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#### **Top Stories**

# **Super Typhoon to Threaten Southeast China After Hitting Northern Philippine Islands**

Earlier Monday, <u>Super Typhoon Ragasa</u> directly hit the Philippines' Babuyan Islands, population 19,000, with estimated one-minute maximum sustained winds of 160 mph (255 km/h). Reports out of the region may be limited due to widespread impacts and communications disruptions in the initial hours following the event. Farther south, despite the typhoon passing well north of the National Capital Region, the typhoon has caused <u>widespread flooding</u> across Metro Manila, with multiple roads in Quezon City rendered impassable, including Gregorio Araneta Avenue, Maria Clara Street, and Maginhawa. Orangelevel heavy rainfall warnings remain in effect, and Quezon City has opened evacuation shelters while announcing the <u>suspension</u> of all in-person classes in public and private schools on Tuesday. ThebPresidential Communications Office had already declared widespread school and government office closures on Monday as a precaution. Residents are advised to stay indoors and prioritize safety.

Attention now shifts to Hong Kong and mainland China, where the effects of Typhoon Ragasa are expected to begin later Tuesday, with greater direct impacts arriving Wednesday. According to the **Hong Kong Observatory**. Gale or Storm Signal No. 8 will be issued by 2:20 pm. Winds may reach hurricane strength offshore and over high terrain. Severe winds will be accompanied by heavy squally showers, thunderstorms, and very high seas. A storm surge could raise coastal water levels by about 2 meters, with maximum levels up to 4-5 meters in Tolo Harbour, posing a serious flooding risk in low-lying areas.

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Authorities advise residents to complete all precautions immediately, secure loose objects, clear drains, cancel outdoor activities, and avoid shorelines or exposed areas. Any northward shift in the **forecast** track could bring increasingly severe impacts to the area.

According to the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, the center may pass within 100 km (60 - 65 mi) of the region. Winds could reach hurricane force for a sustained period, bringing destructive conditions, especially impacting residents and businesses on upper-level floors. A significant storm surge is anticipated. If it coincides with astronomical high tide, flooding on par with that seen during Typhoons Hato (2017) and Mangkhut (2018) could occur on Wednesday. Hato was one of the worst storms Macao experienced in over 50 years. An orange storm surge warning will be issued at 1 pm on Tuesday, with a high likelihood of a red warning being issued later in the day.

Some weakening will occur as the core parallels the coast, but strong typhoon impacts will hit much of central and western coastal Guangdong later Wednesday. Tropical storm conditions and dangerous rainfall hazards will extend into neighboring Hainan, southern Guangxi provinces (China), and ultimately northern Vietnam into Thursday.

# Trump Administration Pushes Executive Order on Political Violence and Free Speech, Seeks to Designate Antifa as a Terrorist Organization

Following the assassination of political activist Charlie Kirk on September 10, the Trump administration is moving to address what it describes as rising threats associated with political violence and extremist rhetoric. On September 18, President Donald Trump <a href="mailto:announced">announced</a> that his administration will designate <a href="mailto:Antifa">Antifa</a>, a decentralized movement opposed to "far-right, racist and fascist groups," as a "major terrorist organization." Trump is also considering RICO-style <a href="mailto:legal">legal</a> action against "left-wing" groups he accuses of promoting political violence. A forthcoming <a href="mailto:executive order">executive order</a> on the issue is expected to open the door to legal action against speech that is deemed to incite violence.

While the administration frames these efforts as necessary to ensure public safety, critics warn that the measure raises First Amendment concerns. Civil liberties organizations, including the ACLU, have **expressed** concerns that policy trending in this direction could result in government overreach and the suppression of dissent. Experts also **note** that significant legal hurdles could impede efforts to label domestic groups as terrorist organizations, since new legislation would be required to enforce such a designation effectively.

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# "Gen Z"-Led Protests in Asia Could Inspire Future Movements, But Challenges Remain

Youth-driven unrest, ranging from sustained pressure campaigns in <u>Indonesia</u> and the <u>Philippines</u> to the <u>overthrow</u> of Nepal's government earlier in September, is inspiring further demonstrations against governments viewed as corrupt and unresponsive to their populations' needs. The events that transpired in Nepal in particular appear to be fueling calls to action as far abroad as <u>France</u>, Tunisia, and elsewhere, as other groups look to the Nepalese demonstrators' success as an inspiration for their own movements.

