

Alvi opens cardiac centre, stresses Islamic principles of welfare, service

LAHORE (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi underscored the intrinsic purpose of Islam as advancement and progress of society. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Sarwar Shahida Memorial Cardiac Centre and Research Institute here on Thursday, he emphasised that engaging in charitable endeavours was a distinctive trait of Muslims. He lauded those who contribute to their nation's betterment, labeling them as true heroes.

President Alvi's speech centered on the idea that Islam encourages a spirit of compassion and mutual support among individuals. He reiterated that while governments may change, the underlying national structure endures. Highlighting the growth of philanthropy among Muslims after the formation of Pakistan, he

stressed the pivotal role of individuals in assisting the marginalised.

Drawing from the examples set by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Khulafa-e-Rashidin, President Alvi conveyed the importance of service to humanity. He pointed out that Islam assigns societal responsibilities, a notion evident from the Quran's opening chapter. Pakistan's core objective, he maintained, is rooted in Quranic teachings of serving society and nurturing a strong sense of responsibility.

The president encouraged virtues such as charity, truthfulness, respect for elders, empathy, and cooperation, particularly in the younger generation. While acknowledging the government's role in addressing major issues, he emphasised that every individual in the Islamic

framework has a role to play in serving others.

Touching upon Islam's economic philosophy, President Alvi emphasised the significance of fair wealth distribution. He noted that Islam discourages accumulation of wealth in few hands, aiming for a more equitable society. The principles of equality, brotherhood, charity, honesty, and lawful earnings underpin Islam's economic framework. President Alvi highlighted Islam's emphasis on human welfare and its call to support the less fortunate. He reiterated that the essence of humanitarianism echoes in all religions. The president's conclusion emphasised Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) dedication to improving humanity's condition, urging the nation to follow this example for Pakistan's progress.



LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi unveiling plaque during ground breaking ceremony the Sarwar Shahida Memorial Cardiac & Research Institute.

Governor proposes setting up Primary Education Commission to ensure quality learning

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh, Kamran Khan Tessori, on Thursday, suggested the formation of a Primary Education Commission for improving the quality of early childhood education.

The Governor, while addressing the Graduation Ceremony of the 33rd Senior Management Course at the National Institute of Management, Karachi, said that the proposed commission may be constituted on the pattern of the Higher Education Commission with objectives of ensuring quality education to children aged between 5 to 8 years.

The commission would ensure learning

along with training of the future generation on the lines that they grow to become productive, sensible and contributing citizens of the society who are always ready not only to help their fellow citizens but also contribute wholeheartedly to the efforts of social and economic development of the motherland, he stated.

Stressing the need for the promotion of national spirit, the governor said that all 240 million Pakistanis have to join hands for economic and social development and solidarity of the country.

National spirit and nationalistic vision were the key to the success of all the developed nations

who grew and prospered in the world, he noted and urged that the Pakistani nation has to unite under the national flag while putting aside all the political, linguistic, sectarian and other differences.

Kamran Tessori while recalling the sad incidents of May 9 said that those unfortunate occurrences were the manifestation of the fact that society had lost valuable qualities of patience and endurance and an infuriated mob inflicted damages to a house attributed to the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah without having a second thought that it is our own country.

KP Governor says: Govt, military shares best vision towards facilitation of business, investment

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has said that the government and military leadership have best vision and approach towards the facilitation of business community and promotion of investment in the country.

Addressing an awards distribution ceremony under the auspices of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) here at Governor's House on Thursday, he said that there are minerals worth trillions of rupees in the mountains of the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and urged the apex trade body to conduct research on the treasures hidden in the mountains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and play a role in ensuring the development and prosperity of the country by utilizing these minerals

and natural resources in a better manner.

Besides, the Caretaker Provincial Minister Fazal Elahi, Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister Malik Maher Elahi, FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Vice President Masoodur Rehman, SAARC Chamber Anjum Nisar, Chairman of Businessmen Panel Shah Zeb, FPC CI Coordinator Sartaj Ahmad Khan, former caretaker provincial minister Adnan Jalil along with former presidents of FPCCI, Peshawar, Mardan, Kohat, Swat, Karam, Dir, Nowshera, Charsadda, Swabi, Chitral, Bajaur, Bannu, Haripur, Mohmand officials of other Chambers of Commerce of the province including Abbottabad, officials of various Women's Chambers of the province and the business community attended the ceremony at large.



