

THE WORLD IN BRIEF

JUNE EDITION





THE WORLD IN BRIEF



NEW

EDITION 2

JUNE 2025

SYMPORIUM

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS' DESK:

DEAR READERS,

WELCOME TO THE SECOND EDITION OF THE WORLD IN BRIEF, THE SYMPOSIUM CLUB'S PUBLIC POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER. THIS EDITION UNDERSCORES VARIOUS FACETS OF THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION, FROM THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRICS ALLIANCE TO THE GRAVITY OF THE ISRAEL-IRAQ WAR, THIS ISSUE WILL TAKE YOU READERS ON A JOURNEY THROUGH A MULTITUDE OF IMPORTANT GLOBAL CONCEPTS AND EVENTS. FIRST, READERS WILL TAKE A TRIP TO THE ROMAN AGE WHERE THEY WILL LEARN ABOUT THE CULTURE OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE. NEXT, WE WILL EXPLORE THE PARAMOUNT ISSUE THAT IS THE ISRAEL-IRAQ CONFLICT BEFORE TAKING A DEEPER VIEW INTO THE WORLD OF BRICS AND ALL THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED WITH THEM. AFTER THIS WE WILL DIVE INTO THE RISE OF ARGENTINA'S JAVIER MILEI BEFORE GETTING A FEW TIPS AND TRICKS FROM SOME VETERAN MUN-ERS. FURTHERMORE, WE WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE VIOLENCE THAT HAS RISEN WITH THE SUDANESE CIVIL WAR BEFORE WE TALK ABOUT INDIA'S NEWLY ACQUIRED RARE EARTH RESOURCES.

"THE WORLD IS A BOOK, AND THOSE WHO DO NOT TRAVEL READ ONLY ONE PAGE." — SAINT AUGUSTINE

UNTIL JULY,

AADITYA AGARWAL AND ANSH BHANSALI,
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF,
THE WORLD IN BRIEF

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THE LEVIATHANS

THE ROAD FROM ROME

Sohpia Andhyarujina

To look at the world around us and believe it was built in the present is a mistake of modern arrogance. The empires, the Leviathans (the all-powerful) did not simply rule. They defined the world we live in today. Of these, few loom larger than Rome. All roads lead back to Rome, and as one navigates the dusty and intersecting veins of world history and modern-day politics, it is a road impossible to stay off.



Rome's most profound legacy lies not in its conquests, but in its ability to define and transmit systems of justice. From the Twelve Tables to Justinian's Corpus Juris Civilis, the Roman legal tradition developed a language of rights, property, citizenship, and equity. The very idea of jurisprudence as a discipline, the role of a judge as interpreter rather than lawmaker, and the mechanisms of contracts, property, and citizenship, all bear the imprint of Rome. When one walks into a court in France or Germany, when legal scholars in Spain or the Netherlands debate torts and obligations, they do so in a Roman tongue.



The medieval glossators of Bologna, scribbling feverishly on Justinian's codes, were not relics of the past but midwives of modernity. They shaped a canon of law that allowed kings to govern, cities to trade, and empires to expand. The very concept of republicanism, *res publica*, a polity built around law and civic virtue, is a Roman inheritance. The notion that citizenship is something conferred by the state, that laws are to be written, debated, and appealed, draws directly from Roman practices. Latin, the language of the dead experiences a new breath of life whenever it is uttered.



Be it a student struggling to pronounce the biology term, or in the motto of nations. It is the true sign that the legacy of Rome stretched far beyond the gods and Colosseum, or even the glowing ashes of the Byzantine empire. It is argued that the most important contribution of Rome to the world was what caused its fall. Roman roads carried the apostles. Roman authority hosted the early Church councils.



Roman persecution forged Christian martyrdom into legend. And it was Rome, through the institutional strength of the Church, that preserved not only theology but learning itself throughout the Middle Ages. This union of empire and church laid the foundations for Europe's cultural identity. The Roman Catholic Church, with its papal bureaucracy, canon law, and liturgy, was as much a political institution as a spiritual one.



