



RAWALPINDI: A view of traffic jam on Gajmandi Road during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown. —On-

Stop political mudslinging, serve Pakistan: Naqvi

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders have advised the ruling party PPP of Sindh to have a mercy on the nation and country at least during the coronavirus pandemic, stop their mudslinging campaign against the federal government and focus their attention and energies on serving people of Pakistan.

Opposition leader in Sindh assembly Firdous Shamim Naqvi, addressing a press conference in the Insaf House here Sunday, said previous day Sindh education minister Saeed Ghani claimed that they were PTI leaders, allegedly Ali Zaidi and Faisal Vawda, who had held press conferences. He said Sindh chief minister himself says that the federal government is doing a good job; however, other PPP leaders are giving statements against the Prime Minister.

He said the PPP had already rocked the boat of Pakistan. Now we earnestly request them to serve the people. He said the federal government has already given 10000 kits. He said the federal government had already issued the national action plan and SOPs. He said complete details are available about the material provided by the federal government to the provinces till March 17. He reminded that



the facility of quarantine was initiated by the federal government. Naqvi said that there are 29 districts in Sindh and the presence of coronavirus in 18 of them is accepted. In remaining 11 districts either the virus is not present or tests are not being conducted. He said from these 18 districts, in six districts only five cases are reported. He said it is our opinion that that strict lockdown was never ensured in the province. Only some central roads of the megacity are closed, while whole interior Sindh is open. He said three days ago the

Prime Minister had asked to relax the lockdown and the Sindh government had said they would make it further strict. However, due to their falling popularity amongst masses the Sindh rulers allowed bakers and factories to resume work.

He said we will not allow the Sindh government to play on both sides of the wicket. He said we believe in telling the truth and continue to tell the truth. He said in Pakistan more employments can be created in agricultural and construction sectors. However, talking on the occasion, PTI Central Vice President and parliamentary party leader in Sindh assembly Haleem Adil said that at this time we do not want to criticize the PPP government in Sindh and we have no differences with it. He said if the PPP takes one step forward, we are ready to take 20 steps. He said the PPP may criticize the federal government and we will not object on it. However, we want to tell them to avoid politics of fear and chaos in Sindh.

He said the chief minister Sindh claims that the growth ratio of coronavirus in Sindh is highest in the world. He said daily dozens of citizens are arrested on the pretext of lockdown and detained together in congested groups, which will further increase their chances of catching the virus.

Ehsaas Programme

Over 40,000 families receive Rs 486.8m

From Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Ehsaas Emergency Cash payment process is being continued in Hyderabad district like other parts of the country under which as many as 40541 persons had received an amount of Rs 486.8 million so far.

According to the report shared by Deputy Commissioner, some 42 distribution centers had been set up in all four talukas of the district from where the registered deserving persons were getting an amount of Rs 12000 each after biometric verification. In addition to these centers.

An amount of Rs 119.937 million was distributed among 9955 deserving persons in taluka City, Rs 106.523 million among 8742 persons in taluka Latifabad, Rs 70.185 million among 5925 persons of taluka Qasimabad and Rs 190.221 million among 15919 persons of taluka Hyderabad Rural after launching of the programme on April 9.

NDMA provides third consignment of protective equipment to GB hospitals
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has provided third consignment of protective equipment for doctors and medical staff in hospitals of Gilgit Baltistan (GB).

According to NDMA spokesperson, the protective equipment was being supplied nationwide whereas medical goods were given to hospitals in Gilgit-Baltistan this morning.

"The goods supplied today include 345,500 surgical masks and 962 N-95 masks, 6,929 protective suits, 3,161 gloves and 175 pairs of ICU shoes, 4,958 surgical caps, 3,767 shoe covers and 1577 protective gowns," he added. He said that 2000 Bio Hazard suits, 500 body bags and 50 safety boxes also included in the consignment. 50 bottles of one liter, 1500 bottles of 150 ml sanitizers and 30 bottles of methanol and 3500 bottles of handwash were also sent, he said. The medical equipment for rest of the provinces would be provided within the next 24 hours.

Minor killed in R Y Khan

A child was brutally murdered by his father in the vicinity of Rahim Yar Khan (RYK), a district of Punjab province, police reported on Sunday.

According to police report, the culprit had a strong desire to take revenge from in-laws. The accused while fulfilling the plan, hanged his own son with rope today.

During investigation, the killer confessed the crime before the police. The first information report was being registered after nec-

'Child labour requires govt's attention'

ISLAMABAD: Human Rights Activist, Ayub Malik has urged the government and child right activists to join hands for ensuring safety of children at the workplaces and protecting their economic rights.

