



Source: *Asad Hashim/Al Jazeera*. Islamabad's normally bustling G-9 markaz market lies empty on Wednesday.

Global News

- Spain overtakes China in total death toll.
- The German parliament has approved a coronavirus aid package that is expected to see Germany take on new debt for the first time since 2013.
- Putin announces delay to constitutional amendment vote, As of March 25, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Russia stands at 658, with no fatalities.
- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has accused the media of "fear-mongering" in a speech that downplayed the threat of coronavirus to the country.
- Facebook group calls soar 1,000% during Italy's lockdown.

Global Response

- The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) urged creditors to provide debt relief to world's poorest countries. The officials called for debt payments to be suspended for nations in the International Development Association (IDA).
- China and Germany to advance cooperation in COVID-19 vaccine development.
- Nike turns to digital sales during China shutdown.
- Saudi Arabia tightens curfew, suspends travel between some cities.
- China's Hubei lifts restrictions as no new local cases reported.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) now allows treatment of life-threatening COVID-19 cases using blood from patients who have recovered.

Local News

- Educational institutions to remain closed until May 31.
- 'Azaan' trends on Twitter after call to prayer echoes across country through the night.
- Dollar rises to Rs166 in interbank market.
- 88-year-old anonymous donor gives Sindh government a million rupees to beat Covid-19.
- Village in Mardan under lockdown; no entry or exit allowed.
- Islamabad admin seals Shahzad Town, Rimsha Colony.

