

Situations like the coronavirus pandemic can quickly become a catalyst for social conflict due to misinformation, rumours, and fake news, as observed in Pakistan during recent national catastrophes caused by dengue fever, floods, and earthquakes. The situation is no different with COVID-19 as stories emerge on how fake news is being used to manipulate response efforts, spread rumours and misinformation leading to behaviours that are undermining community cohesion, and causing citizens to be unaware of the role they can play in the pandemic response.

With that in mind, The Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP), with the financial support from the European Union and technical support from The Asia Foundation (TAF) Pakistan, has officially launched the Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC). This campaign debunks rumours, conducts regular fact-checking, synthesizes data, and convenes virtual forums to produce informative bulletins each week. These bulletins include important government decisions, visual materials, community feedback, debunked rumours with verified information, valid concerns, and other questions from the ground around health and other issues. The goal is to support enhanced awareness among the most vulnerable groups in Pakistan (including ethnic minorities, religious minorities, returning migrants, trafficking victims, prisoners, women, internally displaced persons, transgender persons, persons with disabilities, victims of torture, and other marginalized communities), with a focus on the marginalized communities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. These bulletins are translated into Urdu and Sindhi, with audio transcriptions in Pashto. They are shared with stakeholders, local government leaders, media, legal aid centers, community radios, learning centers, CSOs, and humanitarian networks via online and offline means. They are also disseminated through a web-page, shared widely on social media, and are aired on a wide network of radio stations in local languages.

Current Situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan

Total Confirmed Cases	Total Active Cases	Total Deaths	Total Recoveries
619,259	27,188	13,757	578,314

Provinces	Active Cases	Confirmed Cases	Deaths	Recoveries
Punjab	12,569	257,408	4,322	240,983
Sindh	4,720	170,222	5,323	159,295
Islamabad	4,584	50,096	536	44,976
KPK	4,258	77,972	2,196	71,518
AJK	871	11,377	328	10,178
Balochistan	178	19,290	202	18,849
GB	8	4,967	103	4,856

Source: <http://covid.gov.pk/stats/pakistan>



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Fact

Myth



Common myths around Covid-19 that have been circulating at the local, national, and international level have come into focus in the past few months of the pandemic.



Coronavirus does not survive on food packaging.

MYTH

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been no cases of COVID-19 as yet that have been associated with food packaging or shopping bags, but it is possible for the coronavirus to survive on these surfaces. In fact, [studies](#) have been performed on how long the new coronavirus can survive on [several different surfaces](#). Some of these include common food packaging materials, such as: plastic: where the virus can survive between 3 to 7 days; cardboard, where the virus can survive up to 24 hours; glass, where the virus can survive up to 4 days; and cloth, where the virus can survive up to 2 days. It's important to remember that these studies were done in standard laboratory conditions. If the virus is present on food packaging, it's likely to be in small amounts and also be sensitive to conditions like temperature and humidity. Overall, the coronavirus doesn't survive well outside of the human body, however it is advisable to wipe down surfaces as you come into contact with them.

FACT

According to a latest study, the new U.K coronavirus variant is more deadly than others.



The B.1.1.7 variant (also known as the U.K strain), first identified in the U.K, is between 30% to 100% more deadly than previous coronavirus strains, (around 64%), according to a [new study](#) published in the British Medical Journal. This variant has several mutations that affect the spike protein; the protein that the coronavirus uses to attach and enter the cells in the body. This variant spreads more quickly from one person to another compared to other variants. Public health officials in the U.K. noted that B.1.1.7 is about 50% more infectious than the original coronavirus. The reason for this is not yet known, but it's possible that the mutations in the spike protein help B.1.1.7 to attach more tightly to cells in the body. Data from laboratory experiments that's [currently out](#) supports this idea. Additionally, some research has found that B.1.1.7 samples contain a higher amount of virus. Increased amounts of virus in people who have contracted this variant could also make it easier to transmit the virus to others.

Source: Healthline, WebMD



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The minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar has announced that the **third wave of coronavirus** has started in Pakistan. The **positivity ratio in the country** significantly went up from **4.53%** on March 10, to **6.56%** on March 14. According to Umar, *"The phenomenon that is driving [the third wave] is the spread of the UK strain."* He said that when the government looked at districts where a higher number of cases were reported, it found that these were areas where a large population of Pakistanis residing in Britain lived. The NIH (National Institute of Health) performed genome sequencing on the virus and found the UK strain in areas in north Pakistan, including Islamabad. After that, they did **genome sequencing** for the rest of the country. According to the results, the dominant strain at this time is the **UK strain**. Umar said that the new strain of the coronavirus was **more transmissible than the original strain** from Wuhan. The most recent research reports suggested that its **mortality rate is also higher**, he added.

To review the pandemic situation, a special session was conducted by Asad Umar, where it was observed that there was a sharp rise in the national positivity, which was **around 1%** in September 2020 and **2%** in January 2021, as it has been hovering **between 5% and 6%**. The data, shared during the meeting, showed that major contributors are Islamabad, several cities of Punjab, a few cities of KP and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Dawn).

