

September 21, 2026

Headlining This Week's Brief

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Top Stories

[Early Season Nor'easter Could Threaten This Weekend](#)

A strong coastal storm may impact the Northeast Friday through Sunday with 45–55 mph gusts, 2–4 inches of rain, and coastal flooding. Some additional strengthening is possible, including a low-end chance of subtropical development.

[Dangerous Flood Threat to Peak Over New Mexico This Week](#)

Extreme monsoonal moisture will fuel rounds of heavy rain and thunderstorms across New Mexico from Tuesday through Thursday. Rainfall rates as high as 2-3 inches per hour could lead to life-threatening flash floods on short notice. Residents should use enhanced caution while traveling.

[Dujuan Brings Heavy Rain and Flooding to Eastern Japan with Over 2 Million Evacuated](#)

Dujuan is beginning to move away from Japan, though impacts may linger for several days to weeks, and recovery efforts may be prolonged.

[Appearance of Israeli Prime Minister, Other Concerns Driving Unrest in Midtown Manhattan Through Remainder of UNGA](#)

On 24 September, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to address the United Nations General Assembly, during the “high-level week” of the organization’s ongoing 81st annual

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session. The speech is expected to begin around 2:00 pm local time. Netanyahu's planned appearance at the UN, which sits in the middle of a 23-25 September trip to New York, has already attracted calls for demonstrations. Netanyahu's accommodations are also expected to be targeted by protesters, suggesting that heightened security could disrupt area traffic elsewhere in the city as well. In response to the speech, the New York City chapter of the Palestinian Youth Movement is calling for supporters to march from Bryant Park to the UN at 4:00 pm. In solidarity with the PYM, the New York City chapter of Jewish Voices for Peace is calling for a week of action (from 22 to 28 September) to denounce Netanyahu as a war criminal, though the organizer has yet to announce specific details about any planned demonstrations. Amid reports that Netanyahu had ignored warnings from the UAE ahead of the 07 October 2023 Hamas attacks, Israeli diaspora groups could also demonstrate against Netanyahu's appearance. The expected 25 September afternoon appearance of another controversial leader—Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi—could also inspire demonstration activity. Further demonstrations calling for the release of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party leader Imran Khan are also planned for high-level week, as are rallies by the Organization of Iranian American Communities and other diaspora groups.

Despite Industry, Public Appetite for AI Regulations, Beijing and Washington Remain Unlikely to Act

Amid growing concern over the risks associated with the rapid development and implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) across most industries globally, experts, industry leaders, and politicians are increasingly divided over whether to institute regulatory “guard rails” to avert a catastrophe, or to allow the continued unfettered development of AI models in the interest of outcompeting opponents such as China. Evidence continues to emerge that the most advanced models display more sophisticated and dangerous capabilities than previously known, with some AI agents now capable of collaborating to work around restrictions on their activities, suggesting that failing to implement the appropriate preventive measures quickly enough risks significant real-world impacts. Recent polls suggest that a significant share of the American public is concerned about the pace of AI developments, with 86% of voters considering lack of regulations on the industry “a problem.” Leaders of top AI firms, too, have raised similar concerns, leading some observers to believe this to be a targeted attempt to influence impending regulatory pressure that they find unavoidable. Regardless of the support for boundaries, however, the Trump administration has thus far been unmoved to act, with President Trump repeatedly disparaging critics of the industry amid a White House push for US-based developers to remain competitive with their Chinese peers, who are quickly closing the performance gap. It is the state of intense competition between the Chinese and US AI sectors that has proven the most significant barrier to the establishment of regulatory guidelines to date. Mistrust between Beijing and...

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- **Eastern India and Nepal Flood, Cyclone Risk**: A developing Bay of Bengal system is expected to bring significant flooding and possible tropical cyclone impacts to eastern India before shifting heavy rainfall into Nepal, where landslide and renewed flood risks will increase across already vulnerable terrain.
- **California Prepares for El Niño with Emergency Proclamation**: California Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a statewide state of emergency ahead of the strengthening 2026–27 El Niño, directing agencies to accelerate preparations for severe storms, flooding, coastal erosion, landslides, and debris flows.
- **Persistent U.S. Heat Records Continue Through September**: Summer 2026 was the warmest on record for the contiguous U.S. and much of the southern tier into the Midwest continues to experience record heat in September.
- **Shrinking Ice Coverage in Greenland and Antarctica in the Last 47 Years**: The Earth is warming at a substantial rate, melting ice sheets and increasing the potential for sea level rise across the globe.

