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Top Stories

Large Crowds Expected in Rome and Elsewhere Following Pope Francis' Death

Pope Francis [passed](#) away Monday morning at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta. As of this writing, road closures have been put in place around Vatican City, and crowds have begun gathering in Saint Peter's Square. Pope Francis' death begins a nine-day mourning period known as the [Novendiale](#), during which memorial masses are held in Rome and throughout the world. Gatherings are anticipated at religious sites associated with the Pontiff and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as other public areas, potentially impacting local infrastructure and security.

A spokesperson for the Vatican said that Pope Francis' body could begin [lying in state](#) at the Vatican Basilica as soon as Wednesday morning, where it will remain for [three days](#), although that timeline had not been confirmed as of this writing. A funeral is expected to take place within the next four to six days at Saint Peter's Square, after which, Pope Francis will be [buried](#) in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. Italy is expected to declare a period of national mourning, with hundreds of thousands, including world leaders, expected to travel to Rome to pay their respects. Additional information on the passing of Pope Francis is available in AlertMedia's [Situation Report](#).

Brief Weather Reprieve Across U.S. After Damaging Easter Weekend Storms

Scattered thunderstorms are not expected to be as strong on Monday as they were over the weekend, though they will still pose an isolated [damaging wind threat](#) during the afternoon and evening along a weather boundary stretching from the eastern Ohio Valley through the Lower Mississippi Valley. Tuesday will feature a higher severe weather threat as isolated severe thunderstorms are forecast to develop over West Texas. Any isolated thunderstorm that forms Tuesday evening will be capable of producing

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damaging winds, large hail, and a tornado, prompting the [Storm Prediction Center](#) to issue a Level 2 (5-tier scale) risk for severe weather from south-central Kansas through West Texas. A similar pattern will set up further north on Wednesday, leading to a chance for severe weather across the High Plains, including Nebraska and Kansas. Throughout the week, rounds of storms will target the Central U.S., leading to an elevated flash flood threat for North Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and surrounding areas.

The United States is due for a much-needed break following several days of intense, severe weather over Easter weekend. In Moore, Oklahoma, [two people lost their lives](#) and three others were rescued after vehicles were swept into a creek during flash flooding Saturday night. Between Friday and Sunday night, there were 25 tornado reports across the country. Southern Oklahoma was especially hard hit on Saturday, with [one fatality](#) reported in Hughes County and [significant damage](#) in the city of Ada.

Auto Industry in Asia, U.S. Grappling with Tariffs

Tariffs are impacting Asia's auto industry, with the electric vehicle (EV) sector particularly [affected](#). The 25% global auto tariff (effective April 3), along with additional duties on imported parts (starting by May 3), will [impact](#) over \$460 billion in vehicle and parts imports. The U.S. relies on China for critical minerals used in electric vehicles, and new raw mineral mines in the U.S. face logistical hurdles, including time, regulations, technical challenges, and a lack of domestic refining capacity. General Motors [temporarily](#) laid off 700 workers in the U.S. and Canada amid falling EV demand.

As one of the nation's most affected by U.S. auto tariffs, Japan may seek new export markets or reduce auto shipments while boosting U.S. production. Officials could also [consider](#) LNG purchases to help offset the trade imbalance. Trump's tariffs are [projected](#) to cost Japanese automakers \$17–25 billion annually, according to the International Trade Centre, with Toyota [absorbing](#) about half that cost. South Korea [announced](#) emergency support measures with a funding package [worth](#) \$2 billion USD (3 trillion won) for its auto industry. In 2024, nearly half of South Korea's \$70.8 billion in vehicle exports went to the U.S.

For the U.S., consumers could see higher vehicle prices [by June](#), paralleled by rising insurance premiums due to pricier parts. Retail sales of cars and car parts were at their highest monthly pace in two years last month as consumers rushed to beat expected price increases. S&P Global Mobility [cut](#) its auto sales forecasts by 700,000 for 2025, and by 2.5 million and 2 million for 2026 and 2027, respectively. While a pause on tariffs has been [suggested](#), no official plans have emerged.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Severe Storms to Target Southeast China Through the Week:** Scattered strong-to-severe thunderstorms are expected to develop along a slowly sinking weather boundary in southeast China throughout most of the week. Atmospheric conditions during this period are favorable for thunderstorms capable of producing damaging winds, large hail, flash flooding, and a few tornadoes. Portions of Hunan, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi will all be at risk.
- **New South Wales, Australia Reports Six Drownings Easter Weekend:** Six people have died and one remains missing amid [dangerous coastal sea conditions](#) in New South Wales. On Sunday alone, there were 50 rescues, and another 100 were reported since Friday. This marks the worst Easter weekend on record for drownings. Dangerous coastal conditions are expected to continue through the middle of the week as a storm system strengthens off the coast.
- **India Meteorological Department Releases Monsoon Forecast:** The India Meteorological Department released the [long-range forecast for the 2025 southwest monsoon](#) last week, calling for above-average monsoonal rains for the second year in a row. Above-average rainfall is forecast over most of the country between June and September, except for portions of northwest, northeast, and southern Peninsular India. The monsoon is vital as it delivers a majority of India's annual rainfall, which is necessary for agriculture, water supplies, and power generation.
- **Other Severe Weather Events:** For a daily look at significant weather events around the world, read AlertMedia's [Daily Severe Weather Report](#).

