



July 22, 2025

Headlining This Week's Brief

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Top Stories

Israeli Intervention in Syria Likely to Further Alienate Supporters

Recent [clashes](#) between Syrian government-backed forces and the Druze community in the southern city of Sweida were quickly [brought to an end](#) on July 16 following an Israeli military intervention. The move has left observers increasingly [concerned](#) that potential political benefits may be [driving](#) Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to continue entering new conflicts.

Both the support of the Israeli Druze community and the [popularity boost](#) Netanyahu has enjoyed following Israel's brief war with Iran are critical to the embattled leader remaining in power and a continued [postponement](#) — on national security grounds — of a series of corruption trials that threaten to force him out of office.

Whatever Israel's motivations in entering another foreign conflict following almost two years of nearly uninterrupted fighting in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran, the intervention is likely to [further alienate](#) Israel's international allies, with the Israeli relationship with the United States under President Trump potentially the most important one threatened by the [reception](#) to Israel's continued foreign operations.

It is also unclear how long this strategy will remain viable with Netanyahu's domestic audience. While the Iran conflict was broadly supported, continued demonstration activity targeting Netanyahu (outlined [here](#) in an ongoing alert) for the ongoing conflict in Gaza and failure to secure the safe return of hostages could negatively impact political goodwill toward the government.

Bangladesh Tense Ahead of First Anniversary of Hasina's Resignation

On August 5, Bangladesh will celebrate the 2024 [resignation](#) of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed, capping a more than month-long series of commemorative events that honored the memory of those killed in the [uprising](#). Political tensions between her Awami League (AL) party and former opposition parties, as well as concerns about a planned [April 2026 election](#), have recently led to clashes and mass demonstrations that are increasingly disruptive to local business operations and travel.

Further clashes between supporters of the AL and members of other parties could occur following a series of violent [incidents](#) inspired by a July 16 attack in Gopalganj that resulted in at least four deaths, caused a [long-lasting curfew](#), and inspired demonstrations that [disrupted traffic](#) over 550 miles away in Dhaka. Unrelated clashes between AL supporters and others have also [continued to emerge](#) in the lead-up to August 5.

Separately, Jamaat-e-Islami, the country's second-largest opposition party under the AL-led government, held a [mass rally](#) for political inclusion in central Dhaka on July 19, attracting [tens of thousands](#) of supporters who held processions from across the city and arrived at the venue in droves, creating road and rail disruptions across the capital. Continued concern about further delays could lead to similar disruptive events in the future, with the interim government's plan to [exclude](#) the AL from participation also a potential flashpoint for unrest.

Heat Wave Conditions Dominate Central and Eastern United States

The dominant weather story across the United States this week will be above-normal temperatures and dangerous heat. As of Monday morning, at least 19 states across the Central and Southeastern U.S. were under some form of [NOAA Heat Alert](#). Notably, actual temperatures are expected to approach 100°F along the Central Gulf Coast on Tuesday and Wednesday.

