

FACTS & FIGURES

Police manipulated probe into murder of philanthropist

A judicial inquiry into the investigation of the murder of renowned philanthropist Parveen Rehman appears to have uncovered manipulation by police investigators and has recommended that the whole case be reinvestigated by “efficient, independent and honest police officer(s)”.

The report, prepared by a district and sessions judge in Karachi on the orders of the Supreme Court, is expected to be presented in the court of Justice Nasir-ul-Mulk when he hears a constitutional petition filed by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).

According to an executive summary obtained by Dawn, police officials “did not hesitate to manipulate key aspects of the investigation”. Qari Bilal, the man blamed for Parveen’s murder, was allegedly killed in a shootout with police on Sultanabad Road in Karachi on March 14.

“The story of the mysterious encounter and recovery of the pistol does not inspire confidence as the police officer, namely Ashfaq Hussain Baloch, station house office at Manghopir police station – who claims to have killed Qari Bilal in an encounter and recovered (the) pistol from him – has stated that Qari Bilal had sustained multiple firearm injuries but he did not know on what parts of the body. No one was injured from the police side,” the report said.

Casting further doubts on the police account, the inquiry officer maintains, “Before making their escape... the three companions of Qari Bilal... set on fire the car they were traveling in. After encountering a huge police party in which their companion was killed, they could not afford to waste time in setting the car on fire. Such conduct on their part is unnatural. The artificiality of the story is apparent”, it said.

The report also casts doubts on the veracity of the ballistic evidence that allowed police to connect Qari Bilal to Parveen’s murder. “The evidence regarding the matching of (casings) recovered from the (crime scene) with the pistol allegedly recovered from Qari Bilal is also not free from manipulation.

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The ‘others’ among us

The proposed forced eviction of 12 katchi abadis in Islamabad is a sign of the apartheid-like injustice that the government is unashamedly exercising over its own people. The ‘state’, by its very definition, is the servant of the people. By paying our taxes, we employ the state. By instilling faith in the state to protect our welfare, we entrust it with the most esteemed task — of all-fairness. A right is then that for which a human being need not, and must not, have to fight. In the urban socio-political context, anthropologist David Harvey addresses this notion as the people’s ‘right to the city’.

Housing or ‘shelter’ is one of the most basic of human rights, and most of the world’s constitutions acknowledge this in clear terms, with the state providing affordable housing to its poor under various models. Countries in Europe and several in Latin America follow the ‘social housing’ model, while the UK has ‘council housing’. Chinese state provides low-cost rental flats as public housing. Affordable public sector housing was part of Pakistan’s first and second five-year plans, a project that weakened in the 1980s and is non-existent today.

Those that are born into poverty are left with no option other than to fend for their own survival. Where the state has not done its job, whether it’s the *favelas* of Brazil or the *katchi abadis* of Pakistan, the phenomenon is merely the people’s attempt to weave secure, dignified lives for themselves and their children. As the late Perveen Rehman clarified, katchi abadis are simply ‘poor people’s housing’; “the poor have found no alternative, and this reflects the failure of the government to absorb them”.

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'Every 7th school in Sindh is non-functional'

The education sector is one of the most neglected areas in Sindh, where ghost schools are the most crucial issue, with every seventh school being non-functional.

This was the consensus at an ILM-o-AGAHl education journalism workshop held here on Wednesday, said a press release issued by Mishal Pakistan.

According to a recent survey conducted on the directive of the Supreme Court, there are 6,164 non-functional and ghost schools in Sindh, which means every seventh school in the province is non-functional. "There is a dire need to address the education emergency in Sindh, as the future of the next generations depends on the quality of education," said one of the speakers, who included journalists, academicians and civil society activists.

The workshop was organised by Mishal Pakistan in collaboration with Ilm Ideas, a three-year UKaid-funded programme.

More than 30 education reporters from leading media entities of print, television, radio and online journalism were selected for the workshop.

According to the Alif Ailaan education data, there are 12 million children in Sindh between the ages of 5 and 16, of which 6.1 million or 50 percent are out of school. More than half of the children out of school are girls.

Senior journalist Mubashir Zaidi, while discussing the current state of education and the role of the media, said the government of Sindh spent an estimated Rs573 million on schools that existed only on paper.

The scope of the problem of ghost teachers was crucial as there was no data available on that; however, media reports suggested that many teachers drew salaries from the education department without showing up for their jobs, he said.

"The education sector is the most neglected area in media; however, with the help of civil society, the media should play an active role in promoting education."

Discussing the role of the media in policy development, Dr Tahir Masood, chairman of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Karachi, said learning outcome of children was also a big issue and required the attention of education policymakers.

Sindh's children scored poorly in reading and mathematics compared to children in the rest of the country, he said.

