



October 28, 2024

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Top Stories

Harris, Trump to Close Out Final Week of Campaigning Ahead of U.S. Election Next Tuesday

This week, Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump will [campaign](#) in swing states as they vie for votes before Election Day next Tuesday. Tonight, Harris is slated to [rally](#) in Ann Arbor, MI. Tomorrow evening, she will [deliver](#) a speech on the Ellipse in Washington, D.C., to an estimated 20,000 people. Harris is also expected to hold rallies in [Raleigh](#), NC, and [Madison](#), WI, on Wednesday. After [rallying](#) at Madison Square Garden in New York City last night, Trump plans to stop through several battleground states, with events scheduled in Atlanta, GA, Allentown, PA, Green Bay, WI, Henderson, NV, and Milwaukee, WI.

Misinformation and disinformation are in the spotlight outside the campaign schedule. Last week, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) [released](#) a memo outlining how Russian and Iranian actors may utilize covert tactics to fuel violent protests after the election. Days later, authorities [issued a statement](#) saying that Russian actors are believed to be behind a fake video that went viral online depicting mail-in ballots for Donald Trump being ripped up in Pennsylvania. Microsoft also [said](#) it has observed "influence efforts by Russia, Iran, and China aimed at undermining U.S. democratic processes" online, including Chinese-linked social media campaigns targeting down-ballot Republican candidates and politicians who advocate for anti-China policies and Russian-backed deepfake videos aimed at smearing the Harris-Walz campaign.

Physical threats and violence have also been reported in some locations. In Bexar County, TX, an individual was [arrested](#) after allegedly assaulting a poll worker last week after being asked to remove his

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"Make America Great Again" hat. Texas law prohibits wearing political apparel at the voting booth. Additionally, there have been multiple reports of suspected arson attacks targeting ballot drop boxes, including in [Phoenix](#), [Portland, OR](#), and [Vancouver, WA](#).

Abnormally Warm, Dry Conditions in U.S. Resulting in Expansion of Drought, Fire Weather

In NOAA's [weekly drought update](#), a significant eastward expansion of drought conditions was noted for a third consecutive week across the eastern Plains, Southeast, and East Coast of the United States. Nearly 42% of the country is experiencing drought, and portions of all 50 states are abnormally dry. Farmers are reeling from the effects, with depleted water levels along the [Mississippi River](#) prompting increased soybean shipping costs. Much of the country is also unseasonably warm, with highs near 90F into Kansas Monday and forecast highs near 80F as far north as Chicago, Cleveland, and Washington D.C. between Tuesday and Thursday. Warm, dry, and windy conditions have also supported large wildfires in [New Jersey](#) and [Oklahoma](#) within the last week, and much of the central Plains were under [critical fire weather conditions](#) yet again Monday afternoon.

Positive changes are in store over the next 10 days, with [above-normal rainfall](#) likely between the southern Plains, mid-Mississippi Valley, and Great Lakes. Conditions will turn wetter beginning Wednesday to Friday, with multiple inches of rainfall likely into next week. The change in weather patterns will also support the potential for a few [severe thunderstorms](#) between Dallas, Oklahoma City, and Kansas City Wednesday afternoon and evening.

Typhoon Targeting Taiwan With Potential Impacts to Mainland China, Philippines Admit Recovery

As of midday Monday, [Kong-Rey](#) was near typhoon strength while east of Luzon, Philippines. Still [reeling from Tropical Storm Kristine](#), the Philippines are unlikely to be directly hit by the latest typhoon. However, the threat of outer rainbands and gusty winds have already prompted calls for [evacuations](#) and school closures in northernmost vulnerable areas. Taiwan will likely encounter widespread Category 2 to Category 3 hurricane equivalent conditions by Thursday and Friday (local time). Forecast conditions may yield nationwide school, business, and transportation suspensions. The level of impact is less certain across mainland China. However, the latest model data favors potential port disruptions, tropical storm winds, and heavy rain between Quanzhou (Fujian) and Shanghai by late week.

Israel Strikes Back Against Iran as Mediators Again Attempt to Reach a Ceasefire Agreement

Over the weekend, Israel [conducted](#) airstrikes on Iran in response to a missile barrage launched at Israel by Tehran on October 1. The attack by Israel was relatively measured, targeting military sites in Tehran, Khuzestan, and Ilam provinces but sparing the country's oil and nuclear facilities. Iran has [pledged](#) a

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strong response to the strikes, which it initially downplayed as causing minimal damage. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei stated that Iran would “use all available tools” against Israel. Meanwhile, Israel is continuing operations in Lebanon, recently [conducting airstrikes](#) on the southern coastal city of Tyre after issuing evacuation warnings. Israel began its push into Lebanon with the official goal of allowing its citizens to return to their homes in northern Israel without fear of being struck by rockets from Hezbollah. To that end, the Israeli military said that it was [easing restrictions](#) for some areas of the north, including in parts of Upper Galilee, the Golan Heights, and Haifa Bay.