Worldwide

- **Ongoing Demonstrations, Unrest Across India Over Changes to Waqf Rules:** The passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Act has triggered widespread protests across India, some of which have turned violent, including in [West Bengal](#), [Tripura](#), and [Assam](#). The AIMPLB has [launched](#) a monthslong "Waqf Bachao" campaign, with a demonstration planned at Delhi's Talkatora Stadium this Tuesday at 10 am. Protests are [expected](#) to continue through at least Eid al-Adha on June 6 in locations across the country, including in Hyderabad, where the AIMPLB has [announced](#) a series of actions over the coming weeks. The Supreme Court's judgement on the act's constitutional validity, expected in early May, will likely trigger further demonstration activity.
- **Maldives, Bangladesh Reintroduce Travel Restrictions Over Middle East Conflict:** In response to the ongoing Israeli actions in Gaza, both the Maldives and Bangladesh have taken

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formal measures to restrict travel related to Israel. The Maldives has [prohibited](#) the entry of Israeli passport holders after President Mohamed Muizzu ratified an amendment to the Maldives Immigration Act, [accusing](#) Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians and saying the action is in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Bangladesh has also [reinstated](#) a passport restriction, stating that Bangladeshi passports are valid for travel to all countries in the world, except Israel. Bangladesh joins other countries, including Brunei, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan, that also prohibit their citizens from traveling to Israel.

- **France Launches Terrorism Investigation After Intimidation Attacks Target Prisons:** Last week, a series of coordinated arson and gunfire attacks [targeted](#) at least seven French prisons, with four vehicles belonging to prison officers set on fire in various [cities](#), including Villenoy and Tarascon. Evidence found at the scenes, including graffiti advocating for prisoners' rights and anti-prison sentiments, suggested an organized effort by criminal networks in response to the government's intensified crackdown on drug trafficking. The Justice Minister labeled the attacks as terrorism, saying they are [intimidation](#) efforts aimed at destabilizing the state.
- **Sudan's RSF Declares Rival Government Amid Escalating Civil War:** Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo, [announced](#) a rival "Government of Peace and Unity" in areas they control on the second anniversary of the civil war against the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). Recently, the RSF [signed](#) a transitional constitution in Nairobi, proposing a 15-member presidential council. Hemedti claims the government would provide essential services like education and healthcare nationwide, emphasizing unity and a "state of law." The announcement [coincides](#) with intensified fighting, particularly in the North Darfur El-Fasher region, where the RSF is attempting to seize the last SAF-held state capital.
- **U.S. Enhances Border Security Measures, Allocates Federal Land to Military:** The Trump administration [authorized](#) the emergency transfer of nearly 110,000 acres of federal land in New Mexico along the U.S.-Mexico border to the U.S. Army to enhance border patrol operations, strengthen efforts against illegal immigration, and curb illegal cross-border activities. The action follows a diplomatic [memo](#) from Mexico's president over security collaboration at the border. Last week, a fatal vehicle incident involving three U.S. service members assigned to the Joint Task Force Southern Border initiative left two dead and one injured in a [crash](#) near Santa Teresa, New Mexico. The Joint Task Force Southern Border initiative was formed under President Donald Trump to boost military presence at the border, deploying nearly 3,000 troops in March.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **New U.S. Probe, Regulations Cause Shakeup in Semiconductor Industry:** Last Tuesday, the U.S. Commerce Department [announced](#) that it is conducting a national security probe into

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imports of semiconductor technology. The move served as a confirmation for the semiconductor industry that chips and other electronic imports will not be excluded from U.S. tariff plans, despite the administration recently [indicating](#) otherwise. Amid U.S. tariff threats, semiconductor companies around the world are pivoting operations, including Nvidia who recently [announced](#) plans to onshore \$500 billion of AI infrastructure production within the U.S. Nvidia also [disclosed](#) that it faces new export rules requiring the company to obtain an export license to sell to China, one of its largest markets. The requirements are expected to hit Nvidia's H20 chip sales, which is [projected](#) to result in \$5.5 billion in losses for the company this quarter.

