About SDPI

SDPI was founded in August 1992 on the recommendation of the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (NCS), also called Pakistan’s Agenda 21. The NCS placed Pakistan’s socio-economic development within the context of a national environmental plan. This highly acclaimed document, approved by the Federal Cabinet in March 1992, outlined the need for an independent non-profit organization to serve as a source of expertise for policy analysis and development, policy intervention, and policy and program advisory services. SDPI is registered under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860.

Mission
To catalyse the transition towards sustainable development, defined as the enhancement of peace, social justice and well-being, within and across generations.

Vision
To be a center of excellence on sustainable development policy research, capacity development and advocacy in Pakistan.

About Newsletter

In order to keep abreast of emerging issues at the National/International and local level, the SDPI brings out a Bi-weekly E-Newsletter on “COVID-19”

It carries reference information’s to the News items/Comments/Op-Eds appearing in leading National/International dailies.

Newspapers Covered:

- Dawn
- The Nation
- Pakistan Observer
- The News
- Business Recorder
- Pakistan Today
- The Express Tribune
- Daily Times
- Urdu Point

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Orange days
It’s the time when the slogan ‘orange the world’ makes sense to all women’s rights activists – the 16 days of activism for elimination of violence against women. This year, the UN has put forward the theme of increased domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic for the November 26 Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Pakistan, of course, is no strang..... more >>

Saudi travel relief
Source: Editorial, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-27
Good news for Pakistanis from Saudi Arabia! The Saudi authorities have announced removal of the restriction on travellers from Pakistan and five other countries to spend two weeks outside these countries before entering the kingdom. From December 1 onwards, incoming air passengers from these countries will have to spend only five days in isolation in government-approved accommodations. These quara..... more >>

Travellers jump hoops to leave S Africa as Covid variant hits
Source: Sofia Christensen, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
Eyes welling up with frustration and relief, Belgian Valerie Leduc and a friend walked from a ticket counter at Johannesburg international airport having secured a flight seat home via Ethiopia. But they will only be flying out in three days’ time. “We were feeling like we have committed a crime,” said the 30-year-old Antwerp resident, rejected from her original flight ..... more >>

Response to Covid
Source: Arif Azad, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of existing pandemic preparedness arrangements governed largely, until now, via international health regulations (IHR) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Various panels and working groups have mulled over the deficiencies in response and suggested ways to redress gaps for future pandemics. A special session of the World Health Assembly (WHA) is due to begin..... more >>

Joint families fare better in current scenario
Source: Aamir Khan, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
KARACHI: Out of the many realisations that the Covid-19 pandemic left us with, perhaps the most unsparing was the fear of isolation- something that we, as social beings, still struggle to come to terms with. However, what was the source of our greatest fear, was also what became, for many, their greatest strength in these hallowing times. In the fast-paced, smoke-filled, chaos-hurling urban metr..... more >>

Covid Fund Irregularities
Source: Editorial, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
Now that Pakistan has found agreement with the IMF on its financing plan, it is time for the government to start delivering on its promises. One of the five steps we had to take before the fund disbursal was to release the audit report of covid-related expenses and the relief packages launched by the PM to counter the worst effects of poverty as a result. The audit report however, does not pain..... more >>
New Variant
Source: Editorial, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-27
As Covid-19 cases ebb in areas around the world, one region broke frightening news of a new and more dangerous variant being discovered; the B.1.1.529. South Africa’s health minister rang alarm bells about its rapid transmission which is responsible for the 50 cases already confirmed. This has ramifications for the entire international community which must take action to prevent a new wave... more >>

A Few Questions Politicians are Afraid to Ask
Source: Harlan Ullman, Daily Times, 2021-11-29
Centuries ago, the first American settlers gave thanks for their survival now called Thanksgiving. Today, too many politicians are offering thanks for not having to confront or answer otherwise frighteningly direct questions about America and its role in the world. When pluralistic societies fear addressing tough questions that challenge the basic foundations for those societies, some things are v... more >>

New Covid danger
Source: Editorial, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
DESPITE a palpable sense of the world going back to 'normal', the emergence of a new Covid-19 variant has begun to threaten global health and economies once again. Dubbed the Omicron variant, the new mutation of the virus was first detected in South Africa and is said to have an “unprecedented number of spike mutations”. The WHO has said that the overall global risk from Om... more >>

Thank you, South Africa
Source: Muhammad Hamid Zaman, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
There is justifiable anxiety about the new Covid-19 variant — (B.1.1.529) or Omicron, as it has been named by the WHO following the practice of identifying successive variants by Greek alphabets. Markets are anxious, cities are on alert, and flights from nearly all southern African countries are cancelled by several countries across the world. Of course, as often happens when new pathogens e... more >>

Embezzlement of Covid fund
Source: Editorial, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
The reported irregularity in disbursement of funds to the tune of Rs40 billion under the Covid package, as well as under other similar heads, is outrageous. The fact that this has happened under the PTI government is depressing. It, inevitably, undermines Prime Minister Imran Khan's resolve to fight corruption, and regulate the affairs of the state as per law. It means someone somewhere has ... more >>

Chasing the pandemic’s tail
Source: BR Research, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
The emergence of a more transmissible variant of Covid-19, named Omicron, right when many hesitant countries had just started to open borders to foreign travellers confirms one thing for certain: rich countries hogging the covid-19 vaccines is going to ultimately be detrimental to them. The longer the virus is left to spread, the more chances it has of mutations. The more the virus mutates th... more >>

Booster Shot
Source: Editorial, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
The provincial health department of Sindh has decided to offer free-of-cost Pfizer booster shots to people who have already been fully vaccinated in the province. This comes in light of the heightened risk of transmission and re-infection courtesy of the new strain, Omicron. Against the best of hopes, the now heavily mutated virus has prompted countries to impose travel restrictions and bans once ... more >>
Inequality in vaccine access
Source: Zahid Hussain, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
JUST as the world appeared to be limping back to life from the devastating effects of Covid-19 and its myriad strains, a new, perhaps more deadly, variant has thrown nations around the world into a state of panic. Described by the World Health Organisation as a “variant of concern”, the Omicron could prove more contagious than earlier strains, pushing many countries to close their border. more >>

The variant this winter
Source: Rafia Zakaria, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
IT was not a piece of news that anyone wanted to hear. Last week, the World Health Organisation designated B.1.1.529 or ‘Omicron’, the new Covid strain whose existence was announced by South Africa earlier, as a “variant of concern”. No sooner had the very existence of the variant been announced than countries, mostly in the West but also including the United Arab Emirates, more >>

Covid funds controversy
Source: Editorial, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
A COMPREHENSIVE and detailed report by the auditor general of Pakistan on the utilisation of Covid-19 funds by the government has raised grave concerns about misappropriations. It has been reported that it was only under IMF pressure that the government agreed to release the report. This suggests that without this pressure, the government was not willing to share with the citizens these serious allegations. more >>

NCOC approves booster shot for health workers, immunocompromised people and those over 50
Source: Naveed Siddiqui, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Wednesday approved a booster shot of Covid-19 vaccines for healthcare workers, immunocompromised people and those aged over 50 years, while discussing the spread of the new coronavirus variant Omicron across the world. Although the statement issued by the NCOC did not say which Covid-19 vaccine would be administered as booster shots, it did say that... more >>

Will there be more fiscal firepower?
Source: BR Research, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
While the new Covid-19 variant has everyone spooked, cautious minds are waiting for analysis of more definitive data on the variant’s transmissibility, severity and vaccine-evasion properties. By several accounts, dissemination of such analysis may come within a fortnight. In the interim, governments have a time window to dust off their Covid-19 playbooks and see how they can respond to a list... more >>

The unending variants — coronavirus
Source: Inam Ul Haque, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
I wrote ‘The great equaliser’ outlining the implications and response to the Covid-19...the ‘Pandemic’ on 29 April 2021. Coronavirus ever since has remained a ‘Suez moment’ in human history; that is affecting being human in not yet fully comprehensible ways. From work to leisure to travel to living normal lives to commerce to geopolitics to vaccine economy. more >>

Vaccine apartheid
China is all set to give one billion vaccine doses to African countries as part of its large-scale cooperation with the African continent. Given that the new Covid-19 variant ‘Omicron’ has emerged from Africa, I started to read up on ‘vaccine apartheid’ imposed by Western countries on the rest of the world. There is damning evidence against the West of hoarding vaccines and... more >>
Perpetual pandemics
When a hero of mine, journalist Edward R Murrow, asked another hero of mine, Nobel Prize-winning virologist Dr Jonas Salk, if he had patented his world historic polio vaccine, he said, “There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?” And so, the deadly and long-dreaded disease polio was basically wiped from the face of the Earth in a few years. Because Salk put people before profits. ..... more >>

Health equity
Source: Dr Nadeem Jan, The News, International, 2021-12-12
On December 12, 2012, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) endorsed a resolution urging countries to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage – the idea that everyone, everywhere, should have access to quality, affordable healthcare – as an essential priority for international development. On December 12, 2017, the UN proclaimed ‘December 12’ as International Univ.... more >>

Vaccine patents
Source: Famiya Masood, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-13
THE intellectual property protection regime is often seen as the villain in an otherwise picture-perfect society where all important inventions are available to everyone equally without paying any premium. But this is not a perfect world and there is a need to create incentives. Those incentives come in the form of intellectual property rights that promise returns to inventors to compensate them f..... more >>

Omicron threat
Source: Editorial, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-04
THE NCOC has suggested installing more oxygen plants in various parts of the country as the new Covid-19 variant, Omicron, spread to five continents this week. The decision to increase the number of oxygen plants and provide support to far-flung areas is timely, for as Planning Minister Asad Umar said last week, it is inevitable that the new variant will reach Pakistan. The forum also noted that t..... more >>

Omicron threat in Pakistan
Source: Editorial, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-10
AS experts warned, it was only a matter of time before it would happen. Earlier this week, the first suspected case of the Omicron variant surfaced at a private hospital in Karachi. The patient, an unvaccinated middle-aged woman, has been discharged and is currently said to be isolating at home. In a video message released on Thursday, the Sindh Health Minister Azra Fazal Pechuho stated that while..... more >>

Doing right without preconditions
Source: Muhammad Hamid Zaman, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-14
While many well-connected people left in the frantically organised flights out of Kabul in late summer, and others who wanted to leave but were lower down on the hierarchy and could not leave, there are some who moved in the other direction. Public health workers, working with international organisations (WHO, Unicef, etc), have steadily been going to Afghanistan on what are often called surge mis..... more >>

Omicron: the beast?
Source: Dr Rana Jawad Asghar, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-14
A new variant of SARS-COV-2 was identified by the end of November in South Africa. Just two weeks have passed since then but country after country started putting travel restrictions and a panic button was pressed. All the gains against the pandemic seemed now lost. Vaccination, prior infection with this virus and even social distancing seems losing its value. Winter surge was already in full swi..... more >>
Covid funding irregularities
Source: Editorial, Daily Times, 2021-12-02
It's a bit rich of the federal cabinet to reject the Auditor General of Pakistan's (AGP’s) report on Covid funding without ordering a thorough probe into the lapses uncovered in it and waiting for the result, especially since it was the finance ministry that released it. If the AGP’s findings are to be trusted, which the government obviously doesn’t, there were Rs40 b..... more >>

Surging Covid-19 cases bring a 2020 feel to the end of 2021
Source: AP, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-20
US officials intensified calls last week for unvaccinated Americans to get inoculated in the face of the new omicron variant that contributed to a record number of infections in New York and threatened to wipe out a second holiday season in Europe. Though the calendar is about to change, there is a distinctly 2020 feel: The National Football League games were postponed because of Covid-19 infecti..... more >>

Vaccination resistance where least expected
Source: Editorial, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-20
Coronavirus has exposed an awkward divide in Western societies along arch-conservative and liberal lines as reflected in an increasingly aggressive pushback against Covid-19 vaccination. Last Wednesday, German police foiled a plot by anti-vaccination activists to murder the state premier of Saxony in eastern Germany. Saxony, a stronghold of the far-right Alternative for Germany party, has one of t..... more >>

Booster Shots
Source: Editorial, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) issued notifications according to which citizens over the age of 30 will be eligible to get booster shots for Covid-19 vaccines starting January 1, 2022. A flexible mix-and-match strategy will be adopted, allowing for more individuals to get boosters—improving overall immunity in the country. Such protective measures are vital to take right no..... more >>

The Omicron Rises
With yet another new variant of the deadly pandemic ready to burst open the floodgates and the health department still hedging its bets on whether the storm would take a turn away, the eerie deja vu is far too striking to dismiss. The international community could not ring the alarm bells any louder. Downing Street has already marked the mammoth surge in recorded infections as the tidal wave. Mr B..... more >>

New Threat
Source: Editorial, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-10
With the first suspected case of Omicron detected in Karachi, it is important for the public to not panic and the government to take immediate action. True; the new strain has been established to have a higher transmissibility rate than the delta variant. It is also now confirmed that the new strain also has improved vaccine resistance. But regardless, with two years of the pandemic under the belt..... more >>

The Omicron shame
Helping Africa in its critical fight against the [Covid-19] pandemic should have been done in a more systematic fashion as part of an inclusive global strategy. Alas, little of that has transpired. From the very start, rich countries like the US, European states, China and Japan had provided financial packages to keep their economies afloat. At times, they provided direct financial support to a..... more >>
Green Covid recovery
Source: Marriyum Hasany, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
From the advancement of communication technologies in World War I to the pioneering Turing Machine in World War II, global challenges have historically paved the way for technological disruptions. This raises the question: what emerging technological disruptions are to come as a result of the reigning pandemic? Is Covid-19 going to only be known for strengthening the PPE supply chains or has this..... more >>

The Omicron factor
There appears to be no escape for the world from the Covid-19 virus which has so badly affected life across the globe over the past two and a half years. Just as Pakistan and other countries had hoped the pandemic was more or less over, according to reports, 12 cases of the Omicron variant have been discovered in Balochistan. Confirmation is awaited. There is still some argument amongst medical ex..... more >>

Radical hope
In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, and with economic and ecological crises only intensifying, it is easy to understand why so many people feel hopeless for the future. All the more so after this year’s UN Climate Conference (COP26) failed to provide the radical roadmap we need to avert climate catastrophe and as governments are trying to take us back to a dystopic, unequal ‘normal’..... more >>
National News

Balochistan

YDA announces boycott of Covid vaccination drive
Source: Staff Correspondent, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
QUETTA: The Young Doctors Association (YDA) has decided to boycott the 10-day special coronavirus vaccination drive announced by the health department in 10 districts of Balochistan and said the association would take out a peaceful rally in the provincial capital on Wednesday. Speaking at a press conference along with Young Nurses Association president Malik Aziz Kakar on Tuesday, YDA president .... more >>

Doctors continue to boycott OPDs at govt hospitals in Quetta
QUETTA: Young doctors continued their boycott of outpatient departments (OPDs), in-door and elective services at the government hospitals in Quetta on Tuesday as the protest entered the second day against the arrest of their fellow doctors. The patients suffered greatly due to the ongoing strike of the young doctors as they failed to get the healthcare facilities at the government hospitals. A..... more >>

12 suspected Omicron cases found in Balochistan: health official
Source: Ghalib Nihad, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
Twelve suspected cases of coronavirus' Omicron variant were reported in Balochistan on Tuesday, according to a health official. Head of Operations Cell (Covid) Dr Naqibullah Niazi toldDawn.comthat 32 cases had tested positive for Covid-19 out of which 12 cases exhibited signs of the Omicron variant. They were from the town of Kalat. He said their samples were sent to the National Instit..... more >>

Balochistan reports 30 suspected cases of Omicron variant
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-21
QUETTA: At least 30 suspected cases of Omicron variant of Covid-19 were reported in Balochistan on Tuesday, while the provincial government imposed a 15-day lockdown in Kech to cease a surge in cases in the district. Samples of the suspected patients are being sent to the National Institute of Heart Diseases (NIHD), Islamabad. According to the Covid cell in-charge, Dr Na..... more >>

