

WHO CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) SITUATION REPORT-117

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

Total (new) cases in last 24 hours

Globally

4 425 485 cases (86 827)

302 059 deaths (4 940)

Western Pacific Region

166 721 cases (1 171)

6 697 deaths (33)

European Region

1 848 445 cases (22 150)

164 723 deaths (1 446)

South-East Asia Region

127 995 cases (5 741)

4 201 deaths (151)

Eastern Mediterranean Region

315 668 cases (10 479)

9 701 deaths (143)

Region of the Americas

1 909 483 cases (45 015)

115 057 deaths (3 123)

African Region

54 461 cases (2 271)

1 667 deaths (44)



People praying while maintaining social distancing at a Mosque—*Getty Images*

Global News

- Trump selects Muslim American to hunt for vaccine as global research intensifies
- US: The House passed a \$3 trillion relief package. It has no chance of advancing in the Senate, but is Democrats' opening offer for future negotiations.
- France daily coronavirus toll dips, total tops 27,500.
- Fears grow as pandemic reaches Rohingya camps.
- Trump hopes for Covid-19 vaccine by end of year, 'maybe before'.
- Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia open borders to each other, create EU's first 'travel bubble'.
- Russia reports 10,598 new coronavirus infections.
- Trump selects Muslim American to hunt for vaccine as global research intensifies.
- 119 prisoners test Covid-19 positive in India's Jaipur district jail.

Global Response

- US-China war of words clouds WHO meeting focused on pandemic.
- Virus could cause cancellation of 28 million surgical operations worldwide: study.
- Dubai Police launches community bikers patrol unit for Covid-19 awareness.
- India announces reforms to help millions of poor farmers.
- Iran reports 2,102 new virus cases, highest in over a month.
- US pilot jailed in Singapore for breaking quarantine order.
- Australian state reopens bars, restaurants after 2 months of lockdown.
- Germans stage protests against lockdown measures, social distancing rules.

