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## DAILY MIRROR

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## Ruling Powers Advised to accept their Message with Decency: Fazl

JUI-F chief regrets people are mocking Islam in a country that was established in name of Islam

APP

CHARSADDA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that he has advised the ruling powers with love and urged them to accept their message with decency.

While addressing a gathering in Charsadda, Maulana Fazlur Rehman stated that in a country established in the name of Islam, the people are mocking Islam.

The JUI-F chief emphasized that the blood of a Muslim is sacred for another Muslim.

He accused the rulers and politicians of committing grave injustices against Islam.

"This country is not anyone's personal estate. Industrialists, feudal lords, bureaucrats and common Pakistanis all have their own standing," he remarked.

The JUI-F chief asserted that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam, and millions of Muslims sacrificed their lives for it. He added that only religious scholars have remained loyal to this country, and they seek peace in Pakistan.

He reiterated that they have tried to reason with the ruling powers with arguments and affection. "Even Sheikh Hasina won through rigged elections. Accept our message with decency," he warned.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman claimed that JUI-F safeguarded the belief in the finality of Prophet-hood. He alleged that religious seminaries (madrasas) are under attack from all directions due to global conspiracies.

"The world wants to end the system of madrasas, but despite international conspir-

acies, they are growing stronger.

Even the British wanted to shut down madrasas," he said, adding that Allah has made Islam a complete way of life for Muslims.

The JUI-F chief argued that if the 26th Constitutional Amendment had been passed at the government's behest, it would have caused great devastation. He said the proposed constitutional draft posed a significant threat to Parliament and human rights, as it sought to strengthen military courts and curtail the powers of higher judiciary.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman further stated that the country is completely engulfed in an interest-based economic system. "All institutions and banks operate on an interest-based model," he lamented.

He asserted that JUI-F has no desire to be part of the "dummy assembly," where people vote for one candidate, but someone else is declared the winner.

Highlighting the issue of resources, Fazl said, "Our resources belong to us, and no one can take them away from us."

He criticized the state of governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that there is neither law and order nor an effective government.

He said that a country could not function without a strong government.

"The nation cannot be deceived by economic indicators. The incompetent rulers should tell us whether they have found Aladdin's magical lamp. If the government claims economic improvement, then they must explain where the resources are coming from," he added.



QUETTA: CM Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti While addressing a gathering in Nokandi.

## Reko Diq Project will Pave the Way for Increased Investment in the Province: CM

APP

QUETTA: The decision to develop the Reko Diq project has greatly heightened foreign investors interest in Balochistan's mining sector. This was stated by the Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, during his visit to the Reko Diq project site. He emphasized that once revenue generation from the project begins, the provincial government is committed to allocating a substantial portion of the earnings to benefit the people of Chagai, ensuring that the local community, as key stakeholders of the asset, receives the maximum possible advantage from its development.

Welcoming the Chief Minister, Barrick CEO Mark Bristow highlighted the Reko Diq project as a major milestone in the development of Balochistan's mining industry. "Reko Diq has opened a new frontier for mining in the region. As the project's operator, we are committed to making it a catalyst for regional development," Bristow said. Unlike many mining companies that wait until revenue generation begins, Barrick

has already launched Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in areas such as education, healthcare, clean water supply, and skills development to uplift local communities.

Bristow further emphasized Barrick's dedication to the success of the project, which is due to begin construction this year and commence production in the latter part of 2028, noting, "Reko Diq is on

its way to becoming a world-class mine, and we are confident that the unique partnership between Barrick, the federal government, and the provincial government will provide benefits to all stakeholders."

The Chief Minister praised Reko Diq Mining Company's (RDCM) community-centered initiatives, noting their alignment with the provincial government's vision of empowering local communities through quality healthcare, education and skill-building programs. During the visit, he engaged with project employees, commended their hard work, and highlighted the project's crucial role in driving socio-economic development in Balochistan.

## Pakistan first country to implement Digital FDI under WEF: Shehbaz

APP

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif said on Saturday Pakistan is the first country to implement the Digital Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Initiative, launched by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Digital Cooperation Organisation (DCO). According to a spokesperson, the premier said Pakistan's first Digital FDI project had been making significant efforts to identify targets and promote digital progress. He elaborated that Pakistan's Digital FDI project was a framework aimed at implementing digital infrastructure, digitization and export of digital services. It would focus on sectors likely to attract foreign investment into the country, he added. "It is an important milestone towards creating an investment-friendly environment in the country," the premier said, adding that the country was heading towards a vibrant digital economy, which was a vital step in achieving sustainable progress and prosperity.

PM Shehbaz Sharif remarked that the initiative reflected the government's commitment to fostering economic growth.

## IMF downgrades Pakistan's GDP growth forecast to 3%

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF), has downgraded Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) growth projections for 2025 to 3% from the previous forecast of 3.2% in October 2024.

In its "World Economic Outlook Update Global Growth: Divergent and Uncertain," the IMF said that it expects the country's GDP growth to remain at 4% in 2026. The IMF's growth projection is similar to that of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which last month revised Pakistan's growth forecast to 3% during the fiscal year 2024-25 as opposed to the previous figure of

2.8% projected in September 2024. The ADB, in its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) for December 2024, had attributed the revised growth figures to greater macroeconomic stability which it said would support recovery.

The lender also said that a more accommodating monetary policy because of faster-than-expected easing of inflationary pressures should further support economic activity through rebounding private investment and noted that industrial output growth was projected to accelerate with the suspension of import management measures, higher investor confidence, and easier access to foreign exchange.

## 'Won't let Al-Qadir University fall into Sharif family's hands': Imran tells Maryam

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: A day after being convicted in £190 million case, incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Saturday said that he would not let Al-Qadir University fall into the hands of ruling Sharif family, his lawyer quoted him as saying.

His remarks came a day after Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said that the varsity "is now under my control" and scholarships would also be given to its students.

The PTI founder and his spouse Bushra Bibi were handed down 14 and seven years imprisonment in the high-profile £190 million corruption case by an accountability court in Rawalpindi on Friday. In its verdict, the court also

ordered the federal government —led by CM Maryam's uncle Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif— to take control of the Khan-founded university.