From Thursday into Friday, the core of the above-normal heat will shift north and east into the Great Lakes and Northeast regions. Friday may see the highest number of daily high temperature records broken, with temperatures forecast to reach 96–99°F in cities such as Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia. A similar heat wave in late June caused [transit delays](#) on New Jersey Transit, and similar disruptions are possible again with this event.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Atlantic Tropics Update:** There are two systems of interest brewing in the Atlantic. First, a disturbance is expected to move across northern Florida around Tuesday, then track westward along the coastal waters of the Florida Panhandle, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas between Wednesday and Friday. While the chance of named storm development is very low, this system could bring heavy rainfall to the region by mid- to late-week. Elsewhere, the [National Hurricane Center](#) is monitoring a weak tropical wave in the central Atlantic, which is forecast to reach the Lesser Antilles by Thursday. The potential for named storm formation with this system is also low.
- **Manila Placed Under Red Rainfall Warnings:** As of late Monday local time, Manila and surrounding areas were placed under [red rainfall warnings](#) due to an intensified southwest monsoon. These warnings are typically associated with widespread significant flooding. Classes and government work have been [suspended](#) through Tuesday. Forecast models suggest that above-normal rainfall coverage and intensity may continue through mid-week.
- **Typhoon Wipha Exits Hong Kong, Approaching Hanoi:** Typhoon Wipha brought significant impacts to [Hong Kong](#) over the weekend, including the cancellation of hundreds of flights and [injuries](#) to over 30 people. In China, around 700,000 residents in low-lying coastal areas were evacuated ahead of the storm. While conditions have improved in Hong Kong, the now-weakened Tropical Storm Wipha continues to threaten northern Vietnam and Laos with heavy rain and significant flooding, including in the capital, Hanoi. Rainfall along its path could reach 200–400 mm (8–16 inches), with isolated areas possibly seeing over 500 mm (20 inches).
- **South Korea Flood Aftermath:** [18 are dead and nine are missing](#) following days of torrential rainfall and flooding, most notably over southern parts of the country. In total, over 14,000 people were evacuated. Much drier weather and building heat wave conditions are expected through Friday. New tropical threats, if any, won't near the area until the weekend.
- **West Pacific Tropics Remain Active:** The [U.S. Joint Typhoon Warning Center](#) is monitoring a new disturbance, Invest 97W, located east of the Philippines. Forecast models consistently show it developing into a named storm as it approaches Okinawa, Japan by Wednesday or Thursday. While conditions are not favorable for significant intensification, the main concerns will be heavy rainfall and flooding, not only in Okinawa, but possibly in Taiwan and coastal China near Wenzhou and Shanghai, depending on the storm's track. It's still too early to pinpoint where the heaviest rain may fall. Meanwhile, another system may form farther east in the open Pacific within the next four to seven days, though any potential land threat remains uncertain.

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- **Pakistan Threatened by More Flooding:** Following last week's [deadly monsoon floods](#) that killed at least 63 in Punjab, the Pakistan Meteorological Department has issued a new warning through July 25. Heavy to very heavy rain and thunderstorms are forecast across Islamabad, Rawalpindi, parts of Punjab, Kashmir, and Baluchistan, among other locations. Rainfall totals between Lahore and Islamabad could reach 50–100mm, with locally higher amounts possible. Residents are urged to brace for disruptions and potential damage to vulnerable infrastructure.

Worldwide

- **Japan Warns of Rapid Chinese Military Buildup Ahead of Taiwanese President's Paraguay Visit:** Japan's latest defense white paper [warns](#) that China's rapid military buildup, notably around Taiwan, poses Japan's "greatest strategic challenge." Tokyo highlighted "unprecedented" modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s naval, air, missile, and nuclear capabilities, alongside increased activity near Japanese waters and around Taiwan. In response, Beijing [dismissed](#) the report as unjustified, [defending](#) its latest operations as legitimate. The report comes ahead of Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's scheduled [visit](#) to Paraguay, one of a dozen countries that recognize Taiwan, next month. The trip is likely to involve a stopover in the U.S., according to precedent.
- **Major Bank Freezes China Travel After Employee Is Prevented From Leaving:** After an Atlanta-based senior banker was not allowed to leave China while traveling there, Wells Fargo [suspended](#) all business travel to the country. Despite [efforts](#) to attract foreign business back to China amid an ongoing trade war with the U.S. and widespread "re-shoring" of manufacturing to other countries, the [continued use](#) of exit bans and other means of pressuring companies amid business or political disputes is impacting interest in further Chinese investments. China has [previously used](#) exit bans as a political tool, leading both business and private travelers to be [less willing](#) to travel to the country for fear of detention, sometimes for several months.
- **Hoax Bomb Threats Continue to Impact Indian Air Travel, Education:** Indian [schools](#), [temples](#), and at least one [airline](#) have received hoax bomb threats in recent weeks, raising concerns about a potential resurgence in the trend that has become increasingly disruptive. In 2024, Indian flight schedules were severely disrupted by [nearly 1,000](#) such threats, a significant increase over the 120 threats received in total between 2014 and 2017. Similar threats have also frequently targeted [schools](#), leading to snap closures that can impact childcare needs across large areas. Despite government efforts to discourage the trend by [raising penalties](#) amid the late 2024 surge, the continued ease with which threats can be made on this scale suggests that they are likely to continue.

