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CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN

CONFIRMED CASES
448,522

REPORTED DEATH
9,080

SINDH
199,706

PUNJAB
129,291

ISLAMABAD
35,441

BALOCHISTAN
17,838

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
53,609

GB/AJK
4,804 / 7,833

RECOVERED CASES
396,591

*Stats as of 17 December, 2020 - 08:13am, Provided by Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination, Government of Pakistan



COVID SECOND WAVE ON THE RISE

Pakistan's positivity ratio reaches 10pc

MN Report
ISLAMABAD - The number of new Covid-19 cases in the country was recorded at 3,795 on 07 December after a gap of over five months as the national positivity ratio reached almost 10 per cent. This figure is the highest single day rise in coronavirus infections

since July 2 when 4,087 people contracted the virus. According to the data released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), the highest positivity ratio was observed in Karachi at 21.31pc, followed by Abbottabad at 17.86pc and Peshawar, 16.66pc. As many as 75 patients succumbed to the virus while the number of active cases, which was less than 6,000 in September, reached 55,316. Of the 75 deaths across the country, 22 patients died in Punjab, six in Rawalpindi-Islamabad, 41 in Sindh and six in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the past 24 hours. No death was reported from Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. The NCOC data further said 353 ventilators out of 1,749 reserved for Covid-19 patients were in use. However, there was no patient on vent in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. The meeting was informed that movement of 1.51 million people had been restricted by imposing 4,503 smart lockdowns. Testing had remained over 40,000 per day for the last two weeks with 81pc positive cases being reported from major urban centres. The forum was further told that various administrative measures, including fines and closures, had been taken to contain the spread of the virus. The provinces had updated the NCOC on various activities being undertaken, particularly during SOP compliance week (Dec 5-12). The meeting was informed that the national positivity ratio, which is measured on the basis of the number of positive cases in 100 samples, stood at 9.71pc. Meanwhile, positivity ratio in Azad Jammu and Kashmir was 11.93pc; Balochistan, 11.61pc; Gilgit-Baltistan, 2.89pc,

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UK becomes first country in the world to approve COVID-19 vaccine

MN Report
LONDON - Britain approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine recently, jumping ahead of the US and Europe to become the West's first country to formally endorse a jab which should reach the most vulnerable people soon.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson touted the green light from Britain's medicine authority as a global win and a ray of hope for the end of the pandemic, though he recognised the logistical challenges of vaccinating an entire country of 67 million. Britain's move raised hopes that the tide could soon turn against a virus that has killed nearly 1.5 million people globally, hammered the world economy and upended normal life for billions since it emerged in Wuhan, China, a year ago. Britain's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) granted emergency use approval to the vaccine developed by Pfizer and German biotechnology partner BioNTech, which they say is 95% effective in preventing illness, just 23 days after Pfizer published the first data from its final stage clinical trial. "Fantastic news," Johnson told parliament, though he cautioned that people should not get carried away. "At this stage it is very, very important that people do not get their hopes up too soon about the speed with which we will be able to roll out this vaccine."

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'COVID-19 cases are increasing sharply'

MN Report

KARACHI - The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) is very concerned over the rapid increase of COVID-19 patients across Pakistan during the second wave of the pandemic.

Due to this increase in the burden of disease, doctors are getting infected rapidly and are dying. Till now, 127 doctors have lost their lives to COVID-19. Three doctors died last week, and then during the last three days, six more doctors succumbed to the ailment.

During the second wave, which started in November, 18 doctors have lost their lives (Punjab 7, Sindh 5, KPK 4, AJK 2). The situation is very alarming.

Unfortunately, doctors are not getting proper protection. They are facing a shortage of PPEs. There is no proper place in hospitals for doctors' isolation. They are not getting any risk allowance and even not getting their salaries on time.

It is unfortunate that the Shuhda Package's announcement by the Government for the families of Shaheed doctors has not been implemented yet, and the aggrieved families are going through a hard time with lots of economic

problems. During long hours' duty, doctors get exhausted, and they do not even have any room to sit and relax. At the same time, they face misbehavior and violence from the patients and their attendants. There is no check over the entry



in hospitals; patients with COVID enter the hospitals openly, increasing doctors' and others' risk of getting infected. There should be one entrance at the hospital where people should be scanned properly, examined for temperature and other symptoms, and their hands should be sanitized.

Up till now, more than 3000 doctors are in isolation. The number of patients is increasing day by day, and the burden on hospitals and healthcare workers is also increasing. There is a shortage of beds in hospitals for corona patients, and due to this reason, hospitals are refusing to take new patients.

The PMA demanded the Federal Government, Provincial Governments,

and private hospitals' management to take extra care in saving the lives of doctors, and for that, every hospital should allocate a few beds for doctors. The Government should take immediate steps to protect doctors and ensure the provision of an uninterrupted supply of PPEs for doctors.

The PMA requested doctors to take care of themselves, refrain from examining

patients without wearing PPEs. The life of a doctor is very important for the nation during this difficult time. They should avoid shaking hands. They should also avoid going to any functions.

The PMA also requested the public to follow SOPs strictly. Wear a mask whenever you go out, maintain social distancing, and wash your hands or sanitize after regular intervals.

The PMA appealed to the Government to implement SOPs strictly. We believe that COVID-19 has already spread violently in the community through both large and small gatherings. If the Government fails to implement SOPs strictly, then nobody will be safe from this fatal disease.

Dr Mushtaq Ahmad passes away

MULTAN - Celebrated Physiologist and Ex Principal Nishtar Medical College (NMC), Dr Mushtaq Ahmad, recently died. Funeral prayer of Dr Mushtaq Ahmad was held at Jama Mosque Nishtar.



The Publisher, Editor and the staff of Medical News Pakistan express their heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of Dr Mushtaq Ahmad, Ex Principal Nishtar Medical College (NMC), Multan and pray that God gives his soul eternal peace and enough courage to the family members to bear this irreplaceable loss, Amen!

SIUT condoles the demise of Mir Zafarullah Jamali

MN Report

KARACHI - Director, Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT), Prof Dr Adib Rizvi, along with other staff members of the institute, condoled the sad demise of Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan.



In a message of condolence to the members of the bereaved family, the Director of SIUT paid tribute to the late Prime Minister and described him as a gentleman and a politician with sagacity and, above all, compassion. He said Jamali Sahab was a great friend of the SIUT and always took a keen interest in the progress and activities of the institute.

Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali was the 13th Prime Minister of Pakistan who served the office from 2002 to 2004. He passed away recently in a Rawalpindi hospital.

