

CEO Jazz presents Rs 50m cheque for PM's Corona Relief Fund

ISLAMABAD: CEO Jazz Amir Hafeez Ibrahim Sunday called on Prime Minister Imran Khan and presented a cheque of Rs 50 million as donation towards the Prime Minister's Corona Relief Fund. Special Assistant to PM for Overseas Syed Zulfiqar Abbass Bokhari and Senator Faisal Javed were also present, PM media wing in a press release said. The prime minister appreciated the donation made by Jazz and its employees —APP

The Business

Faisalabad, Monday, April 20, 2020 Shaban 26, 1441

Pakistan Railways will run special quarantine train

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways will run a special Quarantine Train comprising thirty coaches including two medical vans for Chaman Balochistan to join the efforts against the COVID-19. Addressing a news conference in Lahore, Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid said the train will have two medical coaches for dealing with any emergency arising out of coronavirus on the way. He said 12 thousand rupees each and ration bags will be given to Railways coolies today. Sheikh Rashid appreciated the media for playing its positive and effective role.

Priority being given to bring stranded labour community back to Pakistan: Moeed

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Security, Dr Moeed Yousuf on Sunday said that incumbent government was utilizing all available resources to bring stranded labour community and employees back to Pakistan.

"We have information about stranded Pakistanis and the employees who has lost their jobs due to coronavirus threat that struck the people around the world," he stated while talking to a private news channel programs.

He said the government adopted the comprehensive strategy keeping in view the evolving situation in some countries that had halted the flight operation and other services for protecting their people from the dangerous virus.

The SAPM further stated that capacity had been increased from 2000 to 6000 persons, adding that government was well aware of the existing situation emerged due to COVID-19, hitting and playing havoc in many countries. To a question about Pakistanis who lost their lives due to virus negative impact, he said the ministry of health had developed a web portal namely covid.gov.pk and the information could be obtained from the website for flight schedule and other necessary arrangements. Dr Moeed Yusuf said that the website was developed following the guidelines of world health organization (WHO), given for dead bodies and lifting the passengers from other countries.

Timesaco launches e-Commerce retail platform

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Chinese digital company Timesaco has launched e-commerce platform 'Dazaran' for introducing the online retail business to provide facility to the people in current challenging situation of COVID-19 pandemic.

Recently, Pakistan-based Chinese company Timesaco has decided to launch e-commerce Dazaran App in advance to support all merchants in Pakistan to open online stores through support in two hour instant delivery system in the same city to maintain retail business and reform the retail methods in Pakistan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Chinese online Services company Timesaco, Donald Li told APP here.

Donald said that Dazaran was a provider and operator of e-Commerce ecosystem platform in Pakistan.

He said that under the umbrella of mother company Timesaco, "We are providing the five different services to the customers in 10 major cities of the country including twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Donald Li said that his company was committed for employment opportunities to the people in this critical situation of pandemic disease, when whole of the world was suffering from this curse, he added.

The CEO informed that the launch plan was three months ahead of schedule but because of people difficulties Dazaran start its operation to encourage business merchants to run their business online.

He said that Pakistan's New-commerce Platform "Dazaran" in each main city in Pakistan, including merchants and Customer friendly platform which would provide a hub to business to the local community.

Replying to a question, he said that during COVID-19, merchant started facing business difficulties and the people started facing the demand pressure of basic living goods.

He said that most merchants in Pakistan still use traditional retail model and in the face of pandemic, most of them were helpless and could not support their families.

Plan afoot to store additional 10 MAF water by 2030

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Keeping in-view importance of water, the government has embarked upon an ambitious plan to store additional 10 million acre feet of water by 2030 in order to enhance country's water storage capacity.

Sources told APP here that under the plan, over 7.1 MAF water would be stored through construction of Diamer Basha and Mohmand dams while remaining would be met through building small storage dams in all provinces during the said period.

They said that physical work had already been started on Mohmand Dam and it would likely to be completed before flood season of 2024. The Mohmand Dam would not only generate 800 megawatt cheap hydel electricity but also store over 1.2 MAF. The dam would also directly benefit people of Charsadda, Mohmand and adjoining areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Mohmand Dam is being constructed on River Swat about 48 kilometers from Peshawar at confluence of Mohmand and Charsadda districts and the dam's reservoir



MULTAN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi visits Ehsaas Emergency Cash Centre at Manzooraabad.

Train operation after lockdown: Sh Rashid

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said on Sunday that train operation would be restored after the end of lockdown across the country.

He said this while talking to the media at Lahore Railway station after distributing food hampers among 1000 porters, sanitary and washing-line employees of lower scale.

He also saw off quarantine train comprising 30 coaches for Chaman, Balochistan to facilitate the citizens of the area.

He said the PR had established hospitals in all seven divisional headquarters including Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan, Sukkur, Quetta and Karachi to deal with the coronavirus cases.