Kalat reports 30 suspected Omicron variant cases
Source: INP, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-23
KALAT: Pakistan needs to sound alarm bells as Covid-19 new variant Omicron has descended on the country’s turf. As many as 30 suspected cases of the new variant have been reported from the Balochistan area of Kalat. According to the health department, the new cases emerged after a patient tested positive for the virus. During a two-day testing in the area, 30 more suspected cases of the..... more >>
**Islamabad**

### Alarmed by new Covid variant, Pakistan bans travel from African countries, Hong Kong


Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar has said that Pakistan has restricted travel from six South African countries and Hong Kong following the emergence of a new coronavirus variant. “Based on the emergence of the new Covid variant, notification has been issued to restrict travel from 6 South African countries and Hong Kong,” said Asad, who also heads National Command. .... more >>

### Rs40b irregularities detected in PM’s Covid package

**Source:** [Shahbaz Rana, The Express Tribune, Islamabad](https://www.expresstribune.com), 2021-11-27

ISLAMABAD: After holding on to it for nearly six months, Pakistan on Friday gave in to the International Monetary Fund’s pressure by releasing the audit report of expenditures incurred on Covid-19, disclosing over Rs40 billion irregularities in operations. The findings of the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) – the constitutional body – showed misprocurement, payments to ineligible..... more >>

### Pakistan bans entry of travellers from 6 countries

**Source:** [Abdul Rasheed Azad, Business Recorder, Islamabad](https://www.businessrecorder.com.pk), 2021-11-28

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has announced banning the entry of travellers from six countries, owing to the concerns of Omicron Covid-19 variant. A statement by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) said that a ban on direct or indirect inbound travel from the countries has been imposed, with the countries placed in Category C “with immediate effect”. A notification issued ..... more >>

### Covid cash transfers; BISP made ‘irregular’ payments of Rs1.84bn: audit report

**Source:** [Sardar Sikander Shaheen, Business Recorder, Islamabad](https://www.businessrecorder.com.pk), 2021-11-28

ISLAMABAD: The management of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) made irregular payments of 1.84 billion rupees to a total of 153,369 individuals comprising 86,211 government employees/pensioners and 67,158 spouses of government employees/pensioners, in terms of Covid cash transfers, in financial year 2019-20. This has been revealed by the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) in its spec..... more >>

### Irregularities in Covid fund: AGP vows to unmask culprits

**Source:** [Irshad Ansari, The Express Tribune, Islamabad](https://www.expresstribune.com), 2021-11-28

ISLAMABAD: The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) has vowed to unmask the culprits found guilty of committing irregularities detected in the expenditures incurred on the Covid-19 relief programme, expressing the resolve that those who have undermined the legal procedure will not be spared. “The law was not followed in the Ehsaas programme as its transparency was questioned in a report sub..... more >>

### Pakistan joins global travel bans as Omicron sparks alarm

**Source:** [Tahir Niaz, The Nation, Islamabad](https://www.thenation.com.pk), 2021-11-28

Travel ban imposed on flights from 6 African states, Hong Kong | Omicron coronavirus variant detected in Britain, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands | Emergence of new variant makes it even more urgent to vaccinate all citizens: Asad Umar ISLAMABAD - The government Saturday decided to impose travel restrictions for six South African countries and Hong Kong immediately in the wake of emergence..... more >>

### More countries tighten borders as new Covid variant spreads

**Source:** [News Desk, Daily Times](https://www.dailytimes.com.pk), 2021-11-29

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has taken notice of a viral video purportedly showing voters in Lahore’s NA-133 constituency being given bribe ahead of the by-polls. The by-elections, being held after the death of PML-N
Lahore chapter’s central leader Pervez Malik, are scheduled for December 5. On Sunday, Returning Officer Syed Basit Ali wrote separate letters to the Punjab ..... more >>

Rs40b irregularities in COVID-19 budget: Govt says IMF satisfied with utilisation of fund
ISLAMABAD: The Finance Ministry has said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had expressed satisfaction over the country’s utilisation of COVID-19 fund after an audit report of the urgently procured supplies related to the disease was shared with it. Last year, the international financial institution provided $1.4 billion to Islamabad to meet its balance of payment requirements ste..... more >>

Inevitable that Omicron variant will come to Pakistan, we have weeks to reduce its threat: Asad Umar
Source: Dawn.com, Dawn, Islamabad , 2021-11-29
Federal Planning Minister Asad Umar warned on Monday that the latest concerning variant of the coronavirus, Omicron, will inevitably come to Pakistan and the country had only a few weeks to contain its threat. Addressing a press conference alongside Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan, Umar stressed the need for citizens to get vaccinated and complete their doses. &q..... more >>

One dies of COVID-19, 32 cases from twin cities
Islamabad : As many as 32 new patients were tested positive for coronavirus illness, COVID-19 from Islamabad Capital Territory and Rawalpindi district in the last 24 hours while the virus claimed one life from the region, from Rawalpindi district. It is important that no death due to COVID-19 was reported from ICT in the last week though as many as 952 patients belonging to ICT had already lost..... more >>

NCOC says no escaping Omicron, vaccination only prevention
Source: News Desk, The Express Tribune, Islamabad , 2021-11-29
National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) chief Asad Umar on Monday said the new Covid variant, Omicron, wreaking havoc across the world will also eventually affect Pakistan as well, but the country has a few weeks to counter the threat. In a press conference alongside Prime Minister’s Health Adviser Dr Faisal Sultan, Umar stressed the logical solution to thwart the new variant ..... more >>

Emergence of ‘Omicron'; People should follow SOPs seriously: NCOC
Source: Recorder Report, Business Recorder, Islamabad , 2021-11-29
ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has asked the people to get fully vaccinated against Covid-19, besides following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) seriously due to emergence of new variant ‘Omicron’. In a tweet, the NCOC urged the people to observe the SOPs to prevent the spread of virus. “Please ensure that your vaccination is complete (both d..... more >>

Pakistan reports 303 Covid cases, 5 more deaths
Source: Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad , 2021-11-29
ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has reported five more corona virus deaths in the last 24 hours, according to the National Command & Operation Centre (NCOC). With five new deaths, the death toll has reached 28,709. The country also reported 303 fresh Covid cases, taking the number of total cases to 1,284,189. The positivity ratio remained 0.81 for Saturday while the NCOC said that 946 patients were in c..... more >>

‘Main reason behind new variant spread is non-vaccinated individuals’
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad , 2021-11-27
ISLAMABAD - The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Friday discussed the epidemic curve chart
data, national vaccine strategy and disease prevalence across the country. The NCOC session was chaired by National Coordinator Maj Gen Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and SAPM Health Dr Faisal Sultan. The Forum was briefed about COVID positivity ratio, disease prevalence, number of deaths and new adm..... more >>

Saudi Arabia allows direct entry from Pakistan
Source: Agencies, The Nation, Islamabad , 2021-11-27
ISLAMABAD - Saudi Arabia’s civil aviation authority announced it will allow direct entry to travelers from six countries, including Pakistan. Saudi Arabiasuspended all international flights in March 2020, following the coronavirus outbreak. The suspension was lifted in May this year, but was not applicable to many countries due to the pandemic situation, Arab news reported. To arrive in..... more >>

Omicron: Pakistan announces mega vaccination programme
Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar Monday said keeping in view the impending threat of the new variant of COVID-19, the government had decided to re-intensify the vaccination campaign across the country by utilizing extra resources. “The vaccination process was already going on but now we are going to escalate the process and within two or three days, a re.... more >>

Pakistan has ‘few weeks’ to contain Omicron threat
Federal Planning Minister Asad Umar has sounded a very timely alarm about the Omicron variant of the coronavirus making its way to Pakistan in a matter of weeks. Therefore there’s still time to prepare for the inevitable invasion of this new variant that has already sent financial markets into a tailspin all over the world and renewed calls for lockdowns in a number of countries, especially ..... more >>

Audit finds massive irregularities in Covid spending
Source: Kalbe Ali, Dawn, Islamabad , 2021-11-30
KARACHI - Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that Sindh province has started its mandatory courses of Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) and Senior Management Course (SMC) through our provincial Training Management and Research (TMR) Wing. This he said on Friday while addressing the graduation ceremony of first-MCMC conducted by Training Management and research (TMR) here at CM Hous.... more >>

PPP demands probe into Rs40b corona fund irregularities
ISLAMABAD: PPP parliamentary leader in the Senate Senator Sherry Rehman On Monday demanded a probe into irregularities in the Corona fund and questioned why the accountability institutions were still silent on more than Rs 40 billion irregularities. “The opposition did not make allegations over Rs 40 billion Corona relief fund as these irregularities have been confirmed in the audit repor..... more >>

Omicron
Source: Editorial, The Express Tribune, Islamabad , 2021-11-30
The recently identified Omicron variety of the Covid-19 coronavirus has brought a new wave of travel restrictions in several countries. The variant was first detected in South Africa but has since been detected in Australia, Hong Kong, and Europe. The World Health Organisation assigned the B.1.1.529 variant a name because of its “concerning” mutations and preliminary evidence suggestin..... more >>
‘Govt beefs up safety guards’
Source: APP, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr Faisal Sultan on Monday said the government, keeping in view the recent wave of another Covid-19 virus spreading in various European countries, had beefed up all safety measures to prevent spread of the new variant ‘Omicron’. Addressing a joint media briefing flanked by Chairman National Command and Operation Centre (NC.... more >>

Centre announces booster programme to combat Omicron
ISLAMABAD - Federal Minister for Planning Asad Umar on Monday warned of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 and stressed for more effective vaccinations to reduce threat of the new “dangerous and fast transmissible” strain. He said that the new variant would inevitably come to Pakistan due to interconnected nature of the world but the danger could be contained through “effective v.... more >>

Cabinet rejects audit report on Covid-19 spending
Source: Syed Irfan Raza, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet on Tuesday rejected the recently-released audit report which hinted at billions of rupees of irregularities in Covid-19 expenditure, vaccination process and Ehsaas relief programme. The cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan also asserted that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was bound to hold the next general elections on the basis of ele..... more >>

Despite drop in international price: Govt keeps petroleum products prices unchanged
ISLAMABAD: The government on Tuesday decided to keep the petroleum prices unchanged at home for the first half of December 2021. In the international market, the oil prices (Global Benchmark Brent) have tumbled from $84.52 per barrel recorded on 9 November to around $68.8 per barrel on Tuesday, showing a decline of around 15.7 dollar per barrel in the last three weeks. The major reason behind t..... more >>

Not just another brick in the wall
Source: Dr Ayesha Razzaque, The News, International, 2021-12-01
Every service in the world is turning towards personalisation – be it medical treatments, diet and fitness plans, shopping recommendations, streaming audio and video playlists, etc. The last domain where a one-size-fits-all factory approach is still tolerated is education. In 1950, a few years after the end of World War II and only four years before he took his own life, Alan Turing develop..... more >>

Pakistan moves to tackle Omicron threat
Source: Agencies, Daily Times, 2021-12-01
As Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan said that it’s too early to encompass how dangerous Omicron variant of Covid-19 is, the Sindh government on Tuesday issued new guidelines to curb the transmission of Covid-19 in light of the threat posed by the new Omicron variant. The Sindh Home Department issued the new guidelines that will be applicable across the province..... more >>

Pandemic crisis; Developing states must be provided with adequate means: Qureshi
Source: Recorder Report, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Tuesday said that the world is confronted with triple crises: Covid-19 pandemic, the challenge of realizing the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, and the existential threat of climate catastrophe. Participating in the 45th ministerial meeting of Group of 77 and China, held in a virtual format, in which Pakistan was elected as the n..... more >>
Opp may submit requisition for NA session to discuss Omicron
Source: Javaid-ur-Rahman, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
ISLAMABAD - The Opposition parties may submit a requisition in the National Assembly secretariat to force the government to summon a special NA session to discuss the latest variant of the coronavirus, Omicron. The Omicron scare has spread all around the world. Federal Planning Minister Asad Umar, in this regard, had also warned the latest variant of the COVID-19 will inevitably come to Pakistan. .... more >>

Too early to assess implications of Omicron: Dr Faisal
Source: APP, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
ISLAMABAD - Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan said that every virus has its mutations and it is too early to encompass how dangerous was new Omicron variant of COVID-19. No case of Omicron variant has been detected in Pakistan and it was evident that the new strain’s transmissibility is faster than any previously detected variant of COVID-19, he said while ta.... more >>

Second phase of ‘reach-every-door’ vaccination drive launched
Source: Aamir Yasin, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
RAWALPINDI: The second phase of Punjab government’s Covid-19 vaccination drive: ‘reach every door’ started on Wednesday in which health teams will visit all the houses to convince them to get second dose of vaccination. “It is the second phase of reach every door campaign. The first phase started on Nov 12 and more than 1.1 million people were vaccinated against the virus...... more >>

NDMA lacked preparedness to counter Covid-19: AGP
Source: Kalbe Ali, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
ISLAMABAD: The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) has not only pointed out financial irregularities in the procurement and storage by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) during the coronavirus pandemic mainly in 2020, but found the authority unprepared to timely devise a counter strategy. The audit report on the expenditure incurred on Covid-19 by federal government has stated that the a..... more >>

NCOC urges provinces to hasten Covid vaccinations amid Omicron threat
Source: News Desk, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Thursday urged provinces to hasten the vaccination process amid the rising trend of the Omicron variant across the globe, highlighting that the anti-Covid jab is the only way to prevent the spread of the new variant. In Thursday’s session, the forum discussed the epidemic curve chart data, national vaccine strategy and disease prevalence acr..... more >>

Countrywide drive to administer booster jabs launched
Source: Abdul Rasheed Azad, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-03
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has launched nationwide drive to administer Covid-19 booster jabs and in first phase healthcare workers, 50-year-old citizens, individuals with weak immune systems, and others to be inoculated. The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) meeting held here on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Asad Umar, while approving the administration of Covid-19 vaccine&rsquo..... more >>

Careem says its ride-hailing services hit by Covid-19, inflation
Source: Tahir Amin, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
ISLAMABAD: Careem – the supper app invested $100 million during last five years and created 0.8 million employment opportunities, however, Covid-19 pandemic and inflation had a significant impact on Careem’s ride-hailing services. This was revealed by Fatima Akhtar Ahmad, Director of government Relations Careem and Madiha Javed Qureshi, Director Communications and Public Relations..... more >>
Pak covid response can be a global case study: Shafqat
Source: Agencies, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
ISLAMABAD - Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mehmood on Wednesday said that Pakistan’s Covid-19 response can be a global case study of effective response despite economic constraints. He was addressing the FCDO-funded Sub-National Governance Programme, implemented by Oxford Policy Management. The programme kick started its two-day National Learning Workshop..... more >>

Korean govt supports Pakistan to check Covid-19 spread
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
ISLAMABAD PR - The Republic of Korea (ROK) has supported the government of Pakistan’s response in controlling the outbreak and spread of COVID-19. The Korean government has already provided masks, RNA kits, and PPEs (Personal Protective Equipment), worth more than $800,000. The healthcare facilities in different localities are still lacking in medical supplies such as beds, wheelchairs and s..... more >>

Pakistan reports 414 Covid cases, 9 deaths in 24 hours
Source: Tahir Niaz, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
ISLAMABAD - Corona virus pandemic has claimed 9 more lives while 414 more people tested positive in Pakistan during the last 24 hours. According to the latest figures appeared on National corona virus Dashboard of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), Pakistan has reported 9 deaths in the last 24 hours by corona virus that took the tally of the fatalities acros..... more >>

Rs5.24b irregularities in corona fund: PAC suggests Utility Stores closure
ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Wednesday while expressing its annoyance over the tales of corruption and sale of substandard items in the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) suggested for its closure and asked the FIA to investigate the utility stores within 10 days. Public Accounts Committee was told that the Utility Stores Corporation has submitted the report to the Committee th.... more >>

Korea, KAAP support for COVID-19
Islamabad: The Republic of Korea has supported the government of Pakistan’s response in controlling the outbreak and spread of COVID-19, says a press release. The Korean government has already provided masks, RNA kits, and PPEs (personal protective equipment), worth more than $800,000. The healthcare facilities in different localities are still lacking in medical supplies such as beds, wh..... more >>

