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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:** Moscow politician gets seven years for denouncing war, China calls on Myanmar junta to hold talks with opponents, Italy declares state of emergency in drought-stricken north, valuations of Asian stocks hit lowest point since March 2020, Abe shooter held historical grudge: Japanese police, Haryana: The 105-year-old granny is breaking running records in India.

### **SPECIAL EDITION: UKRAINE**

**Moscow politician gets seven years for denouncing war.** A Moscow councillor has been jailed for seven years for [speaking out against Russia's war in Ukraine](#), in what is said to be the first full jail term under new laws targeting dissent.

**Putin says Russia barely started in Ukraine, dares West on battlefield.** In a speech to parliamentary leaders, Putin said the [prospects for any negotiation](#) would grow dimmer the longer the conflict dragged on.

**Smaller countries need reassurance amid Russia's war: Germany's foreign minister.** Annalena Baerbock promised the international community would help [stop the effects of Russia's war in Ukraine](#) from destabilising other countries.

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### **CONFLICT**

**China calls on Myanmar junta to hold talks with opponents.** China's foreign minister tells the regime in Myanmar to [seek political reconciliation](#), amid regional concerns over spiralling civil violence.

**Russia threatens to seize its 'lost territory Alaska' if US continues to grab its resources.** Russia has warned that if the US continues to seize Russian resources abroad, [Moscow could reclaim Alaska](#), formerly a part of the Russian territory.

**Burundi to eradicate begging as police sweep streets in raids.** 300 street beggars have been rounded up with [children being placed in care and adults punished](#). The penal code provides for penalties ranging from two months in prison for vagrancy to 15 years for inciting children to beg.

**Congo and Rwanda reach agreement to reduce tensions.** Political tensions had risen since the [M23 rebel group](#) launched an attack in Congo's east. The agreement calls for an immediate suspension of hostilities and the withdrawal of M23 rebels from Congo.

**Cost-of-living crisis driving surge in extreme poverty.** According to a UNDP estimate, 71 million people are on the verge of falling into severe poverty [as a result of inflation](#), mostly affecting Sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans, and Asia.

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## DEVELOPMENT

**Italy declares state of emergency in drought-stricken north.** Italy is facing an unusually early heatwave and a lack of rainfall, particularly in the northern agricultural Po Valley, which has been hit by its [worst drought in 70 years](#).

**Why Ghana has returned to the IMF.** In a statement outlining its plan for approaching the Fund, the government [blamed its woes on a combination of recent external forces](#) including COVID-19, the Ukraine crisis, and American and Chinese economic slumps.

**New Zealanders might be allowed to vote in Australian elections.** The Australian government will set up a committee to review allowing [long-term New Zealand residents](#) the ability to vote. New Zealand already grants voting rights to Australians living in New Zealand if they have been there for a year.

**Climate change: Sand battery could solve green energy's storage problem.** Finnish researchers have installed the [world's first fully working sand battery](#) which can store green power for months at a time. Using low-grade sand, it stores the heat at around 500C, which can then warm homes in winter when energy is more expensive.

**Nuclear and gas considered as green by European Parliament.** The EU parliament has passed legislation designating gas and nuclear power projects as environmentally friendly and green. The [Taxonomy Delegated Act](#) will go into effect on January 1, 2023.

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## ECONOMICS

**Valuations of Asian stocks hit lowest point since March 2020.** Valuations of Asian equities dropped for a third straight month in June and hit their [lowest since the start of the pandemic](#) with the P/E ratio at 12.1.

**ECOWAS lifts sanctions on Mali.** Western African leaders have decided to lift economic and financial sanctions in response to Mali's military junta proposing a [24-month transition plan to democracy and electoral law](#).

**IMF warns of labour shortages if Africa is neglected.** IMF has warned that [failure to invest in African countries](#) could result in labour shortages, as half of the new entrants to the global workforce over the next decade will come from sub-Saharan Africa.

