

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Shikoku Electric Power Co. reactivated a nuclear reactor in western Japan's Ehime Prefecture on Thursday, after it had been shut down since December 2019 owing to routine inspections and a subsequent court injunction. Following the overturning in March of an injunction issued by the Hiroshima High Court in January 2020 prohibiting the reactor from functioning due to safety concerns, the utility restarted the No. 3 reactor at the Ikata nuclear power facility.
Source: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/12/33a0d6c55ad0-ehime-nuclear-reactor-in-western-japan-to-be-restarted-after-2-yr-halt.html>
2. According to a French non-governmental organisation citing a whistleblower, a design issue in the reactor pressure vessel could be the origin of a problem that was made public in June at EDF's jointly-owned nuclear power facility in China.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/design-flaw-could-explain-problem-edfs-chinese-nuclear-plant-ngo-2021-11-29/>
3. The Indian government is considering enhancing the capability of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant in the near future from 2000 MW to 6000 MW, according to the Atomic Energy Ministry. The capability will increase progressively to 6000 MW on completion of KKNPP-3 & 4 (2 X 1000 MW) and KKNPP-5 & 6 (2 X 1000 MW) which are presently under different stages of construction.
Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/dec/01/government-considering-enhancing-capability-of-kudankulam-nuclear-power-plant-2390517.html>
4. The uranium mining market is projected to reach nearly \$10.18 billion next year, according to a Business Research Company report, which noted that the industry should see CAGR of 4.6% during the forecast period (<https://ibn.fm/vvT93>). Energy Fuels UUUU +2.12% (Get Free Alerts for UUUU), the largest producer of uranium in the United States, is committed to playing a significant role in the growing market.
Source: <https://www.benzinga.com/news/earnings/21/11/24363419/energy-fuels-emerging-as-leader-in-uranium-mining>
5. An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts said the operator of France's Belleville Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) has demonstrated commitment to safety by introducing additional methods to prepare for accident management and using innovative approaches in the training of plant staff. The Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) concluded the 18-day mission to Belleville NPP on 2 December.
Source: <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-mission-observed-safety-commitment-by-frances-belleville-nuclear-power-plant-encourages-continued-improvement>

6. Russia's Kalinin nuclear power plant shows a commitment to safety, said a team assembled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which took some new practices away to share with the global industry.

Source: <https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/IAEA-team-reviews-Kalinin-safety>

MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. China's pursuit of hypersonic weapons "increases tensions in the region," according to US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who also promised that the US will maintain its capability to repel any Chinese threats. Austin made the statements on Thursday in Seoul, following his annual security meetings with his South Korean counterpart, which emphasised on challenges posed by China and North Korea, as well as other issues confronting the partners.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/2/us-s-korea-to-update-war-plans-as-they-urge-diplomacy-with-north>

2. After talks with his South Korean counterpart in Seoul on Thursday, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned North Korea's missile and weapons developments are becoming increasingly destabilising for regional security.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/north-koreas-missile-programme-increasingly-destabilising-says-uss-austin/articleshow/88043246.cms>

3. During a visit to South Korea on Thursday, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned North Korea's missile and weapons developments are becoming increasingly destabilising for regional security.

Source: <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/asia-pacific/n-koreas-missile-program-increasingly-destabilizing-for-region>

4. Putin said on November 30 at the "Russia Calling!" investment meeting that Russia is aware that the US is ahead of China in hypersonic weapon development, but "nobody makes a fuss about it," according to TASS.

Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/putin-punctures-beijings-us-well-ahead-of-china-in-hypersonic-missile-race/>

5. According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, a protocol extending a 10-year agreement between China and Russia to warn each other of ballistic missile and carrier rocket launches went into force on Wednesday. The news was made by Wang Wenbin, a ministry spokesperson, at a routine press briefing on Thursday.

Source: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-12-02/China-Russia-extend-agreement-on-missile-notification-by-10-years-15FgODz1wju/index.html>

6. The Russian navy successfully test-fired a potential hypersonic missile on Monday, according to the military. The Admiral Gorshkov frigate in the White Sea launched the Zircon cruise missile, which hit



a practise target 400 km (215 nautical miles) distant, according to the Defense Ministry.

The launch was the latest in a series of Zircon tests ahead of its commercial deployment next year.

Source: <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/world/russian-navy-test-fires-hypersonic-missile-capable-flying-nine-times-speed-of-sound-latest-international-news-updates-russian-navy-news-updates-747534>

7. Russian President Vladimir Putin cautioned NATO on Tuesday not to cross a "red line" in Ukraine, saying that if they do, Moscow will have no choice but to respond, while boasting about Russia's hypersonic missile development. Putin has stated that deploying NATO soldiers or advanced missile systems on Ukrainian land, capable of striking Moscow in minutes, would be a step too far for Russia. NATO has taken no action in this direction.

Source: <https://www.businessinsider.in/politics/world/news/putin-warns-nato-of-russias-unstoppable-missiles-if-his-red-line-in-ukraine-is-crossed/articleshow/88018623.cms>

8. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stated on Thursday that the country must prepare for a "very enormous fight" next year in order to continue making gains in fields such as defense, agriculture, and building. Kim made the statements at a meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's politburo's central committee on Wednesday, which decided to conduct a plenary assembly of the committee next month.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/12/2/kim-jong-un-warns-of-very-giant-struggle>

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. According to two US sources briefed on the matter, Israel has provided intelligence with the US and several European partners over the past two weeks suggesting that Iran is taking technical steps to prepare to enrich uranium to 90% purity — the threshold required to manufacture a nuclear weapon.

