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

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## CONFLICT

**South Africa deploys army to quell unrest linked to Zuma jailing.** The violence has resulted in 489 arrests and six deaths. Most of the violence involved [opportunistic looting](#) with the military firing rubber bullets to disperse crowds.

**US probing American ties to assassination of Haitian president.** US law enforcement and intelligence agencies were [probing American connections](#) to the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. Two Haitian-American men were arrested on charges of participating in it.

**Taliban advances in Afghanistan give Kashmir militants a boost.** Experts fear a [spike in armed insurgency](#) in India-administered Kashmir. If the Taliban continue their advances and gain control of more territory, they could support extremists in Pakistan and Kashmir.

**Beijing says it 'drove away' US warship in South China Sea amid rising tensions over contested waters.** The incident came as [the US repeated a warning](#) to China that an attack on Philippine armed forces in the South China Sea would trigger a 1951 defence treaty between the US and the Philippines.

**China and US can coexist in peace but challenge is enormous.** The White House said that it was possible for China and United States to coexist in peace but the [challenge was enormous](#) and Beijing had become increasingly assertive.

**Rwanda commits troops to fight Mozambican insurgency threat.** Rwanda declared that it is [deploying 1000 soldiers 'immediately'](#) to fight extremists in the Cabo Delgado province. This contingent will fortify other armed support commitments made by SADC countries.

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## DEVELOPMENT

**Smart foam material gives robotic hand the ability to self-repair.** Singapore researchers have developed a smart foam material that [allows robots to sense nearby objects](#), and repairs itself when damaged, just like human skin.

**China and US rivalry are dividing the tech world into two incompatible systems.** China's technological ecosystem has [continued to expand beyond internet platforms](#) to operating systems, CPU architectures, satellite communications networks and payment systems, with little interoperability with Western equivalents.

**Draft UN agreement on biodiversity targets conservation, pollution and finance.** The agreement will [put 30% of the planet under conservation protection](#) within the next decade. The targets include reducing pesticide use, cutting plastic waste and channelling \$200 billion a year towards protecting nature in developing countries.

**Where poverty risk is on the rise in the EU.** New estimates by Eurostat have revealed the [potential effect the pandemic year 2020 had](#) on the most economically at-risk in the European Union.

**Handful of cities driving urban greenhouse gas emissions.** Just 25 big cities, almost all of them in China, accounted for [52% of the climate-warming gases](#). These included 23 Chinese cities - among them Shanghai, Beijing and Handan, as well as Moscow and Tokyo.

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## SOCIAL

**Twitter loses immunity over user-generated content in India.** Twitter is now responsible for user-generated content in India as the US giant has [failed to comply with new IT rules](#), the Indian government said in a court filing.

**Cuba sees biggest protests in decades.** Thousands of Cubans joined street protests from Havana to Santiago in [anti-government demonstrations](#). They were protesting against shortages of basic goods, curbs on civil liberties and the authorities' handling of the pandemic.

**World passes milestone of 4 million recorded Covid-19 deaths.** The WHO chief announced the figure. It has been [18 months since the outbreak emerged](#) in China in December 2019. Variants are currently outpacing vaccines.

**Iceland opting for shorter hours after four-day week trials.** More than 85% of the country's government workers [were part of a programme](#), which found there was no decrease in productivity.

**Chinese government deploys facial recognition to limit gaming.** China's national regulations are [aimed at reducing screen time](#) amid youth internet dependency. A curfew has been imposed from 10pm to 8 am for those under 18.

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## ECONOMICS

**Factory sleepovers help guard Vietnam's workers from virus outbreaks.** Thousands of workers are [sleeping on factory floors](#) to maintain productivity and minimise loss of wages. In developing nations, wage disruption can lead to starvation.

**China-Europe rail trade increases despite Beijing-Brussels tensions.** The railway network between Europe and China saw a [record number of freight train trips through Xinjiang](#) in the first six months of the year.

**EU economy expects fastest growth since 1976.** Growth across the EU is likely to expand by 4.8% this year and 4.5% next year. The improving outlook is being [fuelled by rapid progress with vaccinations](#), which has enabled many European countries to ease restrictions, boosting service businesses in particular.

**Europe's startup funding set for record year.** Europe accounted for [18% of total global funding for startups](#). On a per capita basis, Sweden outperforms the US as the richest breeding ground for startups.

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## POLITICS

**Syria's president increases salaries by 50% amid run-away inflation.** Hundreds of thousands of civil servants and military members [received a 50% salary increase](#). The decree came a day after the state doubled the price of bread, the country's main staple, and increased by 180% the price of diesel fuel.

**Mexico President casts video of brother taking cash as political smear.** The video, the second within a year to feature [a brother of the President taking money](#) from the political operative, sparked fresh criticism.

**Jordan and Israel agree to a water deal.** Israel agreed to sell water to the kingdom, [doubling the supply for the year](#), while significantly boosting Jordanian exports to Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. The deal comes after Bennett coalition indicated that warming ties with Jordan was a foreign policy priority.

**Ethiopia PM Abiy's party wins landslide victory in election.** Abiy's party won 410 of 436 parliamentary seats, however [elections did not take place in three of the ten regions](#), including Tigray, because of violence.

**Biden signs order to tackle corporate abuses across US economy.** The President signed a sweeping executive order to [promote more competition in the US economy](#), urging agencies to crack down on anti-competitive practices in sectors from agriculture to drugs to labour.

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## PEACEBUILDING

[The New Zealand Environmental Protection Agency regularly looks for ways to integrate traditional Indigenous \(Māori\) knowledge into its decision-making.](#) As one example, a new road was rerouted to circumvent a high flood risk area; a year later, when the area was hit by a major flood, the road was unharmed. [Peer-reviewed scientific studies](#) have demonstrated that around the world, Indigenous-managed lands have more biodiversity intact than other lands, even [those set aside](#) for conservation.

[Netherlands company Tony's Chocolonely is making efforts to prevent the use of child labor in its supply chain and more broadly throughout the sector.](#) The firm buys cocoa beans from specific cooperatives with whom it has long-term relationships, it pays premiums to the growers, and it developed its own online software to track every bag of beans by lot number. It also shares its network of farmer cooperatives and "bean-tracker" software in a program it calls "Tony's Open Chain." Tony's has won over at least one major ally, Barry Callebaut, the largest chocolate manufacturer in the world.

**As part of a consortium led by Saferworld, national organizations in South Asia have been running unofficial bilateral exchanges between Pakistan and its neighbors.** A [Saferworld report on Women's Voices in Regional Dialogues: A Case Study of South Asia](#), explores the ways in which these activities have supported women's representation and participation, identifying areas where it has worked well and others where it has been constrained by policy and social norms. The report outlines how this kind of dialogue could be adapted to increase women's meaningful participation, drawing on the insights of women in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.

[In Chicago, community groups are implementing community-based solutions to reduce reliance on police. In the Treatment Not Trauma program](#), the city created two teams of responders—one composed only of mental health professionals and another that includes police as a co-responder. In addition, volunteers at the Rogers Park Free Store, a mutual aid hub, have received some training about what to do in a medical emergency, how to administer naloxone in a drug emergency, what to do if immigration or other law enforcement shows up at the Free Store, and how to keep each other safe from COVID-19.