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CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN

CONFIRMED CASES

564,077

REPORTED DEATH

12,333

SINDH PUNJAB

253,762 164,268

ISLAMABAD BALOCHISTAN

42,688 18,942

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AJK/GB

69,990 9,487 / 4,940

RECOVERED CASES

525,997

*Stats as of 15 February, 2021 - 08:08am, Provided by Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination, Government of Pakistan



PM Imran inaugurates Pakistan's COVID-19 vaccination drive

MN Report
ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Imran Khan recently oversaw the start of Pakistan's coronavirus vaccination campaign, with the first jab administered to a doctor in Islamabad. Speaking at a ceremony to mark the launch of the drive, the premier congratulated his government's health team for moving rapidly to secure the

vaccine and thanked China for donating 500,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine to Pakistan. He reiterated that the vaccine will be first administered to health workers working with COVID-19 patients, followed by the elderly in the high-risk age group. "This (vaccine) is being distributed equitably among all the provinces so no one thinks we've provided more of it to one province," he said. Prime Minister Imran urged all healthcare workers to get the vaccine, saying they were most at risk. He also appealed to the public to follow the COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) and wear a mask. "If Allah has blessed Pakistan as compared to the rest of the world, we should be grateful for that and take full precautions," he emphasised. "If there is anything that slows the spread of the virus, it is a mask."

He said the government had reopened schools and would do the same for hospitals, and that Pakistan's COVID-19 cases were "falling". But he stressed that it was important for people to follow the SOPs in order to save lives. "Look at what is happening in Europe, America - they have had more than 400,000 deaths, [...] while there is a complete lockdown in Britain," the premier said, noting that while some Western countries had shut down their economies, Pakistan's economy was functioning and restrictions were in place only in the services sector. "If you take precautions, we will open the other sectors as well." Before the premier's speech, a doctor was given the country's first COVID-19 vaccine shot as Imran and his special assistant on health Dr Faisal Sultan stood watching. Since reporting its first cases of the coronavirus on February 26 last year, Pakistan has so far confirmed more than 547,000 infections, while 11,746 people

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National Assembly panel finds discrepancies in MDCAT result

MN Report
ISLAMABAD - The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination recently recommended that Medical and Dental College Admissions Test (MDCAT) results may be cancelled and the tests may be conducted again to secure the future of students. The committee meeting held under the chairmanship of Khalid Hussain Magsi made this recommendation after a thorough discussion on the results of MDCAT. The committee was of the view that on reservations of the body regarding flaw and discrepancy in MDCAT test results, the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) president could not satisfy the committee. Discussing the allocation of seats and fee structure of private medical colleges, the committee recommended and directed that the PMC may allocate seats to private medical colleges and determine their fee structure by themselves. The committee further recommended that passing marks for admission test of MDCAT should not be more than 50%. The committee urged the PMC to hire the services of medical professionals with administrative skills instead of other professionals. The meeting was attended by Dr Haider Ali, Jai Parkash, Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz, Dr Nousheen Hamid, Dr Seemi Bukhari, Fouzia Behram, Aliya Hamza Malik,

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Sindh Government to start COVID-19 vaccination from 3 February

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Government has announced to start COVID-19 vaccination of frontline healthcare workers, including doctors, paramedics, laboratory technicians, and COVID test collection teams deputed to conduct testing door-to-door from February 3, 2021, in ten severely COVID hit districts of the province. The vaccination will be started in seven districts of Karachi, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Jamshoro. The Provincial Minister for Information, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, and Parliamentary Secretary Health, MPA Qasim Siraj Soomro, made this announcement in a recent press conference held at the Sindh Assembly Committee Room. The Information Minister stated that China was providing 500,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine to the federal government, and Sindh will get 83,359 doses. He informed that the Sindh government would receive the vaccine on January 31, 2021. Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that the Health Department, from its own resources, has allocated PKR 1.5 billion for the

purchase of different COVID-19 vaccines. Besides, the Sindh government has also allocated appropriate funds for the procurement of

meeting with the World Bank at the Chief Minister House, we requested their support for COVID vaccine procurement. On the occasion, the

Parliamentary Secretary on Health, MPA Qasim Siraj Soomro, added that they have 170,000 frontline health care workers registered with them and added that

priority would be given to those working in the ICU, laboratory technicians, and team members deputed to collect samples from door-to-door. He said that ten districts were identified based on registered data and COVID positivity ratio.

He said that the ratio of COVID positive cases in Karachi reached 22 percent, 26 percent in Hyderabad, and then district Shaheed Benazirabad. Responding to the question, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that they welcome the private sector to support us in vaccinating the people of Sindh free of cost, but the private sector should be certified by relevant authorities. On Transparency International, the Provincial Minister said that Imran Khan used to wave the reports of Transparency International

Continued on Page 08

Azra Pechuho announces honouraria for healthcare staff

MN Report

KARACHI - Minister for Health and Population Welfare Sindh, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, has announced that all healthcare staff working at the COVID-19 Adult Vaccination Center in Sindh will be receiving one basic salary as honoraria for their services. healthcare staff for their service during this time and for coming forward and volunteering themselves to help us fight the virus. I request all healthcare workers to get their vaccination done when they are informed about it. Any healthcare worker who does not get themselves vaccinated will not be allowed to work in health facilities," said Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho.



