



February 9, 2026

## Headlining This Week's Brief

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## Top Stories

### **Out With the Cold, in With Warmth and Thunderstorms**

After a weekend that delivered record lows, including **single-digit temperatures** in New York City, temperatures across the Eastern U.S. are poised for a notable rebound.

While a full moderation will take time in the Northeast, much of the central United States is already experiencing an abrupt shift toward spring-like warmth. Forecast highs on Monday surged to as much as 40 degrees above normal, with afternoon temperatures reaching the upper 70s to near 80°F in parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and southern Nebraska, regions that are typically tracking snow potential rather than near-record warmth at this point in February. The combination of anomalous warmth, low humidity, and gusty winds has also elevated **fire weather** concerns, prompting Red Flag Warnings from the southern Rockies eastward into portions of the Plains.

Between Wednesday and Saturday morning (February 11–14), a passing cold front will usher in a short-lived stretch of cooler-than-average temperatures across parts of the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. However, this cool-down will be modest and short-lived, especially when compared to the recent bouts of record-setting cold. Elsewhere, average to above average temperatures are forecast.

As warmer air returns to the southern and eastern U.S., attention will shift toward the increasing potential for thunderstorms, a limited but growing concern after a relatively quiet few months nationally.

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On Saturday, a limited severe weather threat may develop across eastern Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and southern portions of Oklahoma and Arkansas, with isolated damaging winds and a low-end tornado risk possible. Confidence decreases Sunday, though a marginal severe storm threat could expand eastward into middle Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, northern Florida, and the Carolinas.

## Bangladesh Prepares for Pivotal Elections Amid Rising Political, Communal Violence

On Thursday, February 12, Bangladesh will hold its first general election since the 2024 mass protests that ended Sheikh Hasina's rule and ousted the Awami League (AL) party from power. The sudden power vacuum and subsequent banning of the AL reshaped Bangladesh's political field, creating space for traditional powers like the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), as well as new entrants into the political arena, such as the newly-formed National Citizen Party. In addition to **electing** representatives to all 300 parliamentary seats, voters will also **decide on a referendum** on a host of constitutional reforms, although the implementation of those reforms will fall to whoever ultimately prevails in the election.

The campaign period has been marked by a volatile security situation, with a sharp rise in election-related violence including **political killings**, armed clashes between **rival party supporters**, arson, and attacks on civilians during **campaign events**. A dispatch by **Human Rights Watch** also suggests growing insecurity for religious minorities and women, which the organization at least partly attributes to an increase in activity by more conservative, religious organizations that were previously marginalized by the government, including Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami party (JI), which enjoys broad popular support but was **banned** from contesting elections under the AL.

Authorities have **deployed** approximately 900,000 personnel from the Army, Police, Ansar & Village Defense Party (VDP), Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), and other security forces via phased deployments beginning on February 8 and lasting at least through February 14 to monitor the election. Demonstrations, security checkpoints, and political rallies are expected to disrupt transport, voter access, and commerce, particularly in Dhaka, Chattogram, and other major urban centers. Persistent unrest and political polarization could suppress voter turnout and threaten the credibility of the elections. Even once the election period has concluded, the possibility of further unrest will persist, as the victors will be tasked with governing in a divided political landscape and could struggle to **implement** controversial constitutional reforms.

## Tehran, Washington Hold First Talks Since June as Middle East Tensions Remain High

Talks between the United States and Iran took place on Friday, marking a limited but notable instance of direct engagement amid elevated regional tensions. Both sides indicated that follow-up discussions are expected, though the timing of the next round of talks has not yet been confirmed. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi characterized the talks as a “good start,” while U.S. President Donald Trump stated that Washington and Tehran are likely to meet again this week, warning of “very steep” consequences if negotiations fail even as he emphasized that talks are progressing.

