

WHO CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) SITUATION REPORT-89

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

Total (new) cases in
last 24 hours

Globally

2 160 207 confirmed (85678)

146 088 deaths (6710)

Western Pacific Region

129 256 confirmed (1661)

5598 deaths (40)

European Region

1 086 889 confirmed (36018)

97 201 deaths (3721)

South-East Asia Region

25 291 confirmed (1731)

1134 deaths (83)

Eastern Mediterranean Region

120 683 confirmed (4859)

5784 deaths (122)

Region of the Americas

784 272 confirmed (40665)

35 742 deaths (2714)

African Region

13 104 confirmed (744)

616 deaths (30)



A sand artist created an motivational art piece to stand against Coronavirus—*Getty Images*

Global News

- South Korea's new coronavirus cases fall to single digits.
- Australia calls for independent probe into global virus response.
- China reports 16 new coronavirus cases, lowest since March 17.
- New York reports lowest virus death toll in two weeks.
- Turkey's coronavirus cases overtake Iran, highest in Middle East.
- Italy's daily coronavirus death toll lowest since April 12.
- Bangladesh garment workers pack streets to demand wages during coronavirus lockdown.

- Director of Wuhan lab denies virus link as Trump warns China of 'consequences.
- France warns of 8% GDP drop this year after lockdown extension.
- Novelist Arundhati Roy claims pandemic exposes India's hatred of Muslims.
- UK govt. faces mounting criticism over protective clothing shortages.

Global Response

- Saudi Arabia's top religious authority recommends praying at home during Ramazan.
- Spain's PM to seek longer but more flexible lockdown.
- Panama holds 1,700 migrants in jungle due to coronavirus.
- US reiterates its support for Pakistan in fight against Covid-19.
- India sends hydroxychloroquine to UAE for virus patients.
- UK announces fund for Pakistan in fight against virus.
- Canada, US extend border restrictions for another 30 days.
- Global concert raises more than \$127M for WHO emergency response fund.



A laborer sitting on a road devastated—*Getty Images*

Local News

- Spread of COVID-19 in thickly populated areas alarming, says CM Sindh.
- 7,000 pilgrims have returned from Iran since February.
- Virus-hit Karachi UCs to remain sealed till incubation period ends, Sindh tells SC.
- Industries struggling to stay afloat as coronavirus cases surge in Pakistan
- KSE-100 rallies on rate cut, debt relief.
- PM Imran sees spike in Covid-19 cases next month.
- KP: PDMA releases Rs406m for quarantine facilities.
- Balochistan govt. to conduct 50,000 tests.
- Punjab LG&CD urges proper disposal of masks, gloves.

