

Trump reiterates offer to mediate on Kashmir

New Delhi: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday reiterated his earlier offer to mediate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir, adding that his relationship with the leaders of both the countries is strong.

The US president made the comments while address-

We discussed terrorism at length today," he added.

However, when pressed further by another reporter about India's past rejection of his offer, the publication quoted Trump as saying: "I didn't say anything about that [being a mediator], Kashmir obviously is a big problem between



ing a press conference in the Indian capital on the last day of his two-day visit, after holding meetings with the Modi administration.

Trump's remarks came in response to a question on terrorism in Pakistan.

"We talked a lot about it at length today. No question it is a problem. They are working on it. I said I will do whatever I can do to help because my relationship with both gentlemen [Prime Minister Imran Khan and Indian PM Narendra Modi] is so good. Anything I can do to mediate, I would do," he said.

"They [Pakistan] are working on Kashmir. Kashmir has been a thorn in lots of people's sides for a long time. There are two sides to every story

India and Pakistan, they are going to work out their problem. They have been doing it for a long time."

Trump has offered to mediate between the two countries on Kashmir on multiple occasions. Earlier this year, he reiterated the same during a meeting with Imran on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum assembly in Davos, Switzerland.

However, India has categorically rejected the offer to mediate, calling the issue an internal matter. Most recently, Indian Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said: "There is no role for any third party in the Kashmir issue. It is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan."

Punjab Govt refuses to extend Nawaz Sharif's bail

Lahore: Punjab Law Minister Raja Bhasarat on Tuesday said the provincial cabinet had decided not to further extend the bail granted on medical grounds to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who is currently in London for treatment.

Addressing a press conference alongside other members of the Punjab cabinet, including provincial health minister Dr Yasmin Rashid and information minister Fayyazul Hassan Chohan, Bhasarat said: "The committee has decided that Nawaz Sharif's bail can't be extended further."

He explained that the initial court order said the former premier was granted bail for eight weeks by the Islamabad High Court on October 29, 2019, but said that "a further eight weeks had passed since then as discussions were underway."

"Till a decision by the Punjab government, this bail was to be automatically extended, therefore it was extended for 16 weeks," he said.

After the passage of 16 weeks, Bhasarat said the provincial government wanted to be informed about developments regarding

Nawaz's health on the basis of which a decision to extend his bail could be made.

Earlier, the IHC had directed Nawaz to seek the Punjab government's permission for further relief if required.

"Till today he [Nawaz] has not been admitted in any hospital in London," Bhasarat said today adding that nothing specific had been shared with the government regarding the PML-N supreme's health and the matter had been "lingering on."

He said the Punjab cabinet had decided that there was "no legal, moral or medical basis without any concrete proof" for further extension of Nawaz's bail.

Bhasarat said the Punjab government would now share its decision with the federal government, which will decide upon the matter. Following the Punjab government's announcement, PML-N senior leader Rana Sanaullah said they will challenge the decision in the high court following discussions.

Extension in Nawaz's time abroad Amid ticking between the ruling PTI and PML-N, Nawaz reached London for medical treatment on November 19, 2019.

Nawaz was granted bail by the IHC on humanitarian grounds, in the Al Azzia case earlier this month. He also obtained bail in the ongoing Chaudhry Sugar Mills case, in which he is a suspect, from the Lahore High Court.

On December 23, he sought an extension in his stay abroad on the expiry of the four-week period granted by the LHC. Following his request, the Punjab government constituted a four-member committee to decide on it and sought fresh medical reports to make an "informed decision".

In January, a picture of Nawaz at a London restaurant along with some members of his family had surfaced on social media, raising questions about the condition of the former premier's health. Following this, on January 15, the Punjab government had rejected Nawaz's medical reports which had been submitted on December 23. Once again on January 30, the Punjab government asked Nawaz to submit fresh medical reports so that a decision on his seeking more time abroad could be made.

"Energy reforms and checking its losses are govern-

ment's top priority." The premier said that the government is providing relief to every possible level to the weaker segments of the soc-

Adviser on Finance Hafeez Sheekh and Special Assistant Nadeem Babar: "I want all the people of Piplan especially the youth to

don't know the importance of jungles," he said. "We don't know the blessings God has given us. How many of you know that God has



ety and consumers using up to three hundred units of the electricity. The PM said the government is cognizant of the problems faced by the masses and it is our utmost effort to stabilize the power prices and provide every possible relief to the people.

