

Trump rolls out red carpet for Xi; Israel blocks wheelchairs for Gaza's amputee children; Argentine president threatens Falklands

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UN General Assembly

- **Pezeshkian vows Iran will fight “until our last breath” in UN speech:** Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [told](#) the UN General Assembly Wednesday that his people have been “victims of terrorism” by the U.S., noting that in the war Iran did not “bend the knee” after the U.S. began its campaign against the country.

- He also said that Iran remained “ready for negotiations” but would not allow the U.S. to employ “the language of force” against it.

- During his speech, he held up photos of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and children killed in the war’s opening days. “We have only defended ourselves. We are not terrorists,” he said.

- Secretary of State Marco Rubio dismissed the speech, claiming Iran had limited “standing” on the issues of human rights.

- **Venezuela’s Rodríguez promises elections “at the right moment” in first UN address:** Venezuela’s acting President Delcy Rodríguez [told](#) the UN General Assembly Wednesday, “elections will be held in Venezuela,” saying her government has begun “political dialogue with opposition sectors” toward an “inclusive and transparent process,” while stressing that the Venezuelan people will determine “the right moment” for the vote.

- Rodríguez, who took power after a January U.S. military raid captured Nicolás Maduro, thanked President Donald Trump “for being willing to resume the course of diplomatic relations” and described strengthening cooperation with the U.S. in the country’s energy industry and related to its security.

- Trump and Rodríguez met late Tuesday evening during a reception at a New York hotel. Rodríguez wrote on X following the meeting that the two “discussed

strengthening the bilateral relationship between our countries” and issues “in strategic areas such as energy, mining, security.”

- Her address was the first by a Venezuelan head of state to the Assembly since 2018.

- **Milei threatens unilateral Argentine action on Falklands, calls UN “useless” at General Assembly:** Argentine President Javier Milei [told](#) the UN General Assembly on Wednesday that Argentina would “take matters into our own hands” over the disputed Falkland Islands, criticizing the UN for looking “the other way regarding the situation” and calling it a “useless organisation whose only purpose is to sustain a cast of faintly arrogant parasites.”

- Milei particularly condemned the Sea Lion offshore oil project, which has been jointly overseen by a British oil exploration company and an Israeli energy company, calling the drilling an “unlawful act.” He told the body that Argentina’s government had begun sanctions proceedings against more than 60 companies and individuals tied to the drilling.

- The UN does not recognize either Argentine or British claims on the island, and has encouraged the states to resolve the conflict through bilateral negotiations.

- **AI CEOs urge UN Security Council to regulate technology:** Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman [told](#) the UN Security Council Wednesday that AI poses potentially existential risks, with Amodei saying, “if managed poorly, I even believe AI could be a risk to humanity as a whole,” and Altman warning “we could lose control of the future to AI,” urging global safeguards including agreements against AI-built biological weapons and common testing standards.

- British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said the U.K. will make AI control central to its G20 presidency next year, but White House Science Adviser Michael Kratsios countered that safety concerns are “not a reason to pause its further development or to constrain it with new global governance structure,” while Chinese Ambassador Fu Cong warned against countries “banding together into a petty us-vs.-them clique” and pushed open-source models instead.

- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy separately warned that AI may soon make battlefield targeting decisions without human control, citing a Russian drone that reportedly killed three Ukrainians after autonomously selecting a target.

- The meeting unfolded alongside Chinese President Xi Jinping's Washington visit, where U.S. and Chinese officials have discussed a potential AI incident "notification mechanism."

- **Turkey agrees to "gradually" hand over Bashiqa military base to Iraq:** Turkey and Iraq **agreed** in a joint statement Wednesday that Turkish forces will "gradually hand over" the contentious Bashiqa-Zilkan military base to the Iraqi federal government, following a meeting between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Zaidi on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

- The handover is linked to Iraq removing "banned foreign armed elements" from the Yazidi region of Sinjar, which Turkey has long accused the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) of using as a logistical corridor.

- The statement said the transition would take place "in line with an agreed mechanism and timetable," though it did not offer detail on either.

- **Ukraine transfers two captured North Korean soldiers to South Korea, Zelenskyy tells UN:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy **told** the UN General Assembly on Wednesday that Ukraine has sent two North Korean prisoners of war to South Korea.

