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CORONAVIRUS IN PAKISTAN

CONFIRMED CASES

550,540

REPORTED DEATH

11,833

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| SINDH | PUNJAB |
| 248,919 | 159,311 |
| ISLAMABAD | BALOCHISTAN |
| 41,655 | 18,840 |
| KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA | AJK/GB |
| 67,803 | 9,100 / 4,912 |

RECOVERED CASES

505,818

*Stats as of 04 February, 2021 - 07:32am, Provided by Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination, Government of Pakistan



‘Pakistan all set to start vaccination drive in upcoming days’

MN Report
ISLAMABAD - The government will start vaccinating frontline health workers next week while the general population in the

age group of 65 and above will receive their shots from March. "The system for vaccination is in place. Hundreds of vaccination centres in the country will be administering COVID-19 vaccine. Inshallah the vaccination of front line health workers will start next week," Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar announced through a tweet recently. People falling in the low risk category of less than 50 years will be vaccinated in the second half of the current year. Moreover, the National Command and Operation Centre decided to open universities and primary and middle schools from Feb 1.

However, educational institutions in the four main cities Karachi, Hyderabad, Lahore and Peshawar will have to follow a pattern under which 50 per cent of the students will attend classes every alternate day. Last week, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had announced that China would provide 500,000 doses of coronavirus vaccine to Pakistan by Jan 31. An official of the Ministry of National Health Services, requesting not to be named, said, "As many as 400,000 frontline workers, who are in the top slot, have registered themselves and their vaccination will start in February. Citizens over the age of 65 years will be vaccinated in March while patients, suffering from chronic diseases and those over

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Sindh decides to allocate 95% seats in private medical colleges for locals

MN Report
KARACHI - The Sindh government has recently decided to allocate 95 percent of the seats for the local candidates in private medical and dental colleges.



In the provincial health department's notification, it was made mandatory for all Sindh's private medical and dental colleges to give admissions to at least 95% of candidates who have Sindh's domicile. The other five percent of the seats have been reserved for other provinces' students. It should be mentioned here that the Sindh cabinet earlier had decided to establish the Sindh Medical Commission (SMC) and approved that students belonging to Sindh should get at least 95% seats in the province's private medical and dental institutions. Previously in October 2020, the provincial health department had announced setting up the Sindh Medical and Dental Council in the same month. The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council had been dissolved and replaced by the Pakistan Medical Commission through a presidential ordinance in October last year.

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SMDC to be formed with stakeholders' consultation: Dr Azra Pechuho

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Medical and Dental Council is being formulated, and it will be presented for consultation with all stakeholders, said Dr Azra Pechuho, Sindh Minister for

bypass federal legislation under which MDCAT was conducted, but we can try and put some authority with the SMDC to reduce the difficulties in registration and more. She appreciated the

and leave benefits in order to attract human resources. The Minister especially appreciated the move and asked for it to be presented in the cabinet. Vice-Chancellor Prof Tariq Rafi also shared that the



Health while addressing the Jinnah Sindh Medical University's fourth senate meeting. Dr Azra, who is also the Pro-Chancellor of the University, said that the Pakistan Medical Commission bill is under study to point out the lacunae that the SMDC will seek to fill. It will cover many other areas like universities and medical colleges affiliations and recognitions, curriculum, and studies, like the PMDC. We cannot

services of the Founding Vice-Chancellor, Prof Syed Muhammad Tariq Rafi, and said that he had been an asset who worked hard to take the university from one institute to ten in his tenure. Earlier, Prof Tariq Rafi presented an overview of the past two years of the university's performance. He described the university's efforts to grant advantages to its contract employees in the form of paid leaves, increments,

JSMU was generating 60 percent of its budget from its own resources as the government grant was reducing steadily. He presented the university budget of PKR 1.9 billion with a deficit of PKR 490 million, which he was confident of overcoming with austerity measures and the government's grant. He posed the question of the university's faculty's status as the federal government
Continued on Page 08



Expert from UK highlights factors contributing to diabetes

MN Report

KARACHI - In Pakistan, Diabetes is the fourth highest disease that affects people's lives. The main issue regarding such a condition is the fact that it has been taken far too lightly by people. The general population doesn't seem to grasp the point that the lighter they take diabetes as a life-threatening disease, the harder it will hit in the future. Given that diabetes is also a genetically influential disease, one can still combat it by correcting habits.

Referring to the current situation of diabetes in Pakistan, Dr Tabinda, CCST in Diabetes and Endocrinology, South Thames, London and Consultant in Diabetes and Endocrinology, Royal Cornwall Hospital explained that diabetes is a condition in which your body is unable to handle the sugar levels or glucose.

She was speaking at a live session organised by Medical News Pakistan. The moderator for the event was Mr Yousuf Ali.

Dr Tabinda began by explaining, "Diabetes is a condition in which your body is unable to handle the sugar levels or glucose."

She then went on to explain the normal and abnormal levels of sugar intake. She blamed the cultural norms to be the cause for it.

"Letting kids eat fast food all the time just to keep them happy is not something to appreciate," Dr Tabinda explained.

Dr Tabinda discussed the risk factors that
Continued on Page 08

SHCC shuts down 45 more quack clinics

MN Report

KARACHI - The Directorate of Anti-Quackery, Sindh Health Care Commission (SHCC), visited 156 clinics last week and sealed 45 more clinics run by quacks. The Anti-Quackery teams visited 156 clinics last week in the

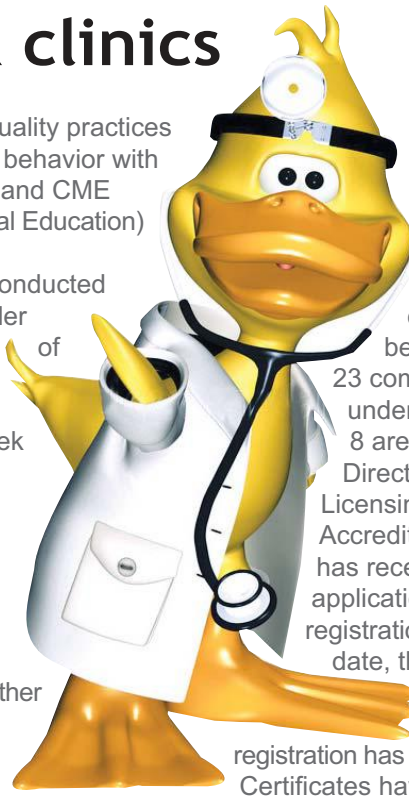
Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas divisions, where the teams sealed 45 clinics this past week. A total of 4,256 Healthcare Establishments (HCEs) have been sealed in Sindh so far.

