



January 27, 2025

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Top Stories

Milder, Wetter Weather Pattern Shaping Up Across Southern, Eastern United States

Following weeks of well below-average temperatures across the eastern two-thirds of the country, a general warming trend is anticipated for many areas across the United States between Tuesday and Sunday. By Thursday, afternoon highs will climb into the 70s from Central Texas eastward into southern Georgia, with southern Florida and Texas approaching 80F. Moreover, the NOAA [Climate Prediction Center](#) forecasts well above-normal temperatures throughout the Southeast U.S. during the first five days of February.

Mid-winter above-average temperatures often contribute to heightened severe thunderstorm potential. Over Texas, warm and unstable air will clash with an approaching cold front, leading to scattered heavy rain, damaging winds, and hail [Wednesday](#) into [Thursday](#). Northeast Texas, southeast Oklahoma, and lower Arkansas could also receive three to five inches of rain, with localized flooding possible [Thursday](#). A low-end threat of severe storms may reach the central Gulf Coast on Friday.

U.S.-Colombia Retaliatory Tariffs Avoided Following Deportation Row

After Colombian President Gustavo Petro [ordered](#) the return of two military aircraft bearing deportees from the United States, U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 25% tariff on all Colombian goods entering the U.S., with a [promise](#) to increase them to 50% within a week. At first, Petro responded defiantly, indicating his government would implement retaliatory tariffs, but hours later, the two nations came to an agreement over the deportees, and [no such measures were levied](#).

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The spat was the first in what may be several trade-related disputes ahead. During his first week in office, President Trump [said](#) that tariffs of up to 25% could be implemented on both Canada and Mexico, the country's two largest trading partners, as early as Saturday, February 1. During a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Trump also said that the U.S. could double the tax rate for foreign nationals and companies if they imposed "discriminatory" taxes on American multinationals. The threat of tariffs has [caused](#) some producers to cease taking orders from the U.S.

Other countries that the administration has floated tariffs for include [Denmark](#), where the U.S. leader may use them as part of his goal of acquiring Greenland, and China, where the administration is [considering](#) an additional 10% duty. Countries have begun making plans for if additional tariffs are implemented, with the European Union and Mexico [inking](#) a trade agreement and Argentina President Javier Milei [offering](#) to leave Mercosur if it would allow for a free trade agreement with the U.S.

Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire Extended, Palestinians Return to Northern Gaza

A tenuous ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon will [remain in effect](#) until February 18, despite Israel refusing to withdraw from southern Lebanon. It remains unclear how many Israeli troops are still stationed in the country and when their withdrawal—a key component of the November ceasefire agreement—will occur. On Friday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office [stated](#) that the troop departure depends on "the Lebanese army deploying in southern Lebanon and fully and effectively enforcing the agreement," measures it alleged have not yet been implemented.

To the south, tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians began [returning](#) home to northern Gaza. Their return was [delayed](#) amid Israel-Hamas ceasefire negotiations but secured after Hamas agreed to release three hostages before Friday in exchange for the opening of crossings to the northern portion of the territory. Palestinians' return to the area, much of which has been destroyed by conflict, comes despite U.S. President Donald Trump's [suggestion](#) that Palestinians be resettled for a period in Egypt and Jordan, a proposal swiftly rejected by both countries.

While both ceasefires hold, Israel is [continuing](#) a military operation in the West Bank, launched last week to target what it describes as Iranian-backed militants. The operation has [led to the evacuation](#) of residents from the Jenin refugee camp, a recurring focal point of recent Israeli campaigns. Elsewhere in the West Bank, UN officials reported that Israeli security forces have closed checkpoints, blocked entrances to major cities, and intensified vehicle searches.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Rare Earthquake Hits New England:** The United States Geological Survey (USGS) reported a [magnitude 3.8 earthquake](#) near York Harbour, Maine, shortly after 10 am Monday. [Light shaking](#) was felt as far away as Providence (RI), Springfield (MA), eastern Vermont, and Augusta (ME). There were no immediate reports of damage.
- **Wildfire Burn Scars in Southern California at Risk of Flooding, Debris Flows:** A low-pressure system will continue to produce scattered showers and a few isolated thunderstorms through Monday evening across Southern California. While the rain will offer a welcome relief from the active fire conditions from the last several weeks, localized high rainfall rates could trigger dangerous debris flows in vulnerable heavy rain and localized dangerous impacts.
- **Ireland and United Kingdom Disruptions Following Storm Eowyn:** Across Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, power outages and disruptions persist due to recent severe weather. In Ireland, power has been [restored](#) to 438,000 properties, but more than 300,000 are still without electricity, and over 100,000 people lack water access, with supplies for an additional 126,000 at risk as of Sunday evening. In Northern Ireland, [NIE Networks](#) reports that 60,000 customers remain without power, with full restoration expected by February 3. In [Scotland](#), 5,000 Scottish Power Energy Networks and 2,700 Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks customers are still affected, while debris removal continues on [rail lines](#) between Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- **Northwest France Hard Hit by Storm Herminia:** A maximum level [red flood warning](#) has been issued for Ille-et-Vilaine as rivers across the area continue to rise. Rennes is experiencing [unprecedented river flooding](#), prompting numerous evacuations, while many residents in Pont-Réan have also had to evacuate their homes. The town of Craon has also been severely impacted by flooding, though worsening conditions are possible as the Oudon River is expected to reach its peak levels from tonight into Tuesday. Additionally, the Mayenne River has overflowed in certain areas. Flooding has caused a complete suspension of train service between Rennes and Redon in both directions.

