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Future Trends

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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: Russia shells Ukrainian nuclear power plant, Peruvian PM resigns amid investigations into President Castillo, Rwanda intervened militarily in Eastern Congo, Bank of England hikes rates as it predicts 13% inflation and long recession, France tackles its worst drought on record, conjoined twins separated with help of Virtual Reality.

SPECIAL EDITION: UKRAINE

Russia shells Ukrainian nuclear power plant. Ukraine said that renewed [Russian shelling](#) had damaged three radiation sensors at the Zaporizhzhia power plant, in the second hit in consecutive days on Europe's largest nuclear facility.

US Senate approves Finland and Sweden for membership into NATO. US Senators delivered overwhelming bipartisan approval to [NATO membership for Finland and Sweden](#).

Amnesty apologies over Ukrainian war allegations. Amnesty International apologised for the distress and anger caused by a [report accusing Ukraine](#) of endangering civilians and triggered the resignation of the head of its office in Kyiv.

POLITICS

Peruvian PM resigns amid investigations into President Castillo. Peru's Prime Minister Anibal Torres has resigned, amid a widening [criminal investigation](#) focused on President Pedro Castillo, who has grown increasingly isolated after one year in office.

Senegal ruling coalition loses big parliamentary majority. Senegal's ruling [Benno Bokk Yakaar coalition](#) has lost its comfortable majority in parliament, securing just two seats more than two allied opposition coalitions in a legislative election.

Bolsonaro risks blowback from combining military parade and his campaign rally. He has ordered a [military parade](#) to join his campaign rally, stoking concerns that the far-right former army captain is dragging the Brazilian military into politics to compensate for his sagging popularity.

US Senate approves bill to fight climate change. The US Senate passed a sweeping \$430 billion bill intended to fight climate change. The bill aims to dramatically [reduce carbon emissions by 2030](#).

Where are the boundaries between China and Taiwan? The island is about 180 kilometres from the mainland but only 130 kilometres at the nearest point. [Air and sea space get more complicated.](#)

CONFLICT

Rwanda intervened militarily in Eastern Congo. A UN group of experts said it had solid evidence that Rwandan troops conducted [military operations](#) in eastern DRC between November 2021 and July 2022, and that Rwanda has supported the M23 rebel group's advance there with weapons and troops.

Japan protests after Chinese missiles land in its exclusive economic zone. Five ballistic missiles fired by China appear to have landed in [Japan's exclusive economic zone](#), as part of military exercises.

Uganda and Somalia strengthen relations through adoption of Defence Cooperation MoU. The two countries have agreed to strengthen co-operation of their defence forces and will work together to [improve security](#) within Somalia, which has been under increasing attacks from al-Shabaab.

US delays Minuteman III missile test over Taiwan tensions. The US postponed a long-planned test of an [Air Force Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile](#) to avoid escalating tensions with Beijing during China's show of force near Taiwan.

Top Pakistan Taliban leader killed in Afghanistan roadside attack. [Abdul Wali](#), also known as Omar Khalid Khorasani, was a top commander of the Pakistan Taliban and was allegedly behind some of the deadliest attacks in recent years.

ECONOMICS

Bank of England hikes rates as it predicts 13% inflation and long recession. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has left [Britain on course for a recession](#) lasting more than a year and inflation above 13% the Bank of England has warned, as it raised interest rates for a sixth successive time.

Global oil prices fall to lowest level since Ukrainian invasion. Global oil prices have fallen to their lowest level since before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as traders now fear a [possible recession could suppress demand for energy](#).

Cuba more than quadruples dollar/peso exchange rate. Cuba will begin purchasing dollars and other convertible currencies at nearly five times the current rate in an effort to undercut the [informal money market](#) and capture the funds.

Italy finalises justice reform to help unlock EU funding. Italy's outgoing government approved a decree to reform the country's slow [criminal justice system](#), paving the way for the finalisation of a broader reform needed to keep EU funds flowing.

China tries to buy a strategic Solomon Islands port and airfield. A Chinese state-owned company is negotiating to buy a deep-water port and an airstrip in Solomon Islands, as new documents detail how [bribery from Beijing](#) has helped keep the Pacific nation's controversial leader in power.