SHCC gets new Chairman

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Health Department has appointed Anees ul Hasnain as the Chairman of the Sindh Health Care Commission (SHCC) for a period of three years.

As per a recent notification, in pursuance of clause 8 (1) & (2) of the Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) Act 2013, the governing body of the SHCC, after going through secret balloting and with the approval of a competent authority, i.e., Chief Minister, Sindh Health Department, Government of Sindh, has notified Anees ul Hasnain as the Chairman of the SHCC, till the end of three years' current tenure of the board of governors, with immediate effect.



Dr Seemin Jamali promoted to BS-21

MN Report

KARACHI - On the recommendation of the Provincial Selection Board and Chief Minister Sindh, Dr Seemin Jamali has been promoted to the post of Executive Director (BS-21), Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC). According to the notification issued by Services, General Administration and Coordination Department Sindh, on the recommendation of the Provincial Selection Board No.1 with the approval of the competent authority, i.e., the Chief Minister Sindh, Dr Seemin Jamali, Joint Executive Director (BS-20) has been promoted to the post of Executive Director (BS-21), Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), Health Department regularly with immediate effect.



Health minister inaugurates anti-polio drive in Sindh

MN Report

KARACHI - Provincial Minister for Health Sindh, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, inaugurated the anti-polio campaign in Sindh wherein more than 9 million children under five years of age would be administered polio drops.



The Coordinator Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) for Polio in Sindh, Fayyaz Abbasi, Project Director, Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), Akram Sultan, and District Health Officer South, Dr Raj Kumar, were also present on this occasion.

Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho administered polio drops to children and also distributed gifts among children during the inauguration ceremony. She advised the parents to vaccinate their children and save them from childhood diseases like polio.

The province-wide anti-polio drive started on 30 November and will continue till 6 December 2020 as part of the national immunization days. The polio drops will be given to approximately 9 million children under five years of age across the 29

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PMA urges concerned authorities to protect Halejee Lake

MN Report

KARACHI - The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Karachi expressed concern over the disappearance of trees around the Halejee Lake and urged the Sindh Government's concerned authorities to protect this natural beauty.

These views were expressed by General Secretary, PMA Karachi, Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, Finance Secretary, PMA Karachi, Dr

Nusrat Shah, and Joint Secretary, PMA Karachi, Dr Muhammad Ismail Memon, in a press conference held at the PMA House.

They said that the PMA has been organizing the "Round the lake marathon" every last Sunday of November for the past thirty years. On Sunday, the 29th of November, we walked and ran around the historical Halejee Lake for the 30th time. It was sad to notice that the lake has now become the victim of negligence. It is deteriorating day by day. They explained that the National Highway's main road is in very bad condition and it is dangerous to drive on it. The bridge is broken for the past many years, and it seems that

the concerned authorities are least bothered about the people who are using this road. They said 90 percent of trees have disappeared from the banks of the lake. It is disappointing to see that a big part of the lake is filled with

environmental disorder is helping the COVID -19 pandemic, and now the people in rural Sindh are becoming COVID-19 positive.

The situation is deteriorating day by day, and there is a need to take urgent action to protect

our people from health-related issues and education as this is the only tool by which we can overcome the incidents like any pandemic in modern society, but

unfortunately, health and education are not the priorities of our government.

They suggested the Sindh government take immediate action to protect the Halejee Lake and plant thousands of new trees around the lake to promote tourism as it is a way to raise awareness of environmental values and it can serve as a tool to finance the protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance too. A massive campaign should be initiated to make our cities more environment-friendly by planting trees and garbage disposal in cities. There is a need to launch a campaign to educate the masses against the coronavirus.

unwanted plants and herbs. We noticed some developmental activities at the beginning of the lake, which is appreciated, but the developmental work is very slow.

"We also noticed the extreme poverty of villagers living around the lake. They told us that they have no school and no health facilities in this area and are not getting any education. Hundreds of boys and girls were seen begging on the roads," he added. They said, unfortunately, in our province of Sindh, the government has failed to improve the environment and create awareness regarding diseases associated with climate disasters. This



SHCC seals 51 quacks clinics

MN Report

KARACHI - The Directorate of Anti-Quackery Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) visited 139 clinics last week and sealed 51 quacks clinics.

The anti-quackery teamed visited 139 healthcare establishments (HCEs) in Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benaizabad, and

Hyderabad and closed 51 clinics run by quacks. A total of 3,973 quack clinics have been sealed across the Sindh province so far, while warnings have been issued to 2201 HCEs for non-compliance to date. In this week, 15 warnings have been issued. The team has visited a total of 7990 HCEs in Sindh to date.

The Sindh Healthcare Commission organized training sessions for primary healthcare and independent consultant clinics in Karachi. The participants were trained by Deputy Director Trainings, Dr Zainab Hassan, on the Sindh service delivery standards for primary healthcare and clinics. Fifty-two healthcare facilities attended the training session.

The Director of Clinical Governance & Training, Dr Ahmed Raza Kazmi, spoke to the participants about the mandate and functions of the SHCC that is to improve healthcare delivery services in the province and to eradicate quackery. At the end of the session, certificates were distributed to participating health care establishments.

The Directorate of Complaints has received a total of 152 complaints to date, out of which 112 complaints have been disposed of, 32 complaints are under processing, while 8 are sub-judice.

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AKU to launch a clinical trial of low-cost ventilator for ambulances

MN Report

KARACHI - The Aga Khan University will launch a clinical trial of a portable, low-cost ventilator that aims to make lifesaving treatment such as assisted 'breathing' available to patients before they reach the hospital. Ventilators are currently only available in hospitals, even though most patients with critical breathing problems need earlier access to breathing assistance.

The AKU's briefcase-sized, battery-operated ventilator, is designed to be used in an ambulance to reduce existing delays in receiving care.

"Every moment is vital when you're struggling to breathe," said Saleem Sayani, Director of the AKU's Technology Innovation Support Centre and Digital Health Resource Centre. "Most people with severe respiratory issues see their health deteriorate on their way to the hospital, and they typically need more breathing assistance than a simple oxygen cylinder can provide."

Pakistan also has a high burden of respiratory diseases, with pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD, being two of the top ten

leading causes of death, according to the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019. People with severe forms of pneumonia, COPD, and COVID-19 are among those who require urgent access to ventilation.

A third of all patients in low and middle-income countries require care such as assisted ventilation before reaching the hospital, according to the World Health Organization. Besides those with breathing problems, individuals suffering from head injuries, drug overdoses, and heart conditions can also benefit



from ventilators in ambulances.

"Too many precious lives are lost due to a lack of timely and effective ventilation," said Dr Junaid Razzak, Director of the AKU's Center of Excellence for Trauma and Emergencies. "This innovation aims to bridge the gap in care during transport to the hospital, which is often the period of highest risk for critically ill

patients."

