



CJP leads consultation on national design competition for women facilitation centers



Pakistan-UK high-level meeting focuses on trade, regional stability



Minister Chaudhry orders 30-day plan to clear stuck-up containers, boost port efficiency

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

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

Executive Group Editor
Arif Mehmood Khan



Friday 03 April 2026

Shawwal 14, 1447

A.HVOI No: 06

Issue No. 59

Pages 4 Rs. 20

PM Shehbaz says Centre, provinces need to make collective efforts to provide relief amid global oil crisis

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the Centre and provinces need to set their priorities and make collective efforts to provide relief to the needy amid the global oil crisis triggered by the US-Israeli war on Iran. He made the remarks while addressing a high-level meeting, attended by Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir, the chief ministers from all four provinces and federal ministers. The premier said that the Centre and provinces should utilise their resources sagaciously and curtail their development projects as much as possible while also utilising their resources on agricultural-related initiatives. "We have to spend this money on public

goods and transport. Now we have to set our priorities jointly," he added. He also highlighted the government's initiatives to protect the economy and the common man from the adverse impact of the global oil crisis. In his remarks, PM Shehbaz also said that like other countries across the world, Pakistan was "being severely affected by this war". He added that after achieving macroeconomic stability, the "time for prosperity and development had arrived but unfortunately, as a result of this war, we are facing unlimited economic difficulties". He said two Pakistani vessels that were "waiting to pass through the Strait of Hormuz" were able to do so thanks to the efforts made by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting to review austerity measures in the wake of regional situation.

Iran army chief warns 'no enemy troops should survive' any US ground invasion

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iran's army chief warned on Thursday that "no enemy troops should survive" if the US attempts a ground invasion. "In the event the enemy attempts a ground operation, no one should survive," Amir Hatami said in comments carried by state broadcaster IRIB. Hatami said the military leadership has instructed operational commands to closely monitor movements by the US forces and respond in a timely manner. "It is necessary to monitor the enemy's movements and actions with utmost precision and extreme caution, moment by moment, and to implement plans to counter its attack methods at the appropriate time," he said. "The spectre of war must be removed from our country, and security must prevail for all, as it is unacceptable for places to be safe while our people are in danger," he added.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said Iran will take 'necessary actions' to prevent the Strait of Hormuz from being exploited for 'military aggression' against the country.

Pakistan in talks with Afghanistan but Kabul must demonstrate 'visible and verifiable actions': FO

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is holding talks with Afghanistan to end the current conflict between the two countries, but Kabul must "demonstrate visible and verifiable actions", said Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi on Thursday.

Since Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil-Haq against terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan on February 26, diplomatic contact between the two sides had largely ceased. The talks in the northwestern Chinese city of Urumqi were being held between senior officials of the two countries, the spokesperson said in his weekly press briefing. The meeting was focused on sharing perspectives on the latest escalation. No major outcomes were expected, though it was believed that China was pushing for confidence-building measures, such as reopening trade routes. The spokesperson recounted the visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to Beijing earlier this week at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, saying that it "provided an opportunity for both sides to hold in-depth discussions on regional issues as well as bilateral matters of global and mutual concerns".

During his opening remarks, Andrabi mentioned that Afghanistan was one of the issues that came up for discussion between the two foreign ministers. Pressed later for details, he confirmed that Pakistan had sent a delegation to Urumqi for talks.

Govt hikes petrol price to Rs458 per litre, HSD price to Rs520 per litre

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik announced on Thursday that the price of petrol was being raised to Rs458.4 per litre and that of high speed diesel to Rs520.35 per litre. He made the announcement while addressing a press conference alongside Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.

At the outset of the press briefing, Malik expressed gratitude to President Asif Ali Zardari, chief ministers of all provinces and the leadership of the ruling party's allies for their guidance at this "critical time".

He said energy prices had skyrocketed in the international market due to the ongoing Middle East war. "It has not just engulfed the entire region but the entire world as well," he added.

