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- Israel signs deals with defence firm Elbit to make bombs domestically
- Israel's ministry of defence creates AI and autonomy administration
- An 'Iron Dome' to stop wildfires: Israeli startup's 'FireDome' is based on missile defence

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- UK Defence Senior Advisor concludes first visit to Kuwait

Lebanon

- Lebanese, French army chiefs discuss military cooperation
- Lebanese army enters southern town of Naqoura after Israeli withdrawal
- Indigenously manufactured vehicles to reach Lebanon for use by Indian contingent in UNIFIL

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- India, Oman looking at finalising comprehensive trade, investment deal soon

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- Saudi Arabia seeks MK 54 torpedoes in \$78.5m US FMS sale

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- How Syria's rebels developed lethal drone technology

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- Turkiye enters 2025 after pivotal year for defence, space progress
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- Buoyed by drones, NATO deals, Turkey defence exports hit record \$7.1B
- Turkiye ranks 11th in countries exporting defence products

United Arab Emirates

- International Defence Conference 2025 to kick off February 16
- UAE's tech industry set to achieve record growth in 2025
- UAE and India forge strategic collaboration in polar research
- ADSB launches first vessel in 'FALAJ 3' Programme

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- Yemen's Houthis claim missile attack on power plant in northern Israel

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- Denmark, Norway to buy \$183 million in arms for Kyiv from Ukrainian manufacturers in 2025
- U.S. Saw an Opportunity While It Pushed to Arm Ukraine
- Ukraine enhances automation and efficiency in its drone technology
- IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

United Kingdom

- UK government considering role for SMRs in AI expansion
- Ministers pledge record £410m to support UK nuclear fusion energy
- UK says N.Korea's 'unlawful' ballistic missile launches 'another breach' of multiple UN resolutions

- PM plans to ‘unleash AI’ across UK to boost growth
- Prime Minister sets out blueprint to turbocharge AI
- UK can be ‘AI sweet spot’: Starmer’s tech minister on regulation, Musk, and free speech

Germany

- Dismantling of Brunsbüttel vessel progresses
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- PM Modi to attend AI Action Summit in France on February 10-11: French president Macron
- Newcleo joint venture aims to develop Slovakia units

Italy

- Controversy in Italy over potential deal with Musk’s SpaceX

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- Three SMRs selected for evaluation in ship propulsion study

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- Angra 2 agreement targets radiopharmaceutical production

Brazil

- Brazil to get nuclear physical security training centre
- Tripling global nuclear energy capacity is in reach—if the world seizes the moment

Mexico

- Mexico Launches SECIHTI to Boost Science, Technology, Innovation
- Grants Energy announces launch of New Mexico ISR project

M. Oceania

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- Australia’s Telstra seeks to partner with Accenture for AI boost
- NASA jet touches down in Australia to watch Starship re-entry

N. Africa

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- Carrying up to 30 missiles, Egypt proudly displays its locally-made 'Raad 200' rocket launcher

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- Legal Support to Nuclear Newcomer Countries in Africa

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- Russia is making a fragile pivot from Syria to Libya. The West should beware falling into a new trap

A. India

USA to end restrictions on India's nuclear entities

World Nuclear News, January 8, 2025

The USA is finalising the necessary steps to remove long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear entities and US companies, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has said. India and the USA signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement (also known as a 123 Agreement) in 2008, after India - which is not a signatory of the international Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) - reached a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

<https://world-nuclear-news.org/articles/usa-to-end-restrictions-on-indian-nuclear-entities>

India, Pakistan exchange list of nuclear installations

The Hindu, January 1, 2025

India and Pakistan on Wednesday (January 1, 2024) exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral pact that prohibits the two sides from attacking each other's atomic facilities, in continuation of an over-three-decade practice. The exchange of the list took place under the provisions of an agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations and facilities, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. It was done simultaneously through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-pakistan-exchange-list-of-nuclear-installations/article69049866.ece>

India's NTPC sets up nuclear subsidiary

World Nuclear News, January 15, 2025

NTPC Parmanu Urja Nigam Limited has been set up as a wholly-owned subsidiary of state-owned National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd. Meanwhile, NTPC and Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd

have signed an agreement to enable the transfer of the Mahi Banswara Rajasthan four-unit nuclear project from NPCIL to the Ashvini joint venture. NTPC Parmanu Urja Nigam Limited (NPUNL) was incorporated on 7 January as a wholly-owned subsidiary of NTPC Limited.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/indias-ntpc-sets-up-nuclear-subsiary>

Last high-profile trip to India by Biden administration will focus on technology

The Economic Times, January 4, 2025

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan will travel to India for a visit focusing on cooperation on strategic technology, including in defence, space and artificial intelligence. The Biden administration said Sullivan's visit on Sunday and Monday will include a speech at the Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi in which he will stress that the outgoing administration sees the US partnership with India as central to its regional and global priorities, and one with support from both major political parties.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/last-high-profile-trip-to-india-by-biden-administration-will-focus-on-technology/articleshow/116930342.cms?from=mdr>

B. China

'Ginkgo leaf' sparks discussions on alleged sixth-gen fighter jets as PLA Eastern Theater Command publishes music video, releasing multiple signals

Guo Yuandan, Liu Xuanzun and Chen Shan

Global Times, January 1, 2025

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theater Command released a music video titled "Zhong Guo Ren (Chinese People in English)" on its official WeChat account in celebration of the New Year, showing the determination, will and ability of officers and soldiers in the theater to stay vigilant, remain ready to fight at

any time and resolutely safeguard the reunification of the motherland. It highlighted images of new equipment such as the “ginkgo leaf” and the Type 076 amphibious assault ship, which shows that the PLA can resolutely fight back and thwart any attempt for “Taiwan independence,” and will never allow any forces to split the island of Taiwan from China’s sovereign territory.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202501/1326118.shtml>

China’s Xi addresses economic challenges, threatens Taiwan in New Year speech

Katrina Northrop

The Washington Post, January 1, 2025

Chinese leader Xi Jinping used his New Year’s address evening to project confidence about the country’s economic outlook and repeat threats about taking over Taiwan, as Beijing grapples with an ailing economy and the looming inauguration of a U.S. president set to take a hard line on China. In the televised address, Xi acknowledged that China’s economy was facing “challenges from uncertainties in the external environment” – but he struck a defiant note, proclaiming that the country would prevail through hard work. “We have always grown by weathering the storms and become stronger by overcoming challenges,” he said.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/01/01/xi-speech-china-economy-trump-taiwan/>

Country imposes export controls on 28 US entities

Zhong Nan

China Daily, January 2, 2025

China has added 28 entities from the United States, including Boeing Defence, Space & Security and Lockheed Martin Corp, to its export control list, the Ministry of Commerce announced. Taking effect immediately, this move aims to safeguard national security and interests while fulfilling nonproliferation and other international obligations, the

ministry said in an online notice. Under the new rule, Chinese companies are prohibited from exporting dual-use items to these 28 US entities. Any ongoing related export activities should be immediately halted, said the notice.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202501/02/WS6776ad94a310f1265a1d8ac9.html>

U.S. weighs ban on Chinese Drones, citing national security concerns

Ana Swanson

The New York Times, January 2, 2025

The Biden administration said that it was considering a new rule that could restrict or ban Chinese drones in the United States out of national security concerns. In a notice, the Commerce Department said the involvement of foreign adversaries notably China and Russia in the design, development, manufacture and supply of drones could pose “undue or unacceptable risk to U.S. national security.” The notice requested private companies to comment on the scope and implications of the rule by March 4. The decision of what restrictions to impose, if any, on Chinese and Russian drones will fall to the Trump administration.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/02/us/politics/drone-ban-china-security.html>

First unit of China’s Zhangzhou nuclear power project starts commercial operations

Xinhua, January 2, 2025

The first power generation unit of the Zhangzhou nuclear power project in east China’s Fujian Province began commercial operations, according to China National Nuclear Corporation. This marked a major step forward in the scaled construction of Hualong One, a domestically developed third-generation reactor, as China seeks to improve its energy mix and meet its dual carbon targets. The Hualong One reactor meets the highest global safety standards and

represents a major milestone in the country's innovative nuclear power development.

<https://english.news.cn/20250102/50d0cb8d6435487e93a41603a417267e/c.html>

China vows 'all necessary' measures to defend lawful rights after US announcement of mulling ban on Chinese drones

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, January 3, 2025

China firmly opposes the US overstressing the concept of national security, which disrupts and restricts normal economic and trade exchanges, and undermines the security and stability of the global industrial and supply chains. We will take all measures necessary to firmly safeguard our lawful rights and interests.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fjrbt/lxjzh/202501/t20250103_11526929.ht

China conducts 5 rocket engine tests in Beijing, Hebei

China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, January 3, 2025

China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) carried out a total of five rocket engine tests in Beijing and Laiyuan County, north China's Hebei Province, laying a solid foundation for the implementation of major aerospace projects later this year. In Beijing, Institute 101 of the Academy of Aerospace Propulsion Technology under the CASC conducted a test on four types of engines, including a new hydrogen-oxygen engine.

<https://english.spacechina.com/n17212/c4249378/content.html>

US Treasury sanctions technology company for support to malicious cyber group

US Department of Treasury, January 3, 2025

The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned Integrity Technology Group, Incorporated

(Integrity Tech), a Beijing-based cybersecurity company, for its role in multiple computer intrusion incidents against U.S. victims. These incidents have been publicly attributed to Flax Typhoon, a Chinese malicious state-sponsored cyber group that has been active since at least 2021, often targeting organizations within U.S. critical infrastructure sectors.

<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2769>

China plans tech export rule changes

Zhong Nan

China Daily, January 4, 2024

China's proposal to adjust its catalogue of technologies subject to export bans or restrictions aligns with international practices and will enhance its management of technology trade, industry scholars said. The Ministry of Commerce issued a notice soliciting public feedback on the adjustment of a catalogue of technologies that are subject to export bans or restrictions. Apart from proposing to tighten export restrictions on battery cathode material preparative technology, China plans to enhance export curbs on specific technologies and processes used for extracting metallic gallium and lithium, which are essential for the semiconductor, electric vehicle and consumer electronics industries.

<https://www.chinadailyhk.com/hk/article/601549>

Is China's mystery 6th-gen stealth fighter poised to be a command centre for combat drones?

Enoch Wong

South China Morning Post, January 5, 2024

China's mystery sixth-generation stealth combat aircraft spotted last month might have sacrificed flexibility and carrier mission opportunities for other roles, according to military experts. One such

role could be serving as a command centre to direct combat drones, the observers said. Footage of two similar models of a new tailless fighter jet have been circulating on Chinese social media since they were first posted on December 26, the 131st anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3293421/chinas-mystery-6th-gen-stealthfighter-poised-be-command-centre-combat-drones>

China 2035: Three Scenarios for China's Nuclear Program

Andrew Harding, Madelyn Heaston and Robert Peters

The Heritage Foundation, January 6, 2025

China desires a security environment in which its world-class military is unrivaled and its nuclear arsenal is at a minimum on par – and very possibly, superior to – that of the United States. Indeed, if the United States does not build the deterrent it needs, it risks falling behind Russia and China as nuclear powers. As such, the United States should meet and defend against such a scenario. By rebuilding American nuclear forces to a level capable of deterring an even more powerful China, the United States can maintain a secure nuclear environment that keeps America and its allies safe – regardless of the future China seeks to pursue.

<https://www.heritage.org/china/report/china-2035-three-scenarios-chinas-nuclear-program>

Chinese Foreign Ministry on BRICS expansion

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, January 7, 2025

China warmly welcomes the new addition to the BRICS family. The BRICS cooperation mechanism came into being amidst the collective rise of emerging markets and developing countries. It is also what the world would like to see in the interest of peace, the world's common development and better global governance. China stands

ready to work with all BRICS members to embrace the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, advance the high quality development of greater BRICS cooperation, jointly advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and promote the building of a community with a shared future for all. The future holds tremendous promise for greater BRICS cooperation.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fjrbt/lxjzh/202501/t20250107_11528563.html

Pentagon to blacklist China's largest EV battery and tech firms

Ellen Nakashima and Cate Cadell

The Washington Post, January 7, 2025

The Pentagon will blacklist China's largest EV battery manufacturer and its largest tech firm beginning in June 2026, barring them from Defence Department contracts and sending a powerful signal to American firms about the potential risks of doing business with them. In a notice in the Federal Register on Monday, the Defence Department published a list of firms it deems to be operating in the United States for, or on behalf of, the Chinese military or that contribute to China's military buildup.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/01/06/pentagon-blacklist-china-technology-ev/>

Why do China's sixth-gen stealth fighters have different designs?