Despite the engagement, deterrent rhetoric and military signaling have continued. Araghchi warned over the weekend that Iran would retaliate against U.S. military bases across the Middle East if Washington conducts strikes inside Iran. The United States has reinforced its posture alongside diplomacy, with senior U.S. officials visiting the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier following the talks, highlighting the scale and proximity of U.S. military forces operating in the Arabian Sea.

Diplomatic activity around the talks remains active and fluid. Iran’s top security official is scheduled to visit Muscat this week to meet with Omani counterparts. At the same time, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to meet with Trump in Washington to discuss the U.S.-Iran talks and broader regional security considerations. Despite the renewed diplomatic engagement, underlying tensions remain high.

## Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Mississippi Recovering Two Weeks After Storm:** The University of Mississippi **reopened** today, 16 days after a major ice storm that cut power for hundreds of thousands of customers. As of Monday morning, approximately 9,300 customers were still without power in Mississippi. Lafayette, Yalobusha, and Tippah are the most affected counties.
- **Hawaii Under Multiple Alerts: Warnings** remain in effect for flooding, strong winds, and winter conditions on the Big Island summits. Wet and windy weather will continue through Monday (local time), with strong winds and periods of heavy rain, especially on windward sides of the islands. Conditions should gradually improve Monday night as winds weaken and rainfall becomes lighter and less widespread.
- **Mountain Snow Forecast in California After Slow Start to Winter:** A strong ridge over the Western U.S. has led to above-normal temperatures and dry conditions across much of California over the last month, causing snowpack levels as of February 1 to **fall** to just 46-52% of average across the Sierras. An upcoming system from late Tuesday through Wednesday will likely produce around 12-18 inches of snow across elevations above 7,000 feet in the Northern and Central Nevadas. Looking farther ahead, the weather pattern between February 15-19 will increase the snow depth across the mountains in Northern California.

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- **Additional Storms to Threaten Portugal and Spain:** The active weather pattern across Portugal and Spain will continue through at least Friday, sending several disturbances across the Iberian Peninsula. The region is reeling from the near-constant barrage of storms, with thousands of evacuations and power outages still ongoing. The latest forecast model data suggests upwards of 150-250 mm (6-10 in) of rain will fall over northern Portugal, including Porto, and northwestern Spain over the next 5-7 days, which will worsen the river flooding situation and likely trigger additional evacuations. Strong winds are also expected at times, which could lead to power outages due to how saturated the soil is. Warnings are in effect for both **Portugal** and **Spain**.
- **Tropical Cyclone Mitchell Makes Landfall in Western Australia:** After paralleling the northwestern Western Australian coastline, Tropical Cyclone Mitchell has finally **made landfall** within Shark Bay. The storm has weakened significantly over the last 24 hours and will mainly pose a flood threat across western Gascoyne, the western Mid West, and into the Wheatbelt region, east of Perth. **Emergency WA** has issued Cyclone Watch and Act and Storm Advice alerts throughout western portions of the state.
- **Philippines to Face Shear Line, Flood Risk:** After Tropical Storm Basyang (Penha) left at least **12 people dead**, a slow-moving **shear line** is expected to produce heavy rain across the Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas. Eastern, coastal portions of the islands could receive between 6-10 inches of rain over the next few days, which will likely lead to areas of severe flooding and landslides. **PAGASA** has issued several Flood Advisories across the region.
- **Tropical Cyclone Gezani Eyes Madagascar:** **Tropical Cyclone Gezani** formed just north of Mauritius and is the equivalent strength of a tropical storm as of Monday afternoon. Models strongly agree on landfall near Toamasina by Tuesday afternoon at Category 2-3 equivalent strength, with gusts of 120-140 km/h likely causing major damage and outages. Rainfall of 150-200 mm (6-8 in) over north-central areas poses a high flood risk. Gezani is expected to enter the Mozambique Strait by Thursday, restrengthen, and approach southern Mozambique by Friday or Saturday. Forecast uncertainty remains on a possible southeast recurve; if not, Inhambane Province faces the greatest risk of tropical storm to low-end hurricane impacts.

