



Pakistan earns international recognition for constructive role in promoting peace: Ayaz Sadiq



Aleem Khan welcomes US-Iran peace accord, lauds Pakistan's leadership role



Sherry urges broader tax base, welcomes GST removal on women's hygiene products

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PM Shehbaz says Pakistan to host signing ceremony of US-Iran agreement in Geneva

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Monday that while the signing ceremony of an agreement reached between the US and Iran — aimed at ending a war that began three months ago — would be held in Geneva, it would be hosted by Pakistan.

"The [signing] ceremony of this historic agreement will be held on Friday, June 19, in Geneva, and by the grace of God, it will be hosted by Pakistan," he said while addressing a National Assembly session after he announced the agreement past midnight on Monday.

Under the agreement, the US and Iran have agreed on a framework to end the war, halt the US blockade of Iran and reopen the

Strait of Hormuz.

The war began in late February, with the US and Israel launching strikes on Iran. Throughout the conflict, Pakistan has remained actively involved in mediating for peace and also hosted the first round of talks between the two sides in Islamabad in April.

The historic direct US-Iran talks had ended without an agreement, but also without a breakdown. This was after Pakistan brokered a ceasefire between the two sides, which has remained fragile but in place. Days later, PM Shehbaz announced on X that the two sides had reached a "peace deal" after intensive talks. "Both sides have declared the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the National Assembly.

World leaders welcome US-Iran peace deal, praise Pakistan's mediation role

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Global leaders have welcomed the US-Iran peace agreement as a major diplomatic breakthrough, highlighting efforts to end regional hostilities and commending Pakistan's role in facilitating the negotiations.

US and Iranian officials announced on Sunday they had agreed on a framework to end their war, halt the US blockade of Iran and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. US President Donald Trump said on his Truth Social platform that the "Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete", posting the message around 5:30pm ET in Washington (2130 GMT) on Sunday.

His remarks came shortly after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose country has played a mediating role, announced that an agreement had been reached early on Monday local time.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) is scheduled to be formally signed on Friday in Switzerland.

The UN chief has welcomed the US-Iran peace deal, describing it as a major step towards ending the conflict and achieving a peaceful settlement.

US, Iran reach preliminary agreement to end war, signing set for Friday

MAHPARA ZAMAN



NEW YORK: US and Iranian officials said they had agreed on a framework to end the war, halt the US blockade of Iran and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a preliminary pact that sent oil prices falling but leaves the fate of Iran's nuclear programme to further negotiations. "The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete," US President Donald Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform around 5:30pm ET local time in Washington (2130 GMT) on Sunday. His post came shortly after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced a deal had been struck early on Monday local time. PM Shehbaz said in a post on X that "following intensive talks, we are pleased to announce that the Peace Deal between the United States of America and Islamic Republic of Iran has been REACHED. Both sides have declared the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon". He added that the "official signing ceremony" would be on Friday, June 19, in Switzerland. "We would like to thank the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran for their commitment to finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to our brothers in this mediation effort, the great leadership of state of Qatar, for their support in reaching this agreement.

Pakistan's global standing reaches unprecedented level through peace diplomacy: Khawaja Asif

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Monday said Pakistan had witnessed a historic moment, as the country's prestige and standing in the international community had risen to an unprecedented level through its successful diplomatic efforts for regional peace. Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister said the honour earned by Pakistan was unmatched in the country's 78-year history. "There is no doubt that we are passing through a historic moment. The respect and recognition Pakistan has received globally are unprecedented and reflect the wisdom, patience and statesmanship demonstrated by our leadership," he said. Khawaja Asif credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and their teams for steering the delicate process with prudence and determination, adding that the peace initiative had reached its final stages and was expected to be formally concluded with the signing of an agreement on Friday, June 19. He said the close coordination among the country's leadership had played a key role.

Muharram moon not sighted in Pakistan, Ashura to fall on June 26

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs on Monday announced that the Muharram 1448 AH moon was not sighted in the country. The first of Muharram will fall on Wednesday, June 17, while Ashura will be observed on June 26. In a notification, the ministry said: "In pursuance of the decision of the Central Ruet-i-Hilal Committee in its meeting held today in Lahore, the federal government in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Islamabad, hereby announces that the moon of Muharram 1448 AH has not been sighted."

BUDGET 2026-27: Multiple risks looms over next-year budget, finance ministry warns

PEAK POINT

proposes mitigation measures to support fiscal discipline. "A likely decision to



waive full price pass-through to domestic consumers would result in a decline in petroleum levy receipts," it noted. To protect domestic consumers, particularly low-income households, the government would need to raise subsidies. Rising international oil prices, specifically a \$40 per barrel increase, are projected to add 0.8pc of GDP to the fiscal deficit in the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Aurangzeb said a significant part of the more than 1.035 trillion rupees in special grants secured from the provinces has been set aside to cope with the conflict's second- and third-round impacts.

Macroeconomic risks mainly arise from a slowdown in economic activity, which could lead to weaker-than-expected real GDP growth and affect the fiscal stance. A 1pc point decline in real GDP growth could lower government revenues through reduced tax collections, while also increasing expenditure pressures, particularly on social safety nets.

"The combined impact is estimated to widen the fiscal deficit by around 0.2pc of GDP in FY2026-27," the ministry added. "Under this scenario, upward pressure on inflation.

PAF trainer aircraft crashes near Mardan, both pilots martyred

PEAK POINT



MARDAN: A trainer aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force crashed near Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Mardan city on Monday, resulting in the martyrdom of both pilots onboard the aircraft, the military's media affairs wing said. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement that the aircraft was on a routine training sortie when it crashed. As a result, Flight Lieutenant Muhammad Qasim Abdullah from the PAF and Lieutenant Taha Abbasi from the Pakistan Navy embraced martyrdom. It added that "a board of inquiry has been constituted by Air Headquarters to ascertain the cause of the accident." The statement said Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir.



SPORTS



PCB unveils new framework for awarding central contracts from next fiscal year



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday unveiled a new framework for awarding central contracts to players from the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, while making no changes to either the national selection committee or the coaching staff.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, at a press conference held at a local hotel, made the announcements. He was accompanied by the High Performance Centre Director Aaqib Javed, white-ball coach Mike Hesson, PCB Chief Medical Officer Dr Javed Mughal and other officials.

Earlier, the PCB chairman also met all 49 players of Pakistan's red- and white-ball squads, who are currently attending training camps in Lahore, and briefed them on the new central contract system. Interestingly, Naqvi had hinted during a media briefing on Saturday that several changes could be made within the PCB set-up. However, Monday's announcement focused primarily on reforms to the central contracts system. Under the new structure, players will be placed in five categories instead of the previous four. The categories are Track AB, Track A, Track BC, Track C and

Track D. In a press release, the PCB said that Track AB is a dual-format category covering Test and One-day International (ODI) cricket. "Pakistan's premier multi-format cricketers — the players who carry both the Test and ODI sides. This is the board's highest commitment tier. The board does not regard an AB cricketer as a short-format player. That call is only made when selection options require it, never as a default," the PCB stated. Track A is reserved for red-ball specialists. "The dedicated Test crick-

eters. This track exists to recognise and protect players who devote themselves to the longest format, and it carries permissions designed to keep them playing red-ball cricket at the highest level," the PCB explained. Track BC is designated for white-ball specialists who play ODI and T20 International cricket. "The core white-ball track for players whose value to Pakistan lies across the limited-overs formats. This is where most white-ball cricketers will sit, and it absorbs what used to be a separate ODI category," the PCB said.

Rana Sanaullah congratulates Pakistan Football team on winning Int'l trophy after 74 years



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC), Rana Sanaullah, has congratulated the national football team on its historic victory after 74 years at the Diamond Jubilee International Football Tournament held in Maldives. Paying tribute to the national team on this landmark achievement, Sanaullah said teams from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Maldives participated in the four-nation tournament, said a press release. He added that the national football team raised the nation's head with pride by displaying determination, spirit, and excellent football. This remarkable success, he said, reflects the progress and bright future of football in Pakistan. Sanaullah also commended the notable progress made by the Pakistan Football Federation under the leadership of Syed Mohsen Gilani. The minister stated that the team's historic win is a new source of hope and inspiration for young players. He noted that the leadership and vision of the Pakistan Football Federation laid the foundation for this success. Expressing optimism, Sanaullah said he hopes the national football team will continue to achieve more victories in the future.

