

NEWSCLIPPINGS

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ECONOMICS



Urban Resource Centre

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Rupee depreciation

FINANCE Minister Ishaq Dar has shouted the dollar back down again, for the second time since his term began. But he cannot do the same where the current account deficit is concerned. The sharp depreciation of the rupee on Wednesday was described by the State Bank as necessitated by a worsening of the external account, something that is widely known in financial circles. The State Bank even went on to add that the depreciated value of the rupee, at 108.25 to the dollar, was "broadly in line with the economic fundamentals". But the finance minister described the move as "artificial" and then during his news conference on Thursday, added that it was the result of "miscommunication between a few individuals". Not only that, he went so far as to claim that one deputy governor at the State Bank appeared to have acted on his own, and promised a probe into the affair, once a permanent governor was appointed.

This take on the whole affair raises some important questions. First, how can it be that the State Bank owned the move in a press release on Wednesday if it was in fact engineered by one individual and did not represent the institutional prerogative of the central bank? Even if we believe one individual is responsible for the withdrawal of all supports provided to the rupee in the interbank market, how can he or she arrange for the drafting of a press release and its upload onto the State Bank website without taking others on board? It appears that the finance minister has allowed his temper to overrule his judgement. Now that the currency has been restored to the level he favours, he should move to breathe more confidence into the markets rather than breathing fire at them.

Lost in the whole drama is the elementary truth that the country's external accounts have widened to unsustainable levels, and depreciation in the rupee is inevitable. The longer that decision is delayed, the greater the eventual shock is going to be. On the same day that the whole drama played out, a little noticed revision in the data reported for the current account showed that the deficit is in fact \$1.71bn higher than what it has been reported all year. This means the situation is even more urgent than originally thought. But if we are to believe that the State Bank has suddenly woken up to its responsibilities as the legally empowered,

independent curator of the country's foreign exchange reserves and exchange rate, then we must know what it makes of the sudden reversal of the exchange rate witnessed on Thursday. The clear fact here is that after the finance minister's tirade, all semblance of the independence of the State Bank has almost completely vanished. The sad loser in this fiasco is the economy of Pakistan. (Dawn 08, 07/07/2017)

Population Planning 2020

The writer is a development activist and founding member of the Women's Action Forum

Once the national census results are released, we'll know how many people live in the country. By 2050 the population will rise substantially from whatever figure it currently stands at. If "demography is destiny," what does the future hold for us? Will we become an overpopulated, poverty-stricken, ignorant and bigoted nation, clinging to its medieval traditions, or modern, educated and progressive?

The choice is in our hands —or rather, in the hands of our policymakers. Just before the Panamagate scandal, this nation was, according to financial experts, on the threshold of an economic upswing, draining IMF loans over and the worst finally behind us.

Greater provincial autonomy with the 18th amendment introduced new strategies and plans, including for social sector development and population planning.

The positives: Pakistan's largest-ever cohort of enthusiastic, energetic adolescents could be a major plus.

The downside: an unplanned, rapidly increasing population — with a growth rate that could nullify economic progress, further shrink education opportunities and give rise to increasing hunger and malnutrition. In short, it would force the country into a strait-jacket of poverty and make it untenable for its people. Much of which is already a reality.

According to Dr Jilani, a well-known senior population scholar, after all these years, unbridled population increase is the major impediment to economic and social progress. "It is a painful realisation, that Pakistan is badly left behind in efforts to control population growth, strong resolve, political will and consistency," he adds.

Demographer Dr Farid Midhet worries about the nexus between poverty, inequality and population growth. "Unless there's greater investment in adolescents, they could well become a threat to the very existence of the nation... the energies of a youthful population may become directed towards undesirable activities," says Dr Midhet.

Pakistan's per woman fertility rates still exceed those of its South Asian neighbours. Each woman has an average of four children — when she would happily prefer three. That extra child per family comes at a huge cost of unsatisfactory access to family planning, contraceptive failures and decision-making not by the woman herself but by others in the family. Millions of women lose their lives during childbirth, while others lose their infants — Pakistan has the region's highest infant mortality rate.

Contraceptive prevalence continues to remain low due to unavailability or inaccessibility of family planning centres, especially in far-flung rural areas. The Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) at 35 per cent has been virtually static for many years.

There's also high son preference, which tempts countless couples to continue birthing children till a boy arrives. Every new baby added to an average-size household increases the population living below poverty line by about 10 per cent. Untrammelled population growth reduces food availability per person and renders the country less food secure.

The Family Planning (FP) conundrum is complex. Woman's position within the family and her autonomy remain weak, even for decisions concerning their own bodies and personal lives. Their decisions frequently face resistance from family, community or society. Often, women lack knowledge about and access to FP services. At other times, there is fear of side effects, leading to contraceptive failure.

Given that at least 25 per cent women wish to either delay pregnancy or end childbearing altogether but are unable to indicate that, there is need for greater communication, understanding and involvement of decision-maker husbands, and/or mothers-in-law. The spousal age gap is also high. Women are generally seven to 10 years younger than their husbands.