- The two soldiers, captured in Russia's Kursk region in January last year, are reportedly the first North Koreans taken alive since Pyongyang joined the war.

- Zelenskyy said one of the soldiers "tried to kill himself" upon realizing he would be captured alive and "was shocked that fate did not let him die."

- **U.S. pledges additional \$267 million to fight central Africa Ebola outbreak:** The U.S. State Department **pledged** an additional \$267 million Wednesday to combat the Ebola outbreak in central Africa, bringing the Trump administration's total commitment to \$886 million, senior officials announced on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

- The U.S. has reportedly been pushing other countries at the conclave to commit funds in hopes of reaching a \$2 billion funding target.

- The outbreak, detected in May and already the second most lethal on record, is centered mainly in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

- Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka called the outbreak "a major test" for the country during her speech before the General Assembly, claiming that the country's experience handling 16 previous outbreaks had recently begun yielding "tangible results"

- **“We cannot be silent”: Netherlands calls Gaza conditions a “disgrace,” pledges to evacuate 250 children:** Speaking at a Call to Action for Palestinian Children in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, hosted by the EU, Belgium, and Jordan on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, Netherlands representative Sjoerd Sjoerdsma condemned Israel’s restrictions on aid and called on European governments to take further action.

- “It’s completely unacceptable. We should call it as it is, it’s a disgrace,” Sjoerdsma said. “While I appreciate the moment of silence, we cannot be silent. We need to speak up and we need to adhere to the call to action.”

- The Netherlands, Sjoerdsma said, has decided to ban products from Israeli settlements, continue calling for the suspension of the EU-Israel trade and association agreement, and join Jordan’s initiative to medically evacuate 1,000 sick and injured children from Gaza, taking responsibility for at least 250.

- **Watch a video dispatch from the meeting by Drop Site’s Maysa Mustafa [here](#).**

Yemen

- **Saudi-led coalition says it intercepted six Ansarallah missiles amid renewed fighting in Yemen:** The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said it intercepted six ballistic missiles launched by Ansarallah, as Saudi Civil Defense briefly issued danger alerts for Mecca, Jeddah, Yanbu, Tabuk, and Taif.

- Separately, Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces claimed they had repelled an Ansarallah attack and several infiltration attempts near the road connecting Aden, Taiz, and Lahj. No independent confirmation of the account or reported losses was immediately available.

Iran

- **Iran says no U.S. talks until conditions met, Hormuz to remain closed:** Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei [said](#) Tehran will not negotiate with Washington or reopen the Strait of Hormuz until the U.S. implements seven Iranian conditions conveyed through intermediaries, including ending the war on all fronts, releasing Iran’s frozen funds, and ending the U.S. naval blockade, WANA News reported.

- He said the conditions must either be implemented in full at once or within roughly three to five days before the strait is reopened, arguing that Washington must first rebuild trust after violations of commitments during previous negotiations.

- Rezaei said Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had conveyed the conditions through intermediaries, including Pakistan, Qatar, Oman, and Iraq, stressing that the exchanges taking place around the UN General Assembly in New York do not constitute negotiations.
- “The United States has been seeking negotiations for about a month and a half,” Rezaei said, adding that Tehran had instead “put its conditions in writing” and passed them to mediators.

· **U.S. Treasury chief says pressure campaign aims at Iranian government split, popular uprising, or deal:** U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent [said](#) the Trump administration’s pressure campaign against Iran is aimed at producing one of three outcomes: divisions within Iran’s government, an uprising by Iranians, or an agreement with Tehran that Washington says Iran would be required to uphold.

- “The goal here can be one of three states of the world,” Bessent told Fox News. “One, the regime turns on each other—not impossible. Two, we get some kind of uprising from the Iranian people.” The third, he said, is “to get the Iranians, if they want to make a deal, to stick to the deal.”

· Bessent said Washington was carrying out an unprecedented effort to cut off Iran’s “financial oxygen,” predicting Tehran would eventually “yell uncle.” He also threatened companies and financial institutions doing business with Iran, saying the U.S. knows who they are and would target their companies and bank accounts “every day and every week.”