Despite the continued fighting, mediators are still pushing for even a limited ceasefire. Egypt [proposed](#) a two-day ceasefire in Gaza, aiming to facilitate the exchange of four Israeli hostages held by Hamas for some Palestinian prisoners, as confirmed by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. The ceasefire proposal was announced during renewed talks in Qatar, attended by CIA and Mossad leaders, with the goal of establishing a lasting ceasefire within 10 days. While Israel remains committed to dismantling Hamas militarily, Egyptian, U.S. and Qatari mediators hope a short-term halt could lay the groundwork for broader peace efforts amidst mounting casualties in Gaza.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Trami Makes Landfall in Vietnam, Flood Threat Continues:** After impacting the Philippines, Tropical Storm Trami continued west into the South China Sea and made landfall over central Vietnam on Sunday. At least four storm-related deaths and multiple road closures have been [reported](#). Through the middle of the week, there is strong model support for an additional eight to 12 inches of rain, locally higher, across Đồng Hới, Đồng Hà, and surrounding areas of Vietnam as Trami weakens and meanders over the region.
- **Monitoring Western Caribbean for Potential Tropical Development:** The [National Hurricane Center](#) (NHC) has upgraded the threat for tropical development in the western Caribbean Sea over the next seven days to medium. Forecast model data shows an increasing signal for the formation of a disturbance in this region between November 1-4. Interests within Jamaica, eastern Cuba, and Hispaniola should keep a close eye on the forecast as tropical storm conditions and excessive rainfall impacts could threaten the area between November 2-5.
- **Spain Flood Risk Through Friday:** An upper-level low-pressure storm system will trigger rounds of heavy rain and thunderstorms across southern and eastern Spain through Friday, possibly longer. Widespread rainfall totals are expected to range between three and six inches, with locally higher amounts surpassing 10 inches possible between Valencia and Tarragona. Widespread warnings have been issued by the [Spain Meteorology Agency](#). Significant flooding has already hit [Porto Cristo](#).

Worldwide

- **Georgian Opposition Calls for Protests, Accusing Ruling Party of Vote-Rigging:** Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili called for [protests](#) against alleged fraud by the ruling Georgian Dream party in the recent elections, claiming that they used violence and vote-rigging to secure 53% of the vote. International observers, including OSCE, reported voter intimidation and campaign irregularities, while European leaders have expressed concern. Opposition parties, led by the Coalition for Change and Unity-National Movement, have rejected the results, with some refusing to take parliamentary seats. European Council President Charles Michel urged an investigation into the alleged abuses. As of this writing, several hundred people have [gathered](#) outside the parliament building in Tbilisi to protest the results.
- **Türkiye Launches Airstrikes in Iraq, Syria in Retaliation for Attack on Airspace Company:** Two attackers [killed five people](#) and wounded 22 others at the Turkish Aerospace Industries headquarters near Türkiye's capital city of Ankara last Wednesday. The [attackers](#) were killed, and the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) has since claimed responsibility for what Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [called](#) a "vile terror attack." One day later, Türkiye's air force struck Kurdish militant locations in Iraq and Syria in [apparent retaliation](#). Turkish defense ministry officials [said](#) more than 30 targets were destroyed in the aerial offensive, while officials in Syria [reported](#) that the new wave of attacks by Türkiye killed 12 civilians.
- **Sikh Activists Warn Against Flying Air India From November 1-19:** Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a dual U.S.-Canadian citizen who campaigns for a separate Sikh state to be formed in South Asia, warned passengers against flying on Air India flights between November 1-19. The perceived threat follows over [300 hoax bomb threats](#) made towards flights from Indian airports over the past two weeks. Indian officials [state](#) "they are not aware of any specific threats against Air India and its passengers." Pannun made similar threats in 2023 against Air India, which did not result in any notable incidents. Passengers may expect to see heightened security at airports during the threat's timeframe.
- **India, China Move to Relax Tensions Along Border:** India and China have started implementing an [agreement](#) to end their border standoff in Ladakh, marking the first de-escalation since deadly clashes in the region in 2020. On Wednesday, troops began withdrawing from the last standoff points, Depsang and Demchok, with full disengagement expected by month's end. The deal struck ahead of talks between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the BRICS summit, aims to restore pre-2020 patrolling routines. The easing of tensions could pave the way for greater Chinese investment in India and the [reintroduction](#) of direct flights between the two countries and visas for Chinese tourists and business travelers.

