

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Ontario Power Generation picked GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy to construct a light water reactor at its existing Darlington nuclear power plant, a choice that will have long-term implications for Canada's nuclear industry.

Source: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-canadas-first-new-nuclear-reactor-in-decades-is-an-american-design/>

2. North Korea's Kim Jong Un this week opened a key ruling party meeting, state media reported on Tuesday, a forum he has previously used to make major New Year policy announcements.

Source: https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkoreas-kim-convenes-major-party-meeting-with-2021-policy-agenda-kcna-2021-12-27/?taid=61ca6e7af25af200019933dc&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. On Sunday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reaffirmed Russia's status as India's strategic partner. Singh also backed India's nuclear and other military deterrents as a means of preventing external attacks on Indian soil. After laying the cornerstone for the BrahMos Aerospace cruise missile manufacturing centre in Lucknow, Singh told a crowd that the project was a testament to the two countries' defence industry collaboration.

Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/rajnath-singh-inaugurates-brahmos-missile-manufacturing-unit-in-lucknow-121122600508_1.html

2. On Sunday, the Saudi-led coalition accused Iran and Hezbollah of assisting Yemen's Houthi rebels in firing missiles and drones at Saudi Arabia, killing two people.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-arabia-accuses-iran-hezbollah-of-aiding-houthis-after-deadly-missile-attack/>

3. According to US intelligence assessments and satellite photographs, Saudi Arabia is developing its

own ballistic missiles with the support of China. A source familiar with the situation and a US official said, US intelligence agencies believe the kingdom, which has long been considered to have received missiles from Beijing, is now producing its own.

Source: <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/12/26/saudi-arabia-appears-to-be-building-its-own-ballistic-missiles-with-chinas-help.html>

4. The Space Force, a branch of the US military, has granted GEOST, an Arizona-based company, a contract for prototype space-based sensors worth US\$32 million (NT\$883.84 million). According to the storey, Thomas Karako, a senior scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C., told American Enterprise Institute hosts that the United States has to deploy space-based sensors to counter China's new missiles.

Source: <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4389682>

5. Hypersonic missile, fourth-generation tank and upgraded MIG to be introduced to Russian troops for the New Year.

Source: <https://www.rbth.com/science-and-tech/334564-top-3-new-era-weapons>

6. On December 24, the Myanmar Navy commissioned a Chinese Type 035 Ming-class submarine. This comes after receiving a second-hand Kilo class submarine from India, which has proven to be quite a logistical problem. China is assisting Myanmar's dictatorship in firewalling the internet and supplying repressive weaponry and equipment.

Source: https://twitter.com/IndoPac_Info/status/1475340968102543362

7. The UK and Japan have revealed plans to jointly construct a prototype fighter jet engine as part of their Tempest and F-X programmes, which are both aimed at fielding new-generation fighter jets. The current deal is part of the two countries' growing military alliance, which includes the sharing of air-to-air missile systems.

Source: <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/43625/united-kingdom-details-plans-to-build-future-fighter-jet-engine-with-japan?xid=twittershare>

8. In the midst of a standoff between Russia and Western countries over Ukraine, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted by the RIA news agency as stating on Monday that the threat of a new missile crisis is significant.

Source: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/moscow-sees-threat-new-missile-crisis-serious-ria-cites-formin-2021-12-27/?taid=61c9a99c92a8110001a5f5ca&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

9. Taiwan has fashioned a defensive masterstroke on the front lines of the superpower fight between the United States and China. The massive Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Ltd (TSMC) has captured a technology that is critical to today's and tomorrow's cutting-edge digital products and weaponry by dominating the production of the most advanced semiconductors.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/taiwan-china-chips/>

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. The easing of all US sanctions in a verifiable process that ensures Tehran's unrestricted capacity to export its oil will be Iran's major objective in nuclear talks that resume in Austria on Monday, according to Iran's foreign minister.
Source: https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/irans-oil-exports-are-focus-vienna-nuclear-talks-top-diplomat-says-2021-12-27/?taid=61c9a3c092a8110001a5f4fb&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter
2. North Korea's ruling party has begun a key policy conference to lay out priorities for the coming year and how to respond to Vice President Joe Biden's request to resume nuclear disarmament discussions that have been delayed for nearly two years. According to the official Korean Central News Agency, Kim Jong Un attended the opening session of a Workers' Party Central Committee meeting on Monday. According to a brief broadcast issued early Tuesday, Kim and his closest aides were to "discuss and decide on the strategic and tactical policies."
Source: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-12-28/kim-jong-un-starts-meeting-to-chart-nuclear-strategy-toward-u-s>
3. Nearly 700 scientists and engineers, including several Nobel laureates, have signed a petition to President Joe Biden encouraging him to implement four new nuclear policies.
Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/biden-should-not-embrace-new-nuclear-policies-198588>
4. The eighth round of Iran nuclear talks will begin in Vienna on Monday, according to Iran's foreign minister, and will be based on a new joint document that includes major Iranian demands such as guarantees and verification on the lifting of sanctions. Hossein Amirabdollahian, Iran's foreign minister, told reporters in Tehran on Monday that a "acceptable" joint agreement had been reached, which included talking points on sanctions and nuclear concerns.
Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/27/iran-says-vienna-nuclear-talks-to-restart-around-joint-document>
5. Iran and the US started indirect negotiations on Monday to save the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, with Tehran focusing on one side of the original deal, eliminating sanctions against it, despite little progress on reining in its nuclear operations.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/irans-oil-exports-are-focus-vienna-nuclear-talks-top-diplomat-says-2021-12-27/>
6. Israel has set a red line in the 2015 nuclear agreement discussions with Iran, declaring that the Islamic Republic will not be allowed to become a nuclear threshold state. Israel has accused Iran of aiding terrorist networks in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon once again, and has stated that if necessary, it will act unilaterally against the Islamic Republic to defend itself.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/videos/world-news/will-act-alone-israel-draws-red-line-over-resumption-of-iran-nuclear-talks-101640629614993.html>