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- **Two New U.K. Immigration Rules Take Effect Tuesday:** The United Kingdom is implementing [changes](#) to its immigration rules to reduce immigration. Two of the rules, which come into effect this Tuesday, will reduce the list of jobs eligible for a new Skilled Worker visa and end an existing exemption for recruiting social care workers from abroad. Further reductions to the skilled jobs list are expected in 2026. Other rules, including stricter English language expectations and increasing the standard qualifying period for permanent residence, do not have set timelines for implementation. The changes come amid ongoing social tensions over immigration and the one-year anniversary of the Southport riots. This Saturday, Glasgow, Scotland, will see [opposing demonstrations](#), with the U.K. Independence Party organizing a march and “mass deportation rally” and the group Stand Up To Racism organizing a counterdemonstration against it.
- **Arrest of Varna’s Mayor Sparks Protests, Strains Relations:** The July 8 arrest of Varna mayor Blagomir Kotsev on corruption and embezzlement charges [sparked](#) nationwide protests and demonstrations in several European cities and is [straining](#) diplomatic relations with Germany. The largest rallies occurred in Varna and Sofia, where demonstrators, [joined](#) by EU lawmakers, denounced selective justice and demanded the release of Kotsev and two councilors. Germany’s ambassador attended one protest, prompting a diplomatic complaint. The case has drawn heightened attention as Bulgaria pursues membership in the Schengen Area and the Eurozone, intensifying scrutiny over its judicial independence. Kotsev denies wrongdoing and claims political targeting, and at least one witness later [withdrew](#) their testimony against him, citing coercion.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **U.S. Targets AI, Energy Infrastructure for Increased Private Investment:** At the Pennsylvania Energy & Innovation Summit, U.S. President Donald Trump [highlighted](#) over \$92 billion in private-sector investments in artificial intelligence and energy infrastructure, part of an initiative to boost U.S. competitiveness and reduce reliance on foreign technology. Key commitments [include](#) Amazon’s \$20 billion for data center complexes, Blackstone’s \$25 billion for data centers and gas-fired plants, Google’s \$25 billion for AI infrastructure, and CoreWeave’s \$6 billion [data center](#) project. Several projects involve repurposing older energy infrastructure, including decommissioned coal plants and dormant nuclear facilities for modern energy use. While Trump signed an [executive order](#) to formalize AI policy, the success of these initiatives may hinge on permitting outcomes, energy availability, and whether projects are new or pre-existing.
- **Malaysia Imposes New Permit Rules on U.S. AI Chips:** Malaysia is [requiring](#) permits for imports and exports of U.S.-made high-performance AI chips, a move intended to address

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potential diversion risks and regulatory gaps as global [scrutiny](#) of semiconductor trade intensifies. The policy also covers transshipment and transit, with companies required to notify authorities at least 30 days in advance, even for items not [explicitly](#) listed under Malaysia's strategic items list. The change comes amid broader U.S. efforts to block chip flows to China via third countries and reflects pressure on regional partners to tighten controls. Malaysia, a fast-growing AI infrastructure hub, has drawn major investment from Microsoft, Google, and ByteDance. The policy's impact may depend on U.S.-Malaysia trade negotiations and the outcome of pending U.S. export rules.

