

Delegation of Bangladeshi Civil Service Officers calls on Ayaz Sadiq



Islamabad Expressway Service Road to be completed in 60 days: Naqvi



Pakistan, Turkmenistan to convene steering committee for TAPI gas pipeline, stress engagement among partner countries

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
Website: www.peakpoint.pk

ExecutiveGroup Editor
Arif Mehmood Khan

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Wednesday 19 November 2026 Jumada-ul-Sani 07, 1448 A.H VOl No: 06 Issue No. 250 Pages 4 Rs. 20

CDF Munir underscores importance of sustained engagement, mutual trust in meeting with Iran's Araghchi

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir underscored the importance of sustained engagement, mutual trust and close coordination between the two countries to promote regional peace and stability during a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, the military's media wing said on Tuesday. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics and evolving geopolitical developments were also discussed between the two.

Both sides also exchanged views on exploring avenues to address common security challenges, it added.

Araghchi appreciated Pakistan's "constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability and expressed his country's desire to further strengthen bilateral relations", ISPR said. Pakistan has been mediating between Washington and Tehran, making efforts for an end to a war that began with US attacks on Iran on February 28.

Months of diplomacy have failed to resolve the war, while CDF Munir has been playing a key role in Pakistan's mediation efforts.

His latest meeting with Araghchi took place in Rawalpindi on Monday, when the Iranian foreign minister was in Pakistan, primarily to attend the 30th meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation.



ISLAMABAD: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir.

In hard-hitting speech, Bilawal says system was 'made to collapse'

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Amid debate on a "system reset" in the country, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Tuesday that the governance system had not collapsed, but was rather "made to collapse". He made the remarks while speaking at the Karachi Press Club. Over the past few months, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has whipped up a political storm since he called for the formation of new administrative units in the country, saying the current "system" of governance had "collapsed" and needed a "reset".

Recalling Naqvi's remarks, Bilawal said, "Nobody objects that the system has collapsed, but there is no discussion and debate on why it collapsed."

He noted that the proposed solution "was not an actual remedy to the illness due to which we suffered a system collapse".

"If we want to focus on resolving the issues of the public, if we want to fight poverty, unemployment, inflation, then we absolutely need to decide why the system collapsed," the Bhutto scion said.

PM Shehbaz directs modernisation of ports, expansion of PNSC fleet to make Pakistan regional trade & transshipment hub

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed all port-related institutions to work in close coordination and adopt an integrated strategy to resolve the problems facing the business community.

The prime minister issued the instructions amid chairing a high-level meeting on the country's ports and the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) here, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The prime minister said the country's ports play a pivotal role in expanding business and driving economic growth. He stressed that increasing port capacity is essential if Pakistan is to become a key trade and transshipment hub in the region.

The prime minister instructed that cargo movement, clearance and other related processes at the ports be modernised to facilitate traders and speed up commercial activity.

Turning to the national shipping line, the prime minister said comprehensive reforms were urgently needed to transform PNSC into a modern, stable and competitive organisation that meets international standards. He directed that a workable plan be prepared to expand the PNSC fleet so the country can strengthen its own shipping capacity for imports and exports. The meeting was briefed on the PNSC reform agenda. The participants were told that a business.

Iran war, rising fuel costs weigh on Trump as approval remains near career low

PEAK POINT



NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump's approval rating remains near the lowest of his presidency, with fewer than one in three Americans backing his performance. At the same time, public support for the US war with Iran is even lower, a new Reuters/Ipsos poll found.The four-day survey, completed on Monday, found that 32% of Americans approved of Trump's performance in the White House, broadly unchanged across four consecutive polls since mid-October. His rating stood at 31% in October, marking the lowest level recorded during his presidency. Only 31% of respondents said they supported the war in Iran, which has driven fuel prices sharply higher and added to financial pressures on American households. Trump's popularity has declined this year as the conflict's economic consequences have weighed on voters, with rising energy costs contributing to discontent that also hurt Republicans in the November 3 midterm elections. Democrats are set to take control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives in January. The poll also pointed to growing dissatisfaction within the Democratic Party.