Source: <https://www.axios.com/iran-enrich-weapons-grade-uranium-israel-f624e90a-2283-4b55-adca-d5aae1403912.html>

2. The discussions between Iran and the major nations on arms control will begin on Monday, but there will be a noteworthy absentee. The US delegation will not be seated at the table at Tehran's request; instead, its members will wait in an antechamber to be informed by the Europeans.

Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-nuclear-jcpoa-tehran-enrichment-islamic-republic-11638129541>

3. Iran's top diplomat claims that a deal to resurrect his country's nuclear pact with world powers is "within reach," but that it is contingent on Western goodwill. Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Twitter on Thursday that talks in Vienna, Austria, were "proceeding with seriousness" and that lifting sanctions was a "fundamental priority."

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/2/iran-says-nuclear-deal-within-reach-if-west-shows-goodwill>



4. Iran has sent draughts on sanctions relief and nuclear pledges to European states involved in the shattered nuclear deal, according to Iran's senior nuclear negotiator, as world powers and Tehran try to resurrect the treaty.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/iran-gives-european-nuclear-deal-parties-drafts-sanctions-removal-nuclear-issues-2021-12-02/>
5. According to Anadolu News Agency, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said on Thursday that an attack may be an option to put an end to Iran's nuclear programme.
Source: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20211202-israel-reiterates-intention-to-strike-irans-nuclear-program/>
6. Israel's government has stepped up diplomatic efforts to persuade foreign powers to maintain Iran sanctions and refuse to budge during the restarted talks. In a tough-talking video, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett urged people not to succumb to Iranian "nuclear blackmail."
Source: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/11/vienna-talks-open-israel-pleads-firmness-iran#ixzz7Du144GVM>
7. According to a copy of the project proposal obtained by the Washington Free Beacon, the Biden administration has hired two nuclear-disarmament activists to give the Defense Department with "alternatives" to the US' long-standing intercontinental ballistic missiles system.
Source: <https://freebeacon.com/national-security/biden-enlists-nuclear-disarmament-proponents-to-study-icbm-alternatives/>
8. The announcement of AUKUS, the military partnership between the UK, the US and Australia, is a dangerous escalation in the West's ongoing confrontation with China. Spreading nuclear technology is at the heart of the deal: the US and UK are collaborating with Australia to provide them with nuclear-powered submarines. This risks nuclear proliferation and is a breach of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
Source: <https://cnduk.org/aucus/>

UN REFORMS

1. Despite ongoing high-stakes talks to renew a 2015 deal to limit Iran's capacity to stockpile nuclear weapons, the UN says Iran is enriching uranium at one of its plants. According to Reuters, the Iran is enriching uranium up to 20% purity at its Fordow plant, which has 166 modern equipment. To be used in weapons-grade quantities, uranium must be purified to 90% purity.
Source: <https://thehill.com/policy/international/583819-iran-begins-enriching-uranium-with-advanced-centrifuges-watchdog-says>



2. The US government reiterated its opposition to a United Nations treaty barring nuclear weapons on Wednesday, claiming that such blanket prohibitions will not assist accomplish disarmament goals. At a news conference in Latvia, Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated, "We do not support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."
Source: <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20211202/p2g/00m/0in/007000c>
3. If the year-long conflict spreads to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia risks devolving into sectarian bloodshed and facing a chaotic exodus akin to Kabul, the UN assistance head warned. Martin Griffiths voiced significant concern for the stability of a nation of 115 million people composed of more than 80 ethnic groupings in an interview with AFP.
Source: <https://www.firstpost.com/world/ethiopia-un-fears-conflict-could-take-sectarian-turn-as-government-rebel-camps-fight-it-out-10181251.html>
4. According to a recent report by the United Nations humanitarian arm, UNOCHA, over 700,000 children have been affected by school closures due to conflict in Cameroon's north-west and south-west regions. During their joint visit to Cameroon this week, Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Yasmine Sherif, Director of Education Cannot Wait, urged for an end to attacks on education.
Source: <https://www.nrc.no/news/2021/november/violence-impacts-700000-children-in-cameroon/>
5. In resistance to the country's merciless military, which took power in a coup d'état on February 1, peaceful pro-democracy street demonstrations and work stoppages have given place to paramilitary operations. The Tatmadaw, as the Myanmar military is known, is now trying to eliminate resistance along the border, firing rocket launchers and burning down homes.
Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/months-after-myanmars-coup-worries-of-civil-war-7651236/>
6. According to Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Błaszczak, the migration and refugee crisis on the Polish-Belarus border threatens to extend months due to political tensions. Thousands of migrants and refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan fled into Belarus in the hopes of gaining entry to the European Union, only to be met by sub-zero temperatures, fire water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets fired by Polish police, according to C.B.S. News.
Source: <https://theowp.org/poland-says-migrant-crisis-at-belarusian-border-could-last-months/>
7. As Poland grapples with a simmering migrant crisis, its president approved legislation on Tuesday limiting relief organisations' and journalists' access to the country's border with Belarus.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-limits-access-belarus-border-migrant-crisis-simmers-2021-11-30/>