Worldwide

- **European Leaders Focused on Russia Amid Rising Frequency of Sabotage Across the Continent**: Rising hostilities between European countries and Russia over the latter's suspected "grey zone" campaign of sabotage and other non-wartime instigations are believed to play an important role in the broader increase in reports of such incidents across Europe in recent months. While the trend has seen a variety of perpetrators, ranging from disgruntled workers to environmental activists and other domestic organizers, more frequently turn to infrastructure and cyber sabotage as a mode of dissent, it is the rising frequency of attacks attributed to Russia that is attracting the most attention across the European Union and NATO. The recent Russian attack in western Ukraine that narrowly missed trains carrying European and US officials is being treated as a significant escalation, and has inspired rapid security responses both within Poland and at the EU level. On 16 September, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen announced her support for a European Security Council, to comprise "leaders from the EU, Britain, Norway, Ukraine, and Canada," as well as a "new system to coordinate responses to so-called hybrid incidents," though how this would work in practice remains unclear. While the statement signals Europe's growing attention on the perceived Russian threat, it leaves unaddressed the rising adoption of sabotage tactics by local organizers, which could continue to disrupt transportation and other services across the continent if authorities do not develop effective deterrent or protective measures.
- **Saudi Air Strikes Target Houthis Amid Fears of Wider Oil Disruptions**: After Saudi Arabia claimed that Houthi fighters launched a drone toward Islam's holiest city, Mecca—a claim the Houthis deny—Riyadh launched a series of airstrikes on Houthi positions across Yemen, signaling the kingdom's growing involvement in the conflict as its oil exports come under threat. Observers warn that the escalating clashes, which has also displaced over 100,000

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people in Yemen amid the Houthi advance, could pose a serious threat to global oil supplies, with prolonged disruptions to the East-West Pipeline (which has already been forced offline for several weeks following an attack) removing as much as 4% of global supply from circulation every day that it is closed. Amid the ongoing strikes, Saudi exporters are now offering a steadily-rising supply of exports to Asian markets via ship-to-ship transfers off the coast of Oman, an alternative that leaves the vessels involved exposed to potential Iranian attacks as well.

- **US Confirms Weapons in Orbit as China, Russia Urge Demilitarization of Space**: On 15 September, US Space Force officials admitted that the military is operating weapons in orbit, a landmark declaration that breaks with a long-held taboo against weaponizing space. General Douglas Schiess claimed that the orbiting weapons “can defend the Joint Force against space-enabled attacks,” adding that Space Force intends to scale its orbiting weapons program using “disciplined and responsible choices” in the coming years. The announcement drew immediate rebuke from Beijing and the Kremlin, opposing the launch of any weapons into orbit and calling on global actors to cooperate on the demilitarization of space. Russia, in particular, urged the drafting of a legally-binding international treaty “to outlaw the deployment of offensive weapons [in space],” noting a longstanding reticence among Western powers to work with Russia on such a commitment.
- **Defense Department Inspector General Warns of Munitions Shortfalls, Widespread Damage Resulting from Iran Conflict**: In the Defense Department’s first publicly-released report on the war in Iran since the conflict began in February, Inspector General Platte Moring revealed that the war in Iran had not only brought key munitions stockpiles to dangerous lows, but had also resulted in around \$184 million in damage to hundreds of structures. The list purportedly includes US military bases in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, as well as diplomatic facilities in Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The report also warned that the Defense Department’s present efforts to restock critical US munitions are limited by industrial challenges including a lack of key inputs such as rocket fuel, or challenges in sourcing sufficiently skilled laborers. This could slow the ramp-up in new production and limit US military activities in the ongoing conflict with Iran, as well as potentially leaving the US unprepared for a large-scale conflict with China or another well-armed adversary.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **Iran-Linked Spyware Campaign Targets Dissidents and Journalists**: Iranian state-linked cyber actors are using CHOSEN BRICK spyware to surveil dissidents, activists, and journalists internationally, according to a joint warning from British, Dutch, and US intelligence agencies. Attackers research individual targets before approaching them through WhatsApp or Telegram while impersonating trusted contacts or technical support. Victims are then persuaded to open malicious files disguised as legitimate material, including MRI scan results

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and applications such as Telegram, Norton Antivirus, and KeePass. Once installed on Windows devices, CHOSEN BRICK can steal emails and messaging data, capture screenshots, activate microphones, download additional malware, and persist after reboots. The FBI attributes related activity to actors operating on behalf of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security. Stolen information from some victims has appeared on pro-Iran websites.