Far too many women are still married before age 20. Child marriage still accounts for about 15 per cent of all marriages, leading to an extended reproductive life span.

There is urgent need for strong implementation of the recently updated and passed Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2016. The Sindh Assembly unanimously passed this bill, the only province to equalise age at marriage for both women and men.

The vacuum left by inadequate contraception is filled with tragedies, mostly avoidable. Eighty women die silent, painful deaths each day because of preventable complications during pregnancy. Countless women survive childbirth with painful rectal or vaginal fistulae, with tragically few treatment facilities. Or they face chronic illness or death due to unsafe abortions. For every mother who dies, numerous children are left orphaned.

Where does the problem lie? In insufficient accessibility and availability of family planning facilities? Women's and couples' inability or reluctance to use family planning? Fundamentalist beliefs? Or overwhelming influence of patriarchy and male decision-making? Probably the answers lie in a mix of all these. A gynaecologist observed: "The medical curriculum itself does not give sufficient importance to family planning; consequently, practising gynaecologists and other doctors rarely stress the significance of contraception to their patients."

Many consider FP opposed to Islam — an observation confirmed by a recent study titled Fundamentalist Discourses on Family Planning Practices in Pakistan. It quotes anecdotal evidence of local mosque clerics castigating all forms of birth control. Further, some politico-religious parties have stoked the controversies for political ends.

Unfortunately, there is little expression of strong will in political party manifestos. Leading political parties all mention the need to reduce the population growth to 1.5 per cent per annum and promote nutritional, child and maternal health. The PML-N also aims to increase CPR from 35 to 55 per cent by 2020, but few concrete measures have been suggested to reach this target. The JUI makes no mention of the need for population control.

For family planning to succeed from the privacy of the bedroom to the public domain, spousal communication is all-important, as women's position in our culture, family and homes. All these facets affect the decision to have or not have a baby.

Studies have shown that low spousal communication is an ever-present problem even amongst educated couples. Women have little say about family size. Decisions about the number of children a couple should have, maternal health or child spacing, aren't often discussed. Unequal gender norms continue to hinder overall progress.

Population planning is decisively linked to the country's economy and overall development. It's not only a matter of reducing fertility, equally important is the need to concomitantly address other development issues. Only by incorporating them all can a cohesive, sustainable population planning programme succeed.

The strategies for moving towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could lead to lower fertility, reduced maternal and child mortality — and improved food security, better educational opportunities and healthier families. Gender equality and women's greater empowerment will further contribute to the achievement of 75 per cent of the post-2015 SDGs' agenda.

Sindh has recently launched an ambitious programme to increase the current contraceptive prevalence rate from 29.5 per cent to 41 per cent by 2020. "Population is a tremendous dynamic resource, and it becomes valuable when it is healthy, educated, well-informed and productive and contributes to prosperity," states Dr Tauseef Ahmed, consultant to Sindh's FP2020 programme.

(By Hilda Saeed The Express Tribune 06, 11/07/2017)

Diversion of development funds

THE federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) is one of the biggest engines of growth simply by virtue of the enormous resources that can be thrown into the economy through it. The revival of growth that the government presents as its signature achievement has in large part been achieved by sharply escalating development spending. In the outgoing year, for example, the government disbursed Rs744bn through the development budget. Although this amount was below the budgeted Rs800bn (for the federal PSDP only), it still represents enough money that goes directly into productive activities and that can shape the fiscal framework as well as the growth environment in important ways. But with this volume of money passing through government hands, it is crucial that proper oversight be maintained to ensure it is being directed towards the projects for which it is intended.

In the last fiscal year, as an example, revenue shortfalls necessitated a steep cut in the domestically financed component of the development budget, and the axe largely fell on the programmes marked to facilitate the return of temporarily displaced persons of the Waziristan operations. The amount allocated for this programme was Rs100bn, but it was cut by Rs38bn. From the remainder,

around Rs24bn was then diverted to various expenditures not connected to the TDPs at all, such as paying for the contingent liabilities of the JF-17 Thunder contractual payments, as well as a 'security allowance' and raising a special security force.

Although these diversions were effected after obtaining the necessary approvals, they speak of the ease with which funds marked by parliament for one purpose can be diverted to another. It is not clearly known how much of the development budget gets diverted in similar ways since the reporting template for the programme does not include the relevance disclosure requirements. What is known, however, is that growing amounts from the development budget are now being directed towards funding projects related to CPEC, for which more than Rs1.1tr have been marked thus far and Rs180bn spent until June 2016. Given the sheer amounts involved, and the growing absorption of domestically financed projects meant for CPEC, parliamentary oversight is becoming ever more critical. Yet the development budget remains one of the least debated and scrutinised areas of public finance. Parliament must play a more active role in providing oversight in this crucial area.
(Dawn 08, 22/07/2017)

167 parliamentarians not in tax directory

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government's talk of bringing all members of parliament into the tax net has failed to produce any noticeable results as 167 legislators did not file their income tax returns on a voluntary basis in the tax year 2016.

