

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. The Canadian government has pledged to assist Indigenous communities in exploring the possibility of small modular reactors (SMRs) to provide emissions-free energy for a variety of applications, including generating electricity in remote communities. Meanwhile, X-energy Canada will work with leaders from First Nations to develop Indigenous capabilities in the advanced SMR industry.

Source: <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Initiatives-support-Indigenous-inclusion-in-Canada>

2. India now has a nuclear power capacity of 6,780 MW, according to Jitendra Singh, Minister of State in the Department of Space and Department of Atomic Energy, and the government plans to increase it to 22,480 MW by 2031 as part of a plan to meet India's net-zero targets. The minister also mentioned that the Centre had already given 'in principle' approval for the construction of six additional nuclear power plants in Maharashtra's Jaitapur, each having a capacity of 1,650 MW. This would be India's largest-ever nuclear power expansion, with a combined capacity of 9,900 MW.

Source: <http://www.millenniumpost.in/editorial/powering-the-future-462419>

3. Nuclear energy is a rare commodity: a carbon-free energy source that isn't overhyped and has bipartisan backing in Washington. The main question now is whether new technologies that could reduce expenses are indeed effective. Given its ability to supply consistent carbon-free energy, governments are revisiting nuclear power. New methods for producing fission reactors show promise, but they have yet to demonstrate that they are both cost-effective and safe.

Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nuclear-power-has-a-second-chance-to-prove-itself-11640011729>

4. Qatar's sovereign wealth fund will invest 85 million pounds (\$112.12 million) in Rolls-Royce's low-carbon nuclear power business in exchange for a 10% equity stake, the British company said on Monday.

Source: https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/qatar-takes-10-stake-rolls-royces-low-carbon-nuclear-business-2021-12-20/?taid=61c0b6a992a8110001a48f82&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

5. In order to deal with a winter energy shortage across Europe, the French government asked Electricite de France SA to restart some nuclear reactors sooner than anticipated. On France Info radio, Ecology Minister Barbara Pompili said she had requested EDF Chief Executive Officer Jean-Bernard Levy in a meeting on Friday to restart several reactors that had been paused for maintenance and were slated to begin in mid-January sooner than anticipated.

Source: <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/french-government-asks-edf-to-restart-nuclear-reactors-early->

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MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. India has received the first regiment of Russia's S-400 missile system. In 2022, it is likely to be deployed in the northern region of the country, from where it can prevent any kind of air attack from Pakistan and China and protect the country.
Source: <https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-first-regiment-of-s-400-missile-system-arrive-in-india-to-be-deployed-in-this-region-2924808>
2. According to a source in the defence industry, Russia has developed the X-BPLA, a new guided missile that can be used as part of the armament system for drones and helicopters.
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/russia-says-it-can-launch-lethal-missiles-based-on-kornet-d-system-from-drones-ka-52m-alligator-helicopters/>
3. According to a recent article by The Warzone, the US Air Force's AGM-183A air-launched rapid response weapon (ARRW) hypersonic missile has failed a test for the third time. The prototype missile failed to separate from its B-52H bomber host owing to an unknown problem, according to the Air Force Life Cycle Management Command's Armament Directorate.
Source: <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2021/12/20/us-hypersonic-missile-fails-trial/>
4. As final arguments in the highly watched trial began Monday, Dutch prosecutors claimed four defendants accused of shooting down a Malaysia Airlines aircraft with a surface-to-air missile were seeking to serve "their own military interests"
Source: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/12/20/dutch-prosecutors-say-mh17-suspects-served-military-interests-a75883>
5. L3Harris reported Dec. 20 that a missile-tracking satellite it constructed for the US Missile Defense Agency has passed a major design assessment. The Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor (HBTSS) programme uses the satellite. Northrop Grumman was given a \$155 million contract and L3Harris was awarded a \$121 million contract by the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) in January to develop prototypes for on-orbit demonstrations. Both companies have to deliver their satellites in 2023.
Source: https://spacenews.com/l3harris-missile-tracking-satellites-pass-critical-design-reviews/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter
6. L3Harris Technologies (NYSE:LHX) has fulfilled the final key design milestone for the US Missile Defense Agency's (MDA) Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor (HBTSS) programme Phase IIb On-orbit Prototype Demonstration and has already commenced construction.
Source: https://www.bakersfield.com/ap/news/l3harris-completes-final-us-missile-defense-agency-satellite-design-milestone/article_8f42cbde-4fb9-5ac3-9384-2cc0f648bef4.html

7. On her visit to India, French Defense Minister Florence Parly stressed how "valuable" the French-Indian friendship is. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh urged French companies to "either work with Indian enterprises or simply produce in India" as the two countries agreed to expand bilateral, regional, and defence industry partnership on December 17.

Source: <https://www.defenceaviationpost.com/2021/12/france-proposes-to-develop-rafale-fighter-jets-in-india-collaboration-on-aero-engine-technology-in-pipeline/>

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. On Monday, the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) announced via its official WeChat account that the world's first nuclear power plant with a pebble bed reactor (PBR), the fourth generation of high-temperature gas reactor (HTGR), has officially started up in East China's Shandong Province.

Source: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202112/1242878.shtml>

2. According to US official sources, the US has advised Japan not to attend the first conference of signatories to a United Nations treaty banning nuclear weapons as an observer, indicating Washington's hostility to the pact. As per the sources, the Japanese government has indicated that it will follow the lead of the United States and take a cautious approach to the matter. Tokyo has no "clear preparations" to attend the meeting as an observer, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told a parliamentary committee on Thursday.