- **[Chinese Hackers Use AI to Process Stolen Data](#)**: Chinese cybersecurity firm Zhengzhou Zhirong Network Technology (ZRON) allegedly used AI to transform large volumes of stolen foreign government data into searchable intelligence products for Chinese authorities. Internal materials show ZRON offering access to diplomatic correspondence, government emails, visa information, telecommunications data, and documents from countries including Pakistan, the Philippines, and Russia. The company developed dashboards that combined both stolen and publicly available information, while AI models from companies including Alibaba and DeepSeek were used to organize datasets, construct incident timelines, conduct risk assessments, and generate intelligence reports. The disclosures come as Anthropic separately identified Chinese-speaking operators using AI agent swarms for intrusion attempts, malware development, and vulnerability research against roughly 50 global organizations.
- **[Pro-Beijing Hackers Deploy Backdoor Across Latin American Government Agencies](#)**: A new backdoor dubbed "SparroWocky" has been deployed by a Beijing-linked collective against various government departments in Argentina, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela. The hackers are affiliated with FamousSparrow, which is tied to the Chinese state-backed Salt Typhoon cyber threat group that has previously breached US government and critical infrastructure bodies. The SparroWocky backdoor, which can "exfiltrate files, take periodic screenshots, perform file operations, and delete itself from the host." FamousSparrow has been documented since at least 2019 and has become increasingly focused on Latin America since mid-2025, a change believed to be inspired at least in part by a growing US focus on the region. While the target list of the SparroWocky attack is fairly cosmopolitan in its distribution, it includes a US territory, countries with strong US ties, countries that recognize Taiwan, and other countries the US has an interest in. The attack has also reportedly impacted the Panamanian agency responsible for mediating a dispute with Chinese port operators over the future of the Panama canal, further confirming the likely Beijing connection to the attack and suggesting that other countries clashing with China over various issues could face similar heightened espionage and cybersecurity threats.
- **[Hackers Steal and Dismantle Flock Camera, Share Data With Media](#)**: Hackers with the collective stegan0gram claim to have stolen a Flock automated license plate reader and extracted data from it that revealed the equipment's usage history, including capturing exponentially more images than the number of vehicles it targets. Sharing this data with cybersecurity-focused media outlets Wired and 404 Media, the group claims that over a span of 21 days, the camera scanned just 50,000 vehicles, but captured over 1.6 million images, including details of specific vehicles like an American flag patch on a motorcycle saddle bag. The camera was found to run on "about 20 Flock-built apps including ones that detect motion

and upload data,” and “generally captures around 28 images from a single encounter with a vehicle, though some can produce more than 100.” Responding to the incident, Flock noted that tampering with their cameras is illegal and that the hackers’ failure to self-report through the company’s Vulnerability Disclosure Policy leaves the company without “enough detail to assess the claims being made.” The revelation that the cameras capture large numbers of images and specific identifying details, as well as Flock’s response, are likely to further heighten tensions over the use of the controversial road surveillance equipment.

- **Connection of Metabase to Sensitive Databases Exposes London Property Management Company’s Customers to Hackers:** London property management company City Relay disclosed on 14 September that it had been the target of a cyberattack that the company became aware of on 08 September. Hackers had accessed the company’s Metabase Cloud twice. During these intrusions, these hackers may have stolen “names, email and physical addresses, telephone numbers, financial information, property access details” of client landlords, as well as “bank account numbers, sort codes, IBANs, SWIFT references, and account names and addresses” stored in users’ databases, and “data about property amenities and access, including the locations of stored keys and codes for lockboxes containing them.” The impact will vary from user to user based on their settings within the City Relay platform, as the breach takes advantage of those enablements to access users’ documents. While the company claims that no evidence has been found to date to suggest that any stolen information has been misused, cybersecurity experts warn that it is the connection of Metabase to databases of sensitive information that “risks exposing highly sensitive financial records and credentials,” flagging a potential vulnerability in similarly arranged IT systems globally.
- **European Union Proposes First International Social Media Regulatory Regime:** On 16 September, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed a blanket ban on social media use by people under the age of 13, a significant escalation in the ongoing debate over appropriate limitations on social media usage by minors and a threat to the business models of impacted firms. While limited local- and national-level restrictions have come into effect recently or are under consideration around the world, the proposal marks the first move toward an international regulatory regime. The proposal, which would effect users across all 27 EU member states, could also prevent children under 13 from accessing AI chatbots and online games, with further provisions for parental controls on accounts for 13-15-year-olds and “safe design” features for platforms accessible by 15-18-year-olds. While EU parliamentarians must still debate and vote on the measure before it takes effect, potentially dragging the process out by years, the move signals growing international support for efforts to rein in big tech amid concerns over the addictive effects of social media.
- **CISA Warns of Critical Vulnerability Impacting GitLab:** On 11 September, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) warned of a newly discovered vulnerability (CVE-2026-85706) impacting GitLab, which is employed by more than half of all Fortune 500 companies and has some 30 million registered users. Cybersecurity experts warn that unauthenticated users could exploit the flaw “to read credentials, secrets, and other sensitive

