

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. ORLEN Synthos Green Energy, a joint venture between PKN Orlen and Synthos Green Energy, has signed an investment agreement with the goal of preparing and commercialising small nuclear reactor technologies in Poland, primarily GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy's BWRX-300 reactors.

Source: <https://www.marketscreener.com/quote/stock/POLSKI-KONCERN-NAFTOWY-OR-1413342/news/ORLEN-steps-up-efforts-to-deploy-small-nuclear-reactors-37249236/>

2. Several large names are investing in nuclear fusion, according to the Wall Street Journal. Both Bill Gates and George Soros have invested in Commonwealth Fusion Systems, LLC in the hopes of securing a piece of what may be a game-changing energy invention. Commonwealth has raised \$1.8 billion in private funding, making it the largest private investment in nuclear fusion to date.

Source: <https://www.etftrends.com/gold-silver-investing-channel/whether-through-fission-or-fusion-nuclear-power-is-the-future/>

3. Ontario Power Generation (OPG) has chosen GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GEH) as the technology partner for the Darlington New Nuclear Project. GEH and OPG will collaborate to build a BWRX-300 small modular reactor (SMR) at the Darlington site, which might be operational by 2028.

Source: <https://www.ge.com/news/press-releases/ge-hitachi-nuclear-energy-selected-by-ontario-power-generation-as-technology-partner>

4. The 2nd of December is World Nuclear Energy Day, a global celebration of nuclear energy and the individuals who make it possible. The award is well-deserved, given the industry's efforts to decarbonize the power sector and produce game-changing technology. The theme of this year's World Nuclear Energy Day is "nuclear in the neighbourhood."

Source: <https://www.nei.org/news/2021/nuclear-in-the-neighborhood>

5. The Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is gathering for the second time this week at the United Nations. Despite the absence of Israel and the United States from the conference and an earlier session in 2019, given recent developments in the Middle East security environment, this year's summit could result in considerable progress toward a WMD-free zone.

Source: <https://thebulletin.org/2021/12/pathways-to-a-wmd-free-zone-in-the-middle-east/>

6. This winter, Louisianians are dealing with increased energy expenses as well as lowering temperatures. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden is pursuing policies that would further suffocate the US energy industry and the economy that relies on it, such as considering shutting down the Line 5 pipeline.

Source: <https://rollcall.com/2021/12/03/nuclear-energy-is-key-to-americas-economic-and-geopolitical-future/>

MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. Ethiopia has carried out air raids against Tekeze, a hydroelectric power plant in the country, as well as the surroundings of Mekelle, the regional capital. While the exact extent of the dam's destruction is unknown, reports suggest that the dam's power sub-station has been targeted and damaged. Getachew Reda, Tigray's spokesperson, said Ethiopian forces attacked the dam.
Source: <https://globenewsnet.com/news/ethiopia-conducts-drone-attacks-on-tekeze-power-dam-and-in-the-outskirts-of-mekelle/>

2. Congress reaches an agreement on a bill inviting Taiwan to join RIMPAC. The 2022 National Defense Authorization Act also asks for improving Taiwan's asymmetric warfare capabilities and collaborating with the National Guard. On Tuesday (Dec. 7), US senators reached an agreement on a defense budget bill that contains provisions urging Taiwan to participate in the 2022 Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) and urging the country's asymmetric defensive capabilities to be upgraded.
Source: <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4368807>

3. Three years and more than a dozen rounds of violent combat later, the Israeli military establishment has finished a 65-kilometer (40-mile) reinforced barrier with the Gaza Strip. Defense Minister Benny Gantz said the barrier "deprives Hamas of one of their capabilities, and places an iron wall, sensors and concrete between it and the residents of the South. Routine life here is our victory, and it is the greatest enemy of terror organizations."
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israel-completes-upgraded-barrier-with-the-gaza-strip-688089>

4. Just a day before discussions were set to restart, British foreign minister Liz Truss pushed Iran to sign up to the 2015 nuclear deal, saying it was "the last chance" to do so.
Source: https://www.reuters.com/world/britain-warns-iran-its-last-chance-sign-up-nuclear-deal-2021-12-08/?taid=61b0a0a04c9fd40001a04336&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

5. Chinese shipyards are rapidly producing new aircraft carriers, amphibs, and destroyers. New infantry carriers and mobile artillery platforms are being rapidly developed by Chinese armoured vehicle developers. A vast number of new drones and attack robots are being developed in China. The fastest-growing and arguably most worrying aspect of all of this, according to many senior US authorities, is China's rapid acquisition of nuclear weapons.
Source: <https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/chinas-growing-nuclear-program-worries-air-force>

6. India today successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the integrated test range of Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, sources in the DRDO said. The air version of the missile was test-fired from supersonic fighter aircraft Sukhoi 30 MK-I at 10:30 a.m., according to sources who described the mission as a "significant milestone" in the development of BrahMos.



Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-successfully-test-fires-air-version-of-brahmos-supersonic-cruise-missile-report-2642138>

7. Defense Research & Development Organization (DRDO) successfully flight tested the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) developed for deployment onboard Indian Naval warships for the second time since February this year on Tuesday. VL-SRSAM is designed to counter a variety of airborne threats at close ranges, including sea-skimming targets, which are assets that fly as close to the sea surface as possible to avoid being detected by warship radars.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-flight-tests-vl-srsam-indian-navy-7661203/>

8. China is developing the world's fastest fighter jets and missiles at breakneck speed in its hypersonic weapons programme. China has completed a massive calibration test of a one-meter hypersonic aerodynamic wind tunnel, which can replicate the air resistance faced by a jet or missile flying at speeds much exceeding the speed of sound.

Source: <https://eurasiatimes.com/china-moves-at-blistering-speed-in-hypersonic-weapons-program/>

9. After the Iran-aligned Houthis launched ballistic missiles and armed drones into Saudi Arabia, notably targeting Aramco oil installations in Jeddah, the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said on Tuesday it struck military targets in the capital Sanaa.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/yemen-houthis-say-attacked-saudi-aramco-other-facilities-with-missiles-drones-2021-12-07/>

10. According to the US Justice Department, the US Navy made its largest-ever seizure of weaponry from Iran, which included surface-to-air missiles and cruise missile pieces. According to a statement, the weapons were recovered from two "flagless vessels" in the Arabian Sea that were transferring goods to Iran-backed Houthi terrorists in Yemen in 2019 and 2020.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-reveals-its-largest-ever-grab-of-weapons-shipment-by-irans-guards/>

11. Saudi Arabia is running out of the ammunition it needs to defend itself from weekly drone and missile assaults, according to US and Saudi sources. The kingdom is pleading with the US and its Gulf and European allies for a resupply. Saudi Arabia has been targeted by almost a dozen ballistic missile and drone strikes every week by Yemen-based Houthi rebels in recent months, according to US and Saudi authorities.

Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-pleads-for-missile-defense-resupply-as-its-arsenal-runs-low-11638878400>



NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. In a resolution voted 178-1 on Monday with two abstentions, the United States and Cameroon, Israel was the only country to vote against the UN General Assembly's request for a Middle East nuclear-free zone. Iran, which the international community worries is on the verge of becoming a nuclear threshold state.

Source: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israel-was-only-un-country-to-oppose-middle-east-nuclear-free-zone-688096>

2. According to a new Israel Democracy Institute study, a majority of Israelis would favour a strike on Iran even if it did not get US approval. According to the poll, 54% of respondents believe Iran represents an existential threat to Israel's survival.

Source: https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/poll-51-of-israelis-would-support-strike-on-iran-even-without-us-approval/

3. Iran and the United States exchanged barbs on Tuesday after the Biden administration imposed fresh sanctions on Iranian entities and officials, with Tehran warning Washington that the measures would not "create leverage" in nuclear deal talks. The Special Units of Iran's Law Enforcement Forces and Counter-Terrorist Special Forces, as well as many personnel related to the organisations, were blacklisted by the US Treasury Department, accusing them of human rights violations.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/7/us-sanctions-wont-create-leverage-in-nuclear-talks-iran-warns>

4. The European ambassador presiding over nuclear talks between Iran and international countries says they will continue on Thursday in Vienna. After speaking with their governments in recent days, Enrique Mora announced on Twitter on Wednesday that the parties to the 2015 Vienna Accord will meet in the Austrian city. After Iran's team made various demands last week that were considered unacceptable by the other parties to the agreement — Britain, China, France, Germany, and Russia — European diplomats asked Tehran to return with "realistic suggestions."