"Fifty-nine percent of class 5 students in Sindh cannot read a story fluently in Urdu or Sindhi."

Talking on the role of media in a society's evolution, senior journalist and media researcher Afia Salam said: "Education plays a significant role in the development of a society. Due to advancement in the education sector, developed countries make progress by leaps and bounds in all segments of life. Pakistan's media can play an active role in creating a demand for quality education in the country."

Asif Farooqui, programme manager of ILM-o-AGAHl, said: "Education spending in Sindh is not rationalised and resources are not allocated according to the needs. Across Sindh, 77 percent of government school buildings are in an unsatisfactory condition, almost half of the government schools in Sindh are missing the basic facility of toilet."

Adnan Farooqui, senior communication expert, shared his experiences on the art of story-telling through social media. He briefed the participants about how social media was changing trends of journalism across the globe, and how digital communication had made the entire news expression in 145 words possible.

Through the ILM-o-AGAHl initiative, 18 education journalism workshops will be held across Pakistan for education reporters to increase their capacity and improve the coverage of education issues in media.

In each workshop, more than 30 education reporters will be selected to enhance their capacity to report on identified educational challenges and issues to improve understanding and skills among journalists to capture the community's perspective and voice including children's voice.

Mishal Pakistan is the partner institute of the Center for International Media Ethics and the Global Competitiveness and Benchmarking Networks of the World Economic Forum. (The News, 10/04/2014)

**URC News Clippings &
Articles Publications
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Cellphones, Billboards, No Helmets: A Recipe For Death In Karachi Streets

Fatal road accidents are the top cause of death for young people around the world, according to a United Nations report on its road safety campaign for 2011-2020.

In Karachi, Pakistan, of the 33,000 people injured in road accidents in 2013, 1,130 people aged 16 to 30 died. Of the total, 64 percent of injuries and 49 percent of fatalities were among motorbike drivers or those riding on the backs of motorbikes.

According to the data collected from the city's five government-run hospitals by Karachi's Road Traffic Injury Research and Prevention Center, on average, 94 young people died in avoidable accidents each month.

"The sad part is these injuries and deaths were avoidable. Our data says 86 percent of the injured or deceased riders were not wearing a helmet," said Dr. Raza Rizvi, a



neurosurgeon and associate professor at Karachi's Jinnah Post-Graduate Medical Center.

A vast majority of those admitted to hospitals suffer head injuries or end up handicapped, activists say, but a road accident can cause more than just physical damage.

"Ours is a joint family system where families are dependent on one breadwinner. But when the latter suffers a debilitating injury or dies, the entire family is paralyzed, both socially and economically," explained Malik Zaheerul Islam, former director general of the Karachi Mass Transit Cell who at one time also headed the Traffic Engineering Bureau in the port city.

While making rounds in the intensive care unit at Jinnah Hospital's neurosurgical ward, Dr. Rizvi pointed to Abdul Hadi, 30. A team of doctors were struggling to keep alive, though it was becoming increasingly clear that their efforts were in vain.

Lying still at the far end of the ward, the young man's head was covered with bandages and a tube had been inserted into his mouth. He seemed to be sleeping peacefully.

Actually, his stillness was a point of concern. "This young man will not survive, and if he does, will remain in a vegetative state," Dr. Rizvi said, peering at the young man's files. Hadi, the doctor said, was not wearing a helmet, which could have saved him from the severe head trauma.

According to the city's Road Traffic Injury Research and Prevention Center, 84 percent of those injured or killed in road accidents last year were male. And 73 percent were driving at the time of the accident.

Dr. Rizvi offered details on some cases, each more heart-rending than the next. "And we haven't even begun to talk about the mental health of the survivor and his family," he said.

The neurosurgeon has pinned his hopes on the next generation, explaining that he would like schools to start a campaign on road safety and include it as part of the curriculum.

"I don't think our police will be able to enforce road safety. We have to target the children now," he said. "They can take our message to their respective homes and pressure the grown-ups to behave conscientiously, and then hopefully they will grow up to be responsible riders."

City without mass transit

The population of Karachi, a megapolis currently home to 18 million people, is projected to increase to 27.6 million by 2020 and to 31.6 million in 2030.

Public transport includes large buses, minivans, taxis, three-wheeled rickshaws and a new and popular mode of transportation called the Qingqi, a kind of a rickshaw strapped to a motorcycle.

"In the absence of a mass transit system, and inadequate, expensive privately-owned public transport, which is in shambles, motorbikes have naturally become the choice for millions of commuters," explained Muhammad Yunus, director of the Urban Resource Center, a nonprofit organization that has been documenting transport woes in Karachi since it was founded in 1989.

