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November 2, 2026

Headlining This Week's Brief

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Top Stories

Unrest and Geopolitical Issues Threaten Governments Across Europe

At a time of widespread unrest, challenging economic conditions, and a perceived Russian threat, political strife poses a growing threat to government stability across Europe. Disagreements over how best to address these challenges and growing pressure from social movements threatens to undermine national-level responses, and could produce marked political change at both the domestic and EU levels. France remains the most visible of these scenarios amid persistent demonstration activity that is well into its second month. Observers warn that the unrest has proven detrimental to support for centrist politicians, to the benefit of candidates at either extreme of the political spectrum. The increasingly polarized political environment reduces the likelihood that opposing sides find common ground on the matter, and could threaten the passage of any legislation meant to address the unrest. Meanwhile, a years-long series of demonstrations over corruption and other issues in Serbia recently culminated in the ouster of President Aleksandar Vučić, who had served 14 years and played a significant role in establishing the government's priorities and driving economic growth in the country, regardless of the popularity of his platform. Reforms and other efforts to move past the Vučić era are well underway, but it remains unclear if the Students List platform can sustain the growth seen under the former President. Separately, the non-EU member state Moldova seeks to accelerate the process of joining the bloc over fears of further Russian aggression, which threaten Moldova in particular due to its proximity to the front lines of the Ukraine...

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

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Four Corner States Dealing With Dangerous Floods Following Heavy Rain this Weekend

Dangerous river flooding is ongoing in Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico after a second round of heavy rain impacted the region this weekend. Local authorities have issued evacuations in several locations, mainly along the San Juan River and its tributaries across southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico. While weather conditions are improving, it will take days for river levels to fully recede and for conditions to return to normal.

Tropical Cyclone Murasu Nearing Landfall in Andhra Pradesh India

Thousands have been preemptively evacuated in Andhra Pradesh as Tropical Cyclone Murasu looks to become the second system to make landfall in the state over the seven days. While Murasu is not expected to be as intense as Arnab, the latest forecast models are signalling for a potentially extreme rainfall threat over central Andhra Pradesh, likely centered around Ongole and Vijayawada. The India Meteorological Department has issued maximum level warnings as this could be a life-threatening situation through at least Wednesday.

Despite Partial Ceasefire, Russia-Ukraine Conflict Drags On, Driving Civilian and Commercial Disruptions in Both Countries

While a US-brokered ceasefire in the southern Ukrainian city of Oleshky remains intact at the time of publication, both Russia and Ukraine continue launching drone and missile strikes targeting military sites and critical infrastructure in each other's territory, with further Russian strikes targeting population centers also reported. The continuation of the intense pace of strikes despite the partial ceasefire is driving significant disruptions to business activity and daily life in both countries. On 27 October, strikes that targeted the South Bridge in Kyiv disrupted road and metro transport indefinitely, and flights were temporarily restricted in Moscow on 29 October amid a volley of some 600 Ukrainian drones. Ukraine's campaign targeting Russian data centers has also had a significant impact on internet access, e-payments, and other critical web-based services in the country, as well as the performance of data center service providers like Yandex. The situation has forced both countries to seek creative solutions to continue exporting critical goods including food and fuel to global markets. Russian shipping firms announced on 28 October that the first grain cargo had been loaded at a port along an underutilized Arctic trade route from the World War II era due to the rising threat to commercial shipping in the Black Sea. The current situation and trajectory of the conflict drove Finnish President Alexander Stubb and Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre to hold a call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on 27 October. During the meeting, they implored Putin to seek a path to...

Climate and Natural Hazards

- Extreme Flooding Reported in Melbourne Florida, Flood Risk to Continue: Locally extreme rainfall totals of 15-20 inches have been reported in Melbourne and the Palm Bay area as of late Monday morning. Dangerous flooding remains ongoing as heavy rain continues to focus along the east coast. Residents are being advised to stay home until conditions improve in Melbourne and Palm Bay. Additional flooding is possible through Monday across central and southern Florida, especially along the east coast.
- El Niño Driving Severe Flood Threat Across Ecuador and Northern Peru: El Niño has led to severe landfall across western Ecuador and northwestern Peru throughout October, leading to life-threatening conditions. With El Niño forecast to strengthen through January-March 2027, the region is expected to observe worsening flood and landslide impacts. Tumbes and Guayaquil are two of the areas most at risk for additional dangerous flooding this week.
- Fall Severe Weather Outbreak Possible Across the Central and Southern Plains: The Storm Prediction Center has highlighted a large area under a Level 2 of 5 Severe Risk for Monday, with a localized Level 3 of 5 Risk centered between Wichita, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City. While all severe hazards will be possible, the main threat is for a few strong tornadoes. Those within the area, especially between 3:00 p.m. and 11:00 a.m., should remain weather-aware and take shelter immediately upon receiving tornado warnings.