Early tests show that the prototype ventilator can provide a regular supply of oxygen that can stabilize the health of a high-fidelity patient mannequin mimicking the symptoms of a patient with respiratory issues. Clinical trials aim to evaluate the device's safety and efficacy among patients with chronic breathing problems in

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Prof Saeed Quraishy joins CHK as Chairperson Management Board

MN Report

KARACHI - Professor of Surgery and Vice-Chancellor, Dow University Health Sciences (DUHS), Karachi, Mohammed Saeed Quraishy has joined as Chairperson, Management Board of the Dr Ruth K M Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK).



Médecins Sans Frontières provides relief to flood victims

MN Report

KARACHI - The Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known as Doctors Without Borders, has provided relief to flood victims of around 25 villages in Tehsil Johi of Dadu District in the Sindh province.



The mobile clinics visited these villages as part of a post-emergency response, and two medical teams provided basic medical services to more than 4,000 patients over the course of a month. MSF also distributed relief items, including kitchen, hygiene, and shelter kits, to more than 2,500 families affected by the floods in five union councils of Tehsil Johi. Moreover, the international emergency humanitarian organization supported the local administration in restoring the main water supply benefitting over 60,000 people. Water treatment tablets were distributed to over 2,000 families in the area.

"Our activities in the flood-affected areas of Sindh are part of MSF's commitment to support the Pakistani authorities in responding to emergencies, including natural disasters," MSF country representative in Pakistan Aymen Abdullah said in a statement. "We have also donated medicines to the local authorities to support them in meeting urgent medical needs in the area." More than 350 villages in Sindh's Dadu district were affected by the floods after heavy rainfall in August 2020. Dadu was one of the worst-hit areas in the province, and its population of over 240,000 were declared calamity-affected by the provincial government. While the floods damaged the houses, roads were also washed away, thereby further limiting people's access to healthcare facilities.

"The post-flood period is critical as there
Continued on Page 08

Pakistan needs 3,000-foot clinics to control foot amputation ratio: Experts

MN Report

KARACHI - There is an urgent need to establish around 3000 diabetic foot clinics with telehealth facilities throughout Pakistan, especially at district, tehsil, and taluka levels, to prevent thousands of amputations that are annually performed due to diabetic foot ulcers in Pakistan, national and international experts said on Saturday.

"There are around 19.6 million people living with diabetes in Pakistan as per International Diabetes Federation (IDF), and of them, 1 to two million develop diabetic foot ulcers, which is a serious complication of type 2 diabetes. Of them, thousands of people face amputations of lower limbs annually in Pakistan. Thousands of amputations can be prevented with the establishment of specialized diabetic foot clinics in Pakistan," said Prof Dr Abdul Basit, Secretary-General of the Diabetic Association of Pakistan (DAP), while addressing the 8th Nadep Foot Con 2020.

The two-day international foot conference, being organized by the National Association of Diabetes Educators of Pakistan (NADEP) in collaboration with the Baqai Institute of Diabetology and Endocrinology (BIDE), Karachi is being held for the last several years at various cities of Pakistan, and it is addressed by leading diabetologists and endocrinologists who share their experiences in managing and treatment of diabetic foot ulcers and prevention of lower-limb amputations.

"Every year, three to four hundred thousand people lose their legs, feet, or parts of their lower limbs due to diabetic foot ulcers in Pakistan, but with better care, timely intervention, and treatment, as well as education and awareness, thousands of amputations can be prevented. For the last several years, we have trained

hundreds of doctors, general practitioners, and nurses to help people in preventing diabetic foot ulcers and saved hundreds of limbs," Prof Abdul Basit said in his talk titled "Pragmatic Approach to Diabetic Footcare."

The eminent diabetologist who has also served as the President of International Diabetes Federation (IDF) for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region claimed

them aware of its complications, especially diabetic foot ulcers.

"Due to COVID-19 restrictions, thousands of people with diabetic foot ulcers could not visit the specialized foot clinics, and this led to worsening to their wounds. This issue can be resolved by using technology", he said and added that they are conducting live workshops where experts are training doctors throughout



Pakistan on cleaning, managing, and treating diabetic foot ulcers. President of the National Association of Diabetes Educators of Pakistan (NADEP), Dr Saif-ul-Haq, said there is an urgent need to spread awareness among healthcare

professionals as well as common people so that diabetic foot ulcers and other complications of diabetes could be prevented in Pakistan. In addition to training doctors, there is a need to train thousands of nurses and take them on board in the management of diabetes in Pakistan, he said, adding that most of the complications of the lifestyle disease could be prevented by increasing awareness and educating the masses.

Tanzanian expert of diabetic foot ulcers Dr Zulfikar G Abbass spoke on the Charcot Arthropathy, a condition in which bones and joints of the feet of people with diabetes start disintegrating and breaking but added that early diagnosis of this condition could prevent further progression of the disease. Several other experts including Prof Nicolass C Schaper, Chairman of the International Working Group on the Diabetic Foot, Prof Zaman Shaikh, Dr Asim Bin Zafar, Dr Asmat Nawaz, Prof Rayaz A Malik, Dr Awn Bin Zafar, and Prof. Karim Kammeruddin also spoke on the first day of the conference.

that 50 percent amputations due to diabetic foot ulcers were prevented at 150-foot clinics established by them throughout the country where podiatrists and technicians trained by them are helping people with diabetes and added that now there is a need to replicate this project in entire Pakistan.

"In Karachi, we have managed to bring down amputations due to diabetic foot ulcers from 27 to 3 percent only, which means that hundreds of lives were saved as most of the people with diabetes die within a few years after losing their lower limbs," Prof Abdul Basit said adding that with the use of technology and awareness, even the incidence of diabetic foot ulcers can be prevented to a large extent.

Dr Zahid Miyan, organizing secretary of the NADEP Diabetes Foot Con 2020, in his address told that with the help of multidisciplinary care, training, and awareness, around 50 percent amputations have been prevented as specialized foot clinics in Pakistan and called for using the technology to reach a maximum number people with diabetes to make

professionals as well as common people so that diabetic foot ulcers and other complications of diabetes could be prevented in Pakistan. In addition to training doctors, there is a need to train thousands of nurses and take them on board in the management of diabetes in Pakistan, he said, adding that most of the complications of the lifestyle disease could be prevented by increasing awareness and educating the masses.

