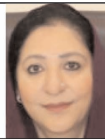




Pakistan urges stronger climate cooperation at Arctic Circle Rome Forum



100,000 laptops procured for PM Youth Laptop Scheme-IV: Wajaha



Leather, footwear industry delegation discuss issues with Jam Kamal

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PM directs Pakistani embassies in Gulf to stay ready to assist citizens amid current situation

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed that the Pakistani embassies in Gulf countries must remain readily available at all times to assist Pakistani citizens amid the prevailing situation in the region.
Chairing a meeting regarding the evacuation of Pakistanis from Iran and issues related to Pakistanis residing in Gulf countries, the prime minister expressed gratitude to the brotherly country Azerbaijan for assisting in the evacuation of Pakistanis from Iran.
During the meeting the participants were briefed on the current situation regarding the evacuation of Pakistanis from Iran.

"By the grace of Allah, Pakistani citizens are safely returning home from Iran, and the Pakistani Embassy in Azerbaijan is fully active in facilitating the process", the prime minister was told.
The meeting was also informed that, on the prime minister's instructions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was continuously monitoring the entire situation.
A briefing was also given on the measures taken by Pakistani embassies to facilitate Pakistani citizens residing in Gulf countries.
The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar and Attaullah Tarar.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Chairing a meeting regarding the evacuation of Pakistanis from Iran and issues related to Pakistanis residing in Gulf countries.

Pak Army destroys Afghan Taliban's brigade headquarters in Kandahar

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Army continues its operation Ghazab Lil Haq against Afghan Taliban and militant elements across the border destroying the brigade headquarters of the 205 Corps of the Afghan Taliban in Kandahar during a targeted strike on Thursday.
Sources said the operation also targeted ammunition depots belonging to the Afghan Taliban, causing significant damage to their military infrastructure.
Earlier, Attaullah Tarar, Pakistan's Minister for Information and Broadcasting, stated that since the start of the operation, 481 operatives of the Afghan Taliban regime have been killed, 226 checkpoints destroyed, and 35 checkpoints captured by Pakistani forces.
Security officials said the armed forces are continuing effective ground and aerial operations against Afghan Taliban fighters and groups described as Fina al-Khawarij. Pakistan has also reportedly carried out a successful strike on the strategically important Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan as part of the ongoing operation.



Iran launches fresh missile attacks on US, Israeli targets, claims destroying 10 drones

PEAK POINT
IRAN: The Iranian military has claimed it carried out fresh attacks on US and Israeli targets using more than 40 missiles, while also destroying 10 drones during the operation.
According to international news agencies, Iranian officials said the strikes were launched in response to recent attacks by the United States and Israel. The Iranian military stated that American bases located in Kuwait and Bahrain were among the targets during the retaliatory operation.
An Iranian military spokesperson said that more than 40 missiles were fired at US and Israeli targets, adding that 10 drones belonging to the two countries were also shot down during the confrontation. The spokesperson further warned that if the United States and Israel attempt a regime change in Iran, Tehran could target Israel's nuclear facilities. AFP adds: The Israeli military confirmed that Iran launched several rounds of missiles at Israel early Thursday, triggering alerts in multiple areas and explosions heard in Jerusalem, immediate reports of casualties. After a lull of more than seven hours, Israel's military issued three separate alerts warning of Iranian missile fire in under two hours. Iran's state broadcaster IRIB also reported the launches. AFP reporters in Jerusalem heard explosions following the third reported launch. But Israel's emergency services, Magen David Adom, said it had received no reports of casualties following Thursday's early rocket fire, and the military has cleared people to leave their shelters. Meanwhile, Hezbollah claimed it targeted a military base south of Tel Aviv. The group said the strike was carried out using a drone aimed at an Israeli Iron Dome radar system. Earlier, the Israeli military conducted airstrikes on Beirut on Wednesday, killing three people and injuring six others. The escalating conflict in the Middle East has also severely disrupted air travel across the region. Over the past five days, more than 20,000 flights across eight countries have reportedly been cancelled due to the growing security situation.



US-India naval ties in focus amid Iran conflict

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: A former senior adviser to the US Secretary of Defence, has claimed that the US Navy is increasingly relying on Indian ports for docking and unloading operations due to escalating tensions with Iran. Former US Army Colonel Douglas Macgregor's remarks, made in a recent interview on One America News, have sparked discussion on social media, particularly in South Asia, highlighting what some view as a potential shift in US military logistics away from traditional Persian Gulf bases, according to a media report. He argued that threats.

