

CLAWS Newsletter



America Decoded | Volume I | Issue 01

by Yuvvraj Singh

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. Senate passes Trump's "big, beautiful bill" ([CBS, July 01](#))

The Senate narrowly passed President Trump's massive tax and spending bill Tuesday after a marathon series of amendment votes that stretched more than 24 hours, delivering a major victory for the president and bringing the signature piece of legislation of his second term one step closer to his desk. Known as the "big, beautiful bill," the legislation includes ramped-up spending for border security, defence, and energy production and extends trillions of dollars in tax cuts, partially offset by cuts to health care and nutrition programs. The Congressional Budget Office estimated the legislation would increase federal deficits by nearly \$3.3 trillion over the next decade.

2. Trump signs landmark fiscal package on Independence Day ([Associated Press, July 04](#))

President Donald Trump signed his package of tax breaks and spending cuts into law Friday in front of Fourth of July picnickers after his cajoling produced almost unanimous Republican support in Congress for the domestic priority that could cement his second-term legacy. Flanked by Republican legislators and members of his Cabinet, Trump signed the multitrillion-dollar legislation at a desk on the White House driveway, then banged down a gavel gifted to him by House Speaker Mike Johnson that was used during the bill's final passage Thursday.

Against odds that at times seemed improbable, Trump achieved his goal of celebrating a historic, and divisive, legislative victory in time for the nation's birthday, which also was his self-imposed deadline for Congress to send the legislation to his desk.

3. Elon Musk launches "America Party" ([Reuters, July 05](#))

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." 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.

4. Flash floods devastation and presidential visit in Texas ([USA Today, July 05](#))

President Donald Trump on Friday said he'd never seen destruction from a disaster as bad as what he saw in Texas after he surveyed the damage of catastrophic flooding that tore across the state's Hill Country and as authorities and volunteers continued to search for the missing. Over 120 people have been recovered since heavy rainfall overwhelmed the Guadalupe River and flowed through homes and summer camps in the early morning hours of July 4. Ninety-six of those killed were in the hardest-hit county in central Texas, Kerr County, where the toll includes at least 36 children.

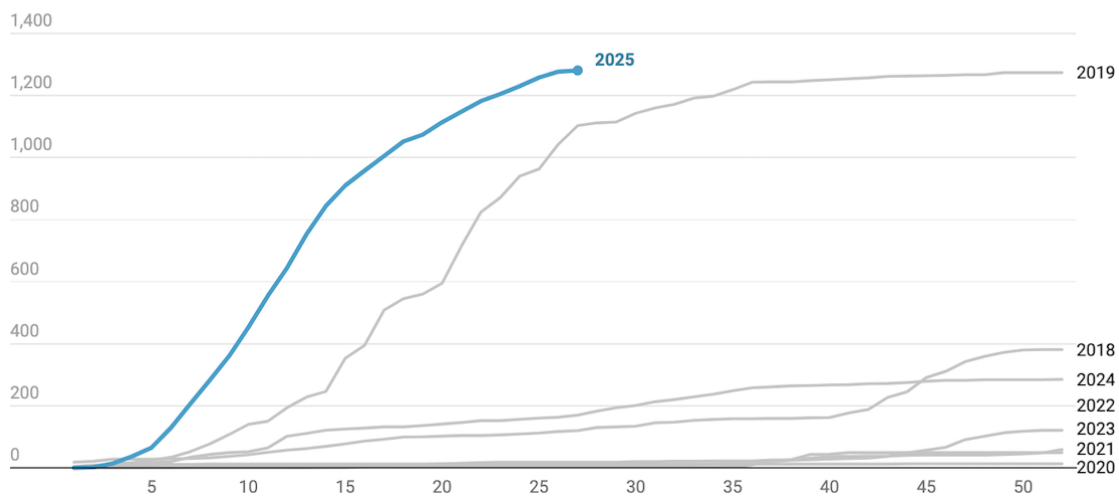
State officials vowed to continue searching for over 160 people still missing but have acknowledged the dwindling chances of finding survivors alive a week after the disaster. The last time rescue teams made a "live rescue" was on the day the flood broke out.

The president, first lady and a host of lawmakers and cabinet members made the trip to Texas Friday as questions linger over what could have been done to save more lives from one of the deadliest floods of the last 25 years.