Police constable martyred in targeted attack in Bannu

PEAK POINT

MIRANSHAH: A police constable was martyred after unidentified armed men opened fire on him near the Afghan Refugees Camp in Bannu on Tuesday morning, Assistant Sub-Inspector Shah Barat Khan confirmed. According to Khan, the constable, identified as Zahid Khan, was targeted at around 9:10am within the jurisdiction of Domel Police Station. Khan, who belonged to Jhangi Peerbakhil, was posted at Bannu Central Jail and was on his way to duty when he was attacked. "He died at the scene.

Canada, China agree to tariff relief, commercial deals amid US tariff threats

PEAK POINT

CHINA: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed Tuesday in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen to expand bilateral trade through reciprocal tariff relief and new commercial deals despite US tariff threats.

"Canada and China have recalibrated our relationship to the benefit of citizens in both countries," Carney said in a statement released by his office ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting.

He said the deals are "making it easier to travel, study, and do business" between the two nations.

Under the expanded arrangement, Beijing will provide tariff relief covering roughly 400 million Canadian dollars ($279.7 million) in Canadian exports, including 116 million Canadian dollars ($81 million) in frozen pork cuts and 285 million Canadian dollars ($199 million) in fish and seafood.



This builds on nearly 7.5 billion Canadian dollars ($5.2 billion) in trade access restored since January.

In exchange, Ottawa will extend existing tariff remissions on certain Chinese steel and aluminum products by two years beyond the late 2026 deadline and add 32 steel and aluminum tariff items where domestic supply falls short.

Carney also committed $8.85 million Canadian dollars ($6.19 million) in combined funding for environmental cooperation and student scholarships in China, designated 2027 as the Canada-China Year of e-commerce, and announced a 2027 trade mission alongside new Air Canada flights between Vancouver and Guangzhou starting in May 2027. Chinese airlines will also increase flights to Canada.

Both leaders welcomed more than $15 million Canadian dollars ($10.5 million) in arts and culture agreements, a new chief executive roundtable, and a university dual-degree program.

The deepening partnership comes despite warnings from US President Donald Trump, who threatened an immediate 100% tariff on all Canadian goods following Carney's January visit to Beijing and accused him on his social media platform Truth Social of seeking to turn Canada into a "drop off port" for Chinese exports.

ADB approves $500m loan to support Pakistan's federal pension reforms



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday approved a $500 million results-based loan to help Pakistan reform its federal civil pension system, the Manila-based lending agency said in a statement.

The reforms will help contain rising pension-related fiscal pressures, strengthen pension system sustainability, and expand fiscal space for development and social spending, according to the statement.

It added that Pakistan's federal pension spending has grown nearly fivefold since fiscal year 2016 and now exceeds Rs1 trillion a year. "Its longstanding unfunded and noncontributory.



DAILY PEAK POINT

SPORTS



Pakistan, Sri Lanka docked WTC points for slow over-rates in first Test



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Sri Lanka have been penalised for maintaining slow over-rates in the drawn first Test of their two-match ICC World Test Championship (WTC) series, with Pakistan losing five points and Sri Lanka suffering a 15-point deduction.

Match referee Dean Cosker of the ICC International Panel imposed the sanctions after Pakistan were found five overs short of the required rate and Sri Lanka 15 overs behind, after time allowances were taken into account.

Under the ICC Code of Conduct, players are fined five per cent of their match fees for every over their side falls short, subject to a maximum penalty of 50 per cent. Consequently, Pakistan were fined 25 per cent of their match fees, while Sri Lanka received the maximum 50 per cent fine.

Captains Babar Azam and Kusal Mendis pleaded guilty to the offences and accepted the sanctions, avoiding formal hearings. The charges were brought by on-field umpires Adrian Holdstock and Rod Tucker, third umpire Allahuddien Paleker and fourth umpire Faisal Afridi.

The penalties have further dented both teams' positions in the 2025-27 WTC cycle. Pakistan, who had moved to nine points with a points percentage of 7.50 following the Rawalpindi draw, have slipped to four points and approximately 3.33 per cent after the deduction.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, have dropped from 28 points and a percentage of 33.33 to approximately 15.48 per cent, falling to eighth place in the nine-team standings.

