

WORLD
world**Sri Lanka province under curfew after first riot death**

Sri Lankan security personnels stand guard in front of the Jumha mosque after a mob attack in Minuwangoda

Colombo, Sri Lanka

A Sri Lankan province north of the capital was under indefinite curfew yesterday after the first death in anti-Muslim riots in the wake of the Easter terror attacks, police said.

A nationwide night curfew was relaxed in all areas except the North-Western Province (NWP) where a Muslim man was killed by a mob on Monday, police said, in a violent backlash against last month's bombings.

The 45-year-old died of injuries sustained when a crowd stormed his carpentry workshop in the Puttalam district in the NWP and slashed him, official sources said.

Elsewhere in the province, mobs torched dozens of Muslim-owned shops, vandalised homes and mosques in a day of rioting.

"The curfew in the NWP will be continued until further notice," spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said. "Security forces are assisting police who have been ordered to use maximum

force to contain the violence." Police said they fired in the air and used tear gas at several places to deter people attempting to attack mosques.

In the adjoining district of Gampaha, mobs smashed Muslim-owned restaurants and at least one garment factory, official sources and residents said.

In an address to the nation on Monday night, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said a countrywide curfew was declared to prevent unidentified groups orchestrating communal violence.

"At several places in the North-Western Province these groups created trouble, damaged property," Wickremesinghe said.

"Police and security forces have contained the situation, but these (unidentified) groups are still trying to create trouble."

Wickremesinghe said the unrest would hinder investigations into the April 21 attacks that targeted three Christian churches and three luxury hotels, killing 258 people and wounding nearly 500.

'Coastguard' takes over Hodeida port

AFP | Hodeida, Yemen

Yemen's Huthis have handed over security of key Red Sea ports to the "coastguard" but much work remains to remove military equipment, the UN said yesterday.

The pullback is part of a hard-won truce agreement struck in Sweden in December between Yemen's Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Huthis.

But the government has accused the insurgents of merely handing over the ports to their own forces in different uniforms.

The UN said Sunday it had been monitoring the withdrawal of the Huthi rebels from the Hodeida, Saleef and Ras Issa terminals.

A UN team was there on Tuesday to verify the redeployment.

Its head, General Michael Lollesgaard, welcomed the handover "of the security of the ports to the coastguard", according to a UN statement.

"There is still a lot of work to be done on the removal of the manifestations, but cooperation has been very good.

"UN teams will continue to monitor these initial steps in an impartial and transparent manner."

Huthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam wrote on Twitter that they "have completed their commitment in implementing the first phase



Michael Anker Lollesgaard, Head of the United Nations Mission in support of the Hodeida Agreement (UNMHA), speaks during a press conference to welcome the handover of the port of Hodeida

of redeployment".

Last year's deal was hailed as a breakthrough that offered the best chance so far of ending the war in Yemen, where a coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates is fighting on the government's side.

The agreement stipulates a full ceasefire, followed by a withdrawal of rival forces from the city of Hodeida and its surroundings.

But although the violence has largely stopped in Hodeida, there have been intermittent clashes and the promised redeployment of the warring parties away from the front lines has failed to materialise.

Lollesgaard said Yemen's warring parties were continuing to express their commitment to the truce deal.

"Full implementation of this agreement is critical for return-

ing peace and stability to Yemen, and ensuring effective humanitarian access into the country where million continue to be in need of life-saving assistance," he said.

The UN Security Council is due to hear a briefing on Hodeida on Wednesday amid increased Gulf tensions following a Huthi-claimed drone attack on two pumping stations on a major pipeline.

The attacks were "a response to the aggressors continuing to commit genocide" against the Yemeni people", Abdulsalam tweeted.

The 1,200-kilometre (750-mile) pipeline reportedly hit on Tuesday serves as an alternative for Saudi crude exports if the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf were to be closed.

Five dead, one missing in floatplanes collision in Alaska

Washington, United States

Five people died and one person was missing Monday after two floatplanes collided mid-air in Alaska while carrying passengers from a cruise ship's sightseeing expedition, officials said.

