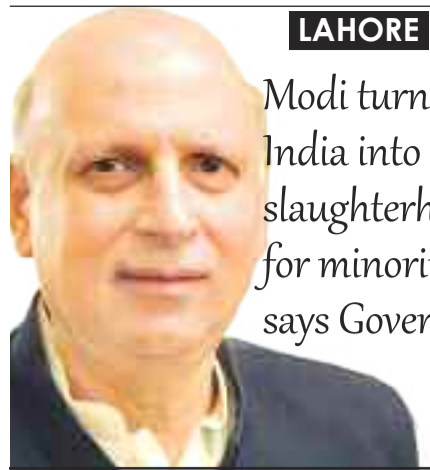


LAHORE P3



Modi turns India into a slaughterhouse for minorities, says Governor

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LAHORE

P2

Positive corona patients increasing immensely: CM



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PM's housing scheme receives overwhelming response: Baqir

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Governor State Bank of Pakistan Reza Baqir on Sunday said that Prime Minister's housing scheme for low income group is receiving an overwhelming response of people of different category. The Banks had collected a large number of applications for loan amounting to forty billion rupees approved by the government of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) for construction of small houses in the country, he said while talking to news channel special program. It was Prime Minister's vision that every citizen drawing meager salary should have loan facility from banks for construction of a house in Pakistan, he added.

The instruction had been given to banks to facilitate the customers willing to apply loans on soft terms and condition, he disclosed. Clearing the ambiguity about account holders and government employees, he said it was not necessary that citizen should be a government employee for applying this scheme.

He further stated that if any person did not have bank accounts such people could also apply for the low cost housing scheme.

Alvi wishes happy Holi to Hindu community

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday wished happy 'Holi' to the Hindu community. In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "Wishing a Happy Holi to all our Hindu brethren celebrating. May this joyous event of colours bring happiness, peace and prosperity for all of us and our region." "Pakistan stands committed to the rights of minorities," he added.

Qureshi wishes Hindu community happy Holi

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Sunday wished Hindu community in Pakistan and across the world a very happy Holi.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "Wishing our Hindu community in Pakistan and across the world a very happy Holi. May the festival of colours bring peace, happiness and prosperity."

COVID-19 claims 57 lives, infects 4,767 more people

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Sunday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 44,447 with 4,767 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 2,647 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours.

Fifty-seven corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 53 of whom were under treatment in hospital and four out of the hospital in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in the Punjab followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Out of the total 57 deaths occurred during last 24 hours, 20 of the deceased had died on ventilators during their treatment.

The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 70 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory 62 percent, Gujranwala 60 percent and Lahore 55 percent. The maximum Oxygen beds (alternate oxygen providing facility other than ventilator administered as per medical requirement of COVID patient) was also occupied in four major areas of Gujrat 98 percent, Gujranwala 85 percent, Peshawar 78 percent and ICT 56 percent. Around 388 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in the country while no COVID affected person was on ventilator in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Balochistan. Some 45,656 tests were conducted across the country on Saturday, including 9,424 in Sindh, 19,377 in Punjab, 8,160 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 6,460 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).



HYDERABAD: An illuminated view of Haji Baba Hayat Jamia Masjid at Pathan Colony decorated with colourful lights in connection with Shab-e-Barat.

PM directs SBP, NBP to facilitate housing loan applicants

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday while taking notice of difficulties facing the applicants, instructed the State Bank and National Bank of Pakistan to facilitate those applying for low-cost housing loan under Naya Pakistan Housing Program.

Addressing the National Bank of Pakistan's telethon on low cost housing loan, the Prime Minister asked the State Bank to instruct commercial banks to ease the loaning process for the applicants.

Simultaneously aired on Pakistan Television and different private channels, the telethon was attended by Senator Shibli Faraz, Chairman of Naya Pakistan Housing and Development Authority Lt General (retired), Anwar Ali Hyder, State Bank Governor Raza Baqir, President of National Bank of Pakistan Arif Usmani and Executive Director SBP Samar Hasnain.