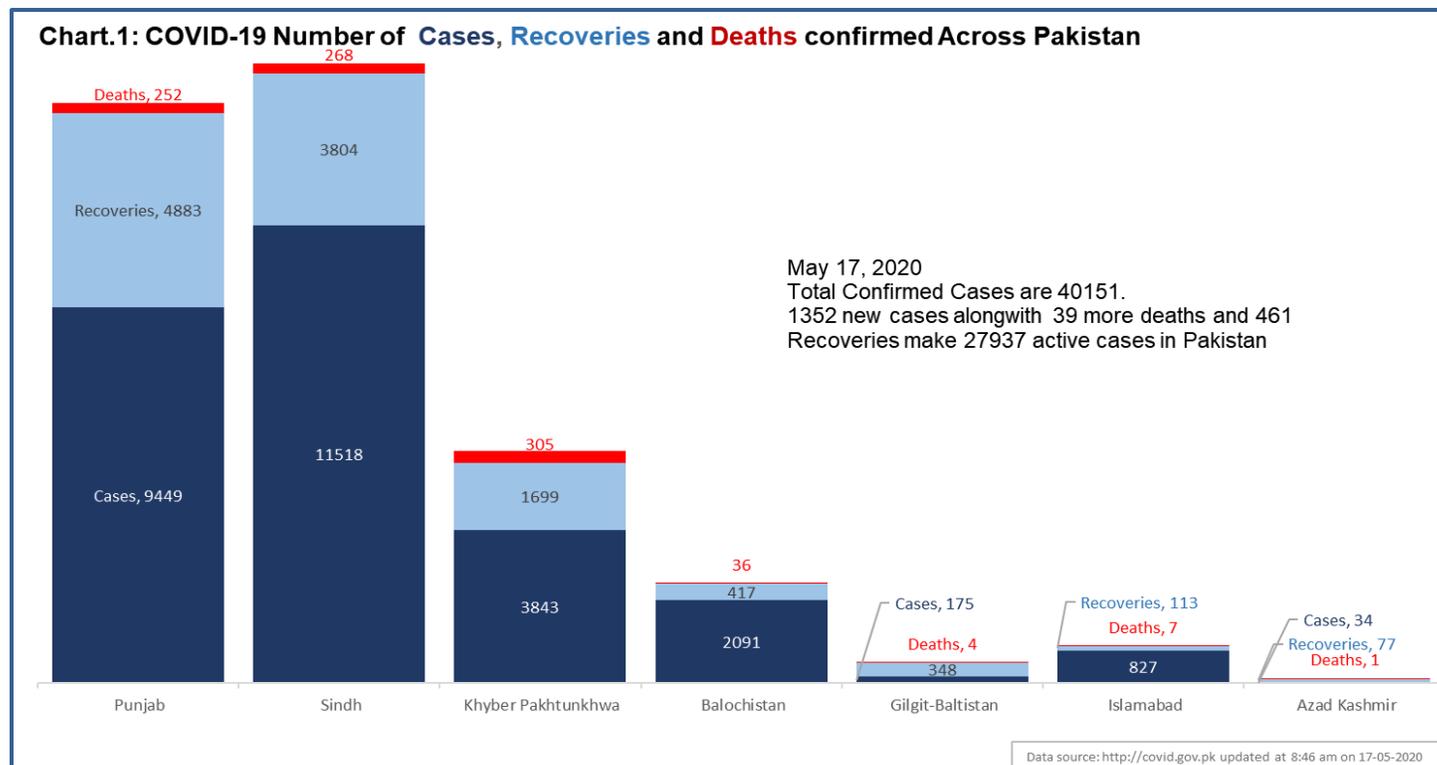
Local News

- Islamabad reports 55 new cases, 1 death; AJK reports 3 cases, GB reports 17.
- Economic slowdown due to lockdown can't be prevented: State Bank
- ISPR releases special documentary on use of PPEs.
- Coronavirus has become the biggest threat to the revival of Pakistan cricket.
- 147 Covid-19 cases, 1 death reported in Balochistan.
- PM Imran urges nation to take responsibility, says 'this Eid is different'.
- Govt. to make wearing face masks mandatory: Zafar Mirza.
- Huge accomplishment' that Pakistan will be among countries producing Remdesivir: Mirza.
- Pandemic detracting focus from other diseases: Dr Faisal Sultan.
- 150 million people affected by lockdown: PM Imran.

