



# THE DAILY **tribune**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2024

QUOTE  
OF THE  
DAY

**LIFE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT AND HOW WE MAKE IT - WHETHER WE REALIZE IT OR NOT**  
NAPOLEON HILL



TOP  
**4**  
TWEETS

01



Had a productive discussion with Thai Deputy Prime Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara @MFAThai on advancing the U.S.-Thai alliance and a free and open Indo-Pacific region. We also discussed efforts with Thailand and ASEAN to address the worsening crisis in Burma.

@SecBlinken

02



The Best Minister Award 2024 World Government Summit celebrates its winner, H.E. Dr. Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Minister of Public Health of the State of Qatar, for transformative leadership in public health.

@DrTedros

03



Incredibly honoured by the warm welcome from the Indian Community in Abu Dhabi today. The vibrancy of our diaspora never ceases to amaze me.

@narendramodi

04



Today, King Abdullah II and I discussed how no major military operation in Rafah should proceed without a credible plan to ensure the safety and support for the more than one million people sheltering there.

@POTUS

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

## News in brief

### Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC) said yesterday it has launched long-range ballistic missiles from a warship for the first time. The launch from the Shahid Mahdavi during naval manoeuvres involved firing two ballistic missiles capable of striking targets up to 1,700 kilometres (1,050 miles) away. "The IRGC for the first time has fired ballistic missiles in the Gulf of Oman," state television reported. "The firing of a long-range ballistic missile from the warship was successfully carried out," IRGC chief Hossein Salami said. Separately, in central Iran, the IRGC simulated a surface-to-surface ballistic missile attack on Israel's Palmachim airbase south of Tel Aviv, state television reported. It said Palmachim was the "main base for F-35 fighter jets" in Israel.



Iran fires first ship-based long-range ballistic missiles

### Israel says UNRWA probe mandate too vague

Israel warned yesterday the mandate of an investigation into allegations that UN staff participated in Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attacks was too vague, but said it would cooperate. Earlier this month, United Nations chief Antonio Guterres announced the creation of an independent panel to assess UNRWA, the UN agency tasked with helping Palestinian refugees. The embattled agency had come under fire over accusations by Israel that 12 of its staff members were involved in the deadliest-ever attack inside Israel on October 7 last year. "We plan to cooperate with the investigation," Israeli ambassador Meirav Shahar told reporters in Geneva. But she warned that "the mandate as it stands right now is too wide".

### Italy says Israeli response to Hamas 'disproportionate'

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said Tuesday there were "too many victims" in Gaza, saying Israel's assault on the Palestinian territory following the unprecedented Hamas attacks was "disproportionate". In an interview on RAI radio, Tajani -- whose country holds the rotating G7 presidency this year -- strongly condemned the "savagery" of October 7 attacks and said Israel had the right to defend itself. But he said that "at this point Israel's reaction against the Palestinian civilian population is disproportionate... there are too many victims who have nothing to do with Hamas". Tajani distanced himself from comments made last week by Francesca Albanese, an Italian who is United Nations special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, who denied the Hamas attacks were "anti-Semitic".

## SPOTLIGHT

## Qatar frees eight former Indian Navy men, PM will go to Doha



Some of the former Indian Navy personnel after their arrival in New Delhi early Monday.

TDT | agencies

More than three months after they were sentenced to death, eight former Indian Navy personnel have been released from custody in Qatar and seven have returned to India.

This was announced by the Ministry of External Affairs in the early hours of Monday. Hours later, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Qatar on February 14 and meet Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, after completing his visit to the UAE that starts Tuesday. Relieved families hailed the efforts of the government and the personal intervention of the Prime Minister -- Modi met the Qatar Emir on the sidelines of the COP28 summit in Dubai on December 1 -- in securing the release of the eight men.

Kwatra too said, "Prime Minister has himself personally, constantly, supervised all the developments in this case and has never shied away from an initiative that would ensure the return of Indian nationals home."

The Indians had been working in their private capacity with Doha-based Dahra Global to oversee the induction of Italian small stealth submarines U212.

