



President felicitates UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham on assuming office



Pakistan, Canada agree to expand bilateral cooperation as FM Anand visits Islamabad



Sports key to empowering youth, promoting national unity: Syedaal Khan

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PM for expanded, diverse ties between Pakistan, Canada

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, said Pakistan and Canada enjoyed friendly ties that needed to be further expanded, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, agriculture including agri-foods and vaccine manufacturing, renewable energy, as well as the automobile and auto parts industry. Foreign Minister of Canada Anita Anand, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, called on the prime minister at the PM House. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Syed Tauqir Shah and other senior government officials were also present, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister conveyed his greetings and best wishes for Prime Minister Mark Carney and said that he looked forward to meeting him soon. He fondly recalled the telephone conversation with his Canadian counterpart in April, and thanked Canada for supporting Pakistan's regional peace efforts. Foreign Minister Anita Anand thanked the prime minister for the warm welcome accorded to her and her delegation in Islamabad. She conveyed the good wishes of Prime Minister Carney for the Prime Minister and said that her visit was on the instructions of her prime minister to expand Canada's relations with Pakistan. On the bilateral front.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Ms. Anita Anand, Foreign Minister of Canada calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Andy Burnham becomes UK PM, says Britain needs to 'regain stability'

PEAK POINT



"Andrew Burnham MP accepted The King's offer and kissed hands upon his appointment as Prime Minister," Buckingham Palace said in a statement, adding the king had asked him to form the next government.

Burnham became Britain's sixth prime minister to move into Downing Street in 10 years, with an in-tray overflowing with challenges and little time to make his mark.

BBC reported that a large crowd of supporters erupted into applause as Burnham stepped onto Downing Street for his first speech.

Delivering his address, Burnham promised to set out new measures to help with the cost of living this week before setting out a new 10-year plan for the country later this year. "Britain needs to show the world that we can regain our stability once again," Burnham said. "We have not been good enough, and we need to be better."

US strikes Iran for 9th day; IRGC say Hormuz to remain unsafe as long as American 'aggression' continues

PEAK POINT



NEW YORK: The United States hit Iran for a ninth consecutive day on Monday as concerns grew over shipping through the Strait of Hormuz after Tehran said two oil tankers had exploded and been immobilised, adding that the waterway would remain unsafe as long as US "aggression" in the region continued.

In a statement, US Central Command said it targeted "Iranian military command centres, air defense and coastal surveillance sites, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and communications networks to further diminish Iran's ability to attack commercial vessels and civilian mariners transiting the Strait of Hormuz."

The strikes are part of an escalating cycle of attacks between the US and Iran after an interim ceasefire agreement signed a month ago unravelled, deepening a struggle for control over the Strait of Hormuz that has disrupted energy supplies and stoked fears of global inflation.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency, citing its own reporters, said US missiles struck several Iranian cities early on Monday. Explosions were heard in Tabriz, Chahabahr, Konarak, Bandar Mahshahr and Bandar Imam Khomeini, according to Tasnim.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the United States would continue to target Iran while it attacked global commercial shipping. "The Strait of Hormuz is an international waterway."

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister calls on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada Anita Anand called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ here Monday at General Headquarters (GHQ).

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and bilateral relations between Pakistan and Canada were discussed, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir highlighted Pakistan's perspective on global peace and regional stability underscoring the importance of cooperation and collaborative efforts to address common security challenges.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's ongoing efforts and sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, as well as its constructive role in promoting peace and stability.

Both sides reiterated their resolve to further strengthen bilateral ties and expand engagements in defence and security, the news release said.

ECP directs political parties to submit accounts by August 29

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday directed all enlisted political parties to submit their comprehensive annual financial returns for the financial year 2025-26 by 29 August 2026, in accordance with the legal requirements of the Elections Act, 2017. Under Section 210 of the Act, every political party enlisted with the Election Commission is required to file its annual financial returns within 60 days after the close of each financial year. The annual returns by parties.