Urban planner Arif Hasan and researcher Mansoor Raza published a 2011 study, titled Motorbike Mass Transit, estimating that there were 1 million motorbikes in Karachi in 2010.

Quoting the Karachi Transportation and Improvement Project, the report said there will be an estimated 3.6 million motorbikes in Karachi by 2030. Also by 2030, there are expected to be 115 motorbikes for every 1,000 persons, up from 57 in 2011.

Meanwhile, it is not uncommon to see entire families — as many as five or six people — or large, bulky items traveling on a single motorbike.

Too many bikes, too few helmets

Activists say that helmets could save thousands of lives each year. Helmets are not very expensive, but riders are averse to them.

“Helmets will not reduce accidents, but they will reduce the severity of the injury,” Islam, the former traffic official.

Faisal Hussain, 35, a banker, was rushed unconscious to the Jinnah Hospital emergency room last week after a car hit his bike and he fell on the road. Like Hadi, he was not wearing a helmet.

“Has anyone tried to measure the impact these helmets can take, the cost, the quality, etc.?” asked Islam, noting that increasing fines has proven futile.

“We must know the reasons first before we can make people aware of the risks of not wearing the helmet,” he added.

Hussain said the main reason he believes most riders don’t wear a helmet is that “it becomes difficult to see the sides when you are wearing one.” Other riders also cite heat, especially in the summer, as a reason why they don’t wear helmets.

Risky behavior, dangerous roads

Motorists’ attitudes have played a greater role in the rise in fatal accidents than increased traffic.

“People obey laws either out of fear or respect. In Karachi, I have seen an absence of both. People feel they own the road. It is this culture of open disregard for laws that is so dangerous,” Islam said.

“There are several private vehicle training schools,” he noted, “but not a single one for those who want to learn to ride a motorbike.”

In addition, it’s easy to get a driver’s license without passing a road skills test. More alarmingly, motorbike drivers without helmets can often be seen using cellphones while driving on Karachi’s roads, while billboards and hoardings offer other distractions that can lead to road accidents.

Irfan Saleem, who works at the Road Traffic Injury Research and Prevention Center, said risky behavior partly stems from a sense of impunity among those with influence, “while the common man just pays off a little bribe to the traffic warden and gets off easily with breaking the law.”

“I know that in the evening, especially late in the night, many young men returning from work like to race with their friends. Often if the road is clear, they will try different antics, including one-wheeling, but there is no one to stop them,” Saleem said.

Zafar Iqbal, an engineer with the center, also blamed faulty road engineering for some particularly bad road accidents. “Often road bumps constructed to reduce speed cause more harm than good because there is a design fault or it’s sub-standard.”

He said that sometimes all it takes is a really low-cost solution to resolve these road problems. For example, he explained how the center dramatically reduced accidents on an overhead circular bridge connecting the harbor to the city center.

“We noticed it was a regular passage for fish-laden trucks. The melted ice water made the road very slippery and speeding bikes often skidded on it. Between 2008-2010, we had recorded 15 to 18 fatalities a month, on average,” he explained. “We suggested to the traffic police to put rumble strips on the road and put up corrugated iron sheets along the curb to break the wind. The deaths caused by road slipperiness came down to between four and five.”

Giving another example, he said widening the road and putting cat’s eyes in the middle of a main artery that had heavy, fast traffic in both directions, helped divide the road as a dual carriageway.

On their list of successes, though, their greatest achievement has been convincing the administration of the necessity of building pedestrian bridges over major arteries. Karachi now has over 170 such walkways that allow people to cross traffic-congested roads smoothly and safely.

(By Zofeen Ebrahim,
www.mintpressnews.com,
04/04/2014)

The truth about katchi abadis

A conflict is brewing in the capital city - invisible to most, pitting the urban poor against the state. Bureaucrats, politicians, and the judiciary have joined hands to launch eviction drives that will affect over 100,000 residents of the katchi abadis of Islamabad.

The issue has a long recurring history, but the recent episode began last year when the PML-N government came into power. Surveys were conducted, eviction notices were issued, and search operations were launched in katchi abadis. The situation escalated this February when the Islamabad High Court issued an order (not a judgement) for the removal of "illegal settlements" from Islamabad.

The officials claim that the 30-odd katchi abadis of Islamabad are illegal settlements that have emerged due to encroachments on private and public land, and these abadis harbor criminals and terrorists.

These are of course blatant and outrageous lies designed to make state violence somewhat palatable, by simultaneously criminalising the poor and denying the state's own wrongdoing.

Consider the issue of criminality – the interior minister has repeatedly called residents of katchi abadis criminals and terrorists. That is a joke. The real criminals occupy large mansions in posh neighbourhoods and we are suffering the consequences of their ideological and material support to terrorist outfits. We are suffering at the hands of their white-collared crimes.

