

# Medical News

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Independent  
Medical Periodical from  
Karachi

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## Prime Minister announces Rs 1.13 trillion relief package on coronavirus

### MN Report

**ISLAMABAD** - Prime Minister Imran Khan recently announced in a Press Conference that a rescue and stimulus package worth about Rs1.13 trillion would be launched. The package aimed at supporting various sectors of society and the economy in absorbing the adverse impacts of coronavirus pandemic. Speaking at a news conference, the prime minister gave details of the multi-sectoral package put together by the federal government and said the provinces had also been asked to chip in with their funds to support troubled sections of economy.

At the same time, Imran said the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) was considering reducing its key policy rate. It was cut by 150 basis points to 11 per cent soon after the premier's

the provincial governments to make available their resources.



He did not give details, but said discussions with businesspeople were in progress over how to use some of the funds so that they do not send their workforce on leave. To protect the export sector



televised session came to an end. Giving details of the stimulus package, Mr Khan said the government had decided to allocate Rs200 billion for the labour force and was talking to

from global challenges, the prime minister announced Rs100bn payment of refunds immediately to improve cash flows for payments to labour force.

*Continued on Page 08*

## Tally of coronavirus cases rises to 413 in Sindh

### MN Report

**KARACHI** - Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah, has urged the people of the province to observe the next three days in voluntary isolation so that people can be safe and secure. In the next three days, offices will be



closed, hotels will not allow dining in, and gyms will be closed. Therefore, there is no need for people to go outside, he noted.

He said this while presiding over the 23rd meeting of the Taskforce on Coronavirus at the CM House. The meeting was attended by Dr Azra Pechuho, Saeed Ghani, Syed Nasir Shah, Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary, Mumtaz Shah, IG Sindh, Mushtaq Maher, PSCM, Sajid Jamal Abro, Secretary Home, Usman Chachar, Brigadier Sami of Corps 5, representatives of the WHO, Civil Aviation Authority, Airport, VC, Dow University of Health Sciences, Prof Saeed Qureshi, Prof Dr Bari of the Indus Hospital, Dr Faisal Mehmood of the AKUH, Focal Person, MB Dharejo, and others.

Mr Shah said that the people of Pakistan are fighting against the COVID-19 bravely. "The time has come to demonstrate a responsible attitude by observing voluntary social distancing. We should all remain in our homes," he said.

He also said that he was surprised that during these holidays, some people were hosting receptions and

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## PMA lauds Sindh CM over lockdown decision

### MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Pakistan Medical Association Karachi appreciated the decision of the CM Sindh for lockdown and hoped that it would help in getting rid of this killer virus.

the medical staff involved in case management and lab facility providers for coronavirus should not be allowed to remain in contact with their families physically because they also need social distancing; otherwise, their families will also be put at risk. The PMA further added that the government should provide boarding facilities for them at their nearest location by evacuating hotels, hostels, etc.





# Governor Sindh inspects screening protocols in the Airport

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - Governor Sindh, Imran Ismail, recently visited the Quaid-e-Azam International Airport, Karachi, to inspect the screening arrangements made for travelers coming from various countries.

The National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA) Disinfection team leader, Dr Asim Mehmood Khan, briefed the Governor about the screening arrangements

and precautionary measures being taken at the Airport. Governor Sindh appreciated the screening protocol being adopted for passengers entering Karachi. Members of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh, Haleem Adil Shaikh, and Khurram Sherzaman, were also present on occasion.

The Governor Sindh, while talking to the press, after inspecting the arrangements, said that Pakistan could not afford a lockdown as a large number of people survive on daily wages. The Federal

Government is fully aware of the situation, and no suggestion of a lockdown is being considered at the Federal level, he added. Ismail said that Prime Minister Pakistan, Imran Khan, knows the severity of the matter, and he is continuously monitoring



the situation. He visited Dera Ghazi Khan and other places where infected people are being quarantined for recovery, he added. Imran said that this is a natural calamity that requires unity and coordinated efforts. If any patient is being quarantined for 14 days, it is in his own interest as well as his relatives and other citizens, he added. Governor said that by adopting precautionary measures such as avoiding crowded places, handshakes, and staying indoors, if any

symptoms arise, the spread of the virus could be averted. By observing simple precautionary measures, we can save not only ourselves but also our younger generations, he remarked. Governor Sindh said that we should not panic and stay

united as we face this pandemic. Refuting the impression that the Federal Government is not paying any heed towards Sindh, Imran Ismail said

that there was no truth in such baseless propaganda. The Federal Government has provided 1500 test kits to the Sindh Government and health institutions of the province while 200 test machines and thousands of masks would soon be provided to the province by the NDMA, he added. Mr Imran said that this was not the time to play blame games, and we all must act as a team. The Federal and provincial governments are in the same team when it

**Continued on Page 08**

# Online training sessions for COVID-19 infection prevention

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Sindh Healthcare Commission's (SHCC) Directorate of Clinical Governance & Training recently held a meeting with the Medical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases Society of Pakistan (MMIDSP) to discuss conducting online workshops for healthcare establishments (HCEs) and healthcare providers (HCPs) to train them regarding infection prevention and control for COVID-19. The meeting decided that the SHCC would conduct a clinical audit of hospitals and confirm that HCEs are following proper isolation protocols. The SHCC team would also check the availability and the quality of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as per international standards. A one-hour short training session would also be conducted for HCEs as per hospital requirements if it were deemed necessary. The Directorate of Anti-Quackery has conducted an operation in Sindh against unauthorized labs/diagnostic centers for

conducting the COVID-19 test. Fifty-two labs/diagnostic centers were inspected out of which 19 warnings notices were issued, and three were sealed on the spot. The Directorate in its operations against quacks has sealed 3502 HCEs so far, whereas warnings have been issued to 1132 HCEs for non-compliance. The Directorate of Complaints has received 132 complaints to date, out of which 87 complaints have been disposed of, 39 complaints are under process, while seven are sub-judice. The Directorate of Licensing & Accreditation received 21 new applications for registration. The total number of applications for registration received to date is 10,739. Registration certificates have been issued to 18 HCEs bringing the total number of registration certificates issued to HCEs to 9509.



# Lawyers in solidarity with medical professionals

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid (LHRLA) organized an event at the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) expressing solidarity with medical and healthcare professionals who are fighting the coronavirus at the forefront.



Representatives from the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Bar Council, Bar Association, Young Doctors Association (YDA), and administrative officers of the CHK were present on occasion. Senior lawyer Zia Ahmed Awan, Dr Shershah Syed, Chairman, Edhi Foundation, Faisal Edhi, Medical Superintendent, CHK, Dr Khadim Hussain Qureshi, Dr Ismail Memon, Dr Ghafoor Shoro, and Dr Nusrat Shah also participated in the event. Addressing the event, Zia Ahmed Awan said that doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff are at the forefront of dealing with coronavirus patients, and we must respect them. Secretary-General, PMA Centre, Dr Qaisar Sajjad, said that medical and healthcare professionals are treating high-risk coronavirus patients round the clock, and the efforts of the medical staff are highly appreciable. MS, CHK, Dr Khadim Hussain Qureshi, thanked the LHRLA for organizing a solidarity event for healthcare professionals.

