Vaccine-preventable diseases surge as NIH uncovers immunisation gaps

Issues two advisories urging early detection, reporting and vaccination

By M. Waqar Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: A rise in vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), including diphtheria, pertussis and measles, in the federal capital, along with an increase in influenza cases across the country, has prompted the National Institute of Health (NIH) to issue two urgent advisories, exposing gaps in immunisation and preparedness.

Several diphtheria patients are admitted to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), pertussis cases have been reported in recent weeks in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and measles has claimed hundreds of lives across the country, officials said.

They said the deaths point to poor vaccination status among children and to the failure of the Federal Directorate of Immunisation (FDI) and provincial EPIs to promote immunisation.

Paediatricians and infectious diseases specialists said the health institutions and international donor agencies working on child vaccination had also failed to persuade parents to vaccinate their children, as a social media campaign against vaccines has gone largely unchecked.

In its VPD advisory, the NIH's Centre for Disease Control (CDC) listed inadequate routine immunisation coverage, population mobility, missed doses, weak cold chain management, delayed case detection and poor infection control in hospitals as key risk factors. It directed healthcare providers to maintain a high index of suspicion and promptly evaluate patients with compatible symptoms.

For diagnosis, measles is to be confirmed through serum samples kept at 2-8°C during transport. For diphtheria, throat or nasal swabs must be placed in Amies transport medium with charcoal. Pertussis requires nasopharyngeal swabs or aspirates, while tetanus is primarily a clinical diagnosis.

On treatment, the advisory said measles management is mainly supportive and includes Vitamin A. Pertussis needs antibiotics, ideally early in the illness, with prophylaxis for close contacts where indicated. Diphtheria requires immediate antitoxin and antibiotics, and tetanus needs urgent hospital care and vaccination, since recovery does not confer reliable immunity. Hospitals must keep adequate stocks of Vitamin A, antibiotics and diphtheria antitoxin.

The advisory also called for uninterrupted routine immunisation under the Expanded Programme on Immunisation, follow-up of children who missed doses, catch-up vaccination and targeted campaigns where needed. Suspected cases must be notified to District Disease Surveillance and Response Units and entered into the District Health Information System, while suspected outbreaks and clusters must be reported immediately.

Influenza is spreading at the same time. "With vaccines from multinational companies unavailable, many people remain unprotected and are falling sick," an infectious diseases specialist warned.

In the second advisory, on seasonal influenza for 2026-27, the NIH warned that Influenza A(H3N2) and other seasonal viruses can cause mild illness but may progress to severe disease among high-risk groups. These include people aged 65 and above, children under five, pregnant women, the obese, the immunocompromised and those with diabetes, heart or respiratory ailments.

In Pakistan, the NIH's disease surveillance system recorded 47,417 suspected influenza-like illness cases and 1,805 suspected severe acute respiratory infection cases in Week 41.

The NIH advised symptomatic people to stay home, cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands and avoid contact with high-risk individuals. It asked provincial and regional health departments and hospitals to circulate both advisories and report the measures taken in their areas.



KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the Sindh Agriculturist Forum 2026-27, here at the Chief Minister's House, Friday. —INI

Physical remand of two accused in child maid's death extended by three days

By Khalid Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Judicial Magistrate Naima Iffat has extended the physical remand of the two accused, Afshan Ali and Ali Raza—arrested in connection with the murder of 15-year-old domestic worker Fatima Asghar—by an additional three days.

The court observed that, according to medical evidence, there are multiple wounds and signs of violence on the victim's body, and the record suggests that the child's death resulted from physical abuse. Judicial Magistrate Naima Iffat issued a written order regarding the extension of the physical remand. Although the police had requested a four-day extension, the court granted a three-day remand.

During the hearing, Prosecutor Wajid Munir informed the court that an electric iron had been recovered from the accused, Afshan, and a stick from the accused, Ali. The DVR has been sent for forensic analysis, and CCTV footage related to the incident is also available. According to the prosecutor, the victim was burned with an electric iron and subjected to ongoing violence.

The prosecutor stated that the post-mortem report reveals 29 injuries on the child's body; the fact that some of these wounds are old points to a pattern of sustained abuse, and the child was never provided with medical treatment. CCTV footage also shows the child being subjected to repeated violence. The prosecution further requested permission to conduct polygraph and voice-matching tests to ascertain the specific role of the accused, Qari Ali.

In its written order, the court directed the investigating officer to verify the child's exact age and examine the documentary evidence, while also investigating all aspects concerning her placement with the accused family, her education, her stay in the household, her care, and the nature of the domestic work she performed. The court ordered that matters concerning contact with the child, financial support, and her overall welfare also be included in the investigation.