COVID-19 spread well under control, weekly positivity drops again in ICT
Islamabad : The spread of coronavirus illness, COVID-19 is well under control in this region of the country including Islamabad Capital Territory from where the weekly positivity rate of the infection has once again dropped down to 0.66 per cent from the previous week’s rate of 0.88 per cent. The number of cases and the positivity rate of COVID-19 registered an upward trend for the previo..... more >>

55 COVID-19 cases, no death from twin cities
Islamabad: The number of patients being tested positive for coronavirus illness, COVID-19 from Islamabad Capital Territory and Rawalpindi district is still significantly higher as in the last one week, as many as 306 new patients have been registered from the region at an average of 44 patients per day while the virus has claimed five more lives from twin cities in the last seven days. In the l..... more >>
**Strong economic ties with Pakistan in US interest: Amb Blome**


WASHINGTON: US Ambassador-designated to Pakistan Donald Blome has said the Pak-US ties have remained extraordinary. Briefing the Senate Committee, Donald Blome said under its geo-economic policy, the US wants to enhance economic and commercial ties with Pakistan. He expressed his conviction to work for Pakistan’s digital economy and intellectual property protection, besides promoting tran..... more >>

**NCOC to decide on winter vacation today**


Islamabad: A final decision on winter vacation in the countrywide educational institutions will be made by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) today (Wednesday). This was decided during the 34th meeting of Inter Provincial Education Ministers Conference here on Tuesday. The education ministers held a meeting to discuss several issues, including shifting winter vacation to January ..... more >>

**NCOC allows Pakistanis to return from Category C countries**

Source: Ikram Junaidi, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-15

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Tuesday allowed Pakistanis to travel inbound from category C countries. Meanwhile, 25 per cent of total population and 37pc of vaccine-eligible population of Pakistan has been inoculated. To facilitate stranded passengers, a meeting of the NCOC decided to allow Pakistanis, including NICOP/POC holders, to travel inbound..... more >>

**Four dead, 370 more test positive for coronavirus**

Source: App, Daily Times, 2021-12-16

The national tally on Wednesday of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded at 9, 292 with 370 more people tested positive for the deadly virus while 10 more people died from the disease during the last 24 hours. During the last 24 hours most deaths occurred in KP followed by Sindh. All four corona patients died in the hospital during last 24 hours and three patients were on ventilators, accordin..... more >>

**NCOC, education ministry differ over winter vacations**

Source: Kashif Abbasi, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-16

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) and the federal education ministry, it seems, are not on the same page regarding winter vacation in educational institutions, as the former at its meeting on Wednesday recommended the vacation start in the middle of January, a day after the federal education minister announced the holidays would commence on Dec 25. Following the NCOC rec..... more >>

**NCOC decides to shift winter vacations to Jan: sources**


ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has decided to shift the winter vacations for educational institutions to January from December, in a meeting held on Wednesday, sources confirmed to Geo News. Sources further said that the decision was backed by all provinces, who agreed to the proposal.”The decision was taken in line with the recommendations forwarded during t..... more >>

**NCOC Covid-19 update: Four die, 370 test positive**


ISLAMABAD: Four people died of the coronavirus, while 370 tested positive with the national tally of total active cases recording 9,292 in the 24 hours period. All the four corona patients died in the hospital, of whom three were on the ventilator, revealed the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). Most of the deaths occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), whic..... more >>
Govt partners with TikTok on COVID-19 awareness
ISLAMABAD: TikTok has partnered with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MNHSRC) to launch an awareness campaign for COVID-19 prevention in Pakistan. As part of the campaign titled #MeriVaccineKahani, the MNHSRC has officially joined TikTok (@nhsrcpk) and will be using the platform to disseminate information about COVID-19 prevention and their vaccine program.

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PIA transports 15m doses of Sinovac vaccines from China
Source: APP, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-16
BEIJING: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has transported fresh consignments of 15 million doses of Sinovac Covid-19 vaccines by five special flights from the Capital International Airport Beijing to Islamabad, PIA Country Manager, Qadir Bux Sangi said on Wednesday. The national flag carrier launched special flights PAK-6852, PAK-6853, PK-6856, PK-6857 and PK-6858 respectively and airlift.....

Omicron variant; Stranded Pakistanis can travel from Category C countries till 31st: NCOC
Source: Abdul Rasheed Azad, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-15
ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan has extended the date for stranded Pakistanis in category “C” countries hit with Omicron variant to return home until December 31, 2021. According to an announcement of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) released here on Tuesday, “Pakistanis including valid NICOP/POC holders can travel without exemption from Category C coun.....

Pakistan reports only 3 new corona deaths, 250 cases
Source: Tahir Niaz, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-15
ISLAMABAD- The country on Tuesday reported only three deaths and 250 infections due to Covid-19 during the last 24 hours with visible signs that the fourth wave of the deadly virus was on the verge of diminishing in Pakistan. According to the latest data released by the NCOC, the overall death toll due to Covid-19 has now surged to 28,839 after the addition of three new deaths. While the .....

Amid Omicron threat, NCOC approves booster jabs
Source: News Desk, Daily Times, 2021-12-02
The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has approved the administration of Covid-19 vaccine’s booster jab for people grouped into three categories amid the threats of an outbreak of Omicron. A meeting of the NCOC, chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives and NCOC chief Asad Umar, announced to launch a special vaccination drive in the country. T.....

Air pollution may affect the lethality of COVID-19: study
Source: ONLINE, Daily Times, 2021-12-02
New research suggests that air pollution may have an effect on the number of people who die from COVID-19. The rapid spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has meant that there has been little time for scientists to determine what affects its speed of transmission and how lethal it can be. Scientists have, however, already identified some factors that might affect the lethality of COVID-19. These factors.....

more >>
Pakistan Covid response can be a global case study: Shafqat
Source: App, Daily Times , 2021-12-02
Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mehmood on Wednesday said that Pakistan's Covid-19 response can be a global case study of effective response despite economic constraints. He was addressing the FCDO-funded Sub-National Governance Programme, implemented by Oxford Policy Management. The programme kick started its two-day National Learning Workshop on Pakistan&r..... more >>

FDE announces winter vacations from Jan 3
Source: Muhammad Faisal Kaleem, Daily Spokesman , 2021-12-18
After a slight deadlock between National Command and Operational Centre (NCOC) and Federal Education and Professional Training on the matter of winter vacation, the both sections on Friday agreed finally to observe vacation in federal educational institutions from January 03, 2022. As per notification issued by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), controlling authority of all educational i..... more >>

COVID-19 claims eight more lives, infects 149 others
Source: App, Daily Times , 2021-12-17
As many as eight more patients of coronavirus died overnight lifting the death toll to 7,648 while 149 new cases emerged when 10,327 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Min..... more >>

Fiscal federalism
The stagnant fiscal space and mounting debt repayment requirements pose enormous challenges to long-run fiscal sustainability. Apart from budgetary space and debt obligations, the rules of the game defined under the National Finance Commission (NFC) could be a significant source that undermines long-run fiscal sustainability. Based on the 7th NFC Award, 57.5 percent of resources are transferred..... more >>

Winter break in schools from Jan 3
Islamabad : The National Command and Operation Centre, the nerve centre for the country’s anti-coronavirus measures, on Friday decided that winter vacation in educational institutions would begin on January 3, 2022, but the areas hit by extreme weather conditions will be an exception. The provincial governments will issue notifications for the purpose accordingly. The decision was announ..... more >>

Foreign secretary tests positive for COVID-19
ISLAMABAD: In a setback ahead of Organization of Islamic Conference Foreign Ministers meeting scheduled for today ( Sunday) in Islamabad, the Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood who contracted coronavirus won't be able to attend the event. The foreign secretary is under quarantine at his residence. The doctors have yet to ascertain the variant. Given the situation, the officials of the forei..... more >>

Omicron threat
Source: Editorial, Dawn, Islamabad , 2021-12-19
WITH cases of the Omicron variant spreading at "lightning speed" in Europe, according to the French prime minister, the detection of the strain in Pakistan — the second such case here — in a passenger arriving from the UK should result in further tightening of Covid-related SOPs and travelling restrictions. Last week, the WHO warned that the Omicron variant was spreading fa..... more >>
Cricket and Covid
Source: Editorial, Dawn, Islamabad , 2021-12-18
FOR Pakistan cricket and its fans, the joy of winning yet another series was tempered by the postponement of another. West Indies were the first team to tour the country since New Zealand abandoned their tour in September due to a perceived security risk and the fallout from that saw England withdraw its team from a tour in October. The West Indies series was a chance for Pakistan to restore its r..... more >>

Pakistan’s Covid-19 mortality rate much higher than global rate
Source: Ikram Junaidi, Dawn, Islamabad , 2021-12-19
ISLAMABAD: Though health experts have been claiming that Covid-19 has proved less lethal among Asians, global data shows that Pakistan’s mortality rate is far higher than many regions. Member of the Scientific Task Force on Covid-19 Dr Javed Akram was of the view that more Pakistanis died because they visited hospitals due to complications arising from Covid-19 rather than the infection..... more >>

COVID-19 claims three more patients, infects 237 others
Source: App, Daily Times , 2021-12-20
As many as 3 more patients of coronavirus died overnight lifting the death toll to 7,652 and 237 new cases emerged when 14,063 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here on Sunday. He said that 3 more patients of COVID-19 lost their lives lifting the death toll to 7,652 that constituted 1.6 percent death rate. Mr. Shah said tha..... more >>

BD minister cancels Pak visit due to COVID-19
ISLAMABAD: Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam has cancelled his Pakistan visit as he is now in isolation at his residence for meeting with a Covid-19 infected person. It would have been the first visit of a Bangladesh foreign minister to Pakistan in nine years and the first in the Sheikh Hasina government, if Shahriar could have made it. The cancellation of the visit was a..... more >>

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COVID-19 claims another life, 26 cases from twin cities
Islamabad: Another confirmed patient of coronavirus illness, COVID-19 belonging to this region of the country has lost life due to the illness while as many as 26 new patients were tested positive for the infection from Islamabad Capital Territory and Rawalpindi district in the last 24 hours. Data collected by ‘The News’ reveals the virus claimed one more life from ICT in the last ..... more >>

Dipping mercury increases demand of winter apparels
Islamabad: The dipping mercury due to the ongoing cold wave in the country has increased the demand of the winter wears in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, like other parts of the country, with a large number of buyers thronging markets, second hand clothes stalls and weekly bazaars to buy warm stuff. Since the temperatures of twin cities dropped to -1 degree Celsius during the las..... more >>
NCOC allows people over 30 to get booster shots from Jan 1
Source: Ikram Junaidi, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-21
ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Monday allowed booster shots for people over the age of 30 years as Covid-19’s latest strain, Omicron, infects 58,000 people in 95 countries. On the other hand, as a large number of people have been denied travel by several countries because of vaccine “discrimination”, mix-and-match booster vaccine shots have been p..... more >>

Above 30s eligible for booster: NCOC
ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) Monday urged masses to get fully vaccinated to prevent from the new variant of coronavirus omicron. The forum discussed the epidemic curve chart data, national vaccine strategy and disease prevalence across the country. The forum agreed upon taking strict measures regarding obligatory vaccination regime. The NCOC reviewed province-wi..... more >>

Vaccination directives
MANSEHRA: The district administration has warned marriage halls’ administrations to ensure the coronavirus vaccination for their employees or else strict legal action would be initiated against them. A Health Departments’ team led by the Additional Assistant Commissioner, Hasrat Khan, paid the surprise visit to the marriage halls in the city and its suburbs and checked the vaccination c..... more >>

Iron supplementation project launched to address maternal anemia in merged districts
Source: App, Daily Times, 2021-12-22
Nutrition International (NI) in collaboration with federal and provincial health departments through its implementing partner Prime Foundation (PF) on Tuesday launched “Iron Folic Acid (IFA) Supplementation for addressing Maternal Anemia in Pakistan” project under COVID-19 Emergency Response Project in seven merged tribal districts. Chairperson, Health Standing Committee of Khyber Pak..... more >>

FAFEN terms KP LG elections orderly
ISLAMABAD: The Free and Fair Elections Network (FAFEN), in its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Election Observation Report 2021, termed the local government elections orderly, lawful and transparent but fell short of complete compliance with procedural formalities. Pakistan inched towards installation of the constitutionally-promised local governments (LGs) when around 40 per cent of regist..... more >>

NCOC team checks vaccination status on public transport
Source: App, Daily Times, 2021-12-23
The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) along with Secretary RTA Islamabad and Motorway Police on Wednesday checked the vaccination status of passengers and drivers of public transport at Bhara Kahu Bus Stand, Muree Expressway, Muree Toll Plaza, and Satra Meel. The teams inspected the vaccination certificates of the passengers in the buses of different routes. Passengers and drivers who..... more >>

Ghost Pims employees detected in lists sent to ministry for Covid allowance
Source: Ikram Junaidi, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-23
ISLAMABAD: An inquiry committee has found a large number of ghost employees in Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) who had been nominated for Covid-19 Health Risk Allowance. The committee also recommended disciplinary action against the Pims administration and further investigation into the disbursement of the allowance in 2019-20 and 2020-21. The hospital has 4,200 employees but a l..... more >>
**Rs1,240b COVID-19 relief package: PAC not satisfied with Finance Ministry’s briefing**


ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday expressed its dissatisfaction over the briefing of the Finance Ministry on the issue of Rs1,240 billion Covid-19 relief package after the ministry failed to satisfy the committee on the issue. It was revealed that out of Rs500 billion announced by the prime minister for providing relief to the citizens, only Rs186 billion were released. [more >>]

**PAC unsatisfied over Rs1.24tr Covid-19 funds**

Source: Our Correspondent, *The Express Tribune, Islamabad*, 2021-12-23

ISLAMABAD: The finance ministry on Wednesday failed to satisfy the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of parliament on the issue of Rs1.24 trillion coronavirus relief package. The ministry’s officials told the committee that the Rs1.24 trillion was the overall package, and not just for a year. Out of the total amount, Rs875 billion was cash relief while Rs365 billion was planned to be in oth... [more >>]

**Remittances fall by 6.6pc in Nov 2021**


ISLAMABAD: Turkey’s Lira against the US dollar achieved an overnight comeback and gained by almost 40 percent; however, in Pakistan the exchange rate has been witnessing a persistent decline against the US dollar for the last several months. Despite claims by Pakistan’s economic managers that the exchange rate would move in two ways, the rupee is persistently on the decline against... [more >>]

**CDA to open Rawal Dam Chowk flyover, 7th Avenue bridge in two months**


Islamabad : Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Aamer Ali Ahmed who visited development projects on Wednesday, directed for opening of flyover part of Rawal Dam Chowk and bridge at 7th Avenue within the next two months. The CDA Chairman during his visit to the projects at Rawal Dam Chowk, 7th Avenue and IJ Principal Road was accompanied by officials of the National Logistic Cell... [more >>]

**Road, rail transport; ADB report spells out Covid-19 impact**

Source: Tahir Amin, *Business Recorder, Islamabad*, 2021-12-23

ISLAMABAD: The most significant impact of the Covid-19 for road and rail transport in Pakistan was on border-crossing time as trade facilitation indicator (TFI) averaged 55.7 hours, far above the 28.3 hours in 2019, says the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The bank in its report, “CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring Annual Report 2020, the Coronavirus Disease and its Imp... [more >>]

**Special teams start surprise raids to vaccinate passengers on highways**

Source: Our Staff Reporter, *The Nation, Islamabad*, 2021-12-23

ISLAMABAD - The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) Wednesday directed the concerned authorities to not allow drivers and passengers to travel without vaccination. This was directed by the National Command and Operation Center team along with Secretary RTA Islamabad and Motorway Police while checking the vaccination status of passengers and drivers of public transport at Bhara Kahu B... [more >>]

