

China Announces Measures in Retaliation for Trump Tariffs



A magazine carrying a front cover of President Donald Trump with the words "Trump shock again" on display with other magazines at a bookstand in Beijing, Feb. 4, 2025.

BEIJING (Reuters) -- China announced a wide range of measures on Tuesday targeting U.S. businesses including Google, farm equipment makers and the owner of fashion brand Calvin Klein, minutes after new U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods took effect.

Beijing also slapped tariffs on U.S. products such as coal, oil and some autos in a rapid response to the new duties on Chinese goods imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump, escalating trade tensions between the world's two biggest economies.

China's State Administration for Market Regulation said Google was suspected of violating the country's anti-monopoly law and an investigation was initiated in accordance with

the law.

Google products such as its search engine are blocked in China and its revenue from there is about 1% of global sales. It still works with Chinese partners such as advertisers.

In 2017, Google announced the launch of a small artificial intelligence centre in China. But the project was disbanded two years later and the firm does not conduct AI research in China, according to a blog posting.

Separately, China's Commerce Ministry said it had put PVH Corp, the holding company for brands including Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, and U.S. biotechnology firm Illumina on its "unreliable entity" list.

It said the two companies took what it called "discriminatory measures against Chinese enterprises" and "damaged" the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies.

Companies added to the blacklist can be subject to fines and a broad range of other sanctions, including a freeze on trade and revocation of work permits for foreign staff.

Shares of both PVH and Illumina were down nearly 4% each in pre-market U.S. trading, while Google-parent Alphabet rose 1%.

PVH had already been under scrutiny from Chinese regulators over "improper" conduct related to the Xinjiang region.

China also announced 10% tariffs on imports of U.S. farm equipment that could impact firms such as Caterpillar, Deere & Co and AGCO, as well as a small number of trucks and big-engine sedans shipped to China from the United States.

That could apply to Elon Musk's Cybertruck, a niche offering Tesla has been promoting in China, as it awaits regulatory clearance to begin sales.

China's Ministry of Industry and Information technology designated the Cybertruck as a "passenger car" in a posting in December that was quickly deleted.

If the Cybertruck was designated as an electric truck, Tesla would face a 10% tariff on any future imports from its factory in Texas.

Hundreds Flee as Quakes Hit Famous Greek Island



A photo shows a view of the town of Fira on the Greek Island of Santorini on February 4, 2025.

SANTORINI, Greece (Reuters) -- Hundreds of people left Santorini on ferries and planes on Tuesday to reach safety in Athens as a series of quakes kept shaking the famous Greek tourist island.

Hundreds of quakes have been registered every few minutes in the sea between the volcanic islands of Santorini and Amorgos, in the Aegean Sea, in recent days, prompting authorities to shut schools in Santorini and the small nearby islands of Ios, Amorgos and Anafi until Friday.

A tremor with a magnitude of 4.9 was recorded by the Athens Geodynamic Institute at 0246 GMT on the island, most of whose popular

white and blue villages cling to steep cliffs over the sea.

Hundreds of permanent residents and workers rushed to a port early on Tuesday to embark on the Greek capital.

Flights out of Santorini to Athens were full, Greek air carrier Aegean Airlines said on Tuesday. A total of 2,500 to 2,700 people were expected to have flown out since Monday by the end of the day, it added.

"We are going to leave because I am afraid, there are constantly earthquakes, we have to leave for the kids, so the kids can calm down," said Beni Ouklala, 38, who has temporary work on the island.

Others were unfazed. "We will stay here, why should we leave? If something happens it happens," said Eftichis Diamantopoulos, 63, a tourist boat captain.

Santorini throngs with hundreds of thousands of tourists in the summer. It is much quieter at this time of the year, but with seismologists estimating that the intense seismic activity could take days or weeks to abate, local authorities have drafted an emergency accommodation plan.

"We have (planned for) places for shelters for the population without structures and on level surfaces, there are eight places that can accommodate people," said Santorini Mayor Nikos Zorzos.

Emergency rescue crews were also on the ground, while people were advised to stay out of coastal areas due to the risk of landslides and avoid indoor gatherings.

Some hotels started emptying their pools as they were told that the water load made buildings vulnerable and construction activities have ceased.

Greece is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in Europe as it sits at the boundary of the African and Eurasian tectonic plates whose constant interaction prompts frequent quakes.

Santorini took its current shape following one of the largest volcanic eruptions in history, around 1600 BC. The last eruption in the area occurred in 1950.

Farage's Right-Wing Party Leads for First Time in UK Poll

LONDON (Reuters) -- Nigel Farage's right-wing Reform UK party overtook Britain's governing Labor Party to become the country's most popular political party in a new poll, reflecting public discontent in Prime Minister Keir Starmer less than seven months into his term.

