



**October 14, 2024**

## Headlining This Week's Brief

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## Top Stories

### **Southeast India and Sri Lanka Close Schools, Implement Telework Ahead of Monsoon Surge**

Red rainfall warnings from the [India Meteorological Department \(IMD\)](#) and [Sri Lanka Department of Meteorology](#) are in effect, prompting Tamil Nadu authorities to declare school and college closures in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, and Chengalpattu districts on October 14. In Sri Lanka, Colombo, Gampaha, Kelaniya, Kolonnawa, and Kaduwela educational zones will also be [closed](#) on October 15. Private IT companies in southeastern India have been advised to implement [remote work](#) from October 15-19, and residents in flood-prone areas have moved vehicles to higher ground as a precaution. Scattered showers and thunderstorms, some heavy, are impacting coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry, with isolated areas recording over 50mm (two inches) of rain in the last 24 hours. Forecast models predict the heaviest rainfall between late Tuesday and early Thursday, with localized totals possibly exceeding 100-200mm (four to eight inches), though rainfall distribution is expected to be uneven. Potential impacts include scattered flash flooding, waterlogging, localized rescues, landslides, and urban travel disruptions due to flooding. According to [local media](#), severe weather has already affected over 150,000 people in Sri Lanka.

### **U.S. CDC Announces New Measure in Response to Rwanda's Marburg Outbreak**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) increased its [travel advisory](#) for Rwanda to "Level 3: Reconsider Nonessential Travel" and is implementing extra screening procedures for travelers from the East African nation due to an ongoing outbreak of Marburg virus, an often-fatal disease similar to Ebola.

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Under new [screening procedures](#), arriving travelers who have been in Rwanda within the past three weeks will be rerouted starting today to one of three airports for additional checks: O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, or Dulles International Airport near Washington, D.C. Rwanda's health ministry is [conducting](#) its checks on all travelers prior to departure.

Shortly after the screening announcement, the World Health Organization (WHO) [issued](#) its statement advising nations against implementing travel and trade restrictions on Rwanda in the context of the outbreak, saying that at this stage they are "ineffective and unnecessary." The WHO originally [assessed](#) the risk of the current outbreak as "very high at the national level, high at the regional level, and low at the global level." Still, in its latest update on the situation, the organization noted that Marburg is not easily transmissible and several public health measures are in place. As of Sunday, officials have [confirmed](#) 61 cases and 14 deaths from the disease, with all new cases from the past two weeks [coming](#) from two hospital clusters in Kigali.

## **U.S. Air Defense Battery, Troops to Deploy to Israel Amid Expanding Conflict**

The United States [plans to send](#) a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system to Israel to bolster the country's defenses as it continues its offensives in both Gaza and Lebanon. The THAAD battery announcement came Sunday, the same day that Hezbollah [targeted](#) an Israeli army base near Binyamina, killing four soldiers and injuring dozens more. Officials [said](#) the deployment is meant to "bolster Israel's air defenses following Iran's unprecedented attacks" in April and October.

As Israel mulls plans for an expected retaliatory attack on Iran, its military continues to strike in Lebanon. At least 18 people were killed on Monday after an airstrike hit a residential area in northern Lebanon, and Beirut [experienced](#) its deadliest day of the conflict so far after Israeli airstrikes left 22 people dead last Thursday. In addition to striking from the air, Israel also expanded its ground invasion in southern Lebanon over the past week. On Sunday, troops [forced](#) their way into a U.N. peacekeeping mission base in southern Lebanon. The raid drew condemnation from the UN and international leaders and came after Israel's military reportedly [injured](#) four U.N. personnel in two separate incidents last week.

Türkiye [began evacuating](#) citizens and foreign nationals from Lebanon via ship last week. Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon [continues to urge](#) citizens to depart the country via commercial flights, warning that those who choose to stay "should prepare contingency plans" and "should not rely on the U.S. government for assisted departure or evacuation."

## Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Central Atlantic Tropical Storm Development:** A well-defined low-pressure system ([satellite](#)) several hundred miles west of the Cabo Verde Islands has been given a medium

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chance of development by the [National Hurricane Center](#). The disturbance will track west, potentially reaching the Leeward Islands, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico by October 18-19. The system will be near Hispaniola, Turks and Caicos, and the Southeast Bahamas between October 19-21. There is currently no immediate threat to the mainland United States. Regardless of whether a named storm materializes, locations in the path are likely to see an uptick in heavy showers and coastal winds.

