

# Medical News

Pakistan's First  
Independent  
Medical Periodical from  
Karachi

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## THE MYSTERY OF GAS LEAK

# Death toll mounts amid confusion over source

**MN Report**

**KARACHI** - As per sources, the death toll from the mysterious gas leak rose to

14, recently. Many people have been hospitalised ever since the leak was first noticed. The people of the affected areas took to the streets, accusing the administration of paying only lip service over the grave issues involved.

After a brief respite earlier, the situation began deteriorating again when a number of people, including women and children, were rushed to private and government hospitals. This exercise continued till sunrise. Finally in the evening, the Sindh

health ministry came up with the latest casualty figures. "To conclude the report, 14 patients expired," said the

the patients were collected and sent to Aga Khan University Hospital and International Center for



Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) for further investigation and analytical study. Efforts to determine the cause or even the exact place of gas leak failed to throw up anything conclusive.

Special Health Secretary in his report to Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. It is pertinent to mention here that 258 patients were examined and 232 were discharged after treatment and 12 patients were under observation in relevant hospitals. The specimens of

The International Centre for Chemical and Biological Sciences at the University of Karachi suspected that 'soya bean dust (aeroallergens)' was behind the problem. However, a study conducted by a private laboratory assisting the Sindh environment authorities spoke

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## PMC ordinance 'null and void' by IHC

**MN Report**

**ISLAMABAD** - The Islamabad High Court recently declared Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) dissolution null and void and restored the dissolved Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) by setting aside the presidential ordinance



that had replaced the PMDC with the Pakistan Medical Commission over three and a half months ago.

Giving a short verdict, which had been reserved in PMDC dissolution case on Jan 8, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani declared that the ordinance that repealed the PMDC was ultra vires, held that the PMC formation was not authorised by the law and directed the federal government to reinstate the sacked employees of the PMDC. President Arif Alvi had promulgated the PMC

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## Nationwide polio eradication campaign begins

**MN Report**

**ISLAMABAD** - The year's first nationwide polio vaccination drive has been all set to begin recently, apart from Karachi where the campaign began a week ago, aiming to vaccinate approximately 39.6 million children. The campaign would involve nearly 265,000 polio workers going door-to-door to inoculate children under the age of five. Earlier, though the National Institute of Health confirmed five more polio cases from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, bringing the tally for the current year so far to 17.

"Building on the successful national campaign in

December last year, the nation is all set to

undertake aggressive measures to push the virus back during 2020, setting the stage to root out polio from the country once and for all," claimed Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Zafar Mirza. "We have critically reviewed our performance during the last campaign and worked with provincial and district teams for even better preparedness for the upcoming vaccination effort," Zafar added.

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# PMA calls for increment in health budget

**MN Report**

**KARACHI** - Addressing a recent press conference at the MPA House, The Pakistan Medical Association officials (PMA) recently demanded increase in the health budget of the country. Dr S M Qaisar Sajjad, Secretary-General, PMA Centre, Dr Qazi Muhammad Wasiq, Dr Muhammad Sharif Hashmani, President, PMA Karachi Chapter, and Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, General-Secretary, PMA Karachi spoke to the media persons regarding the dilemma. They said that Pakistan, with a population of over 219,006,884, stands fifth in the world, with one of the fastest-growing populations. "The country is facing challenges like poverty, illiteracy, energy crisis, terrorism, and, indeed, a massive burden of diseases," PMA told. PMA, through its health of the nation report, has already highlighted these pressing issues and offered recommendations. For many years, health indicators have failed to show any positive trend. In fact, in some of the areas, things have worsened, said in Press conference. The PMA leaders said that according to the WHO's recommendations, the health budget of a country should at least be 6% of the national GDP. In our case, the health budget, despite the PMA's repeated pleas and reminders to the government, has remained less than 1%, out of which 80% is spent on salaries and administrative costs. Out of the 20% that is the share of the poor masses, corruption eats up a major chunk, leaving a negligible amount for the poor patients, they noted. "Pakistan carries a heavy burden of diseases because of the lack of awareness and ignorance and the poor healthcare delivery system at the primary level. Most diseases are preventable through vaccination/immunization or by way of simple awareness and the provision of some basic facilities

by the government," PMA representatives told. Similarly, an effective vaccination/immunization program should be carried out honestly and professionally, to eradicate diseases like polio, TB, whooping cough, diphtheria, measles, smallpox, hepatitis, typhoid, meningitis, pneumonia, mumps, rubella, and others for good. "Unfortunately, healthcare and education are not priority areas for our government," noted the PMA. "It is the need of the hour that our government puts its act together, make a people-friendly health policy, increase the health budget, concentrate on preventive healthcare, eliminate corruption, honor merit, and, above all, demonstrate a political will to address the issues of health and education in the country on a priority basis," urged PMA. They demanded the reinstatement of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, which should be an autonomous, democratic, transparent, and vibrant body comprising of elected and nominated members as per the 1962 ordinance, with the inclusion of stakeholders like the PMA and the PDA. They demanded a complete overhauling of medical education and training of doctors according to recent trends in the world. They demanded a people-friendly national health policy based on the ground realities of the country. The PMA spokespersons urged that adequate health budgets are assigned with the assurance that the allocated amount would be spent with honesty. "We demand a check on the mushroom growth of medical colleges and universities regarding the faculties, infrastructure, tuition fee, etc." "We advocate that prevention is better than cure must be our national goal. Print and electronic media must allocate some time for creating awareness of this slogan," the PMA concluded.