ECP summons Naqvi over delay in Islamabad LG polls

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday issued a contempt notice to the interior secretary over his failure to appear in a hearing related to the delay in local government elections in Islamabad.
A five-member bench of the commission, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, heard the case.
During the proceedings, Islamabad Chief Commissioner Ali Randhawa appeared before the commission, while the interior secretary did not attend the hearing.

Pakistan takes proactive steps to shield economy amid regional risks, Aurangzeb tells UK

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is taking proactive steps to manage potential economic implications arising from evolving regional developments, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told the British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott.
Aurangzeb's assurance came during a meeting with the British High Commissioner to Pakistan at the Finance Division on Thursday. According to a statement, the meeting focused on regional developments, Pakistan's macroeconomic outlook, progress on economic reforms, and avenues for strengthening bilateral economic cooperation.
The finance minister shared that the prime minister has constituted a high-level committee comprising key federal ministries also assessing broader implications for inflation, external accounts, and financial stability.
Aurangzeb emphasised that Pakistan currently maintains adequate reserves and supply arrangements, noting that the government is undertaking scenario planning and sensitivity analysis in case the regional situation persists. The government is also reviewing energy conservation measures and coordinating with provincial authorities to ensure prudent resource management while avoiding unnecessary market panic.
Govt monitoring petroleum supplies amid Gulf tensions: Aurangzeb
During the discussion, Aurangzeb provided an update on Pakistan's ongoing economic reform agenda and engagement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the current programme.
He noted that the government remains committed to meeting programme benchmarks and advancing structural reforms, particularly in the areas of tax policy, revenue mobilisation, governance, and institutional transparency. He highlighted the government's focus on broadening



Pakistan voices concern over India-Canada uranium supply agreement

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed concern over a long-term uranium supply agreement between Canada and India, as well as potential cooperation between the two countries on small modular reactors and advanced nuclear technologies.
Responding to media queries, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Pakistan believes civil nuclear cooperation should follow a non-discriminatory and criteria-based approach applicable equally to countries that are not signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). He stated that selective exceptions undermine the credibility of the global non-proliferation framework and could further destabilise regional and international peace and security.





SPORTS



Fickle PCB shifts National T20 Cup back to Peshawar



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: It seems that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) remains extremely confused on where to stage the National T20 Cup as it again shifted the tournament on Wednesday, this time from Multan to Peshawar, the original venue of the event.

This is the third time the venue for the 10-team event was changed in recent days. The matches, according to the latest change, will be played at the Imran Khan

Stadium, the new name of Peshawar's Arbab Niaz Stadium. On Tuesday, when four participating teams following their travel plan reached Rawalpindi, where the tournament had been moved from Peshawar, they were asked by the PCB to move to Multan, citing that the said event had been shifted there.

As a result, the luggage of the teams was transported to Multan late Tuesday night. However, sources close to the situation told Dawn that now the luggage is

returning to Peshawar from Multan. Earlier, the tournament was to start from March 5 but now due to logistical issues, it will commence from March 7.

Interestingly, HBL Pakistan Super League chief executive Salman Naseer, during a press conference in Lahore on Tuesday, said that the Peshawar venue was not fully prepared to host matches due to some technical issues, including some related to the ground, no match of the

Surprisingly, now a national-level tournament has been shifted to Peshawar.

Ten regional teams, divided into two groups, are going to participate in the National T20 Cup.

Lahore Whites, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Karachi Whites and Bahawalpur are included in Group 'A' while Group 'B' contains Lahore Blues, Sialkot Multan, Abbottabad and Karachi Blues.

