

FACTS & FIGURES

Impure bottled water

The perils of contaminated water are well known. So is the unfortunate fact that unscrupulous vendors will try to capitalise on high demand for a product to make a quick buck.

It is, therefore, reassuring that the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources undertakes regular testing of mineral and bottled water brands available in the country. Its report for the period of January to March 2015, based on the results of testing 71 brands of mineral and bottled water collected from across the country, declares eight as being “completely unsafe” for human consumption on various grounds. Several of them contain levels of arsenic, sodium and potassium either moderately or far higher than the permissible limits set by the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority. These chemicals can cause various ailments, including diabetes, kidney problems, hypertension and even cancer. Three brands were found to be unsafe due to “microbiological contamination which may cause cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis and typhoid etc”.



The quarterly exercise by the PCRWR is certainly helpful for consumers and may even be having a deterrent effect. In the first quarter of last year for instance, 21 brands of mineral and bottled water were found to be contaminated compared to eight this time.

In November 2014, the PSQCA in a press release went further and declared it was illegal to buy or sell eight brands of water found unfit for human consumption during that monitoring cycle. Violating the ban, it said, would attract a fine of at least Rs50,000 and one year behind bars. However, without stringent implementation of the law, repeat offenders — as well as new, fly-by-night concerns — may resume the lucrative business of selling contaminated water masquerading as ‘pure’ and ‘safe’ to lure consumers. Under its mandate to check deceptive marketing and oversee consumer protection issues, the Competition Commission of Pakistan can also play a role here. Consumers themselves cannot be expected to stay abreast of periodic reports that inform them which brands of bottled water are safe.

(Dawn, 14/04/2015)

Lessons from history: The evolution, or degradation, of Karachi’s transport system

Traffic is a mess in Karachi. The morning rush hour when everyone is trying to get to work is almost as bad as the evening rush when everyone is trying to get home. And while both these occasions are the absolute worst, Karachi’s traffic woes are certainly not limited to these times. So was it always this unnerving to drive across the city? Not according to Arif Hasan.

The architect and urban planner discussed the history of public transport in Karachi at a workshop, titled ‘Transport Dilemma of Karachi’ on Saturday, organised by Shehri – Citizens for a Better Environment.

Hasan’s nostalgia for Karachi’s public transport starts with the iconic tramways, which were closed down in 1974 because they were causing too many accidents and disrupting vehicular traffic. “A proposal for an underground metro was to be developed to replace it.” That was back then. The proposal never saw the light of day.

1959 Karachi resettlement plan

On the 1959 Karachi resettlement plan and its effect on the transport system, Hasan explained how the demands for transport had considerably increased as a result. According to the plan, two satellite towns



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Barring Karachi, all districts at rock bottom in nationwide rankings

More than two years since the enactment of the free and fair education law by the Sindh Assembly, a first in the country, the only region from Sindh to be included in the top 50 performing districts of education is Karachi.

According to the third annual district rankings report by Alif Ailaan and Sustainable Development Policy Institute, on the whole, the performance in education indicators for Sindh has remained poor, with only the megacity of Karachi being included in the top 50 regions of the country.

The second district in Sindh to be performing 'well' is Hyderabad. However, nationally it has a rank of 62 out of the total 148 districts in the country. The worst performing district in Sindh is Thatta, which ranks 127 nationally.

The rankings also provide an education score (from 0 to 100) for each district based on a number of indicators including enrolment, infrastructure, gender parity and learning outcomes from data available from the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey, National Education Management Information System and the Annual Status of Education Report.

According to this year's findings, 19 out of the total 25 districts in Sindh scored more than 50 in the education score, while only Karachi managed to secure more than 70. Only four districts of Sindh ranked in the top half of the education scores.

Primary education

In the category of primary education, Sindh dropped a place this year, from fifth to sixth place, out of the total eight regions in Pakistan.

Last year, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa had been in the sixth place, but this year it moved up a rank with around 13 percent improvement in its education score. On the other hand, Sindh's score dropped by around one percent to 61 from 62, out of the total of 100.

This year, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) remained at first place for the third consecutive year, Azad Jammu Kashmir was second, Punjab at third, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) fourth, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) fifth, Sindh sixth, Balochistan seventh and, lastly, FATA at eighth spot.