Worldwide

- **Rebel Group Seizes Goma, Tensions Escalate Between DRC and Rwanda:** The M23 rebel group today [claimed control of Goma](#), the largest city in eastern Congo, marking a significant development in their ongoing offensive in North Kivu Province. As M23 bared down on the city, the Congolese government cut diplomatic ties with Rwanda, which [backs the group](#), and

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[accused](#) the country of committing “a frontal aggression” and “declaration of war.” The fall of Goma, a humanitarian hub [housing](#) around one million displaced persons, risks worsening the region’s long-running conflict. As fighting intensifies in the area, the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa has [advised](#) citizens currently in North Kivu to depart to a safer location.

- **Prosecutors Charge South Korea’s Suspended President With Insurrection:** President Yoon Suk Yeol was [indicted](#) Sunday for leading an alleged insurrection after declaring martial law last month, marking the first time a sitting South Korean president has faced indictment. Prosecutors [accuse](#) Yoon, who will [remain in custody](#) for trial, of conspiring to deploy military forces to block parliament from overturning his emergency declaration and planning to detain political opponents. As he awaits criminal proceedings, the country’s Constitutional Court continues to deliberate on the question of removing him from office after he was impeached. If removed, presidential elections [would need to occur](#) within 60 days.
- **Peru Sees Spate of Attacks Involving Explosives:** On Friday night, at least three people were injured when an explosive device [detonated](#) outside a club in Lima’s La Victoria district. The incident marked the latest in a [string of attacks](#) involving explosive devices in Peru’s capital since January 15. Several businesses were impacted by the violence, and authorities are investigating whether they’re linked to extortion attempts by criminal groups, a [continuing](#) and [significant](#) problem in the country. Reflective of this issue was a [separate bombing](#) of a Public Ministry building in the coastal city of Trujillo on January 19 that officials believe was perpetrated by members of an extortion network.
- **Killing of Gang Leader Leads to Violence, Unrest Outside Jamaican Capital:** Violent and disruptive protests broke out in Spanish Town, Jamaica, last week after police [killed](#) Othneil “Thickman” Lobban, a leader of the One Order gang, one of the country’s most prominent and well-established [criminal groups](#). Lobban was a primary target on Jamaican authorities’ most wanted persons list before his death, but some residents of Spanish Town, which is located just west of Kingston and is the home base for One Order, [viewed](#) him as a community leader. The activity prompted a curfew and the [heightening](#) of the threat level against security forces to “extreme.” Officials [say](#) that calm has returned, but there remains the potential for retaliatory violence and further unrest.
- **Italy’s Urban Centers Step Up Crime Efforts in Busy Travel Year:** Today, in Turin, Italy, police will [intensify](#) policing efforts in four areas designated as high-risk for criminal activity. The locations— dubbed [red zones](#)—will see increased monitoring and access restrictions for known criminals until at least April 30. With the establishment of these zones, Turin joins [several other cities](#), including Rome, Florence, Naples, Bologna, and Milan, that are taking aim at crime as a busy travel year kicks off for the [2025 Catholic Jubilee](#). Over 32 million people are expected to

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travel to the nation's capital for the celebrations ([almost triple](#) the number seen in 2023), with many tourists likely to hit other cities as well.