Shahzad, Saiba triumph in Lahore Region World Corporate Golf Championship



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Shahzad Azam and Saiba Batool emerged as the overall champions of the Lahore Region World Corporate Golf Championship after an impressive performance at the Royal Palm Golf and Country Club. Despite challenging weather conditions and intense June heat, a strong field of corporate golfers and seasoned competitors gathered for the prestigious event, showcasing their skills in a highly competitive Stableford-format contest. The championship teed off early in the morning, with participants displaying remarkable resilience and determination throughout the day. One of the standout features of the tournament was the outstanding performance of Saiba Batool, the lone female golfer in the field. Competing against a host of experienced male golfers, she demonstrated exceptional composure, accuracy and consistency to help her team secure top honours. Partnering with Shahzad Azam, Saiba produced a superb all-round display as the duo finished at the top of the leader-board to claim the Lahore region title. Nasir Irshad and his son Qasim Nasir secured second place, while the accomplished pair of Abdul Islam Nazir and Haseeb Gardazi

finished third after another impressive outing. In the individual competitions, Abdul Islam Nazir once again showcased his power off the tee by winning the Longest Drive award, while Haseeb Gardazi claimed the Nearest-to-the-Pin prize with an excellent shot. The successful event highlighted the growing popularity of corporate golf and provided participants with a valuable opportunity to compete at a high level while promoting sportsmanship and networking within the corporate community. The Lahore regional competition serves as a qualifying stage for the national final, which will be held in Islamabad.

Regional Inter-District U-19 one-day tournament begins on today



England coach McCullum 'worried' about Stokes after curfew incident

PEAK POINT
ENGLAND: England head coach Brendon McCullum said he is "worried" about Ben Stokes after the captain was involved in a late-night incident that led to his absence from this week's second Test against New Zealand. Stokes will miss the clash at the Oval after breaching a midnight curfew while celebrating England's win over the Black Caps in the first Test at Lord's. The all-rounder and his England team-mate Gus Atkinson became embroiled in an incident involving Saracens rugby player Toota Auvaa, prompting an internal investigation by the England and Wales Cricket Board. There were suggestions that Stokes would resign or even retire in the immediate aftermath. But the 35-year-old's future remains shrouded in mystery ahead of the start of

the second Test on Wednesday. Speaking on Monday, a sombre McCullum said he experienced a range of emotions from anger to concern when he learnt of Stokes' antics at a Chelsea nightspot. "But very quickly my overall emotion turned to worry and concern for Ben in particular. "Since then it has been



being bewildered, on to angry, on to kind of gutted," he told reporters on Monday. "But very quickly my overall emotion turned to worry and concern for Ben in particular. "Since then it has been about how we support these guys, whilst not overlooking the fact they have not lived up to the standards we have set for ourselves. "For me it's very much about how we support these guys through the next stage, in particular Ben. That is very much where my mind is at, my worry for him."

Fida Hussain wins title at 2nd Sohail University wheelchair tennis event





Joint struggle will be made to address the social, educational, and economic challenges faced by the christian community: Samson Sohail

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Executive Director of the United Council of Churches (UCC), Pastor Samson Sohail, thanked the men and women who attended the inaugural ceremony organized to promote unity within the Christian community. He stated that the primary objective of this forum is to bring Pakistan's Christian community onto a unified platform in order to foster mutual cooperation, strengthen collective leadership, and jointly strive to address the social, educational, economic, and other challenges faced by the Christian community. Addressing the ceremony, Ashraf Gill, Chief Executive



