

PFA continues inspections even in virus situation

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) is taking all preventative measures to ensure healthy and adulteration-free food in the market along with the health safety of its employees.

In this crucial time, PFA continued its routine inspection operation across the province. On Friday, PFA's enforcement teams along with Director General Irfan Memon visited 45 yogurt and milk shops to inspect the hygiene and food standards in the area of Dharampura, Iqbal Town and Township. The teams had worn protective suits (full gowns), mask, gloves, goggles and shoe covers during inspection to minimise the risk of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the teams have issued warning notices for improvement to food business operators and guided them about coronavirus. He said that teams also screened the shopkeepers for COVID-19 with the help of thermal guns. He said that protective costumes have been provided to all-district teams according to their requirements. The authority also completed the screening arrangements in the offices of Punjab Food Authority, he added.



LAHORE: A view of an empty Mall Road during the lockdown imposed by Punjab Government. —Online

PPP for provision of protective kit to doctors, nurses

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Punjab President Qamar Zaman Kaira has said that the Punjab government should immediately provide protective kit to doctors and nurses, working on COVID-19 patients.

In a statement he has expressed concern over the inhumane treatment of Corona patients in Mayo Hospital Lahore. He demanded an investigation into Corona patient death at Mayo Hospital. In this case it is very important to held accountable for the negligence and apathy, he said. He added, "We already have reservations on the care of Corona patients in Punjab Hospital."

Electricity bills payment date extended till April 7

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: In an effort to provide economic relief to the already suffering people amid coronavirus outbreak, federal government on Thursday extended the payment date of electricity bill to April 7, 2020 without late payment surcharge.

According to a notification issued by the Power Division on Thursday, the electricity consumers can pay the bill by April 7 without late payment surcharge.

The notification stated that the consumers have been relief due to outbreak of coronavirus in the country.

PFMA to donate 31,000 flour bags to Punjab Govt

US envoy assures help to CM in dealing with coronavirus

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The US Ambassador to Pakistan Paul W. Jones has assured of every possible cooperation to Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar to deal with the coronavirus.

In a letter, the Ambassador said his country stands with Pakistan in the fight against coronavirus and added the US has termed Pakistan as a priority country for emergency coronavirus assistance. The US is providing assistance for overcoming epidemics, he further said.

In this regard, the chief minister appreciated the US cooperation adding that coronavirus is an international pandemic which requires coordinated efforts for dealing with it.

Another report adds: A delegation of Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) led by its Central Committee Chairman Asim Raza called on Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office here on Friday and pre-

sented a donation of 31,000 flour bags worth Rs 2.5 crore to the provincial government for distribution in the penurious population.

The CM thanked the delegation and told that a comprehensive strategy has been employed to counter this pandemic while making every effort to improve the supply of flour and other food items. There are ample wheat reserves in the province while the new wheat crop is also ready, he said. Increase in flour mills' wheat quota will be examined while there should be no hurdle in the supply of flour, he added. He assured to take steps for stabilizing the flour price to ensure its availability at the fixed rate. The people should not face any difficulty as there is no shortage of wheat or flour in the province, he appended. The PFMA delegation appreciated the steps being taken by the Punjab government for dealing with coronavirus pandemic and assured their full support in this regard. The PFMA will not let any shortage of flour in

the province, they added. Chairman of PFMA's Punjab Branch Abdul Rauf Mukhtar, Director Food Punjab and others were also present. Buzdar condoles loss of lives in Arifwala Chief Minister has condoled the loss of lives due to falling from the roof of a house in Arifwala and extended sympathies to the bereaved heirs. In a condolence message, he prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace. He also sought a report from the administration and directed to provide best treatment facilities to the injured. CM orders probe into Mayo Hospital incident Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar has expressed a deep sense of sorrow over the death of an elderly patient in Mayo Hospital and sought a report from the minister and secretary health. He directed to hold an impartial inquiry for taking action against those responsible for this negligence. Such an incident cannot be tolerated, asserted the chief minister. In another great gesture

of fraternity, China has agreed to form a hospital in a government university of Punjab till the threat of coronavirus looms.

According to details, Governor Punjab Chaudhry Sarwar had requested a Chinese University for the initiative which has been obliged.

The make-shift hospital will be made in Lahore whereas the Chinese University will also provide coronavirus test kits, masks, gloves among other medical aid equipment to Pakistan.

The Vice Chancellor of the University, Mr Lee Song has agreed to show all-out support to Pakistan in these trying times. A delegation of the Chinese university will visit Pakistan next week to finalise the deal and visit the site of the project.