LAHORE: Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

Mayor Karachi calls upon journalists to discourage false, fake news

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Thursday said that access to information, the investigative reporting and fact-finding are the main responsibilities of professional journalists, success in this field is possible only through hard work and continuous struggle.

Therefore, he said that journalists related to local government institutions always keep the larger interest of Karachi and citizens in mind by discouraging false and fake news.

He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of a one-day training workshop organized by City Institute of Image Management of KMC on the topic of "Role and Responsibilities of local government Journalists".

The Mayor Karachi's Spokesperson for Political Affairs

Karamullah Waqasi, Senior Journalist and Scholar Mahmood Sham, Mazhar Abbas, Head of the Journalism Department, the University of Karachi, Shehzad Chughat, Imran Ali Shah, Director Siim Muhammad Shahid and other officers were also present on this occasion.

Mayor Karachi said that local government reporting has a very important role in the better and more effective performance of local bodies as their effective guidance and identification of problems help in the completion of development work.

He said that positive thinking and sincerity is the basic condition for improvement in urban affairs and we get a lot of positive information from journalists reporting on local bodies, from which we get guidance if there is a training workshop.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori addressing as a Chief Guest of the Graduation Ceremony for the participants of 33rd Senior Management Course at National Institute of Management (NIM).

Pakistan is committed to complete eradication of polio virus: Governor

LAHORE (Online): Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Leslie Scanlon, met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore, here today. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation in health, trade, environment and mining sectors were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Pakistan is committed to complete eradication of polio virus, we are grateful for the support of the Canadian government in this regard, he added. The Canadian High Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the Pakistani government to combat polio. Governor Punjab further said that Pakistanis living in Canada are playing a positive role in the development of

Canada. He said that Pakistan is keen to further expand bilateral cooperation with Canada in trade, environment, and people-to-people contact. Governor Punjab told the Canadian High Commissioner that there is a favourable environment for Canadian investors to invest in Pakistan. He said that there are vast investment opportunities in mining sector in Pakistan. Governor Punjab said that the government has made a conducive policy for foreign investors, which is increasing foreign direct investment in Pakistan. He appreciated Canada's preferential tariff programme and said that Pakistan supports the creation of new Canadian preferential tariff programme. This program will enable Pakistan to increase its exports to Canada.

CM attends funeral prayer of martyred policeman

PESHAWAR (APP): The funeral prayer for a policeman who was martyred by unknown assailants in Peshawar took place at Police Lines.

Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan, along with CCPO and other police officials, attended the funeral prayer.

The attack occurred when unknown assailants on a bike opened fire on policemen who were on their way to duty in the morning. Police constable Sarwar Shah embraced martyrdom in the incident.

The chief minister and police officials laid floral wreaths on the martyr's coffin. Prayers were offered for the elevation of the martyr's rank, and a police force rendered a salute. Chief Minister Azam Khan condemned the incident of firing on the policeman.

SHC stopped the govt from recruiting in various departments

KARACHI (Online): Sindh High Court has stopped the federal government from recruiting in various departments.

Sindh High Court heard the petition filed by MQM Pakistan against the recruitment of Sindh government in more than 140 departments.

In the petition of MQM, it was said that Sindh government is making recruitments without fulfilling the legal requirements and the provincial government is awarding jobs to the

PTI former MNA Gulzar shifted to Adiala jail

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI former MNA Shandana Gulzar has been shifted to Adiala jail.

According to sources Shandana Gulzar has been detained in Adiala jail for 15 days. She has been detained on DC Islamabad orders under 3 MPO.

Sher Afzal Khan counsel for PTI had said Police and the personnel in plain clothes have abducted Shandana Gulzar.

On the other hand Islamabad police had confirmed the arrest of Shandana Gulzar.

CS orders I-Day celebration with grandeur

LAHORE (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman on Thursday issued directions to all the deputy commissioners regarding celebrations of the Independence Day in a befitting manner.

