4	2	1	2	4	Eighteen PLA sorties and AI-assisted cyberattacks keep the island on alert, yet officials voice quiet confidence in their defences.
Myanmar Kyat - informal rate	5	4	4	4	5	Flooding, airstrikes, and disease in Sagaing, Rakhine, Chin and Yangon pile exhaustion onto an already desperate humanitarian emergency.
Philippines PSEi - peso	3	2	3	2	3	Millions reel from monsoon disruption even as civil defence scrambles to verify fatalities, and one soldier's death in Sulu sharpens the grief.
Indonesia JCI - rupiah	3	3	3	2	3	A ferry rescue in the Lombok Strait brings relief even as officials prepare to restrict subsidised Pertalite fuel for higher-income groups.
Singapore STI - dollar	2	2	1	2	2	An opposition leader's removal from the advocates' roll is a sober public lesson in accountability rather than instability.
Bangladesh DSEX - taka	3	3	3	3	2	The ruling BNP locks in its presidential nominee, giving Dhaka a moment of political direction amid broader South Asian uncertainty.
Vietnam VN-Index - dong	2	2	2	2	1	President Tô Lâm's dense New Zealand state visit and soaring durian exports to China give Hanoi a palpable sense of levitating partnership.
China CSI 300 - yuan	3	2	2	2	2	The C919's first scheduled international commercial passenger flight to Mongolia stirs techno-national pride as the economy grinds ahead.
Hong Kong Hang Seng - dollar	3	2	2	2	2	Widened bid-rigging probe and extreme heat test the city while MTR's doubled profit and project pipeline keep a pragmatic optimism alive.

How to read the colours: 1 = calm, 2 = fairly good, 3 = mixed, 4 = some strain, 5 = serious strain. Updated Thursday, August 13, 2026.

UPPER - UPPER

A Region Between Rescue And Rehearsal

Asia is not celebrating this week. It is holding its breath in places, exhaling in others, and quietly measuring how much strain its institutions can absorb.

Part 1 - The Weight Of Sovereignty

Japan's protest over President Putin's visit to Iturup Island is the sound of an older wound being pressed. Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi summoned Ambassador Nikolay Stanislavovich Nozdrev on Thursday, but the deeper anxiety is that the Northern Territories dispute knows no easy finality.

Taiwan's morning count tells the same story in a different key: 18 PLA aircraft sorties, 11 naval vessels, and 15 planes crossing the median line. The island insists it handled last month's AI-assisted cyberattacks, and the pride is real, but it is the pride of a place that has learned to live with the drumbeat overhead.

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ON TAIWAN'S CYBER DEFENCES - AUGUST 2026

Part 2 - Disasters That Feel Personal

In Myanmar, the news arrives as a compound wound: floods killing at least 23 people in Sagaing, airstrikes killing 19 civilians in Rakhine and Chin, and a Yangon hospital counting 54 severe diarrhea cases with one elderly death. It is the exhaustion of a population that cannot catch its breath between overlapping emergencies.

The Philippines feels similarly stretched, with 3.14 million people touched by monsoon weather and 21 deaths under verification. A single soldier's death in Sulu cuts through the aggregate numbers, reminding everyone that security losses and weather losses now run side by side.

It is the exhaustion of a population that cannot catch its breath between overlapping emergencies.

ON MYANMAR - AUGUST 2026

Part 3 - Relief, And The Long Game

Indonesia's Putri Yasmin rescue was a rare clean victory: passengers lifted from a burning ferry in the Lombok Strait and delivered to ports in Lombok and Bali. But the same week brings the sober announcement that subsidised Peralite will gradually be restricted for higher-income groups, signalling that budgets too must be rescued.

Vietnam offers the clearest sense of forward motion, as President Tô Lâm closes a dense New Zealand state visit and Chinese durian spending nears one billion dollars in the first half. It is not euphoria, but it is the confidence of a country that sees the levers moving.

POSSIBILITY	CHANCE	MARKETS	BREADTH	WHAT IT MEANS FOR LATIN AMERICA
A - Broadens	40 percent	Steady	Widens	Asian demand for Latin American commodities holds as rotation widens
B - Fragments	35 percent	Mixed	Narrows	Export recovery slows for Brazil and Chile as risk appetite splits
C - Fades	25 percent	Soft	Contracts	Copper, soy and iron-ore exporters feel a chill into late August

Source: Rio Times Asia Desk

Eight Things We Are Watching

Asia ends the week carrying several overlapping burdens: territorial friction, military pressure, humanitarian strain, and weather emergencies. Beneath that, some relief is visible in market calm and diplomatic momentum.

