

USD	01	GBP	01
AFN	78.72	AFN	116.43

EUR	1000	PKR	1000
AFN	1075	AFN	50

EUR	01	INR	1000
AFN	95.28	AFN	0.37

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AFN	95.28	AFN	0.37

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Top US diplomat for Yemen heading to Saudi Arabia for ceasefire talks

US President Joe Biden's special envoy for Yemen is heading to Saudi Arabia this week for talks on making a "comprehensive, sustainable ceasefire" in Yemen, the State Department said Tuesday.

US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking will travel to Saudi Arabia on June 17, where he will meet with senior officials from the governments of the Republic of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as well as UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. Throughout the trip, Special Envoy Lenderking will discuss the latest efforts to achieve a comprehensive, sustainable ceasefire, which is the only way to bring Yemen to the relief they so urgently need, the statement read.

This will be Lenderking's seventh published trip to the region since being appointed by Biden to increase diplomatic efforts in an effort to end the protracted war.

Despite ongoing pressure and lifting some designations on the Iran-backed Houthis, the group continues to block regional and international efforts to end the war.

Lenderking's trip also comes after a recent trip to Oman by Omani officials who have played a critical mediating role in Yemen.

The United States also recognizes Saudi Arabia's efforts to advance implementation of the Riyadh Agreement, which is consistent with stability, security, and prosperity in the south of Yemen.

Tuesday's statement from Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, said: "Additionally, Special

Envoy Lenderking will continue to press for the free flow of essential commodities and humanitarian aid into and throughout Yemen."



South Africa returns to tighter COVID restrictions as cases surge

South Africa has returned to tighter restrictions on public gatherings and large events as the country faces a rapid rise in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Tuesday that the new infections threaten the health system in several parts of the country and COVID-related hospital admissions have increased 50 percent over the past two weeks.

The nightly curfew has been extended by an hour from 10pm to 11pm while religious gatherings are limited to 50 people.

The number of people allowed to gather for social events has been limited to 50 people for indoor events and 100 people for outdoor events.

The retail sale of alcohol will be permitted between 10pm and 11pm local time from Monday through Thursday.

South Africa's seven-day rolling average of daily new cases has nearly doubled over the past two weeks, from 6,491 new cases per 100,000 people on May 31 to 12,711 on June 16, according to Johns Hopkins University.

One priority now is to make sure there are enough hospitals, enough health workers, enough ventilators and enough oxygen to give the best possible care to every person who needs it, said

Ramaphosa.

"The massive surge in new infections means that we must once again tighten restrictions on the movement of persons and gatherings," he said.

South Africa has been the country hardest hit by the pandemic on the continent, with a cumulative total of more than 1.7 million infections, including 24,000 deaths, accounting for nearly 40 percent of Africa's total confirmed cases.

The new restrictions come as South Africa also battles its annual vaccination drive that has faced delays from global vaccine shortages and this week the news that it must discard two million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine due to factory contamination in the United States.

Johnson & Johnson had previously delivered two million of its single-shot doses by the end of June, but that is now viewed as in jeopardy because of the recent ruling by the US Food and Drug Administration that a large amount of J&J vaccines were contaminated by a problem in a factory producing a component of the vaccine.

About 400,000 of South Africa's frontline workers have been vaccinated with J&J doses.

Doses of the Pfizer vaccine are being used to vaccinate people aged 60 and over. About 1.4 million people have received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

According to Ramaphosa, South Africa is expecting to receive 3.1 million Pfizer doses by the end of June.

News Agencies

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Israel launches air raids on Gaza, first since truce with Hamas

Israel launched air raids on the Gaza Strip after Palestinian groups in their statement confirming the Israeli bombardment.

The raids early on Wednesday came less than a month after Israel's 11-day bombardment of Gaza in May and followed a month in occupied East Jerusalem by Israeli nationalists that drew Palestinian condemnation and anger.

The Israeli military said its aircraft struck Hamas compounds in Gaza City and the southern town of Khan Younis and said it was "ready for all scenarios, including preventing the flow of continued terrorist acts emanating from Gaza."

The raids, the military said, came in response to the launching of the balloons, which caused 20 deaths in open fields in communities near Gaza.

Alliance spokesman, confirming the Israeli attacks, told Reuters news agency that Palestinians would continue to pursue their "non-violence and defend their rights and sacred sites" in Jerusalem.

It was not immediately clear if there were casualties in Gaza as a result of the bombings.

Israel's Army Radio reported that Israel launched Egyptian rockets in the first balloon launch would "impair" long-term truce talks.

At Israel's Salfat al-Khalil, a reporting from Gaza, said Palestinian fighters said they had no orders from their commanders to respond to the latest raids.

N Korea's Kim: Food situation 'tense' due to pandemic, typhoon

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Laped said these shooting incidents were "a disgrace to the Israeli people," adding: "The fact that there are radicals for whom the Israeli flag represents hatred and incitement is deplorable and unacceptable."

A Palestinian protester threw a burning projectile during a demonstration east of Gaza City near Israel's Old City (Mahmud Hams/AFP)

The "March of the Flag" marks the anniversary of Israel's 1967 occupation of the city's eastern part, and came as tensions remain high over Israel's planned forced displacement of Palestinian families from the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah.

In advance of the march, Israeli police forcibly removed dozens of Palestinians from outside the Old City's Damascus Gate.