# Coronavirus: Awariness programme to address preventive measures

**MN Report**

**KARACHI** - A public awareness seminar titled "Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) and Preventive Strategies" was recently organized at

urged the citizens to protect themselves against the possible threat from the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the country, saying that the World Health



University of Karachi (KU). Dr Muhammad Rashid, Senior Research Officer at the National Institute of Virology that works at under the Dr Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research (PCMD), KU was invited as Chief Guest. PCMD and the Virtual Education Project Pakistan (VEPP) jointly organized the seminar to raise public awareness about the most important current challenges that our nation is facing. Virology expert, Dr Rashid while addressing the audience

Organization (WHO) has declared the outbreak of new coronavirus a global health emergency. He told that the virus had infected more than 30,000 people, while more than 600 people have died due to the fatal infection in China. Dr Rashid said that citizens were advised to practice the best hygiene. They should wash their hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Following the global health

**Continued on Page 09**

# 47 more quackery outlets sealed in Sindh

**MN Report**

**KARACHI** - The Directorate of Anti-Quackery of the Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) recently sealed 47 more quack clinics across the Sindh province in a week. Various successful raids were led against quacks in the province as well. The SHCC has sealed 3,306 healthcare establishments (HCEs) in Sindh so far. Warnings for non-compliance have also been issued to 1046 clinics to date. The Directorate of Licensing & Accreditation received 38 new applications for registration in a week, taking the total number of applications to 10,500. Certificates were issued to five HCEs this week, bringing the total number of issued registration certificates to 9,466. Meanwhile, the SHCC will also collaborate on the polio campaign with the Sindh government and write letters to hospitals seeking support for the polio campaign as well. Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SHCC, Dr Minhaj Qidwai, held a meeting with the Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) and encouraged them to plan an awareness session for their healthcare providers across the Sindh province.





# President inaugurates Fazaia Ruth Pfau Medical College

MN Report

**KARACHI** - President Dr Arif Alvi recently inaugurated the newly constructed Fazaia Ruth Pfau Medical College in Karachi. He was welcomed by the Air Chief Marshal, Mujahid Anwar Khan, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, on arrival.



Addressing the occasion, the Chief Guest appreciated the relentless efforts of the team members in carrying out this remarkable project in record time, as per the standards of the Pakistan Medical Council. Dr Arif Alvi further said that the Pakistan Air Force had been significantly contributing towards nation-building, in the fields of healthcare and education, in particular. He hoped that this college would be a valuable addition in the long list of public service endeavors carried out by the PAF in recent years. Later on, the Chief Guest unveiled the plaque and prayers for the success of the project. Dr Arif also visited the various facilities of the college and interacted with the faculty

*Continued on Page 08*

# Coronavirus: Suspected patient admitted in Khairpur

MN Report

**KHAIRPUR** - After arriving from China, a Pakistani student, suspected of being affected by the coronavirus, has been admitted to the Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences after presenting with cough and bleeding from the nose and mouth. The patient, Shahzeb Rahujo, along with his two attendants, has been kept in the isolation ward of the hospital after the suspected coronavirus patient's condition worsened. Rahujo, a student at the University of China, returned three days prior to Pirjo Goth near Khairpur following the coronavirus outbreak in China. Rahujo's condition worsened soon after arrival as he reported severe cough and bleeding from the nose and mouth. The young man was first shifted to the Civil Hospital Khairpur, where coronavirus kits were unavailable. He was later brought to the Gambat Hospital, where the kits were available. *Continued on Page 08*



# Robotic and dimensional laparoscopic facilities opened by SIUT

MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) is the first public sector hospital to open its own robot facility along with a 3-dimensional laparoscopic unit to provide state-of-the-art surgical facilities to its patients. The robot was currently being

installed, as per reports. Renowned philanthropist, Bashir Dawood, who donated an amount of Rs450 million to establish the unit, inaugurated the unit at a recent ceremony. The unit has been dedicated to Kassim Parekh, a renowned banker and a close family friend of the Dawood family. Director, SIUT, Prof Adib Rizvi,

welcomed the donor and presented the details of his institute activities. The SIUT has a well-structured surgical program comprising of experienced surgeons in the field of robotic surgery for urological disorders, according to the Press Release. A SIUT press release highlighting the salient features of the new surgery unit stated that the 3D surgery facility, which will do away with the conventional open surgery, will provide relief to patients with less pain, less loss of blood, less risk of infection, shorter hospital stay, and above all, quicker recovery time. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Bashir Dawood lauded the dedication and professional excellence of the SIUT's doctors and paramedics. He has also pledged a donation of Rs1 billion to build an SIUT Children and Cardiac Hospital.



# Workshop on ultrasound held at Altamash General Hospital

MN Report

**KARACHI** - A workshop was recently held at Altamash General Hospital to highlight various aspects of Ultrasound. program focused on Obstetrics and Gynaecology subjects and the effects of Doppler in these fields. The topics of Transvaginal Sonography (TVS), Infertility, Foetal echo, interventional and recent advancement were also discussed. The expert speaker invited in the conference was Dr. Musarrat Hasan. The workshops were facilitated by Dr. Fatima Musarrat and Dr. Samina. The event was participated by everyone and was attended by around 250 people.



**Altamash General Hospital recently organized a Free Medical Camp at Behbud Open House. Medical Check-ups along with basic lab tests were also conducted free of charge.**



**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - A Cancer Awareness program and walk was recently conducted to commemorate the World Cancer Day at the Karachi Medical and Dental College (KMDC). On this occasion, a talk show was recorded in the Ishtiaque Ahmed Khan Auditorium in collaboration with local news Channel, Aaj News. The famous talk show "Sawal hay Pakistan ka" hosted by Mr Rizwan Jaffer was put together by Dr Mudassir Hussain of Community Dentistry

# World Cancer Day: Experts call for United Action



Department, KMDC and participants included Professor Syed Mahmood Haider, Principal KMDC, Professors Tazeen Abbas, Raheel Rehman, Aneela Altaf (KMDC) and Mr Hashim Hasan, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Dental News. The show was largely attended by KMDC faculty and students and members of the public. Following the programme, a walk was organised to increase awareness among general public. 'World Cancer Day' is annually celebrated on the 4th of February.