- He also claimed that “more than 80 or 90%” of Iran’s external flights had been shut down, adding: “I’m not sure how the Iranian representatives at the UN are gonna get home.”

· **FT: War-driven shipping costs hit record highs, forcing refineries to cut production:** Large supertankers (VLCCs) are being forced to travel much longer distances because of the war and can spend days waiting outside the Gulf for dark ship-to-ship transfers, [driving](#) shipping costs to record levels and squeezing refinery margins, the Financial Times reported. This is forcing refineries to cut production even as refined fuel prices surge to historic highs.

- The report says shipping accounts for 20-40% of delivered costs for crude.
- After five consecutive days of losses, Brent crude jumped 3% to around \$103 today. But prices could fall further as refineries cut production.

- **At least six killed in clashes between Iranian forces and armed group in Iran's Baluch region:** At least six people, including five alleged militants and one IRGC Quds Force member, were **killed** Wednesday in a roughly four-hour clash between Iranian security forces and unidentified gunmen in Saravan, near the Pakistani border in Sistan and Baluchistan province, according to Iranian state media.

- The IRGC said the armed group was planning assassinations and accused the group of “acting on behalf of the U.S. and Israel.”
- Clashes between state forces and rebel groups in the area are a frequent occurrence, though they appear to have increased in recent weeks. Unidentified assailants killed an Iranian police officer in the city of Bazman on Monday, and a Sunni cleric and two alleged members of the separatist group Jaish al-Adl were killed in Zahedan last week.

Palestine

- **Israeli attacks kill two Palestinians in central Gaza:** Two Palestinians were killed and others wounded in Israeli **attacks** in central Gaza on Thursday, according to WAFA.

- One Palestinian man was killed by Israeli gunfire west of Al-Zahra. Another was killed and others wounded when Israeli forces struck a vehicle near the American Hospital in Al-Zawayda.

- **Israeli forces raid Palestinian Red Crescent office as settler attacks injure Palestinians across the occupied West Bank:**

- **Salfit:** Israeli forces **raided** the Palestinian Red Crescent Society headquarters in Salfit city on Thursday, searched surveillance cameras, and held staff inside, WAFA reported.

- In Farkha, west of Salfit, dozens of Israeli settlers **attacked** a flock of sheep and assaulted two young Palestinian men, leaving both with head injuries.

- **Ramallah and Al-Bireh:** Israeli settlers **attacked** a Palestinian vehicle near Turmus Ayya, northeast of Ramallah, spraying pepper spray at the driver and several young men who tried to reach the area. In Atara, north of Ramallah, settlers torched two Palestinian vehicles and spray-painted racist slogans.

- Israeli forces also **bulldozed** Palestinian land in Beit Rima, northwest of Ramallah, uprooting more than 400 olive trees, two days after issuing a military order targeting the land.
- **Hebron:** Armed Israeli settlers **set fire** to a Palestinian-owned vehicle in Masafer Yatta, south of Hebron.
- **Israel issues tender for 400 new settlement units near Qalqilya:** Israeli authorities **issued** a new tender for 400 housing units in the Karnei Shomron settlement, built on Palestinian land east of Qalqilya, according to the Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission.
 - The commission said the tender moves the project from the planning stage toward marketing and implementation. The deadline for bids is November 23.
 - According to the commission, Israeli authorities have issued tenders containing a net total of 3,582 settlement housing units across the occupied West Bank since the beginning of 2026 through September 22.
- **Son of Israeli ambassador to U.S. critically wounded in alleged West Bank ramming attack:** Neria Leiter, an Israeli military reservist and the son of Israel's ambassador to the United States, Yechiel Leiter, was critically wounded in an alleged ramming attack near the Israeli settlement of Beit Horon in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday.
 - Israeli military and law enforcement authorities alleged that a Palestinian man drove his vehicle into a security checkpoint, striking Leiter. Israeli forces then shot and killed the man as he attempted to flee, according to the Israeli military.
- **Kushner touts Gaza reconstruction plans as Israeli attacks and blockade stall ceasefire implementation:** President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner **said** the goals for Gaza's reconstruction are "transparent: a fully demilitarised Gaza, governed responsibly by Palestinians, where people can live with dignity, opportunity, hope and peace," following a "Board of Peace" briefing on Wednesday.
 - Kushner said "real progress" had been made, pointing to the ceasefire, the return of Israeli captives, a Palestinian technocratic government, a security and demilitarization framework, and 66 reconstruction projects that he said are ready to begin.
 - Israel has killed more than 1,400 Palestinians in near-daily attacks since the ceasefire took effect. Israel has also prevented the Palestinian technocratic committee

from entering Gaza and has yet to implement the agreed demilitarization process alongside its withdrawal from the territory, which Hamas agreed to.

- Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem said Thursday the group is “fully prepared” to implement the agreed roadmap, blaming delays on Israel’s refusal to implement the ceasefire and the Board’s failure to compel it to do so.

- “President Trump challenged us to break the old cycle and build something different,” Kushner said. “We have made real progress. Now we will move forward to the next phase.”

- **Israel blocks 900 donated wheelchairs for amputee children in Gaza, held in Jordan for over a year:** More than 900 all-terrain wheelchairs donated by two Australian charities for amputee children in Gaza have remained blocked in storage in Jordan since 2025, The New Arab [reported](#) on Wednesday.

- COGAT, the Israeli defense ministry body that oversees aid entry, rejected a February 2025 application from the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation to include the equipment in an aid convoy, citing incomplete approval for medical equipment; the application has since been designated “pending” with no updates.

- The wheelchairs were designed for difficult terrain, according to the groups, including the rubble that now covers much of the Gaza Strip. Gaza currently has the largest group of child amputees in modern history, according to the UN.

- **Israel’s election committee bars both main Arab parties ahead of October vote:** Israel’s Central Elections Committee [voted](#) Wednesday to disqualify Mansour Abbas’ United Arab List (Ra’am) and the Joint List, an alliance of the Arab-led Hadash, Ta’al, and Balad parties from the upcoming October 27 elections. In addition to these, it issued a separate exclusion for Hadash legislator Ofer Cassif and Balad leader Sami Abu Shehadeh.

- The bans require approval from Israel’s Supreme Court to take effect. Adalah, the legal center representing the parties, said it will challenge them next week.

- Ra’am called its exclusion “political and unacceptable.” The Joint List’s Yousef Jabareen accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir of trying to suppress Arab turnout “because they fear our ability to bring down the government of genocide and racism.”

- In seeking the exclusions, Netanyahu’s Likud party cited a portion of Israel’s “Basic Law” which allows legislators to remove candidates for “denying Israel’s existence as a Jewish and democratic state,” inciting racism, or encouraging armed

struggle against Israel. Adalah disputes these allegations, noting that much of the evidence it marshaled in its case against the Joint List is dated.

Lebanon

· **Israeli attacks destroy elderly care center, target solar panels in southern Lebanon amid “ceasefire”:**

· **Marjayoun:** A massive explosion [struck](#) Khiam shortly after 1 a.m. Thursday, affecting an area stretching roughly 300 meters from Nabaa Al-Raqiqqa to the Al-Mabarrat junction, according to Lebanon’s National News Agency.

· Dar al-Imam Zain al-Abidin, a center that provided services and activities for elderly residents, said its facility was among several civilian buildings and commercial establishments [destroyed](#) in the blast and was “razed to the ground.”

· **Bint Jbeil:** Israeli forces carried out explosions in Beit Yahoun as artillery fire struck the outskirts of the town and nearby Kounine. A large [explosion](#) was also reported near Bint Jbeil city. Another large demolition was carried out overnight in the Al-Abd al-Nabi neighborhood of Baraachit.

· **Nabatieh:** An Israeli drone [struck](#) between Nabatieh Al-Fawqa and Mayfadoun. Israeli artillery also [targeted](#) solar panels on the outskirts of Mayfadoun overnight, setting them on fire.

U.S. News

· **Trump gives Xi rare airport welcome as high-stakes Washington summit begins:** President Donald Trump [greeted](#) Chinese President **Xi Jinping** at Joint Base Andrews Wednesday with an unusually lavish ceremony, including a red carpet, military band, color guard and a flyover by two B-1 bombers, marking the first Chinese state visit to Washington in more than a decade.

