

Global News

- According to a WHO expert, lockdowns alone will not defeat the outbreak.
- UK government will not dismiss Italy-style lockdown.
- The number of global coronavirus cases surged past 300,000 on Sunday, with more than 13,000 deaths worldwide, according to John Hopkins University, which reported that China, Italy and the US had the most people diagnosed with the respiratory illness.
- India imposes a nationwide curfew.
- In Spain, the death toll rises by almost 400 as Germany and Iran see cases jump.
- A Washington State hospital says it could run out of ventilators by early April 2020.

Global Response

- Organizers of the Summer Olympics in Tokyo-seemingly unwilling to meddle just yet with years of planning and billions of dollars in anticipated revenue- insist the Games can begin in late July as scheduled.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson of Britain had stern advice for the nation as it celebrated Mother's Day: Don't visit your mother.
- Hawaii orders a 14-day quarantine for all arrivals.
- The White House has signaled that American companies are increasing efforts to restock hospitals with crucial supplies during the pandemic, but it has stopped short of more assertive steps that some state and local leaders have been demanding.
- Australia closes pubs and cinemas but schools stay open.
- Chinese foundations to donate medical supplies to Pakistan, other Asian countries.

Local News

- Pakistan cannot afford to impose a total lockdown, says PM Imran Khan.
- PM Imran Khan says that panic is more of a danger than the coronavirus.
- Punjab seeks army help to fight virus outbreak.
- Coronavirus cure: Anti-malarial drug vanishes from medical stores.
- Gas companies concern that tariff reduction would lead to the bankruptcy of gas companies.
- About 2,000 more people expected in Balochistan from Iran soon.

Local Response

- CM Sindh announces province-wide lockdown to combat coronavirus.

Avoid Handshaking To Prevent Spread of Coronavirus

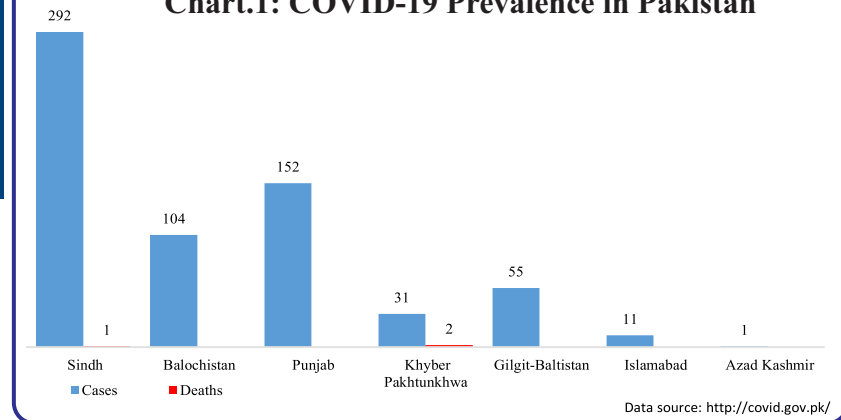


- KP orders closure of restaurants, suspends inter-city transport services.
- PEMRA asks channels not to hold morning shows inviting audience live.
- Sindh government on Sunday announced to impose lockdown in the province from tonight.
- Karachi Electric assures of uninterrupted supply to hospitals.
- KP CM Mahmood Khan approves 1,299 doctors' appointment on emergency basis.

The frequency of COVID-19 in the provinces of Pakistan is increasing and it is still highest in Sindh, while in AJK only one case is reported so far. Total five persons are recovered and three deaths are registered. Since the recovery time is about two to three weeks, it is expected that number of recovered cases may increase in couple of weeks.

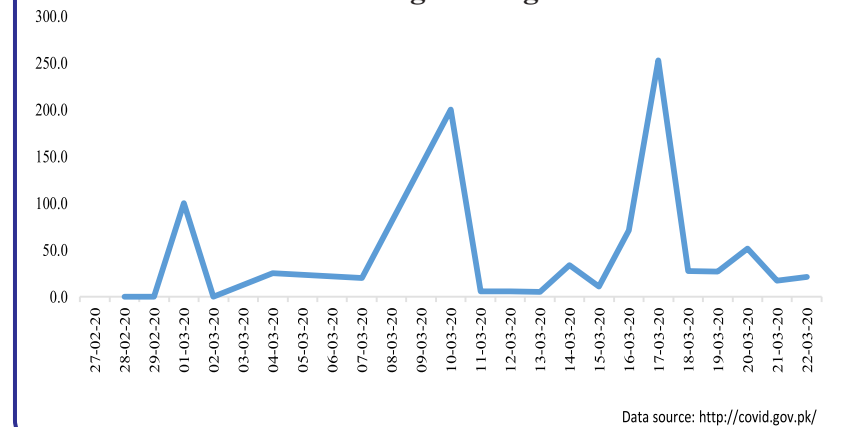
During last 24 hours, 185 new cases confirmed by different laboratories, bringing the national tally to 646. The National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, provides the risk assessment of the disease as having HIGH in Pakistan, see Chart.1.