**US ships 5m more Pfizer vaccine doses to Pakistan**

Source: Shafqat Ali, *The Nation, Islamabad*, 2021-12-23

ISLAMABAD - The United States on Wednesday shipped five million more doses of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to Pakistan taking to total donation to the Pakistani people to more than 32.6 million. These Pfizer vaccines are part of the 500 million doses the United States purchased this summer to deliver to 92 countries worldwide, including Pakistan, to fulfill President Joe Biden’s commitment to... [more >>]
NCOC allows booster dose for citizens of over 30 against Omicron
Source: Imran Mukhtar, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-21
ISLAMABAD - The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Monday allowed booster dose of Covid-19 vaccines for citizens over 30 years of age as part of the government’s efforts to contain the spread of Omicron variant of coronavirus. The forum in a meeting decided to lower the age limit for booster dose and said that individuals with over 30 years of age are eligible to get booster ..... more >>
**Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

### All 4 private Covid labs at Peshawar airport unregistered
Source: Ashfaq Yusufzai, *Dawn, Islamabad*, 2021-11-28

PESHAWAR: A health department committee of experts has revealed that all the four private Covid-19 testing labs working at Peshawar’s Bacha Khan International Airport are not registered with the provincial government, have untrained staff members and are largely not complying with infection prevention guidelines. The department will formally share the panel’s report with NCOC, the cou... more >>

### 22 corona patients under treatment in KTH

Peshawar - A total of 22 corona patients were under treatment in Khyber Teaching Hospital, spokesman of the hospital Sajjad Ahmad told media persons here on Sunday. He said the hospital administration has allocated 122 beds for corona patients in Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar and patients are being treated on 22 beds. He said, Khyber Teaching Hospital has 28 ventilators reserved for cor... more >>

### 8 more schools sealed in Peshawar for refusing vaccination
Source: App, *Daily Times*, 2021-11-30

The district administration of Peshawar on Monday sealed 8 more schools for refusing administering anti-measles and rubella vaccinations to children. On the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Captain (Retd) Khalid Mahmood, the officers of district administration visited various localities within their jurisdiction and ensured administering vaccines to children, said a press rele... more >>

### Four die in Peshawar as govt expedites Covid vaccination
Source: Ashfaq Yusufzai, *Dawn, Islamabad*, 2021-12-01

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded four more mortalities, all from Peshawar, due to coronavirus and 80 new cases on Tuesday as health department ordered acceleration of vaccination efforts to inoculate the target population. Health Secretary Mohammad Tahir Orakzai issued a notification regarding launching a special three-day drive from December 1 to December 3. It said that focused effort was... more >>

### Covid vaccination push planned through cash prizes for health workers in KP
Source: Ashfaq Yusufzai, *Dawn, Islamabad*, 2021-12-03

PESHAWAR: The health department has proposed cash prizes for the ‘best performers’ in the Covid-19 vaccination campaigns to boost up immunisation in 20 districts, where the percentage of eligible people getting vaccine shots is below 50. A report of the department revealed that 11.45 million people had so far been vaccinated against the virus by Nov 30. According to it, 46.32 per cen... more >>

### 37 corona patients under treatment in Peshawar hospitals

PESHAWAR: As many as 37 corona patients are under treatment in two major hospitals of Peshawar, Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) and Lady Reading Hospital (LRH), a health official told media men here on Sunday. Giving detail about the present situation of the corona, he disclosed that 21 corona patients are under treatment in KTH Peshawar and 16 corona patients are being treated in LRH. He said 1... more >>

### 419,763 fined for violation of traffic rules

PESHAWAR: The Capital City Traffic Police have taken action against 4,19,763 people for violation of traffic rules during the last six months. Chief Traffic Officer Abbas Majeed Marwat said on Monday that a total of Rs 97.7 million fine
was collected from the motorists for violation of the traffic rules in Peshawar. The official said the action was taken against 1,07,322 bikers for not wearing h..... more >>

Response to Covid-related measures reviewed
PESHAWAR: A meeting at the office of director general health services here on Friday reviewed Covid-related measures. According to a handout, the meeting was chaired by Director Public Health KP Dr Nek Dad Afridi. Imran Sharif from PHPF UNOCHA, Dr Sarwat from WHO, Kazimullah Khan from EHSAR Foundation, Dr Bilal Bahrawar and Ali Rahman from IDSRS KP, and others attended the meeting. The directo..... more >>

Project launched to address maternal anaemia
PESHAWAR: The Nutrition International (NI) on Tuesday launched a project to address maternal anaemia. A ceremony was organized to launch the project titled “Iron Folic Acid (IFA) Supplementation for in Pakistan” under the COVID-19 Emergency Response Project in Peshawar. Collaboration has been struck with national and provincial health departments through the project implementing pa..... more >>

Punjab

Pindi reports another Covid-19 casualty
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
RAWALPINDI: A person died due to Covid-19 in the district on Saturday while as many as 16 people tested positive for the virus on Saturday and five patients discharged from the hospitals after recovery. Rozma Bibi, 70, resident of Gujar Khan, was brought to Rawalpindi Institute of Urology (RIU) on November 26 where she died on Saturday. As per data shared by District Health Authority, the posit..... more >>

COVID-19 claims another life in Rawalpindi, 16 new infections reported in 24 hours
Source: APP, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
RAWALPINDI - One more patient had died while 16 others were diagnosed with coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 39,255 in the district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here on Saturday, the total infected cases included 36,241 from Rawalpindi and 3014 from other districts. Among the new patients, five cases were reported ..... more >>

Dengue, Covid-19 cases continue to fall in Rawalpindi, Islamabad
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
RAWALPINDI: As many as 229 suspected dengue patients reported to the three government hospitals in the garrison city on Sunday but only 16 of them were found positive. According to data released by the Rawalpindi Medical University (RMU), 10 new patients arrived at Holy Family Hospital (HFH), two in Benazir Bhutto Hospital and four in the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital. The data further sa..... more >>

Over 4.52m people vaccinated against COVID-19 in Faisalabad
Source: APP, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
FAISALABAD - Over 4.52 million people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun’im said on Sunday 3,021,889 people were injected first dose while 1,437,667 administered the second dose of vaccine. He further said that 38,388 health workers were also given first dose while 23,891 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that suffici..... more >>
Rawalpindi’s corona death toll reaches 1,599
Source: APP, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
Rawalpindi - Two more people died of coronavirus during the last 24 hours, taking the total death toll to 1,599 in Rawalpindi district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Sunday, as many as 1,599 people had died in the district since the start of the pandemic, out of which 1,216 were Rawalpindi’s residents and 383 from outside districts. The report up..... more >>

Covid-19 claims two more lives
Source: APP, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
RAWALPINDI: Two more people died of fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, taking the total death toll to 1,601 in Rawalpindi district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here on Monday, as many as 1,601 people had died in the district since the start of the pandemic, out of which 1,217 Rawalpindi’s residents and 384 from outside the district. The report ..... more >>

Punjab reports 64 new corona cases
Source: APP, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
LAHORE - Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) Punjab Secretary Imran Sikandar Baloch Monday said that during the last 24 hours, 64 new cases of coronavirus were reported from across the province. In a press statement, he explained that 43 positive cases were reported in Lahore, six in Rawalpindi, two each in Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad and Multan while one each in Bhawalnagar, C..... more >>

80pc door-to-door voters’ verification completes
Source: The Newspaper's Correspondent, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
SARGODHA: Punjab Election Commissioner Ghulam Israr Khan says 80 per cent of door-to-door verification of voters has been completed. The process includes verification and rectification of electoral rolls and will conclude on Dec 6. The revision of electoral rolls, he said, was important and the public was urged to cooperate with the teams in the campaign so as to ensure preparation of accurate li..... more >>

‘850 pregnant women get Covid jabs in one month’
Source: APP, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
LAHORE: Post Graduate Medical Institute (PGMI) Principal Dr Sardar Muhammad Al-freed Zafar on Wednesday said 850 pregnant women got vaccinated at the coronavirus vaccination counter set up at Gynaecology OPD of Lahore General Hospital (LGH) during the last one month. He expressed these views while talking to women patients on the occasion of inspection of corona vaccination counter at LGH Gyneco..... more >>

Punjab launches second phase of ‘RED’
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
LAHORE: The Punjab government on Monday launched the second phase of the special coronavirus vaccination campaign “Reach Every Door” (RED) with a target of inoculating as many as 26.7 million people till December 31. To review the arrangements for the drive, Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid and Chief Secretary Punjab Kamran Ali Afzal jointly chaired a meeting at Civil Secretar..... more >>

Female schoolteachers refuse Covid jabs
Source: Adnan Lodhi, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
LAHORE: At a time when there is a threat of a new variant of coronavirus, thousands of female schoolteachers are still avoiding vaccination due to rumours about its effects. As per private school associations, around 60 per cent female teachers are unwilling to get the vaccine. They include both married and unmarried women. They are reportedly reluctant because of fears of risks related to preg..... more >>
NCOC approves Covid vaccine booster shot for health workers, others
Source: Tahir Niaz, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
ISLAMABAD - The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Wednesday approved a booster shot of Covid-19 vaccines for healthcare workers, immune-compromised people and those aged over 50 years as the forum discussed the spread of the new coronavirus variant, Omicron, across the world. Although the statement issued by the NCOC did not say which Covid-19 vaccine would be administered as booster..... more >>

13 million people vaccinated in 12 days across Punjab, says Buzdar
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
Lahore - Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar chaired a ceremony at his office in honour of best performing officials of “Reach Every Door” campaign as the vaccination target of 13 million people was achieved in a 12 days drive across the province. The CM distributed shields and appreciated the hard work of concerned officials and announced to start the second phase of this cam..... more >>

CM rewards officials for ‘best vaccination campaign’
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
LAHORE - Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar chaired a ceremony at his office in honour of best performing officials of “Reach Every Door” campaign as the vaccination target of 13 million people was achieved in a 12 days drive across the province. The Chief Minister distributed shields and appreciated the hard work of concerned officials and announced to start the second phase of..... more >>

850 pregnant women get corona vaccination in one month
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-02
LAHORE - As many as 91 cases of coronavirus were reported from various part of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In a press statement issued here on Wednesday, (P&SH) Department Secretary Imran Sikandar Baloch said that 46 positive cases were reported in Lahore, 18 in Rawalpindi and 10 from Multan. The secretary said that so far, the total number of cases reached 443,195 with recovery of 424,94..... more >>

Omicron: PMA calls for rapid response, SOPs' compliance
Source: Our Correspondent, The News, International, 2021-12-02
LAHORE: Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) expressed concern over the detection of the latest mutation of COVID-19 in South Africa namely Omicron, which has caused appalling situations all over the world. The PMA held a meeting Wednesday and asked the government for immediate measures to prevent this variant from entering Pakistan. "We strongly suggest to improve the facilities at airports..... more >>

Covid-19 claims another life
Source: Aamir Yasin, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-03
RAWALPINDI: One person died due to Covid-19 in the district on Thursday while 10 people were diagnosed with the disease and five people were discharged from the hospitals after recovery during the last 24 hours. Positivity ratio in the district was 0.6 percent. The deceased was identified as Raja Mohammad Ayub, 86, resident of Wah Cantonment brought to Shifa International Hospital on Dec 1. As ..... more >>

NCOC goes after transport sector: Obligatory vaccination campaign launched
ISLAMABAD: As per directions of the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), a special drive for implementation of obligatory vaccination regime in transport sector was in progress from December 8 to December 18 by all federating units through formulation of Joint Monitoring Teams. According to a press release issued on Sunday, the NCOC has shared the mandate details for Joint Monitoring T..... more >>
How to tell apart corona, winter diseases
LAHORE: There are many similarities between flu, COVID-19, seasonal allergy and even the common cold. However, breathing problem and loss or change in the sense of taste and smell are major symptoms of the pandemic. Experts say high fever is an important symptom of COVID-19. However, the symptom can also be found among flu and cold patients but such patients rarely suffer from high fever. See more...

No COVID-19 death from twin cities, 39 cases
Rawalpindi: The number of patients being tested positive for coronavirus illness, COVID-19 and the number of deaths caused by the illness from Islamabad Capital Territory and Rawalpindi district has shown a significant downward trend in the last one week as the virus has claimed only three lives in the last seven days while 217 new patients have been reported from the twin cities. The same was...

43pc people vaccinated in Punjab
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-19
LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Information Hasaan Khawar says some 50 million people have been vaccinated with at least one dose and more than 30 million people with two doses of Covid-19 out of designated target of more than 81 million. Seeing the declining trend of vaccination, he said the Punjab government had launched a door-to-door vaccination campaign names RED, “Reac.....

15 Covid-19 cases detected in Pindi
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-19
RAWALPINDI: As many as 15 people tested positive for Covid-19 in the district on Saturday and 11 patients recovered. The positivity ratio of Covid-19 cases in the district was recorded at 1.03 per cent during the last 24 hours. According to data, a total of 1,446 samples sent for testing out of which results of 15 persons came back positive. In Rawalpindi district, there are 119 active patients...

Positivity rate in Pindi falls below 1pc
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-18
RAWALPINDI: Four people were diagnosed with Covid-19 in the district on Friday and nine people were discharged from hospitals after recovery during the last 24 hours. On the other hand, the positivity ratio in the district was recorded at 0.3 percent. A total of 1,334 samples were collected out of which 1,330 were declared negative. In Rawalpindi district, there are 115 active patients. As many .....

43% Punjab population fully vaccinated: SACM
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-19
LAHORE: Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister (SACM) for Information and spokesperson for the provincial government Hasaan Khawar has said Punjab is leading all provinces with 43% vaccinated population. Punjab Health Department has administered Covid-19 vaccine to over 50 million people with at least one dose and 30 million with two doses. Addressing a news conference on Saturday, the SACM.....

Seven more contract Covid-19 in Rawalpindi
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-20
RAWALPINDI: As many as seven people tested positive for Covid-19 in the district on Sunday while nine patients were discharged from hospitals after recovery in the last 24 hours. Officials said 1,441 samples were collected in the district and seven of them were found infected with the virus with the positivity ratio of 0.49pc. There are 117 active patients - 22 in hospitals and 95 home isolated......