HIV and COVID-19 are exposing inequalities in healthcare: UNDP

This year's World AIDS Day theme of 'global solidarity, shared responsibility', reminds us of the impact of pandemics on our lives and how we must come together to prevail. Both HIV and COVID-19 are exposing and exacerbating inequalities. They show us once again that good health is much more than simply who can see a doctor; how health is interlinked with equality,

still cause an additional 123,000 to 293,000 HIV infections and 69,000 to 148,000 AIDS-related deaths. We need to act urgently to protect gains and scale-up efforts to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. To do this we need to "connect the dots" between HIV and COVID-19 responses. The AIDS movement, led by people living with HIV and their allies, has driven one of

securing supplies to ensure continuity of health services and provided dedicated support for the continuity and adaptation of HIV services in 55 countries, including ensuring continued access to HIV services. In confronting both pandemics, we have a unique opportunity. As we have seen this year, when faced with a crisis, governments, scientists, and communities are



human rights, and social protection. Just as the most marginalised and vulnerable bear a disproportionate burden of HIV, in almost every country COVID-19 has impacted poorer communities and the most vulnerable at much greater rates than those who can afford to quarantine. People living with HIV, women, children, key populations, migrants and refugees are amongst those most likely to suffer devastating consequences. Despite some remarkable progress in the AIDS response, before the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not on track to reach the global AIDS targets that were agreed by Member States in 2016. COVID-19 is now threatening to reverse this hard-won progress. The 2020 UNAIDS World AIDS Day report shows that treatment scale-up has slowed and estimates that COVID-related disruptions could

be the most extraordinary global public health responses in history. We have learned from HIV about the importance of equitable access, innovation and the need to focus on those left behind and reaching those left furthest behind. We must apply these lessons in our efforts to tackle COVID-19. Similarly, we need to capitalize on the innovations driven by the COVID-19 crisis and ensure that HIV responses remain resilient in the face of other future pandemics and health threats. UNDP is working with partners to support countries in ensuring continuity of HIV services during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, its partnership with the Global Fund, and as technical lead of the United Nations framework for the immediate social and economic response to COVID-19. UNDP has supported 140 countries in

capable of amazing things. To build forward better from COVID-19, we need a systems approach driven by equity and sustainability. We should meet the moment to turn the crisis into a tipping point for universal health coverage. We need to scale up HIV and basic services while at the same time advancing gender equality and reforming laws and policies that increase risk and stigma and drive infections and disempowerment. This World AIDS Day, UNDP is calling for a re-think of human development, with the Sustainable Development Goals and the pledge to leave no one behind as our compass. At a time when COVID-19 dominates every discourse, we must reinvigorate our efforts to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 - an SDG target which is still within our reach with renewed political will, global solidarity and shared responsibility. **-PR**

Medical students stage protest against KU and KMDC

MN Report
KARACHI - The students of Karachi Medical and Dental College (KMDC) recently staged a protest against the Karachi University and the KMDC administration at the Karachi Press Club over not conducting their examinations on time.



Around 150 male and female students participated in the protest. The protesters tried to enter the red zone to record their protest; however, law enforcement agencies foiled students' attempts. The protesters chanted slogans against KU and KMDC administration. They alleged that the examinations of medical students had been delayed due to the incompetency of these two institutions. They said that the KMDC's negligence had ruined one year of study for medical students. They demanded the KU and KMDC management to hold exams online or physically under the standard operating procedures (SOPs) to save the precious time of the students.

Dow Molecular Pathology Lab becomes Pakistan's first lab to receive NIH certification

MN Report
KARACHI - The Dow University of Health Sciences' Molecular Pathology Lab has become the first lab in Pakistan to receive a Quality Certificate from NIH (National Institute of Health) Islamabad for



COVID PCR testing and reporting. Vice-Chancellor, DUHS, Prof Muhammed Saeed Quraishy, congratulated Prof Saeed Khan and his team on their excellent performance. On this occasion, Prof Saeed Khan said that this is due to the teams' hard work and continues with the support of our management. As a result, we have been able to earn the trust of patients and doctors of the country. We will continue our efforts to further improve our standards. We thank our professional team and management for their continued support, which is why this milestone was achieved.

116 doctors die of COVID-19 in Pakistan

MN Report

KARACHI: As many as 141 healthcare workers have died due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) across Pakistan, out of which 116 were doctors, and 25 were other medical staff.



As per statistics issued by the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA-Centre), a total of 141 healthcare workers have lost their lives in the war against the coronavirus across the country to date, out of which 116 were doctors, and 25 were others.

The PMA further reported that COVID-19 had claimed 50 doctors lives in Punjab, 36 in Sindh, 21 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5 in Balochistan, three in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and one in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The statistics said that nine paramedical staff members, six nurses, three pharmacists, a supervisor class IV, head waiter, ambulance driver, accountant, and three others had died due to COVID-19 so far in the country.

Minor girl of Kashmore rape case discharged from NICH

MN Report

KARACHI - The four-year-old girl rape-victim from Kashmore has recovered and has been discharged from the National Institute of Children Health (NICH).



Executive Director, NICVD, Prof Dr Jamal Raza, said, "By the grace of almighty Allah and the hard work of our team of doctors and nurses, the four-year-old girl from Kashmore has recovered."

She has now been discharged and handed over in consultation with the Government of Sindh to the Minister of Women's Development. He informed that the victim's mother and the baby girl would be transferred to a Government based shelter home for further care of the family. The girl will be seen periodically for follow up as required.



Govt approves \$150 million to get COVID vaccine in 2021

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan has said that the government expects the first phase of coronavirus vaccine procurement in the first quarter of next year, as the federal cabinet approved \$150 million for it.

"We cannot give an exact date of procurement but it will be in the first quarter of 2021," he said, adding that it would be administered to people in stages with frontline healthcare workers being the first takers.

Accompanied by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz, Dr Sultan made this announcement at a press conference after the cabinet meeting recently. After the frontline healthcare workers, the PM's aide said, the Covid-19 vaccine would be administered to the elderly and population at risk besides other health professionals. Dr Sultan made it clear that the general public would receive the vaccine in the third stage. He explained that the stages of vaccine administration had been decided on the basis of

the groups most at risk. He claimed that the vaccine would be available free of cost.

The special assistant said the government would consider multiple factors before procuring the vaccine, including its efficacy, safety and side effects, storage requirements, cost,

"The government will bear the cost so that nobody is burdened; an amount of \$150 million has been approved for vaccine's procurement," he said in reference to the Economic Coordination Committee's recommendation in this regard.