3 bodies found after vehicle carrying Afghans swept away by flash flood in KP's Khyber

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: A vehicle carrying Afghan families returning to the neighbouring country was swept away in a flash flood triggered by rains in the Landi Kotal tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Khyber district on Monday, Rescue 1122 said. Rescue workers have so far recovered the bodies of three people travelling in the car, the emergency service said, adding that the search for the others was under way.

Rescue 1122 said in an initial statement that the vehicle was swept away near Sultan Khel Market, following which rescue teams were dispatched to the site and a search operation was launched.

In subsequent statements, it said the bodies of a woman and a man were found by Rescue 1122

divers, who had the assistance of local residents, in that the children's mother and 14-year-old sister were



the Jamrud town, while the body of a child was recovered from the Parang Sang area. During the search, rescue personnel also found the body of a man who was identified as a resident of Jamrud.

Separately, the roof of a room collapsed in Mardan's Kalu Dheri village, leaving two children dead, according to Rescue 1122. The emergency service said in a statement

injured in the incident. The injured were shifted to Mardan Medical Complex Hospital, it added.

Last week, the Pakistan Meteorological Department had predicted widespread rains in the country for this week, with showers expected in Khyber, Mardan and several other areas of KP between July 19 and July 23.

In light of the forecast, Shah Fahad, Rescue 1122's director general in Khyber, chaired an emergency online meeting to review the weather situation and directed all district emergency officers to remain on high alert, the emergency service's statement detailing the meeting said.

According to the statement, he issued directives to ensure service delivery in accordance with the approved comprehensive plans.

The statement further quoted him as saying that rescue personnel, emergency vehicles, rescue boats and specialised equipment had been deployed in all districts for emergency response while rescue personnel and equipment had also been also deployed at temporary water rescue points.

PML-N MPA seeks ban on appointment of dual nationals to government service



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: A resolution has been submitted to the Punjab Assembly seeking a ban on the appointment of dual nationals to government service, arguing that holding citizenship of another country raises concerns over allegiance and access to sensitive state information.

The resolution, moved by ruling PML-N MPA Amjad Ali Javed, calls on the federal and Punjab governments to enact legislation barring dual nationals from obtaining government jobs.

According to the text of the resolution, an investigative report claimed that around 24,000 serving employees in various government departments held dual nationality.



SPORTS



Pro-Palestine Spain beat pro-Israel Argentina to become Fifa World Cup 2026 champions



PEAK POINT

EAST RUTHERFORD: Spain went all the way round the footballing wheel on Sunday, from silk to sludge, from purity to persistence, and still ended up exactly where they wanted to be -- World Cup champions, with the ball at their feet and belief in their bones.

Their 1-0 victory over Argentina was not a wild departure from their identity but a muddy reaffirmation of it. Spain passed, probed, protected, and pampered the ball as if it were national treasure, refusing to panic as Argentina dug in, and the clock ticked towards the end of extra

time. In the end, fittingly for a side built on the idea that no player is bigger than the whole, the winner came from the bench. It was set up and scored by substitutes Nico Williams and Ferran Torres, the third time in the knockout rounds that a replacement had struck the decisive blow for Spain.

That, more than any glossy tactical diagram, said plenty about Luis de la Fuente's side. This is not a team of soloists demanding the spotlight. It is an orchestra in which even the late arrivals know the tune by heart. Spain finished with more than 65% possession, 12 shots on target, and over twice

as many completed passes as Argentina, who produced their first effort -- off target -- near the end of extra time. It was domination, but not destruction. Spain still had to sweat for it. Their familiar weakness, the absence of a classic centre forward, was exposed by the number of chances they created but failed to finish.