Page 28 of 56
‘97% of Rawalpindi’s adult population gets covid jabs’
Source: APP, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-20
RAWALPINDI: A total of 4,104,128 people had been vaccinated so far against the deadly coronavirus, out of the total population of 4,225,634 in the Rawalpindi district. District Health Authority (DHA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr Faiza Kanwal said that over 97% of the vaccination campaign target had been achieved, while the gaps would be covered next week. She said that free-of-cost doses wer..... more >>

Punjab announces separate dates of winter holidays for various districts
Source: Agencies, Daily Times, 2021-12-22
The Punjab government on Tuesday notified a revised winter vacation schedule, with separate dates for the various districts of the province that are not witnessing particularly high levels of smog, a private TV channel reported. According to a notification by the School Education Department, all public and private educational institutions in Kasur, Sialkot, Narowal, Faisalabad, Sahiwal, Gujrat, G..... more >>

Winter vacation notified from 23rd to Jan 6
LAHORE: Higher Education Department (HED) Punjab has issued winter vacation schedule for the province’s public and private sector higher education institutes. As per the notification, winter vacation will be observed in higher education institutes (HEIs), both public and private sector, under the jurisdiction of Higher Education Department from Dec 23, 2021 to January 6, 2022. The instit..... more >>

Punjab allows businesses to operate 24/7 amid Covid downturn
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
LAHORE: Following a decline in Covid-19 cases, the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (PSHD) has announced lifting all time-related restrictions on commercial activities across the province. According to a notification issued on Tuesday, businesses and markets in the province can operate 24/7 while adhering to Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs), including maintaining so..... more >>

Use of organic products on the rise Health consciousness during pandemic raises demand
Source: Asif Mahmood, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
LAHORE: While many businesses in the country were badly affected during the Covid-19 pandemic, the production of organic material has flourished. Experts say the cultivation of plants like rose, saffron, sohanjana and aloe vera is on the rise in the country. Various fruits, vegetables and herbs are being used in producing organic cosmetics, medicines and food items, whose demand is growing. An ..... more >>

Punjab lifts COVID restrictions
LAHORE: The Punjab government has lifted all COVID-19 restrictions on markets and businesses after a recent decline in cases. The Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department has issued a notification, which shall come into force with immediate effect in all 36 districts of the province. It said, "All markets are allowed to remain open for business, 24 hours, 7 days a week but all ac..... more >>

Covid-induced time curbs on markets lifted
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
LAHORE: Following a decline in Covid-19 cases, the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (PSHD) has announced lifting of all restrictions of timings on markets and businesses across the province. A notification issued on Tuesday highlights that now markets and businesses can carry out commercial activities round the clock while adhering to the coronavirus safetystandard operating pr..... more >>
Fall in Covid-19 cases; Markets in Punjab can now remain open 24x7  
Source: Recorder Report, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-22  
LAHORE: After decline in Covid-19 cases, the Punjab government has notified that all markets will remain open for business 24 hours with seven days a week. The Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department has issued a notification to lift all the restrictions on the markets and business centres because of recent decline in Covid-19 cases. Secretary Primary & Secondary Healthcare Depa..... more >>

Centre for vaccines trial set up in Lahore with Chinese help  
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-23  
LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid on Wednesday inaugurated the “Silk Road Clinical Research Centre” at the University of Health Sciences (UHS). The construction of the 2,400 sq-ft centre has been gifted by China’s Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutical Company, the investigator of ZF2001 coronavirus vaccine clinical trials in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Ecuador and Indonesia. .... more >>

5 more persons tested Covid-19 positive  
Source: Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-23  
RAWALPINDI - Five more persons were tested corona positive during the last 24 hours, raising the number of confirmed cases to 39,500 in the district including 36,459 Rawalpindi residents and 3,041 from other districts. Among the new cases, the report said that one each case has arrived from Rawalpindi Cantonment, Gujar Khan, Attock, KP and Islamabad. *Presently, 21 confirmed patients were ad..... more >>

Covid jab must for offering namaz in Sindh mosques  
KARACHI: The Sindh government has made vaccination compulsory for people offering prayers in mosques as the authorities take steps to keep the coronavirus in check, Geo.tv reported. The Sindh Home Department on Friday — in line with the National Command and Operations Centre’s (NCOC) directions — issued a notification in which it listed updated COVID-19 protocols for mosques. P..... more >>

PMA wants strict Covid screening at airports  
Source: Faiza Ilyas, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-28  
KARACHI: Expressing concern over the threat posed by the new Covid-19 variant, ‘Omicron’, that has attracted serious worldwide concern, the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) on Saturday called upon the government to temporarily suspend travel from South Africa, which has reported this variant, and other countries of the region. “It’s a wake-up call. The government must ..... more >>

Sindh allows Pfizer booster shots amid Omicron concerns  
Source: News Desk, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-28  
As the world governments including Pakistan rush to contain Omicron, a new heavily mutated Covid-19 strain, the government of Sindh on Sunday allowed the administration of Pfizer booster shot aimed at curtailing the spread of the new strain. Sindh Health Secretary Zulfiqar Ali Shah said that a decision in this regard has been taken by the provincial government and a notification will be issued ..... more >>
Vaccination made compulsory to offer prayers in Sindh mosques
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
KARACHI - The Sindh government made coronavirus vaccination compulsory for people offering prayers in mosques, in a bid to keep the virus' spread in check. In a notification issued on Saturday, Sindh Home Department released a list of updated COVID-19 protocols for mosques, in line with the National Command and Operation Centre's (NCOC) directives. *Only fully vaccinated ind..... more >>

Covid-19 claims another life, infects 151
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
KARACHI - As many as one more patient of coronavirus died overnight lifting the death toll to 7,621 and 151 new cases emerged when 9,365 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here on Saturday. He said that one more patient of COVID-19 lost life lifting the death toll to 7,621 that constituted 1.6 percent death rate. Syed Murad ..... more >>

Sindh makes Covid vaccine booster dose compulsory
The Sindh government has made COVID-19 booster dose compulsory after new cases of corona variant surfaced in the province. The provincial government health authorities have decided to administer the booster dose of Pfizer to the fully vaccinated people. Health Secretary Zulfiqar Ali Shah told an Urdu daily that the decision to administer fully vaccinated people a booster jab had been made to preve..... more >>

37 new cases of corona detected in Sindh
Source: Our Correspondent, Daily Times, 2021-11-29
Leader of the Opposition in Sindh Assembly Haleem Adil Sheikh on Sunday demanded that Rangers to be deputed across the province to curtail rising incidents of dacoity, road robberies, murders and target killings. While addressing a press Conference at his residence, he said that issue of robberies were resurfacing in the province and roads and railway track have become unsafe. Haleem Adil Sheikh..... more >>

Sindh plans Pfizer booster shot for all adults
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
KARACHI: The provincial health department has decided to inoculate all people with a booster shot of Pfizer keeping in view the increased risk of transmission and re-infection posed by the new Covid-19 variant Omicron. “The decision has been taken but the department is yet to make required arrangements for this purpose and announce a date for its launch,” said a health official. The ..... more >>

Omicron threat: Sindh allows booster shots
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
KARACHI: As the world governments including Pakistan rush to contain Omicron, a new heavily mutated Covid-19 strain, the government of Sindh on Sunday allowed the administration of Pfizer booster shot aimed at curtailing the spread of the new strain. Sindh Health Secretary Zulfiqar Ali Shah said that a decision in this regard has been taken by the provincial government and a notification will be.... more >>

Sindh reports 37 fresh cases of Covid-19
Source: APP, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
KARACHI: Fortunately no death was reported due to coronavirus on Sunday, however, 37 new cases emerged when 3,081 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here from CM House on Sunday. Shah said that fortunately no death was reported on Sunday. He added that till last Saturday the number death and was 7,621. He said that..... more >>
37 new cases of coronavirus detected with no death
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
KARACHI - Fortunately no death was reported due to coronavirus on Sunday, however, 37 new cases emerged when 3,081 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here from CM House on Sunday. Shah said that fortunately no death was reported on Sunday. He added that till last Saturday the number of death was 7,621. He said that 3,081 sam..... more >>

Sindh makes booster dose compulsory for fully vaccinated people
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-29
KARACHI - The Government of Sindh has decided to make a booster dose of the coronavirus vaccine compulsory after the discovery of the new COVID-19 variant. The Sindh Health Department announced that a booster dose of Pfizer vaccine will be administered to fully vaccinated individuals. Sindh Health Secretary Zulfiqar Ali Shah told media that the decision to adminster fully vaccinated individual..... more >>

COVID-19 claims one more life; infects 279 others
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-11-27
KARACHI - A patient of coronavirus died overnight bringing the death toll to 7,620 and 279 new cases emerged when 15,995 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement on Friday. He said that a patient lost his life bringing the death toll to 7,620 that constituted 1.6 percent death rate. Shah said 15,995 samples were tested which detected 27..... more >>

Sindh govt seeks 2m doses of Covid vaccines for booster shots
Source: Faiza Ilyas, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
KARACHI: The Sindh government needs two million doses of Covid-19 vaccines to offer booster shots free of cost, said Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho on Monday. “We urge the federal government to improve surveillance at all entry points, including airports, and restart the rapid antigen test for passengers. Second, it’s important that people get booster doses so their immunity is..... more >>

Dengue, Covid prevention discussed
Source: News Desk, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
Novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has not gone anywhere yet, occasion Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center Former Executive Director Seemi Jamali said on Monday. Covid should not be considered a myth, as portrayed on the social media, Jamali said and warned against lowering guards against the pandemic. She was speaking at a seminar organised by the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi Medical and ..... more >>

High alert at airport Screening of passengers begins through rapid test system amid Omicron alert
Source: Tufail Ahmed, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
KARACHI: The provincial health department has taken strict security measures to screen the passengers arriving at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport and crew of ships docking at the Karachi Port and Port Qasim. Conventional screening through rapid test system will be performed to diagnose the new variant of the novel coronavirus, Omicron, which has sent a panic wave across the world with..... more >>

New Covid-19 variant; Azra Pechuho urges Centre to respond to new situation strongly
KARACHI: Minister for Health and Population Welfare, Sindh, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, held a Press Conference at the Sindh Assembly regarding the new Covid-19 variant, Omicron. The Minister stated that in order to combat this new variant the Federal Government will have to take precautions immediately. She also said that rapid antigen tests must be carried out at the airport and all other points..... more >>
No Covid-19 death reported: Sindh CM
KARACHI: Fortunately no death stemming from Coronavirus reported on Sunday, however, 37 new cases emerged when 3,081 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here from CM House on Sunday. Shah said that fortunately no death was reported on Sunday. He added that till last Saturday the number of deaths was 7,621. Shah said.... more >>

Variant of concern: Omicron has 50 mutations, 32 in spike protein
KARACHI: The World Health Organization has designated the new variant of Covid-19 'Omicron' as a variant of concern. The new variant can turn out to be fatal for those with weak immune systems. Like other diseases, coronavirus is also going through a transformation phase and, so far, various variants have come to the fore. The new variant of coronavirus Omicron originated in South Afri..... more >>

Crude oil prices fall over 3pc on omicron concerns
Source: App, Daily Times, 2021-12-01
Crude prices fell over three percent on Tuesday amid concerns over omicron coronavirus variant and its impact on oil demand. At 1415 hours GMT, Brent, the international benchmark for two-thirds of the world’s oil, shed $2.64 (-3.59 percent) to reach $70.80 a barrel. Similarly, the US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) price reached $67.40 a barrel, down by $2.55 (-3.65 percent). The price for Op..... more >>

Covid-19 vaccinations; US CG joins religious leaders
Source: Press Release, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
KARACHI: US Consul General Mark Stroh, Sindh Minister of Health Azra Fazal Pechuho, and religious leaders representing Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Parsis visited Karachi’s Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) Ojha Campus as part of the United States and Sindh government’s ongoing immunization awareness campaign, Fizaaoon se Falaah Tak. The campaign is helping to save li..... more >>

Commissioner emphasises ‘cent percent’ vaccination coverage against COVID-19
Source: Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
HYDERABAD - Hyderabad Commissioner Muhammad Abbas Baloch on Tuesday emphasised the officers of all concerned departments of the districts of the division to ensure hundred percent coverage of the vaccination against COVID-19. He also underlined the need of preparing micro plans in this regard and allowing conditional entry of the vaccinated people in festivals, markets and places of entertainment ..... more >>

US envoy joins campaign to encourage vaccinations
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
KARACHI - U.S. Consul General Mark Stroh, Sindh Minister of Health Azra Fazal Pechuho, and leaders representing Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Parsis visited Karachi’s Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) Ojha Campus as part of the United States and Sindh government’s ongoing immunisation awareness campaign, Fizaaoon se Falaah Tak. The campaign is helping to save live..... more >>

Sindh notifies new Covid-19 curbs starting today
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
KARACHI - The Sindh government on Tuesday notified new COVID-19 restrictions, based on a city’s vaccination progress, to be effective from December 1 to 15. According to a notification by the Sindh Home Department, Karachi, Sukkur and Sanghar have been classified by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) as cities with “good vaccination progress”, whereas the remaini..... more >>
One dies of Covid overnight  
Source: APP, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-02  
KARACHI: A patient of coronavirus died overnight lifting the death toll to 7,622 and 197 new cases emerged when 12,443 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued on Wednesday. The CM said currently 6,862 patients were under-treatment, of them 6,658 were in home isolation, 14 at isolation centres and 190 at different hospitals. He added..... more >>

Sindh health dept broadens Covid-19 outreach programme  
Source: Faiza Ilyas, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-02  
KARACHI: To tackle the looming Omicron threat, the Sindh health department on Wednesday broadened its Covid-19 outreach vaccination programme and launched a drive to offer free-of-cost booster doses at all its designated centres in the province. In the first phase, booster doses would be offered to front-line health workers, persons with weakened immune systems and people aged above 50 years, who..... more >>

Health department orders tests for Omicron variant  
Source: Tufail Ahmed, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-02  
KARACHI: The provincial health department has ordered tests for the omicron variant of Covid on passengers who had earlier tested positive after reaching Karachi from abroad. The decision came after five passengers, on a flight from Saudi Arabia to Karachi, were admitted to Sindh Government Hospital in Korangi after showing signs of Covid. On Wednesday, samples of the passengers were sent to th..... more >>

To tame runaway inflation: SBP raises interest rate by 100 bsp to 9.75pc  
KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) raised its benchmark interest rate by 100 basis points for the third straight policy meeting on Tuesday, taking it to 9.75 percent and also revised its inflation forecast to 9-11 percent for the current fiscal year of 2021/22. The tightening was widely expected by the market as inflation accelerated to 11.5 percent year-on-year in November fuelled by so..... more >>

GBV is preventable  
Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global issue that affects individuals across all socio-economic backgrounds throughout the world. GBV covers multiple forms of violence that are perpetuated against an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. It arises from deep-rooted gender inequality, abuse of power and harmful norms. A person belonging to any gender can be a victim/survivo..... more >>

Eight die of Covid-19 overnight  
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-17  
KARACHI: As many as eight more patients of coronavirus died overnight and 149 new cases emerged when 10,327 tests were conducted. In a statement on Thursday, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said the casualties during the past 24 hours lifted the toll to 7,648, constituting 1.6 per cent death rate. The CM said that currently 4,123 patients were under treatment, 3,962 were in home isolati..... more >>

Another case of Omicron reported in Karachi  
KARACHI: Health authorities in Karachi Friday confirmed detection of a another 'strongly-suspected' case of Omicron variant of Covid-19, saying the sample of a person who arrived from the United Kingdom had been handed over to the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) for Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) for its confirmation. "A 35-year old man who had arrived in Karachi on December 08 ..... more >>
141 test positive for Covid
Source: PPI, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-19
KARACHI: Around 141 new cases of Covid-19 emerged when 11,161 tests were conducted during the last 24 hours across the province. However, no death was reported on Saturday. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said in a statement that currently 4,449 patients were under treatment. Of them, 4,288 were in home isolation, 22 at isolation centres and 139 at different hospitals. He added that th..... more >>

Another suspected case of Omicron variant identified in Karachi
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-18
KARACHI: A suspected case of Omicron variant of coronavirus was reported on Friday, health department sources toldDawn. They said the patient, a 35-year-old man, had no signs or symptoms of the illness when he arrived in Karachi from the United Kingdom on Dec 8. They said he had apparently recovered from the illness and was currently under observation at the Qatar Hospital. "His genome se..... more >>

Three die of Covid overnight
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-20
KARACHI: As many as three more patients of coronavirus died overnight and 237 new cases emerged when 14,063 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here on Sunday. He added that the death toll reached to 7,652 that constituted 1.6 per cent death rate. Shah..... more >>

Covid-19 claims 3 more lives, infects 237 others
Source: Recorder Report, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-20
KARACHI: At least 3 more patients of coronavirus died overnight lifting the death toll to 7,652 and 237 new cases emerged when 14,063 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here on Sunday. He added that 3 more patients of COVID-19 lost their lives lifting the death toll to 7,652 that constituted 1.6 percent death rate. Shah..... more >>

COVID-19 claims 2 more lives in Sindh
Source: App, Daily Times, 2021-12-21
As many as 2 more Covid-19 patients have died overnight in Sindh lifting the death toll to 7,654 while 151 new cases emerged when 12,187 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement on Monday. He added that 2 more patients of COVID-19 lost their lives lifting the death toll to 7,654 that constituted 1.6 percent death rate. Murad Ali Shah said 1..... more >>

COVID-19 claims four lives, infects 183 others The total provincial death toll reaches 7,658
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
KARACHI: As many as four more patients of Coronavirus died overnight lifting the death toll to 7,658 that constituted 1.6 per cent death rate, while 183 new cases emerged. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here on Tuesday. He said that 13,387 samples were tested which detected 183 new cases that constituted 1.4 per cent current detection rate. He ..... more >>

COVID-19 claims four more lives, infects 183 others
Source: Our Staff Reporter, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
KARACHI - As many as four more patients of coronavirus died overnight lifting the death toll to 7,658 and 183 new cases emerged when 13,387 tests were conducted. This was stated by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in a statement issued here on Tuesday. He said that four more patients of COVID-19 lost their lives lifting the death toll to 7,658 that constituted 1.6 percent death rate. Sh..... more >>
DC reviews corona vaccination process
Source: Sawan Khaskheli, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-22
BADIN - The Deputy Commissioner Badin, Agha Shahnawaz Khan on Tuesday presided over an important meeting to review the corona vaccination progress, process and future plan being continued in the district Badin at DC Badin Campus office. Agha Shahnawaz Khan, Deputy Commissioner Badin underlined the need of tangible and productive efforts and strictly directed officers of Health Department, Revenue ..... more >>

