



CUTS International *Global Affairs*

News Wrap #91, July 2025– Second Fortnightly

August 1 Tariffs Hit Southeast Asia Hard, BRICS Eyes Mineral Security

It's raining tariffs again! Just when you thought global trade couldn't get any stormier, US President Donald Trump decided to slam countries with tariffs on August 1, 2025

For EU, Israel, Japan and Republic of Korea – 15%, Myanmar – 40%, Taiwan, Vietnam and Bangladesh – 20%, Pakistan – 19% and India with a 25% tariff wall – plus extra penalties for good measure. And in the same breath, he rolled out a shiny new trade deal with Pakistan, complete with a plan for oil reserves. Talk about carrots and sticks – or should we say, sticks for some and barrels for others?

While Washington plays tariff whack-a-mole, the Global South is busy rewriting the rulebook. The BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro was anything but business as usual. With fresh faces like Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam pulling up extra chairs to the BRICS table, the bloc is flexing its Indo-Pacific muscle and signalling loud and clear: we're here to make the rules, not just obey them!

Indian PM, Modi didn't miss the moment either – putting critical minerals front and centre, he reminded the world that in the new resource race, lithium and rare earths are the new oil. His warning? No country should be allowed to hoard or weaponise them.

And yet, here's the rub – there's still no international agency to keep this precious supply chain fair, secure, and out of any single player's grip. Maybe it's time to think big: could a new 'International Materials Agency' be the next big thing in global governance? If we can have OPEC for oil, why not a 'OREMEC' (Organisation of Rare Earths Minerals Exporting Countries) for minerals? Food for thought, and maybe action!

Meanwhile, as the China-EU summit drags on and Thailand and Cambodia lock horns with ripple effects across the region, the stakes for the Globe couldn't be clearer. Old power games are crumbling, and new players are stepping up.

The real challenge is whether we can turn this moment of flux into an era of fairer, more resilient cooperation. One thing's certain – the world's supply chains can't afford to run on old maps anymore. It's time to redraw them and make sure everyone gets a fair share!

Purushendra Singh
Editor

***P.S:** While the world debates tariffs and trade, the crisis in Gaza reminds us that no supply chain matters more than the one delivering hope and humanitarian aid. Let's not lose sight of humanity amid geopolitics*

Message for our Readers

This is the 91st edition of the fortnightly news wrap from the Centre, which carries select published news or comments on a relevant issue. There are equally important issues which may have been missed out to keep the news wrap short and swiftly readable.

This newsletter contains copyrighted material whose use has not been specifically authorised by the copyright owners. Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) is making these articles available in our efforts to advance understanding of bilateral trade and economic issues. We believe that this constitutes a 'fair use' of the copyrighted material as provided for in Article 10 of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Paris Text 1971) and Section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. If anybody wishes to use materials from this publication for purposes that go beyond 'fair use', s/he must obtain permission from the copyright owner. CUTS will not draw any profit from this publication, since it is solely for informative and educational purposes.

Readers are encouraged to send their views and suggestions to: cutsglobal@cuts.org



US Team to Visit India for Trade Pact Talks

The US team will visit India on August 25, 2025 for the next round of negotiations on the proposed bilateral trade agreement between the two countries, an official said. The official added that both sides continue to engage in an interim trade deal as the August 01 deadline approaches.



- [Trump reaps \\$50 bn from tariffs as world 'chickens out' from retaliation](#) | Business Standard
- [China's JD.com to buy German retailer Ceconomy for \\$2.5bn](#) | Nikkei Asia
- [Bangladesh to import 220,000 tonnes of US wheat to cool tariffs](#) | MSN
- [LG Energy Solution wins \\$4.3bn battery order](#) | Pulse

Strategic Issues

The Great Dam Game: China Builds, India Faces Pushback

With China commencing construction of the world's largest dam on the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra, the strategic water chessboard in the eastern Himalayas is now in play. Will India's counter strategy act as a deterrent or further strain the fragile Himalayan ecosystem?



- [Pahalgam Killers TRF a global terror outfit: US](#) | Times of India
- [Thailand launches airstrikes on Cambodian military targets as deadly border dispute escalates](#) | CNN
- [Buzz Aldrin and Vivek Lall: Calling all space pioneers — America needs you](#) | Financial Times
- [Canada will recognise a Palestinian state in September in latest push against Israel's Gaza policies](#) | AP

Energy and Climate

India Launches NISAR Satellite to Track Climate Threats from Space

India has launched the US\$1.5bn NISAR satellite in collaboration with NASA to monitor climate change and natural disasters. Equipped with dual-frequency radar, it can detect minute changes on the Earth's surface and will map the planet every 12 days. The data will be freely available to support global environmental research.



- [Marine Cloud Brightening: The Secret Weather Experiment That Nearly Altered the Climate Forever](#) | NewsX
 - [World Court says countries are legally obligated to curb emissions, protect climate](#) | UN News
 - [Climate Change Could Awaken Sleeping Giants: Dormant Volcanoes Set to Blow?](#) | Orbital Today
 - [India Reaches 50% Non-Fossil Fuel Power Capacity, Ahead of 2030 Goal](#) | The CSR Journal
-



North Korea's Closer Ties with Russia Risk China's Ire

North Korea's growing alignment with Russia is straining its relationship with China, its key ally. Despite earlier diplomatic warmth, recent tit-for-tat incidents suggest Beijing is increasingly uneasy with Pyongyang's overt partnership with Moscow.



- [Shift in aid policy just the tonic Africa's health sector needs](#) | Financial Times
- [Trump gives Russia less than two weeks to reach peace deal with Ukraine](#) | CNBC
- [Trump's 'Africa Second' policy may be a boon to China](#) | Financial Times

- [Kazakhstan and Turkey Tighten Ties Amid Shifting Caspian Dynamics](#) | The Times of Central Asia
-



Global Economy Powers Through Historic Tariff Surge

Trade, production and growth indicators show surprising resilience nearly four months after President Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariffs. The global economy is sailing this historic rise in trade barriers with unexpected strength.



- [Trump Threatens India with Steep Tariffs, Including Penalty Over Russian Oil](#) | The New York Times
- [Trump bets constantly shifting tariff strategy can remake global trade](#) | Mint
- [China's Belt and Road investment and construction activity hits record](#) | Financial Times
- [Aid cuts will push Nigerians into the arms of Boko Haram militants, WFP warns](#) | BBC



Australian Universities Get UCC Nod for Campuses in India

Marking the fifth anniversary of the new National Education Policy, three leading Australian universities – Western Sydney University, Victoria University and La Trobe University have received Letters of Intent to set up campuses in India.



- [Funds from FireAid benefit concert being questioned as second round of grants go out](#) | Fox 11
- [Why the 8.8 magnitude Kamchatka quake is rare but not unusual](#) | The Indian Express
- [Iran-Israel AI War Propaganda Is a Warning to the World](#) | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace