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'Create space for dialogue': PM Shehbaz Sharif urges restraint amid regional crisis

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday commended Sultan of Oman Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for Muscat's constructive efforts in facilitating dialogue and building trust among regional and international stakeholders, amid deteriorating security situation in the Middle East following recent hostilities between Israel and Iran.

PM Shehbaz said this during a telephone conversation with the sultan of Oman.

The two leaders discussed the prevailing regional situation that had aggravated following Israel's attack on Iran as well as subsequent hostilities that had endangered the peace and security of the entire region, the PM Office said.

The premier stressed upon the urgent need to prevent further escalation and to create space for resumption of diplomatic initiatives. The prime minister said that the escalation had taken place at a time when diplomatic efforts were underway to reduce US-Iran tensions, facilitated by Oman.

"The attacks had not only derailed the delicate diplomatic process, but had also undermined efforts to promote dialogue and de-escalation in the region," he added.

Appreciating Oman's mediatory role, PM Shehbaz acknowledged that Oman's balanced and forward-looking diplomacy was a stabilising force in the region. Both leaders agreed to maintain close contact. They reaffirmed their commitment.



ISLAMABAD: An inside view of closed Jinnah International Airport. Due to the regional conflict involving Iran, Israel and the US, like other contries, air operation from Pakistan to the Middle East have been severely disrupted.

Pakistan embassy sets up facilitation desks in UAE, launches outreach initiative for nationals

PEAK POINT



ABU DHABI: The Embassy of Pakistan in Abu Dhabi has launched an initiative aimed at "facilitation and outreach" efforts for Pakistani nationals residing in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) amid heightened tensions in the Middle East.

In a post on X, the embassy said, "The Embassy of Pakistan in Abu Dhabi has launched an online registration form for the Pakistani community residing in the UAE for the sake of facilitation and outreach". The nationals were directed by the embassy to register here. The embassy has set up facilitation desks in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, which will "operate round the clock". The embassy also issued directives for Pakistani nationals stranded in transit in the UAE due to flight disruptions and airport closures to register here. In a post on X, the embassy said, "All Pakistani citizens who are presently in transit are requested to fill out this form carefully and completely". "The information provided will help the Embassy coordinate with relevant authorities and airlines to extend necessary assistance," it added. A day earlier, the Foreign Office (FO) issued an advisory.

List of key Iranian officials killed in US-Israel strikes

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: US President Donald Trump has claimed that joint US-Israel strikes have resulted in the deaths of at least 48 key Iranian figures, asserting that Iran's entire leadership has been decimated and many officials are seeking to surrender.

Iranian state media have confirmed over the past two days that several senior officials, including the country's Supreme Leader, have been killed. The following are some of the key personalities reportedly affected:

Iran's 86-year-old Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was reportedly martyred along with senior leadership in

the strikes carried out on Saturday, as confirmed



by the official news agency IRNA. The attack also claimed the lives of his daughter, son-in-law, and 14-year-old granddaughter.

Seventy-year-old Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and a close advisor to Khamenei, was reportedly overseeing negotiations between the US and Iran on the nuclear program.

Shamkhani survived a targeted Israeli strike

during the 12-day Iran-Israel conflict in June 2025. He served as the council's head for over a decade and was one of the longest-serving officials after former President Hassan Rouhani. Appointed Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces last June by Khamenei, Abdolrahim Mousavi had previously served as

Commander-in-Chief from 2017 to 2025. Mousavi was instrumental in developing Iran's ballistic missiles, drone systems, and space launch programs, and faced international sanctions for human rights violations during domestic protests in November 2019.

Serving as Defense Minister under President Massoud Pezeshkian's 2024 government, Aziz Nasirzadeh, former Deputy Chief of Staff and ex-Commander of the Air Force (2018-2021), played a crucial role in protecting Iran's military and nuclear infrastructure during US-Israel strikes. Earlier reports of his death were later proven false. Mohammad Pakpour.

Operation Ghazab Lil-Haq: Pak Armed Force destroy ammunition depot in Khost

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Pak Armed Forces destroyed an ammunition depot belonging to Fitna al-Khwarizj and the Afghan Taliban in Khost during the ongoing operation Ghazab Lil-Haq in response to the Afghan Taliban's unprovoked aggression. Security sources said that the Pakistani Armed Forces launched strong and effective retaliatory actions in response to aggression by the Afghan Taliban. Following unprovoked aggression along

Punjab govt places all public sector hospitals on high alert

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Sunday directed all public sector hospitals across the province to remain on emergency alert and maintain full operational readiness in view of the prevailing situation. According to official instructions, emergency wards, operation theaters and trauma centres have been ordered to remain fully functional at all times. Availability of specialist doctors and essential medicines has also been ensured to deal with any contingency. The directive emphasized that all administrative and medical staff must remain vigilant.

Operation Ghazb-lil-Haq: Information minister says 415 Afghan Taliban personnel killed

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday released a significant operational update regarding 'Operation Ghazb-lil-Haq', detailing extensive casualties and material damage sustained by the Afghan Taliban.

In a post on social media platform X, the information minister apprised that the ongoing operation has resulted in the killing of 435 Afghan Taliban personnel, while more than 630 others have been reported injured so far since inception of the operation.

Military strikes have successfully destroyed 188 check posts and led to the capture of an additional 31 posts, he said.

The minister's report also detailed the destruction of



such a vast array of equipment and the neutralisation of check posts suggest a focused effort to dismantle the operational capabilities of the Afghan Taliban in the targeted regions.

The disclosure of these figures marks a decisive

phase in Operation Ghazb-lil-Haq. The destruction of Taliban military installations and posts, including in Kabul and Kandahar, in one of the deepest Pakistani incursions into its western neighbour in years, officials said. Islamabad accuses the Taliban of harbouring Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists, who it claims are waging terrorism inside Pakistan, a charge the Taliban denies. Pakistan described its actions as a response to cross-border assaults, while Kabul denounced them as a breach of its sovereignty, saying it remained open to dialogue but warned any wider conflict would result in serious consequences. The fighting has raised the risk of a protracted conflict along the rugged 2,600-km (1,615-mile) frontier.

Meanwhile, international community has expressed increasing concern about the conflict and called for urgent talks. Amid clashes with Taliban forces, Pakistan's

Canada and India strike agreements on rare earth, uranium



PEAK POINT

NEW DEHLI: India and Canada on Monday reached a string of agreements, including on critical mineral cooperation and a "landmark" uranium supply deal for nuclear power, the countries' leaders said in New Delhi. The pacts, which also covered technology and promoting the use of renewable energy, were announced after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney hailed a fresh start in the relationship between their nations. "Our ties have seen a new energy, mutual trust, and positivity," Modi said. Ties effectively collapsed in 2023 after Ottawa accused New Delhi of orchestrating a deadly campaign against Sikh activists in Canada, accusations India rejected.



SPORTS



PCB slaps Rs5 million fine on each player after T20 World Cup exit



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan's disappointing performance in the T20 World Cup 2026 has proved costly for the players, as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has imposed a fine of Rs5 million on each cricketer following the team's early exit.

During the tournament, Pakistan narrowly avoided defeat against the Netherlands in their opening match and then managed to overcome the United States.

Given their familiarity with Sri Lankan conditions and the presence of quality spin bowlers, expectations were high for an improved showing against India. However, similar to their struggles in three Asia Cup matches, the team once again failed to deliver.

After defeating Namibia, the national side secured a place in the Super 8 stage, but their clash against New Zealand was washed out due to rain.

They then suffered a defeat against England, leaving their hopes of reaching the semi-finals hanging in the balance.

England's victory over New Zealand briefly revived Pakistan's chances, but a hard-fought win against Sri Lanka players receive bonuses for strong performances, they must also face penalties for poor results.

In fact, the team had been informed of this decision immediately after losing to India.

It is worth noting that national cricketers currently earn millions annually.

An A-category player receives a monthly salary of Rs4.5 million along with an ICC revenue share of Rs2.07 million, while B-category players are paid Rs3 million per month and receive Rs1.552 million as their ICC share.

They emphasized that just as

Shahid Afridi slams Shaheen Afridi over T20 WC bowling errors



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has strongly criticised his son-in-law and fast bowler Shaheen Afridi over his bowling approach during the T20 World Cup.

Speaking on a private TV program, Shahid Afridi expressed concerns over Shaheen's performance in the tournament. He said that despite playing international cricket for a considerable period, Shaheen still struggles with basic decision-making, particularly regarding where to bowl the final over. Afridi remarked that Shaheen has been repeatedly advised on such matters. The former captain stated that despite being told multiple times, Shaheen continues to repeat the same mistakes. He explained that when a right-handed batter is on strike, bowling round the wicket is generally not preferred, and even if attempted, it should be directed within the stumps. Afridi further said it was difficult to understand why the same error keeps recurring. He questioned when Pakistan's bowlers would grasp such fundamental aspects of the game. He added that players neither seem willing to learn nor eager to improve, and some appear to believe that responsibility in a match lies with only one or two individuals. Shahid Afridi concluded by saying that Pakistan is lagging far behind in cricketing mindset compared to the rest of the world, stressing that the team's overall thinking remains outdated in modern-day cricket.

Sadaf, Fatima star as Pakistan thrash South Africa for consolation victory



PEAK POINT

DURBAN: Sadaf Shamas starred with the bat while skipper Fatima Sana delivered an all-round show to help Pakistan women thrash South Africa in the third and final One-day International for a 119-run consolation victory at the Kingsmead Cricket

Feroza early before Sadaf and Sidra Amin (41) stitched a 130-run partnership. Pakistan stood at 164-3 following the duo's departure but lost two quick wickets, which required a rescue effort of sorts and Fatima, along with Najha Alvi were up to the task. The pair put up 65 for the sixth

wicket before Najha was dismissed in the 48th over. Fatima brought up her fifth ODI half-century and remained unbeaten.

For the Proteas, Sune Luus bagged 3-42 while Nonkululeko Mlaba returned figures of 2-56.

In reply, Tasmia Rubab (1-19) provided Pakistan with the first breakthrough as she dismissed Tazmin Brits in her first over.

Fatima continued the momentum with her pace as she bagged the scalps of her counterpart Laura Wolvaardt and Luus for a duck in space of three deliveries to reduce the hosts to 7-3 after two overs.

Pakistan beat Malaysia 5-3 to reach World Cup qualifier semifinals



PHF unveils revolutionary strategic reform agenda to revive national game

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) announced a comprehensive and ambitious "Strategic Reform Agenda" aimed at reviving the national game, following the first meeting of its ad hoc committee.

The meeting, chaired by PHF President Mohyuddin Wani, marked what officials described as a "defining moment" for Pakistan hockey, with a shift from short-term fixes to a long-term institutional roadmap designed to rebuild the sport from grassroots to elite level.

The reform agenda rests on three foundational pillars: institutional transparency, data-driven talent identification, and professional management of the federation.

Among those present at the meeting were Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Islahuddin Siddiqui, Olympian Hassan

Sardar, Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Dr Faisal, Prime Minister's Coordinator Sardar Yasir Ilyas, Higher Education Commission Chairman Dr Niazi, Inter Board Committee Chairman

are implementing a sustainable, long-term strategy to build a system that is autonomous, transparent and capable of competing at the global level," the PHF president said. The participants also discussed enhancing

international exposure tours to align with modern hockey standards.

A key component of the agenda is restoring democratic governance within the federation. The committee approved a 90-day roadmap under which hockey clubs across the country will undergo strict scrutiny.



First resignation comes after Pakistan's T20 World Cup exit



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Aleem Dar has resigned from Pakistan's national selection committee after the team's dismal performance in the ICC T20 World Cup.

Dar submitted his resignation to officials of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) following Pakistan's failure to reach the semi-finals of the tournament. The decision comes amid expected changes within the team management and selection committee is now setup after the early

Javed and Asad Shafiq.

Data analyst Usman Hashmi remains part of the panel but does not hold voting rights; his role is limited to providing statistical insights and performance analysis to assist the selectors in decision-making.

Earlier, Pakistan's shortcomings were laid bare during their lacklustre T20 World Cup campaign which ended last week when the team failed to reach the semi-finals.

From the captain Salman Agha, who was criticised for not being a T20 player.