## Worldwide

- **Italian Rail Lines “Sabotaged,” Milan Sees Violent Protests as Winter Olympics Begin, Aviation Strike Planned Next Monday:** Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni condemned recent demonstrations and railway sabotage coinciding with the opening of the 2026 Winter Olympics, **labeling** the perpetrators “enemies of Italy.” Around 10,000 gathered in Milan for a peaceful march on Saturday, but a smaller group **threw firecrackers** and smoke bombs at police, prompting clashes with authorities. Italian police have been authorized to preventatively arrest “**suspected troublemakers**” ahead of rallies, prompting criticism from rights groups. Alleged incidents of sabotage were also noted on multiple rail lines in Bologna and Pesaro, which officials consider part of an effort to **disrupt** the event just days after Italy **claimed** to have averted a

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coordinated cyberattack by **Russia-linked actors**. Activist groups are organizing another anti-Olympics demonstration in Verona on Sunday, February 22, coinciding with the Closing Ceremony. The aviation sector is also bracing for a **strike** by ground handling staff and employees of ITA and Vueling airlines next Monday, February 16.

- **Minneapolis Arrests, Nationwide Student Protests Spotlight ICE as Lawmakers Clash Over DHS Funding:** Nationwide student-led protests are **continuing** in response to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions in Minneapolis following the deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Across several cities, thousands of middle and high school students have walked out of classes. More demonstrations planned in the coming days, with some activists calling for a nationwide school walkout on Friday. Meanwhile, in Minneapolis, police **arrested** at least 42 demonstrators outside the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building during a memorial for Renee Good, after some participants threw objects at law enforcement. Legislators remain **deadlocked** over DHS funding and ICE reform, with a stopgap measure keeping the department funded only through the end of this week.
- **Mexico Responds to Violence Against Lawmakers and Miners; Operation Swarm Takes on CJNG-Linked Officials:** Mexico's federal government has intensified its security response to escalating cartel-related violence and corruption cases. More than 1,500 soldiers, including elite Special Forces known as "Murciélagos," were **deployed** to **Sinaloa** after armed attacks injured two local lawmakers in Culiacán and following the kidnapping of 10 workers at a mine operated by a Canadian company. Authorities later discovered human remains believed to belong to the 10 missing miners abducted from a worksite in northern Sinaloa, though official identification is still pending. Meanwhile, **Operation Swarm**, a nation-wide security strategy targeting criminal networks embedded in local governments, led to the arrest of Diego "N," mayor of Tequila, Jalisco, who (alongside other officials) stands accused of extortion, corruption, and having ties to the CJNG cartel.
- **Pro-Military, Pro-Monarchy Party Wins Thai Election Amid Changing Perception of Institutions:** Preliminary, unofficial results from Thailand's February 8 general election show the **Bhumjaithai Party winning** around 193 seats in the 500-member House of Representatives, prompting Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul to claim victory after dissolving Parliament in December 2025. The comparatively conservative and pro-monarchy Bhumjaithai is expected to form a coalition government. Despite the strong showing for the military-friendly Bhumjaithai, voters also supported the **drafting of a new constitution** to replace the current charter, which **supports a strong military role** in the country's government. Evolving public opinion of the **monarchy** and the **military's role** in governance could emerge as significant challenges to Bhumjaithai's eventual coalition government, which may create political instability.
- **U.S. Confirms Presence of Forces in Nigeria as Insurgent Attacks Continue:** Shortly after U.S. Africa Command's chief **confirmed** that U.S. forces were operating on the ground in Nigeria, militants **killed** at least 162 people across two villages in the western state of Kwara. The attack is part of an overall increase in violence in Kwara as insurgent groups **venture further south** from

their traditional strongholds in the north, where the proliferation of armed groups has led some to seek out new territory and resources. Despite a renewed push to combat insecurity across the country, the attacks in Kwara and elsewhere demonstrate the difficulties faced by Nigeria's overstretched and under-resourced military as it contends with varied—**and growing**—security challenges across much of the country.