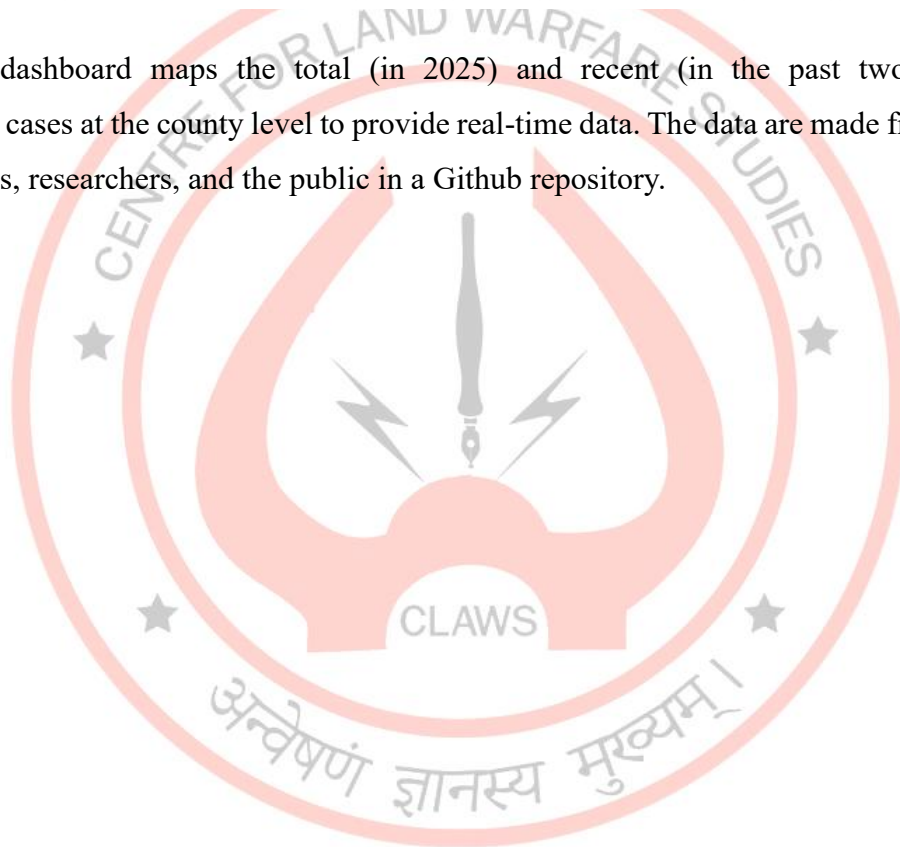
5. U.S. Measles Cases Hit Highest Level Since Declared Eliminated in 2000 ([Johns Hopkins, July 07](#))

The United States surpassed a milestone in reported measles cases, with 2025 now having the most cases since the disease was declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000 and the most cases in more than three decades. As of July 7, 2025, 1,281 cases have been reported, more than the 1,274 measles cases reported in all of 2019, according to a [U.S. Measles Tracker](#) hosted by the International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and developed in collaboration with the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at the Whiting School of Engineering.

Cumulative measles cases reported in the United States by year



This interactive dashboard maps the total (in 2025) and recent (in the past two weeks) number of reported measles cases at the county level to provide real-time data. The data are made freely available for use by health officials, researchers, and the public in a Github repository.



IN THE WORLD

1. State Department layoffs begin (Reuters, July 01)

The State Department began firing more than 1,350 U.S.-based employees on Friday as the administration of President Donald Trump presses ahead with an unprecedented overhaul of its diplomatic corps, a move critics say will undermine U.S. ability to defend and promote U.S. interests abroad.

The layoffs, which affect 1,107 civil service and 246 foreign service officers based in the United States, come at a time when Washington is grappling with multiple crises on the world stage: Russia's war in Ukraine, the almost two-year-long Gaza conflict, and the Middle East on edge due to high tension between Israel and Iran. The total reduction in the workforce will be nearly 3,000, including the voluntary departures, according to the notice and a senior State Department official, out of the 18,000 employees based in the United States.

The move is the first step of a restructuring that Trump has sought to ensure U.S. foreign policy is aligned with his "America First" agenda. Former diplomats and critics say the firing of foreign service officers risks America's ability to counter the growing assertiveness from adversaries such as China and Russia.

2. Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Washington (State Department, July 02)

The Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Washington, D.C. on July 1, 2025, with participation from Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. The ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific region, grounded in international law. They emphasized cooperation on maritime security, counterterrorism, critical and emerging technologies, cyber and space security, climate change, and infrastructure development. They also condemned recent terrorist attacks, including the one in Pahalgam, India, and stressed the importance of justice and countering the financing of terrorism.

The ministers reiterated support for ASEAN centrality, Pacific Islands' development, and closer ties with regional partners. They reviewed progress on various Quad initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, clean energy cooperation, and vaccine delivery efforts. They agreed to strengthen supply chain resilience and enhance strategic communications, while welcoming the upcoming Quad Leaders' Summit in India. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the Quad's shared values and intent to deepen practical cooperation across key strategic domains.