Six uncapped players named in Pakistan squad for Bangladesh tour



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday announced a 15-member squad for the upcoming three-match One-Day International (ODI) series against Bangladesh, scheduled to be played from March 11 to 15. All three matches will be staged at the iconic Shere Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka, promising a competitive contest between the two Asian rivals in familiar subcontinental conditions. Left-arm pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi will continue to captain the ODI side, reflecting the selectors' confidence in his leadership as Pakistan build toward future international assignments. In a notable move, the selectors have included six uncapped players in the squad, signalling a strategic focus on grooming emerging talent alongside experienced campaigners. The new faces are Abdul Samad, Maaz Sadaqat, Muhammad Ghazi Ghor, Saad Masood, Sahibzada Farhan and Shamyul Hussain. Of these, Abdul Samad, Maaz Sadaqat, Saad Masood and Shamyul Hussain were recently part of Pakistan Shaheens squad that competed against England Lions in Abu Dhabi, gaining valuable exposure in competitive overseas conditions.

Ammad Butt confident ahead of Hockey World Cup Qualifier semifinal



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's unbeaten run in the pool phase, Ammad Butt expressed confidence in his team's chances in the upcoming semifinal of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup Qualifier after the Green Shirts won all their three pool matches to reach the knock-

out stage. Speaking after Pakistan's unbeaten run in the pool phase, Ammad said the team was satisfied with its performance but remained fully focused on the crucial semifinal, scheduled for Friday. "We have won all three matches in the

pool stage. I believe the way my team has performed so far is very encouraging. However, the semifinal is a very important match for us as it is a knockout game and we must win it," he said in a video message. Pakistan will face Japan in the semifinal, the players had with a place in the final and a strong chance of qualifying for the 2026 FIH Hockey World Cup at stake. The captain said the team would utilise the rest of the day to prepare for the decisive encounter. "We will give our best and qualify for the World Cup to present a gift to our nation," Ammad Butt also thanked the government and Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) for supporting their team. "I am grate-

ful to Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board Mohsin Naqvi for his strong support for Pakistan hockey. I also thank the Government of Pakistan for listening to the players and facilitating the team in the best possible way," he said. He added that the players responded positively to the support by delivering strong performances on the field. The captain also praised the team management for creating a positive environment. "The management has been excellent. Head coach Khawaja Junaid is doing a great job, while team manager Olympian Tahir Sultan and the support staff, including the team doctor from the Pakistan Sports Board, have provided great support.

Punjab open chess championship on 6th



T20 World Cup: Finn Allen says New Zealand confidence high for final

PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Semi-final hero Finn Allen said New Zealand's thumping demifinal win over South Africa was a "huge confidence booster" ahead of going for their maiden T20 World Cup title in Sunday's final.

Opener Allen hit the fastest-ever T20 World Cup century, off 33 balls, to give his side a crushing nine-wicket win over South Africa and set up a final against India or England in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Allen blasted 10 fours and eight sixes as New Zealand raced to their victory target of 170 with 7.1 overs to spare at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

It was a bruising defeat for 2024 runners-up South Africa, who had been unbeaten in the tournament.

"They fight hard, they come hard at us, they've got good tall, fast bowlers and it makes it challenging for us,"

Allen said of Aiden Markram's South Africa. "Their boys hit the ball hard, so to get one over them is a huge confidence booster for us going into Sunday. They've been the in-form team the whole tournament."

to cheer the team. "I'm sure my parents are up watching the whole game. Hopefully, they're proud. "But I think as a nation, I think hopefully everyone gets behind us and rallies around us for Sunday," said Allen.



The Auckland-born Allen rose to the occasion in the knockout match after ordinary outings in the tournament apart from his unbeaten 84 against the UAE in a group fixture. Allen said his heroics in India would have kept his parents and the nation awake

The final will begin at around 2:30am on Monday morning. "Obviously, difficult time for people to watch back home but I'm sure people were keeping tabs on the game and hopefully they can get up and have a Monday off at work and watch the final."

FG Polo register sudden-death win over BN Polo in National Open



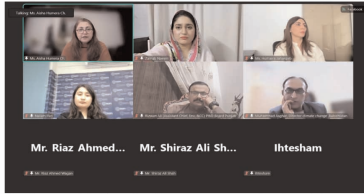


Call to embed climate adaptation within governance structures at grass roots level

Climate adaptation must translate into tangible results for farmers, vulnerable populations: official

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Experts at a webinar on Thursday called for embedding climate adaptation within the governance structures at grass roots level, as Pakistan advances district-level adaptation planning under its National Adaptation Plan. The webinar, titled: "Strengthening Local-Led Climate Adaptation in Pakistan: Beyond Optics," was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with

the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) team, supported by the United Nations Environment Programme under funding from the Green Climate Fund and implemented by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. Senior federal officials, provincial planners, UN representatives and civil society leaders participated in the webinar. In her keynote address, Aisha Humera Chaudhary, the Federal Secretary for Ministry of Climate Change and



