

Food security in Gaza improves but remains fragile: UN



A displaced Palestinian girl, who according to doctors is suffering from chickenpox, stands next to her mother inside the family's tent in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip

AFP | Rome, Italy

Food security and child nutrition have improved across the Gaza Strip, but remain fragile because only one aid crossing point is open, the UN's World Food Programme said on Thursday.

The Rome-based organization noted "an improvement in food security and child nutrition across the Gaza Strip," but "cautioned that the progress, driven largely by expanded access to humanitarian food, nutrition, agricultural and health assistance, remains fragile."

"While access into Gaza has improved, only one crossing – Kerem Shalom/ Abu Salem – in the south of Gaza remains

open, limiting the flow of essential goods," the World Food Programme (WFP) said in a statement.

There has been a "significant" increase in food and nutritional aid since the ceasefire agreement was reached in October 2025, it said.

Food parcels were delivered to around 1.5 million people in May, while some 700,000 people received cash assistance and 60 percent of children under-5 were given nutritional support. The UN's aid chief, Tom Fletcher, called last month for the opening of all crossing points into Gaza and the immediate lifting of Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods such as medical equipment and fuel.

Fields medal awarded to four young mathematicians

AFP | Philadelphia, United States

The Fields medal, among the most prestigious international awards in math, was on Thursday given to two Chinese mathematicians, one American and one Canadian.

Known as the Nobel prize of mathematics, the honor -- which is presented every four years in a different city -- was hosted this year by Philadelphia.

It was awarded to Chinese mathematicians Hong Wang and Yu Deng, American John Pardon, and Canada's Jacob Tsimerman.

The prize is a gold medal bearing the likeness of Archimedes and comes with an award of 15,000 Canadian dollars (17,000 US dollars). It is given by the International Mathematical Union.

It is a recognition of outstanding discoveries by researchers under the age of 40.

Venezuela quakes caused \$19.6 bn in damage

AFP | Washington, United States

Twin earthquakes that devastated Venezuela last month caused at least \$19.6 billion in direct physical damage, the World Bank said in an estimate Thursday, stressing the need for a rapid increase in public reconstruction fund-

ing to avoid lasting economic effects. Direct damage to residential buildings came in at almost half of the total at \$9.3 billion, according to the Bank's assessment. Non-residential buildings suffered \$5 billion in damage and infrastructure faced \$5.2 billion in total losses.

US House passes symbolic Iran war rebuke to Trump

AFP | Washington, United States

The US House of Representatives passed a largely symbolic resolution Thursday calling for President Donald Trump to halt military action against Iran, delivering another congressional rebuke as the Middle East war sharply escalates.

The measure -- which passed 214-208 after four Republicans joined opposition Democrats in support -- directs Trump to remove US forces from hostilities against Iran unless Congress explicitly authorizes the war.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT WITH THE US-SAUDI NUCLEAR DEAL?

1 HAS TRUMP ALREADY KILLED THE DEAL?

Just hours after Saudi Arabia signed the landmark agreement, Trump announced a new caveat to the deal via **Truth Social**.

“The nuclear agreement “will be approved, but is totally subject to Saudi Arabia joining the very respected and successful Abraham Accords” Trump wrote.

Embracing nuclear technology is in line with Saudi policy to address the rapid increase in energy demand in the kingdom while reducing “the reliance on hydrocarbons in order to use petroleum for higher value purposes and export”, according to the energy ministry.

If approved by Congress, the deal would also likely provide an economic windfall for US energy companies and further undergird Riyadh's ties with the US.

2 WHERE DO THINGS STAND NOW?

While the actual text of the deal has yet to be released, US Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** insisted that appropriate safeguards against nuclear proliferation would be cemented in the agreement.

The **Wall Street Journal** had earlier reported that one provision in the US-Saudi deal would potentially see US companies build a uranium enrichment facility in Saudi Arabia.

However, Trump appeared to pour cold water on the idea, saying in his Truth Social post: **“There will be no enrichment of material!”**

The US Energy Department made no mention of such a provision and did not offer comment when asked about it by AFP.

3 WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE REGION?

For decades, US policymakers have worried about the potential consequences of the spread of nuclear technology and weaponisation of energy programmes, fearing it could spur arms races in places like the Middle East.

For some analysts, the deal is part of a **new emerging security context** that has begun forming in the wake of the ongoing war with Iran.

“The broader signal is that the post-war Middle East is generating a new set of rules on nuclear cooperation, security guarantees, and great-power competition simultaneously,” said **Hesham Alghannam**, a Saudi security analyst and researcher.