Rome has been credited with the French and American Revolution. It gave rise to the Enlightenment continuing to define our world merely through its shadow. However, the shadows of Rome did not always lead to light. Leaders like Mussolini, playing Caeser on the world stage when he crossed a Rubicon of his own, during the march on Rome. The fascists of Italy were merely following in the footsteps of what they believed were their predecessors. Like this, not only did Rome help define Europe as the center of power of one of the first times in history, some argue it shifted the torch of power there permanently.

BEHIND THE SCENES: ISRAEL VS. IRAQ

Myrah Kapadia

On the early morning of June 13th, Israel launched Operation Rising Lion. With incredible precision, it eliminated quite a few of Iran's top commanders, including Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Hossein Salami, Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), Gholamreza Mehrabi, Deputy Head of Intelligence, and Amir Ali Hajizadeh, Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, among others. Iran, fazed by Israel's sudden attack, failed to retaliate immediately. Since then, the conflict has escalated, with both countries exchanging strikes. But Israel's attacks did not end there - it soon turned its focus to some of Iran's most important nuclear sites.



Recent targets include the Natanz Nuclear Facility, the Esfahan Nuclear Center, the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant and most recently, the Arak Nuclear Complex. Since the attacks on June 13th, both countries have been locked in continuous exchanges of fire, showing no intentions of a ceasefire. Israel's sudden attacks earlier this June were provoked by intelligence that stated that Iran was rapidly approaching the capability to create nuclear weapons - far beyond what international monitors had initially detected.

The reason Iran's current nuclear position is a global concern is because of its hostility towards Western influence and Israel. Iran is dedicated to completely destroying Israel and "wiping it off the map".

Iran's nuclear plants serve as uranium enrichment facilities. This uranium can be used to produce energy for the public or to develop weapons. Iran claims that its uranium enrichment is reserved only for civilian purposes, but the proof says otherwise. It was recently found that Iran has been using the centrifuges at Fordow to enrich uranium to 60% purity. This level is similar to what is needed to manufacture weapons. Given that Israel views Iran's rapid nuclear energy development as a growing threat to its existence, it is logical for the country to launch a preventive strike.



The United States and other Western countries have also recognised Iran's developing nuclear capabilities. Just prior to the June 13 attacks, Iran and the United States were discussing the former's nuclear stance. While officially calling for de-escalation, the U.S. continues to support Israel, with Secretary of State Mark Rubio confirming the strikes were "unilateral" and warning Iran against targeting U.S. interests. President Trump has maintained indirect diplomacy with Iran but has given himself two weeks to decide whether the U.S. will directly enter the war. Meanwhile, Russia has warned that deeper U.S. involvement could lead to unpredictable and dangerous consequences.



This rising global attention has also put a spotlight on how Israel executed such accurate strikes - thanks to the incredible intelligence work of its spy agency, Mossad. From secretly tracking Iran's top commanders to pointing out key nuclear sites and disabling air defenses with hidden drones, Mossad's years of planning gave Israel a significant upper hand. As the conflict goes on and more countries get involved, it is clear that this war is not only about weapons and diplomacy, but also about intelligence, planning, and who can stay one step ahead.



BRIC BY BRIC

Vedika Shah

What is BRICS+ ?

BRICS+ is the expanded version of the international organisation, BRICS. It includes additional member states compared to its original version with only the five founders: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Hence, making it a group of 10 member countries and several other partner countries. The plus(+)informally refers to the newer members that were included between 2023 and 2025. BRICS was established in 2009 based on the belief that international institutions were mainly dominated by Western influence. It planned on aligning member state's diplomatic and economic policies and reducing the dependence on the US dollar.



Moreover, BRICS is essential for the Global South as it provides an international platform for these developing countries to strengthen their presence and amplify their voices. The bloc focuses on inclusive growth, sovereignty, and sustainable development. This aligns with the goals of the Global South and provides a legitimate space for tackling problems such as inequality and poverty.