## We are moving towards improvement: Dr Azra Pechuho

**MN Report**  
**LARKANA** - Sindh Minister for Health Dr Azra Pechuho along with World Health Organisation (WHO) country head, Dr Palitha Gunaratna Mahipala and Sindh Head, Dr Sara Salman recently inaugurated labour room at the Shaikh Zayed Hospital for Women, Chandka Medical College Hospital (CMCH). She also inaugurated the Nutrition Stabilisation Centre at taluka hospital in Ratodero. Speaking at the inauguration ceremonies and later talking to reporters, Dr Pechuho claimed that the HIV/AIDS cases in Ratodero registered, had a decline. "The problem has been brought under control," she said, adding, "Credit goes to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto who had initiated WHO funded project in the country." She pointed out that the project was still continuing successfully. The minister said that different programmes were under way to deal with any outbreak and for its effective containment. She said from now on, the Nutrition Stabilisation Centre would become a part of the Ratodero Taluka Hospital where patients suffering from AIDS, nutritional deficiencies and gastroenteritis would receive nutritional supplements. Also, expecting mothers would receive treatment at this centre, she added. "We are moving towards improvement," she asserted, and announced that more surgeons would be posted at the taluka hospital. Dr Pechuho said that the Sindh government intended to provide health facilities to people at their doorsteps to serve a huge population. "We are putting in all possible efforts to provide health services to the masses. Doctors should perform their duties with honesty and



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## Isra University celebrates the graduation of 249 students

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - The 5th Convocation of Isra University (IU) was recently held with full zeal and enthusiasm. The event was presided by Dr Asadullah Kazi, Chancellor, Isra University. Prof Dr Abdul Rashid Shaikh, Vice-Chancellor, Isra University was also present besides the

burst its banks. He advised that we must learn swimming or else we will drown." As a parting message to the students, he said, "Work hard to achieve your goals. I want you to become great, as we are optimistic about you. You are the leaders of tomorrow, so get yourself ready to address the challenges of the

in his address, said that the primary purpose of such events was not only to confer degrees on the students but also to honor those who have performed meritoriously. "This day will remain in the memory of many for long, especially the students, the parents, the faculty, and the administration," he added.



dignitaries, faculty members, parents, and a large number of students in the occasion. The Isra University conferred degrees to around 249 students belonging to Medical Sciences, Vision Sciences, and Physical Therapy. Prof Dr Asadullah Kazi while addressing the audience said that everything changes with time, except for the change itself. "We live in an age of innovation and change, and in such an age, universities have a special obligation. They must hold fast to the best of the past, and do more for the best of the future," said Dr Asadullah Prof Kazi said that, "We must get ready for globalization, which is like the river that has

future." He went on and reminded the students about their goals as educated citizens, "to uphold the image of your country, by letting the world know that we are a peaceful nation." Furthermore, in his address, he accentuated the importance of education and said that learning is a lifelong process that continues from the cradle to the grave. He urged the students to be competitive and to extend their knowledge. "There can be no development without participation, and there can be no participation without communication, in this age of digital literacy," Kazi said. On this felicitous occasion, Prof Dr Abdul Rashid Shaikh,

He congratulated the graduates and said that the position and status of today demanded a more humble, humane approach and positive attitude to your fellow beings, loved ones, and humanity at large. "Use the skills that you have acquired now and will acquire in the future, for the betterment of the less privileged in our society, and extend your hands to anyone who needs it," Rashid said. Dr Abdul Rashid stressed, "It is time that you should set for yourself a set of values that distinguishes you from the rest of the people around you. Time is a precious commodity. Do not waste it, and the values

*Continued on Page 09*



# Induction of 900 trainee medical officers demanded

**MN Report**  
**PESHAWAR** - The representatives of various groups of doctors recently demanded from the government to ensure the induction of 900 young doctors in its hospitals as trainee medical officers to save their future. They warned that if the demand wasn't met, the doctors and students of different medical colleges would stage a sit-in outside the provincial assembly building after one week. Leading a group of doctors, All Doctors Association leader, Dr Qasim told reporters that the young doctors, who had passed the FCPS (Fellow of College of Physicians and Surgeons) Part 1 examination and fulfilled the criteria for

induction as trainee medical officers to complete the mandatory training in teaching hospitals for taking Part-II examination in different specialties, weren't adjusted by the government despite repeated requests. "We contacted the relevant health officials time and again but none of them paid serious attention to resolve our demands," he said. Dr Qasim warned that the associations of doctors had also taken the students of various medical colleges into confidence to launch a joint protest campaign soon if the government didn't pay attention to their issues. He said of the total young doctors, only 385 had been given the opportunity to undergo training, while the remaining



over 900 awaited induction as TMOs (Treating Medical Officers). The association leader said the future of 900 doctors had been endangered by the government even though they passed FCPS examination. He said the government was bound to train all doctors selected for specialisation. Dr Qasim said all public sector hospitals in the province lacked medical staff but the government wasn't interested in filling vacancies. He said as the population grew, the people's problems were fast increasing due to a lack of health facilities.

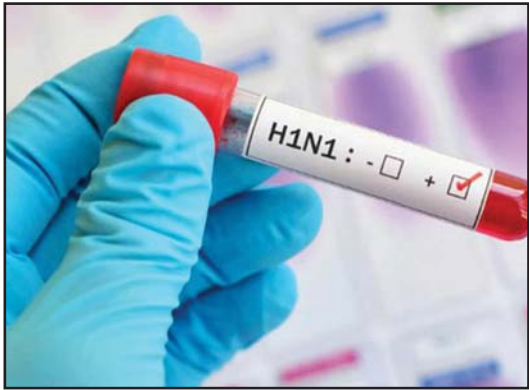
## Coronavirus safety kits donated to DRAP

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - The Pharma Bureau and the Healthcare Medical Devices Association of Pakistan (HDAP) have recently donated coronavirus safety kits to the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to minimize the impact of coronavirus in Pakistan. Representatives of the Pharma Bureau and the HDAP handed over the kits to Chief Executive Officer, DRAP, Dr Asim Rauf. These 500 donation kits include Tyvek, gowns, masks, gloves, etc. In addition to the kits, 2000 face masks and 2500 gloves were also handed over to the DRAP, which were immediately dispatched to the National Institute of Health. "The Pharma Bureau extends its full support to the DRAP and the Ministry of National Health Services to limit the coronavirus impact on the citizens of Pakistan," said Ayesha Tammy Haq, Executive Director, Pharma Bureau. "There is a global shortage of safety clothing to prevent healthcare professionals from catching the virus. All of our members are aware of the situation, and we are doing whatever we can to arrange more safety kits and give to the DRAP and the Ministry if needed," she added. Pharma Bureau is the representative body of research-based multinational pharmaceutical companies in Pakistan.