Local Response

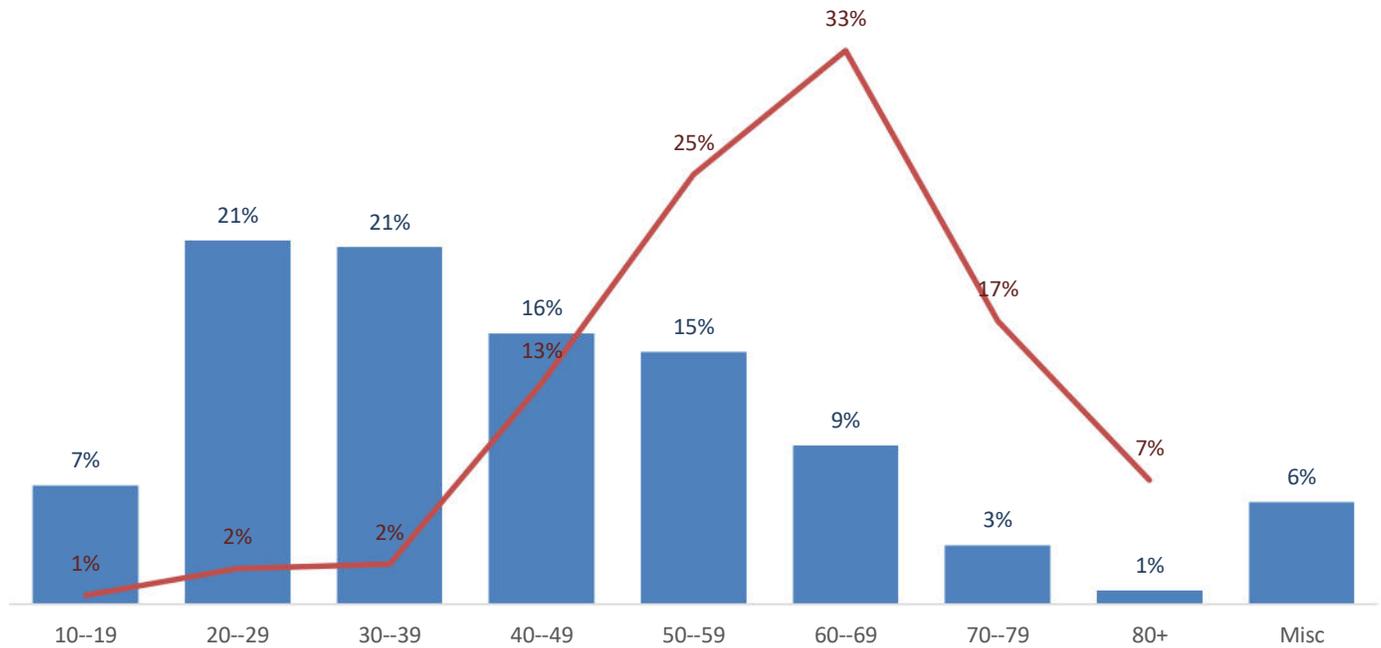
- ECC approves Rs75b cash assistance for labourers.
- 725 more people recover from corona virus in Pakistan.
- Hundreds booked as Youm-i-Ali procession taken out in Hyderabad in violation of ban.
- Second Covid-19 patient being administered plasma in Hyderabad hospital after initial success.
- KP allows public transport to resume from May 18.
- Decision regarding opening of shopping malls left to provinces: Hammad Azhar.
- 8.5m families provided cash handouts under Ehsaas so far: Sania Nishtar.
- Trying to resolve issues of university students impacted by Covid-19: Shafqat Mehmood.

During the last 24 hours, 1352 new cases have been confirmed by different laboratories, bringing the national tally to 40151. Fourteen deaths from KP, thirteen from Sindh, seven from Punjab and five from Balochistan have been reported in the last 24 hours. There are a total 873 deaths and 11341 recoveries across the country, see Chart.1.