Source: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2021/12/54ab486540a3-us-urges-japan-not-to-join-nuclear-ban-treaty-meeting-sources.html>

3. According to preliminary reports, anti-aircraft fire was reported Monday near a nuclear complex in Bushehr, Iran. The anti-aircraft fire, according to an Iranian official quoted by the semi-official Fars news agency, was intended to test air defences at the site.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/blasts-heard-near-irans-bushehr-nuclear-site-officials-cite-air-defense-test/>

4. National security advisor Jake Sullivan said Friday that talks to re-enter the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran are "not going well," a frank assessment coming as European negotiators warn that time is running out. "It's not going well in the sense that we do not yet have a pathway back into the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA]," Sullivan said at a Council on Foreign Relations event.

Source: <https://thehill.com/policy/international/middle-east-north-africa/586350-sullivan-says-iran-uke-talks-not-going-well>

5. Iran will retaliate with a "crushing" response against any Israeli attack, a commander said according to an Iranian news agency linked to the country's top security body.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-pledges-crushing-response-against-any-israeli-attack-nournews-2021-12-20/>

6. Belarus is prepared to deploy nuclear weapons in the face of NATO threats, according to Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei in an interview with the RT Arabic TV channel.
Source: <https://tass.com/world/1377567>
7. In the midst of continued concerns over Iran's nuclear programme, the government held an air defence rehearsal near its southeastern Bushehr nuclear power station. The drill was carried out in the early hours of Monday to the south of Bushehr province, as well as over sections of the Persian Gulf, according to state media.
Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/20/iran-holds-air-defence-drill-over-bushehr-nuclear-plant>

UN REFORMS

1. Hundreds of thousands of people marched to the presidential palace in Sudan's capital Khartoum on Sunday in protest at the Oct. 25 military coup, drawing volleys of tear gas and stun grenades from security forces, Reuters witnesses said.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/security-forces-deploy-sudans-khartoum-against-planned-post-coup-protests-2021-12-19/>
2. Despite the fact that the US dollar has depreciated against the Afghani, Afghanistan's national currency, food and fuel prices have remained high. The US dollar fell to 98 Afghanis on Sunday, down from 130 Afghanis just a few days ago, according to the Xinhua news agency.
Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/afghan-markets-mired-with-high-prices-despite-rise-of-currency-value-121122000259_1.html
3. On December 13, Afghan music students, professors, and their families disembark on a flight to Lisbon. More than 270 evacuees had been lodging in Doha while waiting to be resettled in Portugal.
Source: <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/20/1064510598/afghanistan-music-institute-taliban-doha-portugal>
4. As the United States empties camp grounds, Afghan evacuees consider their options. Due to a lack of cheap housing and the pandemic, more than 29,000 Afghans are stationed on US military facilities.
Source: <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/12/20/afghan-evacuees-future-525725>
5. Women's Tennis Association (WTA) is still concerned that Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai is being censored by the state, as Shuai backtracks on sexual assault claim the report said. She had made an accusation of sexual assault in her first media interview alleging a top Chinese leader had coerced her to have sex according to a report in BBC.

Source: <https://www.india.com/sports/peng-shui-controversy-wta-worried-about-coercion-china-as-tennis-star-backtracks-on-sexual-assault-claim-5146885/>

6. Artificial intelligence start-up in China The SenseTime Group's \$767 million (£580 million) Hong Kong share offering has been reopened. SenseTime has been accused by the United States of creating face recognition software to ascertain people's ethnicity, with a particular focus on identifying ethnic Uyghurs.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59722830>

7. World Uyghur Congress asks OIC to take a strong public stand against China's 'genocide and crimes' against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Muslims.

Source: <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/world-uyghur-congress-asks-oic-to-stand-against-chinas-genocide-of-minorities20211220213652/>

8. According to a BBC investigation, the Myanmar military carried out a series of mass executions of civilians in July, murdering at least 40 males. As per the eyewitnesses and survivors, soldiers as young as 17 collected up villagers before separating and executing the men. The majority of those killed, according to video and photographs from the incidents, were tortured first and then buried in shallow graves.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59699556>

9. Human Rights Watch stated today that the Japanese government should break links with Myanmar's military and immediately cease a military study-abroad programme for Myanmar cadets. The Myanmar military, known as the Tatmadaw, conducted a coup on February 1, 2021, and created a junta that overthrew democratic elections. According to a Defense Ministry spokesman, the National Defense Academy of Japan, a Defense Ministry facility, was still hosting eight Myanmar cadets as of December 10. The cadets are exposed to a broad range of academic and military training, including combat and arms training, as part of the programme.

Source: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/21/japan-cut-defense-ties-myanmar-military>

10. A Myanmar court postponed the announcement of judgments in the latest of a series of proceedings against the country's former leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, on Monday, according to a legal official knowledgeable about the case said.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/myanmar-court-postpones-latest-aung-san-suu-kyi-verdict7681654/>

11. The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) decided on Friday to form an international commission of human rights exertions on Ethiopia in a special session organised at the request of the European Union. The commission's major goal would be to conduct a thorough investigation into allegations of violations and abuses of international human rights law, humanitarian law, and refugee law committed by all parties to the conflict in Ethiopia since November 3, 2020.

Source: <https://www.jurist.org/news/2021/12/unhrc-establishes-commission-to-investigate-international-law-violations-in-ethiopia/>

