

Biden to Bibi: US will not take part in counter-offensive against Iran

G7 Slams Attack, Says It Stands With Israel; Global Powers Urge Restraint

Jerusalem/Dubai/Washington: President Joe Biden warned PM Benjamin Netanyahu the US will not take part in a counter-offensive against Iran, if Israel decides to retaliate for a mass drone and missile attack on Israeli territory overnight, US officials said. The threat of open warfare erupting between the arch West Asia foes and dragging in the US has put the region on edge, triggering calls for restraint from global powers and Arab nations to avoid further escalation. The US will continue to help Israel defend itself but does not want war, John Kirby, the White House's top national security spokesperson, told ABC's "This Week" program on Sunday.

Jordan's King Abdullah told Biden in a phone call on Sunday that any further escalation from Israel would widen the conflict in the region, Jordanian state media reported. Russia, China, France and Germany, as well as Arab states Egypt, Qatar, Turkiye and the UAE too urged restraint.

The leaders of the G7 nations condemned Iran's attack and said they would work to stabilise the situation, warning in a statement that Tehran risked "an uncontrollable regional escalation".

Italy, which holds the rotating presidency of the G7, had called a meeting of G7 heads after Biden pledged a coordinated diplomatic response to the attack launched overnight by Iran. "With its actions, Iran has further stepped toward the destabilisation of the region and risks provoking an uncontrollable regional escalation. This must be avoided," the statement said. The G7 leaders, who spoke for just under an hour on a video conference, called for Iran to exercise restraint. "In this spirit, we demand that Iran and its proxies cease their attacks," they said. The leaders said they will give "full support to Israel" and reaffirmed "commitment towards its security." The G7 groups the US, Canada, Italy, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and the EU. **REUTERS**

WHY US AND ISRAEL HAVE AVOIDED DIRECT MILITARY STRIKES ON IRAN

Iran's military is viewed as one of the strongest in West Asia in terms of equipment, cohesion, experience and quality of personnel, but it lags far behind the power and sophistication of the armed forces of the US & Israel, say experts

IRANIAN ARMED FORCES AMONG LARGEST IN WEST ASIA

580,000
active-duty personnel



200,000
trained reserve personnel divided among the traditional army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps

Army and the Guards each have separate and active ground, air and naval forces



'Axis Of Resistance' | The Guards also operate Quds Force, an elite unit in charge of arming, training and supporting the network of proxy militias throughout West Asia known as the 'axis of resistance'. These militias include **Hezbollah** in Lebanon, the **Houthis** in Yemen, **militia groups** in Syria and Iraq and **Hamas** and **Palestinian Islamic Jihad** in Gaza



Proxy militias are considered an allied regional force — battle ready, heavily armed and ideologically loyal — and could come to Iran's aid if it is attacked

ACHILLES' HEEL

> **Air force.** Much of its aircraft date from the era of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who led Iran from 1941 to 1979, and many have been disabled for lack of spare parts. The country also bought a small fleet from Russia in the 1990s

> **Its tanks and armoured vehicles** are old, and the country has only a few large naval vessels



The remains of a rocket booster that Israeli authorities say critically injured a 7-yr-old after Iran launched drones and missiles near Arad, Israel, on Saturday

IRAN'S ARSENAL

Large fleet of speedboats and small submarines | Can disrupt shipping traffic and global energy supplies that pass through Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz

Largest stockpile of ballistic missiles in West Asia | It includes cruise missiles and anti-ship missiles. Its ballistic missiles have ranges up to 2,000km and can hit any target in West Asia

Large inventory of drones | They have ranges of around 1,900 to 2,500km and are capable of flying low to evade radar

Iran's bases and storage facilities are widely dispersed, buried deep underground and fortified with air defences, making them difficult to destroy with air strikes



A videograb shows rocket trails in sky above the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on Saturday

WHERE DOES IRAN GET ITS WEAPONS?

Iran manufactures a large quantity of missiles and drones domestically and has prioritised defence production. It imports small submarines from North Korea while expanding and modernising its domestically produced fleet

Sarabjit's death triggered India-Pak diplomatic row

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They then tried to suffocate him with a plastic bag on his head. Hospitalised with severe head injuries and a broken spine, Sarabjit died on May 2, 2013, six days after the attack.

The circumstances of Sarabjit's death triggered a diplomatic row between India and Pakistan. A single-judge commission of Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi from Lahore high court investigated Sarabjit's murder before the trial began at the sessions court, Lahore.