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- **China-Taiwan Tensions Spike With Record Military Presence and Live-Fire Exercises:** China held live-fire [drills near Taiwan](#), escalating its military activities around the island. Last Tuesday, the live-fire exercises [took place](#) around Niushan Island in Fujian province, just south of the Taiwan-controlled Matsu Islands. The drills followed a record deployment of 153 Chinese aircraft and warships around Taiwan the week prior. Taiwan's Premier Cho Jung-tai criticized the drills for threatening regional stability but also noted they are part of China's routine annual exercises. The U.S. and other allies of Taiwan have responded to China's military drills with increased naval patrols through the Taiwan Strait.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **CISA Proposes Mandate to Protect U.S. Personal Data:** The U.S. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Agency (CISA) is [proposing](#) new security requirements to prevent adversarial nation-states from accessing American personal data and government-related information. The proposal is aimed at organizations that handle restricted transactions involving bulk U.S. sensitive personal data or data related to the U.S. government. The proposed requirements would [prevent](#) U.S. companies or individuals from directly selling personal data to foreign corporations at least 50% owned or located in a country of concern. The proposal is linked with [Executive Order 14117](#), which restricted access to bulk American sensitive personal data by countries of concern. The requirement is projected to impact a range of technology businesses, including AI developers, cloud service providers, telecommunication firms, health and biotech organizations, financial institutions, and defense contractors.
- **Google Warns Samsung Users to Update to Latest Security Release:** Google [issued](#) a warning that a vulnerability is impacting mobile processors in Samsung phones and is highly encouraging individuals to update devices to protect against potential impacts. The vulnerability, titled CVE-2024-44068, allows privilege escalation, allowing someone to access data after a process is concluded rather than the phone closing access to the data after each action. While the exploit can't be used to conduct an attack, it has been combined with other vulnerabilities to execute malicious code on phones. The vulnerability is [targeted](#) towards older phones, including the Galaxy S10 and Note 10 series.
- **Ransomware Sample Targeting MacOS Devices Identified:** Hackers are [reportedly](#) targeting older MacBook Pro models with new ransomware called NotLockBit, which affects Intel-based Macs and M1/M2 Macs with Rosetta installed. Unlike past macOS threats, this malware attempts to lock users out of their files by encrypting them. Apple's Transparency, Consent, and Control [protections](#) currently prevent the ransomware's success, though researchers warn that future iterations of the malware could bypass the safety measures.

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- **U.S. President Biden Issues First-Ever National Security Memo on AI:** Last week, President Biden [issued](#) a first-ever National Security Memorandum (NSM) on Artificial Intelligence (AI), which outlines strategies for working with developers to mitigate the risks of AI while leveraging AI to strengthen national security. The key priorities in the memo include bolstering talent and resources domestically, promoting and maintaining safe and ethical AI practices, protecting the country and developers from “foreign intelligence threats,” and safeguarding advanced chip supply chains. The memo serves as a framework for the [AI Safety Institute](#) and designates the institute as the primary point of contact for AI management.
- **Critical Exploit Targeting FortiManager Devices Identified:** Fortinet, in collaboration with Google- owned cybersecurity firm Mandiant, is [investigating](#) a suspected zero-day vulnerability (CVE-2024- 47575) in FortiManager appliances [exploited](#) by hackers (UNC5820) to steal sensitive configuration data from managed devices. Over 50 devices across various industries were targeted. Mandiant has yet to find evidence of further exploitation or determine the hackers’ motives. Fortinet gave the vulnerability a CVSS score of 9.8 (out of 10), indicating the vulnerability is extremely severe, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has added it to its known exploit catalog.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **U.N. Highlights Key Disruptions, Struggles in Recent Maritime Shipping Reports:** Key maritime chokepoints such as the Suez Canal, Panama Canal, and the Red Sea are under increasing strain due to geopolitical tensions and climate change, according to the U.N.’s latest [Review of Maritime Transport](#). Attacks on vessels in the Red Sea area reduced ship transits through the Suez Canal by about half in 2023 and even further by mid-2024. Rerouting around Africa’s Cape of Good Hope has been costly and has raised global vessel ton-mile demand by 3% and container ship demand by 12%. In Latin America, reduced water levels in the Panama Canal in late 2023 and early 2024 [forced](#) ships to take longer and more expensive routes. In addition to climate change impacts, freight rate fluctuations have worsened trade inequalities, particularly affecting Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean.
- **One-Day Strike at Montreal Port Punctuates Ongoing Labor Dispute:** Operations at the Port of Montreal are restarting after a [24-hour strike](#) by unionized workers ended early this morning. The Canadian Longshoremen’s Union, CUPE Local 375, called on its members to strike beginning at 7 am on Sunday, and the action reportedly impacted all container and dry bulk terminals. CUPE Local 375, which represents approximately 1,200 dockworkers, [began](#) an indefinite overtime ban on October 10 that remains in effect. Further industrial action is possible in the coming weeks, as the union and its employer are approaching the one-year anniversary of the last contract’s expiration date.