- **CVE Program Receives Last-Minute Funding Extension, Averting Shutdown:** The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) [extended](#) MITRE's contract by 11 months last Wednesday, avoiding any interruptions in services of the Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE). The CVE, essential for tracking cybersecurity flaws, faced a potential shutdown as its federal funding was [set to expire](#) on April 16, which experts warned could have caused major disruptions across the cybersecurity industry. Managed by MITRE, CVE provides standardized identifiers for software vulnerabilities, aiding cybersecurity firms worldwide in prioritizing security patches.
- **U.K. Supreme Court Ruling on Legal Definition of "Woman" Sparks Backlash:** Last week, the United Kingdom's Supreme Court [ruled](#) that the term "woman" is defined only by biological sex. The ruling states that transgender women are not included within the legal definition of "women" under British equality laws, including even those who hold a gender recognition certificate (GRC). While Britain's Supreme Court [said](#) that transgender people are still protected against discrimination or harassment under the 2010 Equality Act, the ruling has sparked confusion and concern. Over the weekend, transgender rights activist groups staged nationwide demonstrations, headlined by a main action in London that saw [thousands](#) participate.
- **India's 2025 Immigration Law Enacted With Stricter Penalties:** India's Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, became [law](#) earlier this month. It replaces colonial-era laws to streamline immigration, enhancing real-time tracking of foreigners' entry, stay, and exit. The law [creates](#) new visa categories aimed at attracting business travelers, entrepreneurs, skilled workers, and investors, while imposing stricter foreigners staying beyond 180 days and requires institutions and carriers to report the presence of foreign nationals.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **EU Pursues U.S. Gas Purchases to Ward Off Tariffs:** The EU is reportedly considering changing methane emission rules to allow for increased U.S. energy imports. Amid ongoing trade negotiations, the EU [announced](#) a list of U.S. goods that could see tariffs if [talks](#) fail. The U.S. has

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imposed a 10% baseline tariff on EU goods, with a further 10% delayed until July. The European Central Bank [cut](#) its benchmark deposit rate for the third time this year in response to rising trade tensions. Meanwhile, Maersk warned its clients that Northern European ports, particularly Antwerp-Bruges and Bremerhaven, are [facing](#) operational disruptions for several reasons, including "anticipation of the U.S. import tariffs."

- **UPS, FedEx Reintroduce Fees for Chinese Imports:** U.S. shippers using FedEx and UPS will pay a surcharge on imports from China and Hong Kong ahead of the implementation of tariffs and the closure of de minimis exemptions on May 2. FedEx imposed a surcharge of \$0.45 per pound on shipments from China, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. For UPS, a \$0.29 per-pound "surge fee" surcharge is being applied on all shipments from China, Hong Kong, and Macau. Hongkong Post will [stop shipping](#) small non-airmail parcels to the U.S. starting May 2. As of today, DHL has [suspended](#) global business-to-consumer shipments worth over \$800 to individuals in the U.S., and business-to-business shipments over \$800 could face delays.
- **FEMA Cuts Relief in North Carolina, Denies Storm Aid in Washington State:** FEMA [denied](#) North Carolina's request to extend its 100% match of Hurricane Helene recovery efforts. The decision means the state will now bear more of the financial burden for critical disaster relief efforts, including debris removal. Communities are still struggling to rebuild six months after the storm, and the reduction in support will likely slow the long-term recovery process in the worst-hit areas in the western part of the state. Meanwhile, FEMA will no longer enforce some floodplain rules for federally funded projects. While this change is meant to make reconstruction easier after disasters, FEMA officials [note](#) that construction and contracting remain barriers for recovery. On the other side of the U.S., Washington State's governor will [appeal](#) after FEMA denied its federal aid request for damage from fatal storms in November 2024.
- **Trump Orders Probe Into Critical Mineral, Pharmaceutical Supply Chains:** The Trump administration has [launched a Section 232](#) investigation into U.S. reliance on foreign critical minerals, potentially paving the way for new tariffs aimed at strengthening domestic supply chains. The Commerce Department will assess whether imports of minerals like lithium and rare earths threaten national security, citing concerns over China's dominance in their global supply. A separate probe was also [announced](#) into pharmaceutical supply chains, with the administration signaling a broader shift toward economic self-sufficiency in key industries. Industry groups warn that tariffs could disrupt manufacturing and inflate costs, while the White House says the moves are necessary to protect strategic sectors.
- **Countries Agree on First International Shipping Emissions Fee:** A landmark agreement to cut global shipping emissions has been reached, marking the first time an international emissions fee will be applied to the maritime industry. The deal, [announced](#) at a UN maritime summit,