## Tally for H1N1 deaths rises to 5 so far

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - As many as 129 cases of the H1N1 virus have been reported in the Sindh province in 2020 so far out of which five patients have been reported dead, latest sources claim. The Coordinator to the Sindh Health Minister recently noted that at least 129 cases of H1N1 flu had been detected in Sindh since the start of the year. Additionally, one influenza B virus and non-H1N1 influenza virus case were also detected. Out of the total of 129 reported cases, 58 are males, and 71 are females. Five people have succumbed to the ailment so far. H1N1, commonly known as the swine flu, is a contagious disease which spreads through air droplets. If the infected individuals sneeze or cough without covering their mouth or nose, they put everyone around them at risk. The swine flu or H1N1 is considered a deadly disease, unlike the common flu.



### NATIONAL

#### March 26-28

26th Annual Meeting: Pakistan Association of Plastic Surgeons (PAPSCON 2020) at Lahore.

#### March 28-29

International Conference on Medical & Health Science at Pearl Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

#### March 27-28

Internal Medicine Symposium 2020 Quality in education and healthcare at AKU Auditorium, Karachi.

#### April 7-9

Health Asia & Pharma Asia at Lahore Expo Center, Lahore, Pakistan.

## 2020 HEALTH DAYS CALENDAR

JUNE	OCTOBER
1 World Milk Day	8 World Sight Day
1 International Children Day	10 World Mental Health Day
5 World Environment Day	12 World Arthritis Day
14 World Blood Donor Day	12 World Bone And Joint Week
19 World Sickle Cell Day	15 World Handwashing Day
26 International Day Against Drug Abuse And Illicit Drug Trafficking	16 World Food Day
	17 World Spine Day
	17 World Trauma Day
	20 World Osteoporosis Day
	24 World Polio Day
	29 World Stroke Day
JULY	NOVEMBER
11 World Population Day	1 Lung Cancer Awareness Month
28 World Hepatitis Day	9 World Quality Day
	14 International Diabetes Day
	17 World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day
	26 World Anti-Obesity Day
AUGUST	DECEMBER
1-7 World Breastfeeding Week	1 World Aids Day
	3 International Day of Disabled Persons
	5 World Patient Safety Day
SEPTEMBER	
9 International Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Day	
20 World Retina Week	
21 World Alzheimer's Day	
25 World Pharmacist Day	
26 World Retina Day	
29 World Heart Day	

## Reported cases of dengue mount in Karachi

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - As many as 35 new dengue fever cases were detected across Karachi in the past week, taking the reported case toll to 297 since the start of the year. The Prevention and Control Program for Dengue (PCPD) in Sindh registered 37 more dengue fever cases across the province in a week, out of which 35 were reported from Karachi and two from other districts. In this month only, a total of 74 positive dengue cases surfaced from all over the province so far, out of which 64 were confirmed from Karachi and ten from other districts. This year, a total of 326 dengue cases emerged from Sindh to date, out of which 297 were reported from Karachi and 29 from other districts of the province. A dengue-related death was also reported from Karachi, claim sources.





**ISLAMABAD** - The 5th Pharma Summit was recently organised by the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PPMA), the experts told that the pharma stake holders and think tanks have converged on a single platform to highlight the export potential of the industry. The title of the summit was 'Mastering Innate Strengths and Acquiring New Capabilities' and was arranged by Terrabiz. Speakers included Managing Directors and Chief Executives of various pharmaceutical giants. This also provided an opportunity to the people from the pharmaceutical industry, government officials as well as representatives from the Drug Regulatory Authority Pakistan (DRAP) to sit together on a common platform and listen to each other's point view on various issues. A large number of problems and issues facing the pharmaceutical trade and industry came under discussion and some useful suggestions were also made by various speakers to overcome the problems. Earlier, Abdul Razzak Dawood, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce speaking on the occasion, said the government was committed to increasing the country's exports by removing all obstacles. Special focus was also being given to increase export volume through tariff rationalisation, trade-related investment, institutional reforms and easing of business regulations, he added. He called upon the pharma industry to come forward to enhance the current volume of over \$300 million exports to over \$3 billion. "The local pharma industry can tap markets like Africa and all stakeholders need to work together to enhance exports

Dr Zafar Mirza advisor to PM on Health in his speech said that the draft of national medicine policy has been prepared and would be launched in the next two weeks. Dr Mirza said efforts were also being made to appoint competent people on the regulatory authority. He urged the pharmaceutical sector to shun practice of unethical promotion of their products and champion a cause rather than asking for price increase only. The prices of essential drugs should be regulated only, he added. Former state minister, Tariq Ikram also briefed that Pakistan had rich potential to export pharma products. The current export volume of pharma sector could easily be enhanced to \$5.4 billion from \$300 million, he added.

Tariq Ikram in his presentation said that there was a lack of understanding of the pharma sector and "it is time to target international markets. In 2000 there was not a single pharma product from Pakistan registered abroad. It is time that the trust deficit is removed and concession due to the sector are given. Packaging and raw materials should be completed exempted from all kinds of sales tax. The industry with a potential to bring in \$ 5.4 billion dollars must be eligible

## 5TH PHARMA SUMMIT BY PAKISTAN PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION (PPMA)

# Pharma industry has the highest forex earnings potential – Experts

for incentives and we must collectively evaluate how to achieve it," Tariq told. "It is time that a joint working group comprising officials of all stakeholders FBR, DRAP and Pharma manufacturers is formed to sort out export opportunities through more government facilitation and curb the powers of agencies who create obstacles for the industry," Ikram further added.



said Pakistan had the strongest pharma industry in all Muslim countries and 98pc of the country's requirement were being fulfilled locally. The pharma sector has witnessed 20pc growth in last two years, he said, adding that "we can fulfil the requirement of whole region as Allah Almighty has blessed us with raw materials being used in