CM Sindh inaugurates COVID-19 vaccine drive

MN Report

KARACHI - Chief Minister Sindh, Murad Ali Shah, along with Health Minister Sindh, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, inaugurated the COVID-19 vaccine campaign in Sindh.



The first COVID-19 vaccine in Sindh was administered to Dr Tanveer Ahmed at the Dow University Hospital, Ojha campus, where they were present along with the Chinese Consul General, Secretary Health Sindh, Dr Kazim Jatoi, and other officials.

While talking to the media, Chief Minister Sindh, Murad Ali, and Minister Health, Dr Azra Pechuho, paid tribute to the healthcare workers and thanked them for their services by distributing shields. They emphasized the SOPs to be followed even after the vaccine is administered so that the healthcare system does not collapse.

CM Murad Ali Shah thanked the Chinese government and said that China helped Pakistan when no one else did. He also said that China had donated 500,000 doses to Pakistan, out of which Sindh received 83,000 doses, for which he is grateful to the Government of Pakistan. In his address, he said that in this initial phase, the vaccine would be given to the frontline healthcare workers only, and Pakistan is on the 80th number of receiving the vaccine.

He also said that the federal government needs to provide us with a proper timetable for the vaccines, so we also know when we will be receiving them. The vaccine campaign in Sindh will be transparent, and whoever gets the vaccine will have their details on the website. He said that the Health Department has spoken to the Chinese government and other pharmaceuticals and are actively working on procuring the vaccine themselves.

Minister for Health and Population Welfare, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, while addressing the inauguration, said that the department is trying to vaccinate all healthcare workers by the end of February. She added that we would be vaccinating 78,000 frontline workers who are currently working in the COVID wards with the initial dose. She requested all Pakistanis to get vaccinated and said that our national duty is to get vaccinated to save the people around us. After visiting the Adult Vaccination Center at the Khaliq Dina Hall in Karachi, Minister for Health, Dr Azra Pechuho, said that because the census done by the federal government is not accurate, we can face some difficulties in the vaccination campaign. The province will, however, take help from the data available at NADRA.

The Provincial Health Minister said that the virus is mutating daily, which is why it is important to vaccinate our people as soon as possible. She also said that people who have recovered from COVID-19 also need to get vaccinated.

PIMA lauds government for launching COVID-19 vaccination

MN Report

KARACHI - The Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) has stressed the need for an integrated and systematic system for corona vaccine use, saying that national harmony should be demonstrated beyond politics, regionalism and self-interest.

PIMA Central President, Dr Khubaib Shahid, and General Secretary, Dr Arshad Munir, in a joint statement said that the stages of

vaccines, it hoped that the government would not leave people alone in the journey to prevent this contagious disease.

"One of the most important aspects that needs to be addressed at this time is the establishment of an integrated and organized system in which steps are taken to transcend politics, regionalism and self-interest and to consider the life of every citizen as precious. From corona's inception, the

will receive it or not. Though answers to these questions were decided a few months ago, nothing was clear. In this regard, the PIMA urged the government to announce a clear policy in regard to vaccines.

The PIMA President and GS advised that the first supply of the corona vaccine be reserved for healthcare workers which includes all medical staff besides doctors and nurses who take care of corona patients and other



government procurement of the vaccine, booking, and delivery appeared to be slow. According to the doctors' organization, the legislation and oversight of all phases were urgently needed on the delivery of the vaccines to the private sector if the vaccine was to be kept within the purchasing power of the common man. Stringent measures were needed to prevent black marketing and rising costs.

They said that the government's performance was commendable for the launch of the current corona vaccine campaign, however, as being a representative body of doctors, the PIMA wanted to draw the government's attention to some issues in this regard.

It opined that the corona vaccine was the only ray of hope after God's mercy to prevent the epidemic. It noted that although Pakistan lagged far behind most other countries in the race for

lack of political flexibility and uniform policy did not yield the desired benefits which could have been accrued. In the new situation, it is expected that the government and all sections of society show national unity," they added.

The PIMA leaders said that although the announcements of the procurement of the corona vaccine by the central and provincial governments and the NCOC have been heard for a long time, it seemed that the government had not been able to formulate a clear policy. They noted that though the vaccine was currently the most sought after item in the world, there had seen a slowdown in all stages of order placement, booking, and delivery. Even after many months, there were questions still need not answer, such as which vaccine will be procured and when, its quantity, and whether the private sector

patients in general. This should also include those serving in the private sector. The PIMA said it could be expected that when vaccination begins, there may be unpleasant incidents of rush and overcrowding, irregularities and nepotism in vaccine centres, prevention of which was also the primary responsibility of the central and provincial governments.

The PIMA added that the government also had a responsibility to make full use of the media to dispel doubts about the effectiveness of the vaccine. Reliable, experienced, and senior doctors need to give a positive message to the people.

A helpline should also be set up to allay public suspicions. In this regard, the PIMA announced that its own public awareness campaign against COVID was not only ongoing but also being further expanded.

Pakistan facing the dilemma of COVID-19

MN Report

KARACHI - Representatives of various public and private higher learning institutions of Pakistan have shown serious concerns over higher education



policies and demanded the federal government to impose an 'educational emergency' in the country.

There is a dire need for the setup of a national consortium of all stakeholders so that Pakistan Education Policy (PEP) 2021 could be formulated as per the need of the time, they said.