- **U.K. Creates Secret Program to Relocate Afghans After Personal Information Exposed:** The U.K. government [secretly created a program](#) to help thousands of Afghans move to Britain after a major data breach exposed their personal information. The [leaked data](#) included the names and other details of nearly 19,000 Afghans and their families who had applied to relocate to the U.K. The [breach](#) put them at risk of being targeted by the Taliban, who had recently returned to power at the time the information was accidentally released in early 2022. The Ministry of Defence didn't discover the breach until August 2023, after some of the data appeared on Facebook. The government is now facing lawsuits by those affected.
- **Singapore Grappling With Sophisticated Cyberattack Targeting Critical Infrastructure:** Singapore is still [responding](#) to a significant, ongoing cyberattack targeting its critical infrastructure. The perpetrators are UNC3886, a cyber espionage group with links to China that is well-equipped to steal information and target critical services and infrastructure. Singapore's military cyber units have been [deployed](#) to assist civilian agencies in mitigating the threat. While specific targets have not been disclosed, Coordinating Minister for National Security K. Shanmugam [stated](#) that "high value strategic threat targets, [and] vital infrastructure that delivers essential services" are being targeted. Beijing [expressed](#) strong dissatisfaction with Singaporean media reports linking UNC3886 to China.
- **Russia Signals WhatsApp Ban Over National Security Concerns:** Russian lawmakers have indicated that WhatsApp may soon face restrictions or exit the Russian market, [citing](#) national security risks and legislation favoring state-controlled alternatives. The move reflects efforts to reduce reliance on foreign technology and communication platforms. WhatsApp, the most widely used messaging app in Russia, was described by lawmakers as a "breach of national security," while new legislation mandates adoption of MAX, a government-backed messaging app integrated with public services. Meta, WhatsApp's parent company, is [designated](#) as an "extremist organization" in Russia, and two of its other products — Facebook and Instagram — were banned in 2022. Previous bans saw [continued](#) use via VPNs, and public concerns may hinder a full transition from WhatsApp.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **U.S. Trade, Health, and Regulatory Priorities Likely to Raise Food Costs:** Various aspects of the Trump administration's policy agenda will likely increase the costs of foods ranging from imported vegetables to domestically produced soft drinks and animal products. A [new 17% tariff](#) on tomato imports from Mexico — which supplies 70% of the tomatoes sold in the U.S. — will [impact](#) both retail and wholesale consumers, while prices of many processed foods are also expected to rise as a result of efforts to [encourage](#) the use of more costly sugars in place of high fructose corn syrup. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [plans to enhance](#) food safety practices for meat, poultry, and egg products are also likely to accompany increased costs associated with testing, training, equipment, and other aspects of increased government oversight.
- **U.S. Unplugs China From Subsea Cable Infrastructure:** The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will move to [ban the use of Chinese technology](#) or hardware to connect subsea communications cables to the United States as soon as August 7. The ban extends to companies involved in the construction of these cables, meaning that companies using certain Chinese technology or equipment will also be banned from joining such projects. The ban comes amid persistent fears about the potential for Chinese authorities to use such technology as a backdoor to access sensitive U.S. data or to sever communications in the event of a conflict, and [could lead to further regulations](#) to protect this critical infrastructure in the future.
- **New Tariffs Could Collapse Basotho Textile Sector, Threatening U.S. Brands:** The increased financial pressure on low-margin industries stemming from new U.S. tariffs [threatens](#) to completely collapse Lesotho's textile sector, the country's largest employer and the most important African supplier to American garment brands. Facing the threat that tariffs as high as 50% could kick in on August 1, government ministries are now required to contribute 3% of their budget to a fund meant to support the creation of 60,000 jobs, to offset expected losses if textile manufacturers wind down local operations. The threat of high tariffs could have a similar effect in other countries heavily reliant on low-profit exports to the U.S. if the Trump administration's threatened tariffs come into effect.
- **North Korean Microchip Production Creates Data Privacy, Compliance Risks:** A South Korean official has [claimed](#) that North Korea is operating at least three semiconductor manufacturing sites, increasing the risk that sanctions evasion via China or other means could see North Korean chips used in devices for global markets. Amid [concerns](#) about the threat posed by North Korean hackers and [active campaigns](#) to infiltrate U.S. firms, this — whether accidental or malicious — could facilitate bad actors' access to users' sensitive data. Additionally,

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following a 2017 United Nations Security Council [resolution](#) banning North Korean exports of electrical equipment, the production or sale of such goods could expose legitimate businesses to regulatory scrutiny.

