



HYDERABAD: Hundreds of people stand in long queues at Latifabad overhead bridge during distribution of food bags from Saylani Welfare with the help of authorities.

All steps taken to combat coronavirus threat: CM GB

The Business Report

GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez ur Rahman said that all health facilities and protective equipments would be provided on need bases not on quota base.

During the Skardu quarantine centers visit along with force Commander and Chief Secretary he said government of Gilgit Baltistan was well aware about Corona threats and needs of people in Baltistan region. Therefore, GB government decided to provide 10 ventilators to Baltistan region as soon as possible. He said some ventilators purchased through public donation would be installed in Skardu very soon. Provincial government will continue its efforts to establish of Corona virus testing laboratory in Baltistan region, Chief Minister added. He said that joint team of Gilgit Baltistan decided to fight against corona virus and determined to make virus free Gilgit Baltistan. Meanwhile Chief Minister visited isolation and quarantine centers where officials from health department briefed them about preparation to combat coronavirus. Chief Minister appreciated the role of doctors and paramedical staff to save the human lives. During the visit Chief Minister and force commander saluted to the efforts amid role of doctors.

Tablighi centre declared quarantine centre: The district administration Monday declared Tablighi centre Jhanda as quarantine centre after corona tests of three persons who were staying at the center along with 164 foreigners were found corona positive.

Deputy Commissioner Abid Wazir told media that the tests of other people staying at the Tablighi center were sent to lab for corona diagnostic.

He said that a total 376 tests were taken from across the district out of which 79 were found corona positive, 93 negative and results of 191 were awaited. The DC said that district headquarter hospital was equipped with 18 ventilators while the government has raised a force of volunteers of Civil Defence force to help the corona patients in Manga village.

Coronavirus positive patients admitted to isolation wards: DC Swabi: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Swabi, Shahid Mahmood has said that protective kits have been provided to all doctors and health workers that are playing frontline role against Coronavirus.

Similarly, he said that protective equipments dispatched by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) have also been arrived and handed over to District Health Officer (DHO). He said none of the new suspected Corona cases registered in the

district has come positive. The Deputy Commissioner said that there are so far only four positive cases and these patients have been admitted to isolation wards of Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital, Lahore and Topi wherein the provincial government is providing food and medicines to them. He said that fourteen cases have been came negative while the result of the four was due today (Monday).

He urged upon people across the district to adopt precautionary measures in light of the directives of the government in letter and spirit to stop the spread of the virus in the district. The Deputy Commissioner also appealed those people who have arrived from abroad other districts to adopt isolation inside their houses on volunteer basis so the life of their relatives, friends and neighbours remained safe from the virus.

He said that on complaints of the people regarding atta shortage, the district administration contacted the government and the flour supply to whole province including Swabi has been started while flour quota from Punjab is also intact. He said that flour is being provided to people across the district on the officially fixed rate while people themselves are also buying the commodity from mills and shops as well and there is now flour shortage in the district.

Capital's cultural activities halted due to social distancing

Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Cultural gatherings such as concerts and exhibitions in art galleries of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad were facing a halt amid the Coronavirus spread in the country.

Many art galleries in capital such as national art gallery of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), media studios in Lok Virsa, Aks Art Gallery, Tanzara Art Gallery, Gallery 5, FACE foundation and National college of Arts (NCA) Rawalpindi have been shut down or working with few numbers of staff.

Amid pandemic of Coronavirus, all the cultural activities at main art institution have already been cancelled following government's instruction of avoiding the gatherings.

The precautionary measures have been taken in the view of increasing number of effected people from corona virus in both the cities. Local administrations are working hard day and night to ensure peace and supply of food and essential items to the citizens while they are confined in their home amid novel virus outbreak.

PBM disbursed Rs 308.75m among deserving persons in 28 neglected districts: Pakistan Bait ul Mal (PBM) had disbursed Rs 308.75 million as Individual Financial Assistance (IFA) among the deserving persons in 28 most neglected districts in last financial year.

PBM was striving to eradicate poverty through Individual Financial Assistance (IFA) in different areas including Medical, Education, Medical and Special Friends.

A sum of Rs 12,066.96 million has been distributed among 28,992 beneficiaries during the current financial year.

According to official data, Rs 2,884.954 million were disbursed among 22,320 persons as medical assistance during current financial year.

Likewise, Rs 9,115.551 million were distributed among 3,602 beneficiaries as education assistance, Rs 51.87 million were disbursed among 1,961 beneficiaries as general assistance. Similarly, Rs 14.585 million were disbursed among 1,109 beneficiaries as assistance to 'special friends'. PBM has also paid Rs 1,779,356 million fine for release of 25 prisoners including four from district jail Muzaffargarh and 21 from central jail Lahore.

