



**June 2, 2025**

## Headlining This Week's Brief

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## Top Stories

### **Thousands Evacuated Amid Historic Start to Canadian Wildfire Season**

[Over 25,000 residents have been evacuated](#) across Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan as dozens of active wildfires burn through Canada. Wildfire acreage burned across Canada since the beginning of the year is the second highest in the 23 years of reliable satellite hotspot tracking, following only the historic 2023 season. Most evacuations have taken place in Manitoba, particularly in the northern region. The most significant evacuation order as of the time of publication has been issued for roughly [6,000 people](#) in and around the city of Flin Flon, located about 630 kilometers northwest of Winnipeg. In Alberta, the second most affected province, [1,300 people](#) in the community of Swan Hills, northwest of Edmonton, have been forced to leave their homes. Dozens of smaller villages across the northern areas of the provinces have also been evacuated.

Officials are closely monitoring air quality impacts in both the United States and Canada. Canadian wildfire smoke is expected to move across the Midwest, Great Lakes, and even parts of the Southeast U.S. through the beginning of the week, likely leading to poor [air quality](#) in some areas. Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan may observe the most significant impacts on Monday and Tuesday, with air quality reaching levels that are unhealthy for sensitive groups. Fluctuating sky cover with occasional hazy conditions is likely within the [Mid-Atlantic and Northeast](#).

Critical fire weather conditions are expected to persist across much of the Canadian Prairies throughout the week. While isolated showers may occur early on, significant rainfall is not anticipated in Manitoba, Alberta, or Saskatchewan until the weekend. Compounding the threat, a strong system to the north will bring powerful winds through Wednesday.

## **Ukraine Launches Major Surprise Attack on Several Russian Bases**

Ukraine said that it had [damaged or destroyed](#) at least 40 Russian warplanes, most of them [strategic bombers](#), at [five military bases](#) scattered throughout the country in a complex operation that Kyiv said was 18 months in the making. In addition to the drone strikes, two railway bridges [collapsed](#) in regions bordering Ukraine, although despite Russian claims of “illegal interference,” it was unclear if the crashes were related or what their ultimate cause was. Ukraine’s surprise attack on Russia came just before a [second round of peace talks](#) that were held earlier today, although there appears to have been little movement by either side, with the only result an agreement for a fresh prisoner exchange.

Russia responded to the attacks on its airbases by launching nearly 500 drones at Ukraine, the biggest number since the outbreak of the war and a continuation of a [recent trend](#) of attacks on civilian areas. Ukraine’s surprise attack has been an [embarrassment](#) for Russia’s military leadership, making further retaliation likely. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that about 50,000 Russian troops are gathered across the border near the Sumy region, where Moscow has made some recent gains, as they [prepare](#) for what is expected to be a renewed offensive this summer.

## **South Korea to Hold Snap Election on Tuesday Following the Removal of Former President**

South Korea will hold a [snap election](#) tomorrow following the impeachment and removal of former President Yoon Suk Yeol after he declared martial law in December 2024. Heightened security, large gatherings, and demonstrations can be expected across South Korea during the period surrounding the election. The government has designated June 3 as a temporary public holiday, meaning that many businesses, schools, and government offices will be closed.

The leading candidates are Lee Jae Myung of the Democratic Party and Kim Moon Soo of the People Power Party (PPP), which Yoon also belonged to. Official results are expected on Wednesday, followed by the victor’s inauguration at the National Assembly later that day.

The Candlelight Vigil Movement, which has organized [recurring demonstrations](#) in Seoul and throughout the country demanding Yoon’s impeachment, is calling on people to gather on election day at 7 pm at Seoul’s Cheonggye Plaza to watch the vote count, followed by a march from Gyodae Station on Saturday at 4 pm. Regardless of the outcome of the election, South Korea’s polarized political climate is likely to lead to continued demonstration activity. For further details on South Korea’s upcoming presidential election, [read AlertMedia’s Situation Report](#).

## Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Atlantic Hurricane Season Begins:** For the fourth year in a row, the Atlantic hurricane season began without a named storm forming before June 1. The [National Hurricane Center](#) (NHC) is not currently monitoring any areas for potential development within the Gulf, Caribbean, or Atlantic. Forecast models suggest a weak disturbance may try to develop near the coastal Carolinas between Thursday and Friday, though it's unclear whether it will stay offshore or gain any tropical traits. Meanwhile, the GFS model continues to lower surface pressures in the western Caribbean—a common early-June signal, though often a false alarm. The highest tropical development chances this week lie in the eastern Pacific, where the NHC notes a medium threat by week's end. Increased rainfall is likely across parts of Central America, including Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chiapas, and Oaxaca (MEX).
- **Lean NOAA Operations Entering Hurricane Season:** NOAA enters the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season with reduced staffing, some suspended operations at local forecast offices, and a decline in upper-atmosphere data collection. Core forecasting and warning services remain operational, and no major disruptions have been reported to date. However, some indications of potential impacts on forecast accuracy and operational capacity have been noted. The AlertMedia meteorology team has compiled a [situation report](#) reviewing what changes have been observed so far and what to anticipate going into the remainder of the 2025 hurricane season.
- **Severe Flooding Reported in Northeast India:** A low-pressure disturbance over the northern Bay of Bengal enhanced extreme rainfall over Bangladesh, northeastern India, and Myanmar this weekend. Some of the most significant impacts have been reported in northeastern India, where at least 34 people have died due to flooding and landslides in Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh, according to [national media](#). More than 10,000 people in Assam have been evacuated to relief camps. Heavy rainfall is expected to taper off through the week, though river levels may continue to rise even after the rain has stopped.
- **Mount Etna Erupts:** Early Monday, Italy's Mount Etna, located in Sicily, began showing signs of [increased volcanic activity](#), with escalating tremors and small explosions at the Southeast Crater. Activity has intensified into near-continuous Strombolian (small minor) eruptions, producing light ash fall and a small lava flow. Seismic and infrasound signals remain very high, indicating strong ongoing unrest. There is a moderate volcanic threat to the immediate area, particularly near the crater and downwind areas, and there is a moderate volcanic threat in the immediate vicinity of the crater and downwind areas. However, the broader region, including

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more populated areas, remains at low risk, as such episodes are common for Etna. The situation continues to be closely monitored.

## Worldwide

- **Colorado Attack Highlights DHS, FBI Warnings of Elevated Threats in U.S.:** A suspect is in custody after an attack in Boulder, Colorado, on a [peaceful march](#) in support of Israeli hostages in Gaza. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has [labeled](#) the attack a “targeted act of terrorism.” The suspect, identified as Mohamed Sabry Soliman, allegedly shouted pro-Palestinian slogans and injured eight people by using a makeshift incendiary device and Molotov cocktails. The attack comes shortly after the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI sent an [intelligence bulletin](#) to law enforcement agencies, warning about the heightened risk of violence at large-scale public events this summer.
- **Netanyahu Faces Headwinds Over Shin Bet Pick as Ceasefire With Hamas Remains Elusive:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu selected Major General David Zini as the new chief of Shin Bet [despite](#) the attorney general informing him that he was unable to make an appointment due to conflict- of-interest concerns. While the legal hurdles to Zini’s appointment are formidable, Netanyahu’s continued efforts to circumvent the attorney general’s instructions will likely lead to further political unrest and an uptick in demonstration activity. Meanwhile, the war in Gaza continues, with Hamas and Israel still [negotiating](#) over a proposed ceasefire agreement. Israel is also facing increased [international criticism](#) over a new aid distribution plan that critics and local officials say has resulted in [dozens of deaths](#), although Israel has [strenuously denied](#) such claims.
- **Mexico’s First Judicial Elections See Low Turnout, Confusion:** Yesterday, Mexico held the first phase of an unprecedented series of judicial [elections](#), selecting approximately 880 federal and numerous local judges, including all Supreme Court Justices. President Claudia Sheinbaum labeled the vote a “ [success](#),” despite a voter turnout of only [13%](#) and reports of widespread confusion due to the large number of candidates and limited campaign visibility. The National Electoral Institute (INE) [reported](#) 1,770 incidents impacting voting during the election, with 28.2% involving interference, 13.3% official absenteeism, and 11.8% weather-related issues. At least six polling stations were not set up, and 50 were suspended. Despite this, 80.4% of incidents were resolved, and the INE deemed that the election proceeded normally. [Counting](#) of the results is set to conclude by June 15.
- **China, U.S. Trade Battle Heats Up Again, Spills Over Into Higher Education:** China has [accused](#) the U.S. of violating an agreement on trade reached last month by introducing restrictions on the sale of chip design software and AI chips from Huawei. Meanwhile, the U.S. said

