

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Iran on Tuesday named Ali Bagheri Kani, a hardline senior diplomat, to replace Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, a seasoned pragmatist diplomat and chief negotiator in talks on Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, state media said. Bagheri, who was named deputy foreign minister for political affairs, had been a senior negotiator in nuclear talks between Iran and the West under former hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from 2007 to 2013. He is a relative of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-replaces-deputy-foreign-minister-araqchi-who-led-nuclear-talks-2021-09-14/> 14 September 2021

2. Federal officials have cleared the way for construction of a dump in West Texas that could hold spent nuclear fuel for up to 40 years. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission granted a license to Interim Storage Partners LLC to build and run a facility that could take up to 5,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel rods from power plants and 231 million tons of other radioactive waste.

Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2021-09-14/us-grants-license-for-temporary-nuclear-waste-dump-in-texas> 14 September 2021

3. Over the last decade, energy experts repeatedly assured policymakers around the world that increasing the use of renewables, while shutting down nuclear plants, would make energy supplies more secure, while lowering prices. To make their case, experts pointed to radical declines in the price of solar panels, wind turbines, natural gas, and lithium batteries.

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelshellenberger/2021/09/14/skyrocketing-natural-gas-prices-create-new-opportunity-for-nuclear-energy/?sh=27dbd63e424a> 14 September 2021

4. The government aims to increase nuclear energy production three times from the current level, Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday. Jitendra Singh said the country was on the course to increase nuclear energy production capacity to 22,480 MW by 2031. The minister sat down with a high-level US delegation, led by Deputy Secretary of Energy David M Turk, and said that in the coming decade India would produce more than three times nuclear power from the current level of 6,780 MW. He called for greater Indo-US cooperation in the field of clean and green energy, and reiterated India's commitment to promoting its nuclear programme, not only as a major



source of clean energy but also as a tool of application in areas like the healthcare and agriculture sector.

Source: <https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/india-nuclear-energy-hydrogen-fuel-climate-action-1852716-2021-09-14> *14 September 2021*

5. Calling for greater Indo-US cooperation in the field of clean and green energy, India on Tuesday reiterated its commitment to promote atomic/nuclear programmes for providing not only a major source of clean energy, but also as a major tool of application in areas like healthcare and agriculture.

Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-reiterates-its-commitment-to-promote-nuclear-programme/articleshow/86198930.cms> *14 September 2021*

6. The US Defense Department's ambitions beyond Earth just grew a little clearer. *SpaceNews* has learned the department recently put out a call for privately-made nuclear propulsion systems that could power small- and mid-sized spacecraft. The DoD wants to launch missions venturing beyond Earth orbit, and existing electric and solar spacecraft are neither suitable for that job nor suitable for smaller vehicles, the department's Defense Innovation Unit said.

Source: <https://techcrunch.com/2021/09/13/defense-department-seeks-nuclear-propulsion-for-small-spacecraft/> *14 September 2021*

7. In the weeks after September 11, while the nation was still grappling with the trauma of the attacks, U.S. leaders confronted the possibility that an even more unimaginable horror was unfolding before them. In October 2001, the CIA director informed the president and other senior officials that a source, code-named "Dragonfire," had confided that al-Qaeda, which had been entertaining thoughts of nuclear terrorism since the mid-1990s, had smuggled a 10-kiloton nuclear device into the United States and planned to detonate it New York City. At the president's direction, scientists from the Department of Energy's Nuclear Emergency Support Team (NEST) quietly scoured the city for the device as part of operation "Radiant Angel" until the CIA learned its initial report was erroneous. Yet in the years that followed, the fear that the world's most potent weapons would fall into the hands of fanatics would remain a central preoccupation at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

Source: <https://www.hstoday.us/911/state-of-nuclear-security-trends-threaten-progress-against-nuclear-terrorism/> *15 September 2021*



8. One of the beneficiaries of the run-up to a potential federal election has been the nuclear energy industry, specifically companies that are touting new nuclear reactor designs called small modular reactors. The largest two financial handouts have been to two companies, both developing a specific class of these reactors, called molten salt reactors (MSRs). First, in October 2020, Canada's minister of innovation, science and industry announced a \$20-million grant to Ontario-based Terrestrial Energy and its integral molten salt reactor (IMSR) design. In March 2021, New Brunswick-based Moltex received \$50.5 million from the Strategic Innovation Fund and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Source: <https://theconversation.com/nuclear-power-why-molten-salt-reactors-are-problematic-and-canada-investing-in-them-is-a-waste-167019> *15 September 2021*