aims to align shipping with global climate targets by pricing carbon and funding green transitions in developing nations. The agreement includes a levy on emissions-producing vessels and sets long-term reduction goals for 2050. Meanwhile, [Norway](#) has introduced its own zero-emissions mandate for cruise ships and ferries in its UNESCO-protected fjords by 2026. Environmental advocates welcomed the global accord as a “turning point,” though critics say it lacks immediate enforcement mechanisms.

- **U.S. to Implement Fees on China-Linked Ships:** The U.S. [is moving forward](#) with a new fee structure targeting China-linked ships, set to begin on October 14. The policy imposes charges ranging from \$18 per net ton to \$120 per container on vessels built in China or operated by entities with Chinese ties. This initiative follows a [Section 301 investigation](#) by the U.S. Trade Representative agency and aims to bolster U.S. shipbuilding by incentivizing orders for domestically built vessels in exchange for a three-year fee exemption. Industry groups have expressed concerns over potential increases in ocean freight rates and supply chain disruptions. Analysts anticipate that major ocean carriers may adjust their networks to mitigate the impact, with companies like COSCO Shipping and OOCL expected to be among the most affected.

Health

- **Risings Cases of Yellow Fever in South America:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [issued](#) a level 2 travel notice (practice enhanced precautions) for yellow fever in South America due to rising case numbers and the spread of the disease to new areas, particularly in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. Colombia’s Health Ministry has [declared](#) a public health emergency after recording 75 cases since September of last year, 34 of which were fatal. The disease has expanded quickly in parts of the Amazon basin, the Magdalena River, and departments such as Meta. It has also appeared in locations where it has not historically, raising concerns that it may start appearing in more densely populated urban areas, where transmission hasn’t been recorded since 1929.
- **WHO Members Agree to Pandemic Treaty:** Members of the World Health Organization (WHO) have [agreed](#) to a legally binding treaty governing the global response to future pandemics. Included in the treaty are agreements on information-sharing and the distribution of drugs, the cost of vaccines, and an overview of global supply chains for masks, medical gowns, and other personal protective equipment. Members are expected to formally adopt the treaty when the World Health Assembly convenes in May. Notably, the U.S. will not be bound by the pact when the country leaves the WHO in 2026 and U.S. negotiators were not involved in the final talks.
- **Whooping Cough Cases Rising Rapidly in U.S., Japan:** Similar to the ongoing [measles situation](#), which has now grown to 800 cases and at least 10 outbreaks, the United States is also

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contending with a rapidly increasing number of cases of pertussis, or whooping cough. The U.S. has already [recorded](#) around 7,100 cases of pertussis, double what had been recorded through this time last year. Japan is also seeing [record highs](#), with more cases recorded through April 6 of this year (5,652) than in all of last year (4,054). Particularly concerning is a rise in drug-resistant pertussis, which has already resulted in the death of at least one infant. Experts [note](#) that the outbreak has not yet reached its peak.

- **Several Cases of Legionnaires' Disease in Sydney:** At least 12 cases of Legionnaires' disease have been [confirmed](#) in people who have spent time in the Sydney Central Business District and surrounding suburbs between March 13 and April 5, with one fatality so far. Legionella bacteria have been detected in at least one cooling tower. NSW Health is [reportedly](#) investigating to determine if one of the cases was contracted while driving through the city in an open-top car. Further testing is being conducted to determine if the cooling tower is the source of the current outbreak while the tower is being decontaminated.
- **Invasive Meningococcal Disease Reported in Saudi Arabia Ahead of Hajj:** Health officials in Saudi Arabia [reported](#) 11 cases of invasive meningococcal disease associated with pilgrims who had performed Umrah in Mecca between January 7 and March 12. In addition, the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office reported six isolated cases in people who had recently returned from Umrah. The reported cases come ahead of the Hajj, expected to take place June 4 to 9. Saudi Arabia does require that pilgrims obtain quadrivalent (four-strain) meningococcal vaccination before taking part in either the Umrah or the Hajj; however, compliance rates for the Umrah have fallen over the past two years and currently stand at only 54% of international pilgrims.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Jamaat-e-Islami Calls for Nationwide Strike in Pakistan Over Middle East Conflict:** Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan has called for a nationwide [strike](#) tomorrow to protest Israeli military actions in Gaza and express solidarity with the Palestinian people. The strike is part of a broader series of [demonstrations](#), including large Gaza Solidarity Marches in major cities near U.S. diplomatic facilities. In related news, over 170 [people](#) were arrested in Pakistan following a wave of attacks on KFC restaurants. The fast-food chain became a focal point for demonstrators who associated it with U.S. support for Israel's military actions in Gaza. The attacks occurred in major cities including Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, with at least 20 incidents reported nationwide.
- **Worldwide May Day Demonstrations:** Disruptions are expected in several cities across the world on Thursday, May 1, due to [May Day](#) demonstrations and strikes organized by labor unions and activist groups. Actions will focus on workers' rights, economic inequality, certain