They have been identified as Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vasish, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta and Sailor Ragesh.

Seven of them have returned to India and Commander Tiwari, the eighth person, sources said, will be brought back after some formalities are completed.

## UNRWA funding freezes risk 'aiding' deaths in Gaza: Saudi official

AFP | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Freezing funds to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees risks "aiding" the deaths of civilians in Gaza, the head of Saudi Arabia's humanitarian agency told AFP on Tuesday.

Several countries -- including the United States, Britain, Germany and Japan -- have suspended funding to the UNRWA agency in response to Israeli allegations that some of its staff members participated in the October 7 attack by Hamas militants.

The UN has sacked the 12 UNRWA staff members accused by Israel of involvement in the October 7 attack and said the tunnel claim should be investigated once the conflict is over.

"We should not penalise the innocent people, millions of people who are living in Gaza,



The head of Saudi Arabia's King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), Abdullah al-Rabeeah

because of an accusation on a handful of people," Dr Abdullah al-Rabeeah, head of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, told AFP in an interview on Tuesday.

"If you have close to two million people living in a small place... and then the funding

for the food and for the health basics is stopped, basically you are calling for them to live in, actually, disaster and also aiding in their death."

Rabeeah, who is also an adviser to the Saudi Royal Court, spoke as Gaza braced for an expected Israeli incursion into the crowded southern city of Rafah where more than a million Palestinians are trapped.

He warned that such an operation would produce "chaos" and potentially trigger the "complete stoppage" of aid trucks.

"We will see thousands of people losing their lives. Now people talk about the threat of epidemics, the threat of famine, and you name it. So we don't want to see any civilian get lost because of things that can be avoided," he said.

## Jordan's king takes part in Gaza aid airdrop

AFP | Amman, Jordan

Jordanian King Abdullah II recently took part in a humanitarian aid drop into war-torn Gaza, according to state TV footage showing him aboard an air force C-130 transport plane.

The king can be seen on board the flight in military uniform, in the 56-second video broadcast on Jordan's Al Mamlaka channel on Monday.

He was helping soldiers drop a crate said to contain humanitarian and medical aid bound for the Jordanian field hospital in northern Gaza, in a joint operation with the Netherlands.

In mid-December, King Abdullah's daughter, Princess Salma, a first lieutenant and pilot in the Royal Jordanian Air Force, also took part in an airdrop of medical supplies to the field hospital.

On November 20, Jordanian Crown Prince Hussein arrived in Egypt's El-Arish airport near Gaza to supervise delivery of the second Jordanian field hospital to the besieged Palestinian



Jordanian King Abdullah II

territory. US President Joe Biden thanked Jordan for providing humanitarian aid, during a White House meeting Monday where the king appealed for a full ceasefire to end the war in Gaza. Abdullah "personally got in a plane and helped conduct an air drop of urgently needed medical supplies into Gaza", Biden said.

"I understand that two of his children have also joined those air drops. They helped fly humanitarian supplies in."

Jordan has conducted 11 airdrop operations since the war broke out on October 7 between Israel and Hamas militants in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Amman has delivered a total of almost 720 tonnes of humanitarian aid from 49 aircraft, 11 of them via airdrops, according to the Jordanian Royal Charity Commission.

325 Jordanian trucks also delivered a total of 4,376 tonnes of aid by land, according to the Commission.

## Jailed Khan rules out alliance with rivals to rule Pakistan

AFP | Islamabad, Pakistan

Jailed ex-prime minister Imran Khan ruled out an alliance with Pakistan's two largest political parties on Tuesday after his candidates took the most seats in last week's general election.

Candidates loyal to Khan defied a crackdown blocking them from campaigning and forcing them to run as independents,



Supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party block Peshawar to Islamabad highway

with a combined showing big-

ger than any party in Thursday's National Assembly polls.

The upset stopped the army-backed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) from securing a ruling majority.

Speaking in Adiala Jail -- where he has spent much of his time since his arrest in August -- Khan accused both the PML-N and second-placed Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) of corruption.