The latest penalty adds to Pakistan's growing problems with over-rate violations in the current WTC cycle. The team had already incurred a 19-point deduction for previous offences, including an 11-point penalty following the third Test against England at Edgbaston in September.

Repeated sanctions have significantly undermined Pakistan's campaign, leaving them with little realistic prospect of qualifying for the WTC final. Their poor results, combined with successive over-rate penalties, have further complicated their position in the competition.

The second Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka began in Rawalpindi on Tuesday, giving both sides another opportunity to improve their standings.

Pakistan fall to India in SAFF final after late heartbreak



PEAK POINT

DHAKA: Pakistan's hopes of lifting their maiden SAFF Championship title ended in heartbreak on Tuesday as defending champions India came from behind to secure a 2-1 victory in the final at the National Stadium, extending their record to 10 titles and completing an unprecedented hat-trick of consecutive triumphs. The Shaheens produced an impressive first-half display and looked on course for a historic victory after taking the lead through Alamgir Ghazi in stoppage time.

However, the dismissal of defender Junaid Shah early in the second half proved a turning point, allowing India to seize control and score twice to retain their crown. Pakistan, appearing in their first-ever SAFF Championship final, began confidently and enjoyed the better of the opening exchanges, putting India's reshuffled side under sustained pressure. The Green Shirts threatened repeatedly down the flanks, with the combination of Abdul Samad Arshad and Haris Zeb causing problems for the Indian defence. India, meanwhile, struggled to establish attacking rhythm, although they came close to scoring around the 35th minute when Pakistan goalkeeper Yousuf Butt produced an important save to deny a dangerous effort.

Pakistan reach Blind Cricket Asia Cup final after defeating India in last-ball thriller



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan defeated arch-rivals India by one wicket in a thrilling last-ball finish to book their place in the final of the Asia Cup Blind Cricket Tournament in Dhaka.

In a nail-biting contest, Pakistan chased down India's target of 180 runs, losing nine wickets, after Nematullah produced a stunning finish in the final two balls.

Pakistan needed seven runs from the last two balls when Nematullah smashed a six off the fifth delivery and followed it with a boundary on the final ball to seal a memorable victory.

After winning the toss, India opted to bat first and posted 179 for six in their allotted 20 overs.

D Tompaki top-scored for India with an unbeaten 62 off 47 balls, hitting five fours. S Shah contributed 30 off 22 balls, while Venkateswara Rao scored 26 off 18 deliveries.

Badnayak added 13 runs, while Behera made 10.

For Pakistan, Ali, Munir and Idris took one wicket each. India also benefited from 29 runs in extras.

For Pakistan, Babar Ali, Badr Munir and Muhammad Idrees took one wicket each.

In reply, Pakistan kept up the chase and eventually reached the target in a nail-biting finish.

Ali played a crucial role in the victory, scoring 64 off 51 balls with four boundaries.

Safdar added 31 off 26 deliveries, while Idris contributed 14 off nine balls.

For India, Venkateswara Rao was the pick of the bowlers, claiming two wickets for 14 runs in two overs. R Singh, P Sharma and Deepak took one wicket each.

Eight Pakistani boys begin J-30 Jr Tennis with wins



PB, Samiullah shine as 12th Battle Axe Polo Cup gets underway



'Team Pakistan' spirit key to winning more international medals: Arif Saeed

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) President Arif Saeed has called for a united 'Team Pakistan' movement, saying unity, greater investment and stronger athlete support are vital to improving the country's medal tally at the Asian and Olympic Games.

Addressing a ceremony organised by the POA in honour of Pakistan's Asian Games medallists, Arif Saeed said the country needed to develop a strong sense of national identity and collective purpose among athletes, coaches, sports federations and former players. He believed that bringing all stakeholders together under the 'Team Pakistan' banner could play a significant role in improving Pakistan's medal prospects at major international competitions.

The ceremony was attended by International Hockey Federation (FIH) President Tayyab Ikram, POA Senior Vice-President Fatima Lakhani, Secretary General Khalid Mahmood, Olympian Tahir Zaman, Pakistan Volleyball Federation Chairman Chaudhry Yaqoob, tennis star Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, Salman Iqbal Butt, PTF's Col (R) Waseem Ahmed Janjua and other prominent sports personalities. Asian Games medallists Ghulam Mustafa Bashir (shooting) and Asim Khan (ju-jitsu), among others, were also present.