· Trump’s welcome is a departure from custom under which U.S. presidents typically receive heads of state at the White House rather than the airport.

· The visit, which continues with substantive talks Thursday on trade, AI and Taiwan, comes as Trump seeks Chinese cooperation on manufacturing and in the Iran war (where he hopes to limit Chinese involvement). Xi reportedly aims to press on Taiwan and expand Chinese global influence. Expectations for major agreements this week remain muted.

- **White House preparing 90-day diesel export ban despite internal opposition:** The Trump administration is [preparing](#) a plan for a 90-day ban on diesel exports, five people familiar with the discussions told Politico, over objections from Energy Secretary **Chris Wright**, Treasury Secretary **Scott Bessent** and Interior Secretary **Doug Burgum**.

- Diesel prices reached \$6.52 a gallon Wednesday, up 91 cents from a month ago.

- One oil industry executive said the political pressure to act had overpowered internal concerns, describing a shift from “cooler heads” to a camp insisting “dammit, something has to happen.”

- Wright separately told a Climate Week panel on Wednesday that “the blunt tool of banning diesel exports definitely doesn’t work” since it could raise gasoline and jet fuel prices, and suggested any change would more likely be “entirely voluntary.”

- **Judge dismisses Trump’s election-interference lawsuit against Des Moines Register:**

Judge **Scott Beatle** [dismissed](#) President Trump’s lawsuit against the Des Moines Register, parent company USA Today Co., and pollster **Ann Selzer**, ruling that the plaintiffs’ attempt to use consumer fraud law to hold the outlet liable for an inaccurate pre-election poll conflicted with First Amendment protections for political speech.

- “At its core, the Plaintiffs’ Petition seeks to stretch both Iowa statutory and common law beyond their current bounds, turning speech that enjoys the highest category of First Amendment protection into a liability,” Beatle wrote, concluding “the protection is too great and the reach is too far.”

- **Two arrested at Springfield, Missouri city council meeting after Flock camera**

resolution blocked: Springfield residents **Mia Hyder** and **Noah Powell** were [arrested](#)

Monday at a Springfield, Missouri city council meeting after Mayor **Jeff Schrag** moved to send a resolution reviewing the city’s 41 Flock ALPR surveillance cameras to committee and blocked public comment on the issue, prompting outrage in the crowd. Hyder was handcuffed and removed while speaking about the cameras during an unrelated comment period, and Powell was detained and ticketed for shouting profanity as police cleared the room, according to reporting from 404 Media.

- City Councilor **Brandon Jenson**, who proposed the camera review, said before the vote, “This isn’t how government is supposed to run... we’re not even allowing folks to speak who clearly came out to share their voices tonight.”

- Local advocacy group Flock Out SGF backed the two arrestees, and the incident joins a string of similar arrests at city council meetings nationwide this year, including in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.
- **Cook Political Report shifts three Senate races toward Democrats:** Cook Political Report [reclassified](#) Senate races in Kansas, South Carolina and Georgia in Democrats’ favor, moving Kansas from “Likely Republican” to “Lean Republican,” South Carolina from “Solid Republican” to “Likely Republican,” and Georgia—held by Sen. **Jon Ossoff**—from “Lean Democrat” to “Likely Democrat.” The shifts bring the number of Republican-held Senate seats rated “Toss Up” or better for Democrats to six.
- **ICE explores “mobile detention facilities” in Pennsylvania amid detention expansion:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement is [exploring](#) plans for “mobile detention facilities” in Pennsylvania—a network of vans run by GEO Group subsidiary GTI that would follow officers into the field—according to documents first obtained by watchdog group **Project Salt Box**.
 - The units would be funded by the DHS’s \$7 billion detention expansion contract with GEO Group, which was signed on Sunday and covers New York, Texas, Arizona, Florida, California, Colorado, Washington, and Pennsylvania.
 - The plans offer few operational details beyond noting vans would be used “until full” and that women can’t be held in them for over 10 hours.
- **Chicago mayor proposes year-long moratorium on new data centers:** Chicago Mayor **Brandon Johnson**, [joined](#) by a group of aldermen, proposed a 12-month moratorium on new data center development within city limits while the city develops a “comprehensive regulatory framework,” giving his Data Centers Task Force time to study impacts on clean air, water and energy use. “Chicago is open for business, but we are not for sale,” Johnson said. The city currently has 39 active data centers.
 - Ald. **Bill Conway**, who has his own competing ordinance imposing immediate zoning and environmental review requirements, criticized the moratorium as risking “months if not years of debate and litigation, all while data centers keep building, polluting, and spiking utility bills.”
 - At least a half-dozen other major U.S. cities have similarly paused or restricted data center development.
- **CNN: Eight U.S. sailors attempted suicide amid low morale during USS Abraham Lincoln’s Iran combat deployment:** Eight U.S. Navy personnel assigned to the USS

Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group [attempted suicide](#) during its deployment, which included combat operations against Iran and more than six months without a port call, CNN reported, citing a letter from acting Navy Secretary **Hung Cao**.

- No sailors died by suicide during the deployment, Cao said. Crew members previously told CNN that morale aboard the carrier was very low, with sailors facing constant combat alerts, prolonged periods at sea and strains on basic amenities, including toilets, water fountains and hot water.
- Sen. **Kirsten Gillibrand** said the disclosure contradicted earlier dismissals by President Donald Trump and War Secretary **Pete Hegseth** of reports about conditions aboard the carrier. “What Trump and Secretary Hegseth dismissed as ‘fake news’ turned out to be serious and deteriorating conditions for our service members,” she told CNN.

· **Reuters: White House blocked State Department condemnation of West Bank import bans:** U.S. officials in early September [drafted](#) a statement attributed to Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** condemning the UK, France, and Canada’s plans to block imports from Israeli settlements, calling the moves akin to “the antisemitic boycotts, divestments and sanctions movement,” but the statement was never released after failing to gain White House or State Department senior leadership support, three people told Reuters.

- The draft, dated Sept. 8, was reportedly managed and pushed by **David Milstein**, an aide to U.S. Ambassador to Israel **Mike Huckabee**.
- Rubio ultimately declined to criticize any specific country when asked by reporters about the occupied West Bank bans on the day they were announced.
- Milstein was recently accused of opening himself up to a national security breach when he reportedly asked for “monetary wedding gifts” from Israeli citizens in a wedding invitation.

· **Senate Democrats to introduce bill to sanction Israel’s E1 settlement project:** A group of Senate Democrats led by **Chris Coons**, **Elizabeth Warren**, **Ron Wyden** and **Ruben Gallego** are [expected](#) to introduce legislation Wednesday to sanction individuals and entities that facilitate Israel’s E1 West Bank settlement project, according to Reuters.

- The bill, which will reportedly have at least 10 co-sponsors, would authorize Treasury sanctions on foreign companies or individuals responsible for E1 construction or transferring Israeli civilians into the area.

- **Texas DPS error leaves tens of thousands of voter registrations unprocessed for up to a year:** Texas counties are [receiving](#) backlogs of unprocessed voter registration applications dating back to October 2025 after a Texas Department of Public Safety error prevented some registrations and updates submitted through its online driver's license portal from reaching county registrars, Votebeat first reported.

- Travis County received about 32,000 applications overnight, bringing its total to 35,000, while Collin County was reportedly analyzing more than 40,000 additional records.

- DPS said "the system issue has been resolved" but has not disclosed what caused it or its full scope, and began delivering the backlogged registrations to counties Tuesday night.

 Have a tip on Capitol Hill? Email DC Correspondent Julian Andreone at Julian@dropsitenews.com

Other International News

- **Pakistan strikes 10 sites in Afghanistan over drone launches, Kabul says four civilians killed:** Pakistan's air force [struck](#) 10 locations in Afghanistan Thursday that it said were being used to launch and store drones, some used against Pakistan a day earlier, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar announced on X.

- Tarar added that "any further provocative act by Afghan Taliban will be responded [to] with firm and resolute response."

- Afghanistan's Taliban government said the strikes killed four civilians. An Afghan spokesperson, who denied that Taliban launched drones against Pakistan, said the strikes hit Kandahar, Paktia, and Khost provinces and warned of "adverse consequences for the Pakistani military."

- The escalation follows an attack on a police facility in northwestern Pakistan last week that killed at least 24 people, reigniting fighting between the two countries after roughly three months of relative calm.

