

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Scientists at Russia's Bochvar Institute have devised a more efficient method of decontaminating laboratory equipment, reducing both the amount of radioactive waste produced and the residual radioactivity.
Source: <https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/New-method-for-decontamination>
2. Westinghouse Electric Company has signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with ten Polish enterprises to work together on the prospective deployment of AP1000 nuclear power plants in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries.
Source: <https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Westinghouse-forms-strategic-partnerships-with-Pol>
3. Posiva Solutions, a subsidiary of the business that is handling the job on behalf of Finland's utilities, will look into the basic criteria for disposing of old nuclear fuel in Lithuania.
Source: <https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Finland-s-Posiva-to-support-Lithuania-used-fuel-di>
4. Amid objections from some politicians and countries, the European Union's proposed plan to classify gas and nuclear reactors as green investments risks producing confusion and inaccurate financial reports, according to expert advisers to the EU.
Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20220124085657-fq0zp/>

MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. North Korea appears to have conducted a flurry of missile tests in the year 2022. On Sunday, the country's dictatorship conducted its seventh test of the year, firing at least one suspected ballistic missile into the sea. According to Reuters, it could be the country's longest-range missile test since 2017.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/in-7th-test-in-2022-north-korea-fires-longest-range-missile-since-2017-448864>
2. According to the office of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the United Kingdom (UK) is considering increasing military support to NATO members and could treble the number of troops stationed in Estonia.
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/uk-could-send-fighter-jets-warships-russia-ukraine-tensions-london/>
3. According to the South Korean Yonhap news agency, which cited a military source, the highest speed of the intermediate-range ballistic missile that North Korea tested earlier on Sunday was assessed to be Mach 16, or 16 times the speed of sound at takeoff.

Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/16-times-faster-than-speed-of-sound-north-korea-tests-worlds-fastest-ballistic-missile-seoul/>

4. Dassault Aviation, based in France, has grown to become one of the world's largest aerospace businesses. Rafale, the company's "star" aircraft, continues to gain favour in other markets, as Dassault signs new fighter jet orders.
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/the-power-behind-rafale-fighters-how-marcel-dassault-aviation/>
5. Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko stated on Friday that his country does not want to go to war and that warfare would only erupt if Belarus or its ally Russia were attacked directly. Lukashenko's remarks come as both countries prepare to conduct military drills.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/war-possible-only-if-belarus-or-russia-get-attacked-says-lukashenko-448858>
6. Russia says it will move naval manoeuvres off the coast of Ireland after Dublin expressed concern, amid a tense standoff with the West over NATO expansion and suspicions that Russia is planning an invasion of Ukraine.
Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/30/russia-moves-naval-exercise-that-rattled-ireland>
7. North Korea's recent missile launches, which appear to be aimed at persuading the US to resume discussions on sanctions relief, have sparked fears that China, Pyongyang's most powerful economic and security backer, would become irritated.
Source: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/01/d7d16f43d357-focus-n-koreas-excessive-military-provocations-may-irritate-china.html>
8. On Sunday, North Korea tested the most powerful missile it has ever tested. The Japanese and South Korean militaries said the missile was launched on a high trajectory, apparently to avoid the territorial spaces of neighbors, and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) and traveled 800 kilometers (497 miles) before landing in the sea.
Source: <https://apnews.com/article/north-korea-tests-longest-range-missile-since-biden-started-37f273d0602f91d392d32b6c0d4002ee>
9. After North Korea's latest ballistic missile test on Sunday, which was apparently the longest such test since 2017, the US is pushing for discussions with the country. According to Bloomberg, despite describing the recent spate of missile tests as destabilising, a threat to US and allied forces in the region, and a violation of UN Security Council resolutions, a senior administration official said on Sunday that the US is still committed to pursuing a diplomatic path forward with North Korea.
Source: <https://thehill.com/policy/international/592035-us-pushes-for-talks-with-north-korea-after-latest-missile-launch>