## Cyber and Regulatory

- **Cyber Threats Remain Top Business Risk; Global Annual Costs Expected to Exceed \$275 Billion Within Five Years:** Cyber threats are expected to **intensify** through 2026 as nation-state cyberwarfare, ransom-ware, and AI-enabled attacks continue to rise. State and state-backed actors are expected to expand cyber pre-positioning within critical infrastructure, often using criminal groups as proxies to blur attribution and intent. Ransomware is expected to be the **fastest-growing** cybercrime in 2026, driving over \$4 billion per month in damages worldwide, with global annual costs likely to exceed \$275 billion by 2031. AI adoption is likely to further amplify both attacker capability and business exposure as it outpaces governance, regulation, and workforce readiness.
- **EU-U.S. Data Sharing Raise Privacy Concerns:** The European Union (EU) is negotiating a framework to **share** travelers' personal data with U.S. border authorities, raising concerns about surveillance and data protection. The move would expand cross-border data transfers to the U.S. at a time when the EU is simultaneously rolling out its own large-scale biometric border system. Talks on the framework have been ongoing **since** September 2025 and could allow EU member states to engage in bilateral agreements with the U.S. to support visa waiver and border security cooperation efforts. The proposal coincides with the phased implementation of the EU's **Entry/Exit System** (EES), which collects biometric data from non-EU travelers and represents a significant expansion of EU border data collection. Any potential EU-U.S. data transfers remain legally sensitive after the bloc's top court **invalidated** the Privacy Shield framework in 2020, ruling that U.S. protections were insufficient.
- **U.K. Weighs Alternatives to Card Payments:** The Bank of England (BoE) **plans** to open consultations on alternatives to credit and debit cards, aiming to let consumers pay directly from bank accounts. The goal of the move is to reduce reliance on card networks, lower costs for businesses, and strengthen the U.K. payments system. Cash now accounts for under 10% of payments in the U.K., while debit and credit cards make up nearly two-thirds, effectively positioning card issuers Visa and Mastercard as gatekeepers. The proposal builds on a November government BoE strategy to expand retail payment options and encourage joint development by banks and financial technology companies. Officials argue that more competition could drive down transaction fees (which can be four times as costly for smaller retailers compared to larger

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chains) and improve resilience against cyberattacks. Security concerns, public resistance, or rapid adoption of digital currency could impact progress on the initiative.

- **Hackers Turn to Disgruntled Employees to Bypass Corporate Security:** Cases of insider-assisted breaches are increasing, accounting for a significant portion of data-loss incidents and costing companies more on average than external attacks. Hackers are actively increasing their **recruitment** of disgruntled employees to assist with cyberattacks, using their authorized access to bypass employers' data security. Cybercriminal organizations search social media sites like LinkedIn for employees who have been laid off, passed over, demoted, or fear job loss from AI, then tempt them with financial incentives in exchange for sensitive data. Cybercriminals are also **posting** recruitment ads with payout numbers on the dark web, specifically mentioning companies like Coinbase, Binance, Spotify, and Netflix. Security experts warn that organizations must focus not only on perimeter controls, but also on employee behavior and addressing human risks to counter the threat of insider-assisted breaches.
- **French, Europol Authorities Escalate Investigation Into X:** French authorities **raided** the Paris offices of X (formally known as Twitter) as part of an expanded cybercrime investigation, and have **summoned** Elon Musk and former X CEO Linda Yaccarino to appear for questioning in April. The investigation, which began in January over complaints about X's algorithm and data practices, has since expanded to include the alleged distribution of child abuse material, explicit deepfake images generated by X's AI chatbot Grok, and Holocaust denial content. Europol officials were present at the raid, and EU and U.K. regulators are conducting similar investigations into Grok's handling of personal data and harmful content. An official spokesperson for X has condemned the actions as politically motivated.

## Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **U.S. Fuel Embargo Forces Emergency Measures Across Cuba:** Daily life and business activity has been severely disrupted across Cuba after the U.S. **threatened** tariffs on countries that provide oil to the island. On February 6, Deputy Prime Minister Oscar Perez-Oliva Fraga announced a slew of **emergency measures** as part of an effort to conserve fuel, including reductions in the school day and public sector workweek; limited public transport (**including flights**, which will not be able to refuel in Havana for the next month); and daytime blackouts. **Power cuts** have reached up to 15 hours per day in some cases as part of the effort to reserve power for critical services like healthcare.
- **India-U.S. Trade Tensions to Ease on Reduced Russian Energy Purchases, Support for U.S. Goods:** A new India-U.S. **trade deal** is expected to reduce U.S. tariffs on most Indian exports from nearly 50% to around 18% in exchange for facilitating increases in energy, defense, aircraft, and other technology imports from the U.S. expected to be worth about \$500 billion over the next five years. A key strategic element of the agreement is India's commitment to gradually **reducing its dependence** on Russian oil and shift part of its energy sourcing towards the U.S.

and allied suppliers. The agreement is expected to improve investor sentiment, though **agriculture** remains a sensitive and unresolved area. A formal agreement on the first phase of the deal is **expected** to be signed by mid-March 2026.

- **Mexico Commits to Delivering Rio Grande Water to Texas Under 1944 Treaty Agreement:** U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio **announced** that Mexico has agreed to deliver a minimum of 350,000 acre-feet of Rio Grande water per year to the United States, addressing past shortfalls under the 1944 Water Treaty. The agreement followed a phone call between Presidents Claudia Sheinbaum and Donald Trump, in which both reaffirmed their commitment to resolving water management challenges amid extreme drought conditions. The U.S. Departments of State and Agriculture **said** the deal provides stability for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities in South Texas. Mexico also **committed** to a technical plan to settle outstanding water debt and ensure timely deliveries, with monthly meetings planned to help avoid future deficits. The agreement will likely increase tensions with farmers in northern Mexico, which is undergoing extreme drought.
- **Efforts to Coordinate Western Critical Mineral Supplies, Stockpiling Advance Further:** The U.S., **EU**, and fellow **allied** countries are moving to coordinate efforts to secure critical minerals through partnerships, stockpiles, and pricing discussions meant to further **reduce** reliance on Chinese exports. The EU has pro-posed a formal U.S. partnership to jointly secure supply chains, develop projects, and coordinate stock-piling, while warning its own 2030 renewable targets are likely unattainable without faster mining, refining, and recycling processes. China **dominates** global supply, providing up to 70% of key rare earths, including 97% of the EU's magnesium and most of its permanent magnet imports. The U.S. has also launched its own \$12 billion civilian minerals stockpiling program.
- **Emirati-Saudi Spat Threatens to Disrupt Regional Business: Rising tensions** between the Saudi Arabian and Emirati governments over their respective roles in Yemen's civil war and other conflicts threaten consequences for regional travel and trade. The two countries benefit from significant bilateral economic ties, and the Emirates are often used as a hub for travel to and from Saudi Arabia. However, in recent weeks employees of various multinational firms active in the region have reportedly **struggled to secure visas** to Saudi Arabia when applying from the UAE. In some cases, companies were forced to apply for visas from offices in other countries, such as Bahrain or Qatar, to ensure their timely approval. In other cases, firms are sending employees into Saudi Arabia on tourist visas, a move which invites potential legal consequences.