3. U.S. blames Hamas for grenade attack injuring American aid workers in Gaza ([Reuters, July 05](#))

The United States on Saturday blamed Hamas for an attack that injured two American aid workers from the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation at a food distribution site in Gaza. The U.S.- and Israeli-backed GHF said in a statement that the injured Americans were receiving medical treatment and were in a stable condition with non-life-threatening injuries. U.S. State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce blamed "Hamas terrorists" for the attack. Gazan authorities reported at least 70 people have been killed in the territory by the Israeli military in the last 24 hours, including 23 near aid distribution sites. The ministry did not specify where or how exactly they had been killed.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the reports.

4. Ukraine's Zelenskiy says latest Trump call the 'most productive' yet ([Ukrinform, July 05](#))

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said that his July 4 phone call with U.S. President Donald Trump was the best and most productive conversation they have had so far. "Regarding the conversation with the President of the United States that took place the day before, it was probably the best one yet, extremely productive," Zelensky said.

He noted that they discussed air defence in particular.

"I'm grateful for the willingness to help. Patriot systems are key to protecting against ballistic threats," Zelensky said.

He added that both sides touched on several other important issues, which their respective teams will follow up on in meetings in the near future.

Trump earlier described his phone call with Zelensky as "good" and "strategic."

5. Trump hosts Israeli PM Netanyahu amid Gaza diplomacy ([Washington Post, July 07](#))

On July 7, 2025, former President Donald Trump hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House for a private dinner focused on efforts to broker a Gaza ceasefire amid ongoing regional tensions. The meeting came as the Biden administration struggled to advance a deal, and Trump positioned himself as

a potential alternative mediator. Netanyahu presented Trump with a letter nominating him for the Nobel Peace Prize, citing his past Middle East efforts, and both leaders publicly praised each other. Central to their discussion was a proposed 60-day ceasefire involving phased Israeli troop withdrawals, increased humanitarian aid to Gaza, and hostage releases.

Trump also reiterated his support for Israel's security while pledging continued U.S. military aid to Ukraine, signalling an attempt to reassert global leadership. Although no formal agreement was reached, the meeting underscored Trump's intent to re-enter the diplomatic spotlight ahead of the U.S. presidential election, with further negotiations expected to take place soon in Doha.

6. Trump pledges additional weapons to Ukraine ([Reuters, July 08](#))

On July 8, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that the United States would resume shipments of defensive weapons to Ukraine, reaffirming his administration's support for Kyiv amid intensifying Russian missile and drone strikes. The decision marks a shift after a brief suspension in arms transfers that had drawn concern from Ukrainian officials, who warned that delays were weakening their ability to protect critical infrastructure and civilian areas. Speaking to reporters, Trump emphasized Ukraine's right to self-defence and said that additional weapons would be delivered, including through NATO coordination, though he did not provide specifics on systems or timelines.

Trump also referenced Patriot missile systems and stressed the need to accelerate air-defence assistance. The U.S. Defence Department confirmed that planning is underway, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed the move and noted upcoming coordination with U.S. officials to address urgent gaps in Ukraine's air defence network. The announcement comes as Russia escalates its offensive operations, and as Trump seeks to reassert his role in shaping the NATO agenda ahead of upcoming leadership summits.

7. U.S. restores \$6.8 million in aid for Tibetans ([Reuters, July 08](#))

On July 8, 2025, the U.S. State Department announced the restoration of \$6.8 million in aid to Tibetan communities, reversing a funding freeze that had been in place since 2019 during Trump's previous term. The assistance is intended to support educational, health, livelihood, and women's empowerment programs for Tibetans both within the Tibetan exile communities in India and Nepal, and more broadly for the preservation of Tibetan cultural identity. This decision signals a renewed U.S. commitment to human rights and minority support in Asia, even as it risks provoking criticism from Beijing, which opposes any foreign government's engagement with Tibetan issues or recognition of the Dalai Lama's authority. A State Department spokesperson said the move reaffirms Washington's dedication to promoting freedom, religious rights, and sustainable development for vulnerable communities. While the funding amount is modest, its symbolic value

is significant—underscoring how the U.S. is reasserting its soft power in regions where China has been attempting to expand its influence.

8. President Trump escalates tariff letters to 14 countries ([CNN, July 08](#))

President Donald Trump cranked up the pressure Monday on America's trading partners, firing off letters to heads of several countries, informing them of their new tariff rate. But at the same time, Trump took some of the edge off by signing an executive action Monday to extend the date for all "reciprocal" tariffs, with the exception of China, to August 1. Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung were the first recipients of Trump's letters. Both countries will face a 25% tariff come August 1, according to the letters, but both nations said on Tuesday they plan to engage in further talks with the US, with Japan saying it was working towards a trade deal.

