



CUTS International *Global Affairs*

News Wrap #101, December 2025- Second Fortnightly

2025: The CATG Chronicle

2025: year of CATG = Critical minerals, AI, Trump, Gen Z. As the year draws to a close, this acronym encapsulates the forces that have reshaped the global landscape. From Washington's transactional 'Tariff' diplomacy centred on securing critical minerals to artificial intelligence transforming labour markets, the year has been defined by disruption.

'Tariff' was the word of 2025. President Trump's return brought "America First" policies that reverberated across continents, whilst Gen Z movements from Nairobi to Antananarivo to Nepal challenged entrenched power structures through unprecedented digital mobilisation.

The scramble for critical minerals intensified US engagement globally, with Africa's Lobito Corridor and minerals-for-peace deals dominating agendas. The Pax Silica initiative launched in December aims to secure silicon and AI-related supply chains through strategic coalitions. Here is our latest publication on India's rare earths strategy, read [here](#).

AI emerged as 2025's key innovator, with breakthroughs in machine learning revolutionising sectors from healthcare diagnostics to climate modelling. However, Nobel laureate Geoffrey Hinton warned that AI systems could make major leaps in 2026, potentially replacing substantial white-collar work. The primary driver, he cautioned, is not productivity but eliminating human labour itself, underscoring urgent regulatory needs as innovation outpaces governance frameworks.

Youth movements revealed deep governance frustrations. Gen Z protestors leveraged social media to demand accountability, only to face military coups in some instances.

Yet amid chaos, glimmers of hope emerged: China-mediated Thailand-Cambodia ceasefire, Trump-Zelensky dialogue on Ukraine, youth demanding climate justice, communities rallying around displaced families, and artists daring to dream aloud.

Check out our top moments of 2025. We hope 2026 brings peace, love and prosperity.

With this, wishing you and your loved ones a happy new year

Let there be light!

Purushendra Singh
Editor

P.S.: Will 2026 be remembered as the year the world chose cooperation over coercion and governance over chaos?

Message for our Readers

This is the 100th 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 that may have been overlooked to keep the news wrap short and easy to read.

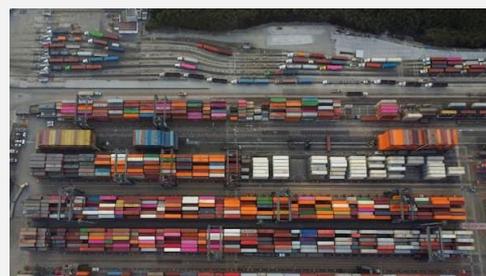
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Readers are encouraged to send their views and suggestions to: cutsglobal@cuts.org



Global Trade in 2025: A Test of Endurance

In 2025, Trump's reciprocal tariffs persisted amid limited retaliation. Unilateral US trade deals proved unstable, while China retained its export dominance despite restrictions. New alliances, such as Pax Silica emerged to bolster supply chain security, and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) gained prominence as a rules-based alternative to a sidelined WTO.



- [How India-New Zealand free trade pact is a win-win prospect](#) | Firstpost
- [Saudi Arabia proposes hosting WTO meeting in 2028](#) | The National
- [EU moves to tighten rules on plastic imports to protect recycling industry](#) | TexSPACE Today
- [Canada and Mercosur accelerate free trade talks](#) | Financial Times



Strategic Issues

Multi-alignment Differs Fundamentally from Non-alignment

Multi-alignment is fundamentally distinct from the concept of non-alignment, and signifies that a country is a major player in the global order, Sanjeev Sanyal, Member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, said in an interview with ANI, when asked about India's position today's fragmented world order.

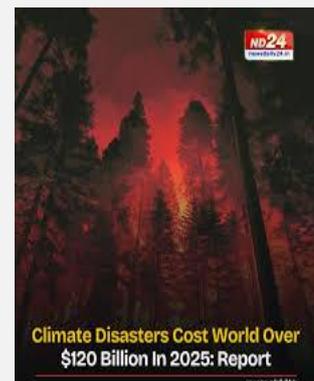


- [Kim Jong Un Oversees Test of New Anti-Air Missile, KCNA Says](#) | Bloomberg
- [The Winners and Losers of Trump's New Foreign Policy](#) | Foreign Policy
- [U.S. launches Christmas Day strikes on ISIS targets in Nigeria. Trump says](#) | CBS News
- [Thailand and Cambodia agree on 72-hour ceasefire](#) | Nikkei Asia



Climate Disasters Cost Global Economy US\$120bn in 2025

A Christian Aid report reveals that extreme weather events in 2025 cost the global economy over US\$120bn, with the US suffering the highest insured losses from California wildfires (US\$60bn). Poorer nations faced devastating human impacts despite low emissions, underscoring the need for urgent fossil fuel phase-out and increased adaptation funding.