The minister stressed the need for discipline and unity at this time, expressing the hope that the "difficult and responsible" decisions that the government had taken today would be seen in the context of the situation in the Middle East.

Pakistan quells IMF concerns over fuel subsidy

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has committed to the International Monetary Fund to raise fuel prices if no additional savings can be identified to maintain current levels, as inflation surged to a nearly one-and-a-half-year high of 7.3% last month, driven by increases in fuel, electricity and gas prices. Sources told The Express Tribune that the IMF also imposed a new condition of increasing the quarterly stipend under Benazir Income Support Programme by 35% to Rs19,500 from January next year to offset the impact of increase in the energy prices. But the Rs5,000 quarterly,

'Back to Stone Age': Trump says conflict nearing end, threatens wider attacks on Iran

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump signalled that the ongoing US-Israeli military campaign against Iran could conclude within weeks, even as he warned of intensified strikes and issued sweeping claims about the scale of damage inflicted on Tehran.

In a 19-minute prime-time address from the White House, Trump described the conflict as a "decisive, overwhelming victory" and said the United States was "getting very close" to finishing the "job" in Iran. "We are going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks. We are going to bring them back to the Stone Age, where they belong," Trump said during the address from the White House. "In the meantime, discussions are ongoing."

While suggesting that the war may soon end, the launches are being blown to pieces." He further



president made clear that the military operations would intensify before any resolution. He did not define the terms of the "deal" he is demanding from Tehran, nor did he outline a diplomatic framework. Trump claimed Iran's military capacity had been severely degraded. He said its missiles and drone systems have been "dramatically curtailed and their weapons factories and rocket

assessed that "never in the history of warfare has an enemy suffered such clear and devastating large-scale losses in a matter of weeks."

At the same time, he acknowledged that Iran continues to retaliate, though he maintained that its "ability to launch missiles and drones is dramatically curtailed." The president said nuclear facilities had been struck again in recent days and declared that "it would take months to get near the nuclear dust," indicating that material buried under rubble no longer concerned him. Reiterating a position he says he has held for years, Trump stated that Iran would never be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons "from the very first day I announced my campaign for president in 2015." He alleged that Iran had "raced for a nuclear weapon like no one has ever seen before," a claim disputed by neutral observers. Linking the present conflict to past US policy, he argued that Israel's survival would have been jeopardised had the 2015 nuclear agreement remained intact. "Israel wouldn't exist."

Security forces kill 8 terrorists along Pak-Afghan border in NW: ISPR

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed eight terrorists while responding to their movement along the Pak-Afghan border in North Waziristan district, the military's media affairs wing said on Thursday.

In a press release, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the engagement took place on Wednesday after the "movement of a group of khwarij" was picked up by the security forces. "As a result of precise and skillful engagement, eight khwarij belonging to Indian proxy Fitna al Khwarij were sent to hell," the ISPR said, adding that weapons and ammunition were also recovered from them. Fitna al Khwarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging.



SPORTS



All-round Shadab, Sameer's unbeaten 82 seal Islamabad victory



PEAK POINT
 KARACHI: A brilliant all-round performance by Shadab Khan and a career-defining unbeaten knock from Sameer Minhas powered Islamabad United to an emphatic eight-wicket victory over Quetta Gladiators in the Pakistan Super League clash at Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday.
 Chasing a challenging 184-run target, Islamabad United comfortably reached 185/2 in 18.2 overs, with 10 balls to spare. The win lifted them to fourth place on the

points table, just behind Peshawar Zalmi on net run rate.
 The chase was anchored by an outstanding, unbeaten 128-run partnership between Shadab Khan and Sameer Minhas after United were briefly under pressure at 61-2. Sameer produced a match-winning innings of 82 not out off 48 balls, striking eight fours and three sixes, registering his maiden half-century in top-level competitive cricket.
 Shadab complemented him perfectly, remaining unbeaten on 69 off 39 balls, laced with five

fours and four sixes. The pair accelerated decisively after setting in, dismantling Quetta's bowling attack with calculated aggression. A 22-run over off Tom Curran proved the turning point, as the duo shifted momentum firmly in Islamabad's favour before finishing the chase in style.
 Earlier, Quetta Gladiators posted a competitive 183-5, recovering strongly from a middle-order collapse. After slipping from 71-2 to 93-5, Quetta were rescued by an unbroken 90-run stand between Hasan Nawaz and Tom Curran.