- **U.S. Officials Urge Caution in Ethiopian Capital Due to Threats:** The U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa issued a security alert this morning recommending that embassy staff avoid public areas and exercise increased caution in the Ethiopian capital after observing social media posts calling for bombings and/or an escalation in violence against schools and open public marketplaces. Officials said the calls to violence were on behalf of Boko Haram but did not include specific reasoning. The posts also did not indicate a timeframe or specific location for targeting.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **Microsoft Services Exploited to Initialize Ransomware Attacks:** At least two separate threat actors are reportedly actively [exploiting](#) Microsoft 365 services to conduct ransomware attacks. Sophos, a cybersecurity firm, is [investigating](#) multiple incidents where default Microsoft Teams configurations were used to initiate conversations with employees while masquerading as technical support. The threat actors then instruct users to install Microsoft Quick Assist, allowing remote access to the employee's computer that is then used to download malicious packages and create backdoors. Researchers began investigating the attacks in November 2024, and the number of incidents has increased since the start of 2025. Sophos advised that the observed tactics are not often included in anti-phishing training.
- **Trump Repeals Biden AI Order, Announces Major AI Infrastructure Investment:** President Trump [repealed](#) an executive order regarding AI safety and reporting requirements signed during the Biden administration. The order [required](#) tech companies to share details about their AI models before the public gained access. Last week, the Trump administration [announced](#) a \$500 billion investment into AI infrastructure through Stargate, a new company with the backing of OpenAI, Oracle, and Softbank. The investment will allow for the construction of new data centers across the country that OpenAI will use for undisclosed projects.
- **Updates on Major PowerSchool and UnitedHealth Breaches:** An unidentified threat actor [claiming](#) responsibility for the [PowerSchool breach](#) says that over 60 million students and teachers were impacted across 6,500 school districts in North America. PowerSchool has been relatively tightlipped about the hack since it occurred, [claiming](#) that it paid to have the stolen data deleted but declining to provide evidence or details on the payment. The company did, however, [announce](#) that it would be offering two years of identity protection and credit monitoring services for those affected. In related hack news, UnitedHealth [confirmed](#) that the total number of people impacted by a breach in February 2024 had increased to 190 million, making it the largest breach of healthcare data in United States history.

- **Cyber Safety Review Board In Limbo After Trump Suspends Advisory Bodies:** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) last week [dismissed](#) all advisory committee members, including those of the Cyber Safety Review Board (CSRB), as part of a Trump administration cost-cutting effort. The move, outlined in a memo from Acting Secretary Benjamine Huffman, will likely delay the CSRB's [investigation](#) into the Salt Typhoon hacks, a Chinese cyberattack targeting telecom providers and political figures. Officials argue the reorganization aligns with Trump's push to streamline government programs and prioritize national security, though critics warn it may hinder cybersecurity oversight.
- **U.S. Officials Warn of Ivanti Vulnerabilities:** In a [new advisory](#), The FBI and CISA warned of Chinese hackers exploiting Ivanti Cloud Service Appliances (CSA) using four vulnerabilities (CVE-2024-8963, CVE-2024-9379, CVE-2024-8190, CVE-2024-9380). Targeting these flaws, attackers gained access, executed remote code, stole credentials, and planted malware. Affected versions include CSA 4.6.x (now end-of-life) and some 5.0.1 versions. Officials urge organizations to upgrade to supported versions, treat stored credentials as compromised, and analyze logs for malicious activity.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Germany Detects Foot and Mouth Disease in Cattle, Triggering Export Bans:** German officials [reported](#) foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in a herd of water buffalo in early January, the first cases of FMD in the country in nearly forty years. In response, several nations, including the U.K. and South Korea, [instated](#) a meat import ban. FMD is a highly contagious viral infection that primarily affects cloven-hoofed animals, such as cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, and deer. The last FMD outbreak in the EU was in [Bulgaria](#) in 2011. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) [states](#) that while FMD is not a public health problem, it can have a "significant economic impact" due to its easy transmission among animals. The DRV agricultural and food industry organization [estimates](#) that German companies will lose \$1.03 billion due to export restrictions in response to the FMD outbreak. An [outbreak](#) of African swine fever in 2020 had already led to curbed trade for Germany's meat industry.
- **France Resumes Certain Poultry Exports as Georgia Detects More Bird Flu:** Recent meat industry disruptions are not limited to four-legged animals. The U.S. state of Georgia confirmed a case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in a second commercial poultry flock last week. State health officials [suspended](#) "all in-state poultry exhibitions, shows, swaps, meets, and sales" after the first case was confirmed on January 17. Poultry production and the sale of poultry products are still ongoing as of this writing. The two affected farms are [located](#) less than a mile away from one another, and commercial poultry operations within a 6.2-mile radius will undergo

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surveillance testing. Meanwhile, the U.S. and Canada [resumed importing](#) certain poultry products from France following a nationwide bird flu vaccination campaign.