What	How We See It	Over What Period	Why
Taiwan's security posture under PLA pressure	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	Eighteen PLA aircraft sorties and eleven naval vessels around the island on Thursday show pressure remains elevated, while Taipei insists it contained AI-assisted cyberattacks. The combination keeps deterrence and digital resilience central for months.
Myanmar's compounding humanitarian crises	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	Floods killed at least 23 people in Sagaing Region, airstrikes killed 19 civilians in Rakhine and Chin states, and severe diarrhea cases are rising in Yangon. We see no near-term path to stabilisation.
Japan-Russia island diplomacy	◆ MIXED	6 months	Tokyo's formal protest to Moscow over Putin's Iturup visit shows the dispute remains live. The ritualised channel signals determination, but real leverage appears limited.
Philippines monsoon recovery	▼ CAREFUL	6 months	About 3.14 million people are affected and 21 possible fatalities are being verified. With work and classes suspended in Manila, clean-up and relief will stretch local government capacity.
Vietnam's deepening partnerships	▲ POSITIVE	6 months	President To Lam's New Zealand state visit and nearly US\$1 billion in Chinese durian purchases in six months point to a country actively building economic and diplomatic options.
Singapore's opposition pressure test	◆ MIXED	6 months	Pritam Singh's removal from the advocates' roll after a lying-to-parliament conviction raises questions about opposition viability ahead. It sharpens scrutiny of political culture rather than resolving it.
South Korea housing affordability	▲ POSITIVE	6 months	Thursday's package to boost housing supply and help younger buyers, alongside the KOSPI rally, gives policymakers a rare upbeat moment. Execution will determine whether the mood lasts.
China's C919 commercial ambitions	▲ POSITIVE	6 months	The first scheduled international commercial flight from Beijing to Mongolia marks a milestone for the domestic jet programme. Further international certification remains the harder test.

Six People Shaping The News

From formal protests to presidential nominations, these figures shaped Asia's Thursday.

Toshimitsu Motegi

Foreign Minister of Japan

Summoned Russia's ambassador in Tokyo to lodge a formal protest over Vladimir Putin's visit to Iturup Island. The move keeps a longstanding territorial claim diplomatically visible.

Pritam Singh

Opposition leader, Workers' Party, Singapore

Struck off the advocates' roll on Thursday following his conviction for lying to a parliamentary committee. It is a serious professional and political blow with implications for opposition standing.

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir

BNP presidential candidate, Bangladesh

Nominated by the ruling BNP on Thursday as its candidate for head of state. His election would formalise the party's hold on the presidency.

Tô Lâm

President of Vietnam

Completed a dense New Zealand state-visit programme, meeting the Governor-General and Prime Minister in Auckland. The visit reinforced Vietnam's broadening Asia-Pacific diplomacy.

Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa

Finance Minister of Indonesia

Announced a gradual restriction on subsidised Peralite fuel for top-income households. The policy shift signals a more targeted approach to state support.

C. Joseph Vijay

Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, India

Hosted the Vetri Tamil Nadu Investors Conclave 2026 in Chennai on Thursday. The event pitches the state as an investment destination amid a deadlocked parliament.

The Day, Country By Country

Asia's emotional register on Thursday ranged from sovereign indignation in Tokyo to deep exhaustion in Myanmar and relief in Lombok. Each country's mood is anchored to a concrete event from the day.

JAPAN

Sovereign indignation, expressed in formal channels

Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi summoned Russian Ambassador Nikolay Stanislavovich Nozdrev on Thursday to protest President Vladimir Putin's visit to Iturup Island. The move reaffirms Tokyo's claim over the four disputed Northern Territories/Southern Kurils. Sources: Bernama - Aug. 13.

Producer prices still running hot

The Bank of Japan reported July's corporate goods price index at 135.8, up 7.2 percent from a year earlier. That is only slightly cooler than June's 7.3 percent pace. Sources: Tokyo News Media - Aug. 13.

TAIWAN

Guarded alertness amid familiar pressure

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense detected 18 PLA aircraft sorties, 11 PLAN vessels, and 3 official ships around the island by 6 am Thursday, with 15 aircraft crossing the median line. The rhythm is well rehearsed but no less wearing. Sources: Tribune India - Aug. 13.

Digital resilience tested and defended

The Ministry of Digital Affairs said AI-assisted cyberattacks targeted government agencies last month, with affected bodies successfully handling the incidents. The claim of containment lends a note of technical pride. Sources: Tribune India - Aug. 13.

MYANMAR

Deep exhaustion as crises compound

Flooding in Sagaing Region townships has killed at least 23 people with two missing, while airstrikes killed 19 civilians and injured 26 in Rakhine and Chin states in the first 11 days of August. There is little space for relief. Sources: MoeMaKa - Aug. 13.

Disease adds to the burden

Yangon General Hospital reported 54 severe diarrhea cases as of Aug. 13, including one elderly death. The health pressure worsens an already desperate humanitarian situation. Sources: MoeMaKa - Aug. 13.

PHILIPPINES

Stretched resilience across millions

The Office of Civil Defence said about 3.14 million people have been affected by recent weather systems, with 21 reported fatalities under verification. Class and work suspensions in Manila and nearby provinces underscore the

disruption. Sources: Philippine Star - Aug. 13.

Grief and vigilance in Sulu

A Philippine soldier was killed and two others wounded in an attack in Sulu on Thursday. The incident sits alongside the broader monsoon crisis. Sources: Philippine Star - Aug. 13.