The teams have also issued warnings to 30 HCEs for non-compliance in a week. The total warnings issued to HCEs to date are 2,174. Directorate of Clinical Governance & Training met with the team of the Aga Khan University Hospital's Microbiologists and the London School of Tropical Medicine to talk about the proposal of training physicians (GPs) of Sindh to improve their ethical practices and an overall

improvement in quality practices by changing their behavior with repeated training and CME (Continued Medical Education) activities.

The Directorate conducted consecutive smaller training sessions of homeopathic physicians and Hakeems this week as well. The first session was conducted on 20 January 2021, where 15 homeopathic doctors were trained, and in another session on 21 January 2021, Hakeems was trained on Minimum Service Delivery Standards. The Directorate of Complaints,

SHCC, has registered a total of 155 complaints to date, out of which 124 complaints have been disposed of, 23 complaints are under process, while 8 are sub-judice. Directorate of Licensing & Accreditation, SHCC, has received 15 new applications for registration this week. To date, the total number of applications for registration has reached 11,675. Certificates have been issued to 15 HCEs this week, bringing the total number of registration certificates issued to 10,181.



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Pakistan faces a shortage of trained female cardiologists: Experts

MN Report
KARACHI - One in four middle-aged adults in Pakistan is living with cardiovascular diseases, which are the leading cause of death in the country. Even though men and women are equally susceptible to developing heart diseases, the risk of dying or becoming severely unwell due to heart disease is largely underestimated in women due to under-diagnosis and under-treatment, said speakers at the 2nd Annual Cardiovascular Conference Pulse 2021 held at Aga Khan University.

Contrary to the belief that heart diseases affect only men, women are equally at risk. But they face unique sex-specific risk factors related to the early onset of menstruation, menopause, and pregnancy-related complications such as preeclampsia. Women with diabetes are also more likely to die from cardiovascular diseases than men with diabetes. "Gender matters in the manifestation of heart diseases," said Dr Saira Bukhari, an assistant professor of cardiology in AKU's department of medicine. "Awareness of the differences in the clinical presentation of heart diseases among men and women is key in tackling the burden of disease in the country." Women often report atypical



cardiac symptoms, speakers noted. Clinical diagnosis of heart disease can be challenging as they may present with atypical manifestations of angina such as shortness of breath, weakness, fainting, nausea, and non-coronary chest pain syndrome. Speakers added that women don't always recognize their symptoms as those of heart disease or generally delay seeking medical help due to cultural barriers that restrict women's access to healthcare facilities. They tend to present late in hospitals, thereby increasing their chances of subsequent heart failure and mortality. "In addition to late presentation, treatment in women is less aggressive, which results in poorer outcomes," said Professor Zainab Samad, chair of AKU's department of medicine. "Men and women may also have different preferences for their clinical care, and this has implications all the way from how facilities are set up to who offers clinical care. This is why

it is important to have a gendered lens on diagnosis and management of cardiovascular disease across the continuum of care." Speakers at the event noted that there is also a shortage of trained female cardiologists. There are just 60 female cardiologists in a country where almost 30 percent of all deaths occur due to cardiovascular diseases. Lack of awareness of heart diseases in women at various levels of the healthcare system, along with a shortage of women specialists, is a detriment to patients seeking timely care, experts said. The conference was held in collaboration between AKU Medical College's section of cardiology and the department of medicine and was endorsed by the Scientific Council of Women Heart Diseases as part of Pakistan Cardiac Society and Pakistan Hypertension League. The event was attended by cardiologists, postgraduate trainees, nurses, and other healthcare professionals.

Sindh faces a shortage of hepatitis B drugs

MN Report
KARACHI - The medicines used to treat hepatitis B are not available at the hepatitis centers run by Director General (DG) Health Sindh for a month.



Scores of newly screened hepatitis B patients have been put on waiting all over the Sindh province by consultants due to the ongoing shortage of medicines in the hepatitis centers. The newly registered patients at hepatitis centers, including the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center (JPMC), Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, and other government hospitals, are not being provided with medicines used to treat hepatitis B since one month after the end of the stock, causing great hardships for the patients. The hepatitis center at the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi is registering 25 to 35 new hepatitis B patients on a daily basis, but they have been put on hold due to the shortage of medicines used to treat hepatitis B. The shortage of drugs has badly affected

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Senior paramedical staff Ameer Hussain Shah passes away

MN Report
KARACHI - Senior Paramedical Staff and founder of the Pakistan Peoples Paramedical Staff, Syed Ameer Hussain Shah, recently passed away at the age of 56 at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC). He was on a ventilator in Ward 12 of the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) for two weeks due to multiple diseases. His funeral prayer was held at Hussain Hazara Goth, Gulshan-e-Iqbal. A large number of doctors, paramedical staff, and supporters of the Pakistan People's Party attended

his funeral prayers. The body of Syed Ameer Hussain Shah was moved to his home town in the Chakwal District of Punjab for burial. The administration and staff of the JPMC expressed their heartfelt grief at the sad demise of Syed Ameer Hussain Shah and prayed his soul rests in eternal peace, and the bereaved family finds the courage to bear this shock.



Major diagnostic machines lying idle at CHK

MN Report
KARACHI - The major diagnostic machines of the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) have been lying out of order for the past two years, and the hospital's administration has been unable to get them repaired, sources at the CHK noted recently. The important diagnostic machines of the Radiology Department, like the CT scan and MRI, have not been operational for two years. The incumbent administration of the hospital was unable to get the equipment repaired despite the lapse of two years. Similarly, modern gamma camera devices and angiography machines are also not functioning at the Cardiology



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13 more COVID patients dead, 635 others infected

by AK Lodhi

MN Report

KARACHI - As many as 13 more patients of the coronavirus died overnight, lifting the death toll to 3,888. Moreover, 635 new cases emerged after 6,041 tests were conducted.