Environmental Coordination, emphasized that adaptation must translate into tangible improvements for farmers, schoolchildren, pregnant women and vulnerable populations facing floods, heatwaves and glacial melt. Acknowledging governance challenges, including weak

local government structures and reduced public-sector extension services, she called for integrating local innovations into formal systems. She also proposed encouraging provincial challenge funds, reforming procurement rules to accommodate SMEs and tech entrepreneurs, and conducting joint studies to identify barriers to scaling successful local solutions. "We already have solutions," she said, adding that the real challenge is scaling them. Dr. Saad Khan, Additional

Secretary at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, addressing the structural and institutional challenges, pointed out that while Pakistan's National Action Plan on security is widely recognized, a few stakeholders are aware of the National Adaptation Plan. Stressing the need to elevate adaptation as a national priority, he underscored the limited pool of climate specialists in the country and the bureaucratic delays affecting project timelines.

PSO, PPL and PARCO Governance issues Land in Senate Petroleum Committee

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: Serious governance concerns in Pakistan's petroleum sector surfaced in the Senate as a parliamentary sub-committee questioned the expertise of members on the board of Pakistan State Oil (PSO), flagged prolonged extensions granted to the board of Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), and sought legal clarification on the status of Pak Arab Refinery Company (PARCO). Lawmakers also ordered an in-camera briefing on petroleum supply risks amid reports of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to regional tensions. The

Senate Sub Committee of the Standing Committee on Petroleum met at Parliament House under the censorship of Senator Manzoor Ahmed Kakar to review the legal and regulatory framework governing the appointment of boards of directors in petroleum sector companies. Senator Rana Mehmood-ul-Hassan attended the meeting, while Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti participated virtually. During the briefing, officials of the Petroleum Division explained the existing mechanism for appointing board members in petroleum companies. They informed the committee that boards typi-

cally consist of independent as well as ex-official members who are appointed for a three-year tenure through a competitive process. The ministry maintained that appointments are made on the basis of relevant experience and professional expertise. However, members of the committee raised questions regarding the professional credentials and expertise of certain individuals serving on the board of Pakistan State Oil. The convener directed the Petroleum Division to submit a detailed briefing containing the names of board members, their professional qualifications, tenure and the criteria

used for their selection. The committee also expressed concern that the board of Pakistan Petroleum Limited has continued functioning through repeated extensions instead of completing a fresh appointment process in accordance with legal requirements. Members stressed that board composition must strictly follow applicable laws and policies rather than relying on prolonged extensions. Another key issue raised during the meeting was the unclear legal status of Pak Arab Refinery Company. Officials informed the committee that the question of whether PARCO should be

treated as a State-Owned Enterprise has been referred to the Attorney General's Office for a formal legal opinion to determine the future course of action. During discussion on ex-officio board memberships, lawmakers questioned the relevance of the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue serving on boards of petroleum companies and sought clarification on the rationale behind such appointments. The committee directed the Petroleum Division to expedite clarification regarding PARCO's legal status and ensure transparent and lawful board appointments in

petroleum companies. Members also recommended that parliamentarians could be included on boards to strengthen parliamentary oversight and accountability in the energy sector. In view of evolving regional developments, the convener also instructed the Secretary Petroleum Division to provide an in-camera briefing to the Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum regarding the country's petroleum supply situation and contingency planning amid reports of disruption in global oil routes due to tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz.

Opinion & Editorial

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Economic impact

AS the confrontation between the US-Israel combine and Iran escalates across the Middle East, increasing regional instability is no longer a mere geopolitical concern for Pakistan; it now has tangible implications for its fragile economy. With all signs pointing to a prolonged conflict, the prospects of sustained regional instability threaten to strip away the veneer of economic recovery that the government frequently touts as its key achievement. Islamabad does appear to be preparing contingency plans for energy procurement, but the real test will be fiscal resilience and external account stability if the conflict drags on. While ensuring uninterrupted energy supplies is critical, Pakistan's vulnerability stems even more from a sharp surge in global energy prices. Benchmark Brent crude has spiked by 17pc, while LNG prices have climbed by 68pc over the past week, intensifying pressure on the import bill and current account. The surge in energy prices has revived fears of a repeat of the nightmare that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine four years ago, when soaring oil costs battered Pakistan's economy. Every \$10 increase in oil prices translates into roughly \$1.5-2bn in additional annual import costs, sharply widening external financing gaps.