He said that quarantine train to Chaman would be a complete hospital with two medical coaches which would facilitate 500 patients. The minister said that Railways was ready to send such mobile hospitals to Taftan or any other border in case of need.

"It is our suggestion that railways can provide mobile hospital to the nation in the hard times with the help of medical coaches made by the British rulers before independence", he added. The minister said the National Disaster Management Authority had given 10,000 masks to the railways while it would soon provide more masks for the protection of workshop workers and other PR employees.

Sheikh Rashid said the PR implemented on lockdown a bit late and transported

2,650,000 citizens from Karachi by 20 special trains, whereas India implemented lockdown without planning and 88 people lost their lives while going to their hometowns on foot due to unavailability of transport in India.

He said the railways was planning to provide tickets at the doorstep of people so that they could reach at railway stations safely on time. The minister assured the porters that railways would try to arrange Rs 12,000 from Ehsaas Programme for each porter.

To a question, he said that all TLA employees would be regularized till June, adding that their case had been late due to coronavirus pandemic. Later, the minister distributed food hampers among porters. PR Chairman Habibur Rehman Gillani, Brig Muntaz Ali, PR DS Lahore Amir Nisar Ch, PRP DIG Operations Shehzad Akbar and other senior officers were also present.

Railways plans to outsource 16 trains on different routes

Pakistan Railways was planning to outsource as many as 16 trains on different routes across the country to earn more revenue to turn the department into profitable institution.

The department would outsource ten passenger and six freight trains to private sector and working in that regard in the final stage, an official in the Ministry of Railways told.

About the initial stage, the passenger trains including Lasani Express (runs be-

tween Lahore and Sialkot via Narowal), Jinnah Express (runs between Lahore and Karachi) and Fareed Express (runs between Lahore and Karachi) were being outsourced.

The official said that seven more passenger trains would also be outsourced in phases for which several parties were showing interest to take the trains of Pakistan Railways.

He said that six freight trains would also be given to private companies to run and all these trains which Pakistan Railways was going to privatize were running in deficit.

The official said that Main Line-I (ML-I) would bring revolution in Pakistan Railways and tendering process of the project would be completed in the month of May.

He said that ML-I was a 1,872km-long track from Peshawar to Karachi would be laid out in addition to the existing one — turning it into a double track route and the track would be fenced under the project.

"The project will increase the speed of passenger trains from the current 65km-110km per hour to 160km per hour, while freight trains will be operated at 120km per hour," he added.

He said the track would have a computer-based signaling and control system as well as a grade separation to ensure the safety of train operations. The main line would cover Karachi to Peshawar via Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Rohri, Rahimyar Khan, Bahawalpur, Khanewal, Sahiwal, Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Peshawar.

Pak expats donate over Rs 100m to PM's Relief Fund, says Zulfi

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari has said that over Rs 100 million has been donated to the Prime Minister's COVID-19 Relief Fund by the Pakistani expatriates in response to the website launched by his ministry.

"Over 646,580 dollars (Rs 100 million) has been donated by the overseas Pakistanis so far," said Zulfiqar Bukhari, while addressing to the Virtual Town Hall Meeting arranged by the Pakistani-Americans to discuss the issues faced by them across the United States (US) amid the coronavirus crisis.

The special session, which was held the other day, was attended by Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Asad Majeed Khan, Consular General Aysha Ali, Pakistani businessmen, first responders, survivors of the coronavirus and representatives of the US-based Pakistani organizations.

The special assistant said the PM's corona

relief fund had received over Rs 2 billion so far, out of which 70 per cent contribution was made by the locals. "The fund gets an unprecedented response from the locals," he added.

Highlighting the government's steps for the facilitation of Pakistanis stranded abroad, he said some 2,000 Pakistani nationals had been airlifted from different countries to the motherland, whose number would be increased to 6,000 per week April 20.

Zulfiqar Bukhari said the government had almost finalized a fresh repatriation plan for the stranded Pakistanis under which some 17 special flights would be operated for the United Arab Emirates to bring back those Pakistanis who were stuck in transit or had lost their jobs due to the coronavirus pandemic. He said the government was also negotiating with the Qatar Airways to repatriate Pakistanis from the US as presently the Pakistan International Airline had not been operating any direct flight to New York due to various reasons.

To a query, he said the overseas ministry

was working out a plan for bringing the dead bodies of expats to Pakistan from other countries. The bodies from Saudi Arabia and the US would be airlifted soon, he added.

Zulfiqar Bukhari said the plan for repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis in America would be shared with Pakistani Embassy in the US soon so that it could inform them timely. Ambassador Asad Majeed on the occasion said the Pakistani consulates had collected the details of all those Pakistanis who were stuck in the US after the closure of international flights by Pakistan. "We are in constant contact with the stranded Pakistanis to facilitate them in the prevailing situation."

