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

CONFLICT

[China-Taiwan tensions](#): Xi Jinping says 'reunification' must be fulfilled. China's President Xi Jinping has said that "reunification" with Taiwan "[must be fulfilled](#)" and that unification should be achieved peacefully, but warned that the Chinese people had a "glorious tradition" of opposing separatism.

Hindus fearful in Indian Kashmir after wave of assassinations. Small groups of militants armed with pistols have carried out a [spate of targeted killings](#) in Indian Kashmir, sowing fear among some minority communities, according to security officials.

Ecological Threat Report: Climate change set to worsen resource degradation, conflict. A [vicious cycle](#) linking the depletion of natural resources with violent conflict may have gone past the point of no return in parts of the world and is likely to be exacerbated by climate change.

Iran's enriched uranium stockpile surpasses 120kg, says nuclear chief.

Iran's nuclear chief says the country has made [more than 120kg of 20% enriched uranium](#), exceeding the limit agreed in a nuclear deal with world powers in 2015. President Donald Trump withdrew America from the agreement in 2018, but other Western governments have tried to uphold it, and Joe Biden is keen to revive it.

Tigray rebels claims government has launched an offensive on all fronts. A senior rebel source said Tigray forces were holding their ground against a [significant government offensive](#). The Ethiopian government has not confirmed any fighting, and a communications blackout makes independent verification impossible.

DEVELOPMENT

WHO backs malaria vaccine rollout for Africa's children in major breakthrough. That program followed a decade of clinical trials in seven African countries. It is the [only vaccine](#) and was developed by Africans in Africa. Malaria affects tens of millions of people annually.

Scientists have successfully recorded data to DNA in a few minutes. The researchers utilised a novel enzymatic system to synthesize DNA that records rapidly changing

environmental signals straight into its sequences. The method [enabled the data to be recorded](#) into the genetic code in a matter of minutes instead of hours.

Study find extreme heat exposure across the world has tripled since 1980s. Global heating and urban population growth has put [millions more at risk of illness and death](#), especially in Asia. Cities that experienced extreme heat indexes because of great population growth included Dhaka, Shanghai, Hanoi, Bangkok and Yangon.

COP26: The Pope and other religious leaders are calling for concrete solutions. [The Pope has stated](#) that young people today may be the last generation able to save the planet from irretrievable and catastrophic ecological damage.

Nearly 2 million displaced due to flooding in China's Shanxi province. Shanxi is a major coal-producing province and the government [was forced to halt operations at mines](#) and chemical factories as a result of the rain. The flooding comes less than three months after extreme rains in Henan province left more than 300 dead.

SOCIAL

Spanish PM proposes monthly €250 bonus rental plan for under-35s. Spaniards aged 18-35 should be offered a monthly bonus to help them leave their parents' home and pay rent, [Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has proposed](#). The €250 benefit is part of a broader housing package including rental caps for big property owners, particularly in areas where rent has soared in recent years.

Brazil's Grain Train plan raises fears for Amazon. The Bolsonaro government [plans to build a 1,000km railway](#) to export soya beans despite warnings of a 'catastrophe' for indigenous people and the environment.

Philippines journalist Maria Ressa and Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov share 2021 Nobel Peace Prize. The award honors the right to free speech which the prize-giving committee [described as under threat around the globe](#).

India is ready to open the borders to foreigners. After more than a year of closure, India is [now set to reopen the borders](#) and to accept visas from foreigners.

A Belgian prosecutor proposed a new penalty for racism and hate speech. A Belgian prosecutor [has proposed a visit to the holocaust and human rights memorial](#) for individuals accused of racism and hate speech.

ECONOMICS

Seoul expresses concerns over Washington's info-sharing request on chipmakers. There are concerns that the information requested by Washington from South Korean microchip makers is [too vast and may include trade secrets of related businesses](#). Chips make up roughly 20% of South Korea's outbound shipments and are the backbone of the export-reliant economy.

Oil at 7-year high after OPEC+ decides on cautious increase. [Oil prices jumped](#) after OPEC and allied oil producing countries stayed with their gradual approach to restoring output slashed during the pandemic, agreeing to add only 400,000 barrels per day in November.