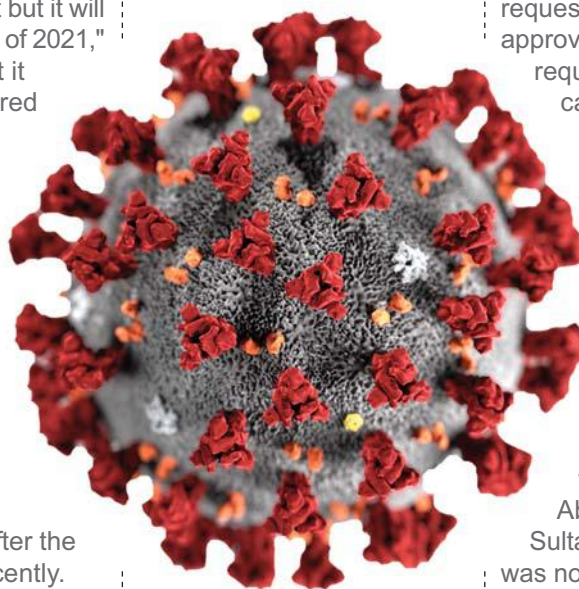
The PM's aide pointed out that the relevant authorities would request the government to approve more funds if

required. The federal cabinet was requested to constitute a committee

comprising four to five members to oversee the purchase of the vaccine, he said while referring to concerns about transparency in procurement of vaccine.

About Remdesivir, Dr Sultan said the medicine was not banned under the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, rather its price had been reduced, he said. The price of Remdesivir the drug being used for treating Covid-19 patients has been reduced from Rs9,244 to Rs5,680.

Senator Faraz clarified that the prices of only 94 essential medicines had been increased in order to keep their supply stable.



manufacturer's production capacity and Pakistan's access to the vaccine. Negotiations underway Responding to a question, Dr Sultan said several companies working on the vaccine had been shortlisted and initial negotiations started.



Is your X-Ray registered with PNRA?

By Dr Sarmad Syed

Many healthcare facilities and dental practices own X-ray equipment or other diagnostic radiological tools for many years without ever knowing if you have fulfilled the regulatory requirements. If that is the case then keep reading this article. It's just for you!

Radiology has always formed an integral part of medicine. Hospitals having a strong radiology team are preferred based on the presumption of more accurate diagnoses. Dentistry has also progressed leaps and bounds with the introduction of radiology to aid diagnosis.

PNRA license

But do you know, your hospital has to go through a rigorous regulatory criterion before it can be licensed to setup a radiology department? This license is provided by the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which has been around since 2001, with an infrastructure that has been in place since 1965. It is the sole body that regulates and

supervises all matters related to nuclear safety and radiation protection.

Currently, PNRA is regulating more than 5900 radiation facilities. These include 5170 diagnostic X-ray facilities, 88 medical facilities, 214 industrial facilities, 84 educational and research institutes, 144 importers and 203 other facilities.

Dosimetry

PNRA regulations state that the annual radiation dose limit for a worker is 20mSv. Radiation doses of up to 50mSv in a single year may be permitted under special circumstances provided that the average dose over five consecutive years does not exceed 20mSv/year. Dose records of 14,700 workers of radiation facilities are maintained in PNRA database of which 54.53% are in diagnostic radiology. Records for 2019 showed exposures for more than 99% of the workers to be within the regulatory limit of 20mSv.

PNRA licensing requirements

Applications are assessed

and approved by PNRA if the following details are provided and their regulatory criteria are met:

- Applicant should be registered and the owner of the facility
- Specifications of the radiation generator
- Particulars of radiologists
- Details of available PPE
- Personal dose monitoring
- Type of dosimeter
- Dosimetry service provider name
- License fee
- Experience training certificates of radiation workers
- Shielding design of the facility

List of licensed Diagnostic radiology facilities

A list of radiation facilities with a valid license from PNRA is available on their website should you ever need to get a radiograph.

-The author is contributing writer at Medical News Pakistan and can be reached at sarmadbinrafi@gmail.com

Seven COVID patients die due to lack of oxygen in Khyber Teaching Hospital

MN Report
PESHAWAR - Seven coronavirus patients passed away at the Peshawar's Khyber Teaching Hospital recently as oxygen cylinders from Rawalpindi failed to arrive on time.



Hospital sources disclosed that patients in other wards of the hospital were also facing difficulties due to the absence of oxygen cylinders.

Meanwhile, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra said that he has ordered the authorities to submit an inquiry report on the matter within 48 hours. He added that most of the patients who died were infected with coronavirus.

The health minister said that if the inquiry report is not deemed satisfactory, the provincial government will hold its own in-depth investigation.

More dengue cases surface in Karachi

MN Report
KARACHI - The Vector-Borne Diseases Department of the Directorate General Health Services, Sindh recorded 1079 dengue fever cases across the Sindh province in November, out of which 1029 were registered in Karachi and 50 in other districts of the province.



Continued on Page 08

Home department fails to establish COVID-19 ward in police hospital

MN Report
KARACHI - The Home Department Sindh and Sindh Police Hospital, Karachi, administration have failed to establish a state-of-the-art Coronavirus Ward for police officers and officials.

Suspected COVID-19 police officers and officials are being referred to the Sindh Government Services Hospital, Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK), Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), and other health facilities for testing and admissions.

However, the Police Hospital Karachi management has miserably failed to set up a corona high-dependency unit (HDU) and intensive care unit (ICU) in the hospital since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Sindh province.

In Sindh, as many as 3,703 police officials and personnel have been tested positive for the coronavirus Sindh, out of which 20 have embraced martyrdom so far. Around 3,481 officials and personnel have recovered from infectious diseases.

Continued on Page 08



Pakistan’s positivity ratio ...
Continued from front page

Islamabad, 8.20pc; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 8.22pc; Punjab, 5.54pc and Sindh, 15.83pc. In Punjab, Rawalpindi reported the highest positivity ratio at 12.09pc followed by 9.74pc in Lahore. In Sindh, the highest rate was recorded in Karachi at 21.31pc while Hyderabad reported 14pc. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 17.86pc positivity was reported in Abbottabad and 16.66pc in Peshawar. In Balochistan, Quetta saw 7.05pc positivity rate while Islamabad recorded 8.2pc. The positivity rate in Gilgit stood at 9.09pc. Azad Jammu and Kashmir was 11.93pc; Balochistan, 11.61pc; Gilgit-Baltistan, 2.89pc, Islamabad, 8.20pc; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 8.22pc; Punjab, 5.54pc and Sindh, 15.83pc. In Punjab, Rawalpindi reported the highest positivity ratio at 12.09pc followed by 9.74pc in Lahore. In Sindh, the highest rate was recorded in Karachi at 21.31pc while Hyderabad reported 14pc. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 17.86pc positivity was reported in Abbottabad and 16.66pc in Peshawar. In Balochistan, Quetta saw 7.05pc positivity rate while Islamabad recorded 8.2pc. The positivity rate in Gilgit stood at 9.09pc.