Sarfaraz and Mudassar confessed to the crime, saying they killed Sarabjit to avenge the deaths in the Lahore and Faisalabad blasts allegedly carried out by Sarabjit. Naqvi recorded the statements of 40-odd witnesses. He also sought to record Sarabjit's statement, but the plea was disallowed on grounds of the latter's medical condition.

The sessions court acquitted Sarfaraz and Mudassar after not a single witness testi-

ANATOMY OF A KILLING

1990 | Sarabjit Singh, a farmer, is caught by Pak rangers at the Kasur border on charges of illegally crossing it

► He is charged in multiple bombings that led to over a dozen deaths in Lahore and Faisalabad

1991 | Sarabjit identified as 'Manjit Singh' and convicted, given death sentence under Pakistan's Army Act

1992 | Several mercy petitions, the fifth contained 100,000 signatures, collected from India

2012 | Pak ex-prez Asif Ali Zardari signs a document commuting Sarabjit's death sentence to life imprisonment

2013 | Sarabjit attacked in his cell by ISI henchmen Sarfaraz and Mudassar at Kot Lakhpat jail, Lahore; dies eight days later

2018 | Pak court acquits Sarfaraz and his aide, citing 'lack of evidence'

2024 | Unidentified gunmen shoot dead Sarfaraz from close range in Lahore, Pak calls it 'targeted killing'



fied due to alleged pressure from ISI.

Sarabjit was a farm worker when he was arrested by Pakistani Rangers along an unmarked patch of the India-Pakistan border near Kasur in Punjab province. He was subsequently framed and charged with orchestrating multiple blasts in Pakistan.

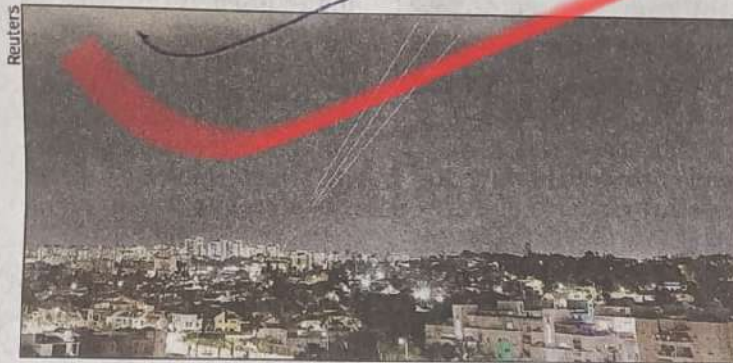
Despite pleas by his family that he had mistakenly crossed the border, a Pakistani court handed Sarabjit the death sentence for spying and killing at least 14 citizens in bomb blasts in Punjab province in 1990.

A movie titled Sarbjit, starring actors Randeep Hooda and Aishwarya Rai, released in 2016.

AI suspends Tel Aviv flights; EAM speaks to Iran counterpart, seeks release of Indians on seized ship

Air India on Sunday temporarily suspended all flights between Delhi and Tel Aviv and tweaked the timings of a few long-haul ones after Iran launched over 300 missiles and drones on Israel in an overnight retaliatory attack. With pilots reporting GPS signal jamming in the conflict region, airlines are likely to change timings and add refuelling stops.

Later, foreign minister S Jaishankar spoke to his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and sought early release of the 17 In-



An Israeli system intercepts missiles and drones launched by Iran on Sunday as tensions in the region escalated further

dian crew members onboard a cargo vessel that was seized by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for its links with Israel. He reiterated India's call earlier in the

day for immediate de-escalation and restraint.

The Israeli military said 99% of the launches on Sunday were intercepted. Several ballistic missiles reached Israeli territory, causing minor damage to an air base. G7 leaders offered their "full support and solidarity" for Israel following the attack and said they were ready to "take furt-

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her measures" in response to "further destabilising initiatives". **P 9, 15, 17**

Iran-Israel hostilities: EAM Jaishankar speaks to Israeli counterpart Katz

NEW DELHI, Apr 14 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday held a telephonic conversation with his Israeli counterpart Israel Katz and shared India's concerns over the situation arising out of the Iran-Israel hostilities.

Iran launched its first direct attack on Israel by firing hundreds of drones and missiles in response to a suspected Israeli strike on its consulate in Damascus on April 1.

"Just concluded a conversation with Israel FM @Israel_katz. Shared our concern at the developments yesterday. Discussed the larger regional situation. Agreed to stay in touch," Jaishankar said on 'X'.

