

DAILY TRACKER**NUCLEAR ISSUES**

1. Due to a paucity of fuel for thermal power plants and rising gas costs, Ukraine's government announced on Wednesday that it plans to enhance uranium output to completely meet the needs of its nuclear power plants after 2026.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/ukraine-aims-produce-enough-uranium-nuclear-energy-needs-2021-12-29/>

2. Kazakhstan's government is considering building a nuclear power plant to address an electrical shortage reportedly caused by the crypto mining boom. Miners who envisioned the Central Asian country as a new home after China recently cracked down on the industry are fleeing due to power supply issues.

Source: <https://news.bitcoin.com/kazakhstan-mulls-nuclear-power-to-deal-with-electricity-shortages-blamed-on-crypto-miners/>

3. Uranium Energy Corp, a Corpus Christi, Texas-based mining and exploration business, stated on Dec. 20 that it has acquired Uranium One Americas, a subsidiary of Russian-owned Uranium One. The \$112 million acquisition includes seven undeveloped Powder River Basin properties, five undeveloped Great Divide Basin projects, and other potential development locations. The company already owns the Reno Creek mining project in northeastern Wyoming.

Source: https://trib.com/business/energy/with-new-wyoming-mines-uranium-energy-corp-hopes-to-restore-a-dormant-industry/article_e021fc94-1b2c-5a88-add9-a13672c18236.html

MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. According to Interfax news agency, Russia tested ten new Tsirkon (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missiles from a frigate and two more from a submarine on Friday. The weapon has been hailed by Russian President Vladimir Putin as part of a new generation of unrivalled weapons systems.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/russia-test-fires-new-hypersonic-tsirkon-missiles-frigate-submarine-2021-12-31/>

2. Israel has signed a deal to buy 12 Lockheed Martin Corp (LMT.N) CH-53K helicopters and two Boeing Co (BA.N) KC-46 refuelling planes from the United States, according to the Israeli Defence



Ministry. The overall cost is estimated to be around \$3.1 billion.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-signs-deal-buy-2-bltn-us-helicopters-tankers-2021-12-31/>

3. In response to India's purchase of Rafale fighter jets, Pakistan has purchased a full squadron of 25 multirole J-10C fighter jets from its all-weather ally China, according to Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed.

Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-buys-25-china-made-j-10c-fighter-jets-in-response-to-indias-rafale-aircraft-acquisition/articleshow/88588970.cms>

4. The Philippines is expected to become the first foreign customer for India and Russia's BrahMos cruise missile system, with the Philippine government recently allocating 2.8 billion pesos (\$55.5 million) for the weapon system's initial funding.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/done-deal-philippines-allocates-funds-to-buy-india-s-brahmos-missile-system-101640869478707.html>

5. The Indian Express has learned that the first unit of the S-400 Triumph, a state-of-the-art air defence missile system purchased from Russia, has been deployed in Punjab to protect against any attack from Pakistan or China. According to sources, the device has been implemented at one of the state's five IAF facilities, which border Pakistan. China has already installed the system along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh in the midst of the border standoff.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/eye-on-china-pakistan-s-400-unit-deployed-punjab-7700617/>

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. President Joe Biden stated on Friday that during their call the day before, he told Russian President Vladimir Putin that he couldn't "move on Ukraine."

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/biden-says-he-made-it-clear-putin-that-russia-cannot-move-ukraine-2021-12-31/>

2. France criticised Iran's satellite rocket launch on Friday, calling it "all the more regrettable" because nuclear talks with international powers were progressing, echoing US and German worries.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/france-says-irans-space-launch-regrettable-amid-nuclear-deal-talks-2021-12-31/>

3. China's foreign minister said on Thursday that the US will pay a "unbearable price" for its actions toward the self-ruled island of Taiwan, in Beijing's latest threat about the flashpoint island.

Source: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-warns-us-will-face-unbearable-price-on-taiwan/articleshow/88603792.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

4. On Thursday, US Vice President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin exchanged warnings about Ukraine, but expressed hope that diplomatic talks in January could help to defuse rising tensions. Biden said he needs to see Russia reduce its military buildup near Ukraine in a 50-minute chat, their second this month, while Putin suggested sanctions imposed by Washington and allies may lead to a rift in relations. Putin had requested the call.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/serious-talk-between-biden-and-putin-sets-stage-for-diplomacy-7699026/>

5. If the US and NATO do not respond to Moscow's security proposals, Russia will be compelled to take the necessary steps to eliminate unacceptable risks, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday. "If a constructive response does not follow within a reasonable time and the West continues its aggressive line, then Russia will be forced to take all necessary measures to ensure a strategic balance and eliminate unacceptable threats to our security," Lavrov told news agency Sputnik.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/russia-will-take-measures-to-eliminate-threats-if-us-ignores-security-proposals-minister-lavrov-441473>

6. According to summaries released by state media on Saturday, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appears to be turning his focus from nuclear weapons or the United States to tractor factories and school uniforms for 2022. The hints appear to have surfaced during his statement at the end of the 8th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea's 4th Plenary Meeting on Friday (WPK).