Later a fire chat round, moderated by Haroon Qasim was held. Sultan Ghani, Ex Associate Director, Office of Compliance, Planning and Coordination, Therapeutic Products Directorate, Canada and presently the Adviser to the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) said that the price control should not be there at all. "Prices in Pakistan are one of the lowest" Ghani said. Sultan Ghani implied that in order for pharma industry to prosper the way forward was consultation and not imposition by the ministry. Earlier, in his opening remarks, PPMA Chairman Mian Zakaur Rehman

manufacturing of medicines". Rehman said there were tremendous opportunities for the pharma sector to export their products in African countries. "The joint working among the government, the business community, the exporters and the national drug regulator could help Pakistan grab more global market share in pharma exports." PPMA Chairman Muhammad Zakaur Rehman. The Conference Chair, Kaiser Waheed urged the need to bridge the trust deficit gap and bring the industry at par with traditional industries

with same privileges and subsidies. Khalid Mahmood, Managing Director, Getz Pharma said "According to UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) report, Pakistan's HDI (Human Development Index ) is amongst the lowest in the world and in the medium human development category, it is now raked at 152 out of 189 countries and territories." "Human Development Index report by UNDP puts Pakistan's 75% people below the poverty line. This is people who are earning Rs 25000 or less per month," Khalid highlighted. Khalid Mahmood told "Funding is not the only solution as there were only 23 cases per 100000 of TB before any kind of funding arrived. After 400,000 USD funding the number rose to 287 per 100000 people. Issue lies with management expertise for handling the disease. Pakistan facing HIV endemic and an issue of co-infections which means that patients having HIV have also developed TB or vice versa." Panellist Hanif Ajari urged the government to grant industry status to Pharmaceutical sector and stop treating it like an unwanted child. Speaking as a panellist he said that export is easier said than done. "A properly documented registration dossier can cost as much as half a million dollars, government must come forward and support the industry," Ajari said. Nusrat Munshi, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director & MD, ADP Limited, appreciated the streamlining of drug registration process and urged the ministry to come out of price fixation Zahid Saeed, Managing Director, Indus Pharma said that the industry

can take bio equivalency waivers especially for injectables and derma products. Derma products in many countries have now been treated as medical devices provided the facility where they are made is ISO 13485 approved. He said that DRAP should also evolve as per international standards and urged an end to media happy debates. It is time to stop playing with the sentiments of the business community, he added.

Pharma Expert, Tauqeer ul Haq while speaking at the conference said that pharma products from Pakistan carry a good image and we should now be focussing on products not

requiring bio-equivalence. "If the industry is expected to take the exports to 2 billion USD from 300 million, the government must come forward and support the industry. Testing and manufacturing equipment must be exempted from all taxes," he told. The conference concluded with a take home message that pharma prices in Pakistan are the lowest and the industry has enormous potential to grow from existing three per cent global share and the current government must extend supporting hand to the exporters to explore and tap new markets. -PR



# Experts call for systematic approach to reduce injury deaths

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - The inaugural session of the 5th AKU Annual Surgical Conference titled 'Trauma: Striving for Change' was recently organized by the Department of Surgery at the Aga Khan University in Karachi, offers unparalleled hands-on and didactic learning opportunities, timely discourse on the most relevant surgical practices and research, and networking with peers.



AKU's Annual Surgical Conference brought together national and international experts with expertise in pre-hospital care, mass casualty, rehabilitation, prevention and disaster management. The panel consisted of Professor Syed Ather Enam, chair of the Department of Surgery at AKU, Hasan Badre Alam, a professor of surgery at the University of Michigan and Eileen Bulger, a professor of surgery at the University of Washington. AKU Vice Provost Anjum Halai, Medical College Dean Adil Haider and chair of the event's organising committee Hasnain Zafar also spoke at the conference.

The experts shared that thousands of injury deaths every year in Pakistan can be averted by taking safety measures on one side and by adopting a systematic approach to improve trauma care on the other. A systematic approach would ensure that life-saving interventions should be performed in a timely manner so that no life-threatening conditions were missed, speakers at the event noted.

The speakers highlighted that as per World Health Organization-WHO guidelines, such an approach could consist of emergency care in the form of first aid being provided by a trained bystander, who can also call an ambulance - equipped with necessary life support and at least two personnel - one to monitor and manage the patient and the other to drive.

Ambulance personnel should be able to communicate to a relevant hospital prior to arrival, if needed. During the handover, the ambulance provider should share critical information with hospital personnel, who then triage patients to different areas based on the seriousness of their condition, as per experts.

Research from the conference was published in a special supplement of the Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association. During the event, Professor Syed Ather Enam, referred to a case report of a two and half-year old boy, who

*Continued on Page 09*

## President inaugurates ...

*Continued from page 03*

and paramedic staff. Principal Staff Officers and high ranking civil and military officials also attended the ceremony. PAF Hospital Faisal and PAF Hospital Masroor would serve as teaching hospitals for the college along with a state-of-the-art diagnostic center equipped with most modern facilities including an MRI, CT scan, digital X-ray, mammography, and fluoroscopy equipment. The college also has a well-equipped laboratory, with facilities of hematology, serology, chemical pathology, blood bank, microbiology, clinical pathology, and histopathology tests.

## Coronavirus: Suspected ...

*Continued from page 03*

After shifting the student to the hospital's isolation ward, the people in the hospital were instructed to wear masks inside the hospital. The police personnel outside the isolation ward were also provided with masks so they can stay protected as well.

## We are moving towards ...

*Continued from page 04*

dedication," she said. During her visit, the doctors doing their post-graduation in different disciplines held a protest demonstration before her against the non-payment of their salaries for the last 10 months. She asked the officials concerned present there to immediately address the doctors' issues.

Meanwhile, the health minister also launched a week-long anti-polio campaign by administering vaccine drops to a child. She admitted that her department was facing a shortage of human resources in operating ventilators

although staffers had already been trained at a hospital in Larkana. "The need is to have a supervisor," she explained, and promised that the emergency unit at the CMCH would be improved and her department would prepare a new plan to resolve the issue of ventilators.