information from vulnerable servers.” The company patched the vulnerabilities in different products a day before the CISA warning and is imploring users to update their applications if they have not yet done so. The vulnerability is considered a maximum-severity threat (assigned a Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS) score of 10 out of 10) with significant potential implications for the handling of trade secrets and other sensitive information, such as supplier documents or web credentials.

- **US Sanctions Package Targeting Iran, Russia, and Trade Partners Advances to Trump's Desk**: The US House of Representatives passed a package of new sanctions targeting both Iran and Russia on 16 September that "would significantly expand economic pressure on Russia" by empowering President Trump "to impose secondary tariffs of up to 100% on buyers of Russian oil and gas." Dissenters in the House vote included most Democrats, who objected to the "extraordinary powers" they argue the bill would provide to the President, including "a loophole that would allow him to define basically any country as a facilitator of evading Russian sanctions." In addition to the aforementioned secondary sanctions and sanctions targeting "Russian officials, companies, and financial institutions helping fuel the war," the legislation "includes a provision to prevent a lapse in sanction authority that restricts funding for Iran's energy and weapons sectors."
- **Several Countries Announce New Visa, Travel Restrictions**: A series of changes to visa policies either announced or coming into effect this week threaten to disrupt international travel plans for businesses and tourists alike. Earlier this month, Thailand announced that it would halve the visa-free stay duration (from 60 to 30 days) for visitors from more than 60 countries, including the China, the entire EU, Singapore, and the US, from 15 September. Officials claim the restrictions are a response to a string of local crimes committed by foreign nationals. On 15 September, Italy and Spain also renewed their mutual visa-free travel suspensions for another 15 days, with the restrictions now to last until at least 08 October. The following day, the US announced plans for new visa restrictions targeting people from South Africa that engage in "race-based discrimination, incite violence, or enable land confiscation without compensation" against White South Africans, though few details were revealed. In Australia, Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke announced that he will soon reveal restrictions on international students' ability to bring family members to the country, citing the nearly 46,000 family members of international students given visas in fiscal 2025.
- **Chinese Authorities to Restrict Travel for Some Foreigners, Nationals From 15 September**: On 15 September, new entry and exit controls first unveiled in July took effect in China. The new regulations enable Chinese officials to ban certain individuals suspected of "violations of export controls or technology import and export rules in a way that may endanger industrial or technological security." This includes exit bans of six months to three years for Chinese nationals "who return to China after committing illegal or criminal acts abroad that harm national security or interests," and entry bans of one to five years for foreigners suspected of "false statements made in visa applications." While Chinese officials and senior executives with access to sensitive information have long faced certain travel