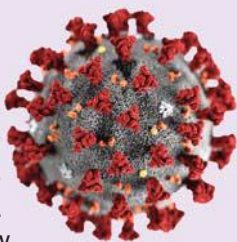
This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a recently issued statement. He added that 13 more patients of COVID-19 lost their lives, lifting the death toll to 3,888 that constituted a 1.6 percent death rate.

Shah said that 6,041 samples were tested, which detected 635 cases that constituted a 10.5 percent current detection rate. He added that so far, 2,632,545 tests have been conducted against which 240,570 cases were diagnosed, of which 91 percent or 218,688 patients have recovered, including 825 overnight.

The CM said that currently, 17,994 patients were under treatment; of them, 17,059 were in home isolation, 13 at isolation centers, and 922 at different hospitals. He added that the condition of 848 patients was stated to be critical, including 85 who have been shifted to ventilators.

According to the statement, out of 635 new cases, 491 have been detected from Karachi, including 271 from East, 134 South, 33 Central, 22 West, 17 Malir, and 14 Korangi. Hyderabad has 104, Shaheed Benazirabad 13, Jamshoro, Ghotki, Larkana, Dadu, and Badin two each, and Khairpur, Shikarpur, Sukkur, Tando Allahyar, and Mirpurkhas one each.

The chief minister urged the people of the province to follow SOPs.



NICVD responds to PTI leader Haleem Adil Shaikh's press conference

MN Report

KARACHI - The spokesperson of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) issued a recent statement refuting all allegations of corruption at the facility.

rationale behind the allegations, stating that how could be corruption rampant in an institution that had provided medical services to over 2.3 million people for free during the past year. The NICVD did not provide

"All allegations against the NICVD and its director, Prof Nadeem Qamar, are false," the spokesman contended, adding that Prof Qamar had been appointed as the hospital's head after the fulfillment of all legal



The allegations were made by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf parliamentary leader in the Sindh Assembly, Haleem Adil Sheikh, during a recent press conference. In the statement, the spokesman said that the allegations were made to serve "political interests." It further pointed out that Haleem Adil Sheikh, who had cited details from a report of the Auditor General, failed to acknowledge that the report included observations, which will be replied to once the report has been received. The Auditor-General issues such observations to all government departments. The spokesman of the NICVD further questioned the

free treatment in the past, but since 2017, the NICVD has been providing free treatment to children and adults who have heart diseases, and the hospital now provides state-of-the-art cardiology facilities 24 hours a day. Every year millions of patients benefit from this expensive treatment of heart disease, angioplasty, heart bypass, and expensive life-saving devices are also given to the patients absolutely free of cost. After shifting from the federation to the province, the Sindh government paid close attention to the NICVD, as it is a heart hospital, and it is very important to save human life here.

requirements. No one's salary in the NICVD is 6 million, there is no truth in such allegations, and the salaries you are talking about are not for one hospital but the salaries of the employees of 28 hospitals of the NICVD, including professors, doctors, nurses, and other staff. All the staff, including the director, are performing their duties 24 hours a day in this dangerous situation of COVID-19 and providing uninterrupted modern heart treatment services to the people of the country in all 28 centers of the NICVD. It stated that the opposition in Sindh should stop targeting the NICVD "just to put down the provincial government."

SBTA seals 13 illegal blood banks, issues warnings to 30 others

MN Report

KARACHI - The Sindh Blood Transfusion Authority (SBTA) has sealed 13 unauthorized blood banks across the Sindh province in 2020, while warnings were issued to 30 registered blood banks over various irregularities. The SBTA teams inspected and monitored a total of 293 blood banks in 2020, out of which 13 illegal blood banks were sealed (7 in Ghotki, three in Rohri, and three in Sukkur), while warnings were also issued to 30 registered blood banks, including 14 in Karachi, 11 in Hyderabad, two Khairpur, two in Mirpurkhas, and one in Jamshoro. Since the establishment of the

SBTA in the year 2004 till 2020, the teams had visited 402 blood banks, out of which 165 were approved among registered blood banks (32 public, 82 private, & 51 NGO). A total of 237 illegal and unauthorized blood banks were closed so far, out of which 34 were registered, and 203 were substandard/illegal (14 public, 178 private, & 45 NGO). The SBTA also conducted a seroprevalence study for evaluating the prevalence rate of COVID-19 among donors coming to the regional blood centers in the last year. The SBTA also played an active role in treating patients through convalescence plasma passive immunization

therapy during the first phase of COVID-19, where the

success rate was found to be around 74 percent. In terms of robust communication, awareness measures were provided for a voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood, convalescent

plasma, social distancing practices, and PPE utilization. There was also a special emphasis on implementing safety measures related to COVID-19 in all the blood establishments of the province.

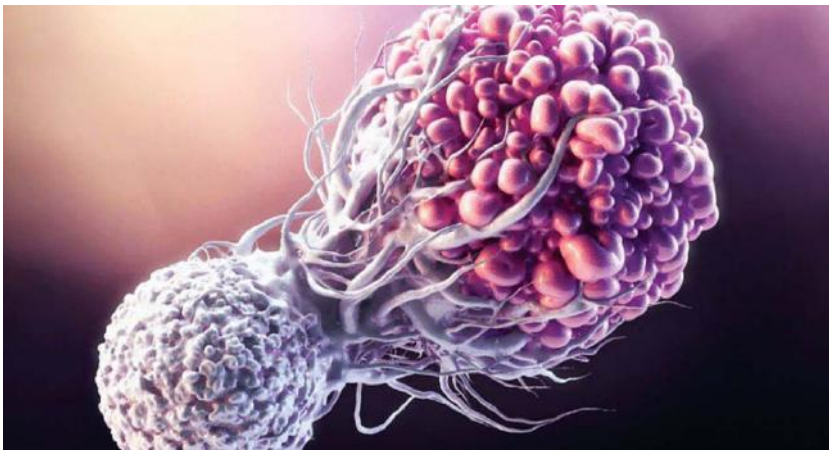


MN Report
KARACHI - "The Karachi Cancer Registry (KCR) reveals that oral cancer, a largely preventable, is the leading cancer in Karachi adult males while in female adults, breast cancer is the leading cancer followed by oral cancer. From January 2017 till December 2019, a total of 33,309 malignant cases were recorded in the KCR database comprising 17,490 (52.5 percent) females and 15,819 (47.5 percent) males. As per the KCR, this alarming scenario demands urgent attention to increasing awareness about healthy lifestyle and highly adverse effects of chewing various ingredients on one hand and screening programs for early detection of breast and oral cancer on the other."