The Prime Minister joined the telethon telephonically for being in quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19 a week ago.

Imran Khan said that the NBP, being the premier bank of the country, should also instruct its staffers, to facilitate the loan applicants, observing that the bank employees were also not in habit of extending such

Imran Khan says once people started building their own house, construction industry would boom to help boost allied 30 other industries

easy loans to the cashless people.

He said there was no such concept of housing loan for the poor people in the country that was why the people were facing difficulties in the beginning.

The prime minister said that once the people started building their own house, the construction industry would boom to help boost allied 30 other industries. Consequently, the wealth would create and increase revenue for the country besides creating jobs for the people, he added.

He said this was the first time in Pakistan that the salaried class or the people with no cash were getting opportunity to own a house.

Imran Khan said the program had been designed in such a way that the beneficiaries currently giving money to pay house rent would be using the same to pay housing loan installment.

As per details, the beneficiaries of the housing loans would have to pay monthly installment of Rs 6,600 for 1 million loan, Rs 13,199 for two million, Rs 19,799 for

three million, Rs 26,398 for four million, and Rs 32,998 for five million loan.

The prime minister said the people across the world like Europe or USA bought their houses through bank loans but it had not been a practice in Pakistan.

He said under the program, not only the people would own a house rather the national economy would also get a boost.

He said as the country was under debt burden, the wealth creation was direly needed to increase the revenue. "In all ways, this is an important project for the country," the prime minister remarked.

To a question, he said the government would give preference to the widows and differently-abled person to give them houses under the program for they being the government's responsibility.

The people aspiring to own a house under the prime minister's pro-poor housing program, joined the transmission by calling at 0519215595 and the panelists

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Pakistan to get 1m more vaccine doses from China: Faisal Sultan

From Our Staff Correspondent

IKARACHI: Pakistan will receive another batch of over a million COVID-19 vaccine doses from China next week, the country's top health official said on Sunday.

Dr Faisal Sultan, the prime minister's adviser on health, said in a tweet that the country has placed orders for the purchase of 1 million and 60,000 doses of Sinopharm and CanSino vaccines from China respectively, which will be received within a few days.

Several million additional doses are in the pipeline and will be delivered in April, he added. The development came amid reports that the country's already sluggish vaccination campaign is likely to take a further hit, following the delay in the supply of 17 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine being provided by the WHO-led COVAX program for developing countries. The promised vaccines were slated to be received by the end of March.

But India's Serum Institute, which is supplying the doses to the world health body, has diverted supplies to meet domestic requirements. Pakistan is currently vaccinating frontline healthcare workers and senior citizens using Sinopharm doses donated by China.

Pakistan on Sunday recorded 4,767 new COVID-19 cases, the highest daily spike since last July. This increased the overall caseload to 654,591, the Health Ministry said, adding that another 57 people died of the disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 14,215. As many as 595,929 patients have recovered so far, with the number of active cases standing at 44,447.

Over the last few days, the country has reported over 4,000 daily cases, with 4,468 infections on Saturday.

Infections have been surged in the South Asian country of over 200 million in recent days, with more than 72,000 reported in March alone.

Earlier this week, the government said

existing COVID-19 restrictions would continue for at least three more weeks.

They include "broader lockdowns" in high-risk areas, with no movement allowed, except for emergencies. Educational institutions have also been closed until at least April 11 in districts with high infection rates.

PM making steady recovery, may resume work

Prime Minister Imran Khan has been advised that he may resume work and build up his work routine over the next few days, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Services Dr Faisal Sultan tweeted on Sunday.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "PM Imran Khan has made steady clinical recovery from Covid and his lab parameters have remained stable."

"He has been advised that he may resume work and build up his work routine over the next few days. This is in line with

Heart of Asia ministerial moot

FM Qureshi to visit Tajikistan today

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi is scheduled to visit Tajikistan today (Monday) for two-day visit to attend 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) Ministerial Conference being held on March 30 in Dushanbe.