She invited United Nations linked organisations to work here.

Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University, Registrar Prof Dr Shahida Magsi speaking to the audience, said that the Shaikh Zayed Hospital for Women became the first pioneer centre for early essential newborn care (EENC) training in the country.

Last year, WHO-trained senior obstetricians trained 145 dedicated staffers, she recalled.

Explaining the concept of EENC, she said it was based on using cost effective methods for improving neonatal health. Every month around 500 deliveries are handled. More than 6,000 deliveries a year are conducted at one [of the three EENC] unit alone, she said.

WHO enhances and equips labour room to facilitate the delivery process and treatment at Shaikh Zayed Hospital for Women.

She thanked WHO-Pakistan for funding and supervising the facility, which was catering to the needs of a huge population coming from the underdeveloped areas.

She called for setting up a neonatal nursery with the labour room and a separate coaching centre for the EENC. She said separate funds would be needed for training of primary healthcare and secondary healthcare hospital workers.

Larkana Commissioner Saleem Raza Khuhro, Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Imdad Ali Abro, Mayor Khair Mohammed Shaikh, Sindh AIDS Control Programme project director Dr Sikandar Memon and officials of the health department attended the events.

## SHCC trains healthcare ...

*Continued from page 10*

The Directorate of Complaints inspected the Noor Hospital in Karachi against a complaint. SHCC also established a Complaint Desk of the SHCC in the hospital. The Directorate has received 125 complaints so far out of which 84 complaints have been resolved, 35 complaints are under processing, and the remaining 6 are sub judice. The Directorate of Anti-Quackery sealed three clinics taking the total sealed HCEs number in Sindh to 3259. The warnings for non-compliance have been issued to 1025 clinics to date.

The Directorate of Licensing & Accreditation received 15 new applications for registration, taking the total number of received applications for registration to 10,462. The certificates were also issued to 22 HCEs bringing the total number of registration certificates issued to 9461. The team also inspected the Ibne-Sina Hospital in Karachi.

## IHC issue notice to Ministry ...

*Continued from page 12*

Earlier, the NHS ministry issued directions to seal the PMDC offices, because of which reinstated staff who approved the building were not allowed in. The court expressed displeasure with this notification and, after issuing the notice to the NHS secretary, adjourned until further proceedings.

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## The mystery of gas leak

**Continued from front page**

of high levels of hydrogen sulfide and nitric oxide in the air.

Amid confusing statements from different agencies, the people of Kemari, including the Railway Colony, Sikandarabad, Jackson Market and Masaan Road, continued to suffer as the authorities only promised to evacuate them without proper planning and arrangements on the ground.

The situation sparked a protest when hundreds of Kemari residents took to the streets and blocked the main road, suspending traffic to and from the Karachi Port Trust premises.

The situation arising out of the protest took more than three hours to normalise and the people dispersed after the administration made several promises. But panic and fear didn't go away.

A majority of the schools in the affected areas and neighbouring blocks announced a holiday for the rest of the week and the state-run oil marketing company decided to suspend operations at its oil terminal in Kemari.

Chief Minister Shah acknowledged that authorities had been unable to determine the cause of the toxic gas leak, which he said had not spread to other parts of the city. He called it a 'mystery', but insisted that all institutions concerned were involved in efforts to unearth the cause of the incident.

Meanwhile, traders have rejected the report which blamed consignments of soya bean as cause of the toxic air. They claimed to have met all quality checks defined under the law and said the consignment was believed to be of highest quality.

## PMDC ordinance ...

**Continued from front page**

Ordinance 2019, dissolving the PMDC and establishing the PMC, on Oct 19 last year.

The presidential ordinance had paved way for the establishment of a new nine-member body namely the Pakistan Medical Commission. Following the promulgation, the Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) through the federal capital's district administration and police had taken over the possession of the PMDC building and shut down the office.

Raja Saimul Haq Satti, who represented the CPSP, told the court that the organisation supported the stance taken by the Ministry of National Health Services. The ministry in its written reply to the petitions stated that the ordinance had been promulgated in the larger interest of the stakeholders, which provided for the restructuring and re-organisation of the regulatory body, pertaining to and dealing with regulations and control of medical profession. Additional Attorney General Tariq Mehmood Khokhar argued that the legislation for the subcontinent empowered the British government

to issue ordinances in the Acts of 1861 and 1935. The petition contended that although the Parliament was empowered to dissolve the PMDC but the president, vice-president and the executive committee of the council would stay till a new commission was elected through annual elections. It also pointed out that the government was unauthorised to appoint an official below grade 20 to head the executive committee.

Representing the petitioners, Babar Sattar, however, argued that it was a matter of basic rights of the erstwhile PMDC and the IHC had all the powers to examine this presidential ordinance.

The petitioners maintained that the PMDC employees were terminated without an opportunity for hearing and expressed reservation over the newly-formed PMC that it may hire employees on sanctioned and contractual posts through varying modes which may jeopardise chances of previous PMDC employees.

## Nationwide polio eradication ...

**Continued from front page**

Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), Dr Rana Muhammad Safdar said that the current geographical spread and the intensity of the virus transmission posed a real risk to children across the country.

"Reaching every child during the nationwide door-to-door campaign would provide a much needed immunity boost to our children and ensure they stay protected from lifelong paralysis. Learning from 2019, we have the firm resolve to turn the situation around in 2020," Rana said.

To benefit from a decrease in temperatures across the country as the cold weather made it tough for the virus to survive, the polio eradication programme scheduled three back-to-back national campaigns during the months of December, February and April with two additional rounds in high-risk districts during January and March. As per reports, the EOC was also deploying 50 experts as facilitators across critical areas of the country to support anti-polio campaign workers. They would administer two drops of oral polio vaccine to every child during the February national campaign. The programme has also launched 'Sehat Tahafuz Helpline 1166' with local language capacities through which the public can report children who have not been vaccinated due to any reason.