The meeting was attended amongst others by Minister for Planning Asad Umer, Minister for Power Omar Ayub, Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi,

listen to me carefully because your youth don't yet realise the importance of tree plantation for Pakistan. I want that the importance of this (tree plantation) for Pakistan's future is taught as a subject to children in school," he said. He recalled that when he came to Mianwali in his childhood there was a jungle in Kundian but today when he viewed the area from his helicopter he could see no trees.

"And the people of Pakistan given Pakistan 12 seasons? How many countries have 12 seasons? Every sort of thing and fruit can grow in Pakistan." He said that often goods such as sugar and vegetables become expensive in Pakistan. "In this country, things should never become expensive because with the land we have been given and the water and seasons we have been given, we should be providing these products to the world."

Govt resolute to alleviate burden of electricity tariffs: Firdous Ashiq Awan

Islamabad: Prime Minister Imran Khan has unequivocally reiterated the government's resolve not to put the burden of increased bills of electricity on people.

Briefing the media regard-

ing for bringing these prices down. She said the Prime Minister also directed to take all preventive measures against spread of Coronavirus in the country. The cabinet was informed that not even a single case of Coronavirus has been reported so far in Pakistan.

Firdous Ashiq Awan said the cabinet also discussed the visit of US President Trump to neighbouring India. It was informed that the defeat of the Indian narrative during this visit is a victory for Pakistan.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Dr. Sania Nishtar gave a detailed briefing to cabinet on Ehsaas Kifayat Program, Langar Khanas and other initiatives which are the vision of PTI government to provide support to vulnerable segments of society. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction on the social welfare programmes under the Ehsaas program. The cabinet was given a briefing on economic data and the reduction in prices of essential items. Due to effective monitoring and comprehensive policy of the government, a strong message has gone to various mafias of hoarders.

ing Federal Cabinet meeting in Islamabad today, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said the Prime Minister directed that people should not be suffered due to gaps in generation and supply of electricity. She said the Cabinet was apprised that decisions taken by the previous government resulted in an increased tariff of electricity. The Special Assistant said the Prime Minister directed the Ministry of Energy to

devising a comprehensive mechanism so that increase in prices due to Newellum Jhelum Surcharge or circular debt is not passed on to ordinary people. A meeting in this regard will be convened soon.

Iranian health minister, lawmaker test positive for coronavirus, death toll 16

Tehran: Iran's Deputy Health Minister Iraj Hariri and a member of parliament tested positive for the coronavirus as the death toll inside the country rose to 16 on Tuesday as Iranian officials said authorities could be under-

standing the scale of outbreak. Iran has the highest number of coronavirus deaths outside China, where the virus emerged in December and more than 2,600 have died.

"My corona test is positive [...]. I don't have a lot of hope of continuing life in this world," Mahmoud Sadeghi, the parliamentarian from Tehran, wrote on Twitter. Also among the infected was the deputy health minister, who posted a video



online announcing his infection which was shown on state media. Among those who had been suspected of the virus, 35 (new cases) have been confirmed and two died of the coronavirus infection," said Health Ministry spokesman Kianush Jahannpur. He said 95 people had been infected across Iran.

Jahannpur put the death toll at 15, but the state news agency later said one person infected by the virus had died in the city of Saveh. Some unconfirmed reports gave a higher death toll.

The outbreak in Iran has coincided with mounting US pressure on Iran's clerical rulers which has hit the economy hard. In 2018, the United States exited Tehran's nuclear deal with major powers and reimposed sanctions.

Worried that official numbers could underestimate the scale of Iran's outbreak, many Iranians took to social media to accuse authorities of concealing facts.

Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and commerce adviser. The delegation members have praised investment-friendly policies adopted by the present government and expressed their willingness to engage in long-term investment plans. The delegation added that Pakistan has increased confidence of foreign investors through its effective policies and they are expecting major opportunities in the country. They said that the country has grabbed major

Foreign investors call on PM Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of foreign investors called on Prime Minister Imran Khan and expressed interests in long-term investment plans, ARY News reported on Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by finance adviser, governor of State



achievement to attract foreign investment by establishing the platform of Digital Pakistan initiative. PM Imran Khan said Pakistan has been put on path of economic and social development after getting established as compared to the challenging environment following the

deficit prevailed in the last year. He said the country succeeded to gain the confidence of global investors and it is now being considered as an attractive place for long-term investments. The premier said Pakistan improved its ranking up to 26 points in the World Bank (WB) report. He added Pakistan is the land of unlimited opportunities especially for the youth, whereas, the federal government launched a bigges over project, for providing employment.