Who are the current members of BRIC+ ?

Currently, BRIC+ comprises of: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia (depending on the status of Saudi Arabia's membership, not fully confirmed by sources yet) The partner countries (e.g. Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda and Uzbekistan) are working towards full membership, further expanding the group's influence. The expanded BRICS+ accounts for about 46% of the world's population, 25% of the world's landmass, 30% of global crude oil production and over 35% of the global GDP.



The threats BRICS+ pose to the Western countries:

1. BRICS+ has created institutions like the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, challenging the Western led bodies like the World Bank and IMF.

2. Moreover, BRICS+ is advocating for dollarisation, promoting trade in local currencies and the creation of digital payment systems, such as the BRICS Bridge. Such types of initiatives are undermining the West's ability to use economic leverages for geopolitical intentions. This undermines the U.S. dollar's status as the world's primary reserve and trade currency. This diminished demand for dollars results in a decline in the amount of global dollar reserves. As countries move to diversify their reserves into yuan, rubles, or BRICS currencies, the dollar's share of international reserves has already fallen from over 70% two decades ago to around 59% now.

3. The expansion of BRICS+ poses a risk of global fragmentation and the world being divided into competing economic and diplomatic blocs.

4. The growth of BRICS strengthens the Global South's voice in international affairs and gives BRICS a more strong counterbalance to the G7 and Western-led alliances. The expansion encourages countries from the Global South to pursue strategic autonomy and diversify their alliances away from the West.

5. The involvement of countries with opposing intentions and maybe even rivalries such as Egypt and Ethiopia or Saudi Arabia and Iran, could make this bloc internally divided. However, it also acts as a blockade for the West to manage and balance alliances and global issues .



6. BRICS members consistently insist on reforms to make the UN, especially the Security Council more inclusive of the Global South. They argue that the current structure is favorable towards the Western powers and outdated. South Africa, Brazil, India and other members have called for the expansion of the permanent members of the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) to include more members from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

LATIN AMERICA'S LEFT FACES SETBACKS

Maitri Varaiya

The past several months have revealed a definitive change in voter attitudes throughout Latin America as leftist administrations in nations like Argentina and Chile encounter increasing difficulties. The election results across these countries demonstrate a widespread regional pattern defined by economic dissatisfaction combined with political division and increasing doubt about the progressive governments that gained power during the early 2020s.



The rise to presidency of Javier Milei, a libertarian economist with radical reformist views on the State, was an overt rejection of the Peronist left in Argentina. Milei's rise experienced an upsurge due to the public's deep-seated irritation arising from chronic inflation, fiscal indiscipline, and perceived institutional drift under the administrations of President Alberto Fernández and Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. With inflation rates climbing above 140 percent in 2023 and with increasing poverty levels, voters opted for Milei's promises of economic "shock therapy," dollarization, and radical public spending cuts.

Milei's ascent signals the decay of what few supporters evolved in favour of traditional leftist parties in Argentine politics of the past. This administration has hence pushed quickly to rescale the state, privatising key industries, and removing currency controls. Although these reforms have seen tracking from labor unions and social movements protesting strongly against them, they have, on the other hand, received the backing of sections of the business community and international investors expectantly eyeing stabilisation and structural reform.



Meanwhile, in Chile, President Gabriel Boric faces the challenge of his progressive ideas running into growing resistance and real-world complications. Following his acceptance in 2021, there were optimistic replies for bridging the socioeconomic divide, giving universal social protections, and reconstituting the existing constitution. Unfortunately, reformatory ambitions were hampered by a systemic deadlock and his legislative reforms. The collapse of two constitutional drafts in 2022 and 2023 respectively was a critical hit to Boric's credibility. The draft was also not favoured by society as it was considered to be very progressive, and the right-wing party had an aversion for it. The second, more conservative proposal also failed to gain sufficient support, illustrating widespread disillusionment with the entire reform process. The most noticeable changes in the mind of the people after the municipal and regional elections were reflected in a visible drop in voter confidence.