The officials of the various public and private universities, higher learning institutions, and the federal ministry expressed these views while attending a seminar held at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi (UoK). The seminar was mutually organized by the Federal Ministry for Education and Professional Training, Association of Private Sector Universities Pakistan (APSUP), Inter-University Consortium, and ICCBS - University of Karachi. The seminar was conducted with the objective to provide the federal government with concrete recommendations for the formulation of the Pakistan Education Policy 2021.

Additional Secretary of Education, Federal Ministry, Mohiuddin Wani, also spoke on the occasion. Prof Dr Iqbal Choudhary, Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, delivered welcome remarks, while APSUP Executive Director, Muhammad Murtaza Noor, conducted the seminar.

The names of the higher learning institutions that attended the seminar included the Malir University of Science and Technology, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sir Syed University of Engineering, Institute of Medical Sciences, Indus University, MAJU, BBSUL, Iqra University Karachi, ILMA University, IBA, SBB Dewan University, Superior University - Lahore, ZABIST-Karachi, Dow Medical University, and ICCBS - University of Karachi.

The Federal Ministry's official, Mohiuddin Wani, said that the country was facing the dilemma of COVID-19 that had already exposed the country's vulnerability. He pointed out that everyone

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YDA demands an increase in PG posts in hospitals

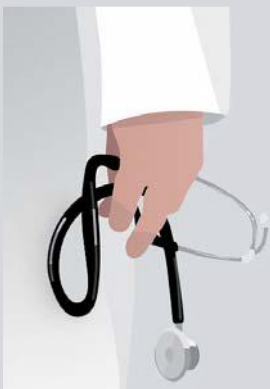
MN Report

KARACHI -

The Young Doctors Association (YDA) Sindh has demanded an increase in postgraduate (PGS) doctor posts in all tertiary care hospitals of all specialties, and these inductions should be made through the National Testing Service (NTS) to ensure merit. General Secretary, YDA Sindh, Dr Mehboob Noonari, in his statement, said that it was observed that influential students get PG posts in teaching hospitals every year instead of deserving ones. He said that the recent result of the JPMC postgraduates (PGs) entry test is an example for test cases as several deserving students have been deprived of training.

He said that the YDA Sindh stands with every oppressed PG and will make sure to increase slots in tertiary care hospitals, and such induction should be done on merit in the future.

He demanded that PG slots should be increased in all tertiary care hospitals for all specialties, and PG induction tests should be conducted by the NTS to prevail merit. Moreover, there should be a central induction policy for medical officers like in the Punjab Health Department. FCPS & MD/MS programs should be given equivalent slots in all tertiary care health facilities.



NICVD becomes the world's largest state-of-the-art cardiac healthcare network

MN Report

KARACHI - The National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), in collaboration with the Government of Sindh, has established its 29th center at Airports Security Force (ASF), Medical Centre, near Pehlwan Goth, Gulistan-e-Johar, Karachi, to facilitate patients with chest pain with easy access and free of cost services.

The NICVD has introduced a new era of heart healthcare with the inauguration of "Chest Pain Units" to serve the nation in quick, approachable areas. This service is one of its kind and is available 24/7 throughout the year.

The Centre at the ASF would be the 15th Chest Pain Unit of the NICVD in the Karachi Metropolitan. Moreover, 1

Chest Pain Unit in Tando Bago, 1 in Ghotki, 1 in Jacobabad, and 1 in Umerkot are functional, providing state-of-the-art cardiac care and treatment to patients at their doorstep totally free of cost. From a single solo hospital, the NICVD has been transformed into the world's largest healthcare network in a short span of 5 years, including ten full-fledged hospitals and 19 Chest Pain Units.

In a statement, Executive Director of the NICVD, Prof Nadeem Qamar, termed the establishment of the 29th Centre at the ASF Medical Centre as another gift for the people of Karachi, saying that this centre will link with the main NICVD, where all cardiac care facilities, including primary PCI, angioplasty,

cardiac surgeries, and other state-of-the-art facilities are available.

In these CPUs, a total of 483,089 patients have been treated, and over 10,723 lives have been saved since its inception till December 2020, which is incomparable by any means in the world.

Shortly, every district of Sindh and major towns would be equipped with the NICVD's Chest Pain Units so that people could be provided timely first aid in case of heart attacks.

He maintained and added that the NICVD, in collaboration with the Government of Sindh, is providing quality healthcare facilities to the nation free of cost, which is evident from the establishment of the Satellite Centers and Chest Pain Units in the province.

MN Report

KARACHI - Chairman, Hashmanis Group of Hospitals, Dr Sharif Hashmani, said that the Hashmanis Group of Hospitals is providing better health facilities to the people of Pakistan. Our vaccination center and laboratory have equal facilities as that of European and US laboratories who have the latest health facilities. The Hashmani Hospital is serving in the eye sector for the past few decades in Pakistan. He was talking to the media after the inauguration of the Hashmanis Group of Hospitals' newly established Diagnostic Centre with vaccination and laboratory facilities in the Zamzama area.