Amber Wangin and Sylvie Zhuang

South China Morning Post, January 7, 2025

The smaller – and more manoeuvrable – of China's two recently revealed sixth-generation stealth aircraft is likely to form the country's future cohort of carrier-based warplanes, according to Chinese analysts. The smaller fighter jet was spotted during its maiden test flight over the northeastern

city of Shenyang late last month. On the same day, a larger, three-engine aircraft with a tailless diamond-wing design was seen over Chengdu.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3293762/why-do-chinas-sixth-gen-stealthfighters-have-different-designs>

Chinese Foreign Ministry on the alleged Chinese hacker groups carrying cyberattacks against Japanese firms

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, January 9, 2025

China firmly opposes and fights all forms of hacker attacks in accordance with law, and opposes politicizing cybersecurity issues. This position is consistent and clear. As many can see, the virtuality of cyberspace makes it difficult to trace the source of actions, and the actors in cyberspace are diverse. It is neither professional nor responsible for relevant Japanese institutions to make judgments based solely on the targets and methods of the hacking attacks. We have noticed that some allies of the US have recently started to assist the US in spreading disinformation about China.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fjrbt/lxjzh/202501/t20250109_11529980.html

China military improves air supply for troops at Himalayan border with India

Enoch Wong

South China Morning Post, January 9, 2025

Chinese troops stationed in the harsh conditions of the Tibetan plateau now have access to better supplies of oxygen as part of efforts to strengthen equipment, training and logistics along the disputed western border with India, the military said. PLA Daily, the People's Liberation Army mouthpiece, said that the military has established a 20km (12.4 miles) supply zone to improve operational efficiency at its high-altitude border outposts. Liu Hao, commander of a border regiment stationed 5,380 metres (17,700 feet) above sea level in the Hotan military subdistrict, told the

newspaper that faster and more reliable oxygen access is critical for soldiers' health and combat readiness.

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3293846/china-military-improves-air-supplytroops-himalayan-border-india?module=top_story&pgtype=subsection

Beijing doctors accomplish world's first ultra-long-distance surgery on a patient in Tibet with help of communication satellite

China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, January 10, 2025

Chinese doctors based in Beijing recently performed the world's first ultra-long-distance surgery on a liver cancer patient thousands of kilometers away in Lhasa, with the help of China's communication satellite. The APSTAR-6D communication satellite used in the surgery is operated by APT Mobile Satcom Limited (APSAT) and developed by the China Academy of Spacecraft Technology (CAST) under the state-owned space giant China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC). The satellite was launched into orbit in July 2020. It is the first in China's Ku-band global high-throughput broadband satellite communication network, according to the CASC in a press release.

<https://english.spacechina.com/n17212/c4252624/content.html>

China releases world's most powerful electronic warfare weapon design software – for free

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, January 11, 2025

A powerful industrial software that can be used to design electronic warfare weapons has been released for free by Chinese scientists – and test results suggest it outperforms a US product in both speed and memory usage. The electronic warfare equipment used by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is evolving rapidly. For example, the multi-band antenna used in

the new phased array radar has “complex structures such as curved surfaces, multilayer dielectrics, metal conductors and thin dielectric layers”, wrote the project team led by Professor Li Bin from the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China in a paper published in November.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3292466/china-releases-worlds-mostpowerful-electronic-warfare-weapon-design-software-free>

China's trade surplus reaches a record of nearly \$1 trillion

Keith Bradsher

The New York Times, January 12, 2025

China announced that its trade surplus reached almost \$1 trillion last year as its exports swamped the globe, while the country's own businesses and households spent cautiously on imports. When adjusted for inflation, China's trade surplus last year far exceeded any in the world in the past century, even those of export powerhouses like Germany, Japan or the United States. Chinese factories are dominating global manufacturing on a scale not experienced by any country since the United States after World War II. China's General Administration of Customs said the country exported \$3.58 trillion worth of goods and services last year, while importing \$2.59 trillion. The surplus of \$990 billion broke China's previous record, which was \$838 billion in 2022.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/12/business/china-trade-surplus.html>

China's energy weapon fires thousands of intense pulses in tests and survives: study

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, January 14, 2025

China has overcome a significant technical hurdle in the development of a compact yet extremely powerful directed energy weapon. This high-power microwave (HPM) weapon – which is still in laboratory testing and not ready for immediate deployment in the field – is capable of

generating electromagnetic pulses with an intensity comparable to a nuclear explosion, which can disrupt or even destroy electronic components within enemy weapons systems. The US military has announced plans to deploy HPM weapons in the Indo-Pacific region this year, targeting Chinese satellites. These weapons employ traditional dish-shaped antennas and require constant rotation to engage different targets.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3294077/chinas-energy-weapon-firethousands-nuclear-blasts-tests-and-survives-study>

China's space station to conduct over 1,000 research projects

The State Council, the People's Republic of China, January 14, 2025

China's space station will conduct more than 1,000 research projects, promote science popularization and enhance international cooperation over the next 10 to 15 years, according to the Technology and Engineering Center for Space Utilization under the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Serving as a national space laboratory, China's space station will organize in-depth interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research collaborations in the coming decade, aiming to produce significant scientific and technological achievements and accelerate their application, Ba Jin, deputy director of the center's application and development division, said.

https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202501/14/content_WS67859b55c6d0868f4e8eec9e.html#:~:text=SHANGHAI%2C%20Jan.,the%20Chinese%20Academy%20of%20Sciences

Chinese researchers develop linear plasma device to advance core materials research for 'artificial sun'

Global Times, January 14, 2025

A Chinese research team has successfully developed a strong flow linear plasma device named as “Chixiao” to provide a

scientific and technological tool for the development of core materials for the research of “artificial sun,” the controlled nuclear fusion experimental devices, Xinhua News Agency reported. According to the research team from Hefei Institutes of Physical Sciences (HFIPS), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), the parameters of Chixiao were verified on Tuesday to meet design criteria following expert assessment, making China the second country in the world following the Netherlands, to own a device of its kind.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202501/1326851.shtml>

What China wants in Panama: more trade, projects and influence

Vivian Wang

The New York Times, January 15, 2025

There was talk of a high-speed rail line that China would build in Panama. A new subway line in Panama City. A modern container port. China has been working to build ties and influence in Panama for years, part of its broader ambition to expand its footprint in Latin America. The effort has had some successes, but also plenty of setbacks. In 2017, China scored a major victory when Panama cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan, the self-governing island that China claims as its territory, and recognized Beijing instead. Panama had been one of the few countries worldwide to recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/15/world/asia/china-panama-explained.html>

C. Pakistan

Little 5G fanfare as industry, users await next-gen network

Dawn, January 15, 2025

Given the multiple challenges that affected the internet landscape in 2024, the government will need to cross many hurdles to make good on its commitment to rollout 5G services this year. The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority

(PTA) are confident that by April 2025, the 5G spectrum auction and rollout of 5G services in Pakistan will be complete. The PTA, as well as the government, has ambitious plans related to additional spectrum for 5G in Pak-istan, with the expectations of significant inflows in terms of licence fee, and the launch of 5G in Pakistan will also give a political stride to the incumbent government.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1885246>

Ceremony marks first concrete for Pakistan unit

World Nuclear News, January 2, 2025

Senior officials from China and Pakistan witnessed the ceremonial start of construction at Chashma unit 5, days after Pakistan’s nuclear regulator issued a construction licence for the Hualong One unit. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission applied to the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) for the construction licence in April, along with the Preliminary Safety Assessment Report and licensing submissions covering design and operational aspects of nuclear safety, radiation protection, emergency preparedness, waste management and nuclear security.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/ceremony-marks-first-concrete-for-pakistan-unit>

D. Russia

China may have stopped Putin from using nuclear weapons, Blinken says

Abbey Fenbert

The Kyiv Independent, January 4, 2025

China may have talked Russian President Vladimir Putin out of deploying nuclear weapons amid Russia’s war against Ukraine, outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in an interview with the Financial Times (FT) on January 3. Beijing has emerged as Moscow’s leading ally and financial backer since the full-scale invasion of February 2022, though China has denied accusations of supporting

Russia's military efforts.

China may have exerted its influence over Russia to intervene when Putin was considering nuclear escalation, Blinken told the FT. "We have reason to believe that China engaged Russia and said: 'Don't go there,'" he said.

<https://kyivindependent.com/china-may-have-stopped-putin-from-using-nuclear-weapons-blinken-says/>

Russia plans to redeploy some arms, equipment from Syria to Libya, Ukraine's intel claims

Kateryna Denisova

The Kyiv Independent, January 3, 2025

Russia is planning to ship some military equipment and weapons from the Tartus naval base in Syria to Libya, Ukraine's military intelligence (HUR) claimed on January 3. Rebels overthrew the Russia-backed regime of former Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad in early December. Amid the fall of Assad's rule, Russia has reportedly begun withdrawing its naval and military assets from Syria. Some mercenaries of Russia's Africa Corps are stationed at the Tartus base on the Mediterranean coast, HUR said. Russia's Africa Corps reportedly emerged in 2023 and consists of over 2,000 soldiers and officers, as well as experienced mercenaries, many of whom previously served in the Wagner Group.

<https://kyivindependent.com/russia-planning-to-redeploy-some-weapons-military-material-from-syria-to-libya-ukraines-intel-claims/>

Russia promises retaliation after saying Ukraine fired US-supplied missiles

Al-Jazeera, January 4, 2025

Russia has pledged to retaliate after it claimed to have shot down eight US-supplied ATACMS missiles fired by Ukraine at its border region of Belgorod. "On January 3, an attempt was made from Ukrainian territory to launch a missile attack against the Belgorod region using US-made ATACMS operational-tactical missiles," the

Russian Ministry of Defence said on 4 January. "These actions by the Kyiv regime, which is supported by Western curators, will be met with retaliation," it added, saying all the missiles were shot down. The ministry said earlier that air defences downed eight ATACMS missiles in total, without saying when or where. Officials in Ukraine have not yet responded to the accusation. The Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) has a range of 300km (190 miles) and was first developed in the 1980s.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/4/russia-promises-retaliation-after-saying-ukraine-fired-us-supplied-missiles>

E. United States of America

US imposes export controls on biotech equipment over AI security concerns

Voice of America, January 15, 2025

On January 15 the U.S. Department of Commerce announced it would implement new export controls on certain biotechnology equipment, citing national security concerns relating to artificial intelligence and data science. The Commerce Department warned that China could use the biotech equipment's technology to bolster its military capabilities and help design new weapons using artificial intelligence. The department said the technology has many applications, including its ability to be used for "human performance enhancement, brain-machine interfaces, biologically inspired synthetic materials and possibly biological weapons."

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-imposes-export-controls-on-biotech-equipment-over-ai-security-concerns/7938147.html>

Biden plans to send \$8bn arms shipment to Israel

Ana Faguy

BBC News, 5 January 2025

The US Department of State has notified Congress of a planned \$8bn (£6.4bn) arms

sale to Israel, an American official has confirmed to the BBC. The weapons consignment, which needs approval from House and Senate committees, includes missiles, shells and other munitions. The move comes just over a fortnight before President Joe Biden leaves office. Washington has rejected calls to suspend military backing for Israel because of the number of civilians killed during the war in Gaza. In August, the US approved the sale of \$20bn in fighter jets and other military equipment to Israel. The latest planned shipment contains air-to-air missiles, Hellfire missiles, artillery shells and bombs, the US official said. A source familiar with the sale told the BBC on January 4 : "The president has made clear Israel has a right to defend its citizens, consistent with international law and international humanitarian law, and to deter aggression from Iran and its proxy organisations. "We will continue to provide the capabilities necessary for Israel's defence."

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpvne94v1rdo>

US approves \$3.6 billion missile sale to Japan

The Economic Times, January 3, 2025

The United States on Friday announced the approval of a \$3.6 billion sale of up to 1,200 advanced air-to-air missiles and related equipment to Japan, one of Washington's closest allies in Asia. China's increasingly assertive presence around disputed territories in the Pacific has sparked Japan's ire in recent years, leading Tokyo to boost security ties with the United States and other countries. "This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a major ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific region," the US defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-approves-3-6-billion-missile-sale-to-japan/articleshow/116924467.cms?from=mdr>

Air Force chief's parting warning: U.S. must transform Space Force to counter China

Sandra Erwin

Space News, January 13, 2025

Outgoing Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall delivered a stark warning to Congress in his final weeks in office: The United States risks falling behind China in the military space race unless it fundamentally transforms its space capabilities. In a report submitted to Congress last month and discussed during a Jan. 13 talk at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Kendall outlined an ambitious vision for both the Air Force and Space Force, emphasizing the need for dramatic expansion in space-based capabilities between now and 2050 to counter growing threats from China and Russia.

<https://spacenews.com/air-force-chiefs-parting-warning-u-s-must-transform-space-force-to-counter-china/>

The Trump administration should leverage private space stations to counter China

Kam Ghaffarian

Space News, January 13, 2025

We stand on the brink of a transformative era in space exploration: a shift from government-led to commercial-led activities off-planet. With this shift comes the need to recognize that the United States commercial space industry will play a pivotal role in maintaining the nation's leadership in low Earth orbit (LEO). And while NASA has long shouldered this responsibility, its commitment to pass the torch, to foster commercial partnerships and support commercial space development, is falling short. The new Trump administration has a unique opportunity to ensure that American leadership is not usurped by our fiercest geopolitical adversary, China. To maintain

U.S. leadership, the government must act with urgency to support a smaller number of companies most likely to achieve success in the critical foothold of LEO.