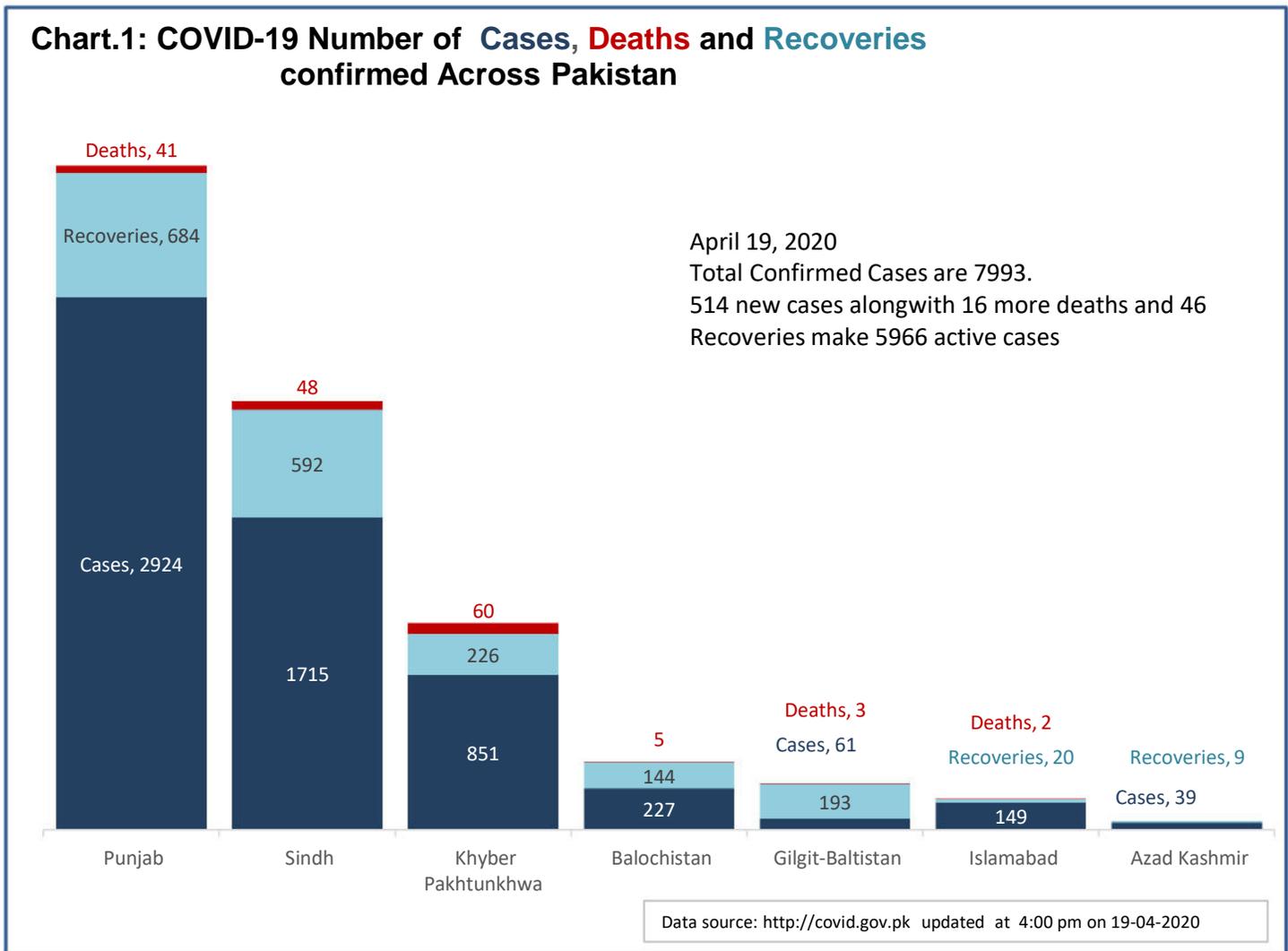
Local Response

- Stocks likely to continue bullish spell.
- Businessmen want interest rate at 5pc, call for SME stimulus.
- Severe punishment will be meted out to hoarders: Naseem.
- Awan urges public to follow Covid-19 guidelines during Ramazan.
- Airlines will be permitted to bring back stranded Pakistanis: Bukhari.
- Govt. launches online portal for air travel information.
- Govt. decides to lift restrictions on Taraveeh, group prayers.
- Corona patients with travel history to be allocated tag numbers.
- Skardu doctors set up ICU for COVID-19 patients on self-help basis.

