

THE NEWS

Tuesday

December 7, 2010

Zilhaji 30, 1431 A.H.

Islamabad/Rawalpindi Edition

Also published from
Karachi, Lahore, London and
globally on World Wide Web at
www.thenews.com.pk

JANG GROUP OF NEWSPAPERS

28 pages
Price Rs. 15.00

Drastic steps needed for implementation of anti-smoking laws

Our correspondent
Islamabad

Drastic measures should be taken for implementation of anti-tobacco rules to make Islamabad a smoke-free city in real terms so that the federal capital could set an example for the rest of the country.

The printing of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs is a great achievement of anti-tobacco advocates, but implementation of anti-smoking laws in real spirit is an uphill task. The media has a strong role to play in the implementation and monitoring of anti-tobacco laws by reporting any violation of the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-smokers Health Ordinance 2002, and creating awareness among the general public about

hazards of smoking, which kills 274 people every day in Pakistan.

This was the crux of a meeting of The Network for Consumer Protection with journalists and the civil society here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the director general of the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) Murtaza Solangi said, all offices and studios of the corporation are absolutely smoke-free in line with guidelines of the 2002 Ordinance. He said, tobacco is a social ill that is fast spreading in Pakistani society, and must be curtailed on all accounts. "Passive smoking takes an even bigger toll as it multiplies the nefarious effects of smoke," Solangi added. He said, NBC would play its due role in creating awareness about the

dangers of smoking.

The president of the National Press Club Afzal Butt said, Pakistan's free and vibrant media is alive to the hazards of smoking and is already playing a positive role in highlighting violations of anti-smoking laws. Praising the anti-smoking drive launched by the TN, Butt said the journalist community supports the campaign against smoking and would report violations of anti-tobacco laws in the print and electronic media so that the federal capital could be made a model for the rest of the country.

The executive coordinator of TN Dr. Arif Azad termed the printing of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs as a landmark achievement that would not have been possible without the support of the media.

"The sale of cigarettes to children under 18 and smoking in public places is continuing unchecked due to feeble law implementation machinery," Dr. Arif pointed out. He informed that retailers even sell cigarette packs with stickers of their shops pasted on pictorial health warnings, but there is nobody to take action against them. He said, this practice is rampant even in the federal capital, where the law implementation machinery is relatively stronger as compare to other parts of the country.

Dr. Arif said, the Ministry of Health and other authorities concerned should make a comprehensive plan to check violations of the anti-tobacco rules. He said, there are an estimated 22-25 million smokers in the country.