Even though there was a drop of 3.6 percent in Balochistan's score, FATA's overall score improved by 15 percent.

Karachi stands at the 43rd place in terms of education nationally, followed by Hyderabad at 62 and Naushahro-Feroze in the 72nd spot. Their education scores for this year are 72.5, 67.3 and 63.6, respectively.

Infrastructure

Punjab stood first with the highest score of 86.9 in school infrastructure, followed by ICT with a score of 86.6.

KPK and Sindh maintained their third and fourth places, respectively, and scored 70.4 and 47. In fifth place is Gilgit-Baltistan, FATA, Balochistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK).

However, the national school infrastructure score rose to 62.2 from 57.6 last year.

In this category, Karachi ranks 49 with a score of 72.2, followed by Larkana at 52nd place with a score of 70.3 and Shaheed Benazirabad at 55 with a score of 66.6.

Facing neglect

The report concludes that as the overall situation of education in Punjab and KPK improves, it continues to deteriorate in Balochistan and Sindh.

With Karachi being the only district scoring more than 70 in the education indicators, and the overall provincial score around 10 points below the national average, the findings attribute this status to governance failures on the provincial governments' part.

Meanwhile, as the Sindh government claims to be serious in mitigating the education crisis in the province, two years after the passage of Free and Fair Education Act, the authorities have yet to frame the rules of business.

Without any rules of business to strategise the access to school and quality improvement for more than six million out-of-school children in the province, provision of free and fair education has become somewhat of a liability for the province.

This lack of direction reflects in the government's management of education and the available resources.

Though the annual budget for education has been increasing consistently, the state of education in the province seems to stagnate, or worse, deteriorate, instead of improving, because of the misdirected allocations. For the outgoing fiscal year, the Sindh government increased the

education budget by 10 percent from last year, but most of the increase went toward salaries, while the development budget was reduced by at least 12 percent.

Eminent educationist Shahnaz Wazir Ali, who is also president of Szabist, believes that consolidation and collation of dynamic data, along with devolving education to districts would help the province improve quality and access to education.

“The policies do not reflect actual problems because they are made too far from where they are implemented,” she said, “There is a need to devolve education planning to the districts.”
(By Tehmina Qureshi, The News, 07/05/2015)

Will Karachi finally have a mass transit system?

The rapid global urbanisation phenomenon brings with it problems of urban congestion and mobility. A major contributor to the growing chaos and degradation in Karachi is the city’s failure to put in place a mass transit system to cater to a population now ranging anywhere between 20 and 30 million people.

According to estimates, 60 per cent of Karachi’s 24.2 million daily trips are realised through the existing buses and motor



rickshaws. Meanwhile, the number of registered public buses has declined from 22,313 in 2011 to 12,399 in 2014. However, after working with various ideas, it would appear that there is finally hope that Karachi may now actually get to experiment with its first public mass transit system – the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) model.

The BRT system was first proposed for Karachi in the ‘Public-Private based environmental friendly public transport system for Karachi (2006)’. Subsequently, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) took over the BRT projects as a part of the Megacity Project and identified three priority corridors. However, the ADB withdrew the BRT project in 2007.

The Karachi Transportation Improvement Project (KTIP) was later conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), in collaboration with the Karachi Mass Transit Cell (KMTC) of the city government. After the master plan stage, Jica selected two BRT corridors, namely the Green Line and the Red Line.

As it now stands, the status of the BRT lines is following different funding and management models. In the Yellow Line, a public private participation (PPP) model is proposed through a consortium. In the Blue Line, again there is a PPP model with an unsolicited proposal being made by Bahria Town. In the Green Line, there is public sector funding for infrastructure only. In the Red Line, the ADB is willing to provide a loan for detailed design, implementation and integration of the network.

In terms of BRT development, the planning is now split into two phases. In Phase 1 (Red), the planned network runs from Safdora roundabout to Tower at MA Jinnah Road through University Road, with a branch extended on Sharae Quaideen Road to accommodate integration with the proposed Yellow Line. In Phase 2 (Blue), it runs from Landhi Road to Nursery through Sharae Faisal.

The case for BRT

The BRT is considered a high-quality bus-based transit system that delivers fast and cost-effective services at metro-level capacities. It operates through the provision of dedicated lanes, with busways and stations that are normally aligned to the centre of the road, off-board fare collection and frequency in operations.