A similar trend was observed since the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) issued the first tax directory for 2013, followed by the two subsequent years. However, in the directory for 2016 the situation has deteriorated.

Under the Income Tax Ordinance, filing of returns is mandatory for all those who possess a 1,000cc car, a plot of 250 square yards or a 2,000-square-foot apartment in the area of any municipal corporation. By this definition, it apparently was the liability of all parliamentarians to file tax returns.

According to FBR spokesman Dr Muhammad Iqbal, former finance minister Ishaq Dar had given a month to all the legislators to file their returns. "We will issue notices to them in case they do not file their tax returns," the spokesman told Dawn.

He said that tax was also deducted at source from the salaries of the legislators. However, he was not aware whether the lawmakers who did not file the returns were on the tax roll.

The question of whether the non-filers have paid the tax will become clear when they submit their returns.

The minimum penalty for not filing returns and wealth statements is Rs5,000 fine and it can be as high as 25 per cent of the tax payable in a year. The non-filer has to declare his total income for assessment or a tax official declares it ex parte.

According to the tax directory, 12 senators did not file their tax returns for 2016 — Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo and Gul Bashra from Balochistan; Ahmed Hassan, Attaur Rehman, Samina Abid and Zahida Khan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Maulana Tanveerul Haq Thanvi and Taj Haider from Sindh and Aurangzeb Khan, Hilalur Rehman, Malik Najmul Hassan and Muhammad Saleh Shah from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata).

Four of the eight senators from Fata were non-filers.

Of the 45 members of the National Assembly (MNAs) who did not file their tax returns, 17 were from KP — Engineer Hamidul Haq Khalil, Gulzar Khan, Siraj Muhammad Khan, Aqibullah, Shehryar Afridi, Nasir Khan Khattak, retired Capt Muhammad Safdar, Sar Zamin Khan, Engineer Dawar Khan Kundi, Akram Khan Durrani, retired Col Amirullah Marwat, Sher Akbar Khan, Iftikharud Din, Junaid Akbar and three women on reserved seats: Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak, Sajida Begum and Begum Tahira Bukhari.

Four MNAs from Fata were on the tax rolls but did not file their returns — namely Bilal Rehman, Sajid Hussain Turi, Muhammad Nazir Khan and Muhammad Jamalud Din.

The 13 MNAs from Punjab who did not file their tax returns were Nawabzada Raja Matloob Mehdi, Dr Nisar Ahmad Jatt, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan, Chaudhry Jaffar Iqbal, Chaudhry Abid Raza, Mumtaz Ahmad Tarar, Shazia Mubashar, Salman Hanif, Malik Abdul Ghaffar Dogar, Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, Alam Dad Laleka and two women on reserves seats — Shazia Sohail Mir and Sabiha Nazir.

Six MNAs from Sindh who did not file their returns were Mehboob Alam, Muhammad Kamal Malik, Shahjahan Baloch, Musarat Rafique Mahesar, Shahida Rehmani and Shazia Sobia.

Maulana Mohammad Khan Sherani was the lone MNA from Balochistan who did not file the returns.

Provincial assemblies

As many as 110 members of the provincial assemblies did not file their tax returns.

From the Balochistan assembly eight members did not file the returns — namely Khalilur Rehman, Mir Abdul Majid Abro, Mir Izhar Hussain Khosa, Rahat Jamali, Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Shama Ishaq, Anita Irfan and former chief minister Abdul Malik Baloch.

In the KP Assembly, 36 MPAs did not file their returns, including Javed Nasim, Arbab Akbar Hayat, Arbab Jehdad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan, Arshad Ali, Khalid Khan, Tufail Anjum, Ziaullah Khan Bangash, Gul Sahib Khan, Mufti Said Janan, Sardar Mohammad Idress, Mian Ziaur Rehman, Muhammad Usmatullah, Abdul Sattar Khan, Ali Amin Khan, Sami Ullah, Javed Akbar

Khan, Fakher Azam Wazir, Habibur Rahman, Maulana Mufti Fazal Ghafoor, Fazal Hakim, Amjad Ali, Mahmood Khan, Qaimos Khan, Muhammad Rashad Khan, Abdul Munim, Ghulam Muhammad, Behram Khan, Nadia Sher, Maliha Tanveer, Romana Jailil, Sobia Shahid and Soran Singh.

KP Finance Minister Muzaffar Said was also among the non-filers. The 44 non-filer MPAs in Punjab included Muhammad Siddique Khan, Asif Mehmood, Malik Muhammad Zahoor Anwer, Ghazanfar Abbas Cheena, Naeemullah Gill, Rashida Yaqoob, Chaudhry Shabir Ahmed, Chaudhry Mohsin Ashraf, Majid Zahoor, Chaudhry Yaseen Sohail, Malik Ghulam Habib Awan, Muhammad Khurram Gulfam, Muhammad Kashif, Jamil Hassan Khan, Malak Muhammad Ahmad Khan, Waqas Hassan Mokal, Sardar Muhammad Asif Nakai, Chaudry Iftikhar Hussain Chachar, Ali Abbas, Malik Sajjad Hussain Joiya, Sardar Meer Badsha Khan Qaisraani, Malik Ahmad Yar Hunjra, Muhammad Zishan Gurmani, Malik Ghulam Murtaza Raheem Khar and Muhammad Imran Qureshi. Women MPAs on reserved seats Kiran Imran, Kanwal Nauman, Farah Manzoor, Saira Iftikhar, Kaneez Akhtar, Tehseen Fawad, Salma Shaheen Butt, Shamim Akhtar alias Shahazadi Kabir, Iram Hassan Bajwa, Zebun Nisa Awan and Shazia Kamran were also non-filers.