Officer of the Pakistan Partnership Initiative, said that the establishment of the United Civil Society Forum (UCSF) marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Christian community. He stated that leaders and professionals from various walks of life would come

together as one voice to work collectively for unity, dignity, empowerment, and positive social change. The inaugural ceremony on Christian community unity was organized jointly by the United Council of Churches (UCC) and the Pakistan Partnership Initiative (PPI) at a local

hotel in Islamabad. The program was led by Ashraf Gill, CEO of PPI, and Pastor Samson Sohail, Executive Director of UCC. The forum was attended by individuals from various sectors of the Christian community, including representatives of NGOs, business leaders, church

leaders, religious figures, government officials, media representatives, nurses, lawyers, social workers, youth leaders, and professionals from other fields. All participants emphasized that the progress and empowerment of the Christian community can be ensured

through unity, collaboration, and collective efforts. A special segment of the ceremony was dedicated to honoring the unsung heroes of the Christian community who have quietly served society and made significant contributions. These individuals were presented with appreciation shields in recognition of their outstanding services. Prominent guests at the event included Pastor Ashknaz Asif, Bishop Javed Siddique, Pastor Shehbaz Boota, Stephen John, Sylvia Daniel, Yasmeen Joseph, and Lubna Younis, along with numerous political, social, and religious personalities.

Middle class relief or fiscal gamble? Parliament panel demands revenue impact analysis

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue expressed serious concerns regarding the potential revenue impact of proposed concessions and the government's strategy to broaden the tax base during a meeting chaired by Syed Naveed Qamar at Parliament House. The session focused on the Fiscal Year 2026-27

budget package and included briefings from the Minister of State for Finance and senior officials of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Chairman Qamar questioned whether the projected revenue losses from the relief measures, including reductions in exporters' minimum tax and property related incentives, had been adequately quantified. He sought clarity on the government's

plan to offset any resulting fiscal shortfall and emphasized that tax relief must be equitable, economically justified, and accompanied by efforts to enhance compliance. The Committee reviewed relief measures aimed at easing the burden on salaried individuals, including revisions to tax slabs, abolition of surcharges, and targeted incentives for the IT and shipping sectors.

Measures highlighted included a reduction of exporters' minimum tax from 2% to 1.25%, continuation of the Final Tax Regime for IT exporters, reduced withholding taxes on property transactions, rationalization of Federal Excise Duty on international air travel, and lowered super tax rates for select corporate taxpayers. Further scrutiny covered concessions such as the abolition of taxes

on contraceptives and select women's products, withdrawal of Capital Value Tax on foreign assets, and incentives for modernization of brownfield refineries. The Committee also discussed rationalization measures, including expansion of the Third Schedule, a fixed tax regime for small retailers, curbing fuel adulteration via adjustable excise duty, and enhanced penalties for non

compliance. Administrative reforms were another focal point, with officials detailing plans for a National Faceless Audit Wing, National Assessment Wing, algorithm-based dispute resolution, digital invoicing systems, and a Central Data Hub supported by artificial intelligence for risk assessment and compliance monitoring.

Opinion & Editorial



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A year on, stalemate persists

Malecha Lodhi
A YEAR after the May 2025 conflict, the India-Pakistan relationship remains volatile. Diplomacy is frozen. Neither side has sought to break the deadlock. A war of words erupts every so often. Last week, it was over the water dispute. Then it was on the Kashmir dispute at the UN. Bilateral relations are at one of the lowest points in their tortured history.

Last month saw speculation about the revival of dialogue. It was triggered by voices from India calling for talks. RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale urged engagement. A former army chief and ex-head of RAW agreed. Leaders from occupied Kashmir chimed in. Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman responded quickly but cautiously. Describing this as a "positive development" he said it was the official Indian line that mattered. Speculation grew that Delhi may be testing the waters with its no-talks posture coming under increasing questioning at home. But it quickly died. There was no official Indian statement. The opposition Congress party attacked the government for "softening" on Pakistan.

India-Pakistan relations snapped back to their default mode of a tense stand-off. In fact, even track two engagement between former officials over the past year has seen no movement. Just reiterations of familiar positions. Suggestions by the Pakistani

side for backchannel communication found no traction from the Indians. The Modi government, they said, was averse to any formal or informal dialogue. India and Pakistan can't afford another crisis and need a backchannel to prevent one. Meanwhile, water has emerged as the new arena of India-Pakistan confrontation. Delhi had suspended the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in April 2025, in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist incident in Pahalgam in occupied Kashmir. After the four-day India-Pakistan military clash, Indian officials repeatedly declared Pakistan would not get a single drop from 'India's rivers'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to make Pakistan "feel the heat" on the issue. For over six decades, the 1960 treaty had survived wars, confrontations and tensions to provide a framework for water-sharing between the two neighbours. Now its fate hung in the balance. India's weaponisation of water held serious long-term implications for Pakistan, posing an existential threat to its agricultural economy and water security. Its immediate impact was, however, limited. This was because India lacked the infrastructure or enough dams to halt the flow of water or significantly divert it.

