



March 3, 2025

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Top Stories

March Roaring in Like a Lion, Multiple Weather Hazards on Tap Across U.S.

[Extremely critical](#) fire weather conditions are expected to develop Monday afternoon across eastern New Mexico and West Texas, including Carlsbad, Roswell, and the I-40 corridor. This marks the first "extremely critical" designation since January's devastating wildfires in Southern California. Winds gusting 50-60 mph and low humidity could lead to rapid fire spread if an ignition occurs. Xcel Energy has already noted that thousands of customers may have their power turned off during the period. By late Monday afternoon through Tuesday, critical to locally extremely critical fire weather will expand into central Texas, Oklahoma, southeast Colorado, and southwest Kansas, with gusts exceeding 40-50 mph. In response, Texas has raised its [wildland fire preparedness level](#) to three on a five-tier scale.

Three days of severe thunderstorms are forecast, with the highest threat expected Tuesday. Severe thunderstorms will develop between Dallas, Oklahoma City, and Wichita [late Monday evening into early Tuesday](#). Scattered gusts near 60mph, isolated hail, and a couple of brief tornadoes are possible. [Tuesday morning through Tuesday evening](#), a significant and enhanced threat of severe thunderstorms will center over Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, and western Alabama. Scattered damaging gusts over 60-70mph and a few strong tornadoes are possible. Tuesday's severe weather risk also coincides with Mardi Gras festivities in New Orleans and surrounding areas. By [Wednesday morning](#), strong storms and high winds will shift into the Mid-Atlantic and Carolinas.

Finally, Blizzard Warnings, Winter Storm Warnings, and Winter Storm Watches extend from Colorado northeastward into the Central and Northern Plains. Through early Wednesday, [moderate to major impacts](#) are likely over north-central Kansas, northwest Missouri, all of Nebraska, west-central Iowa,

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south-central South Dakota, south-central Minnesota, and north-central Wisconsin. Accumulating snow coupled with widespread wind gusts over 40-50mph, locally higher, will generate very difficult and dangerous driving conditions.

Activists to Mark International Women's Day with Demonstrations, Strikes

Disruptions are likely in many cities across the globe on and around Saturday during demonstrations related to International Women's Day. Most gatherings are expected to remain peaceful, though some actions in previous years have led to [clashes](#) with [police](#). Demonstrations for International Women's Day typically involve calls to promote a range of interests, including support for women's rights, labor rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and human rights.

In the Americas, large demonstrations are planned in Buenos Aires, Manhattan, and Mexico City. In Istanbul, where local authorities have previously banned related gatherings and [used](#) tear gas to disperse demonstrators, several actions are planned for Saturday, setting up potential confrontations. Europe will also see widespread rallies, with activists planning nationwide demonstrations and strikes in several countries. For more information, see AlertMedia's [situation report on International Women's Day](#).

PKK Declares Ceasefire After Founder Calls for End to Insurgency Against Türkiye

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a militant group that has been engaged in conflict with the Turkish state for decades, [declared](#) an immediate ceasefire on Saturday, heeding a call from jailed leader Abdullah Öcalan to lay down its arms and disband. More than 40,000 people have been [killed](#) since the PKK began its armed campaign for a separate Kurdish state in the 1980s. A peace deal between the PKK and Türkiye would have significant [implications](#) for the wider region, potentially allowing for the greater integration of Türkiye's Kurdish minority, which makes up an estimated 20% of the population, and for the economic [development](#) of southeast Türkiye.

While encouraging, several hurdles remain before a lasting peace can be realized. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that the PKK must [disband](#) in addition to laying down arms, although a congress is [reportedly](#) already being planned for this purpose. Kurdish forces in Syria are another complicating factor. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which have [faced attacks](#) by Turkish forces and were excluded from a recent National Dialogue in Damascus, has [welcomed](#) Öcalan's call but said that it did not apply to them. Ankara, meanwhile, considers the People's Protection Units