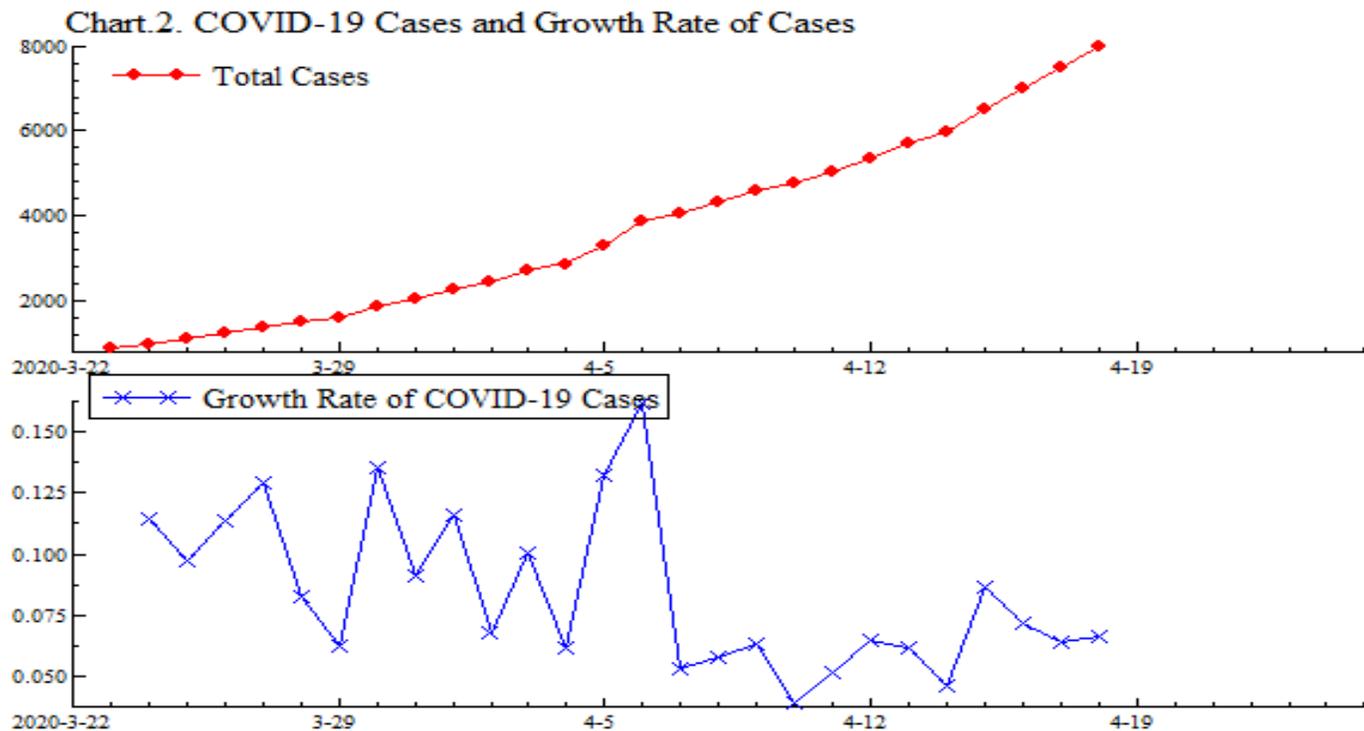


A couple sitting in a park observing social distancing—*Getty Images*

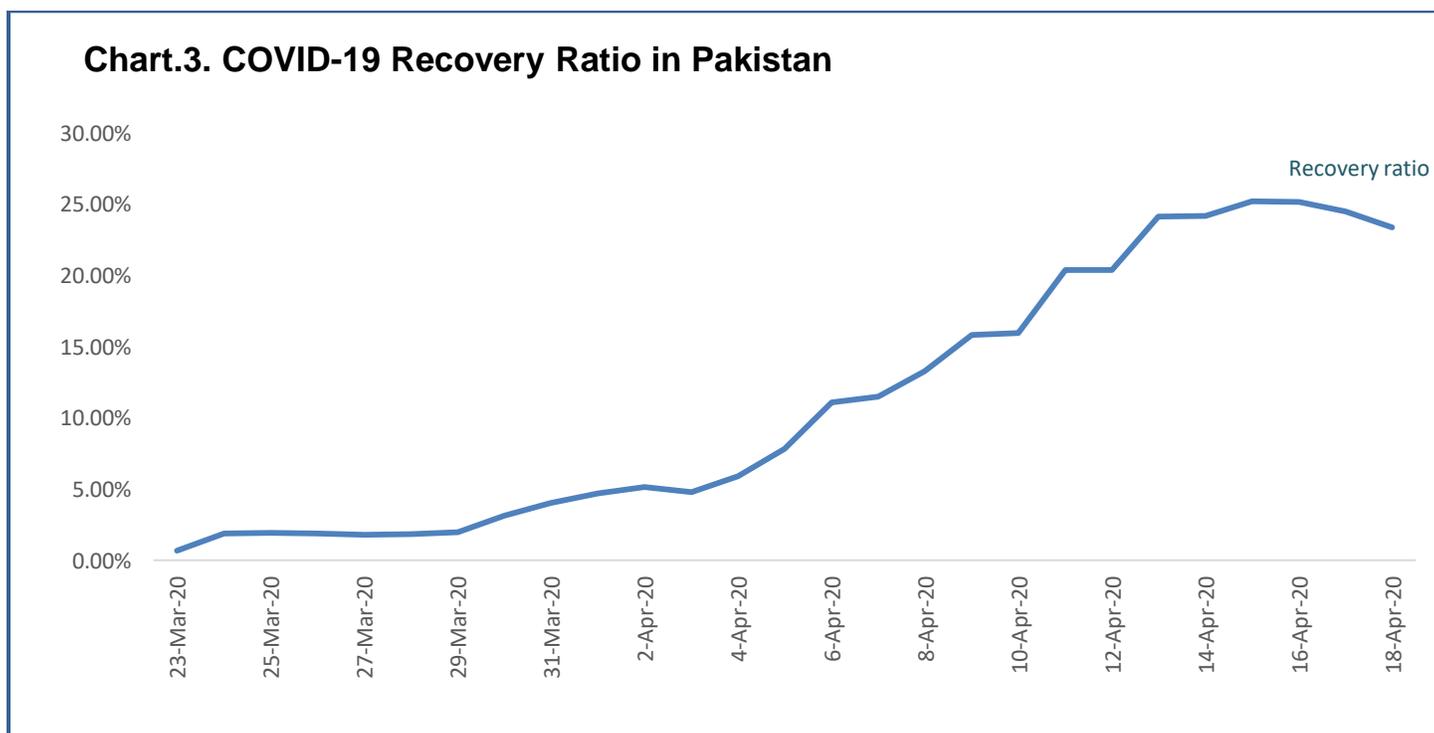
During the last 24 hours, 514 new cases have been confirmed by different laboratories, bringing the national tally to 7993. Ten deaths from KP, four from Punjab, one from Sindh, and one from Islamabad have been reported in the last 24 hours. There are a total 159 deaths and 1868 recoveries across the country, see Chart.1.



