



## International News

### I. Ongoing Conflicts and Humanitarian Crises:

**Russia-Ukraine War:** The conflict remains highly active, with Russia's bombing campaign intensifying significantly.

**Escalated Aerial Attacks:** June 2025 saw the highest monthly civilian casualties in Ukraine in over three years, with 232 deaths and 1343 injuries, due to a dramatic expansion of Russian air offensives since late 2024. The number of drones and missiles launched at Ukrainian targets in June was ten times higher than a year prior. Russia is now reportedly producing thousands of drones monthly, importing laborers to bolster its factories.

**No Breakthrough on Frontlines:** Despite holding the battlefield initiative since early 2024, Russia has seized less than one percent of additional Ukrainian territory, raising doubts about achieving its maximalist war aims.

**US Stance & Tariffs:** US President Donald Trump has announced a deal to supply more weapons to Ukraine via NATO and threatened "severe" tariffs on Russia unless a peace deal is reached within 50 days. The Kremlin has dismissed this as a "theatrical ultimatum" and stated it needs time to "analyse" Trump's rhetoric, while some Russian officials openly mocked the threats. European allies, wary of Trump's previous actions, remain skeptical of his reliability, though they welcome the additional weapons.

**Ukraine's Response:** Ukraine is developing domestically produced interceptor drones as a cost-effective way to combat Russia's massive drone raids, alongside seeking additional air defense systems like Patriot missiles.

**EU Sanctions:** The European Union is "very, very close" to imposing a new sanctions package on Russia, though Slovakia requested a delay in a recent vote.

**Ukrainian Government Reshuffle:** Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal has reportedly filed a resignation letter, as part of a major governmental reshuffle expected this week. Yulia Svyrydenko has been nominated for the post.

**Israel-Hamas Conflict (Gaza and wider region):** The humanitarian situation in Gaza has significantly worsened, and military actions continue.

**Malnutrition Crisis:** The UN reports that malnutrition rates among children in the Gaza Strip have doubled since Israel imposed sharp restrictions on food entry in March. One in ten children screened at UN clinics are now malnourished.

**Intensified Israeli Strikes:** New Israeli strikes have killed over 90 people in 24 hours (as of July 15), including dozens of women and children, in areas like Shati refugee camp and Tel al-Hawa district. Israel continues to bomb Gaza and has also conducted strikes in Syria.

**Aid Access:** Hunger has risen since Israel resumed the war in March and banned all food and other supplies from entering Gaza, though the blockade was slightly eased in late May, allowing a trickle of aid (an average of 69 trucks





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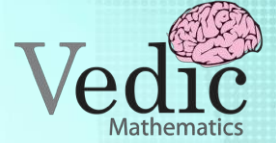
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a day). Deadly shootings have occurred at food distribution sites, with witnesses reporting Israeli forces opening fire on aid seekers.

**Casualties:** According to Gaza's Health Ministry, over 58,400 Palestinians have been killed and more than 139,000 wounded in Israeli retaliation since October 7, 2023. Over half the dead are women and children.

**Political Developments:** There are signs of progress towards a new ceasefire, with reports of "pretty well" progress on truce talks according to Trump. However, negotiations remain delicate, with Israel and Hamas trading blame. Some Israeli political developments, like Shas preparing to quit Netanyahu's coalition, could impact the situation.

## II. Major International Summits and Agreements:

**17th BRICS Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 6-7, 2025):** A significant gathering that highlighted the evolving multipolar world order.

**Expansion:** Indonesia formally joined as a full BRICS member. Additionally, 11 new BRICS partner countries were welcomed (Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Uganda, Uzbekistan).

**Key Discussions:** Leaders discussed reform of global governance (including UN Security Council, IMF, World Bank, WTO), enhancing the voice of the Global South, peace and security (condemning terrorism, including the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack in India), strengthening multilateralism, development issues, and Artificial Intelligence.

**AI Governance:** The summit produced a separate leaders' statement on inclusive AI governance.

**Climate Finance:** A BRICS Leaders' Framework Declaration on Climate Finance was launched, with strong support for the Paris Agreement and India's bid to host COP-33 (2028).

**Trade and Tariffs:** BRICS countries appeared united in pushing back against Trump's tariff threat, advocating for the safeguarding of the multilateral trading system. However, differences persist, with India denouncing the "weaponization" of critical minerals after China imposed rare earth export restrictions on India. While BRICS Pay and national currency settlement frameworks were discussed, a common BRICS currency was ruled out.

**United Nations Convention on Cybercrime:** The adoption of this convention was praised, with a signing ceremony scheduled in Hanoi in 2025 marking a step towards global cooperation against cybercrime.