Since the BRT contains features that are to some extent similar to a light rail or metro system, it is considered a more reliable and faster mass transportation mode than regular bus services.

A BRT bus, in terms of carrying capacity, is equal to 125 cars. In terms of cost of construction and maintenance, too, this mode of public transit is cost-effective as compared to other mass transit systems.

The city of Curitiba, Brazil, introduced this system in 1974 and also became the first successful case of BRT in the world. However, the most successful and innovative BRT system is considered that of Bogota, Columbia, known as the TransMillenio, which was introduced in the year 2000 and can cater to 43,000 passengers per hour in each direction. The average capacity is considered to be 13,000 passengers per hour per direction.

Since the 2000s, the BRT system has been introduced in a number of cities in the world, including Taipei, Seoul, Jakarta,

Beijing, New Delhi, Istanbul, Lima and Bangkok. Presently, an average of 27 million people — 1 per cent — of the global urban population use the BRT each day. A total of 15 cities started BRT operations in 2010, 49 have BRT under construction while 31 are starting to plan.

While the BRT system bodes well for Karachi, it is imperative that lessons learnt from the unsuccessful experimentations made in the metropolis in the past are made an essential part of the planning process so that plans and designs on paper find a viable and sustainable space on the ground through effective implementation.

(By Farhan Anwar, The Express Tribune, 11/05/2015)

Develop slums before developing Karachi

For a swift and sustainable development of Karachi, it is a must that its katchi abadies are given a special focus as the key to urban uplift of the mega city is ‘develop slums to develop Karachi’, said speakers at a launching ceremony of a study “profiles of land tenure system in Pakistan”.

Arif Hasan, a senior architect, urban planner and founder chairman of urban resource centre said the statistics indicate that Karachi’s 62 percent population was living in katchi abadis, but this type of land is only 5.5 percent of the total urban land. He said although some katchi abadis had been regularised, they lacked basic facilities.



Hasan said the localities in downtown areas and near Karachi were becoming denser due to shrinking of land holding. “The size of homes has become smaller. People with a plot of 80 yards are now constructing multi-storied buildings on their small plots. Encroachment on the rain nullahs has resulted in flooding of the city streets after even small rain. If this encroachment practice continued without any check Karachi would be drowned in case a heavy rain hits in the future.”

He regretted that big housing societies like Bahria Town and DHA City were posing threats to the cultural and historical sites of Karachi. Lower and middle class people could not afford to buy the plots in Bahria and DHA City. These new housing societies are actually speculative in nature and people invest in the land in a hope for appreciation of the prices. During Zia’s period, KDA had developed around 300,000 new plots but only half of them have been occupied because those were bought by speculators. The unoccupied plots were later illegally encroached upon by land grabbers.

He said only option available to the poor was to construct a house in a katchi abadi or sell his small pieces of the land to developers and become a tenant for the rest of life. He said high-income residential area’s growth in Karachi would destroy ecology of the

city and further marginalise the poor people. If corrective measures are not taken, overcrowding would further increase.

Bina Agarwal, Professor of Development Economics and Environment, University of Manchester, said inequality in assets-ownership prevails at the global level. Inequality may further cause increase in social conflicts.

In India, she pointed that due to land reforms in different periods, the land ownership of women had increased to some extent. Women with land ownership could perform much better than male farmers, she added. She pointed out that climate change would negatively affect the agriculture production globally. She said for agriculture growth, besides providing land to landless peasants, some other factors like irrigation water, technology access to credit, market and storage facilities were also required.

In Gujarat, they have invested on rain-water harvesting, which has resulted in 10 percent growth in agriculture. She said small farmers co-operations could result in positive changes.

Haji Shafi Muhammad Jamot, MPA, regretted that a large area of the land was encroached upon in Karachi by the influential people and the provincial government was not taking any action against them.

People in Karachi are facing many civic problems including shortage of water. In a cosmetic measure, now the provincial government has announced to provide water via tankers, which will further increase sufferings of people because of wide spread corruption among the tankers operators.

Senior economist Dr Kaiser Bengali, the author of the study, gave an overview of the land

pattern in different parts of Pakistan. "The land tenure pattern in each province is different, so in case the land reforms are introduced, land reforms should be different in each province." He said feudal structure exists in many parts of Pakistan, but it prevails in Sindh province in its worst form. Percentage of the big landlords is more in Sindh as compared to other provinces. He suggested ending the absentee landlordship and giving the surplus land to the landless people.