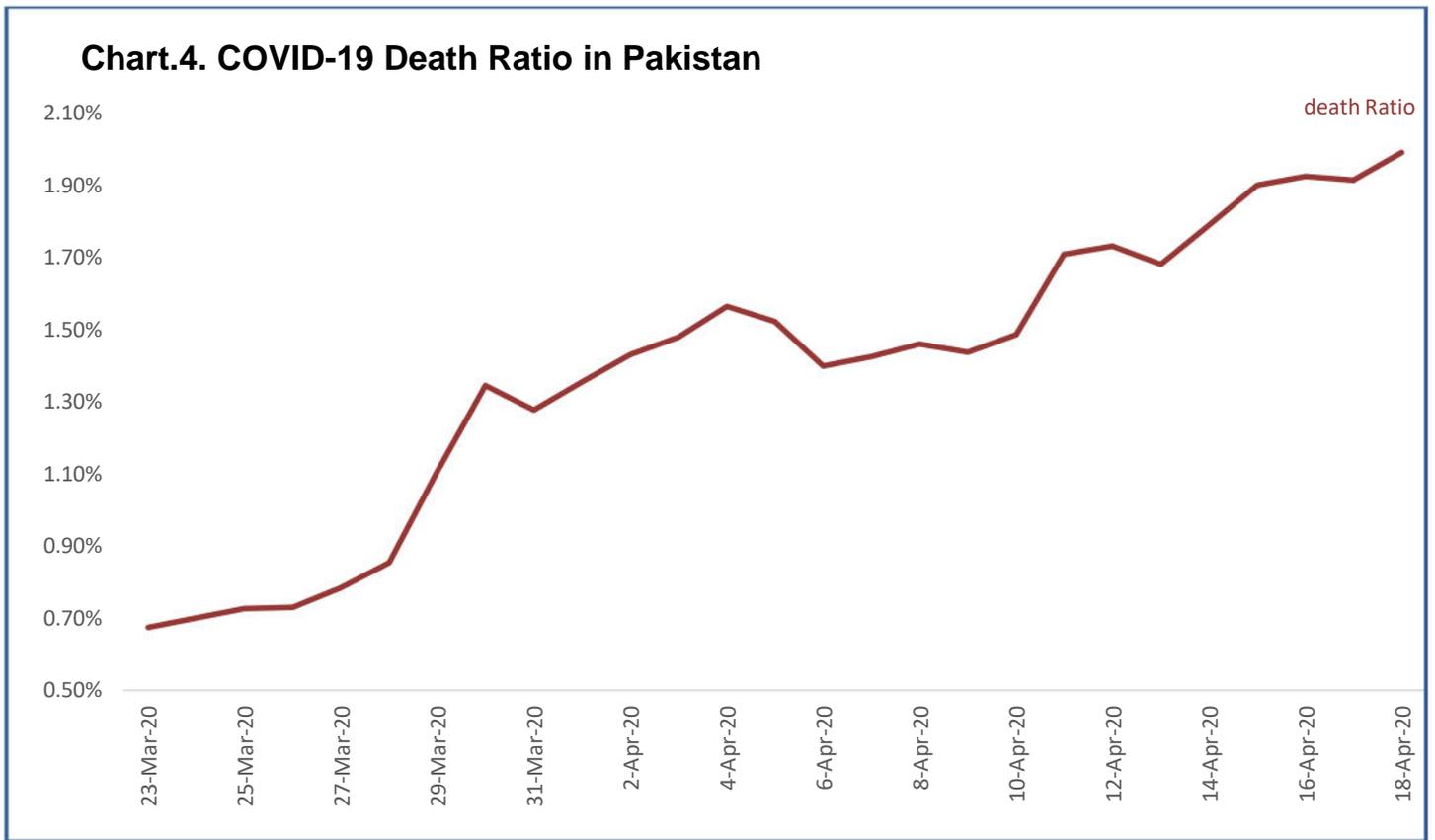
Since the last week of March 2020 COVID-19 cases are increasing manifold in Pakistan, but the growth rate of COVID-19 cases is fluctuating and remained low in 3rd week of April 2020, see Chart.2. The increasing pattern of COVID-19 is not exponential in Pakistan, instead it is following a cubic trajectory.