Over the past year, Pakistan repeatedly protested against India's use of water as an instrument of coercion and warned any diversion of Indus river flows would be

deemed an "act of war". It also sought to draw international attention to the issue. Islamabad pointed out that India's decision to put the treaty into "abeyance" had no legal basis. The treaty does not allow either party to unilaterally suspend or abrogate it. But Delhi rejected Islamabad's protests and said the treaty would remain suspended "until Pakistan ends its support for cross-border terrorism".

More significantly, the Indian government now says it is "actively working" on Prime Minister Modi's directive to halt water flows to Pakistan. Last week, India's minister of water, C.R. Patil declared that it was being ensured that "not a single drop of water will go [to Pakistan] in coming years". This involves restoring and expanding the capacity of existing reservoirs and creation of new ones. Delhi announced projects to build canals that will divert water from Pakistan's Chenab river system into the Beas basin. Islamabad called this interference in downstream flows a violation of both the IWT and broader principles of international water law. The Indian government also unveiled plans for silt flushing from the Salal Dam reservoir on the Chenab river in occupied Kashmir. Islamabad has also objected to this plan which will enable India to increase effective storage and regulate flows in ways that could exceed the IWT's limits.

Courtesy Dawn

Universities at the brink

Muhammad Raiyd Qazi

The recent wave of academic disruption across Karachi's public universities has exposed a deep structural crisis in Pakistan's higher education system. This crisis is increasingly shaped by austerity, fragmented administration and neoliberal governance models that treat education as a cost centre rather than a public good.

At the centre of the current unrest is Karachi University, where teachers and non-teaching staff recently suspended a prolonged boycott of semester examinations after receiving government assurances regarding pending dues. The protest, led by faculty bodies including the Karachi University Teachers' Society, had lasted for over a month and brought academic activity to a near standstill. Invigilators, paper setters and administrative staff collectively refused to participate in examinations due to unpaid salaries, delayed allowances and unresolved financial commitments linked to evening programmes and examination duties.

Although the Sindh government has now pledged to move summaries on ex-gratia payments and housing-related allowances, the episode reflects a recurring pattern of crisis, temporary settlement and partial concessions without structural reform of university financing. The agreement has postponed the immediate boycott, but underlying tensions remain unresolved.

Importantly, the unrest at KU has not been isolated. Students have increasingly entered the protest space and aligned their concerns with those of teachers and staff. In multiple departments, student groups have voiced opposition to examination uncertainty, administrative delays, and an "unpredictable" academic calendar. In some cases, student-led boycotts have emerged in solidarity, demanding either cancellation of examinations or alternative assessment through assignments.

Courtesy Tribune

Fifty days on

More than fifty days after their vessel was hijacked off the Somali coast, Pakistani crew members remain hostage at sea with no visible breakthrough in negotiations. Questions are mounting about how the crisis is being handled by the shipping company and relevant authorities. In a newly released video, the crew can be seen standing on the deck of the ship, directly appealing to the governments of Pakistan and Indonesia for urgent intervention. What has sharpened concern is the reported breakdown in the negotiation process itself. According to the hostages, the shipping company has not engaged directly with the pirates. Instead, it has delegated negotiations to a third party. That arrangement has reportedly become the core obstacle. The pirates, according to the crew, refuse to recognise this intermediary and insist on direct talks with authorised representatives of the shipping company. As a result, no formal negotiation channel is currently functioning, leaving the situation in a deadlock. This impasse is an operational failure in a hostage crisis. In such situations, ambiguity over authority and representation effectively shuts down negotiation. When armed captors reject the designated interlocutor and no alternative is established, the burden falls directly on the hostages.