MPA Rabia Basri inaugurates anti-virus spray in City: The people of Peshawar should not go out from their homes unnecessarily and call 1166 in case of any inconvenience besides taking special care of cleaning and washing their hands with soap repeatedly by taking at their residences.

This was stated by Member Provincial Assembly Rabia Basri while talking to the media men during a door to door campaign for the awareness of general public. Rabia Basri her visit to various areas in the City, she also inaugurated a disinfection spray in Union Council 8 with the help of WSP, Youth MPA Daud Khan, Salman Saeed of PTI Youth Wing.

She urged the people to extend their cooperation with the officials of the WSSP staff. She said that spraying is being done all over the city so that they can be sterilized. She said that people should take special care of sanitation and do not get out of their homes. She also advised the people to keep a distance and refrain from going to the crowded places because the government has done a lockdown for the health of the people so that the people are protected from disease like COVID 19.

Rs 100m fund allocated for Nishtar Hospital to combat coronavirus

From Our Staff Correspondent

MULTAN: Punjab government allocated Rs 100 million fund for Nishtar Hospital which will be spent for buying medicines, Personal Protection Equipments (PPEs) masks and other important material to combat COVID-19.

This was announced in a meeting of Joint Action Medical Committee presided over jointly by provincial minister for energy, Dr Akhtar Malik and DC, Aamir Khattak, held at latter's office here on Monday.

Among others MPAs Saleem Labar, Wasif Raan, Qasim Langha, Medical Superintendents of Nishtar Hospital, CPEIC, GSSH, Children Complex, MIKD and Khawaja Fareeda Social Security Hospital attended the meeting. From the money earmarked, Rs over 75 mln will be used for purchasing medicine while 25 mln for

buying PPEs, masks and other safety material. Speaking on the occasion, Provincial minister for energy, Dr Akhtar Malik said that Punjab government was fully cognized with its responsibilities.

He urged Hospital administrations to make an online portal to minimize rush of patients at OPDs adding that world is facing shortage of test kits for Coronavirus.

DC Aamir Khattak said that provision of safety kits to doctors and paramedics was responsibility of government.

He advised hospital administrations to apprise him about pucity of funds where ever it is needed.

He said that provision of PPEs to front line force of health practitioners was his top priority.

Briefing the meeting Nishtar Hospital MS, Dr Shahid Bokhari informed that the health facility has 5700 full body kits.

Quick Read

Economists believe German economy is set for significant recession



BERLIN: Measures to contain the coronavirus outbreak will slash German 2020 economic output by 2.8 to 5.4% before a rebound next year, a panel of economists who advise the government said on Monday. "The German economy will shrink significantly in 2020," the so-called "Wise Men" expert panel (SVR) said, with the exact size of the impact "depending on the extent and duration of health policy measures and the subsequent recovery".

Like other economists around the world, the group sketched different scenarios for the virus' impact on Europe's top economy depending on whether it follows a "V" shape, with a sharp drop matched by a swift recovery, or a more prolonged "U" in which the rebound takes longer to materialise.

Coronavirus toll in Europe soars as doctors overwhelmed, German Chancellor Merkel goes into quarantine Germany's 83 million people are currently under slightly less strict lockdown conditions than in other European nations like France and Italy, with non-essential excursions outside mostly still allowed. But companies from airline giant Lufthansa to car behemoth Volkswagen have already slashed their operations in response. —AFP

William, Kate Middleton's private Kensington Palace office revealed



LONDON: With many across the globe confined to their houses owing to the COVID-19 lockdown, Prince William and Kate Middleton decided to grace royal fans with a peek inside their Kensington Palace office. Taking to their official Instagram account, the couple posted a total of two pictures, each featuring the royals busy in official matters glued to the telephone.

The area surrounding their office space appears decorated in marble accents, topped up in a sturdy fireplace. Their mantel provides hints of gold that appears to tie the room together.

The couple captioned their post by providing a detailed account of their conversation with the CEO of Mind Charity Paul Farmer.

According to the contents of the caption, the couple reportedly stated, "It is great to see the mental health sector working together with the NHS to help people keep on top of their mental well-being. By pulling together and taking simple steps each day, we can all be better prepared for the times ahead." —The Business Report

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

LONDON: Britain on Monday named Ken McCallum the new head of its MI5 intelligence agency. McCallum's claim to fame was leading the response to the attempted murder of former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal.

McCallum, who has worked in MI5 for 25 years, spent his first decade in MI5 focusing on Northern Ireland but then began battling Islamist militants, developing cyber security and ensuring the safety of the 2012 London Olympics. McCallum was in charge of all counter-terrorism investigations and risk management in the run-up to, and during, the London Olympics, MI5 said. Then, after former Russian double agent Skripal and his daughter Yulia were found poisoned with a Soviet-developed nerve agent in 2018, he led the agency's response to the attempted murder. "In 2018, Ken took charge of the MI5 response to the at-



tempted assassination of Sergei Skripal, within the unprecedented UK-led international response from intelligence allies," MI5 said. Britain blamed Russia for the attack in which a British citizen died. Russia denied any role, though Western

powers expelled dozens of Russian spies working under diplomatic cover.

