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Russian Rouble Faced Headwinds

The Russian [rouble](#) slid past 100 against the US dollar on 14 August, its lowest since March 2022 when the war broke out in Ukraine. The rouble has shed around 30 per cent of its value against the dollar since the beginning of 2023, raising concerns that it could set off an inflationary spiral and panic in Russia's domestic financial markets. In response, Russia's Central Bank hiked the interest rate from 8.5 to 12 per cent.

Russia's Election Commission Chief Stated 'Russia Doesn't Need Western Democracy'

Russia's Election Chief Ella Pamfilova [stated](#), on 18 August, that Russia has "no use" for Western-style democracy. She said, "What is happening today in the West? That kind of democracy isn't the rule of the majority, it's the rule of the minority. We don't need such a democracy". Pamfilova's remarks came ahead of regional elections in Russia as well as the 2024 presidential elections, in which President Vladimir Putin is expected to seek re-election for a fifth term in office.

Wagner Head Prigozhin's Death Confirmed

Russia's Investigative Committee has [confirmed](#) the death of Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner paramilitary group, following a plane crash on 27 August. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov described the incident as "tragic", calling rumours of possible foul play an "absolute lie".

Russian Army Recruited 2,80,000 Soldiers in 2023

Russia's Security Council Chairman Dmitry Medvedev [stated](#), on 31 August,

that Moscow had recruited approximately 2,80,000 people into the army since the beginning of 2023. The Russian army has also led a huge publicity campaign to recruit volunteers, with mass advertisements in both online and offline modes. It has also sought to attract soldiers by promising higher salaries.

Kazakhstan-Taliban Business Forum

A Taliban delegation [visited](#) Astana for a business event on 2-3 August, during which both parties signed commercial deals worth \$200 million, mainly comprising Kazakhstan's commitment to supply grain and flour. Kazakh officials also stressed the importance of such deals as it would help them access South Asian markets, including India and Pakistan. Alongside this, business negotiations, comprising 250 business representatives, were also held.

Trilateral Meeting Held In Ashgabat

On 4 August, Presidents of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan took part in a trilateral [summit](#) in Ashgabat, primarily focused on greater cooperation in political, economic, trade and transport sectors. The need to strengthen comprehensive ties on the basis of common history, traditions and culture was also deliberated upon. They also sought to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Uzbek President Visited Azerbaijan

On the [invitation](#) of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited Baku on 22 August. During the visit, 15 documents seeking to enhance cooperation across energy, youth, sports, food security and cybersecurity were signed.

Tajik President Visited Kazakhstan

On 25 August, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon [met](#) Kazak President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in Astana. The two leaders reiterated the need to strengthen their strategic partnership. They sought to strengthen collaboration in trade, transportation, energy and culture. The leaders welcomed the successful implementation of the Declaration of Applied Cooperation, signed during President Emomali Rahmon's last visit in May 2023.

US Announced Military Aid To Ukraine

Biden administration [announced](#) its 44th and 45th tranche of military aid to Ukraine. The announcement of 14 August, is meant to augment [Ukraine's](#) critical security and defence needs, including additional air defence munitions, artillery and tank ammunition, and anti-armor weapons. The next tranche followed a few days later on 29 August and included mine clearing equipment and additional artillery and tank ammunition.

Netherlands And Denmark To Send F-16 Fighter Jets To Ukraine

Netherlands and Denmark will become the [first two](#) European countries to send F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine. This announcement was made on 17 August. The two countries will send 42 and 19 jets respectively. While President Zelensky hailed the decision as historic, the jets will not be deployed before the end of 2023 and are likely to enter into combat only by next year.

European Commission Adopted Rules To Implement CBAM

On 17 August, the European Commission [adopted](#) the rules governing the

implementation of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) during its transitional phase, starting 1 October. It is a core aspect of the EU Green Deal, aimed at reducing GHG emissions by 55 per cent by 2030. It has been described as a “landmark tool” to put a “fair price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods that are entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries.”

PM Modi Visited Greece

PM Modi became the first foreign Head of Government to [receive](#) the prestigious Grand Cross of the Order of Honour from the Greek President Katerina N Sakellaropoulou. While in Greece, he discussed the roadmap to [develop](#) business and defence ties with the aim to double bilateral trade by 2030. The visit also resulted in elevating India-Greece ties to the level of strategic partnership. Discussions over cooperation in the fields of counter-terrorism, cyber security, agriculture and privatisation of Greek airports and seaports were also held.

British Foreign Secretary Visited China

Britain's Foreign Secretary [James Cleverly's](#) visit to China on 30 August was aimed at mending the strained UK-China relations. This marked the first visit by a high-ranking British diplomat to China in over five years. Cleverly also emphasized on the need to address human rights concerns in his meetings with Chinese officials.