<https://spacenews.com/the-trump-administration-should-leverage-private-space-stations-to-counter-china/>

F. South Asia

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka nuclear test ban treaty field event to be postponed

Shihar Aneez

Economy Next, January 5, 2025

Sri Lanka has held a preparatory meeting for an Integrated Field Exercise under the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Defence Ministry said, though the international body in charge and the Foreign Minister said the event had been postponed. Sri Lanka announced in 2023 that it had ratified the agreement the country signed in 1996. Soon after signing the agreement in 1996, an auxiliary seismic station was set up in Palkelele, Kandy. Work under the treaty including on-site inspection (OSI) events are carried out by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, headquartered in Europe.

<https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-nuclear-test-ban-treaty-field-event-to-be-postponed-197984/>

Bangladesh

Can Bangladesh become a key player in the global semiconductor industry?

Md. Zahidur Rabbi

The Daily Star, January 7, 2025

Small chips which can control the flow of electricity hide in plain sight inside our smartphones, computers, laptops, televisions, and air conditioners — are in almost any electronic device that one can think of. These tiny marvels form the foundation of virtually every modern innovation, which means that with the

growing usage of electronic products, the semiconductor market - also called the 'chip market' - will scale up, offering tremendous potential for countries, businesses, engineers, and consumers alike.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/tech-startup/news/can-bangladesh-become-key-player-the-global-semiconductor-industry-3793731>

Russian worker found dead at Rooppur Power Plant

Ivan Kaitmazov

Dhaka Tribune, January 10, 2025

A Russian worker was found dead in a washroom of the residential Green City of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project in Pabna, police said on Friday. The deceased Ivan Kaitmazov, 40, was employed at the power plant as an electric circuit installer with the project's Skem Company, said Inspector (Investigation) Monirul Islam of Ishwardi Police Station. His body was discovered five days after his death in the washroom of Flat No 95, located on the 9th floor of Building 14, on January 9 around 7pm, police said. Kaitmazov's body was found with a rope tied around his neck. Green City doctor declared him dead at the scene. "Initially, it is suspected that he may have committed suicide," the inspector said. A post-mortem examination will provide further details, he added.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/370439/russian-worker-found-dead-at-rooppur-power-plant>

Afghanistan

Afghanistan "no threat to India": says Taliban a day after Dubai meeting

Kallol Bhattacharjee

The Hindu, January 10, 2025

The present-day Afghanistan "does not pose a threat to any nation", said the Taliban administration in Kabul on

Thursday (January 9, 2024). In a statement issued a day after the Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met with the 'Foreign Minister' of the so called 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA)', the Taliban expressed gratitude for Indian humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and informed that the Iranian port of Chabahar was discussed between the two sides during the talks held on Wednesday (January 8, 2024).

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/taliban-calls-india-a-significant-regional-partner-after-dubai-meeting/article69079599.ece>

G. East Asia

Japan

Japan's go-slow approach to selling high-speed rail globally

Kazuaki Nagata

The Japan Times, January 1, 2025

The shinkansen is an engineering wonder, an enduring symbol of Japan's postwar economic miracle and the country's technological prowess. It's still gee-wiz when so much is so ho-hum. The world just doesn't seem to want to buy it. Only one shinkansen system has ever been sold overseas, to Taiwan, even though bullet trains have become popular must-haves for nations trying to demonstrate their own advancement, or simply trying to move people faster. At 60, the shinkansen has been mostly stuck in Japan as competitors from Europe and China sell their own high-speed trains in an increasing number of countries.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/business/2025/01/01/tech/shinkansen-overseas-sales/>

Japan to map out defence export strategy within 2025

The Japan Times, January 5, 2025

Japan plans to map out a strategy within 2025 to boost defence equipment exports by enhancing the international competitiveness of its defence industry. The government aims to strengthen the industry's foundation by

helping expand its market reach, hoping to accelerate related efforts in cooperation with the private sector as U.S. President-elect Donald Trump is set to return to power soon with his "America First" policy. The strategy, which will present medium- and long-term targets for defence equipment exports, will be worked out through cooperation among government agencies, as well as the defence and trade ministries. Opinions of the industry will also be reflected in the strategy.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2025/01/05/japan/politics/japan-defence-exports-strategy/>

Japan's ratio of nuclear reactors Over 40 half global average, Yomiuri investigation Finds

The Yomiuri Shimbun

The Japan News, January 10, 2025

About 40% of nuclear reactors at nuclear power plants around the world in 2025 will have been operating for at least 40 years, according to an analysis by The Yomiuri Shimbun. However, only 20% of nuclear reactors in Japan will have been operating for this length of time, a situation experts put down to the 40-year limit on the operational lifespan of reactors imposed following the 2011 accident at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant and new regulatory standards that demand extremely strict safety measures. The findings of the Yomiuri analysis clearly illustrate that many nations – unlike Japan – have long been relying on their nuclear reactors to meet their power needs in the long term.

<https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/society/general-news/20250110-232426/>

Toyota backs Japanese space startup Interstellar to mass-produce rockets

The Economic Times, January 7, 2025

A Toyota research unit will invest in Japanese startup Interstellar Technologies (IST) to support mass production of its

rockets, the world's biggest carmaker group said on Tuesday, expanding its foray into the space sector. The announcement came after Toyota chairman Akio Toyoda's speech at the CES trade show in Las Vegas on Monday, where he gave updates to the company's experimental Woven City project, which was announced in 2020. "The future of mobility shouldn't be limited to just Earth, or just one car company," Toyoda said. "Speaking of the sky, we're exploring rockets, too."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/toyota-backs-japanese-space-startup-interstellar-to-mass-produce-rockets/articleshow/117008375.cms>

North Korea

North Korea says new hypersonic missile will 'contain' rivals

Kelly Ng

BBC News, January 7, 2025

North Korea has claimed it fired a new intermediate-range ballistic missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead which "will reliably contain any rivals in the Pacific region". The launch on Monday - Pyongyang's first in two months - came as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Seoul for talks with some of South Korea's key leaders. Hypersonic weapons are more difficult to track and shoot down, as they are able to travel at more than five times the speed of sound. North Korea is claiming their missile flew 12 times the speed of sound, for about 1,500km. South Korea's military earlier said the missile flew 1,100km before falling into the sea, adding that it "strongly condemns" this "clear act of provocation". North Korea has previously test-fired hypersonic missiles. Pictures published by KCNA showed that Monday's missile resembled one that was launched in April last year. But Pyongyang claims its new hypersonic missile features a new "flight and guidance control system" and a new engine made of carbon fibre.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crrwyp75g5xo>

DPR Korea's nuclear quest thwarts disarmament efforts, security council hears

UN News

UN Global perspective Human stories, January 8, 2025

Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for peacebuilding and political affairs, briefed ambassadors two days after the DPRK, commonly known as North Korea, fired off what it described as a new type of intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile (IRBM) loaded with a hypersonic glide vehicle. He cited an official statement from Pyongyang which said the missile flew in line with its predetermined flight trajectory at 12 times the speed of sound before landing in the sea. While the DPRK said the launch had no negative impact on the security of neighbouring countries, no airspace or maritime safety notifications were issued, he added. "The statement reported that the system can 'deal a serious military strike to a rival by effectively breaking any of its dense defensive barriers'", said Mr. Khiari, quoting from the document. He explained that hypersonic glide vehicles "travel at least five times the speed of sound and make evasive manoeuvres, making defence measures against the weapon much more difficult."

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1158826>

H. Southeast Asia

Indonesia

Indonesia pushes nuclear power option amid questions about cost, safety, renewable sources

Tria Dianti and Ismira Lutfia Tisnadibrata

Benar News, January 2, 2025

Indonesia has said it aims to start producing nuclear power by 2032 to meet electricity needs and attain environmental goals although serious concerns remain

about the cost, safety, and risk of setting up an atomic power plant. According to a senior official of American firm ThorCon's local unit, the company will be building the country's first nuclear power plant on Kelasa island in the Bangka Belitung archipelagic province off the southeastern coast of Sumatra. The thorium-fueled power plant would "make Indonesia the FIRST country in ASEAN to go nuclear officially," Bob Effendi, director of ThorCon PT Indonesia, said on social media.

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/indonesia-pushing-for-nuclear-power-amid-vital-concerns-01022025162900.html#:~:text=Indonesia%20has%20said%20it%20aims,up%20an%20atomic%20power%20plant.>

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto wish list includes BrahMos missiles

The Economic Times, January 2, 2025

Purchase of the BrahMos missile will be among key items on the agenda of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto during his proposed visit to India for the Republic Day later this month, ET has learnt. While an immediate purchase of state-of-the-art missiles may not be in offing due to the Prabowo government's strong focus on social sector projects in the first year in office and its budget constraints, the president is keen to import the supersonic cruise missile developed by BrahMos Aerospace, an Indo-Russian joint venture, sources said. Jakarta could be the third BrahMos customer from Southeast Asia after the Philippines purchased the missile system from India and Vietnam finalised a purchase deal.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indonesian-president-prabowo-subianto-wish-list-includes-brahmos-missiles/articleshow/116893842.cms?from=mdr>

Malaysia

As part of its deployment in the South China Sea, the aircraft carrier

USS Carl Vinson arrived in Malaysia

Por Redacción

Zona Militar, January 2, 2025

The USS Carl Vinson carrier strike group arrived in Malaysia a few days ago, marking a key stop in its deployment in the South China Sea. The entry of U.S. Navy vessels into Port Klang is significant, being the second visit by a U.S. aircraft carrier to Malaysia within just over a month since 2012. According to the U.S. Navy, the USS Carl Vinson carrier strike group includes the USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70) aircraft carrier, the Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Princeton (CG-59), and the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers USS Sterett (DDG-104) and USS William P.

<https://www.zona-militar.com/en/2025/01/02/as-part-of-its-deployment-in-the-south-china-sea-the-aircraft-carrier-uss-carl-vinson-arrived-in-malaysia/>

Philippines

PH denounces NoKor's continuing ballistic missile launch

Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Philippine News Agency, January 9, 2025

The Philippines denounced the continuing ballistic missile launches of North Korea following its latest test on Jan. 6, renewing its call to cease such activities. In a statement Thursday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said such actions undermine the peace and stability not only in the Korean Peninsula but the broader Indo-Pacific region. "The Philippines expresses serious concern and strongly denounces the continuing ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Such provocative actions undermine economic progress, peace, and stability in the Korean Peninsula and the Indo-Pacific region," it said.

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1241382>

Philippines to highlight country's tech strength at CES 2025

Ehda M. Dagooc

Philstar, January 7, 2025

The Philippines is set to power up the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2025 as it makes a highly anticipated comeback under the banner of PARTNER Philippines, a flagship initiative positioning the country as a global business hub. From January 7 to 10, 2025, eight premier Philippine tech companies will showcase innovations at the world's most influential tech event in Las Vegas, Nevada. CES 2025 offers a premier platform for the convergence of tech visionaries, brands, and disruptors. Highlighting the country's robust electronics industry, the Philippine delegation aims to demonstrate its capacity for cutting-edge technology and sustainable innovation.

<https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/cebu-business/2025/01/07/2412429/philippines-highlight-country-tech-strength-ces-2025>

Vietnam

Vietnam holds Russia talks - and sets up nuclear project steering committee

World Nuclear News, January 14, 2025

Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and his Russian counterpart Mikhail Mishustin have discussed enhancing their countries' Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, including in nuclear energy, as Hanoi sets up a steering committee to implement the Ninh Thuan nuclear power plant project. The two prime ministers signed a joint communique in Hanoi, which according to Russia's Tass news agency covered a comprehensive plan for cooperation between the two countries to 2030 and a memorandum of understanding between Rosatom and Electricity of Vietnam (EVN). In its report on the talks, the Vietnamese government said it would allow

the clear defining of "key areas of cooperation, spanning from economy, trade, energy, and science and technology, to education, culture and defence". It noted that bilateral trade had increased from USD3.3 billion in 2023 to USD4.57 billion in 2024, and added that there were 60,000 Vietnamese people living in Russia.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/vietnam-and-russia-expand-nuclear-energy-cooperation>

I. Central Asia

Kazakhstan

Kazakh president meets with top AI experts in Abu Dhabi

Dana Omirgazy

The Astana Times, January 15, 2025

President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held a meeting with experts in the field of artificial intelligence on Jan. 15 as part of his working visit to Abu Dhabi. Speaking to the meeting participants, Tokayev noted that AI is one of the key driving forces of modern progress and is capable of radically changing the economy. "Significant steps are being taken in Kazakhstan to create a solid foundation for the promotion of AI. The emphasis is being put on the formation of an institutional framework, infrastructure and the development of human capital. As part of the institutional structure, we are creating an International Advisory Council on Artificial Intelligence, which will work under my leadership. This council will become a strategic platform for dialogue and exchange of views with global experts, bringing together engineers, researchers and entrepreneurs to develop recommendations for national AI policy and strengthen international cooperation," said the President.

<https://astanatimes.com/2025/01/kazakh-president-meets-with-top-ai-experts-in-abu-dhabi/>

Kazakhstan's multivector nuclear diplomacy: Who will build its first nuclear power plant?