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- **Trade Protectionism, Wars Lead to Lowered Global Growth Forecast From IMF:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lowered its global growth forecast for next year due to rising risks, namely from ongoing wars and increasing trade protectionism. The IMF's World Economic Outlook, [published](#) last Tuesday, projects that the U.S. will have the fastest growth among the G7 major economies; however, economists warn that trade protectionism—particularly high tariffs on imports from China and elsewhere—would [spur](#) inflation. While the IMF's Chief Economist [notes](#) that the “battle against inflation has largely been won globally,” uneven trade policy measures could lead to retaliation and risk reigniting inflation.
- **TSMC Suspends Chip Shipments Over Potential U.S. Export Controls Violation:** The Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) suspended semiconductor chip shipments to a China-based design company after a research firm found that Huawei's latest AI product, the Ascend 910B, was using an advanced TSMC chip, according to reporting from [Reuters](#). The China-based design company Sophgo had placed an order with TSMC for chips identical to those in Huawei's Ascend 910B. TSMC reportedly suspended shipments around the same time they notified the U.S. Department of Commerce of the incident. Due to U.S. export restrictions, Huawei is banned from purchasing advanced chips from TSMC. The finding could [indicate](#) that China continues to face challenges in producing enough advanced chips.
- **U.S. Approves Lithium Mine Amid Protests:** The Biden administration [approved](#) the Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project in Nevada last week despite concerns from environmentalists that the mining project will devastate an endangered wildflower population. Lithium mining in the U.S. has expanded as demand for electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy storage has surged. Key projects, particularly in Nevada, aim to reduce reliance on foreign lithium sources. The Rhyolite Ridge project's [approval](#) includes conservation plans that designate a critical habitat of 719 acres for the endangered Tiehm's buckwheat.

Health

- **CDC Links Deadly E. Coli Outbreak to McDonald's Quarter Pounder:** At least 75 people in 13 states have been sickened by an outbreak of [E. coli O157:H7](#) that has been linked to McDonald's Quarter Pounder hamburgers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). One person has died, and 22 have been hospitalized. Colorado has recorded the highest number of cases, with 26. McDonald's is collaborating with investigators to determine which ingredient is causing the illness and believes it to be the sliced onions used in the Quarter Pounder. Taylor Farms, which supplied the onions in the affected locations, has initiated a voluntary recall. All local restaurants of the chain have [removed](#) sliced onions from their supply. Yum Brands said it would also [remove](#) fresh onions from meals at certain Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and KFC locations out of an abundance of caution.

