

(311th Session)

SENATE SECRETARIAT

“QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS AND THEIR REPLIES”

to be asked at a sitting of the Senate to be held on

Thursday, the 27th May, 2021

***Question No. 1 Senator Mohsin Aziz:**

(Notice Received on 6/04/2021 at 12:40 PM) QID: 37775

Will the Minister for Communications be pleased to state the tentative completion dates of construction work of Hakla-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway (M-14) and opening of the same for general public?

Mr. Murad Saeed: The overall physical progress of Hakla to Dera Ismail Khan Motorway project is 87.80 % and the tentative completion date of the project is September, 2021.

***Question No. 2 Senator Nuzhat Sadiq:**

(Notice Received on 8/04/2021 at 12:40 PM) QID: 37780

Will the Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is fact that FIFA has suspended the membership of Pakistan Football Federation due to years of infighting among groups of football in the country;*
- (b) whether it is also fact that Government has failed to end the infighting of different groups under the Pakistan Football Federation; if so, the reasons thereof; and*
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government for settlement the issue once and for all expeditiously?*

Dr. Fehmida Mirza: (a) Yes. FIFA has suspended Pakistan Football Federation.

(b) Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) is an autonomous organizations, which run its affairs under its own Constitution and Government does not interfere in their internal affairs to adhere to the FIFA protocols. However, owing to the present controversy and suspension of PFF, Government is facilitating by engaging all the faction of Pakistan Football Federation & Normalization Committee in dialogue. Meetings of Federal Minister with both the groups have been held and hopefully, the issue will amicably be resolved shortly.

(c) The Government is whole heartedly pursuing the different factions to give up their intransigence to resurrect Football in Pakistan through dialogue, so that embarrassment caused by FIFA decision could be mitigated and to ensure early and amicable settlement of the issue. The Government in line with the International protocols of avoiding interference in sports is seriously attempting to resolve this controversy through dialogue.

***Question No. 3 Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi:**

(Notice Received on 12/04/2021 at 12:45 AM) QID: 37479

Will the Minister for Communications be pleased to state the amount spent on the repair and maintenance of National highways and Motorways during the last two years with province wise details?

Mr. Murad Saeed: The summary of amount spent on different maintenance activities on national Highway and motorways network during last Two (02) years is as follows:

Province	Year 2018-19	Year 2019-20
Rs. in Millions		
Punjab	4,549.74	5,206.89
Sindh	3,268.66	4,989.49
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	1,503.95	3,380.54
Balochistan	1,228.51	3,621.37
Gilgit-Baltistan	1,309.60	195.22
Muzaffarabad AJK	513.03	528.24
Grand Total	12,373.49	17,921.76

Allocation Head wise Summary and detail of the schemes are enclosed at **Annex-A**.

Annex-A

NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY							
Maintenance Expenditures made on National Highways & Motorways - Y 2019-20 Till to date							
Maintenance Category	Punjab	Sindh	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Balochistan	Gilgit Baltistan	Muzaffarabad	Grand Total
Routine Maintenance	935.35	884.57	698.28	1,622.02	110.40	154.76	3,470.03
Periodic Maintenance (Functional & Structural Overlay)	2,668.02	2,460.17	2,112.29	1,386.14	39.55	72.83	6,070.98
Rehabilitation	188.73	808.15	-	112.25	2.20	-	922.60
Special Maintenance	540.26	270.80	196.33	136.18	-	160.28	763.59
Emergency Maintenance	35.63	23.98	20.28	6.26	7.39	5.68	63.59
Highway Safety	173.61	172.64	178.48	246.37	35.68	43.88	677.04
Toll Plaza & Weigh Station	358.34	303.98	-	-	-	-	303.98
Geometric Improvement	-	-	-	8.43	-	39.35	47.78
Bridges/Culvert	306.96	65.20	174.88	103.73	-	51.47	395.28
Grand Total	5,206.89	4,989.49	3,380.54	3,621.37	195.22	528.24	17,921.76

***Question No. 4 Senator Seemee Ezdi:**

(Notice Received on 12/04/2021 at 1:30 AM) QID: 37791

Will the Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of laws framed for regulating medical profession in Pakistan and controlling the acts of health care providers for implementing the right of life as enunciated in Article 9 of the Constitution of Pakistan at present; and*
- (b) whether these laws also include medical negligence compensation, if so, its details?*

Reply not received.

***Question No. 5 Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi:**

(Notice Received on 12/04/2021 at 12:45 PM) QID: 37785

Will the Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination be pleased to whether it is a fact that COVID-19 vaccine prices are high as compared to international market, if so, the reasons thereof?

Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination: Maximum retail prices of new chemical entities/biological entities are fixed on the basis of prices-in reference countries. However, no reliable information about international prices for private market in reference countries of vaccines for Covid-19 are available. Therefore, the Federal Government approved a mechanism to fix prices of these vaccines on the basis of landed cost plus formula and the same has, been notified *vide* SRO. 307(I)/2021 dated 18th March, 2021 on the basis of import price of each vaccine for private market as under:

Finished Import:

Trade Price = Landed cost + mark-up @40%.

Finished Form and local labelling & cartonning:

Trade Price = (Landed cost + packaging cost) + mark-up @ 40%.

MRP shall be calculated by grossing up trade price to provide for retail discount @ 15%.