Eldaniz Gusseinov

The Astana Times, January 7, 2025

From October to December 2024, Kazakhstan's foreign policy agenda found itself at the epicenter of attention for several global players in the nuclear industry. Following a referendum in which over 70% of the country's citizens supported the idea of constructing Kazakhstan's first nuclear power plant (NPP), active diplomatic efforts began to form an international consortium. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced plans that the participants of the international consortium for the nuclear power plant construction in Kazakhstan will be determined in 2025 in a Jan. 3 interview. For the first time in a long while, Kazakhstan is emerging in the energy sector not as a seeker of technology but as a desirable partner, boasting extensive resource bases, a favorable investment environment, and enormous potential for the future nuclear energy market in Central Asia.

<https://astanatimes.com/2025/01/kazakhstans-multivector-nuclear-diplomacy-who-will-build-its-first-nuclear-power-plant/>

Kazakh-China fuel plant reaches nameplate capacity

World Nuclear News, January 7, 2025

The Ulba-FA LLP fuel assembly plant, which produces nuclear fuel for Chinese nuclear power plants, has reached its design capacity of 200 tonnes of low-enriched uranium in the form of fuel assemblies. The 200 tU Ulba-FA fuel assembly plant, which uses Framatome fuel assembly manufacturing technology and equipment manufactured in China, France and the USA, began operations in November 2021 and delivered its first batch of fresh fuel to China General Nuclear subsidiary CGNPC-URC in 2022. Ulba-FA is the only fuel production facility for nuclear power plants in Central Asia. The project is being

implemented by Kazatomprom, through its subsidiary Ulba Metallurgical Plant JSC, together with China General Nuclear Power Corporation.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/kazakh-china-fuel-plant-reaches-nameplate-capacity#:~:text=The%20Ulba%2DFA%20LLP%20fuel,the%20form%20of%20fuel%20assemblies.>

J. West Asia

Armenia

Armenia to participate in DEFEA 2025 international defence and security exhibition

Armenpress, January 10, 2025

The Ministry of High-Tech Industry is accepting applications for participation in DEFEA 2025 International Defence and Security Exhibition in Athens. DEFEA is a high-profile international defence exhibition where international companies present land, naval, aerospace, national and cyber security defence systems. DEFEA will take place 6th to 8th May 2025. It is organised under the auspices of the Hellenic Ministry of National defence, with the cooperation of the SEKPY - Hellenic Manufacturers of defence Material Association and is organised by ROTA Exhibitions Greece. Armenian defence and security companies interested in participation shall submit the application form to the ministry by 30 January. The ministry, together with selected applicants, will participate in the event under a unified pavilion.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1209172>

Armenia signs US pact, drifting further from Russia

The defence Post, January 14, 2025

The US signed an agreement to expand security cooperation with Armenia, which is seeking a greater distance from traditional ally Russia following a humiliating loss to Azerbaijan. The US and

Armenia formed a “strategic partnership commission” that will look for ways to build ties in areas from defence to the economy to democracy, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said. The US is “working with Armenia in the realm of security and defence, and in particular, to support its efforts to assert its independence and sovereignty over its own territory,” Blinken said at a signing ceremony with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan. “We are increasingly strong partners, and I think that is for the good of both of our countries, as well as the good of the region and beyond,” Blinken said.

<https://thedefencepost.com/2025/01/14/armenia-signs-us-pact/>

Deal for 307 ‘Made in India’ ATAGS guns likely by March: Indian Army chief

Bhaswar Kumar

Business Standard, January 14, 2025

The Indian Army aims to finalise the contract for procuring 307 Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) platforms—indigenously developed, state-of-the-art 155mm howitzers—at an estimated cost of Rs 8,000 crore by March 2025, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi announced during his annual press conference ahead of Army Day, observed on January 15. “If all goes as planned, we aim to sign the ATAGS contract before the end of this financial year,” General Dwivedi stated. In November, Kalyani Group’s Bharat Forge began contract negotiations with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for 307 ATAGS platforms. “After completion of the due technical evaluation process and commercial bids opening, the contract negotiation procedure between Bharat Forge Ltd and the Indian Ministry of Defence is currently underway,” the company informed the stock exchange.

https://www.businessstandard.com/external-affairs-defencesecurity/news/deal-for-307-made-in-indiaatags-guns-likely-by-march-indian-armychief-125011400777_1.html

Armenia to tow Indo-French artillery gun system

The Economic Times, January 15, 2025

India and France have developed the Trajan 155 mm towed artillery gun system. Armenia has chosen this system for its forces. Several subsystems of the gun were developed in India. Deliveries will happen in the coming months. Armenia is also getting Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launchers and Akash air defence systems from India. A major defence system, developed jointly by India and France, has bagged an export order from a third nation, showcasing the potential of codevelopment and Indian low-cost manufacturing.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/armenia-to-tow-indo-french-artillery-gunsystem/articleshow/117275292.cms?from=mdr>

Armenia defence minister considers proposal of mutual arms control with Azerbaijan useful

News.am, January 15, 2025

Armenian defence minister Suren Papikyan believes that the proposal by the Armenian side to Azerbaijan on mutual arms control will benefit the region. Papikyan noted about this at a press conference. When asked about the abovementioned proposal made recently by the prime minister of Armenia, Papikyan noted that there is international track record and standards in this matter. According to him, countries can control and limit weapons by mutual agreement. Papikyan believes that such an agreement and its implementation will be beneficial for the region, preventing from entering into an arms race. “Our [i.e. Armenia’s] task is to have a combat-ready army—as one of the guarantees of territorial integrity and sovereignty,” stressed the Armenian defence minister. When asked about the proposal to limit the use of weapons, the minister stated that in order to talk about

the mechanisms, they must be acceptable to everyone.

https://news.am/eng/news/861665.html#google_vignette

Azerbaijan

Bond between Pakistan and Azerbaijan shines as example of fraternal tie

Qaiser Nawab Azernews, January 13, 2025

In an era of shifting global alliances, relationships built on mutual respect, shared values, and genuine camaraderie stand the test of time. Among these, the bond between Pakistan and Azerbaijan shines as a true example of fraternal ties. This connection, deeply rooted in history, culture, and shared aspirations, has been further solidified by the visionary leadership of President Ilham Aliyev. His recent interview sheds light on Azerbaijan's achievements, its ambitions, and the path forward – offering lessons and inspiration for Pakistan as it seeks to strengthen this unique partnership. President Ilham Aliyev has played a transformative role in reshaping Azerbaijan into a nation of progress and influence.

<https://www.azernews.az/analysis/236378.html>

Cyprus

Cyprus eyes major upgrades to air and naval bases

Elias Hazou

Cyprus Mail, January 5, 2024

Possible American assistance in upgrading Cyprus' main airbase in Paphos and the naval base at Mari was discussed in Washington during President Nikos Christodoulides' official visit there last October, the Cyprus Mail has learned. So the president's remarks this week about the planned upgrades should be seen in that context, as well as being part of the United States-Republic of Cyprus road map for bilateral defence cooperation. Earlier in the

week, the president and then his defence minister spoke on the plans regarding the two bases. On the Andreas Papandreou facility in Paphos, Defence Minister Vasilis Palmas said the upgrades could cost around •14 million, and the upgrades to Mari naval base upwards of •200 million. For the former, the government may receive technical assistance from the Americans, and for the latter Palmas stated that efforts would be made to secure funding from the European Union.

<https://cyprusmail.com/2025/01/05/cyprus-eyes-majorupgrades-to-air-and-naval-bases>

Georgia

SpaceX Director highlights Georgia's "strategic role" in digital development at Global

Forum Agenda.ge, January 14, 2025

Stephen Nelson, the Satellite Policy Director at Elon Musk's SpaceX space technology company, has emphasised Georgia's geographic position as a "bridge between Europe and Asia", underscoring its potential as a transport and logistics hub along the Trans-Caspian trade corridor in comments during an Internet Governance Global Forum session organised by the Georgian National Communications Commission in Saudi Arabia, the body said on Tuesday. The country at the crossroads of Europe and Asia has become a natural link between the global East and West. Due to its strategic location, Georgia has historically served as a conduit between these regions, and today its geographical advantage is becoming increasingly important", he said. Highlighting the strategic position of Georgia, Nelson said it was "necessary to mention the innovative role" of the Commission as the first telecommunications regulatory body in the Caucasus region to license Starlink's satellite internet provision.

<https://agenda.ge/en/news/2025/42398#gsc.tab=0>

Iran

India, Iran discuss Chabahar port development and trade relations

Business Standard, January 3, 2025

India and Iran on Friday carried out a comprehensive review of their ties including the joint development of the Chabahar port, ways to boost trade and economic engagement and possible cooperation in agriculture and some other sectors. At the 19th India-Iran Foreign Office Consultations held in Delhi, the Iranian side is learnt to have requested New Delhi to explore ways to resume procurement of Iranian crude oil. India stopped the procurement of crude oil from Iran in mid-2019 following sanctions imposed on the Persian Gulf nation by the United States. The Iranian delegation at the talks was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht Ravanchi while the Indian side was headed by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri. Ravanchi met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and the discussions focused on bilateral matters and current regional challenges.

https://www.businessstandard.com/external-affairs-defencesecurity/news/india-iran-discuss-chabaharport-development-and-trade-relations125010301233_1.html

Iran warns Italy ties to suffer if it yields to US demands on drone suspect

Business Standard, January 4, 2025

Iran warned Italy that it risked harming good bilateral relations if it bows to the political and hostile goals of the United States by detaining an Iranian engineer on a US warrant in connection with a drone attack in Jordan last year that killed three American troops. Tehran issued the warning to the Italian ambassador to Iran, Paola Amadei, who was summoned to the foreign ministry, the official IRNA news agency reported. The meeting took place a day after Italy summoned the Iranian ambassador over the detention of an Italian journalist in Tehran. The back-to-back diplomatic summonses underscored how a three-nation

tangle over the fates of the two prisoners was getting ever more complicated for Italy, which is a historically of Washington but maintains traditionally good relations with Tehran. Mohammad Abedini was arrested by Italian authorities at Milan's Malpensa airport on December 16 on a US warrant.

https://www.business-standard.com/worldnews/iran-warns-italy-ties-to-suffer-if-it-yields-to-us-demands-on-drone-suspect125010400011_1.html

New air defence systems installed at Iran's sensitive sites

Mehr News, January 6, 2025

The commander of Khatam al-Anbia Air defence Base said on Monday that a series of new and secret air defence systems have been stationed near the country's sensitive centres. Brigadier General Ghader Rahimzadeh stated on Monday that the air defence forces from the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) will stage a joint large-scale war game in the coming days. He noted that the Army and IRGC air defence units have stationed a series of new systems, which are unknown to the enemies, near the sensitive centers of Iran, adding that the equipment will be employed in the upcoming military exercise. The forces participating in the drill will be practising the skills they have been trained in during the past year, the general stated, noting the exercises are designed considering the enemies' movements and the Iranian air defence needs.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/226561/New-air-defence-systems-installed-at-Iran-s-sensitive-sites>

Iran doubles number of military drills as it prepares for Donald Trump

Financial Times, January 6, 2025

Iran's armed forces have nearly doubled the number of annual winter exercises this year as the Islamic Republic seeks to

project strength following a series of regional military blows by Israel and the election of Donald Trump in the US. The spokesperson for Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Brigadier General Ali Mohammad Naeini, announced on Monday that about 30 land, air and maritime drills had commenced across six western and southern provinces and would continue until mid-March. These exercises – in joint operations between the ideologically motivated guards and the conventional army – were reportedly designed to counter “new threats”, he said, without providing specifics. “The number of drills has almost doubled this year compared to last year, in response to the evolving threat landscape,” Naeini told the Financial Times on the sidelines of a press briefing in Tehran. “These exercises are significantly larger in scope and sophistication, featuring new weaponry and expanded participation of brigades engaged in realistic operations.”

<https://www.ft.com/content/a027684f50cf-454f-af8d-97c092cc886d>

Will Iran build a nuclear bomb while Trump is in power in the US?