Worldwide

- Surprise Military Deployments in Niger and Haiti Highlight Shifting Security Postures in Neighboring Countries: Algeria's unexpected troop deployment in Niger marks a departure from Algiers' history of non-interventionism, and threatens to draw the country deeper into Sahel security rivalries amid a power vacuum across the region. While nominally aimed at protecting strategic interests such as energy infrastructure and transport corridors, Algeria has also recently reengaged with regional peers, which could play a part in the decision. The move could heighten tensions with neighboring states and armed groups, and increases the threat to cross-border trade, movement, and infrastructure projects, particularly with Algerian ties. Similarly, the rapid deployment of around 1,000 Salvadoran troops to Haiti injects an unexpected external element into the already fragile security environment, potentially threatening security coordination, civilian safety, and business operations in gang-controlled areas. Intensified security activity could disrupt over-the-road transport, local markets, commercial port activities, and humanitarian services in impacted areas, especially around capital Port-au-Prince. The move follows an 18 October ambush of UN peacekeeping forces in the country that resulted in four Salvadoran soldiers going missing, and comes amid a years-long security operation under Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, and at a time when the country is seeking a greater role in regional affairs.

- India-China Border Tensions Resurface Amid Strategic Infrastructure Developments: On 22 October, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) chief Shatrujeet Kapur confirmed ongoing face-offs between Indian and Chinese forces at several locations in Arunachal Pradesh, particularly around Taksing in Upper Subansiri district. India's Ministry of External Affairs attributed the friction to Chinese troops deviating from established patrolling patterns, which Beijing disputed. While there have been no recent reports of fresh clashes between the two sides, their continued failure to address competing territorial claims threatens significant geopolitical consequences in the event of a military escalation or miscalculation. The renewed friction is especially concerning amid recent investments in energy, transport, and other infrastructure across the region by both China and India, which increase the potential costs of walking back territorial claims and could be used by either government to help justify their control in a given area, potentially setting the two sides on a course toward further clashes. Water security in particular is a growing concern following the announcement of China's 60,000-MW mega hydropower project on the lower Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, which threatens the downstream supply to India, in addition to the risk of localized flooding. The strategic leverage the project provides Beijing over the Brahmaputra river system prompted New Delhi to advance the proposed 11,200-MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, triggering violent protests by indigenous communities over displacement from ancestral lands and environmental risks. Clashes with police, arson, and arrests have prompted additional security deployments in the contested region, complicating the project's implementation and underscoring the multifaceted risks associated with the broader…
- Israeli Arab Parties Could Play Key Role in Government Formation Following Inconclusive Israeli General Election: Following Israel's 27 October general elections, which recorded the highest voter turnout in decades, neither the ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Benajmin Netanyahu nor the opposition coalition behind candidate Gadi Eisenkot has a controlling lead. With most votes counted, Netanyahu's coalition was on track to win 53 seats against the opposition's 48. The strong performance of Israeli Arab parties—which are expected to win 19 seats, nearly doubling their previous 10—could see them play a pivotal role in determining which (if either) coalition comes to power. However, challenges including both Eisenkot and Netanyahu's previous refusal to join forces with Arab parties and potentially competing interests, as well as legal structures limiting "Arab parties' ability to turn electoral gains into influence" could undermine their potential role in the government formation process. Netanyahu's Likud party has also demanded a probe into allegations that Arab voters engaged in ballot fraud to "steal" the election, which could further impact the government formation process and could ultimately disrupt Arab Israeli legislators from taking their seats and participating in governance. If this occurs, or if neither party is able to reach a coalition agreement with the Arab parties, the further failure to assemble a ruling coalition of at least 61 seats could ultimately lead to the dissolution of the Knesset and snap elections.
- Canada Signs Trade Deal with UAE as Trade Diversification Efforts Continue Amid Ongoing US Tensions: Despite some relief from US tariff pressure amid an ongoing trade spat, Toronto continues to pursue trade diversification efforts in hopes of reducing its exposure to US decision-

