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Britain's MI5 intelligence agency has a new chief: Ken McCallum

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CM reviews coronavirus related measures in Province



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Announces launching of Coronavirus Relief Fund, rules out lockdown

We can defeat virus with strategy: PM

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan while addressing the nation on Monday said that war against coronavirus will be won through proper strategy. He said there should be no haste in any decision regarding lockdown the whole country.

Prime Minister said the one nation that has emerged successful to a great extent in its fight against COVID-19 is China. It had locked down two crore people in Wuhan to fight this virus. "Perhaps we could also do that if we had an economy like China. Alas, we don't," he added. "We are a country with 25 percent population living below poverty line. Then a number of people living right next to the poverty line in one blow will be ousted into poverty. So, we are looking at the plight of at least 9-10 crore people."

PM said our own neighbour country, India locked down entire country. Today Indian PM apologises its people for locking down without proper planning. India is in a catch 22, if they lift lockdown, COVID-19 spreads, if they don't people will die of hunger. "The biggest question before us is that if we lockdown entire Pakistan today, can we even provide food to the most underprivileged people? If no, this lockdown will be a failure."

"We have given a stimulus package in Pakistan worth \$800 billion. The US has also given a package worth \$2,000 billion. So obviously, we have limited resources. But what two assets we have is: charity due to our faith and our youth."

The premier said that people are treating corona patients as somewhat criminals, which is wrong. Corona is mostly fatal for people with pre-existing medical conditions or the aged ones. Rest can recover if they just go into self-quarantine.

He also announced launching of Coronavirus Relief Fund. "This will be an account in National Bank of Pakistan, you can deposit money in this account starting day after tomorrow. For those who deposit money in this account and declare it in tax statements, will get tax exemptions based on it."

Imran vows to provide relief to masses, economy

Prime Minister Imran Khan has underscored the government's resolve to take all-out steps to provide possible relief to people and every sector of the economy in difficult hour in the face of coronavirus pandemic. The Prime Minister said this while chairing a high-level meeting here on Monday.

The meeting reviewed the measures taken to support industry, commerce and energy sectors as well as steps to provide relief to poor segments of society in the wake of coronavirus outbreak. The PM said the country is facing an unprecedented situation and the government institutions need to play a vibrant role in this crisis. He said, "We are facing the challenge of poverty along with the issue of coronavirus." He said the government would utilize all resources to provide relief to the poor and weaker segments of society, adding, in that respect overseas Pakistanis and philanthropists within the country were a ray of hope for them.

The Prime Minister said the overseas Pakistanis as well as the patriotic people from home always proved in the testing times that they as a nation had the capability to face any difficult situation.

The PM directed the minister for national food security to keep an eye on the availability of essential items in the country and ensure that there is no shortage of flour, pulses, rice, ghee and sugar. The Prime Minister also called for constituting a special committee comprising federal and provincial authorities to monitor the situation of food items on daily basis and present its recommendations.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning Asad Umar, Minister for Economic Affairs Hammad Azhar, Minister for Energy Omar Ayub, Minister for National Food Security Makhdoom Khursu Bakhtiar, Advisor on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Advisor on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood, Special Assistant on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan, Special Assistant on Social Protection Dr Sania Nishtar and Special Assistant on Energy Nadeem Babar. Governor State Bank Reza Baqir and other concerned secretaries also attended the meeting through video link.

Special Assistant on Social Protection Dr Sania Nishtar gave a detailed briefing to the Prime Minister regarding steps taken to provide relief to vulnerable segments in the context of prevailing situation. The meeting also took stock of the measures taken for the industrial activities in the country. Advisor on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood apprised that under the Prime Minister's direction the owners of all huge industrial units have been asked to ensure release of salaries to their employees.

Similar steps for the security of employees working in the small and medium units are also being given the final shape with mutual consultation. With regard to the construction sector, the meeting also discussed in details the government's incentives and measures. The governor State Bank also briefed the PM about establishment of corona relief fund and the mechanism for the inclusion of overseas Pakistanis and the local rich philanthropists. The participants also deliberated upon the mechanism for encouraging the nationals residing in the country and abroad to support the national economy in this difficult situation.