From the Sindh Assembly, there were 22 non-filers, including Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar, Imtiaz Ahmed Shaikh, Sardar Muhammad Muqeem Khan Khoso, Imdad Ali Pitafi, Mir Allah Bux Talpur, Faraz Dero, Mohammad Yousuf Shahwani, Khalid bin Vilayat, Saniya, Muhammad Kamran, Irfanullah Khan Marwat and Dr Sagheer Ahmed. Khairunnisa, Shamim Mumtaz, Ghazala Siyal, Rubina Saadat Qaimkhani, Saira Shahliani, Heer Soho, Naheed Begum, Shazia Jawaid, Irum Azeem Farooque, Soorath and Ponjo Bheel, who were elected on reserved seats, also did not file their returns.

(By Mubarak Zeb Khan Dawn 03, 30/07/2017)

CPEC at ease

China and Pakistan have strengthened trade and economic cooperation in a manner that is unparalleled. It is a friendship that the world looks upon with envy and suspicion, and this has particularly been the case ever since the two nations decided upon the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The corridor will interface Gwadar Port in Balochistan to Kashgar in northwestern China, which will make Gwadar completely operational as well as a huge remote ocean port in the district. Opened for operations in 2007, the control of Gwadar Port was handed over to China's state-owned China Overseas Ports Holding in 2013. From that point forward, Gwadar has been experiencing a noteworthy extension to transform it into an undeniable, profound water business port. At the point when the corridor is developed, it will serve as an essential entryway for exchange amongst China and the Middle East and Africa. CPEC is a complete advancement programme that incorporates the connecting of Gwadar Port to China's northwestern region of Xinjiang through roadways, railroads, oil and gas pipelines, and an optical fibre interface.

Bilateral relations between the two countries have never been uneasy over the course of history, however, the public was curious as to whether Nawaz Sharif's disqualification from the position of prime minister by the Supreme Court would act as an obstacle to CPEC. However, it comes as a welcome relief that the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that the China-Pakistan strategic cooperative partnership will not be affected by the change of the situation. China expressed hope that various parties and sections in Pakistan could "prioritise state and national interests, properly deal with their domestic affairs, maintain unity and stability, and keep focusing on the economic and social development."

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The words of the freshly ousted prime minister ring true — Pakistan-China friendship truly is "higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the deepest sea in the world and sweeter than honey."

(The Express Tribune 06, 30/07/2017)

Karachi ranked sixth least-liveable city worldwide - fair or unfair?

The Global Liveability Report, 2017 has ranked Karachi as the world's sixth worst city to live in for the second consecutive year.



For a city plagued by incompetent governance, The Economist Intelligence Unit's [EIU] Liveability Index will not surprise Karachiites. But it may raise questions on claims of an 'improved' Karachi. The index has ranked 140 cities based on stability, infrastructure, education, healthcare, culture and environment. Pakistan's financial hub has fallen behind in each category.

"It's [just] a perception," insisted Citizens-Police Liaison Committee Chief Zubair Habib. "The situation has improved. We just need to put that information out there." He emphasised the declining rate of organised crime in the city but admitted that the 'police in Karachi is grossly understaffed'.

"We need investigation and forensic teams for all cases, not only high profile ones," the CPLC chief told The Express Tribune.

"There should be at least 50,000 policemen in the city to tackle security threats."

Country	City	Rank	Overall Rating (0-100)	Stability	Healthcare	Culture & Environment	Education	Infrastructure
Qatar	Doha	1	98.7	95	92.5	98.5	95	92.5
Switzerland	Zurich	2	94.5	90	95	94.5	93.5	92.5
Denmark	Copenhagen	3	92.5	85	90	92.5	90	90
Finland	Helsinki	4	91.5	85	90	91.5	89.5	89.5
France	Paris	5	90.5	85	87.5	90.5	88.5	88.5
Algeria	Algiers	136	49.5	40	48.5	49.5	50	49.5
Pakistan	Karachi	137	48.5	30	45.5	48.5	47	48.5
Bangladesh	Dhaka	138	48.5	30	45.5	48.5	47	48.5
Spain	Madrid	139	48.5	30	45.5	48.5	47	48.5
Nigeria	Lagos	139	48.5	30	45.5	48.5	47	48.5
Syria	Damascus	140	48.5	30	45.5	48.5	47	48.5

Habib stressed that the police should have the autonomy to utilise their budget as per their requirements, adding that currently the Sindh government is making those decisions for them.