DEVELOPMENT

France tackles its worst drought on record. France braces for a [fourth heatwave](#) this summer, as its worst drought on record left parched villages without safe drinking water and farmers warn of a looming milk shortage in the winter.

Scientists record Earth's fastest rotation. On 29 June, [Earth rotated 1.59 milliseconds faster](#) than normal. The melting of glaciers, motions of Earth's inner molten core, seismic activity and the Chandler wobble are all possible explanations.

Zambia emerges as a test case as China joins debt relief talks. Zambia has moved closer to a [debt restructuring](#) after top creditor China agreed to negotiate terms, potentially setting a precedent for a multilateral framework as other low-income countries struggle to repay loans from Beijing.

South Korea launched its first lunar orbiter as space bid gathers pace. South Korea launched its [first lunar orbiter](#) as it doubles down on its space programmes, aiming to land a probe on the moon by 2030.

China warns its temperatures are rising faster than global average. China's average ground temperatures have risen much more quickly than the global average over the past 70 years and will remain "[significantly higher](#)" in the future as the challenges of climate change mount.

SOCIAL

Conjoined twins separated with help of Virtual Reality. Twins sharing a cranium and brain were [successfully separated](#) in Rio de Janeiro after months of preparation and a 27-hour operation. It was the most complex separation to date.

Cheetahs to be moved from South Africa to India. The transportation of the animals across continents and reintroduction to the wild is a first. The project is an important conservation step in [saving cheetahs](#) from extinction.

ECJ rules NGO illegal migrant ships cannot be detained without cause. The [European Court of Justice](#) ruled a port country can take detention measures only in the "event of a clear risk to safety, health or the environment."

Great Barrier Reef records highest coral growth in decades. Marine scientists have found that parts of Australia's Great Barrier Reef have recorded their [highest levels of coral cover](#) since monitoring began nearly four decades ago.

Tonga's volcanic eruption could temporarily warm the planet's surface. The massive amount of water vapour blasted high into the atmosphere from the eruption is set to [temporarily warm the Earth's surface](#), according to detections from a NASA satellite.

Scientists create synthetic mouse embryos, a potential key to healing humans. Stem cell researchers have created [synthetic mouse embryos](#) without using a sperm or egg, growing them in an artificial womb. Researchers hope this will lead to the development of artificial organs.

PEACEBUILDING

The [Carter Center](#) is taking concrete steps to restore trust within the US, and specifically in North Carolina. The Center is asking candidates to agree to a set of principles — “integrity, nonviolence, security, oversight and the peaceful transfer of power” — that “might once have been taken for granted.” A state advisory council includes two former governors, four dozen past and current elected officials, academics and political activists. Starting in August, the center will begin what organizers call a “Trusted Elections Tour.”

[Counterpart International](#) and [AgroFrontera](#), a local nonprofit focused on sustainable fishing and farming, are implementing a [program](#) to improve the practices of rice production in the Dominican Republic. The program is a key component of the Integrated Management of Marine Ecosystems Project in Montechristi, the site of multiple protected areas.

The Nigerian government’s [Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution](#), the [Neem Foundation](#), and the [Karuna Center for Peacebuilding](#) are holding a [National Conference on Farmer-Herder Relations in Nigeria in Abuja](#). The conference will highlight the gains of the [Protecting Our Communities Initiative](#) and renew a strategic partnership aimed at consolidating those gains. The initiative has established community-based processes to resolve and prevent conflict and improve civilian security. To date, over 200 incidents that could have sparked broader conflict have been resolved and opposing parties have found common ground in dialogues held at the community to state level.

[Reservation Dogs](#), a TV show featuring Native stories about real problems facing indigenous youth, has an all-Indigenous writer’s room, crew and regular cast. Native Americans have been underrepresented in film and television, landing one percent or less of all top film roles and television and writing positions, according to the [latest Hollywood Diversity Report](#) by the University of California, Los Angeles and a [2020 inclusion report](#) from the Writers Guild of America West’s Native American and Indigenous Writers Committee.