Professor Lee Song has also said that his University and team of scientists in the faculty will work in close collusion with Pakistani scientists against the coronavirus for faster detection of the virus and

Hospital at Expo Centre to be functional within week: CS

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: In the wake of coronavirus threat, sites have been identified to establish field hospitals across the province and a 1000-bed field hospital would be functional in Expo Centre Lahore in a week.

This was stated during a meeting held to review strategy to contain spread of coronavirus and maintain supply chain during lockdown in the province. Chief Secretary Punjab Major (r) Azam Suleman Khan, Provincial Law Minister Raja Basharat, Inspector General of Police Shoaib Dastgir and officers concerned attended the meeting whereas all divisional commissioners and regional police officers (RPOs) joined the meeting through video link.

The meeting decided that carpets should be removed from mosques for disinfecting them and space between rows in congregational prayers should be doubled by skipping one line.

The Chief Secretary asked the Secretary Health to conduct visits to sites of field hospitals and complete arrangements regarding provision of beds and other facilities as early as possible.

He directed that there should be no hurdle in free movement of good transport for supply of commodities, however action be taken against those using goods transport as private means of travelling.

He said that field officers should regularly visit jails and set up isolation wards there.

He ordered that only prescribed number of persons be allowed in private cars and stern action be taken against violators.

The meeting deliberated on a proposal to use railways and NLC for transportation of good from Karachi.

The IG Punjab told the meeting that at present 50,000 policemen are performing duties to enforce the government's measures against coronavirus.

The Senior Member Board of Revenue briefed that mask and hand sanitizers would be provided to police very soon.

Basharat lauds police, admin for making lockdown a success

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Social Welfare Raja Basharat lauded the police and district administration's efforts to make the lockdown a success in the wake of the Corona virus, saying that police and district administration officers and personnel were playing a critical role in limiting citizens to their homes.

In a special statement, he said that the most important thing right now was to restrict people to their homes and stop their usual mobility.

Raja Basharat said that police and district administration employees were risking their lives in performing these duties for which they deserve special encouragement.

He also appealed to the public to cooperate with the police and administration for their own safety and protection from a dangerous epidemic.



LAHORE: Police install breakers on Ravi Road during the fourth day of lockdown imposed by the Punjab Government. —Online

CM Usman Buzdar warns of strict action against hoarders

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar has warned hoarders of strict action on Friday.

CM Usman Buzdar in his statement said he will not tolerate any shortage of edible items including flour in the province. "We have surplus stock of wheat", he added. He made it clear that those found in hoarding will be dealt with iron hands and no one would be spared in present situation the country including province is passing through amid threat posed by coronavirus outbreak. Buzdar directed to ensure supply of wheat flour on the rates set by the government. Last week, CM Usman Buzdar had announced to recruit 10,000 medical staffers including doctors, nurses and paramedics aimed at tackling the coronavirus outbreak. He had said that they have imposed section 144 in the province and a cabinet committee is overseeing the efforts to deal with the virus on daily basis. "We have also formed a committee on school holidays and lowering fees of private schools and will ensure that the guidelines issued from the province are followed," he said. On the other hand, after Sindh and Balochistan, the Punjab government on Friday banned congregational prayers in a bid to curb the swiftly increasing cases of coronavirus in the country.

The provincial government issued the notification after consulting religious scholars and health experts. According to a notification, only three to five mosque staff members (such as the imam and

khateeb) are allowed to pray in the mosque. The move has been taken to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus in Pakistan. Earlier on Thursday, the Sindh government announced ban congregational prayers in mosques including Friday prayers in the province till April 05. The decision was announced by the provincial spokesman Murtaza Wahab on his Twitter account. He said that the provincial government has taken a big decision placing a ban on congregational prayers at the mosques from masses.

"The decision is taken after consulting all religious leaders hailing from different school of thoughts and medical experts," he said. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noor ul Haq on Thursday announced that the countrywide mosques would remain open amid coronavirus pandemic with limitations applied to the congregation within their premises during five-time prayers and Friday prayer. It must be noted that the number of deaths from the coronavirus rose to nine while 1,235 have been affected, according to the latest report released by the National Command and Control Center on coronavirus on Friday. The national dashboard, maintained by the federal ministry of health, reported that Sindh province has been affected more due to the virus, where the number of cases stands at 429, Punjab 408, Balochistan 131, KP 147, Gilgit-Baltistan, 91, Islamabad 27 and a two cases