The POA chief said Pakistan won 95 Asian Games medals between 1954 and 1974, 87 from 1978 to 2002, but only 34 between 2006 and 2026. He attributed the decline partly to reduced Pakistan Sports Board funding after 2006. Boxing, with 61 medals, has been the country's most successful Asian Games sport, followed by athletics and wrestling. He urged greater investment in these disciplines and other sports with medal potential.

He wants a larger Pakistani contingent at the next Asian Games, describing the event.

The City School Peshawar holds high achievers ceremony; medals and certificates awarded to outstanding students







PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: The City School Peshawar Campus and Town Campus organized a prestigious High Achievers Ceremony for the Class of 2026 to recognize and celebrate the outstanding academic achievements of students. Medals and certificates of appreciation were awarded to students who demonstrated excellent performance in A-Level, O-Level and Matric examinations.Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Inayat Wasim, attended the ceremony as the chief guest, while renowned Pakistani squash legend Qamar Zaman participated as a special guest. Head Network Improvement Partner of The City School, Ms. Mahwish Shaukat, Marketing Lead Islamabad, Mr. Hassan Khan Sherwani, Peshawar Campus Principal Ms. Romana Anjum and Town Campus Head Ms. Maryam Khalid were also present.Addressing the ceremony, Inayat Wasim said that the younger generation is a valuable asset of the country and providing them with quality education is a guarantee of a brighter future. He stated that students' achievements are the result of their hard work, teachers' dedication, parents' support and a conducive educational environment. He congratulated the successful students, their parents and teachers, adding that their achievements would inspire other students to work hard-



er.Squash legend Qamar Zaman appreciated the students' academic accomplishments and said that both education and sports play an important role in character building. He emphasized that hard work, discipline and consistency are essential for success and encouraged students to actively participate in sports and extracurricular activities alongside their studies.Ms. Mahwish Shaukat described the students' outstanding performance as a matter of pride for the institution and appreciated the combined efforts of teachers and parents. Principal Ms. Romana Anjum and Town Campus Head Ms. Maryam Khalid also congratulated the high achievers and reaffirmed their commitment to quality education, effective training and the development of students' abilities.Among the O-Level high achievers of The City School Town Campus, M. Aseel Nauman, Abiah Saeed, Malik Attaullah and Urooj Qazi secured three As each. M. Farzeen achieved three As, M. Sinan Khan secured two As, Ramla Jamil obtained two As and four As, while Aman Ali Khan secured two As and two As. Ammar Shakeel, Imaduddin and M. Ruman Khan each achieved one A and two As.At the conclusion of the ceremony, Chief Guest Inayat Wasim, Qamar Zaman and other distinguished guests distributed medals and certificates of appreciation among the outstanding students. The contributions of parents and teachers were also acknowledged and appreciated.

Opinion & Editorial

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD
Arif Mehmood Khan
Group Editor: 0333-5366814
Samra Athar Kakakhel
Resident Editor
Nadim Tanoli
Joint Editor: Mob-0301-7777874
Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
www.peakpoint.pk

A right, not a concession

There can be no two opinions that former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse, Bushra Bibi, languishing in Adiala Jail, are entitled to proper healthcare facilities under the prison manual - a fundamental right that applies equally to every inmate across the country. It is a pity, however, that the incarcerated former first couple had to address an open letter to the chief justices of the Federal Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and the Islamabad High Court merely to have these basic legal and constitutional rights enforced. Both Khan and Bibi are reportedly suffering from serious eye ailments, with the former premier also experiencing high blood pressure and related risks. While senior government figures, including Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah, have repeatedly pledged that the couple will be ensured proper medical care, the authorities have sadly failed to walk the talk. By delaying the implementation of the Supreme Court's August 18 directive to transfer Khan to Shifa International Hospital, the administration has allowed a humanitarian matter to fester into a needless political controversy. Healthcare behind bars is not a political concession; it is a statutory obligation of the state.