making. Ahead of 03 November midterm elections in which the economic impact of the Trump administration's tariff regime on the US cost of living has become a top political issue, Washington lifted 50% tariffs on Canadian-made "plywood sheets, some paper products, certain machinery and refrigeration equipment." However, the announcement also accompanied new tariffs on carpets, "waste products," and other imports, all effective 30 October. Meanwhile, separate negotiations are underway to reduce tariffs of up to 50% on steel and 25% on automobiles. Progress toward resolving the broader trade tensions between the Trump administration and Carney government has yet to emerge. Faced with extensive uncertainty in Canada's relationship with its largest trade partner by far, Prime Minister Mark Carney is seeking new trade partners to mitigate the risk posed by tariffs, export bans, and other potential consequences of the falling-out with the US. A new trade agreement with the UAE will eliminate or reduce tariffs on the vast majority of current Canadian exports to the country once implemented, while Abu Dhabi committed up to C$70 billion (US$49.86 billion) in investments and plans to explore an integrated trade corridor linking the Port of Churchill, Hudson Bay Railway, CentrePort Canada, and Dubai-based DP World's global logistics networks. A separate partnership between UAE renewable-energy company Masdar and Natural Resources Canada will facilitate energy-sector cooperation and investment. Despite...

- New US Intelligence Agency Seeks to Disrupt Competitors' Tech Developments: A new Politico report claims that the US Department of Defense has been working to stand up "an elite new tech agency to help covertly disrupt and sabotage foreign technology programs considered threats," raising concerns about further US aggression overseas and the prospects that the Technology Support Office's (TSO) activities could spark a wider conflict. First established in April 2026, the TSO emerged from the merger of "two classified Pentagon intelligence programs that have conducted similar clandestine tech-sabotage efforts at a smaller scale since 2023," suggesting that active US interference in foreign tech programs could date to the Biden administration. While the exact nature of the TSO's operations remains unclear, US and broader Western concerns about losing competitive advantages to China and elsewhere is driving interest in potential policy responses to the challenge. However, the establishment of a government agency tasked solely with disrupting competitors marks a significant escalation and is likely to face pushback in itself, with any future sabotage activities attributed to the TSO only likely to attract further scrutiny and criticism. As further reports on the TSO's existence and potential activities emerge, the role of Deputy Defense Secretary Steve Feinberg—himself a billionaire investor and close Trump ally with past defense sector interests—may also face scrutiny, especially if Feinberg is found to hold significant stakes in US AI, rare earth, or other tech-adjacent strategic sectors.

Cyber and Regulatory

- Hackers Steal $6.3 Billion From Users of Cryptocurrency Exchange Binance in Industry's Largest-Ever Attack: Cryptocurrency exchange Binance is beginning to recover some of the roughly $6.3

billion in funds stolen from users' accounts during a 29 October hack, which is believed to be the largest cryptocurrency theft ever. The company continues to uncover “additional points of breach” during its investigation into the cyberattack, which has been attributed to North Korean state-backed actors. Much of the attack unfolded in just 20 minutes, and the hackers moved quickly to transfer the stolen funds to accounts “beyond the reach of Binance counterparties and stablecoin issuers.” Cryptocurrency firms have together frozen access to roughly $3 billion of the stolen assets. While digital asset insurance may cover some of the losses that Binance is ultimately unable to recover, legal experts are urging impacted parties to "take their own action, urgently, to recover assets that have been stolen,” through means such as “using the courts to trace and freeze stolen assets before they move beyond reach.”

- Polymarket Temporarily Pauses Trading After Vendor Hack Leads to Theft of $2.7 Million from User Accounts: Online prediction market Polymarket, which allows users to gamble on the outcomes of certain scenarios, suspended service on its global platform for several hours to investigate a hack of one of the company’s UK-based vendors that enabled attackers to steal some $2.7 million from around 700 users’ accounts. Polymarket’s flagship platform is blocked in the US and 39 other countries and territories, and users of a separate, US-specific platform (Polymarket US) were not impacted. The company intends to refund all impacted parties, incurring significant costs as a result. The attack follows a similar June 2026 incident that saw users lose over $3 million, raising questions about the company’s cybersecurity and third-party vendor monitoring practices.
- Suspected Cyberattacks Targeting US Military Freezers Expose Defense Department Logistical, Supply Chain Vulnerabilities: The Pentagon is investigating suspected cyberattacks after freezer malfunctions at commissaries in at least six US military bases reportedly triggered impacted units to defrost, spoiling food stocks. US Cyber Command and Army investigators are involved in the ongoing investigation, though the cause and perpetrators remain unconfirmed at the time of publication. If investigators determine the incident to have been the result of a cyberattack, the incident will underscore the threat such an attack poses to military logistics and food safety. If similar vulnerabilities extend to civilian cold storage facilities, often found in places like supermarkets and pharmaceutical warehouses, cyberattacks could also disrupt food and medical supply chains, as was recently seen in France. Both the French and US incidents expose the risks associated with connected control systems, demonstrating how attacks on support infrastructure can impose operational and economic costs, and in the US case, disrupt combat capacity without directly targeting military command systems or weapons.
- US Midterms Targeted by Hackers, Foreign Influence Campaigns as Experts Warn Defenses May Fall Short: Amid concerns that a delayed and potentially insufficient federal cybersecurity effort could expose the 03 November US midterm election to cyberattacks, influence operations, and other threats, a series of recent developments suggest that malicious actors are actively targeting key races and election-related infrastructure for exploitation. Just weeks ahead of election day, social media platform X (formerly Twitter) announced that it had suspended over 13,000 accounts linked to China, Iran, or Russia, which the company claims “sought to shape the political