Tariq Fazal urges dialogue in AJK, says Pakistan to host US-Iran peace agreement signing



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry Monday said Pakistan's diplomatic efforts had contributed to recent regional peace initiatives and announced that the country would host the signing of a peace agreement between the United States and Iran in Geneva on Friday.

Addressing a press conference at the Parliament Media Centre alongside Pakistan Peoples Party lawmakers, Tariq Fazal said Pakistan had played an important role on the diplomatic front.

"By the grace of Allah, Pakistan played its role diplomatically, and the

efforts of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Field Marshal have borne fruit," he said.

He added that Pakistan would host the signing ceremony of the peace agreement scheduled to take place in Geneva on Friday.

The minister also referred to issues raised by Sardar Fatehullah Khan, including concerns related to Dera Ismail Khan, water canals and flood-affected communities. He said Fatehullah Khan had ended his hunger strike following requests from government representatives.

Discussing the situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Tariq Fazal said the government had taken several steps to address public grievances, including expanding the AJK cabinet and accepting 35 out of 38 demands presented to it. He said the remaining three issues were sub judice and could not be resolved immediately.

He said cases against 170 individuals had been withdrawn and com-

penation had been provided to affected citizens, but expressed regret that protests and marches continued despite these measures.

The minister described recent scenes of unrest in AJK as unfortunate and said the loss of lives among Frontier Corps and police personnel was a matter of concern.

"I would urge the Action Committee not to resort to violence and to resolve issues through dialogue," he said.

Tariq Fazal claimed that the Joint Action Committee had lost its status and said there were no direct talks with the group, although indirect contacts remained in place.

Emphasising the need for peaceful engagement, he said violence was not a solution and all stakeholders should pursue dialogue to resolve disputes and maintain stability.

The minister reiterated the government's commitment to addressing outstanding issues through negotiations and constitutional means.

Pakistan hailed for facilitating Iran-US diplomatic breakthrough, NA speaker calls it historic achievement

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday hailed Pakistan's role in facilitating dialogue between Iran and the United States, describing it as a landmark diplomatic achievement that helped break a nearly five-decade-long deadlock and opened new avenues for regional and global peace.

Addressing the National Assembly, Ayaz Sadiq said Pakistan's constructive engagement and sustained diplomatic efforts had contributed significantly to creating an environment conducive to dialogue between Tehran and Washington. He termed the development a moment of immense pride for the nation, noting that Pakistan had once again demonstrated its ability to serve as a credible and responsible stakeholder in inter-



national affairs. The Speaker congratulated Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their leadership and contributions to the diplomatic breakthrough. He said the Prime Minister's political foresight, commitment to peace, and diplomatic vision played a pivotal role in advancing efforts aimed at fostering understanding between the two countries. Ayaz Sadiq also praised Foreign

Abbasi, Russian Trade Counsellor discuss expanding bilateral cooperation in Railway sector

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi Monday discussed avenues with the Russian Trade Counsellor at the Ministry of Railways for enhancing cooperation between Pakistan and Russia in the railway sector.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, including investment opportunities, infrastructure development, technological collaboration and institutional partnerships aimed at modernizing Pakistan Railways.

The minister said that Pakistan Railways offers significant opportunities for investment and joint ventures, particularly in railway infrastructure, track upgradation, signaling systems and improving operational efficiency.

He welcomed potential Russian cooperation in these areas and invited Russian companies and investors to participate in Pakistan Railways' development projects.

Hanif Abbasi emphasized that Pakistan is

keen to benefit from Russia's extensive experience, technical expertise and advanced technologies in railway modernization.

He also expressed his desire to visit Russia to gain first-hand knowledge of its railway system, best practices and technological advancements.

The Russian Trade Counsellor highlighted Russia's vast experience in railway operations, maintenance and the management of large rail networks, saying that there are broad opportunities for knowledge-sharing and technical cooperation between the two countries. He expressed confidence that enhanced institutional collaboration and technical engagement would further strengthen ties between Pakistan and Russia in the railway sector. The minister said the meeting would help create new opportunities for cooperation and partnership, paving the way for stronger bilateral relations in transport infrastructure and railway development. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to expanding cooperation and deepening engagement.



