



ISLAMABAD: A large number of worshippers offer second Friday prayer of Ramadan at Faisal Masjid.

PTCL provides ration to the needy families

KOHAT: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) embarks upon a massive Ramadan ration drive to provide relief for families affected during the Coronavirus pandemic. The ration drive initiative will be covering 25 cities across Pakistan in the coming days.

The ration packs for an entire month comprising of essential food items, were distributed amongst a few beneficiary families at a special ceremony organised at District Commissioner (DC) Office, Kohat.

The ceremony was attended by senior management from PTCL, along with high-ranking officers of the KP Government. Majority of the ration distribution was conducted by the District Administration at the Mohammadzai Union Council of Kohat.

This ceremony marks the 1st phase of the ration drive that will continue throughout the month of Ramadan.

On the occasion, Ziaullah Bangash, Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), said, "We are grateful and much obliged at the support given by PTCL and its staff who have generously contributed to help the nation in these trying times. We appreciate their contribution and efforts at this time in need and I would also like to pay tribute to the services that they are providing to keep the country connected."

Syed Mazhar Hussain, Chief Human Resource Officer, PTCL, said, "PTCL remains at the forefront in supporting the nation during the ongoing pandemic. Our PTCL Razakaar force is committed to serve communities across the country through determination and hard work."

I am proud of PTCL employees, who voluntarily donated a portion of their salary to the PTCL Razakaar Trust to support this ration drive. We, as a national company, take pride in being socially responsible by taking proactive measures to

help the people of Pakistan." The Ramadan ration drive aims at to help the affected families to observe this holy month in its true spirit. PTCL continues to contribute to the society with its humanitarian activities and stand with people of Pakistan to get through this crisis together.

COVID 19: Guidelines for protection of children issued

The Ministry of Human Rights has issued guidelines for protection of children during COVID19 to create public awareness. According to the guidelines issued, parents can help children at home in their studies due to closure of educational institutions.

Parents must motivate their children to wash their hands again and again for twenty seconds. If any person in the family poses symptoms of coronavirus must self isolate to protect children and other family members.

If you find symptoms of Corona virus cough, flu and fever in children, immediately contact your doctor. In case of any concerns, you can contact help line 1099 of Ministry of Human Rights for guidance. You must encourage your children to communicate and talk in case you find any symptoms of stress in children. The symptoms of stress are lack of sleep, hunger and sadness. You can contact on helpline of Ministry of Human Rights in case of any physical and psychological problem in your children. Children can be victims of secondary effects of Corona virus.

The closure of schools and playgrounds has led to increased use of internet among children. It is important to ensure that your children and family members have access to correct information related to Corona virus. It is also important to keep check that children do not become victim of some online misconduct. —DNA

UNICEF expects five million births in Pakistan during nine months

PESHAWAR: Ahead of Mother's Day, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has called for the world's governments to maintain life-saving services for pregnant women and newborns that are under increasing threat from strained health services and supply chains as a result of coronavirus' outbreak.

The UN agency estimates that 116 million babies have been born since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with Pakistan grouped among the countries that have the highest numbers of forecast births.

It said that new mothers and their babies are facing systems in crisis, including overwhelmed health centres; supply and equipment shortages; and a lack of skilled birth attendants, including midwives. "Millions of mothers all over the world embarked on a journey of parenthood in the world as it was", Henrietta H. Fore, UNICEF executive director, said in a statement. Mother's Day, which will be celebrated on Sunday, is recognized by more than 128 countries.

"They now must prepare to bring a life into the world, as it has become — a world where expecting mothers are afraid to go to health centres for fear of getting infected, or missing out on emergency care due to strained health services and lockdowns".

In her remarks, the UNICEF Chief

warned: "This is a particularly poignant Mother's Day, as many families have been forced apart during the coronavirus pandemic...It is hard to imagine how much the pandemic has recast motherhood".

In the nine months span dating from when COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, the countries with the highest numbers of forecast births are expected to be India (20.1 million), China (13.5 million), Nigeria (6.4 million), Pakistan (5 million) and Indonesia (4 million). Most of these nations had high neonatal mortality rates even before the global health crisis.

And wealthier countries are also being seriously impacted, as trust and supplies run low. The sixth highest country for expected births, the United States, is projected to see in excess of 3.3 million babies born between 11 March and 16 December.

In New York City, authorities are looking into alternative birthing centres as many women are worried about delivering their babies in hospitals, due to the risk of infection.

UNICEF warns that although evidence suggests that pregnant mothers are not at greater risk of serious illness due to COVID-19 than other groups, countries still need to ensure they have access to antenatal, delivery and post-natal services.

Likewise, sick newborns need emergency services and new mothers require breastfeeding support, as well as medicines, vaccines and nutrition to keep their babies healthy.

While it is not yet known whether the coronavirus can be transmitted from a mother to her unborn baby, UNICEF recommends that all pregnant women protect themselves from the virus, closely monitor themselves for COVID-19 indications and seek medical advice if they have concerns or experience symptoms.

They are advised to also practice physical distancing, use online health services and seek early medical care if they live in at-risk areas and have fever, cough or difficulty breathing.

And they should speak to their midwife or doctor about the safest place to give birth along with making a birth plan to reduce anxiety.

Mothers with COVID-19 should wear a mask when feeding their baby, wash hands before and after touching the child, routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and continue to hold their newborn.

Henrietta H. Fore said, "We are living in a time for unity, a time to bring everyone together in solidarity".

"We can help save lives by making sure that every pregnant mother receives the support she needs to give birth safely in the months to come",

Govt will facilitate students: Shafqat

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood has assured students that government will do everything to facilitate them.

