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Introducing another week of Future Trends — *tracking current global news stories that provide insight into the future.*

Here's what you need to know: Poland will send Ukraine four MiG-29 jets, controversial judicial law passes first vote in Israeli Knesset, Senegal rocked by more unrest as the police quell protests, UBS to acquire troubled rival Credit Suisse in Swiss government-brokered deal, ten million children in need of humanitarian assistance in the Sahel, 2023 World Happiness Report released.

SPECIAL EDITION: UKRAINE

Poland will send Ukraine four MiG-29 jets. Poland will send Ukraine four [MiG-29 fighter jets](#) according to the Polish president, making it the first of Ukraine's allies to provide such aircraft.

China's Xi Jinping visits Russia. Chinese President Xi Jinping will be in Russia for a [state visit](#) after he was invited by President Vladimir Putin. The visit comes as China offers to broker peace in Ukraine, an effort that has been met with scepticism in the West.

Russia vows to respond proportionately to US provocations. [Intensified spying by American drones](#) near Ukraine could lead to an escalation and Russia will respond proportionally to future intelligence-gathering operations, Russia's defence chief has told his US counterpart.

POLITICS

Controversial judicial law passes first vote in Israeli Knesset. The Israeli parliament has advanced a bill that would allow it to [overrule Supreme Court](#)

[rulings](#), alongside a bill that would protect PM from removal, and another that would allow more settlements in northern Israel.

Honduras to switch ties from Taiwan to China. The Honduras president, Xiomara Castro, has instructed her foreign minister to establish official relations with China. The move would leave Taiwan with formal [diplomatic relations](#) with only 13 countries.

Yoon visits Japan, hoping to restore ties amid North Korean threat. South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol will pay an [official visit](#) to Japan, amid North Korea's rapidly expanding nuclear program. It is the first bilateral visit to Japan by a South Korean president in 12 years.

Pakistani police file terrorism charges against ex-PM Khan. Police in the Pakistani capital filed charges against former Prime Minister [Imran Khan](#), 17 of his aides and scores of supporters, accusing them of terrorism and several other offenses.

Turkey, Hungary to approve Finland's NATO membership. Turkey and Hungary announced that they will sign off on [Finland's NATO membership](#) removing the biggest barrier to Finland's joining the alliance.

CONFLICT

Senegal rocked by more unrest as police quell protests. Police fired tear gas at protesters in Senegal's capital ahead of a court case involving a prominent opposition politician. The [outbreak of violence](#) has impacted Senegal's reputation as a stable democracy.

South Africans march, calling for president Ramaphosa to resign. The Economic Freedom Fighters, the country's third-largest party, has called for a [national shutdown](#) of walkouts and protests, sparking fears of a repeat of unrest that turned deadly two years ago.

UN nuclear watchdog warns tons of uranium missing in Libya. The IAEA told some 2.5 tons of [natural uranium](#) stored in a site in Libya have gone missing, raising safety and proliferation concerns.

India approves purchase of military equipment worth \$8.5 bn. India approved \$8.5 billion in military purchases including missiles, helicopters,

artillery guns and electronic warfare systems. All the orders would be placed with Indian companies to boost [domestic defence manufacturing](#).

Serbia and Kosovo reach pact on implementing peace plan. Kosovo and Serbia reached an [agreement](#) on implementing an EU-backed deal to normalize relations. Both countries have fully committed to honor all articles of the agreement.

ECONOMICS

UBS to acquire troubled rival Credit Suisse in Swiss government-brokered deal. UBS is to acquire Credit Suisse in an effort to avoid further turmoil in [global banking](#). Credit Suisse is one of only 30 financial institutions designated as being globally systematically important by the Financial Stability Board.

Colombia and Venezuela revive trade deal talks after four-year suspension. The leaders of Colombia and Venezuela renewed a [trade deal](#) that had been suspended for four years. The agreement updates tariffs and trade regulations.

China cuts banks' reserve ratio for the first time in 2023 to aid recovery. China's [central bank](#) cut the amount of cash that banks must hold as reserves to help keep liquidity ample. The move follows data showing a gradual but uneven recovery in the economy in the first two months of the year and a stronger than expected credit expansion.