And surely any menial crimes originating from katchi abadis can be addressed using regular and community policing. Why are we meting out wholesale collective punishment to the urban poor?

Now consider legality. Let me be clear: there are no illegal katchi abadis. Several constitutional provisions, laws, and policies deal with them, including provincial katchi abadi acts, the National Housing Policy and the National Katchi Abadi Policy of 2001. According to these documents katchi abadis are 'informal settlements comprising more than 40 houses', which can be registered and regularised based on when they were built. The preferred official policy is to improve the abadis where they are, but if any abadi is to be removed for extraordinary reasons, that can only be done after working out a detailed resettlement plan in consultation with the residents.

These laws are not sufficient to address the real issue. But as it is, the CDA's horrific plan to bulldoze the abadis, load the residents into trucks and take them 'back' to their places of origin is outrageous, illegal and morally indefensible.

But the CDA also raises two specific techno-legal points. First, they claim that these are Afghan abadis. This is false according to the latest UNHCR data. Only a handful of Afghan nationals constitute a small minority in one or two katchi abadis. Second, the CDA claims that they are only targeting unregistered and already-relocated abadis. It is true that the CDA had registered 11 abadis and offered relocation plans in the past. But the registration process left many families unregistered and the alternatives offered lacked even basic facilities. This means that

not everyone from the regularised abadis was relocated. Furthermore, what about the abadis that were never registered in the first place?

Registration is a strange business. The current official cut-off date for the capital city is March 23, 1985 which is the arbitrary and archaic leftover of the Zia-Junejo government. In Rawalpindi all katchi abadis established before 2012 are eligible for regularisation because the PML-N provincial government recently amended the Punjab Katchi Abadi Act. The same principle must apply to Islamabad.

It is also worth pointing out that recognition and registration of the 11 katchi abadis of Islamabad did not happen due to the benevolence of our leaders and bureaucrats. This was a result of the long struggle by the people and the All-Pakistan Alliance for Katchi Abadi (Apaka). This offers a real possibility of moving forward, but ignorance about the real issue results in divisions among the people.

For example, the CDA ignores the housing needs of the poor and sells the katchi abadi public land to unsuspecting buyers. The new owners are also victims, but they see katchi abadi residents as illegal encroachers. Various victims end up blaming each other.

To understand encroachment, consider the scale of the problem. By 2030 two billion people worldwide will be living in urban informal settlements (pejoratively called slums). In Pakistan nearly half the urban population, an astounding 30-40 million people, currently live in katchi abadis. Informal settlements emerge as a result of rising poverty and lack of housing for the poor. In Pakistan only a third of the total housing needs are met by the formal sector, which caters

mostly to middle and upper classes. Left to their own devices, the urban poor and working classes display amazing resourcefulness to meet 25 percent of the housing demand on their own.

Rising poverty and informal settlements are linked to the ways in which the state and capitalist-feudal-military classes use public land for private profit. Our military is the largest landlord in the country and controls farmland as well as urban property. Why is this land given to generals and brigadiers in colonial-style land grants and not to the poor? Surely, a case can be made to dispossess our last dictator General Musharraf and use his farmlands to provide housing for Islamabad's poor.

Large civilian bureaucracies are no better, and the collaboration between the military-civilian bureaucracy and feudal-capitalist elites has resulted in an alarming increase in the number of posh housing societies. These housing societies are built on land that is aggressively acquired either by manipulating the land market or by simply using brute force. As a result of this process the rural and urban working classes are dispossessed and displaced.

And where do you think they go? A katchi abadi is probably situated within walking distance from your house or office.

Unlike capitalist-colonial elite encroachments, the everyday struggles of working classes result in the 'quite encroachment of the ordinary'. These struggles must not be romanticised – the competition for survival and dignified living drives people to opportunism and selfish behaviour. But by and large katchi abadis are the only housing available to daily wage labourers, domestic workers, sanitation workers, maids, cooks, hawkers, transporters, and workers of the informal sector. The whole system depends on them and profits from their miserable living conditions.

If these everyday struggles for survival can be transformed into collective action, then we will have the makings of a people's revolution. This revolution is unfolding right now in the streets of Islamabad. Women, men, children, and the elderly are staging peaceful protests, sit-ins, and demonstration rallies – organised by the Alliance (Apaka) and the Awami Workers Party(AWP).

This is a struggle to forge a new politics based on truth and justice, not violence and legality. And we must pick a side.

The writer is a member of the Awami Workers party and the All Pakistan Alliance for Katchi Abadis.

