

Pakistan 'fully prepared' for Champions Trophy, Naqvi says on tournament's eve

Islamabad (News Desk) Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday said that Pakistan was "fully prepared" for the (International Cricket Council) ICC Champions Trophy on the tournament's eve.

Hosts Pakistan go into the Feb 19-March 9 tournament as defending champions after the ICC had decided to do away with the tournament before finding a space for it back in the calendar. The Champions Trophy is a short form of the classic 50-over Cricket World Cup, featuring the top eight teams in the world. Its format is cut-

throat, with the teams divided into groups of four each. The single-league format means losing even one match can get a team into trouble, making each fixture crucial. A statement issued by the PCB today quoted Naqvi as saying: "Pakistan is fully prepared for the Champions Trophy." He said that international standard facilities would be provided to all teams, adding that every possible facility would be made available for the fans.

"The organisation of the ICC tournament in Pakistan, after 29 years, is a matter of pride," Naqvi was quoted as saying,

adding that the board would elevate the country's honour by ensuring a grand and successful tournament. The press release said that the first match between New Zealand and Pakistan tomorrow would have President Asif Ali Zardari as the chief guest. "Pakistan Air Force will present a spectacular aerial display," it said. Stadium reconstruction The reconstruction of three stadiums — in Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi — which started on Oct 10 last year, looked in peril at one time as the board tried to finish the preparations for the

Champions Trophy. The Gaddafi Stadium, also the headquarters of the PCB, is set to host the Champions Trophy as the ICC had cleared all three venues (National Stadium, Karachi, Pindi Stadium, Rawalpindi and Gaddafi Stadium) for hosting the matches but the PCB allocated a huge amount of Rs12.80 billion to revamp the three stadiums. While Gaddafi Stadium and the National Bank Stadium reconstruction was completed, the Rawalpindi Stadium reconstruction will be completed after the Champions Trophy concludes.



Screengrab of Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari speaking during an interview at the Munich Security Conference.

Bilawal sees Pakistan as 'bridge builder' between China and US

Islamabad (News Desk) PPP Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said that Pakistan can be the bridge between China and the United States, Deutsche Welle (DW) reported on Monday. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference, Bilawal discussed the country's engagement with China and the US, expectations from President Donald Trump, improving relations with India, and security challenges.

"The pace of that competitiveness [between China and the US] has very palpable effects all across the world [...]. From a Pakistani perspective, historically, we have played the role of bridge builder rather than a dividing force," he said. He added, "If you want to put us in a camp, we would like to see ourselves as bridge builders. We played that role in the past between establishing diplomatic contacts and the relationship between the US and China." "Going forward, we would like to see ourselves as a country that can bridge that gap rather than increase that division." When asked about the new Trump administration, Bilawal called Trump a "deal maker" and said, "Given the challenges we face in the region.

5.1-magnitude quake jolts Swat, surrounding areas



Swat (News Desk) A 5.1 magnitude earthquake was felt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat and its surrounding areas on Tuesday. The epicentre was located at the border area of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, the Associated Press of Pakistan reported, citing the Seismological Centre.

No casualties or property damage have been reported so far.

The tremors caused panic among the residents, who rushed out of their homes and began reciting prayers.

The tremor comes just days after a 4.8 magnitude earthquake was felt in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Saturday. No casualties were reported.

In December last year, tremors were felt in various cities of KP as well as Islamabad after a quake jolted Afghanistan's Badakhshan region.

Earlier in September, tremors from a 4.5-magnitude earthquake were felt in Swat and its surrounding areas, causing panic among residents. The earthquake's depth was recorded at 151 kilometres, with its epicentre located in the Hindu Kush Mountain range, a seismically active area known for frequent quakes.

ATC grants police main suspect's 4-day remand in Mustafa Amir murder case

Islamabad (News Desk) An anti-terrorism court in Karachi on Tuesday granted the police a four-day physical remand of Armaghan, the main suspect in the Mustafa Amir murder case, following the Sindh High Court's (SHC) orders.

Earlier today, the SHC set aside previous ATC orders for his judicial remand and to form a probe body. Amir, a 23-year-old, was kidnapped and allegedly murdered by his friends in Karachi's Defence Housing Authority (DHA) on January 6. According to the police, the youth's friends stuffed his body

in the trunk of his car and torched it in the Hub area of Balochistan. Earlier this month, police arrested Armaghan for injuring policemen in an attempt to resist his detention in connection with Amir's kidnapping case. Another suspect, Armaghan's friend Sheraz aka Shavez Bukhari, was remanded in police custody by an antiterrorism court (ATC) last week. Sindh Acting Prosecutor-General Muntazir Mehdi, on behalf of the Sindh government, had filed revision applications in the SHC, challenging the ATC orders denying the police

brought fruits for his son, alleging that the latter had been tortured during his detention. Mehdi, Additional Prosecutor-General (APG) Muhammad Iqbal Awan, current Investigation Officer (IO) Inspector Muhammad Ali and previous IO Ameer Ashfaq also appeared before the bench, along with other policemen. During the hearing, Mehdi, APG Awan and IO Ashfaq presented their contentions before the judges. The additional prosecutor-general sought Armaghan's physical custody for further investigation.