Addressing a press conference outside the Adiala Jail today, Faisal Chaudhry — Khan's counsel — conveyed the jailed former prime minister's message, saying "We are ready to face all kinds of hardships for true freedom."

Quoting Khan, He said: "I will not bow down to any pressure."

Lauding the former first lady, the lawyer said that she had endured hardships and sufferings just because of supporting Khan.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the accountability court verdict, Khan's counsel said that the prosecution could not prove allegations about money laundering against his client.

## FM Dar directs efficient, timely assistance to Pakistani victims of Moroccan boat tragedy

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday directed the foreign and interior ministries to ensure the provision of efficient and timely assistance to the Pakistani victims of the Moroccan boat tragedy.

The Atlantic Ocean migrant boat tragedy occurred in the waters between Mauritania and Morocco earlier this month. As per reports, 44 out of a total of 65 Pakistani immigrants on board the ship either drowned or died after alleged torture, while 10 bodies have been recovered. At least 19 others survived, according to media reports.

The survivors and the bodies are currently in Dakhla, a small town near the coast of Morocco.

FM Dar reviewed the incident in detail while chairing a meeting today on issues

relating to third-country relocations of Afghan nationals. He also issued instructions regarding coordination of the government's response to the incident.

The secretaries of the foreign and interior ministries and other officials attended the meeting.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to send an official team to Morocco, sources had told Dawn, adding that the team comprised Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Additional Director General (north) Mun-eer Maarth, Additional Secretary Interior Salman Chaudhary and representatives from the foreign ministry and Intelligence Bureau.

They said the officials would visit the Moroccan capital of Rabat and Dakhla, where they would assess the situation and compile a detailed report, which would be submitted to the prime minister.



CHARSADDA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman While addressing a gathering in Charsadda.

## Al-Qadir Trust case: Tarar says amount confiscated by NCA to be used for nation's welfare

> Information minister says amount will not be used to pay Rs460bn fine on Bahria Town by Supreme Court, legal consultation ongoing on how to bring the absconders back

ONLINE

LAHORE: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Saturday said that an amount recovered by the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) in a settlement with the family of property tycoon Malik Riaz and subsequently handed over to the federal government would be used for the nation's welfare.

The information minister was addressing a press conference in Lahore a day after the sentencing in the Al-Qadir Trust Case. Former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi were formally convicted in the £190 million Al-Qadir Trust corruption case, sentencing both to prison.

As per the verdict, the "property of the sham ... Al-Qadir University Project Trust" was forfeited to the federal government. The other accused, namely Bahria Town owner Malik

Riaz Hussain, his son Ahmed Ali Riaz Malik, former accountability czar Mirza Shahzad Akbar, former PM's aide Zulfi Bukhari, Farhat Shahzadi and Ziaul Mustafa Nasim have already been declared proclaimed offenders and perpetual warrants for their arrest and the confiscation of their properties had been ordered.

The detailed verdict, spanning 148 pages, recalled that the Supreme Court had held that the grant of land by the Sindh Board of Revenue (SBR) to the Malir Development Authority (MDA), and the MDA's subsequent exchange of the land with the Bahria Town (Pvt) Limited were all illegal and a result of collusion amongst all the stakeholders.

Subsequently, Bahria Town agreed to pay a total sum of Rs460 billion for the land. The verdict said that funds from foreign bank accounts, previously frozen by the NCA, were repatriated to settle the liabilities of Bahria Town instead of being added to the national kitty.

In his press conference on the entire situation, the information minister said: "The fine [of Rs460bn] which was applied [by the Supreme Court] that was being paid through this amount [of £190m], obviously after this order this amount will not be able to be used to pay for that fine. So now it is a matter between that private party and the court how the court recovers that money. "The state's job was to recover the amount that was to be returned to it. So now it will return and it will be used for the welfare of the nation."

Tarar said legal consultation was ongoing on how to bring

the absconders back and what avenues would be used for that.

The minister claimed that Imran had no legal recourse for an appeal in the case, also demanding that any appeal be fixed after hearing after pending appeals were decided.

"They don't have material, legal argument, documentation and evidence that is why they will try to play around with technicality. The appeal will be very weak ... I don't see the case has enough merit that the appeal is upheld beyond two or three hearings," he said.

"While the Al-Qadir Trust case engenders a number of questions regarding the former prime minister's proximity with a real-estate baron, the manner in which the cabinet rubber stamped the transaction even as it was kept in the dark, and conflict of interest, it would be remiss to not acknowledge that the standard of proof in criminal cases — beyond reasonable doubt — is often submerged in cases concerning opposition leaders," said Baig.

"Given our history of such verdicts failing to pass muster when appealed before the high courts, it would be interesting to see whether this decision withstands the high court's scrutiny or whether history will repeat itself," he added.

"Disqualifications, imprisonments, and forced exiles have become rituals, repeated with such precision that they now seem less like law enforcement and more like political choreography. Our history is not one of stable governance but of carefully curated instability, where leaders are prosecuted not for their crimes, but for their time in office."

## Imran Khan 'laughed upon' hearing £190m case verdict: Aleema Khan

INP

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan laughed when he heard the verdict against him the £190 million corruption case, his sister, Aleema Khan, claimed on Saturday.

Speaking to media outside a court in Lahore, she said, "When the PTI founder heard the verdict, he laughed. We have entrusted our matter to Allah", Geo News reported.

An accountability court convicted Imran and his wife Bushra Bibi in the £190 million case — or the Al-Qadir Trust case — on Friday, sentencing the deposed prime minister to 14 years in prison.

Imran, 72, has been held in custody since August 2023 charged in around 200 cases but his party claims the latest conviction was being used to pressure him into stepping back from politics.

The conviction came a day after PTI leaders again met the government for talks aimed at easing political tensions. PTI's Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan also met Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir recently.

"I will neither make any deal nor seek any relief," the cricketeer-turned-politician told reporters inside the courtroom after his conviction.