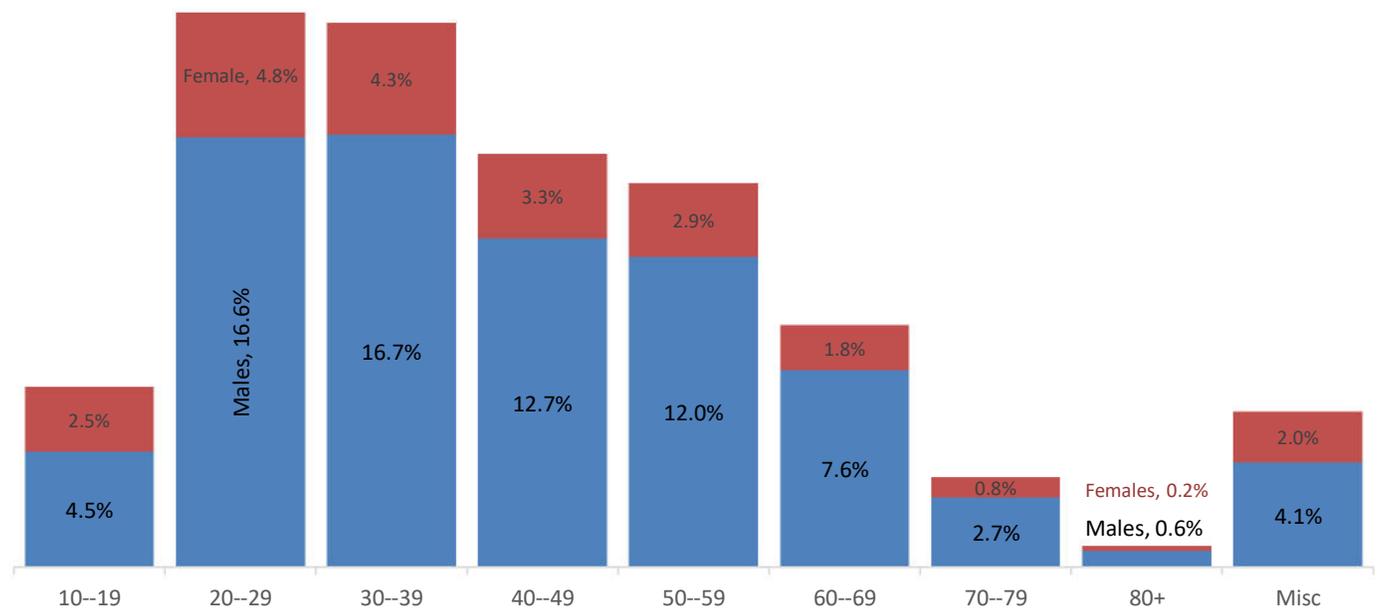
COVID-19 is contagious; in the absence of any medicine/vaccination social distancing is the only cure. More susceptible are those who are more exposed. Observing the age wise distribution of confirmed cases and reported deaths under COVID-19, identify that in Pakistan the more affected cases are the young adults. As of May 17, 2020, the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Pakistan has hit mostly people less than 59 years of age. Almost 42% cases are reported in individuals from age 20 to 40 years, which is the prime exposed age group. Whereas lesser infected cases are observed from elder cohorts. More than 90 percent of individuals infected with the virus are less than 69 years old. Only 10 percent individuals who got infected are above 70 years old. However, the deceased cases show different trajectory as it is more to do with the immunity of individuals. The most casualties have occurred in ages between 50-69, see Chart.2.

Chart.2: COVID-19 Age-wise Percentage of Cases and Deaths



Since the first case was detected at the end of February in Pakistan, post lock down phase, Coronavirus has been spreading fast across the country. Generally male of prime age are more vulnerable to pandemic. Particularly the male of age 20-49 are highest hit by pandemic, the female of same age group are about one fourth only, see Chart.3.

Chart.3: COVID-19 Gender-wise Percentage of Cases



Save Lives or Economy: Paradox or dilemma for Pakistan

Recent developments on the dark stage set by Covid-19, has taken much expected turn in the backdrop of yet another looming crisis; to choose between life or daily sustenance in lowest sections of population in socio-economic hierarchy. Yet, it will not be impertinent to call it the least discussed matter so far.

Apart from the soothing words (only words) of our leadership for the toiling classes, these words transform more obviously in to a policy statement that 'We are at crossroads and you have to choose between a piece of bread or live safely behind closed doors with empty pockets.'

Unfortunately, it will be difficult and heart wrenching at the same time, to ponder a household of ten and food for none, despite the brighter fact that we are one of the most charitable nation. Still, it will not be a Herculean task on behalf of the government to increase the money being allocated to the poorest sections through BISP (Benazir income support program) from Rs. 3000/month to at least Rs. 15000/month.

The naive excuse of empty coffers by the government get busted when one thinks why continue with allocating billions of rupees for long-term development projects (Dams, road networks, metros etc.), when you are facing the proverbial sword of Damocles pretty much hanging upon your heads in the most manifest of a situation termed as health crisis and unknown, yet obvious tearing of the social thread.

There is, however, no denying the fact of developmental projects (effective) as a backbone for any economy, but the saner way of doing things in policy making must be first to think, observe, plan and then act. And, most importantly to incorporate the 'temporal state of affairs' in policy equations.

