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Posts, coronavirus news hit by anti-spam system glitch 'restored'

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## PM informs nation about steps against virus: Firdous

Urges masses to adopt precautionary measures to contain spread of pandemic

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan Sunday said Prime Minister Imran Khan in his address had comprehensively briefed the nation regarding practical steps being taken by the government to fight and curb coronavirus outbreak.

Talking to PTV, she urged the masses to adopt precautionary measures to contain the spread of the pandemic just like China did.

She said the prime minister had asked the nation to adopt preventive measures, urging them to cooperate with the government and go into self-lockdown to cope with the coronavirus outbreak.

She asked media to play a responsible role in creating awareness among people regarding the disease. She said no decision had been made to lockdown the country and it would be decided later.

Firdous said people should avoid handshakes and maintain social distancing to protect themselves.

Every individual, especially religious clerks and scholars, should play his role to educate the masses for taking precautionary measures to cope with the deadly disease, she added.

Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said the government was facilitating the masses and making all out efforts to fight against coronavirus.

## Zulfi Bukhari disapproves foreign media's false report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari has disapproved a false report published by a foreign media outlet on the condition of quarantine facilities, set up at Pakistan's border to contain spread of the Coronavirus from Iran.

He pointed out apparent slackness by the media that even did not bother to visit the targeted area (Taftan) to ascertain the real facts on the ground.

"A hatchet job by 'the guardian' with misreported hearsay based story. They didn't bother to go on ground and report facts like it should be done for any calamity stricken or war zone," the special assistant tweeted.

He urged 'the guardian' to focus on the United Kingdom for the time being.

Referring to Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal's tweet on the same news story, he appreciated the provincial government for rubbishing the news item on the social media.

According to Jam Kamal, the story was fake. He, in a tweet, claimed that the guardian had not visited Taftan.

Posting a picture published by the western media along with the story to highlight the poor condition of camps at Taftan, he said the picture was of Quetta as there was no pine tree in the Taftan. —APP

## Hafeez, Sania discuss relief package

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh Sunday met Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar to discuss and finalise the contours of the special relief package being prepared by the government for the people in the wake of coronavirus epidemic.

During the meeting, different options and proposals as part of the proposed package were discussed, according to press statement



KARACHI: A view of closed shops and hotels to restrict people as precautionary measures to prevent coronavirus in the city.

## CORONAVIRUS

# PM calls to show self discipline against panic

■ Says complete lockdown not possible as situation in Pakistan different

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday appealed to the nation to impose self discipline and should not indulge in panic buying, as with collective efforts, they would overcome the threats of Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic.

In his second televised address to the nation after the country reported above 600 coronavirus cases, the prime minister said that they were not going for complete lockdown as the situation in Pakistan was different from the rest of the world.

It would create economic woes as 25 per cent chunk of its population was living below the poverty line.

"The issue of panic is more dangerous than Coronavirus. If all go on panic buying, it will result in irreparable damage to society," he stressed.

Noting a difference between the situation in Pakistan and those of US, UK, Italy and France after the COVID 19 pandemic, he said the complete lockdown would mean im-

position of curfew across the country with the law enforcement agencies and armed forces on the streets to enforce it.

In case of such scenario what would become of the labourers, daily wagers, rickshaw and taxi drivers, he said adding they would have no resources to look after their families, similarly, the government did not have the resources to cater to their needs.

The prime minister said China did it because it was the second richest country in the world with adequate system and huge resources.

Reminding the nation to adopt precautionary measures, he said "They should go for self quarantine. If you have symptoms like flu and cough, stay inside your homes instead visiting hospitals."

The prime minister observed that about 90 per cent affected persons from the disease had mild symptoms and they recovered quickly. The disease posed serious threats to the old and senile population or those who had respiratory complications.

"The pandemic could spread quickly, if the nation did not take precautionary measures," he warned.

The prime minister said that social distancing should be given preferences instead holding marriages or other social gatherings inside homes as it would be an injustice with the old population of the country who were the most vulnerable segment of society.

"My advice is to impose discipline upon yourself, take care of yourself and avoid going outside," he stressed. He said the government had already issued directives for the closure of shopping malls and rescheduling of cricket events.