The two aircraft -- a Beaver floatplane and an Otter floatplane -- had been carrying 16 passengers from the Royal Princess cruise ship when they crashed near Ketchikan around 1:00 pm (2100 GMT), Princess Cruises said in a statement circulated by US media.

NASA dubs 2024 Moon mission 'Artemis,' asks for \$1.6 billion

Washington, United States

NASA's next mission to the Moon will be called Artemis, the US space agency announced Monday, though it's still looking for the money to make the journey happen by its accelerated 2024 deadline.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said the agency would need an additional \$1.6 billion to meet the deadline. "This additional investment, I want to be clear, is a downpayment on NASA's efforts to land humans on the Moon by 2024," he said.

US announces \$160 mn 'peace' funding payment to Colombia

Bogota, Colombia

The US government announced Monday it will provide \$160 million in funding to Colombia to help implement the historic peace accord signed between the state and now-disarmed FARC rebels.

The funds have been allotted for the "implementation of peace" and to "formalize land" in areas ravaged by half a century of armed conflict, US Agency for International Development Administrator

Mark Green told reporters in Bogota.

FARC rebels laid down their arms and formed a political party following the historic peace accord signed in December 2016 by the left-wing guerrillas and then-president Juan Manuel Santos.

"These funds are destined for important work, for the implementation of peace, to promote reconciliation, to help rural communities, to improve security for citizens and to strengthen the protection of human rights," said Green.

China sends 71 tons of medical aid to Venezuela

Caracas, Venezuela

A second airplane from China carrying medical supplies including medicine arrived in Venezuela on Monday as part of a "humanitarian technical" cooperation agreement between President Nicolas Maduro's government and

the Asian powerhouse.

A Boeing 747 carrying 71 tons of medicines and surgical material arrived in the capital Caracas, the government said in a press statement.

It included supplies for pregnant women and drugs to treat respiratory conditions.

CO2 levels hit historic high

Paris, France

Scientists in the United States have detected the highest levels of planet-warming carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere since records began, sounding new alarm over the relentless rise of man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

The Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii, which has tracked atmospheric CO2 levels since the late 1950s, on Saturday morning detected 415.26 parts per million (ppm).

It was also the first time on record that the observatory measured a daily baseline above 415 ppm.

"It shows that we are not on track with protecting the climate at all. The number keeps rising and it's getting higher year after year," Wolfgang Lucht, from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), told AFP.

"This number needs to stabilise."

But far from stabilising, levels of CO2 -- one of a trinity of greenhouse gases produced when fossil fuels are burnt -- are climbing ever more rapidly.

Ralph Keeling, director of



Representative picture

Scripps Institution of Oceanography's CO2 Programme, said the trend would probably continue throughout 2019 -- likely to be an El Nino year in which temperatures rise due to warmer ocean currents.

"The average growth rate is remaining on the high end. The increase from last year will probably be around three parts per million whereas the recent average has been 2.5 ppm," he said.

"Likely we're seeing the effect of mild El Nino conditions on top of ongoing fossil fuel use."

'Increasing at increasing rate'

The 2015 Paris Agreement

calls on humanity to block the rise in Earth's temperature at "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) compared to preindustrial levels, and 1.5C if possible.

The last four years were the four hottest on record and, in spite of the Paris deal and increasing public awareness of the problem, mankind continues to break its own emissions records, year on year.

Earth's average surface temperature has already increased 1.0C since pre-industrial times due to man-made emissions.

While there is some disagreement over what would constitute "safe" atmospheric



The last time Earth's atmosphere contained this much CO2 was more than three million years ago, when global sea levels were several metres higher and parts of Antarctica were blanketed in forest

CO2 levels, there is a broad consensus that 350 ppm -- a level surpassed in the late 1980s -- would stave off runaway global warming.

"350 ppm is a precautionary value because some of the consequences of being above 400 may still be evolving," Lucht said.

"But since we're not on track anyhow, any value that we can manage to stabilise at is a win."

The 415 ppm threshold was first surpassed earlier this month and has already risen further.