# AHS isolates 10 doctors over coronavirus suspicion

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Abbasi Shaheed Hospital (ASH) has isolated ten doctors following exposure to high-risk coronavirus patients and referred them for further screening. The ASH's management has isolated ten health practitioners, including resident medical officers, postgraduate doctors, and house officers, as they were exposed to a high-risk suspected coronavirus patient, earlier. All ten doctors have been referred for necessary screening for coronavirus as a precautionary measure. The doctors have been instructed to isolate themselves at their homes until the screening. Further tests will be conducted after screening.



# 'COVID-19 Risk Assessment Desk' established for children

MN Report

**KARACHI** - The ChildLife Foundation has formed a "COVID-19 Risk Assessment Desk" in all Emergency Rooms across Sindh and Baluchistan to recognize the symptoms at an early stage in patients

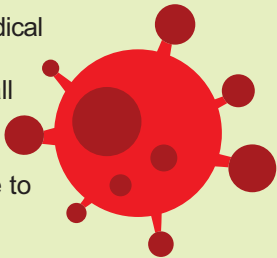


and refer them to the isolation wards designated by the health authorities. According to a statement issued by the foundation, this will help stop the spread of the coronavirus as such patients will be treated separately from other patients. "Standard operating protocol has been developed for the staff to ensure the professional handling of the situation and for the personal protection of the staff as well," said the spokesperson of the ChildLife Foundation. "While the COVID-19 is a serious threat, diseases like pneumonia, measles, diarrhea, and others take the lives of approximately 1000 children (under five years of age) every day, and our dedicated staff is ensuring that we minimize the burden of these diseases as well while fighting the coronavirus," the spokesperson added. It is pertinent to mention here that the ChildLife Foundation is managing 10 Paediatric Emergency Rooms established in various government teaching hospitals across Sindh and Baluchistan, treating thousands of children daily.

# Medical emergency declared in Baluchistan

MN Report

**QUETTA** - A medical emergency has been declared all across the province of Baluchistan due to the spread of COVID-19.

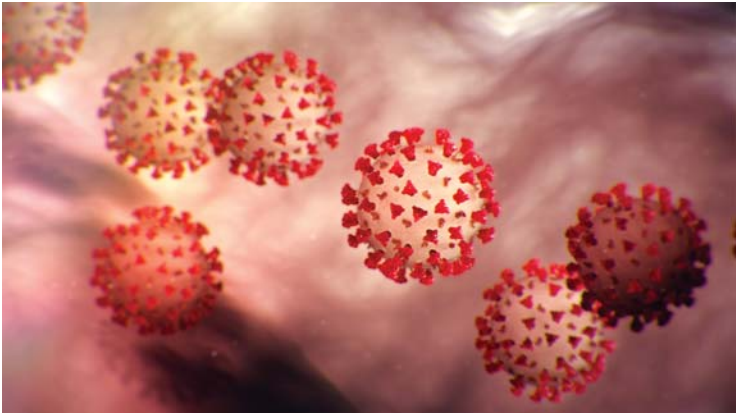


A notification issued by the Services and General Administration Department, Government of Baluchistan said, "In exercise of powers conferred under Section-02 read with Section-03 of the West Pakistan Epidemic Disease Act, 1958; the Government of Baluchistan hereby declares a Public Health/ Medical Emergency all across the province of Baluchistan due to the spread of COVID-19".

# AKU's critical role in dealing with global CORONAVIRUS pandemic

MN Report

**KARACHI** - As the number of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Pakistan increase, the AKU's response to this global pandemic is critical. The WHO's aim with the COVID-19 response is to identify, isolate, and care for patients quickly. This has guided The Aga Khan University Hospital's (AKUH's) response as well. These views expressed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO), AKUH, Shagufta, Dean, Medical College, Dr Adil Haider, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr Asim Belgaumi, Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Salam Jaffer, ID Expert, Dr Faisal Mehmood, Lab Expert, Dr Zahra Hassan, and Administration, Iqbal Sadruddin, in a recent media briefing. The COVID-19 screening, testing and treatment protocol followed by the Aga Khan University Hospital is the same protocol that is being followed worldwide. Screening is a technique used in medicine to determine the likelihood of a person having a disease. This includes a set of questions which have been designed as per the guidelines set by WHO and at AKUH Karachi screening for COVID-19 is done at the



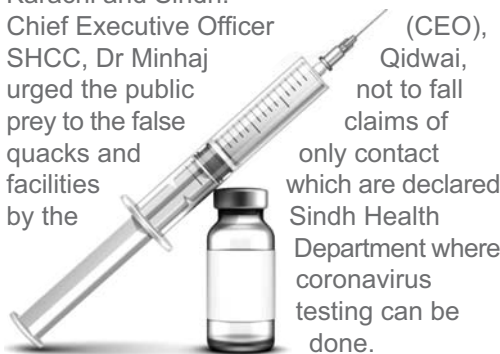
Community Health Centre (CHC), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. AKUH has collaborations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other leading international partners, universities and hospitals, all of which help us act as a credible source for information and advice for the federal and provincial governments and the National Institute of Health. "The COVID-19 disease outbreak is no different. When this disease outbreak first surfaced, our experts in Health Sciences, Infectious Diseases, Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine and Clinical Laboratories, among others, went into full-force, supported by our administrative leadership teams, to better understand the virus, epidemiology, patient management protocols and diagnosis." "COVID-19 is a new virus and

can currently only be reliably diagnosed through a PCR-based technique which requires a swab taken from the nose. Any other technique, such as blood-based antibody testing may provide an indirect measure of exposure to the virus but should not be used in isolation and can provide incorrect results; the PCR based technique is the trusted and recommended standard COVID-19 test by the World Health Organization (WHO)." "While the country-wide COVID-19 response plans were being worked upon, in January 2020, in an attempt to make the COVID-19 PCR test available in Pakistan, the Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi (AKUH, K) Laboratory experts imported certain reagents and equipment, worked on a testing regimen and was able to make a reliable test to diagnose COVID-19."

# Crackdown launched against fake COVID-19 testing facilities

MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) started a crackdown across the Sindh province against quacks offering fake testing facilities for coronavirus patients. Due to the recent outbreak of the coronavirus in Pakistan, quacks have become very active, particularly in the Sindh province, offering fake testing for coronavirus. The SHCC teams started field operations in Sindh after receiving the information to seal clinics offering fake testing facilities. The Anti-Quackery Directorate teams have started operations in Sindh, especially in Karachi and Sindh. Chief Executive Officer (CEO), SHCC, Dr Minhaj Qidwai, urged the public not to fall prey to the false claims of quacks and facilities only contact which are declared Sindh Health Department where coronavirus testing can be done.



