

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, Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP) with support from The Asia Foundation (TAF) Pakistan has officially launched the Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC). This campaign aims to debunk rumours, conduct regular fact-checking, synthesize data, and convene virtual forums to produce informative bulletins each week. These bulletins will 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 with a focus particularly on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. These bulletins will be translated into Urdu and Sindhi and published on a weekly basis, with audio transcriptions in Pashto. They will be shared with stakeholders, local government leaders, media, CSOs, humanitarian organizations and others. They will also have a dedicated web-page, be shared widely on social media, and be aired on local community radio stations.

Current Situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan

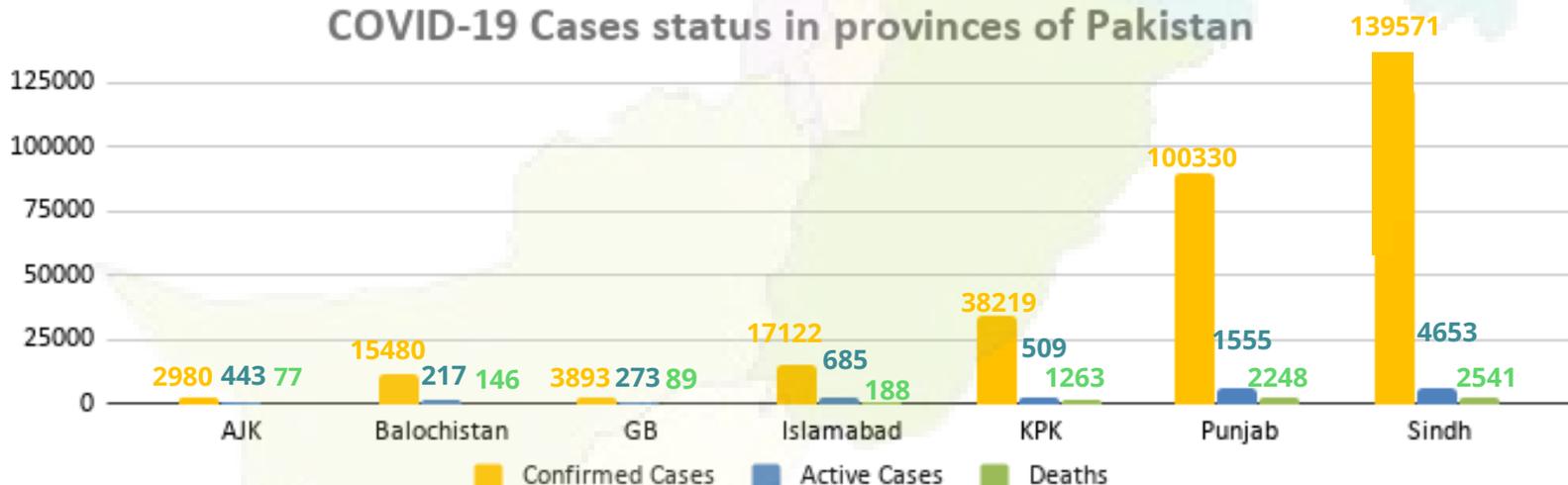
Total Confirmed Cases
317,595

Total Active Cases
8,335

Total Deaths
6,552

Total Recoveries
302,708

COVID-19 Cases status in provinces of Pakistan



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

FACT OR MYTH?

Common myths around COVID-19 that have been circulating at both the national and international level have come into focus in the past few months of the pandemic. Below are few myths that are circulating rapidly.

The prolonged use of medical masks when properly worn, causes carbon dioxide intoxication or oxygen deficiency: MYTH

The prolonged use of medical masks may be uncomfortable but it does not lead to carbon dioxide (CO₂) intoxication nor oxygen deficiency. While wearing a medical mask, make sure it fits properly and that it is loose enough to allow you to breathe normally. Do not reuse a disposable mask and always change it as soon as it gets damp.

Tobacco usage helps prevent COVID-19: MYTH

A common misconception at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan was that smoking tobacco could prevent infection. However, evidence has shown that smoking makes COVID-19 symptoms worse. According to Scientific American, as both long-term smokers and e-cigarette users are at higher risk of developing chronic lung conditions, they are at higher risk of serious infection through COVID-19.