The anti-graft court convened in the Adiala jail where Imran is being held and convicted the couple for graft linked to the Al-Qadir Trust, a welfare foundation they established.

"The prosecution has proven its case. Imran is convicted," said Judge Nasir Javed Rana, announcing a 14-year sentence for the PTI founder and seven years for Bushra.

In her talk with reporters, Aleema said that the current system needs rectifications as she stressed that the £190 million is in the government's custody, not Imran's.

## Electricity prices likely to drop by Rs1.04 per unit

INP

ISLAMABAD: The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) has proposed a reduction in electricity tariffs by Rs1.04 per unit under the December fuel price adjustment.

The reduction has been sought citing reduced reliance on power plants using imported fuel. The application has been submitted to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), which will hear the case on January 30.

If approved, the reduction will provide significant relief to consumers of distribution companies (DISCOs) worth around Rs3.90 billion. This adjustment is expected to reflect in consumers' electricity bills for February.

The CPPA's move highlights the impact of utilizing domestic energy resources to reduce costs. NEPRA will make the final decision after thoroughly reviewing the application and supporting data during the scheduled hearing.

## Justice Ayesha urges laws, reforms for animal rights in Pakistan

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Supreme Court Justice Ayesha A Malik has emphasised the urgent need to work on animal rights in Pakistan, highlighting the lack of constitutional and legal provisions for their welfare.

Speaking at a ceremony on animal rights held at a private hotel in Lahore, Justice Malik underlined the critical role animals play in society and called for collective efforts to safeguard their rights. "Animals are very important for our society, and every living being has the right to live without fear," she stated, stressing the moral and ethical obligation to protect animals. Justice Malik lamented that Pakistan lagged behind on this issue, pointing out the absence of laws specifically aimed at animal welfare.

She noted that while the Constitution mentions various rights, it does not explicitly address animal rights. "When it comes to animal rights, we are very behind on this issue. We all need to work together for it," she urged.

Justice Malik's remarks come amidst growing global awareness of animal welfare, underscoring the need for legislative reforms in Pakistan.

## Step afoot to address population growth as it affecting economy, health: Ikram

APP

Quetta: Deputy Manager Communication, Population Council Ikram Ul Ahad on Saturday said that measures are being taken to address rapid population growth, which is adversely affecting sectors including economy, health, environment, and education indicators. He shared these views while talking to APP, saying that to reduce the rapid population growth and bring it to a sustainable level, implementation of the National Action Plan, formulated under the decisions of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) must be ensured. He said that if the current population growth rate continues, Pakistan would face significant challenges in its economy, education, health, and human resource sectors by 2050. Mr. Ikram Ul Ahad mentioned that Media Coalition Meeting arranged by the Population Council with contribution of UNFPA few days which was attended by journalists including women from across the country on invitation of the population with the aim to highlight rapid growth of population. He also emphasized the criti-

cal need to achieve a balance between population growth and available resources to ensure Pakistan's sustainable progress. "Media can play a vital role in highlighting the challenges posed by rapid population growth through investigative journalism. Particular focus is needed on women's reproductive health and their limited access to family planning services, which remain key areas for attention," he said. He stressed the urgency of implementing CCI decisions, warning that neglecting these measures would exacerbate Pakistan's existing challenges. Presenting key findings from the Population Council's latest report "Pakistan @ 2050, he outlined two potential future scenarios for Pakistan.

In Scenario 1 (Business-as-usual), if the current population growth continues unchecked, the population would reach approximately 386 million by 2050. He noted that in Scenario 2 (CCI Decisions Implementation), by successfully implementing the Council of Common Interest (CCI) decisions and reducing the growth rate, the population could be limited to 338 million.

## President Trump sent invitation to political, Pakistani-American community

By Khawaja Farooq

NEW YORK: The newly elected U.S. President Donald Trump has sent invitations to prominent political and social figures from the Pakistani-American community, including Khawaja Farooq, Naseem Khan Alizai, Sagheer Khan, Chaudhry Ifthikhar Tarrar Advocate, Jahanzeb Tarrar, and renowned journalist Fazal Khaliq.

They have received tickets to attend President Donald Trump's inauguration ceremony. Representing the Pakistani-American community in New York, they will participate in the ceremony and also meet with Hakim Jafri in Congress.



QUETTA: Labors busy in work on imdad chowk.

## Saudi press attaché praises Khanpur Dam as premier tourist destination

APP

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Press Attaché, Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi on Saturday described Khanpur Dam as a remarkable tourist destination, highlighting its scenic beauty and thrilling recreational activities.

Dr. Al-Otaibi shared his personal experience of spending a memorable day at the picturesque location with friends. The group enjoyed the chilly winter weather, indulging in activities that showcased the dam's unique offerings. "We began our day with a serene boat ride on the calm waters of the dam, surrounded by breathtaking views of the lush green hills," he said.

Saudi press attaché praises Khanpur Dam as premier tourist destination

The experience reached its pinnacle with an exhilarating para sailing adventure over the dam, providing a bird's-eye view of the magnificent landscape.



Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Chief, Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman along with others addresses to media persons during press conference after inaugurating Mera Brand Pakistan Exhibition organized by Pakistan Business Forum, held at Expo Center in Karachi.

## Abbasi slams court's ruling on £190m case as political agenda

INP

MURREE: Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has strongly criticized the court's decision regarding the 190 million pound case involving Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, calling it a political move.

Abbasi expressed his dismay, stating, "To my knowledge, no political case has ever been decided on merit in this country. The law has become a joke," adding that the case's outcome was expected to be politically motivated.

He pointed out the difficulties the government would face if negotia-

tions with the opposition were to succeed, as the court's decision could not be overturned. He remarked that PTI would now have to return to court for a resolution, as the government no longer has the details of the decision.

In response to the verdict, Imran Khan, the former Prime Minister and leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), addressed his supporters, urging them not to panic.

He vowed to continue his fight against what he called "dictatorship," stressing that he would not compromise on his principles or the cause of true freedom for the nation.