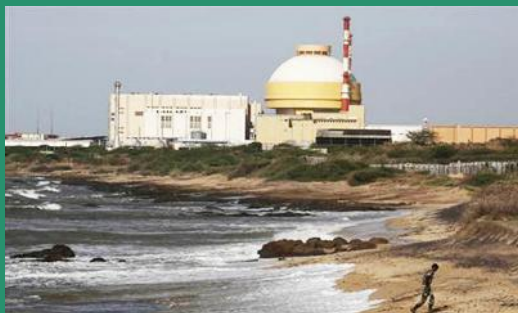
Mahtab Akbar Rashidi, MPA, said natural environment had been destroyed in Karachi. She said people in rural areas were deprived of basic facilities. People affected by floods of 2010 had still not been rehabilitated.

Karamat Ali, Executive Director of PILER, said due absence of land reforms in Pakistan besides inequality and evils like terrorism were increasing in agriculture areas. He urged the members of Sindh Assembly members to introduce land ceiling act so that big land holding was discouraged. He said Land Reforms Act be introduced in Sindh because after the 18th amendment, it is a provincial subject. The Sindh Tenancy Act should be implemented and all anti-peasants clauses be removed from it, he demanded. (Pakistantoday, 14/05/2015)

Nuclear reactors: Karachi's newest danger?

Nuclear power and patriotic pride are inextricably intertwined in Pakistan. In the decades since the tests were conducted, Pakistan's possession of a nuclear bomb is believed to be by many, the sole reason for why the country; located as it is at the intersection of where superpowers like to spar, continues to exist.

It is a belief that is fed and promoted with zeal by politicians and popular culture; and all institutional arms of the state. Little kids cheer the bomb, that good bomb that can destroy everything, even as smaller bad bombs go off all around them. The word nuclear then is considered by most to be an incontrovertible good thing. It is no wonder then that the construction of two additional nuclear reactors at KANUPP near Karachi are being regaled as the solution to the city's continuing plunge into darkness.



With more power it is assumed, and with nuclear power, the city of lights, now the city of darkness and death can be resurrected again. The city's inhabitants, their lives long cut up and diced away by constant power outages are eager for the reprieve. In the city's ever dimming reality; hoping for light is but a necessity.

But, like everything else produced in Karachi, the 1100 MW electricity produced by the AC-3000 reactors are not to be reserved for Karachi but rather for the national grid and for areas that will bear none of the environmental risk of living next door to a nuclear reactor.

The proximity is worth noting; the new reactor will be less than 20 miles from Karachi's downtown. Nearly 7,000 people live in every square mile of that distance. Even Chernobyl, the plant at the heart of one of the world's worst nuclear plant disasters, was located further away from such dense human settlement.

The nearness to hapless humans is not the only problem being ignored in this energy eager moment.

The new Chinese made nuclear reactor, which has the capacity to produce far more electricity than its predecessors, is not being used anywhere else. Karachi and its environs then will be the trial run for this mass nuclear energy production experiment. Then there are Karachi's geographical realities; the plant will not simply be close to people it can kill, it will also be in an earthquake and tsunami prone zone.

In years past, when storms have skimmed the shore, the city has relied on the supernatural powers of the shrine at its coast. Arriving storms descending on nuclear reactors may not be held back by the luck and folklore.

The fallout from Japan's Fukushima nuclear plant continues even four years after the tsunami, with radioactive water still seeping into the ocean.

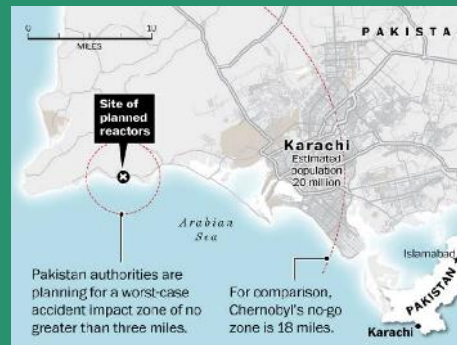
What will be the scale of Karachi's condemnation, if such a storm hits its soon to be nuclear coast?

A thin sliver of civil society had tried to fight the scapegoating of Karachi for the country's energy needs.