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government [policies](#), as well as the Middle East conflict. Key events include rallies in the U.S. as part of the May Day Strong Movement in cities like Chicago (Union Park at 11 am), Denver (State Capitol at 11 am), and Washington, DC (Freedom Plaza at 5 pm). Prominent events will also be held in Mexico City (Zócalo to Cámara de Diputados at 9 am led by Frente Nacional por las 40 Horas), San Salvador (Plaza Civica at 7 am led by MDCT), and in Athens (Syntagma Square at 10:30 am led by PAME). Demonstrations will likely feature marches, assemblies, and work stoppages. In some areas, clashes with authorities are possible.

- **Argentina Braces for Fresh Strike, Bolivia Teachers Mobilize in La Paz:** Disruptions are likely across Argentina on Wednesday due to a planned national strike by the Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado (ATE). The group has [called](#) for the strike to protest recent policies under President Javier Milei. The strike will involve demonstrations near various public institutions and ministries starting at 11 am, with actions such as assemblies, work stoppages, open radio broadcasts, and withdrawals from workplaces expected. In neighboring Bolivia, the Confederation of Urban Education Workers of Bolivia (CTEUB), will [launch](#) a national mobilization today in La Paz with a stated goal of defending public education and labor rights, and to address the economic crisis occurring in the country. The action will involve teachers from 31 federations across the country and may include road blockades in addition to the cancellation of school activities.
- **Demonstrations Likely in Puerto Rico Following Recent Power Outages:** Disruptions are likely to occur across Puerto Rico in the coming weeks due to demonstration activity following recent power outages across the island. One such large-scale mobilization is scheduled for Friday, May 2. On Wednesday, April 16, a major island-wide [blackout](#) left over 1.5 million customers without electricity when the island's power plants unexpectedly shut down. The cause of the outage remains under investigation, with authorities considering equipment failures and maintenance issues such as overgrown vegetation. The blackout is one of [several](#) significant power failures in recent years, underscoring the ongoing fragility of Puerto Rico's electrical grid, which has struggled to recover since Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017.
- **United Kingdom, Ireland to See Demonstrations Over Climate, Immigration:** Climate activist groups are planning multiple actions in London this week. Extinction Rebellion will demonstrate against the participation of U.S. officials at the U.K. and International Energy Agency's [energy security summit](#) in London on Thursday. Later this week, Just Stop Oil will hold its "[final](#)" protest action at Parliament Square on Saturday, and Youth Demand is expected to continue organizing rallies in central London on Tuesdays and Saturdays through the end of April. Across the Irish Sea, Belfast will see opposing demonstrations over immigration at its City Hall on Sunday, while Ireland will see protest activity against immigration in Dublin on Saturday.

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Upcoming Events

- April 25: Constitutional Referendum (Marshall Islands)
- April 27: London Marathon (London, United Kingdom)
- April 28: Federal Election (Canada)
- April 28: General Election (Trinidad and Tobago)
- April 30: General Election (Cayman Islands)
- May 1: Labor Day/May Day (Global)
- May 3: Federal Election (Australia)
- May 3: General Election (Singapore)
- May 4: Presidential Election (Romania)
- May 11: Parliamentary Elections (Albania)
- May 12: General Election (Philippines)
- May 15: Nakba Day (Israel, West Bank, and Gaza)
- May 18: Presidential Election (Poland)
- May 18: Parliamentary Election (Portugal)
- May 23-26: NATO Parliamentary Assembly (Dayton, Ohio)
- May 25: Parliamentary Election (Suriname)
- May 25: Parliamentary Election (Venezuela)
- May 25-26: Jerusalem Day (Israel, West Bank)
- May 26: Independence Day (Georgia)
- June 1: Judicial Elections (Mexico)
- June 4-9: Hajj (Mecca, Saudi Arabia)