- **Resource Nationalism Forces Miners to Adapt Across Africa:** Governments across Africa are employing increasingly [aggressive tactics](#), including nationalization and export bans, to regain control of their critical mineral resources from foreign mining corporations amid surging demand. The trend is forcing these companies to craft new approaches to managing these challenges, including engaging in “back-channel negotiations even as they pursued legal cases against host governments” and other strategies that threaten to impact brand reputation in an industry already under intense scrutiny over its human rights practices. Other companies have sought instead to build better relationships with host nations by investing in local development projects, hoping that infrastructure investments could both benefit local operations and create a sense of goodwill.

Health

- **EU Launches New Stockpiling Strategy:** The European Commission announced [two new initiatives](#) designed to increase access to essential goods in the event of a crisis: the EU Stockpiling Strategy and a Medical Countermeasures Strategy. Under the plans, EU member states are being [instructed](#) to stockpile “medicine, generators, and raw materials,” as well as “water purification products, equipment to repair undersea cables, drones, and mobile bridges for use in conflicts.” The bloc also plans to establish a critical raw materials center by 2026 to procure goods for interested companies. As of now, [only three countries](#) — Czechia, Finland, and Estonia — are fully engaged in EU stockpiling efforts, with the status of other member states unclear, likely due to national security concerns.
- **Swine Fever Resurgence Threatens Vietnamese Livestock:** The underreporting and concealment of cases of African Swine Fever (ASF) across Vietnam is “[threatening disease control efforts](#),” according to agriculture officials, with “small-scale, low-biosecurity” farms particularly at risk. Authorities are tracking 248 active outbreaks spread across 20 provinces, 41% fewer outbreaks than at this point in 2024. However, they warn that issues with vaccine uptake, slaughtering practices, and poor regulatory enforcement could lead these outbreaks to worsen. The livestock sector is responsible for a quarter of Vietnam’s agricultural production, and a major outbreak in 2020 that led to the culling of 9 million pigs had a significant impact on the national economy.
- **60,000 Korean Medical Workers Threaten July 24 Strike:** On Thursday, July 24, a [threatened strike](#) by 60,000 South Korean medical workers over working conditions could further impact

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healthcare services in a country already suffering the impacts of a more than yearlong strike by trainee doctors. The one-day strike is likely to impact the operations of 127 different medical facilities across the country if authorities do not agree to their terms, which include the establishment of public medical colleges and other significant demands that are unlikely to be met. The threat is emblematic of the many disagreements between the Korean government and the medical community, and similar large-scale action could recur if authorities and the healthcare sector do not come to terms.

- **Nipah Confirmed Case Count Increases to Five in India:** The total number of people infected with Nipah in India's Kerala state [increased](#) to five last week, after preliminary testing of the son of a man who died of the disease came back positive. Authorities instituted a three-kilometer lockdown around his residence in Palakkad and have asked all identified contacts to remain in quarantine. As of July 21, over 570 people are on the [Nipah contact list in Kerala](#). The majority are in Palakkad (418), followed by Kozhikode (89) and Malappuram (62), with [extensive surveillance measures](#) underway across several districts, as well as at some [border checkpoints](#) with Tamil Nadu. While there is no current vaccine approved for Nipah, two candidates are [slated](#) to begin human trials in Bangladesh.
- **Air Pollution Sickens Six Million People in Jakarta:** Worsening air pollution has [sickened](#) at least six million people in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, according to Minister of the Environment Hanif Faisol Nurofiq, who noted that pollution in northern parts of the city is reaching dangerous levels by the middle of the day. "Respiratory symptoms, including acute infections that could aggravate existing conditions," have already been noted, leading authorities to begin restricting certain burning practices. If the issue continues, authorities could crack down on industrial activity and commercial transport, two of the most significant sources of pollution in the ci

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Several Demonstrations Planned in Peru Ahead of Fiestas Patrias:** Several large protests against the government and chronic insecurity are expected across Peru over the coming week, culminating in mass demonstrations and a [transportation sector strike](#) on July 27 and 28, coinciding with the Fiestas Patrias. Tomorrow, the General Confederation of Workers of Peru (CGTP), the largest trade union federation in the country, has called for [nationwide demonstrations](#), highlighted by a rally in Lima at the Plaza Dos De Mayo at 4 pm. Following tomorrow's rallies, groups representing the transportation sector will [begin to gather](#) in the capital on July 26, with a sit-in scheduled at the Palace of Justice on July 27 and a march on the Congress of the Republic on July 28.