- **Florida Power Restoration Following Milton:** As of Monday morning, about 399,000 customers in Florida were still without power following Hurricane Milton, down from a peak of 3.5 million on Thursday. Most outages are concentrated in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Manatee, and Sarasota counties. [Florida Power & Light](#) has restored power to 90% of its customers, while [Duke Energy](#) aims to restore power in Pasco and Pinellas by midnight tomorrow. [Tampa Electric](#) expects full restoration in Pasco County today, Polk County tomorrow, and Hillsborough and Pinellas counties by October 17.
- **São Paulo Experiencing Widespread Power Outages After Storms Friday:** On October 11, severe thunderstorms produced widespread heavy rain and damaging winds, resulting in [seven deaths](#). As of today, [over 500,000 customers remain without power](#) in the Greater São Paulo area, down from over 2.6 million on Friday. The National Electric Energy Agency has [called a meeting](#) with Enel and other energy providers to discuss the blackout. National authorities, cited by [media](#), have described the lack of timely response to outages as “absurd.”
- **Western Europe Facing Multiple Rounds of Heavy Rain:** Through Wednesday, excessive rainfall and scattered flood potential will focus over Spain. Thursday through Saturday, multiple rounds of heavy showers and thunderstorms will steadily advance eastward across France, Italy, and the western Balkans. Localized flooding has been reported in [southern Spain](#) within the last 24 hours, and parts of [northern France](#) were hit by significant river flooding within the last week.

## Worldwide

- **U.S. Officials Disrupt Election Day Terror Plot, Other Election Updates:** Last week, U.S. authorities [charged](#) an Afghan national for conspiring to conduct an Election Day terrorist attack in the U.S. on behalf of the Islamic State terror group. The announcement came days after the Department of Homeland Security issued its latest [Homeland Threat Assessment](#), which stated that the threat of domestic and foreign terrorism in the country remains high. In related election news from this past week, a man attempting to enter a Trump rally Saturday in California’s Coachella Valley was [found](#) with an illegally loaded firearm and a high-capacity magazine. The

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individual was stopped at a security checkpoint, and authorities said Trump “was not in any danger” during the incident. Looking ahead in the campaigns, Vice President Kamala Harris will be in [Detroit](#) on Tuesday, [Philadelphia](#) on Wednesday, and [Wisconsin](#) on Thursday. She returns to Michigan on Friday and, on Saturday, heads to Atlanta to counter a [town hall](#) by former president Donald Trump. Trump’s itinerary for the week includes additional stops in Oaks, PA, [Cumming](#), GA, and Duluth, GA.

- **China Engages in Large-Scale Drills Around Taiwan:** China launched [major military drills](#) around Taiwan in response to Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te’s recent statements rejecting Chinese authority over the island. The drills, involving the army, navy, and rocket forces, are seen as a direct warning to Taiwan’s independence movement, with a focus on blockading key areas around the island. Taiwan [condemned](#) the actions as provocative and deployed its military in response. This follows heightened tensions as China continues to assert claims over Taiwan while Chinese President Xi Jinping maintains a stance of potential forceful reunification.
- **Haiti’s Transitional Council Gets New Leader Amid Continuing Violence:** Haiti’s transitional presidential council has [transferred](#) the rotating presidency to Leslie Voltaire, despite opposition from outgoing leader Edgard Leblanc Fils, who cited unresolved corruption allegations against other council members. Voltaire arrives in the position as his country continues to be marred by violence. In recent days, gunmen have launched significant attacks [north of Port-au-Prince](#) and in a central town called Pont- Sondé, where gang members [reportedly](#) killed over 100 people. As it seeks to help contain the gang violence, Kenya, in conjunction with the [U.N. mission](#), [announced](#) it would be sending 600 more police officers to Haiti.
- **Curfew Enacted in Martinique Amid Violent Unrest:** A curfew and ban on public gatherings was enacted last week across the French territory of Martinique following a wave of violent protest activity sparked by living costs. Officials [said](#) Monday that the security situation appeared to be improving after the previous several days saw demonstrations lead to [riots, looting, fires](#), and the [storming](#) of an airport tarmac; however, gathering restrictions were set to remain in place through the day, as were [public school closures](#). The U.S. Embassy issued an [alert](#) about the situation, advising citizens in-country to avoid large gatherings and maintain awareness of their surroundings.
- **Mexico’s New President Takes Aim at Violent Crime in Nation’s Most Affected Cities:** Mexico’s new federal government has [unveiled](#) its national security strategy, built on four pillars. President Claudia Sheinbaum’s strategy prioritizes combatting homicides and the influence of drug cartels in municipalities with the [highest murder rates](#), improving coordination between federal and state security forces, and enhancing intelligence to dismantle criminal organizations. Sinaloa’s capital, Culiacán, which has seen a surge in cartel violence over the past month, will be a focus area as [additional troops](#) have been deployed to the region.