UK becomes first country ...
Continued from front page

International drugmakers and researchers have been racing to develop vaccines for months and Britain’s authorisation coming first may be seen as a coup for a government that has faced criticism over its handling of the crisis. U.S. and EU regulators are sifting through the same Pfizer vaccine trial data, but have yet to give their approval. The world’s big powers have been racing for a vaccine for months in

an attempt to be first to begin the long road to recovery. The approval of a vaccine for use almost exactly a year since the novel coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China, is a triumph for science, Pfizer boss Albert Bourla and his German biotechnology partner BioNTech.

Health minister inaugurates ...
Continued from page 02

districts of the province. Out of these, more than 2 million children reside in Karachi. The campaign will be conducted whilst following strict WHO recommended COVID prevention protocols, which include the wearing of masks by workers, their temperatures being checked before deployment, not handling children directly, not entering houses, spending limited time with families, knocking on doors with pens, rulers or elbows rather than hands while reducing the length of meetings and attendance in meetings. Pakistan is one of the two polio-endemic countries in the world along with Afghanistan and has so far reported a total of 81 polio cases in 2020, out of which 22 cases are from Sindh.

SHCC seals 51 quacks ...
Continued from page 03

Similarly, the Directorate of Licensing & Accreditation, SHCC, received 34 new registration applications this week. The total number of applications for registration has reached 11,397. Certificates were issued to 30 HCEs this week, bringing the total number of registration certificates issued to 10,022 HCEs.

AKU to launch a clinical trial ...
Continued from page 03

ambulances and emergency rooms. The prototype device also has a mobile app that allows doctors at the hospital to manage the

ventilator’s settings while the patient is in the ambulance to ensure that s/he reaches the hospital in a stable condition. Hospital staff can also access real-time data about the patient’s health through the app, enabling them to take appropriate actions before his or her arrival at the emergency room. All the data available on the app in the ambulance is visible to specialists in the hospital. This will enable more efficient triage, diagnosis, and treatment for critically ill patients. The ventilator’s app also contains an artificial intelligence component that evaluates the patient’s data, assesses the risk to health, and provides suggestions on the next steps to be taken by the ambulance paramedic. "The use of low-cost mobile ventilators in ambulances coupled with remote monitoring from the hospital through mobile technologies has the potential to significantly improve patient outcomes and increase chances of survival, particularly in low-resource countries like Pakistan," said Dr Asad Latif, chair of the department of anesthesiology at the AKU’s Medical College. The clinical trial’s objectives are in line with global efforts under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 3 to reduce premature mortality from communicable diseases such as pneumonia and non-communicable diseases such as asthma and COPD.

Médecins Sans Frontières ...
Continued from page 04

is a high risk of outbreaks of vector-borne and water-borne diseases such as malaria. The objective of our mobile clinics was to improve people’s access to healthcare by providing them with basic care at their doorstep and reduce the risk of disease outbreaks. We treated patients with acute respiratory

diseases, skin infections, malaria, and other illnesses," said Anna Cilliers, MSF medical coordinator.

MSF is also supporting Sindh’s department of health in an awareness campaign on dengue fever. The cases of dengue fever in Karachi increased recently, and 12 union councils of East and South Karachi were declared hotspots. MSF is broadcasting awareness messages of prevention and protection from dengue fever through TV channels, cable

Home department fails to ...
Continued from page 07

networks, and social media. Medical Superintendent, Sindh Police Hospital, Karachi, Dr Muzzafar Ali Jakhrani, informed that efforts are underway to establish a COVID-19 facility in the Police Hospital. Officials and equipment are acquired to establish the ward. He hoped that the corona ward would be made operational in a month.

More dengue cases...
Continued from page 07

The VBD has registered 3,282 dengue cases all over the Sindh province since the start of the year in Sindh, out of which 3,108 surfaced in Karachi and 174 in other districts of the province so far. In Karachi, District East was on top with 1,161 dengue cases, followed by District South, District Central, District Korangi, District West, and District Malir, respectively. The majority of cases are being reported from Gulshan-e-Iqbal, North Nazimabad, Saddar, Defence, and Gulberg areas of the city. A death due to dengue fever has also been reported in Karachi this year so far.

Public rallies should be ...
Continued from page 12

He added that people look up to the Ulema, therefore, they play a very important role in society. "All religious scholars have unanimously agreed that people should combine precautions and prayers in order to achieve success, just like they did during the first wave," President Alvi said. All provincial governors, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Noorul Haq Qadri and Interior Minister Ijaz Shah were in attendance. Prior to the meeting, Governor Punjab Mohammad Sarwar said the government will finalise SOPs in consultation with the Ulema. Sarwar urged all sections of society to play their role in containing the spread of the virus. "PDM should also stop holding rallies and save the public from the coronavirus," he said.

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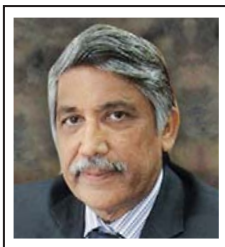
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Prof Asghar's new book focuses on healthcare system

MN Report

KARACHI - The healthcare system in Pakistan is mired with a multitude of problems ever since the country's inception. One of the main problems, as often pointed out, is that here the emphasis has always been on mega projects, initiated without planning and long-term thinking, while the policy-makers were usually not interested in horizontal programs for primary health care, or provision of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, which result in the breakout of epidemics such as dengue fever, malaria, typhoid, cholera, etc. These views were expressed by Founder, Pakistan National Forum on Women's Health, Dr Shershah Syed, President, Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Sindh, Dr Mirza Ali Azhar, General Secretary, PMA Karachi, Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, and others during the book launching ceremony of Prof Dr Asghar Channa at the Karachi Press Club. They said that the book on "Health status, issues, and policy trends in Pakistan" penned by Prof Dr Asghar Channa, is no ordinary book on the healthcare system of the country. It not only analyses the shortcomings of the country's healthcare system but also gives solutions to the myriad problems that our healthcare system is faced with and the role that various governing bodies and institutions can play in providing universal health cover to the length and