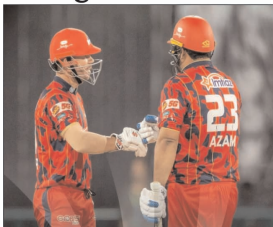
Hasan top-scored with a composed knock, while Curran provided valuable support as the pair lifted the total with a late surge.
 Quetta had started brightly, with captain Saud Shakeel contributing a fluent 42 off 26 balls, supported by Shamyil Hussain's quick 21. However, Shadab turned the game with the ball, claiming 3-23, including key wickets in a crucial spell that halted Quetta's momentum. His all-round brilliance and impactful contributions with both bat and ball earned him the player of the match award.

Fakhar Zaman loses appeal against two match ban



PEAK POINT
 LAHORE: Swashbuckling opening batter Fakhar Zaman lost appeal against match referee's two match ban for ball tampering the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 after the PSL Technical Committee rejected the claim.
 The PSL Technical Committee, comprising Prof. Javed Malik, Dr Munir Raiz Naqshband, and Mr Syed Ali Naqi, upheld the two match ban slapped by the match referee Roshan Mahanama.
 The decision made by the PSL Technical Committee shall be the full, final and complete disposition of the matter and will be binding on all parties.
 The ban was imposed for breaching Article 2.14 of the applicable Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel during the Lahore Qalandars v Karachi Kings match on Sunday, 29 March at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.
 A PCB press release on Thursday night said, "Pursuant to conducting a de novo inquiry, reviewing all evidence, and hearing submissions from relevant individuals, the Committee has dismissed the appeal and upheld the two match ban imposed by Match Referee Roshan Mahanama."

Azam Khan powers Karachi Kings to five-wicket win in PSL 11



PEAK POINT
 KARACHI: Azam Khan struck a decisive 74 off 34 balls as Karachi Kings chased down 197 to beat Rawalpindiz by five wickets with four balls to spare in a Pakistan Super League match on Thursday at Gaddafi Stadium.
 Karachi finished on 199 for 5 in 19.2 overs, completing what had been a tense

chase that remained in the balance deep into the second innings.
 Rawalpindiz, led by Mohammad Rizwan, posted 197 for 6 after being put into bat, built around a 120-run partnership between Sam Billings and Daryl Mitchell. Billings made 58 off 35 balls, while Mitchell contributed 65 off 41, combining to provide a strong platform.
 Despite that stand,

Karachi's bowlers sealing the result further before the final exchanges. "I wasn't really satisfied with figures of 3 for 24 in four overs.
 Karachi's reply began aggressively, runs off the bat always with Muhammad Waseem scoring 23 after being named off 11 balls, before David Warner anchored the innings with 50 off 36 deliveries to keep the chase on track.
 The game turned after the 15th over when Azam Khan took control of the scoring. His innings, featuring sustained boundary hitting, reduced the required rate and shifted momentum decisively in Karachi's favour.
 He was dismissed in the 19th over with only a few runs played, effectively