After the Federal Capital, Maroof to establish new facility in DHA Rawalpindi, expanding access to quality healthcare

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Maroof International Hospital hosted its Annual Iftar Dinner at the elegant Serena Hotel Islamabad, bringing together consultants, managers, staff, and their families for an evening of reflection, gratitude, and connection. The gathering provided a rare opportunity for colleagues and their families to engage beyond the workplace, strengthening bonds, sharing

experiences, and celebrating the growing "Maroof Family." Chairman CH Naseer Ahmad delivered an inspiring keynote: "Maroof is not built by bricks and walls alone — it is built by hearts that serve, hands that heal, and families that stand together. Every year, our family grows stronger, and with it, our resolve to serve humanity with compassion and excellence." A defining moment of the evening was



the announcement of a new Rawalpindi. Ch. Naseer Maroof International Choudhry highlighted that Hospital in DHA Phase II, the new facility will provide

high-quality medical services to the people of Rawalpindi and its surrounding areas, extending the hospital's commitment to accessible, compassionate healthcare beyond the federal capital. CEO Haroon Naseer reaffirmed the hospital's values of compassion, unity, and social responsibility: "We are mindful of the recent challenges faced by communities and extend our support and thoughts to

those affected. As a healthcare institution, we remain committed to the well-being and care of all." The Iftar Dinner concluded with a shared sense of pride, gratitude, and optimism. The event reinforced that Maroof International Hospital is more than a healthcare provider — it is a growing family dedicated to service, community, and regional harmony.

Ramazan M-Tag hours revised: 12-hour service launched at 9 points, 4 centers open round the clock

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration has changed M-Tag service hours and introduced two new categories of 24 hours and 12 hours for motorcycles to facilitate the citizens during Ramazan. According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the decision expands access across 13 service points, with 4 centers now operating round the clock and 9 points providing 12-hour service. According to officials, the 24-hour service will be available at 26 Number Chungi, F-9 Park, Faizabad, and Phulgran. These locations will remain open day and night to ensure uninterrupted service for citizens who cannot visit during regular



In addition, the Directorate of Excise approved an extension of staff duty hours. On the directions of the Director General of Excise, the existing 9-hour shift has been extended to 12 hours at selected points. As a result, 9 out of 13 M-Tag service locations will now offer 12-hour service each day.

The 12-hour category includes centers at Rawat Check Post, G-14 Check Post, and 9th Avenue I-9. Officials confirmed that these points will remain open for extended hours throughout Ramazan to manage higher demand. Further locations providing 12-hour service include Wheat Godown Naka, Daman-e-Koh, and Murree Road near Tulip Naka. Authorities stated that these points were selected based on traffic flow and public need. Centers established at Gulberg Greens, Millpur, and Margalla Avenue Check Post will also operate for 12 hours daily. The Excise Department said the extended schedule will continue during Ramadan to ensure smooth processing.

Motorway police recovered large quantity of non-tax pad cigarettes

WAJIHA TAMSEEL MIRZA
FAISALABAD: According to the initial report, on M4 Motorway Faisalabad area, Duty Officer Inspector Muhammad Usman Shabbir, was on routine patrol when he received a call for a mechanical problem of the helpline 130. The duty officer immediately reached the spot. The driver's statement of the vehicle was suspicious. After initial questioning, it was revealed that 67 carton cigarettes on the vehicle were being carried by non-tax-paid cigarettes (Kisan brand) worth around Rs 8 million PKR (including duties and taxes). The admin officer and the concerned area Patrolling Mobile



was also called at the spot. During further investigation, it was revealed that a resident of Sargodha was taking the said cigarette from Midh Ranjha (Sargodha) to Toba Tek Singh through Shahzore Pickup. FBR officers were called for further legal action. After completing the codal formalities, the aforementioned non-tax-paid cigarettes were handed over to FBR officials, Faisalabad region for further legal action.

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Humanitarian factor

Huma Yusuf
MISSILES are raining down across the region. The calculations are securitised, strategic, or sinister. What is lost amidst the grandstanding and analysis is consideration for the human toll of conflict. Fighting between Pakistan and Afghanistan has reached unprecedented levels, with Islamabad launching attacks in retaliation for escalating cross-border militant attacks. Pakistan has drawn its red line, demanding the Afghan Taliban put an end to terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. This is fitting given the increasingly egregious cross-border infiltrations, particularly in KP. But Pakistan must not forget the human cost and the further isolation of the Afghan people, particularly Afghan women. The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is dire. More than 17 million people are experiencing crisis levels of hunger, a number that disproportionately includes women and girls. Four million children are acutely malnourished. Following the slashing of US development aid, only 2.7 per cent of the Afghan population is receiving food assistance. The drivers for this widespread food insecurity are complex, and include economic challenges, climate disasters and reduced international aid. But Pakistan has played a direct role in Afghan food shortages. Border closures since October have stymied food