**Sri Lanka to strengthen bilateral relations with Russia.** Amid Sri Lanka's economic crisis, the [outgoing President has requested credit from Russia](#) to support fuel imports, and has asked to resume flights between Moscow and Colombo to boost tourism.

**COMESA's early warning system project begins.** COMESA has begun its consultations on the development of [early warning system structures](#) that aim to provide drivers for their Peace and Prosperity Index.

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## POLITICS

**Abe shooter held historical grudge: Japanese police.** Shinzo Abe was renowned for his economic policies and nationalistic bent. There is some evidence that his [association with conservative religious groups](#) made him a target.

**Mexico probes former President Pena Nieto for wire transfers.** Mexico's Financial Intelligence Unit said it has been investigating millions of dollars' worth of money transfers involving former President Enrique Pena Nieto, from which he may have received '[economic benefits](#).'

**Thai opposition seeks court ruling to halt move to change election system.** Thailand's biggest opposition party said it would seek a court ruling to stop an effort by pro-administration lawmakers to [change the electoral system](#), calling it an unconstitutional move to favour the government.

**China and Philippines strengthen ties.** Elections in the Philippines have set a new [stage for friendly cooperation](#). China has called it an opportunity for a new golden era for their bilateral relationship.

**Arab people believe economy is weak under democracy.** A new survey shows that the majority of 23,000 people surveyed across the MENA region believe that the economy is weaker under democracy. Most people surveyed [valued effectiveness of policy over type of government](#).

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## SOCIAL

**Haryana: The 105-year-old granny is breaking running records in India.** She started her [sprinting career](#) in the north Indian state of Haryana just a year ago, but has already won several medals in local competitions.

**Greek police coerce refugees to commit illegal pushbacks.** Greek police are [exploiting refugees](#) to engage in illegal pushbacks of other would-be asylum-seekers at the EU's external border. Witness testimony, satellite images and other documents provide evidence of how officials are taking advantage of people seeking protection.

**Three-eyed marine predator's brain preserved in 500-million-year-old fossils.** [Canadian palaeontologists](#) found nearly 300 fossils that are half a billion-years old. They show an extinct, three-eyed relative of modern insects, spiders and crabs, offering a rare glimpse of the animal's brain and nerves.

**Arizona to ban people filming police officers within eight feet.** Arizona will ban people from filming police officers at short distances, with fines or jail for those who don't comply. Authorities say filming on mobiles could [interfere with police operations](#).

**Dutch approve work from home as a legal right.** The Dutch parliament approved legislation to establish work-from-home as a legal right, making the Netherlands one of the [first countries to grant remote working](#) flexibility by law. It is still to pass the senate.

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## PEACEBUILDING

**AFSC New Mexico's [Farm to School](#) project aims to create a replicable model for school food purchases from local farms.** School children get fresh food and farmers get an institutional market they can rely on, so they have better chances of remaining economically viable, especially during the off season, when schools are in session.

**Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security, and Conflict Transformation (WCAPS) has received AfP's first [Champions of Change Award](#), recognizing peacebuilding organizations that are advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.** WCAPS DEI programs include Race Across the Pond, the Art and Policy Forum, a Mentorship Program, and [Organizations in Solidarity](#), a partnership of 300 organizations and individuals that have pledged to implement OIS's 12 commitments to combat racism.

**The [Carter Center](#), which serves as the Independent Observer of Mali's 2015 peace agreement, has released a [report](#) urging the signatories to refocus on strengthening their dialogue,** taking pragmatic steps and reengaging with the Malian public to overcome the current impasse in the implementation process.

**[Nonviolent Peaceforce](#) Women's Protection Teams from Walgak, Lankien, and Pibor, South Sudan recently held a [conference](#) to strengthen inter-community relations and women's leadership in the [Pieri Peace Process](#), a local peace agreement established in 2021.** The agreement, which aims to address conflict among the Lou Nuer, Dinka Bor, and Murie groups resulted from wide inter-communal talks, which included chiefs, women's groups,

and youth groups and were supported by local spiritual leader Gok Deng Dak Kueth and facilitated by USAID, UK Aid and UNMISS.