Dr Shahid Pervez, Chair of Karachi Cancer Registry, and Professor at the Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, expressed these views while speaking at the online public awareness seminar on "Cancer and the Karachi Cancer Registry" held at the Dr Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research (PCMD), University of Karachi recently.

Prof Pervez, who is also Co-Chair

Karachi Cancer Registry records 33,309 malignant cases



National Cancer Registry, said that cancer was the second leading cause of death in Pakistan, while the same disease was the leading cause of death in developed counties. He said that the purpose of the cancer registries was to collect the cancer incidence data to provide essential information to healthcare providers, government, and researchers to identify major risk factors in a population, based on their lifestyle.

He maintained that cancer registries were the foremost requirement for 'Cancer Control Programs' in any country like 'Prevention' and 'Screening.' Cancer registries also own a purpose to prioritize government policies and fund allocation, he said, adding that in that way, the burden of cancer is reduced. He informed participants that the KCR was a part of the 'National Cancer Registry' established under the ministry of 'National Health

Services Regulations and Coordination', Islamabad. The KCR started the collection of cancer data from 2017 and invited all cancer diagnosing and treating hospitals to send data on a voluntary basis, he added. The objective of the KCR is to collect cancer data from major cancer diagnosing and treating hospitals of Karachi, he stated. He pointed out that from January 2017 till December 2019, a total of 33,309 malignant cases were recorded in the KCR database, which shows an alarming situation. This situation also reveals that in children and adolescents, bone, leukemia, and brain/CNS malignancies are most common, he said. He said, "Colo-rectal (large intestine) cancer is on the rise in both genders. Liver cancer is also a very common cancer due to a high burden of Hepatitis B & C in our population."

This alarming scenario demands the urgent attention of the concerned authorities to increase awareness about healthy lifestyles and the highly adverse effects of chewing various ingredients, Prof Pervez said.

In the face of such a high risk and burden of various types of cancers and no screening programs ever

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Dr Arshad Mahmood passes away due to COVID-19

MN Report
KARACHI - Former Program Manager of the Sindh AIDS Control Program (SACP), Dr Arshad Mahmood, has passed away after succumbing to the coronavirus (COVID-19).



Dr Arshad Mahmood passed away due to respiratory complications after contracting COVID-19. He was the former provincial manager of the Sindh AIDS Control Program. His funeral prayers were held after Namaz-e-Zohar at the Ghazali Masjid, Block 13-D, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi. The burial ceremony will be held at the Sakhi Hasan graveyard.

Till now, 184 healthcare professionals have lost their lives due to COVID-19 in Pakistan, out of which 157 doctors and 27 other medical staff members. Forty-eight doctors have lost their lives during the second wave, which started in November.

In Sindh, as many as 56 healthcare workers have died due to the coronavirus across the Sindh province so far, out of which 50 were doctors, and six were other medical staff.

Federal Government adds three hospitals to MTI hospitals

MN Report
KARACHI - Three major public sector hospitals of Karachi have been added to the Federal Medical Teaching Institutes (MTI) list, which will be run under the Board of Governors (BoGs) after notification. The Federal Government has added three hospitals, including the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, and National Institute of Child Health in the Federal Medical Teaching Institutes Ordinance, 2020 (Ordinance No XII of 2020).

The notification issued by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination (NHSRC), with the approval of the cabinet as conveyed vide cabinet division memorandum No. Dy 1044 (S) 2020-cab dated 29 December 2020; the following institutions have been added in the schedule of Federal

Medical Teaching Institutes Ordinance, 2020 (Ordinance No XII of 2020). The names of institutes are Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), National Institute of Child Health (NICH), and Sheikh Zayed Postgraduate Medical Institute (SZPGMI), Lahore. As MTIs, they will be allowed to charge fees from the patients visiting to run the hospitals' expenditure. Earlier, the hospitals took no or nominal charges against providing medical services to the public. According to the bill of Medical Teaching Institutes, the objective of this shall be to

undertake all functions required for providing health facilities and healthcare services to the people and to provide medical education and training and research and to perform such other functions as are assigned to it by the government from time to time. Under the MTI Act, the teaching institutes shall retain receipts from various fees levied by the government or the board to meet the recurring and development expenditure of medical teaching institutions. It said that the employees who opt for private practice within the premises of the hospital clinics, imaging facilities, and laboratories of the MTI might be entitled to such an increase in salary, adjustment, bonuses, or other benefits as the board may approve. It said that all employees hired after this act's commencement shall be expected to perform their private practice within

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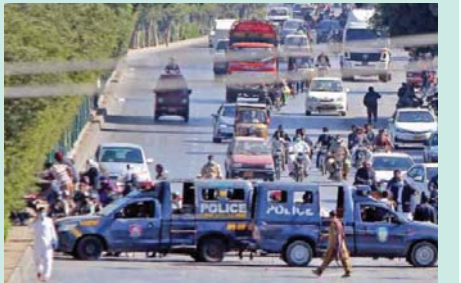


Women and children need special attention: Former MPA, Mehtab Akbar Rashdi

Sindh forms committee to ensure supply of oxygen to hospitals

MN Report

KARACHI - The supply of oxygen to public and private sector hospitals of Karachi has been resumed following the Sindh Health Department's intervention.