debate in the United States." Despite X and other platforms' efforts to crackdown on inauthentic political discourse driven by foreign actors, the issue remains a challenge and could influence key races like the close contest for Texas' open Senate seat. Meanwhile, an attempted 27 October breach of the Federal Election Commission's (FEC) website, which disrupted mandatory campaign finance disclosure filings. While the incident will not impact the administration of elections, any candidates' failure to meet the financing obligations could be portrayed by opponents as obscuring the information or see any forthcoming victory challenged in the future, raising the stakes despite the lack of a direct impact to balloting processes.

- Cyberattacks Targeting US Hospital Systems Highlight Far-Reaching Potential Impacts: On 22 October, Cleveland-based University Hospitals disconnected its systems from the internet after detecting unusual server activity, disrupting its MyChart patient portal, network connectivity, and insurance pre-authorizations. Appointments and elective procedures were subsequently rescheduled. Days later, a separate cybersecurity incident at the University of New Mexico's (UNM) Health Sciences Center forced ambulance diversions, cancellations across more than 30 clinics, and the suspension of outpatient services, temporarily increasing pressure on other area hospitals and disrupting scheduled services at many of the network's locations. The incidents come amid an increase in cyberattacks on digital systems used to administer essential services, and expose the vulnerability of interconnected hospital networks where attacks or precautionary shutdowns can disable access to records, scheduling, and other administrative processes. Beyond the immediate impacts, a pattern of cybersecurity-related disruptions could also worsen long-term patient outcomes, overwhelm regional services in the event of a mass casualty incident or other strain on services, expose sensitive data, and drive substantial costs for impacted consumers, firms, and municipalities alike.
- Japan Faces Rising Cyber Threat as AI Undermines Language Barriers for Hackers: Faced with the rising cyber threats posed by artificial intelligence and the growing interconnectedness of everyday devices, Japanese authorities plan to simulate cyberattacks against businesses, government entities, and infrastructure across the country in an attempt to identify and address weaknesses before attackers exploit them. The recent PHP vulnerabilities and a series of cyberattacks targeting prominent Japanese firms and connected infrastructure in recent months highlighted the potential consequences of unpreparedness, producing impacts ranging from ransom costs to service outages and data leaks. Japanese officials are also devoting increased attention to the potential vulnerabilities associated with devices such as smart energy meters installed in some 80 million homes, which could enable hackers to cause massive power outages or other disruptions if they are accessed. Historically, many Japanese firms have lagged global industry peers in cybersecurity preparations, leaning heavily on the local language barrier as a limiting factor that reduced risk. However, the advent of AI language models capable of digesting Japanese language characters in non-executable code or creating convincing Japanese script for use in phishing and other social engineering efforts has exposed the vulnerabilities of this strategy and will likely force greater corporate and government investment in cybersecurity efforts going forward. Amid the spate of recent attacks, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi

announced on 26 October that the government would be compiling a package of additional support measures for release as soon as next week and instructed ministers to work with "like-minded countries and relevant overseas organizations" to determine the perpetrators.