Famous businessman and social worker Aqeel Karim Dhedhi, Haji Rafiq Pardesi, CEO, Arsalan Hashmani, Jawad Amin Khan, former Olympian, Salahuddin, Abdul Sattar Chottani, Arif Banani, Professor Dr Tipu Sultan, and

Hashmani Group of hospitals establishes Diagnostic Centre in Clifton



others attend the inaugural ceremony. Chairman, Hashmani Group, Dr Sharif Hashmani, said that we would provide the COVID-19 vaccination facility to the people in this center with hepatitis, flu,

and other vaccine facilities in this developed laboratory. On the inaugural day of this Diagnostic Centre, we conducted all tests free of cost in the Zamzama center, he said. Dr Sharif said that this center

would work without any closure 24/7 and we have well trained qualified staff in this Diagnostic Centre to provide better quality care to the people. The people of Clifton will benefit greatly from this center, he added.

Aqeel Karim Dhedhi said that the federal government should allow private people to purchase the COVID-19 vaccines in the country instead of getting them for free, he urged. He said we are hopeful that this vaccination center will serve the people in the same way as the Hashmani Hospital is serving in the eye diseases sector in Pakistan. Haji Rafiq Pardesi said that the Hashmani Group has a different identity in the health sector, and it always provides excellent health facilities to the people in this city. Later, CEO Arsalan Hashmani conveyed his thanks to the distinguished guests and visited different sections of the newly established center with them.

IQRA University inaugurates College of Nursing

MN Report

KARACHI - The Vice-Chancellor of IQRA University, Prof Dr Wasim Qazi, recently inaugurated the IQRA University College of Nursing. He was accompanied by Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Dr Muhammad Mansoor, and Principal, Nursing College, Prof Shehla Naeem Zafar. The

markets, Dr Qazi added. In this regard, the Vice-Chancellor also stated that the IQRA University would prepare nurses and paramedical staff to appear in international nursing exams. Lauding the efforts of the Founding Chancellor of the IQRA University, Hunaid Lakhani, Dr Qazi expressed that Hunaid Lakhani, the Founding

Hussain Lakhani Hospital, where nurses would get hands-on clinical experience, he added.

The Hussain Lakhani Hospital is spread over 6 acres of land and has over 300 beds. It is fully equipped with the latest healthcare facilities, emphasized Dr Qazi.

Talking to the media, the Dean



inauguration ceremony took place at the Hussain Lakhani Hospital.

Speaking to the media after the inauguration ceremony, Prof Dr Wasim Qazi stated that the IQRA University had achieved a new milestone by laying the nursing college's foundation. Dr Qazi highlighted the importance of the nursing profession in Pakistan. He said, "In Pakistan, there is a scarcity of not only doctors but also nurses and paramedical staff, and we realized this last year during the COVID-19 pandemic."

According to the WHO, there is only one nurse for every 1500 people in Pakistan, which is alarming, added Dr Qazi. He also stressed that many nurses from Pakistan are working abroad, which has created a demand for nurses in Pakistan. With proper training and teaching, many middle-class women can also access both local and international job

Chancellor of the IQRA University, realized the importance of the nursing profession and laid the foundation of the Faculty of Health Sciences, which offers degree programs in Physiotherapy and Pharmacy, and now, we have inaugurated the College of Nursing. Dr Qazi also stated that the IQRA University, with its international nursing faculty, plans to improve nursing practice and teaching in Pakistan. He said, "With our international nursing faculty onboard, the IQRA University aims to provide top-notch training and teaching to its paramedical staff and faculty."

Speaking about the campus facilities, Dr Qazi highlighted that the nursing college is spread across 8 acres of land and offers residential facilities to nurses. The nursing college has its teaching hospital:

of Health Sciences, Prof Dr Muhammad Mansoor, said, "The nursing college is equipped with next-generation classrooms and modern labs. We are ready to deliver the education of international standard to our nursing students."

He further added that the Nursing College is registered and recognized by the Pakistan Nursing Council. The Sindh Health Department has also visited the nursing college and found it fully equipped with up to date medical labs and other facilities necessary to start a nursing program.

Speaking about the admissions, the nursing college Principal, Prof Shehla Naeem Zafar, said that admissions in nursing would commence from Spring 2021. She also highlighted that the Pakistan Nursing Council has already granted a mandatory NOC to start this program.

Sindh police officials, public prosecutors, attend short training at SFDL

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Forensic DNA and Serology Laboratory (SFDL) at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, conducted a one-day short training session for officers from the Sindh Police and public prosecutors.



The session was organized at the request of the Sindh Judicial Academy. In the session, the trainee officials attended the lectures of the forensic experts on the collection, packaging, and transportation of biological evidence for forensic DNA analysis from the crime scene. Twenty-eight participants learned the best practice of crime scene management for biological evidence collection.

Dr Ishtiaq Ahmad Khan, In-Charge, Sindh Forensic DNA and Serology Laboratory, welcomed the participants on behalf of ICCBS Director, Prof Dr Iqbal Choudhary. Dr Ahmad briefed the audience about the world-class forensic DNA facility established at the ICCBS with the Sindh Health Department's financial support.

He further said that the SFDL has the capability to deal with the full

Continued on Page 09

Health Department posts Dr Aijaz Khanzada as chief consultant

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Health Department has allowed Dr Aijaz Ahmed Khanzada, Chief Superintendent, Medical Officer Services Hospital Karachi, as Chief Consultant in the Health Department to assist with technical matters.