7. As talks to revive the 2015 deal to curtail Tehran's nuclear programme resumed in Vienna on Monday, Iran asked that world powers enable it to sell oil on international markets to replace its diminishing foreign currency reserves. Indirect discussions between Iran and the US have also begun, with Tehran concentrating on one aspect of the original agreement, namely the easing of sanctions, despite little progress in reining in its nuclear operations.

Source: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1993826/middle-east>

8. Even if Iran and world powers cannot agree on a return to the 2015 nuclear deal, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization said Saturday that his country will not enrich uranium above 60%. "No," Mohammad Eslami said when asked by Russia's Sputnik news agency if enrichment levels would climb further. Since the United States withdrew from the agreement in 2018, Iran has been blatantly violating the 2015 accord, including enriching uranium in greater quantities and to higher levels than permitted and deploying more modern centrifuges. Uranium that has been enriched to 60% can be swiftly enhanced to 90%, the level necessary to build an atomic weapon.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-atomic-chief-claims-country-wont-enrich-uranium-over-60-if-nuclear-talks-fail/>

9. The Iranian dictatorship continues to reject international pressure and push ahead with its nuclear programme. The risk of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon as 2022 approaches remains one of the greatest threats to world security.

Source: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1993361>

UN REFORMS

1. Rahmatullah Qaderi was abducted by the Taliban last week and is currently being tortured in captivity.
Source: <https://twitter.com/MajeedQarar/status/1475401061066182656>
2. The environment ministry announced last week that Malaysia is requesting \$3 million from the United Nations Green Climate Fund (GCF) to build a national plan to adapt to climate change, amid devastating floods that have affected almost 70,000 people this month.
Source: https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/malaysia-seeks-un-climate-adaptation-funds-amid-deadly-floods-2021-12-27/?taid=61c99de55bce710001f1567f&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter
3. A senior United Nations official expressed his horror at the violence, calling on Myanmar authorities to investigate the reported killing of at least 35 people, which opposition activists blamed on government soldiers.

Source: https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/horrified-un-official-condemns-reported-killings-myanmar-2021-12-27/?taid=61c9b68092a8110001a5f73e&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

4. According to a leaked document, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has ordered limitations on all types of Christmas celebrations, including those held in places of worship.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/damaging-traditional-chinese-culture-china-cancels-christmas-to-avoid-western-influence-439804>

5. Solidarity with the Uyghur people is growing around the world in anticipation of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. This is a collection of nations that have decided to put the rights of the Uyghur people ahead of the spectacle and economics of the event.

Source: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/why-israel-must-boycott-beijing-s-olympic-genocide-games-1.10494950>

6. Southern Baptist activists for Uyghur Muslims victimised by China's genocidal campaign applauded the United States' imposition of a ban on the importation of items created in the Communist giant using slave labor. President Biden signed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act into law on Thursday (Dec. 23), just over six months after messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual convention unanimously passed a resolution condemning the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) abuse of the Uyghurs. In addition, the resolution urged the US government to take "concrete efforts" to stop the atrocity.

Source: https://www.kentuckytoday.com/baptist_life/southern-baptists-commend-new-law-to-aid-uyghurs-in-china/article_8d33b134-65b5-11ec-a240-ebc15dff6b91.html

7. The Taliban Ministry of Foreign Affairs' guidelines prohibiting women from travelling were dubbed "inhumane" by a group of women in Kabul today, who demanded that the Taliban rescind the prohibition.

Source: <https://twitter.com/Etilaatroz/status/1475468102716563459>

8. Human Rights Watch has strongly criticized the Taliban's recent directive banning women from traveling, saying the directive is more about imprisoning women.

Source: <https://www.etilaatroz.com/133987/hrw-says-talibans-new-directive-focuses-more-on-imprisoning-women/>

9. Dr. Surgul Nawzadi, head of the academic council of Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar, said four malnourished patients had been admitted to the hospital in the past three months, of whom seven had died.

Source: <https://www.etilaatroz.com/ps/2021/12/27/the-number-of-malnourished-children-in-kandahar-has-risen-by-30-percent/>

10. The Taliban have said Afghan women who want to travel large distances by road should only be given transportation if they are accompanied by a male relative. The directive, issued on Sunday, is the latest curb on women's rights since the Islamist group seized power in August. The majority of secondary schools are closed to female students, and most women are prohibited from working. Human Rights Watch claimed the latest ban went a step farther in making women prisoners.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59800113>