

Sunday, October 4, 2026

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Maya: Good evening, and welcome to Global Politics, the evening edition for Sunday, October fourth, twenty twenty-six. I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. Brazil has voted, and the result is a shock. First-round results are in, and the winner of the day is forty-five-year-old Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, son of former President Jair Bolsonaro.

Maya: With nearly all votes counted, according to Brazil's Superior Electoral Court, Bolsonaro took roughly forty-seven percent of valid votes, while eighty-year-old President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva finished with roughly forty-five percent. Neither cleared fifty percent, so the race goes to a runoff on October twenty-fifth.

Devon: What stuns everyone is how wrong the polls were. Final surveys had Lula narrowly ahead, or the race tied. Instead Bolsonaro beat nearly every projection, and Reuters is already calling it one of the biggest polling misses in recent Brazilian history.

Maya: Al Jazeera, reporting on election night, quoted Bolsonaro saying quote, Brazil needs change. It cannot bear any more suffering, such as high taxes, so many women killed. Nearly one hundred sixty million Brazilians were eligible to vote, and turnout was close to eighty percent.

Devon: Why does it matter? A first-round win gives Bolsonaro momentum and a lead of about two and a half million votes. A runoff victory on October twenty-fifth would extend the wave of right-wing wins by Trump-aligned candidates across Latin America, and put Washington's demands on Brazil, over trade, rare earths, and security, in a very different light.

Maya: To the Middle East now, where the United States-Iran confrontation has hardened. The Associated Press reports that after this weekend's twenty-one-hour ceasefire talks in Islamabad collapsed, President Trump announced a blockade, and American Central Command has set a time. The blockade of Iranian ports and coastal areas begins Monday at ten o'clock A M Eastern time, enforced quote, impartially against vessels of all nations.

Devon: That is a step down from Trump's earlier threat to blockade the entire Strait of Hormuz. Central Command says ships sailing between non-Iranian ports can still pass. But Iran is not backing down. The BBC reports the Revolutionary Guard Navy has re-closed the strait, which it briefly reopened on Friday, and says it stays shut until the United States lifts its blockade, warning that approaching military vessels will be quote, dealt with severely.

Maya: Diplomacy is not quite dead. Trump said quote, very good conversations, are happening with Iran, and Iran's Supreme National Security Council says new American proposals are quote, currently being reviewed.

India's foreign ministry says two Indian-flagged ships were involved in a quote, shooting incident, in the strait. In Lebanon, a French peacekeeper was killed clearing explosives in the south, and Israel said it struck fighters it accused of violating ceasefire understandings.

Devon: Every day the blockade runs without a deal, energy prices climb. The United Nations food agency warned this weekend that world food prices are already near a four-year high, partly because of the Hormuz disruptions.

Maya: To the Horn of Africa, where pro-government forces have regained control of Mekelle, the capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region. Reuters reports this is a major setback for the opposition alliance led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

Devon: The pro-government Tigray Peace Forces say they entered the city center Saturday afternoon, followed by the Ethiopian military. The T P L F confirmed its retreat, saying the regional government will quote, temporarily move out of Mekelle and operate from somewhere else. It is the worst escalation since the civil war of twenty twenty to twenty twenty-two, which killed more than six hundred thousand people.

Maya: A State Department spokesman, Tommy Pigott, urged quote, maximum restraint, from both Ethiopia and Eritrea, warning that quote, the Horn of Africa cannot sustain another military conflict and humanitarian crisis. And Egypt is stepping in. A diplomatic source told AFP that Egypt is hosting a mini-summit in Alamein this weekend with the presidents of Egypt, Eritrea, and Somalia, and Sudan's armed forces chief.

Devon: The blame game is heating up too. Egypt's foreign minister told Reuters quote, we are not party to the domestic crisis facing Ethiopia now. It has nothing to do with us. But Ethiopia expelled an Egyptian diplomat this week, and Cairo retaliated. Eritrea, Sudan, and Egypt all deny backing the rebels.

Maya: Now to Yemen, where a second regional front is heating up. CNN reports that Yemen's internationally recognized government has announced a major new operation against the Iran-aligned Houthis, with the Saudi-led coalition promising quote, full operational support.

Devon: Houthi media say Saudi aircraft hit the capital, Sanaa, twenty-six times Saturday night. Reuters reports fierce fighting in Taiz, where more than seventy people were killed in a single day. And the Houthis claim missile-and-drone strikes on two Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, one in Riyadh and one in Khurais, though Riyadh has not confirmed any attack.

Maya: The context matters. Yemen fell back into civil war in July after years of calm, and last month the Houthis seized the entire Red Sea coast and the Bab al Mandeb strait, one of the world's great shipping lanes.

Devon: Finally to East Asia. Reuters reports North Korea says leader Kim Jong Un personally oversaw a hypersonic missile test Saturday. State media described an intermediate-range missile flying about one thousand kilometers into waters off

Maya: So here is what we are watching overnight and tomorrow. The American blockade of Iranian ports takes effect Monday at ten A M Eastern. Watch how Tehran responds, and how oil markets react when trading resumes.

Devon: In Brazil, the runoff campaign begins, with Bolsonaro holding a roughly two-point lead and three weeks to October twenty-fifth. Expect the polling autopsy to begin in earnest.

Maya: In Africa, the results of the Alamein mini-summit, and whether the loss of Mekelle pushes the T P L F to negotiate or fight on. Plus Israel-Lebanon talks expected in Washington on Tuesday, and the new Mecca defense pact committee meeting Monday in Riyadh.

Devon: That is it for the evening edition. Maya and I will be back tomorrow morning with the latest on the blockade, the Brazil runoff campaign, and everything else the night brings.

Maya: Good night, and thanks for listening.