

Struggling Stocks, Alternative Assets, and CPI Highs

February 23rd, 2026

- **CPI High** – The January 2026 Consumer Price Index increased by 0.2%, bringing the 12-month average to 2.4%. Both the food and shelter indexes rose by 0.2% in January 2026, while the energy index fell by 1.5% (source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **Star-Studded Stock** – Sandisk Corporation, a technology hardware and storage company, took the top spot on the S&P 500 with a 142.75% return in January 2026. This comes after a 559.4% share price return in 2025 (source: Yahoo Finance).
- **Sector Spotlight** – Energy was the strongest sector performer in January 2026, with a 14.18% return. Materials, Staples, and Industrials were close behind at 8.64%, 7.51%, and 6.65%, respectively. The Financial sector was the worst performer with a -2.43% decline (source: Y Charts).
- **Unemployment Update** – The January 2026 unemployment rate was 4.3%, with 130,000 job gains spread across the health care, social assistance, and construction sectors. The Federal government and financial activities sectors reported job losses. However, the unemployment rate is 0.3% higher compared to January 2025's figure of 4.0% (source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **IT Troubles** – Stocks in the Information Technology sector had a tough January 2026, taking six out of the ten worst-performing slots on the S&P 500. Applovin Corp led the decreases with a -29.8% share price decline, followed by Intuit at -24.7%. ServiceNow had a -23.6% drop, Salesforce reported a -19.9% decrease, GoDaddy had a -19.0% decline, and Tyler Technologies solidified a -18.6% decrease (source: Y Charts).
- **Stopped Sales** – Existing home sales dropped by 8.4% in January 2026, which is the slowest sales pace in more than two years. Despite the slowdown in home sales, the median home price is still up 0.9% from January 2025 (source: Realtor).
- **Day Declines** – On January 30, 2026, gold prices fell by 10%, which was the worst one-day decline since 1983. Similarly, silver declined by more than 28%, marking the worst single-day loss since 1980. However, both gold and silver posted 301% and 105% gains from January 2025 through January 2026, excluding the last day (source: Y Charts).
- **Moving Manufacturing** – The S&P Global US Manufacturing PMI increased to 52.4 in January 2026, with output having the strongest rise since August 2025. This beat preliminary estimates of 51.9 (source: Trading Economics).
- **Widening Wealth** – Pew Research Center found that the median wealth of Baby Boomer households is higher than that of earlier generations of older adults. Baby Boomers in 2022 had a median wealth of \$432,200, while the Silent Generation had \$335,900 in 2001, and the Greatest Generation had \$185,300 in 1983 (source: Pew Research Center).
- **Warm Weather** – The average temperature in January 2026 was 33.2°F, which is 3.1°F above the 20th-century average. Similarly, January 2026 was the 11th-driest January in the past 132 years, with the average precipitation being 0.78 inches below the 20th-century average (source: National Centers for Environmental Information).

[Definitions and Indexes](#)

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