

2 soldiers killed in fresh Azerbaijan-Armenia clash

AFP, Armenia

Azerbaijani troops on Friday killed one Armenian soldier in border clashes between the arch foes, Yerevan said, on the second day of fighting which threatens to derail EU-led weekend peace talks.

The Caucasus neighbours are locked in a decades-long territorial dispute over Azerbaijan's Armenian populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh, over which they have fought two wars.

Armenian defence ministry said there was "one killed and two more injured" among its troops, adding that "the intensity of fighting has decreased".

It had reported earlier on Friday that "Azerbaijani Armed Forces violated the ceasefire in the direction of Sotk (eastern part of the state border) using UAVs (drones)" and "opened fire using heavy weapons on the Armenian positions near the village of Kut," in the Gegharkunik province near the border with Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani defence ministry said: "Armenian armed forces opened fire from trench mortars on Azerbaijani positions" at the border.

On Thursday, an Azerbaijani serviceman was killed and four Armenian troops were wounded during border clashes.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev are scheduled to meet Sunday in Brussels for talks led by European Council President Charles Michel.

The rival leaders have also agreed to jointly meet the leaders of France and Germany on the sidelines of a European summit in Moldova on June 1, according to the EU.

On Thursday, Pashinyan accused Azerbaijan of seeking to undermine the talks in Brussels. He warned there was "very little" chance of signing a peace deal with Azerbaijan at the meeting.



Workers unload from a semi-truck a part of a wall with the work of world-renowned graffiti artist Banksy which was dismantled from a residential building heavily damaged during Russia's attack in the town of Irpin, outside of Kyiv, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

TURMOIL IN PAKISTAN
Political crisis will deepen economic woes

CNN ONLINE

The political unrest that's engulfed Pakistan since former Prime Minister Imran Khan was arrested earlier this week will complicate efforts to secure a financial lifeline from the International Monetary Fund and exacerbate the country's economic crisis.

Growth has stalled and inflation has soared in the South Asian country of 220 million over the past year. With Pakistan's rupee sharply depreciating and reserves of foreign currency dwindling, the country has struggled to import essential products like food, leading to deadly stampedes at distribution centers. Fears Pakistan could default on its debt have lurked for months.

"It makes things quite complicated," said Sergi Lanau, director of emerging market strategy at Oxford Economics on Khan's arrest. "This is very bad news [in] a situation that was already very hard."

The government can probably muddle through in the immediate term, thanks to the forbearance of foreign creditors such as China, but the risk of default will rise unless an IMF deal can be reached soon.

A spokesperson for the International Monetary Fund, which has been in talks with Pakistan's government about restarting a \$6.5 billion assistance program, said Thursday that negotiators are "heavily engaged" with authorities in Pakistan, which "faces a very challenging situation."

Yet investors are skeptical Pakistan and the IMF can reach an agreement to unlock much-needed funds, with the volatile political environment.

The political tumult in Pakistan comes as the country grapples with a dire economic outlook.

Growth has slowed to a crawl, while a severe shortfall of dollars is hampering imports. Shortages of food items are contributing to skyrocketing prices. Inflation reached an annual rate of 36.4 percent in April, with the cost of food rising nearly 47 percent in urban areas and more than 52 percent in rural regions.

Foreign reserves at the central bank of roughly \$4.4 billion are sufficient to cover about a month of imports, aid Tahir Abbas, director of director of research at Arif Habib, a financial firm in Karachi.

Sylhet City Corporation e-Tender Notice-05/2022-23 (Electrical)
Nagar Bhaban, Sylhet www.scc.gov.bd
Memo No. 46.07.0000.021.99.061.23.1720 Dated: 13.05.23

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Nepali climbers kick off Everest summits

AFP, Kathmandu

Nine Nepalis reached the summit of Mount Everest yesterday, opening the route for hundreds of climbers expected to scale the world's highest mountain in the coming weeks.

Weather cleared up for the nine to fix ropes to the top of the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) mountain, which will be used by Everest hopefuls.

Every year, the first summit of Everest is by a team from one of Nepal's expedition organising companies, who prepare the way for hundreds of paying customers to follow.

"The team safely reached the summit of Everest today," coordinator Mingma Gyalje Sherpa of Imagine Nepal Trek and Expeditions told AFP.

The team was led by mountain guide Dawa Gyalje Sherpa, who already had 12 Everest summits to his name.

Early Friday, a trail of headlights snaked up Everest's Khumbu icefall as hundreds followed the footsteps of the rope-fixing team to try to reach the summit in the coming days.

"Climbers are going up as the weather is expected to be favourable for a summit for a few days," Tashi Sherpa said from base camp.

Heavy fighting rocks Khartoum
Warring sides to resume peace talks today

REUTERS, Khartoum

Khartoum residents described fierce battles yesterday with fighters roving the streets and little sign Sudan's warring sides were respecting an agreement to protect civilians ahead of ceasefire talks due to resume in Saudi Arabia today.

Fighting has rocked Khartoum and adjoining areas as well as Geneina in the Darfur region since the warring army and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary force agreed a "declaration of principles" on Thursday.

The two sides have battled through previous truces and have shown no sign of being willing to compromise. Although the RSF has promised to



uphold Thursday's agreement, the army has not yet commented on it.

Neither side seems able to secure a quick victory, with the army able to call on air power but the RSF dug into residential districts throughout the capital.

The resumed talks in Jeddah will start by discussing ways to implement the existing agreement,

then move on to a lasting ceasefire that could pave the way for a civilian government, officials say.

Saudi Arabia has invited army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan to the Arab League summit in Jeddah, a senior Saudi diplomat said, but he is not expected to leave Sudan for security reasons, two other diplomats in the Gulf said.

Burhan was invited because he is head of Sudan's Sovereign Council, in which his rival, RSF chief Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, is deputy.

Saudi Arabia has had close ties to both men since the army and the RSF sent troops to help the Saudi-led coalition in its war against Houthi forces in Yemen.

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