



Govt pursuing policy of transparent accountability in Pakistan: Governor

The Business

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UK to unveil obesity plan after PM Boris Johnson's near-death experience

Gwadar to soon become global port city, says Asim Bajwa

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Lt. Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Sunday said that development activities at Gwadar port were picking up to make it a world class port city.

In his tweet, Asim Bajwa said that Gwadar had huge potential to become a global city and a vibrant port.

Asim Bajwa who also heads China Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority, said development activities in South Balochistan were also in progress.

"Current focus is on building roads for better connectivity and socio economic development of the area."

Asim Bajwa said Hoshab-Awaran-Khuzdar and Awaran-Bela roads were in focus to transform this region.

ICCI calls for opening all businesses after Eid

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Sunday urged the government to allow complete opening of all businesses with compliance of standard operating procedures (SOPs) after the Eid ul Azha.

The chamber said that current economic situation could not afford to keep the businesses shut for longer period, as opening of the businesses after Eid-ul-Azha with compliance of SOPs would help to boost the country's economy.

Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President ICCI also appealed the traders, industrialists and the general public to take all precautionary measures during the Eid-ul-Azha and fully comply with the instructions issued by the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafiqat in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that traders and industrialists had suffered huge losses due to the pandemic, lockdown and it will take time to recover from this situation.

However, he said that by the grace of Allah Almighty, the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic had significantly decreased, but there was possibility that the deadly virus could spread again on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. That was the reason, closed businesses had not been reopened yet.

However, he urged the government to reopen all the businesses completely after Eid as our economy could not afford further losses by keeping businesses closed.

The ICCI president said the Covid-19 had destroyed businesses, reduced tax collection by more than 30 percent and increased inflation and unemployment manifold.

He said that the economy was expected to improve with the return of businesses to normal routine. He hoped that after Eid, all closed businesses would be fully reopened with compliance of SOPs from August 5 so that the economy could come out of the problems and move towards rehabilitation that would reduce the problems of the business class and the common man.

President condoles with Ijaz on his brother's death

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday expressed his condolence with Interior Minister Brig (Retd) Ijaz Ahmad Shah over the death of his brother later Pir Hassan Ahmad,

The president in his condolence message, prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul and for the bereaved family to bear the loss with equanimity. According to a press release, the president also expressed his sympathies with the bereaved family.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator, Shibli Fraz flanked with SAPM on Digital Pakistan, Tania Aidrus and Focal person to PM on COVID-19, Dr Faisal Sultan addresses a press conference.

Virus: Shibli appeals masses to adopt SOPs on Eid ul Azha

— Says Pakistan's model of smart lockdown being replicated in many countries

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz said on Sunday the government had adopted a balanced strategy to cope with the challenge of coronavirus pandemic effectively.

Addressing a news conference along with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Pakistan Tania Aidrus and Focal Person to the PM on COVID-19 Dr. Faisal Sultan, Shibli Faraz said Pakistan introduced the smart lockdown policy to save precious lives and livelihood of people. The Pakistani model was being replicated in many countries in the world, he added.

The minister said Prime Minister Imran Khan had the opinion from day one that Pakistan could not afford complete lockdown policy due to ground realities.

He said many countries which observed strict lockdown to stop spread of this global epidemic were now facing economic hard-

ships and rising death toll. Shibli Faraz said National Command and Operation Center played a vital role and managed the situation scientifically with analysing data on daily basis.

He said at the time of Eidul Fitr, the cases of coronavirus had spiked as people thronged markets and shopping malls without adopting social distancing practice.

He said the pandemic was in control but it was still prevalent and carelessness may prove costly. He appealed to the masses to adopt SOPs on the occasion of Eidul Azha as it was necessary to defeat the pandemic.

The minister said in February, when the first case of coronavirus was reported in Pakistan, there was no data available, doctors and paramedics had no training to handle this disease, healthcare system was weak and economy not very good shape.

Keeping in mind these facts, the government adopted a strategy, he said.