## Cyber and Regulatory

- **Largest U.S. Water Provider Targeted in Cyberattack:** American Water, a New Jersey-based water and wastewater utility company, was [targeted](#) in a cyberattack on Thursday, October 3. The company, which provides services to over 14 million people, deactivated certain systems after detecting an intrusion. A week later, American Water announced that it had begun restoring systems and stated that neither the incident impacted its water nor wastewater facilities.
- **Brazil's Supreme Court Lifts Ban on X:** Brazil's Supreme Court has lifted a ban on X after CEO Elon Musk refused to comply with the court's orders. According to the [court](#), X proved that they had appointed a legal representative in the country, blocked accounts that "disseminated false information," and paid approximately \$5 million in fines on September 27. Internet service providers began to restore access to the social media platform on Wednesday, October 10.
- **Australia's New Cyber Law to Require Disclosure of Ransomware Payments:** New [cyber legislation](#) in Australia will mandate businesses report ransomware payments, making it the [first country](#) to enforce such a law. Affected businesses with an annual turnover above AU\$ 3 million must declare extortion payments to the government within 73 hours or face fines. The move aims to improve transparency and combat the growing threat of ransomware, which costs Australian businesses millions annually. The bill also includes security standards for smart devices and measures to enhance cooperation between government and industry.
- **Cyber Insurance Provider Sees Jump in Average Claim Size:** A new report by Coalition, an entity that provides cyber insurance, [said](#) that while customers made fewer claims in the first half of 2024, the average claim size increased by 14% to \$122,000. Ransomware reportedly drove this spike, with average losses rising 68% to \$353,000, as attackers targeted larger businesses. They found, however, that ransomware claims for mid-sized companies (\$25M-\$100M in revenue) declined. They also observed that ransomware gangs are increasingly willing to negotiate.
- **Cyberattack Closes Calgary's Public Libraries, Other Hack News:** All public libraries in Calgary, Canada, were forced to close this weekend after a [cyberattack](#) compromised some of its systems. Additional details about the hack were not immediately clear, though it marked the [second attack](#) on a major Canadian city's public library system in the past year. In other hack news, The Wayback Machine, a digital archive of the Internet managed by the non-profit organization Internet Archive, had its systems breached last week, and hackers [reportedly](#) "stole a user authentication database containing 31 million unique records." Fidelity Investments also [reported](#) a breach last week that occurred in August.

## Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Authorities in Oceania Bolster Defenses Against Bird Flu:** Australia and New Zealand are on high alert against high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) as wild birds' migratory paths draw

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closer to Oceania. Australia and New Zealand have been [spared](#) from the H5N1 strain of HPAI that has plagued poultry farms outside of the region since 2020, [affecting](#) over 100 million poultry in the U.S. in the last two years alone. Australia has reported cases of bird flu different than the H5N1 strain in wild birds and poultry farms, prompting precautionary culls while avoiding disruptions to the national supply chain. Due to its geographic isolation and strict biosecurity measures, New Zealand has managed to stay bird flu-free. In response to the increased risks of H5N1's arrival, both countries are taking measures to protect native species and bolster biosecurity procedures on poultry farms. Yesterday, Australia's government [announced](#) an additional AU\$95 million investment to safeguard against the H5N1 strain.

