

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES ESSENTIAL AS COVID-19 MAY LAST LONG: MASOOD KHAN



Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan has said that the spirit of doctors and other medical staff to save lives of the people at the risk of their own lives had contributed to control the Covid-19 situation in the liberated territory, while the people had also set an example by complying with the directives of the doctors and the government.

He said this while speaking at two separate functions organized by Pakistan Red Crescent Society Azad Kashmir chapter at the Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences and the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) here Friday to distribute personal protective equipment (PPEs) and medicines among doctors, nurses and paramedical staff. The functions were attended among others by Commandant CMH Brig. Ikram Nabi,

Special Secretary Health Department Sohail Azam, Director General Health Dr Sardar Aftab, Additional Secretary Health Dr Sardar Maroof, Administrator Red Crescent Society Col (ret) Tahir Younus, and other senior civil and military officials.

The state president said that by virtue of timely steps taken by the AJK government, effective lockdown and the determination of the doctors, the number of Covid-19 patients was 105 only. Of them, 76 have recovered while 28 are still under treatment in hospitals, and none of them is on a ventilator. "Only one death from Covid-19 has occurred in Azad Kashmir so far," he added.

Sardar Masood Khan said that Azad Kashmir has the highest recovery rate in Pakistan, and this had happened because our government, people and the medical community were on one page to combat the pandemic.

Saying that we have started from scratches, President said that there was no separate isolation facility or hospital in the liberated territory at the time of the outbreak of Covid-19, but now we have 68 isolation centres. The virology department has been upgraded and the testing facility has been provided besides Muzaffarabad, in Rawalakot and Mirpur, while a proposal is also under consideration to impart training to 1,500 members of medical staff to respond to Covid-19 pandemic in future.

Sardar Masood Khan said that the lockdown had been relaxed to facilitate the people. Therefore, both shopkeepers and the customers should adopt all out precautionary measures and avoid crowds at business establishments and other public places.

He paid great tributes to philanthropists for reaching out to the affected people and helping the government in tackling the challenge. However, the government was also helping the affected people from its own sources, he added.

The AJK president appreciated the National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan Army, National Institute of Health Islamabad and particularly the Red Crescent Society for extending the fullest support to the people of Azad Kashmir at this difficult juncture and helping the state government in tackling the health crisis.

He said that there was no dearth of health infrastructure and health equipment in the liberated territory, and at present, 68 ventilators are available, while demand for more ventilators have been submitted to the federal government.

The AJK president said that as compared to the people of Azad Kashmir, their brethren in occupied Kashmir are confronted with more difficulties. "We have enforced lockdown to protect lives of the people while in occupied Kashmir, the people particularly the youth are being massacred under the garb of lockdown," he lamented.

The president later handed over face masks, sanitizers, first aid kits and other PPEs to Commandant CMH and Executive Director of Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences.

Commenting on the situation in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the state President said that coronavirus is rapidly spreading in IOJK and doctors are unable to properly treat the people because of inadequate protective equipment. He added that the state of affairs has posed serious dangers to the lives of Kashmiri people.