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that China has [restricted](#) the export of rare earth metals, stymying production at hundreds of companies in the U.S. and Europe. This latter accusation [reportedly](#) led the U.S. Department of State to "[aggressively revoke](#)" the visas of Chinese students studying in the U.S. The restriction on Chinese students comes amidst the Trump administration's ongoing battle with higher education. Before the revocation of Chinese student visas, the State Department said that it would [halt](#) the scheduling of all new student visa appointments.

- **Tensions Escalate Between Cambodia, Thailand:** One Cambodian soldier [died](#) on Wednesday during a [brief clash](#) with Thai armed forces that broke out along a disputed portion of the Cambodia-Thai border near Chong Bok. The fighting [prompted](#) reports that Thailand was preparing to close its borders with Cambodia, although the Royal Thai Army has said that [such actions](#) would be taken only if the situation were to escalate further, and that they were "ready" for any [eventuality](#) along the Cambodian border. Cambodia has said that it will seek a [ruling](#) from the International Court of Justice on the border. [Calls](#) for the boycott of Thai products are circulating on Cambodian social media.

## Cyber and Regulatory

- **Germany Proposes 10 Percent Tax on Digital Platforms:** Last week, Germany's Culture Minister Wolfram Weimer [announced](#) plans to draft a bill imposing a 10 percent tax on major digital platforms like Google and Meta, following Austria's existing levy model. Weimer, in an interview with Stern magazine, called the tax "moderate and legitimate." He has invited Google and industry representatives for talks to explore alternatives, such as voluntary commitments. Meanwhile, Chancellor Friedrich Merz, backing the initiative, stressed a collaborative approach with U.S. tech firms to avoid escalating tensions amid the ongoing dispute with the Trump administration over tariffs.
- **Texas Enacts Age Verification Law for App Stores Amid Broader Tech Policy Shifts:** On Tuesday, Texas [passed](#) a law requiring Google and Apple to verify app store users' ages and obtain parental consent for downloads by minors. The law goes into effect next year and follows [similar legislation](#) passed by Utah in March. The law faces potential legal challenges, with a U.S. Supreme Court ruling on related [age-verification](#) laws pending. In related news, Texas lawmakers abandoned House [Bill 186](#), which aimed to prohibit minors from using social media, as it missed a critical Senate vote deadline after House approval.
- **India's CCTV Regulations Target Chinese Surveillance Concerns:** In April, India implemented new [regulations](#) requiring all internet-connected CCTV cameras to undergo hardware, software, and source code testing in government laboratories before market entry. The policy, promoted by concerns over Chinese [espionage](#), affects both domestic and imported surveillance

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equipment, notably impacting companies such as Hikvision and Xiaomi. Industry stakeholders have reported supply chain disruptions and a significant decline in sales due to approval delays, with only 35 of 342 applications approved as of writing. Indian officials have cited the need to strengthen cybersecurity and reduce reliance on Chinese technology, as Chinese firms [currently](#) supply 80% of components and hold 30% market share.

