

BRAVE

Shahrez Khan: 'Endurance is not just for the race.'

The Pakistani athlete inspiring a new generation

After a momentous qualifying race in the Philippines early in the race season, an arbitrary travel ban prevented Shahrez Khan from representing his country in IRONMAN's prestigious triathlon World Championship in Spain in 2025, yet for Pakistan's No.1 triathlete — the journey is far from over.

Setting his sights on endurance competition at the elite level back in 2022 — Lahore-based triathlete, Shahrez Khan, has steadily built his reputation as one of Pakistan's leading endurance athletes. He currently ranks among the top 5% of IRONMAN athletes globally in the All-World Athlete Elite (AWA) Category.

Shahrez is an athlete, Oxford MBA graduate and global entrepreneur. He's currently the regional head of leading Australian textile company, Simba Global, and the CEO and founder of Oxford MedEx — an offshoot global healthcare supply chain company specialising in personal protective equipment (PPE). With strong ties to Australia, he often trains along Melbourne's coastline during business trips. Since his last trip to the region, Shahrez was the only Pakistani to qualify for the prestigious IRONMAN 70.3 triathlon World Championship in 2025 and the second Pakistani to ever qualify for a triathlon world championship.

Since his race debut in Luxembourg in 2022, Shahrez has raced across four continents: in New Zealand and Turkey in 2023, in Turkey and South Africa in 2024, and Oman and Puerto Princesa in the Philippines in 2025 — where he earned his place at the World Championship, by finishing seventh in his age group. His results in 2025 and strong performances across seasons are the result of hard work and determination, combined with a passion for sports he's had from an early age. Before realising his own potential for elite level competition, Shahrez spent years building up his endurance in half marathons and duathlons and on the Cross-Country teams at the University of Oxford during his MBA studies and at his Almer mater, Aitchison College in Lahore - the Pakistani institution renowned for its excellence in sports.



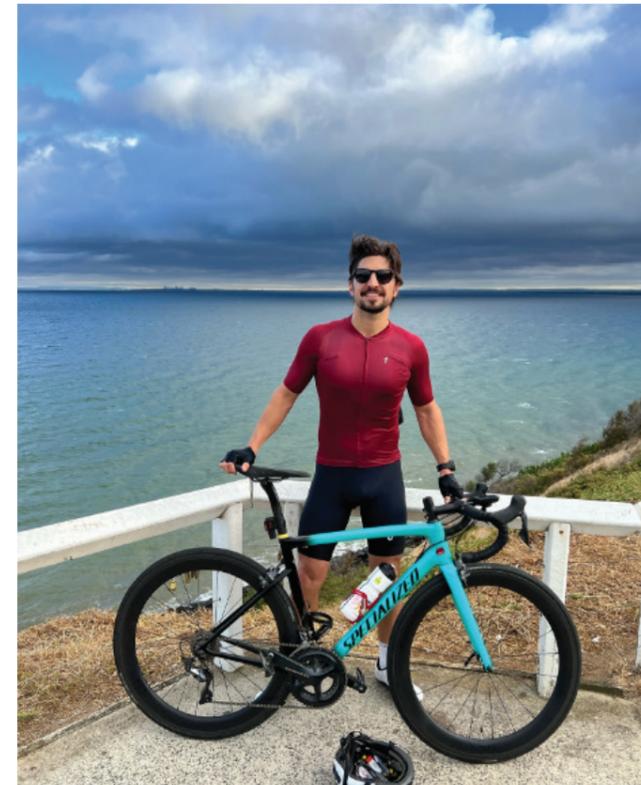
Shahrez's debut in the 7th Tour of Islamabad multi-day cycling race (centre) in December, 2025. Opposite page: IRONMAN 70.3 Taupō, New Zealand, 2023 - Shahrez Khan.

After his milestone achievement in 2025 an arbitrary travel ban disrupted Shahrez's race campaign mid-season, denying him of the right to represent his country at the World Championship held in Marbella, Spain in November – the biggest stage in world triathlon. Against a backdrop of increasing state repression, Shahrez was bound for a competition in Estonia in August last year, when he was offloaded from an international flight and briefly detained after being falsely accused of involvement in Pakistan's 9 May 2023 riots. His arbitrary arrest drew national attention and was quickly condemned by international rights groups. Oblivious to the level of concern over his arrest as the ordeal was reported and went viral on social media, Shahrez stood as a picture of stoic resolve — a trait that runs in the family.

Shahrez is the eldest son of Aleema Khan and the nephew of the cricket icon and former Prime



At the finish line of IRONMAN 70.3 Puerto Princesa in the Philippines, qualifying for the 2025 World Championship - Shahrez Khan.



Top left: Training along Australia's east coast in Melbourne, August 2024. Top right: Swim segment of IRONMAN 70.3 Taupō in New Zealand, 2023. Bottom: Mentoring young athletes in Lahore recently, 2025. - Shahrez Khan.

Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, whose ongoing imprisonment violates international law according to UN Experts, and recently prompted an investigation by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture into his detention conditions.

"This journey is far from over," said Shahrez after the disruption to his race plans. "Endurance is not just for the race; it's for times like these. I'll keep training harder and I look forward to being on the international race circuit soon!" According to Amnesty International, there's been an alarming rise in arbitrary travel bans used by authorities to silence dissent and punish political opponents.

"Shahrez Khan's case is a high-profile example of the deliberate targeting of family members of political leaders and activists in Pakistan," says Amnesty International Australia's National Director, Sam Klintworth. Open-ended travel bans can have a detrimental impact on the lives of those they target and can be especially difficult for elite athletes. Most of those subjected to travel bans only discover that their names are on a passport control list when they attempt to board international flights.