restrictions, most Chinese are generally free to travel, making the policy change especially significant. Going forward, Chinese officials could use these restrictions to target nationals conducting business or research with foreign tech companies in an attempt to limit foreign access to Chinese talent and technology, as well as foreigners who may travel to China to conduct similar business.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **New Trump Administration Memorandum Directs Federal Agencies to End Procurement of Canadian-Origin Items**: US President Donald Trump has ordered US government agencies to “remove Canadian goods from government contracts,” effectively banning federal sourcing from Canada in the latest escalation of the two countries’ ongoing trade spat. The conflict already weighed heavily on one of the strongest bilateral trade relationships enjoyed by either country, with bilateral tariffs of up to 50% levied on a wide variety of goods, bans on imports of certain items, and demands that companies “reshore” in order to maintain market access. In the memorandum, the White House accused Ottawa of discriminating against US businesses by employing a “Buy Canadian” procurement policy. The abrupt cancellation of existing supply relationships with Canadian partners could cause near-term shortages in key resources for US agencies. It could also impact the US military’s efforts to restore munitions stockpiles following their depletion during the war in Iran, though the order only allows for the ban in cases “where warranted” and “to the extent permitted by law,” suggesting that critical imports could still continue. If the order is upheld for an extended period, it could encourage these suppliers to establish new relationships with other buyers, creating longer-term logistical disruptions for federal agencies and forcing them to establish relationships with new sources.
- **New York City's Office of Worker Power Seeks to Widen Awareness of Workers' Rights**: On Labor Day, in a US first, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani announced the establishment of a Mayor’s Office of Worker Power that will “assist organizing efforts among private-sector workers.” The office intends to “focus on outreach, education, research, policy development, and strategic partnerships” to help workers across the city identify the challenges they face and connect them with appropriate resources in response. The office also “also plans to increase accessibility to workplace rights information and education” and “hold public hearings on significant worker issues,” suggesting that it will take a particularly active role in encouraging wider awareness of workers rights. The MOWP launched with four explicit priorities: “new technologies, worker misclassification, immigration-based exploitation, and climate risks to worker safety,” suggesting that local regulations tightening scrutiny and enforcement in these areas could also be forthcoming. Depending on the Office of Worker Power's reception, other cities may look to establish their own, similar initiatives.
- **US Port Investments in Palau Raise Local Concerns Amid Friction With China**: The US effort to upgrade and expand the Malakal Port in Koror, Palau so it can accommodate US Navy vessels is raising local concern over the potential ramifications in the event of an international

conflict. The \$500 million infrastructure investment—the US military’s largest planned overseas project of 2027—will include the dredging of the harbor to accommodate larger vessels, which could prove a boon to the tourism hub’s cruise industry. However, Palau’s strategic location at the heart of the US Navy’s WESTPAC theater of operations and broader proximity to East Asia could also see Koror dragged into any US military campaigns that unfold in the region, including any potential future conflict with China. The improvements will include “military radar and a remote airfield widened for heavy aircraft,” suggesting that the US military wishes for the port to be capable of hosting long-range operations or military supply operations.

- **BRICS Members Seek Greater Cross-Border Payments Integration**: Member states of the BRICS international organization have developed strong electronic payment platforms, including Brazil’s Pix, India’s UPI, and others. Instant payment systems based in these 11 countries processed a combined \$10 trillion in transactions in the past 18 months alone, outperforming global giants including Mastercard and Visa in some markets. Though the use of these systems remains largely limited to the domestic markets they are developed for, a growing number of trade partners (including major economies such as the European Union) are seeking opportunities to use these platforms as payment mediums for cross-border transactions, a move that could have significant trade implications and further strengthen the position of payment processors originating in BRICS member states. Growing pressure from these governments targeting global corporations seeking to enter their increasingly lucrative markets could also encourage the further uptake of these payment systems. The rising interest in these systems is prompting regulators to consider how best to manage these cross-border payments, including “facilitating cooperation between those payment systems [in] each country’s own currencies” by establishing a common currency basket the various platforms can exchange with.
- **Kazakhstan Seeks New Means of Exporting Oil Amid Disruptions, International Pressure Stemming From Russian Involvement**: Amid security threats to Kazakh oil cargoes shipped through Russia and rising international pressure on countries continuing to trade with Russian partners despite the ongoing war in Ukraine, Kazakh officials are reportedly seeking new avenues for the export of petroleum products. Ukrainian strikes have repeatedly targeted Russian oil extraction, processing, and transport facilities in recent weeks, including a noteworthy 08 September incident when a drone strike near the Russian fuel port of Novorossiysk halted loading operations. Meanwhile, Russian requests for Kazakh shipments of gasoline to offset an energy crisis of their own also puts Astana in a precarious situation: while selling fuel to Russia could invite international pressure, refusing Moscow’s request could further impede Kazakhstan’s access to oil markets. Kazakh oil cargoes are increasingly threatened by their reliance on Russian logistics, but few viable alternatives currently exist, with the country’s Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline only capable of carrying 1.2 million tons of oil annually, compared to a volume nearing 65 million tons shipped through the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) terminal in Novorossiysk for loading by Kazakh, Russian, and other

carriers. While Kazakh producers initially stood to benefit from rising prices amid the ongoing closure of the Strait of Hormuz, with production maximized and a slew of challenges impeding the country's energy trade, these benefits have not materialized.