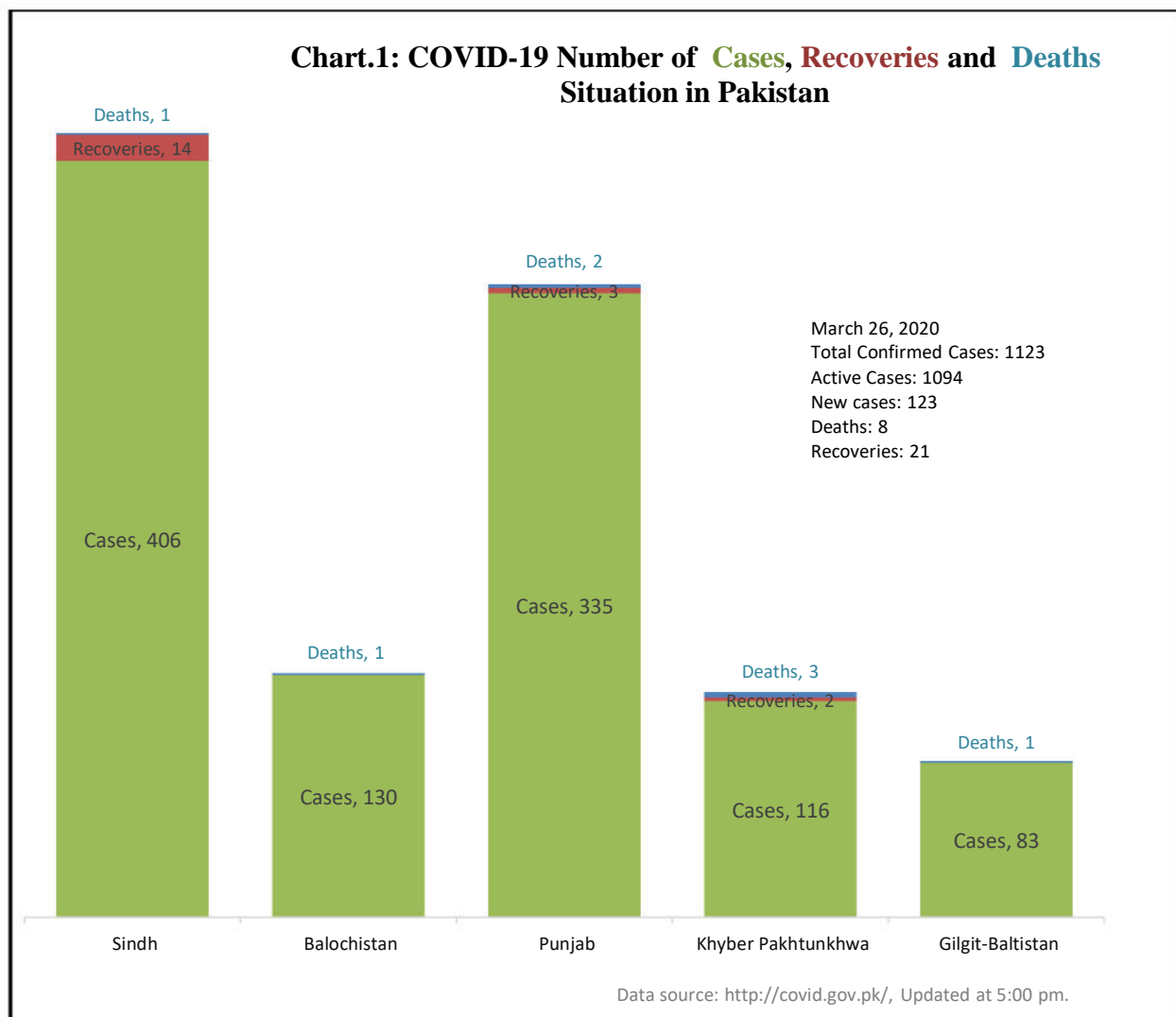
Local Response

- GB people will never be left alone, says General Qamar Javed Bajwa.
- President Alvi urges scholars to ban congregational prayers after Jamia Al Azhar issues fatwa.
- Ulema say they will comply with instructions given by the government.
- Sindh CM releases Rs580m to provide food, other supplies among daily wage workers.
- Senators to donate one month's salary to emergency fund.
- Pakistan to obtain \$3.65 billion (Rs587 billion) loans to ward off negative impacts of COVID-19 virus on the country's economy.
- Usman Buzdar announces risk allowance for medics, paramedics.
- Rs7.8bn approved for NDMA to contain pandemic.
- Federal govt. directs taxi drivers, passengers in Islamabad to wear masks.

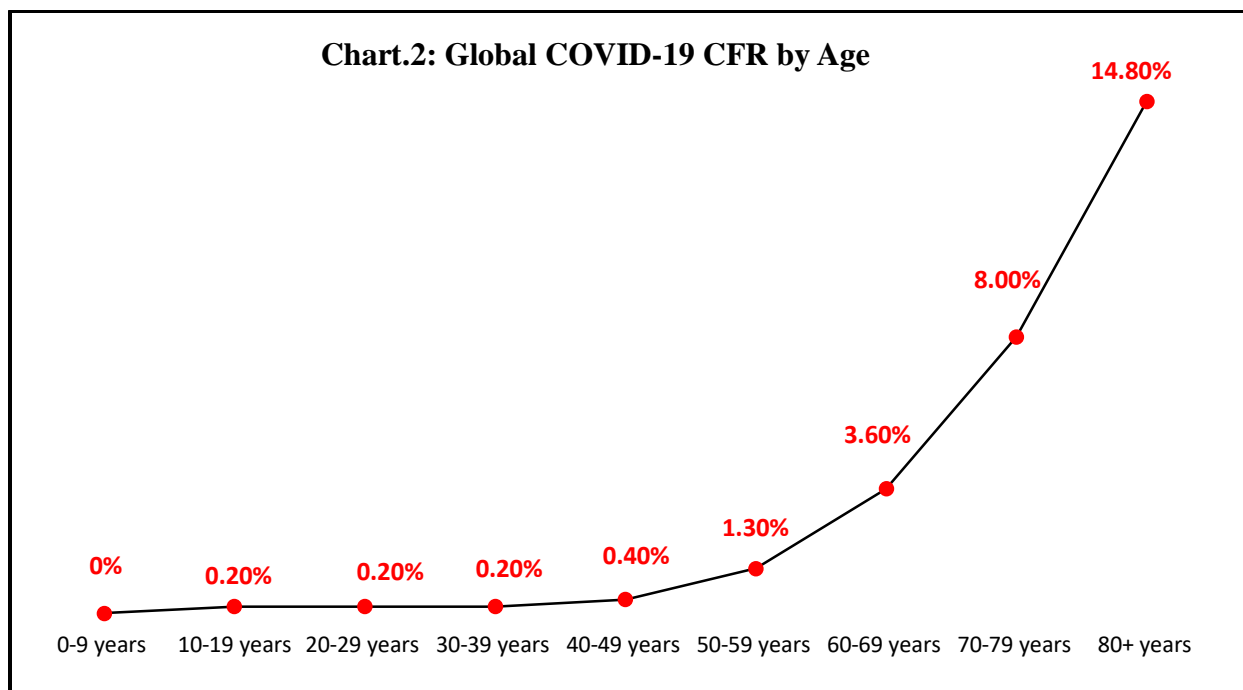


Source: *Asad Hashim/Al Jazeera*. Islamabad's normally busy Blue Area market lies abandoned on Wednesday, as authorities mandated that only stores selling essential food and medicines could remain open.