9. The fevered race to build an atomic bomb during the second World War famously ended in an airburst 580m above Hiroshima that killed 140,000 people and incinerated the city in August 1945. The destruction of Nagasaki and another 70,000 lives followed three days later. Less well known is that wartime Japanese scientists were also trying to build a bomb. A new Japanese movie called Taiyo no Ko (Gift of Fire) for the first time dramatises that history, depicting the attempt to develop a nuclear weapon at Kyoto University, led by physicist Bunsaku Arakatsu, a brilliant protege of Albert Einstein.

Source: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/new-film-pushes-japan-to-confront-a-wartime-taboo-1.4674055> *15 September 2021*

10. Fuelled with thorium, the China-based nuclear reactor is about to start tests. While this radioactive element has seen reactor trials before, many scientists and industry experts agree that this could make China the first country to come within leaping distance of developing the technology to a commercial scale, according to a report from the journal *Nature*. If it works, this could serve as a major milestone in the global community toward creating safer, more efficient alternatives to conventional forms of nuclear power.

Source: <https://interestingengineering.com/china-to-test-thorium-fueled-nuclear-reactor> *14 September 2021*

11. The IAEA Department of Nuclear Safety and Security will host 12 side events, in virtual or hybrid format, including two ESPACE events and three tours, during the 65th IAEA General Conference, to be held in Vienna from 20 – 24 September 2021. The objective of this event is to showcase the suite of IAEA nuclear security e-learning modules and to engage a wide range of users in an interactive and



hands-on presentation, including a demonstration of different modules. This will be an interactive session, with participants receiving an overview of the e-learning courses available and the chance to try out the modules under the guidance of the Technical Officers involved in their development.

Source: <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/nuclear-safety-and-security-side-events-at-the-65th-iaea-general-conference> *15 September 2021*

12. Without a lifeline in the budget reconciliation bill, the next generation of nuclear power in the United States could be fueled by Russia. That's significant because President Biden's ambitious climate goals won't be achievable without nuclear energy in the mix for the foreseeable future, observers say. Analysts note that the next generation of advanced nuclear reactors — which are smaller, cheaper and easier to deploy than their predecessors — need enriched uranium. "And right now the only way to get that is from Russia," said Lindsey Walter, deputy director for Third Way's Climate and Energy Program. To break that grip, the United States must develop its own supply. One option is to recycle fuel from shuttered facilities, and advocates say the reconciliation bill can provide that pathway. Advanced reactors have the potential to supply the U.S. industrial sector — a major source of greenhouse gas emissions — with carbon-free nuclear power. They also have been explored as a source of power for Bitcoin mining and as a replacement for fossil fuels powering the grid.

Source: <https://www.eenews.net/articles/russia-could-fuel-u-s-nuclear-plants-without-political-fix/> *15 September 2021*

13. Iranian guards sexually harassed inspectors from the UN's nuclear watchdog at the country's Natanz nuclear facility multiple times in recent months, according to a Tuesday report in the Wall Street Journal. The incidents included inappropriate touching of female inspectors by male security guards as well as orders from the latter to remove some clothing, the report said, citing unnamed diplomats. The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed the inappropriate conduct in a statement responding to the report but did not get into details.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-guards-accused-of-sexually-harassing-un-inspectors-at-nuclear-plant/> *15 September 2021*

14. Illinois passed one of the most aggressive clean energy bills in the country on Monday, in a rousing success for environmental advocates that, unusually, also bails out some of the state's biggest sources of clean power: nuclear energy. The bill, known as the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, passed the Senate on Monday in a 37-17 vote, and heads to Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker's desk for signing. Pritzker tweeted his praise for the bill Monday and said he "look[ed] forward to signing into law." In his

statement on the bill's passage, Joe Duffy, the executive director of Climate Jobs Illinois, a coalition of labor organizations that advocated for the bill, called it "the most pro-worker, pro-climate legislation in the country."