(By Ahsan Kamal, The News, 06/04/2014)

The Unplanned Revolution Observations on the Processes of Socio-Economic Change in Pakistan

By Arif Hasan

The book describes the process of socio-economic change in Pakistan along with its actors and their relationship with each other on the one hand, and with the larger physical and political context on the other, as viewed by the author through his development related work and travels in the different regions of Pakistan since 1968. The writings identify past socio-economic conditions as viewed by the communities the author worked or interacted with, present conditions and emerging trends. Price: Rs.495.00 available at Oxford University Press

SHC issues notice to KMC on pleas of Taiser Town school employees

Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday once again issued notice to administrator Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and director Lyari Expressway Resettlement Project to submit comments on a petition of over 70 employees of the schools, established in Taiser Town for the regularization of their service.

The petitioners Atta Muhammad, Shagufta and others, employees of schools in Taiser Town, Scheme-45 stated the schools remained closed for last 19 months from 2011 due to shortage of funds and non-payment of salaries to the teachers but later they were paid their salaries in installments.

They said staff at schools were appointed at least 6 years ago and all of them were performing their duties continuously. KMC authorities had not decided their matter about regularisation of their services, they added.

They prayed to the court to direct the KMC authorities to regularize their jobs.

SHC seeks comments on petition against Rangers personnel: Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday directed Rangers official to submit comments on a petition seeking action against paramilitary forces for allegedly killing a citizen in a fake encounter.

A division bench headed Justice Ahmed Ali M Sheikh was seized with the hearing of a petition filed by Sardar Jan who moved the court against Rangers for allegedly killing his son Farman Shah in a fake encounter on March 4.

The petitioner submitted that her son was picked up by

Abdullah Shah Ghazi Rangers along with 9 other persons during raid in Surjani Town area on January 29, 2013. She told the court that other persons got released by law enforcement agencies but there was no clue about her son.

The woman petitioner said that she learnt through the media reports that her son was killed in encounter by Rangers on March 4.

She said after encounter three FIRs were registered against his son to cover the illegal act of paramilitary forces. She said this was core issue of the country that law enforcement agencies without any justification picked up person and declared them suspected in the various crimes.

She requested the court to directed law enforcement agencies to submit before the court entire record about encounter and involvement of her son in cases and also order action against them.

The bench directed wing commander Abdullah Shah Gazi Rangers to submit comments in response to petition.

SHC issues notice to KMC officials on contempt application: Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday issued notice to the then and current administrators of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) for disobeying its order regarding cancellation of allotment of amenity plots to NGO for setting up school and hospital.

A division bench of SHC headed by Justice Sajjad Ali Shah framed the contempt charges against KMCs director land Najamuzzaman and deputy director Syed Jamil Ahmed for non-compliance of the court order issued on 23rd August 2012.

The judges observed after the issuance of contempt notice KMC officials had complied with court order, which speaks volume of their conduct. It said that comments filed by officials on contempt of court application did not explain the reason for non-compliance of court order for almost 20 months.

The bench was hearing a contempt of court application filed by NGO Zaidi Foundation seeking contempt proceedings against KMC officials for non-compliance of the court orders. Applicant submitted that SHC had set aside the cancellation of two amenity plots ST-15 and ST-22 in Gulistan Jauhar allotted to it for setting up school and hospital.

Despite lapse of 20 months, the KMC authorities did not implement on the court orders and restore allotment of plots, applicant added. The court was pleaded to initiate contempt proceedings against KMC officials.
(DailyTimes, 27/03/2014)

“Urban Housing Policies and Approaches in a Changing Asian Context”

by Arif Hasan

The paper originated as an outline for the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) in 1992. It was developed into a paper for a policy seminar on 'Training for Housing and Development' organised jointly by the UNCHS (Habitat) and the Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven (Belgium). It has now been updated and jointly published by the ACHR, City Press and URC. Price Rs 50 excluding postage

Water supply problems in a mega city like Karachi

After air water is the most essential thing for the survival of human beings. History tells us that all the ancient civilisations in the world began along the big rivers and so did the Indus valley civilisation. Karachi being the last and farthest riparian of river Indus is one of the few mega cities in the world located more than 100 miles away from the water source and is faced with immense problem in meeting up the water requirement of the fastest growing city of the country.

Although it is a seashore and has the option of going for desalinated water but all the studies including Karachi Master Plan have concluded that desalinated water is financially not viable and the only viable water source for Karachi is river Indus. Before coming towards the problems in managing water supply to the mega city it is essential to know something about the existing water supply system and the service provider.

Karachi is not only the largest city of Pakistan but also one of the most populated city of the world having an estimated population of more than 20 million spread over an area of 2787 Sq. Km. It is the industrial hub of the country and generates more than 70% of the total revenue of the country.