Despite the movement's success and recent efforts to <a href="transform">transform</a> their protest into lasting political influence in Nepal, <a href="questions remain">questions remain</a> surrounding whether the demonstrators will be able to achieve the systemic change they desire. Failure to achieve material improvements in corruption, transparency, and other key indicators could lead to further political instability. Bangladesh, which saw the overthrow of its government in 2024 as the result of a similar youth movement, has made only <a href="fitful progress">fitful progress</a> towards reforms and fresh elections, illustrating the difficulty such movements face in achieving their desired outcomes. As changes in the global economy and consumption patterns continue to impact many countries' fortunes and existing regimes prove themselves unable or unwilling to respond to the demands of their citizens, further unrest and instability are likely.

#### Climate and Natural Hazards

- Three Systems of Interest in Atlantic: While the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season has been unusually quiet, there is no shortage of systems to monitor in the week ahead. First, Hurricane Gabrielle is passing east of Bermuda and could threaten the Portuguese Azores Islands, located in the eastern Atlantic, by Thursday. In addition, two disturbances in the central Atlantic have been given medium to high chances of development as they move westward. While there is no immediate threat, residents of the Turks and Caicos, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and the U.S. East Coast should prepare for the likelihood of at least one named storm crossing the southwest Atlantic between September 25 and 28.
- Severe Flooding Ongoing in Northern Italy: A slow-moving disturbance over Central Europe
  has led to dangerously heavy rainfall across northern portions of Italy. The system has already
  caused major transportation disruptions in <u>Como</u> and <u>Milan</u>, among other towns and cities in
  the region.
- Watching the Bay of Bengal for Tropical Activity: A broad low-pressure area over the north Bay of Bengal may consolidate into a named tropical disturbance by Thursday or Friday. The <u>India Meteorological Department</u> has given the system a moderate chance of cyclogenesis

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during the period and is warning of squalls, very rough seas, and heavy rain. Current forecast model guidance suggests the storm will move inland over Odisha or northern Andhra Pradesh around Saturday. Residents in the region should closely monitor the progress of this feature and heed warnings from local officials.

• New Study Links China's Aerosol Reductions to Faster Global Warming: According to an international study published in Communications Earth & Environment, a sharp decline in China's aerosol emissions since 2010 has accelerated global warming by removing aerosols' temporary cooling effect that previously masked greenhouse gas impacts. The reduction increased global average surface temperatures by about 0.07°C between 2010 and 2023, roughly 0.05°C per decade, explaining most of the recent acceleration in warming across the Northern Hemisphere. Researchers, including the Finnish Meteorological Institute, emphasize that while reducing aerosols improves air quality and prevents millions of premature deaths annually, it also highlights the urgent need to cut greenhouse gas emissions to further limit climate change.

#### Worldwide

- H-1B Visa Change Likely to Reshape U.S. Corporate Recruitment Strategies: The Trump administration's <u>announcement</u> that applicants for an H-1B visa will have to pay a \$100,000 application fee has upended recruitment plans in industries that rely on the program to supply highly-skilled workers for which there is a shortage of domestic talent. The fee, which the government clarified will only apply to new applications and <u>will not be levied against</u> the over 700,000 existing H-1B visa holders, is likely to impact recruiting in the U.S. technology, healthcare, research, and education sectors, while <u>offering potential opportunities</u> to

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companies in other talent hubs in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. The policy change is also likely to <u>further damage</u> U.S.-India relations and could hurt India's domestic economy if the flow of <u>remittances</u> drops. Around 70% of H-1B visa holders come from India.