Yet if the lack of a ruthless striker remains their Achilles' heel, it is about the only exposed part of a team otherwise wrapped in collective certainty. Spain swept the individual tournament awards, with Pau Cubarsi named Best Young Player, Unai Simon Best

Goalkeeper, and Rodri the tournament's Most Valuable Player. Only the Golden Boot escaped them, going to France's Kylian Mbappe. Even that felt appropriate. Spain's triumph was never about one hot boot. Their 14 goals in eight matches were shared by eight players, echoing their European Championship success in 2024, when they scored a tournament-record 16 goals through 10 different players. The win over Argentina also stretched their unbeaten run to 38 matches, moving them past Italy and underlining three years of dominance in international football.

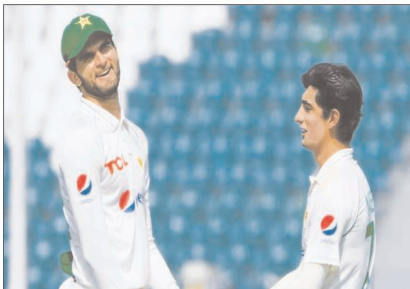
PHF rejects reports of dissolving Selection Committee



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Monday dismissed reports circulating on social media claiming that it had dissolved its selection committee and transferred all selection powers to the coaching staff, describing the claims as baseless.

In an official statement, the federation said the current PHF Selection Committee remained fully functional and would continue to discharge its responsibilities strictly on merit. The PHF said that, through the efforts of its President, Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani, an international coaching panel was currently in Pakistan to assess players' performances using a modern GPS-based monitoring system. The performance data generated by the panel was being shared with the selection committee to support the evaluation process. It said the selection committee, comprising former hockey greats, would make the final decision on the national squad purely on merit. The team would be announced through the federation's official platforms after considering the recommendations of the Professional Development Committee. Rejecting reports about the committee's dissolution, the federation said the player selection process had instead been upgraded in line with modern international standards, strengthening rather than diminishing the role of the selection committee.

Shaheen, Naseem not yet fit for Test cricket: Former wicketkeeper



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Former Pakistan wicketkeeper Atiq-uz-Zaman has sparked debate ahead of Pakistan's Test series against the West Indies by claiming that pace spearheads Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah currently lack the fitness and endurance required to excel in the

longest format of the game. Speaking on a local sports platform, Atiq said modern Test cricket demands fast bowlers who can consistently deliver multiple high-intensity spells throughout a day's play, insisting that both Shaheen and Naseem are yet to meet those standards. "I think Shaheen

and rhythm through domestic cricket and specialised training at the National Cricket Academy. "Shaheen has lost his rhythm. He needs to play domestic cricket, work on his fitness and skills at the NCA, and return stronger," Atiq added. Despite the criticism, both pacers boast impressive Test records. Shaheen has claimed 126 wickets in 34 Tests since his debut in 2018, while Naseem has taken 60 wickets in 20 matches. Pakistan are set to begin a two-Test series against the West Indies in Trinidad later this month as they aim to improve their position in the ICC World Test Championship 2025-27 standings.

Tanzid Hasan stars as Bangladesh edge Zimbabwe in series decider



PFF's mental health campaign wins global praise at UN forum

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan's innovative 'Football for Mental Health' initiative has received international recognition at the United Nations, with global leaders praising the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) for harnessing the power of football to promote mental health awareness, empower young people and drive meaningful social change. The recognition came during the high-level "One World, One Game, One Goal: Football as a Catalyst for Youth Mental Health and Well-being" forum, jointly organised by the United Nations in Pakistan, the UN Youth Office and UNESCO. The event brought together policymakers, football administrators, athletes and youth advocates from Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria, England and Pakistan to explore the role of football in improving mental health, resilience and social inclusion. Representing Pakistan,

PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani highlighted the federation's pioneering programme, describing football as a transformative platform that extends far beyond the playing field. "Using football as a tool for mental health did not just

awareness. Our responsibility goes beyond developing talented players; it is also about nurturing healthy, resilient and responsible citizens," Gilani said.