Top golfers eye glory at J.A. Zaman Memorial Open Golf C'ship

PEAK POINT



LAHORE: The prestigious fairways of the Lahore Gymkhana Golf Club are once again alive with anticipation as the J.A. Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship gathers momentum, drawing the finest professional and amateur golfers from across Pakistan.
 Widely regarded as one of the most prominent fixtures on the national golfing calendar, the championship promises a compelling blend of elite competition, rising talent, and significant prize money, ensuring a thrilling spectacle for players and spectators alike.
 All eyes are on Pakistan's golfing icon, Shabbir Iqbal,

who returns to defend his title. With an extraordinary career featuring over 200 tournament victories, Shabbir remains the benchmark of excellence in Pakistan golf. Despite his remarkable achievements, his competitive hunger remains undiminished. Entering the tournament in strong form, he is once again a leading contender, but the road to victory is expected to be anything but easy.
 The championship

features a highly competitive field of sea-trophies but also for recognition and valuable exposure on a national platform. Their participation enhances the competitiveness of the championship. A notable highlight of this year's edition is the enthusiastic participation of women golfers. Competing with passion and determination, they aim to deliver high-quality performances and further elevate the standard of the game.

PTF conducted trials for the selection of the PDC Juniors Team



PEAK POINT
 ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tennis Federation conducted trials for the selection of the Pakistan Davis Cup Juniors Team to participate in the upcoming Davis Cup Juniors, scheduled to be held in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, from 16th to 24th May 2026. The trials were conducted at the PTF Tennis Complex, Islamabad, from 30th March to 2nd April 2026. A total of 12 players were invited to participate in the trials

based on their current rankings and performances. Mr. Abubakar Talha was exempted from the trials in recognition of his recent outstanding performance. The selected players are as follows: Abubakar Talha, Hassan Usmani, Zohaib Afzal Malik, Mr. Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi President-PTF, Col.Zia-ud-din Tufail Secretary General-PTF, and the PTF management extend their best wishes to the selected players and their families for success in the upcoming event.

ITF PAKISTAN
 ZAINAB ALI NAQVI
 MEMORIAL WORLD JUNIOR
 TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS
 LEG-1
 6 to 13 April 2026
 PTF, SSB, Tennis Complex Islamabad
 2x ITF J-30
 1x ITF J-60
 4th to 26 April 2026
 Venue: PTF Tennis Complex Islamabad



Journalists stage walkout in protest over layoffs and unpaid salaries, demand immediate action from Govt

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Tensions reached a boiling point in Pakistan's National Assembly on April 1, 2026, as the Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA) staged a dramatic walkout during the session, protesting the ongoing layoffs and unpaid salaries affecting journalists and employees across various media houses in the country. The walkout underscored the deepening crisis within the media sector, where thousands of workers are grappling with job insecurity and delayed payments. The protest followed the PRA's strong condemnation of the rising number of forced layoffs, particularly at media outlets such as Aaj News, Abtak News, and other prominent organizations. Reports indicate that

more layoffs are imminent, further exacerbating the uncertainty faced by media employees. During the protest, PRA representatives presented a list of demands to the government, calling for immediate intervention. They highlighted the alarming pace at which media employees are being dismissed without notice, while many others are still waiting for unpaid dues from previous months. The PRA emphasized that journalists who had been dismissed recently are yet to receive their severance payments, adding to the growing discontent within the industry. PRA has called for a halt to the ongoing layoffs, specifically at organizations such as Aaj News and Abtak News, which have been at the center of recent firings. The association also demanded



the immediate release of unpaid dues to all affected employees, including journalists who have not been compensated for their work over the past several months. PRA expressed deep concern that despite the government's significant payments to media owners in the form of advertisements, many media workers are still denied their rightful salaries. This has raised questions about the ethical conduct of media

owners and their treatment of employees. Additionally, PRA raised concerns over the significant reduction in travel benefits for journalists by Pakistan Railways, urging the government to restore these privileges without delay. PRA demanded that the government take a clear and decisive stance against media owners who have failed to pay their employees. The association warned that if these issues are not addressed

immediately, the protest will be escalated. The walkout was a powerful signal of the growing unrest within Pakistan's media industry, where workers are increasingly bearing the brunt of financial mismanagement and corporate greed. As the protest unfolded, Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, took notice of the situation and directed a government delegation, including Minister of State Barrister Aqeel and PPP leaders Shazia Marri and Manzoor Hassan, to engage with the PRA to address their concerns. In a swift response to the protest, the government promised to engage with the PRA and take necessary steps to resolve the crisis. The government delegation met with PRA representatives to discuss the pressing

