



Daily Covid count remains at elevated levels

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported more than 7,000 cases of Covid-19 for the fifth consecutive day on Monday, with the national positivity rate averaging 11.53 per cent.

Data released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) showed that 7,048 more infections were reported and 21 people succumbed to the virus during the past 24 hours. The number of patients on critical care stood at 1,423.

According to a document available with *Dawn*, the positivity rate was recorded at over 10pc in 12 cities — Karachi, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Bahawalpur, Mirpur, Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Islamabad, Quetta and Muzaffarabad.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), a representative body of the medical fraternity, has expressed concern over the consistently high positivity ratio of Covid-19 across the country.

It has also urged the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to strictly implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) during the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) tournament.

“Although the positivity ratio in Karachi has decreased, it’s still higher. This is all due to our negligence in adopting preventive measures,” the PMA said in a statement issued after a virtual meeting presided over by Dr Salma Aslam Kundi and attended by Dr Qaisar Sajjad, Dr Qazi Wasiq and others.

Flouting of precautionary measures during PSL questioned; 600 vaccination centres mapped across country

The PMA said it “enthusiastically welcomes” the international cricket and players in Pakistan, as it helped promote the country’s soft image and provided immense leisure to cricket lovers.

However, the situation being observed during the PSL at Karachi’s National Stadium was “horrifying”, as nobody was seen following the SOPs, the association said.

“Spectators at the stadium are seen without masks and without maintaining social distance. This could worsen the Covid-19 situation and the consequences could lead to the postponement of PSL like the past year,” it said.

The medical association also requested the government to strictly implement the SOPs across the country. “We also request the public to adopt preventive measures, wear masks whenever you go out, keep social distance, wash or sanitise your hands with proper intervals, avoid shaking hands and hugging and avoid going out unnecessarily,” it said.

The PMA meeting also expressed concern over the shortage of medicines and their rising prices.

Careem maps vaccination centres

Meanwhile, ride-hailing firm Careem has partnered with the NCOC to map 600 government vaccination centres on its app. The measure will help people book a ride to and from the centres to get their first two doses or booster shots of the Covid-19 vaccine.

Users will be able to use the ‘Vaccination’ feature on the app to get detailed information about vaccination centres, including their timing, locations and eligibility.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development, Reform and Special Initiatives Asad Umar appreciated the decision. “Pakistan is currently experiencing the fifth wave of Covid-19 with a highly contagious Omicron variant. Today, we are in a much better position to fight this pandemic by ensuring everyone gets vaccinated and, if it has been over six months since the vaccination, getting the booster shot. This is a commendable step taken by Careem, and I hope others will follow suit,” he said.

Careem’s country head Feroz Jaleel said: “The new variant is spreading fast and we need to take measures to contain it. With that being said, I am happy that the government has worked tirelessly towards making the vaccines available to the masses and we, as an organisation, just wanted to play our part in helping people get their vaccination or booster shots and combating this contagious variant.”

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