Drug Pricing Committee of DRAP considered MRP fixation of two vaccines for Covid-19, namely; Gam-Covid-Vac Solution manufactured by FSBI N.F. Gamalaya RCEM of the Ministry of Health of Russia and Convidecia Vaccine manufactured by CanSino Biologics Inc., China in its urgent meeting held on 19th March, 2021 and determined MRPs of these vaccines on the basis of above approved mechanism. Recommendations of the DPC were forwarded to the honourable Prime Minister through Ministry of NHR&C.

Federal Cabinet on 01-04-2021, approved MRP of only Convidecia Vaccine @ Rs. 4,225/- per injection which was notified in the official Gazette *vide* S.R.O. 467(I)/2021 dated 9th April, 2021 whereas the Cabinet deferred price fixation of drug “Gam-Covid- due to interim order of the Sindh High Court at Karachi. Later, in pursuance to the direction of the Sindh High Court, the Federal Cabinet on 27-04-2021 approved MRPs of Gam-Covid-Vac Vaccine @ Rs. 8,449/per pack of 2 injections, Rs. 16,560/ per pack of 4 injections, Rs.40,555/ per pack of 10 injections, Rs. 81,110/ per pack of 20 injections.

It is relevant to mention that prices being circulated on social media are incorrect and misleading. Prices of vaccines for public procurement and private market are always different.

***Question No. 6 Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi:**

(Notice Received on 12/04/2021 at 12:45 PM) QID: 37789

Will the Minister for Communications be pleased to state the progress made so far on the Hakla-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway and tentative date of completion indicating the proposed facilities for commuters on the said Motorway?

Mr. Murad Saeed: The overall physical progress of Hakla to Dera Ismail Khan Motorway project is 88.72% and expected completion date of the project is September 30, 2021.

As per policy of the Motorways, four (04) Nos. Service Areas (North Bound and South Bound) shall be constructed to facilitate the road commuter.

***Question No. 7 Senator Mohsin Aziz:**

(Notice Received on 12/04/2021 at 12:52 PM) QID: 37790

Will the Minister for Communications be pleased to state the steps taken by the Government during the last three years for bringing Pakistan post at par with private courier service providers?

Mr. Murad Saeed: When present government took over the charge, by the time the Pakistan Post Office Department was incurring huge loss. Its deficit was soaring, revenue was dwindling, and public trust was at the lowest ebb. By compressing the existing services and undertaking a range of new initiatives, the new government turned the tide, reduced deficit, and sharply increased the revenue.

- From September, 2018 to March, 2021 Pakistan Post earned revenue amounting to Rs. 37,559 million while in the same period previously (From Feb.2016 to August, 2018) total revenue earned was Rs. 29,692 millions.
- Pakistan Post earned Rs. 7,867 million more revenue despite the disastrous impact of Covid-19 on all businesses since March, 2020.

Apart from the above, for significant increase in revenue, a range of new initiatives were taken some of which are as following:—

- Same Day Delivery
- Mobile App - Track & Trace Facility
- Pick-up Service for Bulk Mail
- Standardized Packaging Material
- EMS Plus for delivery of parcels and Packets at major overseas destinations in 72 hours
- Opening of Postal Rest Houses for General Public
- Expansion of Postal footprint through Digital Franchise Post Offices
- Foreign Remittance Initiative in collaboration with NBP at 500 locations
- Introduction of Electronic Money Order (EMO) doorstep delivery

Initiatives in Pipeline - Short / Mid Term Strategies/ Plan

- Digitalization of Financial Services.
- Partnership with Bank of Punjab of loans through Pakistan Post for DFPOs.
- Renting out of Postal Properties.

Long Term Strategies / Plans

- Establishment of Pakistan Post Logistics Company.
- Pakistan Post Digital Bank.
- Restructuring of Pakistan Post.

***Question No. 8 Senator Seemee Ezdi:**

(Notice Received on 14/04/2021 at 10:15 AM) QID: 37805

Will the Minister for Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) *the profit and losses statement of the Pakistan Post during the last 3 years; and*
- (b) *the steps being taken by the incumbent Government to improve the performance of Pakistan Post, indicating also the details of E-services being provided by this department to the people?*

Mr. Murad Saeed: (a) • Pakistan Post is service delivery organization. The basic mandate of Pakistan Post is to provide Postal Services throughout Pakistan, irrespective of cost involved.

- Pakistan Post has to fulfill the Universal Service obligation, under which each and every citizen of Pakistan is entitled to receive Postal and allied services wherever he resides in Pakistan.

- The operational expenditure of Pakistan Post is 16% of the total expenditure. Major portion of expenditure is employee related *i-e.* pay and allowances and Pension.

- No profit and loss statement is prescribed for Pakistan Post.

- From September, 2018 to March, 2021 Pakistan Post earned revenue amounting to Rs.37,559 million while in the same period previously (From Feb.2016 to August, 2018) total revenue earned was Rs.29,692 millions.

- Pakistan Post earned Rs.7,867 million more revenue despite the disastrous impact of Covid-19 on all businesses since March, 2020.

(b) New initiatives have been taken some of which are as follows:—

New Initiatives Accomplished

- Same Day Delivery
- Mobile App - Track and Trace Facility
- Pick-up Service for Bulk Mail
- Standardized Packaging Material
- EMS Plus for delivery of parcels and Packets at major overseas destinations in 72 hours
- Opening of Postal Rest Houses for General Public
- Expansion of Postal footprint through Digital Franchise Post Offices.
- Foreign Remittance Initiative in collaboration with NBP at 500 locations.
- Introduction of Electric Money Order (EMO) doorstep delivery.