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self has confessed negligence in shortage of sugar and flour in the country, Bukhan said.

The public should be informed about the mafia behind the crises, he said. Those behind the tsunami of price hike and dearness are associates of Imran Khan, the PPP secretary general alleged.

The market and industry sources claimed that hoarding and speculation trade aggravated hike in sugar and flour prices. Prime Minister Imran Khan, taking notice of the price hike had ordered a crackdown on hoarders and profiteers to overcome the crisis.

The prime minister him-

Steps taken against illegal constructions in City, Says Nasir Hussain Shah

Karachi 26 Feb. 2020: More than 900 illegal buildings / constructions had been demolished. No any person or any construction company would spared, who found involved in such practice and would be dealt with iron hands.

This was observed by Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Sindh Minister for Local Government and Information while talking to the press men. Soon after a surprise visit of Civic Centre, the office of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA).

On the occasion, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah while warning encroachment mafia and builders that those who found responsible would now be booked under the strict sections of SBCA and would be awarded severe punishments and penalties according to institutional rules & laws. Earlier FIR being registered under section 118 by SBCA officers, which was proved not so effective, he added.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said strict action would be taken against those builders who fraudulently looted lacs of rupees from innocent people. He assured that the same losted money would be refunded to the deprived people.

Sindh Minister for Local Government and Information Syed Nasir Hussain Shah

upon honest and professional people of the civil society. Mr. Roshan Ali Shaikh Secretary Local Government was also present on the occasion along with other high rank officers of the department. The Minister vowed that the Sindh government would continue to introduce whatever legislation needed for the protection of the members of the minorities. While giving a comparison between Pakistan and India, he said that in India the members of the minorities were suffering immensely owing to the depressing policies of the Modi government, while in Pakistan they were free to

move anywhere they wanted and practices their religion with complete freedom. Syed Nasir Hussain Shah on behalf of the Sindh government announced that the government would make available 10,000 copies of Bhagavad Gita for the members of Hindu community soon. A Hindu delegation led by Pandit Shyam Nand and

toled else that public complaints regarding illegal encroachments would be registered at help line no 1093.

Earlier during his surprise visit, he directed that a cell be established at one window facility of SBCA already established in collaboration of world bank. He also ordered to constitute a over seas committee which comprises



Ram Yoga Das who came from Australia to attend the festival also met with Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and his delegation that included special coordinator to Sindh Chief Minister Shahzad Memon, Dr. Lal Chand Ukran and Chairman DMC South Malik Fayaz.

Meanwhile, while talking to the media Sindh Minister for Information, Local Government, Housing Town Planning, Religious Affairs, Forest and Wildlife Syed Nasir Hussain said that the government of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf had given nothing to the people except for inflation.

information, traffic data or content data. Under the rules, social media platforms will have to be required to remove any 'unlawful content' pointed out to them in writing or electronically signed email within 24 hours, and in emergency cases within six hours.

These firms will have to establish registered offices with a physical address located in Islamabad within the next three months. These companies will also be required to appoint a Pakistan-based focal person for coordination with the relevant authorities within three months and establish one or more database servers.



abide by any of the provisions will entail a fine of up to Rs500 million. The information to be provided may include subscriber

PPP seeks submission of FIA report on wheat, sugar crises in Parliament



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party on Tuesday demanded the government to submit inquiry report of the Federal Investigation Agency on sugar and flour crisis, in the Parliament, ARY News reported.

People's Party Secretary General Muzaffar Bukhan said a statement said that the government will not be allowed to keep the issue of the wheat flour and sugar crises under the carpet. The prime minister him-

New media regulations could hamper freedom of expression: Alice Wells

Washington: Chief US diplomat for South Asian affairs, Alice Wells, on Tuesday expressed concern over the Pakistan government's new social media regulations, adding that they "could be a setback to freedom of expression and development of digital economy."