In this connection, the Sindh Health Department has constituted a three-member committee to ensure an uninterrupted supply of oxygen to the hospitals during a protest or sit-in. The committee members will ensure coordination among law enforcement agencies, hospital administration, and oxygen suppliers. The names of the three-member committee are Dr Dabeer Ahmed Khan, Dr Sikander Ali Memon, and Dr Syed Ashiq Hussain Shah. Earlier, oxygen supply and distribution companies temporarily suspended the supply of oxygen to Karachi's hospitals, including the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK), due to

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MN Report

KARACHI - Medical professionals recently examined and treated scores of villagers of Rehri Goth and surrounding areas in a free medical camp at the Sindh Government Hospital arranged by Green Star, a non-governmental organization. The medical team, including the specialists of various diseases, provided treatment and medicine to the poor patients of the area. Several patients were referred to hospitals, while others were asked for follow-ups. The doctors and medical experts carried physical examination of patients suffering from hypertension, diabetes mellitus, breast cancer, and tuberculosis. Rehri Goth is among the most dilapidated and ignored area of Karachi which populous is living beneath the poverty line and hence the Green Star's free medical camps at Rehri Goth was not less than a blessing. A mother of an ailing child who came to the free medical camp told that her son was ill for the



past many days, but she could not visit any physician as she seriously lacked the money to bear the medical expenses. "Doctors at the free medical camp thoroughly examined and treated her son, free of cost, and with due respect. Another female patient said that she was examined at the free medical camp by doctors, and the free medical camp organizers also gave her free medicines. Green Star CEO, Aziz Ur Rab, said that the Green Star is at the service of the deserving people of Pakistan for the past three decades. The Green Star's services in the family planning

and family health sector have no parallel, and hence we are confident for a brighter and healthier Pakistan ahead. Former Member of Sindh Assembly, Mehtab Akbar Rashdi, said that the free medical camp was very important for the residents of underprivileged areas. She said that hundreds of women in the camp showed the dismal affairs of the health system in the area. She urged the area elders to look after the health of women and children. It is pertinent to mention that the Green Star maintained all necessary SOPs at the free medical camp.

MN Report

KARACHI - The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sindh, recently held a coordination meeting with renowned religious scholars and other stakeholders at a local hotel to raise awareness about climate change. The event was presided by the Chairman, PRCS-Sindh, Mrs Shahnaz S Hamid, and attended by former Federal Minister and Chairman of Al-Mustafa Welfare Society, Haji Muhammad Hanif Tayyab, Mufti Muhammad Zubair, Maulana Abdul Waheed, Qazi Ahmed Noorani, Maulana Muhammad Salafi, Maulana Tanveer-ul-Haq Thanvi, Dr Mohsin Naqvi, Secretary Council of Islamic Ideology, Dr Ikram ul Haq, besides a large number of renowned religious scholars from different sects and people from different professions. The purpose of this coordination meeting was to get the encouragement and consent of religious scholars to help inform the public about climate change and its effects through their Friday

PRCS invites religious scholars to raise awareness about climate change



sermons and other addresses. Chairman Mrs Shahnaz said that the PRCS had joined the cause with the collaboration of its partner national Society-Germany and adopting the community-based approach. "Our commitment to climate change starts with the launch of the Climate Advocacy and Coordination for Resilient Action (CACRA), which gives our

team an opportunity to ascertain our unified commitment for working on climate change adaptation," she added. "We must increase resilience against it by building adaptive capacity, but the most imperative part is to develop awareness campaigns for behavioral change," said the Chairman. She further said that Karachi and

Lahore are among the most polluted cities in the world with the worst air quality, so now climate change should be everyone's priority. She uttered that the role of Ulema in raising awareness about climate change is of paramount importance and will be even more critical in the years to come. This challenge could be effectively tackled if the Ulema sensitizes the public in their Jumma sermons. "Based on the discussion with participants, we can start a climate change campaign by adopting a park," suggested Chairman, PRCS-Sindh. Mufti Zubair and others also appreciated the PRCS initiative and vowed to provide assistance in any way that they could. "The PRCS deserves the highest accolade for creating awareness among the public about this serious environmental problem," said Haji Muhammad Hanif Tayyab. The coordination meeting was

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Shortage of clean drinkable water is creating health social issues: Khalid Iraqi

MN Report

KARACHI - A great amount of water is wasted every day in our society, and unfortunately, concerned departments and masses are not taking this matter seriously. According to research conducted recently, there will be an acute shortage of water in Pakistan in the next ten years.

The governmental offices, non-governmental organizations, civic activists, and the public have to create awareness about the proper use of water, and federal and provincial governments should work together to save water supplying sources and supplies. We have to educate our children about the importance of water in our lives, and the public should realize that we should not use wastewater. Awareness about the proper use of water among children from a young age would help society in preventing water wastage in the country.

These views were expressed by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Karachi, Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi. He stressed the importance of water in the lives of humans at the inaugural ceremony of the water filtration plant, which has been established near the new building of the Faculty of Pharmacy. The Ehsan Development Welfare Organization has set-up the



water filter plant.

The KU VC, Professor Dr Khalid Iraqi, observed that the shortage of clean drinkable water begets health and social issues. He stressed the need for an efficient water management system is badly needed, coupled with an effective water monitoring system.

He said that practical steps are needed to be taken to stop the wastage of water so that we could conserve water, which is one of the most precious commodities of nature. The Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, Prof Dr Faiyaz Vaid, Prof Dr Muhammad Harris Shoaib, Students Advisor, Dr Syed Asim Ali, Chairman, Department of Computer Science, Dr Nadeem Mehmood, and others were also present on this occasion.

Earlier, the Honorary Secretary,

Ehsan Development Welfare Organization, Mushtaq Ahmed Qureshi, briefed the audience about the background of the trust and said that they are working on a project to make Tharparkar district self-sufficient and green.

He said that the charitable organization has so far installed 88 reserve osmosis plants, open a school, and conduct a couple of free medical camps while distributed a good amount of facemasks and food supplies during the Covid19 pandemic in different locations of Tharparkar.

"This is our first project at the University of Karachi, and we have installed an ultra-water filtration plant for students, visitors, and others. We hope that we will be able to do more projects with Karachi University."

KU declares the result of MBBS Final Professional Annual Examination 2020

MN Report

KARACHI - The University of Karachi recently announced the results of the MBBS Final Professional Annual Examination 2020.

The KU Controller of Examinations, Dr Syed Zafar Hussain, mentioned that 297 candidates were registered, and all of them appeared in the papers. He said that 238 candidates were declared pass while the overall pass percentage was 80.13 percent.

According to the gazette issued, Ayesha Liaquat, daughter of Syed Liaquat Ahmed, seat number 203049 and a student of Karachi Medical and Dental College, secured 1472 marks out of a total of 1800 marks and clinched the first position.

Moreover, Aiman Razzaq, daughter of Abdur Razzaq, seat number 203046, and a student of the KMDC, bagged the second position with 1434 marks. Furthermore, Iqra Faraz Hussain, daughter of Faraz Hussain, seat number 203103, and a student of the KMDC, scored 1423 marks and the third position.



