

[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.

Get out of Khan Younis, Israel tells Palestinian refugees from the north

JEDDAH: Israel on Thursday ordered Palestinians to leave four towns near Khan Younis in southern Gaza, a month after telling them to move there to avoid the bombardment of the north.

Leaflets dropped from aircraft told civilians to leave the towns of Bani Shuhaila, Khuzaa, Abassan and Qarara. More than 100,000 people usually live there, but the towns now shelter tens of thousands more who fled other areas further north.

Israel halts travel for Palestinian Americans from West Bank despite visa deal

LONDON: Israel has been accused of stopping Palestinian Americans from entering the country from the West Bank, contradicting a September agreement signed between Tel Aviv and Washington.

The deal introduced visa-free travel between the US and Israel, and was meant to lift restrictions on American Muslims and Arabs traveling to and from the Occupied Territories.

Previously, most were forced to travel via Jordan's capital Amman if they wished to reach the West Bank.