"Talking to Twitter, she stated: "Unfortunately if Pakistan discourages foreign investors and stifles domestic innovation in such a dynamic sector. Encourage discussion with stakeholders." On February 12, the federal cabinet had approved a set of rules to regulate social media in the country, under which social

media companies will be obliged to disclose any information or data to a designated investigation agency, when sought, and failure to

The information to be provided may include subscriber

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Systematic reeducation

Raza Hussain

If you look at the history of inflation in Pakistan, you'll notice that it comes down shortly after 2000 as the country successfully implemented a short but very tough IMF programme in that year. It rises briefly after that but again comes down after 2002, when the country went on to another IMF programme that was supposed to last for three years. That programme was terminated by Pakistan in 2004 since the then government of Gen Pervez Musharraf felt it no longer needed the programme since all targets had already been met; inflation once again rose till it hit an all-time high of 25pc in August of 2008 (year on

year). In November 2008, the country once again went onto an IMF programme and inflation declined to 10pc by 2011, falling back into single digits by the end of that year. This was a sharp fall, but it was expected to be sharper still given the scale of the adjustment the country had just undertaken, but the switch to government borrowing from commercial banks has been supported by large liquidity injections by the (State Bank of Pakistan), a policy that has similar inflationary effects as direct central bank financing," IMF noted. To reduce inflation and increase the SBP's policy credibility, such injections should be scaled back and direct government borrowing from the SBP should be avoided.

By 2013, when the country again went on to an IMF programme, inflation was already on a sharply declining path. Nevertheless, interest rates were kept elevated at 9pc for a while longer to partially offset anticipated inflationary pressures building up via a hike in the sales tax rate, power tariffs and exchange rate depreciation. By 2015, the fiscal deficit was on its way down, government borrowing from the banking system was also down, and monetary expansion was largely contained. Interest rates fell to 6.5pc in acknowledgment of this. When this government came into power, monetary expansion was out of control. Government borrowing from the State Bank, a practice akin to printing more money,

doubled from Rs3.67 trillion in June 2018 to Rs7.6tr by February 2019 before it was more or less stabilised at that level. This alone was a stupendous rate of money creation, vastly expanding the money supply in a short span of time. The result was inflation that spiked at 9.4pc in March 2019, catching the government by surprise. The government tried to spin this result, saying the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics had miscalculated the figure. They argued that inflation should be around one percentage point lower than what the PBS was reporting, due to some quibble with how gas prices were being treated. Then it plateaued out. For the next few months it was stable at the elevated level and closed the fiscal

Importance of regional peace

Opposing Ashraf Ghani's government are the Taliban, Afghanistan's principal militant actor a group that at one time ruled from Kabul before being dislodged by the Americans. The Americans top this list, though other regional players are also involved in the game. But it is a fact that the Taliban to reach a settlement with the US as well as the Kabul government, they would go a long way towards ending years of conflict and achieving a durable peace. However, the long-running negotiations between the US and Taliban have yet to achieve the ideal results, though at times it has appeared that both parties have been tantalisingly close to an agreement. On Tuesday, a Taliban spokesman accused the Americans of stalling the peace process and 'blame-shifting'. The statement appears to be a reaction to the US secretary of state's recent comments that the Taliban must reduce violence in order for the peace process to move forward. The statements from both sides may well be public posturing to put pressure on the other and achieve maximum gains behind closed doors. After all, US officials recently visited Afghanistan and Pakistan to brief both states on the status of the negotiations. Indeed, the Taliban need to shun violence, especially the targeting of non-combatants, to send a signal to all concerned that they are serious about peace. However, the US must also realise that there is a small window of opportunity here, and if the Taliban are rebuffed they must shun the peace process altogether and return to the battlefield for the long run. This outcome will only spell more misery for the people of Afghanistan. Both sides need to drop maximalist positions and reach a doable agreement, while the Afghan government must be kept in the loop for the peace process to succeed.

G M Murshidi

I was handed a large trunk containing the residue, which I discovered were significant, if not priceless, examples of miniatures ranging from the 16th to the 19th century. Thanks to the patient generosity of my mother, I used to cycle to the museum each day, and working gratis, sit in the singlebulb twilight of the curator's room, examine each painting, noting its size, subject matter, likely provenance and relevant bibliographical details. It was a painstaking, lonely task, made even more trying by the hostility of the inhospitable staff.