Maziar Motamedi

Al-Jazeera, January 11, 2025

Donald Trump's second term as president of the United States promises Iran a rocky road that could lead to different outcomes when it comes to its relations with the West, analysts say. US leaders, along with Israelis, have been openly discussing military strikes on top Iranian nuclear facilities and critical infrastructure like power plants and oil and petrochemical facilities. Iran's leaders, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, remain defiant, and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have held large-scale military exercises, predominantly focusing on defending sensitive sites. For more than two decades, Iran's relationship with the West has largely been defined by developments in the country's nuclear programme and efforts to stop it from getting a bomb. Tehran has consistently maintained that it does not seek a weapon of mass destruction.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/11/will->

iran-go-for-a-nuclear-bomb-whiletrump-is-in-power-in-the-us

Iran unveils daunting laser-powered air defence system

Mehr News Agency, January 13, 2025
Iran's Army has unveiled a state-of-the-art laser-powered air defence system during its Air defence Forces' military maneuvers in the country's western and northern areas. The equipment, named Seraj (Light), was wheeled out on Sunday as the defence forces were drilling near the country's Fordow uranium enrichment facility. The Army identified the system as only one of the layers providing the site with air defence services. Observers have described the apparatus as “daunting,” pointing to Western states' expressing surprise concerning the phenomenon. The exercises, during which the Air defence Forces conducted various reconnaissance, interception, confrontation, and destruction operations against mock enemy forces, featured the deployment of various other defence systems too. The forces carried out airstrikes using missiles as a means of defending the strategic and sensitive areas under their jurisdiction.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/226836/Iran-unveils-daunting-laser-powered-air-defence-system>

Iran unveils new thunder/tondar mobile air defence missile system amid rising tensions with Israel

Global Defence News, January 13, 2025

In January 2025, during the Iranian air defence military exercise dubbed Eqtedar 1403, the Iranian Armed Forces unveiled the Thunder (Tondar) mobile air defence missile system. This latest addition to Iran's air defence arsenal is designed to intercept and destroy aerial targets at high altitudes, a critical component of the country's growing defence capabilities. The unveiling of the Thunder system occurs against the backdrop of escalating tensions with Israel, which has long been considered a major adversary, especially regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions and

regional activities. Iran's focus on strengthening its Indigenous air defence systems has been fueled not only by the threat of military action from Israel but also by the continuing effects of international sanctions that limit the country's access to foreign military technology.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/armynews/2025/iran-unveils-new-thundertonar-mobile-air-defence-missile-systemamid-rising-tensions-withisrael?isExternal=true>

Iran tests laser air defence system amid potential Israeli threats to nuclear sites

Army Recognition, January 14, 2025

As tensions persist over the possibility of Israeli attacks targeting Iran's nuclear facilities, Tehran has undertaken largescale military exercises to strengthen the defence of its critical infrastructure. On January 12, 2025, Iran unveiled a new laser-based air defence system, named "Seraj," during exercises conducted in the western and northern regions of the country. This advanced system, designed to protect sensitive sites such as the Fordow uranium enrichment facility, has garnered significant attention. The system operates by emitting a high-energy photon beam capable of intercepting and disabling aerial targets through rapid heating, leading to structural failure. Although specific technical details of the Seraj system remain undisclosed, reports from Mehr News Agency describe it as formidable. Integrated into the multilayered air defence systems surrounding Iran's nuclear installations, the Seraj is regarded as a key component in deterring potential strikes from Israel or the United States. Laser technology offers unique advantages as a cost-effective and efficient solution for neutralizing aerial threats, including drones and missiles, while minimizing collateral damage.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/armynews/2025/iran-tests-laser-air-defencesystem-amid-potential-israeli-threats-tonuclear-sites>

Iran's navy unveils its first signals intelligence ship

Arab News, January 15, 2025

Iran's navy received its first signals intelligence ship on Wednesday, semiofficial Tasnim news organization reported, a few days after the country's army took delivery of 1,000 new drones. The Zagros is a new category of military vessel equipped with electronic sensors and the ability to intercept cyber-operations and conduct intelligence monitoring, Tasnim said. "The Zagros signals intelligence ship will be the watchful eye of Iran's navy in the seas and oceans," Navy Commander Shahram Irani said. Earlier this month, Iran started two-month-long military exercises which have already included war games in which the elite Revolutionary Guards defended key nuclear installations in Natanz against mock attacks by missiles and drones. he military drills and procurement come at a time of high tensions with arch-enemy Israel and the United States under incoming US president Donald Trump.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2586507/middle-east>

Iran's deterrence doctrine: From horizontal resilience to vertical strength

Dr Umud Shokri

Middle East Monitor, January 15, 2025

Iran is moving from a horizontal to a vertical stance in its deterrent strategy, which is a major change. The decrease in its regional influence and the waning effectiveness of its proxy networks have forced a strategic recalibration, which is reflected in this change. Iran has historically projected strength outside of its boundaries using a horizontal deterrent strategy known as "forward defence" or "mosaic defence", which included the employment of proxies, ballistic missiles, naval guerrilla tactics and cyber

technologies. It aimed to neutralise threats before they reached its territory by keeping its defensive depth. Recent events, however, have highlighted this policy's shortcomings, leading to a shift toward a more centralised and technologically driven deterrence posture.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/2025-01-15-irans-deterrence-doctrine-from-horizontal-resilience-to-vertical-strength/>

Iraq

Al-Sudani: We aspire to see the UK as a strategic partner in our ambitious projects

Iraqi News Agency, January 13, 2025

Prime Minister Mohamed Shia Al-Sudani revealed the objectives of his visit to London, noting that the relationship between Iraq and the United Kingdom has witnessed major transformations over recent decades, he stressed that the United Kingdom's exports to Iraq exceeded one billion dollars in 2024. The Prime Minister said, in an article published on the Telegraph newspaper and followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "This visit reflects my government's commitment to strengthening the strategic partnership between Iraq and the UK, a partnership deeply rooted in history and one that aspires to broader horizons of economic, trade, and cultural co-operation." He added "Meeting His Majesty the King holds great symbolic significance as it underscores the enduring historical ties between our two countries and highlights the importance we place on deepening dialogue and co-ordination on issues of security, stability and development in our region."

<https://ina.iq/eng/37685-al-sudani-weaspire-to-see-the-uk-as-a-strategic-partner>

Iraq and UK reach mega-infrastructure deals in reset of ties

Tony Gamal-Gabriel

Al-Monitor, January 14, 2025

Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia alSudani met Tuesday with his UK

counterpart Keir Starmer, securing a £12.3 billion (\$15 billion) trade and investment package during a UK visit hailed as a "new era" in ties. The Iraqi leader's trip to London, during which he also met King Charles III, focused on security, migration and infrastructure, with the two leaders agreeing a strategic "defence relationship" to deepen cooperation. It comes more than 20 years after Britain took part in the US-led invasion which left the country reeling from conflict for years. Starmer — who entered Downing Street last July — is eager to reset ties with a host of capitals, from Beijing to Brussels, and keen to seal any deals to boost Britain's ailing economy. Beijing to Brussels, and keen to seal any deals to boost Britain's ailing economy.

<https://www.almonitor.com/originals/2025/01/iraq-and-ukreach-mega-infrastructure-deals-reset-ties>

Israel

US plans \$8 billion arms sale to Israel, US officials say

The Economic Times, January 5, 2025

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration has notified Congress of a proposed \$8 billion arms sale to Israel, two U.S. officials said, with Washington maintaining support for its ally whose war in Gaza has killed tens of thousands. The deal would need approval from House of Representatives and Senate committees and includes munitions for fighter jets and attack helicopters as well as artillery shells. The package also includes small-diameter bombs and warheads, according to the sources. One source familiar with the package said Biden had been clear that Israel had a right to defend its citizens "consistent with international law and international humanitarian law," and that the U.S. would continue to provide the capabilities necessary for Israel's defence.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-plans-8-billion-arms-sale-to-israel-axios-reports/articleshow/116930174.cms?from=mdr>

Defence Ministry secures NIS 1b. deals with Elbit systems to boost military selfsufficiency Jerusalem

Post, January 7, 2025

The defence Ministry signed two major agreements with Elbit Systems, totalling approximately NIS 1 billion, as part of a strategic effort to strengthen the IDF's selfsufficiency and operational readiness. The deals, signed by defence Ministry DirectorGeneral Maj.-Gen. (res.) Eyal Zamir and Elbit Systems CEO Bezhael Machlis are expected to bolster the country's domestic defence manufacturing capabilities. The agreements are part of an overarching initiative inspired by lessons learned from recent military conflicts, the ministry said. It added that the contracts were the result of in-depth planning aimed at securing long term supply stability for critical defence resources.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article836425>

Israel signs deals with defence firm Elbit to make bombs domestically

Steven Scheer

Zawya, January 7, 2025

Israel's Defence Ministry had signed deals worth around \$275 million with the country's largest domestic private arms maker Elbit ESLT.TA to make heavy bombs and raw materials needed for defence, reducing dependence on imports. "These strategic agreements are crucial for enhancing the Israel Defence Force's operational endurance and force build-up capabilities," it said, describing the need to reduce dependence on imports as "a central lesson" from the war in Gaza. Under one agreement, Elbit will supply the military with thousands of heavy air munitions. The second deal would establish a plant to produce raw materials previously sourced mainly from abroad. The ministry did not specify the raw materials but suggested they were used to make munitions. "Today, we are laying the foundations for expanding manufacturing independence in two critical areas for the IDF's operational sustainability - domestic production of heavy air munitions and establishing a national raw materials

plant," said Eyal Zamir, director general of the defence ministry.

<https://www.zawya.com/en/world/middle-east/israel-signs-deals-with-defence-firm-elbit-to-make-bombs-domestically-bzrkbp7>

Israel's ministry of defence creates AI and autonomy administration

Tamara Rozouvan

Janes, January 8, 2025

The new administration, under the Directorate of Defence Research & Development (DDR&D), will aim to "advance AI and autonomous capabilities within Israel's defence establishment", the MoD said on 2 January. This comes as Israel continues its drive in autonomous weapons development. In December 2024 the DDR&D completed several contracts with Israeli company Elbit Systems totalling around USD40 million to supply the Israel defence Forces (IDF) with "advanced drones and autonomous systems". The contract likely includes small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that use Elbit's Legion-X autonomous mission system, which underpins its HuntAir-X system for co-ordinating swarms of surveillance UAVs. Elbit Systems unveiled what it called a "tactical airdrop munition" called TerminaThor in early December 2024 that can carry up to six M66 bomblets, 1.2 kg munitions developed by Elbit, which have been modified for use by UAVs. A human operator has to be in the loop before engaging with the target, Janes understands.

<https://www.janes.com/osintinsights/defence-news/air/israels-ministryof-defence-creates-ai-and-autonomyadministration>

An 'Iron Dome' to stop wildfires: Israeli startup's 'FireDome' is based on missile defence Sharon Wrobel

Follow Times of Israel, January 12, 2025

In the midst of war, as sirens were blaring almost every day to signal barrages of

incoming rockets, Israel's Iron Dome air defence system tracked and intercepted missiles to help protect and save lives. For Gadi Benjamini, the Iron Dome in January last year inspired the idea behind the development of a system to fight wildfires and prevent them from spreading. "Similar to a war to fight wildfires, there are the firefighters, which are the infantry. There are airplanes, but darkness makes it harder to fly during the night and also during strong winds, and what we develop is a kind of artillery support," FireDome co-founder and CEO Gadi Benjamini told The Times of Israel. "The biggest challenge in the climate tech area are wildfires, and more specifically, the reaction to wildfires, because many companies focus on detection." "What we develop is a system to enhance firefighters' abilities and capabilities to address more fires simultaneously, like spot fires and embers and to reach places where sometimes they can't, due to different logistics constraints that they have," he added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israelistartup-takes-inspiration-from-iron-dome-for-system-to-stop-wildfires/>

Kuwait

UK Defence Senior Advisor concludes first visit to Kuwait

Times Kuwait, January 15, 2025

Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren OBE MA, the United Kingdom's Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East, said "Defence collaboration is a cornerstone of the UK and Kuwait's long-standing friendship, and I am incredibly grateful for the warm welcome that has been afforded to me on my first visit here as DSAME." Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren OBE MA, the United Kingdom's Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East (DSAME), has wrapped up his two-day visit to Kuwait, marking his first since being appointed to the role in February 2024.