Health

- [**Research Reveals Possible Causes of Rising Legionnaires' Disease in New York City as Another Outbreak Occurs in the Bronx**](#): A fresh Legionnaires' disease outbreak in the Bronx has been tied to at least two deaths. During a mass testing exercise, officials identified 10 cooling towers—including one at Yankee Stadium—that tested positive for the Legionella bacteria. It's the second major outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in New York City, following a cluster over the on the Upper East Side that killed 11 people. While officials ordered the cooling towers that tested positive in the Bronx to be sanitized by 14 September, the broader threat of Legionnaires' disease is becoming a growing concern for New York City and other urban areas as outbreaks grow more common. The bacteria that cause Legionnaires' disease, which can result in deadly pneumonia, live and reproduce in pooled water and warm conditions, with infections often caused when those bacteria become airborne in HVAC systems or when the atmosphere is moist. Recent studies have linked several trends, including the rising environmental prevalence of the bacteria responsible, increasingly warm and wet temperatures as a result of climate change, and the possibility that airborne transmission may be facilitated by driving through puddles hosting the pathogen, to the rising incidence rate.
- [**WHO Sees 'Encouraging Signs' But DRC Ebola Outbreak 'Far From Over'**](#): The World Health Organization (WHO) said that there are "encouraging signs" that public health efforts to control the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are "gaining ground." While WHO head Tedros Ghebreyesus warned that the fight is "far from over," some 3,000 front-line healthcare workers have already been vaccinated with Merck's Ervebo, which is designed to protect against the Zaire strain but may be effective in reducing transmissions of Bundibugyo Ebola. Surveillance efforts are also said to be improving, and an observational study involving vaccinated workers will help assess the effectiveness of the vaccine in the challenging exposure environments facing healthcare workers. If successful and the vaccine proves to have some efficacy, officials may look to distribute it more widely. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) was similarly optimistic in a report filed by its Emergency Consultative Group on the outbreak. Africa CDC highlighted additional improvements, including a decline in transmission rates in outbreak epicenter Ituri Province, but warned that transmission rates were also rising elsewhere, such as the conflict zone of North Kivu. Despite the signs of potential improvement, vaccine skepticism and difficulties in accessing impacted

populations due to conflict or terrain could derail these efforts and allow the outbreak to continue to grow.