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. The nuclear talks with Iran have reached a critical juncture. The first is that the timeline keeps slipping, and the second is that neither the US nor the EU are willing to take any significant action that would cause Iran more harm than the current sanctions, which it has been able to withstand for nearly four years.
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-695009>
2. Western diplomats have a self-imposed deadline of mid-February to resurrect the 2015 agreement, which limited Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. Some Western officials are concerned about Iran's quick nuclear improvements since the United States pulled out of the deal in 2018, as well as a looming report by the UN's nuclear watchdog, which is expected to detail more Iranian nuclear advancements, causing new frictions. As a result, the next three weeks will determine whether the pact is restored – or if the discussions fall apart entirely.
Source: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/469644/Iran-nuclear-talks-enter-final-stage>
3. Last week, Richard Nephew, the US deputy special envoy for Iran and the architect of the economic sanctions against Tehran, resigned from the team after advocating for a harder posture. Another member of the US negotiating team has also resigned. When new Iranian negotiators selected by hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi following his victory last year overturned most of the concessions made by their predecessors, some wanted to walk out completely.
Source: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2014986>
4. In an interview released Thursday, former army chief Gadi Eisenkot blasted the US decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, calling it a "strategic mistake." He added that the pullout gave Tehran 'legitimacy' to violate the pact.
Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/former-idf-chief-calls-us-withdrawal-from-iran-nuclear-deal-a-strategic-mistake/>
5. According to Macron's office, French President Emmanuel Macron reminded his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi that an agreement relieving sanctions in exchange for restrictions on Iran's nuclear activity is still conceivable, but that talks must speed up.
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-694970>
6. Officials from the Biden administration will tell the Senate on Ukraine and the rising tensions with Russia, which has stockpiled soldiers along the border, on Thursday. The meeting with senior administration officials, reported by a Senate aide to The Hill, comes amid mounting concerns over a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine, with Moscow thought to have 120,000 troops on the border.
Source: <https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/592025-senate-to-get-ukraine-russia-briefing-on-thursd>

UN REFORMS

1. Malaysia's Human Resources Ministry announced on Sunday that it would summon any companies facing import bans from the United States due to suspicions of forced labour to discuss immediate steps to address the allegations.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/malaysian-firms-facing-us-bans-over-forced-labour-summoned-by-ministry-2022-01-30/>
2. Taiwan Vice President William Lai used his final day in the US to criticize China of preventing the island from receiving COVID-19 vaccines last year, and to thank a US Lawmaker for her part in giving the vaccines.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-vp-us-repeats-accusation-china-blocked-vaccine-access-2022-01-30/>
3. Activists took advantage of the lifting of the ban by handing out hundreds of T-shirts with the question "Where is Peng Shuai?" on the final day of the Australian Open for women on Saturday.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/peng-shuai-t-shirt-campaign-resumes-finals-day-melbourne-park-2022-01-29/>
4. According to a recent report in the Daily Mail, China's ambitious 'mega constellation' of up to 13,000 satellites that would operate in low Earth orbit, similar to SpaceX Starlink, has raised snooping concerns.
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/china-mega-constellation-of-satellites-gigantic-space-project/>
5. President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met for the first time on Friday to discuss concerns about China's increasing military assertiveness, which is causing growing concern in the Pacific. The two leaders spent a "significant amount" of their 80-minute call discussing China-related issues, including their shared concerns about China's increasing aggression toward Taiwan.
Source: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-joe-biden-europe-china-north-korea-9b74c926b40e50823eb52c5b324ae5a7>
6. Gunmen killed one Christian priest and wounded another as they were driving home from Sunday Mass in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar, police said. This is the latest attack on Christian minority in Pakistan.
Source: <https://apnews.com/article/religion-pakistan-taliban-peshawar-f410326e040b2a8873dd6feafe317d26>
7. Peaceful statewide protests and deadly crackdowns by security forces have deteriorated into a nationwide humanitarian crisis since Myanmar's military disregarded the results of the country's democratic election and took power on Feb. 1, 2021.

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-one-year-into-military-rule-7cd0ee904a358cb230525ff0d8a0becd>

8. In a new report, the United Nations accused the Taliban of assassinating more than 100 members of the former Afghan government and allied international forces.
Source: <https://thehill.com/policy/international/592036-un-says-taliban-has-killed-more-than-100-affiliated-with-former>
9. President Biden called for the release of American captive Mark Frerichs on the two-year anniversary of his abduction on Sunday, if the Taliban wants to be recognised as Afghanistan's legitimate government.
Source: <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/592012-biden-calls-for-taliban-to-release-american-hostage-mark-frerichs>
10. Iran's murderous homophobic policy continued on Sunday, with two men executed under the country's anti-gay Sharia law regime. According to the Human Rights Network in Iran, the two Iranian men, Mehrdad Karimpou and Farid Mohammadi, were executed in the Maragheh jail in northwestern Iran. Six years ago, the men were apprehended.
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-695006>
11. On Sunday, United States Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield stated that Russia would not have built such a massive military presence along the Ukrainian border if it did not intend to use it.
Source: <https://thehill.com/homenews/sunday-talk-shows/591998-us-ambassador-to-un-says-russia-would-not-amass-100000-troops-if>