- **Fuel Shortages in Florida Hinder Recovery Following Hurricane Milton:** Gas stations in Florida are struggling to refuel in the wake of Hurricane Milton, which made landfall last Wednesday evening as a Category 3 storm—gas stations in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area is particularly affected, with 77% of gas stations [reporting](#) issues after power outages affected fuel pumps. Analysts [expect](#) availability to be back to normal by mid-week and, as of Monday morning, [all but two gas terminals](#) are fully functional. Ten Florida ports were closed last Thursday in Hurricane Milton's aftermath, including the Port of Tampa Bay, which [distributes](#) approximately 43% of Florida's fuel. Port of Tampa Bay regained power on Friday, allowing fuel tankers to begin [distributing](#) gas that afternoon.
- **Dockworkers Begin Indefinite Overtime Ban at Port of Montreal:** The Port of Montreal Longshoremen's Union [launched](#) an indefinite overtime strike last Thursday. It plans to refuse to work overtime as its labor dispute with the Montreal Port Authority and Canadian Maritime Employers Association continues. Unionized port workers [conducted](#) a partial work stoppage two weeks ago, which impacted the Vieux and Maisonneuve terminals. Contract negotiations have since resumed, though no agreement has been reached. The Montreal Port Authority estimates that, while all port terminals remain open, the strike action could slow the handling around 50% of imports and exports.
- **Houthi Target Chemical Tanker, Flights Diverted From Iranian Airspace:** The conflict in the Middle East continues to disrupt flights and maritime transportation in the region, most recently with the Houthi rebels in Yemen [attacking](#) a chemical tanker in the Red Sea. Last Thursday, the group launched a projectile that damaged a Liberian-flagged tanker. No injuries were reported, and three other projectiles landed in the water near the ship. Meanwhile, an increasing number of airlines are diverting flights to avoid Iranian airspace as tensions in the region increase. Flight tracker FlightRadar24 [reported](#) that flights over Afghanistan and bypassing Iranian airspace have increased since the start of the month, with 222 flights recorded on October 6 compared to 132 in late September.
- **Vehicle Recalls Affect Millions of Drivers in North America:** Last Wednesday, Honda issued a [recall](#) affecting approximately two million of its vehicles due to a defective part in the steering gearbox that could result in an increased risk of a crash. The recall applies to 2022-2025 Acura



and Honda vehicles, with more than 1.7 million of the affected vehicles sold in the U.S. Meanwhile, Stellantis is [recalling](#) more than 150,000 hybrid Jeeps over fire risks estimating that 5% of plug-in hybrid Jeeps under the recall might be affected by a battery-related defect that has caused at least 13 fires in vehicles. The Stellantis recall affects more than 14,000 vehicles sold in Canada and 25,000 sold elsewhere in the world. Tesla also recently [issued](#) a recall for 27,000 Cybertrucks over potential visibility issues due to delayed rear-view camera images.

## Health

- **Number of Bird Flu Cases in California Dairy Workers Up to Six:** The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), working in conjunction with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), has [confirmed](#) a total of six cases of H5 avian flu in dairy workers, with a probable seventh awaiting further testing. Two cases were among those working on the same farm with infected cows, suggesting that transmission remains animal-to-human. The new cases in California put the total number of human H5 avian flu cases for the year in the U.S. at 20, with all but one related to contact with sick cows and poultry. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Inspection (APHIS) also [recorded](#) one more infected dairy herd in California, bringing the total number of infected herds for the state to 100 since late August and 300 nationwide.
- **Helene Contributing to Shortage of IV Fluid:** In a recent [letter](#) to hospitals, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said that shortages of intravenous (IV) fluids were likely to continue for months. A Baxter plant in Marion, North Carolina that produces more than half the U.S. supply was temporarily closed due to damage from Helene. The letter noted current shortages of normal saline IV fluids, normal saline irrigation fluid, sterile water irrigation, and dextrose 5% IV fluids. The company [said](#) that it has increased the allocations of its highest-demand IV fluids from 40% to 60% for direct customers and from 10% to 60% for distributors. The HHS urges hospitals to implement conservation strategies as the company works to restore 100% allocation levels.
- **Company Recalls Nearly 10 Million Pounds of Meat Due to Possible Listeria Contamination:** BrucePac is [recalling](#) nearly 10 million pounds of meat and poultry products from an Oklahoma plant after the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) detected listeria in samples of poultry during routine testing. The recalled items were produced between June 19 and October 5 and shipped to grocery stores, restaurants, and food service vendors nationwide. USDA officials have made available a [list](#) of affected items. There have been no confirmed cases of listeria linked to the recall.
- **California Continues to Report More Dengue Cases as Numbers Climb Throughout Americas:** After Los Angeles County tallied five locally acquired dengue cases, San Diego County health officials have [reported](#) a sixth. The discovery comes as case numbers continue to climb

across the Western Hemisphere. In its latest [epidemiological alert](#), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) urged countries in South America to increase their response after already recording 11.7 million cases in the year, more than double what was observed in 2023. The Southern Cone has been particularly hard hit, with a 250% increase in the number of cases seen over the same period in 2023.