Khan strongly criticized the judi-

cial system, accusing it of further damaging its reputation with what he termed a "black decision" in the Al-Qadir Trust case. He accused certain judges of bias, claiming they were appointed to deliver verdicts against him.

Khan also pointed to other political figures, questioning the legality of their actions, including Nawaz Sharif and his family, and criticized the government for allegedly forgiving billions in money laundering cases. He argued that the Al-Qadir Trust, like his other welfare projects, was a nonprofit institution aimed at serving the public, particularly in educating

## Azma Bokhari accuses Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi of embezzling billions

INP

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has alleged that former prime minister Imran Khan, along with his wife Bushra Bibi, committed massive financial embezzlement worth billions.

Speaking at a press conference in Lahore, Azma Bokhari stated that Imran Khan's conviction in the 190 million pounds case sparked outrage among PTI members.

She claimed that the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) informed the

Pakistani government about returning funds to Pakistan, but instead of transferring the money to the government's account, it was deposited into a Supreme Court account, followed by alleged corruption.

The minister highlighted that the accused were given 15 opportunities to record their statements but used delaying tactics.

She mentioned that Aleema Khan had stated they wanted the case resolved, yet 35 hearings were needed to complete cross-examinations.



QUETTA: A vendor displaying warm cloths to attract customers along roadside at Sriyab road.



## BCCI curbs players' family time on tour after Australia defeat

SPORTS DESK

NEW DELHI: India's cricket board has capped the amount of time players can spend with their families on tour after a string of Test defeats including a 3-1 drubbing in Australia this month.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) issued new policies on Thursday for the senior men's team detailing guidelines to "promote discipline, unity and a positive team environment".

As part of the new guidelines, families will be allowed to stay with the players for a maximum of two weeks during overseas tours of 45 days or more.

The guidelines, seen by AFP on Friday, also makes participation in domestic cricket "mandatory to be eligible for selection in the national team".

Non-compliance could result in disciplinary action including fines and a ban on participating in the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL), Indian broadcaster NDTV reported.

The new rules come on the heels of sharp criticism of the board, which critics have accused of allowing a "star culture" to thrive.

"The cricket board needs to stop acting like admirers and put their foot down," retired Indian batting great Sunil Gavaskar told news channel India Today earlier this month after the Australia tour.

Top players, including captain Rohit Sharma and star batsman

Virat Kohli, have not played in the domestic circuit in years.

Both have come under fire for failing to deliver wins in recent bilateral series.

Rohit, who missed the only India win in Australia because of the birth of his second child, managed 31 runs in three matches.

Kohli scored one century but managed only 90 runs across his eight other innings.

The new BCCI rules prohibit players from traveling separately to and from matches and practice sessions.

"Separate travel arrangements are discouraged to maintain discipline and team cohesion," the board said, adding that all team members were "required to stay for the entire duration of the scheduled practices".

"This rule ensures commitment and fosters a strong work ethic within the team," said the board.

India's next Test tour is slated for June in England, where they will play five matches.



Sajid Khan (L) celebrates after taking the wicket of West Indies' Keacy Carty (2R) during the second day of the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and West Indies at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

## Pakistan stretches lead to 202 as spinners dominate first Multan Test against West Indies

SPORTS DESK

Spin wizards Noman Ali and Sajid Khan guided Pakistan to a strong position against the West Indies after another spin-dominated second day's play in the opening Test in Multan on Saturday.

The pair shared nine wickets between them to dismiss the West Indies for a paltry 137 in reply to the home team's 230 all out earlier in the day.

By the close, Pakistan stretched the 93-run lead to 202 by scoring 109-3 in their second innings, with Kamran Ghulam and Saud Shakeel batting on nine and two respectively when bad light ended play 25 minutes before time.

Left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican (2-17) dismissed Muhammad Hurraira for 29 after an opening stand of 67 and Babar Azam for a second failure, trapped leg-before for five.

Skipper Shan Masood looked solid for his 52, hitting two sixes and two fours, before Warrican ran him out after attempting a quick single.

Noman grabbed 5-39 for his seventh five-wicket haul in Tests, while Sajid finished with 4-65 to dismiss the West Indies for 137 after lunch in a first innings that lasted just 25.2 overs. Pakistan earlier lost their last six wickets for 43 runs after resuming at 143-4 and were bowled out for 230 in their first innings. The dry and grassless Multan pitch has already produced 20 wickets in five sessions even though two-and-a-half hours were lost on day one, and another 30 minutes on Saturday, because of poor visibility.

Noman and Sajid, who shared 39 of the 40 wickets in the last two Tests against England in Pakistan's 2-1 series win last year, were once again unplayable.

Sajid opened the bowling and removed Mikyle Louis (one), Keacy Carty (0), Kraigg Brathwaite (11) and Kavem Hodge (four) in his first three overs. Noman then further jolted the tourists with another four wickets to leave them on 66-8. The tail-enders showed more resistance, with number 10 batsman Jomel Warrican unbeaten on 31, with Gudakesh Motie adding 19 and Jayden Seales the last wicket to fall for 22.

Seales hit three sixes before holing out off-spinner Abrar Ahmed.

Warrican also took 3-69 in Pakistan's innings. Saud Shakeel top-scored for Pakistan with 84 off 157 deliveries, including six boundaries, while keeper Mohammad Rizwan added 71.

Shakeel added an invaluable 141 for the fifth wicket with Rizwan, lifting Pakistan from a precarious 46-4 on day one.

Kevin Sinclair sparked the Pakistan batting collapse by taking Shakeel's wicket with the first ball after drinks.

He then trapped Rizwan leg-before off a missed reverse sweep, the original decision of not out overturned on review.

Rizwan's 133-ball stay included nine boundaries. Sajid hit a boundary and a six in a rapid-fire 18 before he was bowled by Warrican on the stroke of lunch to end Pakistan's innings.

## Justin Kluivert's hat-trick helps Bournemouth snap Newcastle streak

SPORTS DESK

Justin Kluivert's stunning hat-trick snapped Newcastle's winning streak in style as Bournemouth stormed into the Premier League's top six with a 4-1 win at St. James' Park on Saturday.

