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Pakistan Praises Azerbaijan Peace Deal, Strengthens Regional Ties

August 11, 2025

— Categories: General News



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan on a historic peace agreement reached with Armenia, ending a conflict that lasted nearly three decades. The announcement was made following a phone conversation between the two leaders on Sunday, as reported by Radio Pakistan.

Shehbaz Sharif praised President Aliyev's visionary leadership in bringing about the resolution of the long-standing dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. He described

the peace deal as a significant milestone that opens the door to regional stability and economic growth.

Expressing Pakistan's unwavering support for Azerbaijan, the prime minister said, "It is heartening that under President Aliyev's bold leadership and statesmanship, peace has finally been established. Pakistan stands firmly with Azerbaijan."

In the discussion, PM Shehbaz also acknowledged the role of former US President Donald Trump in facilitating the peace agreement, noting his contribution to resolving not only the Karabakh conflict but also recent tensions between India and Pakistan.

President Aliyev responded by highlighting the new era of peace and its potential to boost connectivity and cooperation between Pakistan and Central Asia. Both leaders expressed satisfaction over the progress in their bilateral relationship and reiterated their commitment to mutual goodwill.

Shehbaz Sharif recalled their recent meetings in Lachin and Khankendi, two key areas affected by the conflict, and extended an official invitation for President Aliyev to visit Pakistan. The leaders are expected to meet again at the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Tianjin.

The peace agreement, brokered by the United States, aims to normalise diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, enhance economic integration, and respect territorial sovereignty. It includes provisions for a strategic transit corridor through the South Caucasus region under US oversight.

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh began in the late 1980s when the mostly ethnic Armenian population of the region sought independence from Azerbaijan. After years of tension and war, Azerbaijan regained control of the territory in 2023, leading to a mass exodus of Armenians from the region.

During the Soviet era, Nagorno-Karabakh was an autonomous oblast within Azerbaijan. After the USSR dissolved in 1991, the region operated with de facto independence until the recent peace deal.

The resolution of this conflict marks a new chapter for regional peace and cooperation, with Pakistan playing an active diplomatic role in supporting its ally Azerbaijan.