It is pertinent to mention here that polio is a highly infectious disease caused by poliovirus mainly affecting children under the age five. It invades the nervous system and can cause paralysis or even death. While there is no cure for polio, vaccination is the most effective way to protect children from this crippling disease. Each time a child under the age of five is vaccinated, his or her protection

against the virus is increased. Repeated immunisations have protected millions of children from polio, allowing almost all countries in the world to become polio-free. There are only two countries in the world Pakistan and Afghanistan where polio cases continue to be reported.

## Coronavirus: Awareness ...

**Continued from page 02**

issue, the WHO has already declared the coronavirus outbreak a global emergency, as it continues to spread outside China, Rashid added. Dr Rashid stressed the need to aware the citizens about the fatality of coronavirus, as well as preventive measures that could keep them safe against the deadly virus. He said that the 2019 novel coronavirus caused viral pneumonia presenting with symptoms including cough, fever, and shortness of breath.

"In rare cases, it can lead to severe respiratory problems, kidney failure, or death," Dr Rashid maintained. "If someone believes that he or she owns these symptoms and had traveled to Wuhan, China, within 14 days, they must contact their health care provider. Citizens must cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash," Rashid stressed.

Dr Rashid said that they should avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands, adding that sick people were required to stay at home. He reiterated that there was no pathological laboratory performing diagnostic tests in Pakistan for the confirmation of coronavirus infections. "There was a need to monitor and control all immigrants and visitors, livestock, and goods at entry points. People at all international airports should be scanned for temperature, and suspected individuals should be examined in isolation," he concluded.

## Isra University celebrates ...

**Continued from page 04**

will earn you dignity and respect in society."

Dr Shaikh highlighted the importance of female education, "I earnestly desire our female students to be pro-active in their future life. You should not waste your skills and professional knowledge by sitting idle at home.

You should come out and work alongside male professionals because the nation needs your services more."

He mentioned a report which suggested that 85,000 female doctors in Pakistan were not working after receiving their education. "This certainly is an alarming figure, and I hope you will not be among those adding to this number," he added. In the end, gold, silver, and bronze medals were awarded to outstanding students for securing positions in their relevant faculties and departments. This year, Ukeer Fatima, a graduate of the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) program, Shari Musadiq Ali, a graduate of the BS (Bachelor of Science) Vision Sciences program, Muhammad Usama Sheikh,

a graduate of the DPT (Doctor of Physical Therapy) program, received gold medals. Silver medals were awarded to outstanding students, including Farukh Sahar and Faryal Abbasi, graduates of the MBBS program, Nimra Anwar, a graduate of the BS Vision Sciences program, Samra Noureen, a graduate of the DPT program. The bronze medal was awarded to Khizra Rabbani, a graduate of the MBBS program, Samreen Brohi, a graduate of the BS Vision Sciences program, and Sanam, a graduate of the DPT program.

Besides the dignitaries, other faculty members, parents, and a large number of students were present on occasion.

## Experts call for systematic ...

**Continued from page 08**

sustained three gunshots at point-blank range. The child was unresponsive when the terrified family brought him to the emergency department of the Aga Khan University Hospital after trying two nearby hospitals. When the patient did not respond to initial resuscitation efforts, a team of paediatric, cardiothoracic and orthopaedic surgery, and paediatric anesthesiology specialists was taken on board and he was moved to the operating room immediately.

"Today, he is a healthy four-and-a-half-year old school going child. There could be thousands of people who were not lucky like him. That's because our hospitals lack multidisciplinary teams of specialists and the emergency care system as a whole is short of fully equipped ambulances and trained bystanders," Professor Enam said.

"Since blood loss is the leading cause of preventable death following injury, rapid control of bleeding at the scene of an event can be lifesaving, especially if bystanders can step in to help before emergency responders arrive," said Eileen Bulger.

Later, on the second day of the conference, AKU's upcoming Centre of Excellence for Trauma and Emergencies, and partners would launch a national life-saving initiative focused on bystander training in life support.

Hasan Badre Alam stated, "Emergency care is essential to many targets of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under SDG 3, good health and wellbeing: Post-crash emergency care and rehabilitation has been estimated to play a role in preventing 40 per cent of road traffic deaths. Also, timely emergency care access is critical to effective universal health coverage."

"Emergency care could also contribute to efforts to achieve targets under 10 more SDGs by addressing non-communicable diseases, obstetric complications, child health issues, and injuries related to disasters and violence," informed Hasan Badre Alam.



# New study links 'over-excitabile' visual cortex with Migrain

**T**he effects of migraines are well known, but the causes are less clear. Now scientists think they may have found a link between the neurological condition and a part of the brain called the visual cortex. It's the bit of the brain that handles visual information as it comes in, and based on a study of 60 volunteers, an over-excitabile visual cortex could have some relationship with the risk of migraines.

In the study published in Neuroimage: Clinical, the 29 volunteers who suffer from migraines (migraineurs), the visual cortex was found to be more excitabile and more responsive in a series of tests. That could give us clues to the causes of migraines - and ways of treating them.

"Most migraineurs also report experiencing abnormal visual sensations in their everyday life, for example, elementary hallucinations, visual discomforts and extra light sensitivity," says psychologist Terence Chun Yuen Fong from the University of Birmingham in the UK. "We believe this hints at a link between migraine experiences and abnormalities in the visual cortex. Our results provide the first evidence for

this theory, by discovering a specific brain response pattern among migraineurs."

The study participants were shown a striped grating pattern (like those already known to give migraine sufferers problems) and then asked to rate how uncomfortable it was to look at, and to log any other visual phenomena associated with looking at it.

Further electroencephalogram (EEG) tests were used to track and record the brain waves of the volunteers. The migraineurs showed a larger response in their visual cortices during both the pattern and EEG experiments.

What's more, a subgroup of non-migraineurs who reported seeing additional visual disturbances also showed hyper-excitability in their visual cortex responses.

On its own, the study isn't enough to prove a definitive link between migraines and brain over-excitability, but the results fit in with previous studies, and offer up an interesting avenue for further investigation.