and medicine supply chains and Afghan food systems have buckled under the pressure of over 2m Afghans returning after expulsion from neighbouring countries, primarily Pakistan. Beyond hunger and malnourishment, Afghan women and girls are enduring shocking repression, described by UN experts as 'gender apartheid'. The Afghan Taliban over the past year has introduced horrific laws restricting women's freedom of movement and access to public spaces, while enforcing existing bans on post-primary education and various forms of employment. Recent changes to the Afghan penal code afford better protections to animals than women: the punishment for beating a wife until her wounds are visible is 15 days' imprisonment, while that for making birds or animals fight is five months. Taking a cue from authoritarianism everywhere, the Afghan Taliban have also introduced draconian laws punishing dissent or criticism, making a mockery of media freedoms. The Afghan public's plight is likely to worsen as Iran is further destabilised in the wake of joint US and Israel strikes against the Islamic Republic over the weekend. Iran hosts up to 3.6m Afghans, who may be forced to return to Afghanistan if there is prolonged conflict or regime change in Iran, further stress-

ing food and job markets. Even if the situation does not deteriorate to the extent of mass displacement, trade disruptions due to Operation Epic Fury will affect Afghans significantly. Bilateral trade between Afghanistan and Iran amounted to \$3.4 billion in 2025, including critical food and fuel items. Afghanistan has also been making up for exports clogged at the Pakistan border by routing them via Iran and other Central Asian countries. Those routes may now be disrupted, putting additional pressure on the Afghan economy and so its population. As Pakistan carries out attacks against terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan, it must also acknowledge the humanitarian suffering of Afghan civilians. This is important to avoid any accusation of hypocrisy as Pakistan condemns US and Israeli strikes against Iran, and continues to call for a just peace in Gaza. Of course, we live in an era of hypocrisy, in which the formation of a Board of Peace heralds more conflict in the Middle East. But further normalising it, and refusing to call out the people at the heart of every conflict, engenders the threat of perpetual war. Juggling national security with humanitarian considerations is challenging, but essential, particularly in the context of conflict with non-state actors. Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan's new Afghan doctrine

Kamran Yousaf
For years, Pakistan exercised restraint in dealing with the authorities in Afghanistan. It relied on backchannel diplomacy, intelligence sharing and border fencing to contain the threat posed by the banned TTP. But the recent wave of high-profile terrorist attacks inside Pakistan appears to have altered Islamabad's calculus decisively. In an unprecedented move, Pakistan conducted massive air strikes deep inside the Afghan territory, targeting what it described as Taliban military bases used to facilitate cross-border terrorist attacks. The strikes, in response to the Afghan Taliban's simultaneous attacks on Pakistan army checkpoints, hit multiple locations, including Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Khost. Never before has Pakistan struck at such scale and depth inside Afghanistan. The message is unmistakable: the era of patience is over. At the heart of the escalating tensions lies the TTP issue. The TTP, ideologically aligned with the Afghan Taliban, has found safe haven across the border. Since the Taliban takeover, the group has regrouped, rearmed and reorganised, launching increasingly sophisticated attacks inside Pakistan. Efforts at reconciliation have failed. Pakistan even tried negotiations with the TTP under Taliban mediation, but the ceasefire collapsed. The result: a surge in violence that has tested public patience and forced policymakers to rethink their approach. The air strikes targeting the Afghan Taliban military bases signal a doctrinal shift. Pakistan is no longer content with defensive posturing or reactive measures along the border. Instead, it has adopted a strategy of punitive deterrence, degrading the infrastructure that enables cross-border terrorism. By hitting what it said are Taliban military facilities and training hubs, Pakistan seeks to raise the cost of supporting the TTP. The objective is not symbolic retaliation but strategic degradation. Courtesy Tribune