Peace prognosis

Dr Raashid Wali Janjua

AFGHAN foreign and domestic policies are a curious mix of tribalism, revanchism and ideological confusion that shun human rights and statecraft in favour of support for terrorist groups based on Afghan soil that pose a clear danger to regional peace. Unfortunately, all attempts at positive engagement with the Afghan Taliban by Pakistan as well as regional countries have been scuttled due to Kabul's lack of willingness to rein in terrorist outfits operating under its benign gaze.

A belief has gained traction amongst the Afghan Taliban that their successful armed struggle against Nato/USA could also be emulated by their ideological comrades like Al Qaeda, IS-K, ETIM, the TTP etc in pursuit of their political objectives. Rooted in medieval notions of tribal honour and revenge, the regime offers a propitious environment for growth of terror networks. The flow of external funds into the Afghan regime's coffers has encouraged the obduracy of the Taliban, which continues channelling these funds to its ideological allies, sustaining the vicious cycle of terrorism and crime.

Afghanistan is acting as a generous host for terrorist outfits that use its soil to generate economic rents through narco-trafficking, ransom, and smuggling. These groups are confident that their base of operation and sources of income would remain protected under the Taliban. A mere look at the figures showing the funding of this terror haven by the unsuspecting international community indicates why Taliban-ruled Afghanistan remains a threat.

Since August 2021, donors have confirmed paying $8 billion in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan through various international organisations, with a further $3.78bn committed and $94 million pledged. Billions more were reportedly received by the Taliban regime in direct foreign grants. Western capitals remain the biggest financial contributors to Afghanistan.

The Afghan economy is kept afloat by foreign patronage and narco-trafficking.

Afghanistan imports goods worth around $12bn annually against exports of only $1.7bn, leaving an annual trade deficit of $10.3bn. It is intriguing how the Taliban regime is bridging $10.3bn every year. The answer lies in $17.5bn in foreign grants received since 2021, besides billions of dollars earned through narco-trafficking. It is clear evidence of an economy kept afloat by foreign patronage and narco-trafficking.

But the biggest question is: should such a regime that hosts terrorist groups be kept afloat through the largesse of international donors who might soon feel the heat from violent groups based in Afghanistan? If the international community thinks it can wean the Afghan Taliban away from terrorists, it needs to have a look at Pakistan's 17 sincere attempts through ministers, the national security advisor, special representative, and joint coordination committee interactions, besides internationally mediated parleys in Doha, Istanbul, Riyadh and Urumqi.

The reason for Afghan obstinacy is hubris and ideological narcissism that are pampered through foreign indulgence, despite zero concessions by the Kandahar-based ruling clique on political inclusivity, women's education and minority rights. Pakistan has tried bilateral channels and has exhausted relevant regional fora like the trilateral group (Pakistan, China and Afghanistan) where in 2023 the Afghan foreign minister agreed to stop the flow of terrorism from Afghan soil.

The Moscow Format, which evolved out of a quadrilateral forum which was abandoned by the US after the Ukraine War, kept pressing the Afghan regime to abide by international counterterrorism obligations till its seventh meeting. However, it failed to elicit a positive response from the Taliban delegation during its eighth iteration at Moscow on Oct 5. The Taliban's reluctance to even acknowledge the need to stop the activities of terrorist groups from Afghan soil betrays a mindset that is sympathetic to these violent groups.

Courtesy Dawn

What problems to solve?

Muhammad Hamid Zaman

When I first started working in global health nearly two decades ago – coming from the world of engineering and technology – I was a firm believer in the mission of frugal innovation, or context appropriate technology. The idea was that technology can solve some of the most pressing problems we see in the developing countries, but because necessary infrastructure does not exist, we need to create technology that works in these locations. To carry out this mission, schemes with grand ideas were unveiled. These were the days of programmes including "one laptop per child" – the notion that if we give a laptop to each child around the world, we would be able to make extraordinary gains in education. Ideas such as a 100 dollar laptop came from this mindset. The campaign lasted for about a decade, and then ended abruptly as it failed miserably. Today no one really talks about it.