The water supply network of Karachi is unique in the sense that unlike other major cities of the country which mostly supply groundwater, the main water source of Karachi is surface water located more than 100 miles away from the city. Water to Karachi is supplied from Kenjhar Lake which is fed by river Indus. Karachi has a quota of 1200 cusec water from river Indus which is being almost

fully utilised. The other source of water for Karachi which supplies only 100 MGD water is the Hub dam. This is not a very reliable source as it has a storage capacity for only three years and in case of no rains in its catchment area it goes dry. Nowadays water supply from the Hub Source has totally stopped as it has gone empty due to no rains in its catchment area.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Board is the agency responsible for the water supply and sewerage services to this mega city. Under KW&SB act 1996 the KW&SB is an autonomous body governed by a Board under the control of GoS. KW&SB has a huge conveyance system comprising of canals, tunnels, siphons and huge pumping station located at Dhabeji as well as gigantic water purification plants.

On one hand KW&SB brings water to the city from a distant located source while on the other hand it is supplying piped water to its islands through HDPE waterline laid in the sea. Further, apart from the regular and developed areas KW&SB has to manage water supply to the illegal settlements including that on the hilltops of Orangi and adjoining areas through numerous pumping stations.

The problems related to water supply in Karachi are also as complex as is its distribution network. Right from the beginning there has been a gap between the demand and supply of water in the city due to planning failure as the population growth rate of the city always surpassed the projected growth rate due to influx from the other parts of the country in this industrial hub of the country. The other reason for the widening gap between demand and supply is the delay in execution of the mega water supply projects.

Presently after shut down of supply from the Hub Dam Karachi is being supplied only 550 mgd water from the Indus source. The requirement of the city as per WHO standard @55 gallon per capita per day (GPCD) comes to s1100 mgd. So currently there is a short fall of more than 550 mgd. It means that Karachi is presently getting only 50% of its total water requirement. The last addition of water to Karachi was made in the year 2005 through K-III project after which no further addition has been made whereas the population has increased by more than 45% during this 9 years period. K-IV project phase 1 for bringing additional 260 mgd water to the city was to be launched in the year 2008 but it couldn't be done as yet for various reasons. If this project is not started immediately it will result in great hue and cry in the city. Water shortage is also hampering the economic growth and the industrial activities in the city. This issue needs to be resolved on war footing basis, without further delay.

Karachi's supply system is heavily overburdened due to unplanned and uncontrolled expansion of the city in all directions. There is no check on the expansion of the city. More than 40% of the city's population is residing in the illegal settlements which are increasing with the passage of time.

Like all water utilities of the country KW&SB is also facing financial problems. The financial recovery ratio is very poor as only 30% of the registered 1.056 million registered consumers pay their monthly water bills. Majority of the people living in illegal settlements called Kachchi Abadies do not pay their water bills. Global Warming is also a great threat to the water resources of the country. KW&SB has conducted Climate Change Study with

the help of WSP. The recommendations of the study need to be considered in the future water supply master plans of the city.

(By Qutbuddin Sheikh,
Business Recorder,
22/03/2014)

De-urbanization: The Karachi crisis

We live in a global village. Every city being mapped for livability, and such factors as negligence, smog, theft, cost of living, proximity, wealth, recovery, offences, crime, law, culture & population are taken into consideration when drawing the map. Business leaders making efforts to bring in investment dollars, through rationalization of their business plans to promote their cities. What Bloomberg did for the big apple is what Mahatir envisioned for most cities in Malaysia: Bringing people to their cities through well-crafted, long-term, committed consultative strategies. Can we do something like that to make our cities more livable?

To make the heartbeat of a country, one makes the world invest in our cities. During countless years, the one debate that carries on endlessly is why our big cities do not make it on the world most glamorous, most energetic, more attractive or the most highly traveled cities of Asia or the world. In the last 60 years, not one of our cities has been nominated for any global recognition, award or nomination. Our leadership is not serious about urban development or governance resulting in one of the worst colossal economic damage and lacks vision. Unfortunately, we are still salvages our bruised egos using the same old tune of patriotic inefficiency without a slightest care of how your perception overseas limits our progress. Our country suffers

from De-Urbanization or negative urbanization.

Karachi is one of the popular cities in the world, only by virtue of its population. It is the seventh largest city in the world with the average population rising every month by over 3 million people, a 100,000 people each day. This is the concrete jungle where people breathe by day and fear by night. Health and safety, value for money, great shopping, fantastic hospitality, excellent hotels, wonderful city tours, great bargains, fun fairs, exhibitions, events & galore. Not here. Not in this city which was once a city of lights - once but a very long time ago. There is an absolute and visible case of environmental degradation in the city, with overpopulated areas, bursting out of control, an average negligent state of affairs, no civic sense, no law on the streets, extremely high street crime, people behaving like savages in all walks of life. Karachi entails all ingredients of a resilient city, a place which has seen turmoil, bloodshed, failure after failure and zero governance for decades. Law of the land is the law of the jungle. With a population of over 18 million people and one of the highest crime rates and killings, we are globally rated as one of the most dangerous cities in the world. With only 27000 policemen in this giant city and half of them on non active duty, we are left with a little less than 7000 policemen to battle it out: hardly, a city by the sea where people can feel safe. No safety from the crimes that breed here and no respite for the ordinary citizen. This is what we term as a systematic breakdown and an urban governance crisis. No city has survived in such a state without turning into a war zone and today, Karachi is a war zone.