NFC reform

PLANNING Minister Ahsan Iqbal's call for forward-looking reforms in the NFC Award has reopened an important debate on Pakistan's fiscal architecture. The focus should now be on reshaping the revenue-sharing framework to ensure fiscal sustainability, reward performance and reflect changing economic realities. Highlighting the imbalance between federal responsibilities and fiscal capacity, Mr Iqbal cited budget figures to underscore the scale of the centre's financial constraints. After transferring the provinces' share from the divisible tax pool under the NFC Award, the centre is left with only enough money to finance debt servicing and defence expenditure. This forces the centre to rely on borrowing to fund essential functions such as pensions and social protection, perpetuating a cycle of rising debt and shrinking fiscal flexibility. However, the solution is not a reduction in the provincial share, which is constitutionally problematic and counter-productive. The 18th Amendment redefined the federal structure, transferring significant functional duties to the provinces along with corresponding fiscal resources. Undoing this arrangement would weaken provincial autonomy and risk destabilising the federation itself. The solution lies in the expansion of the pie, not redistribution. Raising the tax-to-GDP ratio from 10.5pc to at least 18pc would dramatically expand fiscal capacity for both the centre and provinces.

Listen attentively, we're ready for you: Zardari warns India; calls for negotiated solutions to Gulf situation



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday calling the war a last resort, urged India to shift from war theatres to meaningful negotiations—or face another humiliating defeat—and warned that Pakistan had already shown both India and Afghanistan only a fraction of its capabilities. “Make no mistake. We

are ready for you. My message to them is to move away from war theatres to meaningful negotiating tables because that is the only path for regional security... India must listen to us attentively: Pakistan will continue to give its fullest diplomatic and moral support to the just cause of the people of Jammu and Kashmir,” the president said in his annual address to the joint sitting of parliament here.

Co-chaired by Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the session was attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and members of the National Assembly and Senate, while in the galleries were First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, provincial governors and chief ministers, and diplomats.

The president, who addressed the parliament for the ninth time at the beginning of the new parliamentary year, deliberated on all national, regional, and international matters, including the Kashmir and Palestine issues, ongoing tension in the Gulf region, Maarka-Haq and Ghazab Lil Haq operations, Indian violation of the Indus Waters Treaty, economy, provincial autonomy, and poverty. The president said that nobody in South Asia would be free and safe until Kashmiris win their freedom from Indian occupation. The president condemned the war waged.

Pakistan making ‘full diplomatic efforts’ to de-escalate situation in Middle East, says Dar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday said Pakistan was making “full diplomatic efforts” to de-escalate the regional situation following attacks by the United States and Israel on Iran.

“This recent escalation ... has ... significantly heightened tensions in an already volatile and fragile environment. We are making full diplomatic efforts and requesting all parties to de-escalate,” Dar said during a media briefing in Islamabad.

He recalled Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s visit to Austria and noted that he held discussions with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), saying that the “feedback was positive”. He said that “serious developments” had taken place



at a time when “diplomatic efforts were underway to reach a peaceful and negotiable ... solution”. “But what triggered all of a sudden engulfed ... almost all countries,” he said.

He then referred to a high-level meeting chaired by the prime minister on Sunday, which reviewed the regional environment and the situation between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Commenting on the assassination of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and said: “We are concerned over the violation of norms.

Axle load compliance vital for transporters, national infrastructure: Abdul Aleem Khan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday said that axle load compliance was in the best interest of goods transporters as well as the country’s road infrastructure, reiterating the government’s full support to the transporter industry.

He expressed these views while talking to a high-level delegation of the All Pakistan Goods Transport Association (APGTA) led by its Chairperson Ch. Qamar Zaman Gill, which called on him here at the Ministry of Communications, said a press release.

The federal minister said that strict adherence to axle load compliance is not merely a regulatory requirement but a strategic benefit for the Goods Transporters themselves. He highlighted that compliance significantly reduces vehicle wear and tear, minimizes maintenance costs, and is essential for the preservation of the country’s road infrastructure. Maintaining prescribed load limits is

beneficial for the overall business ecosystem,” he stated. He urged the association to play a proactive role in convincing all stakeholders across the country to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding national compliance. The delegation headed by Ch. Qamar Zaman Gill and President Muhammad Awais Chaudhry, expressed their alignment with the Government’s vision, informing the Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan that the Association firmly believes in upholding court decisions and adhering to established rules. The representatives noted that violations of axle load limits impact them negatively, leading to increased fuel consumption, higher accident rates, and unfavorable market rates due to non-compliance by certain factions. Addressing the recent challenges, Abdul Aleem Khan noted that while the Government had to provide certain reliefs following strikes by a faction of the transporters, it is imperative for the association to realize that long-term sustainability lies



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan with delegation of the All Pakistan Goods Transport Association (APGTA).