Written by Tabish Ayaz; a student at the Department of Environmental Economics, PIDE



Buses are seen parked before reopening to the public in Lahore—Getty Images

Frequently Asked Questions

Which surface disinfectants are effective against COVID-19 in non-health care setting environments?

In non-health care settings, sodium hypochlorite (bleach / chlorine) may be used at a recommended concentration of 0.1% or 1,000ppm (1 part of 5% strength household bleach to 49 parts of water). Alcohol at 70-90% can also be used for surface disinfection. Surfaces must be cleaned with water and soap or a detergent first to remove dirt, followed by disinfection. Cleaning should always start from the least soiled (cleanest) area to the most soiled (dirtiest) area in order to not spread the dirty to areas that are less soiled.

All disinfectant solutions should be stored in opaque containers, in a well-ventilated, covered area that is not exposed to direct sunlight and ideally should be freshly prepared every day.

In indoor spaces, routine application of disinfectants to surfaces via spraying is not recommended for COVID-19. If disinfectants are to be applied, these should be via a cloth or wipe which is soaked in the disinfectant.

What protection measures should people take when using disinfectants?

It is important to reduce your risk when using disinfectants:

- The disinfectant and its concentration should be carefully selected to avoid damaging surfaces and to avoid or minimize toxic effects on household members (or users of public spaces).
- Avoid combining disinfectants, such as bleach and ammonia, since mixtures can cause respiratory irritation and release potentially fatal gases.
- Keep children, pets and other people away during the application of the product until it is dry and there is no odour.
- Open windows and use fans to ventilate. Step away from odours if they become too strong. Disinfectant solutions should always be prepared in well-ventilated areas.
- Wash your hands after using any disinfectant, including surface wipes.
- Keep lids tightly closed when not in use. Spills and accidents are more likely to happen when containers are open.
- Do not allow children to use disinfectant wipes. Keep cleaning fluids and disinfectants out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away disposable items like gloves and masks if they are used during cleaning. Do not clean and re-use.
- Do not use disinfectant wipes to clean hands or as baby wipes.
- The minimum recommended personal protective equipment when disinfecting in non-health care settings is rubber gloves, waterproof aprons and closed shoes. Eye protection and medical masks may also be needed to protect against chemicals in use or if there is a risk of splashing.

Source: World Health Organization

COVID-19: Timeline of a Pandemic (March 21, 2020 — March 23, 2020)

March 21 — Ecuador's health and labor ministers resign after cases in the country surpass 500. East Timor, Angola, and Eritrea report first cases of COVID-19.

March 22 — Global cases of COVID-19 surpass 300,000. It took over three months to reach the first 100,000 confirmed cases, 12 days to reach 200,000 and three days to reach 300,000. A cargo flight lands in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with 5.4 million face masks, 1.08 million COVID-19 diagnostic tests, 40,000 sets of protective clothing, and 60,000 sets of protective face shields for distribution throughout the African continent. The medical supplies were donated by the Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Foundation. Ma also announced that his foundation would donate emergency supplies to 17 countries in Asia and Latin America. WHO says there is "a rise in criminals disguising themselves as WHO to steal money or sensitive information."

Palestinian health officials report the first two cases of COVID-19 in the Gaza Strip. Uganda, Grenada, Mozambique, Dominica, and Syria report first cases of COVID-19.

March 23 — World Bank Group President David Malpass calls on bilateral creditors of the lowest-income countries to provide debt relief so these countries can focus resources on the COVID-19 pandemic. African finance ministers call for \$100 billion in funding for economic stimulus and a suspension of interest payments on public debt and sovereign bonds.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres calls for a global ceasefire to "help create corridors for life-saving aid, open windows for diplomacy and bring hope to places among the most vulnerable to COVID-19." Norway creates a multidonor fund with the United Nations to assist low- and middle-income countries respond to the COVID-19 crisis. "Asking people to stay at home and other physical distancing measures are an important way of slowing down the spread of the virus and buying time — but they are defensive measures. To win, we need to attack the virus with aggressive and targeted tactics — testing every suspected case, isolating and caring for every confirmed case, and tracing and quarantining every close contact," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesu says at a press conference.