More than 24,568 dog bite cases recorded in Karachi

MN Report

KARACHI - Up to 24,568 dog bite cases were reported across Karachi in 2020, while the Sindh Health Department has failed to establish vaccination centers in district hospitals for dog-victims in the city.



In Karachi, out of 24,568 cases, 8,467 dog-bite cases were recorded at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), around 7,887 at the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi, 6,000 at the Indus Hospital Karachi, 1,614 at the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (SMBB) Institute of Trauma, 300 cases at districts hospitals, and 300 at the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) run hospitals of the city.

Rabies is a preventable disease transmitted to humans through the bite of infected animals. However, in Pakistan, 99% of the cases are caused by dog bites.

Presently, dog bite cases are being reported from slum areas of Ibrahim Hyderi, Korangi, Surjani, North Karachi, New Karachi, Baldia, Orangi, Keamari, Mehmoodabad, Liaquatabad, Federal B Area, Sohrab Goth, Orangi, Golimar, and other areas. The Sindh Health Department and Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) have miserably failed to launch a comprehensive campaign against stray dogs. Presently, the anti-rabies vaccination is available at Karachi's three major health facilities, including the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (SMBB) Institute of Trauma, and Indus Hospital (TIH) free of cost for dog bite victims.

In Sindh, an estimated 175,000 dog-bite cases were registered across the province in 2020, out of which the majority of dog-bite cases were reported in Karachi, Naushero Feroze, Khairpur, Kashmore, Dadu, and other districts.

In 2019, a total of 195,761 dog-bite cases were registered in Sindh.

Pakistan all set to start ...

Continued from front page

50 years, will get the shots in the next phase. The population below 50 years and included in the low-risk category will get the vaccine in the second half of 2021," the official said.

SMDC to be formed with ...

Continued from page 02

According to the data shared by the NCOC, 1,563 Covid-19 cases and 74 deaths were reported in a single day. assumes control of the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center, the Sindh Medical College's teaching hospital. Dr Azra Pechuho termed it a problem and said that her ministry was constantly working to find a solution to the faculty status after the institution's transfer under federal control.

Expert from UK highlights ...

Continued from page 02

contribute to Diabetes. She told that with age, the tendency to deal with sugar slows down once grown up. The family history matters in diabetes. She said that type 1 diabetes can be traced early and hence by exercising regularly, the risk can be reduced. Literacy regarding the topic is of high importance. Urban areas are riskier than rural areas because of food complexity and less physical work. "Every 1 out of 4 people in Sindh are either suffering from diabetes or likely to be diabetic soon." She also addressed Type1 and Type2 of diabetes. Explaining that she's not anti-corporate but fast-food chains are not healthy at all. "Don't call it McDonald's, call it McDiabetes. 2000 calories per meal. By walking just 1km, you only burn 50 calories." Lastly, Dr Tabinda stressed upon healthy eating and abstained from the intake greasy dishes.

Sindh faces a shortage of ...

Continued from page 03

the program performance as the treatment of hepatitis patients is very costly, and a large number of patients cannot afford the treatment cost of this viral disease. The shortage of medicines has put the lives of scores of patients suffering from hepatitis C at risk. More than 61 treatment centers were established at teaching, district, and tehsil hospital levels (screening, vaccination diagnostic & treatment services provide), while 17 screening and vaccination centers are working (screening and vaccination against hepatitis B). Media Coordinator, Hepatitis Prevention & Control Program, Sindh, Khurram Khan, was not available for comments.

Major diagnostic machines ...

Continued from page 03

Department, CHK, for one and a half years. The hospital's management was unable to get this costly equipment repaired. The CHK is Sindh's largest teaching hospital where a score of patients is brought every day from different areas of Karachi and the Sindh province; some of them need diagnostic services such as angiography, CT scan, MRI, and gamma camera. Patients are being referred to other public and private sector hospitals due to the non-availability of diagnostic facilities. Private labs charge heavy fees for conducting diagnostics tests, which are out of the reach of poor patients. The Sindh government has allocated 24 million for the maintenance and repair of out of order equipment each year. The repairing charges of diagnostics machines, however, have increased with the passage of time and increase in dollar value.

Therefore, the CHK's management was unable to get these diagnostic machines repaired. Acting Medical Superintendent, CHK, Dr Noor Muhmmad Soomro, was not available for comments.

Karachi Cancer Registry ...

Continued from page 05

in place, government attention at both provincial and central levels is urgently needed at preventive, early diagnostic (screening) as well as interventional levels, he added.

Federal Government adds ...

Continued from page 05

the MTI hospitals, clinics, imaging facilities, and laboratories and shall not be permitted private

Committee formed to ...

Continued from page 06

practice outside these facilities. the ongoing protests and sit-ins at different places in Karachi. The delivery vehicles are unable to reach the hospitals for supplies. An administrative official at the Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) said that the oxygen supply had been restored to the hospital following the Sindh Health Department's intervention and the formation of

PRCS invites religious ...

Continued from page 06

the committee in this regard. also attended by the representatives of the NED University, Karachi University, Bahria University, Institute of Oceanography Pakistan, Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Pakistan Boy Scouts Association, Federal Civil Defense Training School, Pakistan Meteorological Department, Urban Forest, and senior journalists from various media houses.

9-month-old conjoined ...

Continued from page 12

Gastrointestinal Surgery and Neurosurgery amongst those on stand-by. The nature of this surgery is such that it demands double the amount of resources and concurrent functioning of all teams to manage and save both lives. Prior to the surgery, an advanced imaging and three-dimensional prototyping were used to fully understand the nature of the conjoining, the expertise required, and the necessary reshuffling of the resources. Dr Zafar Nazir, Paediatric Surgeon at the Aga Khan University Hospital, led the efforts to perform the 8 hour-long surgery with the support of over 50 clinical and administrative staff. 'This is a rare surgery that the Hospital has performed for the second time. A tremendous amount of effort went into the rearrangement of the resources, both inside and outside the Operating Room. But, at the end of this procedure, it was a joy to watch both the boys get a new life', commented Dr Zafar Nazir as he recalled the events of the treatment. The role of the anaesthesiologists was of great significance, as they had to ensure that both the babies were stable throughout the procedure. "The perioperative care of Ayan and Aman was like no other. As they were joined at the torso and facing each other, a complete incision required flipping them around. Therefore, we could not have intubated them, as it would have hampered the movement. We opted for an intravenous drug and ensured a thoroughly managed sedation throughout the procedure," recalled Dr Faisal Shamim, Anaesthesiologist at Aga Khan University Hospital. Israr Ahmed and his wife are not the only parents to have gone through this pain and suffering of finding the appropriate treatment. There are many such families who are in dire need to receive compassionate care and high-quality treatment. Treating such rare and critical health conditions offers the experts at the Aga Khan University Hospital a commendable opportunity to test and enhance our systems and capabilities and learn to design innovative health solutions for our people in Pakistan. But, most importantly, it gives us immense joy to watch distressed families go back home healthy and happy with their loved ones. go back home healthy and happy with their loved ones.