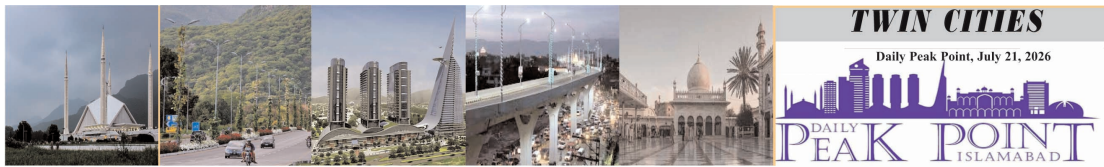
Launched in collaboration with the United Nations in



inspire us, it transformed us," Pakistan and the UN Youth Office, the initiative has emerged as one of the PFF's flagship community outreach programmes, demonstrating how football can positively influence lives while addressing one of society's most pressing challenges.

WAPDA athletes win 6 medals in 10th South Asian Karate Championship





TWIN CITIES

Daily Peak Point, July 21, 2026

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Medicine prices Skyrocket up to 3,991%: Omeprazole 20mg Hits Rs67.85 Despite Rs1.7 Govt rate

NADEEN TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan faces a mounting public health crisis as medicine prices have surged up to 4,000 percent above government approved rates, making life saving treatments unaffordable for ordinary citizens. The Pakistan Young Pharmacist Association (PYPA) held a press conference to expose how five multinational pharmaceutical companies left the country after the government removed mandatory price controls in

February 2024, resulting in an estimated \$5 billion outflow from the national economy. PYPA warned that the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has failed to enforce price regulations, allowing pharmaceutical companies to deregulate prices, import banned drugs, and profit at the expense of public health, while patients suffering from diseases such as AIDS, Hepatitis, and other critical illnesses struggle to access essential medication. Life-saving

medicines such as Omeprazole 20mg, which costs Rs.1.7 per tablet under government procurement, are now sold at Rs.67.85 in the market, representing a 3,991 percent increase. Other drugs include Monelukast 10mg (Singulair) at Rs.93 compared to Rs.3.07, Escitalopram 10mg (Cipralax) at Rs.100 versus Rs.2.93, Pregabalin 75mg (Lyrica) at Rs.143.67 against Rs.6.21, Atorvastatin 20mg (Lipiget) at Rs.55 versus Rs.2.73,

Ceftriaxone 1g injection (Rocaphin) at Rs.1,244 against Rs.78, Tobramycin + Dexamethasone eye drops (Tobradex) at Rs.1,500 versus Rs.70, Losartan 50mg (Xavor) at Rs.30.86 against Rs.2.9, Fluconazole 150mg (Diflucan) at Rs.620 versus Rs.39.51, Glimepiride 2mg (Evopride) at Rs.17.23 against Rs.1.37, Moxifloxacin 400mg injection (Avelox) at Rs.2,071 versus Rs.160, and Omeprazole injection 40mg (Risek Inf) at

Rs.530 versus Rs.53. PYPA leaders accused DRAP officials of colluding with pharmaceutical companies and failing to protect the public, warning that without immediate intervention, patients will be forced to either forgo treatment or face catastrophic expenses, with some families spending up to Rs.24,000 per month on medicines alone. The association demanded the immediate restoration of mandatory price controls, criminal investigations into

responsible DRAP officials, recovery of illicit profits from pharmaceutical companies, and consideration of provincial-level regulation to ensure affordability. PYPA emphasized that continued inaction could lead to a national public health disaster, further spreading preventable diseases and increasing mortality, urging the government to act swiftly to safeguard access to essential medicines and restore public confidence in regulatory institutions.