4 WHY THIS DEAL MATTERS

Saudi Arabia's energy needs are soaring. Nuclear power can provide reliable, large-scale energy while freeing oil for higher-value uses and exports.

The deal could **unlock billions of dollars** in contracts for US energy companies and create thousands of high-skilled jobs.

It would further strengthen the strategic partnership between Riyadh and Washington at a time of global realignment.

But final approval hinges on Congress—and on Saudi Arabia possibly joining the **Abraham Accords**, a major diplomatic hurdle.

THE ROAD AHEAD: The deal is not done yet. Safeguards, enrichment, Congressional approval and the Abraham Accords caveat could shape its future.

Rubio says Saudis seek ‘peaceful, civil nuclear programme’

AFP | Manila, Philippines

US Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** said yesterday that a landmark nuclear coopera-



tion pact with Saudi Arabia would result only in a peaceful, civilian atomic programme.

“Suffice it to say that any agreement that we’re going to make with any

country in the world on civil nuclear energy is going to be one that will have safeguards in place to ensure that it can’t be turned into a weapons programme,” Rubio said on the sidelines of a Southeast Asian

summit in Manila.

“Saudi Arabia seeks to have a peaceful, civil nuclear programme,” he told reporters, noting a similar deal was in place with the United Arab Emirates.

Trump says Saudi nuclear deal contingent on recognising Israel

AFP | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that a deal with Saudi Arabia to establish a civilian nuclear programme would be contingent on the kingdom's recognition of Israel.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said recognition by Saudi Arabia, a regional power and home to Islam's holiest sites, would mark a “historic leap” forward for peace in the Middle East.

The deal announced Wednesday to establish a civilian nuclear programme in the Gulf kingdom “will be approved, but is totally subject to Saudi Arabia joining the very respected and successful Abraham Accords”, Trump said.

Should it go through, the deal would generate billions of dollars for American companies and would be a major win for Saudi Arabia on both the economic and diplomatic fronts.

But with Trump's latest announcement, it was unclear whether the

MIDDLE EAST WAR LATEST EVENTS

ENERGY & ECONOMY IMPACT

BRENT HITS \$100

• Brent crude soars over 8% to reach \$100 a barrel.

• US crude (WTI) up 5% to \$91.19 a barrel.

LAGARDE WARNS OF MIDEAST INFLATION

• Fresh fighting could push inflation higher than expected, says ECB President Lagarde.

WAR DRIVES COAL HIGHER

• Coal-fired power generation set to rise by 1.4% in 2026.

• Driven by gas supply difficulties and soaring prices, says IEA.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ DISRUPTIONS

• Since March 2026, conflict causes regular blockages of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of LNG transits.

RED SEA & DIPLOMACY DEVELOPMENTS

TRUMP THREATENS HOUTHIS ‘PUNISHMENT’

• Warns of “major military retaliation”, says U.S. will hold Iran responsible as Houthis are its proxy.

HOUSHI'S ATTACK OIL TANKERS IN RED SEA

• Yemen's Houthis launch missile and drone strikes on oil tankers in the Red Sea.

EU SLAMS HOUSHI TANKER ATTACK

• EU's top diplomat demands Houthis stop attacks on ships in the Red Sea.

BRITAIN WITHDRAWS LAST IRAN STAFF

• Britain withdraws remaining diplomatic staff from Iran as conflict between Iran and the U.S. escalates.

MILITARY & REGIONAL SECURITY ALERTS

DRONES HIT KUWAIT-IRAQ BORDER

• Drones hit Kuwait's side of the border with Iraq, Iraqi source confirms.

• Kuwait official says Iran was to blame.

SIRENS IN SAUDI

• Saudi's interior ministry says air alerts triggered.

• Iran confirms targeting US assets in Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait.

JORDAN INTERCEPTS STRIKES

• Jordan's army shoots down 3 Iranian missiles; a fourth falls in an unpopulated area.

KUWAIT INTERCEPTS THREATS

• Kuwait's military intercepts “hostile drone threats” overnight.

deal would ever see the light of day. One provision would potentially see US companies build a uranium enrichment facility in Saudi Arabia, the Wall Street Journal reported.

The US Energy Department made no mention of such a provision and did not offer comment when asked about it by AFP, while Trump added in his Truth Social post that “there

will be no enrichment of material!” The deal will be submitted to Congress for review.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that “any agreement that we’re going to make with any country in the world on civil nuclear energy is going to be one that will have safeguards in place to ensure that it can’t be turned into a weapons programme”.

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The United States currently has agreements governing civilian nuclear cooperation with more than 50 countries.