The poll, conducted by YouGov for the Times newspaper, showed that if a general election were held tomorrow 25% of British voters would choose Reform, 24% would pick Labor, and 21% would vote for the Conservatives.

Reform's narrow lead over Labor in the poll - which surveyed 2,465 people over Feb. 2-3 - is within the margin of error, YouGov said.

Starmer, who led Labor into a landslide win in last year's election and ended 14 years of Conservative rule, has suffered a number of early setbacks, most notably the fallout of a tax-raising budget. A sluggish economy has also plagued the new government.

On the other hand, Farage's populist views have helped his party gain ground over Britain's two major political parties.

Farage, a friend of U.S. President Donald Trump, was one of the leading campaigners for Britain to leave the European Union in 2016, and supports reduced immigration and lower taxes.

Britain's "first past the post" elec-

toral system meant Reform won just five out of the 650 parliamentary seats in last year's national election, despite a 14.3% overall vote share. Labor's landslide 63.2% seat share came on a vote share of 33.7%.

"Britain wants Reform," Farage said on social media platform X on Monday, posting the latest poll.

Labor dropped three points since the last survey conducted on Jan. 26-27, while Reform gained two points.

The Conservatives - one of the world's oldest political parties - fell further behind under leader Kemi Badenoch, losing one point in the poll. In July, they recorded their worst ever election performance under former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Trump Wants Ukraine's Rare Earths in Exchange for Aid



Volodymyr Zelensky and Donald Trump in New York in September.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- U.S. President Donald Trump said he wants Ukraine to supply the United States with rare earth minerals as a form of payment for financially supporting the country's war efforts against Russia.

Trump, speaking to reporters at the White House, said Ukraine was willing, adding that he wants "equalization" from Ukraine for Washington's "close to \$300 billion" in support.

"We're telling Ukraine they have very valuable rare earths," Trump said. "We're looking to do a deal with Ukraine where they're going to secure what we're giving them with their rare earths and other things."

It was not immediately clear if Trump was using the term "rare earths" to refer to all types of critical minerals or just to rare earths.

"Rare earths" refers to a group of 17 elements prized for their unique magnetic and electrochemical properties. They are used in many modern products, from smartphones to electric vehicle batteries to cancer treatment drugs.

China is by far the world's largest producer of rare earths, accounting for about 70% of global production. The elements have been designated as critical by the U.S. Geological Survey for sectors including national defense, and

Washington has sought to reduce its reliance on Beijing.

Ukraine contains large deposits of uranium, lithium and titanium, although none are considered to be among the world's five biggest by volume and the U.S. has its own untapped reserves of those and other critical minerals.

The U.S. president was immediately accused of exploiting the Ukraine war for material gain, with the German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, saying "it would be very selfish, very self-centered". Germany is Ukraine's second-largest military donor after the U.S.

Such resources would be better used for Ukraine's reconstruction after the war, Scholz said, speaking after a meeting of EU leaders in Brussels.

The Kyiv Independent cited a source in Ukraine's presidential office as saying that a deal over the country's resources with allies was in fact part of Zelensky's "victory plan", which includes a mix of economic and security incentives and demands of western allies.

Moscow said on Tuesday that Trump's desire for rare earth metals was a clear offer to Ukraine to buy U.S. assistance.

"It would be better of course for the assistance to not be provided at all, as that would contribute to the end of this conflict," said the Kremlin's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov.

Uganda Deploys Troops to Resource-Rich Congo as War Rages



Ugandan soldiers and a Congolese soldier stand along a road between Bulongo and Beni, North Kivu, in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

NAIROBI (Reuters) -- Uganda has deployed more than 1,000 extra soldiers into east Congo in the last week near an area where the Kinshasa government is fighting M23 rebels, four diplomatic and UN sources said, heightening fears of a regional escalation.

Residents said they were moving towards the conflict zone.

The Rwandan-backed M23 recently captured regional capital Goma in an anarchic and mineral-rich part of Democratic Republic of Congo where wars in 1996-1997 and 1998-2003 drew in outside nations and killed millions, mostly from hunger and disease.

The extra Ugandan deployment north of Goma would raise its numbers there - officially to back Congo President Felix Tshisekedi's army against another rebel force - to about 4,000-5,000, according to UN sources.

Rwanda also has troops operating in east Congo.

In a region of complex and often-shifting alliances, UN experts say Uganda has also backed the ethnic Tutsi-led M23, which is the latest in a string of Rwanda-backed rebellions to take up arms in the name of Congo's Tutsis.

Ugandan army spokesperson Felix Kulayigye denied a major new deployment, saying its forces had changed their "posture to offensive defense", without giving further

details.

Congo's Communications Minister Patrick Muyaya did not respond when asked if more troops had arrived, but stressed the priority of Ugandan soldiers in the area was to fight takfiri terrorists though combat against M23 and Rwandan soldiers was also possible.