Source: <https://gizmodo.com/sweeping-illinois-clean-energy-bill-also-bails-out-nucl-1847673869>
15 September 2021

15. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley took steps to prevent then-President Donald Trump from misusing the country's nuclear arsenal during the last month of his presidency, according to a new book by The Washington Post's Bob Woodward and Robert Costa obtained by NBC News. Their book, "Peril," said that in the days before the 2020 election, Milley also acted to prevent a potential conflict with China. The book said Milley received intelligence that Chinese officials believed the U.S. was getting ready to attack them. To defuse tensions, Milley called the head of China's military, Gen. Li Zuo Cheng, and told him the "American government is stable" and "we are not going to attack."

Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/milley-acted-prevent-trump-misusing-nuclear-weapons-war-china-book-n1279187> **15 September 2021**

16. The second unit of the UAE's nuclear power plant has connected successfully to the national grid. Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant's second unit was started up late last month only four months after commercial operations began using the first reactor. The announcement was made on Tuesday by the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation, a representative for whom said the first carbon-free megawatts of electricity had been delivered to the grid. The unit was connected to the UAE grid by the plant's operations and maintenance subsidiary Nawah Energy.

Source: <https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/2021/09/14/uaes-second-nuclear-power-plant-unit-successfully-connects-to-grid/> **15 September 2021**

17. Polish chemical company Ciech has signed a Letter of Intent to cooperate with Synthos Green Energy (ESG) to co-operate in the use of small modular reactor (SMR) and micro modular reactor (MMR) technologies. As part of the cooperation, both entities will define, the possibility of building small or micro nuclear reactors on the premises of Ciech's production plants and they will analyse possible models of energy supply under mutual agreements. The Ciech Group announced the possibility of using nuclear power during the publication of the ESG strategy in May 2021. It assumes a departure from the use of coal in 2033, and the achievement of climate neutrality in 2040. The signed letter of intent will enable the Ciech Group to thoroughly analyse the use of SMRs and MMRs in plants producing soda ash. Currently, combined heat and power plants supplying steam - an essential raw



material in the technological process - use coal as a fuel. The Ciech Group is one of the largest recipients of coal after the commercial power industry in Poland, but in accordance with the adopted strategy, it is to gradually move away from this raw material in favour of obtaining energy from natural gas, thermal waste processing or just nuclear energy.

Source: <https://www.neimagazine.com/news/newsciech-and-synthos-green-to-cooperate-on-nuclear-energy-use-9079735> *15 September 2021*

18. In the weeks after September 11, while the nation was still grappling with the trauma of the attacks, U.S. leaders confronted the possibility that an even more unimaginable horror was unfolding before them. In October 2001, the CIA director informed the president and other senior officials that a source, code-named “Dragonfire,” had confided that al-Qaeda, which had been entertaining thoughts of nuclear terrorism since the mid-1990s, had smuggled a 10-kiloton nuclear device into the United States and planned to detonate it New York City. At the president’s direction, scientists from the Department of Energy’s Nuclear Emergency Support Team (NEST) quietly scoured the city for the device as part of operation “Radiant Angel” until the CIA learned its initial report was erroneous. Yet in the years that followed, the fear that the world’s most potent weapons would fall into the hands of fanatics would remain a central preoccupation at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

Source: <https://www.hstoday.us/911/state-of-nuclear-security-trends-threaten-progress-against-nuclear-terrorism/> *14 September 2021*

MISSILES/BIO WEAPONS

1. The Bentley Continental GT Speed can do donuts. We know of this unexpected (and, perhaps, gauche) talent because, during our recent test drive of this sportier, \$275,000, up-powered (650 horsepower!) iteration of the flying-B brand’s best-known and longest-lived model, we did a series of smokey donuts in a searing chartreuse Speed Coupe. This joyous display of automotive infantilism took place in an equally unlikely location for a recherché, six-figure two-door: a closed NATO base in Sicily. Comiso Air Base was once home to 2000 people and a discrete cache of nuclear missiles. Both the staff and warheads were housed in concrete bunkers, though the ones with the weapons in them had significantly thicker walls, and 50-ton solid steel garage doors.

Sources: <https://www.forbes.com/wheels/features/2022-bentley-continental-gt-speed/> *14 September 2021*



2. The Monarch's message only came to light after Pyongyang issued a press release on behalf of the North Korea tyrant. The release, published by North Korean state media states: "Kim Jong Un, president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), received greetings from Elizabeth II, queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on September 7." The message was sent two days before North Korea's founding day parade among dozens of other messages from leaders of countries, according to the Daily Beast.