Initiatives in Pipeline - Short / Mid Term Strategies / Plan

- Digitalization of Finance Services.
- Partnership with Bank of Punjab of loans through Pakistan Post for DFPO's.
- Renting out of Postal Properties.

Long Term Strategies / Plan

- Establishment of Pakistan Post Logistics Company.
- Pakistan Post Digital Bank.
- Restructuring of Pakistan Post.

***Question No. 9 Senator Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur:**

(Notice Received on 14/04/2021 at 3:55 PM) QID: 37816

Will the Minister for National Health Regulations and Coordination be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is fact that in our country an increasing resistance to broad -spectrum anti-biotics is being observed, if so, its causes; and*
- (b) whether it is a fact that the Government , with the support of WHO has recently completed the development of national action plan to address anti-microbial resistance, if so, the details of initiatives taken in this regard by the Government?*

Minister for National Health Regulations and Coordination:

(a) Yes; as a matter of fact, resistance to broad spectrum anti-biotics is being observed in Pakistan.

Pakistan is amongst largest consumer of anti-biotic Resultantly, there is an increasing resistance to even broad spectrum anti-biotics.

Major causes include be following:

- Self-medication more than 51% of population.
 - A large number of quacks who prescribe anti-biotics.
 - Availability of over the counter anti-biotics.
 - Inappropriate prescription of anti-biotics.
- (b) • Yes; the Government of Pakistan (GoP), in collaboration with WHO and One Health stakeholders including federal and provincial departments, has developed a National Action Plan (NAP) for Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR).
- GoP has fully endorsed the Global Action Plan for AMR adopted *vide* Resolution WHA 68.7 during the 68th WHA and support the goal of Global Action Plan to ensure continuity of successful treatment and prevention of infectious diseases with effective and safe medicines that are quality-assured, used in a responsible way, and accessible to all who need them.

- National AMR Strategic Framework has been developed in Pakistan with “One Health” approach. This framework has been developed through a consultative process and is in line with the five strategic objectives of the WHO Global Action Plan for AMR
- In compliance to WHA resolutions, the Ministry of NHR&C has developed and endorsed the National Action Plan for AMR in Pakistan. This process ensured national ownership as well as the commitment of all relevant stakeholders.
- The primary objective of the National Action Plan (NAP) developed through collaborative efforts of concerned stakeholders is to ensure that current anti-microbials remain effective as long as possible, minimise the cost associated with their indiscriminate use and commitment of all relevant stakeholders. The NAP is in line with the objectives of Global Action Plan including minimising the utilization of anti-biotics.
- Seven (07) strategic priorities of the NAP are as below:
 - i. Development and implementation of a national awareness raising and behavioural change strategy on anti-microbial resistance;
 - ii. Establishment of an integrated national AMR surveillance (human, animal usage and resistance monitoring);
 - iii. Improve prevention & control of infections in health care, community, animal health, food, agriculture and environment;
 - iv. Update and enforce regulations for human and veterinary anti-microbial utilization;
 - v. Phase out use of anti-microbials as Growth Promoters and provide appropriate alternatives (such as prebiotics, probiotics);

- vi. Integration of AMR in all public health research agendas including research on vaccines; and
- vii. Estimation of health and economic burden of AMR for decision making.
- A PC-1 on AMR worth Rs. 361.9 Million for a period of three (03) years has also been approved and its implementation is under way.

***Question No. 10 Senator Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur:**

(Notice Received on 15/04/2021 at 12:30 AM) QID: 37817

Will the Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps being taken by the Government at present to deal with the third wave of Covid-19 in Pakistan; and*
- (b) the names of those international bodies which have applauded the efforts made by the incumbent Government in dealing with the pandemic since its outbreak during the last year?*

Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination: (a) Pakistan is currently passing through a third wave of Covid-19 that started in the end of February 2021. In response to the surge of cases, the M/o NHSR&C with direct support of the National Command and Control Center (NCOC), has been coordinating with all stakeholders at the Federal and provincial levels and wills development partners to enhance the capacities of health Systems including:

- i. Implementation of diverse Set of SOPs.
- ii. Further enhancing the COVID testing capacities across the public and the private.
- iii. sectors.
- iv. Acquisition of vaccines and establishing of Adult vaccination centers across the country.

- v. Establishment of and strengthening of robust recording and reporting mechanisms for patients, health systems information, vaccination progress and updates).
- vi. Ensuring adequate capacities in the system for uninterrupted supply of Oxygen.
- vii. Monitoring of disease pattern with reference to the dimensions of time, locations hospitalizations and critical care needs, provisions of supplies and materials/consumables in the health system (Protective equipment, medicinal supplies, critical care equipment, health workforce enhancement and skills enhancement of the workforce).

The Ministry is continuously striving to further enhance its capacities across various sectors to be able to handle this pandemic efficiently; and be able to provide respectful-accessible-equity based and quality health services and non-health services to the people. In view of the emerging learnings and new scientific literature, the M/o NHSR&C has made efforts to inculcate such learnings in the country's response. During the third wave of Covid-19, further standard operating procedures have been developed include;

- i. Guidelines for Vaisakhi (Baisakhi) Festival during COVID-19.
- ii. Guidelines for Sinovac.
- iii. Guideline for Surveillance of Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) – COVID-19.
- iv. Guidelines for Efficient Utilization of Oxygen for Covid-19 Patients.
- v. Guidelines for Aitekaf during COVID-19.
- vi. Guidelines for Juma-ul-Wida for prevention of Corona Virus.
- vii. Guidelines for Prevention of SARS -CoV-2 Transmission during Eid-UI-Fitr.
- viii. Guidelines for Shab-e-Qadar during COVID 19.