At the moot, the foreign minister would lead the Pakistani delegation, said a Foreign Office press release.

The ministerial meeting will be preceded by Senior Officials Meeting on March 29. The theme of the Conference is "Strengthening Consensus for Peace and Development."

During the conference, the foreign minister would deliver a statement highlighting Pakistan's positive contributions to the Afghan peace process and its support for Afghanistan's development and connectivity within the regional framework.

On the sidelines of the conference, the foreign minister would hold consultations with key regional and international partners.

Initiated in 2011, the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, is an important platform to promote peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan through regional cooperation, confidence-building measures (CBMs), and dialogue.

Complete ban on marriages from April 5: NCOC

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Sunday imposed a complete ban on marriage ceremonies both indoor and outdoor from 5th April onwards to contain disease spread. The NCOC special session was held here with Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar with provincial chief secretaries on board via video link.

The Forum took detailed stock of epidemic curve chart data, update on non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) or alternate measures to treat the disease other than medical treatment and vaccination process.

The Forum had imposed complete ban on marriages (including indoor and outdoor) from 5th April onwards. However, the provinces would have the discretion to implement restrictions in early time frame as per the situation on ground. The NCOC would also provide updated hotspot maps to the provinces for enforcement of expanded lockdowns (ranging from a union council to an entire town) with effect from 29th March. The Forum had also decided that all kind of gatherings both indoor outdoor would be banned with immediate effect including all social, cultural, political, sports and other events.

266 Chinese staff returns for CPEC projects

BEIJING: As many as 235 personnel from PowerChina International Group Limited (PowerChina) and 31 workers from other companies, returned to Pakistan for China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects with 230 boxes of anti-epidemic materials and construction equipment. PowerChina indicated that this batch of staff will participate in the construction of Diamer-Bashah Dam, Lucky Coal-fired Power Station Project, Wind Power Project Group, and Thar Power Station Project. In 2021, those projects will gradually enter the construction peak period which demands more technicians and workers," according to a report published by CEN on Sunday.

After arriving, all the 266 staff will be quarantined for 14 days before entering the construction site, a spokesman said. "At present, all the projects of PowerChina Pakistan have been operating normally. The construction has been carried out under the requirements of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State



SIALKOT: Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister for Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan listens problems of the people.

BoI to expedite relocation of Chinese Industry in SEZs

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairman Board of Investment (BoI) Atif Bokhari on Sunday emphasized that Pakistan and China need to focus and work towards expediting the relocation of Chinese Industry in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) including Rashakai SEZ.

In his remarks Chairman BoI, Atif Bokhari welcomed the delegation and praised China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC)'s impressive work in the Rashakai SEZ.

China and Pakistan have negotiated in detail on the development progress and marketing plans for Rashakai Spe-

cial Economic Zone (SEZ) and other matters of mutual interest, said a press release issued by BoI here.

Vice President, China Road and Bridge Corporation Mr. Sun Yaoguo and his delegation called on MOS/Chairman Board of Investment (BoI) Atif Bokhari at the BoI office.

Both sides also discussed the interest of Chinese enterprises in Rashakai.

While in meeting Chairman BoI concurred with Mr. Sun for perusal of an aggressive marketing campaign that effectively highlights the monetary benefits for investors.

In this regard Chairman BoI apprised the delegation about approval of two major incentives for SEZs i.e.

custom and duty exemption on capital goods and elimination of 1.5 percent turnover tax. He applauded the work being carried out by CRBC in Pakistan. He assured the delegation that BoI will support CRBC in coordination with relevant departments and Ministries as well as offering assistance within BoI's mandate.

BoI looks forward to closely working with CRBC to not only facilitate their progress in Pakistan but also to jointly work towards Pakistan's fast paced industrialization. He also shared that domestic companies have shown keen interest in setting up enterprises in the Rashakai SEZ and desired that this should be looked into.