Furthermore, it directed an enquiry into whether the child was subjected to domestic labour or exploitation within the accused's household, and instructed that the individual roles of both accused persons—as well as any other potentially involved individuals—be determined. The court also ordered an examination into the applicability of Sections 328 and 328-A of the Pakistan Penal Code, along with the Islamabad Domestic Workers Act, 2022, to the case.

PPP — three questions

By Farrukh Saleem

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has consecutively governed Sindh for 18 years and 7 months. Over that period, cumulative federal revenue transfers to Sind amounted to Rs12.84 trillion (this does not include all the resources Sindh raised or borrowed independently).

Using the Rs12.84 trillion cumulative federal transfers, that works out to approximately Rs428 billion per district over the period. That amounts to Rs1.3 million for every household in the province. Rs12.84 trillion is sufficient to build 114,600 schools, 142,700 health clinics or 183,400 km of new roads.

In 2007–08, Sindh's literacy rate stood at 56 percent. Seventeen years later, it was 58 percent. Seventeen years. Two percentage points. 39 percent of Sindh's children are out of school. Among girls, the proportion is 44 percent.

Only 22 percent of Sindh's households have piped water as their main source of drinking water. One-third have no drainage system.

Yes, there has been progress. Documented full immunisation increased from 50 percent in 2018–19 to 66 percent in 2024–25. The proportion of households without toilets declined from 12 percent to 7 percent.

Question 1: How many functioning schools, staffed clinics and usable roads did its people actually get?

Question 2: How much of Sindh's provincial revenue reached its 30 districts, and how much remained under provincial control?

Question 3: Rs12.84 trillion reached the provincial treasury. The question is what reached the household.

Red alert: The official records reveal that in 2008 Sindh's public-school network had 49,125 schools. By 2024 the number had gone down to 40,978 schools, a decline of 8,147 schools or 16.6 percent.

Over the 2010 to 2023 period, the number of hospitals has increased from 88 to 101. A net increase of 13 hospitals over 13 years. The number of Basic Health Units (BHU) has been stagnant at 772.

Imagine potential new schools 114,600 - an actual decline of 8,147. Imagine potential new 142,700 clinics - on the ground stagnant at 772.

Sindh has made progress in some areas. But after eighteen years of PPP rule, two percentage points of improvement in literacy demand an explanation.

Eighteen years. Four electoral victories. Rs12.84 trillion in federal transfers. The question is not how much money arrived in Karachi. The question is what changed for the people of Sindh.

Newborn mauled to death in Sukkur's Pano Aqil hospital

By our correspondent

SUKKUR: A newborn died after allegedly being attacked and bitten by cats at a private hospital in Pano Aqil, Sukkur, prompting allegations of negligence by the facility's administration.

The health facility has been sealed by the authorities, while an FIR has been registered against the administration of the hospital.

The family alleges. "Due to the alleged serious negligence of the hospital administration and staff, the baby girl was attacked by cats during the night."

Imdad Chouhan, father of the deceased newborn, said that the baby's body bore bite marks and injuries, which clearly shows that animals had attacked her.

Meanwhile, Baiji Police has registered a case against the administration of the hospital.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Heavy Mechanical Complex invites applications for the following position on contract basis:-

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GOVERNMENT OF SINDH

THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER/COLLECTOR, SUKKUR

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SITUATION VACANT

APPOINTMENT AGAINST THE POSTS OF BPS-01 TO BPS-04 NON-TECHNICAL POSTS IN THE OFFICE OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SUKKUR

Applications are invited for appointment against below mentioned posts from candidates having Domicile of District Sukkur in the office of the Deputy Commissioner Sukkur.

S#	Name of Post BPS	No. of Vacant Posts	Age Limit	Qualification/ Experience	Domicile & PRC
1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)
1.	Driver BPS-04	07	18-28 years	i) Possessing of valid LTV Driving License ii) Must be able to maintain the Log Book. iii) At least three (03) years experience in the relevant field.	Only for District Sukkur
2.	Chowkidar BPS-01	04		Matriculation, Preferably literate person	
3.	Malhi BPS-01	01		Matriculation, Preferably literate person	
4.	Naib Qasid BPS-01	15		Matriculation, Preferably literate person	
5.	Sanitary Worker BPS-01	02		Matriculation, Preferably literate person	
6.	Cook BPS-01	01		Matriculation, Preferably literate person	
7.	Kotar BPS-01	23		Matriculation, Preferably literate person	
	TOTAL	53			

