

NCOC to launch 'no mask no service' initiative

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Control Centre (NCOC) on Sunday decided to launch "no mask no service" initiative at the commercial markets which would bound the shopkeepers to deny entertaining those customers who do not wear masks. The decision was taken at the NCOC meeting presided over by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar and attended by Interior Minister Brigadier Ijaz Shah (R), National Food Security Minister Fakhar Imam, Economic Affairs Minister Khusro Bakhtiar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security Dr Moeed Yousaf and SAPM on Health Dr Zafar Mirza. According to an official statement, the meeting sought to engage market associations for the implementation of Covid-19 guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in letter and spirit. The planning minister directed the NCOC to "concentrate on the plan to ease the lockdown while strictly implementing the SOPs," the statement said. The forum also decided to take "strict punitive action on violation of SOPs." The meeting, it said, reviewed short-term measures as well as formulation of a long-term strategy under the federal government's proposed policy "Living with the Pandemic". The meeting expressed satisfaction over the availability of ventilators in hospitals across the country. The meeting was informed that the Resource Management System (RMS) would be rolled out countrywide from today (June 1). Under this system, the hospitals would also share the details of local resources available to them, total admitted patients, denial of admissions, no of beds and ventilators available, as well as other facilities being provided to them, the statement said. Briefing the NCOC, Dr Zafar Mirza said that National Health Ministry was planning to mobilise retired doctors of public sector hospitals, young doctors, doctors on house jobs, and final year medical students to cope with the situation. Moreover, new doctors and paramedics would be recruited through walk-in interviews. The forum was apprised that the provinces had been asked to ensure community mobilisation and set up Call Centres in their respective areas by June 15. The forum was told that Sindh and Balochistan governments were not agreeing on imposing smart lockdown. Instead, they preferred the home quarantine policy.