Source: <https://www.the-sun.com/news/3659697/queen-bizarre-celebratory-message-kim-jong-un/>
14 September 2021

3. The armed forces on the island of Taiwan practiced on Monday countermeasures for a bioweapons attack in the Han Kuang drill, which is an annual exercise targeting the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), with media on the island saying that since the US is speculating that COVID-19 originates from labs from the Chinese mainland, the island needs to be prepared for a potential biological weapons attack from the PLA.

Source: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234287.shtml> **14 September 2021**

4. Saudi Arabia has reached out to Jerusalem about the possibility of procuring Israeli-made missile defense systems, at a time when the American systems the Kingdom has for so long relied upon have been removed, Breaking Defense has learned. Sources here have confirmed an AP report from the weekend that American THAAD and Patriot batteries have been quietly removed from Prince Sultan Air Base, located outside of Riyadh. Those assets had been moved into the Kingdom following a 2019 strike on Saudi oil production facilities; while claimed by Houthi forces in Yemen, US officials assessed that Iran was actually behind the attack.

Source: <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/09/saudi-arabia-considering-israeli-made-missile-defense-systems/> **14 September 2021**

5. "There is nothing unusual about this test, but what we need to understand is that the North Koreans have tested a long-range cruise missile which is of strategic relevance for a particular region," said Dr Jagannath Panda, coordinator of the East Asia Centre at MP-IDSA, New Delhi, in an interview with *indianexpress.com*. Following the test, Joseph Dempsey, research associate at the International



Institute for Strategic Studies wrote on Twitter that the DPRK “technically already had cruise missiles – albeit a shorter range anti-ship system – the Kumsong-3 (KN-SS-N-2 Stormpetrel) based on the Soviet Kh-35.”

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-importance-of-north-korea-first-strategic-cruise-missile-tests-7508564/> 14 September 2021

6. North Korea fired two ballistic missiles into the sea off its east coast on Wednesday, South Korea’s military has said, two days after the North claimed to have tested a new missile in its first weapons test in six months. South Korea’s joint chiefs of staff said in a statement the North Korean projectile flew towards the waters of the Korean Peninsula’s east coast and that further analysis was under way. North Korea said Monday it tested a newly developed cruise missile over the weekend. North Korea’s state media described the missile as a “strategic weapon of great significance”, implying they were developed with the intent to arm them with nuclear warheads.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/15/north-korea-fires-two-ballistic-missiles-into-sea-south-korea-military-says> 15 September 2021

7. North Korea fired a pair of ballistic missiles off its east coast on Wednesday, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said, days after Pyongyang said it had launched a long-range cruise missile. The North has been building up its weapons programme over the past few years after talks aimed at dismantling its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes broke down in 2019 over sanctions relief.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/15/south-korea-says-pyongyang-tested-pair-of-ballistic-missiles> 15 September 2021

8. Thales said it would create 40 new jobs and retain 140 posts, mainly at its facility in east Belfast. The site employs a workforce of 600. Thales will share in the £72m contracts to produce "directed energy weapons", which use laser and radio frequency technology. It said the move could "change the face of the future battlefield" through the ability to detect and disrupt enemy targets.

Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-58562436> 15 September 2021



1. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi urged North Korea on Monday to abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions and implement safeguards consistent with the Non-Proliferation Treaty on preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Grossi's statement comes on the heels of the IAEA's report released late last month that says North Korea restarted the plutonium-producing reactor at its primary Yongbyon nuclear complex to the highest levels in three years. "The DPRK's nuclear activities continue to be a cause for serious concern," he said in a statement. "Furthermore, the new indications of the operation of the 5MW(e) reactor and the Radiochemical Laboratory are deeply troubling."