Talking to APP, he said that almost 88 percent of working children work in their families. These children must be sent to schools by implementing the laws prohibiting child labour, he added.

He also said that child labour issue in interior Sindh required attention of the authorities concerned, and added that child labour was one of longstanding issue which needed attention of the provincial government to introduce a mechanism to overcome the problems. He added that according to National Child Labour Survey report around 3.3 million of primary school-aged children did not go to school. Out of this number, about half a million were from Sindh and most of the children were engaged in child labour,

PTA sends 811.97m messages to create awareness about COVID-19

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), under its ongoing extensive campaign, has sent 811.97 million messages to mobile phone users aimed at creating awareness about preventive measures against the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Since March 19, till April, 13 the messages had been sent in Urdu, English and regional languages for comfort of the PTA subscribers across the country, said a press release on Sunday.

Awareness SMSs in Urdu and English have also been sent to the travelers/suspected persons who may have come into

contact with coronavirus patients during travelling. More than 0.53 million messages have been sent to the travelers and suspected persons since March, 19 2020.

Similarly, Corona Awareness Ring Back Tones (RBTs) have been initiated on 131.75 million subscribers' mobile devices. To facilitate operations of educational institutions, call centers etc. 72 IPs have been white listed since March, 19. PTA has allocated 12 different short codes and 6 UAN (Toll Free) numbers to government entities working on controlling the pandemic. PTA has also facilitated in arranging donations by

Mobile users in 'Prime Minister's COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund-2020'. Mobile subscribers can donate Rs 20/SMS by sending a text message on code 6677. PTA is also closely monitoring the measures taken by all telecom operators amid Covid-19 pandemic in Pakistan. The telecom operators have launched many offers/initiatives for their subscribers. Some are offering discounts or temporary upgrades at low or no cost during the crisis to help their subscribers stay connected. Details of these offers/packages are being regularly updated on PTA website: www.pta.gov.pk.

Quick Read

Hundreds protest against US COVID-19 rules



WASHINGTON: Hundreds protested in cities across America against coronavirus-related lockdowns - with encouragement from President Donald Trump - as resentment grows against the crippling economic cost of confinement.

An estimated 400 people gathered under a cold rain in Concord, New Hampshire - many on foot while others remained in their cars - to send a message that extended quarantines were not necessary in a state with relatively few confirmed cases of COVID-19. The crowd included several armed men wearing military-style uniforms, with their faces covered.

In Texas, more than 250 people rallied outside the State Capitol in Austin, including far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, founder of the Infowars site, who rolled up in a tank-like truck. "It's time to reopen Texas, it's time to let people work, it's time for them to let voluntary interaction and good sense rule the day, not government force," said Justin Greiss, an activist with Young Americans for Liberty.

Stay-at-home mother Amira Abuzeid added: "I'm not a doctor but I'm an intelligent person who can do math and it looks like at the end of the day, these numbers are not that worrisome." Demonstrators outside Maryland's colonial-era statehouse in Annapolis stayed in their cars but waved signs with messages like "Poverty kills too."

Dolores, a hairdresser, told AFP she is not eligible for unemployment because she is a business owner, not an employee. "I need to save my business. I need to work to live. Otherwise I will die," she said.

Other demonstrations took place across the country in cities such as Columbus, Ohio and San Diego, California, as well as the states of Indiana, Nevada and Wisconsin. Few practiced social distancing but many of the protesters waved American flags. Protesters have drawn encouragement in certain Democratic-led states from tweets by Trump, who has said he favors a quick return to normal, though protests have also taken place in Republican-led states like New Hampshire and Texas.

The US has seen more coronavirus cases and deaths than any other country in the world - with more than 734,000 confirmed infections and 38,800 fatalities as of Saturday evening. The vast majority of Americans are under lockdown orders restricting public movement and keeping all but essential businesses closed.

In Concord, demonstrators carried signs with slogans like "The numbers lie" and "Reopen New Hampshire." Their common demand was that the stay-at-home order for the state of 1.3 million people be called off before its scheduled May 4 end date. Others, amid a sea of American flags, chanted the state's Revolutionary War-era slogan, "Live Free or Die." A protester in Concord, New Hampshire waves a flag during a rally urging a quick end to

A protester in Concord, New Hampshire waves a flag during a rally urging a quick end to virus-related confinement. "People are very happy on a voluntary basis to do what's necessary," one demonstrator, 63-year-old Skip Murphy, told AFP by phone. He added, however, that "the data does not support the egregious lockdown we are having in New Hampshire." —AFP

China can face 'consequences' over COVID-19 pandemic, Trump

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump warned that China could face consequences if it was "knowingly responsible" for the coronavirus pandemic.