The Magpies were looking to set a club record with a 10th consecutive victory in all competitions but were thoroughly outplayed by the Cherries, who are themselves now on an 11-game unbeaten streak.

Kluivert, son of former Newcastle striker Patrick Kluivert, was the star of the show before Milos Kerkez fired in a fourth in stoppage time.

Defeat leaves Newcastle still in fourth but now just one point clear of Bournemouth in the race for a place in next season's Champions League.

Alexander Isak's hopes of matching the Premier League record scoring streak also came to an end on a humbling afternoon for the Magpies.

The Swedish striker had struck in eight consecutive games, but was barely given a sniff of a chance by a brilliant Bournemouth display.

Andoni Iraola's men flew out of the traps and never let up to move above defending champions Manchester City in the table.

The visitors should have led inside four minutes when Dango Ouattara's shot was saved by Martin Dubravka and Antoine Semenyo blasted the rebound over.

Bournemouth had to wait just two minutes more to take the lead when Semenyo's cut-back was swept into the far corner by Kluivert.

Newcastle were shellshocked in the early stages but



looked to have restored some order when Bruno Guimarães headed in Lewis Hall's corner.

Yet the home side headed in at half-time behind once more after another classy finish from Kluivert to turn in Ouattara's pass.

Bournemouth should have been well out of sight before they did finally get the third goal in stoppage time.

Ouattara had a goal disallowed by a VAR review as the ball had gone out of play before the Burkina Faso international prodded home.

David Brooks's inventive backheel was then denied by a combination of Dubravka and the post.

Bournemouth were robbed of a famous victory in midweek when Reece James' stoppage time free-kick rescued a point for Chelsea in a 2-2 draw.

This time, though, they were not to be denied of three thoroughly deserved points.

Kluivert took aim from outside the box to complete his second hat-trick of the season.

Member APNS

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## Al Qadir ruling

**THIS** was, perhaps, the only case in which there seemed to be ostensible malfeasance involved. Alas, the way the Al Qadir Trust case was conducted, and the delays in pronouncing the verdict have cast a shadow over it, and one wonders whether the matter is as closed as the PTI's critics would have one believe.

It may be recalled that a substantial sum of money, originally seized by the UK's National Crime Agency on suspicion that it was "derived from bribery and corruption in a foreign country", was repatriated to Pakistan in 2019 under a settlement between the NCA and property tycoon Malik Riaz. Instead of being put directly to public use, this money was diverted by the PTI government to settle payments owed by Mr Riaz's Bahria Town to the Supreme Court.

The most obvious question that arose was how could money seized from an individual on suspicion that it was dirty be used to benefit that same individual in a different case.

Following this settlement, Mr Riaz donated a sizable tract of land for the creation of Al Qadir University, to be run by a trust overseen by Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi. Many observers found another reason to believe there was quid pro quo involved in Mr Khan's decision, as prime minister, to divert the NCA's repatriated funds to the Supreme Court's accounts and Mr Riaz's contemporaneous decision to fund a major project thought to be close to the PM's wife.

The accountability court, which heard the case since last February, has now sentenced Mr Khan and his wife to 14 and seven years, respectively, for corruption.

Mr Khan and his supporters have asked how the two could be convicted if they did not and could not derive any material benefit from the Al Qadir Trust.

However, this seems to deflect from the fact that the former PM knowingly got himself involved with an individual accused of shady business dealings and walked away with something, no matter how intangible, for himself and his wife. Despite the accountability court judge's decision to convict the former PM and his spouse, there are many questions that remain unanswered, such as what agreement the then government entered into with the UK's NCA regarding the funds it was to receive.

It is said the details of this arrangement are only known to Mirza Shahzad Akbar, former special assistant to the PM on accountability, who has remained absconding from the case.

Without it, the finding of guilt may be on shaky grounds. With the announcement of the verdict, the PTI legal team now has recourse to the high courts and will seek to challenge the decision. For now, the former PM's battles continue, both within the legal system and without.

By M.R Malik

## Is the game over?

**N**o sir! The game has now begun. In any poor and backward country, the game of making and removing a king is played by only a few groups, because only these groups, individuals or families have the right to play with the fate of the people while raising the slogans of the people. In the actor states the poor people are like criminals who are not aware of their sin and crime but they are constantly and regularly punished so that the flag of justice and fairness is raised if there is any conflict between justice and injustice. If one likes to recognize the difference, this difference has been very clear in every age.

The right to live is being given, but otherwise, if the courts are busy giving decisions at someone's discretion, people are being killed in police encounters, executioners are dropping the gallows, the society would still be more discouraged and courageous instead of being afraid. going If rebellion and complaints are increasing, then every sensible person understands the truth that justice has gone awry. The decision against Imran Khan is also a similar decision which the people refused to accept. What you can call class justice, this kind of so-called justice eventually prepares the people to the point where they become willing to fight against the state. In Pakistan, three decisions came from the high courts whose decisions were eagerly awaited by the people.

The first decision was the appeal decision of the government of Pakistan against the decision of Justice Mr. Cornelius of the Sindh High Court. The elected democratic

government was restored but the Supreme Court suspended the decision of the Sindh High Court under the leadership of Mr. Justice Muneer. After this decision, the people realized that their vote has no importance and The supreme power of the state is actually decided by someone else instead of the people. Time passed and a very important murder case appeal was presented before the highest court of Pakistan. He was the Prime Minister of Pakistan The accused was sentenced to death and the accused was seeking justice from the highest court of Pakistan. The whole world was paying attention to this case, while the people were deeply interested in this case. Awaiting the decision The era of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto politics was an amazingly charismatic era. Mr. Bhutto awakened the sentiments of the people in Pakistan to an extreme extent. With this new style of politics, the thinking of the people turned towards consciousness, in the background of which Pakistani politics took a stormy turn. The result of this new conscious life was that instead of being moderate, the mood of the nation turned towards extremes of love. A large number of vote banks started loving Mr. Bhutto very much, while very few people continued to hate this political leader. Much love and Bhutto's appeal was rejected in a country where only Bhutto supporters were in large numbers in the midst of a few outbursts of hatred. On the one hand, it was decided that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is innocent in this case, so he should be acquitted. Therefore, despite the conflicting



decisions of the judges, the administration hanged Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. There is also a question on the independence of the judiciary. Our history is witnessing many incidents. Hazrat Umar was the caliph. He had a dispute with a common citizen on a

matter. The matter was taken to the judge. Expressing disgust at this preferential treatment, he told the Qazi that he had committed an injustice even before hearing the case. In the same way, Ameerul Momineen Hazrat Ali appeared in the court as a plaintiff against a non-Muslim and presented the name of his son Hazrat Hasan as a witness. The judge refused to accept the son's testimony in favor of the father. He went back and did not remind the court that I am Amirul Momineen and the reliable witness is the grandson of the Prophet.

