

May 12, 2025

Headlining This Week's Brief

Top Stories

Climate and Natural Hazards
Worldwide
Cyber and Regulatory
Infrastructure and Supply Chain
Health
Demonstrations and Industrial Action
Upcoming Events

Top Stories

Heavy Rain, Flood Threat Across Southeast & Mid-Atlantic United States

A slow-moving storm system visible on <u>radar</u> and <u>satellite</u> will track northeastward across the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic United States through Tuesday, drawing deep tropical moisture northward and triggering widespread rain, scattered flash flooding, and locally severe thunderstorms. The most serious flood risk lies between Miami and West Palm Beach, where a <u>Level 3</u> of 4 excessive rainfall outlook has been issued by the Weather Prediction Center. Through Monday evening, rainfall totals of three to six inches are expected, with localized amounts over eight inches. This could result in scattered flash flooding—some of it significant or life-threatening.

A broader <u>Level 2</u> of 4 risk covers much of Florida, with rainfall totals of two to five inches likely. Flash flooding will be most common in low-lying and urban areas. Beyond the Southeast and Florida, the Mid-Atlantic also faces flood risks through <u>Tuesday</u>, though impacts there are expected to be more localized.

India-Pakistan Ceasefire Holds Despite Accusations of Violations

A ceasefire between India and Pakistan announced on Saturday, 10 May, seems to be holding following initial claims by both sides that the other had breached the agreement. Military officials from each country **spoke today** about the ceasefire, with borders expected to remain closed and trade expected to remain suspended despite no ceasefire violations reported overnight on Sunday. In Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first public address on the military clashes with Pakistan, he **stated** that Pakistan will need to remove its "terrorist infrastructure," reflecting a prioritization of security concerns in their strained diplomatic relationship. The focus on terrorism signals that progress on other issues like trade

May 12, 2025



or water treaties depends on addressing its terrorism-related grievances. India has **reopened its airspace** and

resumed operations at all previously closed airports, though schools in some border areas remain shut as a precaution.

The ceasefire, brokered after four days of the fiercest cross-border fighting in nearly three decades, followed U.S.-led diplomatic efforts. The violence was triggered by India's accusation that Pakistan-backed militants were responsible for an attack that killed 26 tourists in Pahalgam. In response, India launched air and drone strikes on targets it claimed were militant infrastructure across Pakistan and Pakistani- administered Kashmir, while Pakistan denied the charges and said civilian areas were hit. The conflict killed dozens and displaced hundreds, with infrastructure damage reported on both sides of the Line of Control. Despite the return to calm, India has warned it will respond forcefully to future violations, while Pakistan has welcomed the ceasefire and called for a neutral investigation into the events. For more information, read AlertMedia's situation report on the India-Pakistan ceasefire.

Turkish Opposition Hopes to Gather Two Million in Izmir as Demonstrations for Jailed Istanbul Mayor Continue

Demonstration activity in Türkiye against the Justice and Development Party (AKP) following the imprisonment of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu has persisted, although it has diminished from the widespread, occasionally violent actions seen immediately following his arrest on March 19. The Republican People's Party (CHP), to which İmamoğlu belongs and forms Türkiye's primary opposition, continues to hold rallies twice weekly as they push for early elections. Each week, the CHP organizes rallies in a different district of İstanbul on Wednesday and in a new city around the country on Saturdays. The gatherings continue to draw tens of thousands of participants, momentum the CHP is looking to build on this Saturday—celebrated within Türkiye as Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day—when the party hopes to draw two million people to İzmir's Gündoğdu Square. Meanwhile, the government continues to pursue repressive policies, jailing dozens more İstanbul municipality employees on corruption charges.