He directed this while presiding over a high-level meeting here at the Civil Secretariat. The meeting reviewed preparations to mark the Independence Day and decided that fireworks display would be held in all district headquarters at 12 night on August 13, while concerts of national songs would be organized in all districts at 8pm on August 14. The Chief Secretary Punjab said

that freedom was a great blessing, it should be valued. He said the purpose of celebrating Independence Day with grandeur was to make the young generation aware of the importance of freedom. He said that living nations celebrate Independence Day with great enthusiasm.

The meeting was briefed that a comprehensive plan had been prepared to observe the Independence Day with national zeal and zest. Events would be organized at provincial, divisional, district and tehsil levels.

The main flag hoisting ceremony would be held at Huzari Bagh, Lahore.

Non bailable arrest warrants of PTI 268 absconding workers issued

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) has approved the plea for issuing the non-bailable arrest warrants of absconding workers of PTI.

The petition filed by police for issuing non bailable arrest warrants of 268 absconding workers of PTI came up for hearing which was approved by ATC.

The court issued non bailable arrest warrants of 268 workers of PTI in Jinnah House attack case.

Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar of ATC issued 10-page written decision.

As per decision the accused are absconding and they are avoiding from being arrested.



GILGIT: Workers presenting flower bouquet to Sadiya Danish on becoming Deputy Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly at Assembly Secretariat.

Sindh govt approves 762 appointments under deceased quota

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Government has approved 762 cases for appointment under the deceased quota as per the rules and regulations.

The decision to this effect was taken in a meeting on the implementation of the deceased quota held here at Sindh Secretariat under the chair of Sindh Chief Secretary Dr. Mohammad Silohail Rajput on Thursday.

Provincial secretaries of various departments including senior member Board of Revenue and Chairman Enquires and Anti Corruption were present in the meeting.

The meeting approved 762 appointments under the deceased quota (a quota fixed for the legal heirs of

government employees who died during service) in 29 departments including 28 in Agriculture Department, 12 in Revenue, 32 in College Education, 93 in Health Department, 98 in Irrigation Department, 294 in School Education Department, 46 in Works Service Department, 13 in Public Health Engineering, 4 in Excise Department, 61 in Local Government Department, 14 in Population, 11 in Forest, 4 in Home Department, 3 in Social Welfare, 3 in Services General Administration 2 and two in Culture department, 7 in food department, 11 in livestock and fisheries.

Chief Secretary Dr Muhammad Sohail Rajput said that the families of 13 thousand government

Two ghost employees suspended

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Two ghost employees among dozens reported to have been deputed in Municipal Corporation, were suspended on Thursday after an enquiry.

Administrator Municipal Corporation Asghar Laghari sought attendance of the employees during surprise visit. He found that 27 employees were collecting salaries worth lacs at their homes while absent from the office since induction.

The administrator suspended two employees on the spot while served show cause notices on rest of the fifteen employees.

4 dacoits killed in two encounters

FAISALABAD (APP): Four dacoits were killed in two encounters in Thukriwala and Lunkrianwala police station areas. A police spokesman said here on Thursday that seven armed bandits intercepted a car coming from Gojra near Naurang Abad check-post on Gojra-Painsara Road and tried to loot them, but the car riders opened fire on the outlaws.

As a result, two criminals received serious bullet injuries and died on-the-spot, whereas their other accomplices managed to escape from the scene under the cover of darkness.



LAHORE: Girls painters are participating in painting competition in connection with 14 August celebrations, at Al-Hamra Cultural Complex in Provincial Capital.

PRCS chairman lauds AJK chapter's services for humanity

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society AJK Ejaz Raza was called on National Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari here on Wednesday. The meeting was aimed to discuss the on-going relief operations in a recent land sliding incident that struck the village Damishi/Abhyail in district Muzaffarabad.

During the meeting, a significant step towards strengthening humanitarian efforts and disaster response was discussed besides focusing on collaborative strategies to enhance relief operations, healthcare services and community engagement.