- European Commission Proposes Expanding Border Force's Authority Beyond EU Territory: The European Commission's proposed expansion of Frontex would empower the EU border agency to coordinate deportations between non-EU countries, operate from overseas return hubs, deploy rapid-response teams during border emergencies, and monitor public social media content. The proposal would also increase Frontex's standing workforce to 30,000 border enforcement officers by 2041. The move follows a series of widely-publicized incidents across the continent pertaining to undocumented migrants, including a noteworthy mass influx of migrants to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in late July, and still requires approval by the European Parliament and Council. Proponents claim the expansion could help member states accelerate migrant removals, reduce administrative burdens, and strengthen EU responses to mass migration attempts, but critics warn that by shifting enforcement operations beyond EU territory, where independent oversight and legal safeguards may be weaker, the plan increases the risk that attempted migrants may face arbitrary detention, human rights violations, and other impacts. Partner countries could face greater pressure to accept deportees and cooperate with EU enforcement as a result of the proposal, potentially threatening diplomatic fallout or domestic pushback.
- Chair of House Oversight Committee Denounces Delaware Plan to Enable Creation of AI-Led Companies: Delaware is considering legislation that would enable the formation of Artificial Intelligence Companies (AICs), "corporate entities that are run on a day-to-day basis by autonomous AI bots, which would have the right to sign contracts, file lawsuits, and make decisions on behalf of the business." The proposal has attracted criticism from influential US politicians, including the chair of the House Oversight Committee, James Comer. Comer expressed concern "that Delaware's AIC proposal could be used to protect powerful AI companies and their investors from responsibility for reckless harmful actions" and requested "documents and information about the state's plans." Comer also expressed concern about the role of a former Facebook lawyer in drafting the legislation, and suggested that AICs could help obscure larger companies' anticompetitive efforts.
- Slovakia's Warming Russia Ties Threaten EU and NATO Fines, Trust Concerns: Slovakia has resumed high-level consultations with Russia for the first time since Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, paving the way for bilateral cooperation in energy, agriculture, and other sectors, despite EU efforts to reduce dependence on Russian supplies. Following talks in Moscow on 26 October, Foreign Minister Juraj Blanár said Slovakia would expand cooperation "in areas not covered by sanctions," arguing that Russian fossil fuel exports remain difficult to replace in the global energy mix. In addition to providing Moscow with a fresh revenue stream despite a yearslong EU and US-led effort to economically isolate Russia in response to the Ukraine conflict, the move could see the country run afoul of EU efforts to end member states' imports of Russian gas by 2027, which could invite up to 40 million euros in EU penalties by February 2028. The

restoration of military-diplomatic contact has also raised NATO concerns over intelligence trustworthiness and the potential that the move provides the Kremlin with an inroad to advance espionage and sabotage efforts within Europe, although Bratislava insists it will honor its EU and NATO obligations.

- Meta Faces Record $25 Billion Penalty for Misleading Users About Data Privacy: On 21 October, a New Mexico judge ordered Meta to pay a record $25 billion fine after a jury found that the company had committed more than 43 million violations of state consumer protection laws with misleading statements about personal data safeguards and user privacy. The case stemmed from the Cambridge Analytica scandal, in which data from up to 87 million Facebook users was harvested without their consent for political profiling. Meta plans to appeal the fine despite the risk of incurring additional court costs, arguing that the ruling threatens its ability to operate in the state. The judge presiding over the case claimed that a penalty of up to $219 billion was appropriate under state law. The judgment is a significant development in efforts to rein in the activities of Big Tech companies, and could strengthen efforts to hold them accountable for data misuse, increase legal and compliance costs, and intensify scrutiny of how platforms collect, share, and monetize user information.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- French Businesses Count Losses in the Hundreds of Millions of Euros as Disruptions, Theft, Vandalism Bite Amid Unrest: Ahead of another planned nationwide day of action scheduled for 31 October, French businesses are once again preparing for widespread operational disruptions and potential theft or vandalism. While the last large-scale day of action in the country, which took place on 24 October, did not see vandalism on the scale of preceding 17 October unrest, businesses remain heavily exposed, threatening lasting economic impacts and leading to calls for more robust protections. Retailers have begun closing ahead of major days of action and boarding up storefronts in efforts to mitigate the risk of theft or vandalism. Some 3,000 businesses were targeted during the 17 October unrest, which caused damages expected to reach into the hundreds of millions of euros. Most businesses are unlikely to have lost trade coverage, with operational disruptions due to demonstrations, vandalism, and repairs having potentially significant impacts on their performance. Lost inventory could disrupt supply chains for retailers, including those not directly impacted by the violence, as other sites may be forced to redirect their own stock to the recovery effort. Industry experts expect the recovery to be uneven across impacted firms, with small businesses facing particular risks that larger chain stores, which have the support of corporate financial backing and supply chains, do not. Family-owned and other small businesses, which often store paper records in-store, are less likely to back up important records to remote or digital storage and may be forced to cover deductibles or restocking costs out of pocket.
- Iran Threatens Trillions in Gulf Tech Infrastructure if US Attacks Resume: Amid concerns that the Netanyahu government in Israel and the Trump administration in the US could launch fresh

operations against Iran either ahead of or immediately following their respective elections, Iranian officials have threatened to target over $2 trillion in "US-linked data centers, artificial intelligence facilities, and other technological infrastructure in the region" if the attacks resume. Despite the threat, US officials are reportedly warning allies across the Middle East that "a short, intense military campaign" against Tehran will likely follow the US midterms, potentially setting the stage for widespread Iranian retaliation against regional and multinational tech interests seen as having even tangential ties with Washington. An attack on this scale would likely impact cloud computing, banking, e-commerce, and internet connectivity across the Gulf, threatening widespread disruptions to business activity, government services, and daily life. Tehran has repeatedly proven capable of evading air defense systems to strike strategic targets. Iranian strikes on Amazon Web Services (AWS) facilities in the UAE and Bahrain disrupted cloud operations in March, with some customer data rendered permanently unrecoverable as a result. Iran has also threatened to target subsea telecommunications cables, which could compound disruptions to internet connectivity, cross-border financial transactions, and other services. The persistent wartime conditions across the region would also likely delay any repair efforts, threatening lasting impacts in the event of a disruption.