Going forward, the party has also announced <u>plans</u> to continue holding actions in AKP strongholds following the success of an April 19 rally in <u>Yozgat</u> that drew larger than expected crowds. The demonstrations also saw the support of some <u>farmers</u> in the region, potentially <u>indicating</u> eroding support among core AKP constituencies. Such demonstrations are expected to persist, likely intensifying on and around June 16, when <u>imamoğlu</u> is next <u>scheduled</u> to stand trial. A <u>boycott</u> of companies with

May 12, 2025



alleged links to the AKP and the government, organized by CHP head Özgür Özel, also continues to grow with new organizations regularly <u>added</u> to the list.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- Record High Temperatures in Texas: All-time monthly temperature records have the potential to be set Tuesday and Wednesday in Texas. <u>Austin</u> and <u>San Antonio</u> highs may reach 105°F while <u>Dallas</u> could hit the century mark. Actual temperatures won't be quite as high in <u>Houston</u> (mid-90s), but humidity will make the feel-like temperature near 101°F. Such temperatures typically aren't reached until late June or early July. Aside from health impacts to outdoor workers, another hazard to be mindful of is the possibility of increased wildfire activity, especially across central Texas, where <u>exceptional drought conditions</u> persist.
- Hurricane Center Outlooks Begin May 15, Atlantic Season Begins June 1: The National Hurricane Center announced a few changes and updates to their outlook products for 2025. The experimental cone will now include coloring to reflect where hurricane watches and tropical storm warnings overlap, a rip current risk map will be added, and the forecast error cone will be three to five percent smaller for all Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf Storms. Additionally, Potential Tropical Cyclone advisories will be issued up to 72 hours in advance, as opposed to 48 hours in 2024. The official forecast for 2025 from Colorado State University calls for a borderline hyperactive hurricane season due to warmer-than-normal waters and a lack of El Niño.
- Growing Drought in Europe, Impacted Agriculture and Wildfire Fears Increasing: Concern is growing regarding worsening drought conditions across most of the continent, including northwestern, central, eastern, and southeastern Europe, and portions of the Mediterranean region. January through March featured above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall, especially in the Alps, eastern Europe, and northern Scandinavia. Seasonal outlooks predict a continuation of warmer than usual conditions as well as below-average rainfall for the majority of the summer. Impacts to vegetation and decreased crop yields are likely in the coming months if these conditions persist. Drought conditions will also promote higher than average wildfire activity across the Mediterranean region.
- Heightened Seaweed Exposure Along Southeast U.S., Caribbean Coasts: In April, the eastern
 Caribbean and western Atlantic had well-above-normal sargassum levels—each seeing levels
 200% above historical April records. Overall, the total Sargassum amount was 150% higher than
 the previous April record and 40% above the all-time high from June 2022. Further growth and
 westward movement of Sargassum are expected through May, and beaching events are expected

May 12, 2025



to increase. While generally harmless, the seaweed can trigger allergic reactions in some individuals and potentially discourage tourism.

Worldwide

- Sudan Civil War Expands to Port Sudan with Drone Attacks: Sudan's Rapid Support Forces
 (RSF) paramilitary group launched a series of drone attacks on the city of Port Sudan, targeting
 infrastructure like fuel depots, the Port Sudan International Airport, and the city's main power
 substation. The strikes have exacerbated rolling blackouts that have been occurring for the
 previous two weeks and are threatening the flow of humanitarian aid into the country. Fighting
 continues in Omdurman, near the capital Khartoum, killing at least eight civilians, including
 three children.
- Targeting of Israeli Airports, Yemeni Ports Continues After U.S.-Houthi Ceasefire: Targeting
 of airports in Israel and ports and infrastructure in Yemen are continuing following the Omanmediated ceasefire between the U.S. and Houthis that did not include Israel in negotiations. The
 Houthis announced their intent to create an aerial blockade of Israeli airspace, with the main
 target being Ben Gurion Airport, and have continued launching attacks. Israel has responded
 with evacuation warnings at ports in Yemen, followed by airstrikes on infrastructure, including
 fully disabling the Sana'a International Airport.
- Zelensky Invites Putin to Peace Talks in Türkiye, Russia Rejects Ceasefire: Russia Launched
 over 100 drones overnight at Ukraine after rejecting an unconditional ceasefire proposed by the
 U.S. and European leaders. Ukrainian President Zelensky Invited Russian President Putin to meet
 in Türkiye on May 15 for peace talks, contingent on a ceasefire starting Monday. Russia proposed
 talks "without any preconditions," and Putin's attendance remains unconfirmed. The Kremlin
 insists talks must Consider the 2022 Istanbul Communique draft agreement and current
 territorial control, which Ukraine rejects. U.S. President Trump and European leaders support
 negotiations, while French Foreign Minister Barrot reiterated Europe's position that a ceasefire
 must come first. The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv has warned of a potentially significant Russian air
 attack in the coming days.
- Guatemala AG Charges Indigenous Leaders with Terrorism for 2023 Protests: Guatemala's Attorney General, Consuelo Porras, has <u>charged</u> Indigenous leader Luis Pacheo, a Maya <u>K'iche'</u> vice minister of Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and Hector Chaclán, a former treasurer of the 48 Cantons of the Totonicapán organization, with <u>terrorism</u>, illicit association, sedition, and obstruction. The accusations stem from their roles in organizing highway blockades and protests during and after the 2023 <u>elections</u>, which supported President Bernardo Arévalo's democratic transition. Prosecutors allege the protests aimed to disrupt and