- **Vietnam Cracks Down on Telegram Due to Illicit Activity:** Vietnam's technology ministry [ordered](#) telecommunication providers to block the Telegram messaging app due to its alleged failure to cooperate in combating user-related crimes. The directive, signed by the deputy of the telecom department, followed police reports that 68% of Vietnam's Telegram channels violated laws involving fraud, drug trafficking, and suspected terrorism. In related news, Vietnamese police [arrested](#) a gang behind the Matrix Chain crypto scam, which has defrauded over 185,000 victims of nearly \$400 million through a pyramid scheme promising high profits with worthless tokens.
- **Other Stories the Global Intelligence Team is Watching:** Adidas [reported](#) a cyberattack targeting customer contact information through a third-party customer service provider. The company confirmed that no passwords or credit card data were compromised and is notifying affected customers. **Victoria's Secret** took its U.S. website offline on Wednesday following a [security incident](#), with recovery efforts ongoing and physical stores remaining open. And **Prague** has [accused](#) China of hacking its foreign ministry and exposing thousands of unclassified emails in a campaign dating back to 2022 .

## Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **U.S. Imposes Additional Export Controls on Semiconductor Components, Design Software:** Last week, the U.S. [imposed](#) further export controls on semiconductor design software and related chemicals used in semiconductor manufacturing, as well as some [aviation equipment](#). The U.S. Commerce Department directed leading Electronic Design Automation (EDA) firms, including Synopsys, Cadence, and Siemens EDA, to obtain a license to sell their products to Chinese buyers. The move appeared aimed at curbing China's advancements in artificial intelligence and semiconductor technologies. After allegedly receiving the directive from the Department of Commerce via a letter, Synopsys suspended its financial forecasts, and its shares, along with those of major chip design companies, subsequently dropped.
- **Covert Provision in Trump's Budget Bill Spooks Wall Street, May Deter Foreign Investment in U.S.:** Analysts are expressing concern over a [provision](#) in U.S. President Donald Trump's [budget bill](#). Section 899 would allow the U.S. Treasury to impose taxes on foreign investments from countries deemed to have "discriminatory" tax practices against American firms. The



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provision could be used to [target](#) nations like the U.K., Canada, and EU members, which the administration says have “unfair foreign taxes,” such as digital services taxes on American tech firms. Financial firms and experts are warning that the provision could deter foreign investment, destabilize markets, and hamper U.S. economic competitiveness.

- **BYD's Price Drops Cause Chinese EV Market Shakeup:** Chinese electric vehicle maker BYD [slashed](#) prices on 22 of its models by [as much as 34%](#), disrupting the country's large EV market. Industry leaders [say](#) the move is “triggering a new round of ‘price war’ panic” and “poses safety risks.” The price cuts are expected to effectively drive out competition from smaller carmakers. Rivals like Geely, Nio, and XPeng saw [share declines](#) up to 9.5% as they scrambled to respond. China's government urged an end to the “vicious competition,” fearing long-term damage to the sector. Meanwhile, China's commerce ministry is [monitoring](#) the potential market impacts of a growing trend by automakers and dealers that involves the sale of “used cars” that have never been driven.
- **Global Port Congestion Worsens Amid Trade Uncertainty, Geopolitical Disruptions:** Port congestion is [intensifying at major European hubs](#) like Bremerhaven and Hamburg, with berth delays increasing to 77% at some locations. The delays have been driven by labor shortages, low Rhine River levels, and front-loaded demand from a temporary U.S.-China tariff pause. Key ports across Asia and the U.S. have been affected by similar congestion, as geopolitical tensions and uncertain trade policies complicate shipping flows and planning. Global freight costs are rising amid continued Red Sea disruptions, with carriers rerouting via southern Africa and warning that a hasty return to Suez Canal routes could overwhelm ports and worsen supply chain bottlenecks.
- **Trump's Tariff Strategy Faces Legal Hurdles:** Reciprocal tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump on almost every other country [faced](#) a legal setback last week after they were blocked by the U.S. International Court of Trade Court, although an appeals court [granted](#) a stay on the ruling, allowing them to remain in effect. The current legal wrangling does not apply to all of the tariffs introduced by Trump, with previously announced levies on steel, aluminum, and cars unaffected. As if to reinforce that fact, on Friday, Trump announced that he would [double](#) tariffs on steel and aluminum to 50% beginning Wednesday. The [EU](#) has denounced the tariff increase and warned of retaliatory measures. The uncertainty over tariffs comes as the 90-day pause on “Liberation Day” tariffs is set to end on July 8, with little in the way of substantive trade deals secured by the administration so far.

