

INTERNATIONAL

World Food Programme says food supply chains 'falling apart' in Ukraine

A World Food Programme (WFP) official said on Friday that food supply chains in Ukraine were collapsing, with a portion of infrastructure destroyed and many grocery stores and warehouses empty. "The country's food supply chain is falling apart. Movements of goods have slowed down due to insecurity and the reluctance of drivers," Jakob Kern, WFP Emergency Coordinator for the Ukraine crisis, told a Geneva press briefing by videolink from Poland. He also expressed concern about the situation in "encircled cities" such as Mariupol, saying that food and water supplies were running out and that its convoys had been unable to enter the city. WFP buys nearly half of its wheat supplies from Ukraine and Kern said that the crisis there since the Russian invasion on February 24 had pushed up food prices sharply. "With global food prices at an all-time high, WFP is also concerned about the impact of the Ukraine crisis on food security globally, especially hunger hot spots," he said, warning of "collateral hunger" in other places. The agency is paying \$71 million a month extra for food this year due to both inflation and the Ukraine crisis, he said, adding that such an amount would cover the food supplies for 4 million people. "We are changing suppliers now but that has an impact on prices," he said. "The further away you buy it, the more expensive it gets."

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Egypt displays recently discovered ancient tombs in Saqqara

Egypt on Saturday displayed recently discovered, well-decorated ancient tombs at a Pharaonic necropolis just outside the capital Cairo. The five tombs, unearthed earlier this month, date back to the Old Kingdom (1570 B.C. and 1069 B.C.) and the First Intermediate Period that spanned more than a century after the collapse of the Old Kingdom, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. "All of those five tombs are well-painted, well-decorated. Excavations did not stop. We are planning to continue our excavations. We believe that we can find more tombs in this area," Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities told reporters at the site. The tombs were found near the Step Pyramid of Djoser, in the Saqqara Necropolis, 24 kilometers (15 miles) southwest of Cairo. The Saqqara site is part of a sprawling necropolis at Egypt's ancient capital of Memphis that includes the famed Giza Pyramids as well as smaller pyramids at Abu Sir,

Dahshur and Abu Ruwaysh. The ruins of Memphis were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1970s. In recent years, Egypt has heavily promoted new archaeological finds to international media and diplomats in the hope of attracting more tourists to the country.

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China develops laser weapon that could destroy satellites in space

Researchers in China have developed a microwave machine "Relativistic Klystron Amplifier (RKA)", that could jam or destroy satellites in space. The device can generate a wave burst measuring 5-megawatts in the Ka-band, a portion of the electromagnetic spectrum increasingly used for both civil and military purposes, citing Asia Times, Taiwan News reported. Although not powerful enough to shoot targets out of the sky from the ground, the RKA can be mounted onto satellites, which could then be used to attack enemy assets in space by burning out their sensitive electronics. Directed Energy Weapons (DEW) are systems that use concentrated electromagnetic energy rather than kinetic energy to damage or destroy enemy equipment and/or personnel in a physical conflict. Although China denies the RKA is a Directed Energy Weapon (DEW), if the system were built at scale, it could send beams strong enough to rip through metallic materials moving at speed, reported Taiwan News. Space is becoming an increasingly hotly contested geopolitical arena. This comes after recent revelations China tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic glide vehicle that flew through low-orbit space in August last year. Responding to the news in November, Thomas Karako, a senior fellow at the Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), said the US needs to deploy space-based sensors to counter the Chinese military's new missiles, reported Taiwan News. Moreover, the recent conflict in Ukraine could also birth a greater risk of conflict in space and endanger satellites. The collaboration Russia and Western countries enjoyed in space for decades may be ending fast with the Russian space director recently threatening Moscow might decline to correct the course of the International Space Station, which would bring it crashing down to earth, reported Taiwan News. In addition, last year Russia destroyed one of its own legacy satellites which created mass debris in space.

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