Financial terrorism and weak economy

Malik Muhammad Aslam Awan

No person can even think of plundering one's own homeland, making it vulnerable to imminent risks, hovering over loom large to shatter the economy. The economy of a country is its backbone to survive long or least. Even a normal person is well aware of the fact that burning one's own nest is tantamount to an act of harming oneself and leaving no abode to live in. To damage the kitty means the spirit to damage the interests of the beloved homeland and make it so weak as to be an easy target of enemies. The culprits of terrorism make a few living souls the victim of their brutal act to embrace martyrdom, but those who commit financial terrorism with the country are fully aware of the tragic fact that they endeavour to strangle the 220 million people of the country, and going to the wider connotation, financial terrorism is an act to suffocate the 220 million souls. Unfortunately plundering the kitty merci-



lessly has been a most repeated practice since the inception of the nascent state in general and during the three last decades in particular. Being unemployed, we pose ourselves so patriotic to think first for Pakistan and later for ourselves. As soon as one gets employed all his patriotism falls to the ground with a bang and his speedy thoughts and inborn necessities make him a wolf to devour national resources — to the best of his ability and ambit of authority.

It is shameful and tragic ground reality that those involved in financial terrorism with the country are dealt with soft corner attitude, due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of those sitting at the helm of affairs and those occupying key posts, having the authority to draw from the national exchequer are woven in composite texture and have inter-relations with each other. It is hard rather impossible to prove them guilty while pyramids of illegal and ill-gotten wealth and assets are like a horizontal fact to be seen as transparently as a mirror. To blink over such heinous crimes is in itself a crime with the nation. Accountability system is too weak to institute a formidable case on sound legality to ensure recovery of illegal wealth and strenuous punishment to the offender. The state functionaries act like a rampant horse and cause mammoth loss to public

exchequer to make the kitty so feeble and decrepit that those at the helm of affairs resort to transitory relief and bow before IMF, World Bank, USA sprawling hands to beg for the country to boost the economy to detract from the ventilator.

Prime Minister Imran Khan rightly and righteously felt that country's real and glaring issue is corruption and dacoity on national wealth. He is quite upright in his thought and after assuming power he was moving in the right direction to have an iron hand on the national thieves, who have eroded the kitty so much so that it came on ventilator to last breathing. People in general and the political observers and media pundits in particular develop consensus of opinion that it would be hard for the inexperienced team of the "Captain" to boost the dying economy and get it back on the right track. There are no two opinions that despite being inexperienced, the team of the "Captain" hurried to the doctrine of necessity and managed somewhat to give palliative anchorage to the economy breathing last.

Prime minister is fully aware of the glaring fact that IMF, World Bank, USA and other big economies are not the permanent remedial measures. The permanent solution is to curb corruption, nepotism and embezzlement of the

national wealth. We beg from loaning economies and allocate a large chunk of the begged money to defence, healthcare, education, road and building infrastructure, forests, horticulture, PHA and other departments to deliver to the nation, here the issues crop up, public functionaries start playing havoc with the country and get a lion's share from the allocated money to transfer to their own pockets and vaults. A book comprising several volumes can be written on the malpractices, misappropriations maneuvers of public funds and spiral tricks, how to clean hands safely to have big bite from the national wealth.

Public functionaries have interlinked themselves into iron blocks to defend each other, never to be un-knotted, formed themselves into bondage of relationship. Even when a single tissue is in trouble, the whole texture is shaken and they immediately get awakened to defend the accused because if one is nabbed the other texture will be in jeopardy. Having prima facie glimpse and further deep down study of circumstances, one would find that the corrupt "Mafia" has developed so organised that it is not easy to put clinching hand on it. The remedy of the injustice and treatment of the ailment is far high than prime minister once thought and took it as an easy task, it is a hard nut to

crack. Incessant, hard and strenuous struggle is further required to put an iron hand on those involved in financial terrorism with the country. Indiscriminate and ruthless incessant measures are required to nab the neck of "economic terrorists" to make the rest ones eschew the obnoxious practice of public plundering and thwart economic adventurist, sapping the national kitty fearlessly, making beloved homeland knee down before lending institutions of the world. Borrowing practice from bigger nations retrenches the national prestige and ego. A nation is a sensitive living entity, so long as it retains and sustains its national pride and prestige. We are a nation, inheriting glorious past and independent entity and the renaissance of our prestigious past is hidden in revamping of our economy. We will have to shake off the burden of cumbersome loans and devise a comprehensive policy for the elimination of financial terrorism, overhauling accountability system, evolving policy and measures for NAB, Police and anti-corruption reforms. The Report Corruption app is a well-devised stratagem to curb corruption but it requires well-administered surveillance to evolve efficacy and yield positive results.

The writer is a freelance columnist and independent analyst