Much has been said about the city where the Sindh chief minister acts as the de facto mayor, while the actual elected mayor frequently calls on the court to grant him powers. The city of lights remains entangled in a confusing web of deception.

Unmoved by the ranking, the forlorn mayor of Karachi believes negligence is the reason behind it. "Karachi's issues are increasing day by day," Wasim Akhtar told The Express Tribune. "There is no will to attend to the city's problems," he said.

"Karachi's infrastructure is not equipped for the constant influx of population," Akhtar explained. "What is the point of new roads if you have no sewerage system in place?" he asked, stressing the lack of systematic development in the city.

"There is a state within a state in Sindh after the 18th Amendment," said the mayor. "They [the Sindh government] make up laws as they please."

Having filed a petition in the Supreme Court for the restoration of Article 140(a), Akhtar yearns for the revenue-generating departments that have been taken away from the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation. "All I can do is pay salaries and pensions," he lamented. "I'm not even allowed to undertake a project worth more than Rs20 million."

Melbourne ranked world's most liveable city in the world, 7th consecutive time

From the water board to solid waste and garbage collection, all the responsibilities that should fall under local government have been 'usurped' through notifications by the provincial government, Akhtar claimed.

As a metropolis, Karachi attracts those seeking medical relief but it lacks a proper healthcare system. The mayor said he is unable to maintain the 13 hospitals that fall under his care, due to lack of power and funds. Akhtar said that while the hospitals are under the mayor's command, the responsibility to buy medical equipment falls to the Sindh government.

The CPLC chief is on the same page. He lamented how the police force lacks basic medical care, with rundown hospitals and low-cost insurance.

But where the state fails, the city's people step up. With institutions such as the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation, The Indus Hospital and Aga Khan University Hospital amongst others, pro-bono work manages to give the people respite.

Similarly, private schooling has filled the void in the education sector in a city where authorities frequently bulldoze schools. With an approximate population of 27 million, Karachi's future lies in its youth.

Khizra Munir, a volunteer teacher and alumni at The Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, said it is important to experience the city with an understanding and approach that is not just that of a student but that of a stakeholder in the ups and downs of the city.

Through their city orientation class, volunteer teachers construct experiences that encourage students to create public service campaigns that can help them 'become more accountable Karachiites'.

The 20 least liveable cities on Earth

The city that never sleeps embeds a kind of perseverance in Karachiites that even a powerless mayor has faith in. By signing memorandums of understanding with Chinese firms to create revenue-generating schemes, the mayor has started a plantation drive and distributed biodegradable disposable bags in a clean-up campaign.

When asked why he is still holding an office with no powers, Akhtar smiled. "If I give up, they [the Sindh government] will destroy everything." As he completes a year in office, the mayor is unsatisfied but hopeful. "I have not achieved what I set out to but I am trying."

(By Niha Dagia The Express Tribune 13, 18/08/2017)

Karachi to be transformed under Karachi Neighbourhood Improvement Project

The government has devised short and long-term plans to transform Karachi into a beautiful city, which include development of roads and parks, restoration of old buildings and evolving a proper traffic management system.



Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said this while presiding over a meeting on the World Bank-assisted Karachi Neighbourhood Improvement Project (KNIP) at CM House on Friday. Karachi will get a new face after the project, which will be the face of prosperity, claimed the CM.

Shah said that the World Bank, at the request of the Sindh government, carried out a Karachi City Diagnostic (KCD) to support the provincial government in the implementation of the Karachi Transform Strategy through short-term and long-term engagements. The KCD estimated that at least \$10 billion would be required in the next 10 years to close the city's infrastructure gaps.

Mayor announces development schemes for Karachi

Planning and Development Chairperson Mohammad Waseem said that in the short-term the World Bank has agreed to support KNIP by focusing on fast, low-cost and high-impact involvements to respond to the emergent city needs. "At present, KNIP stands approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council [Ecneec] and the loan agreement has already been signed by the World Bank and government," he said.

Giving a presentation to the chief minister, KNIP Director Khair Mohammad Kalwar said that the project's cost is \$98 million, of which \$12 million will be funded by the Sindh government. The project aims at enhancing public space in targeted neighbourhoods,

improving road infrastructure to enhance mobility and improving the city's capacity to provide selected administrative services, he added.

Talking about component-I of the project, the project director said it includes renewal of the city's downtown area in Saddar, enhancement of roads and public spaces in Malir and mobility improvement in Korangi.

Chief minister blames Centre for delaying KCR

In the renovation of Saddar, heritage buildings at Pakistan Chowk and its adjoining areas will be restored, while roads will be reconstructed with new water and sewerage lines. It has also been decided that different roads in the area will be made one-way for traffic and footpaths, with beautiful benches and plants, will be built.

The area from DJ College to the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi will also be developed on the same pattern with a one-way traffic route along with construction of parking lots and development of parks and open spaces with benches for visitors.

