

Brazil Hosts BRICS Summit



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, right, and Vietnamese Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chinh exchange gifts during a meeting at Fort Copacabana, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 5, 2025.

RIO DE JANEIRO (Dispatches) – Leaders of the growing BRICS group gathered in Brazil for a summit overshadowed by United States President Donald Trump’s new tariff policies while presenting the bloc as a defender of multilateralism.

The leaders, mainly from the developing world, discussed ways to increase cooperation amid serious concerns over Western dominance at their two-day summit that begins in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday.

The BRICS acronym is derived from the initial letters of the founding member countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The bloc, which held its first summit

in 2009, later added Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as full members. It also has 10 strategic partner countries, a category created last year, that includes Belarus, Cuba and Vietnam.

But for the first time since taking power in 2012, Chinese President Xi Jinping will not be attending in person, instead sending Prime Minister Li Qiang.

Russian President Vladimir Putin will also miss in-person attendance as he is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his role in the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Brazil, as a signatory to the Rome Statute, would be required to enforce the ar-

rest warrant.

The notable absences are raising questions over the group’s cohesion and global clout.

Now chaired by Brazil, leaders at the BRICS summit are expected to decry the Trump administration’s “indiscriminate” trade tariffs, saying they are illegal and risk hurting the global economy. Global health policies, artificial intelligence and climate change will also be on the agenda.

The BRICS countries represent almost half of the world’s population, 36 percent of global land area, and a quarter of the global economic output. The bloc sees itself as a forum for cooperation between countries of the Global South and a counterweight to the Group of Seven (G7), comprised of leading Western economic powers.

But Al Jazeera’s Lucia Newman, reporting from Rio, said the group’s aim remains clear.

“The BRICS goal is to exert pressure for a multipolar world with inclusive global governance to give a meaningful voice to the Global South, especially in the trading system,” she said.

“It’s not super organized, nor does it have a radical global impact,” Newman added. “The real question is, can an expanded BRICS whose members have very different political systems and priorities form a sufficiently unified bloc to have any significant impact?”

Rutte: Russia Winning Ammunition Race Over NATO

BRUSSELS (RT) – Russia’s military production is dwarfing that of NATO, Secretary-General Mark Rutte has warned, urging Western nations to ramp up defense spending.

In an interview with the New York Times, Rutte sounded the alarm about Russia’s military capabilities, noting that the country is “reconstituting itself at a pace and a speed which is unparalleled in recent history.”

He said Moscow is “producing three times as much ammunition in three months as the whole of NATO is doing in a year.”

Rutte pointed to a proposal to boost NATO defense spending to 5% of GDP – a figure US President Donald Trump has been insistent on – with 3.5% going to the core military budgets and another 1.5% earmarked for areas such as cyber defenses and preparing civilian infrastructure. “Yes, this is an enormous amount of spending. But if we don’t, we’ll have to learn Russian,” the NATO chief said.

Asked whether the increased defense spending risks fueling an arms race with Russia, Rutte said: “We have to make sure that the deterrence is there,” noting Russia’s heavy investment in tanks, artillery, air defense, and ammunition.

What I’m particularly worried about is the defense industrial



A stack of 155mm artillery rounds sit behind the line of AS90 self-propelled guns

output... because we simply lack the defense industrial base to produce the weapons we need to make sure that we can deter the Russians or the North Koreans or whoever.”

Rutte’s comments come amid speculation in Western media and among some officials that Moscow will eventually attack NATO countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin has dismissed the accusation as “nonsense,” saying Moscow has no interest in invading the US-led bloc.

As the Ukraine conflict rages on, Russia has significantly ramped up defense spending. Last year, Putin stated that Russia’s defense industry

increased its output of ammunition fourteenfold, drones fourfold, and armored vehicles by 3.5 times since the start of the hostilities. He also said Russia outproduces all NATO countries combined tenfold in missile manufacturing.

In late June, Putin revealed that Russia is spending 13.5 trillion rubles (\$151 billion) on defense – around 6.3% of GDP. He acknowledged that the figure is high and has fueled inflation, while noting that the US has spent even more during past conflicts – 14% of GDP during the Korean War and 10% during the Vietnam War.

‘Can’t Describe the Pain’ Bosnia Marks 30 Years Since Srebrenica Massacre

SARAJEVO (AFP) – Three decades after the Srebrenica genocide, relatives are still looking for and burying the remains of more than 8,000 men and boys killed by Bosnian Serb forces, revealing the painful scars cut deep into the country.

On July 11, 1995, Bosnian Serb forces stormed the Muslim enclave of more than 40,000 people in eastern Bosnia.

At the time, it was a “UN protected zone” — an ultimately hollow phrase meant to shield the many displaced people who had fled the 1992-1995 war.

General Ratko Mladic’s forces executed thousands of men and boys before burying them in mass graves.

After decades of painstaking work, about 7,000 victims have been identified and properly buried, but about 1,000 remain missing.

Mass grave discoveries are now

rare. The last was uncovered in 2021, when the remains of 10 victims were exhumed 180 kilometers (112 miles) southwest of Srebrenica.

