



CUTS International *Global Affairs*

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Mid-2026: Beyond Hard Power

This month's developments reinforce a central reality of contemporary geopolitics: power is increasingly exercised through geoeconomics as much as through military strength. From shifting alliances and competition over critical technologies to energy security and artificial intelligence, July demonstrated that strategic influence is now built through resilient partnerships, technological leadership and economic statecraft.

Across the globe, the NATO summit in Türkiye accelerated defence investments while recalibrating burden sharing among allies. Australia deepened its strategic footprint in the Pacific through landmark agreements, including the Ocean of Peace Alliance with Fiji, while the US advanced its strategic engagement in the Middle East through a landmark nuclear agreement with Saudi Arabia. Simultaneously, China sought to shape global AI governance by launching a new multilateral AI cooperation framework aimed at the Global South. Together, these developments underscore that strategic competition is increasingly unfolding across technology, energy and economic connectivity.

For India, the month highlighted the importance of translating strategic partnerships into tangible outcomes. The finalisation of Australian uranium exports for India's civilian nuclear programme, and exporting alongside India's advances in hydrogen-powered rail and private space launches, reflected the growing convergence of technological innovation, energy resilience and national security. Furthermore, India and Indonesia concluded a landmark BrahMos and Astra missile agreement during Prime Minister Modi's July 2026 visit.

Against this backdrop, CUTS Global Affairs Centre continued to foster policy dialogue on emerging strategic challenges. Our webinar on [Global Strategies in the Age of Geoeconomics \(G-SAGE\)](#) examined how states increasingly deploy trade, technology and finance as instruments of national power. This was complemented by a discussion on [Building an India–Australia Energy Security Corridor for Indo-Pacific Resilience](#), highlighting the role of trusted partnerships in strengthening regional resilience.

P.S. As Beijing builds new institutions for AI cooperation, is the world witnessing the emergence of a new arena for geopolitical competition?

Message for our Readers

This is the 102nd edition of the monthly 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



India Hosts 13th ASEAN-India Trade Pact Review Meeting

India hosted the 13th ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) Joint Committee and related meetings in New Delhi from July 06-10, 2026 to advance negotiations on the review of the trade agreement. Discussions focused on customs procedures, trade facilitation, market access and rules of origin, with India and ASEAN assigning time-bound targets to expedite negotiations on the remaining chapters.

Co-chaired by India and Malaysia, the meeting reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening regional economic integration. ASEAN remains one of India's key trading partners, with bilateral trade reaching US\$128bn in 2025-26.



- [Trade unions strengthen regional cooperation in Central Asia](#) | ILO
- [India steps up Chile, Latin America, Africa FTA push for critical minerals as Peru talks slow down](#) | Money Control
- [IDFA Celebrates Implementation of U.S.-EU Trade Agreement, Announcement of Uzbekistan Framework Deal](#) | IDFA
- [Gulf FDI flows to Algeria but obstacles remain](#) | AGBI

Strategic Issues

Modi's Australia Visit Yields 18 Key Outcomes

India and Australia significantly expanded their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership by announcing 18 agreements and initiatives at the third India-Australia Annual Summit. The package strengthened cooperation across defence, maritime security, energy, critical minerals, cyber and emerging technologies, education, skills, scientific research and cultural exchanges.

Key outcomes included a new Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation, a Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap, implementation of the Civil Nuclear Agreement, and new technology partnerships.

The initiatives also advanced resilient supply chains, vocational training, critical minerals cooperation and Indo-Pacific security, while deepening people-to-people ties.



- [US-Saudi nuclear deal, what it means for the Kingdom, the US and the Middle East](#) | Gulf News
- [Korybko to Timofeev: The US is Waging a Hybrid World War Against Russia, China, & Iran](#) | ESTI EST
- [US strikes hit Iran's Chabahar maritime control tower](#) | Iran International
- ["China's J-10CE Push into Uzbekistan Threatens Russia's Central Asian Airpower Monopoly as 24-Jet Pivot Redraws Eurasian Balance"](#) | Defence Security Asia

Energy and Climate



Pacific Climate Ministers Advance COP31 Agenda

Pacific Climate Ministers convened in Sydney for the sixth Pacific Climate Ministers Talanoa, reaffirming regional cooperation ahead of Pre-COP31 in Fiji and COP31 in Türkiye. Co-chaired by Australia and the Solomon Islands, ministers emphasised a unified Pacific position on climate negotiations, resilience and adaptation.