It was also decided in the meeting that parking along the roads will be strictly prohibited and the entire area would be monitored via closed-circuit television cameras.

Civil society unhappy with Green Line extension

The CM directed Karachi Additional IG Mushtaq Maher to work together with the KNIP director to develop the one-way traffic plans. Shah added that there is a dire need to manage growing traffic in the city, particularly in Saddar.

"This is the most important project for the restoration of the old city area. Therefore, it must be supported [by everyone] not only by the relevant agencies and government departments. I request each and every Karachiite to support and own it," the CM said. Shah also proposed that compound walls of some important beautiful buildings in the old city be replaced by fences so that beautiful facade of such buildings could be enjoyed by every passer-by.

More bridges and highways? No! We need bus lanes, elevated light rail and underground trains

The CM also directed the Karachi commissioner to start removing encroachments from the entire area of the project's component-I so that it could be started within a month. He also directed the KNIP director to begin inviting tenders for the reconstruction work within two weeks.

Components II and III include automation of construction permits by the Sindh Building Control Authority, an integrated financial management system for the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and design and implementation of the Sindh Provincial Electronic On-Stop Shop, along with other projects .

(By Hafeez Tunio The Express Tribune 13, 19/08/2017)

Sohrab Goth cattle market's physical and monetary fall



There is a common phrase often heard before Eidul Azha, 'mandi gir gayi [the market fell]', which usually means prices of sacrificial animals at the cattle market have come down. However, on Monday night when the city witnessed heavy downpour with strong gust of winds, the phrase was once again used, not for the prices because the huge setup of the market, including marquees and tents, fell down due to the thunderstorm.

On Tuesday morning, it appeared as if a flood had swept away the site of the Asia's largest cattle market situated at Sohrab Goth on Super Highway, which is spread over 800 acres and consists of 26 blocks.

Despite the ban on billboards in the city, gigantic bill boards were installed at the market, many of which fell due to winds as they could not bear the rainfall and heavy winds. Some of the boards also fell on cars parked at the market, damaging them.

Cattle market troubles: 'Why should we pay to go to our own house?'

With around 10 days remaining in Eidul Azha, the market hosts more than 200,000 sacrificial animals which include cows, sheep and camel. However, it is feared that the recent rain may cause illnesses to the animals, which include flu, foot and mouth diseases, as well as Congo virus.

Soon after the rain stopped, the social media was filled with pictures and videos depicting the situation of the cattle market. In one of the videos, it was visible how the huge tents in the VIP block of the market had fallen due to the heavy rain and wind.

After the rain stopped, both the ordinary and special (VIP) portions of the market had the same bad condition. According to a trader, Usman Laakho, the customers are now forcing the sellers to sell their animals at a very low price. "They should be expressing solidarity with us since because we are the real victims of rain," he said, adding that the sellers in the market, in their jargon, call these opportunist customers as gidh (vultures). "Our animals can get ill, fodder for the animals has been wasted after getting wet and like last year, we have to bear the loss," Lakho lamented.

Eidul Azha preps: Set-up of Asia's biggest cattle market in Karachi under way

Meanwhile, the administrator of the cattle market, Syed Irshad Ahmed, said around 10 heavy duty suction pumps and bowsers are currently being used in the market to drain out the inundated water that has brought huge troubles for the people.

Ahmed added that power supply, which was suspended in the market after the rain, has been resumed and the VIP tents are being fixed. It will take another 24 hours to normalise the market, he said.

Many visitors, which mostly include youth who are passionate about sacrificial animals, have also expressed sympathy for the traders at the market and wished them good luck. "We should help the sellers as their money is at stake. Instead of pressurising the sellers to sell at low price, we should wait for a day for them to reorganise their tents," said a buyer, Salman Ali. (By SHEHARYAR ALI The Express Tribune 13, 23/08/2017)

Cattle traders grapple with muddy mess as business suffers

Transformed into a muddy mess in the aftermath of the recent downpour, the city's largest cattle market off the Superhighway is experiencing a decline in businesses these days, a visit to the facility showed on Wednesday.

Spread over 1,000 acres, the yearly market for sacrificial animals is organised by the Malir Cantonment Board. More than 100,000 animals have so far arrived in the market where prices of animals are said to be high this year owing to an increase in taxes (imposed by the market administration), apart from other factors.

These animals, including a large number of camels, are brought mainly from the interior of Sindh and Punjab. Prices of animals up; traders blame rise in taxes

The traders Dawn spoke to complained of an acute water shortage in the market and lack of support from the administration in handling the post-rain conditions.

"The water being provided to us for free is not sufficient at all for big animals while there are long queues at spots dedicated for selling water," Hussain, a trader from Badin said, adding that most traders were working on a self-help basis and trying to remove rainwater from the space allotted to them.

Mohammad Farid, an animal trader from Bahawalpur, seemed equally worried. Venting his frustration, he said: "Nobody from the administration has even bothered to ask how we and our animals are surviving here. All our tents had fallen after the rain, which we ourselves have erected again."