The Panama case was the third case, the decision of which was eagerly awaited by the people. The decision was reached. An honorable judge did not call the Prime Minister innocent, but an honorable Justice awarded the head of the administration with the title of "Godfather" but a Prime Minister. He was sitting in the prime minister's chair even though he was not acquitted in the Panama case. Z. A Bhutto was acquitted but was hanged. Wow, the strength and shamelessness of the administration! Time has gone out of hands, today the same thing is happening with Imran, so a new game has started now, a deadly game!

By Mushtaq Khan

## Follow China

**A** SERIES of articles in the New York Times (NYT) seems to justify protectionism. One article lists the mind-boggling statistics of China's trade balance on goods and services: adjusted for inflation, China's trade surplus in 2024 far exceeded any country in the past century — its trade surplus last year was \$990 billion.

It doesn't stop there. The value of China's manufacturing output is one-third of global production and exceeds the combined production of the US, Japan, Germany, South Korea, and Britain. 'Made in China 2025' entails import tariffs to encourage buying Chinese products, while domestic production is incentivised by lending to expand factory capacity, subsidised export financing, and targeted grants to complement the massive state investment in physical infrastructure, basic research, and specialised education. As a result, Chinese factories are overproducing, and since the real estate crisis has dampened domestic demand, the surplus is exported. However, this is not limited to cheap consumer goods; the Chinese government has specifically targeted sectors that will dominate the 21st century.

Another article lists the goods and related investments. From a net auto importer in 2019, China became a net exporter of 2.2 million automobiles in 2022. In the process, China is now the largest producer of EVs in the world and also has a monopoly on producing solar panels. Furthermore, it has become a global leader in commercial drones, lithium-ion batteries, industrial and interactive robots, nuclear power plants, LCD monitors/ screens,

smartphones, telecom equipment, semiconductors, and has become the global supplier of rare earth minerals. China's state-owned aircraft manufacturer specialises in single-aisle passenger aircraft, which have the highest commercial value. As they have done with autos, China will likely outcompete Boeing and Airbus in the next few years. To compete with China, the US will have to copy it.

On the flip side, you have the US, which has been deindustrialising since the 1970s. It started exporting blue-collar jobs when its trade surplus shifted to deficits in 1971, and is now dependent on imports for most consumer goods. The US auto sector, steel, consumer durables, and electronics have collapsed in our lifetime.

When one thinks of the typical MAGA supporter, his/ her mindset is deeply rooted in America's deindustrialisation. Donald Trump's nationalist agenda — 'America First' — is an attractive solution for their worsening plight. I will not be surprised if Trump uses his inauguration speech to promote import tariffs with a slogan like 'Be American, Buy America'. In some ways, this is the same message as 'Made in China 2025'.

However, import tariffs alone will not do the trick. Tariffs may protect some US industries and bring back some blue-collar jobs, but the US will not be able to retain or regain its global leadership as China already has the edge in the above-mentioned sectors.

In yet another NYT article, a compelling argument was made that US government funding/ contracts to improve aircraft and missile design (after World War II) gave American

companies global leadership in aircraft production and armaments — an edge they still maintain. The argument was that the funding required for basic research and experimentation, which has a small probability of commercial success, would not be undertaken by purely commercial enterprises.

This creates an interesting possibility for US tech giants specialising in AI, microprocessors, self-driving vehicles, quantum computing, and robotics. Elon Musk and other tech billionaires have already cosied up to Trump, sensing that the US can only compete with China if the US adopts the Chinese model of economic development. The free-market model suited the US after World War II when most of the world's manufacturing infrastructure was destroyed; post-war planners thought unhindered trade and American investment would fortify US dominance.

However, the Asian miracles witnessed in South Korea, Southeast Asia, Singapore, Vietnam, and China can no longer be ignored.

Policies like import substitution, protective tariffs, subsidised export finance, government grants for R&D, performance-based subsidies, and development banks should no longer be frowned upon. If xenophobia and nationalism are cultural themes of the 21st century, the entire neoliberal model of economic development will have to be discarded. The real issue is whether the Washington Consensus — the World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organisation, which have championed neoliberal ideology for decades — will survive or be forced to adapt to a completely different world order.

# DAILY MIRROR

## Pakistani, Chinese companies sign MoUs worth \$250m to boost medical equipment trade

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani and Chinese companies have signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) worth around \$250 million to boost trade in the medical and surgical sector on Saturday.

Pakistan has held strong bilateral relations with China which has supported it through many investments and development projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project which was termed as a "lifeline" for the country's economy.

The MoUs were signed during a China-Pakistan B2B matchmaking conference on the medical equipment and surgical instrument sector held in Beijing yesterday.

APP, quoting China Economic Net (CEN), said that Silk Road Assistance Industrial Internet Platform — a provider of advisory services for companies to do cross-border businesses — signed MoUs with Pakistan's dental and surgical instrument manufacturer Sawwat, as well as Chinese pharmaceutical company UPH Biopharma.

According to CEN, the collaboration aims to encourage more Chinese companies to set up joint ventures in the medical instrument sector.

Pakistan's embassy in Beijing also confirmed in a statement yesterday that three MoUs worth \$250m were signed during the conference.