To pacify them, without permitting them to actually influence the altering of the plan or its construction, a "public hearing" was held on April 27th

2015. To make it as inconvenient as possible, it was held at KANUPP instead of actually in the city precluding many from attending.

Perhaps, the organisers were underscoring just how “far” the nuclear reactor will be from the city. Radiation, however, travels faster than traffic and people, and unlike the annoying objections of environmental and civil activists; it cannot be stopped.



The over 300-page environmental impact report issued by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission is a daunting read. Its left and technical details; along with the short time permitted to peruse its contents is of course, all meant to deter anyone from saying anything. For those who may look through its pages; it is grim reading detailing the tons of liquid and solid radioactive waste that will be produced from the energy, making behemoth that will likely be Karachi's newest danger. If you look past the report's promises and consider the ineptitude with which even non-radioactive waste is disposed off in Karachi, you cannot help but be terrified.

Also read: [Nuclear plants project: Certain facts not being made public for strategic reasons, SHC told](#)

If things go wrong, and they do so often in Karachi, the poison will spread farther, to the 20 million inhabitants of Karachi who stand directly in the path of the plant's noxious and tainted effusions.

Just like the streets of Karachi, its dark corners and alleys and its million days of mourning bear the brunt of the nation's war and the nation's pain; so too, will they bear the weight of the nation's want; their contaminated lives lighting up the homes and havens of those far away, in other, luckier parts of Pakistan.

(By Rafiz Zakaria, Dawn, 15/05/2015)

Karachi Chronicle: Water games

The shortage, practically no water in the pipeline is a chronic problem that's decades old, but we managed with tanker water and bottled water; while in the poor localities people managed by boring 'wells' which actually tap water in the large underground water conduits. Even though the Press and TV channels continuously report on various aspects of the problem, Karachiites are mum because they fear their legal and illegal supply will be affected. That is why the current water crisis has not caused citywide riots, as the media expected.

There is no crisis beyond the normal shortage of water, but the problem has been exposed because of the exorbitant price charged by the tanker walas since April. Their reason for the high price was closing down all hydrants excepts the legal 12 operated by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), including subsoil aquifers. Tankers have to queue for hours to get water from the hydrants which has reduced the number of times they

can fill up from something like 15 to 18 rounds to two or three. So the crisis is not water shortage but tanker supply shortage.

We have always asked how it is that there is no water in the pipeline but plenty through tanker supply and from the bottlers of drinking water. Where do they get their water from? The media exposed the source to be illegal hydrants and subsoil aquifers. We blamed the tanker mafia. But thanks to the current crisis the government was asked to explain its own alleged involvement. In particular the Minister for Information and Local Government Sharjeel Memon has been accused by the tanker association general secretary who said the KWSB managing director was just a puppet. 'The person in charge of the hydrants is Rashid Siddiqui and he has his own union of 200 tankers drivers and owners. The union is headed by Ghulam Nabi. Both these men answer to Sharjeel Memon'.

Other skeletons began to emerge from the cupboard. The KWSB accused K-Electric for stoppage of power to pumping stations which, it alleged, was the reason there was no water in the pipeline. The power supply claimed the KWSB had not paid outstanding dues to the tune of over 30 billion rupees. The KWSB said it was against the law to stop power supply to pumping stations. And recently, an unexpected expose was the large amount owing to KWSB by the city's important persons. The biggest defaulter was the Rangers, but it is shameful that the Sindh Governor, Chief Minister, some current and past ministers, and even the Komcar or Karachi commander were defaulters. No wonder nothing has been done to improve water supply beyond promises, and neither has the government taken any interest in ending tanker mafia. It is odd that the

Cantonment Board should advertise an appeal to people living in their zone to be patient about the water crisis. As if it is not at all responsible for the shortage of water supply in pipelines, forcing us to depend on tankers. A few years ago the Cantt had promised to set up desalination plants. What happened? Why this was not done? Why are people in the six cantonments still without adequate supply of piped water?