- Moldovan Authorities Act Against Russian Interference as Parliamentary Election Approaches: Police in Moldova conducted raids on Monday targeting over 100 people suspected of preparing Russia- backed "mass disorder and destabilization" ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for Sunday, September 28. According to reporting from Bloomberg. Russia developed a plan to intervene in Moldova's elections by deploying instigators to conduct disruptive protests and disinformation campaigns. A similar disinformation effort caused significant disruptions to neighboring Romania's elections last year, resulting in multiple large-scale demonstrations over the barring of candidate Calin Georgescu amid accusations of Russian influence. Moldova's parliamentary election will determine whether the country moves closer to European Union membership or deeper into Russia's sphere of influence.
- New Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Defense Pact Highlights Regional Concerns Amid Israel's
   Extraterritorial Strikes: Saudi and Pakistani officials hope that a new mutual defense pact "will
   reinforce [their] deterrence" at a time when Israel continues to pursue its security objectives
   abroad and the role of the United States, traditionally an important security partner in the region,
   is less certain. Further bilateral security agreements could arise following Israel's September 9
   strike on Hamas targets in Doha, Qatar, which also killed a Qatari security officer. More broadly,
   the territorial violation is prompting diplomatic pushback and hindering both efforts to
   negotiate a ceasefire in Gaza and the broader normalization process between Israel and the
   Gulf states.
- Philippine Capital Region Sees Mass Protests Against Corruption: <u>Demonstrations</u> against purported corruption in flood mitigation projects attracted tens of thousands of participants across Metro Manila and the broader Philippines on Sunday, September 21, leading to school closures and a significant security deployment, especially in the capital region. Most demonstrations, including large actions in Manila's Luneta Park and the People Power Monument in Quezon City, <u>passed peacefully</u>, but unrest in the areas of the Ayala Bridge (<u>location</u>) and the Mendiola area (<u>location</u>), near the president's residence, saw clashes with security forces. Authorities report that at least 131 police officers were injured in clashes across the country, with at least 224 people arrested. Organizers behind the demonstrations have <u>vowed</u> to continue holding protests "until accountability measures are enforced."

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## Cyber and Regulatory

- European Airports Face Major Disruptions Over the Weekend Due to Cyberattack: Over the
  weekend, several major European airports, including Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, and Heathrow
  (London), <u>faced</u> widespread disruptions following a major cyberattack. The attack targeted a
  system run by Collins Aerospace and affected electronic check-in, baggage drop, and boarding
  processes, forcing airports to check in and board passengers manually. As of this writing, there is
  no confirmed suspect in the hack, though experts have <u>posited</u> various possibilities, including
  lone hackers, state actors, and criminal organizations.
- **FBI Warns of Extortion Campaign Linked to Salesforce Breach**: The FBI has <u>issued</u> an alert over an ongoing extortion campaign by Scattered Spider (UNC6395) and ShinyHunters (UNC6040) after the groups stole data from Salesforce platforms. The groups are <u>reportedly</u> extorting hundreds of organizations, threatening victims with public release of customer and business data unless ransoms are paid in cryptocurrency. The FBI advised companies to restrict user permissions, enforce access restrictions based on IP addresses, monitor API usage, and train staff against such tactics. Meanwhile, further victims of the Salesforce breach are being <u>confirmed</u>, including Gucci, Balenciaga, and Alexander McQueen.
- Thai Face Account Freezes Due to Complex Money Laundering Schemes: Thai authorities are responding to a spike in cases where bank accounts must be frozen as fraud networks adopt more complex money laundering schemes. Rather than funneling stolen funds into syndicate accounts, scammers are now using small retail shops to mask transactions, as well as multiple "mule accounts." Some account holders knowingly allow these transactions, while others are unaware and are later surprised when their accounts are frozen while investigations drag on. Authorities are expanding hotlines, streamlining the procedure to unfreeze accounts, and coordinating with banks to reduce the harm to account holders not suspected of wrongdoing.
- Exxon Mobil Halts Projects in EU Over New Rules on Chemical Recycling: Exxon Mobil is pausing more than \$100 million in planned investments in chemical recycling projects in the European Union, citing concerns over proposed EU regulations. Exxon says that the proposed rules would limit the amount of recycling credits a company can claim for processing at an existing plant, arguing that such a regulation would "result in less plastic getting recycled." The move comes amid a push to simplify regulations amid concerns that the EU is growing unappealing to business investors due to its stricter regulatory environment and other challenges.
- China Bans Nvidia Chips; Nvidia Pledges \$5 Billion Stake in Intel: China's Cyberspace Administration has <a href="mailto:barred">barred</a> major tech firms, including ByteDance and Alibaba, from purchasing