The embassy said it hosted, in collaboration with the Board of Investment (BOI), the sixth moot in a series of sector-specific B2B matchmaking meetings focused on investment partnerships between Pakistan and China in the medical sector.

"Over 80 Chinese companies and associations and more than 20 Pakistani companies participated both in person and online," it noted.

On the occasion, Pakistan's ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi highlighted the growing potential of the medical industry in Pakistan, saying it was valued at over \$600m.

The embassy said Hashmi announced Pakistan would host the 4th Health, Engineering, and Minerals Show (HEMS) in Lahore from April 17-19, 2025, with a special focus on surgical and medical instruments.

According to CEN, the conference marked the conclusion of the first series of seven B2B events held since Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China last June. Another seven roadshows were in the pipeline and were expected to roll out from next month, the report added.

During PM Shehbaz's visit, 32 MoUs were agreed upon to promote trade

and investment between the two neighbours.

In September 2024, Chinese companies signed various MoUs with their Pakistani counterparts at a conference, where as many as 25 major Chinese firms expressed their deep interest in investing heavily in Pakistan.

Most recently, in December, Chinese and Pakistani diplomats signed MoUs for five projects in transport, health, energy and agriculture, with support from the Sindh government. This came days after a Chinese business delegation met with President Asif Ali Zardari in Karachi.

Chinese businessmen note Pakistan's "tax incentives, large labour force" Sunny Yang, chief technology officer of the Silk Road Assistance platform, told CEN that Pakistan's "vast market, tax incentives, and set of standards consistent with Europe give it a competitive edge in capturing international investment".

"Its medical industry can be further advanced in collaboration with China. For example, while it excels in equipment and instruments, there is significant room for improvement in areas like image documentation," Yang was quoted as saying.

"By joining forces, Chinese technology can help Pakistan build its own brand and climb the global value chain," he added.



Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar Talking to newsmen in Lahore

### Nawaz Sharif has tasked his team to sabotage negotiations: Barrister Saif

INP

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Adviser on Information, Barrister Dr. Saif, has claimed that Nawaz Sharif has assigned his team a mission to derail the ongoing negotiations.

In his statement, Barrister Saif stated that after the meeting between PTI leadership and the military establishment, a sense of unrest has emerged within Nawaz Sharif's camp.

He stated that Nawaz Sharif has initiated efforts to make the government's negotiation committee ineffective.

He alleged that certain elements were actively working to prevent pathways for political stability in the country.

Barrister Saif emphasised that while PTI was striving for peace through dialogue, an unelected group was working to protect its illegitimate rule by attempting to sabotage the negotiations.

He urged government ministers to respect their oaths and refrain from politicising the meeting between PTI and the military leadership.

### Govt develops framework to revive industrial sector: Tanveer

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain says a framework, developed with the help of foreign experts and technocrats, has been implemented to revive industrial sector.

Talking to newsmen in Lahore today, he said the government is providing all possible facilities to businessmen and addressing the few remaining obstacles.

The Minister said negotiations with Independent Power Producers are underway and noticeable changes will be seen by April.

Expressing government's determination to bring interest rate at single digit, he said it has come down from twenty-two to thirteen percent.

### Pakistan and Bangladesh agree to boost defence cooperation

Defence Secretary retired Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali says Pakistan greatly values its relations with Bangladesh

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Principal Staff Officer of Bangladesh armed forces division Lieutenant General, S.M. Kamrul Hassan, has called on Defence Secretary, retired Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali in Rawalpindi.

The discussion was focused on expanding bilateral defence collaboration covering all domains.

Speaking on the occasion, Defence Secretary said Pakistan greatly values its relations with Bangladesh.

The visiting dignitary expressed Bangladesh's aspiration for vibrant days of cooperation between two countries.

Both sides expressed satisfaction over ongoing collaboration between two countries and aimed at strengthening the cooperation in mutually beneficial fields.

Earlier, a top Bangladeshi military official, Lt-Gen S M Kamr-ul-Hassan, visited Pakistan on Tuesday, marking a rare visit by a senior Bangladeshi general.

He visited the General Headquarters

(GHQ) in Rawalpindi, where he met with Pakistan's military leadership, including Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza.

The visit signals a thaw in bilateral ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh, which had been strained during the 15-year rule of Sheikh Hasina.

Since Hasina's ouster in August, ties have improved, with both nations increasing their diplomatic and military engagements.

The meetings focused on evolving regional security dynamics, enhancing military cooperation, and strengthening defence relations.

Both sides emphasized the importance of a resilient defense partnership and joint efforts for regional peace and stability.

Lt-Gen Hassan praised Pakistan's military for its professionalism and sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, further underscoring the growing cooperation between the two countries.

### Trump administration plans mass immigrant arrests next week

Immigration raid to last entire week and will involve 100 to 200 ICE officers

By Khawaja Farooq

WASHINGTON: United States immigration authorities will carry out mass arrests of undocumented immigrants across the country on Tuesday, a top border official in the incoming administration of Donald Trump has said.

The move would be among the first by Republican Trump, who returns to the White House on Monday, to uphold a campaign pledge to deport millions of undocumented immigrants from the US.

The remarks on Friday by Trump's incoming "border czar" Tom Homan to Fox News came in response to reports in the Wall Street Journal and other US outlets that Trump's new administration planned to carry out an "immigration raid" in Chicago beginning on Tuesday, the second day of the president in office.

"There's going to be a big raid across the country. Chicago is just one of many places," said Homan, a former acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) who oversaw a policy that separated migrant parents and children at the border under the first Trump administration.

"On Tuesday, ICE is finally going to go out and do their job. We're going to take the handcuffs off ICE and let them go arrest criminal aliens," he said in the interview.

"What we're telling ICE, you're going to enforce the immigration law without apology."

You're going to concentrate on the worst first, public safety threats first, but no one is off the table. If they're in the country illegally, they got a problem," Homan added.

### Maryam Nawaz meets Japanese ambassador to discuss bilateral cooperation

INP

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz held a meeting with Japan's Ambassador Akamatsu Shuichi to discuss bilateral relations, trade cooperation, and investment opportunities in various sectors.