This year, the remains of seven victims will be buried during the July 11 commemorations at the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial Center, including two 19-year-old men and a 67-year-old woman.

“This year, I’m having my father buried. But only one bone, his lower jaw,” Mirzeta Karic told AFP.

The 50-year-old said her mother was very ill, and so she decided to go ahead with the burial without waiting for more remains to be found.

Her father, Sejdalija Alic, joined several thousand men and teenagers who tried to flee Mladic’s troops through the dense forests.

He failed.

His 22-year-old son, Sejdin, was also killed, as were Alic’s three

brothers and their four sons.

He will be Karic’s 50th immediate family member laid to rest at Potocari cemetery.

The ceremony for her brother, Sejdin, was in 2003.

“I’ve been able to endure everything, but I think this funeral will be the worst. We’re having a bone buried. I can’t describe the pain.”

An international criminal court sentenced Mladic, now 83, and former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, now 80, to life jail terms for war crimes and genocide during the conflict that left nearly 100,000 dead. Both are still incarcerated, but a proper reckoning inside the splintered Bosnian states remains overdue.

Political leaders in the Bosnian Serb entity, Republika Srpska, reject the term genocide and regularly downplay the massacre.

U.S. Tariffs on European Goods Threaten to Shake Up World’s Largest Trade Relationship



FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) – The European Union expects to find out on Monday whether President Donald Trump will impose punishing tariffs on America’s largest trade partner in a move economists have warned would have repercussions for companies and consumers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Trump imposed a 20% import tax on all EU-made products in early April as part of a set of tariffs targeting countries with which the United States has a trade imbalance. Hours after the nation-specific duties took effect, he put them on hold until July 9 at a standard rate of 10% to quiet financial markets and allow time for negotiations.

Expressing displeasure the EU’s stance in trade talks, however, Trump said he would increase the tariff rate for European exports to 50%, which could make everything — from French cheese and Italian leather goods to German electronics and Spanish pharmaceuticals — much more expensive in the U.S.

The EU’s executive commission, which handles trade issues for the bloc’s 27-member nations, said its leaders hope to strike a deal with the Trump administration. Without one, the EU said it was prepared to retaliate with tariffs on hundreds of American products, ranging from beef and auto parts to beer and Boeing airplanes.

The EU’s executive commission describes the trade between the U.S. and the EU as “the most important commercial relationship in the world.”

The value of EU-U.S. trade in goods and services amounted to 1.7 trillion euros (\$2 trillion) in 2024, or an average of 4.6 billion euros a day, according to EU statistics agency Eurostat.

The biggest U.S. export to Europe is crude oil, followed by pharmaceuticals, aircraft, automobiles, and medical and diagnostic equipment.

Europe’s biggest exports to the U.S. are pharmaceuticals, cars, aircraft, chemicals, medical instruments, and wine and spirits.

Trump has complained about the EU’s 198 billion-euro trade surplus in goods, which shows Americans buy more stuff from European businesses than the other way around.

However, American companies fill some of the gap by outselling the EU when it comes to services such as cloud computing, travel bookings, and legal and financial services.

The U.S. services surplus took the nation’s trade deficit with the EU down to 50 billion euros (\$59 billion), which represents less than 3% of overall U.S.-EU trade.

Before Trump returned to office, the U.S. and the EU maintained a generally cooperative trade relationship and low tariff levels on both sides. The U.S. rate averaged 1.47% for European goods, while the EU’s averaged 1.35% for American products.

But the White House has taken a much less friendly posture toward the longstanding U.S. ally since February. Along with the fluctuating tariff rate on European goods Trump has floated, the EU has been subject to his administration’s 50% tariff on steel and aluminum and a 25% tax on imported automobiles and parts.

Report: CIA Admits Link to JFK Assassin

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – For the first time since U.S. President John F. Kennedy’s assassination nearly 62 years ago, the CIA tacitly admitted that an officer specializing in psychological warfare ran an operation that came into contact with Lee Harvey Oswald before the Dallas killing.

The disclosure — nestled in a batch of 40 documents concerning officer George Joannides — indicates the CIA lied for decades about his role in the Kennedy case before and after the assassination, according to experts on JFK’s slaying.

A January 17, 1963, CIA memo showed Joannides was directed to have an alias and fake driver’s license bearing the name “Howard Gebler.”

Until now, the agency had denied that Joannides was known as “Howard”, the case officer name for the CIA contact who worked with activists from an anti-communist group opposed to Cuban ruler Fidel Castro called the Cuban Student Directorate.

For decades, the agency also falsely announced it had nothing to do with the student group, which was instrumental in having Oswald’s pro-Castro stances published soon after the shooting.

“The cover story for Joannides is officially dead,” Jefferson Morley, an author and expert on the assassination, said, adding, “This is a big deal. The CIA is changing its tune on Lee Harvey Oswald.”

The information comes to light as part of President Donald Trump’s order that the government meet its obligations to disclose all documents under the JFK Records Act of 1992.

Little was known of Joannides’ involvement in the case until disclosures in 1998 under the records act. New disclosures of previously hidden records keep adding

slices of information to the story.