According to a notification, Dr Aijaz Ahmed Khanzada, Chief Superintendent Medical Officer (BS-20), Services Hospital Karachi, has been hereby allowed to work as the Chief Consultant in the Health Department to assist with technical matters of the Health Department with immediate effect till further order.



GLOBAL STUDY

C-Suite Execs experience more **mental health** challenges than their employees in pandemic

MN Report

KARACHI - Mental health challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted workers differently depending on their seniority, generation, and location according to a new report by the Oracle and Workplace Intelligence, an HR research and advisory firm. The study of more than 12,000 employees, managers, HR leaders and C-Suite executive across 11 countries, found that C-Suite executives struggled to adapt more than their employees, younger generations experienced the most burnout, and that India, UAE, China and the U.S. had the most workers reporting the pandemic has negatively impacted their mental health. C-level executives have struggled the most with adapting to remote work realities and report they are suffering from mental health issues more than their employees, but they are also the most open to finding help in AI. Fifty-three per cent have struggled with mental health issues in the workplace more than their employees (45 per cent). C-Suite execs also had the hardest time adapting to virtual lifestyles with 85 per cent reporting significant remote work challenges including

collaborating with teams virtually (39 per cent), managing increased stress and anxiety (35 per cent), and lacking workplace culture (34 per cent).

"The pandemic put employee mental health in the global spotlight, but these findings also showed that it created growing support for solutions from employers including technologies like AI," said Emily He, senior vice president, Oracle Cloud HCM.

"The way the pandemic changed our work routines makes burnout, stress and other mental health issues all too easy. Everyone has been affected in different ways, and the solutions each company puts in place need to reflect the unique challenges of employees. But overall, these findings demonstrate that implementing technology to improve the mental health of employees needs to be a priority for every business." C-Suite execs were also 29 per cent more likely to experience difficulties learning new technologies for remote work than employees; once they adjusted to the new normal, C-Suite execs were 26 per cent more likely to find increased productivity than employees. C-Suite execs are the most open to using AI for help with mental health: 73 per cent

would prefer to talk to a robot (i.e. chatbots and digital assistants) about their mental health over a human compared to 61 per cent of employees. C-Suite execs are 23 per cent more likely to see AI benefits than employees; 80 per cent of C-Suite leaders noted AI has already helped their mental health at work.

Younger workers are feeling the most burnout due to the mental health effects of the pandemic and are more open to asking AI for relief. Nearly 90 per cent of Gen Z workers said COVID-19 has negatively impacted their mental health, and 94 per cent noted workplace stress impacts their home life as well. Gen Z workers are 2X more likely than Baby Boomers to work extra hours during the pandemic, and Millennials are 130 per cent more likely to have experienced burnout than Baby Boomers. Younger generations are the most likely to turn to robots for support: Gen Z workers are 105 per cent more likely to talk to a robot over their manager about stress and anxiety at work than Baby Boomers. Eighty-four per cent of Gen Z and 77 per cent of Millennials prefer robots over humans to help with their mental health. Gen Z workers are 73 per cent more likely than

Baby Boomers to benefit from AI at work: 90 per cent of Gen Z say AI has helped their mental health at work and 93 per cent want their companies to provide technology to support their mental health. Despite seniority, generation and geographic differences, people all over the world agree that the pandemic has negatively impacted the mental health of the global workforce-and they want help. Seventy-eight per cent of workers say the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health. Seventy-six per cent of people believe their company should be doing more to protect their mental health. Eighty-three per cent would like their company to provide technology to support their mental health.

"Amidst the challenges of the pandemic, companies can use this moment as a catalyst for positive change in their organizations," said Dan Schawbel, Managing Partner, Workplace Intelligence. "While the pandemic raised the urgency for companies to start protecting the mental health of their employees, the efforts they put in now will continue to create happier, healthier and more engaged workforces in the decades to come," he added.



PM Imran innaugrates ...**Continued from front page**

have lost their lives due to the disease. The first batch of the vaccines donated by China had reached Islamabad early on Monday morning from Beijing on a special Pakistan Air Force plane.

Meanwhile, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) said the first tranche of the COVID vaccine had reached all federating units, adding that the doses for Sindh and Balochistan were dispatched by air. It said the provinces' inoculation drive will begin on 3 Jan.

Besides the Sinopharm vaccine, the government has also approved the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine and Russia's Sputnik V shot for emergency use in Pakistan. Earlier, Planning Minister Asad Umar had announced that the government had received a letter from Covax saying 17 million doses of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine would be provided to Pakistan in the first half of 2021. Out of the 17m doses, around 7m will be available by March.

Dr Nisar Ahmed Cheema, Dr

National Assembly panel ...**Continued from front page**

Samina Matloob, Dr Darshan, Dr Sobia Shazia Aslam Soomro, Ramaish Lal, and Salahuddin Ayubi as a special invitee.

Member of the committee MNA Sobia Shazia said it is beyond comprehension that the power to test the students was taken away from the provinces and handed to the centre. "If we were to get a briefing from a secretary, then we should have gone to the ministry,"

she said, adding that future of children is at stake, the people who organised the exams should come here in the committee and explain why questions were given out of course.