## III. Global Geopolitical Shifts and Economic Trends:

**U.S. Foreign Policy and Protectionism:** The policies of the second Trump administration are having a significant impact.

**Tariffs:** Trump's announcement of a 50% tariff on copper imports (effective August 1, 2025) has sent shockwaves through global metals markets, causing supply chain disruptions, particularly for electronics, construction, and renewable energy sectors. It benefits US copper producers and recyclers.





**"America First" Approach:** Growing trade protectionism and increased government intervention in markets, coupled with an intensifying AI race, are accelerating fragmentation in the global landscape. This approach risks narrowing partnerships, as seen in concerns regarding US-India ties if the US prioritizes domestic industrial capacity at the cost of open trade and technology access.

**Impact on China:** While Trump's tariffs pose a challenge, China has reduced its dependence on US trade by shifting to domestic demand and cultivating trade with other regions. China is also portraying itself as a champion of global free trade in response to US actions.

**India's Multi-alignment:** India continues its doctrine of strategic autonomy, engaging flexibly with various partners.

**US and Allies: Considered vital to counter China's rise.**

**BRICS and SCO:** Deeply integrated within these forums where Chinese interests play a major role.

**Russia:** Despite a diminished status, Russia remains a key UN Security Council member, arms supplier, and energy source for India. This relationship acts as a "deliberate hedge" for India.

**Challenges:** India faces a territorial dispute with China and concerns over the US stepping back from its traditional role as a global order guarantor.

**Cybersecurity and AI Race:** Geopolitical competition is driving an increase in the scope, scale, and sophistication of cyberattacks, with new generative AI technology expanding the

efficacy of malicious hacking. AI and its associated infrastructure are increasingly being treated as national security assets.

### Global Trade Trends (Q1 2025):

Global trade continued to expand, estimated to increase by US\$300 billion in the first half of 2025 (1.5% in Q1).

Developed countries' trade increased more than developing countries', driven by strong US import growth (importers racing to beat incoming tariffs) and EU exports.

Trade imbalances widened, with an increasing US deficit and rising surpluses in China and the EU.

Policy uncertainty and geopolitical tensions are expected to pressure global trade in the coming months.

**Syria-Malaysia Bilateral Relations:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic, His Excellency Asaad Hasan Al-Shaibani, is on an official visit to Malaysia (July 16-17, 2025) to explore potential areas to reinvigorate bilateral relations and strategic cooperation.

## MCQS

1. According to UN reports, how much have malnutrition rates among children in the Gaza Strip doubled since Israel imposed sharp restrictions on food entry in March?

- A) One in fifty children
- B) One in twenty children
- C) One in ten children
- D) One in five children

**Answer:** C) One in ten children



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The text states, "One in ten children screened at UN clinics are now malnourished."

**2. As of July 15, how many people were killed in new Israeli strikes in Gaza in 24 hours?**

- A) Over 50
- B) Over 70
- C) Over 90
- D) Over 100

**Answer:** C) Over 90

The text mentions, "New Israeli strikes have killed over 90 people in 24 hours (as of July 15)..."

**3. According to Gaza's Health Ministry, how many Palestinians have been killed in Israeli retaliation since October 7, 2023?**

- A) Over 30,000
- B) Over 40,000
- C) Over 58,400
- D) Over 70,000

**Answer:** C) Over 58,400

The text states, "According to Gaza's Health Ministry, over 58,400 Palestinians have been killed and more than 139,000 wounded in Israeli retaliation since October 7, 2023."

**4. Which country formally joined as a full BRICS member at the 17th BRICS Summit in July 2025?**

- A) Saudi Arabia
- B) Indonesia
- C) Vietnam
- D) Thailand

**Answer:** B) Indonesia

The text clearly states, "Indonesia formally joined as a full BRICS member."

**5. How many new BRICS partner countries were welcomed at the 17th BRICS Summit?**

- A) 5

- B) 8
- C) 11
- D) 15

**Answer:** C) 11

The text mentions, "Additionally, 11 new BRICS partner countries were welcomed (Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Uganda, Uzbekistan)."

**6. What percentage tariff did US President Donald Trump announce on copper imports, effective August 1, 2025?**

- A) 10%
- B) 25%
- C) 50%
- D) 75%

**Answer:** C) 50%

The text states, "Trump's announcement of a 50% tariff on copper imports (effective August 1, 2025)..."

**7. By how much is global trade estimated to increase in the first half of 2025 (in Q1)?**

- A) US\$100 billion (0.5%)
- B) US\$200 billion (1.0%)
- C) US\$300 billion (1.5%)
- D) US\$400 billion (2.0%)

**Answer:** C) US\$300 billion (1.5%)

The text states, "Global trade continued to expand, estimated to increase by US\$300 billion in the first half of 2025 (1.5% in Q1)."