In my own discipline of biomedical engineering, there was extraordinary excitement around paper-based diagnostics changing the face of disease detection. There were claims that a 'device' printed on paper, about the size of a postage stamp, could potentially eliminate the need for many heavy-duty diagnostics. The results of that promise did not materialise in any substantial way either. Most of those companies, that made such promises, do not exist today.

And then there was this broader movement about using local materials, local knowledge and local innovations to solve local problems. A whole bunch of 'innovations' came to the fore, and while some local individuals were able to improve their financial condition by creating small businesses or find ways to support their families, by and large, these innovations did not scale. Large number of those who lived in slums, or in refugee camps, were not able to break free from the shackles of injustice or abject poverty.

Courtesy Tribune

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Delegation of Bangladeshi Civil Service Officers calls on Ayaz Sadiq



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday received a delegation of Bangladeshi Civil Service officers, currently visiting Pakistan, at Parliament House, Islamabad.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan, Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan, was also present on the occasion.

Welcoming the delegation, Ayaz Sadiq underscored the importance of strengthening the longstanding friendly relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh through enhanced bilateral cooperation, institutional engagement and people-to-people contacts.

During the interaction, NA Speaker briefed the delegation on Pakistan's parliamentary system, legislative procedures and the composition of the National Assembly.

He also highlighted the role and functioning of Standing Committees, the SDGs Secretariat and Parliamentary Caucuses.

Ayaz Sadiq also apprised the delegation of the administrative and human resource reforms introduced in the National Assembly Secretariat under his leadership, particularly those aimed at improving the service structure, ensuring transparency and merit in recruitment and appointments, and streamlining the promotion process for Secretariat employees. He highlighted the measures undertaken to improve employees' career progression, address service-related matters and strengthen institutional efficiency through reforms in various administrative procedures.

Ayaz Sadiq emphasised that these initiatives were aimed at fostering a more transparent, efficient and employee-friendly working environment within the Secretariat.

Recalling the historical and fraternal ties between the two countries, NA Speaker noted that the people of Pakistan and Bangladesh shared deep bonds of affection and goodwill.

Referring to his recent visit to Bangladesh to attend the funeral prayers of former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, on the directions of the Prime Minister, he said that the warmth, affection and hospitality extended by the people of Bangladesh had left a lasting impression on him.

Islamabad Expressway Service Road to be completed in 60 days: Naqvi

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said the Islamabad Expressway Service Road project will be completed within 60 days, with 40 per cent of construction work already finished.

Talking to reporters during a visit to the project site, Naqvi said obstacles that had delayed construction, including a gas pipeline, had been removed.

He said the government was developing the Islamabad Expressway along motorway standards to improve traffic flow and reduce travel time between Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The interior minister said the service road would benefit a large population, while plans to extend it beyond Koral were also under consideration.

During the visit, Naqvi reviewed the progress of construction work and received a briefing on the project's implementation.

Officials said 40 per cent of the work had been completed and the remaining construction would be finished within the stipulated timeframe.

Speaking about environmental initiatives, Naqvi said a report by the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) showed that the number of trees in Islamabad had increased by 28 per cent over the past 18 months.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan to convene steering committee for TAPI gas pipeline, stress engagement among partner countries

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday discussed the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline with a delegation led by Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov.

The discussion took place at the 6th Session of the Pakistan–Turkmenistan Joint Intergovernmental Commission (JIC), which was held in Islamabad on Tuesday.

Meredov had arrived in Pakistan ahead of the 30th meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Council of Ministers, held from November 15-16.

The two sides recognised "the importance of political engagement among the participating countries on the technical and commercial aspects of the project", Dar said in remarks during a joint press stakeout after the talks. Meanwhile, Meredov said that the two sides also agreed to convene a meeting of the steering committee for the project.

The 1,800-kilometre pipeline is expected to carry 33 billion cubic metres of natural gas every year from Turkmenistan's Galkynysh — the world's second-largest gas field — to the Indian city of Fazilka. It will pass through Herat and Kandahar in Afghanistan, and Quetta and Multan in Pakistan.

The project has two phases: a free flow phase with an estimated cost of $5-6bn and installation of compressor stations for at least $1.9bn.