<https://timeskuwait.com/uk-defencesenior-advisor-concludes-first-visit-to-kuwait/>

Lebanon

Lebanese, French army chiefs discuss military cooperation

Yusuf Alioglu

Anadolu Agency, January 4, 2025

Lebanese Army Commander Gen. Joseph Aoun held discussions with French Army Chief of Staff General Thierry Burkhard, focusing on ways to enhance military cooperation between the two countries. The meeting took place during Burkhard's visit to Beirut, according to Lebanon's National News Agency. The talks between Aoun and Burkhard addressed "the general situation in Lebanon, ways to strengthen cooperation between the two armies, and continuing support for the Lebanese Army under the current circumstances," the agency reported. France is a member of the quintet committee overseeing the implementation of the cease-fire between Lebanon and Israel, alongside the US and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Under the terms of the cease-fire, Israel is required to withdraw its forces south of the Blue Line – a de facto border – in phases, while the Lebanese army is to deploy in southern Lebanon within 60 days. Data from the Lebanese Health Ministry indicates that since Israel's onslaught against Lebanon began on Oct. 8, 2023, at least 4,063 victims have been killed, including women, children, and health workers, while 16,664 others have been injured.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middleeast/lebanese-french-army-chiefs-discussmilitary-cooperation/3441915>

Lebanese army enters southern town of Naqoura after Israeli withdrawal

Naim Berjawi

Anadolu Agency, January 6, 2025

The Lebanese army entered the town of Naqoura in the Tyre district in southern Lebanon, the third town reclaimed

following Israel's withdrawal. According to the state-run National News Agency, the army vehicles, backed by UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) troops, entered Naqoura at 3.20 pm local time. The agency reported that a Lebanese army bulldozer was seen in the convoy. It comes after a meeting of the Five-Party Committee on Cease-fire Monitoring in Ras Naqoura, attended by US envoy Amos Hochstein. On Dec. 31, the Lebanese army announced its entry into Shama, the second town vacated by Israeli forces after Khiam on Dec. 12. The withdrawals align with the cease-fire agreement implemented on Nov. 27.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middleeast/lebanese-army-enters-southern-town-of-naqoura-after-israeli-withdrawal/3443291>

Indigenously manufactured vehicles to reach Lebanon for use by Indian contingent in UNIFIL

The Economic Times, January 8, 2025

In a boost for 'Make in India' initiative, 62 indigenously manufactured vehicles are set to reach Lebanon for utilisation by the Indian contingent deployed in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), defence sources said on Wednesday. The fleet comprises high mobility troop carriage vehicles, utility vehicles (one tonne and 2.5 tonne), medium and light ambulances, fuel bowzers and recovery vehicles, they said. Until now, the Indian troops serving in the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon were operating the vehicles provided by the United Nations. These vehicles were sourced from other countries, a defence source said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indigenously-manufactured-vehicles-to-reach-lebanon-for-use-by-indian-contingent-in-unifil/articleshow/117057904.cms?from=mdr>

Oman

India, Oman looking at finalising comprehensive trade, investment deal soon

Business Standard, January 15, 2025

India and Oman are looking at sealing a broad trade and investment pact this year

that will cut tariffs on each other's goods and boost the overall trade basket in line with renewed vigour in the relations, especially in the economic sphere. The negotiations for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) gained new momentum after Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik travelled to India over a year back. Omani Commerce Minister Qais bin Mohammad Al-Yousef told PTI that Muscat is hopeful of concluding the ambitious trade pact with India this year, which is expected to significantly expand the two-way trade and investment ties between the two countries. There has been a major upswing in economic ties between the two countries in the last few years with India emerging as one of the top trading partners of Oman. India was the fourth largest market for Oman's crude oil exports for the year 2023 after South Korea. India was also the third largest market for Oman's non-oil exports in 2023 after Saudi Arabia.

https://www.businessstandard.com/external-affairs-defence/security/news/india-oman-looking-at-finalising-comprehensive-trade-investment-deal-soon125011500552_1.html

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia Eyes Purchase of 100 KAAN Fighter Jets from Turkey

defence Mirror, January 1, 2025

Saudi Arabia is reportedly pursuing a deal to acquire 100 KAAN fighter jets from Turkey as part of its Vision 2030 initiative. The discussions regarding the deal took place during a meeting in Istanbul last week between Haluk Gorgun, head of the Turkish Defence Industries Directorate, and Saudi Assistant Defence Minister Khalid Bin Hussein Al-Bayari. The Commander of the Royal Saudi Air Force, Turki Bin Bandar Al-Saud, was also present, as per reports. Saudi Arabia's interest in the KAAN jets likely stems partly from the U.S. refusal to supply the Kingdom with F-35 aircraft over its purchase of Russian S-400 missile systems. Analysts view this as a signal from Riyadh to Washington that it has alternative

sources for military technology. Saudi Arabia reportedly sees the KAAN jets as a stopgap measure until it secures more advanced aircraft in the future.

https://www.defencemirror.com/news/38515/Saudi_Arabia_Eyes_Purchase_of_100_KAAN_Fighter_Jets_from_Turkey

Saudi Arabia seeks MK 54 torpedoes in \$78.5m US FMS sale

Naval Technology, January 6, 2025

The US State Department has authorised a potential foreign military sale (FMS) to Saudi Arabia, which includes MK 54 MOD 0 Lightweight Torpedoes and associated support, with an estimated cost of \$78.5m. The defence Security Cooperation Agency has officially notified Congress of the potential transaction. The sale encompasses 20 MK 54 MOD 0 Lightweight Torpedo units. This MK 54 MOD 0, an anti-submarine weapon for surface ships and aircraft, combines existing technology with “advanced” digital signal processing from commercial sources. This integration aims to enhance performance while reducing lifecycle costs. Additionally, continuous software updates are provided through the Torpedo Advanced Processor Build process.

<https://www.navaltechnology.com/news/saudi-arabia-seeksmk-54-torpedoes/>

Syria

How Syria’s rebels developed lethal drone technology

The Economic Times, December 5, 2024

Syria’s Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) has undergone a remarkable transformation from a beleaguered jihadist faction to a well-organised militant force with advanced weaponry and tactics. Leveraging local manufacturing and tactical innovation, the group now poses significant challenges to the Assad regime. HTS’s evolving strategy, rooted in Western military doctrines and a disciplined command structure, has enabled it to expand its influence, capture advanced weapons, and defy adversaries despite international sanctions and a volatile region. Just five years ago, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

(HTS), Syria’s most prominent Islamist rebel group, was a beleaguered jihadist force fighting for survival after relentless assaults by the Russian-backed Assad regime. Today, HTS operates as a polished proto-military force in its stronghold of Idlib province. Its transformation is marked by a centralised command structure, specialised combat units, advanced weaponry, and locally developed manufacturing capabilities, as reported by the Financial Times. This shift underscores HTS’s evolving role in Syria’s prolonged conflict and its challenge to regional stability.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/how-syrias-rebels-developed-lethal-drone-technology/articleshow/116008411.cms?from=mdr>

Turkiye

Turkiye’s technological leap in 2024: A year of space, defence

Gokhan Ergocun

Anadolu Agency, January 1, 2025

Turkiye’s technological landscape in 2024 was characterised by a focus on selfsufficiency in defence technologies, advancements in quantum and AI computing, entering the space field, and a push toward sustainable and digital economic growth. These developments not only enhance the country’s technological sovereignty but also position it as an emerging player in global tech innovation on the global scale. As a recent significant step, Turkiye’s first quantum computer was commissioned in cooperation with the defence firm Aselsan and the TOBB University of Economics and Technology in Ankara in November.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/sciencetechnology/turkiyes-technological-leapin-2024-a-year-of-space-defence/3439519>

Turkiye enters 2025 after pivotal year for defence, space progress

Daily Sabah, January 2, 2025

Turkiye’s technology and defence landscape last year was characterized by

a series of key developments focusing on self-sufficiency, such as advancements in quantum and AI computing, enhancing the push in the space field, and milestones such as the maiden flight of homegrown fighter jet. These developments not only enhance the country's technological sovereignty but also position it as an emerging player in global tech innovation on the international scale. As a recent significant step, Türkiye's first quantum computer was commissioned in cooperation with the defence firm Aselsan and the TOBB University of Economics and Technology in Ankara in November. The quantum computer will enable the country to build its quantum computer market.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defence/turkiye-enters-2025-after-pivotal-year-for-defence-space-progress>

Turkish navy starts construction of three new warships

Cem Devrim Yaylali

defence News, January 3, 2025

The Turkish navy has begun the new year by announcing the construction of three warships based on domestic designs: a submarine, an aircraft carrier and the lead ship of the highly anticipated TF-2000 airdefence destroyer series. The shipbuilding programs are closely linked to the political and naval ambitions of Turkey, honing the country's long-range force projection and strike capabilities, in particular. The new work brings the total number Turkish naval ships under construction to 31, according to service officials. The additions are meant to bolster the country's local shipbuilding chops, a key element in the government's preference for building weapons at home, versus importing them. The first weld for the National Submarine (MÝLDEN) was completed at Gölcük Naval Shipyard. Due to the general secrecy surrounding submarine operations, the Turkish Navy has shared only limited details about the project.

<https://www.defencenews.com/global/europe/2025/01/03/turkish-navy-startsconstruction-of-three-new-warships/>

Turkiye begins work on MUGEM carrier, TF-2000 destroyer, MILDEN Sub

Naval Technology, January 3, 2025

The Turkish Ministry of Defence has revealed the commencement of works on MUGEM indigenous aircraft carrier, the TF-2000 anti-air warfare (AAW) destroyer, and the MILDEN indigenous submarine. The ministry held ceremonies to mark the start of construction of MUGEM and TF2000 at Istanbul Naval Shipyard, while MILDEN's event was held at Golcuk Naval Shipyard. The events were attended by Turkish Navy officials and representatives from the shipyards, according to the video post on the MoD's X account. At the SAHA EXPO 2024, the Turkish Navy displayed a mock-up of the MUGEM aircraft carrier.

<https://www.navaltechnology.com/news/turkiye-navyvessels/>

Buoyed by drones, NATO deals, Turkey defence exports hit record \$7.1B

Ezgi Akin

Al-Monitor, January 3, 2025

Turkey's defence industry exports surpassed \$7.1 billion last year, the head of Turkey's defence Industry Agency (SSB) announced Friday, marking a significant milestone. "In 2024, our defence and aviation industry exports, including NATO and service exports, reached a new record by increasing by 29%, reaching \$7.154 billion," SSB Chairman Haluk Gorgun wrote on X. The figure exceeded Turkey's 2024 defence export target of \$6.5 billion. Gorgun also noted that Turkey exported defence products to 180 countries but did not provide further details. Turkey is poised to further increase its defence exports. A leading international arms fair held in October resulted in export agreements totaling \$4.6 billion. Turkey's NATO ally Spain agreed to purchase 24 Hurjet jet trainers, produced by Turkish

Aerospace Industries (TUSAS), under a memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries in December.

<https://www.almonitor.com/originals/2025/01/buoyeddrones-nato-deals-turkey-defence-exportshit-record-71b>

Turkiye ranks 11th in countries exporting defence products

Dilara Aslan

Daily Sabah, January 15, 2025

Turkiye left behind a fruitful year, full of critical developments, in its defence industry, developing its product portfolio, mass productions, R&D as well as innovation, Presidency of defence Industries (SSB) head Haluk Gorgun said. Speaking at a meeting with media representatives in the capital Ankara, G rg n said: "We exported to 185 countries in 2024. Our export figures exceeded \$7 billion. "We expect to place among the countries with two-digit (billion dollar) export figures within two years," G rg n said, indicating that about 1,600 out of 3,500 defence industry companies have managed to make exports so far. Gorgun pointed out that most agreements in 2024 were made with European countries. Accordingly, five of the 10 countries receiving the most exports were European. "2024 was also the year we made the most project applications to NATO. We will have more cooperation with the alliance in 2025." He elaborated that he would meet with the NATO secretary-general and high-level officials of several countries.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defence/turkiye-ranks-11th-in-countriesexporting-defence-products>

United Arab Emirates

International Defence Conference 2025 to kick off February 16

Emirates News Agency, January 6, 2025

The International Defence Conference (IDC) 2025 will take place on 16th February under the theme "Defence Reimagined: Innovation, Integration and Resilience". The event coincides with the International

Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) and Naval Defence & Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX) 2025. Organised by ADNEC Group in strategic partnership with the Ministry of Defence and in collaboration with the Tawazun Council, IDC serves as a global platform bringing together key decisionmakers, experts, and leaders from around the world. The event aims to promote collaboration among nations, institutions, and defence companies by discussing key global issues and threats and presenting innovative solutions to overcome future challenges.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/bhjxu01-international-defence-conference-2025-kick-off>

UAE's tech industry set to achieve record growth in 2025

The Economic Times, January 11, 2025

The UAE's technology industry is expected to grow significantly in 2025, thanks to digital innovation and the adoption of new technologies. The nation's supportive environment, infrastructure, and regulations make it a global tech hub. Key areas of growth include AI, cloud computing, and blockchain. This will attract global and emerging tech companies, boosting market revenues. The UAE's technology industry is set to achieve record growth in 2025, driven by significant expansion in digital innovation and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies. This growth further solidifies the UAE's stature as a global hub for innovation and an international beacon for tech companies. The UAE has strengthened its position on the global map as an innovation-driven environment and an exceptional destination for the expansion of both global and emerging tech companies. This has been made possible through its sustainable investments in digital infrastructure development and the establishment of supportive regulations and policies that create a favourable climate for innovation and growth.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/uaes-tech-industry-set-to-achieve->

[record-growth-in-2025/articleshow/117144489.cms?from=mdr](https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2025/1/10/10-1-2025-uae-india)

UAE and India forge strategic collaboration in polar research

United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 10, 2025

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Republic of India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), in a monumental step aiming to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership and close historic relations, and support mutual efforts in a field of critical global importance. The MoU between the Emirates Polar Program and the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) of India was signed during the 15th session of the UAE-India Joint Committee Meeting. The signing ceremony was officiated by H.E. Abdulla Balalaa, Assistant Minister for Energy and Sustainable Affairs and Deputy Chair of the UAE Polar Mission Steering Committee, and Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) of India.

<https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2025/1/10/10-1-2025-uae-india>

ADSB launches first vessel in 'FALAJ 3' Programme

Emirates News Agency, January 14, 2025

EDGE Group entity Abu Dhabi Ship Building (ADSB) celebrated a significant milestone with the launch of the first FALAJ 3 class vessel during a ceremony held at the ADSB shipyard. This launch marks a pivotal phase in fulfilling the contract with the Ministry of Defence (MOD), paving the way for an advanced fleet of vessels designed to enhance national defence capabilities. Under the patronage of Rear Admiral Pilot Staff Major General Sheikh Saeed bin Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, Commander of the UAE Naval Forces, the ceremony brought together dignitaries, military officials, and senior EDGE and ADSB leadership to commemorate the vessel's debut.

