

Weekly China Insight

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SCO Tianjin summit highlights China's institutional leadership in the Global South

On 31 August and 1 September, the 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit convened in Tianjin, marking the largest meeting in the bloc's history. Chinese President Xi Jinping hosted over 20 heads of state and 10 international organization leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Xi also oversaw the joint signing and adoption of the "Tianjin Declaration," the "2026-2035 SCO Development Strategy," and a landmark "Global Governance Initiative." The summit inaugurated four regional security initiatives, approved the creation of a long-delayed SCO development bank, and announced six new multilateral cooperation platforms in energy, digital economy, education, and AI. China pledged over RMB 120 billion in grants and concessional loans to the grouping. The SCO also admitted Laos as a new partner, expanding the bloc to 27 nations.

Xi leads Victory Day military parade in Beijing, projecting strength and unity

On September 3, 2025, China held a grand military parade in Beijing's Tiananmen Square to commemorate the 80th anniversary of its victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the broader World Anti-Fascist War (WWII). President Xi Jinping urged nations to "eliminate the root causes of war and prevent historical tragedies from recurring," while underscoring the imperatives of national unity and global peace. The parade served as both a display of military strength—featuring hypersonic missiles, underwater drones, and advanced fighter jets—and a diplomatic showcase. Xi was flanked by high-profile dignitaries: Russian President Vladimir Putin and DPRK's Kim Jong Un, whose joint appearance was unprecedented. In total, 27 foreign leaders and representatives attended, including Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Vietnam's President Luong Cuong, Cambodia's King Norodom Sihamoni, Serbia's President Aleksandar Vučić, ROK's Speaker of the National Assembly, as well as leaders from Pakistan, Laos, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and several others across Asia, Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Notably, among distinguished former statesmen, former Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama was present — arriving with what he described as an "apologetic and introspective attitude," despite domestic controversy in Japan over attending.

Xi-Modi meeting signals cautious reset in Sino-India ties

On 31 August, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tianjin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, marking their second meeting in under a year. Xi called for the bilateral relationship to resemble a

dance between a “dragon and an elephant” and urged both sides to treat each other as development partners, not rivals. Modi echoed the sentiment, emphasizing that peace and stability along the contested border has returned and that expanded tourism and narrowed trade imbalances are key to deepening ties. The leaders acknowledged the bilateral trade deficit and committed to pursuing a “fair, reasonable, and mutually acceptable” resolution to border disputes.