It took 10 years to find one. My mentor throughout this decade of depression was Dr William Archer, the doyen of art historians, who himself laboured with his magnum opus Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills (1973). Sagely, he suggested that I structure my catalogue on the basis of his. I did. He approached Sotheby's with my manuscript. They agreed to publish as a sequel to his book, if he contributed a foreword. He did. And thus, in early 1977, the first copy of my first book was hand-carried by a friendly PIA pilot from London to Karachi, and by another to Lahore. Only authors who have cradled their first book in their hands will understand that pure effusion of one-sided love a parent feels for a

brainchild, one that will never grow up. My book received a generous reception by everyone except the Lahore Museum. It demanded 200 free copies. Had the book not been priced at £25, this request might have been bearable. Such largesse, though, was beyond the means of a struggling author. I had returned to my profession but still lived from hand to hand. For the many reviews of my book, the one that remains indelible, appeared in the Financial Times, written by Natwar Singh, then deputy Indian high commissioner in London. Over dinner, Dr Archer pressed Natwar to assess the book on its merits, and not to assess how marvellous that a Pakistani Muslim should be writing on Indian miniature

paintings. 'Absolutely,' Natwar agreed. 'The book is clearly a work of academic scholarship.' Sure enough, when the FT review appeared, it began with 'How marvellous that a Pakistani Muslim... This first book led to an invitation to speak at a colloquium on Pahari painting convened at the Los Angeles County Museum in September 1977. On the way back from the United States, my wife and I stopped in London. We walked down New Bond Street and there, in the two showcases flanking the entrance of Sotheby's, were countless copies of my book. It was a heart stopping moment.

However, one that is singularly special is when I revisited the famous antiquarian book-dealer Maggs Bros in London's Berkeley Square. Its owner, Mr Clifford Maggs, had been a prime source of out-of-date research books for me, an encounter with Mr Edward Gibbs, Chairman of Sotheby's Middle East, India, at the Lahore Biennale 02 recently brought back memories, buried, one thought, beyond retrieval. Usually, I try to avoid references to myself in these columns but I make an exception about this particular meeting. My relationship with Sotheby's Parker Bernet started in the 1970s, when its newly established offshoot, Philip Wilson Publishers agreed to publish my first

book Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum. The research for that book a catalogue of over 500 miniature paintings in the Lahore Museum's collection began in 1966. Professor Shakir Ali, then principal of the National College of Arts and a board member of the museum, suggested that I, a chartered accountant with an unassuaged passion for art, should catalogue the paintings. The previous catalogue had been published in 1922. It was more a handbook of the paintings on display. Following the partition of Punjab in 1947, the Lahore Museum collection was divided, one-third of it going to the East Punjab Government in India. Courtesy- PO

Change....?



City news

KCCI President seeks 'Special Policy' to save importers from severe losses

KARACHI: President of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) Agha Shahab Ahmed Khan has requested the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to come up with some kind of a Special Policy to save the importers



of various goods and commodities from suffering severe losses due to ban imposed on imports from China because of the outbreak of corona virus, COVID-19. In a statement issued, Agha Shahab urged the relevant authority to issues notification in which the port authorities and all terminal operators must be advised to refrain from imposing demurrage and detention charges on those consignments which have already arrived at the Pakistani ports from China but were not being cleared. "Any demurrage or detention charges already applied on such consignments must immediately be waived off which would certainly be widely welcomed by the business community", he

penalized and relief has to be provided to the perturbed traders by waiving the demurrage and detention charges." He said that out of a total bilateral trade of around US\$12 billion between Pakistan and China, around US\$6 billion has been transacted so far but the downfall in trade would certainly appear by the end of current fiscal year and US\$12 billion mark will not be achieved due to complete suspension of trade between the two countries. "The outbreak of corona virus is an opportunity for the local industry as we have to look into the possibility of what we can produce on our own which was previously being imported from China prior to suspension of trade", he added. He stressed that the lethal virus has been rapidly spreading in many countries around the world including some countries bordering Pakistan hence, the government will have to take stringent measures to save our country from the eruption of deadly virus. He hoped that the relevant departments would realize the gravity of the situation and relief will soon be provided to the importers as soon as possible by urging the port authorities not to demand any demurrage and detention charges from those importers whose goods were arriving from China which would certainly be welcomed.