The prime minister said Allah Almighty often tried the believers with ordeals.

"I have firm belief in my nation which always emerges out of the trying times successfully. I am proud of my nation which faced the difficult times. I have strong hopes with my nation and it will not disappoint me," he said and cited the natural

calamity of 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods which inflicted huge damages upon the country.

He also mentioned the support extended by the overseas Pakistanis in those hard times.

The prime minister said today, his government required nation's fully support and cooperation in tackling the Covid 19 threat as any slackness or irresponsibility on their part could lead to a problematic situation.

He said if the nation imposed self discipline like the one exhibited by the Chinese nation, it would emerge successful of the current situation.

The prime minister said the country had no shortage of edible things and advised the people not to pile up things unnecessarily.

He further assured the nation that he along with his team were working day and night as how to tackle the situation and steer the business, economic and industrial sectors of the country out of the current economic slowdown. And in this regard, he would announce a plan within a couple of days, he added.

## Coronavirus: FM Qureshi for debt relief to eveloping countries

■ Briefs his German counterpart on efforts taken to contain outbreak of Covid-19

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi has underscored the need for providing debt relief to developing countries so that they could utilize their resources towards mitigating the effects of Covid-19.

He was talking to German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas during a telephonic conversation.

The foreign minister briefed his German counterpart on the efforts taken by the government to contain the outbreak of Covid-19 and underscored the need for the international community to collaborate during these challenging times, Foreign of-

fice spokesperson in a press release on Sunday said.

The foreign minister said that in the same spirit, Pakistan was coordinating with the regional countries via the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

During the recent video conference of the SAARC member states, Pakistan also called on India to lift the nearly eight months long blockade in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), to ensure necessary medical supplies to contain the spread of Covid-19, he added.

The foreign minister further underlined that the situation in Iran was very serious and it was important that sanctions be lifted so that Iran

could effectively deal with the humanitarian crisis unfolding due to Covid-19.

Qureshi informed his German counterpart that Pakistan had followed the IMF programme in letter and spirit and as a result, its economy was becoming stable.

However, due to the challenge posed by Covid-19, the resources were being stretched to the limits.

Foreign Minister Qureshi offered deep condolences over the loss of lives in Germany due to the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19).

He informed that three persons in Pakistan had lost their lives while more than 500 people were infected by the Coronavirus (Covid-19).

The German foreign minister informed that 68 people had lost their lives and more than 20,000 people were infected due to Covid-19 in Germany. He said Germany shared the concern regarding the situation in Iran and would take up the matter at his important regional meetings next week.

He also agreed on the need to provide relief to developing countries in dealing with debt burden, so that they could utilize their resources towards containing Covid-19 and said that Germany would raise this issue appropriately during the forthcoming high-level meetings.

The two ministers also agreed to remain engaged.

## Complete lockdown to have serious implications: Ejaz

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Ejaz Ahmed Shah Sunday said the complete lockdown could have serious implications for the country, which was why the federal government was not deciding about it.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) lauded the prompt response of the Pakistani government to curb coronavirus outbreak, he said talking to a private news channel.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan in his address had asked the masses to go into self-isolation because taking precautionary measures was better than cure.

The minister said after the 18th amendment the provinces were authorized to take any decision and they had appealed the federal government for deployment of army in the provinces to contain the critical situation.

Calling the army should not be considered as a lockdown as armed forces had always provided assistance to the government to cope with any calamity, he added. —Online

## Sindh govt imposes province-wide lockdown

By Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Sindh government on Sunday has imposed lockdown in the province from 12:00am on Sunday after the number of coronavirus cases escalated, a report says on Sunday.

According to details, Sindh Governor Imran Ismail said that during the lockdown, grocery and medical stores would remain open. On the other hand, the Governor House Sindh has been closed for two weeks in view of the worsening situation of the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, in the meeting of the coronavirus Task Force chaired by Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, important decisions were taken regarding the coronavirus.

Sources told that preventive measures taken against the coronavirus are set to be tightened; this decision was taken after repeated calls of social distancing were ignored by the populace.

On the other hand, spokesman Sindh government Murtaza Wahab tweeted on social networking website Twitter, saying it was time to make difficult decisions.