221 test positive for Covid
Source: APP, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-23
KARACHI: With no death reported, 221 new cases of Covid-19 emerged overnight across the province. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said in a statement on Wednesday till last Monday the number of deaths was 7,658. He said 13,424 samples were tested, which detected 221 cases that constituted 1.6 per cent current detection rate. ..... more >>

DC Khairpur reviews Corona vaccination process
Source: Agencies, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-23
SUWKUR - Deputy Commissioner, Khairpur, Tariq Chandio on Wednesday presided over a meeting to review the corona vaccination process and future plan being continued in the district. He underlined the need of tangible and productive efforts and directed officers concerned including health department, revenue department to accelerate the corona vaccination process while utilization all available resou..... more >>
International News

Countries News

Oil dips 10pc over new Covid variant fears
LONDON: World oil prices slumped more than 10 percent on Friday, slammed by demand fear after the emergence of a new variant of Covid-19. In late afternoon London trade, New York's WTI crude tumbled 11.3pc to $69.53 per barrel, while European benchmark Brent North Sea oil retreated 10.2pc to $73.81. The two contracts briefly sank as low as $68.75 and $73.03 respectively, levels last seen in..... more >>

WHO designates new Covid strain as ‘variant of concern’
GENEVA: The World Health Organization designated the new highly mutated strain of Covid a "variant of concern" and gave it the Greek name Omicron, plunging stock markets and global oil prices. Citing preliminary analysis, the World Health Organization has designated, Omicron, as a variant of concern and reported it to be carrying a higher risk of reinfection than other variants. The W..... more >>

Threat of new Covid variant Omicron causes worldwide scramble
Source: AP, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-27
Nearly two years into the Covid-19 pandemic, the world is racing to contain a new coronavirus variant potentially more dangerous than the one that has fuelled relentless waves of infection on nearly every continent. A World Health Organisation (WHO) panel named the variant “Omicron” and classified it as a highly transmissible virus of concern, the same category that includes the pre..... more >>

New Covid-19 variant detected in South Africa
WASHINGTON/ GENEVA: The discovery of a new coronavirus variant triggered global alarm on Friday as countries rushed to suspend travel from southern Africa and stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic suffered their biggest falls in more than a year. The United States will restrict travel from South Africa - where the new mutation was discovered - and neighbouring countries effective Monday, a s..... more >>

World Trade Organisation cancels ministerial moot due to Covid variant
Source: AFP, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
GENEVA: Next week’s World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial conference, the global trade body's biggest gathering in four years, was postponed at the last minute on Friday due to the new Omicron Covid-19 variant. The WTO hoped the four-day gathering in Geneva would breathe new life into the crippled organisation, which has been stuck for years trying to make progress on resolving i..... more >>

Tens of thousands protest Austria compulsory vaccination
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-11-29
Tens of thousands of Austrians rallied this weekend to protest against the government's introduction of compulsory vaccination — the first EU country to do so — as the chancellor insisted on Sunday that the move would represent “a minor interference” compared to the alternatives. One of the largest demonstrations was held in the southern city of Graz, where police sa..... more >>
**China warns of ‘colossal’ coronavirus outbreak**  
China could face more than 630,000 COVID-19 infections a day if it dropped its zero-tolerance policies by lifting travel curbs, according to a study by Peking University mathematicians. In the report published in China CDC Weekly by the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, the mathematicians said China could not afford to lift travel restrictions without more efficient vaccinations... more >>

**Omicron has many more mutations than Delta**  
ROME: The new COVID variant Omicron has many more mutations than the Delta variant, according to a first “image” of this new variant initially detected in South Africa, produced and published by the prestigious Bambino Gesu hospital in Rome. On the three-dimensional “image”, which looks like a map, “we can clearly see that the Omicron variant presents many more mutation.... more >>

**More countries tighten borders as new corona variant spreads**  
LONDON/AMSTERDAM: Even more countries imposed travel restrictions trying to seal themselves off as the Omicron coronavirus variant kept spreading around the world on Sunday, with 13 cases found in the Netherlands and two each in Denmark and Australia. Dutch health authorities said the 13 cases of the variant were found among people on two flights from South Africa to Amsterdam on Friday. Autho..... more >>

**More Omicron cases pop up as world rushes to learn more**  
Source: AP, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-11-29  
Cases of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus popped up in countries on opposite sides of the world on Sunday and many governments rushed to close their borders even as scientists cautioned that it’s not clear if the new variant is more alarming than other versions of the virus. The variant was identified days ago by researchers in South Africa, and much is still not known about it, includ..... more >>

**Swiss voters firmly back Covid pass law; UK to enforce new Covid rules from Tuesday; Online conspiracies fuel Dutch Covid unrest**  
The Hague: When Covid riots rocked the Netherlands for the second time in a year, Ricardo Pronk was there to livestream it all to his followers on social media. The 50-year-old anti-vaccination activist administered a Facebook group with 10,000 followers, which had shared a call for a demonstration in the port city of Rotterdam on November 19 that later turned violent. The group, which was rec..... more >>

**WHO warns COVID variant Omicron risk ‘very high’**  
GENEVA: The World Health Organisation warned on Monday the new COVID-19 Omicron variant poses a “very high” risk globally, despite uncertainties about the danger and contagion levels of the new strain. The UN health agency said the Covid strain first discovered in southern Africa was a “highly divergent variant with a high number of mutations... some of which are concerning and m..... more >>

**UK extends Covid vaccine booster programme**  
London: All adults in Britain will now be able to get a third Covid jab, a government scientific advisory body said on Monday, as concern mounted about the spread of the new Omicron variant. The move, approved by Health Secretary Sajid Javid, comes as the UK government said it needed to react swiftly to the new variant, which was first detected in South Africa. ”We’re advising that t..... more >>
Firms cautious on impact of Omicron variant
Source: Reuters, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
WASHINGTON: Pandemic-weary corporations struggled to assess the impact of the new Omicron variant of the coronavirus on Monday, with industries from airlines to automobiles awaiting more details to help determine how it might affect their operations and profits. The World Health Organisation warned that the Omicron variant carries a very high global risk of infection surges. Spooked investors ..... more >>

WHO warns Covid variant Omicron risk ‘very high’
Source: AFP, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-11-30
GENEVA: The World Health Organization warned Monday the new Covid-19 Omicron variant poses a “very high” risk globally, despite uncertainties about the danger and contagion levels of the new strain. The UN health agency said the Covid strain first discovered in southern Africa was a “highly divergent variant with a high number of mutations... some of which are concerning and..... more >>

No evidence yet that vaccines won’t protect against Omicron: Oxford
LONDON: The University of Oxford on Tuesday said there was no evidence that vaccines would not prevent severe disease from Omicron, but that it was ready to rapidly develop an updated version of its vaccine developed with AstraZeneca (AZN.L) if necessary. Earlier on Tuesday, the head of drugmaker Moderna said that COVID-19 shots were unlikely to be as effective against the variant, jolting glob..... more >>

Oil falls nearly 5pc on jitters over vaccine efficacy
LONDON: Oil prices tumbled nearly 5 percent on Tuesday after Moderna’s chief cast doubt on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines against the Omicron coronavirus variant, spooking financial markets and adding to worries about oil demand. The head of drugmaker Moderna told the Financial Times that Covid-19 vaccines are unlikely to be as effective against the Omicron variant of the coronavirus as th..... more >>

Omicron variant raises new fears for pandemic-hit world economy
Washington: Just as it was recovering from the body blow of the Covid-19 pandemic, the global economy has taken yet another hit from the Omicron variant of the virus, which has led to a raft of new travel restrictions. First reported to the World Health Organization in South Africa less than a week ago, the new strain has rapidly spread everywhere from Africa to the Pacific, and from Europe to ..... more >>

Omicron vaccine could get nod in four months: EU watchdog
Source: AFP, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
BRUSSELS: Vaccines specially adapted for the new Omicron coronavirus variant could be approved in three to four months if they are needed, the head of the EU’s drug regulator said on Tuesday. The decision on whether new shots are required would, however, have to be made by other bodies, European Medicines Agency Executive Director Emer Cooke said. “Were there a need to change..... more >>
Travel bans
Source: Jesse Jackson, The News, International, 2021-12-02
Omicron, the new Covid-19 variant, is now on the march. While southern Africa appears to be its epicenter, countries including Britain, Canada, Australia, Israel and others now report cases. Dr Anthony Fauci calls it “inevitable” that it will come to, or is already in, the US. We know the variant is very contagious, but still unknown is how severe it is or how resistant to vaccines it will be. More...}

Omicron fears deepen around the world: EU chief mulls mandatory Covid jabs
Brussels: Europe's top official said on Wednesday it was time to “think about mandatory vaccination” as the fast-spreading Omicron variant darkened forecasts and deepened fears of another difficult winter. Ignoring a WHO warning against blanket travel bans, Japan suspended new flight bookings into the country as the OECD warned that Omicron threatens economic recovery and lowe. More...}

Was tornado outbreak related to climate change?
WASHINGTON: The calendar said December but the warm moist air screamed of springtime. Add an eastbound storm front guided by a La Nina weather pattern into that mismatch and it spawned tornadoes that killed dozens over five US states. Tornadoes in December are unusual, but not unheard of. But the ferocity and path length of Friday night’s tornadoes likely put them in a category of their own... More...}

New Zealand reports 104 new cases of Covid-19
WELLINGTON: New Zealand reported 104 new cases of Covid-19, the Ministry of Health said in a statement on Sunday. Of the new cases, 103 were community cases across New Zealand, one was an imported case, said the ministry. Among the new community infections, 86 were recorded in the largest city of Auckland, nine in nearby Waikato, three in Bay of Plenty, two in Northland, two in Canterbury, and... More...}

Over 13m people fully vaccinated in Myanmar
YANGON: Over 13 million people have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 across Myanmar as of Saturday, according to a release from the Ministry of Health on Sunday. Over 5.79 million people have received the first jab of Covid-19 vaccines as of Saturday, the release said. According to the ministry's figures, Myanmar reported 280 new Covid-19 cases with daily test positivity rate of 2.43... More...}

Boris Johnson accused of breaching own Covid rules; Omicron spreads faster and weakens jabs: WHO; UK raises Covid alert level due to Omicron surge
London: The UK on Sunday raised its Covid Alert Level due to the "rapid increase" in cases of the Omicron variant, as the government announced new measures to control its spread. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, under pressure because of claims he and staff flouted Covid restrictions last Christmas, was due to make an address to the nation at 2000 GMT. He is expected to talk about the co... More...}

Malaysia records 31 deaths, 4626 Covid infections
KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has reported 4,626 new Covid infections and 31 more deaths as of midnight on Saturday, the health ministry said. Among the new cases, 20 are imported, and 4,606 are local transmissions, data from the ministry showed. The national total thus reached 2,688,149, and the death toll has risen to 30,862. More...
3 doses key for protection against Omicron
LONDON: Two doses of a COVID vaccine are not enough to stop you catching the Omicron variant, UK scientists have warned. Early analysis of UK Omicron and Delta cases showed the vaccines were less effective at stopping the new variant, a British media outlet reported on Saturday. But a third booster prevents around 75% of people getting any COVID symptoms. One of the main concerns since the he..... more >>

First person dies of Omicron as WHO warns of ‘very high’ risk
Source: Agencies, Daily Times, 2021-12-14
At least one person has died in Britain after being infected with the Omicron variant, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday, as the country launched an ambitious Covid booster shot programme to stop the virus’ spread. Britain – among the countries worst hit by the global health crisis since last year – is believed to be the first government to officially announce a death ..... more >>

Greece strengthens vaccination rules as Covid-19 cases hit 1 million: One dies from Omicron as UK boosts response
London: Britain on Monday confirmed what is thought to be the first confirmed death after infection with the Omicron variant, as the country launched an ambitious Covid booster shot programme to stop the virus spiralling out of control. On a visit to a vaccination centre in west London, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Omicron accounted for about 40 percent of the cases in the British capital,..... more >>

Mandatory vaccines
The emergence of the latest Covid-19 variant of concern, Omicron, further ramped up the pressures on governments to make decisive interventions before their health systems are overwhelmed. With its unusually high levels of mutations, the Omicron variant might mean faster transmission and higher resistance to our current crop of vaccines. Thankfully, initial research from South Africa suggests that..... more >>

Pfizer says study confirms positive results for anti-Covid pill; California reintroduces mask mandate
Los Angeles: Authorities in California said on Tuesday they were reinstating mask mandates in all indoor public spaces to try to curb the resurgence of Covid-1 in recent weeks. The mask mandate, which will come into force Wednesday, applies to all individuals, whether vaccinated or not. Los Angeles, San Francisco and other counties in California reintroduced the mask-wearing rule locally severa..... more >>

Covid, conflict and climate worsening hunger in Africa
NAIROBI: Hunger in Africa has worsened significantly with an almost 50 percent rise in those considered undernourished compared to 2014, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and other agencies said on Tuesday. A new report says the number going hungry across Africa reached nearly 282 million in 2020 -- more than one-fifth of the population -- an increase of 89 million compared to..... more >>
Omicron news
At this point, we still don't know very much about the Omicron variant, except that it spreads far more quickly than the Delta variant. The data show a sharp upsurge in Covid cases is South Africa, most of which seem to be Omicron. There have also been several instances of what turned out to be super-spreaders in Norway, Denmark, and the U.K. where a ridiculously high percentage of the attend..... more >>

US crosses 800,000 Covid-19 deaths
Washington: The United States, the country hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic, crossed 800,000 Covid-19 deaths on Wednesday, a tracker maintained by Johns Hopkins University showed. The figure is greater than the entire population of several states, including North Dakota and Alaska. Democrats Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, who lead the House of Representatives and Senate respectively, as..... more >>

Omicron could become dominant in Europe
Strasbourg, France: EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday warned the Omicron variant of Covid-19 could become dominant in Europe next month, but said her 27-nation bloc had ample vaccines to fight the pandemic. "If you look at the time it takes for new cases to double in number, it seems to be doubling every two or three days. And that’s massive. We’re told that by mid-Jan..... more >>

DR Congo struggles with Covid vaccine push
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-04
A year ago, the world kicked off one of the greatest initiatives in medical history: the rush to vaccinate Earth’s human population against Covid-19. Since the launch of mass vaccination in Britain on November 8 2020, billions of jabs have since poured off production lines and rich countries are lining up booster shots to top up protection for their citizens. But in the Democratic Republic..... more >>

Pak, Chinese students paint Sino-Pak friendship of new era
BEIJING: Chinese and Pakistani students held here a painting exhibition on Sino-Pak friendship of new era, China Economic Net reported on Thursday. The report says, 2021 is the 70th year since China and Pakistan established diplomatic ties. Students from both countries depicted the precious friendship in their heart via a great many paintings at the ‘Art Exhibition of Chinese-Pakistani St..... more >>

Paris cancels New Year fireworks over Omicron fears
PARIS: Paris on Saturday said it was cancelling its traditional New Year fireworks as Europe braced for tighter curbs to rein in the spread of the new strain of the coronavirus fuelling a resurgence in Covid-19 cases worldwide.EU chief Ursula von der Leyen has warned the Omicron coronavirus variant could be dominant in Europe by mid-January. Many countries have decided to reintroduce travel res..... more >>

Omicron detected in 89 countries, cases doubling fast: WHO
NEW YORK: The Omicron variant of the coronavirus has been detected in 89 countries and is spreading rapidly even in places with high levels of population immunity, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Saturday. The number of COVID-19 cases involving Omicron is doubling every 1.5 to three days in countries where there is community transmission of the variant and not just people who were i..... more >>
Erdogan pledges 15m Covid vaccine doses for Africa
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-19
Turkey will send 15 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to Africa, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced on Saturday at a major summit of the continent’s leaders, adding that the low vaccination rates there were a blot on humanity. Ankara has invested heavily in developing trade and diplomatic ties with the world’s poorest continent during Erdogan’s rule as prime minister and then….. more >>