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# Pakistani succumbs to coronavirus in Italy



### MN Report

**ITALY** - A Pakistani died of the novel coronavirus in Italy, confirmed the foreign office. The Pakistani national passed away in Brescia, about 100 kilometers from Milan, added the spokesperson. The Pakistani Consulate in Milan was in touch with the concerned family, as well as the authorities in Italy, said the spokesperson.

# SRMS extends rapid response in the wake of coronavirus

### MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Sindh Rescue and Medical Services (SRMS) has been actively providing operational support to the Sindh Government for shifting coronavirus victims.

Till 16th March, a total of 95 (82 suspected and 13 confirmed) cases have been transferred to different hospitals across the city by the SRMS. "Ambulances have been conducting the controlled transfer of suspected and confirmed coronavirus cases. A comprehensive protocol is being followed for managing the patient; right from the very first minute, the call was received by our Command and Control Centre," said a spokesperson of the SRMS. The ambulance crew is provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes a safety suit, gowns, head cover, N95 masks, surgical masks, protective goggles, gloves, and shoe covers. Moreover, a rigorous ambulance disinfection protocol is strictly followed each time a suspected or confirmed coronavirus victim is shifted.



# PIMA develops guideline for worshippers to stay safe from coronavirus

### MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) has developed the guidelines to protect worshippers and places of worship safe from the coronavirus pandemic in light of recent medical knowledge

should be assured that since their niyyat is to protect others, even their absence from the masjid will be a source of ajar for them, and Allah will reward them for praying in the masjid in such cases. Likewise, by disobeying the law, for example, by hiding the truth

the necessary safety measures instead. The masjid's management should take extra care of cleanliness, including disinfecting the areas of worship. Simple soap, phenyl, and similar liquids in daily use can be good enough. Avoid



and advice from experts in the field. Social distancing is one of the key concepts to reduce the spread of this potentially deadly disease, and hence, we advise individuals to observe certain vital measures to contain the spread of the virus. Avoid coming to the masjid, or meeting with a large number of people, if you are sick or have any symptoms of illness. Likewise, if you know someone who is unwell, advise them against coming to the masjid. If you are elderly, have poor general health, suffer from a significant lung or heart disease, traveled to or from a place with a high number of coronavirus patients, have been in close contact with a coronavirus patient, restrictions must be followed for the next fourteen days. People should avoid the masjid visit until the coronavirus scare is cleared by the government. Those barred from attending the masjid on health grounds

and still attending the masjid, they are liable to sinning rather than ajar of praying in the masjid. Those who do attend masjid or religious gatherings should adopt proper safety etiquettes such as doing wudu before coming to the masjid instead of performing it in the masjid, offer sunnah prayers at home before you come and go home immediately after farz prayers, and offer their remaining prayers at home. Additionally, they should minimize the socializing time in the masjid. Do not shake hands or embrace others, especially those who are sick and if you are sick. Cover your nose and mouth with your flexed elbow when coughing and sneezing. Frequently washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is recommended. Use your own prayer-mat if you have any allergy, as it is important to be careful. People should avoid being paranoid and harsh to fellow worshippers. Stop spreading panic and adopt

heavy carpets in the prayer areas as they harbor germs and are very difficult to clean. If not feasible to remove, clean them thoroughly when the masjid is empty. Ask anyone presenting with signs of illness to leave the masjid, or be escorted to a health facility if he cannot. Remind worshippers, especially the Imam, to follow the precautions in such instances and consider them as wajib, because not doing so will endanger their lives as well as many others which is haram in Islam. Moreover, the masajaids will become unsafe (on medical grounds) for people to visit; the gunaah of this will be on all such people who do not obey the orders of the Ahl-e-amr. We should all avoid spreading unconfirmed news, unproven remedies, and unnecessary discussions related to the COVID-19. Leave it to those who are responsible such as the government, doctors, etc. Panic is to be avoided. What you cannot do will not be helped by your discussion.



# '27,000 cases of registration in pending due to PMDC dissolution'

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) is deeply concerned over the non-functioning of the PMDC, i.e., the country's regulatory body for the registration of doctors and medical education. Secretary-General, Pakistan Medical Association (Centre), Dr S M Qaisar Sajjad, in his statement, noted that the present regime dissolved the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC) and formed the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) to regulate medical education and the registration of medical practitioners. Now, the PMC has been dissolved by the Islamabad High Court and has restored the PMDC and its employees. He said, "We regretfully say that the government is not

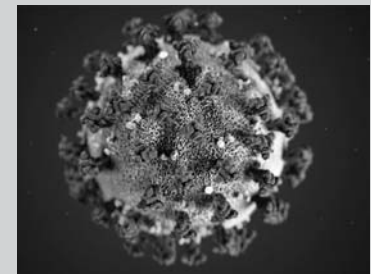
implementing the decision of the Islamabad High Court and the PMDC still has not been restored." He said the head office and the regional offices of the PMDC are closed. The situation is creating problems for medical professionals. He further said that young doctors are unable to start their house jobs because nobody is there to register them. According to an official statement, more than 27,000 cases of registration are pending. Likewise, Pakistani doctors working abroad are also very distressed because they are unable to get their registration renewed or get their good standing certificates. He said the PMA believes that the government should immediately implement the verdict of the Islamabad High Court and open the head office of the PMDC in Islamabad and

the regional offices in the other provinces so that the day-to-day issues of medical professionals can be resolved timely. Dr Qaisar Sajjad suggested the formation of an ad-hoc committee by the Islamabad High Court immediately to run the day-to-day affairs of the PMDC, and it should be given the task of holding fresh elections within the next 60 days, according to the PMDC ordinance of 1962. He further suggested that the representatives of the stakeholders should also be included in this ad-hoc committee. The elected body will then resolve all the issues concerned with medical professionals as well as medical education.



## Coronavirus training kicks off

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Sindh Health Department, has launched a three-day coronavirus emergency response management training program for infectious disease experts at the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi. The representatives of private-sector hospitals, including the Ziauddin Hospital, the Burhani



Hospital, the Kutiyana Memon Hospital, the Park Lane Hospital, and others participated in the training session. Infectious diseases experts from the WHO, the Aga Khan Hospital, and the Head of the Infection Diseases Department, CHK, Prof Dr Shehla Baqi, gave the necessary information to the doctors about the coronavirus emergency response and the management of such patients in the case of a health emergency.