Work to unlock the secrets of migraine sources continues. A study from 2017 found a link between the chronic headaches and a jaw



condition, perhaps suggesting some underlying biological cause, and we know migraines are much more common in women too.

Around one in seven people are thought to have problems with migraines - just about a billion of us across the planet - so finding better ways of targeting the root causes of the condition is going to bring a lot of relief to a lot of people.

"Our study provides evidence that there are likely specific anomalies present in the way the visual cortex of migraine sufferers processes information from the outside world," says neuroscientist Ali Mazaheri, from the University of Birmingham.

"However, we suspect that is only part of the picture, since the same patterns of activity can also be seen in non-migraineurs who are sensitive to certain visual stimuli." **-Courtesy by ScienceAlert**



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## SHCC trains healthcare providers to improve performance

### MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Sindh Healthcare Commission's (SHCC) Directorate of Clinical Governance & Training held training sessions for healthcare establishments (HCEs) in Hyderabad to improve service delivery standards. The series of training sessions in Hyderabad on Sindh Service Delivery Standards were held for primary healthcare clinics. A total of fifty clinics participated in the session.

Later, another two-day session was held for healthcare establishments (HCEs) in which the staff of 48 HCEs were



trained. The training was conducted on Sindh Service Delivery Standards, infection prevention & control, and inspection procedures of the SHCC and its requirements. The hospitals were also briefed about the functions of the SHCC.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SHCC, Dr Minhaj Qidwai, met with Ms Fareeda Shah Shaheed, Executive Director of the Shirkat Gah Women Resource Centre, along with others. The meeting aimed to discuss the options available for collaboration between the SHCC and the Shirkat Gah Women Resource Centre for creating awareness among the masses regarding family planning and also sharing the data available with the SHCC for the same purpose.

The participants of the meetings also discussed that public hospitals would be assisted in developing information centers related to birth spacing. The heads of obstetrics and gynecology departments of hospitals would be engaged in this regard.

Meanwhile, Director, Clinical Governance & Training, Dr Raza Kazmi, also attended the meeting organized by the Health Minister Sindh to discuss coronavirus awareness as well as the actions that must be taken with the help of the district bodies.

**Continued on Page 08**





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# FBR starts crackdown on defaulting doctors



## MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR's) subordinate, the Regional Tax Office in Sindh has served notices to 17 hospitals in Karachi, seeking data of doctors to identify those hiding their assets and incomes, revealed sources affiliated with the board recently. It has asked the hospitals' administrations to share the names, ages, copies of Computerised National

Identity Cards and contact information of the doctors, as well as details of their bank accounts and trips they made abroad. The step was taken after FBR received information about doctors, mostly working at private health facilities, concealing their income. According to FBR officials, steps will not only be taken against defaulting doctors employed at private clinics but also those running their own

health facilities and found guilty of the offence. In case the hospitals fail to share the details asked for by the FBR, they will be penalised under section 182 of the Pakistan Penal Code and section 191 of the Income Tax Ordinance. According to source in FBR, two of the biggest health facilities in the city have already been fined for failing to share the required information.

## TUG OF WAR

# Murad claims Center wants Sindh to run Major Hospitals

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - Sindh Chief Minister (CM), Syed Murad Ali, Shah spoke to the media reporters that the Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan, during his recent visit to Karachi, told him that the federal government could not run three hospitals namely the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), and National Institute Of Child Health (NICH). Therefore, he permitted the provincial government to take control of operations. He said this while talking to the media after inaugurating a seven-day polio eradication drive by administering polio drops to children. The event was held at the Rural Health Center in Baldia. Shah said that he had given two options to the federal government. "Under option one, the federal government can give these three hospitals, on the pattern of the PPP (Pakistan's Peoples Party), to the Sindh government. Option two is to hand them over to the provincial government to operate them under

its administration," he said. In response to a question about the increase in the polio cases, the Chief Minister said that a problem was created against polio vaccine in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; therefore, the drive had come to a standstill, and we could not launch it in March, last year. "The recent increase of 19 cases in 2019 is the result of this stalemate; otherwise, we had controlled the polio situation. In 2017, only one case of polio was reported." He said that 2.3 million children would be targeted in the 7-day campaign. Another campaign would be launched from February 17 in other districts of the province with a target of 6.7 million children. He thanked the 13,000 workers who will be participating in polio drive and also thanked the law enforcement agencies for providing them with security. To address the complaints made by citizens, the Chief Minister directed the Health Department to complete the under-construction 100-bedded hospital in Baldia as soon as possible.



# IHC issue notice to Ministry over PMDC employee's plea

## MN Report

**ISLAMABAD** - IHC Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani recently issued a notice to National Health Services (NHS) Secretary Malik Allah Bakhsh on a petition filed by the registrar and other Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) staff for not implementing a court order reinstating council employees.



Earlier, Justice Kayani revived the dissolved PMDC by setting aside a presidential ordinance that replaced it with the Pakistan Medical Commission. PMDC registrar Hafizuddin Siddiqui filed a contempt petition before the court since the reinstated employees were not allowed into the PMDC building. The court also summoned district administration officials and asked why they had sealed the building. The additional deputy commissioner responded that the building was not sealed.

Continued on Page 08

# Polio worker injured by rowdy youngsters

## MN Report

**MIANWALI** - A polio worker was allegedly beaten by three people at Takht Vichora village situated in the hilly area of Khatak belt in the Kalabagh police jurisdiction. Mohammad Ijaz Khan, Naib Qasid of the Govt High School of Tabisar, was deputed to administer polio drops to children in the area during the ongoing polio campaign. When he went to Islam Khan's home at Takht Vichora village, reports said, the old man told him that veil-observing women were at home and children and other members were out of home and that he should come some other time. Meanwhile, some youngsters came out of the neighbouring house and thrashed the polio worker by blaming him for arguing with an old man. Ijaz Khan reported to the Kalabagh police that armed men Tariq and Anwar Sadat, along with another person, thrashed him and inflicted injuries on him. As per sources, the police has been investigating the issue.