Thai prison set on fire during riot over coronavirus cluster
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-19
Hundreds of prisoners set fire to a Thai jail during a two-day riot over the handling of a coronavirus cluster, with some inmates wounded as officers sought to restore order. Thai prisons are notoriously overcrowded and have struggled to curb the spread of the virus — more than 87,000 inmates have been infected with 185 recorded deaths, according to the Corrections Department. Authorities ..... more >>

Paris cancels New Year’s Eve fireworks as Omicron spreads
Source: Agencias, Daily Times, 2021-12-19
Paris has cancelled planned fireworks as well as festivities on the Champs Elysees avenue on New Year’s Eve in line with new government rules to prevent the spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant, BFM TV reported. French Prime Minister Jean Castex said major public parties and fireworks would be banned on New Year’s Eve and recommended that people – even if vaccinated –..... more >>

Iran reports first case of Omicron variant
Tehran: Iran has detected the first case of the coronavirus Omicron variant, deputy health minister Kamal Heidari told state television on Sunday. An Iranian man from Tehran had tested positive after returning from the United Arab Emirates. “We detected him very quickly and immediately quarantined him and the contact cases,” Heidari said. An emergency meeting has been held to disc..... more >>

Bank of France optimism undimmed by pandemic woes
Paris: France’s central bank said on Sunday that the EU’s second-largest economy remained resilient even faced with the Omicron variant of Covid-19, predicting steady growth over the coming years even if new restrictions are imposed. The coronavirus crisis “has not left scars in terms of production levels and potential production,” Bank of France director-general Olivier..... more >>

EU to get 20m extra vaccine doses to fight Omicron
Brussels: EU members will get an additional 20 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in the first three months of 2022 to fight the fast-spreading Omicron variant, the European Commission said on Sunday. The announcement comes as Europe braces for a new Covid-19 wave, driven by the highly mutated and transmissible Omicron variant and fanned by socialising over the Christmas holidays. ..... more >>

‘We need to learn to live with Covid’; Israel set to ban travel to US as Covid curbs widen; Johnson left reeling after Brexit minister quits
London: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was left reeling on Sunday after his Brexit minister resigned, ending a difficult week during which his Conservative party suffered a humiliating defeat in a local by-election and his own MPs
reballed over new coronavirus curbs. David Frost, a trusted ally of the prime minister and former Brexit negotiator, sent his resignation letter late Saturday f..... more >

Omicron scrambles anew US firms’ in-person aspirations
New York: Major US companies are having to reassess their return-to-office plans and getting tough on vaccine or mask requirements as the Omicron Covid variant looks set to extend pandemic-induced work-from-home culture. A resumption of pre-virus workplace norms was only partially moving forward in the United States when the fast-spreading new variant arrived and provoked fresh concern. Legal ..... more >

2nd Sino-Pak matchmaking workshop held to advance science, tech transfer
BEIJING: Second Sino-Pak Matchmaking Workshop was held to advance science and technology transfer and cooperation support, under CPEC. According to China Economic Net (CEN), themed by ‘Deepen China-Pakistan STI Cooperation to Support the Construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor’, the workshop was held in Kunming and Islamabad online and offline. Various promising scientific..... more >

US cities remain locked in a grim spiral of record homicides
WASHINGTON: Several American cities, both large and small, have seen a record number of homicides this year, a deadly spiral born at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic last year and which the authorities are still struggling to control. A convergence of factors is to blame, according to experts interviewed by AFP: the painful reverberations of the coronavirus and of the varied traumas it trigg..... more >

WEF defers Davos meeting
ZURICH: The World Economic Forum (WEF) on Monday postponed its annual meeting in Davos due to the spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant, putting off the event scheduled for January until mid-2022. A month before world business and political leader were due to gather in the Swiss ski resort, its organisers said they had decided to postpone in light of continued uncertainty over Omicron, addi..... more >

Oil prices sink on Omicron demand fears
LONDON: Oil prices slumped by about $3 on Monday as surging cases of the Omicron coronavirus variant in Europe and the United States stoked investor worries that new mobility restrictions to combat its spread could hit fuel demand. Brent crude futures fell by $3.16, or 4.3 percent, to $70.36 a barrel by 1506 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were down $3.47, or 4.9 perce..... more >

IsDB approves $252.5mln funding for Mohmand Dam, vaccines
ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has approved $252.5 million funding for the construction of Mohmand Dam, and provision of vaccines to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. The 343rd meeting of the board of executive directors of the bank gave the approval for the allocation of $180 million to contribute to the financing of Mohmand Dam and hydropower project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The mee..... more >
China cuts interest rate for first time in 20 months
Beijing: China’s central bank cut a key interest rate on Monday for the first time in nearly two years in a bid to kickstart growth in the world’s number two economy as it creaks under the impact of a real estate crisis and coronavirus flare-ups. The People’s Bank of China said in a statement that it had lowered the loan prime rate (LPR) to 3.8 percent from 3.85 percent in Nov..... more >>

Erdogan pledges 15m Covid vaccine doses for Africa
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-21
Turkey will send 15 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to Africa, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced on Saturday at a major summit of the continent’s leaders, adding that the low vaccination rates there were a blot on humanity. Ankara has invested heavily in developing trade and diplomatic ties with the world’s poorest continent during Erdogan’s rule as prime minister and then..... more >>

Thai prison set on fire during riot over coronavirus cluster
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-21
Hundreds of prisoners set fire to a Thai jail during a two-day riot over the handling of a coronavirus cluster, with some inmates wounded as officers sought to restore order. Thai prisons are notoriously overcrowded and have struggled to curb the spread of the virus — more than 87,000 inmates have been infected with 185 recorded deaths, according to the Corrections Department. Authorities ..... more >>

Omicron now dominant strain in Denmark: minister
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-22
The highly transmissible Omicron variant is now dominant in Denmark, which on Tuesday set a new record for daily Covid-19 infections, the health minister said. “The Institute of Public Health now considers Omicron to be the dominant variant and climbing” a month after first being detected in the Nordic country, Magnus Heunicke tweeted. A record 13,558 new cases in 24 hours were regis..... more >>

Scotland axes New Year’s Eve street party due to Omicron
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-22
Edinburgh’s hugely popular New Year’s Eve street party has been cancelled because of the surge in coronavirus cases driven by the Omicron variant, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced Tuesday. Tens of thousands of revellers from around the world typically descend on the Scottish capital on December 31 for Hogmanay, which is marked by live music and fireworks above Edinburgh Castle..... more >>

France bans UK travel as Omicron fears mount
PARIS: France said on Thursday it would ban non-essential travel to and from Britain in a bid to curb the lightning spread of the Omicron Covid-19 variant, which is forecast to quickly become the dominant risk for strained hospital systems worldwide. Countries around the world began urging against foreign travel while ramping up domestic restrictions to battle Omicron, which scientists believe ..... more >>
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<th>Headline</th>
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<td>TRENTON, New Jersey: A Pakistani man who obtained a fraudulent COVID-19</td>
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<td>loan worth millions from the US government near the beginning of the</td>
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<td>coronavirus pandemic has been sentenced to five years and four months</td>
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<td>in prison. Azhar Sarwar Rana, 31, of Newton, will also have to pay</td>
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<td>back about $5.58 million (approx. Rs1 billion) and serve five years of</td>
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<td>supervised release after completing his stint in..... more &gt;&gt;</td>
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<td>Covid cases surge in Nigeria</td>
<td>AFP, The News, International</td>
<td>2021-12-22</td>
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<td>Lagos: Nigeria on Tuesday said cases have shot up in Africa's most</td>
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<td>populous nation, urging people to respect anti-Covid measures as it</td>
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<td>enters a fourth wave of the coronavirus. ..... more &gt;&gt;</td>
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<td>Scotland axes New Year's Eve street party due to Omicron; US offers free</td>
<td>AFP, The News, International</td>
<td>2021-12-22</td>
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<td>Covid tests as Omicron spreads</td>
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<td>Washington: The United States said on Tuesday it will distribute</td>
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<td>hundreds of millions of free Covid tests in the face of surging</td>
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<td>Omicron cases, which have forced governments worldwide to reimpose</td>
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<td>restrictions ahead of the holidays. Washington also said Tuesday it</td>
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<td>will donate more than $500 million in international Covid aid to help</td>
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<td>countries battle the pandemic, while Israel announced tough new.....</td>
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<td>more &gt;&gt;</td>
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<td>EU to limit vaccine validity in Covid pass to 9 months</td>
<td>AFP, The News, International</td>
<td>2021-12-22</td>
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<td>Brussels: The European Union is poised to limit the validity of vaccine</td>
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<td>recognition in its EU Covid certificate to nine months, its executive</td>
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<td>said on Tuesday, in a bid to encourage boosters. The European</td>
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<td>Commission said in a statement it has adopted &quot;a binding acceptance</td>
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<td>period of nine months (precisely 270 days) of vaccination certificates</td>
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<td>for the purposes of intra-EU travel&quot;, to c..... more &gt;&gt;</td>
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<td>Indian fined for wanting Modi's face cut from vaccine drive</td>
<td>AFP, The News, International</td>
<td>2021-12-22</td>
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<td>New Delhi: An Indian man went to court to complain about Prime Minister</td>
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<td>Narendra Modi promoting himself as the face of the nation's Covid</td>
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<td>vaccination drive -- but walked away Tuesday with a fine for wasting</td>
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<td>the judge's time. The Hindu nationalist leader has been the focus of</td>
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<td>a massive advertising blitz touting his government's triumphs in</td>
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<td>fighting the pandemic despite nearly 5..... more &gt;&gt;</td>
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<td>Balochistan reports 32 cases of Omicron</td>
<td>News Desk, Daily Times</td>
<td>2021-12-23</td>
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<td>At least 32 suspected cases of Omicron variant of COVID-19 have</td>
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<td>been reported in Balochistan's Kalat district during a vaccination</td>
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<td>and diagnostic process, a provincial health department official</td>
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<td>confirmed on Wednesday. The National Command and Operation Centre</td>
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<td>(NCOC), however, has not yet confirmed any cases of the strain in the</td>
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<td>district. Kalat District Health Officer (DHO) Nasrullah Lango.....</td>
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<td>more &gt;&gt;</td>
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<td>US authorises Pfizer Covid-19 pill, first for at-home use</td>
<td>Reuters, Dawn, Islamabad</td>
<td>2021-12-23</td>
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<td>The United States on Wednesday authorised Pfizer Inc's antiviral Covid-</td>
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<td>19 pill for people ages 12 and older at risk of severe illness, the</td>
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<td>first oral and at-home treatment as well as a new tool against the</td>
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<td>fast-spreading Omicron variant. Pfizer's antiviral regimen, Paxlovid,</td>
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<td>was nearly 90 per cent effective in preventing hospitalisations and</td>
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<td>deaths in patients at high risk of severe illness..... more &gt;&gt;</td>
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France jabs kids, Chinese city locks down
Paris: France started vaccinating children over five and China plunged a city into a strict lockdown on Wednesday as governments scramble to contain fresh virus surges driven by the Omicron variant. The latest clinical data suggest Omicron does not cause more severe illness than its predecessors, notably the Delta variant first identified in India, which accounts for the bulk of cases worldwide. more >>

Japan tells US mly to enforce virus rules after base cluster
Tokyo: Japan on Wednesday urged the US military to adhere to coronavirus testing and quarantine rules as a cluster linked to an American base grew to more than 200 cases. Cases have nosedived in recent months in Japan, which has seen a comparatively low 18,300 Covid deaths during the pandemic. But in recent days, 215 people linked with the US base Camp Hansen in Japan’s southern Okinawa r..... more >>

WHO calls for treaty to shield against next pandemic
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-11-30
The world must study the wreckage of Covid-19 and say “never again” by striking a pandemic preparedness treaty, the WHO said Monday as countries gathered to build a new accord. World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said another disastrous pandemic was bound to happen unless countries showed the resolve to strengthen global defences. Nations are meeting..... more >>

WHO urges ‘rational’ measures against Omicron Covid variant
Source: AFP, Daily Times, 2021-12-01
The World Health Organization called Tuesday for countries to keep calm and take “rational” measures in response to the new, fast-spreading Covid variant Omicron, which has sparked global panic. “We call on all member states to take rational, proportional risk-reduction measures,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a briefing to countries. “The global respo..... more >>

Large, synchronised global downturn due to omicron highly unlikely: Fitch
Source: Agencies, Daily Times, 2021-12-01
It is too soon to incorporate the effects of the omicron coronavirus variant into economic growth forecasts until more is known about its transmissibility and severity, according to Fitch Ratings. “We currently believe that another large, synchronised global downturn, such as that seen in 1H20, is highly unlikely but the rise in inflation will complicate macroeconomic responses if the new v..... more >>
Countries agree to negotiate WHO pandemic accord
GENEVA: The World Health Organisation member states agreed on Wednesday to start building a new international accord on how to handle future pandemics and ensure there can be no repeat of Covid-19. The economic turmoil and millions of lives lost during the coronavirus crisis triggered calls for new international defences strong enough to prevent a future such disaster. At a special meeting in G.... more >>

2022 must be year ‘we end the pandemic’, says WHO
GENEVA: The World Health Organisation chief called on Monday for the world to pull together and make the difficult decisions needed to end the Covid-19 pandemic within the next year. As the end-of-year festivities approach, WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was better to cancel events “now and celebrate later than to celebrate now and grieve later.” “202.... more >>
## SDPI Engagements

### Webinar News

**Bridging policymakers-stakeholders gap key to tap full CPEC potential**  
Source: Staff Reporter, The News, International, 2021-12-23  
ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: In order to tap full potential of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) the divide between policymakers and stakeholders must be bridged over at the earliest. This was the consensus of a roundtable of think-tanks from different sectors that stressed that the government should facilitate investors and the business community..... [more >>](#)

**Speakers call for bridging gap between policy makers, stakeholders to fully tap potential of CPEC**  
Source: APP, APP, 2021-12-22  
PESHAWAR, Dec 22 (APP): The speakers in a meeting of “1st National Network of Economic Think Tanks” Wednesday called for bridging gap between policy makers and stakeholders to fully tap the business and trade potential from China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project and Pak Afghan Transit trade by facilitating investors and business community. The think tanks from different sector..... [more >>](#)

**SPEAKERS CALL FOR BRIDGING GAP BETWEEN POLICYMAKERS TO FULLY TAP POTENTIAL OF CPEC**  
Source: DNA News, DNA News, 2021-12-22  
Islamabad, /DNA/ – The speakers at a meeting of ‘1st National Network of Economic Think Tanks’. Wednesday called for bridging gap between policy makers and stakeholders to fully tap the business and trade potential from China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project and Pak Afghan Transit trade by facilitating investors and business community in Pakistan. The think tanks from di..... [more >>](#)

**SPEAKERS CALL FOR BRIDGING GAP BETWEEN POLICYMAKERS TO FULLY TAP POTENTIAL OF CPEC**  
Source: DNA, Centreline.com, 2021-12-22  
Islamabad, /DNA/ – The speakers at a meeting of ‘1st National Network of Economic Think Tanks’. Wednesday called for bridging gap between policy makers and stakeholders to fully tap the business and trade potential from China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project and Pak Afghan Transit trade by facilitating investors and business community in Pakistan. The think tanks from di..... [more >>](#)

**SPEAKERS CALL FOR BRIDGING GAP BETWEEN POLICYMAKERS TO FULLY TAP POTENTIAL OF CPEC**  
Source: DNA, Daily Islamabad Post, 2021-12-22  
Islamabad, /DNA/ – The speakers at a meeting of ‘1st National Network of Economic Think Tanks’. Wednesday called for bridging gap between policy makers and stakeholders to fully tap the business and trade potential from China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project and Pak Afghan Transit trade by facilitating investors and business community in Pakistan. The think tanks from di..... [more >>](#)