During the meeting, both leaders emphasised the need to explore new avenues for enhancing economic collaboration.

CM Maryam Nawaz expressed gratitude for Japan's support during the 2022 floods and acknowledged their assistance in Pakistan's times of need.

The Japanese Ambassador invited the Chief Minister to visit Japan, which she accepted. He also appreciated Maryam Nawaz's development initiatives and her continuation of the public welfare agenda established by Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Maryam Nawaz reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering strong ties with Japan, highlighting the deep and friendly relationship between the two nations.

She assured Japanese investors of full support and security in Punjab, particularly in sectors like agriculture, minerals, IT, artificial intelligence, robotics, and energy, where enhanced collaboration with Japan was desired.

### Two apex court judges shot dead in Tehran: Iranian judiciary

MONITORING DESK

IRAN: Two Iranian Supreme Court judges were shot dead in Tehran on Saturday and another judge was wounded, the judiciary's Mizan news website reported.

It said the attacker killed himself after opening fire at the judges outside the Supreme Court. Iranian media said a bodyguard of one of judges was also wounded.

The motive for the assassination was unclear.

The judiciary identified the judges who were killed as ayatollahs

Mohammad Moghiseh and Ali Razini, who worked on cases "fighting crimes against national security, espionage and terrorism".

The motive behind their killing was not immediately clear, but Mizan said the assailant was not involved in any cases before the Supreme Court, without providing further details on the attacker's identity.

Authorities said an investigation into the incident was launched, Mizan added.

### 'Talks don't take place through multiple doors': Senator Siddiqui on Gohar-COAS meeting

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui has criticised Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan's recent remarks about meeting Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, questioning the credibility of what he called "backdoor negotiations."

Senator Siddiqui shared what he knew about the discussions and their details, arguing that negotiations cannot succeed through "multiple doors," Express News reported.

He suggested PTI should formally acknowledge the talks and reassess its approach.

The PML-N lawmaker said the PTI should focus on a single negotiation channel rather than seeking multiple entry points into the political process.

His comments came after Barrister Gohar confirmed that he along with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had met Army Chief General Asim Munir. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan had reportedly welcomed the meeting, calling it a positive step.

Barrister Gohar, while speaking outside Adiala Jail, said the talks aimed at ensuring political stability in Pakistan.

He insisted that any meetings he attends are under Khan's instructions.

He further stated that PTI had always been open to dialogue, but the other side had kept its doors closed. Now that talks had begun and were progressing, he saw it as a beneficial step for the country's stability. He also reiterated PTI's two key demands: the formation of a judicial commission and an inquiry into two specific incidents.

The PTI chairman confirmed that he and Ali Amin Gandapur had met with the army chief, stating that the meeting took place in Peshawar, where they presented their entire case before him.

Barrister Gohar Ali Khan described direct negotiations with the establishment as a positive step, adding that there had been a constructive response from the other side.

He concluded that the initiation of talks was a welcome move and that all PTI's demands had been formally presented.

The meeting came a day before Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, were convicted and sentenced to 14 and seven years,

respectively, as an accountability court in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail announced its reserved verdict in the £190 million case, having previously delayed the ruling three times.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairs a meeting on Saturday.

### British HC calls on Planning minister: Pak-UK ongoing, future collaboration discussed

APP

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott Saturday called on Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal and discussed ongoing and future collaborations between the two countries.

During the meeting, Ahsan Iqbal reflected on the Vision-2025 initiative which served as a strategic roadmap for Pakistan's economic and social development, a news release said.

He also highlighted efforts to eradicate basic education deprivation through public-private partnerships, provincial cooperation to enhance capacity in education, health, and human resources, besides significant budget increases for

higher education. The minister said that the government was committed to modernizing the higher education curriculum and skilling university students.

Jane Marriott congratulated Ahsan Iqbal and commended the efforts of his entire team for preparing Uraan Pakistan National Economic Transformation Plan to address key economic challenges through the targeted framework of 5Es.

Ahsan Iqbal said the economic strategy was aimed at rejuvenating Pakistan's economy, promoting sustainable development, and driving inclusive growth.

He stressed on the importance of the five critical areas that the strategy aimed to address including exports, e-Pakistan, environment and climate change, energy and infrastructure.

### Israel says 737 prisoners to be freed in first phase of Gaza truce

INP

GAZA: Israel's justice ministry has said 737 prisoners and detainees will be freed as part of the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal approved Saturday.

It said in a statement on its website that "the government approves" the "release (of) 737 prisoners and detainees" currently in the custody of the prison service.

Israel's cabinet voted to approve the ceasefire deal early Saturday, according to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, ending days of uncertainty about whether the truce would go into effect this weekend.

Those named by the ministry include men, women and children who it said will not be released before Sunday at 4:00 pm local time (1400 GMT).

It had previously published a list of 95 Palestinian prisoners, the majority women, to be freed in exchange for Israeli captives in Gaza.

Among those on the expanded list was Zakaria Zubeidi, a chief of the armed wing of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party.

Zubeidi escaped from Israel's Gilboa prison with five other Palestinians in 2021, sparking a days-long manhunt, and is lauded as a hero.

Also to be freed is Khalida Jarar, a leftist Palestinian lawmaker whom Israel arrested and imprisoned on several occasions.

Jarar is a prominent member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a group designated a "terrorist organisation" by Israel, the United States and the European Union.

Detained in late December in the West Bank, a Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, the 60-year-old has been held since then without charge.

Two sources close to Hamas told AFP that the first group of hostages to be released consists of three Israeli women soldiers.

However, since the Palestinian Islamist movement considers any Israeli of military age who has completed mandatory service a soldier, the reference could also apply to civilians abducted during the attack that triggered the war.

The first three names on a list obtained of the 33 hostages set to be released in the first phase are women under 30 who were not in military service on the day of the Hamas attack.

Justice ministry spokeswoman Noga Katz has said the final number of prisoners to be released in the first swap would depend on the number of live hostages released by Hamas.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani visiting stalls at the occasion of Health and Fitness Gala at Police Line in Federal Capital.