issues raised, with a commitment to finding a lasting solution. However, the PRA has warned that if their demands are not met in a timely manner, the protests will intensify, signaling an escalating battle between media workers and owners. The PRA's bold walkout not only brought attention to the dire situation faced by media workers but also highlighted the lack of accountability among media owners, who continue to exploit their employees despite the sector's ongoing financial difficulties. The ongoing wage disputes and the growing number of layoffs point to a larger systemic issue in the media industry, one that is failing to safeguard the rights of its workers.

Islamabad Model School achieves 100% result in class v exams

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Model School G/6-4 has achieved a remarkable milestone by securing a 100 percent pass rate in the annual examinations of Class V.A prize distribution ceremony was organized to celebrate the outstanding performance of the students. High achievers were awarded certificates and prizes in recognition of



their academic excellence. On this occasion, Principal Shagufata Tayyab and School Management Committee President Choudhary Muhammad Rasheed Sal distributed awards among the successful students and appreciated their hard work and dedication. According to the school administration, the exceptional results reflect the insti-

tution's high academic standards and the effectiveness of its teaching methodologies. Parents also expressed satisfaction over the performance, commending the efforts of the teachers and school management. They further expressed hope that the institution will continue its tradition of excellence and maintain high educational standards in the future.

Opinion & Editorial



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

Pakistan-Iran relations: Beyond slogans, the real test of diplomacy



By Muntaz Malik
In the context of recent tensions in the Middle East, relations between Iran and Pakistan have once again come into global focus. The scenes in Tehran's streets, where slogans in favor of Pakistan were raised and expressions of "Thank You Pakistan" echoed, undoubtedly reflect public goodwill and emotional affinity. However, in statecraft, emotions are not the true measure of relations rather, they are defined by interests, strategy, and sustained diplomatic balance. It is a fact that Pakistan has consistently sought to reduce tensions in the region and resolve conflicts through diplomacy. In the current situation as well, Islamabad has adopted a cautious yet balanced approach. On one hand, it is maintaining its brotherly ties with Iran; on the other, it is ensuring that its relations with Gulf countries remain unaffected. Walking this fine line is perhaps the greatest test for any state. In this context, it is fair to say that Pakistan's conciliatory and balanced role so far is indeed commendable. At a time when major powers are directly or indirectly aligning themselves, Pakistan has

demonstrated prudence by promoting dialogue, attempting to ease tensions, and creating space for a possible ceasefire. This approach not only reflects the conduct of a responsible state but also positions Pakistan as an effective mediator. Appreciation from Iranian leadership including Ali Khamenei, Ali Larijani, Abbas Araghchi, and Reza Amiri Moghadam is certainly a positive signal. However, interpreting it as full strategic alignment would be premature. In international relations, statements are often shaped by immediate needs, while real partnerships are determined by ground realities and long-term interests. A key aspect of Pakistan's foreign policy is ensuring stability in sensitive regions such as the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of the world's energy supply passes. If Iran is facilitating the safe passage of Pakistani vessels, it is a practical example of mutual trust. Yet, it is equally important to recognize that Iran's own strategic interests are embedded in such decisions. As far as Israel is concerned, Pakistan's stance has historically been clear and unequivocal: support for Palestinian self-determination and opposition to Israeli policies. Nevertheless, global poli-

tics is not governed by permanent friendships or enmities, but by evolving interests. Therefore, Pakistan must maintain its principled stance while demonstrating flexibility in practical strategy. Recent diplomatic engagements, including consultations with China and regional meetings held in Islamabad, indicate that Pakistan seeks to play a proactive rather than reactive role. This is a positive development, as passive diplomacy can prove detrimental in such sensitive times. However, a critical question remains: can Pakistan sustain this delicate balance over the long term? Managing relations simultaneously with Iran, Gulf states, China, and the Western world is an inherently complex challenge. It requires not only diplomatic skill but also internal political stability and economic resilience. In conclusion, while the slogans in Tehran are encouraging, real success will lie in transforming these sentiments into tangible cooperation, economic partnership, and lasting regional peace. For Pakistan, this is the true moment of test to move beyond symbolic appreciation and ensure a consistent, balanced foreign policy that not only navigates the present crisis but also lays a strong foundation for the future.