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/change-of-heart-north-koreas-kim-jong-un-shifts-focus-from-nukes-to-economic-development-for-2022-441536>

7. Germany is shutting down half of its six nuclear power reactors on Friday, a year before the country ends its decades-long use of nuclear power. The decision to phase out nuclear power and transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy was initially made in 2002 by former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's centre-left government.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/31/germany-shuts-down-half-of-its-remaining-nuclear-plants>

8. During talks between world powers and Iran on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid praised Israel's military capabilities. In a Friday interview, Lapid was questioned if Israel has the capability to target Iran's uranium enrichment and/or weapons locations. "Israel has capabilities, some of which the world, and even some experts in the field, cannot even imagine. And Israel will protect itself against the Iranian threat," he told Channel 12 news.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-iran-nuke-talks-lapid-says-israel-has-capabilities-many-cannot-even-imagine/>

9. Iran announced that it had launched "three research cargos into space" in a new space launch. The launch comes as discussions between Iran and Western nations to resurrect the 2015 nuclear deal have come to a halt. US negotiators have been pressuring Iran to halt its nuclear programme, which was restarted after former President Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018 and slapped heavy sanctions on the country.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/iran-launches-research-cargos-into-space-amid-stalled-nuclear-talks-441140>

10. Following Iran's announcement on Thursday that it has conducted a new space launch, France has condemned it, calling it "regrettable" in the context of continuing nuclear discussions with international countries. The satellite launch, according to France's foreign ministry on Friday (December 31), was in breach of UN Security Council resolutions. "These activities are all the more regrettable as they come at a time when we are making progress in the nuclear negotiations in Vienna," the French foreign ministry said.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/france-condemns-irans-space-launch-amid-nuclear-deal-talks-calls-it-regrettable-441524>

UN REFORMS

1. The German charity vessel Sea Watch 3, which is transporting hundreds of migrants rescued at sea, will arrive in Sicily the Italian port of Pozzallo on Friday, according to the nonprofit group that operates it. Since rescuing the migrants from the Mediterranean, the ship has been looking for a location to disembark for the past week.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/charity-boat-with-440-migrants-dock-italy-2021-12-31/>

2. The Chinese government is aiming to exterminate a thousands-year-old minority through continual monitoring, torture, sterilisation, forced labour, "reeducation," and the destruction of thousands of mosques and holy sites. Since 2017, almost one million Uyghurs have been detained in internment camps, with millions more facing systematic persecution.

Source: <https://forward.com/opinion/480190/uyghur-genocide/>

3. According to numerous reports, the Chinese government brutalises Uyghur Muslims, subjecting them to forced labour, torture, and psychological hardship. An Uyghur woman who returned to China two years ago is suspected to have died, according to Kyodo News. Mihray Erkin, a 31-year-old Uyghur from Kashgar in China's Xinjiang region, spent five years studying Japanese and teaching it to Uyghurs before returning to China.

Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2021/dec/30/china-accused-of-targeting-uyghurs-living-abroad-2401330.html>

4. The International Olympic Committee recently announced that it had secured an Olympic apparel deal with some Chinese enterprises in the Uyghur Autonomous Region for the Tokyo Summer Olympics in 2021 and the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022.

Source: https://www.rfa.org/uyghur/qisqa_xewer/mejburiy-emgek-12292021142158.html

5. Myanmar's people are in the midst of a historic political, economical, human rights, and humanitarian catastrophe, with needs growing drastically since the military took power and a severe COVID-19 third wave. According to a UN Humanitarian Needs Overview published by OCHA on Friday, the upheaval is expected to push over half of the population into poverty by 2022, erasing the substantial advances made since 2005.

Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/12/1109012>

6. Following last week's massacre of more than 35 people, the European Union has called for an international arms embargo on Myanmar's military government, as well as toughening its own sanctions.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/30/eu-readies-more-sanctions-on-myanmar-over-kayah-state-massacre>

7. When the young farmhand returned to his village in Myanmar, he found the still smoldering corpses in a circle in a burned-out hut, some with their limbs tied. He told the AP that the Myanmar military invaded Done Taw about 11 a.m. on Dec. 7, murdering ten people on foot, including five teenagers.

Source: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/myanmar-military-reverts-to-strategy-of-massacres-burnings/articleshow/88581982.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

8. The sound of drones hovering over Pray Meh's hamlet in Hpruso township, Myanmar's southern Kayah State, awoke her at two a.m. on December 24. In a state where nearly half of the population is Christian, the February 1 military coup and the ensuing violent struggle left locals with no desire to celebrate.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/30/a-dark-christmas-in-myanmar>

9. As winter approaches, Afghan widow Kubra, 57, must find fuel to heat the one room in which her eight family members dwell in Bamiyan's central region. Food is getting scarce as the flour they purchased months ago runs gone. When they left their home amid the chaos that gripped Afghanistan, as the Taliban stormed towards Kabul on their approach to seize back control of the country, their firewood was stolen.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2021/12/31/afghanistan-poverty-drought-food-crisis-struggling-families-winter>

10. During a crackdown on nationwide protests on Thursday, Sudanese security forces shot dead four people, according to a doctors' committee, as tens of thousands of people marched against military authority. According to witnesses who spoke to Reuters, security officers shot tear gas and stun grenades as protestors marched through Khartoum and the neighbouring cities of Omdurman and Bahri towards the presidential palace.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/four-protesting-against-military-rule-in-sudan-shot-dead-doctors-say-441291>

11. Aziz Gul's husband sold their 10-year-old into 'marriage' without telling his wife, taking a down payment to sustain his family of five children. He warned her that if they didn't, they'd all starve. To save the others, he had to sacrifice one. As their country slides into a poverty vortex, many of Afghanistan's growing number of underprivileged individuals are making such desperate decisions.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/desolate-afghan-parents-children-into-marriage-to-feed-families-7699635/>

12. A father in Zabul got his three-year-old daughter 'married'. The father claims he did it to acquire the bride price facing acute poverty. Afghanistan under Taliban is witnessing worse human rights abuse.

Source: <https://twitter.com/MrDawodZai/status/1477032857960861699>