Having seized much of North Kivu province, M23 rebels have been consolidating their hold on Goma and moving on Bukavu, a town some 200 km (125 miles) to the south. After meeting resistance from Congolese and Burundian forces, they have said they do not plan to take the city.

Uganda and Rwanda have both entered east Congo in the past in the name of protecting their borders but faced accusations of looting natural resources, especially gold.

Zobel Bhalal, a senior expert at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime think tank, said eastern Congo is as important for Uganda's economy as it is for Rwanda's, and the country would do what it needed to protect its interests.

Adding to concerns over Uganda's potentially ambiguous position, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the influential son of Uganda's president and head of the military, has been publicly supportive of Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and his government.

In 2022, he referred to M23 as "brothers of ours" fighting for the rights of Tutsis in Congo.

News in Brief

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) -- Swedish police said on Tuesday five people were shot in an attack at a school in the city of Orebro some 200 km (125 miles) west of Stockholm, triggering a massive response by rescue services. "Five persons are confirmed shot," police said in a statement, adding that the extent of any injuries was unclear. "This is currently seen as attempted murder, arson and aggravated weapons offence," the police said. Ambulances, rescue services and police are onsite, a spokesperson for local rescue services said. The shooting took place in a campus area where several schools, for both children and adults are located. Police said students were held indoors at the affected school and also at nearby schools. "The news of an attack at Orebro is very serious," Justice Minister Gunnar Strömmer told public broadcaster SVT, adding that the government was in close contact with police.

KYIV (Reuters) -- At least five people have been killed in a Russian missile attack on the eastern Ukrainian city of Izium, authorities said on Tuesday. "A part of the local town hall was destroyed by this strike," President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on Telegram, stating that such brutality cannot be tolerated. About three dozen people were injured in the strike on the city centre of Izium, the governor of the Kharkiv region, Oleh Syniehubov, said on Telegram, adding that some of them had to be taken to hospital. A ballistic missile hit an administrative building and damaged another, and damage was also caused to a five-storey residential building, he said, adding that more victims are still believed to be under the rubble.

LONDON (Reuters) -- Lawyers for British nurse Lucy Letby on Tuesday launched a new bid to overthrow her conviction for killing seven babies, after a group of international medical experts who reexamined evidence used at her trial concluded none had actually been murdered. Letby was convicted of killing the newborns and attempting to murder eight more between June 2015 and June 2016 while working in the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in Chester, northern England. As Britain's worst serial child killer of modern times, she is serving 15 full life terms in prison and was told she would never be released. Letby, 35, has maintained her innocence throughout but has been refused permission to appeal against her convictions. However, since her trial, medical specialists and other supporters have questioned her guilt, suggesting that expert evidence presented by the prosecution to the jury was flawed. Her lawyer Mark McDonald said new medical findings from the international experts "demolished" the case against her.

SEOUL (Reuters) -- A top South Korean military commander said on Tuesday he trusted President Yoon Suk Yeol to be making a legitimate decision when he declared martial law, but declined to say if the impeached leader gave orders to "drag" lawmakers out of parliament. Army Lieutenant General Lee Jin-woo testified at a Constitutional Court trial reviewing parliament's impeachment of Yoon over his short-lived martial law decree of Dec. 3. "I still believe it was legitimate and when told to go to parliament, I considered it to be an order," Lee told the court. The Constitutional Court is reviewing parliament's impeachment of Yoon on Dec. 14 and will decide whether to remove him from office permanently or reinstate him. If he is removed, a new presidential election must be held within three months. Prosecutors have separately indicted Yoon on charges of leading an insurrection. He was arrested last month and is being held at a detention centre.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) -- Heavily armed gangs in Haiti have attacked a neighborhood that's home to most of the country's elite and had been largely untouched by criminals, and police have demanded help repelling the assault that has killed at least 40 people. "It's been eight days since Kenscoff has been under attack," Mayor Jean Massillon told The Associated Press. He blamed the attack on the Viv Ansanm gang coalition, with gunmen going home to home and indiscriminately opening fire. "As we speak, they have surrounded the area," Massillon said as he called for reinforcements. The dead include pastors, teachers and children, although the number is expected to be higher because authorities haven't been able to reach certain parts of the neighborhood, which is home to many politicians and business leaders. Gangs already control 85% of Port-au-Prince, and the United Nations secretary-general warned last month they could overrun the capital.

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) -- Monsoon rains unleashed flooding in Australia's Queensland that have claimed the lives of two people as the week-long deluge dropped months of rainfall in a few days, devastating small rural towns on the state's north coast. The body of an 82-year-old woman was found on Tuesday in a paddock near the North Queensland town of Ingham. It followed the death of a 63-year-old woman on Sunday when the rescue boat she was traveling in struck a tree and flipped. The rain drove hundreds from their homes, washed out an important bridge and blocked drinking water supplies to the worst-hit area.