## SIUT provides free testing and care for coronavirus patients

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - Director, Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT), Prof Dr Adib ul Hasan Rizvi, said that the SIUT was at the forefront of serving people and providing free testing and care for the people of our country. Dr Adib said during a recent media briefing held at the SIUT. He said that the SIUT has been serving the people of this country for many decades. In the time of need, be it earthquakes, floods, or other natural calamities, the SIUT has been at the forefront of serving the people of the country without discriminating based on caste, color, creed, and language. Prof Rizvi highlighted that the SIUT was providing free health care to millions of

peoples every year. The SIUT conducted more than 1200 hemodialysis every day and more than 400 renal transplants per year, along with routine urology and nephrology services, hepatobiliary surgeries, and care for adults and children alike, all free of cost. "As the coronavirus pandemic continues to wreak havoc, in this time of need, again, the SIUT is helping the motherland and its people. The SIUT will provide free testing and free care for the people of our country. We have screened more than two hundred patients, and eight of them tested positive for the virus," noted Dr Rizvi. On this occasion, Prof Rizvi announced that Prof Fazal Akhtar, Head of the

*Continued on Page 08*



### NATIONAL

**April 3-4**  
24th Annual International Conference of Pakistan Society of Rheumatology (PSR) at PC Rawalpindi.

**April 7-9**  
Health Asia & Pharma Asia at Lahore Expo Center, Lahore, Pakistan.

**December 2-5**  
34th International Pak ORTHOCON 2020 at Karachi.

### 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	

## Reports of theft at the CHK

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - Reports of theft of patients' mobile phones and other valuables are on the rise in the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK). Private security guards have failed to control such crimes on the premises of the institution. Reporting the most recent incident at the facility, sources state that a thief entered Medical Ward-III in the late hours of the night and stole another patient's mobile phone. An administrative official of the CHK noted that incidents of theft had become the norm in the premises of the CHK's OPDs, especially at night time. Some security guards remain absent from their duties during the evening and night hours due to a poor check and balance system. The CHK's management has started an inquiry into the incident. Medical Superintendent, CHK, Dr Khadim Hussain Qureshi, was not available to make any comments.

# World Health Organization Declares COVID-19 a ‘Pandemic’

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently declared COVID-19 a pandemic, pointing to the over 118,000 cases of the coronavirus illness in over 110 countries and territories around the world and the sustained risk of further global spread. "This is not just a public health crisis, it is a crisis that will touch every sector," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,

WHO is doing, and it doesn't change what countries should do." SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is thought to have first jumped from an animal host to humans in Wuhan, China. At least at first, most cases were seen within China and among people who had traveled there, as well as those travelers' close contacts. While these cases were



WHO director-general, at a media briefing. "So every sector and every individual must be involved in the fights." It is pertinent to mention here that an epidemic refers to an uptick in the spread of a disease within a specific community. By contrast, the WHO defines a pandemic as global spread of a new disease, though the specific threshold for meeting that criteria is fuzzy. The term is most often applied to new influenza strains, and the CDC says it's used when viruses "are able to infect people easily and spread from person to person in an efficient and sustained way" in multiple regions. The declaration refers to the spread of a disease, rather than the severity of the illness it causes. During multiple prior press briefings, WHO officials maintained that COVID-19 had "pandemic potential," but stopped short of declaring it one. The agency did, earlier, call it a public health emergency of international concern, a slightly different label that refers to an "extraordinary event" that "constitute[s] a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease." "Pandemic is not a word to use lightly or carelessly. It is a word that, if misused, can cause unreasonable fear, or unjustified acceptance that the fight is over, leading to unnecessary suffering and death," said Dr. Tedros on March 11. "Describing the situation as a pandemic does not change WHO's assessment of the threat posed by this coronavirus. It doesn't change what

concerning, they did not suggest a pandemic, because there was not significant spread outside of China. But as the total number of infections rose, so too did the number of cases that spread from person-to-person within communities around the world. Cases have now been confirmed on every continent except Antarctica, and secondary disease hotspots have emerged in places such as South Korea, Italy and Iran. All of these factors helped inform the WHO's pandemic declaration, which signals to the world that continued spread is likely, and that countries should prepare for the possibility of widespread community transmission. It may also inform travel policy, and prompt cities and countries to flesh out plans for quarantines and possible disruptions to public events, if the need arises. It can also kickstart the expedited development of therapeutics and vaccines. A pandemic declaration is fairly unusual. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), a coronavirus related to COVID-19, and which infected about 8,000 people across 26 countries in 2003, did not reach pandemic status, for example. The WHO last used the label during the 2009 H1N1 (or "swine flu") outbreak, but got pushback for that choice. Critics argued that the situation was not serious enough to warrant a pandemic declaration, and that giving it one caused unnecessary panic and precautions. - **Courtesy by Time**

## COVID-19 Fund launched by WHO, UN Foundation and partners

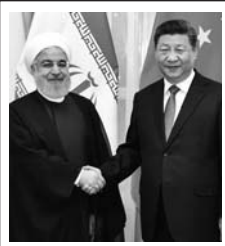
WASHINGTON - A new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Solidarity Response Fund will raise money from a wide range of donors to support the work of the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners to help countries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The



fund, the first-of-its-kind, enables private individuals, corporations, and institutions anywhere in the world to come together to contribute to global response efforts directly, and has been created by the United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, along with the WHO. "We are at a critical point in the global response to COVID-19 - we need everyone to get involved in this massive effort to keep the world safe," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "We are immensely grateful to the UN Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation for coming forward to help us set up this fund. A lot of people and institutions have been saying they want to contribute to the fight against the novel coronavirus. Now they can." The fund launches with major support already lined up, including from Facebook and Google, who have instituted a matching scheme for funds raised through their platforms, while individual donors are also supporting the fund through [www.COVID19ResponseFund.org](http://www.COVID19ResponseFund.org). "We cannot ignore the fact that this is a truly global problem - one that requires truly global solutions," said **Continued on Page 08**

## China ready to aid Iran in the fight against COVID-19 epidemic

BEIJING - Chinese President, Xi Jinping, has said that China will continue to provide as much assistance as it can to Iran in the latter's fight against the COVID-19 outbreak. In a message sent to Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, Xi expressed heartfelt sympathies to the Iranian government and people over the epidemic on behalf of the Chinese government and people. Stressing that China and Iran are comprehensive strategic partners and their people enjoy traditional friendship, Xi noted that the Iranian government and people had provided sincere and friendly support and help for China's fight against the epidemic. Meanwhile, to help Iran beat the disease, China has offered Iran a batch of anti-epidemic supplies and sent a team of voluntary health experts, Xi said. China stands ready to step up cooperation with Iran to contain the epidemic, Xi said, adding that he is confident that the Iranian government and people will surely win the battle against the outbreak.





# ADB to provide \$200m to support strained supply chains in the fight against COVID-19

**MANILA** - The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will make available \$200 million through its Supply Chain Finance Program for companies manufacturing and distributing medicines and other items needed to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Companies manufacturing and distributing products, including medicines and personal protective equipment, are increasingly strained as production and distribution ramp-up to address COVID-19. The support from ADB, working in partnership with commercial banks, will provide such companies in Asia and the Pacific with additional working capital to meet expansion and other requirements. "The support will target

companies in the supply chain that are critical to fighting the virus," said the ADB's Head of Trade and Supply Chain Finance, Steven Beck. "We're looking to support companies that want to ramp up production

from partner commercial banks could boost support under the facility to \$800 million over the same period. The funds will be made available through the ADB's Supply Chain Finance Program and provided to selected companies within weeks. The ADB is closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on trade finance and is in regular contact with client banks to assess whether additional support



and therefore need to engage suppliers." Given that a single pool of supply chain finance is typically used for a subsequent delivery over 120-180 days, the \$200 million facilities could support more than \$400 million of financing over the next 12 months. Fifty-fifty risk sharing

is required. The ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members-49 from the region.