Iran Alone Against Global Powers: The Closure of Hormuz and a World on Edge



By: Haseeb Ahmed
Column: Voice of the Time

The Middle East is once again standing at the brink of a dangerous escalation. According to emerging reports, the conflict between Iran on one side and the United States and Israel on the other has now entered its fifth consecutive day. Both sides appear determined to demonstrate military strength, and the intensity of the confrontation has raised serious concerns among global observers. Many analysts are warning that what is unfolding in the region may represent the early stage of a far larger international conflict. In the weeks leading up to the war, diplomatic negotiations between Washington and Tehran were underway. Yet critics now argue that these talks were less about genuine diplomacy and more about strategic positioning before an inevitable confrontation. During this period, the United States reportedly moved naval fleets closer to the Gulf, rein-

forced its military presence in the region, and supplied advanced weaponry to its allies. Shortly afterward, coordinated strikes against Iranian targets began, reportedly involving a wide array of modern military systems. Iran responded rapidly and forcefully. Reports indicate that American military installations across the region—including bases in Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Jordan—were targeted with missiles and drones. Some sources claim that several facilities sustained significant damage. In addition, reports have surfaced about attacks on American diplomatic missions in certain Arab countries, further intensifying the already volatile situation. One of the most dramatic developments came with reports that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in a targeted strike along with several of his close associates. The incident reportedly triggered widespread outrage inside Iran, fueling a surge of national anger and leading to an escalation in retaliatory military operations. Perhaps the

most consequential dimension of this conflict is the reported closure of the Strait of Hormuz. For the past three days, according to various accounts, the strategic waterway has remained blocked, leaving hundreds of oil tankers stranded at sea. Given that a significant portion of the world's oil supply passes through this narrow corridor, its disruption has immediately raised alarms in global markets. If the closure continues, the world could soon face a dramatic spike in energy prices and the onset of a wider economic shock. Reports also suggest that the United States has suffered casualties among its military personnel, while Washington has begun evacuating its citizens and diplomatic staff from certain countries in the region. Analysts note that the resistance faced by American forces may reflect Iran's long-term military preparation. Over the past two decades, Tehran has invested heavily in developing missile technology, drone capabilities, and asymmetric warfare strategies designed specifically for a confrontation with a techno-

logically superior adversary. Another issue generating intense debate is the role of the broader Muslim world. Many observers argue that Iran appears to be confronting major global powers largely on its own, while much of the Islamic world remains cautious or silent. Some Gulf states have faced criticism from commentators who claim that their territories or airspace have been made available to U.S. military operations. If the conflict continues to expand, it may not remain confined to the Middle East. The deeper involvement of major powers could transform a regional war into a global crisis. In the worst-case scenario, such an escalation could push the world toward a broader international war—one that would bring widespread destruction, economic upheaval, and profound geopolitical instability. At this critical moment, the world faces a defining question: will global leaders choose diplomacy, restraint, and dialogue, or will the drums of war grow louder until the flames of conflict spread far beyond the Middle East?

Rex Mundi

F.S. Aijazuddin
TO adapt William Wordsworth's invocation to the poet John Milton: 'Kissinger! thou shouldst be living at this hour: the Middle East hath need of thee'. Some argue that Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy between Arab coun-

tries and Israel prevented a conflagration in the combustible Middle East. Others suspect that he banked an ember that has glowed for over half a century, and which has finally flared into open war. Dr Kissinger's book on Diplomacy (1994) should be compulsory reading for all world leaders, especially those with

imperial aspirations. The Stoic Roman philosopher Marcus Aurelius once advised: "Look back over the past, with its changing empires that rose and fell, and you foresee the future." He spoke from experience. He was the last (r.161-180 AD) of the Five Good Emperors whose governance brought peace and

social order — a Pax Romana — to a turbulent empire. In modern times, who knew better than Dr Kissinger the lessons history provides? He spent his life teaching it, and then making it. Who knew better than Kissinger the lessons history provides? Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan urges stronger climate cooperation at Arctic Circle Rome Forum



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Masood Malik warned that Pakistan remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change as he addressed the Arctic Circle Rome Forum, calling for stronger global cooperation and science-based solutions to tackle the accelerating impacts of melting glaciers and extreme weather.