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08 MEDICAL NEWS / January 15-31, 2021



Province-wide anti-polio drive to begin from Jan 11th

MN Report

KARACHI - The Emergency Operation Centre for Polio in Sindh will launch a province-wide polio campaign from 11th to 17th January 2021 as part of the national immunization campaign. This is the first campaign of 2021 in which polio drops will be given to approximately 9 million children under five years of age across 29 districts of the province. Out of these, more than 2 million children reside in Karachi. To further boost immunity, children from six months to five years of age will also be provided with vitamin A drops.



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. Spokesperson EOC Sindh said, "As a result of the pandemic, the gap in campaigns from March to July coupled with routine immunization being affected left an immunity gap in children which we have been addressing through back to back monthly polio campaigns since August 2020. Thanks to these campaigns, Sindh has not

reported a single case of polio since July 2020. If we continue with the same momentum, we will soon see significant results. While we deal with the pandemic, we must also deal with childhood immunization to prevent childhood diseases. Children can be saved from childhood diseases like polio through vaccination, and we seek the media's help to raise awareness regarding this."

Pakistan is one of the two polio-endemic countries in the world along with Afghanistan and has so far reported a total of 84 polio cases in 2020, out of which 22 cases are from Sindh. The Pakistan Pediatric Association, Pakistan Medical Islamic Medical Association, medical experts across the world, and major religious scholars in Pakistan and across the region endorse the oral polio vaccine, which is the safest and most effective for not only preventing polio but also eradicating it from the environment. Ten billion doses of this vaccine have been given to 3 billion children across the world in the last decade, as a result of which 10 million polio cases have been avoided.

29,924 medico-legal cases reported in 2020

MN Report

KARACHI - As many as 29,924 cases were reported in the medico-legal centre of Karachi in 2020, out of which 13 exhumations and 1292 postmortems were also carried out last year. According to the annual report issued by Police Surgeon Karachi, Dr Hamid Z Jillani, a total of 29,924 people were reported in the medico-legal centers of Karachi, including three major centers, namely the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center, Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi, and Abbasi Shaheed Hospital.



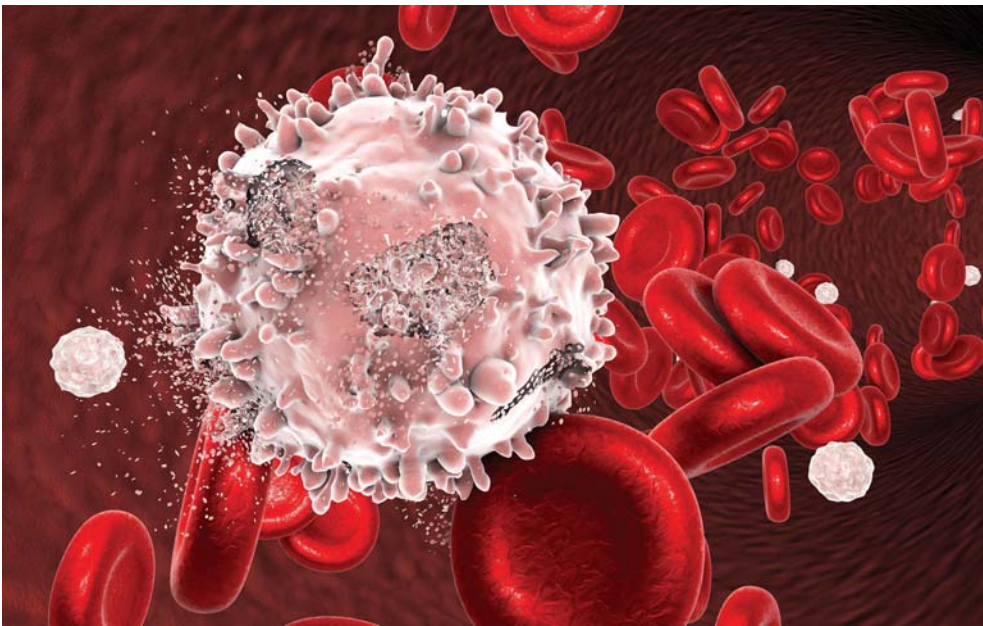
While six minor medico-legal sections, which are the Sindh Government Lyari General Hospital, Sindh Government Hospital Saudabad, Sindh Government Hospital Liaquatabad, Sindh Government Qatar Hospital Orangi, Sindh Government Hospital Korangi, and Sindh Government Hospital New Karachi. As many as 29,924 medico-legal and postmortem examination cases were registered in the city in 2020, out of which 17,726 medico-legal and 1292 postmortem cases. 13 exhumation cases were also conducted in 2020. In Karachi, out of the 17,726 medico-legal cases, 15,839 were of hard and blunt assault, 538 were of sharp-edge, 1100 were of firearms, 12 of explosives, 17 of human-bite, 23 of maltreatment, five dog-bites, and 197 were brought dead to the centers in 2020. Around 2,495 road traffic accidents, 25 railway accidents, 402 burn incidents, 169 fall incidents, four factory accidents, and 962 dead bodies were reported in Karachi's ML centers in 2020. 316 sexual assault active (rape) and 455 passive cases reported last year. 101 (active) sodomy and 137 passive cases were also reported. As many as 6,369 poison cases, 291 of alcohol, 28 of drugs, and 323 miscellaneous cases were reported in the last year as well. The report further stated that 612 people died during treatment in different hospitals.