## Rs100 million approved to procure coronavirus testing kits

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - The Sindh Cabinet has approved the purchase of 5000 coronavirus testing kits and Rs100 million for adopting preventive measures against the virus. While presiding over a recent cabinet meeting at the CM House, Chief Minister, Murad Ali Shah, noted that so far 53 tests of coronavirus have been conducted in Sindh, out of which only two tests were found positive. He said isolation wards had been established in nine hospitals with 118 beds. Shah said that he had assigned the Indus Hospital with the task to look after the coronavirus issue from conducting the tests, keeping the suspects in isolation, and providing them with treatment. The provincial government of Sindh has given them a grant of Rs100 million for the purchase of testing kits and other necessary equipment. The cabinet approved the release of the grant worth Rs100 million as well as the purchase of 5000 testing kits.

## PMA lauds Sindh Government for the closure of education institutes

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) appreciated the Sindh government for closing schools till March 16, 2020, and said this is an appropriate step taken at the right time to prevent the spread of coronavirus in Pakistan. Secretary-General, Pakistan Medical Association (Centre), Dr S M Qaisar Sajjad, said that due to these timely efforts, the situation had been brought under control. According to the received information, 681 pilgrims had returned from Iran via Karachi. They have been quarantined for 14 days till March 13, 2020. They will also be tested for coronavirus and, if found positive, will be kept in isolation for treatment. He requested parents not to take their children to shopping malls during these holidays and avoid large crowds and gatherings to keep themselves safe from the coronavirus. Hand washing is an essential preventive measure; people with flu and cough should wear masks and stay at home. Additionally, they should also avoid large crowds and gatherings. Healthy people do not need to put

on masks, but they must stay at least one meter away from those who are coughing or sneezing because this infection is transmitted via droplets or close contact with infected people. "If somebody is suffering from flu and cough, he can contact the centre established for the prevention of coronavirus by the Sindh government and federal government for a checkup to avoid any complications," he added. He said the PMA believes that the Pakistan Super League (PSL) should not be stopped because it is in the national interest of Pakistan. It is boosting the soft image of Pakistan. Our message is to adopt preventive measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus instead of stopping PSL or other national and social events. Dr Qaiser Sajjad appealed to all Pakistanis to play their due role to prevent the spread of coronavirus by adopting all the required preventive measures. People who have symptoms of flu and cough especially should quarantine themselves at home and avoid going into crowds and gatherings.

## Former Health Minister suggests suspension of all non-essential services

**MN Report**  
**KARACHI** - Former Health Minister and President of the Private Hospitals and Clinics Association (PHCA), Dr Syed Junaid Ali Shah, has suggested the suspension of all non-essential services from the Jinnah International Airport Karachi as an essential precautionary measure to prevent the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). He wrote a letter to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) asking them to suspend their porter service, luggage service, duty-free shops, and other commercial booths. He also suggested that only the mandatory services should remain functional to allow passengers to board, embark, and disembark flights. The measures should remain in place up until all flight schedules and services resume. Dr Shah welcomed the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) decision to hold the PSL matches in Karachi without spectators. He appreciated the Sindh government's decision to keep schools closed as this has now become a very pressing concern. He appealed to the citizens of Karachi to avoid visiting parks and shopping malls.



## CPSP's new policy raises 'fear' among Postgraduate trainee doctors

**MN Report**  
**LAHORE** - College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) and the Punjab government recently reached a deadlock over policy renewal. This aggravated the fear of Postgraduate trainee doctors from public sector medical institutions of the province to lose an academic year. The medic holders of Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Master of Science (MS) degrees seemed to be affected the most. The situation escalated when the Punjab Government, earlier, advertised jobs in around 24 disciplines of level IV FCPS (Second fellowship). A committee headed by former Vice Chancellor of University of Health Sciences, Prof Mahmood Shaukat, had been notified to recruit postgraduate residents in level IV. The candidates possessing FCPS and MD/ MS (both level III qualifications) applied for the jobs. However, the doctors holding MD/MS were refused for allegedly holding a university degree. It is pertinent to mention here that The MS and MD were century-old postgraduate degree programmes of

*Continued on Page 08*

Prime Minister announces ...  
Continued from front page

Secondly, he said the SBP had been asked to engage with banking industry for deferred payment of principal and interests on bankloans. Another Rs100bn was approved for deferred payment of loans for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and agriculture and concessional loans to ensure their input costs do not go up. Also, Rs150bn was earmarked to support vulnerable families by increasing their stipend from Rs2,000 to Rs3,000 per month for four months. The prime minister said the provinces had also been asked to come up with their support plans so that the weak segments of society could be further helped out. He said the network of panagahs (shelter homes) for the jobless and poor was being expanded so that the unemployed and weak could have meal and shelter.

Likewise, Mr Khan said the Utility Stores Corporation would be given additional Rs50bn to ensure it did not run out of essential commodities and keep providing them at affordable rates to the middle class.

The Prime Minister also announced Rs15 per litre reduction in the prices of petrol, diesel and kerosene with immediate effect, saying this relief worked out to Rs75bn. Responding to an observation that reduction in oil prices did not commensurate with the price cut in the international market, PM's special assistant Nadeem Babar said the impact of global prices usually had a lag of about 45 days and if the trend continued prices would be brought further down. Mr Khan announced that payment of electricity and gas bills would be allowed in three instalments. The facility would be limited to those with monthly electricity consumption of less than 300 units and less than Rs 2,000 per month of gas bills. He said the facility covered about 75pc of power consumers and 81pc of gas consumers. The Prime Minister said Rs50bn had been set aside to provide financial support to medical staff and to hire more staff. In addition, he said the Federal Board of Revenue had been directed to completely exempt or reduce taxes on imported essential food items like pulses.

An additional amount of Rs25bn would be given to the National Disaster Management Authority to beef up medical and rescue equipment like testing kits and ventilators.

In addition, Mr Khan said about Rs100bn would be set aside for a fund aimed to make arrangements for future emergencies. He said a separate stimulus package for construction industry would be announced in a couple of days. This would be an 'unprecedented package' because the construction industry not only would create job opportunities but also carry a host of industry along and boost economy.

Responding to a question about one of the highest interest rates in the world, the prime minister said there had been continuous discussions on the matter but there were also its repercussions and hence there was no straightforward answer to rate cut which could be discussed in public. However, he said everything was moving in the right direction and exports had started to pick-up before the coronavirus challenge emerged.

Tally of coronavirus cases ...  
Continued from front page

family gatherings in their homes. "This is not the time to arrange social gatherings but for social distancing," he said.