US Treasury Secretary Yellen against trillion-dollar coin idea. Janet Yellen has told ABC News that the idea of minting a trillion dollar coin to avoid the US defaulting on its debts is a '[gimmick](#)' that could jeopardize the independence of the Federal Reserve.

Fuel prices soar across Asia as global energy crunch deepens. As an electricity crisis roils energy markets across the world, Asian buyers [are paying top dollar](#) for a variety of fuels that can be fed into steam boilers or power turbines as they seek alternatives to increasingly pricey natural gas.

More than 100 countries reach global deal for 15 per cent minimum corporate tax rate. In the [proposal](#), home countries would impose a top-up tax on companies that have earnings that go untaxed or are lightly taxed in one of the world's tax havens. Of the 140 negotiating countries, only Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sri Lanka refused to sign.

Jordan to supply Lebanon with electricity by the end of the year. Lebanon is trying to find a solution to the [national electricity shortage](#) which has plunged the nation into darkness, and is due to an ongoing financial meltdown

POLITICS

Right-wing merger aims to form Brazil's largest political party. Two right-wing political parties in Brazil decided on Wednesday [to join forces](#) to become the country's largest political party, with plans to field an alternative to President Jair Bolsonaro in next year's elections.

Poland's top court ruling marks major challenge to EU laws. Poland's top court [has rejected the principle of the primacy of EU law over national legislation](#) in certain judicial matters. The Constitutional Tribunal said some EU treaty articles were incompatible with Poland's constitution.

Austrian leader Sebastian Kurz resigns amid corruption inquiry. Mr Kurz and nine others [were placed under investigation](#) after raids at a number of locations linked to his conservative People's Party (ÖVP). He denies claims he used government money to ensure positive coverage in a tabloid newspaper.

Czech election sees an oligarch defeated and a president in hospital. A [dramatic general election](#) in the Czech Republic seems to have ended the rule of the populist oligarch Andrej Babiš. The next Czech government is likely to be made up of a partnership between two different right-of-centre coalitions.

Cleric Sadr wins Iraq vote, former PM Maliki close behind. Shi'ite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's party was the biggest winner in an Iraqi election [marred by a record low turnout](#).

PEACEBUILDING

The [Carter Center](#) has published “[The Big Lie and Big Tech](#),” a report detailing the role played during the 2020 US election by media that repeatedly disseminate false and misleading information. The Carter Center’s “repeat offender” list came from [NewsGuard](#), a nonpartisan organization that tracks articles that have been fact-checked and debunked. [The Center analyzed 2.93 million posts in 883 Facebook groups](#) engaged in partisan political discourse and found repeat-offender content in 76% of all groups—and in 97% of right-leaning groups—between August 17, 2020, and January 20, 2021.

[Authorities from six Guatemalan municipalities have signed agreements that seek to resolve conflict in Guatemala’s Western Highlands](#). Agreements were also signed with four departmental governments and four municipal governments in 2019 and 2020. This project works with local leaders to “transform conflicts into opportunities for development” in Guatemala’s Western Highlands, which has one of the highest rates of migration in the country, according to [Creative Associates](#).

During a hybrid conference in Kigali in September, [Interpeace](#) and partners presented findings from [baseline research on mental health and societal healing](#) in Bugesera District, Rwanda, where the prevalence of mental health disorders has made reconciliation and societal healing difficult. Participants also discussed the development of several protocols, informed by this survey, to address efforts related to mental health, social cohesion, and economic opportunities. The conference was organized by Interpeace, in partnership with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and Prison Fellowship Rwanda, with support from the European Union.

[Palladium and UK National Parks have designed Revere](#), a new financing facility aimed at restoring natural habitats across the UK using private capital. The facility will develop restoration projects with land managers and work with capital from major global companies. Projects will generate revenue through the sale of ecosystem services (such as carbon credits and nature restoration), creating accessible new funding alternatives for farmers and landowners seeking to improve the quality of landscapes and biodiversity.