The latest medical and dental college entrance exams conducted under the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC), appear to have held a mirror up to the state of education across the country. According to MDCAT results, the percentage of failing students from Sindh stands at 74.51 per cent in rural and 56.39 per cent in urban parts of the province. Furthermore, out of the 25,266 students from rural and urban Sindh who participated in the test, over 16,965 were those who failed the test with less than 120 marks. Going by which, the success rate of students in rural and urban Sindh stands at a mere nine per cent and 43.61 per cent respectively. Thereby, making rural Sindh one of the most educationally impoverished regions in the country. In contrast, in KP, a majority of 74.4 per cent of students have been able to score a passing grade.

Sindh Government to start ...**Continued from page 02**

in the past but now he himself and his ministers were saying that there was nothing in the report against their tenure.

Syed Nasir Shah said that he got it translated in Urdu and Sindhi and found nowhere that report of transparency belonged to a period earlier than 2018.

Replying to another question, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah added that Sindh received PKR 70 billion fewer shares from the federal government

to date and said that Sindh's promises had not been fulfilled.

Pakistan facing the dilemma ...**Continued from page 03**

was a stakeholder in the education sector. The federal government is in need of suggestions and ideas from the stakeholders of the higher education sector so that the PEP 2021 could be devised for a better future of the country, he stated. He asked the participants of the seminar to guide us on how to improve higher education in Pakistan.

The participants demanded the government to involve all stakeholders in the formulation of educational policies in the country. They asked the concerned authorities to devise policies for the most important sector of education by realizing the ground realities of the country.

They said that various challenges have risen in current times, including, but not limited to poor infrastructure and other resource gaps, lack of sound research-based studies, very weak industry linkages, lagging behind international standards/systems/ accreditation requirements, modernization of global systems, and economies, beginning of new realities like pandemics (such as COVID), natural disasters, climate change, a shift in the nature of knowledge and design of modern economies and societies.

Ziauddin University holds ...**Continued from page 05**

to a new WHO survey. The survey of 130 countries provides the first global data

showing the devastating impact of COVID-19 on access to mental health services and underscores the urgent need for increased funding. This is why this is an important issue that needs to be discussed at global forums. "Individuals with mental illnesses, if they get timely help instead of suffering in silence, if they reach out and get the right help from the right person, not only will they be able to recover faster, but they will also contribute to becoming responsible citizens of society," she added.

Sindh police officials, public ...**Continued from page 06**

spectrum of DNA and Serology cases. The hands-on training was also arranged on the mock crime scene of the SFDL. The participants also got awareness about the significance of documentation and proper packaging and its impact on the resolution of crimes.

Pak-origin 'Cardiac Magician' ...**Continued from page 12**

therapies for repairing the heart and other organs. Hina W. Chaudhry, MD, Director of Cardiovascular Regenerative Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, is the Principal Investigator for this four-year award. An official Facebook page of US Embassy Pakistan shared her achievements on a post earlier today to mark an achievement for Pakistani women using hashtags #MuslimWomenInScience #MuslimsinUSA #USPAK #ThankYou!

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GOVT-NGOs can resolve public health concerns together under PPP: CEO Green Star

MN Report

KARACHI - Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Pakistan for the welfare of the people living below the poverty line have said that a variety of health issues such as malnutrition in children, iron deficiency in pregnant women, breast cancer, and children's contagious diseases could easily be overcome through 'Public-Private Partnerships - (PPP)' in Pakistan. While on a visit to a free medical camp held at Lyari, Chief Executive Officer, Green Star NGO, Syed Azizur Rab, said that there are NGOs in good numbers in Pakistan catering to the poor and their role could be improved and enhanced

under the auspices of the state institutions especially the government of Pakistan. There is a lack of trust in public healthcare institutions by the general public in Pakistan, which could be reduced and even reversed by patronizing the works of the NGOs, said Rab,

cancer, family planning, ophthalmologic, and dermatologic disorders and diseases. All who were treated there at the camp were also provided with medicines free of cost, he added. He said that the Green Star would continue to hold free medical camps so that the poor could be provided with free treatment and



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adding that the Green Star held a free medical camp at the Khadija Bibi Clinic which treated at least 1500 poor women and children. This is, in fact, a candid, clear manifestation of the trust in NGOs by the people. Expert medical doctors at the camp examined, advised, and treated patients with breast

medication at their doorstep. However, this noble mission could be augmented further with the active support of the Government of Sindh because it has achieved many milestones in the public health sector. The Government of Sindh should consider this free medical scheme under the umbrella of the PPP.

COVID-19 vaccination drive could not get momentum in Karachi

by Abid Lodhi

KARACHI - Healthcare professionals of Sindh seem reluctant to get themselves vaccinated at COVID-19



Vaccination Centres established in Karachi due to the rumours on social media about the efficacy of the vaccine and other social stigmas.

It was learned recently during visits to COVID-19 Vaccination Centres, doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff are not paying heed to get immunized despite the growing number of corona cases in Sindh, particularly in Karachi. The District Health Officers (DHOs) and Sindh government hospitals have also failed to convince healthcare workers to get vaccinated.

The COVID-19 vaccination drive in Karachi could not get momentum on the second day like the first day. The attendants of healthcare professionals at the COVID-19 Vaccination Centres remained low like the previous day.

As per statistics shared by the Sindh Health Department only 664 doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, and others got vaccinated on the first day at the nine vaccination centres set up in Karachi out of a total of 979 vaccinated.