Joannides was the deputy chief of the CIA’s Miami branch, overseeing “all aspects of political action and psychological warfare”. That included covertly funding and directing the Cuban student group, commonly referred to as DRE for its Spanish-language initials.

On August 9, 1963, more than three months before November 22 assassination, four DRE operatives got into a scuffle with Oswald in New Orleans when he was passing out pro-Castro “Fair Play for Cuba Committee” pamphlets. The subsequent court hearing was covered by local news media.

On August 21, 1963, Oswald debated DRE activists on local TV, providing more media attention to him as a communist.

After the assassination, DRE’s newsletter identified Oswald as a pro-Castro communist, and the Miami Herald and Washington Post covered the story.

A year before Oswald became known as pro-Castro, the Pentagon formulated a plan called Operation Northwoods to stage a false-flag attack in the United States, blame Cuba and then attack it.

The new documents don’t shed any additional light on Kennedy’s shooting or settle the controversy over whether Oswald acted alone. Nor is there any evidence showing why the CIA covered up Joannides’ ties to DRE.

All the records disclosed so far show how the CIA lied about financing or being involved with DRE. That includes the agency’s interactions with the Warren Commission (1964), the Church Committee (1975), the House Select Committee on Assassinations (1977-78) and the Assassination Review Board (until 1998).

News in Brief

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – The dispute between Republican President Donald Trump and his main campaign financier Elon Musk took another fractious turn on Saturday when the space and automotive billionaire announced the formation of a new political party, saying Trump’s “big, beautiful” tax bill would bankrupt America. A day after asking his followers on his X platform whether a new U.S. political party should be created, Musk declared in a post on Saturday that “Today the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom.” “By a factor of 2 to 1, you want a new political party and you shall have it!” he wrote. The announcement from Musk comes after Trump signed his self-styled “big, beautiful” tax-cut and spending bill into law on Friday, which Musk fiercely opposed. Musk, who became the world’s richest man thanks to his Tesla car company and his SpaceX satellite firm, spent hundreds of millions on Trump’s re-election and led the Department of Government Efficiency from the start of the president’s second term aimed at slashing government spending.

SEOUL (Reuters) – South Korean special prosecutors on Sunday filed a request to detain former President Yoon Suk Yeol on charges related to insurrection from when he declared martial law last year, the prosecutor’s office said in a statement. “Detention request is related to allegations of abuse of power and obstruction of justice,” the statement from the special counsel of prosecutors investigating the December 3 incident said. Yoon’s martial law decree was lifted about six hours after it was announced when lawmakers, who had been forced to scale the walls of the assembly building to make it through a ring of security forces, voted the decree down. Yoon was summoned on Saturday for hours of questioning by the special counsel as part of the probe over the insurrection charges, according to the counsel officials. Yoon’s lawyer was not immediately available for comment on Sunday.

NIAMEY, Niger (AFP) – A double attack by suspected militants near Niger’s western border with Burkina Faso left 10 troops dead, authorities said whilst stating that 41 attackers were also killed. The West African country, now run by a military junta, has been battling violence by groups linked to Al-Qaeda for the past decade. Defense Minister General Salifou Modi said in a statement the simultaneous attacks by “several hundred mercenaries” took place in Bouloundjounga and Samira in Gotheye department. The statement, read on national television, said 10 soldiers were killed and 15 wounded. “On the enemy side, 41 mercenaries were neutralized,” it added. Gotheye department is near the borders with Mali and Burkina Faso and has long been a zone known for militant attacks. The village of Samira has Niger’s only industrial scale gold mining company. Eight of the company’s workers were killed in May when their vehicle was blown up by a roadside bomb.

NAIROBI (AFP) – An armed gang attacked the headquarters of the Kenyan Human Rights Commission on Sunday as it hosted a press conference calling for an end to state violence, an AFP journalist saw. The attack came on the eve of “Saba Saba Day” when Kenyans mark pro-democracy protests from the 1990s, and renewed unrest is expected on Monday. The east African country is once again facing a wave of violent protests over economic stagnation, corruption and repeated acts of police brutality under President William Ruto. The Kenyan Human Rights Commission was hosting a press conference calling for “an immediate end to arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings” when it was attacked by 20 men, some armed with sticks. “The gate was locked but they forced themselves in. They were attacking and robbing guys, saying: ‘You are planning protests here’,” said an AFP journalist at the scene.

TOKYO (Reuters) – Japan will export used navy destroyers to the Philippines to strengthen its deterrence against China’s maritime expansion, the Yomiuri newspaper reported on Sunday, as the two U.S. allies increase cooperation to counter Beijing. The export plan involves six Abukuma-class destroyer escorts in service with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force for more than three decades, the Japanese daily said, citing multiple unnamed government sources. Defense ministers Gen Nakatani and Gilberto Teodoro agreed to the destroyer export when they met in Singapore last month, the Yomiuri said, adding that the Philippine military will inspect the ships this summer as part of the final preparations. A delegation of naval experts from the Philippines will conduct an in-depth assessment of the ships, the Philippine Navy said in a statement on Sunday, following an official invitation from Japan’s defence ministry.