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(YPG)—the largest component of the SDF—to be an extension of the PKK. The [collapse](#) of a previous ceasefire process in 2015 led to a spike in violence.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Hundreds of Active Wildfires in Southeast U.S.:** While extreme fire weather is on tap for the southern Plains, it has been the Southeast U.S.—including [Mississippi](#), [Alabama](#), [Georgia](#), [South Carolina](#), and [North Carolina](#)—that has already faced consecutive days of fire spread and localized evacuations. Most fires are under control, but strengthening winds could ignite new flare-ups between late Monday and early Wednesday, just ahead of severe thunderstorms.
- **High Winds, Power Disruptions Probable Over Eastern U.S.:** Beyond the direct impacts of winter storms, severe thunderstorms, and fire weather, widespread gusty winds are expected to cause sporadic power outages across more than a dozen states through mid-week. Residents and businesses across the Central and Southern Plains, Missouri Valley, Southeast U.S., and Mid-Atlantic should prepare for periods of strong winds and potential power disruptions.
- **Eastern Australia Braces for Extreme Rainfall, Rare Tropical Cyclone Impact:** Tropical Cyclone Alfred ([satellite](#)) is [forecast](#) to remain off the coast through at least Tuesday before slowly tracking towards southeastern Queensland beginning Wednesday. The latest forecast guidance shows a strong signal for landfall near Brisbane late Thursday or early Friday as a tropical storm equivalent. The last tropical cyclone to cross the Southeast Queensland Coast was Zoe in 1974. Confidence is growing that severe rainfall totals between 10-15in, locally higher, will lead to localized life-threatening flooding between Wednesday and Saturday for southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales.
- **Severe Flooding Possible in Spain This Week:** A slow-moving weather system will promote rounds of heavy rain across portions of Spain, including the Canary Islands, through at least Thursday. Severe flooding has already been reported in [Telde](#), and [emergency services](#) in Valencia issued a special warning recommending increased vigilance and security, as up to 100mm of rain could fall in a short period of time. The latest forecast guidance suggests that Valencia, Castellón, and Málaga will be most at risk for flooding as there is a strong signal for 150-200mm (6-8in) of rain, locally higher, during the period. A similar weather pattern killed over 230 people in Valencia in October 2024.
- **Other Severe Weather Events:** For a daily look at significant weather events around the world, read AlertMedia's [Daily Severe Weather Report](#).

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Worldwide

- **At Least Two Dead in Germany Car Ramming Incident:** As of this writing, two people are dead and at least 14 injured after a car [drove](#) into a crowd in Mannheim, Germany, on Monday. It is unclear at this point whether the incident was an accident or a deliberate attack, but it comes after two previous car rammings in Germany in recent months, one in [Munich](#) and another in [Magdeburg](#). German police were already on high alert after an image [appeared](#) on a website run by an Islamic State affiliate that showed a list of cities with upcoming Carnival-related events and the text, "Choose your next target." The list included events in Cologne and Nuremberg and the Festival of Love in the Dutch city of Rotterdam.
- **Phase One of Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Expires Without Agreement on Next Steps:** Following the expiration of phase one of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Israel said that it is [stopping](#) the entry of all aid into Gaza unless Hamas agrees to extend phase one through the end of Passover on April 19 in exchange for the release of half of the remaining hostages. Hamas has rejected the proposal, saying additional hostages will only be released as part of the current phase of the agreed-upon framework. However, talks around phase two have sputtered, and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that they may need to [return to fighting](#). Meanwhile, the Arab League is due to meet tomorrow in Cairo to discuss a [reconstruction plan](#) for Gaza.
- **Political Uncertainty in Eastern Europe Amid Romania's Election Re-Do, Bulgaria's Recount:** Romania is likely to see heightened demonstration activity ahead of May's presidential election rerun amid criminal investigations into Calin Georgescu. Last week, prosecutors in Romania launched an inquiry into Georgescu over alleged false electoral campaign financing declarations, among [other offenses](#). Election-related demonstrations have [drawn](#) thousands of participants since the Constitutional Court annulled the country's December election results. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Bulgaria's Central Election Commission will [recalculate](#) its October 2024 election results, with any changes potentially impacting parliament's seat distribution. To the west, a Bosnian court banned the president of Republika Srpska from politics for six years and sentenced him to one year in prison for defying peace envoy orders. In response, lawmakers in the autonomous region [barred](#) the national police and judiciary from its territory.
- **U.K. Announces New Package for Ukraine as U.S. Support Wavers:** Over the weekend, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer [pledged](#) \$2.8 billion in support for Ukraine. The news came on the heels of a heated meeting between U.S. leaders and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the White House that ended without an anticipated [minerals deal](#) and led the Trump administration to [consider](#) suspending military aid to Kyiv. Officials in Washington will

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[reportedly](#) meet today to discuss the next steps as the war in Ukraine continues, with last week seeing significant Russian attacks that prompted Poland to [scramble](#) military aircraft.