There are currently no drugs licensed for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19: FACT

While several drug trials are ongoing, there is currently no evidence that hydroxychloroquine or any other drug can cure or prevent COVID-19. The misuse of hydroxychloroquine can cause serious side effects and illness and even lead to death. WHO is coordinating efforts to develop and evaluate medicines to treat COVID-19.

Thermal scanners can detect COVID-19: MYTH

Thermal scanners are effective in detecting people who have a fever (i.e. have a higher than normal body temperature). However, they cannot detect people who are infected with COVID-19. There are many possible causes of fever, COVID-19 being only one of them.

Source: World Health Organization, Scientific American.

Pakistan: Marriage Halls and Restaurants becoming new hubs of COVID-19

The National Health Services (NHS) has advised health authorities to declare high alert due to the possibility of the spread of COVID-19 during the winter season. An advisory notice by the name of Seasonal Awareness and Alert Letter (SAAL) has stated that diseases such as COVID-19, Dengue fever, seasonal flu, and others have a high possibility of spreading during the months of October to February. The NHS confirmed that the purpose of SAAL is to inform all health professionals and authorities to develop effective responses during epidemics and pandemics.

As winter approaches, restaurants and marriage halls are emerging as coronavirus hotspots in Pakistan, the government has stated. Doctors have raised concern over the complacency of ignoring SOPs, in spite of the relatively lowered cases of infection in the country. Asad Umar, the planning minister who has overseen much of the country's pandemic response remarked that indoor restaurants and marriage halls were emerging as high contributors to the spread of COVID-19 during a meeting of the National Command and Operation Center. Attendees of the meeting were informed that people had started ignoring health protocols such as wearing masks and maintaining social distance. In response to this, Asad Umar advised that the spread could be avoided if people complied with SOPs.

The [World Health Organization's advice](#) on social events and public gatherings urges that any decision to hold a public event should rely on a risk-based approach. WHO has provided guidance on how such an approach can be taken and what precautions should be consulted by both organizers and attendees of such events. It is now more important than ever that we follow basic health protocols when going to schools, restaurants or social gatherings, and not fall victim to complacency in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 this winter.

Coronavirus symptoms

Mild Symptoms include:

1. Fever or chills
2. Cough
3. Lost sense of smell or taste
4. Fatigue
5. Sputum production, congestion, and runny nose
6. Sore throat
7. Aches, pains, and headaches
8. Diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting

Source: Center for Disease Control

Severe Symptoms include:

1. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
2. Persistent pain or pressure in your chest
3. New confusion, or the inability to wake up or stay awake
4. Bluish lips or face

Source: Center for Disease Control

What should I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms?

Contact your doctor or the coronavirus helpline at



1166



Where can I get tested?

Karachi

Aga Khan University Hospital

Stadium Road, Karachi

Dow Medical Hospital

Ojha Campus

Suparco Road, Karachi

Indus Hospital

Opposite Darussalam Society, Korangi

Crossing, Karachi

Multan

Nishtar Hospital

Nishtar Road,

Justice Hamid Colony, Multan

Rawalpindi

Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

Range Road

CMH Complex, Rawalpindi

Hyderabad

Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS)

Liberty Market Roundabout, Near

Liaquat University Hospital

Hyderabad, Sindh.

Islamabad

National Institute of Health

Park Road

Chak Shahzad, Islamabad

Khairpur

Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences

Gambat, Khairpur, Sindh

Abbottabad

Public Health Lab Ayub Teaching Hospital

Mansehra Road. Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Shaheena Jameel Hospital

Abbottabad . N-35

Quetta

Fatima Jinnah Hospital

Bahadurabad, Wahdat Colony,

Quetta, Balochistan

Peshawar

Khyber Medical University

Phase 5, Hayatabad, Peshawar, KP

Hayatabad Medical Complex

Phase-4 Phase 4 Hayatabad, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Lahore

Punjab AIDS Lab

PACP Complex

6 - Birdwood Road, Lahore

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital

7A Block R-3 M.A. Johar Town, Lahore

For more cities visit the

[COVID-19 Health Advisory Platform](#)

Coronavirus CivActs Campaign is brought to you by
Accountability Lab Pakistan

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.