Senate questions Rs170 million LPG Air Mix plants in Chitral, delays raise concerns

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Functional Committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas raised serious concerns over the delayed installation of three LPG Air Mix Plants in Chitral, purchased in 2017 at a cost of approximately Rs170 million. Lawmakers warned that logistical bottlenecks and inadequate supporting infrastructure prevent the plants from becoming operational, potentially

undermining energy access and local development in the region. The meeting, chaired by Senator Niaz Ahmed at Parliament House, Islamabad, included Senators Kazim Ali Shah, Talha Mehmood, Danesh Kumar, Jan Muhammad Khan, and Aslam Abro, alongside senior officials. Senator Talha Mehmood highlighted that installation has yet to commence, despite the plants being procured nearly nine years ago. NHA officials explained

that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) objected to installation due to inadequate infrastructure and difficulties transporting the plants to the designated high altitude sites. Lawmakers criticized the delays, saying that prolonged inaction on such high cost projects raises questions about planning, oversight, and accountability. The committee was informed that these plants were intended to strengthen local energy infrastructure in

Chitral, but persistent logistical and terrain challenges have delayed their implementation. Senators emphasized that effective coordination between federal and provincial authorities is essential to ensure these development projects complete on schedule. Senators also discussed broader concerns regarding development in Chitral, noting that difficult terrain, frequent landslides, and high altitude conditions impede timely delivery of infras-

tructure and services. Officials noted that technical surveys and support from telecom operators like Telenor are underway to improve digital and energy access in the region, but energy projects such as the LPG plants remain critical for sustainable local development. The committee called on the relevant authorities to resolve logistical constraints immediately and provide a timeline for installation, stressing that accountability measures

should be taken for the nearly decade long delay. Lawmakers warned that continued inaction could hamper economic growth and public trust in government infrastructure projects. The subcommittee also noted that projects of similar magnitude should include detailed planning for infrastructure and transport challenges from the outset to prevent long delays and misuse of allocated funds.

Opinion & Editorial

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Waiting for climate justice

Climate change has become Pakistan's defining development challenge, yet the global financial architecture created to help vulnerable countries continues to move at a pace that bears little resemblance to the urgency of the crisis. The latest decision by the Board of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage to delay its first disbursements until the end of the year is indicative of the fact that while climate disasters arrive without warning, international climate finance remains entangled in procedural caution and political hesitation. The reasons for the delay are understandable but no less troubling. The Fund has received 176 proposals from 119 developing countries seeking a combined \$2.8 billion, while only \$250 million has been earmarked for the first round of grants under its pilot phase. Even with nearly \$500 million pledged, the available resources are only a fraction of what is required. This is the sheer scale of climate-induced destruction confronting vulnerable nations across the world. Demand has exposed the uncomfortable truth that the world's flagship loss-and-damage mechanism is dramatically underfunded before it has even begun operating. Each passing year brings with it new waves of destruction that compounds the financial burden on Pakistan's already constrained economy.

Poverty and inequality

Umair Javed

The release of the Household Integrated Economic Survey and Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement data presents a clearer picture of poverty and economic distress in Pakistan. This data has appeared after a gap of nearly six years, during which several important events and shocks took place. In 2018-19, the country had to go through a painful macroeconomic adjustment to counteract the yawning current account deficit left behind by the then departing PML-N government. Between 2020 and 2021, the global economy faced massive contraction on account of the Covid-19 pandemic. The expansionary policies designed to mitigate this contraction then led to increased inflation and monetary tightening the world over, which dried up dollar liquidity and raised commodity prices.

During this cycle, the PTI government pursued ill-advised growth via the expansion of domestic consumption, which once again increased imports and reintroduced another balance-of-payments crisis. That crisis, coupled with the global oil price shock, sent Pakistan into its worst inflationary period in decades; it took an extraordinarily painful stabilisation period to tame the cost spiral, though at the cost of growth and any notion of increased prosperity. This precarious stability is threatened once more by regional

geopolitical events.

Given the frequency of shocks — self-inflicted and external/global in nature — and the painful adjustments needed to fight them off, it is little surprise that poverty rates have gone up in the country. The government's own poverty estimates narrate an increase of seven percent between 2018-19 (21.8pc) and 2024-25 (28.9pc). Rural areas were impacted more, reporting an 8pc increase, compared to 6pc for urban areas.