- **Tens of Thousands Demonstrate in Seoul as Constitutional Court Weighs Impeachment:** Over 130,000 people [gathered](#) in downtown Seoul to demonstrate both for and against the impeachment of President Yoon Suk-yeol. The demonstrations came a few days after the Constitutional Court concluded its hearings on whether to uphold Yoon's impeachment. Precedent suggests that the Court will reach a decision within two weeks, with the exact timing [expected](#) to be announced two to three days in advance. A heightened security presence is expected on the day of the ruling to avoid a potential repeat of the [violence](#) that followed former South Korean President Park Geun-hye's impeachment. If Yoon is removed from office, a new election must be held within 60 days.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **Hack of Employment Screening Firm Impacts 3.3 Million People:** A data breach at DISA Global Solutions, Inc., an employee screening company, [exposed](#) the personal data of more than 3.3 million people. DISA discovered the data breach in April 2024, two months after a hacker accessed the company's network and stole information, including individuals' Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, driver's license numbers, and other government ID numbers. According to a [filing](#) with the Massachusetts attorney general, medical records were also among the stolen information. In a statement, DISA [notes](#) that their investigation "could not definitively conclude the specific information procured."
- **Government-Imposed Internet Shutdowns Hit Unprecedented High in 2024:** Governments shut down the Internet more times last year than ever before, according to a report from digital rights non-profit [Access Now](#). India, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Russia accounted for the majority (more than 70%) of shutdowns. Major triggers for access cuts included protests, political instability, elections, and—most notably—[conflict](#). Africa saw 21 internet shutdowns in 2024 across 15 countries, including first time occurrences in Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, and Mauritius.
- **Australia Bans Kaspersky Software on Government Systems Over Security Concerns:** Australia's Department of Home Affairs directed all government entities to stop using and remove Kaspersky Lab products and web services, citing claims that the Russian cybersecurity firm [poses](#) a security risk "arising from threats of foreign interference, espionage and sabotage." Kaspersky [claims](#) the ban is political. Several other countries, including Germany and Canada, have banned Kaspersky products from government systems, and the U.S. [expanded](#) its ban to cover companies and consumers in 2024. According to [security experts](#), the Russia-based

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service provider Prospero, a source of malware and phishing websites, has started routing its operations through networks run by Kaspersky Lab.

- **Massive Botnet Discovered Targeting Microsoft 365 Accounts:** Security researchers have discovered a botnet consisting of over [130,000 devices being used](#) to target Microsoft 365 accounts with an attack technique known as password spraying. The attack technique is not new; however, the campaign's size and its leveraging of Non-Interactive Sign-Ins to avoid triggering security alerts are a novel development. Multiple sectors, including education, financial services, healthcare, government, and SaaS providers, are considered potential targets for this type of attack. Microsoft is set to retire the authentication process being targeted by this attack in September 2025.
- **Signal Messaging App to Exit Sweden in Protest of Potential Data Retention Law:** Sweden is reportedly looking to amend its data retention laws to resemble the United Kingdom's [Online Safety Act 2023](#). If passed, Signal CEO Meredith Whittaker has stated that the encrypted messaging app would cease to operate in Sweden [before complying](#) with the law. The Swedish government is set to consider the proposed changes in March 2026.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **U.S. Prepared to Levy Tariffs on Canada and Mexico, Exact Measures Uncertain:** The White House is [reportedly](#) planning to move forward with tariffs on Canada and Mexico tomorrow despite what U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said was a "reasonable job" by both countries at securing their borders. The exact levies remain uncertain, as Lutnick [appeared to suggest](#) Sunday that they may not be at the 25% level originally announced. The southern border continues to be a particular focus of the Trump administration, with the Pentagon [preparing](#) to deploy around 3,000 additional active-duty troops to the area in the coming weeks. As Mexico works to enforce stricter border controls, [notable delays](#) have been occurring at key crossings in Nuevo Laredo.
- **Senate Subcommittee Holds Hearing Focused on Rising Cargo Theft:** The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Freight, Pipelines, and Safety held a hearing last week meant to raise awareness and gather insights on a [recent rise in cargo theft](#) in the country, a trend described here in February, and one that [experts expect](#) will continue into 2025. The proceedings included testimony from Will Johnson, Chief Special Agent of the BNSF Railway Police Department, who [provided](#) a stark picture of the situation. Johnson proposed some policy actions to improve efforts against criminals, including increased penalties for offenders and creating a federal supply chain crime center and a task force to unify enforcement efforts.