- **New Hospital Cyber Rules in New York State Take Effect:** New [cybersecurity rules](#) for general hospitals in New York State went into effect on October 2. Under the rules, hospitals must implement comprehensive cybersecurity programs and policies and conduct regular testing, risk assessments, and incident response plans. They must also appoint chief information security officers. Hospitals have one year to comply with the new rules but must immediately begin notifying the New York State Department of Health of determined cybersecurity incidents.

## Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **COP16 in Colombia to Kick Off With Protests, Threat From Armed Militant Group:** Over 12,000 attendees are [expected](#) at the 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP16) in Cali between October 21 and November 1, including various world leaders. Beginning Wednesday, local indigenous communities will hold demonstrations and road blockades to raise environmental concerns. In addition to protests, the event has faced a threat from the Central General Staff (EMC), a dissident armed group of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which [warned](#) attendees not to go. While it remains unclear what, if anything, the group is plotting, President Petro responded by stating that the “security of COP16 is guaranteed.”
- **Boeing Announces Major Job Cuts, \$5 Billion in Losses Amid Ongoing Machinists Strike:** Boeing [announced](#) it will cut 17,000 jobs—around 10% of its global workforce—and delay the first delivery of its 777X jet to 2026. The decision comes as a monthlong strike by around 33,000 machinists impacts production, causing Boeing to incur \$5 billion in quarterly losses. The company has also [filed](#) an unfair labor practice complaint with the National Labor Relations Board against the union, accusing it of “failing to bargain in good faith.” The dispute has reached the one-month mark, and impacts are being [felt](#) across the wider aerospace supply chain, especially as competitors struggle to keep up with demand.
- **Spain to See Demonstrations by Teachers Ahead of Strike:** Various education unions are [planning](#) to hold a demonstration near the Madrid Education Department on Wednesday at 11 am ahead of a planned strike to demand improved working conditions and salaries. Spanish students began a strike last Friday to denounce new university entrance exams, and teachers [intend](#) to continue striking and demonstrating through November 21. Future demonstrations will take place in Madrid’s city center and will likely cause traffic congestion and other disruptions.
- **Cities Around the World to See Demonstrations Related to the Middle East Conflict:** On Wednesday, activists in Tokyo will stage two demonstrations—one at the Big Sight Station at



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11:15 am to reportedly disrupt an aerospace exhibition, and another at the Ikebukuro Station at 7 pm. In New York City, local pro-Palestine groups are planning to gather at BlackRock's headquarters in Manhattan's Hudson Yards area at 3 pm on Friday. Geneva will see a pro-Palestine demonstration near the Place de Neuve at 2:30 pm on Saturday. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign is planning to hold a "day of action for Palestine" on Saturday as well, headlined by a rally in central London, details of which are to be announced. Additional actions are likely across the country.

- **Other Demonstration Activity We're Watching:** Pakistani opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) [plans](#) to hold a demonstration at D-Chowk tomorrow during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit. Beginning tomorrow through Wednesday in Uruguay, education and labor unions are [set](#) to hold strikes and demonstrations to demand improvements to education and "work stability." The main demonstration is set to take place in Montevideo at 10 am. In Peru, the public is still [reeling](#) from a disruptive three-day strike by unions across sectors held last week to denounce extortion in the country amid an active State of Emergency in the Lima and Callao areas.

## Upcoming Events

- October 16: EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit (Brussels, Belgium)
- October 20: Presidential Election, Referendum on EU Membership (Moldova)
- October 21-26: IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings (Washington D.C.)
- October 21 - November 1: United Nations Biodiversity Conference (Cali, Colombia)
- October 22-24: BRICS Summit (Kazan, Russia)
- October 26: Parliamentary Election (Georgia)
- October 27: General Election (Japan)
- October 27: Parliamentary Election (Bulgaria)
- October 27: General Election (Uruguay)
- October 30: General Election (Botswana)
- October 30: Nationwide Transportation Strike (Argentina)
- November 5: General Election (United States)
- November 11-22: COP29 - United Nations Climate Change Conference (Baku, Azerbaijan)
- November 18-19: G20 2024 Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)