The market administration, he said, should speed up work and take measures for immediate rehabilitation. According to him, there has been a drastic drop in customers, seriously affecting businesses. "You can see mud all over the place. How could anyone come here in these conditions and see our animals?" he said.

While there were no serious concerns regarding a disease outbreak following the rain as traders claimed to have brought vaccinated animals, there was shared concern regarding their reduced feed intake following the rain spell and subsequent loss of weight. "Unlike buffaloes, cows and goats don't like rainy weather and stop eating. On top of that, there is an acute water shortage in the market, which is extremely worrisome for traders of big animals," another trader said.

According to traders, this year the tax for small and big animals has been increased from Rs500 to Rs800 and from Rs1,000 to Rs1,400, respectively. Prices for space and other facilities have also been raised.

When asked about it, traders blamed this price hike for the increase in animal prices. A trader had to make up for the investment he had made in the animal and earn some profit at the end of the day, they argued. When contacted, market administrator Syed Arshad Ahmed said the administration was working round the clock to improve sanitary conditions at the market.

"There have been water shortages but the problem, caused at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board end, would be sorted out soon," he said.

On increased taxes, he said this had been done after five years. "We were forced to do it because the relevant housing societies whose land is used for setting up the market have demanded more payment," he said. (By Faiza Ilyas, Dawn, 17, 24/08/2017)

\$3.4 billion ADB-funded projects mired in delays

Half of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded projects – worth \$3.4 billion – have either become problematic or put on watch list due to implementation delays, reveals a latest portfolio review that has again highlighted governance issues in Pakistan.



Most of the troubled projects are in the areas of energy generation, transmission and distribution, which are the so-called priority sectors of the PML-N government during the past four years.

The other projects are in the water, agriculture, transport and social sectors, according to officials who attended the portfolio review meetings that continued for about one month.

As of end June 2017, the ADB-funded active public sector portfolio in Pakistan is made up of 37 projects with a total cost of \$6.7 billion. Of the 37 investment projects, 32 valued at \$5.83 billion are ongoing. About 18 of them worth \$3.6 billion are facing problems.

Pakistan to get \$600m ADB loans to bolster FX reserves

The ADB has declared six projects worth \$560 million 'actual problems' and eight schemes costing \$1.2 billion 'potential problems'.

There are four projects, which are on the watch list, having total cost of \$1.7 billion and there are a total of seven projects on the watch list but three are already declared problematic.

Excluding the watch list projects, the ADB rated 60% or 21 projects on track. This ratio was 80% in December last year and the latest review indicates that the project implementation is getting from bad to worse.

The ADB underlined that the downward trend in the performance rating of the projects is due to the lag time in meeting contract award and disbursement targets for the first half [January-June] of 2017. From six months to one year is wasted in between project approval by the ADB and its effectiveness, largely because of bureaucratic inefficiencies.

The ADB monitors implementation performance of projects using projections of contract awards and disbursements and the status of implementation on them.

ADB to provide Pakistan \$1.055b for nine projects

The high ratio of troubled projects underscores the challenges the country faces in improving governance, which has restricted socio-economic benefits of the schemes.

Pakistan's transmission network has outlived its life, creating problems in wheeling the electricity besides causing technical losses. Similarly, the distribution companies' network also requires upgrading and expansion.

Still, the execution agencies could not take appropriate actions to fast track development work on these schemes despite availability of funding.

The PML-N government's top most priority was to bring power outages to an end – a promise that it has yet to fulfill with only nine months remaining in the next general elections. It has focused on enhancing generation capacity but ignored the transmission and distribution issues.

The ADB-funded energy sector portfolio is worth \$3 billion that represents 43% of the active portfolio of projects. The transport sector is the second major area representing almost 26% of the active projects. The energy and transport sectors together accounted for 69% of the active loan portfolio by end of June 2017.

The ADB has declared Public Sector Enterprise Reform Project as an actual problem. The bank had approved the project in 2014 to strengthen Pakistan's capacity to privatise and restructure its designated public sector enterprises.

A \$42 million Fata Water Resources Development Project, which six months ago was on track, has been declared as actual problem. The Karachi Bus Rapid Transit design project is also declared as actual problem.

The \$200 million worth National Disaster Risk Management Fund is also actual problem project. The post flood National Highways Rehabilitation project of \$197 million and Sindh Cities Improvement investment programme worth \$92 million have also been declared actual problems.

The ADB has also put \$900 million Jamshoro Power Project on the watch list, cautioning about delays in implementation of the scheme. Despite lapse of over two and half years, the project execution agencies are still at the stage of finalising technical things and awarding the contracts.

Among the potential problem projects are \$218 million Flood Emergency Reconstruction project, \$278 million National Motorway project, \$167 million Power Distribution Enhancement Programme tranche-4, and three tranches valuing \$470 million of power transmission enhancement investment programme are facing delays. Similarly, Jalalpur Irrigation project and energy efficiency investment programme are among the potential problematic projects.

