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Future Trends

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Welcome to this week's Future Trends - the must-read weekly briefing covering the changing face of global politics, economics, development, and conflict.

Here's what you need to know this week:

- India's top court upholds Modi government's decision to revoke special status of Kashmir
- Ukraine – 24 million telecom subscribers cut off in cyber attack
- Central banks 'risk tipping UK and other developed countries into recession'
- US and China race to shield secrets from quantum computers
- Hunger crisis threatens Chad as funding for food aid falters

POLITICS

India's top court upholds Modi government's decision to revoke special status of Kashmir. [Jammu and Kashmir](#), the only Muslim majority states, have been at the heart of more than 75 years of animosity with neighbouring Pakistan. The court also ruled they must hold elections.

Biden says Netanyahu must change, Israel losing global support. US President Biden said that Israel is losing support over its [indiscriminate bombing of Gaza](#) and that Israel's leader Netanyahu should change his approach to maintain international support.

China, Vietnam upgrade ties; agree to boost security efforts. China and Vietnam agreed to step up [co-operation on security](#) in their move towards becoming a community with a shared future, after Chinese President Xi's visit to Hanoi. They signed dozens of co-operation pacts and agreed to set up more hotlines to defuse any emergencies in the contested waters.

Niger junta agrees plan to restore democracy. Niger's military leaders have agreed a plan for [restoring democratic rule](#) which will be presented to regional bloc ECOWAS for approval. The US is planning to resume security and development cooperation with Niger on the basis that democracy is being restored.

Somalia officially becomes a member of the East African Community. Somalia signed the [Treaty of Accession](#), officially becoming the 8th member of the East African Community.

Serbia's ruling populists claim sweeping election victory. The governing Serbian Progressive Party is set to win the country's [election](#), which has been marred by reports of major irregularities. President Vucic expects to hold around 130 seats in the 250-member assembly.

CONFLICT

Ukraine – 24 million telecom subscribers cut off in cyber attack. Ukraine's biggest mobile network operator, Kyivstar, has been hit by what appeared to be the biggest [cyber attack](#) of the war with Russia so far, knocking out mobile and internet services for more than half the population. Ukraine officials said Russia was behind the attack.

Hamas members arrested in Germany for terror plot. Four members of the Islamist militant group [Hamas](#) have been detained on suspicion of planning attacks on Jewish institutions in Europe, German prosecutors said.

US-led force to patrol Red Sea in response to attacks by Houthis backing Palestinians. The Iran-aligned group says the aim of its missile and drone attacks is to [support the Palestinians](#) as Israel and Hamas wage war in the Gaza Strip. Oil major BP has stopped shipping through the Red Sea in response to the attacks.

IPOB leader to remain in Nigerian jail. Nigeria's Supreme Court overturned a judgement that dropped terrorism charges against separatist leader [Nnamdi Kanu](#) , ruling that trial on the charges should continue. Kanu, a British citizen who leads the banned Indigenous People of Biafra, skipped bail in 2017 and was arrested in Kenya in 2021 and charged with terrorism.

Ukraine closer to EU membership. The EU has opened accession negotiations with Ukraine, after a vote supporting its EU membership aspirations. It comes as Russian President Putin vowed there would be [no peace in Ukraine](#) until his goals are achieved and NATO chief Stoltenberg warned of a "real risk" Putin would not stop at Ukraine, if he achieves military victory there.

Rebels claim to capture more ground in Congo's east. A rebel group with alleged links to neighbouring Rwanda claimed to have seized a key town in Congo's conflict-hit eastern region amid intense fighting, raising further security concerns ahead of the country's [December 20 presidential election](#) .

ECONOMICS

Central banks 'risk tipping UK and other developed countries into recession'. The OECD said continued tough action by central banks to tackle stubborn inflation risks tipping Britain and other developed countries into [recession](#) next year. The OECD said the chances of policymakers getting it wrong were high and posed a threat to its central soft landing forecast for the global economy.

Argentina's devalues peso by 50 percent. Argentina embarks on a strict austerity drive, as President Milei begins radical reform. The [peso](#) will be

sharply devalued by half, subsidies cut, and public works tenders cancelled in a bid to revamp the nation's economy.

Nigeria's inflation rises to 18-year high on surging food prices. Nigeria's annual [inflation](#) rose in November for the 11th straight month to the highest level in 18 years, adding pressure on the central bank to tackle the rise amid a worsening cost-of-living crisis in Africa's largest economy. Consumer inflation rose to 28%.

IMF & World Bank grant Somalia \$4.5 billion in debt forgiveness. Somalia was granted [\\$4.5 billion in debt forgiveness](#) after completing years of financial reforms under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, or HIPC.