Urban culture has been severely affected in the city. Over 50% people in Karachi are living in substandard conditions, below poverty line. The poor continue to thrive in with meager resources while the bureaucrats and the developers are unmoved. Rampant terrorist activity has affected planning, project management & governance. Low density areas for high income groups has resulted in high density areas for low income groups leading to more dominant population issues where population is rising drastically. In certain areas of Karachi, 1300 children stand deprived of schools simply because the schools have been demolished or destroyed or taken over by land mafia. Public transport is negligent today with fewer public buses today. Housing today is smaller and less equipped with basic amenities. Posh- culture is flourishing where public welfare has been forgotten over developing projects for rich to make money on. With more marriages today, percentage increase in new born children and their needs to better healthcare is also rising but unattended.

Several factors indicate the crisis. No efficient transportation system as people are forced to travel in subhuman conditions, chronic traffic jams due to no road planning and adjustment since early 80s, unhygienic public parks with no safety measures taken for the children or general public, no proper fine collection systems or maintenance systems in place as mafias illegally haggle for money, poor filthy public hospitals with no proper waste management procedures or tolls in place and a third class state of security and civil order in the most cities, with Karachi topping the list. There is lack of urban planning in all public sector development, no proper human settlement policy in place and a clear cut lack of responsibility and accountability on development agencies leading to a major monitoring issue, in every working department today.

Poor urban development also arises from redundant procedures, over designed and incomplete projects, institutional weaknesses, incapacity of policy implementation by the local government, poor attention to cost recovery and economic benefits due to heavy corruption & negligence and chronic inefficiency. This is one of the reasons why the city has become a large slum, with majority of the low income population being left ignored, abandoned and without any governmental care. Karachi lacks its proximity with other smaller cities and hence faces the bulk of the population within it, leading to a further increase in this problem, which affects urban development. The city is not developing at the pace of a global city, due to its crisis mismanagement and lack of investment in its urbanized growth through diversification, innovation and development. Land management in this city is one of the worst anywhere in the world, with land grabbers stealing land through illegal occupation.

This in turn affects our gravity - which is our tax and revenue collection that can in turn be reinvested back to develop the city. Due to a severe law and order breakdown, gangs in the city collect illegal tax while the government actually loses tax as well through leakages within the system. The parallel black economy remains to be the single biggest reason behind Karachi's downfall. In 1999, our tax to GDP ratio was 13.5% while today it stands at 8%, one of the lowest in the world. And since Karachi contributes to over 70% to the country's GDP, it is no secret where the problem lies.

We need to rethink our strategy for Karachi and then other cities as it's the bloodline of the country and has potential to be world class city. It requires extreme commitment on part of

professionals, think tanks, government officials, law enforcement agencies and federal and provincial ministries as a whole. This further requires that we build a urban master plan, a framework that is approved, ratified and sanctioned in the hands of the right people - the technical and intellectually sound decision makers and city planners with zero tolerance for corruptions. The think-tanks then have to ensure to devise, update and implement these master plans, through accountable and transparent local government, unlike the current corrupt government set up that is eating up this city.

We also need to involve private sector in urban services provision and focus on urban health and food security. Severe and chronic issues like water need to be tackled where the country focus has to be on building faster than our neighbors. To revive the city to its past glory, we have to revisit the past mistakes and rectify them to perfection without any leakages this time. A comprehensive drive

to eradicate the gun culture or armed militia must be enforced in order to rid the city of its negative elements and finally bring it back to light - rediscovering the beauty of Karachi. This beautiful city is our city of hope. And its our collective efforts that will bring faith back to Karachi - making it beautiful. Lets bring back the soul of Karachi and make it visible as part of our Vision for 2025.

(By Zeeshan Shah, The Frontier Post, 26/03/2104)

Police manipulated probe into murder of philanthropist

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Police had no clue about the involvement of Qari Bilal in the murder of Parveen Rahman and there was no occasion for sending the (casings) and the pistol to ballistic experts for matching. In order to minimise the chances of manipulation, (casings) are required to be sealed and sent immediately to the Forensic Laboratory without waiting for the recovery of the weapon. This was not done in this case. The casings were recovered on March 13, 2013. Even though the next day was a working day, the (casings) were sent to the laboratory on March 15, after the recovery of the alleged murder weapon. There is no explanation for the delay, except that police wanted to manipulate things,” the report said.