The District Health Officers, medical superintendents and heads of public sector health facilities Karachi have failed to convince healthcare workers to get vaccinated.

DRAP holds training session ... Continued from page 12

granting emergency use authorization to three COVID-19 vaccines. He said that these vaccines are new and there are chances that there might be rumors among the public and fake news about the vaccine's safety. The purpose of today's session was to counter such fake news and rumors. He said that it is in the responsibility of WHO to optimize the health of Pakistani population and to minimize the risk associated with vaccines. Furthermore, it was also international requirement that necessary refresher training may be provided to stakeholders involved in AEFI monitoring. He said that WHO will continue to support such activities which primary aim is to ensure patient or public safety. Aqsa Hashmi, Assistant Director from Pakistan National Pharmacovigilance center, Division of Pharmacy Services explained the procedures of reporting. The participants were informed and trained about different methods of reporting that included reporting through E-reporting

system and MedSafety mobile application. MedSafety App was installed in the mobiles of participants, and hands on training was forwarded. In the 3rd session of the training, Expanded Programme on Immunization explained their system of AEFI surveillance. It was outlined that COVID-19 vaccination will be carried out through adult vaccination counters (AVCs) established currently at 582 health facilities across the country. All AVCs will have AEFI Focal Persons will share AEFI data on AEFI reporting forms with DHO office on daily basis and these will be compiled weekly at the office of DHO. These weekly AEFI reports will be entered in EPI MIS. Sindh and Punjab will share their data in hard format or excel sheets as the EPI-MIS is not yet rollout there. The AEFI review committee at the national level will supervise the activities related to AEFI. Final data of AEFI will be shared with PNPC through VigiFlow. In the last session, Abdul Mateen, Assistant Director, Focal Person pharmacovigilance, Pakistan

National Pharmacovigilance Centre presented about VigiFlow data entry of AEFI and ADRs. Participants were provided hands-on training on data entry in VigiFlow and how to use MedDRA and WHO drug for coding of ADRs, AEFIs and drugs or vaccines. Furthermore, the way forward for reporting of AEFI was also briefed, where it was presented that AEFI reports will be daily submitted by AEFI Focal persons to DHO office. The data will be accordingly entered in EPI-MIS by DHO office, which will be shared with DRAP through VigiFlow by Federal EPI. The session was concluded with aim to actively monitor the AEFI and timely report to concerned stakeholders in order to detect the risk as early as possible. It was decided that Focal Persons of Pharmacovigilance of the provincial pharmacovigilance centers will coordinate with Focal Persons of EPI of the Provinces and will help them in capturing the maximum information in AEFI reporting form. Similarly, if provincial pharmacovigilance centres have pharmacovigilance officers at the level of these adult vaccination

counters they should also coordinate with the Focal persons of AEFI at the adult vaccination centre and help them in collection of AEFIs. However, the flow of reporting will be the same like AEFI Focal Persons at adult vaccination counters will report AEFI to DHO office on daily basis and these will be compiled on weekly basis at the office of DHO. These weekly AEFI reports will be entered in EPI MIS. The final data will be shared by Federal EPI with DRAP through VigiFlow. Similarly, it was also discussed that EPI should at present continue with their existing AEFI reporting form. However, they should also consider to revise their EPI-reporting form online with WHO AEFI form, with the approval of their AEFI review committee. It was decided that follow-up virtual meeting should be held in the 3rd week of February most probably on 23rd of February, 2021. It was decided that Pakistan National Pharmacovigilance Centre will provide necessary logins of VigiFlow database to Federal EPI for the data entry and sharing of AEFI data with DRAP.

AKU becomes the first academic entity in South Asia to gain ACGME-I accreditation

MN Report

KARACHI - The Aga Khan University's Departments of Postgraduate Medical Education, PGME, in Karachi and Nairobi have become the first in South Asia and Africa to be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education International, ACGME-I. ACGME-I is a global accreditation body that verifies that medical education institutions, as well as their postgraduate programs for residents and fellows, meet the highest academic standards. By improving the quality of teaching, learning,

research, and professional practice, ACGME-I seeks to improve healthcare that ultimately benefits the public. To date, the ACGME-I has accredited institutions in Haiti, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Accreditation of AKU's specialized medical education programs will make it easier for the University's trainee physicians to access advanced educational opportunities at other accredited entities overseas and will enable the country's doctors to continue to gain the knowledge, skills, and



experience to treat the most complex diseases and disorders. "The sponsoring institution

applications from Aga Khan University in Karachi and Nairobi were awarded initial accreditation in a peer-driven review process..." said ACGME-I Executive Director Lorraine Lewis. "Peer reviewers from the US and other ACGME-I-accredited jurisdictions noted the commitment and professionalism that was evident in both submissions, and congratulate faculty and staff at both institutions for their accomplishment." AKU's campuses in Kenya and Pakistan are the only institutions in their respective regions to be recognized by the ACGME-I for having the infrastructure, policies, procedures, and support systems to provide top-quality graduate medical education to trainee doctors. Commenting on the news, AKU Medical College, Pakistan, Dean, Dr Adil Haider, said: "Investment in our PGME program has been a key priority over the last two years, and the ACGME-I accreditation is one of the most important initiatives that will allow us to strengthen and grow. "Our PGME programs, which are verified by Pakistan's College of Physicians and Surgeons, are noted as being one of the most important resources for high-quality education and training in the country. The ACGME-I accreditation reinforces the high-quality training