We're stuck in a doom-loop of low growth, recurrent stabilisation, and half-hearted attempts at poverty alleviation.

Likely for the first time ever on record, average household inflation-adjusted incomes and consumption actually fell during two successive survey cycles. In real terms, households on average are both earning less and consuming less than six years ago. Stretch that back to 10 years, and the numbers remain flat. In other words, Pakistan has witnessed a lost decade in both incomes and consumption.

On its own, this story is distressing enough. For a country of 250 million with a young and large labour force, enhancing shared prosperity should be the central plan of economic policymaking. Instead, we're stuck in a doom-loop of low growth, recurrent stabilisation, and half-hearted attempts at poverty alleviation.

But what makes it worse

is that there is a creeping inequality story that is becoming more apparent via data and anecdotes. By now, it is clear that the story of the past decade is of economic slowdown interspersed with outright stagnation. The recently released survey data adds the increase in poverty to this story too. But what about the fact that growth has actually not been zero during this time? The average annual growth rate from the past six years is around 3pc. And yet poverty has gone up during this time. As my colleague Dr Ali Hasanain and several others have noted, these two parallel trends (low but positive average growth and increased poverty) show that the benefits of even anaemic growth are being accrued to a narrower sliver of the population. If the gain from all economic growth was distributed equitably, we would not see a real-term decline in average incomes or consumption and an increase in the poverty rate (using a fixed threshold). Breaking the income and consumption data by quintile predictably shows that the lowest quintiles have seen greater erosion compared to the upper ones. However, it's the missing top 10pc or so that is likely benefiting from the growth that has taken place. In large-scale consumption and income surveys, it is standard practice to assume that the top 10pc of the distribution is unlikely to be captured by standard sampling frames.

Courtesy Dawn

Encounter of 'Satluj'

Waqar K Kauravi/Adela Naureen

Jaswant Singh Khaira, a human rights activist in Indian Punjab, was abducted and murdered by the Punjab Police in 1995. He was targeted for his work exposing the illegal killings and secret cremations of thousands of people during the 1980s and 1990s.

Khaira was a bank director from Amritsar who turned to human rights activism after being deeply troubled by the many disappearances in the state following Operation Blue Star and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. He began documenting the cases of people who had "disappeared" after being detained by the police. His research led him to municipal cremation records, where he uncovered a pattern of large-scale, illegal cremations of bodies labeled as "unidentified" or "unclaimed".

On January 16, 1995, Khaira made his findings public, alleging that the Punjab Police had secretly cremated thousands of victims to cover up extrajudicial killings and fake encounters. He claimed that around 25,000 innocent youths were killed in this manner. A subsequent CBI investigation confirmed over 2,000 unlawful cremations in the Tarn Taran district alone.

On the morning of September 6, 1995, Khaira was washing his car outside his home in Amritsar when he was forcibly taken by personnel of the Punjab Police. Witnesses saw him being bundled into a sky-blue Maruti van. According to the courts, he was taken to the Jhalal police station, where he was tortured and shot dead. His body was then disposed of near the Harikie bridge on the Sutlej River and was never recovered.

Khaira's wife, Paramjit Kaur, filed a habeas corpus petition with the Supreme Court of India, which ordered the CBI to investigate his disappearance and the wider claims of illegal cremations. In 2005, a trial court convicted six low ranking police officials for Khaira's abduction and murder.

Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan, Canada agree to expand bilateral cooperation as FM Anand visits Islamabad



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand in Islamabad on Monday, with both sides agreeing to expand cooperation in priority sectors and hold annual meetings to review progress on their agreed Joint Statement. The two foreign ministers reviewed recent developments in Pakistan-Canada bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and international developments of

mutual interest, the Foreign Office said in a statement issued on X.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the mutually beneficial partnership between the two countries, agreed to expand cooperation in priority sectors, and decided to institutionalise the relationship through annual meetings to track progress on the agreed joint statement.