Source: <https://www.nknews.org/2021/09/nuclear-watchdogs-chief-urges-north-korea-to-uphold-nonproliferation-treaty/> 14 September 2021

2. One of the beneficiaries of the run-up to a potential federal election has been the nuclear energy industry, specifically companies that are touting new nuclear reactor designs called small modular reactors. The largest two financial handouts have been to two companies, both developing a specific class of these reactors, called molten salt reactors (MSRs). First, in October 2020, Canada's minister of innovation, science and industry announced a \$20-million grant to Ontario-based Terrestrial Energy and its integral molten salt reactor (IMSR) design. In March 2021, New Brunswick-based Moltex received \$50.5 million from the Strategic Innovation Fund and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Source: <https://theconversation.com/nuclear-power-why-molten-salt-reactors-are-problematic-and-canada-investing-in-them-is-a-waste-167019> 15 September 2021

3. More than two thousand leading scientists and academics have called on world leaders to commit to a new fossil fuel 'non-proliferation treaty', committing to urgently phase out the use of coal, gas and oil in response to the emerging threats posed by climate change. The open letter has been delivered to UN secretary-general António Guterres, ahead of meetings of the UN General Assembly and UN climate change negotiations later in the year, which is set to be a focal point for governments to strengthen policies and targets to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and to transition to zero emissions energy sources.

Source: <https://reneweconomy.com.au/thousands-of-scientists-academics-call-for-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty/> 15 September 2021

- Iran's outgoing nuclear negotiator has been replaced as deputy foreign minister for political affairs by an ultra-hardliner, potentially further complicating efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal. The state of play: It's not yet clear whether the new deputy foreign minister, Ali Bagheri, will play as central a role in nuclear negotiations as his predecessor, Abbas Araghchi. Araghchi was Iran's chief nuclear negotiator since 2013, played a key role in reaching the 2015 deal and comes from the more moderate camp.

Source: <https://www.axios.com/iran-nuclear-negotiator-replaced-ali-bagheri-7b9a71fd-4340-4733-af4e-cb99023d12ae.html> 15 September 2021

UN REFORMS

- The United Nations is faced with rival claims to Myanmar's seat at the 193-member world body as the ruling junta seeks to cement its coup with international legitimacy by ousting the U.N. ambassador appointed by Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government. Ahead of the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations in New York next week, there is also uncertainty over who will fill Afghanistan's seat for the 76th General Assembly session, which no one has yet formally claimed.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-faces-rival-claims-myanmar-seat-doubts-over-afghanistan-2021-09-13/> 14 September 2021

- Jordan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 2016, Jordan national Sima Sami Bahous has been appointed as the new executive director of UN Women. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced on Monday. Bahous succeeded former South African Deputy President and Executive Director for UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka to assume the office on Tuesday.

Source: <https://www.freepressjournal.in/world/jordan-national-sima-sami-bahouus-appointed-as-new-un-women-chief-all-you-need-to-know> 14 September 2021

- The UN is calling for reform of the world's \$540bn in farming subsidies to help the climate and promote better nutrition. Livestock and food production are among the biggest emitters of carbon but



also enjoy the most state support, it says in a new report. Financial support to farmers accounted for 15 percent of agriculture's total production value globally, with the figure expected to more than triple to \$1.8tn by 2030 if subsidies continue to grow at their current pace, the UN warned.

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/a6577704-4b5d-4c78-a295-b8d7322d272b> 14 September 2021

4. Almost 90% of the \$540bn in global subsidies given to farmers every year are “harmful”, a startling UN report has found. This agricultural support damages people's health, fuels the climate crisis, destroys nature and drives inequality by excluding smallholder farmers, many of whom are women, according to the UN agencies. The biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, such as beef and milk, received the biggest subsidies, the report said. These are often produced by large industrialised groups that are best placed to gain access to subsidies. Without reform, the level of subsidies was on track to soar to \$1.8tn (£1.3tn) a year by 2030, further harming human wellbeing and worsening the planetary crisis, the UN said.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/14/global-farm-subsidies-damage-people-planet-un-climate-crisis-nature-inequality> 14 September 2021

5. Iranian security guards have physically harassed several female United Nations atomic agency inspectors at a nuclear facility over the past few months, diplomats say, and the U.S. has demanded that Iran stop the behavior immediately. The previously unreported incidents at Iran's main nuclear facility, Natanz, allegedly included inappropriate touching of female inspectors by male security guards and orders to remove some clothing, the diplomats said.

Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/iranian-guards-physically-harassed-female-u-n-nuclear-inspectors-diplomats-say-11631626649> 14 September 2021

6. India has taken note of references in the oral update by the United Nations high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet and expressed disappointment over her remarks on the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-says-its-disappointed-with-unwarranted-remarks-made-by-un-envoy-on-j-k/articleshow/86203968.cms> 14 September 2021

7. Around 87% of the annual \$540-billion support given worldwide by governments to agricultural producers includes measures that are price distorting and can be harmful to nature and health, a new UN report has found. It argues that changing agricultural producer support, rather than eliminating it, will help end poverty, eradicate hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition among other things.



Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/87-of-annual-540-billion-farm-support-worldwide-distorts-prices-harms-nature-un-report/articleshow/86207098.cms> **14 September 2021**

8. The Chinese envoy to the UN Office at Geneva called for an investigation into alleged crimes including torture and killing of civilians committed in Afghanistan by military personnel from the US and its allies in a speech at the 48th session of the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday, and asked the US to reflect on its mistakes and address serious human rights abuses.

Source: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234268.shtml> **14 September 2021**

9. Passing on the gavel to the new Assembly president, António Guterres saluted his predecessor: “Throughout this difficult and historic moment, we have all been fortunate to rely on the leadership of His Excellency, President Volkan Bozkir”. The UN chief credited the outgoing Turkish diplomat and politician for prioritizing a sustainable recovery, rooted in the 2030 Agenda, and supporting countries and communities as they rebuild systems shattered by the pandemic. And the 76th General Assembly gets underway in UN headquarters at New York.

Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1099912> **15 September 2021**

10. Four million Afghans are facing “a food emergency” and the majority live in rural areas where \$36 million is urgently needed for the coming months to ensure the planting of winter wheat, feed for livestock, and cash assistance for vulnerable families, the elderly and disabled, a U.N. official said Tuesday. Rein Paulsen, director of the Food and Agriculture Organization’s Office of Emergencies and Resilience, told reporters at U.N. headquarters in a video briefing from Kabul that 70% of Afghans live in rural areas and there is a severe drought affecting 7.3 million Afghans in 25 of the country’s 34 provinces. These vulnerable rural communities have also been hit by the pandemic, he said.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/rural-afghans-facing-food-emergency-un-officials/article36466296.ece> **15 September 2021**

11. A day after the UN human rights chief highlighted human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir, India stated that her “unwarranted remarks” do not reflect the ground reality. On Monday, September 13, the UN high commissioner for human rights, Michele Bachelet, opened the 48th session of the Human Rights Council with an update on the global human rights situation. In her remarks, Bachelet revealed that her office would soon be finalising allegations of serious human rights violations in China’s Xinjiang province. She also mentioned her concerns about problematic practices in various countries, from the Central African Republic to Palestine.



Source: <https://thewire.in/rights/not-ground-reality-india-reacts-to-un-human-rights-chiefs-remarks-on-kashmir> *15 September 2021*

12. India on Tuesday said the world community's approach to Afghanistan should be in line with UN Security Council resolution 2593, which demands Afghan soil shouldn't be used in any way for terrorism and seeks an inclusive and negotiated settlement to the crisis in the war-torn country.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/un-resolution-2593-should-shape-world-s-response-to-afghanistan-foreign-secretary-harsh-varadhan-shringla-101631647543142.html> **15 September 2021**

13. Global support to producers in the agricultural sector amounts to \$540 billion per year, making up 15 percent of total agricultural production value. By 2030, this is projected to soar up more than three times to \$1.759 trillion. Yet the 87 percent of this support, approximately \$470 billion, is price distorting and environmentally and socially harmful. These are findings of a new UN report calling for repurposing damaging incentives to achieve more of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and realize the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. The report — A multi-billion-dollar opportunity: Repurposing agricultural support to transform food systems — launched by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) finds that current support to producers mostly consists of price incentives, such as import tariffs and export subsidies, as well as fiscal subsidies which are tied to the production of a specific commodity or input.

Source: <https://www.thestatesman.com/india/farm-subsidies-distort-prices-degrade-environment-un-1503007343.html> *15 September 2021*

14. More than 100 heads of state and government are planning to attend the UN General Assembly's annual gathering of world leaders in person next week, including US President Joe Biden, King Abdullah II of Jordan and the presidents of Brazil and Venezuela, according to the latest speakers list. The prime ministers of Japan, India and the United Kingdom will also be at UN headquarters to deliver their country's speech to the 193-member assembly, along with Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Source: <https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/over-100-world-leaders-to-attend-un-gathering-in-person/> *14 September 2021*