- ix. Guidelines for Mass Gathering for Youm-e-Ali Procession during COVID-19.

For limiting public interaction, the key interventions taken by the Government of Pakistan are as follows;

- i. Spring break in view of COVID 19 and continuation of closure on 12th March 2021.
- ii. Extension of educational institutes vacations in view of COVID 19, and cancellation of exams on 24th March 2021.
- iii. Deployment of para military and army for enforcement of SOPs in support of LEAs on 21st April 2021.
- iv. Inter-provincial ban on road transport on Saturday & Sunday on April 10 2021.
- v. Decision of Eid break & lockdown from 8-15th May 2021.
- vi. Decision of limiting intercity and inter-provincial transport on Eid-ul-Fitr from 8-16th May 2021.
- vii. Reduced in-bound international flights to 20% capacity from 8-16th May 2021.

Acquired and administering the vaccine to vulnerable population in phase manner. Firstly, COVID-19 vaccine is prioritized for all **healthcare workforce directly** involved in handling/ treating COVID-19 patients across health in Pakistan. Secondly, the **remaining health care workers and adults of age group 65 and above**. Third priority would be given to **general population** based on vaccines supply, however, **excluding populations below 18 years and pregnant women**.

To ensure availability of adequate Oxygen across the health system; and its provision for those requiring low flow oxygen, high flow oxygen or requiring ventilator-based care, Oxygen is diverted from the industrial sector towards health. A set of recent decisions to augment the Oxygen availability for COVID-19 patients in the country are as;

- i. Import of Liquid Oxygen (6,000 Metric Tonnes) on 29th April 2021.
- ii. Further import of 5,000 oxygen cylinders on 29th April 2021.
- iii. Further import of cryogenic oxygen tanks (20) on 29th April 2021.
- iv. Further import of small oxygen production plants that can be deployed at health facility level and able to furnish oxygen for 30-35 beds per day on 29th April 2021.
- v. Diversion of industrial oxygen to health sector (Misri Shah plant closure) on 29th April 2021.

The health system has had continuous efforts to allocate the adequate number of ventilators and oxygenated beds as per the requirements/needs. During the surge experienced during November-December 2020 and from March 2021 additional beds were added/allocated for COVID 19 accordingly that includes an overall addition of nearly 2,700 hospital and critical care beds across the country.

The COVID 19 data is being continuously used to conduct predictive mathematical and statistical modelling-based derivations (SIR model and SEIR mathematical models with statistical validation) to estimate the time-wise “expected” number of cases in the time frame to come (two weeks and one-month projections). These projections are revised on a twice weekly basis and presented regularly at the NCOC and NCC.

(b) WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in a media briefing on 7th September 2020 lauds Pakistan for suppressing Covid-19 while keeping economy afloat and included Pakistan among seven countries that world can learn about how to fight future pandemics.

***Question No. 11 Senator Mushtaq Ahmed:**

(Notice Received on 19/04/2021 at 10:35 AM) QID: 37837

Will the Minister for Federal Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture be pleased to state:

- (a) *the details of “Policy for PhD Degree Programmes 2021” issued by HEC; and*
- (b) *whether it is a fact that under the said policy, the criteria of eighteen years education (MPhil, MS) has been reduced to sixteen years of education (BS) for enrollment in PhD programmes, if so, the steps being taken for improvement in research quality in PhD programmes?*

Mr. Shafqat Menmood: (a) The details of Policy for PhD Degree Program 2021 issued by HEC is attached at **Annex-I**.

(b) The minimum requirement for admission in PhD program shall be completion of the BS (or equivalent) degree. To avoid confusion, it is clarified that this and the remaining criteria in this policy are only minimum requirements, and universities are free to establish their own admissions framework that may vary by discipline, provided it satisfies the minimum conditions set forth in the policy. Keeping in view that doctoral studies are intended to be rigorous and demanding, universities need to ensure that entrants to doctoral programs are capable of handling the academic rigor required to complete a PhD degree. Further, in admitting students to PhD programs, this policy encourages admissions committees to take a substantive approach to ascertain (a) applicants’ commitment (or level of interest) in pursuing the PhD program and (b) their preparedness in terms of previous academic training that will enable them to succeed in the program. Prior to entry into a PhD program, the student shall have been awarded his or her BS/MS/MPhil or equivalent degrees. In case of those students who have previously completed a graduate degree in the same discipline (MS/MPhil or equivalent), the university shall notify a policy (which may vary by discipline) with objective criteria allowing such students to receive credit for prior coursework for not more than 50% of the total credit requirement of the program. The steps being taken for improvements in research quality in PhD Programmes are attached at **Annex-II**.

(Annexures have been placed on the Table of the House as well as Library)

***Question No. 12 Senator Mushtaq Ahmed:**
(Notice Received on 19/04/2021 at 10:35 AM) QID: 37835

Will the Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination be pleased to state whether there is any proposal

under consideration by the Government to vaccinate whole population of Pakistan against Covid-19, if so, the details thereof, indicating also the duration by which the whole population of Pakistan will be vaccinated against Covid-19?

Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination: Pakistan's response to COVID-19 in terms of policy and implementation has been commended globally. Introducing COVID-19 vaccines require key national decisions to be made regarding vaccine deployment and rollout. In view of above, the Government of Pakistan has developed the **National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP)** for Covid-19 vaccines.

This supports in protecting national interest and assure that deployment of the COVID-19 vaccination in Pakistan is based on epidemiological evidence, assessed through rigorous scientific review by considering population safety and ensuring equitable distribution.

M/o NHR&C has a **National Focal Point for COVID-19** to lead the process of vaccine deployment in the country. The Director General Health office is leading the vaccine supply chain management and administration of vaccine. Provinces being the key stakeholder in the implementation of the deployment process have been taken on board both by the Ministry and EPI.

Based on the current epidemiological data available for COVID-19 for year 2020, the NCOC have recommended conducting **vaccination sessions by prioritizing population into three groups**. Firstly, COVID-19 vaccine is prioritized for all **healthcare workforce** directly involved in handling/ treating COVID-19 patients across health in Pakistan. Secondly, the **remaining health care workers and adults of age group 65 and above**. Third priority would be given to **general population** based on vaccines supply, however, **excluding populations below 18 years and pregnant women**.

Pakistan's approximate population is taken at 234 million people. It is an accepted fact globally that people under the age of 18 will not require a vaccine. If we take out population below 18 (49.2%) and pregnant women (2.8%) from the total population, that leaves roughly 112 million people as total eligible population. Public health experts believe a population reaches herd immunity if 70% of the people have either been infected with the virus or administered with the vaccine. In approximate

numbers, this means that **78 million population will be targeted for COVID-19 vaccination on Pakistan by the end of 2021**. In 2022, this target will increase to vaccinate all population.

***Question No. 13 Senator Nuzhat Sadiq:**

(Notice Received on 23/04/2021 at 11:45 PM) QID: 37847

Will the Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan is one of top countries worldwide with a heavy burden of tobacco-related diseases as per the latest report of World Health Organization, if so, the details thereof;*
- (b) whether the Federal Government has estimated the average death toll due to tobacco-related diseases of in the country, if so, the details thereof; and*
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government for early detection, treatment and creation of awareness about such diseases in the country and controlling the availability of tobacco products?*

Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination: (a) As per the latest report of WHO, **“WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2019”**. Non-communicable diseases’ (NCDs) cause more than two thirds of deaths in developing countries, and tobacco use is a major risk factor for NCDs such as cancer and heart disease.

Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study 2019 estimates highlight that the total NCD related deaths are **55 percent** of all deaths in the country in 2019.

In Pakistan, prevalence of various NCDs such as cancer reported in 2019 were 4,108,977 cases while prevalence of cardiovascular diseases & COPD was 8,628,206 and 6,085,677 cases respectively. Both of them are the leading diseases as a result of excessive use of tobacco or tobacco related products. Such high prevalence of heavy burden of tobacco-related diseases includes

Pakistan as one of the top countries worldwide in context of tobacco related complications.

(b) According to Global Burden of Disease Study (2019), death toll caused by factors attributable to tobacco is 163,671 in Pakistan.

(c) As a signatory to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), Pakistan is fulfilling its international commitments by taking demand and supply reduction measures.

New pictorial health warnings have been issued for cigarette packs and the size of new warning has been increased from 50% to 60% of the outside of the cigarette packs. According to WHO's latest report, Pakistan ranks **50th** globally and **5th** in Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and is one of the highest achieving countries in 2018 for using Graphic health warnings on tobacco product packages.

Development of National Tobacco Control Strategic Framework is also in process that is designed to provide a policy framework leading to reduction in the prevalence of tobacco use in Pakistan.

Moreover, Pakistan has adopted an effective way to reduce tobacco use in Pakistan by raising the price of tobacco products through increased excise tax.

***Question No. 14 Senator Irfan-Ul-Haque Siddique:**

(Notice Received on 3/05/2021 at 12:05 PM) QID: 37854

Will the Minister for Federal Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture be pleased to state:

- (a) the percentage of increase in the number of scholarships for the financial assistance of needy literary persons, poets, their widows and children during the last three years as it was increased from 500 persons / families to 1000 persons / families in 2017; and*
- (b) the percentage of an increase in the amount of monthly scholarships during the last three years as it was increased from Rs. 7000/- to Rs. 13000/-?*

Mr. Shafqat Mahmood: (a) At present number of monthly stipends/scholarships is Rs. 1000 for needy writers, poets, men of letters and bereaved families of deceased writers.

Applications are constantly received by Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) from writers' community all over the country.

Applications, received from monthly stipends are placed before the Provincial Stipend Scrutiny Committee, comprising of writers and constituted with approval of the Board of Governors (BoG) of PAL.

The Committee considers applications in accordance criterion, approved by the BoG and makes its recommendations for final approval by the Chairman, PAL.

The details of stipends given to needy writers during last three years is as under:

S#	Financial Year	No. of Stipend holders
1.	2018-19	890
2.	2019-20	902
3.	2020-21	922

(b) Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), Islamabad intends to increase rate of monthly stipend from Rs. 13000/- to Rs. 15000/- from financial year *i.e.* 2021-22. The BoG has approved this proposal.

PAL has also initiated a proposal for issuance of Health Cards to 1000 Writers, Scholars, Poets and Bereaved families of deceased writers. At present the case under process with NADRA, State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan for verification and further action at their end **(Annex-I)**.