Myanmar and Belize report first cases of COVID-19.

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

Experts' Opinion

The prime minister has played a big gamble with this decision. If he succeeds in reopening the economy without an exponential growth of infections and deaths, he will be credited for taking such a bold decision. If the decision to ease restrictions backfires and he is forced to re-impose the lockdown then he will be blamed for the disaster. The prime minister and his government are facing a tough situation. The failure of the government to save lives and curb the virus will have serious political consequences. **(Khalid Bhatti, THE NEWS)**

WHILE the world continues its struggle against the pandemic, nations and organisations are also evaluating its human, economic and socio-psychological costs. The security threat matrix is increasingly being oriented around the perils of the virus, placing less focus on other non-traditional security challenges. Though the threat of terrorism has not shown any visible retreat — in some places it has even enlarged such as in Afghanistan — the world is failing to give it the consideration it did prior to the pandemic. **(Muhammad Amir Rana, DAWN)**

People caring for Covid-19 patients such as family members and healthcare workers, people with a recent travel history, recovered corona patients and Asians everywhere are also at the receiving end of the coronavirus stigma. These stigmatised groups are being subjected to social avoidance or rejection, denial to services such as healthcare, employment, housing and even verbal or physical abuse. This evolving xenophobic momentum needs to stop. **(Raja Khalid Shabbir, THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE)**

Where does Pakistan stand? In terms of infection and fatality rate we are not yet in the red zone where our health structure is on the brink of being overwhelmed. We do not know why the spread of infection and mortality is lower than feared (no one in the world knows). Thanking the Almighty Allah SWT is something we must all do and pray that the infection does not spiral out of control. But at the same time, no one should gloss over what we have done (or not done) since January. **(Fahad Hussain, DAWN)**



A discarded disposable glove flies in the wind in Barcelona, Spain, May 11, 2020—*REUTERS*



A doctor reacts after two minutes of silence for health workers that died of COVID-19, in Madrid, Spain—*Getty Images*



A street barber cuts the hair of a labourer at a market after eased lockdown—*Getty Images*



An elderly labourer carries dry fruits boxes on his head at a market in Rawalpindi—*Getty Images*

COVID-19 READS

1. **Coronavirus exposed the real reasons behind France's 'burqa ban'**
<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/coronavirus-exposed-real-reasons-france-burqa-ban-200514105218122.html>
2. **Coronavirus can still be an opportunity for peace in Afghanistan**
<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/coronavirus-opportunity-peace-afghanistan-200512103852960.html>
3. **Coronavirus: How exposed is your job?**
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52637008>
4. **OCD: 'I spent 20 years preparing for the coronavirus pandemic'**
<https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-52564434>
5. **'Women-Led Businesses Disproportionately Affected By Coronavirus Crisis'**
<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/05/women-led-businesses-disproportionately-affected-by-coronavirus-crisis/>
6. **US Muslims Provide Food To Churches To Cope With Coronavirus Crisis**
<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/05/us-muslims-provide-food-to-churches-to-cope-with-coronavirus-crisis/>
7. **In lockdown, gardens have become the new great social divide**
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/17/in-lockdown-gardens-have-become-the-new-great-social-divide>
8. **Covid-19 Reality Has a Liberal Bias**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/14/opinion/trump-covid-experts.html>
9. **How the Pandemic Hit Bollywood**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/opinion/bollywood-coronavirus.html>
10. **Giving up COVID-19 fight a betrayal to mankind**
<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1188410.shtml>
11. **Latest coronavirus pictographs in Shanghai, China and around the world**
<https://www.shine.cn/news/world/2003124144/>
12. **What China has done to boost int'l cooperation against COVID-19**
<https://www.shine.cn/opinion/2005178283/>

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