Secretary Health, Zahid Abbasi, is his briefing to the Chief Minister, said that 2017 samples had been taken from Sukkur and 83 from Larkana, out of which 1294 tested negative while 238 were declared positive. Four hundred two of Sukkur's and 83 of Larkana's samples are pending results.

1230 samples were tested in Karachi and other districts, out of which 98 have tested positive. The tally has risen to 249.

It may be noted that 402 pilgrims returned from Taftan and have been kept in Sukkur, while 83 others who also returned from Iran have been kept in isolation in Larkana.

The Chief Minister said that cases due to local transmission have soared to 51.

Commissioner Karachi, Iftikhar Shalwani, told the Chief Minister that 22 pilgrims were scheduled to go to Iran, but due to the COVID-19 spread, they could not go. He added that all the 22 pilgrims have returned via Lasbela, and the DC West has received them. The Chief Minister directed the Commissioner to get all 22 people screened and confirm if they all are healthy then proceed to send them back to their homes.

The Commissioner also briefed the Chief Minister about establishing the

Quarantine Center and Field Hospital at the Expo Center. The Chief Minister directed him to make the necessary arrangements for toilets and resting places for the staff working at the Expo Center. He allowed the essential procurement of equipment, medicines, masks, and other items.

The public sector hospitals, in their daily report, identified 1874 suspects out of which 21 tested positive. The private sector hospitals have given a list of 702 suspects, out of which five were declared positive.

The Chief Minister was informed that 15 out of 31 flights were canceled. The 16 remaining scheduled flights brought 3710 passengers out of which four were deemed suspects. They have been kept in quarantine, and their samples have been sent for testing.

It is pertinent to mention here that currently that 413 cases have been confirmed in Sindh and 1020 cases in Pakistan. According to reliable sources, 7 people have died due to Coronavirus.

Governor Sindh inspects ...  
Continued from page 02

comes to eradicating this virus, he observed. Governor Sindh said that he had requested the Prime Minister and the National Security Council to close marriage and cinema halls, which was acted upon promptly.

"The police must take action against those who are holding large gatherings," he added on a question regarding the non-compliance of the large gatherings' ban.

Mr Ismail asked the media to point out such violations to the administration and the Sindh Government so that action against the violators could be initiated. The role of the media in educating the masses about the necessary precautionary measures and creating awareness was of immense importance, and it should act accordingly, he requested.

Governor Sindh said that it should also highlight the steps being taken by the Government in this regard. The NDMA has been acting proactively to combat this natural calamity, and he was constant in contact with its Chairman. He said after the Karachi Airport, City and Cantt Railway Station would also be sanitized.

SIUT provides free testing ...  
Continued from page 05

Department of Nephrology, would be the focal person from the SIUT to deal with coronavirus patients. Additionally, people can call the SIUT's helpline number, 021-99215469, for any guidance related to the COVID-19.

The SIUT has established an isolation ward for positive coronavirus patients. For awareness, the SIUT published posters, booklets, and provided training to its doctors and paramedical staff on how to combat the coronavirus situation. Doctors from the Infectious Diseases Department of the SIUT were also present on this occasion.

COVID-19 Fund launched ...  
Continued from page 06

Elizabeth Cousens, UN Foundation President, and CEO. "The case for global cooperation could not be clearer - communities everywhere are affected, and people want to contribute. This new fund will create space for people everywhere, together, to fight this virus."

Funds will go towards actions outlined in the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan to enable all countries - particularly those most vulnerable and at-risk, and with the weakest health systems - to prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 crisis including rapidly detecting cases, stopping transmission of the virus, and caring for those affected.

The WHO and its partners are seeking financing for protective equipment for frontline health workers; to equip diagnostic laboratories; improve surveillance and data collection; establish and maintain intensive care units; strengthen supply chains; accelerate research and development of vaccines and therapeutics, and take other critical steps to scale up the public health response to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund is hosted by two foundations, the UN Foundation (registered in the United States) and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation (registered in Switzerland). Both foundations have established relationships with the World Health Organization, allowing for efficient transfer of financial resources to enable COVID-19 response efforts.

All donations made to the United Nations Foundation and Swiss Philanthropy

Foundation are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by the law, where applicable (U.S. and Switzerland). Additionally, the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation has partnered with Transnational Giving Europe to extend tax benefits to certain additional European countries where applicable.

CPSP's new policy raises ...  
Continued from page 07

the public sector medical universities here. The doctors possessing these degrees have long been suffering due to the CPSP, which was running a rival degree programme Fellow of College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (FCPS) -to maintain its monopoly over government institutions by making majority of the inductions.

The MD/MS students complained to the specialised healthcare department that the CPSP was not considering them for the slots just for holding monopoly over the FCPS programme. They alleged the CPSP of discriminating against qualified doctors holding the government's own degree.

The MD/MS trainees argued that their degree was equal to FCPS level-III qualification as per Punjab Public Service Commission, the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) and the Punjab government rules. They requested the health authorities to take notice of the 'injustice.'

Earlier, the Specialised Healthcare Department wrote to the CPSP president for clarification regarding level IV inductions, complaining that the Punjab government was funding billions of rupees every year for the training of level III students.

"It is stated that the erstwhile PMDC regulations, MD/MS and FCPS are all equivalent i.e. these are all level III qualifications," reads the letter. It further stated that these qualifications were considered eligible for recruitment against teaching positions.

According to a decision taken in a meeting of Vice Chancellors/Deans of various universities with the president of the Pakistan Medical Commission, an institution already accredited for a CPSP programme will automatically receive recognition for the same programme offered by universities, the letter further reads.

"I am further directed to state that this department is considering funding for the training of only those level IV programmes that allow the intake of all level III qualifications which are considered equivalent by the Punjab government in line with the stated policy of the erstwhile PMDC and now PMC," the letter adds.

The department asked the CPSP to clear its position on the above question so a decision could be taken for the future of the medics holding MD/MS degrees.

The last date for CPSP registration for level IV programme has passed and put the future of all candidates at stake. All interviews for level IV programmes have been halted since then.

The official said that one of the major factors behind this sorry state of affairs was the role of councilors and office-bearers of the CPSP council, who were incidentally also deans of public sector medical universities.

Presently, he said, two senior representatives of the CPSP were serving as vice chancellors of King Edward Medical University and Fatima Jinnah Medical University, and another as principal of the Services Institute of Medical Sciences.

The situation puts the heads of these two state institutions in an awkward position as to which side they choose -the CPSP or university degree. Under an oath, the head of a state-run institution is the custodian of the university degree programmes and the appointment of vice chancellors of the universities as representatives of the CPSP has raised the issue of conflict of interest'.

PMDC all set to be ...  
Continued from page 12

Presidential Ordinance that repealed the PMDC was ultra vires on February 11 and directed the federal government to reinstate the sacked employees of the council.