- seize the Attorney General's Office, though no public evidence has been presented. The case is under judicial reserve, with limited transparency.
- Kurdistan Workers Party Announces Disbandment After Four Decades: The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has announced its <u>intent to disband</u> after the group's jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan, called for the action in February. The PKK intends to cease all military operations immediately; however, disarmament specifics <u>remain unclear</u> and will depend on how Türkiye addresses Kurdish rights and how it handles PKK fighters and leadership. In lieu of <u>outright independence</u>, the group intends to push for Kurdish autonomy through political means, which may impact Turkish President Erdogan's potential re-election bid in the upcoming 2028 elections.

Cyber and Regulatory

- Hackers Impersonated Employees to Access M&S, Co-op Systems: The hackers that targeted Marks & Spencer and Co-op Group began their attacks by first impersonating employees and contacting the companies' help desks, and convincing their IT teams to help them reset their passwords. The hack prompted the U.K.'s National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to issue an advisory to organizations instructing them to review their password reset processes. Speaking at the annual summit of the U.K. National Cybersecurity Centre, Cabinet Office Minister Pat McFadden called the incident a "wake-up call" and said that the proposed Cyber Resilience and Security Bill will be instrumental in preparing the U.K. against future attacks. The bill will require over 1,000 companies providing IT services to critical national infrastructure to harden their defenses.
- India-Pakistan Conflict Prompts Cybersecurity Warnings: During the recent conflict with Pakistan, India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) advised the banking, financial services, and insurance sector to increase their preparedness for potential cyber threats. The Centre also instructed other key pieces of digital infrastructure to harden their defenses, including power-generating stations, national electricity grids, banks, hospitals, defense installations, telecom companies, and public sector enterprises (PSEs). The instructions came after a group called Pakistan Cyber Force claimed that hackers had breached Indian government websites, including the Military Engineer Services and the Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis. Indian officials deny that any such breach occurred.
- Supply Chain Attack Discovered Affecting Magento-Based E-Commerce Sites: A supply-chain attack has <u>compromised</u> at least 500 e-commerce sites, including one owned by a \$40 billion multinational company, by embedding malware into Magento-based extensions from vendors Tigren, Magesolution (MGS), and Meetanshi. The malware, dormant for six years, became active

May 12, 2025



recently, allowing attackers to execute arbitrary PHP code on servers and inject browser-based skimmers to steal payment information. Sansec, which discovered the attack, **advises** ecommerce sites using these vendors' software to inspect for infections, particularly looking for functions executing a file named \$licenseFile as PHP code.