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- **Anti-Trump Organizations Plan Two Additional Days of Action:** After tens of thousands took part in demonstrations against the Trump administration as part of the “Good Trouble Lives On” day of action on July 17, organizers have announced two additional protest days for later this summer. Several groups, including prominent unions like the SEIU, have called for peaceful demonstrations across the country on July 26 under the banner of “[Families First](#)”. The following weekend, on August 2, the 50501 Movement and allied organizations are planning their next nationwide protest, dubbed “Rage Against the Regime.” To date, 50501 has organized the largest demonstrations against the Trump administration, with some of its days of action gathering millions of participants nationwide; the actions have been predominantly peaceful.
- **Protests Against South Africa Police Gain Momentum:** Demonstrations are expected to continue in South Africa over [accusations](#) that Police Minister Senzo Mchunu, who heads the [controversial](#) South Africa Police Service (SAPS), is connected to organized crime. In light of the allegations, President Cyril Ramaphosa has suspended Mchunu and [established](#) a Judicial Commission of Inquiry. The situation has prompted demonstrations in [Durban](#), [Pretoria](#), and other [locations](#), including SAPS locations. Meanwhile, opposition party uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) has said that they will [stage](#) “rolling nationwide protests” if Ramaphosa does not reverse the appointment of Firoz Cachalia as acting police minister.
- **Strikes in Europe to Impact Travel in Italy, Medical Care in England:** In England, resident doctors [voted to strike](#) for five days beginning this Friday, July 25, at 7 am. Up to 50,000 doctors [could take part](#) in the work stoppage, potentially leading to appointment cancellations for thousands of patients. More than 60,000 appointments were [canceled](#) during a walkout by doctors last year. In Italy, airport ground staff and flight crew members with Volotea airlines intend to [strike](#) for four hours on Saturday afternoon. Flight delays and cancellations are [possible](#) during the nationwide aviation sector strikes.
- **Demonstrations Possible in France Against 2026 Budget:** The CGT, among France’s most influential trade union federations, is [planning](#) a series of mobilizations beginning in early September, when the school year begins. The actions are in response to Prime Minister François Bayrou’s proposed plan to [scrap](#) two public holidays — Easter Monday and May 8, when France celebrates Victory Day — in a bid to reduce the country’s deficit. Opposition parties from across the ideological spectrum have criticized the plan, making it unlikely that the proposed budget that includes the holiday cuts will be passed as written. The backlash also lays the groundwork for a no-confidence motion against Bayrou as early as October, setting France up for further political paralysis.

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Upcoming Events

- July 3-August 9: Amarnath Yatra (India)
- July 18-24: Airline Workers' Strike (Portugal)
- July 24: Potential Medical Workers' Strike (South Korea)
- July 26: Recall Vote (Taiwan)
- July 26: Glasgow Airport Strike (Scotland, U.K.)
- July 27: UEFA Women's EURO 2025 Final Match (Basel, Switzerland)
- July 28-29: Fiestas Patrias (Peru)
- August 5: July Mass Uprising Day (Bangladesh)
- August 14: Independence Day (Pakistan)
- August 15: Independence Day (India)
- August 17: Independence Day (Indonesia)
- August 17: General Elections (Bolivia)
- August 24: Independence Day (Ukraine)
- August 24-September 7: U.S. Open Tennis Tournament (New York City, NY)
- August 25: Day of Songun (North Korea)
- August 31: Independence Day (Malaysia)