In its reaction, India called for immediate de-escalation of

Jaishankar speaks to Iranian counterpart, seeks release of 17 Indians onboard ship

NEW DELHI, Apr 14 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday spoke to his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and sought the release of 17 Indian nationals onboard a Portuguese-flagged cargo vessel. On the Iran-Israel hostilities, Jaishankar, during the

the situation and said that its embassies in the region are in close touch with the Indian community in the region.

"We are seriously concerned at the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Iran which threatens the peace and security in the region," the Ministry

of External Affairs (MEA) said. "We call for immediate de-escalation, exercise of restraint, stepping back from violence and return to the path of diplomacy," it said.

India has been in touch with Iran to secure the release of the Indians onboard container ship MSC Aries that was seized by the Iranian military near the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday.

of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"We call for immediate de-escalation, exercise of restraint, stepping back from violence and return to the path of diplomacy," it said.

The MEA said India is closely monitoring the evolving situation in West Asia.

G7 leaders convened by Biden condemn Iran attack, stand in support of Israel

WASHINGTON, Apr 14 (AP)

PRESIDENT Joe Biden convened the Group of Seven advanced democracies on Sunday to coordinate a rebuke to Iran for its unprecedented and largely unsuccessful aerial attack on Israel and to prevent a wider regional escalation. After their video conference, the leaders issued a joint statement “unequivocally condemning in the strongest terms” the direct attack by Iran while expressing “our full solidarity and support to Israel” and reaffirming “our commitment towards its security”.

The G7 — made up of the US, Italy, Japan, Germany, France, Britain and Canada -- also said that Iran, “with its actions, has further stepped toward the destabilisation of the region and risks provoking an



uncontrollable regional escalation”. They said their nations “stand ready to take further measures now and in response to further destabilising initiatives”. The leaders of G7 countries met virtually on Sunday and expressed “full solidarity and support to Israel and its people” and reaffirmed their “commitment towards its security”.

“We, the Leaders of the G7, unequivocally condemn in the strongest terms Iran’s direct and unprecedented attack against Israel. Iran fired hundreds of drones and missiles

towards Israel. Israel, with the help of its partners, defeated the attack,” they said in a statement released by the White House.

“We express our full solidarity and support to Israel and its people and reaffirm our commitment towards its security,” they said in the statement.

They said by launching the attack on Israel, Iran has “further stepped toward the destabilisation of the region and risks provoking an uncontrollable regional escalation. This must be avoided”. They further said that they will “strengthen our cooperation to end the crisis in Gaza, including by continuing to work towards an immediate and sustainable cease-fire and the release of hostages by Hamas, and deliver increased humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in need”.

'Second batch of Indian military personnel leaves Maldives'

MALE, Apr 14 (PTI)

THE second batch of Indian military personnel manning a helicopter gifted by India to the Maldives has left the island nation as demanded by him, President Mohamed Muizzu has said.

Muizzu, a pro-China leader, also reaffirmed that foreign ambassadors in Male will not wield authority over him emphasising that ultimate power rests with the citizens.

Last month, he had alleged that his predecessor Ibrahim

Mohamed Solih operated on the orders from "a foreign ambassador" without naming any country.

He announced the withdrawal of the second Indian military contingent from the Maldives while speaking during a campaign event for the ruling People's National Congress party candidates ahead of the parliamentary election scheduled for April 21.

"The first team has already gone. Now, on April 9, the soldiers on the second platform have also been withdrawn,"

Muizzu, who has been demanding the withdrawal of foreign soldiers from the Maldives during his election campaign last year, was quoted as saying by the local media on Saturday.

Muizzu had set March 10 as the deadline for the withdrawal of the first group of Indian military personnel from his country.

Under an agreement between Maldives and India in February, New Delhi agreed to replace the Indian military personnel stationed in Maldives

to oversee the operations of the military aircraft the country has gifted with trained civilians also from India.

Muizzu also said the Indian soldiers on the last aviation platform would also leave the Maldives before May 10 deadline set by him and that would mark the fulfillment of his pledge to remove Indian soldiers from the island nation.

"There is only one platform left. As the two countries have already signed, they [the remaining Indian military per-

sonnel] will also be recalled ahead of May 10. They will leave," Muizzu was quoted as saying by Edition.Mv news portal on Saturday.

He did not provide details of the number of the second batch of Indian military personnel who have left the Maldives. He also did not clarify whether the soldiers had been replaced by trained Indian civilians.