The Chairman PRCS briefed about the recent land sliding incident in district Muzaffarabad and on-going relief operations. Besides, both the chairmen engaged in a comprehensive discussion about the

current state of humanitarian activities within AJK and the broader goals of the PRCS. The leaders underscored the importance of unity and synergy among PRCS chapters to ensure a swift and efficient response to emergencies and to serve vulnerable communities effectively. The Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari lauded the exceptional and on-going relief operations conducted by the PRCS AJK Chapter. The commendation comes as a testament to the dedication and tireless efforts of the PRCS AJK team in providing vital humanitarian assistance and support to communities in need. "Under the dynamic leadership of Ejaz Raza, the PRCS AJK Chapter has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment.

Ukraine-Russia war: Putin 'considers coming face to face with world leaders' at G20 summit

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian president Vladimir Putin is considering attending the G20 summit in person, a Kremlin source has claimed.

The summit is set to take place in September in New Delhi, India, focusing on the theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future."

But Putin hasn't ruled out his attendance, the Kremlin official told NBC News, seeking to "re-launch himself on the world stage" ahead of next year's election. Likewise, the official claimed that Putin is keen to win over countries that aren't solid in their support for Russia in its invasion of Ukraine. After world leaders condemned Russia's war, Putin did not participate in the event in Bali in 2022.

The news comes just one day after Russian president Vladimir Putin pledged to ramp up border defences following a surge in drone attacks.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said NATO-member Poland had already announced plans to strengthen its military, and he expected significant NATO forces and weaponry to be deployed in Finland. Russia claimed it shot down two Ukrainian drones headed for Moscow, one near a major airport to the south of the city and one to the west of the capital.

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India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) is seen on a television screen as he addresses the lower house Lok Sabha in New Delhi.

India PM Modi's government defeats no-confidence motion

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: The government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi defeated a no-confidence motion in parliament on Thursday after a fiery speech by the premier at the climax of a three-day debate.

Opposition lawmakers — who had brought the motion over months of ethnic violence in Manipur state — walked out of the chamber, prompting a furious rebuke from the premier, with the government then winning the vote.

The walkouts, according to broadcasters, included Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi, who on Wednesday said Modi's government was "set on burning the whole country."

Modi denounced them, saying: "Those who don't trust democracy are always ready to make a comment but don't have the patience to hear [the rebuttal]."

They would "speak ill and run away, throw garbage and run away, spread lies and run away", he added, to cheers from his own benches.

"This is their game and the country can't expect much from them."

The no-confidence vote was dismissed by the government ahead of the vote as a headline-grabbing gimmick ahead of a general election next year.

Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has a large majority in the 543-member lower house, and is widely expected to win a third term in power.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas fires nearly all governors in West Bank in major upheaval

Monitoring Desk
RAMALLAH: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas fired most of the governors in the occupied West Bank on Thursday, responding to long-standing demands for a political shake-up as frustration grows with the semi-autonomous Palestinian Authority.

Abbas issued a decree dismissing the governors of eight provinces under Palestinian administration in the occupied territory. The upheaval included the restive northern cities of Nablus, Jenin and Tulkerem, the focus of a recent surge in Palestinian militancy that has undermined the authority's leadership. Only three areas — including Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority — retained their governors. The president's office said that he would form a committee to suggest replacements.

Although the decision is unlikely to have an immediate impact on the ground, experts said it signals Abbas' recognition of the authority's deepening unpopularity and his desire to show that he is heeding calls for change in the face of mounting difficulties.

"It gives the authority

a new face, which is important particularly as the governors are in charge of all security matters," said political analyst Jihad Harb.

"But it won't change anything really. (Abbas) is trying to rebuild some public trust, but it will take much more."

Palestinians have not had the chance to vote in national elections since 2006. Abbas' original four-year term technically ended in 2009. Although governors said they had expected an overhaul for years given growing demands for change, many said Thursday's decree took them by surprise.

Five Turkish soldiers killed in operations in Iraq - ministry

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Five Turkish soldiers were killed in a clash with militants in an operation in northern Iraq, Turkey's defence ministry said on Thursday.

The conflict took place in Zap region, where Turkey has been carrying out a cross-border operation called "Claw-Lock."

Ankara says the offensive is a measure to prevent the PKK from using Iraq as a base to carry out attacks in Turkey.