breadth of the country. They said the book deals with different issues related to healthcare in Pakistan. The author discusses in detail the history of healthcare and health management and mismanagement in the country and deliberates on different policy matters with strategies and reasons for its failure. The book also discusses the role of civil society, regulatory bodies, and their failure in addressing the challenges faced by the unfortunate people of this country. It further deals with primary health care and the role of different agencies such as the WHO and the World Bank, and professional bodies, postgraduate institutes, the role of media, civil forces, and different government authorities. Dr Channa has tried to explain the causes of the failure of our health care system and medical education and given recommendations for improvement in the strategy for effective coverage of a maximum number of people for their health needs. "In most developed countries, the improvement in health parameters has been met with the political determination of the government and sustained policies, which are the most important tools to bring about a change in health behavior. Unfortunately, frequent change of

governments and political unrest in our country, coupled with other factors, led to poor policy implementation and outcome," they added. As stated by Dr Channa, there is no shortcut or quick-fix formula for health issues in the history of medicine. Like medical management of chronic disease, with an acute presentation, the solution to our healthcare problems can conveniently be divided into emergency and elective or short-term and long-term management. Speakers said this book would be helpful to policy-makers, stakeholders, donors, the UN agencies, international NGOs, and students of public health who want to understand our failures and successes in the healthcare sector. It is hoped that the government in each province and their policy-makers will understand the importance of this book and use it in future planning for a better outcome. The author, Prof Dr Ghulam Asghar Channa, is a retired professor of surgery, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre and former Vice-Chancellor of SMBBU, Larkana. He has held various teaching posts at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Karachi, and is presently serving as a Consultant Surgeon at Altamash Hospital, Karachi. During his extensive career, he gained a wealth of experience to address the issues prevailing in the healthcare system in our country.

Dow Medical College celebrates 75th Anniversary

MN Report

KARACHI - The Dow Medical College (DMC) recently commemorated the completion of its 75 years at a simple but colourful ceremony attracting several alumni of the institution and senior physicians of the city.



The college is named after Sir Hugh Dow, the then Sindh governor, who laid its foundation stone on Dec 10, 1945.

Recollecting his memories as a student at the college, Prof Ghaffar Billo said the college was in its infancy when he took admission in 1954. Today, it had transformed into an institution with numerous disciplines and specialties establishing its integrity within and outside the country, he said.

Dr Tipu Sultan appreciated the administration for holding a jubilee event and said, "It's like a dream meeting with old colleagues and seniors after a long time. We are grateful for this opportunity."

Highlighting the academic contribution of the college and its students, Prof Zakinddin Oonwala said the DMC had produced outstanding doctors and its students had set an example by serving the poor through the Patient Welfare Association.

Prof Iqbal Memon said the DMC had rendered great service to the country by providing quality education and clinical experience to thousands of students. "We have served people in the health sector and we will continue to do so."

Sharing how the university is meeting the current health challenges, Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) Vice-Chancellor, Prof Muhammad Saeed Quraishy said that the university was one of the few institutions that had remained on the front line in treatment of and research on Covid-19. Praising the faculty and staff, he said it was a great pleasure to observe the jubilee of the DMC with its alumni.

"The institution is now internationally recognised. It's not just a medical college, but a healthcare system with a network of affiliated institutes having over 8,000 students."

Those attending the event included Dr Shershah Syed, Dr Zafar, Dr Shaista Affendi, Dr D.S. Akram, Dr Khalid Mehmood, Dr Saad Khalid Niaz, Dr Khalid Paracha, Prof M.A. Almani, Prof Salahuddin Afsar and Prof Tipu Sultan. The last three were former DMC principals.

The event concluded with the release of 75 pigeons and the distribution of gifts.

Health department allows five hospitals to hire staff for COVID-19

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Health Department has granted permission to five major hospitals of the Sindh province to hire staff for intensive care unit (ICUs) and high-dependency unit (HDUs) to deal with the ongoing coronavirus emergency.



The Medical Superintendents of the Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi, Sindh Government Services Hospital, Karachi, Sindh Government Lyari General Hospital, Karachi, Liaquat University Hospital, Hyderabad/Jamshoro, and Ghulam Muhammad Mahar Medical College Hospital, Sukkur have been permitted to hire staff for emergency duties to counter COVID-19.

The competent authority has been pleased to accord permission for the hiring of minimum staff for ICUs and HDUs on their recommendation of ICUs and HDUs in-charges, on a contingent basis for the period of (89) days on service rendered charge renewable subject to satisfactory performance after fulfilling all formalities and clearance of committee headed by the medical superintendent and consisting of senior professors.

OCI to help ChildLife Foundation expand life-saving operations

MN Report

KARACHI - The ChildLife Foundation (ChildLife) has selected the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) to support its third party hospital management system application. The Oracle Cloud Infrastructure has helped the foundation significantly increase the utilization of the application by improving its availability and performance at a reduced cost. ChildLife has been expanding its operations exponentially since its inception in 2010. To continue this, it needed a stable, secure, and scalable platform to underpin its hospital management information

system and support this ongoing growth. The foundation has made significant savings by deploying the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure to help it future-proof its IT infrastructure instead of upgrading its on-premises solution. This is helping the foundation direct the maximum amount of funding and resources towards achieving its mission: providing quality and free-of-cost emergency healthcare to every child in Pakistan. Additionally, the Oracle Cloud will help deliver the performance and scalability needed to run demanding workloads and maximize the availability

of data and applications, as well as provide a disaster recovery site. "Transforming the future of healthcare can be achieved by leveraging the latest technology to deliver high-quality patient care at a reduced cost. While this is true globally, it specifically applies to a country like Pakistan, where resources are limited," said Amer Khan, Senior Sales Director, Technology Business, Oracle Pakistan. "We are delighted to help ChildLife Foundation build a reliable and highly available healthcare platform using Oracle's cloud offerings that will help provide patient-centered, value-



based care, enabling the foundation to continue to expand its healthcare network without worrying about the security, scalability, and performance issues." "Preventable deaths claim the lives of hundreds of children annually in Pakistan, with pneumonia alone killing 92,000 children annually. Our aim is to save as many of them as possible by making rapid access to free-of-cost and quality emergency medical care possible across the country," said Dr Ahson Rabbani, CEO - ChildLife Foundation. "Knowing that our hospital

management system application is running on a reliable, performant and secure cloud-like Oracle Cloud, gives us peace of mind and allows us to ensure that the majority of our funding goes towards delivering an efficient healthcare system." ChildLife operates in 21 hospitals with 10 state-of-the-art, model emergency rooms in all public-teaching hospitals across Sindh and Baluchistan provinces and 11 telemedicine satellite centers serving far-flung areas, providing services that typically help save one million lives annually.



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Health department appoints officials for corona emergency control room

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Health Department recently appointed officials/officers to coordinate with focal persons in the Emergency Control Room for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situated in the Committee Room on the 6th floor of the New Sindh Secretariat.