- CISA Warns of Threats to Operational Tech: On May 8, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), along with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), issued a **joint advisory** warning of "unsophisticated" cyber actors targeting industrial control systems (ICS) and operational technology (OT) in critical infrastructure sectors, including oil, gas, energy, and transportation. These actors exploit poor cyber hygiene, such as default passwords and internet-exposed OT devices, to gain access. The agencies recommend removing OT systems from public internet access, enforcing strong, unique passwords, and securing remote access with VPNs and phishing-resistant multifactor authentication to mitigate these threats.
- Trump Administration to Revoke Biden-Era Restrictions on Chips: The Trump administration plans to revoke the Biden-era "Al diffusion rule," which sought to restrict the export of advanced U.S. technologies, particularly Al and semiconductor chips, to prevent access by adversaries like China. Critics, including major chipmakers such as Nvidia, argued the rule was overly complex and hindered innovation. Countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE had also lobbied for relaxed restrictions. The administration intends to introduce new guidance in the coming months, although it is unclear exactly what form that will take, leaving companies with continued uncertainty.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- New U.S.-U.K. Trade Pact Cuts Tariffs, Falls Short of Ambition: On Thursday, May 8, the United States and United Kingdom finalized a trade deal to reduce trade barriers, falling short of a comprehensive free trade agreement. The U.S. lowered tariffs on U.K. cars from 27.5% to 10% for up to 100,000 vehicles annually and eliminated 25% tariffs on U.K. steel and aluminum. The U.K. reduced tariffs on U.S. goods from 5.1% to 1.8%, granting tariff-free access for 13,000 metric tons of U.S. beef and 1.4 billion liters of ethanol. A 10% baseline U.S. tariff persists, with unresolved issues like the U.K.'s digital services tax and U.S. agricultural access. The deal aims to boost bilateral trade, streamline supply chains, and strengthen economic ties, but critics argue it leaves key sectors and regulatory alignments unaddressed.
- UPS Mail Innovations Raises Rates, Adds Fees Amid USPS Pricing Changes: UPS Mail
 Innovations is <u>raising</u> rates due to U.S. Postal Service (USPS) pricing changes, with some
 customers facing a 40% increase effective last Monday. Additional fees, including a \$1.75 per-

May 12, 2025



package charge for "extended area" zip codes and a 1.5% late fee on delinquent invoices, started on Sunday, May 11. These adjustments follow USPS's 2024 pricing changes, prompting UPS to shift away from USPS for last-mile delivery and introduce third-party vendor solutions for faster, more reliable service. UPS Mail Innovations is also launching same-day delivery in major metropolitan markets to enhance customer offerings.

- Tariffs Threaten Semiconductor Supply Chains as Apple Shifts to US-Made Chips: U.S. tariffs on semiconductor imports, introduced in April 2025, threaten global supply chains, with chip equipment maker ASML projecting over \$1 billion in annual losses due to rising costs. Targeting Taiwan and China, the tariffs aim to bolster U.S.-built chips in 2025. Apple, responding to the trade policies, plans to source over 19 billion U.S.-made chips in 2025, primarily from TSMC's expanding Arizona facilities, reducing reliance on China and aligning with U.S. incentives like the CHIPS Act. Critics, including industry leaders, argue the tariffs lack precision, potentially harming U.S. firms and stalling Al infrastructure growth.
- India Expands Global Reach with Mineral Deals and New Trade Pacts: India, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is deepening ties with Latin America to secure lithium and copper for its net-zero 2070 goal, signing deals with Chile's Codelco and Argentina for mineral exploration, and opening an embassy in Bolivia. On May 6, India and the U.K. sealed a trade deal cutting tariffs on cosmetics, vehicles, and whisky, aiming to boost trade by £25.5 billion yearly. In related news, India proposed slashing its U.S. tariff gap to under four percent, offering preferential access for 90% of U.S. goods and seeking tech parity with allies. These moves strengthen India's role in global energy transitions and trade amid rising protectionism.
- U.S. and China Slash Tariffs in 90-Day Trade Truce Breakthrough: U.S. and Chinese officials concluded two days of trade talks in Geneva with U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent reporting "substantial progress" in resolving tariff disputes. The U.S. and China agreed to a 90-day tariff rollback, reducing U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods from 145% to 30% and China's tariffs on U.S. imports from 125% to 10%, effective Wednesday, May 14. The deal keeps U.S. 20% fentanyl-related levies intact. Both nations will also suspend non-tariff measures, including China's rareearth export restrictions. The agreement aims to de-escalate a trade war impacting both economies.
- U.S. Air Traffic Control Overhaul Planned Amid Outages and System Fragility: The Trump
 administration, led by Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, is overhauling the U.S. air traffic
 control system to address aging infrastructure and a 3,000-controller shortage. Duffy warned of
 potential nationwide flight disruptions, underscored by recent outages at Hartsfield-Jackson
 Atlanta International Airport and Newark Liberty International Airport, including Newark's Liberty
 third system failure in recent weeks on Sunday, which caused a 45-minute ground stop, over 250