Israel's changing greed

Imran Jan
I came across an elderly lady in a grocery store struggling with paying for her groceries which, truth be told, was a measly quantity barely even visible in her cart. My first instinct was to help her pay her bill but she refused.
She told me how she was not able to use her food stamp card, which the US government gives its low-income citizens in order to help put food on the table, because she had to go to some government office to "recertify". I asked her what that meant. She told me that she changed her address recently and so she was required to go there so they can reevaluate if she might still need it.
Later, I did some research. I found that when you move to another state, you would have to reapply in the new state because the food benefits do not move automatically. It almost made me laugh because moving to another state doesn't change one's need for food. I also came across that American citizens wouldn't be able to buy soda drinks with that food stamp anymore because it is not considered as nutrition. They may not be wrong about that but it all points to the same conclusion I personally stumble upon every time I see how much the US government cares about its own citizens.
President Trump wants to make tall claims about helping the Iranian people grab control of their government and country but somehow refuse to help American citizens be able to buy food with their own tax money if they dare change where they live.
And that word "live" is deeper than I thought. Americans that I talk to usually like to use the word "stay" when asked where they live. Initially, I thought this was one of those language nuances I had yet to get accustomed to. But then I realised that it really was not that but rather the temporary housing situation a very large number of Americans find themselves in.
Courtesy Tribune

Reputational damage

For most Pakistanis, seeking justice through a defamation suit is an endless marathon. Cases languish for years, bogged down by a legal system rife with intentional flaws that permit endless adjournments and rarely deliver clear conclusions. The recent verdict in the Ali Zafar-Meesha Shafi dispute stands as a rare exception - though even here, the case took nearly eight years. The court ordered Shafi to pay Zafar Rs5 million in damages, finding her sexual assault allegations against Zafar to be "false, defamatory and injurious" and not "made for public good". While defamation cases in Pakistan rarely reach a conclusion, the country's defamation laws are among the most vague and aggressive in the world, often hiding behind flawed cultural arguments rather than any sense of fairness. It is in part because of these problems that many aggrieved parties prefer to sue in foreign jurisdictions due to clearer laws that can be fairly applied. It is why some Pakistani commentators keep losing cases in the UK, where honest opinions are generally protected, as long as they are fact-based. By contrast, in the US, known for its highly permissive free speech laws, courts have shown that even public figures such as presidents are subject to defamation law.

Pakistan-UK high-level meeting focuses on trade, regional stability



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting was held in Islamabad between Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and the Rt Hon Edward Llewellyn, Director General Political of the United Kingdom, where both sides discussed bilateral trade, regional security, and the ongoing global energy situation. British High Commissioner Ms Jane Marriott also accompanied the DG.

During the meeting, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to

strengthening trade relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, said a release issued here on Thursday.

They reviewed progress on the Pakistan-UK Trade Dialogue and appreciated the establishment of the working group on Healthcare and Life Sciences. Both sides agreed on the need to activate working groups to enhance cooperation in IT, Agriculture, Professional Services, and Education and Skills.

Speaking on the occasion,

Minister Jam Kamal Khan said that Pakistan is fully committed to continuing structural reforms to improve its trade environment and attract foreign investment. He noted that the government's tariff policy and regulatory improvements are aimed at making Pakistan a more competitive and business-friendly destination.

He emphasized that "consistency in policy and gradual reforms are key to building long-term investor confidence."

Secretary of Commerce Jawad Paul also highlighted that the ongoing trade dialogue could serve as a strong foundation for future cooperation.