"It could have been stopped in China before it started and it wasn't," Trump told reporters at a White House briefing. "And now the whole world is suffering because of it."

Trump was asked whether China should suffer consequences over the pandemic which began in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December and has left more than 157,000 people dead around the world.

"If they were knowingly responsible, certainly," he said. "If it was a mistake, a mistake is a mistake."

"But if they were knowingly responsible, yeah, then there should be consequences," Trump said.

"Was it a mistake that got out of control or was it done deliberately?" he asked. "That's a big difference between those two."

"In either event they should have let us go in," he said. "We asked to go in early. And they didn't want us in. I think they knew it was something bad and they were embarrassed."

"They said they're doing an investigation," the president continued. "So let's see what happens with their investigation. But we're doing investigations also."

The Trump administration has said it doesn't rule out that the novel coronavirus was spread - accidentally - from a laboratory re-



searching bats in Wuhan.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian - who previously alleged that the US

military may have brought the virus into China - has rejected US media reports on the subject and said there is "no scientific basis."

Trump also cast doubt on official Chinese figures showing the country has suffered just 0.33 deaths per 100,000 people. —AFP

Bogota's poor, homeless get some help amid quarantine

BOGOTA: Some of the neediest residents of Colombia's capital Bogota have started receiving food donations, while dozens living on the street were given a chance to shower and change clothes, as the city rides out a five-week lockdown to contain the coronavirus.

Residents of the Andean city, home to about seven million, had set tires on fire and blocked roads in isolated Thursday protests to demand help during the quarantine.

The government has budgeted 18 trillion pesos (about US\$4.43 billion) to shore up an inadequate healthcare system and fund welfare payments during the lockdown that runs until Apr 27. But many families who get by in informal industries like street selling, construction and recycling are now cut off from work and are scrambling to make ends meet. Many say they have received no aid at all. Others have been luckier.

On Friday, army soldiers in gloves and masks distributed boxes of rice, beans, sugar, salt, canned meat, toilet paper and bottled water to residents of the Egipto neighbourhood, whose steep streets wind up the skirts of the Andes.

"I'm so grateful to the army because they are the only ones who have gone house to house," said a tearful Luz Maria Piraquive, 61. "This arrived just at the moment when we're lowest on supplies."

Major Johan Alzate, operations head for the presidential guard, said: "We are coming to a community with many needs... joining efforts to try to mitigate some of the emergency that we are living."

Meanwhile, the mayor's office offered showers, toiletries,



changes of clothes and meals to people living on the street - some of whom have been rendered homeless due to the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

"I've been sleeping on the street for seven days," said 42-year-old Hamilton Mosquera, who lost his job as a club doorman when the government shut down nightlife last month.

The coronavirus has killed over 150 people in Colombia and infected nearly 3,500. Giving people a way to shower and change will prevent them from becoming vectors, city officials said.

"We started these self-care sessions, which is a place where we put in showers, bring clothes, bio-safety supplies like alcohol, antibacterial gel and food," said Daniel Mora, from the city's social integration department. —Reuters

UK not thinking of easing virus lockdown measures yet: Minister

LONDON: Britain is not considering lifting the lockdown enacted almost four weeks ago to control the coronavirus outbreak given "deeply worrying" increases in the death toll, a senior minister said.

Britain is at or near the peak of a health crisis in which more than 15,000 people have died - the fifth highest national death toll of a pandemic linked to at least 150,000 deaths worldwide. Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove said a Buzzfeed report that the government was considering lifting the lockdown in phases over the coming months was not correct. "The facts and the advice are clear at the moment that we should not be thinking of lifting of these restrictions yet," Gove told Sky News.

The latest data show 15,464 people have died in British hospitals after testing positive for the novel coronavirus, a total that has increased by more than 800 for three days running. A further 2,500 had died in care homes during the week to Apr 13, according to the National Care Forum, a representative body for the adult social care sector.

"One of the things that is deeply worrying and concerning is the high level of deaths," Gove said. "The evidence suggests that the rate of infection and the death rate is flattening, but we're not absolutely certain that we are yet on a downward trajectory." Gove described as "grotesque" a Sunday Times story that said Prime Minister Boris Johnson had skipped five crisis meetings to address the coronavirus pandemic early in the outbreak. "The prime minister took all the major decisions. No-body can say that the prime minister wasn't throwing heart and soul into fighting this virus," he added. —AFP