Euro zone inflation falls. [Euro zone inflation](#) fell far more than expected this month, a challenge to the European Central Bank's narrative that price growth remains stubborn and likely fuelling bets on early spring rate cuts in defiance of the bank's explicit guidance.

DEVELOPMENT

US and China race to shield secrets from quantum computers. US and China are in a race to develop [advanced quantum computers](#) with profound implications for the international security and strategic landscape. Experts claim countries around the globe are harvesting data now to decrypt it later, when quantum computing makes current encryption models obsolete.

Tesla recalls two million cars in US over Autopilot defect. Tesla is recalling almost every Tesla sold in the US since the [Autopilot feature](#) was launched in 2015. It follows a two-year investigation into crashes which occurred when the tech was in use.

China chip firm powered by US tech and money avoids crackdown. A Chinese chip designer, part-owned by the country's top sanctioned chipmaker, is purchasing US software and has American financial backing, relationships that underscore the difficulty Washington faces applying new rules meant to block American support for [Beijing's semiconductor industry](#).

Indonesia and Japan agree on removing more trade barriers. Japan will allow greater access for Indonesian products, including removing tariffs on processed fishery items, and [the two countries](#) will improve relations in the banking sector.

Japan to give tax breaks for 10 years to boost EV, chip production. The scheme aims to make it easier for companies to [invest in Japan](#) by providing tax benefits for projects with high hurdles for achieving profitability, in areas the government sees as strategically important, such as green transformation.

SOCIAL

Hunger crisis threatens Chad as funding for food aid falters. The World Food Programme has warned that [food aid](#) for 1.4 million people in Chad faces a “looming halt” because there is no money, even as the country is experiencing an influx of refugees from the fighting in Sudan’s Darfur region.

Himalayan glaciers are cooling down, potentially slowing down effects of climate change. Himalayan glaciers have been melting and are predicted to continue to do so, however at a [slower pace than predicted](#) due to cold winds going down the mountain slopes which are cooling them down.

Kuwait's ruling emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah dies aged 86.

Sheikh Nawaf became emir in September 2020 following the death of his brother. The breadth and depth of emotion was strong over the loss of [Sheikh Sabah](#), known for his diplomacy and peace making.

New World Excel champion named. Sydney actuary Andrew "[The Annihilator](#)" Ngai has won the Microsoft Excel World Championship for the third consecutive year, at an esports event broadcast live from Las Vegas. The competition sees data crunchers given problems to solve using Excel spreadsheets, including maths, financial modelling and even board and card games.

Vatican court convicts former Pope adviser of financial crimes. Italian Cardinal Becciu, a former adviser to Pope Francis, was sentenced to five-and-a-half years jail for financial crimes. Marking the first time a cardinal has stood trial in a Vatican court, [Becciu](#) was accused of funnelling vast sums of money to his home diocese of Sardinia, some of which reportedly benefited his family.

PEACEBUILDING

Pope Francis has granted his formal approval [allowing Catholic priests to bless same-sex couples](#) as long as they do not appear to endorse their marriage. Blessings may be granted to same-sex couples and other couples "in irregular situations" (such as divorce and remarriage) who "do not claim a

legitimation of their own status,” according to the [declaration](#) published recently in "*Fiducia Supplicans: On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings*."

Jewish and Muslim organizations have compiled resources, tools and strategies for countering anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish biases. The [Anti-Defamation League](#) has published [Anti-Muslim Bias and Acting as an Ally](#), [6 Tips for Supporting Jewish Students in the Classroom](#), and [Words that Can Hurt, Help and Heal](#). The [Council on American-Islamic Relations](#) has released a [Community Safety Pocket Guide](#) and an [Islamophobia Pocket Guide](#). The [TRUST Network](#) publicized [these resources](#) in the recap of their recent activities.

Some Evangelical Christian leaders in Texas, who are members of a [Multi-Faith Neighbors Network](#), have published [The Peacemaker's Toolkit](#) to help clergy deal with polarization and radicalization within their churches. The toolkit focuses on Christian ethics and provides advice for dealing with scenarios of conflict, especially within congregations. Researchers from American University and experts in peacebuilding helped develop the toolkit, [according to PBS](#).

The France-based non-profit organization [Climate Fresk](#) holds laid-back educational workshops on global warming. Participants use illustrated cards that represent the causes and consequences of climate change, discuss potential solutions they could take part in, and create large climate frescoes. The cards are based on data from the United Nations' [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#). The workshops are a hit in Paris and are gaining popularity around the world.