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- **Taiwan Probes Undersea Cable Cut as Possible Sabotage:** Last week, Taiwan's Coast Guard [intercepted](#) a Togo-flagged cargo ship after an undersea cable connecting Taiwan and Penghu was severed. Authorities are investigating possible sabotage, as the vessel, [owned by a Chinese company](#) and crewed by Chinese nationals, had been loitering in the area for days and failed to respond to multiple warnings. Taipei [said](#) it has not ruled out that the event was part of China's "grey zone harassment" tactics, while Beijing [accused](#) Taiwan of exaggerating Chinese involvement without all the facts. Cross-strait tensions were further inflamed when Beijing began [conducting](#) live-fire drills by Taiwan the day after the cable cutting.
- **French Unions Plan Further Port Strikes in March Amid Pension Row:** Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF), the largest employer federation in France, [issued a statement](#) last week calling for an immediate end to strikes that have intermittently [impacted](#) the nation's ports since January. MEDEF claims the actions have resulted in additional costs and significant revenue loss, including an approximate 25% decline for operators in February of this year. Despite the urging, unions, who are protesting pension reforms, intend to move forward with [further work stoppages this month](#), including a 72-hour strike between March 18 and 20 and four-hour walkouts on eight other days.
- **Chile Investigates After Nationwide Blackout:** Chile is recovering from a nationwide blackout last week triggered by a failure in a transmission line that prompted a state of emergency and the deployment of military forces. The outage [impacted](#) 98% of the country's population and [disrupted](#) urban transportation systems and operations in key sectors like copper mining. Officials are working to pinpoint the exact cause of the failure but [ruled out](#) an attack. While Chile has a generally reliable grid, it is aging and has faced [issues](#) with transmission capacity limitations. Last year, [hundreds of thousands lost power](#) in and around Santiago after a storm knocked out a high-voltage transmission tower.

Health

- **Unknown Illness in DRC Kills Over 60 People, WHO Suggests Poisoning Event:** An unknown illness has killed over 60 people and sickened more than 1,000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since late January. The World Health Organization (WHO) suspects a "[poisoning event](#)," possibly related to a contaminated water source in one affected village; however, doctors from the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention pointed to a potential malaria connection, noting similarities between this outbreak—centered in Équateur Province—and a flulike illness in [Panzi](#) last year. The present outbreak was first [detected](#) in Boloko, where three children reportedly fell ill and died within 48 hours after eating a bat. A second, larger cluster of cases then emerged in Bomate Village.