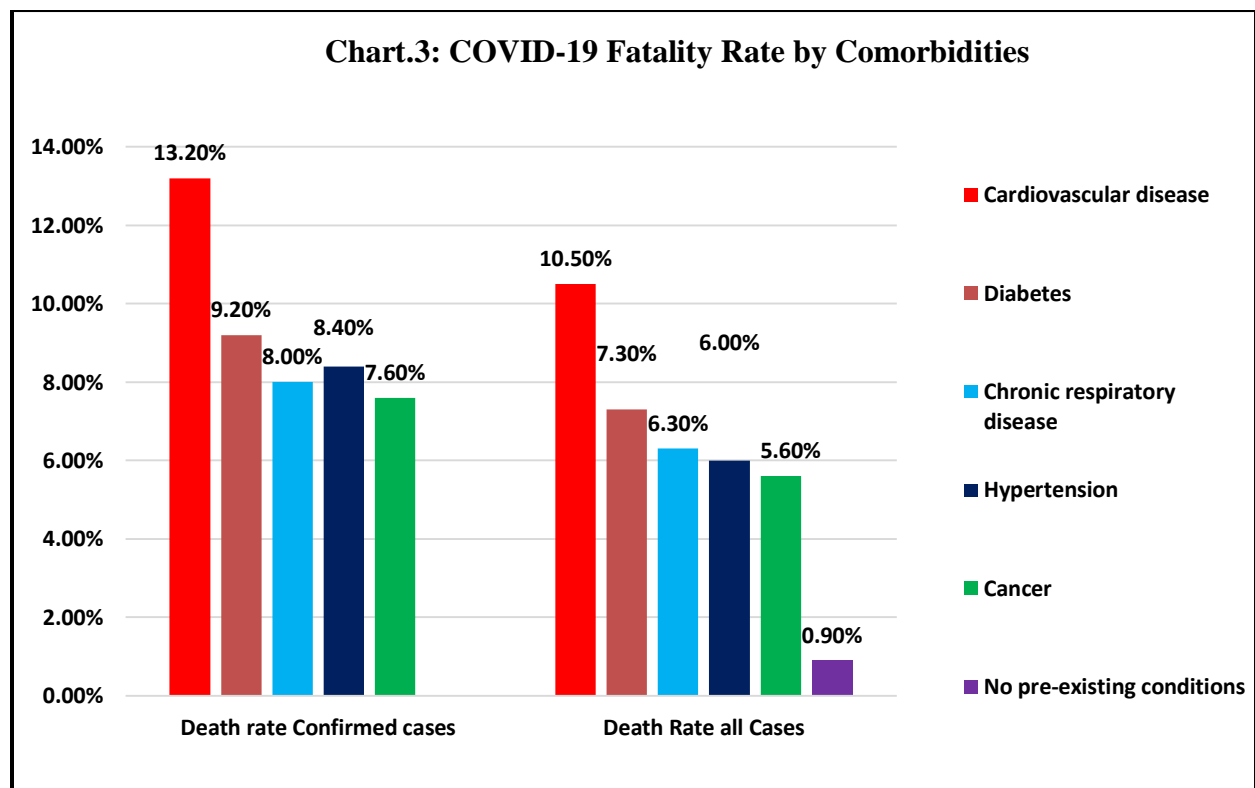
As on March 26, 2020, during last 24 hours, 123 new cases confirmed by different laboratories, bringing the national tally to 1123. No death is reported in last 24 hours, see Chart.1.



Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is ratio of Number of deaths from certain disease to Number of people diagnosed with this disease; generally the CFR is higher in old age than younger age. The analysis of Global CFR of COVID-19 shows that it is 14.80% in age group 80 and above and is about zero in below 10 years of age. The COVID-19 CFR is in fraction below age 50 and it increases sharply in age 50 and above, see Chart.2. A substantial portion of population is less than 50 years of age in Pakistan, of which majority is under 30 years of age. Its fair enough to believe that sizable segment of population is comparatively less vulnerable in Pakistan.



It is observed that existing medical condition is vital for determining the CFR of COVID-19. Out of total deaths by COVID-19, 13.2% were cardiovascular patients, 9.20% were diabetes, 8% had chronic respiratory disease, 8.40% had hypertension and 7.60% were cancer patients. If we look into disease by disease it is observed that death rate by Comorbidities¹ is higher than without it, see chart.3.



¹It refers to the presence of more than one disorder in the same person.

The World Health Organization launches WHO Health Alert on WhatsApp

As the coronavirus outbreak spreads, people around the world are turning to the World Health Organization for official, reliable health information and advice.

On March 23, the WHO launched Health Alert on WhatsApp at +41798931892. The new service, free to use, is designed to answer public questions about the Coronavirus and provide 24 hours a day with quick, reliable and official information worldwide. It will also serve government decision makers by providing current numbers and status reports.

Start by clicking WHO Health Alert, and then just type the word "Hi" in the Whatsapp message to get started. The service responds to a series of prompts and will be updated daily with the latest information. WHO Health Alert will provide information on issues such as infection, travel advice, and removal of corona virus secrets.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO said: “Digital technology gives us an unprecedented opportunity for vital health information to go viral and spread faster than the pandemic, helping us save lives and protect the vulnerable. We are proud to have partners like Facebook and WhatsApp that are supporting us in reaching billions of people with important health information.”