The court also held that the formation of PMC was not authorised by the law. President Dr Arif Alvi in October last year promulgated an ordinance which left the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) dissolved and paved the way for establishment of Pakistan Medical Commission.

Chest diseases on the rise ...  
Continued from page 12

degradation being experienced across the country.

"We can save many lives by just being considerate towards our environment. It's this same concern that we wanted to show through this plantation event chosen for the launch of Chest Con 2020," said Dr Nisar Ahmad Rao.

Highlighting concern over pollution, he said degrading quality of air and water posed great threat to public health. "We have to address the pollution challenge seriously in order to improve public health especially chest health. It's unfortunate that little awareness exists on this issue. Perhaps, this is the reason why Pakistan has been included in the list of 10 countries most at risk of climate change," he said.

DRAP warns against ...  
Continued from page 12

In the meantime, FDA issued a statement in which it said that it had not approved the medicine for treating Covid-19 and was studying its use against the disease.

During a press conference on March 22, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Zafar Mirza had said the sale of chloroquine without prescription was banned.

"It is an old medicine which is being used to treat malaria, but suddenly it has disappeared from the market. Though the export of the medicine is already banned, we have done stock taking across the country. We have also contacted experts of infectious diseases to find out if it should be used for treating coronavirus. There is no evidence that people can use it as prophylactic treatment," he added.

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## Prof Samad Shera passes away

**MN Report**

**KARACHI** : Eminent diabetologist, Prof Dr Abdus Samad Shera, passed away at the age of 85 in Karachi following a brief illness. Family sources noted that Prof Shera had undergone a heart bypass surgery at a private hospital in the previous week. He was later shifted to his home, where his condition deteriorated. He was again shifted to a private hospital, but the doctors were unable to save him.

Dr Shera was born in 1935 in Alwar, India, and migrated to Pakistan at the age of 11. He did his MBBS from the Liaquat Medical College, Jamshoro, in the late 50s. He went to England to attain a post-graduation degree. He returned to Pakistan in the 60s, after which he started practicing as a physician and diabetologist.

The late professor is survived by his widow and three daughters. His funeral prayers were offered at the Fatehpuri Masjid near Hill Park.



## Pakistani Paediatrician won Ireland's Quality Improvement Championship

**MN Report**

**IRELAND** - Dr Muhammad Moazzam Gulzar has been recently announced as the National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA) Quality Improvement Champion 2020. Dr Gulzar, Registrar Emergency Medicine, Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, received the award for a project on "Paediatrics ECG interpretation checklist".

Three projects were shortlisted to present for the NOCA Quality Improvement Champion Award 2020 at NOCA's annual conference.

Also presenting were Ricardo Paco, Trauma Audit Coordinator, St James's Hospital with his project "CodeHip" and Helen Kavanagh, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist, St James's Hospital presented their project "Seven-day Physiotherapy Stroke Assessment".

The NOCA 'Quality Improvement Champion' Award recognises an individual or team who has made best use of national or local clinical audit data to improve patient care in their hospital / hospital group / healthcare organisation.



## 70 fall sick after gas leak at Bin Qasim factory

**MN Report**

**KARACHI** - Around 70 people were hospitalised due to a gas leak at a chemical factory in the Bin Qasim Town area recently. This caused fear and panic among people, rescue services and hospital staff in the wake of recent deaths from a gas leak in the Karachi Port Trust area, as per officials. The incident prompted provincial authorities to close the industrial unit operations and constitute a

committee to conduct a thorough probe into its safety and environmental standards. Bin Qasim Station House Officer (SHO) Mohammed Ali said the gas leaked from the Engro Polymer and Chemicals Plant, which manufactures PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) plastic pipes, affecting around 67 persons. He said the police were informed that 'chlorine' leaked from one of the pipes. Rescue services complained that they had not been informed about the type of the chemical so that they could provide protective gear to their ambulance staff to save them during the rescue operation while shifting the affected persons to hospitals and

nearby clinics.

After being given first aid, most of the affected persons were transported to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for further treatment, sources in Edhi Foundation said. JPMC executive director Dr

chemical industrial unit operations were affected for some hours.

Later, the factory resumed its operations, he said. Apparently to highlight that the factory was safe, the SHO claimed that he even

performed Friday prayer on the premises of Engro chemical plant.

Taking notice of the incident, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and a team of officials led by Director General of the Sindh Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) got the company's

operations stopped.

"The operations of the company would continue to be closed till its administration gives assurances for implementation of environmental laws fully," says a statement issued earlier. A SEPA team available in the Bin Qasim area was probing the incident. In order to conduct personal hearing into the incident, a notice was also being issued to the Engro firm, it added.

Adviser to the CM Barrister Murtaza Wahab, who was looking into the matter, said another SEPA team had been sent to the JPMC and Aga Khan University Hospital to inquire after the condition of the affected persons.



Seemin Jamali said they received 70 persons, all young and middle aged, with the common complaint of difficulty in breathing and burning sensation in their eyes.

She said they were stable and 69 of them were discharged. Only one patient was admitted for further treatment. "He is also stable and has been put under observation," Dr Jamali added.

She said there was "an element of anxiety" ostensibly in the wake of recent gas leakage at Karachi Port Trust. The Bin Qasim SHO said the authorities would decide about the possibility of initiating any legal proceedings after an initial inquiry. He said the

## ChildLife Emergency Room Sukkur saved 4500 lives

**MN Report**

**SUKKUR** - The ChildLife Emergency Room, Ghulam Muhammad Mahar Medical College Hospital, Sukkur, has treated 4500 patients since its soft launch.

The Children Emergency Room is a 40-bed facility, operating 24/7, providing free-of-cost emergency services to the residents of Sukkur and its adjoining areas including Rohri, Panoakil, Khairpur, Saleh Pat, and Shikarpur.

The formal inauguration of the ChildLife Emergency Room, Ghulam Muhammad Mahar Medical College Hospital, Sukkur, has been postponed due to precautionary measures taken by the Sindh Government to fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Meanwhile, the public-private partnership is doing wonders for Pakistani children as ChildLife is saving the lives of around 1 million children every year in Sindh and Baluchistan. Approximately 3 million children have been treated up till now. The Children Emergency Rooms being operated under the public-private partnership include the Dr Ruth KM Pfau Civil Hospital, Karachi, the National Institute of Child Health, Karachi, the Sindh Government Hospital Korangi-5, the Lyari General Hospital, Karachi, the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, Karachi, the People Medical College Hospital, Nawabshah, the Chandka Medical College Hospital, Larkana, and the civil hospitals of Sukkur, Hyderabad, and Quetta.





# SHCC urges hospitals to share coronavirus patients' details with the Health Department

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) has devised a comprehensive strategy to deal with the coronavirus. In this connection, all healthcare establishments (HCEs) and healthcare providers (HCPs) have been directed to share the information of all coronavirus inflicted patients as well as patients with pneumonia symptoms and related respiratory illnesses to the SHCC.