US and Ethiopia to strengthen bilateral ties. US Secretary of State and the Ethiopian Prime minister agreed to strengthen relations between the two countries. Discussion included the recently signed [peace deal](#) that ended a civil war.

50,000 Cambodian workers laid off amid garment sector decline. In the midst of [industrial downturns](#), 50,000 Cambodian employees have been stood down in an attempt to cut costs. Experts claim it is due to the partial loss of the EBA preferential trade status with the EU.

DEVELOPMENT

10 million children in need of humanitarian assistance in the Sahel. [Conflict in the region](#) has left millions of children facing hunger, water shortages and violence. The number of child deaths have doubled since 2020 pointing to the need for urgent action.

The generation 6G of wireless communication will take a big leap forward. A research team has invented a ground-breaking [tunable terahertz \(THz\) meta-device](#) that can control the radiation direction and coverage area of THz beams. It is expected to provide a highly adjustable, directional and secure means for future 6G communications systems.

Albania designates Europe's last 'wild river' as a national park. Albania's government has designated the [Vjosa River](#) in the southern part of the country as a national park, marking a victory for environmentalists who have been fighting for years against plans for hydropower plants along the waterway.

Tropical storm Freddy could lead to spiral of cholera outbreak in Malawi. Destruction from tropical storm Freddy has seen some areas go without clean running water renewing fears of another [cholera outbreak](#). Thousands have been displaced and many others are missing in Mozambique and Malawi.

Nuclear leak contaminates water in Minnesota. A [nuclear power plant's leak](#) has contaminated the waters of Monticello, Minnesota. Experts, however, report no possibility of environmental danger.

SOCIAL

2023 World Happiness Report released. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network has released the [2023 World Happiness Report](#), using the Gallup World Poll data. The report measures global trends in happiness and formulates annual rankings.

China reopening borders to foreign tourists for first time since Covid. China is to resume issuing visas to [foreign tourists](#) for the first time since the Covid pandemic broke out three years ago.

Bar exam score shows AI can keep up with human lawyers. GPT- 4 can now outperform most law school graduates on the bar exam. The AI scored 297 on the bar exam, which places it in the 90th percentile of actual test takers, and this score is enough to be admitted to [practice law](#) in most states.

Belgium to become the second EU country to recognize Buddhism. Belgium to officially recognize [Buddhism](#) after the federal government approved a draft law which opened the door to federal funding, official delegates and school classes. The only other EU country where Buddhism is recognized is Austria.

Education crisis in Lebanon spells disaster. The UN says a third of Lebanon's children are not attending school. The country's economic crisis is rippling through the [education system](#), which is threatening to collapse. The hardest hit in the disruptions are Syrian refugees.

PEACEBUILDING

[A delegation of 10 West African Catholic and Muslim religious leaders](#) from Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana are meeting with US lawmakers to discuss the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in the Sahel region and encourage legislators to address underlying grievances through long-term investments in civil society, economic development and social accountability.

Almost 18 years since a peace accord was signed, [six local civil society organizations have come together to renew support for Aceh's efforts](#) on transitional justice and reconciliation, promotion of women's and children's rights, and strengthening civil society. [Nonviolent Peaceforce](#) and the Royal Government of the Netherlands are supporting the project.

[Barter Theatre](#) in Abingdon, Virginia is known for [bringing regional themes to its rural Appalachian stage](#). Six were featured this year at the theater's Appalachian Festival of Plays and Playwrights, providing an opportunity for regional writers to develop new work. A historically white theater in a mostly white town, Barter has made a commitment to telling stories of Black Appalachia and promoting Black playwrights. Founded during the Great Depression, it is one of longest-running professional theaters in the U.S.

Some conservation initiatives aim to amplify natural processes for preserving and restoring habitats. Scotland's nature agency, [NatureScot](#), has announced [a new initiative and partnership](#) with private sector partners, including [Palladium](#), to raise over £2 billion to invest in nature restoration projects across the country. Signatories of the [Mangrove Breakthrough](#) have committed to protecting Mangrove trees to preserve

their role in aiding coastal conservation, protecting against extreme weather and offering a unique carbon sequestration system. [More than 100 programs have reintroduced beavers](#) into parts of North America and northern Europe to take advantage of their [roles as “ecosystem engineers”](#) in creating complex wetland habitats.