With a move by the conservative Republican Party choosing their leader, José Antonio Kast, the political climate can be observed to be changing in the direction of security-related issues, jobs, and immigration. These broader political shifts show that the electorate in Chile has stopped trusting in the leftist parties and is therefore moving into the camp of the conservatives. Challenges faced by progressive movements in the countries of Argentina and Chile take on this meaning they are a part of the emerging paradigm shift in the political sphere in Latin America today.



In the previous decade, we saw the ruling of the left-wing movements in several other countries too like Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico. However, there is trouble for both the right and left, the voters in the region are leaning more towards viable solutions rather than strict ideological beliefs. It does not necessarily mean that the left is going to lose ground per se, rather, it implies that there is an urgent need for sound policies, strong institutions, and people-responsive leadership.

The economic difficulties will continue further and the social issues will be deepened; consequently, the leftist parties might need to change their approach, and lure the disillusioned middle class to stay engaged in the political area. The positions in Argentina and Chile are precious resources to understand the new reality of Latin American politics, where the ideological currents always are mirroring the economic problems and the stiff demand of democracy.

CONFESsions from SEASONED MUN-ERS

Saisha Damodar

Aaditya Agarwal, Secretary General CMUN 2025

What is the most fun part about the Club? Which was your most memorable MUN and why?

“The most fun part of the Club is definitely the trips you get to go on, and the bonds you forge with juniors and seniors you’d otherwise never have interacted with. Notably HMUN Boston, where you get to travel around the city of Boston with your friends, go to fancy restaurants, and engage in all the HMUN traditions that have become the Cathedral delegation’s norm - the entire delegation overall has a great time. It’s definitely one of my best memories in the club, and a great break during what is an incredibly stressful period of time in the school with exams around the corner.”

A few words of advice you would give new delegates? Anything you wish you had been told before your first MUN?

“The most important thing, which I learned from my own experience and my mentors, and tell my mentees now, is consistency and despite the cliché, not giving up in committee. There have been times where committee wouldn’t be going your way, or you make what seems to be disastrous mistake, making the entire ordeal extremely stressful - my advice to new MUN-ers is to learn that things will go wrong, and not every committee session or even MUN will go your way, but what’s worked for me and most of the best MUN-ers I know, is the ability to consistently give the Club and every MUN your best, across sessions, MUNs and years. Symposium seems to be extremely competitive at times, and it’s important to remember that at the end of the day the things that matter the most are the times you genuinely enjoy in committee, and every MUN-er should remember that.”

Ansh Bansali, Deputy Secretary General CMUN 2025

A lesson you learned the hard way in a MUN and how it helped you grow?

“Avoid pre-writing a speech after your first few MUNs just go with points that feel right in the moment. This helps build fluidity of thought, eloquence, confidence, and improves manner. It is very important for Crisis Committees but makes you stand out even more in General Assemblies.”



Any tips and tricks to ace your research?

“Apart from having a fundamental understanding of the agenda, in a cabinet specifically, if you’re good you don’t need research because you can persuade fellow delegates with your confidence. If you’re well informed about geopolitics and history in general you will already have all the information you need. Usually, most committees revolve around crises in a cabinet. But at the same time, to reach this level, initially you need to learn how to research.

So a couple of tips - **Never** under any circumstances use AI for research except to develop a rudimentary understanding of the agenda. Wikipedia is a good source, but not to cite. Break your agenda into subtopics and research accordingly. This helps during moderated caucuses, to categorise and add structure to your understanding of an agenda.”

CIVIL WAR IN SUDAN

Adyant Gupta

A civil war has been raging in Sudan for over 2 years. 13 million have been forced out of their homes, 30 million are in desperate need of humanitarian aid, and 80,000 lie dead - the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. This article will delve deeper into the war's context, causes and consequences.