Consul General Aysha Ali said food, accommodation and medical facilities were being provided to all those stranded Pakistani who had contacted the consulates.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani-Americans also highlighted the efforts which they made for their fellow nationals and other communities in the US. They said concentrated efforts were being made to ensure safety of their country-mates.

Over 3.022m sacks among wheat growers distributed

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Over 3.022 million sacks (bardana) of 100 kg has so far been distributed among farmers across the grains producing areas of the country under current year's wheat procurement campaign.

The sacks were distributed among grain producers in order to facilitate them to sell their produces on official fixed rates at the centres being established by the government.

The Punjab Government has so far provided 1.322 million bags to farmers as the province was tasked to procure about 4.500 million tons of wheat during current procurement season, said Food Security Commissioner Dr Imtiaz Ahmed Gopang.

Talking to APP here on Sunday, he said that the Sindh Government was the second largest staple grain producer of the country has also distributed 1.700 million bags among its growers as the province would procure about 1.400 million tons of wheat during this season.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) has provided 1.094 million bags as it would procure about 1.8 million tons of wheat in order to fulfill the domestic requirements as well as keeping the strategic reserves, he added. However, he said that bardana distributions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were not initiated, adding that as soon as the harvesting start in these provinces, sacks would also be provided to the farmers of these areas too, he added.

'Wheat procurement in full swing in Sargodha'

By Our Staff Correspondent

SARGODHA: Commissioner Sargodha division Dr. Farah Masood has said that wheat procurement campaign is in full swing in the four districts and so far more than 12 thousand five hundred farmers have been issued gunny bags.

Government has abolished gardawari condition and introduced mobile application and farmers can register for gunny bags through this application she said adding that inter-provincial transporting of wheat and flour was banned and on violation FIRs have been registered against seven persons so far in which three FIRs in district Mianwali and four in Bhakkar.

She expressed these views while chairing a review meeting of wheat procurement campaign.

713 Pakistani repatriated from Kabul: Ajmal

By Our Staff Correspondent

MPESHAWAR: Seven quarantine centres had been established in district Khyber having a capacity of 1500 people, while 713 Pakistani stranded in Afghanistan were repatriated via Torkham border, said Ajmal Wazir, Adviser to the Chief Minister KP on Information Sunday.

Addressing a news conference in Jamrud district Khyber on Sunday, Ajmal Wazir said a state-of-the-art isolation centre had also been set up in the area having 300 independent rooms.

The Pakistanis returned from Afghanistan had been sent to quarantine centre for a specific period where all necessary facilities were being provided to them. The advisor further said all edible items were available in the markets in sufficient quantity and strict action would be



KARACHI: A view of empty roads during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the COVID-19. —Online

Dr Ata optimistic of drugs combination to combat corona

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Task Force of Pakistan Science and Technology, Dr. Ata-ur-Rehman on Sunday said that in order to counter COVID-19, Pakistani laboratories were working on a project by using two drugs for tackling the patients having symptoms of virus.

Talking to a private tv channel program, on Sunday, he said that combination of anti-malarial drug namely Hydroxychloroquine and Erythromycin, being used for treating a wide variety of bacterial infections, could produce better results after clinical tests of patients infected with COVID-19.

About the mutation of the virus, Chairman Dr Ata ur Rehman said that the virus entered into this region, was a third family virus appeared before the world with the name of COVID-19. He said in the recent years, there was a Middle Eastern Respira-

tory Syndrome (MERS), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and that the families of virus had affected a number of people in some countries including Gulf region. In reply to a question about intensity of the virus in Pakistan, he said COVID-19, due to mutation stages, was not as vulnerable in this region as compared to America, Spain, Italy and other European regions. However, he said the research was in progress in labs for identifying the exact number of stages of mutation here. To a question about preparation of vaccination, he said ministry of science and technology has claimed to initiate the process of vaccination but this was a first phase where the health experts were working on it. He disclosed that in the second stage, the concerned team would have to approach for Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), for carrying forward the procedure after approval.

"Clinical testing of vaccination, usually

it takes a few month for showing results," Dr Ata ur Rehman stated. Meanwhile, Vice Chancellor of University of Health Sciences (UHS), Lahore, Prof. Dr Javed Akram said that his team was working on the project of combination of two drugs including Hydroxychloroquine, erythromycin with ingredients of "Kalvangi" (black seed), that he added could be made effective after clinical test of coronavirus patients. It is to be mentioned here that Bio-safety Level-3 Laboratory for Emerging Pathogens of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore has also taken initiatives for conducting diagnostic tests of COVID-19.

The lab has successfully managed to process the first batch of 205 samples of suspected coronavirus patients. Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmad had visited the laboratory for inspecting the testing process and appreciated the efforts of Chairman Department of Microbiology.