The recovery ratio (number of total recoveries to total number of COVID-19 cases) remained lower than the global recovery ratio throughout the period since the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan, by the 3rd week of April the recovery ratio approaches at par the global recovery ratio, see Chart.3.



The death ratio (total number of deaths to total number of COVID-19 cases) is continuously following increasing trend and it is around 2 percentage by 18 April 2020, but still it is less than one third of global death ratio which is currently 6.69%, see Chart.4. Although the current death ratio due to COVID-19 in Pakistan is much lower than many other countries; but this requires constant effort in terms of campaign for general public awareness for social distancing to slow the risk of COVID-19 outbreak.



Digital Gap of Pakistan and COVID-19

Every industry in Pakistan is transforming and finding its presence on internet even the most traditional businesses. For instance I know a real estate company which is spending more than 2 million on social media marketing per month. This shows that how much access to internet is important for not only businesses but for masses too.

Pakistan internet covers only 76 million of population or roughly 36% of population according to Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan. The COVID-19 situation which demands quarantine and work from home due to shutting down of most businesses created a new problem as well opportunity for the digital world. This resulted in high demand of internet speed and accessibility. In Pakistan, average family size is at least 6.7 according to census 2017 by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. This puts extra burden on domestic broadband internet. Families where work from home and online classes both are taking place with an average 2 MB internet, has an average 200 to 400 KB download speed. This hardly covers work from home internet requirement. Whereas in US internet download speed limit as described by the government is 25 MB. According to digital rights foundation there are 78 million broadband connections. Let alone the accessibility is not enough, according to IMF 89% of Pakistanis cannot afford internet. The former FATA and some areas of Baluchistan do not have access to internet and students still have to travel hundreds of kilometers to send an email.

As soon as the COVID-19 and lockdown situation rose, people were confined to their homes. This put a lot of pressure on our online and internet service providers. A steady internet speed was required to conduct all the online work. Meanwhile study from home is not ideal for our students as Pakistan lacks basic infrastructure and capacity. Pakistan has to ensure to provide accessibility and affordability to people. Internet has been declared as a basic fundamental right by UN in 2010. Government should establish public Wi-Fi hotspots for students with safety precautions just like schools in US did. Even according to US official government reports, 21 million lack access to internet and unofficial figures put it around 41 million. The US government started to provide laptops and started establishing free public Wi-Fi spots.

According to Mobile Gender Gap Report 2019 Pakistan has the widest gender gap and women in Pakistan have 37% chance of not getting the internet. Economic inequalities and patriarchal attitude could be one of the reasons for this.

Pakistan needs to streamline its policies and make sure to provide its resources equally to everyone. Necessary steps should be taken to shorten the digital gap and remove the structural and infrastructural inequalities. The Universal Services Fund should be utilized without any interference from other organizations to make sure internet is provided to everyone. **(Written by Syed Muddasir Shah, an alumnus of Department of Development Studies, PIDE)**

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/13/coronavirus-covid-19-exposes-cracks-us-digital-divide>

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/category/research/>



An old lady playing outside home with her granddaughter during coronavirus threat—Reuters

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Will COVID-19 have negative impacts on global food security?

Both lives and livelihoods are at risk from this pandemic.

The disease is spreading quickly. This is no longer a regional issue—it is a global problem calling for a global response.