PAKISTAN ACADEMY OF LETTERS
National Heritage & Culture Division
Government of Pakistan



Dr. Yousuf Khushk Meritorious Prof.

Ph.D (Pak) & Post Doc. (Germany)

Chairman

No. PAL/CH-1(1)/2020
January 13, 2021

Dr. Faisal Sultan

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Health
Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination

Islamabad.

Subject: **ISSUANCE OF HEALTH CARDS FOR WRITERS AND THEIR BEREAVED FAMILIES**

Dear Sir Amlam o Alekum!

Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) is a premier statutory organization of the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, working for the promotion of Pakistani literature, literary activities and the welfare of writers' community. In order to achieve its goal Pakistan Academy of Letters executes a wide range of literary activities throughout the calendar year. The PAL has extended its literary activities as well as has undertaken certain new initiatives in this regard.

2. Writers are the most precious segment/asset of any society, who are playing vital role for the social development and betterment. Hence, it becomes the social responsibility of relevant sector of the society to work for the welfare of writers by providing them assistance from different perspectives. The PAL is paying financial assistance to old, ailing and needy writers and bereaved families of deceased writers in the shape of monthly stipends @ Rs.13,000/- per month to 1000 writers and their families of the country.

3. It has been noticed that due to limited earnings/sources of income the writers and poets are facing financial problems and unable to get treatments as it's beyond their reach. While keeping in view, the cost of living which has increased manifold, the Board of Governors of Pakistan Academy of Letters in its meeting held on October 15, 2020 recommended the health cards (only 1000) for the writers, poets and their bereaved families to further enhance their financial capacity. This endeavor of issuance of 1000 health cards for literary circle will not only uplift the poor families of writers' community but will convey a healthy and positive message from the present Government too.

4. In the light of above, the honorable Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Health is requested to kindly issue necessary instructions to the concerned quarters for issuance of health cards to only 1000 old, ailing and needy writers, poets and bereaved families of writers and poets all over the country (list of writers and poets & families is attached herewith). An early action in this regard will highly be appreciated.

5. This needs your special kindness.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature)

(Dr. Yousuf Khushk Meritorious Prof.)

Copy for Information:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Islamabad.



F. No. 6-3/2019-SSP-(Tech)

Government of Pakistan

SEHAT SAHULAT PROGRAM (SSP)

M/o National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination

Off: 407 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex, F-5/1, Islamabad.

Off: 051-9216815. Fax: 051-9103878.

'SAY NO TO CORRUPTION'

Islamabad, the 19th April, 2021.

Subject: **ISSUANCE OF HEALTH CARDS FOR WRITERS AND THEIR BEREAVED FAMILIES.**

Please find enclosed herewith letter with its enclosures, received from Pakistan Academy of letters, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, on the subject cited above.

2. NADRA is requested to identify the following items from the enclosed data of Pakistan Academy of letters, Islamabad.

- a. How many CNICs are beneficiaries of Sehat Sahulat Program.
- b. How many CNICs are not beneficiaries of Sehat Sahulat Program.
- c. How may CNICs are enrolled in Sehat Sahulat Program.

3. Same data in soft form will be emailed to NADRA. It will be appreciated if requested information be provided at earliest.

(Dr. Faisal Rifaq)
Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Mohsin Rizvi.
Head of PMU
NADRA,
Islamabad.

CC:

- **Mr. Tahir Ramzan Bhatti.** Project Manager, NADRA, Islamabad.
- **Mr. Mir Nawaz Solangi.** Assistant Director (S&A), Pakistan Academy of letters, Government of Pakistan, Sector H-8/1, Islamabad.



F. No. 6-3/2019-SSP-(Tech)
Government of Pakistan
SEHAT SAHULAT PROGRAM (SSP)
M/o National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination
Off: 407, 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex, F-5/1, Islamabad.
Off: 051-9216815. Fax: 051-9103878

'SAY NO TO CORRUPTION'

Islamabad, the 21st April, 2021.

Subject: **ISSUANCE OF HEALTH CARDS FOR WRITERS AND THEIR BEKEAVED FAMILIES.**

Please find enclosed herewith letter with its enclosures, received from Pakistan Academy of letters, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, on the subject cited above.

2. SLIC is requested to identify the following items from the enclosed data of Pakistan Academy of letters, Islamabad.
 - a. How many CNICs are beneficiaries of Sehat Sahulat Program.
 - b. How many CNICs are not beneficiaries of Sehat Sahulat Program.
 - c. How may CNICs are enrolled in Sehat Sahulat Program.
3. Same data in soft form will be emailed to SLIC. It will be appreciated if requested information be provided at earliest.

(Dr. Faisal Rifaq)
Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Muhammad Ashar.

Regional Chief (H&AI)/Project Incharge (SSP),
State Life Insurance, Corporation of Pakistan,
Islamabad.

CC:

- **Mr. Mir Nawaz Solangi.** Assistant Director (S&A), Pakistan Academy of letters,
Government of Pakistan, Sector H-8/1, Islamabad.

***Question No. 15 Senator Mushtaq Ahmed:**

(Notice Received on 5/05/2021 at 1:30 PM) QID: 37858

Will the Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination be pleased to state the hurdles in preparation of corona virus vaccine in the country indicating whether the Government of Pakistan has requested to the friendly countries for assistance in this regard, if so, the progress made on the same so far?

Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination: Manufacturing of vaccines is highly technical job which involves advanced techniques and specialized human resources. During COVID-19 pandemic Biological Production Division (BPD) of National Institute of Health (NIH) took a lead and successfully conducted first ever phase III clinical trial of COVID-19 vaccine in Pakistan, developed by CanSinoBio, China. As a result CanSinoBio enlisted Pakistan in priority countries and signed an agreement with BPD NIH for phase wise Transfer of Technology (ToT) to manufacture COVID-19 vaccine, starting from vaccine concentrate bulk, filling and packaging and thereafter development of indigenous basic vaccine production capabilities from raw material at NIH. The first phase of ToT has been started and NIH has manufactured 124,000 doses of corona vaccine from the concentrate by the name of Pak Vac. The doses have been sent to NCLB (DRAP) after passing through qualified rigorous internal quality and safety testing at QCL NIH. The vaccine will hopefully be available for use by the end of May 2021 after getting lot release from NCLB (DRAP). During the 1st Phase of ToT extensive training of quality control testing and formulation was provided by the Chinese experts to up-gradate the skills of technical personals of the institute. Although, NIH has achieved a significant mile stone of in house COVID-19 vaccine production, but some problems which were faced by the technical team during this whole process are as follows:

- Availability of pharmaceutical grade excipients for indigenous vaccine production in the market. Majority of chemicals are not for injectable or Biopharmaceutical production.
- Delay to obtain regulatory approval from Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) due to un-availability established SOP to handle this situation.
- Delay of supplies of upgraded high sophisticated machineries, specific grade of chemicals, specific kits and reagents for operation of such machineries and equipment etc. due to cancellation of international flights, and un-control pandemic situation.

***Question No. 16 Senator Naseebullah Bazai:**

(Notice Received on 6/05/2021 at 1:30 PM) QID: 37855

Will the Minister for Federal Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture be pleased to state:

- (a) *the detail of the incumbent Director General of Pakistan National Council of Arts indicating date of appointment, name of appointing authority, criteria of appointment, qualification, experience, perks and privileges being drawn by the incumbent DG PNCA; and*
- (b) *the details indicating the number of consultants appointed by the incumbent DG PNCA during his / her tenure indicating the date of appointments, appointment criteria, qualifications, experiences, perks and privileges drawn/being drawn by each of them?*

Mr. Shafqat Mahmood: (a) Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) was established under the PNCA Act, 1973 as an apex cultural body for the promotion and development of Pakistani Art & Culture in and outside Pakistan.

Details of incumbent i.e. Dr. Fouzia Saeed, Director General (PNCA):

Date of appointment of incumbent	8 th January, 2020
Name of the appointing authority	In terms of Section 2(c) and 4(1) (a) read with Section 5(1) of PNCA Act, 1973, the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture in capacity as Chairman of the Council (PNCA) (<u>Annex-A</u>).
Criteria of appointment 1	An advertisement was published in the press on 13-09-2019. In this advertisement the criteria for the appointment of DG PNCA was mentioned as under: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pay Scale :MP Scales (in terms of Finance Division's instructions)

	<div>ii. Tenure : (02) two years However, the selected candidate shall cease to hold office of the Director General PNCA on attaining the age of 65 years or expiry of term whichever is earlier</div> <div>iii. Maximum age-limit : 63 years</div> <div>iv. Minimum Qualification :Master's degree in Fine Arts, Social /Management Sciences or related disciplines from HEC recognized University / equivalent foreign qualification</div>																
	<div>v. Experience</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 years experience of working at senior management level, preferably in art management and culture administration;• Must have sound knowledge of human resources and financial management in the public sector or private sector in capacity as head of department/ organization;• knowledge/ research in art and culture shall also be treated an additional experience</div>																
Qualification & Experience of the incumbent	Ph.D in Education with minor in Cultural Anthropology from University of Minnesota, USA. C.V attached (Annex-B)																
Perks and privileges being drawn by the incumbent DG, PNCA	<table><tr><td></td><td>Min.</td><td>Incr.</td><td>Max</td></tr><tr><td>Basic Pay</td><td>Rs. 433,950/-</td><td>Rs.33,000/-</td><td>Rs.532,950/-</td></tr><tr><td>House Rent</td><td>Rs. 101,000/-</td><td>-</td><td>Rs.142,000/-</td></tr><tr><td>Utilities</td><td>Rs. 19,650/-</td><td>-</td><td>Rs.24,300/-</td></tr></table>		Min.	Incr.	Max	Basic Pay	Rs. 433,950/-	Rs.33,000/-	Rs.532,950/-	House Rent	Rs. 101,000/-	-	Rs.142,000/-	Utilities	Rs. 19,650/-	-	Rs.24,300/-
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Utilities	Rs. 19,650/-	-	Rs.24,300/-														
Pay:	Management Pay Scale-I as follows:-																
Monetization:	Monetization of transport facility amounting to Rs.95,910/- per month in lieu of Chauffeur Driven Car maintained at Government expense.																
TA/DA on domestic official tour:	As admissible to the Civil Servants of the highest grade																
TA/DA on official duty abroad:	As admissible to the Civil Servants in Cat-I.																

Medical Facilities:	Re-imbursement of Medical and Hospitalization charges for self, spouse and children for treatment received at Government or Government recognized institutions in Pakistan.
Leave:	Leave on full pay @ 03 days per month for the period of duty. The leave shall be availed during the currency of contract period. Title to leave shall expire on expiry of contract. If given a fresh contract, the period of earned leave available in respect of the previous contract shall not be carried forward.
Gratuity:	One Month's basic pay for each completed year of service.