In 2003, in response to an attempt by rebel groups to reclaim the rights of ethnic minorities in Darfur, notorious dictator Omar al-Bashir ordered one of the bloodiest genocides in African history (second only to Rwanda) - where the mass murder, rape and pillaging of entire Black communities took over 300,000 lives. It was carried out by local Janjaweed militias, composed of Arab nationalists, to wipe out non-Arab Sudanese people.



In 2019, intense public pressure led to the ousting of al-Bashir from power, marking the end of decades of autocratic rule. Sudan showed signs of promise for the first time since 1989. The transitional military government promised an imminent return to civilian rule, and a power-sharing agreement was reached. However, all that collapsed in 2021, when General Abdeh Fattah al-Burhan orchestrated a coup that ousted the civilian government.

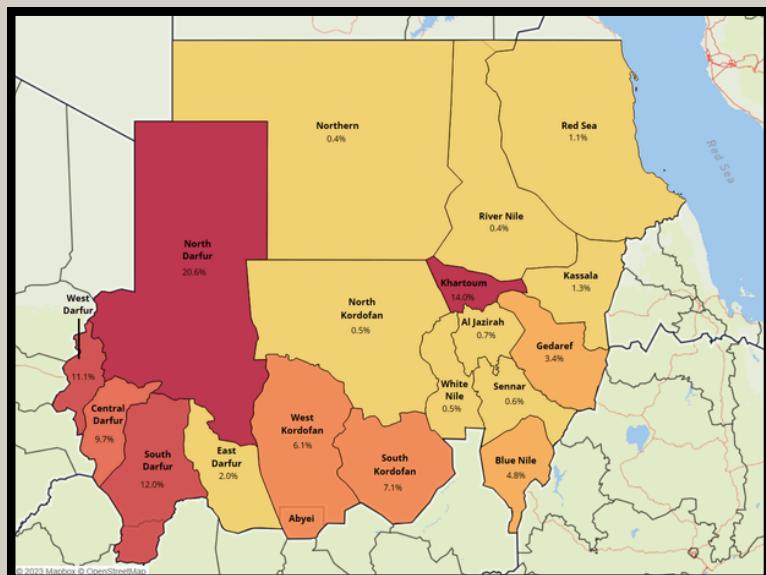
Simultaneously, the janjaweed militias had not disappeared. Instead, they had mutated and organised themselves into a more lethal paramilitary force known as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which continued to be filled with Arab nationalists determined to finish what they had started. Their leader, Mohamed Hamdan 'Hemedti' Dagalo, sensed a power vacuum after the fall of al-Bashir—despite initially cooperating with al-Burhan, he wanted the RSF to control Sudan.



The SAF proposed an integration that would merge the RSF into its ranks, but Hemedti feared losing control of his forces. After a disagreement on the future of Sudan, and a race to control key gold mines and oil pipelines (amid economic free-fall), the two forces clashed in Khartoum in 2023, ushering in the start of a gruesome civil war. The two groups faced no difficulty sourcing arms, with the SAF being backed by Egypt and the RSF being supported by the UAE and Libya. The consequence is minimal battle fatigue and control of key cities oscillating between the SAF and RSF (neither being able to secure a firm grip on power).

Worst of all, however, are the scars being ripped open in Darfur. The RSF has resumed their campaign of ethnic cleansing in the country's Western province, targeting the same communities that managed to survive 2003's bloodbath.

While both sides have used horrendous strategies like human shields and scorched earth tactics, the RSF has redefined battlefield norms. Darfur's Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa tribes are being tortured, sexually assaulted, murdered, and in some particularly cruel instances, even burnt alive. Victims include girls below the age of 3 and disabled people - an indication of how far members of the RSF are willing to go in their attempt at ethnic purity.



Despite consistent efforts, barely any meaningful aid has gotten through the blockades imposed by both sides. Most Western nations have either ignored the conflict or made feeble efforts to send food to the region. This conflict serves as a chilling reminder of how the impacts of seemingly inconsequential power struggles amongst the elite almost always land directly on society's most vulnerable.