May 12, 2025



delays, and 80 cancellations. This followed a 90-second radar <u>outage</u> on May 9 and a 60-90 second outage in late April. Duffy <u>plans</u> to meet airline leaders to discuss reducing Newark flights and the proposed multibillion-dollar system upgrade, pending Congressional approval.

Health

- Ecuador Declares Epidemiological Alert Over Outbreak of Three Illnesses: Ecuador has declared an epidemiological alert due to rising cases of pertussis (whooping cough), yellow fever, and leptospirosis. Over 300 pertussis cases were reported, mainly in infants, prompting authorities for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic to implement a 60-day mask mandate in schools across four provinces, one of whose capitals is Quito. Yellow fever has also reemerged in the country's Amazonian regions, leading to new vaccination requirements for travelers from nearby countries, including Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, who are grappling with their own yellow fever health emergency. And, in the rural Morona Santiago province, eight children have died from leptospirosis.
- New Research Shows That Climate Change Accelerates Spread of Deadly Fungi: Climate change is accelerating the spread of dangerous fungal pathogens, notably of the Aspergillus family, a deadly fungus that infects millions of people every year and accounts for about five percent of all deaths worldwide. New research suggests that the fungi may reach into northern regions, including the Americas, Asia, and Europe. These fungi pose serious health risks, especially to individuals with weakened immune systems, having the potential to cause diseases like aspergillosis, a difficult-to-detect fatal lung disease. Aspergillus flavus also threatens food security by infecting crops and producing carcinogenic aflatoxins. Extreme weather events, such as droughts followed by heavy rains, further facilitate spore dispersal. Despite the growing threat, investment in antifungal treatments is limited due to high costs and low profitability.
- LA County Declares Hepatitis A Outbreak: Los Angeles County has declared a hepatitis A outbreak amid rising cases and elevated virus levels in wastewater. In 2024, the county reported 138 cases, and officials project even higher numbers for 2025, with 29 cases already confirmed in the first quarter double the count from the same period last year. Many infections are likely undetected due to the virus's seven-week incubation period and mild symptoms. Notably, most recent cases are locally acquired and involve individuals outside traditional high-risk groups. At least seven deaths have been linked to the outbreak. Health officials urge all residents to get vaccinated, especially those over 25 who may not have received childhood immunizations.