PTI moves IHC seeking transfer of Imran to hospital amid health concerns

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was moved on Monday with a plea seeking the immediate shifting of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan to Shifa International Hospital for specialised eye treatment, alleging that jail authorities have been conducting medical examinations in complete secrecy. A similar plea was submitted in the Supreme Court on February 25, following Imran undergoing a government-facilitated follow-up treatment for his eye ailment. Monday’s criminal miscellaneous application was filed under Section 561-A CrPC by senior counsel Sardar Latif Khosa. The petition claimed that Imran — now 73 years old and incarcerated since August 2023 — has been left with only approximately 15 per cent vision in his right eye. The application cites a report submitted to the SC by amicus curiae Barrister Salman Salfar, which confirmed that despite the petitioner’s repeated complaints of “blurred and hazardous vision,” no timely or adequate medical intervention was undertaken by jail authorities, ultimately resulting.

More than 300 students completed specialized training under NAVTTC

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: More than 300 students completed specialized training under the Prime Minister’s Overseas Employment Programme of the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC), with a visa issuance ceremony held in Islamabad on Monday.

Addressing the ceremony as chief guest, Chairman Prime Minister’s Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, called on overseas employment promoters to actively support the programme and work closely with the government to expand overseas job opportunities for Pakistani youth. Calling the trainees as ambassadors of the country, he said their perfor-



mance abroad would boost confidence among Pakistani manpower and play a key role to promote Pakistan’s positive image globally. “With discipline, skill and professionalism, you will not only secure your own future but also brighten Pakistan’s name,” he said. Addressing the gathering, Executive Director NAVTTC, Aamir Jan said the programme aimed on securing job placement of Pakistani youth in international market with handsome wages through specialized.

Raja Nasir Abbas criticizes Western powers to destabilize Middle East for strategic dominance

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas Monday strongly criticized Western powers including United States and Israel for attempting to destabilize the Middle East for strategic dominance.

Speaking at Senate, he said that the region is politically and strategically vital and global powers are working to reshape it in line with their own interests.

He said that the West is seeking to maintain control by creating instability at key “heart points” across the region.

Referring to Iran as a “broth-



erly neighboring country,” he said the Islamic Republic remains a major obstacle to what he described as expansionist ambitions.

He warned that certain U.S. officials have made statements about restructuring the region and expanding influence, including in Palestine and other Middle Eastern states.

Pentagon tells Congress no sign that Iran was going to attack US first, sources say

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: Trump administration officials acknowledged in closed-door briefings with congressional staff on Sunday that there was no intelligence suggesting Iran planned to attack United States forces first, two people familiar with the matter said.

The US and Israel launched their most ambitious attacks on Iran in decades on Saturday, assassinating Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, sinking Iranian warships and hitting more than 1,000

targets so far, officials say. But Sunday’s remarks to Congress appeared to undercut one of the key arguments for the war made by senior administration officials.

They told reporters the day before that US President Donald Trump decided to launch the attacks in part because of indicators that Iranians might strike US forces in the Middle East “perhaps preemptively”.

Trump, one of the officials said, was not going to “sit back and allow American forces in the



region to absorb attacks”.

Pentagon officials briefed Democratic and Republican staff of several national security committees in both the Senate and

the House of Representatives for more than 90 minutes on the unfolding US attack in Iran, White House spokesperson Dylan Johnson said earlier.

In the briefings, administration officials emphasised that Iran’s ballistic missiles and proxy forces in the region posed an imminent threat to US interests, but there was no intelligence about Tehran attacking US forces first, the two sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters.

Trump said the attack, which is expected to run for weeks, aimed to ensure Iran could not have a nuclear weapon, contain its missile program and eliminate threats to the United States and its allies.

He has urged Iranians to rise up and topple the government. Democrats criticise “war of choice” Still, Democrats have accused Trump of waging a war of choice and have taken aim at his arguments for abandoning peace talks that mediator Oman said still held promise.

Trump has argued, without presenting evidence, that Iran was on track to soon secure the ability to strike the US with a ballistic missile. His missile claim was not backed by US intelligence reports.