In addition to these revelations, the report calls for extending police protection to staff of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP), reopening of the investigation into the murder of OPP workers as well as the death of Qari Bilal and his alleged connection to Parveen’s murder.

Parveen Rehman was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle on Manghopir Road on March 13 last year. According to her sister, Parveen regularly campaigned against land and water-tanker mafias, investigating and documenting their activities. According to the report, the mafias were making an annual Rs500 million from this racket and they could not afford a voice being raised against them.

(By Abdul Shakoor Khan, Daily Dawn, 15/04/2014)

The ‘others’ among us

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Within this reality, the proposed forced eviction of twelve of Islamabad’s well-established katchi abadis by the CDA on the pretext that they are harbouring crime and terrorism, is farcical to put it mildly. Even more absurd is the fact that the claim is not backed by a single police report. The eviction plan has given rise to two kinds of reactions: relief on the part of those that accept the rhetoric presenting these as places of crime; horror by those that are dumbfounded at the apartheid-like injustice that the government is unashamedly exercising over its own people.

Above all, it is a question of whether we believe that those with less than us are ‘one of us’ — our equals, our brethren; or whether we understand them to be an entity ‘other than us’, an entity that lives and behaves differently, and deserves to be dealt with penance for their so-called ‘improper’ ways.

In the law of the jungle, however, where might and strategy are all you need for survival, there is no question of rights. The Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano addresses this subject with a satirical sensibility in his well-known piece *The Nobodies*: “nobody’s children, owners of nothing...who are not but could be...who are not human beings but human resources”.

In the early twentieth century, German sociologist Georg Simmel similarly coins the term ‘the strangers’, where “the stranger is fixed within a particular spatial group (in this case the city), but he has not belonged to this group”.

The plan to evict people from many of Islamabad's katchi abadis is then not an issue of katchi abadis alone. Nor is it really an issue of legality or 'security'. It is in fact a matter of our ethos as a nation; of how we envision humankind, what we deem as our duty to our fellow men, and what we see as the relationship between those that have and those that don't.

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Almost all urbanised nations have a trajectory of the poor people's housing struggle. Somewhere along this trajectory, where the demand for affordable housing in cities is not met adequately by the state, the emergence of informal settlements becomes the closest — albeit unendorsed — solution to the housing shortage.

In the cities of the developing world, once squatter settlements become widespread, acts and laws for their regularisation are passed mostly as a result of long-term activism by their lower-income citizens themselves. The 1985 Punjab Katchi Abadi Policy defines a *katchi abadi* as a unit of forty or more dwellings that are to be regularised by the state. In recent years, the cut-off date of this policy was extended to 2007 for katchi abadis in Punjab and 2009 for katchi abadis in Sindh.

Sindh too has the SKAA, or the Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority. Guidelines for the regularisation of katchi abadis have also been laid out in the National Housing Policy 2001. By either carrying out, or threatening of forced evictions, the CDA stands in violation of all of the above.

And then there is the question of 'illegality'. Pakistan's laws, inherited from our British colonisers, lie largely untailored to our evolving needs and to-date reflect the motives of the coloniser. The perception of the informal settlement as an 'illegal' entity is also something we do by choice, turning a blind eye to certain kinds of illegality, while choosing to condemn others.

In the vein of 'illegality', it would also be pertinent for the government to note that not only are forced evictions a violation of the human right to adequate housing, but eviction in the absence of rehabilitation too is a punishable offence according to international law.

Important to note, forced eviction of informal settlements is prevalent across cities of the developing world today, including Delhi and Bombay. This pattern is fuelled by donor-driven neo-liberal policies adopted by these countries, which advocate that land be treated as an economic commodity alone, while its parallel use for purposes of human welfare is forfeited.

Once the low income settlement is bulldozed, its land value multiplies manifold, and it is soon replaced with high-end private development, such as multi-storey apartments and shopping malls. And right before our eyes is the creation of our 'world class city': boasting iconic architecture, celebrating capital, and shunning anything that reminds us of our less than first-world past.

And the argument comes back to those deemed the 'strangers', the 'nobodies'. The more clueless you keep them about their rights, the stronger your position to manipulate them — make them see the perverse picture that indeed they are a burden on the land and that you are bestowing upon them the great opportunity to exist. Where an awareness of rights is not part of the collective conscious, rights are only dispensed by the mighty as favours to the few. Nowhere is this more evident than on road space, the most multi-class, multi-struggle space of all.

(By Rabia Ezdi, The News, 13/04/2014)

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