## Health

- **PAHO Issues Warning for Measles as Cases Continue to Climb in U.S.:** The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) **issued** a measles epidemiological alert for the Americas, citing a sharp rise in cases and urging intensified surveillance, vaccination, and rapid outbreak response to interrupt transmission and protect vulnerable populations. PAHO called for closing immunity gaps and strengthening routine immunization as outbreaks expand regionwide. Mexico has

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reported the highest numbers of recent measles infections, with authorities deploying vaccination efforts and public health measures. In the **United States**, outbreaks continue, especially in South Carolina, and overall U.S. measles totals rose by 145 cases amid broader transmission challenges.

- **FDA Launches Pilot Program Aimed at Boosting U.S. Drug Production:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration formally **launched** its PreCheck pilot program to streamline the development of new domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities, aiming to reduce regulatory complexity and bolster U.S. drug production. PreCheck facilitates earlier FDA engagement during facility design and construction and prioritizes plants that align with national priorities, including those producing critical medicines. Eligible facilities must be of new construction, commit to manufacturing in the U.S., and intend to produce drugs or drug ingredients, with a requirement to operate for at least three years post-approval. The program reflects broader efforts to onshore drug production amid industry investments and federal policy focus.
- **Researchers Discover Emerging Bat-Borne Virus as Nipah Case Detected in Bangladesh:** Bangladeshi researchers found an **emerging bat-borne virus**, Pteropine orthoreovirus (PRV), in archived throat swabs and viral cultures from five patients originally suspected of Nipah virus infection but testing negative for it. The patients, admitted with severe respiratory and neurological symptoms between December 2022 and March 2023, had recently consumed raw date-palm sap—a known exposure route for bat viruses. The study suggests PRV may co-circulate with Nipah and recommends including PRV in differential diagnoses for Nipah-like illness in endemic regions. The discovery comes as officials in Bangladesh **report** a fatal case of Nipah in Rajshahi Division, although the World Health Organization assesses that the risk at local, regional, and global levels remains low.
- **Lack of Healthcare Worker Exemptions From New U.S. H-1B Visa Fees to Strain Rural Systems:** More than four months after the Trump administration ordered a \$100,000 H-1B visa application fee, health-care workers have **not received an exemption**, raising concerns about worsening workforce shortages. Hospitals—particularly **rural, safety-net, and underserved facilities** that rely heavily on foreign-trained clinicians—report pausing or limiting recruitment for H-1B-dependent roles. Medical groups warn the fee could disrupt residency recruitment, biomedical research, and staffing in primary care and psychiatry. **Studies** show that H-1B physicians are disproportionately concentrated in vulnerable counties, suggesting the policy may deepen existing access disparities and strain already fragile healthcare systems.
- **TrumpRx Launches Amid Questions About Whether it Will Actually Lower Prices:** The Trump administration **launched** its TrumpRx prescription drug discount website on February 5, claiming to display lower cash prices for 43 brand-name drugs and direct patients to purchase links or coupons. The platform, part of Trump’s drug-pricing strategy, shows discounted out-of-pocket costs compared with list prices, but does not sell drugs directly and is geared toward patients

paying without insurance. Experts note that many listed drugs **already have cheaper generics** or lower costs through insurance, and cash prices may exceed insured rates. Critics question whether TrumpRx will significantly improve affordability for most Americans despite its promotion as a cost-saving tool.

## Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **India Braces for General Strike Over MGNREGA:** A coalition of 10 central trade unions, along with major organizations from the banking, agriculture, and government sectors, have called for **nationwide general strike** on Thursday. The strike is to protest the dismantling of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), grievances related to the proposed Indo-U.S. trade deal, and new labor codes that unions say weaken job security, wages, and social protection. Widespread multi-sectoral disruptions are expected across banking, government offices, public sector units, transport, agriculture, manufacturing, and other commercial services, though some groups like Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) will not join the industrial action. Authorities are making precautionary arrangements. Organizers claimed that a similar strike on July 9, 2025 **involved** over 250 million participants, causing severe disruptions across several sectors.
- **Germany to See More Strikes This Week Amid Labor Negotiations:** The Verdi union, which is preparing for the third round of collective-bargaining negotiations this week that affect 2.2 million workers, **announced** more public sector strikes this week. The Education and Science Workers' Union has called for a nationwide strike in the education sector over the next two days, with striking teachers planning to march to Potsdam's Kongresshotel on Wednesday. Unionized workers in the regions of Bavaria and Berlin-Brandenburg intend to strike on Wednesday, with Berlin officials **warning** that daycare centers, schools, and district offices may close that day. Public transportation is also expected to be **disrupted** in Munich and Nuremberg. While Verdi leadership expressed optimism that a deal will be reached this week, a fourth round of negotiations—and more strike actions—is expected if employers do not meet demands for pay increases.
- **Argentine Unions Call National Strike as Senate Prepares to Debate Milei's Labor Reform:** Argentina's labor unions, led by ATE and the CTA federations, called a **national strike** for Wednesday, February 11, the same day the Senate is set to debate President Javier Milei's proposed **labor reform bill**. The unions are planning nationwide protests and earlier mobilizations to pressure lawmakers and governors backing the bill. They argue that the reform weakens labor rights, expands precarious employment through "monotributo contracts," and affects public agencies such as ANSES, PAMI, and AFIP. Union leaders warn the initiative would roll

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back decades of worker protections, undermine collective organization, and deepen wage losses, intensifying social and political tensions.

- **Germany to Host Munich Security Conference This Week:** Around 200 heads of state and high-level officials will gather Friday to Sunday, February 13-15 at the Hotel Bayerischer Hof in Munich, Germany, for the annual **Munich Security Conference (MSC)**. MSC officials **expect** a high number of conference attendees this year. Alongside the conference, officials are anticipating **significant attendance** at a **demonstration** called for by Reza Pahlavi, the son of Iran's last Shah who currently lives in exile. Several demonstrations are planned for Saturday, including the Iranian rally at Theresienwiese and a pro-Pales-tine rally at Karlsplatz (Stachus), both scheduled for 1 pm. Approximately 4,000 people **took part** in multiple demonstrations during last year's conference.
- **Other Stories the Global Intelligence Team is Watching:** Munich, mentioned above, is only one of several cities where Iranian-diaspora-led demonstrations are planned this weekend. Exiled Iranian Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi has called for a "Global Day of Action" on February 14, with major gatherings being expected in **Los Angeles** and **Toronto**. Back in Europe, Spain's farmers will take to the streets in **Madrid** this Wednesday to protest issues impacting the agricultural industry, including the controversial EU-Merco-sur trade deal. Spanish officials have **prohibited** more than 500 tractors from entering the city, though attendance is likely to still be in the thousands. To the east, hundreds of cities across **Czechia** will see large gatherings in support of Czech President Petr Pavel this Sunday, a continuation of a campaign that drew **tens of thousands** to the streets of Prague earlier this month.

## Upcoming Events

- February 6 – March 15: Milano Cortina Olympic and Paralympic Games (Italy)
- February 7 – March 8: Men's T20 Cricket World Cup (India, Sri Lanka)
- February 12: General Election, Constitutional Referendum (Bangladesh)
- February 13-15: Munich Security Conference (Munich, Germany)
- February 13-18: Carnival (Brazil)
- February 17: Chinese New Year (Global)
- February 17: Tét (Vietnam)
- February 17: Mardi Gras (Global)
- February 17 – March 19: Ramadan (Global) *Dates approximate and vary by location*
- February 18 – April 2: Lent (Global)
- February 21-22: Africa Union Summit (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
- February 24: Fourth Anniversary of Russian Invasion of Ukraine (Global)
- March 2-3: Purim (Global)
- March 4: Holi (Global)
- March 5: General Election (Nepal)
- March 8: General Election (Colombia)
- March 8: International Women's Day (Global)