- **Rising Administration of Rabies Treatment Regiments Raises Overuse Concerns:** The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns that reports of both rabies cases and the application of various post-exposure prophylactic (PEP) treatments have been on the rise nationwide, leading the CDC to clarify the conditions under which PEP regiments should be employed. While the CDC “received 17% more rabies-related inquiries” during July and August of this year compared to 2025 figures, suggesting an increase in case rates, pharmaceutical tallies suggest that the use of PEP protocol has increased by 76% year-on-year as of early September, with human rabies vaccinations rising 33% during the same period. There are no shortage of medical supplies required to vaccinate against or treat for Rabies (which is nearly 100% fatal unless treatments begin before symptoms are noticeable), but usage is heavy: of the roughly 1.4 million Americans who seek medical attention following potential exposure, about 1 in 14 will receive PEP treatment. The CDC warns that “errors in rabies risk assessment and PEP administration could result in unnecessary treatment (eg, additional doses of vaccine or HRIG), potential adverse effects, and avoidable costs,” citing costs of up to \$14,000 for a typical PEP regiment. In its advisory, the CDC recommended healthcare systems collaborate with state and local health departments to assess their rabies treatment protocol, as well as best practices that could help limit the unnecessary use of supplies.
- **Pennsylvania Reports Third Measles-Related Death Amid Ongoing Outbreak as Federal Agencies Dispute Data:** On 13 September, Pennsylvania reported a third measles-related death, with the latest victim being an unvaccinated 40-year-old woman. The announcement came shortly after state health officials claimed that some 676 local cases have been reported so far this year, with at least 52 new cases confirmed between 09 and 11 September. Despite the growing cause for concern, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) disputes Pennsylvania’s reports of deaths attributed to measles (including two children too young for immunization that reportedly died in August after infection). The CDC claims to lack any evidence confirming measles-related deaths anywhere in the country amid the ongoing multi-state outbreak, which has already exceeded 3,200 cases nationwide during 2026 by the CDC’s count. Public health officials warn that measles can cause severe illness in unvaccinated individuals of any age, with even Secretary of Health and longtime vaccination skeptic Robert F Kennedy Jr encouraging families to vaccinate their children against measles and other potentially deadly diseases.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Germany to See Nationwide Demonstrations Against Austerity Measures, While Saxony-Anhalt Will Host Anti-AfD Demonstration in Early October**: German trade unions are calling for demonstrations across the country on 26 September to protest government reforms to healthcare and pensions. The German Trade Union Federation (DGB) and its member unions are organizing a day of action in support of the country's social welfare system. Fifteen demonstrations are scheduled in major cities, including in Berlin (Red City Hall at 1:00 pm), Frankfurt (Opernplatz at 1:00 pm), and Hamburg (Rathausmarkt at 11:55 am). In Berlin, demonstrators will gather before the rally at Red City Hall at the IG Metall building, after the IG Metall union mobilized tens of thousands of auto industry workers on 21 September during protests against job cuts in the automotive industry. On 26 September, major cities will likely see turnout in the tens of thousands, with organizers for the demonstration in Nuremberg expecting thousands of people to travel into the Bavarian city on 200 chartered buses. Saturday's mobilization comes amid political fallout from a tumultuous series of state elections. The party of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), fell under the 5% threshold in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and will lose parliamentary representation following the northeastern state's election on 20 September. The CDU also performed poorly in Berlin's state parliament election, though is likely to remain a key coalition partner with the Left Party (Die Linke), which garnered 25.7% of the vote. The outcome highlights dissatisfaction with Germany's political establishment, with the CDU's losses coinciding with gains by the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. Opposition to...
- **ICE-Involved Shooting Sparks Unrest in Texas Capital**: Authorities are investigating a 20 September Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)-involved shooting in the northern part of Texas state capital Austin that injured a man and sparked large-scale unrest. The victim, 28-year-old Venezuelan national and DoorDash driver Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, was shot once while driving his car. According to his lawyer, he was released from the hospital into ICE custody. An unnamed law enforcement source has said that Perez has been transferred to an ICE facility in Pearsall, Texas. Authorities have not commented on whether the operation targeted Perez or why officers shot at him. The incident prompted snap demonstrations in the vicinity of the shooting in northern Austin. The crowd grew to several hundred demonstrators and saw confrontations between participants and law enforcement that led to the use of less-lethal crowd control devices. The Department of Homeland Security, along with Austin Police and the Texas Rangers, are conducting a joint investigation into the incident, the trajectory of which could inspire further unrest. In response to the incident, activist groups and government officials, including Congressman Greg Casar, are calling for an independent investigation into the matter, along with calls for ICE to leave Austin. Organizers are also calling for further demonstrations in the city, including one backed by multiple groups at 8:00 pm in front of the Texas State Capitol on Monday, 21 September and another at an ICE facility located at 8101 N

Stemmons Freeway in Dallas. Related demonstrations could occur in Pearsall, where Perez has reportedly...

- **Drumcree Parade Ruling Heightens Sectarian Tensions in Northern Ireland:** An Orange Order parade proposed for 27 September in Portadown could lead to unrest following a renewed dispute over the parade's route. The Orange Order in Northern Ireland has submitted "limited" Drumcree parade plans for 27 September, hoping to march along Garvaghy Road for the first time in almost 30 years. This past July, a court overturned a Parades Commission ruling that blocked the Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal organization associated with unionism with the United Kingdom, from marching down Garvaghy Road in July. The Order's new bid proposes a parade with 60 members who will march in silence before two bands. More members will join them after Garvaghy Road. The Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition hopes to prevent the parade along Garvaghy Road from happening and has rejected the appointment of a mediator for the dispute. The Order holds thousands of parades per year, with the majority taking place peacefully in recent years. Intermittent violence has occurred in the past, particularly when marches pass through Catholic and Irish nationalist neighborhoods. The Drumcree parade route is one of the most contentious, with the route passing through Garvaghy Road, a primarily Catholic and nationalist area. Violent disorder during the Drumcree march in 1996 led to the creation of the Parades Commission, which decides whether restrictions on sensitive parades should be in place. Northern Ireland's Secretary of State ordered an independent review of the Parades Commission, emphasizing that the commission will need to rebuild confidence following criticism from unionist politicians and the Orange...
- **Opposition Pakistani Political Parties Plan Major Upcoming Actions in Islamabad:** Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) political party launched a "super long march" from Bab-i-Khyber toward Islamabad on 20 September, intending to pressure the government into reducing what are perceived as exorbitant fuel taxes. Government and JI representatives engaged in repeated rounds of talks (including as recently as 19 September) before JI began its demonstration, which threatens significant disruptions in the national capital, as well as cities along the planned route. The party is now calling for the Pakistani government to repeal all "excessive" taxes, including the fuel levy. Due to the global energy crisis, the country has been forced to institute further austerity measures meant to limit fuel consumption for the coming three months. While the measures primarily impact government officials and functions, restrictions related to opening hours for businesses and markets could drive further support for JI's planned actions. A foot march stepped off from the Bab-i-Khyber in Jamrud on 20 September, while a separate "train march" launched from Karachi. The train convoy will pass through Hyderabad, Landhi, Nawabshah, Rohri, and Sukkur, following along Pakistan's main railway line and threatening potential demonstration activity at stops along the route. The march from Jamrud, meanwhile, is expected to pass through Bara and Peshawar en route to Islamabad. Additional groups of