We know that it will eventually retreat, but we don't know how fast this will happen. We also know that this shock is somewhat unusual as it affects significant elements of both food supply and demand.

We risk a looming food crisis, unless measures are taken fast to protect the most vulnerable, keep global food supply chains alive and mitigate the pandemic's impacts across the food system.

Border closures, quarantines, and market, supply chain and trade disruptions could restrict people's access to sufficient/diverse and nutritious sources of food, especially in countries hit hard by the virus or already affected by high levels of food insecurity.

But there is no need for the world to panic. Globally, there is enough food for everyone. Policy makers around the world need to be careful not to repeat the mistakes made during the 2007-08 food crisis, and turn this health crisis into an entirely avoidable food crisis.

As the virus spreads, cases mount and measures tighten, there are countless ways, however, that the global food system will be tested and strained in the coming weeks and months.

- As of now, disruptions are minimal as food supply has been adequate and markets have been stable so far. However, we are already seeing challenges in terms of logistics bottlenecks (not being able to move food from point A to point B), and likely, there is less food of high-value commodities (i.e. fruits and vegetables) being produced.
- As of April, May, we expect disruptions in the food supply chains. For example: restrictions of movement, as well as basic aversion behaviour by workers, may impede farmers from farming and food processors - who handle the vast majority of agricultural products - from processing. Shortage of fertilizers, veterinary medicines and other input could affect agricultural production. Closures

of restaurants and less frequent grocery shopping diminish demand for fresh produce and fisheries products, affecting producers and suppliers. Sectors in agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture are particularly affected by restrictions on tourism, closure of restaurants and café and school meals suspension.

In any scenario, the most affected will be the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population, (including migrants, the displaced, and those hit by conflict). Countries in protracted crises also suffer from underinvestment in public health, which will amplify the pandemic's impacts.

Source: World Health Organization



People praying outside a shrine—*The Tribune*

Feb. 24 — "We must focus on containment, while doing everything we can to prepare for a potential pandemic," says WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus during a press conference.

The Asian Development Bank advises delegates planning to attend its annual meeting that it is monitoring the situation in South Korea, where the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is now over 700, according to the latest situation report by WHO. The bank's 53rd annual meeting is scheduled to take place from May 2-5 in Incheon, South Korea.

The European Commission announces a new aid package of €232 million (\$252 million) for global preparedness and response to COVID-19. The bulk of the money is for WHO's work and for a public-private partnership supporting the pharmaceutical industry's search for a vaccine against the disease. A small percentage — €3 million — is for the repatriation of EU citizens from Wuhan, China.

Cases in China are falling, according to Dr. Bruce Aylward, who led the external experts on a mission in China for the past two weeks — from an average of 2,500 cases two weeks ago to 400 cases today. But he warned against complacency.

Aylward says the world needs to prioritize studies that can stop the outbreak faster and can reduce morbidity and mortality. He said at the moment, only one drug, remdesivir, seems to be showing real efficacy against the disease.

In addition, countries that serve as a second line of defense for low-income countries, should think about what measures they can take to ensure the virus doesn't reach those with less capacity to handle an outbreak, Aylward said.

The host of COVID-19 remains unclear, says Liang Wannian, leader of the National Health Commission Expert Team for the epidemic response in China. But according to currently available data, bats may

be the host and pangolins intermediate hosts of the virus. Some evidence also points to virus transmission through oral-fecal route and aerosol transmission, but this needs further confirmation. It's also still unclear whether asymptomatic carriers of the virus can spread the disease.

The case fatality rate in China is between 3% and 4%, but less than 1% in cities and provinces outside Wuhan.

US biotech firm Moderna sends an experimental COVID-19 vaccine to the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for a planned phase one study in the U.S.

Kuwait, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Oman report first cases of COVID-19.

Feb. 25—Algeria reports its first case of COVID-19 — an Italian adult, who arrived in the country on Feb. 17. This is the second confirmed case on the African continent.

Switzerland, Croatia, and Austria report their first cases.

Iran's deputy health minister, Iraj Harirchi, who is leading the nation's COVID-19 task force, has contracted the virus.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns about the likely spread of COVID-19 in the United States, urging the population to “prepare for the expectation that this might be bad.” Dr. Nancy Messonnier, director at the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, cautioned during a press briefing: “It's not so much of a question of if this will happen anymore but rather more of a question of exactly when this will happen.”