<https://www.wam.ae/article/bhopalyadbs-launches-first-vessel-falajprogramme>

Yemen

Yemen's Houthis claim missile attack on power plant in northern Israel

Mohammed Sameai

Anadolu Agency, January 5, 2025

Yemen's Houthi group said Sunday that it targeted a power plant in Haifa in northern Israel amid escalation over Tel Aviv's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. Military spokesman Yahya Saree said a hypersonic ballistic missile was fired at the Orot Rabin power station in southern Haifa. He said that the missile hit its target, without providing any details. The spokesman vowed to continue attacks against Israeli targets until Israel halts its offensive on Gaza and ends its blockade on the enclave. The Israeli army, for its part, confirmed that its air defence intercepted a missile from Yemen before entering Israeli airspace. The Houthis have targeted Israeli cargo ships or those associated with Tel Aviv in the Red Sea with missiles and drones in a show of support with the Gaza Strip, where over 45,700 people have been killed in Israel's genocidal war since October 7, 2023.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middleeast/yemen-s-houthis-claim-missileattack-on-power-plant-in-northernisrael/3442137>

K. Europe

Ukraine

Denmark, Norway to buy \$183 million in arms for Kyiv from Ukrainian manufacturers in 2025

Kateryna Hodunova

The Kyiv Independent, January 9, 2025

Denmark and Norway are expected to spend 178 million euros (\$183 million) on arms purchases from Ukrainian manufacturers in 2025, Ukraine's defence Ministry said on January 9. Denmark has reserved 135 million euros (\$139 million) for further purchases under the "Danish model," buying arms for Ukraine directly

from Ukrainian arms manufacturers. Norway is expected to contribute another 43 million euros (\$44 million) to this initiative. The Ukrainian Armed Forces have already received weapons worth almost 538 million euros (\$554 million) through direct purchases from Ukraine's defence industry, according to the ministry.

<https://kyivindependent.com/denmark-norway-expected-to-purchase-weapons-worth-183-million-from-ukrainian-manufacturers-in-2025/>

U.S. Saw an Opportunity While It Pushed to Arm Ukraine

John Ismay

The New York Times, January 9, 2025

Just weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian troops began running out of ammunition for their aging Soviet-era artillery. The United States was soon scouring foreign arsenals around the globe for the right kinds of shells as part of its pledge to support Kyiv against its much better equipped adversary. But the Pentagon knew it would never be able to get enough, as fewer nations made Russian heavy artillery ammunition and many Cold War stockpiles of them had become unusable with age.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/09/us/politics/ukraine-russia-weapons-coalition.html>

Ukraine enhances automation and efficiency in its drone technology

The New Voice of Ukraine, January 3, 2025

Ukraine's efforts to deploy "killer robots" on the battlefield in 2025 aim to increase automation as drones take on more roles traditionally performed by pilots, including flight and target strikes, according to The Wall Street Journal. This shift could help Ukraine counter Russia's aggression, even if U.S. weapons supplies slow or stop under the administration of President Donald Trump.

<https://english.nv.ua/nation/ukraine-s-key-defence-in-2024-compact-drones-against-russian-ground-attacks-50478800.html>

IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

International Atomic Energy Agency, January 5, 2025

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) staff reported hearing loud blasts near Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) today, coinciding with reports of a drone attack on the plant's training center, marking yet another threat to nuclear safety at Europe's largest NPP, according to Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi. The IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya (ISAMZ) team stationed at ZNPP reported hearing two loud explosions coming from outside the perimeter of the site at approximately 12:45 and 15:45. For now, the IAEA has not yet been able to confirm any impact. The IAEA team also reported hearing machine gun fire coming from the site on multiple occasions.

United Kingdom

UK government considering role for SMRs in AI expansion

World Nuclear News, 13 January 2025

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said AI (artificial intelligence) was a "defining opportunity" and outlined plans for specific 'AI Growth Zones' to be established to speed the build-out of AI data centres, "with enhanced access to power and support for planning approvals". The first of these is set to be at Culham, near Oxford, home to the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), the JET project and a host of nuclear fusion companies and researchers."The government and UKAEA will seek a private-sector partner who would develop one of the UK's largest AI data centres, beginning with 100 MW of capacity and with plans to scale up to 500 MW. The pilot would pioneer innovative public-private models to deliver secure, dedicated public sector computing capacity, supporting key national priorities. A process to identify a private sector partner will commence in

Spring 2025, alongside steps to select further AI Growth Zones,” the government says.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/uk-government-considering-role-for-smrs-in-ai-expansion>

Ministers pledge record £410m to support UK nuclear fusion energy

The Guardian, January 15, 2025

The UK government has promised a record £410m investment in nuclear fusion which could help construct a world-leading fusion power project on the site of an old coal plant in Nottinghamshire. Ministers hope the funding, which will be made available for the coming financial year, will support the rapid development of the UK fusion energy sector and deliver “a future powered by limitless clean energy”. The funding will include the development of the prototype power plant at the now decommissioned West Burton coal-fired power plant in Nottinghamshire by 2040, and repurposing the UK’s pioneering fusion machine at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy in Oxfordshire.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/16/ministers-pledge-record-410m-to-support-uk-nuclear-fusion-energy>

UK says N.Korea’s ‘unlawful’ ballistic missile launches ‘another breach’ of multiple UN resolutions

Burak Bir

Anadolu Ajansi, January 6, 2025

Britain on Monday criticized North Korea’s first ballistic missile launches of 2025, saying they violated multiple UN Security Council resolutions. North Korea’s “ballistic missile launch on 6 January is another breach of multiple UN Security Council resolutions,” a spokesperson for the UK Foreign Office said in a statement. They said unlawful ballistic missile launches continue to destabilize the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula. “The UK strongly urges (North Korea) to stop such provocations, return to dialogue and take credible steps towards denuclearisation,” the spokesperson added. The statement came

after North Korea fired at least seven short-range ballistic missiles early Tuesday off its eastern coast following the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) last October.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/uk-says-nkorea-s-unlawful-ballistic-missile-launches-another-breach-of-multiple-un-resolutions/3443255>

PM plans to ‘unleash AI’ across UK to boost growth

Liv McMahon, Zoe Kleinman & Charlotte Edwards

BBC News, 14 January 2025

Artificial intelligence presents a “vast potential” for rejuvenating UK public services, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said on Monday. In a speech setting out the government’s plans to use AI across the UK to boost growth and deliver services more efficiently, Sir Keir said the government had a responsibility to make AI “work for working people”. The AI Opportunities Action Plan is backed by leading tech firms, some of which have committed £14bn towards various projects, creating 13,250 jobs, the government said. But the government faces questions over how much time and money will be needed to make its vision a reality, amid concerns over borrowing costs and the falling value of the pound.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crr05jyjkzko>

Prime Minister sets out blueprint to turbocharge AI

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

Govt. of UK, January 12, 2025

Artificial intelligence will be unleashed across the UK to deliver a decade of national renewal, under a new plan announced today (13 January 2025). In a marked move from the previous government’s approach, the Prime Minister is throwing the full weight of Whitehall behind this industry by agreeing to take forward all 50 recommendations

set out by Matt Clifford in his game-changing AI Opportunities Action Plan. AI is already being used across the UK. It is being used in hospitals up and down the country to deliver better, faster, and smarter care: spotting pain levels for people who can't speak, diagnosing breast cancer quicker, and getting people discharged quicker. This is already helping deliver the government's mission to build an NHS fit for the future.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-sets-out-blueprint-to-turbocharge-ai>

UK can be 'AI sweet spot': Starmer's tech minister on regulation, Musk, and free speech

Michael Savage

The Guardian, January 11, 2025

With the NHS still struggling, a prisons crisis still teetering and Britain's borrowing costs soaring, there are few easy jobs going in Keir Starmer's cabinet at present. But even in such difficult times, the task of convincing Silicon Valley's finest to help make Britain a leader in the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution – all while one leading tech boss uses the Labour government as a regular punching bag and others ostentatiously move closer to Donald Trump – is among the most challenging. This is the mission that has fallen to Peter Kyle, the science and technology secretary, who has become an important figure in Starmer's cabinet.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/jan/11/uk-can-be-ai-sweet-spot-starmer-tech-minister-on-regulation-musk-and-free-speech>

Germany

Dismantling of Brunsbüttel vessel progresses

World Nuclear News, January 6, 2025

Work to segment and package the steel reactor pressure vessel head of the Brunsbüttel nuclear power plant in Germany has been completed in less than two months, Vattenfall announced. The

metal will now be recycled. Weighing almost 70 tonnes and with a diameter of more than 6 metres, the lid of the reactor pressure vessel was heavier than any of its internal components, Vattenfall noted. Like the internal components, it has now been dismantled and packed. The cover dome was made of 8-centimetre-thick heat-resistant steel and was coated on the inside with a 6-millimetre-thick stainless steel plating to protect it from corrosion. The flange had a wall thickness of 42 centimetres. The cover dome was cut into eight segments, with each segment weighing 2.8 tonnes. Six pieces, each weighing 7.7 tonnes, were cut from the surrounding flange.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/dismantling-of-brunsbuttel-vessel-progresses>

Iran to hold nuclear talks with France, UK, Germany on January 13: Report

Al-Jazeera, January 1, 2025

The next round of nuclear talks between Iran and France, the United Kingdom and Germany will take place in Geneva in January, Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency reports, citing the country's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi. "The new round of talks between Iran and three European countries will be held in Geneva on January 13," Gharibabadi said on January 1. Iran held talks with the three European powers about its disputed nuclear programme in November. Those discussions, the first since the presidential election in the United States, came after Tehran was angered by a Europe-backed resolution that accused Iran of poor cooperation with the United Nations nuclear watchdog. Tehran reacted to the resolution by informing the IAEA watchdog that it plans to install more uranium-enriching centrifuges at its enrichment plants.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/1/iran-to-hold-nuclear-talks-with-france-uk-germany-on-january-13-report>

Renewables set to dominate as UK and Germany hit a clean energy high in 2024

Fortune, January 6, 2025

Britain and Germany produced their cleanest electricity on record last year, with renewables reaching record highs, according to data released January 2. Renewable energy like wind and solar accounted for 59 percent of production in Germany, while in Britain it stood at 45 percent, the data showed. In Germany, where 2024 marked the first year without nuclear energy, the share of renewables increased to 59 percent from 56 percent the previous year, the country's energy regulator said in a statement. Wind power retained its place as the nation's main electricity producer at 31.9 percent of the total, while the share of coal continued to decrease to less than 23 percent from 26 percent in 2023, it said. The share of natural gas increased to 13.2 percent of the total, up from 8.6 percent.

<https://fortune.com/europe/2025/01/06/renewables-dominate-uk-germany-clean-energy-high-2024/>

France

French auditor warns of challenges for EPR2 programme

World Nuclear News, January 14, 2025

The French nuclear industry is "far from ready and must still overcome many challenges" to construct six EPR2 reactors in France, according to the country's state audit office, the Cour des Comptes (Court of Auditors). In February 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that the time was right for a nuclear renaissance in France, saying the operation of all existing reactors should be extended without compromising safety and unveiling a proposed programme for six new EPR2 reactors, with an option for a further eight EPR2 reactors to follow. The first three pairs of EPR2 reactors are proposed to be built, in order, at the Penly, Gravelines and Bugey sites. Construction is expected to start in 2027. The cost was originally estimated at EUR51.7 billion (USD53 billion), but this was revised to EUR67.4 billion in 2023. EDF

is expected to make a final investment decision on the project next year.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/french-auditor-warns-of-risks-to-epr2-programme>

PM Modi to attend AI action summit in France on February 10-11: French president Macron

The Economic Times, January 11, 2025

Prime minister Narendra Modi will be attending the artificial intelligence (AI) Action Summit in France from February 10 to 11, in what will be a significant visit to the European nation, announced French president Emmanuel Macron on January 10, according to Reuters. While addressing the 30th Conference of Ambassadors, president Macron said, "France will be hosting the AI Summit on February 10-11. A summit for action, as we call it. This summit will allow for an international conversation on AI. There will be prime minister Modi, who will move up to a major visit in our country as we want to forge a dialogue with all powers on AI." The French president emphasised the importance of AI as a global conversation, stating that it will include countries such as the US, China, and India, as well as, the countries from the Gulf, which have significant roles in developing and regulating AI technologies.