He wrote that the Chief Minister had spoken to the Sindh Governor, Corps Commander Karachi, DG Rangers and IG Sindh regarding the implementation of the order to keep people in their homes.

## Pakistan shows concerns over Yasin Malik's health conditions

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed its deep concerns over the deteriorating health condition of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader Muhammad Yasin Malik, who is incarcerated in Tihar jail.

"The reports of Kashmiri leader's announcement of going on an indefinite hunger strike from April 1, this year in protest against the false charge sheet framed by the Indian government against him under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (TADA) Court in a 30 year old case are worrisome. The victimisation of a political leader to suppress the voice of Kashmiris is highly condemnable," a press release of Foreign Office spokesperson on Sunday said.

The international community, including the United Nations, Human Rights organisations and the global media must take notice of Indian government's inhuman treatment of the Kashmiri leader who has been leading a peaceful freedom struggle for decades.

"India must be urged to immediately release Yasin Malik and withdraw all false charges against him," it added. "India must realise that by incarcerating Kashmiris leaders, it cannot subjugate the people of Kashmir. —APP

# Pak-China leadership on same page on Covid-19, CPEC

The Business Report

BEIJING: In the epic fight against "Covid-19 terror" offering the world new standards of resilience on the footsteps of China spirit, momentous meeting between President

Arif Alvi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have benchmarked "Iron-Clad Friendship", allowing both Pakistan and China to make everyone sit up and take notice on regional and international landscape.

The friendship is based on mutual trust, bilateral respect, equal-footed cooperation, cognizance on international issues especially new Afghan peace deal, Kashmir problem and deep understanding on CPEC, signature project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), according to an article published by China Economic Net.

Formal get-together came at a time when both countries needed most each other on national and international issues. President Arif Alvi, who paid his first ever visit to China since Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government came to power in 2018, met Chinese President Xi in a crucial occasion when China registered an extraordinary victory against coronavirus in Wuhan, the epic center of Covid-19.

In China, hundreds of people died; daily tally was on rise. However, China spirit, leadership will, national resolve and health SOPs nixed reign of terror. Now Wuhan once was worst-hit city came clean with zero registration of new coronavirus case. President Arif Alvi's presence on the victory time cheered up Chinese leadership as well as all and sundry. No one but Pakistan was first country which cozier up Iron

Friend in her jubilation.

When China had been struggling to make it through, Pakistan lent its help by dispatching medical supplies to China. The Pakistani government allocated 300,000 medical masks, 800 hazmat suits and 6,800 pairs of gloves from the stocks of public hospitals around the nation and transported the aid to China.

The Hunza region in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan donated 7,000 surgical masks to China. Zhang Heqing, cultural counselor of the Chinese embassy in Pakistan, as well as director of the China Cultural Center in Pakistan, accepted the donation and met the 12-person delegation headed by leaders of the Development Committee of the Overseas Chinese Association in Pakistan.

Zhang expressed gratitude for the donation

made by people in Hunza on behalf of Yao Jing, Chinese ambassador to Pakistan. Later Pakistan sent its military aircraft to China to deliver pandemic control materials.

The materials included medical protective suits, face masks and goggles.

Around 300,000 tablets of Resochin (chloroquine phosphate) - an effective treatment for Covid-19 - from one of Bayer's subsidiaries in Pakistan were transported to China.

Pakistan's National Assembly also passed a resolution to express solidarity with China over its battle against the outbreak. According to the resolution, the National Assembly appreciates the dedicated efforts and efficient policies made by the Chinese government and people in the anti-epidemic fight.

"As China fights outbreak, Pakistan has stood

firmly by us, maintaining flights and pooling medical supplies all over the country to help China. We are deeply grateful and touched by such trust and confidence," said Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying few weeks back during the 'Online' briefing held in Beijing, applauding Pakistan's friendliness.

Showcasing true essence of "A friend indeed is friend in need", China joined hands of Pakistan to hash out Covid-19 SOPs in the beginning. Chinese government also sent 12,000 kits to Pakistan for the detection of the coronavirus in the country. Economic Affairs Minister Hamad Azhar expressed gratitude to China and said that the ally had provided "grant assistance of USD 4 million along with 300,000 medical face masks, 10 ventilators, and other equipment".