



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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China's strategic push – Asia ties amid tariff tensions

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Context

- The President of China, Xi Jinping's **three-nation tour of Southeast Asia** (April 14-18, 2025) to **Vietnam, Malaysia, and Cambodia**, had one goal: to pitch Beijing as the only reliable partner of choice.
- Facing what is at the moment a **145% tariff on Chinese exports imposed by the Trump** administration, China is actively recalibrating its external economic engagement, especially in geographies where it enjoys strategic proximity and relatively receptive partners.
- This Southeast Asia outreach is not just routine diplomacy. It is a considered move by Beijing to mitigate external economic pressure, project stability, and cement its leadership narrative in the Indo-Pacific.
- China is keen to **insulate itself from the ramifications of a deepening trade war with the U.S., which now extends beyond tariffs to export controls, technology bans and financial decoupling.**
- In this context, **Southeast Asia serves as a buffer and a bridge.** It offers **China resilient trade channels**, manufacturing alternatives, and diplomatic partners to collectively push back against the narrative of de-risking or containment led by Washington.

ASEAN Countries

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