- **High Death Toll from Hotel Fire in Türkiye Raises Questions About Safety:** Turkish officials [detained](#) at least fifteen people in connection with the fatal ski resort hotel fire that killed 78 people in Kartalkaya last week. Dozens more people were injured at the 12-story Grand Kartal hotel. Footage of guests and staff escaping the fire from windows [sparked](#) outrage and allegations of negligence. Survivors' accounts of the disaster, one of the worst in Türkiye's history, [note](#) a lack of working fire alarms and sprinklers. Türkiye's Interior Minister [reported](#) that emergency personnel arrived more than 45 minutes after the fire broke out. Türkiye's Tourism Minister [said](#) the hotel, reportedly one of the country's most exclusive ski destinations, had a fire competence certificate, though the local mayor disputed those claims.
- **South Korea Continues to Investigate Jeju Air Crash:** South Korea will [remove](#) concrete barriers found at seven of the country's airports following investigations into the December plane crash at Muan International Airport that killed 179 people. The concrete barriers house navigation systems to help planes land; however, safety inspectors now intend to replace them with more lightweight barriers or relocate them underground. In a preliminary accident report released today, investigators have yet to determine the cause of the accident but have focused on the role of a [bird strike](#), the plane's engines, and the concrete landing navigation structure. Investigations are [expected to continue](#) for several months.
- **Trump Administration Bans DEI Efforts in Federal Government:** U.S. President Trump [issued executive orders](#) banning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in the federal government last week, [directing](#) agencies to terminate DEI roles. The order also [seeks](#) "to encourage the private sector to end illegal discrimination and preferences, including DEI." Trump is tasking federal agencies with identifying the "most egregious and discriminatory DEI practitioners" to potentially target them for [civil rights violations](#). Legal challenges can be expected; in his first term, a ban by Trump on DEI training for federal contractors was later [blocked](#) by a judge. This year's order comes as multiple major companies are [scaling back](#) DEI measures, though some have [reinforced](#) their support.

Health

- **Tanzania Declares Marburg Outbreak, Confirms Two Cases:** Tanzania has [confirmed](#) a new outbreak of Marburg virus disease in the country's northwestern Kagera region, walking back its claim a week ago that there were no cases in the country. Health authorities have now [reported](#) two confirmed positive cases and eight "probable" cases of the virus. In 2023, Tanzania suffered a Marburg outbreak in the same region, which serves as a transit hub for travelers to and from

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Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Rwanda. The WHO [joined](#) response efforts for Tanzania amid the outbreak, deploying a team of public health emergency experts and 1.4 tons of medical supplies.

- **Trump Administration Withdraws U.S. From WHO, Halts Activities at HHS:** President Donald Trump last week issued an Executive Order [withdrawing](#) the U.S. from the World Health Organization (WHO), [citing](#) what his administration called the organization's alleged "mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic" and "failure to adopt urgently needed reforms," among other matters. The move was coupled with domestic measures temporarily [limiting activity](#) at departments under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) umbrella. Notably, the directives resulted in the [suspension](#) of research grant reviews at the National Institutes of Health and the halting of external agency communications through [February 1](#). Trump's Justice Department also [indicated](#) that it would limit the enforcement of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act.
- **Flu Activity Remains High in U.S. and Europe:** Overall, respiratory illness activity in the U.S. [remains high](#), with flu transmission leading to a continued spike in emergency department visits. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the level of people seeking medical care in emergency rooms for flu is "very high" and is increasing, while visits for RSV and COVID-19 are decreasing. Similarly, in the U.K., the [latest update from health authorities](#) indicates that COVID-19 and RSV activity is dropping, while flu spread remains high. Across the rest of Europe, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [reported Friday](#) that significant respiratory virus activity continues, with "all indicators pointing to widespread high influenza activity."
- **Recent Measles Cases Reported in Several Cities Worldwide:** In Australia, health authorities issued an alert for [Sydney](#) and the [Gold Coast](#) after detecting infected travelers. In the U.S., the Rhode Island Department of Health [confirmed](#) a measles case in an unvaccinated child with recent international travel history. This is the state's first reported case since 2013. In Snohomish County, Washington, at least two residents were [exposed](#) to measles. Meanwhile, in Houston, TX, authorities [reported](#) two cases of measles—the first in seven years. Cities in the U.K., including Bristol, Gloucestershire, and Somerset, continue to grapple with rising cases of the infection.
- **CIA Assesses COVID-19 More Likely Originated From Lab, Acknowledges Low Confidence:** Over the weekend, the CIA, through a spokesperson, [indicated](#) that it now "assesses with low confidence that a research-related origin of the COVID-19 pandemic is more likely than a natural origin based on the available body of reporting." The agency still maintains that both scenarios remain plausible and stated that it would "continue to evaluate any available credible new intelligence reporting or open source information that could change its assessment." According

to a [report](#) in the New York Times, the judgment was not swayed by any new evidence; however, the analysis did include a “closer look at the conditions in the high-security labs in Wuhan province before the pandemic outbreak.”