RAWALPINDI: Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed inspecting the mobile isolation facility prepared in Rail Coaches to shelter Corona Virus patients at the Railway Station Rawalpindi.

Punjab approves Rs10b aid package

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar has approved Chief Minister Punjab 'Insaaf Imdad' package. Applications for the aid package will be received online and only the name, CNIC number and mobile number of the recipient will be required.

According to details, a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Usman Buzdar approved the Chief Minister Punjab 'Insaaf Imdad' package.

Chief Minister Usman Buzdar directed officials to launch the 'Insaaf Imdad' package quickly and said that the process of distributing aid to deserving families should be initiated soon.

Usman Buzdar said that financial assistance would be provided to only deserving people, under a foolproof mechanism. In the first phase, 2.5 million people would receive assistance of Rs 4,000 and families affected by lack of employment due to the coronavirus will be paid Rs 8,000 in 2 installments.

The Chief Minister, while addressing the meeting said that the Punjab government has allocated Rs 10 billion for CM Punjab 'Insaaf Imdad' Package and this package will be separate from the federal government's relief package. In view of the economic situation, Punjab government has also waived provincial taxes of Rs18 billion. He said that financial aid under the 'Insaaf Imdad' package would provide relief to the daily wagers and labour class.

Dollar gains Rs1.96, hits Rs167.50

KARACHI: The US dollar on Monday climbed to further Rs1.96 in the interbank market and is being traded at Rs167.50.

It is pertinent to mention here that during the past week, the dollar gained 6.87 rupee against the Pakistani Rupee. The highest mark touched by dollar at interbank was of Rs 169.50. Intervention from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and selling from exporters arrested the declining trend of the rupee.

The sharp rise in dollar's value increased the country's debt burden by hundreds of billions of rupees. The weakening rupee has been attributed to outflow of investments by foreign investors and loan payments. —Online

There are more dark days ahead, say analysts

Oil hits 18-year low as virus down demand

LONDON: Crude oil fell sharply on Monday, with US crude briefly dropping below \$20 and Brent hitting its lowest level in 18 years, on heightened fears that the global coronavirus shutdown could last months and demand for fuel could evaporate further.

Brent crude, the international benchmark for oil prices, was down \$1.93, or 7.7%, at \$23 by 0820 GMT, after earlier dropping to \$22.76, the lowest since November 2002.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell \$1.14, or 5.3%, to \$20.37. The price of oil is now so low that it is becoming unprofitable to many oil firms to remain active, analysts said, and higher cost producers will have no choice but to shut production, especially since storage capacities are almost full.

Another report adds: Asian markets fell Monday following a steep drop on Wall Street as the jubilation from last week's enormous US stimulus package faded and investors returned their attention to the soaring infection and death rate of the coronavirus.

Donald Trump finally signed off the more than \$2 trillion pump-prime measures on Friday, but equities -- which enjoyed a rally for much of the week -- ended on a negative note as dealers took profits.

While the disease ravages populations and the global economy grinds to a halt with 40 percent of the planet in lockdown, experts are struggling to get a grip on the scale of the crisis that is forecast to cause a worldwide recession. Analysts say there are likely more dark days ahead, with Trump abandoning his timetable for life returning to normal in the United States and extending emergency restrictions for another month.

The president said he expected the country to "be well on our way to recovery" by June 1 -- dropping his previous target of mid-April.

Meanwhile, senior US scientist Anthony Fauci issued a tentative prediction that COVID-19 could claim up to 200,000 lives in the US.

Governments and central banks have acted to shore up the global economy, pledging around \$5 trillion in stimulus support, with China on Monday joining the party by lowering bank borrowing costs and pumping billions of dollars into financial markets, while Singapore also eased rates. AxiCorp's Stephen Innes said markets looked like they were "nearing policy fatigue where it becomes less effective, and as the surprise element diminishes, no one cares".