He proposed that both countries should consider moving towards a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the longer term, terming it a natural progression of the growing economic partnership between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

The UK side requested to consider their suggestions regarding proposed changes in Pakistan's intellectual property framework.

Rising electricity demand reflects success of govt policies: Leghari

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari on Thursday said that the steady increase in electricity consumption in the country reflects the success of the government's energy policies and reform measures.

He expressed these views during a meeting with World Bank Country Director Bolormaa Amgaabazar, who called on him here, said a press release.

The minister said the government is working to make electricity tariffs competitive to support key sectors of the economy. He informed that after reviewing concessional tariffs for industries, the Power Division is now working on Time-of-Use proposals aimed at further enhancing energy competitiveness.

Highlighting future plans,



Leghari said the government intends to tap the country's vast solar potential while offering concessional tariffs to industries. He added that consultations with stakeholders are currently underway in this regard.

The minister also noted that major policy decisions are being considered to utilise indigenous resources for electricity generation. He said the evolving situation in the Middle East has reinforced the government's resolve to reduce reliance on external energy sources. Appreciating the World Bank's continued support, Leghari acknowledged.

CJP leads consultation on national design competition for women facilitation centers



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan hosted a high-level consultative session on Thursday, led by the Chief Justice of Pakistan in his capacity as Chairman of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, to advance the Gender-Responsive Justice Initiative (GRJI) 2026-27.

The session focused on the proposed National Design Competition for Women Facilitation Centers (WFCs), bringing together senior judicial leadership, institutional representatives, development partners, gender experts, and members of the architectural community.

Among the participants were officials

from the Supreme Court and LJCP, representatives of the National Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women Pakistan, and the Institute of Architects Pakistan, along with representatives from provincial women development departments.

Registrars of the Federal Constitutional Court and all high courts also joined the meeting virtually. Welcoming the participants, the Chief Justice noted that the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee has identified gender-responsive justice as a priority reform area for the fiscal year 2026-27. He highlighted that the initiative envisages establishing Women Facilitation Centers within judicial complexes across the country to provide safe, structured, and accessible support services to women litigants.

The proposed centers will function as integrated platforms offering legal facilitation, court-annexed mediation, supervised family visitation arrangements, and support services for gender-based violence cases in a secure and dignified environment.

Participants were informed that a concept note and Business Requirement Document

Landowners of govt schools and Class-IV employees protest

ABDUL SALAM BAITAB

B A N N U : Landowners of government schools and Class-IV employees staged a protest demonstration in front of the Bannu Press Club and later addressed a press conference. They stated that they will not accept recruitment of watchmen and peons through an open policy under any circumstances. According to details, the landowner Class-IV employees of government schools protested against the Education Department's decision to fill school posts through an open process instead of reserving them for landowners. They strongly criticized the current government's policy and raised slogans against it. On this occasion, Provincial President of School Owners Haji Muhammad, Khalid Nawaz Khan, Masoom Wazir and others said that the current government is committing an injustice against landowner Class-IV employees that has no precedent in the past.

Minister Chaudhry orders 30-day plan to clear stuck-up containers, boost port efficiency

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Thursday directed port authorities to finalize and implement a comprehensive 30-day plan for shifting, auctioning, and disposing of stuck-up containers and surplus materials to ease congestion and enhance operational efficiency at port terminals. Chairing a sub-committee review meeting on relocating stuck-up containers and auctionable cargo, the minister instructed relevant authorities to transfer these items from on-dock areas to designated off-dock facilities within the timeframe.

He stressed that port operations must remain seamless, ensuring domestic trade flows no



disruption from transshipment cargo or stuck containers.

Noting the rising volume of transshipment cargo due to improved port performance and regional dynamics, Junaid Chaudhry called for a clear mechanism to shift it to off-dock terminals on defined commercial terms. Authorities must also maintain an updated list of off-dock facilities and transshipment cargo records. "Pakistan must seize emerging regional opportunities by adopting.