A Turkish defence ministry official said all five soldiers were killed in the first round of fire by the PKK militants while they were conducting search and

Panama-flagged tanker catches fire near Iranian coast - TV

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: A Panama-flagged tanker called White Pearl has caught fire near Assaluyeh on Iran's Gulf coast, Iranian state media reported on Thursday, adding that all crew members were safe.

"Twenty-two of the ship's crew have been rescued by Iranian rescue teams after the ship's captain requested assistance from the port authorities," state TV quoted a local port official as saying.

The official said that the tanker, carrying 40,000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas, had experienced "a problem in the engine room due to a fire."

Panama's vessel registry, the world's largest, has withdrawn its flag from 136 ships linked to Iran's state oil company in the last four years.



At least 36 killed as wildfire burns historic Hawaii town to the ground.

Biden announces curbs on US investments in China

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Wednesday issued an executive order aimed at restricting certain American investments in sensitive high-tech areas in China — a move Beijing blasted as being "anti-globalisation".

The long-anticipated rules, expected to be implemented next year, target sectors like semiconductors and artificial intelligence, as Washington seeks to limit access to key technologies.

"The commitment of the United States to open investment is a cornerstone of our economic policy and provides the United States with substantial benefits," Biden said in a letter to Congressional leaders announcing the executive order.

"However, certain United States investments may accelerate and increase the success of the development of sensitive technologies and products in countries that develop them to

Hong Kong arrests 10 for 'foreign collusion' over pro democracy fund

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Hong Kong police arrested 10 people on Thursday under the city's national security law, accusing them of providing financial support to overseas disident groups pushing for sanctions against the Chinese finance hub.

Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong in 2020 after huge and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests the year before. Critics say the law has curtailed political freedoms and quashed dissent. Authorities said on Thursday four men and six women, aged between 26 and 43, were arrested for "conspiracy to collusion with a foreign country or external elements" — an offence under the security law that can carry a sentence of up to life in prison.



Hong Kong arrests 10 for 'foreign collusion' over violent pro-democracy protests.

At least 36 killed as wildfire burns historic Hawaii town to the ground

Monitoring Desk
WAILUKU: Thousands of Hawaii residents raced to escape homes on Maui as blazes swept across the island, destroying parts of a centuries-old town and killing at least 36 people in one of the deadliest U.S. wildfires in recent years.

The fire took the island by surprise, leaving behind burned-out cars on once-busy streets and smoking piles of rubble where historic buildings had stood in Lahaina Town, which dates to the 1700s and has long been a favorite destination for tourists. Crews battled blazes in several places on the island Wednesday, and the flames forced some adults and children to flee into the ocean.

At least 36 people have died, according to a statement from Maui County late Wednesday that said no other details were available on the deaths. Officials said earlier that 271 structures were damaged or destroyed and dozens of people injured.

Lahaina residents Kamuela Kawaakoa and Iulia Yasso described a harrowing escape under smoke-filled skies Tuesday afternoon. The couple and their 6-year-old son got back to their apartment after a quick dash to the supermarket for water, and only had time to grab a change of clothes and run as the bushes around them caught fire.

"We barely made it out," Kawaakoa said at an evacuation shelter on Wednesday, still unsure if anything was left of their apartment. As the family fled, a senior center across the road erupted in flames. They called 911, but didn't know if the people got out. Fire alarms blared. As they drove away, downed utility poles and fleeing cars slowed their progress. Kawaakoa, 34, grew up in the apartment building, called Lahaina Surf, where his dad and grandmother also lived.

"It was so hard to sit there and just watch my town burn to ashes and not be able to do anything."

Four US citizens moved from Iranian prison to house arrest

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Four U.S. citizens detained by Iran have left Tehran's Evin prison and are now under house arrest, a lawyer for one of them told Reuters on Thursday, saying he hoped this was a step toward them eventually leaving the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian Americans include businessman Siamak Namazi, 51, and Emad Shargi, 58, as well as environmentalist Morad Tahbaz, 67, who also has British nationality, said Jared Genser, a lawyer who represents Namazi. The fourth U.S. citizen's identity has not been made public.