Terms & Conditions/ General Instructions

1. The applications along with two passport size photographs, attested copies of the testimonials of academic qualification, CNIC, Domicile, PRC and experience Certificate (if required) should be submitted to the office of the Deputy Commissioner Sukkur.
2. The last date of submission of applications is 18-12-2026.
3. As per rules, 5% quota for Women, 5% Quota for Minorities and 0.5% quota for Transgender shall be applicable.
4. Appointment under the 5% quota for Differently Abled Person / Persons with Disabilities were already been carried out under the meetings of DSC held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Sukkur.
5. The applicants already in Government Service shall apply through their respective departments / proper channels.
6. The General age relaxation will be applicable as per Rules and latest notification of SGA&CD, Government of Sindh.
7. The canvassing in any form or manner will disqualify the candidates.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
ESTATE OFFICE MANAGEMENT

URAAN PAKISTAN

TENDER NOTICE

No. 53(16)/General-2026-27 Islamabad, the 18/11/2026

1. Estate office management attached department of Ministry of Housing & works invites sealed bids on Single Stage Single Envelope bidding procedure for the below mentioned works of Pak. PWD Schedule of Rate 2022 & market based rates items from eligible Bidders registered on EPADS v2.0 having valid registration with income tax (for all lots) and Sales Tax (for Lot-I & IV) Departments as Active Tax Payer, valid electrical license (Federal/Punjab) and registered with Pakistan Engineering council in the relevant category with specialized code as mentioned below:

Lot No.	Name of Work	NIT Amount	Bid Security	Completion Time	Category	Specialized Code
1	Annual Operation & Preventive Maintenance Contract for 4-Nos Passenger Lifts installed in 48-Family Suites at G-5/1, Islamabad. (For the period one year 2026-27).	6,444,000/-	Rs. 320,000/-	360 days	C-6 or Above	ME-03, EE-04, EE-09
2	Special Repair/ Upgradation/ Modification to E/M Installations in Federal Lodges/ Hostels/ Family Suites at Islamabad. (S.H:- E/M Works of 48-Family Suites etc)	2,880,499/-	Rs. 144,000/-	210 days	C-6 or Above	EE-04, EE-11
3	Special Repair/ Up-gradation of E/M Installations at Federal Lodges/ Hostels/ Family Suites at Islamabad. (SH: Reinstallation of existing cool type AC & Repairing of Water Pumping Sets etc)	5,701,248/-	Rs. 284,000/-	210 days	C-6 or Above	ME-01, ME-07, EE-04
4	M.O.E/M Installations in Federal Lodges, Hostels & Family Suites etc at Islamabad. (S.H:- Supply of E/M Material)	5,560,656/-	Rs. 275,000/-	60 days	C-6 or Above	PEC registration
5	M.O.E/M Installations in Federal Lodges, Hostels and Family Suites etc at Islamabad. (S.H:- Servicing, Overhauling of Transformers PAD Mounted).	13,232,500/-	Rs. 650,000/-	210 days	C-6 or Above	EE-04, EE-05, ME-07

2. E-Bidding documents, containing detailed terms & conditions, specifications and requirements etc. are available on e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System (EPADS) at **https://vendors.epads.gov.pk/** for all the interested bidders registered on EPADS v2.0. Bidders are required to get themselves registered on EPADS v2.0 to participate in Bidding process.
3. All the prospective bidders must upload the legible scanned copies of the documents of mandatory requirements given in the bidding documents, on the EPADs v2.0.
4. The Applicant firm should have performed minimum 2 or more similar nature of works having minimum aggregate value of 70% of each Applied LOT during last five (5) Years. Documentary evidence to this effect in the shape of work and completion certificates duly attested by the concerned Project Director/Engineer In-Charge must be uploaded on EPADS v2.0.
5. The e-bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the e-Bidding documents, must be submitted through **EPADS v2.0** on or before **01/12/2026** upto **11:00 AM**. E-bids will be opened on the same day at **11:30 AM** at **Estate Office Management, Shaheed-e-Millat Secretariat, F-6/1, Islamabad**. Manual submission of Bids shall not be entertained.
6. The original bid security in the shape of CDR/Banker's Cheque/ Pay Order issued in the favour of Drawing & Disbursing Officer, Estate Office Management, Islamabad must reach to the office of the Assistant Director (EM), Estate Office Management, Shaheed-e-Millat Secretariat, F-6/1, Islamabad on or before **01/12/2026** upto **11:00 AM**, otherwise respective bid will not be opened.

Note: IIn terms of Rules 48 of Public Procurement Rules, 2004 Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) is notified for the subject procurement and notification copy is available on the procuring agency's website and also available on EPADS v2.0 as well as Authority's website at (www.ppra.org.pk).