- President Trump Says New Data Centers to Source Their Own Energy, 'Give or Sell' Excess to Local Community: Facing widespread pushback against existing and planned data center projects across the US, President Trump announced on 21 October that "new and large" data centers will be required to provide their own electricity supply and "give or sell any excess back to the local community, or grid." The comment marks a significant escalation from earlier recommendations that data centers should power their own projects; in March, the White House revealed that a series of data center projects had pledged to "build, bring, or buy all of the energy needed for building and operating data centers, paying the full cost of their energy and infrastructure," though there was no suggestion of any regulatory requirement. It remains unclear how or when any legislation or regulatory changes codifying the President's announcement will emerge. With communities across the country seeking moratoriums on new data center construction due to concerns about the potential impact on power grids, local water supply, and other environmental and infrastructure factors, data center companies and government officials that support these projects have struggled to balance the potentially lucrative benefits of data center projects with their growing unpopularity. This has become particularly important in the weeks leading up to the 03 November US midterm elections, which could have significant political consequences.
- China's Dominance of Clean Energy Sector Threatens Southeast Asia's Energy Security: The International Energy Agency (IEA) is warning that growing global dependence on clean energy equipment produced in a comparatively small number of countries could disrupt grid developments and energy supplies across the world, with Southeast Asia seen as particularly exposed. While the region is expected to remain reliant on fossil fuels, the destabilization of global energy markets at a time of rising industrial activity, the more frequent use of air conditioning, and the construction of data centers across the region is driving interest in the integration of alternative energy sources into regional grid infrastructure. China dominates the

sector, leading the market in solar panel, wind turbine, electric vehicle, and battery production. ASEAN countries have spent over $20 billion on Chinese clean-tech products through 2026 in an effort to meet surging demand. That dependence exposes these and other countries investing in green energy to export restrictions, equipment price volatility, and geopolitical disputes, leading the IEA to call for regional economies to diversify their supplier networks and develop domestic manufacturing capacities. The instability in global fossil fuel markets driven by conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe has also driven many countries to other alternative energy sources, including coal and nuclear power, in an attempt to shore up energy security.

Health

- Travel Restrictions Grow as DRC Exceeds 10,000 Ebola Cases, Kenyan Outbreak Widens: The fatality rate of the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has reached 51.6%—eclipsing the fatality rate of the 2013-16 West African Ebola outbreak that is recognized as the largest ever. At least 5,372 deaths have been reported, with officials counting 10,467 confirmed cases to date. As the outbreak widens in eight of the DRC's 26 provinces, Kenya's challenges in reigning in an outbreak believed to have been imported from the DRC are also rising. Kenyan health athorities are now reporting at least nine confirmed Ebola cases and two deaths. With the World Health Organization (WHO) warning that this ongoing Ebola outbreak is becoming increasingly "complex," neighboring countries and others have implemented further travel restrictions. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will now require all passengers taking international flights to the US to sign a statement that they have not been in the DRC within 21 days of entry. Saudi Arabia has also introduced travel restrictions, suspending Saudi citizens' permission to fly to Kenya, pausing visa approvals for travelers from Kenya, and banning Kenyan citizens from entering Saudi Arabia.
- Rising Flu Cases Spark Concerns Over Vaccine Effectiveness, Cross-Species Transmission Ahead of US Peak Season: The US is experiencing an unusually early flu season, with a mutated H1N1 strain spreading across the West Coast and moving eastward. The CDC estimates that as of 24 October, at least 1 million cases, 16,000 hospitalizations, and 900 deaths are associated with the 2026 flu season to date. The strain carries a specific mutation that may help it evade existing immunity, meaning vaccination may offer less protection against infection, although it is still expected to reduce the risk of severe illness. Meanwhile, an outbreak of H5N1 avian flu situation in Yakima County, Washington, is also raising concern after a second human case reported on 31 October resulted in a fatality following exposure to infected dairy cattle. The patient died after being hospitalized with severe illness and underlying health conditions, marking the first US bird flu fatality of 2026. A third human case was also confirmed, involving a person with mild symptoms. At least 33 dairy herds in Yakima County had tested positive by 29 October. Health officials are

monitoring close contacts and exposed farm workers, but say the risk to the public remains low, with no evidence of human-to-human transmission.

