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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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WHITTIER

Hopefuls for council and mayor discuss Quaker legacy

Candidates reflect on values ahead of Tuesday's election

By Anissa Rivera
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From the 1867 Bailey House to storied Whittier College and First Friends Church, evidence of Whittier's Quaker roots are easy to see around the city.

Whittier is, after all, named after the 19th-century poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier. Not so obvious? How Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship could be reflected in how leaders serve the city.

As the city's Tuesday election draws near, we reached out to this year's candidates for mayor, as well as two council seats, to talk about the city's Quaker legacy and how they see their place in it.

WHAT ARE QUAKER VALUES?

Mayor Joe Vinatieri, a third-generation Whittierite, said he's always led the people of the city talking about Whittier values. These include respect, responsibility and asking “What is in the best interest of our people?”

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CALIFORNIA

21 charged in \$267M hospice fraud scheme

Much of the alleged theft through Medi-Cal centered in L.A. County

By Jason Henry
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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

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