May 12, 2025



- Trump Signs Executive Order Targeting Prescription Drug Prices: U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order implementing "most favored nation" pricing for prescription drugs, aiming to align U.S. prices with the lowest rates paid by other developed countries—typically 30% to 80% less. The cost of medications in the U.S. often exceeds those in other nations. The order gives drug makers 30 days to lower prescription drug prices or face new limits on what the government will pay. During Trump's first term, he also tried to lower drug prices through an international reference pricing program, although that effort was blocked by the courts.
- Listeria Outbreak Hospitalizes At Least 10 in Western U.S.: At least 10 people in California and Nevada have been https://doi.org/10.50/. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), along with state and local agencies, is investigating the outbreak, which has been linked to products from Fresh & Ready Foods LLC of San Fernando, California. Contaminated items were distributed in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Washington through various outlets, including hospitals, hotels, convenience stores, airports, and airlines. Fresh & Ready Foods has voluntarily recalled products with "use by" dates from April 22 to May 19, 2025, under the brand names Fresh & Ready Foods, City Point Market Fresh Food to Go, and Fresh Take Crave Away.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- U.S. Tariffs Fuel Labor Disputes Across China: Workers across China are staging protests over unpaid wages and abrupt layoffs triggered by widespread factory closures. The unrest <u>reflects</u> deepening labor disputes and mounting economic pressures, exacerbated by U.S. tariffs. In many cases, factories have either placed employees on unpaid leave or halted operations entirely without offering compensation. Financial analysts estimate that more than 15 million jobs across key sectors are at risk as a result of the tariffs. Despite a 90-day pause on reciprocal tariffs set to take effect on May 14, many Chinese companies <u>expect</u> the measures to remain in place and view any relief as only temporary.
- Indian Unions Considering May 20 Strike Plans Following Ceasefire: Several Central Trade Unions (CTUs) <u>plan</u> to meet Thursday, May 15, to determine how to move forward with a planned general strike to protest labor codes following the ceasefire between India and Pakistan. The groups had called for a general strike on May 20, but faced pressure to call it off amid the heightened tensions. Prior to the fighting with Pakistan, left parties had extended their support for the strike, saying that they would <u>organize</u> road and rail blockades for two hours on May 20 in solidarity. Some groups, such as the <u>Centre of Indian Trade Unions</u>, have already said that they intend to proceed with the strike.

May 12, 2025



- New Jersey Commuters Face Potential Transit Strike by Engineers: NJ Transit and the
 Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers will <u>appear</u> before the National Mediation Board in
 Washington, DC, today for a meeting intended to help restart the collective bargaining process.
 The two parties are facing a potential strike that could begin on Friday, May 16. If the strike goes
 ahead, more than 350,000 users of the NJ Transit system <u>would</u> be affected daily. Indirectly, bus
 and light rail users could be impacted by an influx of users, and traffic congestion could increase.
- Commerce Companies in Canada Continue to Watch Postal Negotiations: The Industrial Inquiry Commission (IIC), which is mediating negotiations between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), is expected to release a report on the labor dispute by this Thursday. Industry officials are reportedly preparing for the strike to go ahead. If a strike were to occur later this month, the disruptions would be lessened compared to the strike's impact over the winter holiday season, when small and medium-sized businesses lost an estimated \$1 billion in sales. Issues central to the labor dispute are wages, benefits, and job security.
- **Pro-Palestine Groups Worldwide Plan Actions Around Nakba, Eurovision:** An uptick in pro-Palestinian demonstration activity can be expected this week for Nakba Day, which is commemorated on May 15, though related activity is expected through the weekend. In addition to the actions noted in the last Weekly Threat Brief, demonstrations are planned on Thursday, May 15, in Madrid (march from Atocha to Puerto del Sol at 12 pm) and Manhattan (march from Cadman Plaza to Union Square at 4 pm). On Saturday, May 17, a notable pro-Palestinian demonstration will take place at Basel's Barfusserplatz at 7 pm, overlapping with calls to boycott the Eurovision Song Contest over Israel's participation.

Upcoming Events

- May 15: Nakba Day (Israel, West Bank, and Gaza)
- May 18: Presidential Election (Poland)
- May 18: Presidential Run-off Election (Romania)
- May 18: Parliamentary Election (Portugal)
- May 18: Pope Leo XIV's Inaugural Mass (Rome, Italy)
- May 23-26: NATO Parliamentary Assembly (Dayton Ohio, United States)
- 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 3: Presidential Election (South Korea)

May 12, 2025

- June 4-9: Hajj (Mecca, Saudi Arabia)
- June 5: Parliamentary Election (Burundi)
- June 8-9: Abrogative Referendums (Italy)