He said some elements not interested in

welfare of masses criticised Imran Khan's strategy but the PM showed steadfastness and refused to budge under pressure.

Shibli Faraz said those supporting complete lockdown did not have the moral courage to accept the fact that PM's strategy had paid the dividends.

PM's smart lockdown policy helps contain COVID-19 spread: Tania Aidrus

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Digital Pakistan Tania Aidrus Sunday said PM Imran Khan's smart lockdown policy had helped in curtailing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the country. Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz and Focal person to PM on COVID-19 Dr Faisal Sultan, she said Pakistan was not in a position to afford a complete lockdown policy due to its negative impact on the country's economy and life of com-

FO dismisses story on Wuhan lab conducting 'covert'

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday dismissed a story published in an Australian news outlet on a Wuhan lab conducting alleged covert operations in Pakistan, calling it "politically motivated and fake".

"It is composed of distortion of facts and fabrications that quote anonymous sources," said a statement issued by the ministry, through the office of the Foreign Office spokesperson.

The Klaxon report, quoting unnamed "intelligence experts", claims China's Wuhan Institute of Virology has "set up operations in Pakistan as part of a broader offensive against India and Western rivals".

"The secret facility is allegedly making anthrax-like pathogens which could be used in biological warfare," the report published on July 23 alleges.

"There is nothing secret about the Bio-

Safety Level-3 (BSL-3) Laboratory of Pakistan referred to in the report," said the statement by Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued on Sunday. "Pakistan has been sharing information about the facility with the States Parties to the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BTWC) in its submission of Confidence Building Measures.

"The facility is meant for diagnostic and protective system improvement by Research and Development (R&D) on emerging health threats, surveillance and disease outbreak investigation.

"Pakistan strictly abides by its BTWC obligations and has been one of the most vocal supporters for a strong verification mechanism to ensure full compliance by the States Parties to the Convention."

"The attempt to cast aspersions about the facility is particularly absurd against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the need for better preparedness in the areas of disease surveillance and control and international

collaborations in that regard, consistent with Article X of BTWC," added the statement.

The Wuhan Institute of Virology came under scrutiny in April with the US probing whether the virus actually originated in the virology institute — located in China's coronavirus epicentre — with a high-security biosafety laboratory.

Chinese scientists have said the virus likely jumped from an animal to humans in a market that sold wildlife. But the existence of the facility has fuelled conspiracy theories that the germ spread from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, specifically its P4 laboratory which is equipped to handle dangerous viruses.

The director of the laboratory, Yuan Zhiming, had said that "there's no way this virus came from us". None of his staff had been infected, he told the English-language state broadcaster CGTN, adding the "whole institute is carrying out research in different areas related to the coronavirus".

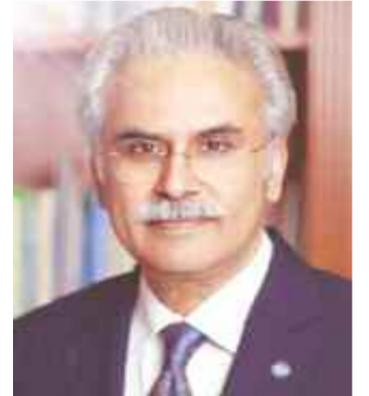
Mirza warns COVID-19 infections can spike again

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Zafar Mirza on Sunday warned that coronavirus cases in the country could spike again.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said that the virus had peaked in the country in mid-June and cases had been declining since then. He added that the country would face two big challenges in the coming weeks — Eidul Azha and Muharram.

Mirza said that the experience of other countries had shown that there could be a spike in cases again. "We saw this in Spain, Iran, United States and other European countries that there can be a resurgence in cases."



Talking about the danger of the virus spreading during Eid celebrations, Mirza said that the government had "learned from last Eid's experience" and had started preparations earlier. "During the last few weeks, we discussed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with provinces and adopted a strategy at the national level."

He urged people to follow SOPs while visiting cattle markets. "Wear a mask, maintain social distancing and wash your hands frequently," he instructed, adding that elderly or sick people should not visit the markets.