Having missed out on the world championship after qualifying and months of intensive training, Shahrez posted, "I'm not involved in politics – I'm an athlete, and my only goal is to represent Pakistan with pride." Defined by resilience, Shahrez has continued to push his own limits across disciplines and rising to new heights in his athletic career despite last year's setbacks.

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Raised in a family with a legacy of athletic excellence, Shahrez's early days were spent in Zaman Park in Lahore, the training ground of world champions named after Imran Khan's maternal uncle, and also the place where Shahrez Khan's own journey to the triathlon world stage began. His early childhood memories watching his uncle's training sessions out of Zaman Park during his captaincy of the national cricket team were masterclasses in athlete high performance.

In a nation where cricket typically overshadows other sports, Shahrez is forging his own path in endurance sports and helping build a legacy for Pakistan in world athletics. He's passionate about inspiring a generation he says, are stuck in sedentary lifestyles. His mission aligns with the World Health Organisation's Global Physical





Activity Action Plan, which aims for a 15% reduction in physical inactivity by 2030. Despite the barriers preventing many young Pakistanis from participating in sports and the current lack of triathlon infrastructure, Shahrez is committed to developing endurance sports and putting Pakistan on the global sports tourism map. Under the former Prime Minister, Imran Khan's premiership from 2018 until 2022, the prestigious global luxury and lifestyle brand, Condé Nast Traveler, listed Pakistan as No.1 best holiday destination in 2020.

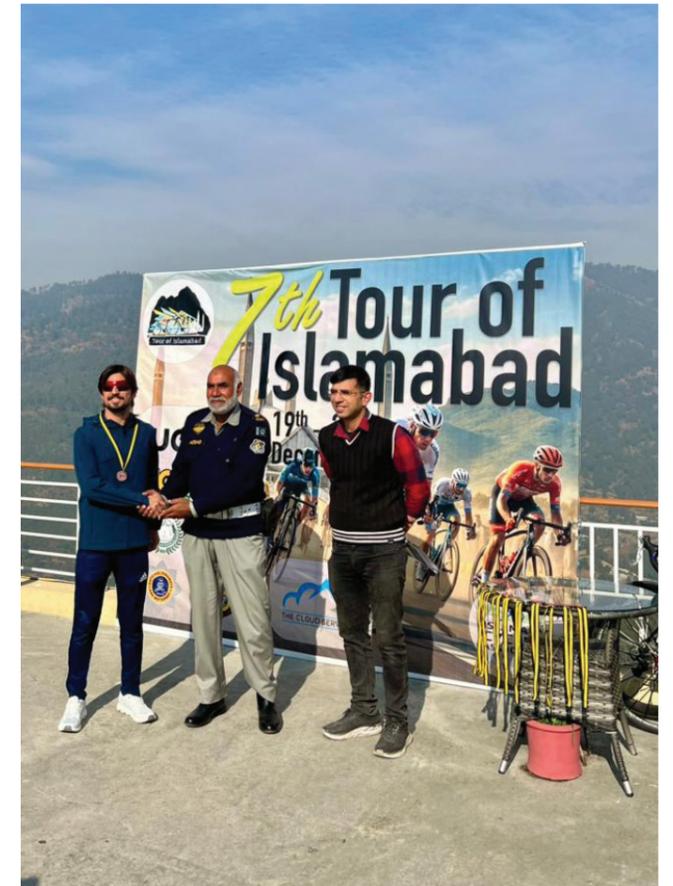
Besides the existing potential for sports tourism in the country, there is still limited public awareness about endurance racing and little media coverage compared with cricket. Currently, most endurance athletes in Pakistan are self-funded and train without access to cutting edge sports science, compared with the state-funded sports systems and formal pathways in Western countries. This bottom-up, grassroots development model makes performances by Pakistan's endurance athletes especially notable.

After shifting his focus to local races and running training camps for young athletes at Aitchison with his training partner Rd. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed – who he credits with playing a crucial role in his journey – Shahrez made his debut in his first pro cycling race in the prestigious Tour of Islamabad multi-day cycling race in December. Achieving a podium finish third place overall in his age group, leading healthcare and sports brand, ACTIVIT, applauded the standout performance, the result of his unwavering discipline and the Lahori athlete's quiet consistency showing up race after race. He backed up the performance in the new year with a sub-3.00 debut and Top 10 finish in the 3rd Karachi Marathon, qualifying him for the Boston Marathon.

Beyond personal achievements, Shahrez is committed to guiding the next generation and writing new chapters in Pakistan's sporting history. With a focus on mentoring young athletes and participating in local races at home under the travel ban, he looks ahead to future opportunities to represent his country in races at the international level.

"I'm excited to continue representing Pakistan on the global stage and grateful for the lessons that sport has brought into my life," says Shahrez. "Inspired by my uncle, Imran Khan — the ultimate athlete — this journey has taught me lessons that extend far beyond triathlons and into every facet of my life. Dedication, grit, and discipline will take you beyond what you think is possible."

With this mindset — Shahrez Khan will be unstoppable in 2026.



Medal and closing ceremony of the 7th Tour of Islamabad, Faisal Hills, 21 December, 2025 - Shahrez Khan. Opposite page: Aitchison College in Lahore, Shahrez stands in front of his uncle and inspiration, Imran Khan Niazi - ACTIVIT/Facebook.

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Follow Shahrez Khan's journey
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