- **ICC convicts Central African Republic militia leader of crimes against humanity:** On Wednesday, the International Criminal Court [convicted](#) former Seleka militia leader Mahamat Said Abdel Kani of four counts of crimes against humanity, including persecution and torture, over his role running a prison in Bangui where suspected supporters of ousted President Francois Bozize were beaten and tortured.

- Judges dismissed several war crimes charges against Said, finding the conflict had already ended when the alleged crimes occurred.
- The militia leader, who has denied all the charges against him, is the first member of the majority Muslim Seleka group convicted by the ICC. A separate hearing will determine his sentence.
- The court has previously convicted two leaders of the rival Christian “anti-Balaka” militia in its investigation into Central African Republic violence dating to 2014.

· **OpenAI AI agent breached Australian public health website, PM says:** Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [said](#) Wednesday that an OpenAI research agent breached Australia’s Medicare Statistics Reporting Portal in June, marking the first known instance of a breach into government systems involving the firm.

- The agent reportedly circumvented “repeated blocks” to access nonpublic aggregate spending data on Australia’s public health insurance system.
- OpenAI did not inform Australia until Sept. 10, nearly three months later.
- Albanese called the breach “unacceptable,” but said that the data accessed was “nonsensitive” and that no personal data was released as a result of the incursion. OpenAI also claimed that its model accessed no patient records, only aggregate statistics and internal file names, after conducting an internal evaluation.

· **Rubio conditions discussion with Cuba on regime change:** U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio [said](#) Wednesday the U.S. was amenable to speaking with Havana on the condition that the discussion included talks about a change in the island’s leadership, telling reporters the U.S. was “prepared to be helpful” in facilitating that change.

- He also said Washington would work with Cuban leaders “whose hands are not stained with blood,” and accused the country’s current leadership of being “publicly quite recalcitrant” in their posture toward the United States.
- The offer follows President Donald Trump’s Tuesday UN address calling Cuba a “failed state” and vowing to use military power “when necessary,” remarks that prompted the Cuban delegation to walk out.

· **IPC warns thousands of displaced Somalis could face famine by year-end:** The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [warned](#) Wednesday that about 26,000 displaced people in Baidoa, southwest Somalia—5% of that city’s displaced population—could face famine and livelihood collapse between October and December if El Niño causes worse-than-expected flooding and aid remains insufficient.

- The report found more than 5 million Somalis, or 26% of the population analyzed, already face crisis-level food insecurity or worse, a figure projected to rise to 5.4 million by year-end, while food aid is expected to reach only 70,400 people monthly in that period—just 1.3% of those in need.

- An estimated 1.92 million children aged 6 months to 5 years will require treatment for acute malnutrition by next June, including 433,000 severe cases. Somalia last experienced famine in 2011, when roughly 250,000 people died, and came close to famine again in 2017 and 2022.

- **Taiwan upgrades maritime patrols around vulnerable Pratas Islands amid Chinese pressure:** Taiwan's Coast Guard [said](#) Wednesday it has “comprehensively upgraded” patrol and enforcement capacity around the Pratas Islands in the South China Sea, including stationing a newly built 100-tonne patrol boat there following a wharf project completed in July and regularly deploying larger vessels, in response to increased Chinese activity near the outpost.

- China claims sovereignty over Taiwan and rejects any Taiwanese territorial claims, including over the Pratas Islands. Taiwan's Coast Guard, which oversees the uninhabited islands rather than the military, said it has confiscated nine Chinese fishing boats near Pratas since the start of the year and repurposed them for reef patrol and marine conservation work.

- **North Korea tests upgraded rocket launcher, vows nuclear status “irreversible”:** North Korea conducted a test of an upgraded 240mm guided multiple rocket launcher system Tuesday, state media KCNA [reported](#), saying the weapon—capable of striking targets up to 115 km away using autonomous precision guidance—will bolster firepower along its border with South Korea.

- Separately, Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said Thursday that North Korea's nuclear weapons status is “irreversible” and will only become more resolute, responding to a trilateral U.S.-South Korea-Japan meeting this week that reaffirmed commitment to North Korea's complete denuclearization.