**Press review January 13th to 19th 2025**

 **US news**

* **Slides 1-2-3: Los Angeles fires**: With the two biggest wildfires in Los Angeles still less than 30% contained on Monday 13th, [the death toll rose to 24](https://ablink.editorial.theguardian.com/ss/c/u001.Yw_JkLMEmFuifc_XG18IRyTNtZQ7fIEMgszcCSneHEAkCD247PEzzJghnkN7Siw6FM_1THZ0A1-3eXIils-KRtEaxS-9OA3CZshzSVrsdGwS9YAbMZAguhrt6MxSf1xBm5L1iO_CzU4vHQcRaa7kTlkHfbifFo1SHJoR_CoAu9wyyfDMc5LLgTMlRG1f7O-dQlArwEhrrl-FwXB_apTgzRrmBxSoPWSq8GaTW7fN0xMPZPtCKjl5V5o9cVzXP2E2d8V5B62w-nDnEWGVuty5fg/4d4/8RhxT1zQTSiRNvIPs7IikA/h31/h001.sT0gtFuu5guhrWxHvk68gAD8iBe2FzCc1Ohnh7OEdWE) and officials in California warned of strengthening winds in the coming days.
* Dangerous winds were [forecast to hit Tuesday](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2025/01/13/dangerous-fire-weather-california-forecast/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F406924e%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F24%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7) 14th, fanning the flames of [multiple active fires](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2025/01/14/los-angeles-fires-california-palisades-eaton-updates/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F406924f%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F25%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7) that have killed at least 24 people and [destroyed entire neighborhoods](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2025/01/13/charred-remnants-altadena-slow-painful-search-victims/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F4069250%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F26%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7).
* **+ political takeover:** Republicans say they want to [put conditions on federal wildfire aid](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/01/13/california-fire-republicans-aid/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F4069251%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F27%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7) to California. And Hollywood is quietly debating [whether to cancel awards shows](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/movies/2025/01/13/oscars-grammys-awards-season-la-fires/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F4069252%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F28%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7).
* **Slides 4-5: Pete Hegseth’s Senate confirmation hearing** 🡪 cf slides
* **Slide 6: Cease fire in Gaza was made**

Hamas and [Israel](https://www.theguardian.com/world/israel) have agreed to a ceasefire deal, pausing the war in Gaza and designed to broker an end to the brutal 15-month conflict, the mediator Qatar has said. The agreement is set to be officially accepted by Israel after a cabinet meeting on Thursday.

The announcement on Wednesday night from Qatar’s prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, was made after weeks of negotiations in the Qatari capital, Doha. There were intensified efforts in recent days to hammer out the final details after [increased pressure on Israel to reach a deal from the US president-elect, Donald Trump](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/15/a-stern-message-how-return-of-trump-loomed-over-gaza-ceasefire-negotiations), which Sheikh Mohammed acknowledged in a media conference.

Predictably enough, both D. Trump and Joe Biden want to take credit for that.

However, at least 101 people have still been killed during intense Israeli strikes since the deal was announced.

* **Slide 7: Joe Biden’s Farewell Address**

It was an opportunity to issue a solemn warning against “[an oligarchy that is taking shape in America](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/01/15/biden-farewell-address-oval-office/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F4072ee9%2F6788f33d7494d011fc82f814%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F26%2F101%2F6788f33d7494d011fc82f814).” It was a thinly veiled reference to [tech billionaires such as Elon Musk](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/01/14/jeff-bezos-elon-musk-mark-zuckerberg-attend-trump-inauguration/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F406e228%2F6788f33d7494d011fc82f814%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F27%2F101%2F6788f33d7494d011fc82f814) who are aligning with Trump. He also insisted on the need for a clear separation of powers and the risks of abuse, as well as disinformation and the need for a free press.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmEkj_3qfJI>

* **Slides 8-9: TikTok**: was supposed to go dark on Sunday after the Superme Court upheld the law passed by Congress in April ordering ByteDance to either sell its American operations to an American company or be banned, but (**plot twiiiist!**) Trump eventually vowed to sign an executive order to give the company a 90-day reprieve
* **Slide 10: The Justice Department released a report on Donald Trump’s Jan. 6 case**

There would have been [ample evidence to convict Trump](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/01/13/trump-jan-6-classified-documents-investigations-report-jack-smith/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F4069249%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F15%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7) of trying to obstruct the 2020 election results if the case had gone to trial, special counsel Jack Smith wrote.

The report, released on Tuesday, serves as the final public record of a historic prosecution that was [abandoned after Trump’s election victory](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/11/06/trump-trials-disappear-new-york-sentencing/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F3f9270d%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F16%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7).

* **Slide 11: The new House of Representatives voted to ban transgender students from girls’ sports**

The House on Tuesday passed legislation banning transgender athletes from competing in girls’ and women’s sports in elementary school through college, elevating a top GOP campaign issue to one of the first priorities in the new Congress.

[The bill](https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/28?s=1&r=6) passed 218-206, with all Republicans present voting yes and all but two Democrats voting no. If the measure becomes law, schools that allow trans girls or women to compete could lose federal education funding.

The bill’s path in the Senate is unclear.

##### **UK News**

* **Slides 12-13-14: British youngsters and democracy**

One in five generation Z and millennial Britons prefer strong leaders without elections to democracy, and voters overall are feeling downbeat about politics, a report has found.