Source: <https://www.devex.com/>

Experts' View

However, Covid-19-related problems do not end with relief. The fallout of the virus is going to render hundreds of thousands of persons jobless in Karachi alone and this will also create serious health and education problems. The only way to deal with this issue is through a large public works programme at the UC and, if required, the district level. Through the public works programme, the local population will be employed on daily wages according to the skills they have and 10 per cent of their daily wage will be deducted and paid at the close of the programme so that they have capital which they could invest or save. **(Arif Hasan, DAWN)**

The UN has warned that the spread of the pandemic could cause a global humanitarian disaster and has appealed for a global ceasefire in all conflict zones. Ironically, internal and external power stakeholders in Afghanistan are not ready to shift their priorities. This is not a season of optimism. **(Muhammad Amir Rana, DAWN)**

Experts' Opinion

The crisis has both economic and humanitarian aspects. As such the affluent nations and the world lending institutions owe it to the poor and developing countries to extend help to them to steer through the confronting challenge, which is in the interest of the entire humanity. In this context, the prime minister's call to the UN secretary-general to work with him in advancing the objective of a coordinated response and his decision to approach the heads of state and government from a wide range of countries notably from Paris Club, highly indebted poor countries, heads of international organizations and other concerned to join him in this effort, was a pragmatic and timely move. Equally appreciable was the initiative to entrust the foreign minister and the adviser on finance to reach out to their respective counterparts to work for a global initiative on debt relief with the objectives of relieving developing countries of the financial challenge emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic and realizing sustainable development. **(Malik Muhammad Ashraf, THE NEWS)**

And the gist of all that I have said is that this is a very, very critical moment in our history and political discord should be set aside for some time. But perhaps we are genetically flawed in this respect and do not learn our lessons from history. If there is an opportunity to make a new beginning after the pandemic, we may not be able to grasp it. **(Ghazi Salahuddin, THE NEWS)**

World Health Organization
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public

How should I wash fruit and vegetables in the time of COVID-19?

Wash them the same way you would in any other circumstance.



Before handling them, wash your hands with soap and water.

Then, wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly with clean water, especially if you eat them raw.

17 April 2020

#Coronavirus

#COVID19



A displaced girl wears a face mask as she takes part in an event to spread awareness and encourage safety amid coronavirus concerns, at a camp in Syria—*Reuters*

COVID-19 READS

1. **Coronavirus: world's biggest trial of drug to treat Covid-19 begins in UK**
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/17/world-biggest-drug-trial-covid-19-uk>
2. **Walmart hiring another 50,000 workers after filling 150,000 new jobs due to coronavirus demand**
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/04/17/walmart-adding-more-new-jobs-coronavirus/5155225002/>
3. **The IMF says its forecast for the COVID-19 recession might now be too optimistic**
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/imf-economy-coronavirus-covid-19-recession>
4. **Gordon Brown on Covid-19, recession and Trump: 'When there's a crisis you have to act quickly'**
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/apr/16/gordon-brown-on-covid-19-recession-and-trump-when-theres-a-crisis-you-have-to-act-quickly>
5. **The unemployment impacts of COVID-19: lessons from the Great Recession**
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/04/15/the-unemployment-impacts-of-covid-19-lessons-from-the-great-recession/>
6. **Are slums more vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from Mumbai**
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/04/16/are-slums-more-vulnerable-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-evidence-from-mumbai/>
7. **COVID-19 puts the squeeze on Japan's most vulnerable**
https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/04/18/national/media-national/coronavirus-health-employment/#.Xpw0lds_ztR
8. **The Covid-19 pandemic shows we must transform the global food system**
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/apr/16/coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-food-animals>
9. **Covid-19 could lead to the return of inflation—eventually**
<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2020/04/18/covid-19-could-lead-to-the-return-of-inflation-eventually>
10. **Face it, these mask-making efforts during the COVID-19 crisis reveal who we really are**
<https://www.geekwire.com/2020/face-mask-making-efforts-covid-19-crisis-reveal-really/>
11. **Walmart to require all employees wear face masks starting Monday as part of coronavirus response**
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/04/18/coronavirus-prevention-walmart-requiring-employees-wear-face-masks/5158840002/>
12. **Armed thieves are capitalizing on the fact that everyone's now wearing masks in public**
<https://qz.com/1837529/thieves-are-capitalizing-on-the-publics-use-of-covid-19-masks/>

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