## Health

- **WHO Reports on Increasing COVID-19 Cases:** In the WHO's [latest global situation report](#) on COVID-19, health officials found that global COVID activity has been increasing since mid-

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February, and test positivity rates are at their highest levels since last July. In India, COVID cases [rose](#) 1,200% in a week, and increasing cases across Southeast Asia have prompted health authorities in [Indonesia](#) and [Thailand](#) to urge the public to adopt precautionary measures. A new, more transmissible variant, NB.1.8.1, has been [reported](#) in the U.S., though medical experts note that symptoms are like those from earlier variants. The CDC [issued updated advice](#) on COVID shots last week and, despite Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s earlier comments about removing the shots from the childhood immunization schedule, the changes were limited to dropping guidance for pregnant women. CDC immunization recommendations have implications for insurance coverage.

- **CDC Updates Travel Advisory as Measles Cases Rise in U.S.:** Two U.S. states, Iowa and Nebraska, reported their first cases of measles last week. According to the [latest data from the CDC](#), there have been 1,088 confirmed measles cases this year reported by 33 states. The CDC [updated](#) its measles travel advisory last week, noting that cases are rising in many countries and reiterating that international travelers should be fully vaccinated with the MMR vaccine. The travel advisory update [warns](#) that travel settings, like airports and other transportation hubs, pose risks for contracting measles. Health officials in Colorado [confirmed](#) a second measles case in an adult traveler who was on a flight that has seen two additional confirmed cases. Seven total cases have been [reported](#) this year in Colorado; there were zero cases in 2024.
- **Fatal Bird Flu Human Case in Cambodia, Latvia Reports H5N1 in Backyard Poultry:** An 11-year-old boy has [died](#) from H5N1 avian flu in Cambodia, the country's fourth fatal case this year. Meanwhile, China [reported](#) its first human H5N1 case since July 2024. The patient, a 53-year-old woman from the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in southern China, has since recovered. China moved to [ban](#) all poultry product imports from Brazil amid the South American country's ongoing bird flu outbreak. Brazil had previously stopped chicken shipments to China and other countries earlier in May. In Europe, Latvia [reported](#) its first outbreak of H5N1 in a flock of backyard poultry.
- **PAHO Urges Americas Member States to Monitor, Vaccinate for Pertussis:** Peru's health ministry [confirmed](#) more than 400 cases of pertussis, also known as whooping cough, this year. The majority of cases have been reported in the northeast Loreto region, with nine deaths reported in the Datem del Marañón province. An epidemiological alert from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) [notes](#) increased pertussis cases across the Americas region this year, particularly in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and the U.S. According to PAHO, the most affected age groups are children under five years of age. However, the most affected group is between 11-19 years of age in the U.S. In Hawaii, cases so far this year (108) have already [surpassed](#) the total number of cases (84) in 2024.



- **Fatal Cholera Outbreak Kills 70 People in Two Days in Sudan's Capital:** An outbreak of cholera in Sudan has [killed](#) 172 people as of last week, with the majority of deaths reported in Khartoum and surrounding areas. Doctors Without Borders [reported](#) a surge in suspected cholera cases in mid-May. The rise in cases comes after the Sudanese armed forces fully [retook](#) Khartoum last month, allowing displaced residents to return home. The WHO [sent](#) 2.9 million vaccines to Sudan to help stem the outbreak. The United Nations has [called](#) the Sudan war the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with millions of people displaced and critical infrastructure, including hospitals and sanitation systems, decimated.

## Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Demonstrations Against Trump Administration Continue in Lead Up to June 14 Day of Action:** Demonstrators are increasingly confronting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel, especially as the agency [attempts](#) to execute its "expedited removal" policy. While the vast majority of demonstrations have remained peaceful, some have escalated, including in [Newark](#), [New York City](#), and [San Diego](#). The demonstrations come as organizers prepare for the next major nationwide day of action, scheduled for June 14 and timed to coincide with a planned military parade in Washington, DC for President Donald Trump's birthday. In addition to the June 14 actions, other days that will likely see an uptick in demonstrations include June 6, when veterans' groups are calling for rallies, and June 28, when the organizers of the Tesla Takedown protests are planning a day of action.
- **Two Killed, Hundreds Injured and Arrested in Paris Following Champions League Final:** Two people [died](#) and nearly 200 were injured during unrest that followed Paris Saint-Germain's five-to-nil Champions League victory over Inter Milan. Police in Paris arrested almost 500 individuals, and they also deployed tear gas and water cannons to prevent crowds from reaching the Arc de Triomphe. With the Champions League settled, attention turns to the FIFA Club World Cup, which will be held in the United States beginning June 14. PSG is one of the participating clubs. As part of security preparations, officials are [banning](#) the entry of around 150 Chelsea and Manchester United fans for past violent behavior, a list that may grow to include some PSG supporters following this weekend's unrest.
- **Panama Declares State of Emergency in Bocas del Toro as Protests Continue:** Panama remains in a heightened state of unrest following the [passage](#) of Law 462, a social security reform signed in early 2025, criticized for promoting privatization of the Social Security Fund (CSS). Opposition groups, including teachers' unions, construction workers, and students, are [demanding](#) the law's repeal while also protesting against other actions by the government, such as a [new security deal](#) with the United States. Since March 2025, demonstrations have resulted

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in significant [disruption](#) and [violence](#). On May 27, President José Raúl Mulino [declared](#) a state of emergency in Bocas del Toro to address a strike by 5,000 Chiquita Brand workers. The strike, deemed illegal, led to road blockades, school suspensions, and \$75 million in losses for Chiquita, prompting the company to lay off the workers and suspend operations. A plan to allow a controversial mine to [export](#) already mined copper may touch off yet more protests.

- **France to See Nationwide Strike, Demonstrations Over Pension Reform:** Widespread disruptions can be expected on Thursday across France during a general strike and demonstration campaign organized by the CGT union. CGT is calling on supporters and members employed across all sectors to walk out and demonstrate nationwide against the 2023 pension reform law and in support of wage increases, according to [union officials](#) and [local media](#). Notable gatherings are planned in Paris (École Militaire at 2 pm), Marseille (Vieux Port at 10:30 am), and Lyon (Place d'Arsonval at 11 am). Disruptions to public transportation services can be expected, with the SNCF's largest union [calling](#) on members to strike that day.
- **Transporters Plan National Strike in Bolivia:** The Bolivian Drivers' Union Confederation, led by executive secretary Lucio Gómez, has announced a national strike with roadblocks scheduled for Tuesday to protest ongoing fuel shortages. The decision follows a recent [resolution](#) by the transportation sector, which criticized the government's failure to address the crisis. The strike will likely involve blockades at borders, main roads, and provincial and departmental capitals. Gómez emphasized that the action is not politically motivated but a response to the fuel crisis, with potential for further measures if the situation persists.

## Upcoming Events

- June 3: Presidential Election (South Korea)
- June 4: Anniversary of Tiananmen Square Massacre (China, Hong Kong)
- June 5: General Elections (Burundi)
- June 5: Naksa Day (Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza)
- June 4-9: Hajj (Mecca, Saudi Arabia)
- June 6-9: Eid al-Adha (Global)
- June 8-9: Abrogative Referendums (Italy)
- June 11: Presentation of Articles of Impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte (Philippines)
- June 14 - July 13: FIFA Club World Cup (United States)
- June 15-17: G7 Summit (Kananaskis, Canada)
- June 24-26: NATO Summit (The Hague, Netherlands)
- July 6-7: BRICS Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
- July 22: Legislative Elections (Japan)