Armaghan's physical custody and sending him on judicial remand instead. Another application was also filed against an ATC order on the suspect's father plea against a raid at his residence. After issuing notices to the respondents yesterday on four revision pleas, a two-member SHC bench headed by Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput resumed the hearing today. Armaghan, stated to be in his early twenties, was presented before the court as per the bench's orders from yesterday. His father, Kamran Qureshi, was also present in the court and



PTI General Secretary Salman Akram Raja, Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Senator Shibli Faraz speak during press conference in Islamabad on Feb 17, 2025

Supreme Court sees shake up after entry of new judges

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) After the arrival of new Supreme Court judges, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi on Monday reshuffled a number of committees which had been constituted to distribute different responsibilities among judges of the top court. CJP Afridi through an office order reconstituted the six-member 'Case Management Committee' headed by himself and

comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui, the additional registrar (judicial). The IT director will be its secretary. The committee will ensure efficiency in judicial work by streamlining case management. The CJP also appointed five judges of the Supreme Court to supervise and monitor the functions and performance of spe-

cial courts (anti-terrorism courts) in Pakistan. Justice Musarrat Hilali will act as the monitoring judge for ATCs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) while Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan, Justice Hashim Khan Kakar, and Justice Salahuddin Panhwar will act as monitoring judges in Punjab, Balochistan, and Sindh. Justice Aamer Farooq will be the monitoring judge for Islamabad special courts.

The CJP also tasked a committee comprising Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad, Justice Hashim Kakar, Justice Salahuddin Panhwar, and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim with monitoring of model courts. The SC's IT affairs committee was reshuffled, with the CJP being its chairman, and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Mian-gul Hassan Aurangzeb its members.

PTI wants courts to expedite 26th amendment, rigging cases

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Leaders of the opposition PTI on Monday urged the judiciary to expedite the cases related to alleged rigging during the general elections and the 26th Amendment, expressing concern that the matters remained undecided despite the passage of a year. The demand was reiterated by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, Senator Shibli Faraz and the party's General Secretary Salman Akram Raja at a press conference, held at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House in the capital. Barrister Gohar claimed the party had filed 74 petitions regarding alleged rigging in the Feb 8, 2024 elections, but the courts had failed to deliver any verdicts. He also criticised the 26th Amendment, passed in October 2024.

IHC restructuring strips Justice Kayani of crucial powers

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) The Islamabad High Court has undergone a major administrative restructuring, which has notably reduced the authority of senior puisne judge Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani — who previously held key decision-making roles — following recent amendments to the high court rules. The changes followed the transfer of three judges from different high courts to the IHC and the subsequent reconstitution of the Administration Committee. Justice Sardar Mohammad Sarfraz Dogar was appointed IHC's acting chief justice, leading to a reshuffle within the court's administrative framework. The move triggered objections from senior judges, who argue that it undermines judicial seniority and due process. The IHC Administration Committee, previously comprising the chief justice, the senior puisne judge and a senior judge, has now been restructured to include Chief Justice Dogar and two of his nominees. This reconstitution significantly alters the court's decision-making authority. Amendments to rules grant CJ discretion in committee appointments. The changes were formalised through amendments to Rule 237, Chapter 10 of the High Court Rules. The revised provision now states: "The Administration Committee, headed by the Chief Justice.

Fazl slams govt over 'lack of civilian decision-making'

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Chief of his own faction of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Monday launched a blistering attack on the government's handling of national security issues and warned that the country's very existence was under threat due to lack of civilian decision-making. Speaking on a point of order in the National Assembly after the house hurriedly passed five bills aimed at curbing human trafficking and organised beggary amid noisy opposition's protest, the JUI-F chief cautioned that "Pakistan's physical boundaries might be altered sooner rather than later" unless drastic measures were taken to address pressing concerns, including the lack of state writ in the provinces of Balochistan and KP as well as the newly-merged tribal districts. There was a stunned silence during the Mr Rehman's speech, and a few instances when the opposition members shouted 'shame, shame'. PTI members, who had made two failed attempts to disrupt the proceedings by pointing out quorum and raised slogans during the passage of the bills, later heard the Mr Rehman's speech in complete silence. However, as soon as Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar took the floor to respond to Mr Rehman's speech, the PTI members once again started sloganeering and one of its members pointed out quorum for the third time. Deputy Speaker Ghulam Mustafa Shah adjourned the sitting till Tuesday morning (today) after declaring the house not in order due to a lack of quorum, for which the presence of 84 members is required in the 336-member house.

Bulls dominate as PSX rises by nearly 1,400 points with experts citing 'good corporate results'

Islamabad (News Desk) Bulls dominated the trading floor on Tuesday at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) as shares rose by nearly 1,400 points, with experts citing "good corporate results" as the reason for the uplift. The rise comes after the market sustained a three-week losing streak, despite bearish performances in the last three sessions due to political noise and

reciprocal tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on American allies and competitors, which heightened concerns about a potential global trade war. After the slump, shares at the exchange went on a record-setting streak as the KSE-100 index climbed more than 3,000 points to surpass the 114,000 mark. The market opened last week with a spec-

tacular rally after the State Bank of Pakistan released remittances data, showing a surge of over a quarter to \$3 billion in January. The benchmark KSE-100 index climbed 1455.85 points to stand at 345,519,481 points from the previous close of 111,743.53 points at 3:30pm. Finally, the index closed at 113,088.47, up by 1344.94 points or 1.2pc, from the previous close.

Yousuf M. Farooq, director of research at Chase Securities, said, "Good corporate results have attracted fresh institutional buying." While the economy appears to be back on track, the current account deficit and real effective exchange rate numbers released today have led some investors to believe that a devaluation of the Pakistani rupee might occur, Farooq said,



valuation could contribute to longer-term stability. "The economy is showing signs of recovery, with improve-

n fuel consumption, motorcycle and auto sales, although large-scale manufacturing remains sluggish," he added.