An order of the Sindh Health Department said that with the approval of the competent authority, the following officers of the Health Department had been directed to perform their duties and coordinate with focal persons in the Emergency Control Room. The appointed officials include Asad Khatri (section officer), Aijaz Ali Mahar (senior clerk), Farhan Ali (section officer), Balveer Singh Sodha (assistant), Bilal (naib qasid), Ameet (section officer), and Nasrullah Khan (senior clerk).



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One vaccine can work on all strains of COVID-19: Infectious Expert

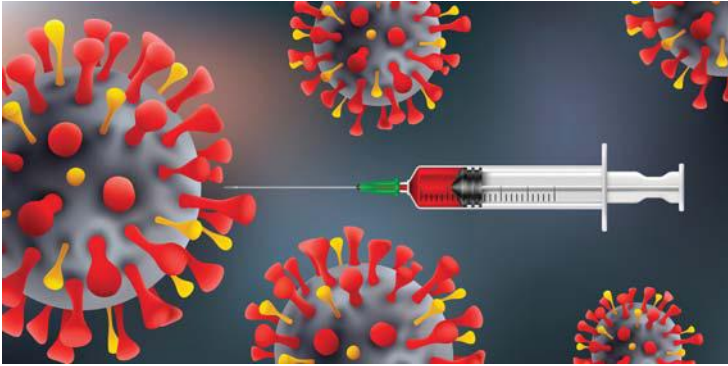
By Dr Muattar Hanif

KARACHI - The data combined regarding the strain of SARS-CoV-2 has been still unclear but the vaccine made can work effectively on all the strain of virus.

In an exclusive conversation with Medical News, Dr Najam A. Zaidi, Infectious Disease Physician at Morton Hospital, USA, shared that the clinical and epidemiological impact of 'Clades' or strains of coronavirus is unclear. He said, "Right now, the data combined is preliminary and theoretical. All the information gathered is around how the virus distributed after it left China etc. The rest is someone looking at the genetics and theorizing from patterns whether it is more infectious or transmissible based on mutation in certain genes."

Will the vaccine works on all the strains of SARS-CoV-2?

Dr Najam said, "The vaccines mostly by making a spike protein that is a pathogenic element on the surface of the virus which makes it infectious- so taking this out by immune response takes out the virus - it is unique to



virus and conserved across pathogenic strains so the vaccine works on all strains."

Is it true that different strains of SARS-CoV-2 cause different symptoms?

Debunking the theory that different strains of virus cause different symptoms, Dr Najam said, "All strains can cause all symptoms- we think symptoms different in different patients due to differences in patient genetics, age, sex, mode of transmission and distribution in the body."

Will the vaccine prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2 or mainly just protect against illness?

Dr Najam said that data has been under study to evaluate whether the vaccine help in lowering the transfer of virus among masses. He said, "The vaccines protect against

illness; but whether transmission will be affected? Some data suggestive of that."

Anti-covid vaccination theories

The theories of 5G and microchip insertion via vaccines have been circulated among social media platforms. Dr Najam said that one should not believe in such misinformation. He said, "5G and microchip theories exist for a lot dumb things - there is currently no technology that can monitor individual patients and whereabouts. Currently, larger chips to monitor pets and children present but nothing small to inject invisibly into a 5cc syringe."

"I think the cost and complexity of such a venture does not justify giving these 5G roaming chips to every individual on the planet."

Public rallies should be postponed to contain the virus: Ulema

MN Report

LAHORE - Pakistani Ulema recently unanimously agreed with the government that public rallies should be postponed considering the growing number of coronavirus cases in the country. Religious scholars met with President Dr Arif Alvi to discuss implementing coronavirus SOPs in mosques to contain the spread of the disease.

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, President Alvi said that akin to the government, religious scholars have also expressed their concern over the rising number of cases in the country during the ongoing second wave of the infection.

"It has been decided that a day of prayer will



be observed on December 4," President Alvi said. "The Ulema have also urged people to be careful when they are going to markets and other crowded places."

President Alvi said that back in April, religious scholars had fully assisted the government with the implementation of the SOPs, adding that the Ulema agree with the government's stance and have appealed to the opposition to postpone public rallies to contain the virus.

"On behalf of the state, I would like to recognise religious scholars' efforts in spreading the message of discipline without which we would not have been able to control the spread of the virus during the first wave," the president said.

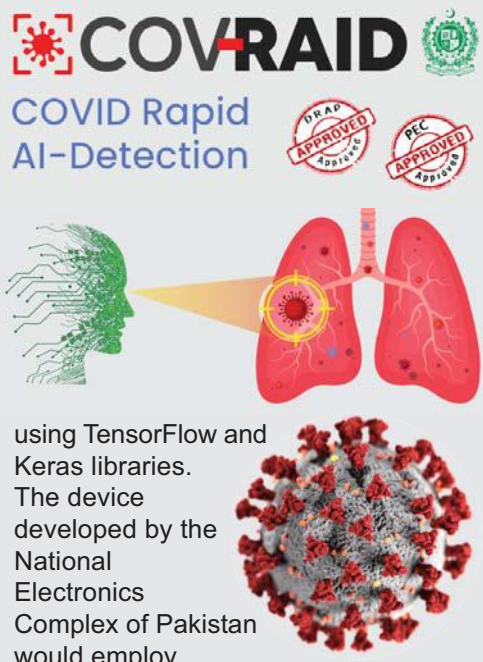
Continued on Page 08

DRAP approves locally invented device to detect COVID-19

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has recently approved registration of locally manufactured device, COVID-19 Rapid Artificial Intelligence Detection (COV-RAID) to detect the corona infection in suspected person's lungs within a minute.

A DRAP official on said that the COV-RAID was a window-based software programme based on python



using TensorFlow and Keras libraries. The device developed by the National Electronics Complex of Pakistan would employ Convolutional Neural Networks to detect the presence of COVID-19 in suspected individuals, he added. He further said the purpose of registering this device was to identify suspected patients economically using X-Rays and the product was approved for the secondary detection of COVID-19 virus.

As per the certificate handed to COV-RAID, this registration, valid for a period of five years, would be subject to the conditions specified in the DRAP Act, 2012 and the rules made there-under. Commenting on this, DRAP Chief Executive Officer, Dr Asim Rauf said that the device would significantly support the treatment of the coronavirus patients in Pakistan.

He added the device would soon be available throughout the country. He said this technology was being used by only few countries of the world, and Pakistan would start using this technology for the first time for the COVID-19 detection and treatment. The DRAP official said Pakistan would also export this device to other countries. He said this was a great success for Pakistan that such an important device had been invented at a local level to diagnose not only the infection but also its quantity.