AKU wins grant to develop new, targeted stem cell treatments for blood cancer

MN Report

KARACHI - AKU's Centre for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research (CRM) has won a PKR 14.5 million grant to develop new, targeted therapies for a common form of blood cancer in adults, Philadelphia chromosome-positive (Ph+) leukemia. The chromosomal defect is known as the Philadelphia chromosome (Ph) is a characteristic of two important types of blood cancer: chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) and Ph-positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia (Ph+ ALL). The Ph chromosome is formed when chromosomes 9 and

22 break and exchange portions, which leads to the creation of a new fusion gene called BCR-ABL. This fusion causes certain blood cells to become cancerous. It is the main cause of the common CML in adults and accounts for 20 percent of (Ph+ ALL) cases globally. Generally, Ph+ ALL and advanced forms of CML are difficult to cure, and survival rates are poor. AKU researchers are looking to develop a more effective treatment by engineering stem cells to deliver a protein with therapeutic properties, the Helix 2 peptide, directly to the leukemia cells. "We aim to combine



approaches in molecular medicine and stem cell therapy to create a more precise form of treatment

that has the potential to be more convenient for the patient since it will only require a single administration," says Dr Afsar Mian, the principal investigator of the study. "We are anticipating that once introduced, the stem cells will grow and multiply in the body and continuously release the therapeutic peptide to target the cancer cells, inhibit their growth, and ultimately cure the disease." Existing medicines for Ph+ leukemia are currently proving to be less effective due to growing drug resistance and the problem of side effects. Also, they require life-long use by the patient and do not lead to complete eradication of the

disease. This innovative use of stem cells will also generate evidence on the use of peptides to provide targeted treatment in other types of cancers. In the future, Dr Mian and his team seek to combine their expertise in cancer research as well as drug design and delivery to see if such approaches can be used to treat other diseases. The grant was awarded by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan's flagship National Research Programme for Universities that seeks to support high-level and promising scientific research projects that demonstrate strategic relevance and impact to local industry and society.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr Dur-e-Naz posted as Secretary SBTA

KARACHI - The Services General Administration & Coordination Department Sindh has posted Dr Dur-e-Naz Baloch as Secretary Sindh Blood Transfusion Authority (SBTA) until further order. As per the notification, Dr Dur-e-Naz Baloch, Senior Female Medical Officer (BS-19) having seniority number 61 presently posted as the Chief Woman Officer, Dr Ruth K M Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK), has been transferred and posted with immediate effect and until further order as Secretary (BS-20), Sindh Blood Transfusion Authority, Karachi, as per the government's approved policy for the general cadre doctors (BS-19) of the Sindh Health Department.



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Japan provides \$4.57m grant for procurement of polio vaccine doses

MN Report

ISLAMABAD - The Government of Japan Wednesday provided a grant of US \$4.57 million for procurement of 23.66 million doses of oral polio vaccine as part of its support to Pakistan's polio eradication interventions during 2021. Notes of the grant were signed and exchanged between the Government of Japan and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF. The grant will allow the polio programme to reach under 5 years-old children living in districts with persistent poliovirus transmission. Pakistan is facing a challenging situation in polio eradication; 84 polio cases (as of January 19, 2021) have been reported including 26 from Balochistan, 22 each from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, and 14 from Punjab. The Polio programme suspended vaccination activities from March to mid-



July 2020 due to COVID-19, but services resumed after mid-July to get vaccines to children countrywide. "Polio eradication is a top priority of the government. We are grateful to the people and the Government of Japan for their generous support and am confident that we will reach the milestone of polio-free Pakistan and world," said Dr. Faisal Sultan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services. Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Matsuda Kuninori paid tribute to frontline polio workers engaged in

vaccination amid the prevailing risk of COVID-19. He added, "Japan remains committed to assisting the people of Pakistan, together with UNICEF, in their goal of eradicating polio." "With this grant aid, JICA will assist vaccine procurement for children living in high-risk areas through UNICEF. The road towards polio eradication might be rough and steep. However, we will fight together for the earliest realization of polio-free Pakistan," said Shigeki Furuta, JICA Chief Representative.

Nation observes World Braille Day

MN Report

LAHORE - World Braille Day was observed throughout the country on Monday. Braille is a code consisting of symbols, written in the form of raised dots. It added immense value to the lives of the visually-impaired. It is pertinent mention that World Braille Day is observed on 4th January every year because it's the birthday of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille system.



Unfortunately, visually impaired people in Punjab do not have access to books in Braille. Braille has been included in article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a form of necessitating "education, freedom of expression and opinion, as well as social inclusion".

General Secretary Pakistan Association for the Blind, Usman has written several letters to the Special Education Department since 2018 for the provision of books in Braille to the visually impaired children in Jhang but the requests were always turned down. "Braille books are not even there in government schools for the blind," Usman says from Jhang.

MN Report

KARACHI - Muhammad Ayan and Muhammad Aman, born as conjoined twins to Mr and Mrs Israr Ahmed, are now living as two healthy children after a successful separation surgery performed at the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH).

Ayan and Aman were Omphalopagus type of conjoined twins, in which the bodies of the two are joined at the abdomen, and several internal organs are shared, including the liver and sometimes the intestines. The twin brothers shared a small portion of the liver.

'It was an extremely challenging journey for us. Before coming to AKUH, I had a dream that Ayan and Aman were separate. That dream gave me hope', said Israr, while narrating the events that led him to AKUH. 'My family and I were convinced that this hospital is for the rich, and receiving treatment from here will never be a possibility

9-month-old conjoined twins successfully separated



for us. But, my Allah made the Aga Khan University Hospital the savior of my children. The doctors told us to not worry about the

expenses, as they would be taken care of by the Patient Welfare Program.'

Conjoined twinning is a very rare

congenital anomaly, with an overall incidence of 1 in 250,000 births. This happens when the embryo does not separate successfully in the mother's womb to form two individuals. Although there is no known cause for the conjoining, it can be diagnosed early in the pregnancy through an ultrasound. While surgery is the only method of separating the conjoined twins, it cannot be performed in all cases. This is because the complexity of and survival rates after the surgery depends primarily upon the joining sites and the type and number of organs joined internally. To perform this exceptionally difficult surgery, a multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled healthcare experts came together to meticulously plan and organize their efforts. These teams included doctors, nurses, and technicians from Paediatric Surgery, Anaesthesiology, and Radiology amongst active participants, and

Continued on Page 08