In June 2023, Pakistan and Turkmenistan signed a joint implementation plan to execute the TAPI gas pipeline project.

In September 2024, Afghanistan said it would begin work on the pipeline. Progress on the TAPI pipeline had been repeatedly delayed because of security issues in conflict-ravaged Afghanistan. DPM Dar said on Tuesday that the talks between the two countries on trade, investment and regional connectivity were held in "a very cordial and constructive atmosphere.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar @MishaqDar50 holding a Joint Press Stakeout with Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman fo the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, at the conclusion of the 6th Session of the Pakistan-Turkmenistan Joint Intergovernmental Commission.

Construction of Layyah-Taunsa roads to be completed in two months: Aleem Khan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday said construction of roads connecting both sides of the Layyah-Taunsa Bridge over the River Indus had formally started and would be completed within two months. During an inspection of the ongoing work, he said the bridge had been completed nearly a decade ago, but the absence of connecting roads had deprived residents of Layyah and Taunsa of direct access, forcing them to travel several hours to reach the opposite side.

To address this long-standing issue, the National Highway Authority has initiated practical measures and the construction of the new roads will be completed within two months.

Aleem Khan said that the completion of these roads would establish direct connectivity between the residents of Layyah and Taunsa, reducing a journey that currently takes several hours to just a few minutes.

Health minister reviews drug track & trace system

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal chaired a meeting to review progress on the implementation of the drug track and trace system aimed at strengthening medicine monitoring and preventing the circulation of counterfeit and substandard drugs.

During the meeting, officials of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) briefed the minister on the implementation of the system, digital monitoring, transparency in the pharmaceutical supply chain and challenges faced in its execution.

The briefing also covered measures to improve the monitoring of medicines and ensure transparency at different stages of the supply chain.

The health minister directed the concerned authorities to take necessary measures to strengthen medicine surveillance, ensure transparency and make the track-and-trace system more effective and fully operational. He emphasized the importance of an effective monitoring mechanism to prevent the circulation of fake.

BISP establishes over 10 mln Digital Wallets for Beneficiaries; expands Kafaalat eligibility

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid Tuesday said the establishment of over 10 million digital wallets for women beneficiaries was a major milestone towards digital financial inclusion, enabling them to withdraw their payments anytime and anywhere across the country.

She was speaking during her visit to the BISP office and Dynamic Registration Centre in Pattoki, where she interacted with women beneficiaries, listened to their complaints and directed the concerned staff to address their issues promptly.

Senator Rubina Khalid said that under the new digital payment system, beneficiaries could withdraw their payments seven days a week at their convenience from authorized retailers of any of the six partner banks, including Habib Bank Limited (HBL), Bank Alfalah, Bank of Punjab (BOP), Habib Microfinance Bank, Easypaisa and JazzCash, anywhere in Pakistan.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas calls for stronger Pakistan-Bangladesh ties through tourism and institutional cooperation

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas has called for stronger cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh, emphasising tourism, enhanced air connectivity, medical tourism and institutional exchanges as key areas for bringing the two countries closer.Addressing a dinner hosted in honour of a visiting Bangladeshi civil service delegation, Sardar Yasir Ilyas said Pakistan and Bangladesh shared a common history, heritage, culture, traditions and religious bonds that extended beyond geographical boundaries. He stressed the need to translate these longstanding connections into practical cooperation and greater people-to-people interaction. Highlighting tourism as a powerful means of bringing nations and communities together, he said increased direct flights between Pakistan and Bangladesh were essential to facilitate travel and strengthen bilateral engagement. While Pakistan's e-visa facility had made travelling easier, improved air connectivity was the next important step.Sardar Yasir Ilyas invited the Bangladeshi people to explore Pakistan's diverse landscapes, particularly its northern areas, and experience the country's natural beauty and hospitality. He said visitors travelling to Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi would also witness the diversity of Pakistani society and the country's potential.He also underscored the scope for cooperation in medical tourism, proposing exchanges of doctors and professional expertise between the two countries. Referring to the large populations and skilled medical professionals in both countries, he said collaboration could create opportunities for mutual learning and benefit.Calling for broader institutional cooperation, he proposed exchange programmes involving doctors.