

Sunday, October 4, 2026 Morning Edition

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Maya: Good morning, and welcome to Global Politics. It is Sunday, October fourth, twenty twenty-six, and you are listening to the morning edition.

Devon: Our top story is unfolding right now, Maya. Brazilians are heading to the polls in one of the biggest elections on the planet, a presidential race that could reshape Latin America.

Maya: It really is enormous. According to the B B C and Al Jazeera, nearly one hundred sixty million people are registered to vote, and polls are open from eight o'clock A M to five o'clock P M, Brasília time. The choice is between the incumbent, eighty-year-old Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and forty-five-year-old Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, the eldest son of former president Jair Bolsonaro.

Devon: And the Guardian is reporting that this race is much bigger than Brazil's borders. Flávio has positioned himself as the heir to his father's movement, and one American president is watching closely. Donald Trump imposed a fifty percent tariff on Brazilian imports and said Washington is watching this election very closely.

Maya: That's right, and Lula has framed this election as a test of sovereignty, warning against foreign meddling. Meanwhile, Brazil's electronic voting machines count fast, so we should know the first results tonight. But with no candidate expected to clear fifty percent of valid votes, the Guardian says a run-off on October twenty-fifth is the most likely outcome.

Devon: One more wrinkle from Al Jazeera: Flávio Bolsonaro has echoed his father's unproven claims about electronic voting, which analysts say could be groundwork to contest the result if he loses. And get this – Jair Bolsonaro himself, who is serving a twenty-seven-year sentence for plotting a coup, endorsed his son's campaign through an A I generated avatar.

Maya: We'll be watching that count all day. Now to the Middle East, where a weekend of high-stakes diplomacy has collapsed into a dangerous new phase.

Devon: The Associated Press is reporting that American and Iranian negotiators met in Islamabad, Pakistan, for twenty-one hours of talks – the highest-level direct meeting between the two countries since nineteen seventy-nine. Vice President J D Vance led the American side; Iran's parliament speaker led Tehran's delegation. And it ended with nothing.

Maya: The sticking point, according to N B C News, was nuclear policy. Within hours, President Trump announced on Truth Social that the U S Navy would begin blockading ships entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz. Then U S Central Command put out the operational order: starting Monday at ten o'clock A M, Eastern time, maritime traffic entering or leaving Iranian ports and coastal areas will be blocked, impartially, for vessels of all nations.

around seventy dollars.

Devon: Iran answered with threats of its own. The Revolutionary Guard Navy warned that military vessels approaching the strait would be dealt with severely, and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi posted that Tehran was inches away from an agreement before encountering what he called quote, maximalism, shifting goalposts, and blockade.

Maya: And there's a Lebanon dimension the Associated Press says is becoming inseparable from all this. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Israeli-held territory in southern Lebanon on Sunday, and Israel and Lebanon are expected to begin talks Tuesday in Washington. The A P's latest toll puts this war at more than three thousand people killed in Iran, over two thousand in Lebanon, and twenty-three in Israel.

Devon: From the Middle East to the Horn of Africa, where Ethiopia is sliding back toward a conflict many hoped was over.

Maya: Reuters is reporting that Ethiopian government forces have retaken the airport in Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray region, in what three sources described as a major setback for the opposition alliance. Rebel forces had seized the airport on September twenty-third.

Devon: The Associated Press says this is the worst outbreak of violence in Tigray since the civil war that ended in twenty twenty-two a war that killed more than six hundred thousand people. Washington is alarmed. A State Department spokesman urged both sides to exercise maximum restraint, saying the Horn of Africa cannot sustain another military conflict and humanitarian crisis.

Maya: And the crisis is spreading across borders. Ethiopia has severed diplomatic ties with Eritrea, accusing it of backing the rebels, alongside Sudan and Egypt. All three countries deny it. Communications blackouts make independent verification almost impossible, which is why we're relying on Reuters and A P sourcing here.

Devon: Finally, to Ukraine, where Germany is stepping back into the spotlight.

Maya: The Associated Press reports that German Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrived in Kyiv today for his second visit as chancellor. He brought his economy minister and a delegation of defense industry executives, arriving as Russian missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities intensify.

Devon: And President Zelenskyy gave a striking interview to Reuters. He says Ukraine will escalate its attacks on Russian oil refineries, citing intelligence that Moscow has ordered strikes on a broader range of civilian infrastructure ahead of winter. His words were direct: with their attacks on our energy, we have to respond on their energy.

Maya: At least six people were killed in Russian attacks on Saturday, with bridges across the Dnipro River in Kyiv targeted for the third straight day. Merz laid it out as solidarity, saying Ukraine can continue to count on German help though as Reuters notes, no new contracts have been signed yet.