Neither the Maldives Defence Ministry nor India have commented on the latest withdrawal of Indian military personnel from this country.

Iran Hits Israel With Missiles & Drones In Unprecedented Strike

Tel Aviv Says Tehran Fired 170 Drones, 30+ Cruise Missiles And 120+ Ballistic Missiles, But 99% Of Them Intercepted

Iran launched a large aerial attack on Israel and the territory it controls starting late on Saturday, firing at least 300 drones and missiles. It is the first such direct attack launched from Iranian territory after decades of shadow warfare between the two countries. The assault was in response to a recent strike on a building in the Iranian embassy complex in Syria that killed several of Iran's top commanders.

What happened during the attack?

Air raid sirens sounded in Israel and the West Bank overnight, signalling the start of an attack that had been anticipated for days. An Israeli military spokesman said Sunday the launches numbered more than 300, but 99% of them were intercepted. Rear Adm Daniel Hagari said Iran fired 170 drones, more than 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles. Several ballistic missiles reached Israeli territory, causing minor damage to an air base. The US participated in the defensive actions, and defence secretary Lloyd Austin said US forces had intercepted missiles and attack drones launched from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Britain also said its planes had shot down drones. In addition, Jordan, which neighbours Israel, said that its military shot down aircraft and missiles that entered its airspace.

What damage did the attack cause?

The attack caused no deaths, but 12 people were brought in to the Soroka Medical Center in southern Israel overnight. Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the chief spokesman for Israel's military, said the Nevatim air force base in the Negev desert in southern Israel suffered light damage from the attack.

What was the immediate cause of the attack?

The undeclared conflict escalated on April 1, when Israeli war-

ISRAEL'S MIGHTY DEFENDERS

Arrow | Intercepts long-range missiles, including the types Iran says it launched Saturday; it operates outside the atmosphere used to intercept missiles launched by Houthis

Patriot | Oldest member of Israel's missile-defence system - used during First Gulf War in 1991 to intercept Scud missiles fired by Iraq. It is now used to shoot down aircraft, including drones

Iron Dome | Specialises in shooting down short-range rockets. It has intercepted thousands of rockets since it was activated early last decade. Israel says it has a success rate of over 90%

David's Sling | Intercepts medium-range missiles, such as those possessed by Hezbollah

Iron Beam | Israel is developing a new system to intercept incoming threats with laser technology. It will be a game changer because it is much cheaper to operate than existing systems. However, it is not yet operational



Retaliation over, unless Tel Aviv strikes back, says Tehran

Iranian leaders Sunday said their retaliation against Israel was over, signalling they were not seeking to start a wider war, but warned they could launch a bigger military operation depending on Israel's response. Foreign minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, said on social media that "at this point, Islamic Republic of Iran has no intention of continuing

defensive operations, but if necessary it will not hesitate to protect its legitimate interests against any new aggression."

Iranian leaders issued statements that appeared designed to keep tensions from escalating. Prez Ebrahim Raisi focused on what he said was the country's capacity for a "decisive and even stronger response" should Israel strike back. Gen.

Iran vowed to retaliate.

What have leaders said about the attack?

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu has so far spoken only about the defensive military operation. In a post on social media on

Israel: Will exact price when time is right; war cabinet holds meeting

Jerusalem: Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet favours a retaliation against Iran, which fired hundreds of exploding drones and missiles in what was believed to be its first direct attack on Israel after years of a shadow war, but is divided over the timing and scale of any such response, Israeli officials said on Sunday.

The five-member cabinet, in which Netanyahu, defence minister Yoav Gallant and cabinet minister Benny Gantz have decision-making powers, met on Sunday and was expected to convene again for further discussions. Two Israeli officials said some war cabinet members had urged a retaliatory strike, but that was called off after Netanyahu spoke by phone with Biden on Saturday and because the strikes caused relatively minor damage.

Earlier on Sunday, Gantz said that it will exact a price from Iran in response to its attack when the time is right. "We will build a regional coalition and exact the price from Iran in the fashion and timing that is right for us," Gantz said. AGENCIES

Hossein Salami, commander in chief of Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, claimed the attack was more successful than expected. Army chief of staff major general Mohammad Bagheri said, "Our response will be much larger than tonight's military action if Israel retaliates", and told the US its bases could be attacked if it helped Israel. AGENCIES

Sunday he said: "We intercepted. We blocked. Together we will win." Iran's foreign ministry described the attack as a defensive measure, and the country's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps warned US against getting involved. NYT