The SHCC Clinical Governance team held a meeting with the representatives of the Medical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases Society of Pakistan (MMIDSP) in the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) discussing the COVID 19 as well as the isolation and quarantine procedures. The meeting laid particular emphasis on doctors to report the cases of



the coronavirus to the Health Department, Sindh, and the SHCC. Similarly, an internal team of experts was formed to deal with the COVID 19 situation in Sindh. The team includes the Director, Clinical Governance & Training, Deputy Director, Clinical Governance, and Deputy Director, Licensing & Accreditation.

CEO, SHCC, Dr Minhaj Qidwai, and Director, Clinical Governance & Training, Dr Raza Kazmi, attended the meeting of the enhanced Sindh HIV/AIDS Control Program in collaboration with the National Aids Control Program & UNAIDS for discussing the development of the provincial AIDS strategy 2021-25. The initial meetings discussed the facts and

findings on the HIV/AIDS outbreak in Ratodero, Sindh.

The Directorate of Anti-Quackery conducted raids in Kemari, Jackson Town, as well as East and Central Karachi. The team recently sealed 70 clinics and a total of 3483 HCEs across the province. Warnings were also issued to 1,108 others over non-compliance. The Directorate of Licensing & Accreditation received 30 new applications for registration. The total number of applications for registration has reached 10,718 so far. Certificates were recently issued to 32 HCEs bringing the total number of registration certificates issued to 9491. The Directorate of Complaints has received a total of 132 complaints so far out of which 86 complaints have been disposed of, 40 complaints are under process, while 6 are sub-judice.

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## As one nation we can defeat the Coronavirus: Jam Ikramullah Dharejo

### MN Report

**KARACHI** - Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce & Cooperative Department and Anti-Corruption, Jam Ikramullah Dharejo, recently noted that as a nation we could defeat the coronavirus pandemic and we all support the lockdown of the Sindh government. To save ourselves from the coronavirus, we have to limit ourselves to our own homes. Without the public's support, we cannot defeat the coronavirus.



Jam Ikramullah said this while talking to the press on the occasion of distributing face masks and sanitizers among the Policemen and Rangers personnel. He also inspected the lockdown situation in the Ghotki district. Jam Ikramullah Dharejo also visited the Civil Hospital in Ghotki, and handed over face masks and sanitizers to Medical Superintendent (MS) Arbab Malik and at the People's Secretariat Ghotki to Secretary-General, Sikandar Lakho. "We are battling a dangerous epidemic in difficult times," said the Dharejo. Dharejo said that there was no case of the coronavirus in the Ghotki district. The Minister added that "Sindh is the land of Saints and Sufis and the people of Sindh help each other during difficult times. The Sindh government has made a comprehensive plan for distributing rations." He requested philanthropists to come forward during this challenging time and help the needy. Ikramullah urged people to take care of themselves and their families by taking precautionary measures because success against the coronavirus is only possible with caution. Jam Ikramullah Dharejo said that he and all the office bearers of the Ghotki district, standing on the directives of Pakistan People Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, under the leadership of Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah, hope that we can overcome this pandemic and get rid of the virus.

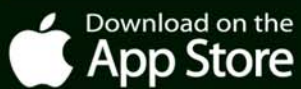




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# Sindh and Pakistan Army set up mass quarantine facility at Karachi's Expo Centre

## MN Report

**KARACHI** - Sindh Government and Pakistan Army has recently helped establish a 10,000-bed field hospital at Karachi's Expo Centre, as per Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) official.

The ISPR official told Press that a special quarantine centre has been established by the Pakistan Army to facilitate patients. The army's media wing said that the Sindh government and the armed forces' teams were working together at the isolation centre.

"The hospital is meant to isolate and treat confirmed patients of the coronavirus in a safe and secure environment, away from



common people and other patients in the city. The Medical Corps of the Pakistan Army has come forward to help in the establishment of the field hospital on the request of the Sindh government," told Army Official.

While addressing the media, Sindh Chief Minister Syed

Murad Ali Shah said, "The Sindh government will bear all expenses for the establishment of the facility. Initially, the Medical Corps battalion will establish a 500-bed isolation and treatment facility in one of the halls of the Expo Centre, and if need arose, more halls would be utilised to add more facilities."



## 'PMDC all set to be revived in few days'

### MN Report

**ISLAMABAD** - The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was recently informed that the government would restore Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) in the coming weeks.

Dr Tauqeer Shah, who was later removed as health secretary the same day, appeared before the court to submit a reply on the petition filed by former PMDC registrar Nadeem Akbar, challenging the order that made him an officer on special duty (OSD).

However, during the course of hearing on Wednesday, when IHC Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani inquired about the implementation of the judgment on PMDC, Shah replied that the matter has been forwarded to the ministry of law and justice. He expressed the hope that following a green light from the law ministry, the NHS would revive the PMDC.

Justice Kayani had declared the

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## 'Chest diseases on the rise due to air pollution'

### MN Report

**KARACHI** - The Chest Society of Pakistan (CSP) recently organized the plantation of mangrove saplings at the Wetland Centre in the area of Sandspit. The event was held to mark the launch of an upcoming conference



titled 'Chest Con 2020.' Health experts highlighted the negative effects of pollution and urged the people to demonstrate civic sense and social responsibility by adopting nature-friendly practices. Health experts shared that more than seven million people died prematurely due to air pollution. "This worrisome situation could be changed for the better if humans started making greater effort in keeping their surrounding environment clean," they noted. While addressing the audience, Dr Nisar Ahmad Rao, CSP President and Head of the Ojha Institute of Chest Diseases expressed his concern over the growing environmental

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# DRAP warns against chloroquine for COVID-19

## MN Report

**ISLAMABAD** - In a recent Press Conference, the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has warned citizens against taking chloroquine as it can severely damage the liver and become a reason for heart attack. The conference was held to clear the air after receiving reports of a



number of people using the drug, a medicine prescribed for treating malaria, as prophylactic treatment against COVID-19.

"It is unfortunate that people have started using the medicine without consulting health experts. We want to warn them that the drug has adverse side-effects, which is why it has been decided to put it in the prescription medicine list," DRAP Chief Executive Officer Dr Asim Rauf told. He said just like controlled drugs, medical stores will have to keep a copy of the medical expert's prescription before selling chloroquine.

"We have carried out the stock taking of the medicine and as per our record there are around 25 million tablets in the market and 9,000kg raw material. This stock can last a year but irrational use and storage of medicine by people can create shortage in the market," he said.

Dr Rauf said the use of chloroquine, without the supervision of a doctor, could damage vital organs, including liver and heart, as it was a toxic medicine.

Last week during a briefing at the White House, US President Donald Trump had claimed that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had approved the 'very powerful' drug chloroquine to treat Covid-19. He had said the medicine had shown very encouraging results and will be available in the market almost immediately. He also said that normally FDA takes a long time to approve drugs but due to the nature of the case it was approved quickly.

As a result of this statement, people across the globe started using the medicine for prophylactic treatment.

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