The polling, due to be published next week as part of the FGS Global Radar report, found that overall 14% of people agreed with the statement: “The best system for running a country effectively is a strong leader who doesn’t have to bother with elections,” rather than the alternative: “The best system for running a country effectively is democracy.”

That rose to 21% of people aged between 18 and 45, who answered that the best system was a strong leader without elections. In contrast, only 8% of people over 55 preferred that system to democracy.

* **Slide 15: State of the NHS**

After a previous alarming report in September, another one has revealed that patients are dying in hospital corridors and going undiscovered for hours, while others who suffer heart attacks cannot be given CPR because of overcrowding in walkways.

* **Slide 16: Environmental activism**

Two Just Stop Oil (JSO) supporters have spray-painted “1.5 is dead” on Charles Darwin’s grave after confirmation that 2024 was the first to breach the important global warming threshold.

##### **AI news**

* **Slide 17:** **Labour announced massive investments in AI**

Artificial intelligence will be “mainlined into the veins” of the UK, ministers have announced, with [a multibillion-pound investment in computing capacity](https://ablink.editorial.theguardian.com/ss/c/u001.Yw_JkLMEmFuifc_XG18IRyTNtZQ7fIEMgszcCSneHEDCub2GK1GA7PcZufOWAACNCAIxh1pD8yLwf1-FcZyNWvuwFfDv_IxFsgJmSbkoc6gV5jZxMzAYow-LjTVpKoGqInJbmIxJQjz0BktyZ92dDV_xVlkBNt-yGjnjaxk8uR897YxaFp8LZVmVh84ZF-kh-xJyhInNRkPghIKjmFiX-EOyq6eg4Afmx_1jfcH4XieiMKO7-JnewaN69BuP-XAbRK8HyEhpeDPf3BkmzBaLBQo6LJ1cvvTnkZiRibpyFlNWxugMvbmUSDOZP2FyNpodnXz6Fh6jTQRjtDM_yRlXTg/4d4/8RhxT1zQTSiRNvIPs7IikA/h30/h001.r1CzAdZO3SVZy4ms_XweSB9ayL9SiwXJJz2poiNzZdU) despite widespread public fear about the technology’s effects.

Keir Starmer will launch a sweeping action plan to increase 20-fold the amount of AI computing power under public control by 2030 and deploy AI for everything from spotting potholes to freeing up teachers to teach.

Labour’s plan to “unleash” AI includes a personal pledge from the prime minister to make Britain “the world leader” in a sector that has been transformed by a series of significant breakthroughs in the last three years.

The government plan features a potentially controversial scheme to unlock public data to help fuel the growth of AI businesses. This includes anonymised NHS data, which will be available for “researchers and innovators” to train their AI models. The government says there would be “strong privacy-preserving safeguards” and the data would never be owned by private companies.

Ministers believe AI can help tackle Britain’s anaemic economic growth and deliver, according to its own forecasts, an economic boost rising to up to £470bn over the next decade.

The action plan represents a shift in tone from the UK government which had previously been focused on tackling the most serious [“frontier” risks](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65395abae6c968000daa9b25/frontier-ai-capabilities-risks-report.pdf) from AI, relating to dangers involving cybersecurity, disinformation and bioweapons.

* **Slides 18-19: Washington Post report about at least 8 Americans being wrongfully arrested due to police ignoring standards after facial recognition matches**

The people were identified through facial recognition software and arrested after police ignored evidence or failed to check alibis. Their cases were eventually dismissed.

These arrests are [probably a small sample of the problem](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2025/police-artificial-intelligence-facial-recognition/?utm_campaign=wp_the7&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F4069260%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7%2F6303c41fca31ee7e6627cb27%2F56%2F97%2F67864f6e3a87230807e599c7), a Post investigation found. The true number of false arrests fueled by AI matches is impossible to know.

##### **Other news**

* **Slide 20: South Korea:** South Korea’s impeached president, Yoon Suk Yeol, [has been arrested and is being questioned](https://ablink.editorial.theguardian.com/ss/c/u001.Yw_JkLMEmFuifc_XG18IRyTNtZQ7fIEMgszcCSneHEAFa0sSOGABWz4Uuj5rmiSsAY9MBRIYaA3OMAHTdlZWp2u-4riTeKXq-AvcT-5hhw0_GJu4rQGd9nCUZYO08Aczc0L3UaDoz9Q9uqjswAxtLcjkRc38Q0ZNq-KzSjmlBsEzCUffGYDwO4OsISKn61VWB4wEViP4sO0Dr6-G21eIIMi9gyEACNmuKGPEequDwPC3P5IGLLzUZywmPdrMLVcAn5vSlgTD3cW5SoT8vFqwHW4ggiAhnOD2CAT5s4_2HkRKHyNbkK6VymADLzxNsfw6/4d6/5PmDiCE_RKOgI-37Eph-PQ/h33/h001.xqHmNk-70g44XU9BExIOLY_otVy6ixIwAI2EtL0oCxc) over his ill-fated declaration of martial law last month, anti-corruption investigators said on Wednesday, bringing to an end an early-morning standoff outside his official residence in Seoul.
* **Slide 21: David Lynch’s death** 🡪 pics from *Elephant Man, Mulholland Drive* and *Twin Peaks* before revealing the name of the director behind these films / series