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## MIDDLE EAST WAR

# Israel OKs talks with Lebanon

### PM Netanyahu's move aims to boost ceasefire efforts 'as soon as possible'

By Jon Gambrell, Elena Becatoros and Mike Corder  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — In a potential boost to Middle East ceasefire efforts, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that he authorized direct negotiations with Lebanon “as soon

as possible” aimed at disarming Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants and establishing relations between the neighbors.

The two countries have technically been at war since Israel was established in 1948, and Netanyahu later stressed that there was no ceasefire between them. In a video statement, he said Israel will keep striking Hezbollah until security is

restored in northern Israel. There was no immediate response from Lebanese authorities. But Israel-Lebanon negotiations were expected to begin next week at the State Department in Washington, according to a U.S. official and a person familiar with the plans who both spoke on condition of anonymity due to the delicacy of the matter.

The prospect of talks appeared to bolster the tentative ceasefire in the Iran war that has staggered

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A government supporter weeps during a mourning ceremony marking the 40th day since the death of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the U.S. and Israel strikes in Tehran, Iran, on Thursday. VAHID SALEMI THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## INDIO

# Coachella festival back for 25th year



Fans of Junior H react to his performance on the main stage during Weekend 2 of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio's Empire Polo Field last year. PHOTOS BY DREW A. KELLEY — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Today launches 2 sold-out weekends of world-famous music showcase

## Staff reports

When fans step onto the Empire Polo Field in Indio today, they'll be participating in a cultural milestone — the 25th version of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, which has grown from a fledgling event to a global gathering that shapes the tastes of music fans worldwide.

It wasn't a seamless transition. After the first festival in October 1999 was awash in red ink, it took promoter Goldenvoice a year and a half to try again — and then in a stripped-down, one-day format. From that uneven start, the festival began to grow steadily, expanding to three days and adding the



Weekend 2 of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio on April 20.

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## CALIFORNIA

# AG charges 21 in hospice fraud scheme worth \$267M

### Alleged Medi-Cal theft tied to Van Nuys, Tarzana, Glendale

By Jason Henry  
JHENRY@SCNG.COM

The California Department of Justice has arrested five people and charged 21 total for their alleged roles in a hospice fraud scheme that pilfered \$267 million through Medi-Cal, state Attorney General Rob Bonta announced Thursday.

Bonta announced the busts, dubbed “Operation Skip Trace,” during a news conference in Los Angeles where he spent much of the time pushing back against the Trump administration's claims that California is not doing enough to address rampant fraud in the state's hospice industry.

“This is just the latest example of the California DOJ's long-standing, ongoing and successful efforts to combat hospice and medical fraud,” Bonta said. “We've been doing it for years, we've been doing it successfully before certain people in this country decided to think about it for the first time.”

Investigators seized two handguns and \$757,000

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## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED

# District, UTLA discussions end without a deal

### Negotiations to resume Saturday, just days before deadline for strike

By Teresa Liu  
TLIU@SCNG.COM

Negotiators for United Teachers Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District ended a full day of talks Wednesday without reaching a deal and are set to resume bargaining on Saturday, leaving key issues unresolved less than a week before a potential strike Tuesday.

The latest round of negotiations comes days before a possible walkout that could involve tens of thousands of employees across the nation's

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