### Online Workshop

**‘India hatched conspiracy to separate East Pakistan’**  
ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a webinar on ‘1971- facts and fictions’ organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Thursday said that Indians had hatched a conspiracy and supported a separatist movement in the then East Pakistan in 1971 to split Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, political and security strategist and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Rauf H..... [more >>](#)
India hatched conspiracy to separate East Pakistan: Speakers
Source: Agencies, The Nation, Islamabad, 2021-12-17
ISLAMABAD - The speakers at a webinar on ‘1971- facts and fictions’ organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Thursday said that Indians hatched conspiracy and supported separatist movement in the then East Pakistan in 1971 to split Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, political and security strategist and the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Raoof Hassan said... more >>

CPEC brings prosperity to poor areas in Pakistan: official
Source: Xinhua, China.org.cn, 2021-12-10
ISLAMABAD, Dec. 10 (Xinhua) -- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has brought prosperity to poor areas in Pakistan including those in southwestern Balochistan province, Khalid Mansoor, special assistant to Pakistani Prime Minister on CPEC affairs said here on Thursday. Speaking at the session “CPEC in the Emerging Regional Scenario” organized by Islamabad-based think tank the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), the official stressed... more >>

CPEC brought prosperity to remote areas: official
Source: Staff Report, Pakistan Today, 2021-12-11
ISLAMABAD:The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has brought prosperity to remote areas in Pakistan including those in Balochistan, Khalid Mansoor, special assistant to Prime Minister on CPEC affairs said. Speaking at the session “CPEC in the Emerging Regional Scenario” organised by Islamabad-based think tank the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), the official stressed... more >>

Pakistan Must Unite to Stamp Out Intolerance, Says NSA
Source: Newsweek Pakistan, Newsweek, 2021-12-10
Moeed Yusuf claims society must stigmatize anyone who takes law into their own hands to ensure incidents like Sialkot lynching are not repeated National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf on Thursday advised Pakistani society to unite to stamp out intolerance, claiming that incidents such as last week’s Sialkot mob lynching can only be eradicated if individuals and groups learn that there will be... more >>

CPEC brings prosperity to poor areas in Pakistan: official
Source: Xinhua, Big News Network China, 2021-12-10
ISLAMABAD, Dec. 10 (Xinhua) -- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has brought prosperity to poor areas in Pakistan including those in southwestern Balochistan province, Khalid Mansoor, special assistant to Pakistani Prime Minister on CPEC affairs said here on Thursday. Speaking at the session “CPEC in the Emerging Regional Scenario” organized by Islamabad-based think tank the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), the official stressed... more >>

Economic policy making must remain govt’s domain through NEC, says Dr Hafiz Pasha
Source: Staff Reporter, The News, International, 2021-12-10
Islamabad: Former finance minister Dr. Hafiz A Pasha has said the accountability of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should rest with the Parliament. Besides, all envisaged targets, including inflation, should be approved by the National Economic Council (NEC) under the Chairmanship of PM and in presence of four chief ministers, he said. “The SBP should be made accountable to Parliament... more >>

PM for inclusive development to empower the poor
Source: APP, APP, 2021-12-09
ISLAMABAD, Dec 9 (APP): Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday stressing for inclusive development said it must demonstrate trickle-down effects with the aim of empowering the poor and lower strata of society. He expressed these...
views in an online address at the concluding session of the 24th Sustainable Development Conference titled: “Beyond the Pandemic: Leaving No One Behind”, held ..... more >>

Pakistan needs concerted ‘whole of nation’ approach to end intolerance: Dr Moeed
Source: APP, APP, 2021-12-09
ISLAMABAD: Dec 9 (APP):National Security Adviser (NSA) Dr Moeed Yusuf on Thursday said the country needed a concerted whole of nation approach to end intolerance from the society and stigmatize violence or taking law into their hands by extremist factions as a taboo. The NSA was addressing the session on Importance of Sustainable Development Goals for National Security in the Context of Current R..... more >>

‘Govt plans to inject 60pc renewables into energy mix by 2030’
Source: Recorder Report, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-10
ISLAMABAD: Member Parliamentary Committee on Climate Senator Faisal Javed, on Thursday said, Pakistan, so far, has planted 1.5 billion trees out of the 10 billion target, aimed at achieving global goals while the government also plans to inject 60 per cent renewables into energy mix by 2030. He was speaking at a session on COP 26 and the Way Ahead-Role of Parliaments in Climate Politics and Imple..... more >>

Humanitarian crises: China, Russia urged to give Afghan people a helping hand
Source: Tahir Amin, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-10
ISLAMABAD: Neighbouring powers such as China and Russia should take the lead to resolve the humanitarian crises in Afghanistan otherwise the whole region can be hit due to the crisis as it is a threat to regional security. This was the crux of a plenary session, “Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan: Need for Regional & Global Responses” held on the occasion of last day of 24th Sust..... more >>

Target to shift 60pc production on clean energy sources: Amin Aslam
Islamabad: Malik Amin Aslam, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change, has said that our Nationally Determined Contributions were based on two pillars: shifting to clean energy with a target of shifting 60 per cent of our production to clean sources and basing our development on nature-based solutions which were aligned with the global framework. Mr. Amin was speaking at the plen..... more >>

Fight against pandemics: Need for bringing health spending as per UN SDG stressed
Source: Abdul Rasheed Azad, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-08
ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a conference, while expressing grave concern over the low spending on healthcare system in Pakistan, have stressed the need for bringing health spending as per the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to better fight any pandemic in the future. They highlighted this, while speaking at a session titled, “Beyond Covid-19 challenges to primary healthcare..... more >>

Digitalisation of economy must to empower women
Source: APP, Daily Times, 2021-12-14
President Dr Arif Alvi Monday said that the digitalization of the economy was essential to empower women and bring other deprived segments into the mainstream. The President, addressing the plenary session of the 24th Sustainable Development Conference here, said the disbursement of the cash assistance to women under the Ehsaas Program directly to their bank accounts would make them more financial..... more >>

Pasha critical of govt’s approach to bringing down CAD
Source: Tahir Amin, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-09
ISLAMABAD: There is an intent to bring down the current account deficit to four percent in 2021-22 from the potentially
5.5 percent by using monetary policy which will have serious social consequences leading to lower growth, higher inflation, increase in inequality and pushing six to eight million more people below the poverty line, said Dr Hafiz Pasha, former finance minister. “Accountabi..... more >>

Speakers for creating ‘reliable’ database to take full advantage of MSMEs for higher growth
Source: Abdul Rasheed Azad, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-09
ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a conference, while stressing the need for supporting the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), have recommended the authorities to set a reliable database for taking advantage of the MSMEs in putting the economy on the path of development. They said this, while discussing at a session on, MSMEs amid Covid-19: Assessment of Loss, Relief and Recovery Policies, Coping S..... more >>

Laws Must Ensure Central Bank Accountability: Dr Hafeez Pasha
Source: Ahmad Mukhtar, NEWSMAN, 2021-12-08
ISLAMABAD (Dec 08, 2021) The laws must ensure the accountability of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the accountability should rest with the government under the prime minister, and there should be coordination between the bank and the ministries concerned, said Dr Hafiz Pasha, former finance minister. He was speaking at a session Understanding the social footprint of central banking & m..... more >>

Transformation of services sector required thru new policies: speakers
Source: Tahir Amin, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-08
ISLAMABAD: Rapid transformation of services sector is required through new policies to move away from vested interests, and rethinking of regulations and new institutions in two key areas, i.e., trade competition and skills. This was the crux of the session, “Services-led Growth and the Rise of Digital Platforms: A South Asia Perspective”, organised by the Sustainable Development Poli..... more >>

Ecosystem degradation to cost global GDP $10tr: Zartaj
Source: Hina Kiyani, Daily Mail, 2021-12-08
ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wazir on Tuesday said massive and urgent efforts were imperative to limit environmental degradation as the unabated ecosystem dilapidation would cost US$10 trillion to global GDP by 2050. Addressing the panel discussion on Ecosystem Restoration 2030: A Decade of Action for Sustainability and Resilience held here under international Sustai..... more >>

From Glasgow to Sharm-el-Sheikh
People all over the planet are facing detrimental impacts of 1.1 C global warming, being hit by strong heat waves, cyclones, floods and wildfires. The talks, delayed for a year due to Covid-19, represented the hope to negotiate at a critical crossroads in our fight for climate action. Over the two weeks and hundreds of conversations in Glasgow at COP26, the public, private, and cross-sector ple..... more >>

Local governments and the youth
The young population of Pakistan can be seen as a problem as well as an opportunity. So far we have been unable to realise the potential of the youth. We have failed to fully integrate them in the policy and governance models. At times, we have also been unmindful of this asset. The goals and targets set for the future should have significant input from those to whom the future belongs. The oppo..... more >>
Body on Agri Transformation Plan; Dr Abid Suleri made national convenerr
Source: Recorder Report, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-01
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has appointed Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Member Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council and as national convenor of the National Committee on Agriculture Transformation Plan. Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Fakhar Imam, will be the chairman of the committee. Dr Suleri is the executive director of the SDPI. The committee..... more >

PM Sacks Jamshaid Iqbal Cheema As NCC Convener Fakhar Imam, Dr Abid get new role for NCC
Source: Nazi Gulzar, NEWSMAN, 2021-11-29
ISLAMABAD: Prime minister, imran Khan, on Monday sacked his former political aide, Jamshaid Iqbal Cheema, as Convener National Coordination Committee (NCC) on Agricultural Transformation. Sources said that his alleged misuse of official position as special assistant to the prime minister on Food Security, and his conflict of interest (He and his family are one of the importers/distributors of pest..... more >>

Dr. Abid Suleri Appointed as Convenor of the Committee on Agriculture Transformation Plan
Source: ProPK Staff, ProPakistani.com, 2021-11-30
In recognition of the work of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Agriculture and Food Security, Prime Minister Imran Khan has appointed Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Member Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council and Executive Director of the SDPI, as National Convenor of the National Committee (NCC) on Agriculture Transformation Plan. Advertisement ALSO READ Oil Pric..... more >>

DR. ABID QAIYUM SULERI APPOINTED AS CONVENOR COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION PLAN
Source: Staff Reporter, Daily Ausaf, 2021-11-30
ISLAMABAD: In recognition of the work of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Agriculture and Food Security, the Prime Minister Imran Khan hasDr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Member Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council and Executive Director of the SDPI appointed as National Convenor of the National Committee (NCC) on Agriculture Transformation Plan. The Federal Minister for..... more >>

Abid appointed convener of AT plan
Source: News Desk, Pakistan Observer, 2021-12-01
In recognition of the work of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute on Agriculture and Food Security, Prime Minister appointed Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Member Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council and Executive Director of the SDPI as National Convenor of the National Committee (NCC) on Agriculture Transformation Plan. According to a notification, the Convenor, in addition to perform..... more >>

SDPI rejoinder to news item
ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), in a rejoinder to a news story published in The News and Jang levelling allegations against its Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri that he had sent his friends and family to Glasgow to attend COP26, is totally misleading and against the facts. None of Dr Suleri's family members or friends travelled to Glasgow. The News item..... more >>
Debate on development strategy
Source: Jawaid Bokhari, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-20
Social exclusion and its fallout have prompted policymakers, think tanks and economists to engage in the national discourse on how to forge an inclusive and sustainable development agenda with required policy adjustments. While it is recognised that economic growth is important for raising national output, it is also being increasingly acknowledged that growth is not socially sustainable as retr.... more >>

Speakers hold discussion on outcome of the COP26
Source: DNA, Daily Islamabad Post, 2021-11-30
ISLAMABAD, NOV 30: Some glimpses from a discussion on the outcome of the COP26, held at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), Sustainable Development Policy Institute and Embassy of France. The event was attended by a wide variety of stakeholders including academia, researchers and civil society reps. President IRS, Am..... more >>

Speakers hold discussion on outcome of the COP26
Source: Admin, Centreline.com, 2021-11-30
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Civil society coalition, envoys discuss COP26 achievements of Pakistan
Source: APP, APP, 2021-12-01
ISLAMABAD, Dec 01 (APP):The Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) in collaboration with the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), the Embassy of France and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organized a post 26th conference of parties (COP26) discussion to share perspectives with a wider audience. The keynote address by SAPM on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam set the tone..... more >>

‘COP26 achieved a weak consensus’
Islamabad : Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam has said that even though COP26 had achieved an international consensus, it was a weak one as it did not make the countries agree to stronger commitments. Mr. Aslam was addressing a conference on “Post- COP26: from Paris to Glasgow” organised here by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collab..... more >>
Farmers face hefty challenges to AI adoption in agriculture sector
Source: M. Salman Raza, APP, 2021-12-12
MULTAN, Dec 12 (APP): Farmers of Southern Punjab face challenges in effectively application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for increasing crops' cultivation which result in declining the overall crops yield followed by ultimate rising commodity prices in the country. Agriculture is a major industry in Pakistan which contributes around 20% to the overall GDP and employs almost 50% of it&...... more >>

Non-traditional security challenges open avenues for inter-state cooperation
Source: Staff Reporter, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-16
ISLAMABAD: Non-traditional security challenges, especially the deteriorating air quality in major cities, provide avenues for inter-state and transnational cooperation among South Asian states and societies. This consensus emerged at an international conference on "Securitising non-traditional security dynamics in South Asia: contemporary challenges and future trajectories" organised ...... more >>

South Asia; Speakers pinpoint multiple non-traditional security challenges
Source: Recorder Report, Business Recorder, Islamabad, 2021-12-15
ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar argue that South Asia grapples with multiple non-traditional security challenges including deteriorating air quality in major cities, the Covid-19 pandemic, poverty and under-development, gender discrimination, refugees, illegal trade, smuggling and drug trafficking. Professor SPIR Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal summed up the discussion, saying that without cooperation..... more >>

Pak delegates for COP26 meet were not experts
ISLAMABAD: Member of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory council, Abid Sulehri had allegedly his acquaintances and family members sponsored through UN funding for a trip to Glasgow to attend the COP26 conference as observer delegates. Sulehri, who is also Executive Director of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), had prepared this list of his own choice without the approval of memb..... more >>

SDPI rejoinder to news item
ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), in a rejoinder to a news story published in The News and Jang levelling allegations against its Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri that he had sent his friends and family to Glasgow to attend COP26, is totally misleading and against the facts. None of Dr Suleri's family members or friends travelled to Glasgow. The News i..... more >>

Community takes up cudgels against smog by monitoring air quality in Lahore
Source: Irfan Aslam, Dawn, Islamabad, 2021-12-18
LAHORE: Being on the top of the list of the most polluted cities of the world for Lahore is not uncommon these days in the ranking of the IQAir, a Swiss company that monitors air quality across the globe. It was shown as the most polluted city of the world on Wednesday. While on Thursday, Lahore was on the top of the list again with 362 AQI, followed by Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. IQAir collects data..... more >>
Increase in WHT on cellular services likely
Source: Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-12-21
KARACHI: The government is considering increasing the withholding tax (WHT) on cellular services from 10% to 15% in the upcoming mini-budget. The move is in direct conflict with the reduction in tax on phone calls announced in the federal budget for 2021-22. Moreover, it is also detrimental to the digitalisation drive for the economy and undermines the ‘Digital Pakistan’ vision. Cur..... more >>

IMF actions to result in double-digit inflation
Source: Shahbaz Rana, The Express Tribune, Islamabad, 2021-11-28
ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) prior actions will push inflation into double digits but Pakistan needs to make difficult decisions about reduction in expenditure and the size of civilian-military workforce, said former State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor Shahid Kardar. “We are living on borrowed times and need surgery but that has to be performed by local doctor..... more >>

Progressive, transparent tax system may ensure inclusive economic growth: Experts
ISLAMABAD - Economic experts have emphasised that revamping tax system from regressive to progressive and turning it transparent may ensure inclusive economic growth in the country. Revamping tax system from regressive to progressive through changing culture at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), improving agricultural yields, raising investment for water conservation and ensuring policy support..... more >>

‘Revamping tax system may ensure inclusive economic growth’
ISLAMABAD: Revamping tax system from regressive to progressive through changing culture at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), improving agricultural yields, raising investment for water conservation and ensuring policy support for Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs)-will lead to an inclusiveness in economy, said Shahid Kardar, Vice Chancellor Beacon House University. Delivering a key note address a..... more >>