"So, while policy responses in the US and Europe have been spectacular... the coronavirus keeps spreading globally, deepening fears of the economic and financial impact across countries. More market turmoil likely lies ahead." He also pointed out that with the corporate reporting season approaching "now we are about to enter a vortex of bad earnings, bad economic data, and bankruptcies."

The downbeat mood weighed on Asian equities, though most pared their morning losses. Tokyo ended more than one percent down, while Shanghai and Hong Kong were both off 0.9 percent. Mumbai and Manila lost more than two percent, while Taipei slipped 0.7 percent.

Seoul was flat, while there were also losses in Bangkok and Jakarta. Singapore slid more than three percent as investors brushed off the city-state's monetary policy easing measures that came days after data showed it was heading for a deep recession. However, Sydney soared seven percent in its best one-day performance ever following a more than five percent slide Friday. Traders also were buoyed by data pointing to a slowdown in new infections in Australia as well as an \$80 billion economic government support package that was unveiled after markets closed but was widely expected.

PSX loses 86 points after volatile day

By Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: The Pakistan stock market 100-index saw a dip of 86 points after closing on the week's first trading day.

According to the details, investors are facing growing uncertainty over the worsening situation of coronavirus in the country, not unlike the rest of the world, and the effect of this uncertainty is being seen in the Pakistan stock market. The trend of selling shares was apparent during the week's first trading day of the week, while the 100 index also recorded a loss of over 250 points during the day. At the end of trading day, some recovery was made due to late share buying by the investors and 100 index closed at 28,023 points after falling 86 points.

The 100 index saw a decline of 0.31% during the entire trading day while 1,277,645,166 shares were traded.

On the other hand, prices of crude oil fell to the lowest level in 17 years, with US oil price falling 5.2 percent to trade at \$20.39 cents a barrel. British crude oil prices fell 6.6 percent and traded at GBP 23.29

FBR extends time limit for filing goods declaration

ISLAMABAD: Mian Anjum Nisar, President, FPCCI has disclosed that the FPCCI Help Desk working under its Vice President Khuram Ijaz is succeeded in getting extension in time limit for filing of goods declaration.

The FPCCI Help Desk has been working 24 hours to solve the problems of traders and industrialists in the prevailing pandemic Covid-19. Time limit for filing of goods declaration from the existing 10 days has been extended to further 15 days (total 25 days) under section 79(1) of the Custom Act, 1969 for all IGMs filed between March 17, 2020 to April 7, 2020. —Online

ECC approves Rs1.2tr PM's virus relief package

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Economic Relief package has been approved by the ECC in its Monday's meeting chaired by Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Abdul Hafeez Shaikh. The economic package amounting to more than Rs 1.2 trillion has been approved in a bid to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

The ECC meeting allocated Rs 200 billion for daily wage labourers, Rs 100 billion for export and industrial sector, Rs 100 billion for SMEs and agriculture sector and Rs 50 billion for utility stores. An amount of Rs 280 billion has been approved for procurement of wheat at the state level, more than Rs 100 billion for 12 million deserving families and Rs 70 billion for relief in prices of petroleum products has also been approved.

Moreover, Rs 110 billion will be provided for relief in electricity and gas bills, Rs 100 billion for emergency relief funds while release of Rs 25 billion has been approved for the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

CDWP approves Rs466m projects for capital

A meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on

Monday approved two projects in the federal capital, worth Rs 466.264 million, and recommended four projects, worth Rs 133 billion, to Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) for consideration.

The CDWP meeting presided over by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan considered nine projects in total.

Projects related to health, physical planning & housing, transport & communication and water resources were considered during the meeting.

Health related project from the government of Punjab namely 'Punjab Human Capital Investment project' worth Rs 52,800 million was referred to ECNEC. The project envisages increasing the access to quality health, education and social protection services among poor and vulnerable households in 11 districts of Punjab.

Two position papers related to physical planning & housing were presented in the meeting. The first project titled "construction of admin block, magazine quarter guard, barracks, MT shed, horse stable & Parade Ground in Diplomatic Enclave, Islamabad" worth Rs 280m was approved in the meeting. Second position paper titled "construction of 4 B-type police station.