Newcleo joint venture aims to develop Slovakia units

World Nuclear News, January 15, 2025

France-based Newcleo has signed framework agreements with Slovakian companies JAVYS and VUJE which could lead to up to four of its 200 MWe lead-cooled fast reactors at the Bohunice site. The agreement with JAVYS - the state-owned radioactive waste management company - establishes a joint venture tasked with "developing and constructing an Advanced Modular Reactor based nuclear power plant of up to four LFR-AS-200 reactors at the Jaslovské Bohunice V1 site in the Slovak Republic". It will also aim to develop a nuclear fuel supply route

with French government support, “with the ultimate goal of the reprocessing and use of Slovak Republic spent nuclear fuels and enables long-term multi-recycling as part of a closed fuel cycle”. The agreement with engineering company VUJE establishes a framework for technical and commercial cooperation, aiming to “leverage VUJE’s decades of experience in nuclear power plant construction and commissioning, and position Slovak nuclear expertise at the forefront of the next generation of nuclear technology deployment worldwide”.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/newcleo-joint-venture-aims-to-develop-slovakia-plant>

Italy

Controversy in Italy over potential deal with Musk’s SpaceX

The Economic Times, January 7, 2025

The prospect of a cybersecurity deal between Rome and Elon Musk’s SpaceX sparked controversy in Italy on January 6, with the government of Giorgia Meloni denying that a contract had been signed. Financial news agency Bloomberg said Italy was in “advanced talks” with SpaceX for a deal to provide secure telecommunications for the nation’s government in a contract that could be worth 1.5 billion euros (\$1.56 billion). In a message on his X social media platform, Musk said he was “ready to provide Italy the most secure and advanced connectivity.”

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/controversy-in-italy-over-potential-deal-with-musks-spacex/articleshow/117008011.cms?from=mdr>

Spain

In 2024 nuclear generation was again a fundamental pillar of the electrical system, adding strength and stability

Foro Nuclear, January 15, 2025

Last year Spanish nuclear power plants generated a net total of 52,055.26 GWh, 19.57% of the country’s total net electricity production. With a net installed capacity of

7,117 MW –significantly lower than that of other technologies and accounting for only 5.44% of the total– nuclear energy ranked as the second-largest source of electricity production in Spain, according to provisional data from Red Eléctrica analyzed by Foro Nuclear. Once again, nuclear energy was the technology with the highest equivalent full-power operating hours, specifically 83.27% of the total hours. In 2024, nuclear plants generated electricity for 7,314 hours out of the year’s 8,784 hours. “This constant production reflects the guarantee of supply offered by nuclear energy day after day and year after year,” stated Ignacio Araluce, president of Foro Nuclear. “The electrical system needs stable baseload sources with consistent production, like nuclear, which provides stability, robustness, and firm capacity to the grid, regardless of external conditions,” he added.

<https://www.foronuclear.org/en/press-room/press-releases/in-2024-nuclear-generation-was-again-a-fundamental-pillar-of-the-electrical-system-adding-strength-and-stability/>

Three SMRs selected for evaluation in ship propulsion study

World Nuclear News, January 7, 2025

The initial phase of Norway’s NuProShip initiative - which is evaluating Generation IV small modular reactor technologies for their viability in commercial shipping applications - has concluded, with three SMR technologies being selected for further evaluation in the next phase. The NuProShip project is being funded by the Research Council of Norway. Alongside Norwegian shipbuilder VARD, the project is supported by prominent partners, including the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, class society DNV, the Norwegian Maritime Administration, ship owner Knutsen Tankers, and the Spanish nuclear consultancy IDOM. VARD said its primary contribution involves integrating these reactor systems into various vessel types, assessing the technical challenges to

enable the future commercial use of nuclear-powered ships.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/three-smrs-selected-for-evaluation-in-ship-propulsion-study>

L. The Americas

Argentina

Angra 2 agreement targets radiopharmaceutical production

World Nuclear News, January 13, 2025

Operator Eletronuclear and the Brazilian Society of Nuclear Medicine have signed an agreement aimed at producing radioisotopes at Angra nuclear power plant's second unit. The memorandum of understanding will see the two sides collaborating on feasibility studies for the production of lutetium-177, which is a beta-emitting radioisotope used in targeted radionuclide therapy for the treatment of prostate and other cancers, destroying the cancer cells while leaving healthy cells unaffected. Production has already been tested and implemented at Bruce 7 in Canada and is being implemented at Cernavoda 2 in Romania. At present lutetium-177 has to be imported by Brazil, at a very high cost. The intention is that if the scheme is successful a similar process would also be carried out in the future if and when Angra 3 is operating. Eletronuclear President Raul Lycurgo said: "We will put the brains of both institutions to work together to serve the health of Brazil and Brazilians. If there is a possibility of adapting our energy generation process in Angra 2, we will undoubtedly do it."

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/brazils-angra-2-set-to-produce-radiopharmaceuticals>

Brazil

Brazil to get nuclear physical security training centre

World Nuclear News, January 9, 2025

A proposed centre providing training for specialists in physical protection systems for nuclear and radioactive installations and in transport operations has been selected for funding by Brazil's Funding Agency for

Studies and Projects. The Nuclear Physical Security Training Centre will be housed at the Institute of Nuclear Engineering (Portuguese: Instituto de Engenharia Nuclear (IEN/CNEN)) and will be a facility, with partnerships across the country, region and with global agencies. The target is to have the centre fully operational within three years. Cristóvão Araripe Marinho, director of the institute, said: "The project foresees the installation of the most modern equipment and physical security systems, enabling practical classes to be taught, which constitutes an important differentiator."

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/brazil-set-for-new-nuclear-physical-security-training-centre>

Tripling global nuclear energy capacity is in reach – if the world seizes the moment

Amy Drake

Atlantic Council, January 15, 2025

In December 2023 at COP28 in Dubai, 22 countries and more than 120 companies pledged to triple global nuclear energy capacity by 2050 to support the goal of reaching net-zero emissions. The declaration reflects a growing consensus around nuclear energy's role in climate action and spurred a momentous year for the industry. Following further commitments announced at COP29, it will be crucial for industry to mobilize engagement as it looks ahead to this year's COP30 in Brazil. In the first global stocktake of progress towards the 2015 Paris Agreement, the 198 signatory countries called for accelerating deployment of low-emission technologies—including nuclear energy—to meet climate goals. The stocktake marked the first formal recognition of nuclear energy as a solution to reduce emissions in a COP agreement, reflecting a recent paradigm shift in how nuclear power is viewed among climate negotiators.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/energysource/tripling-global-nuclear-energy-capacity-is-in-reach-if-the-world-seizes-the-moment/>

Mexico

Mexico launches SECIHTI to Boost Science, Technology, Innovation

Diego Valverde

Mexico Business News, January 7, 2025

On Jan. 1, 2025, the Ministry of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation (SECIHTI) formally began operations, headed by Rosaura Ruiz. This new federal government agency aims to centralize and strengthen the science, technology, innovation, and humanities sectors in Mexico to position the country as a global benchmark in these key areas. "Our working model will be collaborative, inter-institutional, and multidisciplinary, seeking to place Mexico at the scientific and technological forefront," says Ruiz, stressing that this comprehensive approach is essential to advance strategic projects that address both national and global challenges. SECIHTI's main areas of action include fostering technological innovation, improving knowledge systems, and boosting satellite observation and drones for areas such as natural resource management and environmental monitoring.

<https://mexicobusiness.news/tech/news/mexico-launches-secihti-boost-science-technology-innovation>

Grants Energy announces launch of New Mexico ISR project

World Nuclear News, January 8, 2025

Heathgate Resources affiliate Grants Energy is eyeing uranium production from the Grants Precision ISR project, 20 miles from the community of Grants, in the early 2030s. The project scope includes both Cibola and McKinley counties, where Gulf Mineral Resources Corporation identified and validated a large uranium deposit in the 1960s and 1970s including the Mt Taylor deposit, which was conventionally mined between 1980 and 1990. Mt Taylor was purchased by General Atomics affiliate Rio Grande Resources in 1991, according to information from the New Mexico Environment Department. Commercial inquires and contracting will be managed

by General Atomics' Nuclear Fuels Corporation, who told World Nuclear News that uranium production is planned to commence in the early 2030s with first permits and licence applications due over the next 12-24 months.

<https://world-nuclear-news.org/articles/grants-energy-announces-launch-of-new-mexico-isr-project>

M. Oceania

Australia

Australia's Telstra seeks to partner with Accenture for AI boost

The Economic Times, January 15, 2025

Telstra Group on Wednesday proposed a partnership with U.S.-listed Accenture to improve the operations of Australia's top telco through artificial intelligence (AI), as part of its ongoing vendor consolidation strategy. The proposed joint venture is part of a broader strategy to streamline Telstra's vendor relationships, reducing its data and AI providers from 18 to just two joint ventures. This consolidation follows a similar effort in Telstra's Software Engineering & IT division last year, which cut its vendors from over 400 to two strategic partners. The JV aims to improve Telstra's business processes by introducing advanced AI systems that help teams work more efficiently, the two companies said in a joint press release. It also intends to develop specialized AI tools and training programs to enhance the skills and AI knowledge of Telstra's workforce.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/artificial-intelligence/australias-telstra-seeks-to-partner-with-accenture-for-ai-boost/articleshow/117250703.cms?from=mdr>

NASA jet touches down in Australia to watch Starship re-entry

Jake Nelson

Australian Aviation, January 7, 2025

A NASA Gulfstream V has arrived in Australia to monitor an upcoming SpaceX

Starship mission. N95NA, or NASA5, touched down in Brisbane on Monday before flying out to Perth on Tuesday ahead of the launch on 11 January. The aircraft will watch the re-entry of the Starship, which is expected to splash down off the coast of Western Australia. "Hosting a NASA jet wasn't on our bingo card for 2025, but you never know what will turn up at Brisbane Airport," airport spokesperson Peter Doherty said.

<https://australianaviation.com.au/2025/01/nasa-jet-touches-down-in-australia-to-watch-starship-re-entry/>

N. Africa

Egypt

Permit granted for used fuel storage facility at El Dabaa nuclear plant

World Nuclear News, January 7, 2025

Egypt's Nuclear Power Plants Authority has been given the go ahead by the Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Authority to establish a storage facility for used nuclear fuel at the El Dabaa nuclear power plant site. The Nuclear Power Plants Authority (NPPA) submitted its application for a construction permit to Egypt's Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Authority (NRRA) in June. A series of technical meetings followed, as well as a site inspection visit at the start of December. NPPA said the application "was supported by comprehensive documentation in accordance with Article 13 of the Executive Regulations of Law No 7 of 2010 regulating nuclear and radiological activities" with NRRA issuing the permit at its meeting on 31 December. Amged El-Wakeel, NPPA Chairman, announcing the grant of the permit, said it was a major milestone towards the country's first nuclear power plant.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/permit-granted-for-used-fuel-storage-facility-at-egypts-el-dabaa-nuclear-plant>

Carrying up to 30 missiles, Egypt proudly displays its locally-made 'Raad 200' rocket launcher

Egypt Independent, January 14, 2025

The Egyptian Cabinet's Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) on January 10 shared a video showcasing an advanced rocket launcher manufactured entirely in Egypt. The "Raad 200" rocket launcher displayed in the video is able to carry 30 rockets and overcome rough roads. An engineer in the research and design sector at Military Factory 200, Atef al-Azab Tawfiq, said that the launcher is designed and manufactured entirely in Egypt, and weighs 18.5 tons, at 6.5 meters long, 2.8 meters wide. Local media reports also revealed details on the latest armored personnel carrier produced by the Egyptian army. The IDSC published a video from inside the armored vehicles production and repair plant showcasing the "Sinai 200" armored vehicle, the latest armored personnel carrier produced in Egypt.

<https://egyptindependent.com/video-carrying-up-to-30-missiles-egypt-proudly-displays-its-locally-made-raad-200-rocket-launcher/>

Kenya

Legal Support to Nuclear Newcomer Countries in Africa

Judit Silye

International Atomic Energy Council, January 8, 2025

The IAEA conducted two legislative assistance missions in Africa in November, supporting Kenya and Uganda in strengthening their national nuclear legal frameworks and advancing adherence to relevant international legal instruments. Supporting Kenya's Efforts Toward a Comprehensive Nuclear Legal Framework Kenya has been seeking additional IAEA support in developing its national nuclear

legal framework to facilitate the implementation of its national nuclear programme and research reactor project. In response to a request from the Government of Kenya via the Nuclear Power and Energy Agency (NUPEA), the IAEA conducted two national workshops in Nairobi from 12 to 14 November 2024. These workshops focused on Kenya's nuclear security legal framework, nuclear law and the international legal instruments related to nuclear safety, security, safeguards and civil liability for nuclear damage. Over 60 participants attended, including representatives from the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution and the Bar Association.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/legal-support-to-nuclear-newcomer-countries-in-africa>

Libya

Russia is making a fragile pivot from Syria to Libya. The West should beware falling into a new trap.

Emadeddin Badi

Atlantic Council, January 2, 2025

The fall of Damascus last month marks a shift of historic proportions. Once a centerpiece of Russia's reassertion on the

global stage, Syria now starkly illustrates the fragility of alliances built on coercion and convenience. Bashar al-Assad, propped up for years by Russian airpower, mercenaries, and propaganda, could not withstand the combined weight of internal dissent and external recalibration. For Moscow, this collapse is not merely a setback but an opportunity to adapt—an effort already underway as its forces and equipment pivot southward in the Mediterranean. Russia's relocation of troops and hardware to eastern Libya signals a strategic recalibration, with Libyan National Army (LNA) Commander Khalifa Haftar waiting in Cyrenaica, hedging his bets. All eyes are on him as Western states court his family members to deter them from enabling a Russian naval pivot in the Mediterranean.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/russia-syria-haftar-libya/>

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