

# BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Moira Alderson.

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel will hold off future attacks on Iranian gas fields after being asked to do so by President Trump. An Israeli attack on Iran's South Pars gas field on Wednesday, followed by Iranian attacks on Qatari gas installations, caused steep rises in the prices of gas and oil. Speaking to news conference, Mr. Netanyahu also rejected accusations that he'd dragged President Trump into the war on Iran. Sebastian Usher is in Jerusalem.

The Israeli prime minister drew a stark picture of what he believes is the global threat that the Iranian regime has posed and insisted that President Trump had long shared the same view. In Hebrew, he praised the Israeli public for their resilience and implied that the world needed to share a similar long-term view of the conflict. He claimed that after the first 20 days of war, Iran had no ability to enrich uranium and no capability of manufacturing ballistic missiles.

Our security correspondent Frank Gardner is in the Qatari capital Doha with this assessment of the conflict that spread across the Middle East.

Iran has continued to hit oil and gas facilities across the Middle East. This is exactly the escalation that all the Gulf states feared and were hoping to avoid in this war. The missile attack on Qatar's Ras Laffan plant shows just how vulnerable these installations are to attack. The Gulf states do have good air defenses and these have been intercepting the vast majority of projectiles coming from Iran. But some are still getting through. The net effect of all this is that this regional war, which most Gulf Arab states never wanted, is steadily escalating into a global energy crisis.

Meanwhile, the head of the World Trade Organization, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has warned that trade and food security are both threatened by higher energy prices and the blocking of the Strait of Hormuz. She said she was concerned that disruption to the supply of fertilizer could push down agricultural [yie...] yields and increase the price of food.

Lance Lillibridge is a corn farmer in the U.S. state of Iowa. "Just in the last couple of weeks, prices have spiked by nearly \$200 a ton, especially on the nitrogen and the phosphorus. There's gonna be no margin. Unfortunately, the hope is starting to run out because banks are saying, well, you can't just hope now. We got to have hard numbers, you know, we can't just continue to lend money into an operation that's not making money."

In other news, the Mexican Navy says at least 11 people have been killed in an operation by Marines against a suspected drug cartel in the northern state of Sinaloa. Officials say the Marines were attacked after arriving on the site and returned fire. The Navy also seized heavy arms during the raid and detained the daughter of a crime boss.

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A U.S. Senate committee has backed Donald Trump's nomination of Markwayne Mullin to be the new secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, responsible for carrying out his administration's aggressive immigration crackdown. The committee voted 8-7 in his favor, with some senators expressing concern about Mr. Mullin's temperament and policy agenda.

One of them was Democrat Gary Peters. "The Department of Homeland Security needs a leader who can restore the trust that DHS has broken with the American people and with this committee. At his confirmation hearing yesterday, we saw that unfortunately Senator Mullin is not up to that challenge. When I heard President Trump would be nominating Senator Mullin, I kept an open mind. However, throughout the nomination process, he has failed to be forthright and transparent."

The whole Senate will now get to vote on Mr. Mullin's nomination.

Lawmakers in California say they'll rename a state holiday that currently celebrates the Latino labor rights campaigner Cesar Chavez following sexual abuse allegations against him. They've proposed turning Cesar Chavez Day on the 31st of March into Farm Workers Day. There have been decades of allegations that he sexually abused girls and also a woman he co-founded a trade union with.

The founder of Italy's right-wing Northern League party Umberto Bossi has died aged 84. He was a central figure in Italian politics and pushed for independence for wealthy northern Italy. The Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Bossi had marked an important phase in Italian history, making a fundamental contribution to the country.

Meteorite hunters are searching the U.S. state of Ohio for remnants of a 6,000 kilo space rock that crashed through the Earth's atmosphere on Tuesday. Travelling at more than 70,000 kilometers an hour, it broke up with a thunderous boom over Cleveland. NASA has confirmed that a bright fireball seen across several states was part of it, a meteor nearly two meters in diameter.

That's the latest BBC news.