

Turkiye 'buying time' with delay on Sweden's NATO bid

ANKARA: The Turkish parliament's decision to postpone a vote on Sweden's NATO membership bid – the latest twist in an 18-month saga – has raised questions about the reasons for the delay and its potential implications.

Experts suggest the postponement may be linked to Turkiye's hopes of buying \$20 billion of F-16 fighter jets and modernization kits from Washington.

Turkiye plans to exert more pressure on the US to endorse the deal before approving Sweden's bid to join NATO.

Israel must stop using water as a 'weapon of war,' UN expert warns

NEW YORK CITY: Israel must allow clean water and fuel supplies into Gaza "before it is too late," a UN expert warned on Friday, as he called on Israeli authorities to stop using water as a "weapon of war."

Under international law, intentionally depriving the civilian population of the conditions required to sustain life with the aim of bringing about their destruction is classified as an act of extermination and a crime against humanity, said Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, the UN's special rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Internet, phone networks collapse in Gaza, threatening to worsen humanitarian crisis

KHAN YOUNIS: Internet and telephone services collapsed across the Gaza Strip on Thursday for lack of fuel, the main Palestinian provider said, bringing a potentially long-term blackout of communications as Israel signaled its offensive against Hamas could next target the south, where most of the population has taken refuge.

[Blinken speaks with Egypt's FM about Gaza humanitarian aid](#)

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry about efforts to increase humanitarian aid to Palestinians in urgent need, the State Department said on Thursday.

Blinken reaffirmed the importance of concrete steps to minimize harm to Palestinian civilians in all of Gaza and reaffirmed Washington's rejection of the forced displacement of Palestinians, the department said in a statement.

[Syria's president grants amnesty, reduced sentences on anniversary of coup that put father in power](#)

DAMASCUS: Syria's president issued a decree granting amnesty and reducing sentences for several categories of crime committed prior to Thursday, his office and state media reported.

No reason was given for the amnesty, but it came on the anniversary of the 1970 coup that brought the father and predecessor of President Bashar Assad to power.

Assad has issued similar amnesties since the country's deadly conflict that has killed half a million people began in March 2011.