Shaan e Pakistan announces details of its upcoming thunderous fifth edition

Karachi, February 25, 2020: Shaan-e-Pakistan the huge and unique Pakistani platform for culture, food, music and fashion which aims to project the best that Pakistan has to offer beyond its borders, held its star-studded press conference at Zaq restaurant, Dolman Mall, here early today. The event was well-attended by media, celebrities, socialites and corporates who graced the red carpet before the start of the conference. The event was hosted by the charming Hira Hussain who invited the founder and creator of the prestigious platform, Shaan-e-Pakistan, Huma Nasser to introduce the



event. She announced the details of the upcoming 5th Edition and said "After the overwhelming success of the previous editions that took place in New Delhi in 2015, Lahore in 2016, Karachi in 2018 and Lahore in 2019, this year Shaan-e-Pakistan aims to cross another milestone by holding their 5th Edition - PROMISING SHAAN-E-PAKISTAN, 3-DAY FESTIVAL, in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 21st till 23rd March, 2020." She added the objective of

doing such festivals outside Pakistan is to give a platform to our country to show what it has to offer in terms of art, culture, music, food, fashion, property and trade. The three-day event will include exhibitions of Sri Lanka Exhibition and Convention Centre by both Pakistanis and Sri Lankan corporates, women entrepreneurs, designers and artists. There will be a designer Lounge headed by Faiza Malik from Ensembles Dubai featuring Saniya Maskatiya, Fareeda Hasan, Arman and a lot more designers. There will be a Crafter's Lounge headed by Anisa Yunus with some great crafts of Pakistan, Savvy Lounge by Amir Mazhar fea-

ling with Shaan-e-Pakistan as Music Curator Partners. The idea of what to expect in Sri Lanka, a sensational unplugged session by lead singer Wajih Farooqui of Raeth Band followed by Komal Rizvi and finally Safer Jaffrey took place, after which the floor was open to questions and answers. High tea was then served. The event would not be possible without the support of Zee Foundation and Saad Ahsan Immigration Law Firm, and Tranquility Beach Commonweal Dominica who are the main promoters of the event, Hemani is the organic partner and Malka Foods is

the food partner. HUM Network is the official media partner, while Hot FM 103 is the radio partner. Print media partner is Pakistan Observer.

which is also presenting a property and pharma pavilion. Among the main partners from Sri Lanka supporting Shaan-e-Pakistan with gusto are aesthetic partner Jewel Gate, hospitality partner Galadari Colombo, venue partner Barefoot and SLECC, and logistics partner ASK, airline partner Sri Lankan Air and travel partner Reems Travel. Zao is the official restaurant partner in Karachi.



While a fashion show is those present and to give an

Pakistan invited to attend US-Taliban peace deal signing on Feb 29

ISLAMABAD: Qatar has invited Pakistan to attend the peace signing deal between the US and the

US and the Taliban. He said it has always been the stance of Pakistan that there is no military solution to

US troops out of Afghanistan. Both sides have also discussed the implementation of another condition

government, extended an invitation to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Radio Pakistan reported.



Qureshi said Pakistan and Qatar had both played a "pivotal role" in the Afghan reconciliation process. He welcomed the peace deal and said Pakistan had always held the view that there was no military solution to the Afghan conflict, adding that now the world was accepting this stance. According to Radio Pakistan, Qureshi expressed confidence that the peace deal would lead to intra-Afghan dialogue.

The foreign minister had on Saturday said Pakistan played its role and "fulfilled all promises" with America after reports of the US-Taliban deal emerged. Read: Pakistan helped construct roadmap for US-Taliban peace deal, says FM Qureshi. Qureshi went on to say now it was the responsibility of the Afghan government to take the peace process forward.

He said Pakistan wanted to see the formation of an inclusive delegation for advancing towards intra-Afghan dialogue. "My experience shows that the people of Afghanistan want peace. It is now up to their elite whether they take forward the peace efforts or waste it by indulging in power games. All responsibility will be on them [the Afghan government] and not on Pakistan," the foreign minister had said.

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the Afghan conflict. He said the world is now also accepting Pakistan's stance. FM Qureshi expressed the confidence that the US-Taliban peace deal will lead to intra Afghan dialogue. On February 21, Afghan Taliban and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had confirmed to hold successful dialogues leading to a US-Taliban peace deal for ending the decades-long war in Afghanistan.