Chart.1: COVID-19 Prevalence in Pakistan



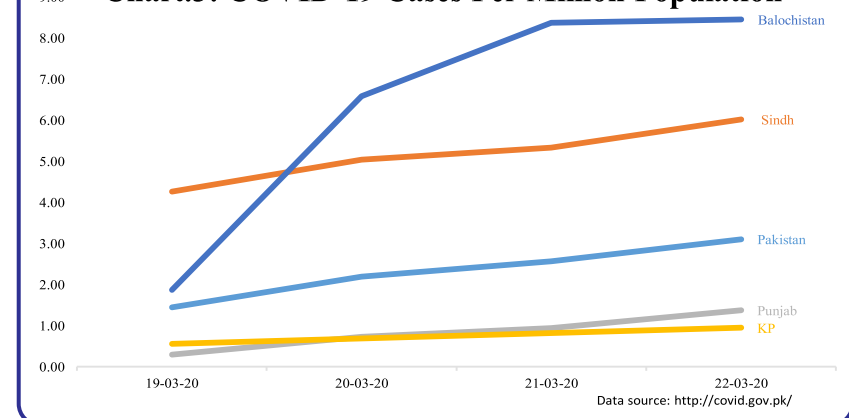
Though the number of COVID-19 infected cases is increasing all over Pakistan, but surprisingly the rate of change is not monotonically increasing. This is because it depends on the number of infected persons' arrival from abroad, only a little is known about localized transmission of the disease, see Chart.2.

Chart.2: Relative Percentage Change of COVID-19 Cases



Sindh has the highest number of infected cases, but when we look at data in per million of population it is observed that Balochistan is the most vulnerable. Balochistan being the front-line area receiving pilgrims from Iran suffered the most. In KP per million cases are less than one. Since the medical facilities in Punjab and Sindh are much better, it is expected that patients may shift from KP and Balochistan to Punjab and Sindh.

Chart.3: COVID-19 Cases Per Million Population



COVID-19 READS

1. **Slowdown or Shutdown Pakistan's Dilemma**
<https://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/PIDE-COVID-Bulletin-2.pdf>
2. **COVID-19 in Pakistan: Caring for the Poor and Vulnerable**
<https://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/PIDE-COVID-Bulletin.pdf>
3. **Panic buying, Lockdowns may Drive World Food Inflation**
<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001365177/panic-buying-lockdowns-may-drive-world-food-inflation-fao-analysts>
4. **Chloroquine for COVID-19: Cutting Through the Hype**
<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/is-hype-over-chloroquine-as-a-potential-covid-19-therapy-justified--67301>
5. **Coronavirus: The Hammer and the Dance**
<https://medium.com/@tomaspuoyo/coronavirus-the-hammer-and-the-dance-be9337092b56>
6. **This is What We Can Learn from the Way Kerala is Handling its Coronavirus Calamity**
https://www.vice.com/en_in/article/pkewx8/lessons-from-kerala-handling-coronavirus
7. **Social Distancing 101 for COVID-19 Coronavirus: Here are the Dos and Don'ts**
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucelee/2020/03/21/social-distancing-101-for-covid-19-coronavirus-here-are-the-dos-and-donts/#1448b19c2dd6>
8. **Coronavirus: In Dense Bangladesh, Social Distancing a Tough Task**
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/coronavirus-dense-bangladesh-social-distancing-tough-task-200320103733470.html>
9. **Coronavirus: Perfect Storm of Virus Peril in Asia's Sprawling Slums**
<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/coronavirus-perfect-storm-of-virus-peril-in-asias-sprawling-slums>
10. **Money Can Buy Some Protection from Coronavirus. But the Poor Can't Afford It, Leaving them More Vulnerable**
<https://www.inquirer.com/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-philadelphia-poverty-food-homeless-food-stamps-20200314.html>



Citizen Science

Interactive computing games have also been used to help with “designing and identifying proteins that may be able to bind and neutralize the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein that it uses to invade host cells. The scientists hope that players’ creations will yield insights that will allow them to create an effective antiviral therapy for COVID-19.” Foldit is an online video game that challenges players to fold various proteins into shapes where they are stable: “Players who can work alone or in teams are using the game’s puzzle system to develop new protein structures that can be tested by biochemists in the lab for use in antiviral drugs.” Folding@home developed by the Stanford University is asking people for donating their CPU time for computational drug design and other types of molecular dynamics involving COVID-19.

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Experts' View:

Public gatherings, including congregational prayer, must be banned, as they are the world over. Quarantine and isolation will have to be enforced; no one is listening to suggestions, least of all the government itself. Continuing to act like feckless, passive spectators will send us down Iran’s path; rigorous, early testing will send us down Korea's. (Salaar Khan, The News)

The SBP must save Pakistan's corporate citizens and Pakistani families from corona-induced economic disaster. The SBP must do two things: bailout affected industries and boost household demand (some of these measures – guaranteeing business loans, for instance – do not require any upfront funding). We must not expect other countries to help us out because they all have their own problems to deal with. (Dr. Farrukh Saleem, The News).

Experts' Opinion:

Behavioral science recognizes that trust in our leaders is the antidote to anxiety and potential social breakdown. A perception that the government response strategies are not effective in looking after the public may lead to an increase in tensions. (Mark Easton, BBC News).

The world of work is being profoundly affected by the global virus pandemic. In addition to the threat to public health, the economic and social disruption threatens the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions. Workers’ organizations can play an important role in participating in decision making and policies responses to the crisis on COVID-19. They can contribute to the prevention and protection of workers by giving reliable information. (ILO)

Social scientists have recorded evidence that natural disasters develop empathy among humans. But pandemics affect the normal bonds of human affection and social distancing becomes a virtue. (Muhammad Amir Rana, DAWN).

Main goal for governments should be to limit the spread of the virus in a way that provides confidence that economic shock will be temporary (Martin Muehleisen, IMF).