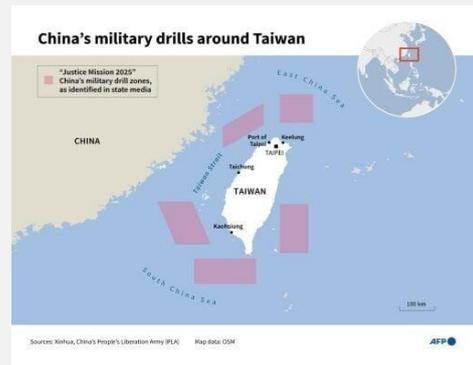


- [Climate-resilient development: How trade and finance can help](#) | UN Trade and Development
- [What is fusion energy. the quest coveted by Trump Media?](#) | Reuters
- [Japan's TEPCO to partially restart world's biggest nuclear plant on Jan. 20](#) | Nikkei Asia
- [India ranks 3rd in rare earth reserves, but trails in production due to structural bottlenecks in mining: Report](#) | Times of India



China Conducts Live-Fire Drills Around Taiwan

China launched surprise live-fire drills, "Justice Mission 2025", encircling Taiwan on December 29-30 2025, simulating port blockades and maritime attacks while deterring foreign interference. The PLA deployed dozens of ships and a record 89 warplanes in response to US arms sales and statements from Taiwan and Japan. Taiwan condemned the escalation and mobilised its forces.



- [Modi's G20 Visit to South Africa: India's \(Bharat\) New Africa Playbook'](#) | Diplomatist
- [US judge rejects business group's challenge to Trump's \\$100,000 H-1B visa fee](#) | Reuters
- [US strategy is leading to a Europe squeezed from the east and the west](#) | Atlantic Council
- [Saudi Arabia bombs Yemen over shipment of weapons that arrived from UAE](#) | ABC News



Four Futures for the New Economy by 2030

The white paper 'Four Futures for the New Economy: Geoeconomics and Technology in 2030' examines how the dynamic interaction between geopolitical developments and rapid technological advancements is reshaping the global economic order. Part of the Scenarios for the Global Economy Dialogue Series, it outlines four plausible scenarios for 2030, shaped by varying levels of geopolitical stability and rates of technology adoption.



- [Budget 2026 wishlist: From renewables to critical minerals, 5 key sectors in focus](#) | Financial Express Business
- [Russia delays LNG output target due to sanctions](#) | Dawn
- [China has logged a US\\$1 trillion trade surplus. Where is all that money going?](#) | South China Morning Post
- [In 2025, global trade cracked as Europe hurt by US tariffs and new China shock](#) | Euro News



Why Hindu Anger Loses the Narrative War

The indefensible vandalism of Christmas decorations in a Raipur mall during a bandh protesting alleged religious conversions is downright shameful, as it distracts from legitimate tribal concerns over evangelism. Drawing parallels to an acclaimed Chinua Achebe’s novel “Things Fall Apart”, the piece argues that reactionary violence weakens indigenous causes, cedes narrative control, and echoes civilisational decline fuelled by provoked outrage and selective remembrance of martyrs like Swami Lakshmanananda Saraswati over figures like Stan Swamy.



PM Modi to Inaugurate AI Impact Summit

India will host the IndiaAI Summit on February 19–20, 2026, with leaders from up to 20 countries, ministers from 50, and officials from over 100 countries expected to attend. Prime Minister Modi will participate in key sessions. The event aims to deliver a consensus declaration on democratising AI resources and establishing global governance standards, alongside the GPAI ministerial meeting.



2025 Yearly Round Up

Events/Webinars	Op-Eds	Media Coverage
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<p><u>QUADRO - Why Russia, India, China, and America Should Work Together</u> Friday - Saturday, November 28-29, 2025</p>	<p><u>Why Cooperation, Not Fear, Must Drive the Future of Trade Ties With America</u> <i>The Asian Age, November 06, 2025</i></p>	<p><u>BRICS for the future: India's chairship to lead from ideas to implementation</u> <i>The Economic Times, October 15, 2025</i></p>
<p><u>QUADRO - Why Russia, India, China, and America Should Work Together</u> Friday - Saturday, November 28-29, 2025</p>	<p><u>How Israel strengthens India's strategic play</u> • <u>Jewish News Syndicate, September 14, 2025</u></p>	<p><u>Australia calls India a 'trusted partner', stresses need to establish a Defence Innovation Bridge</u> <i>The Economic Times, October 13, 2025</i></p>
<p><u>An Emerging BRICS Vision for the Global South</u> Wednesday, October 15, 2025</p>	<p><u>Why Tariff Threats By Trump's USA Could Be Wake-up Call For New Delhi</u> <i>The Asian Age, August 24, 2025</i></p>	<p><u>Track 1.5 and 2.0 Dialogues way forward to South Asia's Prosperity: Experts</u> <i>The Economic Times, July 01, 2025</i></p>
<p><u>India-Australia Defence Industry Business Roundtable</u> Friday, October 10, 2025</p>	<p><u>India-U.S. RDP Agreement: A Potential Booster for Indian Defence Exports</u> <i>India's World, June 04, 2025</i></p>	<p><u>CUTS International and Israeli Thinktank SIGNAL Group Forge Partnership For Trade & Strategic Affairs</u> <i>Knowledge and News Network, May 21, 2025</i></p>
<p><u>South Asia in a Perpetual Conundrum Navigating Challenges in a Shifting Landscape</u> Tuesday, July 01, 2025</p>	<p><u>How can India 'Make for the World'? Unlocking its defence export potential</u> <i>The Economic Times, May 07, 2025</i></p>	<p><u>EU's vision for the Indo-Pacific must translate into concrete policy actions</u> <i>The Economic Times, February 26, 2025</i></p>
<p><u>CUTS International Breakfast Roundtable Discussion</u> Wednesday, March 19, 2025</p>	<p>• <u>Drones, Deals and Deep Reserves – Australia's Indo-Pacific Leverage</u> <i>India's World, April 09, 2025</i></p>	<p>• <u>Pacific region's diversity demands respect: Experts</u> <i>The Economic Times, January 17, 2025</i></p>