In his opening remarks before delegation-level talks with Canadian FM at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the deputy premier welcomed his Canadian counterpart,

mentioning that it was the first visit by a Canadian Foreign Minister to Pakistan in two decades.

Referring to their previous meeting on the sidelines of multilateral fora, he emphasised meeting more frequently in their respective capitals.

"We have the capacity and the potential to elevate our bilateral relations in terms of trade, investment, defence, and security. There is huge scope here," he remarked.

He told the visiting dignitary that Pakistan attached great importance to the long-standing relationship with Canada, which was further bolstered by a large Pakistani diaspora there.

"This relationship is based on mutual respect, democratic values, vibrant people-to-people ties, and constructive cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels," Deputy Prime Minister Dar said and expressed the hope that their discussions during the talks would translate the renewed momentum they started last year into concrete outcomes.

Pakistan, Malaysia discuss enhancing parliamentary cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador to ISC and Adviser to Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Misbah Khar, and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Malaysia, Mohd Syafiq Firdaus Hasbullah, on Monday discussed ways to further strengthen the longstanding friendly relations between Pakistan and Malaysia by enhancing parliamentary engagement, institutional linkages and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

During the meeting, Misbah Khar said Pakistan and Malaysia enjoyed warm and brotherly relations founded on shared values, mutual respect and longstanding cooperation. She noted that both countries had consistently supported each other at regional and international forums and contin-



ued to collaborate closely across diverse sectors. She emphasised the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in deepening bilateral ties and fostering greater understanding between the two nations.

Misbah Khar said that under the leadership of Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, the Senate of Pakistan remained committed to strengthening engagement with friendly countries through sustained parliamentary exchanges and enhanced institutional cooperation. The two sides exchanged views on expanding cooperation.

Establishment of Int'l commercial court LJCP recommends constitutional amendment

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Recognising the pivotal role of a modern commercial justice system in promoting investment, economic growth and international trade, the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Monday recommended the establishment of International Commercial Court of Pakistan (ICCP) through a proposed constitutional amendment.

The recommendation was made at the 49th Meeting of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, which was attended by the Attorney General for Pakistan, the Chief Justices of the High Courts, the Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice and Members of the Commission. The Federal Minister for Law and Justice attended the meeting on special invitation. The International Commercial Court of Pakistan (ICCP) has been proposed as an independent Federal Superior Court through the insertion of a new Article 212A in the Constitution. It is envisaged to provide swift and efficient resolution of international commercial disputes, strengthen enforcement of arbitral awards, promote consistency and predictabil-

ity in commercial jurisprudence, enhance investor confidence, and position Pakistan as a credible destination for international trade and investment.

Considering the constitutional nature of the proposal, the Commission resolved to recommend the proposed constitutional amendment to the Federal Government for consideration and initiation of the necessary legislative process. The recommendation reflects the Commission's vision of aligning Pakistan's commercial justice framework with international best practices and creating an enabling legal environment that supports sustainable economic growth and foreign direct investment. The Commission also approved proposed amendments to Section 3A (1A) of the Banking Companies Ordinance, 1962, recommending that the jurisdiction of the Banking Mohtasib be extended to customers of microfinance banks and institutions. The proposed reform seeks to provide millions of microfinance customers with an effective, affordable and accessible grievance redress mechanism, thereby strengthening consumer protection, promoting financial inclusion and reinforcing public confidence in the financial sector.



ISLAMABAD: The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr Justice Yahya Afridi, chairing a meeting of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

President felicitates UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham on assuming office

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday extended his heartfelt felicitations to Prime Minister Andy Burnham on assuming office as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

The president expressed the hope that under Prime Minister Burnham's leadership, Pakistan and the United Kingdom would further strengthen their longstanding bilateral partnership and expand cooperation across areas of mutual interest, a news release issued from Presidency said.

President Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to dialogue, diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of disputes. He noted that, as the world, particularly the Gulf region, has been passing through a turbulent period since late February, Pakistan has played its part in promoting peace with the support of many brotherly countries.