(b) List of Consultants hired by the DG, PNCA *w.e.f.* January, 2020 till date is placed at **Annex-C**. These Consultants were appointed through open advertisement.

(Annexures have been placed on the Table of the House as well as Library)

ISLAMABAD,
the 26th May, 2021

MOHAMMAD QASIM SAMAD KHAN,
Secretary.

(311th Session)

SENATE SECRETARIAT

“UN-STARRED QUESTIONS AND THEIR REPLIES”

For Thursday, the 27th May, 2021

Question No. 1 Senator Seemee Ezdi:

(Notice Received on 13/04/2021 at 11:00 AM) QID: 37795

Will the Minister for Foreign Affairs be pleased to state the diplomatic measures taken by the present Government at international front against rising Islamophobia indicating also the names of countries that supported our stance in this regard?

Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi: Pakistan is utilizing all available avenues at the bilateral and multilateral level to counter Islamophobia. Prime Minister Imran Khan was amongst the first leaders of the Islamic world to raise the issue of Islamophobia at the international stage. The Prime Minister continues to forcefully advocate the need to effectively combat this scourge.

Tackling Islamophobia was the main highlight of Prime Minister Imran Khan’s speech at the 14th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held in Makkah on 1st June 2019. Later in his address to the 74th UN General Assembly (UNGA) session, held in New York in September 2019, the issue of Islamophobia was one of the key themes raised by the Prime Minister.

In his address to the 75th UN General Assembly session on 25 September 2020, the Prime Minister, *inter alia*, urged that wilful provocations and incitement to hate and violence must be universally outlawed and the UNGA should declare an International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

The Prime Minister subsequently addressed letters to the leaders of all Muslim countries on 28 October 2020 and 18 November 2020, giving an agenda for collective action against Islamophobia. Last year in October

the Prime Minister addressed a letter to Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, seeking a ban on Islamophobic content on Facebook.

In addition to utilising the platform of UN General Assembly and OIC, the Prime Minister has also raised the issue of Islamophobia at other international fora including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO).

Pakistan is effectively following up on the Prime Minister's call for action in the context of rising Islamophobia worldwide. Pakistan is pursuing a multi-pronged approach by: (i) highlighting various aspects of the contemporary forms of Islamophobia and steps needed internationally to curb the rising trend; and (ii) specifically focusing on the issue of blasphemous caricatures and insult of religious personalities, calling for the delegitimization of such actions across the board. The emphasis is on developing understanding among Western countries to recognize the special reverence of Muslims for the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi has been regularly interacting with his counterparts from all over the world to sensitise them on the repercussions of rising Islamophobia and Pakistan's stance on the issue. Pakistan's intense diplomatic efforts have culminated in a key initiative by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). A Pakistan-led resolution on Islamophobia was unanimously adopted by the 47th OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting held in Niamey, Niger, on 27-28 November 2020.

The resolution authorizes the OIC Permanent Missions in New York to jointly table a resolution for designating 15th March as the "International Day to Combat Islamophobia". It urges OIC Member States to organize and support high-visibility events aimed at increasing awareness about curbing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. The resolution re-affirms that desecration of the Holy Quran and re-printing of blasphemous caricatures are not legitimate expressions of the right to freedom of expression and opinion under international human rights law. It calls on the OIC Secretary General to continue monitoring the phenomenon of Islamophobia by strengthening the scope of Islamophobia Observatory and take necessary steps for building a common position of the Muslim Ummah on this issue. This document also calls upon the UN Secretary General to initiate a global dialogue on countering rising Islamophobia and promoting inter-faith harmony.

As mandated by the OIC-CFM, Pakistan is presently actively pursuing with other Islamic countries and UN Member States to table a resolution at the UN General Assembly on “International Day to Combat Islamophobia.”

Pakistan joined the OIC Group in New York on 17 March 2021, to organize a high-level event to commemorate the OIC-designated International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi contributed a video statement in that event, in addition to his Message issued on 15 March 2021 (the OIC-designated International Day to Combat Islamophobia).

Question No. 2 Senator Seemee Ezdi:

(Notice Received on 14/04/2021 at 10:15 AM) QID: 37806

Will the Minister for Federal Educational Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the HEC has introduced the concept of “online readiness” for qualitative online / virtual learning and teaching process during Covid-19 crisis, if so, its details; and*
- (b) the names of those universities which have successfully followed up the directions issued under the “online readiness” initiative?*

Mr. Shafqat Mahmood: (a) Yes, HEC has allowed universities and degree awarding Institutes to continue the quality learning and teaching through online classes or hybrid means (*i.e.* a combination of face to face and online classes) during the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure the safety of students and university employees with minimal academic disruption. For the purpose, structure of “online readiness” was introduced to cover the particular challenges and opportunities of online education. A set of targeted requirements has been devised against eight major areas, namely the university, the course, the faculty, the library, the technology, the examination, the laboratory, and the student. The ‘Online Readiness Policy’ and all the aforementioned documents are available on HEC website at <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/HECAnnouncements/Documents/nCoVirus/Covid-19-Policy-Guidance-No.5-Online%20Readiness.pdf> and is attached at **Annex-I**.

(b) 172 universities have reported successful implementation of online readiness. The list of these universities is attached at **Annex-II**.

(Annexures have been placed on the Table of the House as well as Library)

ISLAMABAD,
the 26th May, 2021

MOHAMMAD QASIM SAMAD KHAN,
Secretary.