imparted by AKU to create the best possible care for patients and further advance training for specialists who are graduating." Prof Rizwan Khan, associate dean of AKU's PGME department in Pakistan, said: "AKU is known for the excellence of its PGME programs, and we continue to strive to be recognized among the world's leading providers of specialized medical education. We will now start the process to seek accreditation for our individual residency and fellowships programs through ACGME-I." AKU's medical colleges have produced over 3,800 specialist doctors to date who have helped raise healthcare standards around the world. Over 60 percent of AKU PGME graduates are currently working at public and private sector hospitals in the countries where they completed their education. More than a third of clinical faculty at AKU are graduates of its own PGME program. All of AKU's 34 residency programs and 16 of its fellowship programs in Pakistan are accredited by the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Pakistan. All of AKU's nine residency programs and four fellowship programs in Nairobi are accredited by the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council.

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Pakistan becomes first foreign military to receives Chinese vaccine assistance

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - China has donated COVID-19 vaccines for Pakistan's armed forces, a statement by the military's media affairs wing said on Monday. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had donated vaccines, making Pakistan's military the first foreign military to receive vaccine assistance from Beijing. "However, keeping with the Pakistan armed forces' traditional spirit of 'nation comes first, always and every time' it has been decided to contribute the complete donation to the national vaccination drive [for] frontline healthcare workers across Pakistan who are the real heroes fighting against the pandemic and

saving precious lives," the statement said. "Pakistan's armed forces extend their deepest gratitude to PLA and the People's Republic of China for this magnanimous donation during testing times," the statement said. Meanwhile, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar lauded the military leadership's decision to



donate the vaccines, adding that it was consistent with the government's decision of giving first priority to healthcare workers. Last week, vaccination drives against the novel coronavirus started simultaneously in all federating units of the country, days after 500,000 doses of the vaccine arrived in Islamabad as a gift from China.

Pak-origin 'Cardiac Magician' Hina Chaudhary featured among top US cardiologists

MN Report

NEW YORK - Renowned Pakistan origin cardiologist known as a 'Cardiac Magician,' Dr Hina Chaudhary, who researches cardiac regeneration in which dead heart cells after a heart can be regenerated, has been named amongst the top science fellows by National Institute of Health in the US. Her research revolves around the process of new heart muscle growth after a patient suffers a heart attack. She's been named one of the top fellows by the NIH for the National Research Service Award and is an Irving scholar. Dr Hina Chaudhary has more feathers to her cap as she has featured amongst the top-20 most influential women in science in the entire Islamic world. She is a cardiologist, scientist, and entrepreneur, who won a research grant of \$2.9 million a few months back from NIH to further her study into cardiac cell rejuvenation. The findings, it was reported, of her team's study could lead to new



Continued on Page 08

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) recently arranged one day training session on monitoring of adverse event following immunization (AEFI) of COVID-19 vaccine. Last week, 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines of SinoPharm Company donated by Chinese government has arrived in Pakistan and subsequently the vaccination drive was initiated by Prime Minister on February 2. In the initial phase frontline warriors such as healthcare professionals will be vaccinated, that will be followed by elderly people. In line with international practices and to ensure the safety of vaccines in the local population, it was felt that there was a need to strengthen the coordination and reporting mechanism among the different stakeholders involved in monitoring of AEFI. In this regard, DRAP in collaboration with WHO organized one day training session on "monitoring of adverse events following immunization of COVID-19 vaccines". Representatives from Pakistan National Pharmacovigilance Centre, DRAP, Federal Expanded Programme on Immunization, Provincial Expanded Programme on Immunization and Focal Persons of Pharmacovigilance from the provinces attended the training session. Dr. Abdur Rashid, Director, Division of Pharmacy and Head of the Pakistan National Pharmacovigilance Centre (PNPC) briefly

DRAP holds training session on COVID-19 vaccine adverse events



explained the role of the DRAP in general and the Division of Pharmacy Services in particular in the process of approval of clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines in Pakistan and subsequent monitoring of AEFIs after their registration. He explained the role and responsibilities of each stakeholder such as national pharmacovigilance centre (DRAP), Federal EPI, provincial pharmacovigilance centres

and manufacturers of vaccines. He also briefed about the current status of the pharmacovigilance activities in the country and explain how the activity would be structured in the future. Asim Rauf, CEO DRAP in his address informed that the Registration Board of the DRAP in its recent meetings has granted emergency authorization to three COVID-19 vaccines. He added the safety of these vaccines could never be comprised that is why the training session has been arranged in order to strengthen the procedure and tools for collection of AEFI and to enhance the coordination among the different stakeholders. He appreciated the efforts of Division of Pharmacy Services and PER for their efforts in the approval of clinical trials and registration of COVID-19 vaccines. He informed that Pakistan National Pharmacovigilance Centre is also harmonizing its procedure for NRA level III. He said that it is time that we must give due consideration to monitoring of the safety of these vaccines in the larger interest of the country. It was also informed that safety monitoring would not only monitor the harms of COVID-19 vaccine but will also build the public trust on these vaccines that will help smooth vaccination. World Health Organization's (WHO) Michael Lukwiya appreciated the efforts of DRAP in

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