

VOA NEWS

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I'm VOA's Joe Ramsey with your worldwide news update.

Fireworks sparkled in the night sky over Nairobi as Kenya welcomed the arrival of the New Year. The capital was one of numerous cities around the world to herald 2025 with a spectacular light show that lit up the dark skies.

Johannesburg's skyline was illuminated by thousands of fireworks as South Africans greeted 2025.

Hong Kong welcomed the arrival of 2025 with a dazzling fireworks display over Victoria Harbor.

Crowds in Dubai celebrated the New Year with a spectacular fireworks display and drone show.

Syrians welcomed in a New Year with many hoping for a promise of a brighter future after the unexpected fall of Bashar al-Assad's government weeks earlier. Hundreds gathered in Damascus to sing, dance and watch a fireworks display, many looking forward to a new beginning after the ousting of Assad.

Many world leaders released messages marking the New Year, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, who praised Russia's military in his pre-recorded address to the nation.

Putin ensured Russians that "everything will be fine" as the country enters the third year of fighting in Ukraine, while French President Emmanuel Macron acknowledged in his New Year's address that his decision in 2024 to dissolve parliament backfired. But Macron also used his address to celebrate last summer's Paris Olympics.

A blackout hit nearly all of the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico on Tuesday as the U.S. territory prepared to celebrate New Year's.

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The U.S. announced on Tuesday it is imposing sanctions on Russian and Iranian groups over efforts to target American voters with disinformation before last month's election. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

American intelligence has accused both Moscow and Tehran of trying to manipulate voters and undermine trust in elections.

The Treasury Department says these sanctions are on organizations that work to stoke divisions among Americans. It says the Russian group's director worked closely with Moscow's military intelligence and that the Iranian group is a subsidiary of Tehran's Revolutionary Guard.

U.S. intelligence officials say while Russia tried to prop up eventual winner Donald Trump, Iran tried to oppose him. Both nations say they did not try to influence the election's outcome.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

The U.S. Treasury Department says Chinese state-sponsored hackers broke into its systems in early December. Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner reports.

According to a letter to lawmakers obtained by Reuters, the Treasury called the breach a "major incident," saying department workstations were remotely accessed and documents were stolen.

It said the hackers compromised third-party cybersecurity service provider BeyondTrust, gaining access to a key used by the vendor, and were able to retrieve unclassified documents.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning on Tuesday called the claims "groundless" and "lacking evidence." A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington also rejected any responsibility for the hack.

The Treasury Department said it was alerted to the breach by BeyondTrust on December 8, and that it was working with the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, as well as the FBI, to assess the breach's impact.

Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner.

A team of U.S. investigators, including representatives from American aircraft maker Boeing, on Tuesday examined the site of a plane crash that killed 179 people in South Korea.

Authorities, meanwhile, are conducting safety inspections on all Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by the country's airlines.

All but two of the 181 people aboard a Boeing 737-800 operated by budget airline Jeju Air died in Sunday's crash.

The plane was seen having engine trouble, and preliminary examinations have revealed the pilots received a bird strike warning from the ground control center and issued a distress signal as well. But many experts say a landing gear issue was likely the main cause of the crash.

That wraps up this update, but the world and news never stop. For additional updates, visit our website, voanews.com. I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA News.