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Nvidia's RTX Pro 6000D AI chips, which were designed exclusively to be sold in China. The move came after several companies had already indicated their intent to purchase tens of thousands of chips, and began testing and verification procedures with Nvidia's server suppliers. Meanwhile, Nvidia agreed to <a href="invest">invest</a> \$5 billion in Intel, in a deal that will see the two companies jointly develop personal computer (PC) and data center chips. Nvidia will buy Intel stock and integrate its graphics technology into Intel's PC chips, while Intel will build its processors for data center products around Nvidia's technology.

#### Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- Chinese Shipping Firm to Test New Europe Route Through Arctic: The Hong Kong-owned cargo ship Istanbul Bridge will join icebreakers in <a href="trialing">trialing</a> an 18-day voyage along Russia's Northern Sea route from the Ningbo-Zhoushan port in China's Zhejiang Province to the port of Felixstowe in the United Kingdom. Industry players hope the route might one day become a regular service between East Asian and European ports. The route, made possible by melting Arctic sea ice, is up to 40% shorter than traditional routes through the Panama Canal, Singapore Strait, Suez Canal, or other more geopolitically sensitive chokepoints. While similar attempts were made previously, the upcoming voyage involves several stops across China and Europe for the first time, which, observers say, "actually resembles a normal shipping route." Still, near-term volume on any such future route is expected to remain insignificant due to the associated costs and low demand.
- Chinese Buyers Shun U.S. Soybeans; Lost Sales Impacting Rail Freight Demand: Falling U.S. soybean exports to China—which accounted for about a quarter of the total U.S. export volume in 2024, but have seen zero orders for the 2025-2026 season to date—could have a <u>significant</u> impact on North American soy market dynamics and logistics. The fall-off in sales amid a Chinese shift to cheaper South American vendors is so significant that the rail freight industry is expected to suffer knock-on impacts, with the warehousing and port operations job markets expected to be impacted as well. States including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Minnesota, which produce about half of the U.S. soy crop, could be especially hard hit by the changing buying patterns, with rail carriers that historically carried those exports to Pacific coast ports also likely to suffer most from the lost sales.
- Multinational Deals Under USMCA Face Regulatory Pressures Amid Competition Concerns:
   Amid ongoing discussions over a host of other issues impacting <u>U.S.-Mexico relations</u>, a new regulatory threat could further complicate travel and trade between the two countries. United States Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy <u>ended the antitrust immunity</u> enjoyed by U.S.

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airline Delta and Mexican airline Aeromexico (which have operated a joint pricing and revenue-sharing venture since 2016) because "Mexico is giving its domestic airlines an unfair advantage." The underlying argument—that Mexican economic policies seen as favoring local companies are sufficient grounds for undermining a multinational business partnership—constitutes a growing threat to joint ventures across the U.S.- Mexico border, which historically benefit from favorable treatment under the United States–Mexico– Canada Agreement. The <a href="upcoming review">upcoming review</a> of the agreement could see a significant rollback in these advantages.

- Fire at U.S. Aluminum Production Site Disrupts Automotive, Beverage Supply Chains: A fire at the Novelis aluminum plant in New York could disrupt the manufacture of a wide range of products, highlighting a potential downside to the development of increasingly insular U.S. supply chains. The fire has forced an <a href="indefinite shutdown">indefinite shutdown</a> at the facility, though the company does not expect it to impact plant employment levels. Novelis supplies <a href="roughly half">roughly half</a> of the sheet aluminum consumed by the automotive industry globally, in addition to forming an important link in the supply chain for beverage cans and various other sheet aluminum products. The concentration of the production of key industrial inputs like aluminum in a handful of manufacturing sites, at a time when the Trump administration is actively encouraging industrial supply chains to develop closer domestic ties, could see U.S. supply chains more directly exposed to similar incidents going forward.
- Invasive Pantry Pest Brought to Australia in Diaper Shipment Could Impact Grain Exports: Australia's US\$12 billion grain industry could be <a href="threatened">threatened</a> by the accidental importation of the khapra beetle, an invasive pest that renders stored food unusable, after it was found in a shipment of diapers. The country is not known to have a local population of the beetle, but an infestation "would cause trading partners to reject Australian goods," creating significant consequences for the Australian economy and disrupting global supply chains and pricing of crops like barley, sorghum, and wheat, which are among the top exports of Australian farms. Authorities have reportedly tracked down about 75% of the 2,000 cases of diapers that could be harboring khapra beetles.