He further said that the government had disallowed cattle markets being set up inside the cities. "You will have seen that small cattle markets start popping up in cities around Eid. That will not be allowed this time but cattle markets are allowed to be set up as far outside cities as possible."

Mirza also urged people to opt for booking sacrificial animals online or for 'ijtimali qurbani' (collective sacrifice). He said that the SOPs based on a 20-point agenda agreed between the government and ulema for Eidul Fitr would be implemented for prayers on this Eid as well.

Regulating real estate sector to be a great relief

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Sunday lauded the decision of the Prime Minister Imran Khan to regulate the real estate sector by establishing real estate regulatory authority.

The business community unconditionally supports the move which will safeguard rights of all the stakeholders including buyers, attract local and foreign investment and generate much-needed economic activity, it said.

The rules and regulations governing real estate sector as so weak that these are often used against the masses by unprincipled real estate agents, builders and developers, said Dr Murtaza Mughal, President PEW.

He said that masses need a break as most of the people who invest their lifetime savings for a home are looted by this mafia with the help of police and other institutions.

Dr Murtaza Mughal who is also Convener FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Insurance said that there is no system for recovery of lost money and the legal battle take decades in which builders emerge victorious. He said that this sector has become a safe heaven for money laundering, looters, plunderers, tax evaders and those who have accumulated billion of ill-gotten wealth.

Virus kills 35 more Pakistanis in single day

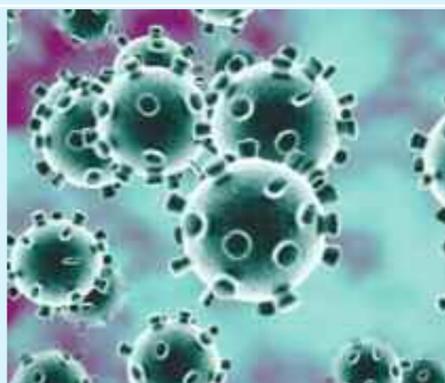
By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pakistan has confirmed 35 deaths in a single day by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 273,113. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 5,822, on Sunday.

According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) 1,226 persons have been tested positive for COVID-19 in 24 hours.

Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad. Till now 117,598 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 91,901 in Punjab, 33,220 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 14,841 in Islamabad, 11,578 in Balochistan, 2,023 in Azad Kashmir and 1,952 in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Pakistan has so far conducted 1,868,180 coronavirus tests and 23,254 in last 24 hours. 237,434 coronavirus patients have recovered in the country whereas 1,267 patients are in critical condition. The COVID-19 has taken away three



more lives in the province, while the number of coronavirus cases in the province exceeded 91,901 after registration of 210 new cases till Sunday morning.

According to the spokesperson of the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department, total number of deaths exceeded 2116 in the province.

As many as 91 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Lahore, 1 in Nankana Sahib, 1 in Kasur, 1 in Sheikhpura, 23 in Rawalpindi, 4 in Attock, 2 in Chakwal, 5 in Gujranwala, 2 in Sialkot, 10 in Gujrat, 10 in Mandi Bahauddin, 10 in Multan, 1 in Khanewal, 3 in Faisalabad, 2 in Chinoet, 6 in Toba Tek Singh, 4 in Rahimyar Khan, 12 in Sargodha, 2 in Mianwali, 1 in Bhakkar, 7 in Bahawalnagar, 2 in Bahawalpur, 3 in Dera Ghazi Khan, 2 in Muzaffargarh, 1 in Rajanpur, 3 in Layyah and 2 new case of COVID-19 were reported in Sahiwal districts during the last 24 hours.

The Punjab health department conducted 692,613 tests for COVID-19 so far, while 81,253 confirmed cases were recovered all together in the province.

CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN	
Confirmed cases:	272,658
ICT:	14,821
Punjab:	91,691
Sindh:	117,598
KP:	33,071
Balochistan:	11,523
AJK:	2,012
GB:	1,942
Recovered:	236,596
Deaths:	5,812