If you think you or someone you know is infected with COVID-19, you can call the following government helplines by province:




WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT I OR SOMEONE IN MY FAMILY HAS CORONAVIRUS?

DON'T PANIC

There are government helplines you can call for help

FEDERAL		1166
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA		1700
PUNJAB		0800 99 000
SINDH		021-99203443 021-99204405
BALUCHISTAN		081-9241133-22 0334-9241133

whatsapp



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES REGULATIONS AND COORDINATION
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
www.nhsrco.gov.pk



Source: Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC)



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The district administration has imposed smart lockdown in **four localities** (Street 9, Sector E II, Street 5, Sector F-V, Phase IV, Street 3, Gulbahar No.4 and Street 11, Defence Colony) in Peshawar after surge in Covid-19 positivity rate as the health department is set to seek permission for enforcing SOPs in **three more districts** of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The officials stated that as per national policy, **any district with over 10% positivity** rate of Covid-19, required certain measures such as closure of schools, hotels and marriage halls as transmission of **coronavirus was showing an upward trend**.

According to officials, *“Charsadda, Nowshera and Kohat are the three districts where the positivity rate is above five per cent. The increasing trend is worrisome. Therefore, we have recommended to the chief secretary smart lockdowns and other measures to put brakes on transmission of the virus.”* Nowshera, Mardan and Swabi have reported two deaths each while Peshawar continues to record a high number of cases (Dawn).

Mild Symptoms include:



Severe Symptoms include:



If you have COVID-19 symptoms contact your doctor or the coronavirus helpline at



1166



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The Sindh government has imposed new Covid-19 restrictions in the province till April 15.

According to the notification issued by the provincial Home Department, the following directives have been issued:

- All commercial/business timings (eg markets, shopping malls, marriage halls, etc) to be open from 06:00 to 22:00 hours (except essential services such as medical stores, clinics, hospitals as well as petrol pumps. bakeries, milk shops, restaurants etc).
- Amusement parks to be closed by 18:00 hours.
- Work from Home to be enforced for 50% of the staff in all public/private sector offices.
- No indoor marriages/weddings allowed- as per earlier decisions only outdoor events/marriages allowed with upper limit of 300 persons till 10pm under defined standard operating procedures - marquees with defined modification for ventilation, and no buffet service to be allowed.
- As per earlier decisions no indoor dining at restaurants only outdoor dining and only takeaway/home delivery to be allowed.
- Closure of all places of indoor gathering such indoor gyms. indoor sports facilities, cinemas and theaters, shrines.
- Outdoor gatherings allowed only in open space with a maximum limit of 300 individuals under strict Covid-19 SOPs.
- Compulsory mask wearing and social distancing to be observed at all government/private offices and public places.



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There's so much that you can do to protect yourself against the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including the variants that have been reported. It's all about the **individual level measures**:



Physical distancing,



hand hygiene,



wearing a mask,



opening a window,



avoiding crowded spaces



respiratory etiquette,



staying home if you're unwell,



**following the local advice
where you live,**



making sure you get tested if needed.

In a number of countries where these virus variants are circulating, that **transmission is being reduced with the use of these measures**. So far, with all of the information obtained by WHO, the public health and social measures, the infection prevention and control measures in health care facilities and outside of health care facilities work against these virus variants. Take all of the steps that you can to keep yourself and your loved ones safe against SARS-CoV-2 (World Health Organization).



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Where can I get tested?

Islamabad	National Institute of Health Park Road, Chak Shahzad, Islamabad
Karachi	Agha Khan University Hospital, Stadium Road, Karachi, Sindh
Hyderabad	Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), Liberty Market Roundabout, Liaquat University Hospital, Hyderabad
Khairpur	Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences, Gambat, Khairpur, Sindh
Peshawar	Hayatabad Medical Complex Phase-4 Phase 4 Hayatabad, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
Mardan	Chughtai Lab Mardan point, near Allied Bank, Shamsi Road, Mardan, KP
Haripur	Excel Labs, TMA Plaza Shop No. 6, Near Girls Degree College Circular Road Haripur, KP
Lahore	Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital, 7A Block R-3 M.A. Johar Town, Lahore, Punjab
Multan	Nishtar Hospital Nishtar Road, Justice Hamid Colony, Multan
Rawalpindi	Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Range Road, CMH Complex, Rawalpindi, Punjab
Quetta	Fatima Jinnah Hospital Bahadurabad, Wahdat Colony, Quetta
Muzaffarabad	Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS), Ambore, Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir
Gilgit	District Headquarters Hospital, Hospital Road, Gilgit, GB

For more cities visit the [COVID-19 Health Advisory Platform](#)

To receive our
regular updates
through WhatsApp

1. Add our number **+27 60 080 6146** as a contact.
2. Send the word **"Pakistan"** as a message on WhatsApp.



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