He expressed the hope that the United Kingdom, under Prime Minister Burnham's leadership, would also play its part in securing a cessation.

Sports key to empowering youth, promoting national unity: Syedaal Khan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar on Monday said sports are a powerful instrument for promoting national unity, discipline, healthy lifestyles and constructive engagement among youth.

Addressing an event held to watch the live screening of the international football final at a local hotel, he said Pakistan's young generation possessed immense sporting talent that must be nurtured through better facilities, coaching and equal opportunities.

The event was organised by Muhammad Rauf Raja, Focal Person to the Prime Minister's Youth Programme on Tourism and Hospitality, in collaboration



with Best Western Premier Hotel Islamabad.

Among those in attendance were Muhammad Rauf Raja, General Manager of Best Western Premier Hotel Rashid Rauf Banday, FPCCI Vice President Tariq Jadoon, a delegation from the Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Trades and Small Industries, former international footballer Mubashir Sanjrani, the Ambassador of Palestine, diplomats from various embassies.

WUM and Sarhad University sign MoU for academic collaboration

PEAK POINT

MARDAN: Women University Mardan (WUM) and Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology (SUIT), Peshawar, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen academic cooperation, research, innovation, and institutional collaboration. The MoU was signed by Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana, Vice Chancellor, Women University Mardan, and Prof. Dr. Salim Ur Rehman, Vice Chancellor, Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology, in the presence of Ms. Haleema Ikram, Director ORIC, Women University Mardan, and Mr. Ali Akhtar Shinwari, Director



Admissions, SUIT*. The agreement establishes a framework for collaboration in student and faculty exchange programmes, joint research, academic conferences, seminars, workshops, innovation, entrepreneurship, internships, capacity-building initiatives, and knowledge sharing through the ORICs of both universities. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana,

Pakistan's air quality is 15 times high than the safe limit

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's recently recorded air quality is 15 times higher than the safe limit in some areas, which is a big danger to human health, reveals an unpublished National State of Environment Report (NSOER) to be launched soon.

At a consultation session, held jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change on Monday, the researchers discussed in detail the troubling new findings of the report that mainly focuses on the youth. The ses-

sion, aimed at gathering youth input for the upcoming report, comes nearly a decade after Pakistan's last State of Environment Report was published in 2016 that had no dedicated youth edition.

Speaking on the occasion, Zainab Naem, Associate Research Fellow, Head of Ecological Sustainability and Circular Economy at SDPI, said the youth engagement process would directly feed into a standalone version of the national report, giving younger citizens a formal voice in a process that has historically excluded them.

She said that the gap is now being addressed as part of a broader push to involve



young people directly in shaping national environmental policy.

Neelum Pari, SDPI Research Associate, walked participants through preliminary findings compiled under the internationally recognized DPSIR framework which assesses environmental issues through their Drivers,

Pressures, State, Impact, and Response. The methodology, she explained, allows researchers to trace environmental degradation from its root socio-economic causes through to the policy responses meant to address it.

Among the most striking revelations was the state of Pakistan's air quality.

According to the findings presented, concentrations of PM2.5, fine particulate-matter considered especially dangerous to human health, have been recorded at up to 15 times the safe limit in some areas, with little to no improvement recorded between 2023 and 2024.

Citing global research, she noted that Pakistanis are losing an estimated 3.4 to 3.9 years of life expectancy on average due to air pollution, with South Asia among the worst-affected regions globally. She said that the full implementation of Pakistan's existing National Clean Air Policy could cut PM2.5 emissions by 36 to 38 per cent by 2030, and

as much as 80 per cent by 2050 provided the policy is properly enforced, which was currently lacking.

Beyond air quality, the report's findings span twelve chapters covering water resources, agriculture, disaster risk, environmental health, and governance and accountability, including data on environmental compliance cases registered nationally. The report reveals that data gaps across provinces meant some regions, particularly the Punjab, were more heavily represented than others due to greater data availability from provincial Environmental Protection Departments.