Both sides have put conditions for creating a suitable security situation prior to signing an accord to pull

for releasing prisoners, whereas the political parties will envisage a strategy for initiating intra-Afghanistan talks. Qatar has invited Pakistan to the signing of the US-Taliban peace deal set to take place on February 29. Radio Pakistan reported on Tuesday. Last week, the US and the Taliban announced they were set to sign a historic agreement in Doha, Qatar, on Saturday, that would pave the way to ending America's longest war. During a meeting today, Qatar's ambassador to Pakistan Saqr Bin Mubarak Al-Mansouri, on behalf of the Qatar

Earth's atmosphere. An environmentalist at heart, Qureshi turned her academic research at Cranfield University, UK, into a save-the-planet endeavor and embarked on a mission to build the world's first pollution-free jet engine.

Pakistani scientist invents world's first eco-friendly aircraft engine

Lahore: Pakistan is set to unveil the world's first-generation contrail-free aircraft engine between mid-to-late 2020, the technological marvel's inventor Dr Sarah Qureshi revealed on Tuesday.

Qureshi has been working on the project since 2018 to eliminate the negative impact of commercial air carriers on the stratosphere that contributes to global warming.

The Pakistani scientist explained the contrail phenomenon, a visible white streak of smoke emitted from an aircraft's jet engines during flight, and discussed its harmful effects on Earth's atmosphere.

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World Bank delays two of Pakistan's budgetary support loans

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has delayed the approval of two budgetary support loans worth \$750 million due to lack of progress on some of the agreed prior conditions, including disagreement among provinces over harmonisation of the general sales tax (GST) on services. The postponement would also delay the restoration of Pakistan's budgetary support, which had been suspended four years ago owing to the deterioration of macroeconomic indicators. Last time, the Washington-based lender had approved a budgetary support loan in February 2016.

Good progress is being made," commented a spokesperson for the World Bank when asked whether the bank had delayed approval of the loans. "As and when they (RISE and SHIFT) are ready, they will be

review document showed March 6 as the date of board meeting for approval of the second review and end-December 2019 performance criteria. The March 6 date may be missed as the IMF management usually needs at least four to six weeks after the staff-level agreement to circulate the report among board members and get it approved. "Many of the RISE programme's agreed prior actions have been completed and work on the remaining actions is under way," said an official of the economic affairs ministry. He hoped that Pakistan would be able to complete the policy matrix next month and the government was foreseeing that the loans would now be approved in May. "There's no specified date for the completion of prior actions, however, the Finance Division is trying to complete them by the end of March. Delay, if any, has been on account of CCI meeting on the National Tax Council and PHPL debt matters, and the World Bank is aware of this," said Omar Hamid Khan, Special Finance Secretary. "RISE will not affect SHIFT," he said. The key objective of the RISE programme is to enhance the policy and institutional framework to improve fiscal management. The World Bank has placed a condition that the four provinces

considered by the executive directors of the World Bank for approval, the spokesperson said. Pakistan is already struggling to keep the seven-month-old \$6-billion IMF programme on track. An IMF mission has returned to Washington without reaching a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the second review (October-December) of the programme. Ten days have passed since the IMF mission returned and there is no word from the Ministry of Finance when the staff-level agreement will be reached. The IMF's first

A World Bank board meeting had been scheduled for March 19 to approve a \$500-million development policy credit — called the Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy (RISE) programme, according to official documents of the World Bank. Similarly, another policy credit of \$250 million for the Securing Human Investments to Foster Transformation (SHIFT) programme has also been delayed. The approval of the RISE and SHIFT loans has been delayed for at least two months, sources in the Ministry of Finance told The Express Tribune. It is for the second time that the World Bank has delayed the



World Bank board may consider approval of the loans either in late May or in June, the sources said. The delay in the \$750-million loans would also affect the government's external financing projections for the current fiscal year. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has shown \$750 million as part of official inflows in the year. A lower-than-expected current account deficit would partially offset the impact of some of the delayed loans. "Discussions with authorities on RISE and SHIFT are continuing,

considered by the executive directors of the World Bank for approval, the spokesperson said. Pakistan is already struggling to keep the seven-month-old \$6-billion IMF programme on track. An IMF mission has returned to Washington without reaching a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the second review (October-December) of the programme. Ten days have passed since the IMF mission returned and there is no word from the Ministry of Finance when the staff-level agreement will be reached. The IMF's first

President Arif Alvi visits deaf-run KFC restaurant, appreciates efforts under Mitao Bhook platform

Islamabad: President Arif Alvi, along with wife Samina Alvi, on Friday visited a KFC restaurant, operated by deaf employees, and appreciated KFC Pakistan's efforts towards inclusion.