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/tense-talks-on-irans-nuclear-program-to-resume-thursday-in-vienna/>

5. While Russian forces are massing on Ukraine's borders, a Republican senator on the Senate Armed Services Committee casually indicated that the US may start a large ground war with Russia to save the country. Senator Roger Wicker made the remarks during an interview with Fox News anchor Neil Cavuto in the evening.

Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/roger-wicker-ukraine-russia-nuclear-b1971691.html>

6. In the Indo-Pacific area, the establishment of AUKUS, a trilateral security alliance between Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, has put China on the defensive, undermining its goal of bringing Australia to its knees by launching a severe trade and tariff war.



Source: <https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=902030>

7. Iran's proposals for restoring the 2015 nuclear deal, which were presented in Vienna last week, fall far short of what is required, France said on Tuesday, adding that time is running out as Iran's nuclear programme makes troubling progress.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/tehran-says-nuclear-talks-to-restart-as-france-calls-draft-proposal-unreasonable/>

8. The talks on resurrecting the 2015 Iran nuclear deal are set to begin on Thursday, according to France's foreign minister, while he expressed concern that Iran is playing for time.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-nuclear-talks-seen-resuming-thursday-france-discouraged-2021-12-07/>

UN REFORMS

1. Six countries, including the United States, expressed concern on Monday about reports of widespread arrests of Tigrayan citizens by Ethiopian authorities based on ethnicity in connection with the country's year-old conflict, urging the government to stop what they believe are likely violations of international law.

Source: https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-other-countries-urge-ethiopia-cease-illegal-detentions-statement-2021-12-06/?fbclid=IwAR0hQkBkyITPubNyBLYTwQLR87nBYiMjb9KXH5tcNhHcnPpPkuvrh_Raz-U

2. Speaking at a UNSC briefing by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Tuesday, TS Tirumurti, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, said that India has always been a country of shelter. He stated that India has always treated Tibetans, as well as our brothers and sisters from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Myanmar, with compassion and understanding. The Indian Ambassador emphasised that India is now hosting a huge number of refugees, and that the programmes to aid them are totally funded by the government.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/india-news/jews-tibetans-or-bangladeshis-we-saved-millions-of-refugees-says-india-at-un-435013>

3. On Tuesday, TS Tirumurti, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, emphasised India's commitment to humanitarian protection of refugees, saying that when West Pakistan unleashed genocide on East Pakistan, India sheltered millions of refugees and protected them from the massacre.

Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/saved-millions-of-refugees-during-1971-bangladesh-genocide-india-at-un-121120800064_1.html

4. Following the Taliban's takeover, Afghanistan's economy is in shambles. Construction projects worth

more than USD 5 billion have been put on hold, according to the country's private construction companies' organisation. Many development, social, and building projects have been halted as the economy has deteriorated. Construction businesses have reportedly not been paid despite their contributions in the projects, according to representatives of the private construction industry' union.

Source: <https://zeenews.india.com/world/afghanistan-crisis-construction-projects-over-usd-5.bn-at-halt-starvation-grips-the-nation-amid-economic-collapse-2416459.html>

5. Despite an unpleasant history between the two countries, authorities from the Democratic Republic of the Congo acknowledged on Wednesday that their military collaboration with neighbouring Uganda will include Ugandan troops in the DRC. Hundreds of Ugandan troops have crossed the border, according to eyewitnesses, to assist the DRC in removing the Islamic-State-aligned Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), who have massacred hundreds of civilians on both sides of the border.

Source: <https://theowp.org/the-congo-and-uganda-working-together-to-stop-adf-history-increases-tensions/>

6. More than 327 million people – including 177 million children – are affected by humanitarian crises and the COVID-19 epidemic around the world, according to UNICEF, which has announced a record US\$9.4 billion emergency financial appeal. As humanitarian needs continue to rise, this year's appeal is 31% larger than last year's.

Source: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-launches-us94-billion-emergency-funding-appeal-children-affected-conflict>

7. As the African nation confronts rising insurgencies, the United Nations Security Council will convene on Monday afternoon for a report on sanctions against the Democratic Republic of Congo. The 'State of Siege' imposed on two eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu since April to quell an insurgency is of immediate concern.

Source:

https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/economy/story/UN_Security_Council_to_discuss_DR_Congo_sanctions-SNG_267309674/