supporters are also said to be traveling to Islamabad for the main demonstration. Leaders of JI expect their march to reach the capital on 23 or 24 September, with a stopover in Lahore between 22 and 23 September. Organizers have said that they...

- **Syria Sees Demonstrations Over Rising Fuel Prices:** Some of the largest demonstrations since the fall of Bashar al-Assad spread across Syria beginning on 13 September after the government announced a 40% increase in diesel prices and a 28% increase for gasoline. With most Syrians still living below the poverty line, discontent with the rising cost of living quickly boiled over in response to the fuel measures. Demonstrators across six provinces burned tires and blocked main roads, including the highway from Damascus to Aleppo, calling on President Ahmed al-Sharaa to address the public's grievances. After days of demonstrations, Energy Minister Mohammed al-Bashar al-Assad announced that the government would offer diesel at a lower price for "heating, agriculture, and industry". While demonstrations appear to have lessened from their peak following the announcement, ongoing disruptions to global energy markets stemming from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to commercial traffic, similar demonstration activity is likely to arise in response to future austerity measures and shortages, both in Syria and elsewhere around the world.
- **Week of Action Beginning 20 September Raises Risk of Climate-Related Demonstrations Across New York City:** The 2026 edition of Climate Week NYC will take place between 20-27 September. The event will overlap with most of the UN General Assembly's High-Level Week (22-29 September), which will bring over 100,000 people to more than 1,000 events on energy, finance, and low-carbon transitions ahead of COP31. Grassroots demonstrations have taken place surrounding the beginning of Climate Week in recent years and are expected to recur in 2026. The group Climate Defenders is planning actions throughout the week as part of its "Unplug AI Week of Action." Demonstrators plan to target companies connected to AI, including OpenAI, Amazon, and Google, as well as a power generating plant in Greenwood Heights, Brooklyn. Other groups plan to demonstrate during a board meeting at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on 23 September. Climate-related demonstrations are also likely elsewhere around the world, with more than 200 demonstrations scheduled across at least 64 departments of France on 26 September. With the backing of nearly 500 organizations, participants will denounce perceived government inaction on climate policy after a summer that saw roughly 7,300 heat-related deaths and 120,000 hectares burned by wildfires in the country.

Upcoming Events

- 20-21 September: Yom Kippur (Global)
- 20-27 September: Climate Week NYC (New York City, United States)
- 22-29 September: UN General Assembly High-Level Week (New York City, United States)
- 23 September: Parliamentary Elections (Morocco)
- 23 September: National Day (Saudi Arabia)
- 25 September: Mid-Autumn Festival (China)
- 25 September: Chuseok (South Korea)
- 25 September-02 October: Sukkot (Global)
- 01-07 October: Golden Week (China)
- 02 October: Gandhi Jayanti (India)
- 03 October: Day of German Unity (Germany)
- 04 October: General Elections (Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- 07 October: Anniversary of Hamas attacks (Israel)
- 12 October: Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day (United States)
- 12-18 October: World Bank Annual Meetings (Bangkok, Thailand)
- 14 October: International AI Summit (Dublin, Ireland)
- 20 October: Dussehra (India)
- 24 October: EU-GCC Summit (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)
- 25 October: 'Retrocession Day' Public Holiday (Taiwan)
- 25 October: Presidential Election (Bulgaria)
- 25-27 October: Thadingyut Festival (Myanmar)
- 27 October: Legislative Elections (Israel)
- 29-30 October: EU-Canada Summit (Montreal, Canada)
- 20-21 October: G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting (Atlanta, United States)
- 03 November: Midterm Elections (United States)