The Defence Housing Authority's phases all depend on tanker water. The DHA have been the chief beneficiary of water from the desalination plant. It is also said to be the posh or wealthy residential area of Karachi. Perhaps the Cantonment Board has put the plan on the backburner. (If it has not totally scrapped the desalination plant project,) could be that the rich do not care. They may mutter in their clubs and parties but they do not voice their complaint to the DHA. The reason is that they will pay for a tanker no matter what it costs; they can afford it. What they cannot afford is discomfort of any kind. Money can buy all the comfort they need. So they do not complain to force the DHA to deliver. The poor are blamed for water theft. They have not only board into the underground conduits but even broken water pipes overground to get water. But the truth is they are not the only ones who have installed those so-called 'wells'. Illegal hydrant operators and even some bottle water suppliers are guilty party. According to one TV channel report the KWSB is aware of the 'wells' and had declared them illegal, but in the wake of the current crisis, the TV reporter alleged, the same KWSB is now planning to legalise the 'wells'. It seems incredible, but we have seen such illegality turned legal in the case of kachi abadies, so why not the 'wells'? And just as the legalisation of kachi abadies

only encourage more illegal settlements in the city, the legalisation of the 'wells' is bound to increase misuse of water and theft of water.

Is there a solution to the problem? Of course there is. Stop drinking water. Stop bathing. Stop washing dishes and doing laundry. Stop growing flowers, trees and vegetables. Without water you will die in about four days, and that is a permanent solution to your problem. It is a pity we cannot blame the Taliban or a foreign hand for the water crisis. But does anybody realise we Karachiites, wheather we the Rangers, the ministers, the millionaires, the middle-class, the poor, the preacher, the teacher have contributed to the water crisis.

(By Nargis Khanum, Business Recorder, 16/05/2015)

The Unplanned Revolution

Observations on the Processes of Socio-Economic Change in Pakistan 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

Participatory Development, the story of Organgi pilot Project and Urban Resource Centre By Arif Hasan

This Book is story of **Organgi pilot Project- Research and Training Project and Urban Resource Centre**, two internationally recognized participatory development organizations in Karachi. OPP-RTI's work in Karachi's katchi abadis and URC's research and advocacy model, both of which involved low income communities in development and in the process effected government NGOs, and donor programmes.

Price Rs. 595/- available at Oxford University Press

New Karachi in the north and Landhi-Korangi in the south-east — were created about 20 kilometres from what was then the city centre. “The industrial areas were an integral part of these plans and the concept was to provide the residents of these two towns, jobs in the industrial areas so they would not have to travel to the city,” he said. “Health and education facilities were also provided but the industries did not materialise and the working population started commuting long distances on bad roads to the city’s business districts, port and adjacent industrial areas.” Hasan added that the number of taxis in the city in 1951 was only 32.

Government's initiatives

In order to cope with the situation, the then government started some initiatives to address the transport issue. Hasan recalled the government's initiative from 1948, when people migrated en masse from India. The then federal government provided transport to and from the new settlements. “In 1950, this initiative was handed over to the Karachi Improvement Trust (KIT), which was established to plan for the expansion and management of the city,” he said, adding that by 1957, the KIT initiative proved to be highly insufficient. In December 1957, the Karachi Transport Syndicate (KTS) was set up with a fleet of 280 buses. “The KTS too was declared a failure in 1958 and was disbanded in December that year.”

The following year, the Karachi Road Transport Corporation (KRTC) was established as a joint venture of the central government and the general public who were invited by shares. “A total of 324 buses and 24 double-deckers then started operating and adequate depots and workshops were provided for these buses,” he explained. “By 1964, the KRTC was also rounded-up for unknown reasons.”

In 1968, the Karachi Master Plan 1975-85 was prepared with the assistance of the United Nations. “In 1973, when Pakistan was subdivided into provinces, the Sindh Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) was established and 2,000 buses were inducted into the system,” he said, and adding that the SRTC was further divided into the Karachi Transport Corporation (KTC) for the city, while the SRTC looked after the rest of the province under the provincial government.

Speaking on the performance of KTC, he said that the links with the nationalised automobile industry were created to develop technology to build larger buses. As a result, 550 large buses were introduced. “A bus terminal capable of handling 200,000 passengers daily was created.”

Enter the minibus

In 1971, the government introduced a transport policy, known as ‘The Free Transport Policy’. According to Hasan, this policy was introduced due to the ever-increasing demand for transport from the various katchi abadis (suburbs) developing on the then periphery of Karachi since government transport only operated on the main corridors of the city. “This policy created the minibus in Karachi,” he said.

(The Express Tribune, 04/05/2015)

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