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- **India Insurers Looking to Hike Health Premiums Due to Pollution:** Indian insurers are reportedly [considering](#) increasing health insurance premiums by around 10-15% in New Delhi due to a significant rise in pollution-related medical claims in 2024. The plan, which would require approval from India's insurance regulator, follows record-breaking [smog](#) that led to increased hospitalization for respiratory, cardiovascular, and other conditions. If approved, similar premium hikes could be implemented in other polluted cities, raising concerns over health insurance affordability.
- **USDA Investing \$1 Billion to Counter Bird Flu, One Dead in Cambodia:** The U.S. Agriculture Department (USDA) [announced](#) an investment of up to \$1 billion dollars to combat highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The funding will focus on \$500 million for biosecurity measures, \$400 million in financial relief for affected farmers, and \$100 million for vaccine research. The initiative aims to protect the U.S. poultry sector, reduce egg prices, and enhance biosecurity audits and assessments across the United States. USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins also [believes](#) the department has sufficient staff to handle the bird flu outbreak despite federal workforce reductions. In related news, Cambodia's health ministry [reported](#) a fatal H5N1 flu infection, the country's second fatal case of bird flu in 2025.
- **UKHSA Warns of Potential Second Norovirus Wave:** The U.K. Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has issued a [warning](#) about a potential second wave of norovirus infections in England as cases continue to surge to record levels. The UKHSA states that prior infection does not guarantee immunity, as various genotypes are in circulation, and reported cases represent only a fraction of the true infection rate. Hospitals and care homes have been [most](#) affected, with cases highest among people 65 and over. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and stomach pain.
- **Measles Outbreak in West Texas Leads to Fatality:** An [unvaccinated child died](#) of measles last week, marking the first measles-related death since 2015 in the U.S. The fatality came as the outbreak across West Texas, now at [146 cases](#), continues to grow, mostly in unvaccinated minors. Separate from the West Texas outbreak, this past Friday, Austin Public Health [announced](#) a measles case in an unvaccinated infant who was exposed while traveling overseas. Outside of Texas and New Mexico, infections have also been reported in [seven other states](#) across the U.S.
- **FDA Cancels Key Meeting Causing Concern About Next Year's Flu Vaccine:** The FDA canceled a [meeting](#) of its Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC), which was scheduled for March 13. The gathering was intended to select flu strains for the 2025-2026 flu vaccine. The cancellation could potentially delay or disrupt the production of targeted flu vaccines, as manufacturers rely on the FDA's recommendations to determine which strains to include in the vaccines. The FDA did not provide a reason for [canceling](#) the meeting.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Nationwide Demonstrations Planned Against Trump Administration Policies:** Multiple days over the coming week will feature demonstration campaigns against U.S. President Donald Trump's policies. Tomorrow will see another round of nationwide rallies organized by the 50501 Movement. Larger actions are expected in New York City (1211 6th Ave at 12 pm), Chicago (Daley Plaza at 12 pm), and Washington, D.C. (Upper Senate Park at 4 pm). On Friday, the group Stand Up for Science is calling for nationwide action, with a main rally in D.C. at the Lincoln Memorial at 12 pm. Meanwhile, demonstrations against Tesla are also continuing, with pickets outside of Tesla showrooms. Most actions have taken place on Saturday and have been peaceful, although a recent demonstration in New York resulted in [multiple arrests](#).
- **Merchants Plan March in Mexico City on Wednesday:** Disruptions are expected in Mexico City near the Zócalo tomorrow due to a planned demonstration by merchants. The Plural Movement of Merchants of Public Markets is [calling](#) on supporters to march towards the Zócalo; however, they have not shared the starting point or if there will be road closures. In February, a similar [march](#) by the Plural Movement of Merchants of Public Markets caused traffic disruptions and road closures in various parts of Mexico City for more than nine hours.
- **Shutdown Strike, Other Demonstrations Planned in Karnataka, India:** Kannada Okkuta, a coalition of pro-Kannada language and culture organizations, has [announced](#) a statewide bandh (shutdown) in Karnataka on March 22, from 6 am to 6 pm, protesting the alleged assault of a state-run bus conductor in Belagavi for not speaking Marathi. Leader Vatal Nagaraj has called on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, various associations, and sectors—including transport, hospitality, and film industries—to support the bandh. Planned activities include a 'Belagavi Chalo' march on March 7, a bandh in the border town of Attibele on March 11, and protests in Mandya, Mysuru, and Ramanagara on March 14.
- **Farmers Plan Next Round of Demonstrations, March on Delhi:** The Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) has [postponed](#) a planned march on Delhi to March 25 after agreeing to meet with the government on March 19. Prior to that meeting, they have called for nationwide demonstrations on March 8 to mark International Women's Day and for farmers elsewhere to intensify border protests. Meanwhile, in Punjab, fellow farmers' organization the Samyukt Kisan Morcha and other groups [plan](#) to march to Chandigarh this Wednesday, where they will hold a sit-in until March 11; however, authorities have not yet approved an exact location for the demonstration.
- **Other Demonstration Activity the Global Intelligence Team Is Monitoring:** On March 22, over 200 organizations plan to take part in demonstrations across **France** against racism and fascism. **Serbia** will see a major nationwide strike by students on March 7, followed by a large

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demonstration in Belgrade on March 15. In **Slovakia**, a large demonstration in support of both the European Union and Ukraine is planned for March 7 at Námestie slobody at 5 pm. And in **Germany**, the Verdi labor union is planning a [warning strike](#) by public sector healthcare workers on Thursday, in addition to several strikes tomorrow, including on bus and train services in [Bielefeld](#), at [banks](#) in multiple cities, and by [social workers](#) in Hanover.

Upcoming Events

February 28-March 29: Ramadan (Global) *dates approximate*

- March 4: U.S. Tariffs on Mexico and Canada Go Into Effect (North America)
- March 4: General Election (Micronesia)
- March 4: Start of “Two Sessions” Meetings (China)
- March 4: Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday (Global)
- March 5: Ash Wednesday (Global)
- March 6: Independence Day (Ghana)
- March 8: International Women’s Day (Global)
- March 9: Daylight Savings Time Starts (United States, Canada)
- March 11: General Election (Greenland)
- March 12: Legislative Elections (Belize)
- March 12: U.S. Tariffs on Steel, Aluminum Go Into Effect (Global)
- March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Global)
- March 21: General Elections (Curaçao)
- March 26: Independence Day (Bangladesh)
- March 28: Parliamentary Elections (Tajikistan)
- March 29: Day of the Young Combatant (Chile)
- March 30: Land Day (Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza)
- April 9: Constitution Day (Kosovo)
- April 12: Presidential Election (Gabon)
- April 13: Presidential Election Run-Off (Ecuador)
- April 17: Maundy Thursday (Global)
- April 18: Good Friday (Global)
- April 20: Easter (Global)
- May 1: Labor Day/May Day (Global)