In a series of tweets, he said the decision for canceling board exams has been taken reluctantly in the larger interest of safety of students.

The Minister said we will answer all queries of students on Monday as they have sought a number of clarifications after Board exam cancellation, especially those who were giving composite class 12 exam or hoped to do better in 12 class compared to their performance in class 11 or reappear, and private students or those having supplementaries. He said examination of class nine is no issue as these students can take composite exam of class 10.

Taking notice of fee raise by Lahore University of Management Sciences, Shafqat Mahmood said he has seen reports that LUMS has increased its fee by 41 percent, if true, this is unacceptable.

e said LUMS is a premier educational institution of the country and needs to take lead in giving relief to students rather than burdening them and their parents even further. He said the Supreme Court has given a formula for annual five to eight per cent increase in school fee.

He, however, said universities may have different compulsions and may need a somewhat greater increase but a sudden 41 per cent increase by LUMS is beyond comprehension. He urged LUMS management to reconsider its decision. —DNA

COVID-19 pandemic destroys 20.5 million US jobs in April

WASHINGTON: The COVID-19 lockdown wiped out 20.5 million jobs in the United States in April, destroying nearly all the positions created in the prior decade in the world's largest economy, the Labor Department reported.

The unprecedented collapse drove the unemployment rate to 14.7 per cent - well beyond the peak hit in late 2009 during the global financial crisis - and from 4.4 per cent in March.

This is the steepest plunge in payrolls since the Great Depression, also shattering the post-World War Two record of 10.8 per cent in November 1982.

Job losses in March were worse than initially reported, falling 870,000 even though the business closures mostly happened in the second half of the month. The bleak numbers strengthen analysts' expectations of a slow recovery from the recession caused by the pandemic, adding

to a pile of dismal data on consumer spending, business investment, trade, productivity and the housing market. The monthly employment report underscored the devastation unleashed by lockdowns imposed by states and local governments in mid-March to slow the spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 has infected more than 1.25 million Americans and killed more than 75,000, the world's highest number of cases and deaths. —AFP



WASHINGTON: A nearly deserted Wall Street and the steps of Federal Hall are seen in lower Manhattan during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in New York City.

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CONDOLENCE

ALL PAKISTAN NEWSPAPERS SOCIETY

expresses profound grief over the sad demise of

Mother of

Senator Faisal Javed

Chairman Senale

Standing Committee on

Information & Broadcasting

May Allah the Almighty rest her soul in

eternal peace and grant courage

to the bereaved family to bear this loss.

APNS

All Pakistan Newspapers Society

COVID-19: Trump, Pence test negative after White House staff infected

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have tested negative for the novel coronavirus after a member of the US military who works at the White House as a valet came down with the virus.

During a meeting with the governor of Texas in the Oval Office on Thursday (May 7), Trump told reporters he had little contact with the man and would be tested daily going forward.

Neither Trump nor Pence wore masks during the meeting. People working around the president at the White House have been getting regular tests for the coronavirus. But staff, Secret Service agents, and guests have not been wearing masks in the West Wing.

"No matter what you do, testing is not a perfect art. So we test once a week. Now we're going to get tested once a day. But even when you test once a day somebody could, something happens where they get something," Trump said. "I've had very little contact with this gentleman. Know who he is, good person... Yeah it's a little bit strange, but it's one of those things," he said.

A White House spokesman said earlier that Trump and Pence had tested negative for the virus.

"We were recently notified by the White House Medical Unit that a member of the United States Military, who works on the White House campus. —AFP

False negative: Officials say Russian COVID-19 tests often give wrong results



MOSCOW: Tests used throughout Russia to determine if someone has COVID-19 or not often give the wrong result, Moscow officials said on, in a statement further calling into question the veracity of official statistics.

The blunt admission by Moscow's department of health came on the same day as the Russian capital's mayor, Sergei Sobyanin, said the real number of coronavirus infections was more than triple the official figure.

The disclosure that test kits often wrongly say that people with late stage COVID-19 are free of the disease means the real number of infections in Russia - at 177,160 already the fifth highest in the world - is likely to be even higher.

It also means that people with the virus have been given the all clear by doctors and allowed in some cases to go home where they could infect other people. Reuters has verified at least one case where that happened and the individual infected someone else in their household who later died.

State medical institutions mainly use tests produced by the government-owned Vektor Institute in Siberia. They are based on a so-called polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, which quickly makes copies of a small sample of DNA molecules, the genetic blueprint for life. "At late stages of the illness, the PCR tests often give false negative results," Moscow's health department said in its statement.

Given that failure, it said Moscow, which is far better resourced than other Russian regions, was now sometimes using another test, an antibodies test, in conjunction with the PCR. Moscow, the epicentre of Russia's outbreak, accounts for more than half of confirmed cases and deaths. In April, it changed testing policy after doctors complained of inaccurate PCR results and began automatically assuming that anyone with pneumonia was infected. —Reuters

Australia maps out staged easing of COVID-19 curbs

SYDNEY: Australia will ease social distancing restrictions in a three-step process, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said, as Canberra aims to remove all curbs by July and get nearly 1 million people back to work amid a decline in coronavirus cases.

Australia in March imposed strict social distancing restrictions, which coupled with the closure of its borders, are credited with drastically slowing the number of new infections of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

With fewer than 20 new infections each day, Morrison said Australian states and territories on Friday agreed a road map to remove most of the



curbs. "You can stay under the doona forever. You'll never face any danger," Morrison told reporters in Canberra, using an Australian word for quilt. "But we've got to get out from under the doona at some time."

Morrison said it will be up to Australia's various states and territories to decide when to begin implement each stage. —AFP