Trump announced similar letters were sent to Malaysia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Myanmar, and Laos. The highest rate he threatened, 40%, was on goods from Myanmar and Laos.

Then later in the day, he posted seven new letters sent to leaders of Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (which is set to reach a 30% tariff), Indonesia, Bangladesh, Serbia, Cambodia, and Thailand, putting the running total at 14 letters delivered on Monday.

In the letters, Trump said he takes particular issue with the trade deficits the United States runs with them, meaning America buys more goods from them compared to the amount that American businesses export to those countries. Trump also said the tariffs would be set in response to other policies that he deems are impeding American goods from being sold abroad. He encouraged country leaders to manufacture goods in the United States to avoid tariffs.

In all 14 letters, Trump threatened to raise tariffs even higher than the specified rates if a country retaliated against the United States with tariffs of their own. Trump said these rates would be "separate from all Sectoral Tariffs," meaning, for instance, the new tariff won't be stacked on top of the current auto tariff of 25%, the White House confirmed. That would apply to any future sector-specific tariffs, too, a White House official said.

9. Trump shifts U.S. approach in Africa: "From aid to trade" ([Reuters, July 09](#))

On July 9, 2025, President Trump hosted leaders from Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, and Senegal at the White House, marking a bid to recalibrate U.S.–Africa relations amid escalating trade tensions and aid reductions. The luncheon centred on promoting business partnerships and U.S. investment, including

support from the International Development Finance Corporation for Gabon's Banio Potash Mine. While Trump pledged that these nations would be spared from the latest U.S. tariffs, the meeting reflected broader America First policies—with sharp aid cuts and rising tariffs—in contrast to efforts showcasing renewed U.S. engagement to counterbalance China's growing footprint in Africa.

Despite the focus on new economic ties, African officials signalled scepticism toward U.S. trade reform amid what they see as “abusive” tariff proposals and tightened visa restrictions, concerns echoed by the African Union. Aid losses were cautioned to have serious humanitarian consequences, and some experts warned of potential crises if reductions persist. Trump framed the initiative as a mutual opportunity, asserting that trade and investment should replace traditional aid, though critics highlighted the risks to livelihoods and long-term stability across the continent.

10. Major trade escalation: 30% tariffs on EU and Mexico announced ([Associated Press, July 11](#))

On July 14, 2025, President Donald Trump announced sweeping 30% tariffs on imports from over two dozen countries, including the European Union, Mexico, Canada, and Brazil, set to take effect on August 1 unless new trade agreements are reached. The announcement was delivered in a highly unconventional manner: autographed personal letters sent to each leader, invoking national security and “unfair trade practices” as justification. The move triggered swift international reactions. The EU condemned the tariffs as “unacceptable” and prepared €72 billion in retaliatory measures but held back immediate enforcement to leave room for negotiations. Canada and Mexico responded more cautiously, signalling a willingness to engage diplomatically while expressing concern over economic fallout. Despite the geopolitical tensions, U.S. financial markets remained relatively stable, with investors hopeful that last-minute talks could avert a full-scale trade conflict. The aggressive tariff push underscores Trump's return to unilateral trade pressure tactics and has reignited fears of a global trade war just months ahead of the 2025 U.S. presidential election.

11. Pentagon presses Japan and Australia for clarity on Taiwan war roles ([FOX News, July 13](#))

The Pentagon is reportedly pressuring Indo-Pacific allies Japan and Australia to clarify what roles they would play in the event of a war with China over Taiwan.

Elbridge Colby, the Pentagon's policy chief, raised the question during recent meetings with Japanese and Australian defence officials, the Financial Times first reported.

While the United States has long urged Indo-Pacific allies to increase defence spending as China escalates its military activity around Taiwan, this push for specific wartime commitments is a new development, and reportedly caught foreign officials off guard.

Australia responded by stressing it would not commit troops in advance of any conflict. Pentagon officials have cited NATO's efforts to boost European defence spending as a model for what Asian allies should consider. At the same time, Colby has advised European allies to prioritize threats closer to home rather than focus on the Indo-Pacific, sources told Fox News Digital.

12. Trump once again claims credit for brokering truce in India-Pakistan conflict, says 'we did that through trade' ([Indian Express, July 14](#))

US President Donald Trump once again reiterated his claim of brokering a peace deal between India and Pakistan, stating that his mediation averted a potential war between the two countries, making it over 20 recorded instances of him claiming credit for the same.

During his meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on Monday (July 14), Trump said, "We've been very successful in settling wars. You have India and Pakistan. You have Rwanda and the Congo, that was going on for 30 years. India, by the way, Pakistan would have been a nuclear war within another week, the way that was going. That was going very badly."

He emphasised that he leveraged trade to stop the conflict from escalating and warned both countries that he would not engage in trade deals if they continued to fight

About the Author

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