Virus deaths toll 20, total cases reach at 1,650

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pakistan on Monday has reported 20 more deaths from novel coronavirus while the total number of cases have surged to 1,685 as 535 patients have been tested positive for the epidemic in Sindh, 152 in Balochistan, 618 in Punjab, 195 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 128 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 51 in Islamabad and six in Azad Kashmir. So far 28 patients have recovered in the country.

Chief Minister of Punjab Usman Buzdar has confirmed that one more person has died from the novel coronavirus. According to sources, the premier will take the people into confidence over government's step to combat the deadly coronavirus. Imran Khan said he will put a comprehensive road map in front of the nation, adding that difficult times are a test of the leadership.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Core Committee has decided to delegate tasks to lawmakers of PTI to deal with coronavirus. The party leaders will also join 'Corona Relief Tigers Force'.

According to details, a meeting of PTI Core Committee, chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan, was held to review situation of the country in view of coronavirus. Meeting was briefed about steps taken by provinces to combat the

deadly disease. Punjab CM Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that labour class would get substantial relief from the economic package of PTI govt.

According to a statement issued on Sunday, he said "We will undergo all sorts of stress and strain in order to provide maximum relief to the poor segment and effectively cope with coronavirus, he added. We believe in undertaking practical steps instead of making oral calculations."

Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid has said that every possible step is being taken to control the coronavirus pandemic, however it is impossible to test everyone for the coronavirus.

Dr Yasmin Rashid said this while talking to media. She said that lockdown to stem spread of coronavirus was yielding good results and added that complete lockdown would be imposed if situation worsens. CM Usman Buzdar has said that "Punjab Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Ordinance 2020" has been promulgated which will enable Government of Punjab to take all necessary measures to prevent and protect public from the dangerous coronavirus.

On his twitter account, CM Buzdar said that the ordinance has been promulgated keeping in view the emergency situation in Punjab. He also tweeted important points of the ordinance.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr Zafar Mirza on Sunday said that 745 confirmed COVID-19 patients admitted in various hospitals across the country were stable and showing signs of recovery.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Sunday, he said that they were in mild to moderate condition and soon they will be discharged from the hospitals, adding that out of total 756 hospitalised corona patients, only 11 were in critical condition and they were being treated at isolation rooms while some of them were on ventilators. The IMF chief took to the twitter to make the announcement saying, "Had a good conversation with Pakistan PM on measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19".

She further said, "The IMF provides financial support during this difficult time and remains closely engaged on the design of policies."

Sindh reports two more deaths, provincial tally rises to 5

Sindh on Monday reported two new deaths from the novel coronavirus, bringing the provincial tally to five. Sindh Health Minister Azra Pechuho confirmed the two deaths in Karachi.

The patients were 52 and 66 years old and had been diagnosed with COVID-19 three days ago.

"We can confirm 2 more deaths in Karachi from coronavirus as of this morning."

The 66 and 52-year-old had underlying renal & respiratory diseases & had acquired COVID19 through contact at the Raiwand Ijtima," said Sindh Health Department in a Tweet. According to the Sindh Health Department, Karachi has 222 cases of the novel coronavirus, Dadu one and Hyderabad seven. 265 cases were detected in pilgrims quarantined in Sukkur upon return from Iran. Seven cases have been detected in Larkana. There are a total of 171 cases of local transmission. Thus far 18 deaths from the disease have been reported in the country, while 28 have made full recoveries after contracting coronavirus.

Coronavirus claims two more lives in Punjab

At least two more patients suffering from novel coronavirus died in Punjab here on Monday. As per details, one of the deceased belonged to Jhelum and was admitted to Benazir Bhutto Hospital in Rawalpindi, while the other COVID-19 patient hailed from Wah. The total number of deaths by the deadly virus in Punjab has reached eight. On Sunday night, another person fell victim to novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Rahimyar Khan.

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CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN	
Confirmed cases:	1,685
ICT:	51
Punjab:	618
Sindh:	535
KP:	195
Balochistan:	152
AJK:	06
GB:	128
Recovered:	53
Deaths:	20