#### Health

CDC Panel Votes Against Recommending COVID-19 Vaccine to All Adults: The Advisory
Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) no longer <u>recommends</u> that all adults receive a
COVID-19 vaccine, instead saying that individuals should consult with a medical professional. The
recommendation appears to contradict the Food and Drug Administration's authorization
guidelines, is <u>likely to limit uptake</u> of the vaccine (especially for those without health insurance),

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and raises further questions around access. The same week the committee issued its recommendations, the <u>West Coast Health Alliance</u> and the <u>Northeast Public Health</u> <u>Collaborative</u>—blocs of states whose governors have said that they are committed to ensuring vaccination—issued their own recommendations, while <u>AHIP</u>, a trade group representing health insurers, said that they would continue to "cover all ACIP-recommended immunizations that were recommended as of September 1, 2025."

- Same CDC Panel Also Recommends Delaying MMRV Vaccination: In addition to issuing updated COVID-19 vaccine recommendations, ACIP also voted to recommend delaying the administration of the combined measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (MMRV) vaccine until four years old. Current guidelines state that the vaccine can be given in a two-shot series, once between 12 and 15 months and again between four and six years old. The panel said that the MMR and varicella vaccines could still be administered on the same timetable if administered separately. However, in an apparent contradiction of their recommendation, the panel also voted to allow the Vaccines for Children program to continue covering the cost of the MMRV vaccine for children under four. Experts are concerned that separating the shots will limit uptake.
- White House to Link Tylenol Use During Pregnancy to Autism: The Trump administration suggested a link between the use of acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol, early in pregnancy and an increased risk of autism in a press conference on Monday afternoon. During the announcement, the administration recommended that pregnant people avoid using Tylenol unless "medically necessary." Many experts are skeptical of the administration's findings, saying that a causal link between acetaminophen, the generic name for Tylenol, and autism is not convincingly borne out by the evidence despite many studies being conducted. Autism, they note, is likely multi-factoral and linked to over 100 separate genes, making a singular "cause" unlikely.
- **Drug-Resistant Fungus Spreading in European Hospitals:** The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is **calling for urgent action** after a recent survey confirmed that Candidozyma auris (formerly Candida auris), a fungus that usually spreads in healthcare facilities and is often resistant to antifungal drugs, is spreading quickly across European hospitals. In the agency's latest survey, the ECDC noted that cases continue to rise, outbreaks are becoming larger, and more countries are reporting ongoing local transmission. In 2023, the fungus had been detected in 18 countries, with most cases reported in Spain, Greece, Italy, Romania, and Germany. Despite the rising caseload, the fungus is likely underreported, with only around half of the 36 countries included in the most recent report having national surveillance programs, while fewer still have guidelines to prevent or control infections.

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• Other Stories the Global Intelligence Team Is Monitoring: At least five people have died in Louisiana, and over two dozen more have been hospitalized after contracting Vibrio vulnificus, a flesh-eating bacterium that seems to be becoming more common as sea temperatures warm. At the same time, Louisiana is also dealing with its worst whooping cough outbreak in 30 years, according to local officials. Cases of whooping cough are also high in Taiwan and Japan. Elsewhere in Asia, India's Kerala state is seeing a surge in cases of Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM), a deadly infection caused by Naegleria Fowleri, also known as a "brain-eating amoeba." So far, officials have confirmed over 70 cases and 19 deaths. Finally, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the number of confirmed or probable cases of Ebola has risen to at least 48, 31 of which have resulted in fatalities. The rapidly growing outbreak has prompted the CDC to issue a health advisory, although officials assess the risk of spread to the U.S. as low.

#### Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- Farmers, Pharmacists to Strike in France, Inter-Union Plans Next Steps: France's inter-union, after organizing last Thursday's general strike and nationwide demonstrations, will arrange a new day of action if the recently appointed prime minister does not respond positively to their demands by September 24. Separately, several unions intend to strike in the coming weeks, beginning with a "big day of action" by the FNSEA agricultural union on Friday, September 26. FNSEA is calling on members and supporters to take part in mobilizations "in all departments...in front of prefectures" to protest the EU- Mercosur trade agreement and campaign for "food sovereignty." Retail pharmacies closed last Thursday in coordination with the inter-union and will escalate with a new phase of strike actions "every Saturday starting September 27." Later, the SNCTA air traffic controller union intends to strike for three days beginning October 7.
- Prague to See Election-Related Demonstration Next Sunday: The group "Million Moments for Democracy," which in 2019 <a href="organized">organized</a> some of the biggest demonstrations since the fall of the communist government in 1989, is once again campaigning against politician <a href="Andrej Babis">Andrej Babis</a>, this time ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for October 3-4. Babis's ANO party is leading in the polls, though no party or coalition is <a href="forecast">forecast</a> to win a majority. Demonstrators will gather at Prague's Staroměstské náměstí (Old Town Square) at 4 pm for a rally on Sunday, September 28, under the slogan "Let's prevent a government of extremists." Sunday's gathering may see up to a thousand participants, and traffic disruptions are likely in the area.

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- Peru's "Generation Z" March Erupts Into Two Days of Violent Clashes in Lima: On Saturday and Sunday, Lima's Plaza San Martín became the epicenter of the country's "Generation Z" protests, as young activists joined by student groups and labor unions mobilized against President Dina Boluarte's government and Congress. Anger over mandatory pension enrollment, entrenched corruption, and past episodes of repression fueled the demonstrations, which escalated into confrontations with more than 5,000 police officers along Abancay Avenue. Authorities fired tear gas, rubber bullets, and used batons, while protesters responded with rocks and firebombs. At least 18 people were injured, inclu ding six journalists and 12 officers. With unresolved demands for accountability fueling youth unrest, similar demonstrations are expected to continue in Peru.
- Nationwide Mobilization in Ecuador Planned Against Noboa Administration: On Tuesday, the
  National Union of Educators (UNE), the United Workers' Front (FUT), and several social
  organizations plan to hold a <u>nationwide</u> mobilization in Ecuador, with demonstrations expected
  in Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca. Protesters are rallying against President Daniel Noboa's
  economic and social policies, including cuts to diesel subsidies, public sector layoffs, reduced
  funding for healthcare and education, and what they see as a lack of dialogue on unemployment.
  This mobilization follows nationwide <u>protests</u> held last week and comes amid ongoing indigenous
  opposition to mining <u>projects</u> such as Loma Larga near the Quimsacocha water reserve, which
  activists argue threatens local ecosystems.
- Planned Partial Strike at Multiple Brazilian Airports: Air traffic controllers at NAV Brasil, Brazil's air navigation service provider, will stage <u>partial strikes</u> on September 24, 26, 30, and October 2 over unmet demands originating in a 2023-2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement, including healthcare, benefits, and new public service exams. Organized by the National Union of Flight Protection Workers (SNTPV), the strikes will occur from 11 am to 12 pm and 3 pm to 4 pm, potentially causing delays at airports like Guarulhos, Campinas, and Santos Dumont. Essential flight safety operations will remain in place, and NAV Brasil has stated it will take measures to minimize disruptions.

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#### **Upcoming Events**

- September 19-October 6: Airport Workers'
- Strike (South Korea)
- September 22-30: UN General Assembly High- Level Week (New York City, NY)
- September 22-October 2: Navratri (Global)
- September 23-24: Rosh Hashana (Global)
- September 27: Legislative Elections (Gabon)
- September 27: General Elections (Seychelles)
- September 28: Parliamentary Elections (Moldova)
- September 28-October 2: Durga Puja (Global)
- October 1-2: Yom Kippur (Global)
- October 1-8: Golden Week (China)
- October 2: Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti (India)
- October 2: Dussehra (India)
- October 3: National Foundation Day (South Korea)
- October 6: Chuseok (South Korea)
- October 12: Dia de la Raza (Colombia)