While visiting KFC - I.I. Chundrigar during lunch hour they were greeted by CEO KFC Pakistan, Raza Pirbhai, who apprised them of the organisation's efforts to boost inclusion under its Mitao Bhook platform. Appreciating their efforts, the President



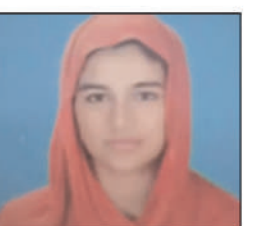
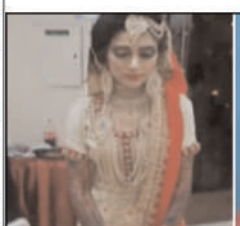
under its Mitao Bhook platform. Appreciating their efforts, the President interacted with the deaf employees, placed an order using sign language and purchased the meal himself.

After lunch, the President joined the employees who presented the national anthem using sign language. Speaking to Raza Pirbhai, he recognised KFC Pakistan's efforts to actively create equal opportunities and improve the lives of disabled members of society by focusing on integrating deaf individuals and moving towards an inclusive future. Inclusion is the central pillar of KFC Pakistan's Mitao Bhook platform, with 1,000 deaf students being educated annually at the Dewa KFC Campus, in coordination with the Dewa Institute, along with 200 at the Deaf Reach KFC Campus, in conjunction with FESF. This is in addition to having 220 deaf employees and operating 9 completely deaf-run restaurants.

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Kashana scandal whistleblower's autopsy report makes startling revelations



LAHORE: A post-mortem report of Iqra Kainat, who brought the Kashana scandal to light, emerged on Tuesday with startling revelations about the cause of her death, ARY News reported. The report claimed she died of starvation as she was denied food and water during her treatment at a government hospital. Samples collected from her body have been sent to a forensic lab to ascertain whether she was poisoned to death, the report said. Earlier, the Social Welfare Department of Punjab had released the findings of a fact-finding probe into the mysterious death of the girl saying she died due to malady. Iqra Kainat, 23, died on Feb 5 almost a year after getting married to Abid Sanaulah of Green Town. The probe report said the girl was not in contact with the Kashana shelter house since her marriage in June 2019. Last year on Dec 17, it said, the police shifted Iqra to the Bilquis Edhi Centre, Lahore from where she was shifted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital after she fell ill. She was sent back to the Edhi Centre after she was discharged from the hospital. She breathed her last on Feb 6 due to

illness, the report concluded. Afhsan Latif, former superintendent of Kashana, had rejected the probe report. She demanded a probe into the girl's sudden death. She added Iqra had grown up in the Child Protection Bureau, Darul Aman and Kashana and thus, she was abreast of the miseries of the girls living there. LAHORE: A post-mortem report of Iqra Kainat, who brought the Kashana scandal to light, emerged on Tuesday with startling revelations about the cause of her death, ARY News reported. The report claimed she died of starvation as she was denied food and water during her treatment at a government hospital. Samples collected from her body have been sent to a forensic lab to ascertain whether she was poisoned to death, the report said. Earlier, the Social Welfare Department of Punjab had released the findings of a fact-finding probe into the mysterious death of the girl saying she died due to malady. Iqra Kainat, 23, died on Feb 5 almost a year after getting married to Abid Sanaulah of Green Town. The probe report said the girl was not in contact with the Kashana shelter house since her marriage in June 2019.

NAB to move SC against bail of ex-PM Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has decided to approach the Supreme Court against the Islamabad High

Operations director general were in attendance in the meeting. The meeting decided to move the Supreme



Court's (IHC) verdict of granting post-arrest bail to PML-N leaders. Read More: Shahid Khaqan Abbasi granted bail in LNG case. Earlier today, a two-member bench of the IHC headed by Justice Athar Minallah approved the bail for former premier Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in the LNG case. The bench ordered the former minister to submit a Rs10 million surety bond to secure the bail.

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