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- **Retailers Pulling Salmon, Frozen Waffles Over Listeria Contamination Fears:** Costco and TreeHouse Foods are both recalling foods due to concerns over listeria. Costco is [pulling](#) packages of salmon from ACME Smoked Fish Corp that were sold between October 9-13. Meanwhile, TreeHouse Foods has expanded an initial recall of more than 600 varieties of frozen waffles to include pancakes and Belgian waffles. Products manufactured by TreeHouse Foods are [sold](#) at several major retailers, including Target and Albertsons. The recalls are the latest in a rash of food safety issues, including at deli meat producer Boars Head and an [egg producer](#) in Wisconsin.
- **Key IV Solution Supplier in North Carolina Recovering From Helene Ahead of Schedule:** Baxter, the company whose plant in North Carolina supplies some 60% of the United States IV solutions, [reports](#) that it is back to pre-hurricane staffing levels. The company further assesses that it will be able to restart full manufacturing on its highest throughput line beginning this week, with products expected to enter the distribution channel by mid to late November, ahead of schedule. The FDA has also authorized the temporary importation of products from other Baxter facilities around the globe; however, there is still no timeline for when the company expects all production at its North Cove plant to be restored to pre - hurricane levels.
- **Germany Identifies First Case of New Mpox Variant:** Germany's Robert Koch Institute [said](#) that it had detected the first case of the new clade 1b variant of mpox in the country on October 18. The case was acquired abroad. Norway also [reported](#) two cases of the clade 2 variant. Despite the new cases, the European Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [assesses](#) that the risk to the continent remains low. Meanwhile, cases continue to [climb](#) in the virus' epicenter, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with scientists in the region becoming increasingly concerned over the rates of illness they've observed in [children](#).
- **U.K.'s Generic Drug Industry Not Ready for Post-Brexit Labeling Rules:** Northern Ireland may [experience](#) shortages of some medications after the British Generic Manufacturers Association said that the generic drug industry is not prepared to comply with post-Brexit labeling rules for the country. The trade body said that the industry has not had enough time to meet requirements for medicine packs to be labeled "U.K. only" beginning January 1, 2025, and has requested that officials delay the rule's implementation; however, both European Union and U.K. officials have indicated that the new requirements will move forward as planned.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Activists Plan Demonstrations Weekend Before U.S. Election:** Widespread demonstrations are expected across the U.S. this weekend as activists hit the streets before the November 5 election. Most activity is anticipated on Saturday, with pro-Palestine and women's rights groups preparing to hold separate national days of action. Large demonstrations connected to the Middle East conflict are expected in Chicago (100 E Wacker Dr at 1 pm), New York (Union Square

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at 2 pm), San Francisco (City Hall at 1 pm), and elsewhere. Meanwhile, the primary “Women’s March” will take place in Washington, D.C., starting from Freedom Plaza at 3 pm. Additionally, smaller marches are likely in other major urban centers.

- **Strikes to Impact Transportation in Multiple Countries:** In **Argentina**, significant impacts to rail, aviation, and maritime services are expected on Wednesday due to a [collective work stoppage by several unions](#). In neighboring **Chile**, after holding a nationwide strike last week, transporters [announced their intention](#) to strike again between November 13-15 during an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) meeting in Lima. Meanwhile, in Europe, workers from **Portugal’s** national rail operator began a [series of walkouts](#) today, and unions representing workers on **London’s** underground have [called for strike action](#) starting Friday.
- **Major Protests Expected in Albania After Former President’s Arrest:** Disruptions are likely in urban centers across Albania on Tuesday during demonstrations planned in the wake of former President Ilir Meta’s [arrest](#) on corruption charges. Opposition leader Sali Berisha, who is also [facing prosecution](#) for alleged corruption, has called for the “complete paralysis of Albania” on Tuesday during a “day of great civil disobedience.” Protest activity is [expected](#) to center on the capital, Tirana, with [parallel actions](#) involving road blockades occurring in several other parts of the country.
- **French Farmers Eye Return to Nationwide Protests:** France’s main farmers’ unions are calling for [nationwide demonstrations](#) starting November 15 as the EU and the South American Mercosur bloc near a deal on a free trade agreement that the groups oppose. Unrest in the sector has been simmering since the [major protest movement](#) seen earlier this year. It has been [exacerbated recently](#) by poor weather impacting harvests, livestock disease outbreaks, and the progression of the EU-Mercosur trade deal, which could be sealed at the G20 summit in Brazil next month. Additional specifics on the planned protest actions were not immediately announced, though previous activity involved widespread road blockades, and union leaders [reportedly](#) indicated they could spread to Brussels.
- **Other Notable Activity We’re Monitoring This Week:** Speaking of agricultural unrest, after staging protests involving roadblocks last week, farmers in India’s Punjab state are [threatening](#) further statewide demonstrations on Tuesday to protest the “slow pace” of the government’s paddy procurement. Meanwhile, in Mexico, unionized teachers are planning a [strike](#) and “national march” in Mexico City on Wednesday. While no specific demonstrations have been identified for the coming days in Lisbon, Portugal, the team is monitoring for additional activity following [protests](#) and [rioting](#) last week in response to a fatal police shooting.



Upcoming Events

- October 28: Labour Day (New Zealand)
- October 29: Republic Day (Türkiye)
- October 30: General Election (Botswana)
- October 30: Nationwide Transportation Strike (Argentina)
- October 31 – November 1: Diwali (Global)
- November 3: Runoff Presidential Election (Moldova)
- November 5: General Election (United States)
- November 11-22: COP29 - United Nations Climate Change Conference (Baku, Azerbaijan)
- November 10-16: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit 2024 (Lima, Peru)
- November 12: Birth Anniversary of Sun Yat-sen (Taiwan)
- November 17: Parliamentary Elections (Senegal)
- November 18-19: G20 2024 Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)