INDONESIA

Relief in the Lombok Strait

Mataram Search and Rescue evacuated passengers from the Putri Yasmin ferry after it caught fire on Wednesday. Evacuees were taken to Lembar Port in Lombok and Padangbai Port in Bali. Sources: The Star ASEAN - Aug. 13.

Fuel subsidy targeting begins

Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa said the government would gradually restrict subsidised Pertalite for top-income groups. The policy aims to better direct state support to those who need it. Sources: FDD Overnight Brief - Aug. 13.

VIETNAM

Diplomatic momentum in Auckland

President Tô Lâm completed a dense state-visit agenda on Aug. 13, meeting Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro and Prime Minister Christopher Luxon. The visit signals an expanding Pacific partnership. Sources: SCMP - Aug. 13.

Trade and crime enforcement share the stage

China spent nearly US\$1 billion on Vietnamese durian in the first half of the year, while Vietnam Customs seized 1.2 tonnes of ivory hidden in a shipment from Africa. Starlink also began taking orders for satellite internet service. Sources: SCMP - Aug. 13.

Pipeline, Sectors, And The Calendar

ITEM	TYPE	WHEN	STATUS
Putri Yasmin ferry evacuation	Rescue	Aug. 12-13	Completed
Philippines monsoon damage verification	Disaster response	Ongoing	In progress
Myanmar flood and airstrike casualty counts	Humanitarian	Ongoing	Rising
Singapore special cash payment	Fiscal transfer	September 2026	Scheduled
South Korea housing supply package	Policy	Announced Aug. 13	Rolling out
Indonesia Peralite subsidy restriction	Policy	Announced Aug. 13	Gradual
China C919 international routes	Aviation	First flight Aug. 13	Expanding
Starlink Vietnam satellite internet	Telecom	Now	Taking orders
MTR Hong Kong project tenders	Infrastructure	Next 12 months	Expected
Hong Kong bid-rigging probe	Regulatory	Widened Aug. 13	Under investigation

Sector Watch - Four Things to Track

AVIATION AND AEROSPACE

China's C919 completed its first scheduled international commercial passenger flight from Beijing to Mongolia. The milestone supports the state-backed push for a credible domestic alternative to Western narrow-body jets.

AGRICULTURE AND COMMODITIES

Chinese spending on Vietnamese durian reached nearly US\$1 billion in the first half of the year. The trade flow shows how Southeast Asian produce remains central to Chinese consumer demand.

HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

South Korea announced measures to boost housing supply and help young buyers, while Hong Kong's MTR posted a 105.9 percent rise in interim net profit and expects to tender two projects within 12 months.

TELECOM AND TECHNOLOGY

Starlink began taking orders for satellite internet in Vietnam, expanding its regional footprint. Taiwan's containment of AI-assisted cyberattacks keeps digital security a live commercial concern across the region.

Calendar - Next 30 Days

DATE	EVENT	WHY IT MATTERS
September 2026	Singapore special cash payment	Over 2.4 million adult Singaporeans slated to receive S\$400–S\$600
Next 12 months	MTR Hong Kong project tenders	Signals infrastructure investment pipeline in the city
September 2026	South Korea housing supply rollout	Tests delivery of support for young buyers
Next 30 days	Philippines monsoon recovery assessment	Verification of fatalities and damage shaping relief scale
Next 30 days	Myanmar flood and health response	Casualty counts and disease cases will affect aid priorities
Next 30 days	Indonesia fuel subsidy implementation	Gradual Peralite restriction begins for top-income groups
Next 30 days	China C919 follow-up flights	More international routes would validate commercial viability
Next 30 days	Starlink Vietnam service expansion	Order rollout will test rural and remote connectivity demand
Next 30 days	Hong Kong bid-rigging probe	Competition Commission widening could reach more contractors
Next 30 days	Bangladesh presidential election process	BNP nomination sets formal head-of-state transition in motion

What Today Tells Us

Asia's Thursday was less a single story than a set of pressures held in tension: Taiwan's military alertness, Myanmar's compounding emergencies, and the Philippines' monsoon strain. Each country is managing its own version of resilience against events that do not pause.

Yet there are also moments of forward movement. Vietnam's diplomacy, South Korea's housing push, China's C919 milestone, and the broad market easing after softer US inflation data point to parts of the region still building rather than merely recovering.

Sources & Method

JAPAN	Bernama, Tokyo News Media - Aug. 13 (English, Japanese).
TAIWAN	Tribune India, Focus Taiwan - Aug. 13 (English, Chinese).
MYANMAR	MoeMaKa - Aug. 13 (English, Burmese).
PHILIPPINES	Philippine Star - Aug. 12-13 (English, Filipino).
INDONESIA	The Star ASEAN, FDD Overnight Brief - Aug. 13 (English).
VIETNAM	SCMP, VietnamPlus - Aug. 13 (English, Chinese, Vietnamese).

Method. We sweep the region's main outlets in their languages, rank by impact, and skip what we covered before.

Compiled from major Asia outlets in the region's main languages.

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