Speaking at the forum's plenary session titled "View from Pakistan:

Climate & Poles," the minister highlighted the country's exposure to climate-induced disasters, including glacier melt, rising sea levels and increasingly frequent extreme weather events.

Musadik Malik also participated in a panel discussion on "Science Diplomacy for the Third Pole," where he stressed the need for closer collaboration between scientists and policymakers and urged the international community to advance climate justice

and shared research initiatives to address environmental risks affecting mountain and polar regions.

On the sidelines of the forum, Pakistan's embassy in Rome arranged meetings for the minister with a number of international leaders and officials, including Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, chairman of the Arctic Circle and former president of Iceland; Katrin Jakobsdóttir, chair of the Polar Dialogue and former Icelandic prime minister; Greenland's Foreign Minister Vivian Motzfeldt; Canadian Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Mona Fortier; Norwegian State Secretary Eivind Vad Petersson; and former EU ambassador for Arctic affairs Marie Anne Coninx. The minister also met Italy's Minister for Universities and Research Anna Maria Bernini and Marco Rusconi, director of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. During his visit, Musadik Malik held academic engagements at Sapienza University of Rome.

Pakistan, Netherlands reaffirm commitment to strengthen energy, industrial partnership

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Thursday met with Robert Jan Siegert, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Pakistan, along with a delegation from Engro Vopak Terminal Limited (EVTL).

The minister warmly welcomed the ambassador and the delegation and expressed optimism for enhanced bilateral cooperation, particularly in the energy and industrial sectors, according to a news release.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to facilitating foreign investment by ensuring a stable, transparent and business-friendly environment.

Ambassador Siegert said the Netherlands highly values its partnership with Pakistan. He noted that Engro Vopak Terminal Limited represents a flagship Dutch partnership in Pakistan, operating modern facilities for bulk liquid chemicals and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

EVTL is a joint venture between Royal Vopak of the Netherlands and Engro

Corporation Limited, providing world-class services to Pakistan's chemical and petrochemical industry.

The ambassador expressed the Netherlands' keen interest in further strengthening cooperation and demonstrating that Pakistan remains open for business. He added that the Dutch side was eager to see the partnership in the terminal business further extended and strengthened.

Ammar Shah, Chief Executive Officer of EVTL, informed the minister that the company handles a significant share of the country's LPG marine imports and supports major manufacturing plants by managing feedstock for downstream DAP, PVC and PTA industries.

He also shared insights on EVTL's role in enhancing supply chain efficiency and supporting industrial growth.

During the meeting, the delegation discussed future prospects for improving terminal operations and expanding business activities.

The federal minister reiterated that the government is fully committed to providing a conducive environment for businesses.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, was called on by H.E. Mr Robert Jan Siegert, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Pakistan.

Grand tribal Jirga set final deadline to govt for withdrawal false cases

ABDUS SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: The Grand Jirga of the tribes of Bannu has given the administration and the government a final deadline to reopen all closed roads, withdraw all alleged false cases against Samad Lala, and ensure the establishment of peace in Bannu. It was also announced that if the demands are not accepted, a Peace March and a sit-in (protest) will be held after Eid. The participants questioned that if there was no intention to open the road, then why were millions of rupees spent on its construction. It was also decided that after Eid, consultations will

be held with religious scholars, the lawyers' community, trader organizations, local bodies' representatives, and students regarding participation in the Peace March. According to details, the Grand Jirga of the tribes of Bannu was held at the Jamaat-e-Islami center under the chairmanship of Professor Muhammad Ibrahim Khan. Representatives and elders from different areas of Bannu participated in the jirga. Among those who addressed the jirga were Professor Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Shaukat Ayaz Advocate, Pir Dr. Sahib