- Bangladesh's Dengue and Measles Outbreaks Worsen, Undermining Containment Efforts and Healthcare Access: Bangladesh is facing a worsening dual outbreak of dengue and measles, with government prevention and vaccination drives yet to contain rising case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths. According to figures released 25 October, dengue had claimed 384 lives, with 123,948 cumulative cases reported to date and a record 2,249 hospital admissions that day alone. The measles outbreak, the world's worst by far, had caused 1,227 cumulative deaths at the same point in time, mostly among children. Experts attribute the continued spread to gaps in routine immunization, the inadequate identification of unvaccinated children, weak mosquito surveillance, and limited decentralized healthcare capacities. With more than 14,000 patients from both outbreaks hospitalized simultaneously, pressure is mounting on the broader healthcare system. The failure of the government's repeated emergency response campaigns points to deeper weaknesses in public health preparedness, staffing, and disease surveillance.
- EU Effort to Streamline Pesticide Approvals Threatens Farmer and Food Safety: The European Union's proposed "Omnibus X" legislation package includes amendments to several existing EU laws that cover pesticides, biocides, food residues, animal feed, and official controls, threatening to undermine the bloc's toxicology-based approach to regulating various substances in the interest of cutting bureaucratic red tape. In December 2025, the European Commission revealed the "Food and Feed Safety Simplification Package," a component of Omnibus X that seeks faster regulatory approvals and renewals, the simpler certification of research laboratories, and new trade policies, among others. While the commission claims that a streamlined regulatory environment will allow the EU to address "rules and procedures identified as particularly burdensome by stakeholders," critics point out that the planned changes could make it easier for pesticides and other agricultural chemicals to be brought to market without a complete understanding of their potential health impacts, both for field workers and those consuming products tainted with those chemicals.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- Los Angeles, Long Beach Port Strikes Temporarily Averted, but Risk Remains: Employees organized under International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 26 at the Port of Long Beach and the Port of Los Angeles (which together make up the San Pedro Bay Port Complex) extended contract talks from 01 November to 05 November, temporarily averting a dockworkers' strike at the busiest container port complex in the United States. ILWU Local 26 represents around 250 watchmen and security personnel across six maritime terminals in the two-port complex. The

workers provide terminal security and control access at facilities that support a large share of regional cargo flows. While the walkout is comparatively small, it threatens an outsize impact, potentially disrupting cargo handling, trucking, and vessel operations with little notice if talks fail. Workers were preparing to strike at 5:00 pm on 01 November after voting to authorize a walkout during the ongoing negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association, and the walkout plans could resume if negotiations fail to produce an agreement by 05 November.

- Demonstrations Against Data Centers, AI Planned in Australia, Netherlands: Climate and social justice activists with Geef Tegengas in the Netherlands will protest the expansion of data center projects in the country on Friday, 06 November, with organizers planning to take direct action against a new Microsoft data center in Amsterdam's Westpoort area. While publicly available information on Friday's action remains limited, the organizers have a history of occupying industrial sites, including a Microsoft facility near Middenmeer last year, and activists will likely attempt to block access to the data center construction site. The action in Amsterdam is part of a Europe-wide mobilization against data centers, with activists from neighboring Belgium organizing transportation to join the event in Amsterdam as well as other demonstrations planned in Leeds, England and Coleraine, Northern Ireland. Meanwhile, in Australia, students are calling for regulations on AI, with a nationwide mobilization planned for next Tuesday, 10 November. At least eight cities will see demonstrations against AI at noon local time, including at Sydney's Town Hall, King George Square in Brisbane, and State Library Victoria in Melbourne. However, social media posts promoting the demonstrations have garnered limited engagement.
- Labor Issues Continue to Threaten Transport, Production Disruptions in South Korea: Following a summer of labor action that impacted industrial operations and other sectors across South Korea, central Seoul is expected to face traffic and access disruptions on Saturday, 07 November, when the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) plans to hold a national workers' rally at 3:00 pm, followed by a march. The proposed gathering area extends from Sungnyemun to Donghwa Duty-Free Shop, making congestion likely around City Hall, Sejong-daero, and Gwanghwamun. Separately, POSCO members will vote on 07 November on a proposed contract addressing wages, bonuses, allowances, and medical benefits. The package offers a 2.6% basic-pay increase, a one-time payment of KRW 6 million (US$4,463), and additional pay step increases. The evolving terms of the company's proposal and the union's withdrawal of a planned indefinite strike suggest progress toward settlement, although it remains uncertain whether workers will ratify the contract. Significant strike-related production disruptions are unlikely while the walkout remains withdrawn, but the rejection of the company's latest offer could revive stoppages at facilities in Pohang and Gwangyang. The extent of production disruptions that may result will depend on participation, duration, and the processes impacted by any eventual walkout.
- French Demonstrations Continue to Drive Disruptions as Organizers Plan Further Days of Action: Ongoing unrest driven by anger over living costs, fuel prices, public services and school conditions