ISLAMABAD: Russian Trade Counsellor met Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi at the Ministry of Railways to discuss avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation in the railway sector.

Raja Nasir hails Pakistan's efforts to avert war

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Raja Nasir Abbas, on Monday praised Pakistan's efforts to avert war and reduce tension in the region.

Initiating the debate on the Finance Bill 2026-27 in the Senate, he said the country had played a role in promoting peace through dialogue between Iran and the United States.

He suggested that the budget should be prepared with the welfare of the people as its central objective and must provide tangible relief to citizens facing economic difficulties.

He said budgetary planning should be based on the country's ground realities, taking into account both expenditures and expected returns, while ensuring that public resources are utilized for the benefit of the people.

He stressed that the budget document should reflect the needs and aspirations of ordinary citizens and include measures aimed at improving their quality of life.

Raja Nasir Abbas called for compre-

Aleem Khan welcomes US-Iran peace accord, lauds Pakistan's leadership role

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications and President of Isteekam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Abdul Aleem Khan, on Monday welcomed the historic peace agreement between the United States and Iran, describing it as a significant development for regional stability and international peace. In an official statement, the minister emphasized that this breakthrough extends far beyond regional dynamics, marking a vital step forward for international peace and strategic stability. He expressed immense optimism regarding the upcoming formal signing and verification of the peace accord scheduled for June 19, noting that it has ignited a fresh ray of hope for the de-escalation of global conflicts.



Paying rich tributes to the country's leadership, Abdul Aleem Khan lauded the tireless diplomatic endeavors of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

He stated that their steadfast commitment and commendable efforts in mediating this historic outcome have earned global recognition for Pakistan. "It is a matter of immense pride for the entire nation that Pakistan's civil and military leadership is being globally acclaimed.

Sherry urges broader tax base, welcomes GST removal on women's hygiene products

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Senator Sherry Rehman on Monday called for a broader tax base, greater reliance on direct taxation, and adequate fiscal space for provinces, while welcoming the removal of general sales tax (GST) on women's hygiene products and contraceptives in the Budget 2026-27.

Taking part in budget debate in Senate, she said the PPP played a constructive role during budget consultations and contributed to measures aimed at reducing the tax burden on products used by women and families. She also stressed the need



for a fair taxation system and sustainable economic reforms.

She said Pakistan needed to expand its tax base to achieve sustainable economic growth and fiscal stability. Direct taxes should be increased while dependence on indirect taxes should be reduced to lessen the burden on ordinary citizens, she added.

Sherry expressed concern over the growing size.

Special and dignified event was held at Top City One, the famous and modern residential project of the twin cities

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A special and dignified event was held at Top City One, the famous and modern residential project of the twin cities, regarding Pak-Saudi investment opportunities, in which prominent figures from business, social and political circles participated. The chief guest of the event was Engineer Amir Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Saudi Arabia's leading investment company "Al-Sahab Investment Holding Company", while Haji Ghulam Yasin, Executive



Director of Top City One, renowned businessman Sardar Yasir Ilyas, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sardar Tahir Mahmood and other important figures also participated. During the event, a detailed presentation

was given on the investment opportunities available for Pakistani investors in housing, agriculture, livestock and other sectors in Top City One and Saudi Arabia. In his address, Engineer Amir Khan said that Saudi Arabia is currently experiencing unpre-

cedented opportunities for Pakistani investors and business people. There are opportunities, he said, adding that there are vast investment opportunities in the housing, agriculture and livestock sectors, from which Pakistanis can take full advantage. He

praised the vision and leadership of Top City One Chief Executive Kunwar Moez Khan and said that Top City One is one of the most modern and fast-growing housing projects in Pakistan. He said that his company is working on a mission to make

Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia stable at the international level by providing them with various facilities including visas, land and financial assistance. On this occasion, Kunwar Qutubuddin delivered a welcome speech and welcomed all the distinguished guests and highlighted the future plans and ongoing development activities of Top City One. He said that due to its location near the New Islamabad International Airport, Top City One has become an important hub for residential, commercial and business activities.