MI5 said one of McCallum's top priorities was enabling MI5 to seize the fast-moving opportunities provided by technology, including machine learning. He enjoys mountain hiking. He succeeds Andrew Parker who retires in April.

MI5, established in 1909 to counter German espionage ahead of World War One, is tasked with protecting British national security. Its main job is currently countering international terrorism though it is also a counter-intelligence agency. "MI5's purpose is hugely motivating," McCallum said in a statement. "Our people - with our partners - strive to keep the country safe, and they always want to go the extra mile. Having devoted my working life to that team effort, it is a huge privilege now to be asked to lead it as Director General."

Coronavirus lockdowns give Europe's cities cleaner air

MOSCOW: Air pollution has decreased in urban areas across Europe during lockdowns to combat the coronavirus, new satellite images showed on Monday, but campaigners warned city-dwellers were still more vulnerable to the epidemic.

Cities including Brussels, Paris, Madrid, Milan and Frankfurt showed a reduction in average levels of noxious nitrogen dioxide over March 5-25, compared with the same period last year, according to the Sentinel-5 satellite images.

That coincides with lockdowns in many European countries which have curbed road transport — the largest source of nitrogen oxides — and slowed output at gas-emitting factories.

The new images, released by the European Space Agency (ESA) and analyzed by the non-profit European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), show the changing density of nitrogen dioxide, which can cause respiratory problems and cancer, like heat maps.

Daily weather events can influence atmospheric pollution, so the satellite pictures took a 20-day average and excluded readings where cloud cover reduced the quality of the data. Data from the European Envi-

ronment Agency (EEA) showed a similar trend over March 16-22. In Madrid, average nitrogen dioxide levels decreased by 56% week-on-week after the Spanish government banned non-essential travel on March 14.

The EPHA said people living in polluted cities may be more at risk from COVID-19, because prolonged exposure to bad air can weaken the immune system, making it harder to fight infection.

"That connection is very likely," Zoltan Massay-Kosubek, policy manager for clean air at EPHA, told Reuters. "But because the disease is new, it still has to be demonstrated." Air pollution can cause or exacerbate lung



Spain toughens restrictions as coronavirus death toll surges

MADRID: Spain prepared to enter its third week under near-total lockdown as the government approved a strengthening of measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus and the death toll rose by 838 cases overnight to 6,528. Second only to Italy in fatalities, Spain also saw infections rise to 78,797 from 72,248 the day before. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, in a televised address to the nation on Saturday night, announced that all non-essential workers must stay at home for two weeks, the latest government measure in the fight against coronavirus.

He said workers would receive their usual salaries but would have to make up lost hours at a later date. The measure would last from March 30 to April 9. Labor Minister Yolanda Diaz said the measure was "flexible" and workers would be paid but would be expected to make up their lost days before December 31.

"We need to reduce mobility to the level of Sundays," she said, adding that taking into account the Easter holidays, measures would cover eight working days. She added to Prime Minister Sanchez's calls for the EU to react, saying "we need a Europe in which workers' rights are reinforced".

Unions welcomed the measures and business groups CEOE and CEPYME said that while they would comply with the new rule, "it will generate an unprecedented huge impact on the Spanish economy, especially in sectors such as industry". The slowdown "may lead to a deeper crisis in the economy that could become social", they warned in a statement. Health emergency chief Fernando Simon repeated a warning that intensive care wards were becoming saturated, but said cases were stabilizing and "the rise in new cases has been falling for a few days".

In Madrid, birdsong drowned out traffic on deserted streets on Sunday morning as police reinforced patrols, stopping buses and cars to check passengers had reason to be out of their homes. The number of beds at a makeshift hospital to treat coronavirus patients in the IFEMA conference center will soon reach 1,400, Madrid's regional government said. It also announced an official period of mourning for those who have died. Flags will fly at half-mast and a daily minute's silence will be held.

Schools, bars, restaurants and shops selling non-essential items have been shut since March 14 and most of the population is house-bound as Spain tries to curb the virus. The number of deaths from coronavirus in Italy fell for the second consecutive day on Sunday but the country still looked almost certain to see an extension of stringent containment measures. The Civil Protection department said 756 people had died in the last day, bringing the total to 10,779 — more than a third of all deaths from the virus worldwide. There were 133 fewer deaths than the 889 deaths reported on Saturday, when the numbers fell from a record high of 919 on Friday. —Reuters