Grand Qaumi Jirga of tribes of Bannu formed to raises issues



ABDUL SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: The Grand Qaumi Jirga of the tribes of Bannu has set April 20 as the final deadline for opening all roads in Bannu and for eliminating "unknown good and bad elements." It was announced that on April 20, the people will come out and then decide whether it is "now or never." If the roads are not opened by the deadline, the public will take matters into their own hands, remove all barriers themselves, and reopen the roads. No further con-

cessions will be given. In case of any clash, the responsibility for losses will lie with the institutions and administration. This was unanimously declared by the Jirga. According to details, a joint Grand Jirga of all tribes of Bannu was held under the leadership of former Senators Haji Baz Muhammad Khan Advocate and Professor Muhammad Ibrahim Khan Advocate. Tribal elders from all tribes of Bannu participated fully and discussed the current situation in Bannu. While addressing the Jirga, speakers including Haji Baz Muhammad Khan Advocate, Professor Muhammad Ibrahim Khan Advocate, Pir Dr. Sahib Zaman, Malik Zafar Hayat Khan, MPA Malik Pakhtun Yar Khan, Malik Yousafullah Khan, former Mayor Irfan Durrani, Naseer Ali Shah Al-Hashmi, Zia-ul-Haq, Malik Nazir Khan, Farmanullah Mirakhel, Haji Akhtar Ali Shah, Naz Ali Khan, Dr. Abdul Rauf Qureshi, Malik Iqbal Jadoon.

Afnan Ismail has been appointed as the focal person for the Prime Minister's Youth Program

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: An important development has emerged under the Prime Minister's Youth Program to economically empower women. Prominent businesswoman Afnan Ismail has been appointed as the focal person for the Prime Minister's Youth Program. The appointment notification was handed over to Afnan Ismail by the Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan. Political, social, and business circles are considering Afnan Ismail's appointment important for empowering women, with the aim of promoting strategic partnerships and cre-



ating new business opportunities for women. This initiative under the PM Youth Program is being considered part of a comprehensive and sustainable development vision. Afnan Ismail has been entrusted with the responsibility of enhancing business connections for women in Islamabad, where she will play a key role in fostering links between women entrepreneurs and institutions.

Govt help sought to develop indigenous capacities to enforce strong carbon trading mechanisms

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Experts at a consultative workshop have demanded of the government to develop indigenous capacities for implementing a strong carbon trading mechanism in the country ensuring inclusive participation by public-private entities in the process. The workshop, titled: "Enhancing Article 6 Preparedness for Private Sector Participation in Carbon Markets", was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with Pakistan German Climate and Energy Partnership, said a press release issued on Thursday. Highlighting emerging oppor-



tunities for Pakistan under international carbon markets and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, the experts also sought private-sector engagement, institutional preparedness, and climate-aligned

development pathways. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, the Executive Director of SDPI, said Pakistan's carbon market policy framework is now evolving and feedback from

stakeholder engagements will help refine implementation strategies and address operational gaps in the policy architecture. Referring to global geopolitical developments and the Middle East energy

crisis, Dr Suleri said temporary shifts by some countries towards fossil fuels could slow carbon market momentum in the short-term but may provide developing countries like Pakistan additional time to strengthen accounting systems, improve MRV frameworks, and prepare high-quality mitigation projects. "This transition period should be used to enhance preparedness, refine reporting systems, and strengthen project pipelines," he said. He emphasized that such dialogue platforms are essential to keep stakeholders informed about global climate-policy developments and ensure that Pakistan remains positioned to benefit from emerging carbon-market

opportunities. Ahyan Mustafa Bhutto, Special Secretary, Environment Climate Change and Coastal Development Department, Government of Sindh, said that Sindh has already initiated several carbon-mitigation projects, including mangrove restoration benefiting around 5,000 households.

The provincial government has also supported wind-energy installations, shrimp farming initiatives, riverine afforestation projects, methane generation from cattle dung, and improved cook-stove programmes submitted to the federal climate ministry for consideration under carbon-credit frameworks, he added.