"The move by Iran of the American hostages from Evin Prison to an expected house arrest is an important development," Genser said in a statement. "While I hope this will be

Six killed as fires scorch Hawaii resorts

Monitoring Desk
KAHULUI: Wildfires fanned by the winds of a distant hurricane devastated Hawaii's Maui island on Wednesday, killing six people and forcing tourists and residents to flee as beloved holiday destinations became flaming infernos.

Some people were forced to jump into the ocean to escape the smoke and fire conditions, prompting the US coast guard to rescue them, according to a Maui county press release. The American Red Cross opened an evacuation centre in a school, the county said.

Six people had been confirmed killed by the fires, Maui county mayor Richard Bissen said at a press conference. Panicked residents fleeing the flames posted videos and photos on social media showing apocalyptic clouds of smoke billowing up over formerly once-idyllic beaches and palm trees.

Ecuador presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio assassinated, one suspect dead

Monitoring Desk
QUITO: Ecuador presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio, a vocal critic of corruption and organised crime, was killed at a campaign event on Wednesday, authorities said, amid an upsurge in violence in the Andean nation blamed on drug traffickers.

Local media reported some 30 shots had been fired at an event in the north of the capital, Quito. Video footage posted on social media showed Villavicencio getting into a car after the event, before the sound of apparent gunfire and screaming.

Ecuador's police and Interior Ministry did not respond to repeated requests for comment about the details of the killing, but outgoing President Guillermo Lasso confirmed police safely detonated a grenade left behind by the killers.

"This is a political crime, which has the character of terrorism, and we do not doubt that this murder is an attempt to sabotage the electoral process," Lasso said in a video statement past midnight local time, after meeting with security and electoral officials.

Eleven die in fire at holiday home in France

Monitoring Desk
WINTZENHEIM: Eleven people were killed in eastern France on Wednesday when a fire tore through a holiday lodging being used by a group of adults with learning disabilities, officials said. The fire at the timbered residence in the eastern town of Wintzenheim struck deep in the night while the guests were asleep, with many of those on the upper floor unable to react fast enough to save their lives. The fire, which came at the height of the nation's summer holiday season, is the deadliest in France since a blaze at a bar in the northern city of Rouen.

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Lebanese army deploys in village after deadly shootout

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: Lebanese army troops deployed on Thursday in a Christian village following a deadly shootout there the previous evening between residents and members of the Shi'ite group Hezbollah.

A Hezbollah member and a Christian resident were killed in Wednesday's exchange of fire in the village of Kahaleh, near Beirut, in an incident that began when a Hezbollah truck carrying ammunition turned over while driving through the area. It was the deadliest confrontation between the Iran-backed Hezbollah and Lebanese who oppose it since clashes in Beirut.

Amazon summit shows thorny challenge for Brazilian COP30 host city

Monitoring Desk
BELEM: Hosting a United Nations climate summit for tens of thousands of people in any city is a daunting task. Doing it in a part of the Amazon rainforest unaccustomed to hordes of visitors will be even harder.

Belem, a city of 1.3 million in northern Brazil that will host the COP30 climate meeting in 2025, was put to the test during a summit of rainforest nations this week. With roughly half as many hotel beds as the 27,000 summit participants, room rates soared. But the city expects more than 70,000 for COP30. To deal with the shortage, it may lean on a solution central to life in the Amazon River delta for hundreds of years: boats.

Some delegates may commute daily by boat from nearby islands, while heads of state may stay on cruise ships parked in the harbor, government officials say.

The city plans to complete a diagnostic later this month on all the challenges to be confronted in the two years until the summit, including an inadequate sewage system, dilapidated roadways and threadbare public transit.

"Is the city ready to host an event that big? If it were today, we wouldn't be," said Luiz Araujo, who leads the city's COP30 preparation committee.

The United Nations convenes an annual conference for the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, an event that has taken on more urgency as heat records have fallen and the target of keeping warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius appears to be slipping out of reach. This year's COP28 will be in late November and December in Dubai. Brazil has a lot riding on COP30's success. The meeting will cap a diplomatic U-turn steered by President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, who has vowed to restore Brazil's standing as a leader on environmental policy after four years of soaring deforestation under his predecessor Jair Bolsonaro.



Firefighters trying to extinguish the blaze.