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **PTI Plans Mass Protest Day in Pakistan:** The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) political party has [called](#) for mass protests on February 8 to mark the one-year anniversary of [national elections](#) that they allege featured widespread instances of poll-rigging and electoral malfeasance. All PTI MNAs and MPAs have been instructed to hold large rallies throughout the country. Police have moved aggressively to disperse past PTI demonstrations. They have also implemented bans on public gatherings and suspended mobile internet access in areas where there are expected demonstrations. In addition to demonstrations within Pakistan, overseas chapters of the PTI are planning demonstrations of their own, including in London on February 8 outside 10 Downing St at 2 pm and on February 9 at Amsterdam’s Dam Square, also at 2.
- **Train Drivers to Strike Across Argentina, Canada Rail Workers Authorize Strike:** Disruptions to rail services can be expected across Argentina on Tuesday during a strike by train drivers. The La Fraternidad union has called for a nationwide strike to [denounce](#) the “lack of a collective bargaining agreement between the union and the companies in the sector.” Meanwhile, in North America, mechanics with the Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway (CPKC) [voted](#) overwhelmingly in favor of a strike to begin as early as Wednesday, though the union said that negotiations would continue up to the strike deadline. The CPKC and Canadian National Railway Co (CN Rail) faced a four-day work stoppage in 2024 that only ended after the government forced binding arbitration.
- **Kenyan Activists Begin Weekly Strikes Today:** Activists have called for supporters to engage in a day of civil disobedience against the government of President William Ruto today. In addition, organizers are circulating calls for a nationwide “citizen protest” and general strike to occur “every Monday” going forward, according to information shared on social media. As part of the strike, activists are seeking business and school walkouts, and the days of action are likely to involve street demonstrations in urban areas across the country. Common protest locations include central business districts and areas around government buildings. Kenya saw [widespread protest activity](#) against the Ruto government in 2024 that led to significant disruptions and clashes between demonstrators and authorities.
- **More Demonstrations Planned by Indian Farmers:** Farmers in India [staged](#) tractor marches in around 150 places in Punjab and a few dozen locations in Haryana on Sunday as the country celebrated Republic Day. The gatherings were peaceful, but they demonstrate the continued determination of farmers’ groups as they campaign for a legally guaranteed minimum support

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price and other demands. Farmers with the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee have said that they **intend** to hold a march to the Shambhu border point on January 30 from Beas as they mark one year of their campaign. Similar marches have been dispersed by police and triggered mobile internet shutdowns. Farmers have also indicated that they will intensify their protests beginning February 14 if the government does not engage in talks.

- **Demonstrations Against AfD to Continue Across Germany:** Several demonstrations against the political party Alternative for Germany (AfD) are planned across Germany as the country prepares for federal elections on February 23. Police **used** a water cannon on demonstrators in Hamburg on Sunday; another demonstration against the AfD is planned at Rathausmarkt Hamburg this Thursday. The initiative Regensburg Gegen Rechts is organizing "in their Bavarian city on Sunday, February 2. Tens of thousands of people **protested** the AfD at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate and in cities across the country on Saturday.

Upcoming Events

- January 13-February 26: Maha Kumbh Mela (Prayagraj, India)
- January 28: Spring Festival Eve (China)
- January 29: Lunar New Year (China and Taiwan)
- January 29: Tet Holiday (Vietnam)
- January 30-February 2: Lunar New Year Holiday (Taiwan)
- January 30-February 4: Golden Week (China)
- February 1: Anniversary of Military Coup (Myanmar)
- February 5: Kashmir Day (Pakistan)
- February 6: Waitangi Day (New Zealand)
- February 8: Military Foundation Day (North Korea)
- February 9: General Election (Ecuador)
- February 9: General Election (Liechtenstein)
- February 9: Parliamentary Election (Kosovo)
- February 9: Super Bowl LIX (New Orleans, United States)
- February 11: National Foundation Day (Japan)"
- February 12: Lantern Festival (China and Taiwan)
- February 14-16: Munich Security Conference (Munich, Germany)
- February 19-22: Conservative Political Action Conference (Washington D.C., United States)
- February 23: Federal Elections (Germany)
- March 2: Parliamentary Election (Tajikistan)