in France led to the third consecutive Saturday of nationwide mobilizations (dubbed “Act III” by organizers) on 31 October. Turnout fell to 320,000 nationwide (as compared to the 410,000 that joined Act II demonstrations on 24 October), including 70,000 in Paris, though unions estimated nearly 500,000 participants. Despite the lower turnout, sustained student and union mobilization throughout the preceding week, which included school blockades and other disruptive actions, highlight the persistent threat to business activity and daily life across the country. The 31 October marches began largely peacefully, but efforts to disperse participants escalated into clashes in Grenoble, Lyon, Marseille, Paris (Porte de Charenton), and Toulouse, where police used tear gas and other crowd-control measures. Authorities also reported attempted breakaways and vandalism in Bordeaux, Lille, Nantes, and Rennes. Authorities arrested 779 people, and 116 police and gendarmes were injured in clashes. At least 36 businesses damaged, three looted, and 515 fires reported across the country. Although these figures were lower than the peak observed during Act I demonstrations on 17 October, repeated demonstrations and associated disruptions to education, transport, and other services raise the pressure facing business operations in the country, especially in the retail and hospitality sectors, which are contending with reduced footfall, property damage, and insurance and security costs. Student organizations are calling for nationwide school blockades and demonstrations on November 03, including a planned march in central Paris from the Panthéon to…

- Deadly Train Collision, Operators’ Strike Disrupt Schedules Across Spain, Threaten Prime Minister Ahead of Elections: A 28 October high-speed train collision near Urda, Toledo killed at least 69 people, with dozens still hospitalized as rescue operations continued on 29 October. The crash occurred after a signaling failure, when a Renfe passenger train was reportedly authorized to proceed despite a stationary train on the tracks ahead. An investigation into the possible failure of rail safety systems and the control center's decision that led to the crash (Spain’s second major fatal rail disaster this year) is ongoing, and will likely fuel further questions over railway safety, maintenance, and investment practices. Demonstrations followed the tragedy, drawing large crowds in Madrid and Barcelona. Clashes were reported near the Ministry of Transport in Madrid as some protesters pushed against police lines and threw flares and other objects, prompting riot police to use tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. Meanwhile, a 24-hour train drivers’ strike scheduled before the accident for 29 October to demand stronger safety measures and investment is compounding service disruptions already worsened by the crash response effort. Minimum and reduced services due to the strike are likely to cause cancellations, crowding near stations, and delays for commuters and businesses. The crisis threatens to undermine Sánchez’s campaign ahead of a planned 29 November general election, shifting attention from the government’s policy agenda to public safety and accountability. The opposition People’s Party (PP) has called for a full investigation, while Vox has attacked the government and demanded resignations. Vox is also organizing demonstrations denouncing the train disaster…

Upcoming Events

- Upcoming Events - Week of 02 November: AlertMedia is tracking a series of demonstrations, holidays, labor actions, and other events scheduled to take place over the coming weeks. 03 November: Midterm Elections (United States) 04 November: Municipal Elections (South Africa) 07 November: General Election (New Zealand) 08 November: Diwali (India) 09-20 November: COP 31 UN Climate Change Conference (Antalya, Türkiye) 16 November: Revolution Day (Mexico) 16-18 November: 49th ASEAN Summit (Manila, Philippines) 16-18 November: World Food Programme Executive Board Session (Rome, Italy) 18-19 November: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (Shenzhen, China) 19-20 November: International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council Meeting (Montreal, Canada) 23-27 November: 31st Chemical Weapons Convention Conference (The Hague) 23-24 November: Tazuangdaing Festival (Myanmar) 25 November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Global) 26 November: Thanksgiving Day (United States) 26 November: Republic Day (Mongolia) 29 November: International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (Global) 30 November-07 December: 25th ICC Assembly of States Parties (The Hague) 02-03 December: Eid Al Etihad National Day celebrations (United Arab Emirates) 04-12 December: Hannukah (Global) 06-10 December: Festival of Lights (India) 08-10 December: UN Water Conference (Abu Dhabi, Dubai) 09 December: Anti-Corruption Day (Uganda) 10 December: International Human Rights Day (Global) 13 December: Commemoration of Nanjing Massacre (China) 14-15 December: G20 Leaders Summit (Miami, United States) 18 December: International Migrants Day (Global) 25 December: Christmas Day (Global except Orthodox countries)