Three simple steps to open WHO WhatsApp Alert with already download WhatsApp application.

1. Open <https://www.whatsapp.com/coronavirus/who> on mobile through internet browser.
2. Click Start by clicking WHO Health Alert
3. Simply text the word ‘Hi’ in a WhatsApp message to get started.

The service responds to a series of prompts and will be updated daily with the latest information.
(Courtesy: Dr. Nadeem Ahmed Khan)



Experts' View

The calculation of time versus depth for the drop in GDP is not easy, down the road, if some more non-essential sectors close but you end up with a shorter period of disruption, you may not lose that much over the year. (**Gilles Moec, AXA chief economist**)

The need for social distancing should not absolve us from our social responsibilities. Rich individuals and philanthropic organizations should come forward in these troubled times to provide relief to those who will require it during a lockdown. This relief, however, should be channeled through a single government agency to ensure its targeted disbursement. Young people should be (online) trained immediately to work as volunteers to both enforce the lockdown and distribute rations and supplies. The crisis facing Pakistan is unprecedented but we are lucky that we are not the first country to have been hit by Covid-19. We can sail to safety only if we do not repeat the mistakes made by those hit before us. (**Abid Qaiyum Suleri, The News**)

One redeeming feature of the national trial is the training citizens are receiving, apart from proper attention to personal cleanliness and hygiene, in online banking and shopping. Further, a realisation is growing that had the state paid due attention to compulsory health insurance and extension of social security to the widest possible section of the population, the fight against the epidemic could have been somewhat easier. The provision of these two facilities must be top priorities on the national agenda once the fight against the pandemic has been won. (**I.A. Rehman, DAWN**)

Experts' Opinion

While a section of monetary experts thinks it is demand-pull inflation, a few other economists are of the view that it is cost-push inflation actually that has made the prices of daily-use items surge, arguing that high interest rates might not arrest the price hike. (**Sabir Shah, The News**)

The calculation of time versus depth for the drop in GDP is not easy, down the road, if some more non-essential sectors close but you end up with a shorter period of disruption, you may not lose that much over the year. (**Gilles Moec, AXA Chief Economist**)

This is one of the most serious diseases you will face in your lifetime, and recognize that and respect it. It is dangerous to you as an individual. It is dangerous to your parents, to your grandparents and the elderly in particular and it is dangerous to your society in general. You are not an island in this, you are part of a broader community, and you are part of transmission chains. If you get infected you are making this much more complicated and you are putting people in danger, not just yourself. (**Dr. Bruce Aylward, senior adviser to the Director-General of the WHO**)

COVID-19 READS

1. A Template to Monitor the Impact of COVID-19 on Pakistan's Economy
<https://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/PIDE-COVID-Bulletin-6.pdf>
2. Coronavirus pandemic has delivered the fastest, deepest economic shock in history
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/mar/25/coronavirus-pandemic-has-delivered-the-fastest-deepest-economic-shock-in-history>
3. India's Poor Testing Rate May have Masked Coronavirus Cases
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/india-poor-testing-rate-masked-coronavirus-cases-200318040314568.html>
4. An Expert to Physical Distancing – and What to Do if Friends and Family aren't Onboard
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/mar/23/how-to-social-distance-tips-convince-friends-family>
5. Coronavirus in Japan: Why is the Infection Rate Relatively Low?
<https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-in-japan-why-is-the-infection-rate-relatively-low-133648>
6. 'We Feel Like All of Us Are Gonna Get Corona.' Anticipating COVID-19 Outbreaks, Rikers Island Offers Warning for U.S. Jails, Prisons
<https://time.com/5808020/rikers-island-coronavirus/>
7. 'We'll Die Like Cattle': Kashmiris Fear Coronavirus Outbreak
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/die-cattle-kashmiris-fear-coronavirus-outbreak-200322151405218.html>
8. Quarantine: How to Prepare for Possible Coronavirus Infection
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/25/health/how-to-prepare-for-coronavirus-quarantine-wellness/index.html>
9. No, the New Coronavirus Wasn't Created in a Lab, Scientists Say
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/coronavirus-wasnt-created-in-lab-no-signs-genetic-engineering-1.5508735>
10. How Loneliness from Coronavirus Isolation Takes its Own Toll
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/how-loneliness-from-coronavirus-isolation-takes-its-own-toll>
11. Under lockdown
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1543505/under-lockdown>
12. Though in limbo, Pak corona numbers are better than developed economies
<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/634561-though-in-limbo-pak-corona-numbers-are-better-than-developed-economies>

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