Discussions covered climate diplomacy, engagement with Türkiye, outcomes from the Bonn UNFCCC meetings, and preparations for upcoming technical consultations.

Participants also highlighted mounting geopolitical uncertainties, constrained climate finance, and challenges to multilateralism, stressing that regional solidarity and coordinated action remain essential to advancing Pacific priorities in global climate governance.



- [World Bank Supports India's Solar Rooftop Program to Boost Clean Energy, Create Jobs, and Unlock Private Capital](#) | World Bank Group
- [Global power demand to grow 3.6% in 2026 as renewables overtake coal: IEA](#) | Down To Earth
- [Cuba suffers second island-wide blackout in a week amid Trump fuel blockade](#) | AIJAZEERA
- [Global energy security at risk if Strait of Hormuz does not open in weeks, IEA chief says](#) | Reuters



2026 NATO Summit in Ankara

Despite occasional tensions, particularly President Donald Trump's remarks on Greenland and burden-sharing, the NATO Summit concluded with broad allied unity. Ukraine secured a proposed licence to manufacture Patriot air defence systems and a €70n (US\$80bn) military assistance package through 2027, although its membership bid remained stalled.

Canada launched the Defence, Security and Resilience Bank (DSRB) to mobilise US\$134bn for defence financing. NATO also announced major defence-industrial initiatives, including GlobalEye surveillance aircraft procurement and a US\$50bn long-range strike programme. The summit concluded with a renewed commitment to Article 5, reinforcing collective defence and transatlantic solidarity despite lingering political differences.



- Visit to Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand will further strengthen India's Act East Policy: PM | [The Hindu](#)
- African leaders raise concern over resumption of conflict in Middle East | [China.org](#)
- Latin America and the Caribbean Consolidate a Regional Roadmap for Ethical, Inclusive, and Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence | [UNESCO](#)
- Contested and congested: Pacific regional architecture getting complex, security expert says | [RNZ](#)



India-Australia Urged to Strengthen Energy Supply Chains

A policy dialogue on Building an India-Australia Energy Security Corridor for Indo-Pacific Resilience, organised by CUTS International with the Rajasthan International Centre, examined opportunities for strengthening bilateral cooperation on energy security. Discussions emphasised critical minerals, renewable energy, green hydrogen, advanced manufacturing and resilient supply chains as pillars of long-term strategic resilience.

Speakers highlighted the complementary strengths of India and Australia, the need to diversify supply chains amid geopolitical uncertainties, and the importance of advancing collaborative research, investment, technology partnerships and institutional cooperation to support the Indo-Pacific's clean energy transition.



- [Trump imposes double-digit tariffs on dozens of countries](#) | Africa News
- [EU adopts 21st package of sanctions against Russia](#) | EU Reporter
- [China-India Great Game taking Shape on the Bay of Bengal](#) | Asia Times
- [Free Trade Can Survive the Brave New World of Geoeconomics](#) | Bloomberg



US Exits UN Meeting After France's Rights Criticism

The twin earthquakes that struck north-western Venezuela on June 24, 2026 have significantly exacerbated existing humanitarian vulnerabilities, causing widespread casualties, displacement, and infrastructure damage.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has mobilised food stocks, logistics support, and coordination mechanisms to assist affected communities while broader assessments continue. The disaster has compounded pre-existing challenges, including high food insecurity, inflation, and climate-related shocks.

The disruption to livelihoods, supply chains, and essential services is likely to deepen humanitarian needs and further constrain food access among the country's most vulnerable populations.



- [Chad announces intent to withdraw from ICC, drawing praise from the US](#)|Times of Israel
- [M7.1 quake rock southwestern Japan, 1 dead, dozens feared injured](#)| Kyodo News

CUTS EVENTS

- [Building an India–Australia Energy Security Corridor for Indo-Pacific Resilience](#)
- [Global Strategies in the Age of Geoeconomics \(G-SAGE\) CUTS International Geoeconomic Monograph Series 3rd Webinar](#)