INDIA EYES RARE EARTH DOMINANCE

Hazel Sonawala

Rare Earth Elements are 17 metallic elements which are extremely vital for modern day technology. They are essential components of a vast range of applications, from electronics to renewable energy technologies. They cater to the demanding needs of the consumers in current society.

China is the world's largest producer of rare earth elements. It produces roughly 60% of the world's supply and processes almost 90%, including materials imported from other countries. Instead, Beijing has suspended exports of rare earth elements, metals and magnets, specifically those used for industrial purposes. This suspension is a retaliation to the hiked tariffs imposed by the US.



Recently, there has been a shortage of Rare Earth Elements due to the curb. This has severely impacted multiple global industries, considering China's dominance in the rare earth market. China is leveraging these curbs to strengthen its position in trade negotiations. Ironically, despite being called 'Rare Earth Elements,' (REE) they are relatively abundant in the Earth's crust.

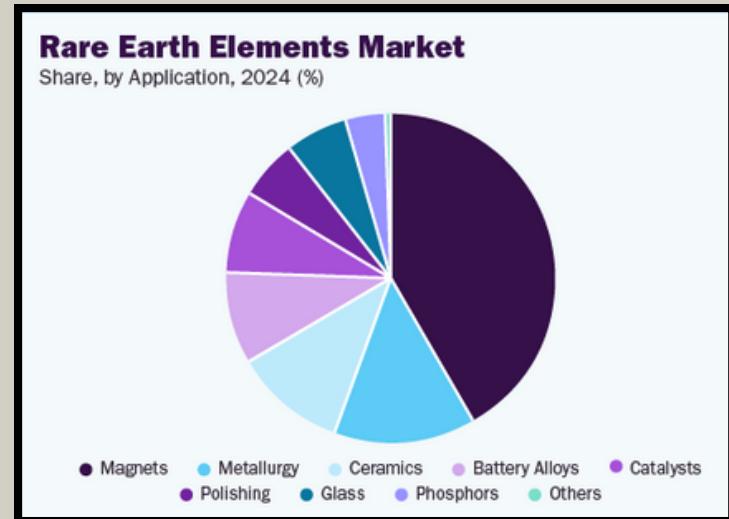
China maintains a near-monopoly over the industry due to its control of processing capacity, low production costs, and strategic long-term investments. India is endowed with rich REE reserves – with almost 7 million tonnes. This gives India the opportunity to become a significant alternative to China in this sector. However, is this a plausible outcome?



Indian officials are exploring how to use Indian Rare Earths (IREL), a government-owned company, to boost the country's production of rare earth elements (REEs). However, to access REE reserves, a country needs the ability to mine and extract raw materials, as well as to process and refine them domestically. India faces challenges in the REE sector. These include a lack of specialised skills in REE mining and processing and poor infrastructure in key mining areas. The country also falls behind in separation and refining technology, with its current contribution to the global share of REE production being less than 1%



In an effort to address this issue, India initiated the National Critical Mineral Mission in 2025. This initiative seeks to establish a framework for self-reliance in Rare Earth Elements (REE) amidst the challenges posed by China's restrictions. The public sector company IREL (India Rare Earths Ltd) has begun discussions with Vietnam, Oman, and Sri Lanka to investigate potential partnerships in the development of rare earth elements.



Among the various options under consideration are government incentive programs and capital subsidies designed to promote local mining and processing. India is at the starting line of a marathon that China began running decades ago. India's path in the REE market is similar to gardening—there is promise for development, yet it requires time and nurturing. Given these factors, it seems unlikely that India will replace China in the near future but it has the potential to emerge as a reliable alternative.

WORD-SEARCH

Zreh Adajania

Find the locations of 4 major UN offices around
the world in the word-search below



WORD-SEARCH ANSWER KEY