Zaman, Sahibzada Idris, Mian Mehfooz-ur-Rehman, Farmanullah Mirakhel, Naseer Ali Shah, Jamshed Khan, Nasir Bangash, Mufti Arifullah, Malik Nazir Khan, Malik Gul Bahadur Khan, Malik Saleem-ur-Rehman, Malik Yusuf Khan, Malik Umar Khattab Khan, Malik Iqbal Jadoon, Maulana Tayyab Shah Bukhari, Malik Hikmat Yar Khan, Malik Sherdar Ali Khan, Malik Hashmatullah, Mameezullah Jehad Yar, Mayor Irfan Durrani, Malik Gul Bahadur, Haji Ismatullah Amandi, Malik Syed Kamal Shah, Khalid Riaz, Malik Nek Daraz Khan, Pir Syed Ali

Shah, Malik Hayat Mandan and others. The speakers said that the people of Bannu are fed up with the current situation. The law and order situation is going out of control, roads are closed, and incidents of target killing are on the rise. They said that the government has allegedly registered false cases against a prominent leader of Aman Pason, Haji Abdul Samad, and imprisoned him in jails in Sindh, questioning how this could be considered justice. They further said that roads, which are considered the first step toward development, have been closed under the pretext of security, caus-

ing severe mental stress among the public and difficulties for traders. The speakers asked that if there was no intention to open the Miranshah Road, why were millions of rupees spent on its construction. The speakers demanded that the government, institutions, and administration should immediately reopen not just one but all closed roads. They also demanded that all alleged false cases against Samad Lala be withdrawn and that he be immediately transferred from Sindh to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similarly, they demanded that immediate funds be pro-

vided for the rehabilitation of the victims of the Kot Barara explosions. On this occasion, it was unanimously decided that if all their demands are not accepted before Eid, a Peace March will be organized immediately after Eid on 27 March. Religious scholars, traders, lawyers, the transport community, students, and chairmen and councilors of village councils will be contacted for participation. If the government fails to give a positive response, a sit-in protest will be held and will continue until their demands are fulfilled.

Leather, footwear industry delegation discuss issues with Jam Kamal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation representing Pakistan's leather and footwear industry on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and discussed export potential of the sector, challenges faced by the domestic industry and regulatory concerns related to the import of used footwear.

During the meeting, the delegation highlighted the strong potential of Pakistan's footwear industry to expand exports and contribute more significantly to the country's export basket.

Industry representatives noted that Pakistan possesses substantial manufacturing capacity and skilled labor, which can support increased production for both domestic consumption and international



markets, according to press release issued by commerce ministry.

The delegation emphasized that Pakistan's annual footwear consumption is estimated at around 550 million pairs, while the country has an installed production capacity of nearly 700 million pairs annually, indicating significant potential for both domestic supply and export expansion.

However, they noted that a considerable portion of this capacity remains underutilized due to market distortions.

100,000 laptops procured for PM Youth Laptop Scheme-IV: Wajaha

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajaha Qamar on Thursday informed the Senate that under the PM Youth Laptop Scheme-IV, 100,000 laptops have been procured at a total cost of Rs 16,801.230 million. Replying to various questions during Questions Hour, the minister said the laptops were procured through an open competitive bidding process in accordance with the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Rules. The entire procurement process was conducted transparently and competitively, and in full compliance with PPRA regulations, she added. She said the quota for Balochistan had been increased from 14 per-



cent to 18 percent under the PM Laptop Scheme, while five percent share (2.5 per cent each) had been allocated to Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) and the Virtual University (VU). Responding to another question, Wajaha Qamar said the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) had already advertised 565 vacant teaching posts of different cadres through the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) for regular recruitment.

Pakistan Information Commission declares HRC of Pakistan a public body under right of access to Information Act, 2017

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Information Commission has held that the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRC) falls within the definition of a public body under the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017 and is therefore answerable to the citizens of Pakistan in accordance with the law. The order was passed in pursuance of an appeal filed by a citizen seeking certain information from HRC. After examining the matter judiciously, the Commission considered the original information request, HRC's response dated 26-11-2025, and its subsequent response dated 21-01-2026 submitted before the Commission. The Commission

also carefully reviewed the relevant legal provisions, including Section 2(ix) of the Act. In its order, the Commission referred specifically to Section 2(ix)(h) of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017, which defines a public body to include a non-governmental organization that directly or indirectly receives or has received public funds, subsidies, tax exemptions, land, or any other benefit involving public funds, as well as any non-governmental organization or body registered under any law for the time being in force. During the proceedings, HRC acknowledged that it had obtained an exemption under Section 2(36) of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001.