(By Shahbaz Rana The Express Tribune 01, 25/08/2017)

6th census findings: 207 million and counting

Pakistan's population has surged to a staggering 207.8 million, showing an increase of 75.4 million people in 19 years, according to provisional summary results of the 6th Population and Housing Census 2017 that were presented in a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) on Friday.



The population was just over 130 million in 1998, the year when the 5th census had been conducted. This means the country has seen a 57% increase in the population at an annual rate of 2.4%.

The government had deployed nearly 118,000 officials escorted by tens of thousands of troops and police to carry out the 70-day data-gathering drive in March launched on the orders of the Supreme Court.

The majority of the people – 52.9% to be precise – still live in Punjab, but its share in the population pie has declined when compared with the 1998 census results.

Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa are the beneficiaries of the reduction in Punjab's share, as Sindh's share in the total population remains unchanged – at 23%.

This might result in a proportionate reduction in the allocation of the National Assembly seats of Punjab, as well as its share in the federal divisible pool, although the overall number of seats of all the federating units would boost due to a 75.4 million increase in the population over the past 19 years. About 82% of the federal divisible pool is distributed on the basis of population.

Why the census is important for Pakistan

According to the summary results, the country's predominant majority – 132.189 million or 63.6% – still lives in rural areas. This ratio was 65.6% in 1998 when the last headcount was conducted.

The urban population stands at 75.58 million, which is roughly 36.4% of the country's population. In 1998, the share of the urban population was 32.52%.

Sindh is the most urbanised province having 52.02% population in urban areas – a result that could disturb rural-urban quotas of the provincial assembly seats and jobs.

Of the total urban population of the province, 68% is concentrated in three major cities – Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur.

Urbanisation-wise, Punjab stands second where 36.71% population lives in cities. The least urbanised province is K-P.

The CCI – the constitutional body headed by the prime minister with four chief ministers as its members – discussed the provisional summary results on Friday.

"However, the final results will be available next year. The CCI decided that the figures will be further debated in the Inter-Provincial Coordination Committee (IPCC) where a strategy will be devised about the future course of action," said a source.

Population census source of fear and hope for minorities

"After discussing the statistics in the IPCC, the census results will be presented to the federal cabinet for approval."

There was a debate in the CCI about whether to hold the next general election on the basis of new results, as the law does not permit fresh delimitation of constituencies on the basis of provisional results, said sources.

They said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had informed the government that it may hold the next general election on the basis of the new census results, if the final results are provided by October this year.

Sources said the CCI discussed the possibility of amending the relevant laws to allow holding of the general elections on the basis of the provisional results.

The population census results are exclusive of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) conducted the census in the two territories but did not release their results as part of the country's population due to their special status.

Meanwhile, women's share in the total population has increased about 1% during the past 19 years. The female population stands at 101.314 million, which is 48.8% of the total headcount, according to the 2017 results. In 1998, the female population ratio was 47.9%.

Pakistan at 80: the next 10 years

The male population has increased to 106.449 million or 51.2%. Meanwhile, there are 10,418 transgender (0.05%) in the country.

The PBS had conducted the exercise in two phases across Pakistan under the supervision of the military. The population results will be used to determine the federating units' share in the federal divisible pool, allocations and delimitation of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies' seats and determination of provincial job quotas.

Punjab

Punjab still remains the most populated province with 110.01 million inhabitants, forming 52.94% of the total population.

The province's population has increased by 36.4 million in past 19 years which is 49.4% higher than the 1998 statistics. In 1998, Punjab's share in the total population was 55.62%.

Punjab's population has grown at an annual rate of 2.13%, – the lowest pace of growth among all the federating units and also lower than the national average.

The share of urban population in Punjab has increased to 36.71% but its 63.9% population still lives in rural areas. There are now 49% women in Punjab as compared to 48.2% in 1998.

Sindh

Sindh remains the second most populated province with 47.886 million people, which is 23% of the total population.

Sindh's population has grown by 57.3% or 17.44 million during the past 19 years, but its overall share in the national population remains stagnant.

Sindh's annual growth rate remained 2.41% – slightly above the national average. Sindh's urban population has increased to 52% as compared to 48.9% in 1998.

There are 48% or 22.96 million women in Sindh – which is 1% up when compared with 1998 results.

CCI meeting delayed for a second time

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

K-P's population stands at 30.523 million – which is 14.69% of the total population as against 13.4% in 1998.

Its population has grown by 12.78 million or 72% – the second maximum increase. The annual growth rate in K-P stands at 2.89% – the third highest among all the federating units and above the national average.

The urban population in K-P has slightly increased to 17.67% of the provincial population. There were 15.05 million women in the province – 49.3% of the provincial population.

Balochistan

Balochistan's population stands at 12.344 million or 5.94% of the total population, according to the 2017 census.

During the past 19 years, its population has grown by 5.8 million or 88% – the maximum increase in the population of any federating unit in terms of percentage.

Its share was only 4.96% as per the 1998 census.

The province's annual growth rate remained 3.37% – the highest after the Islamabad territory and far above the national average. The urban population in Balochistan is 27.54% – significantly better than 23.3% of 1998.

There are 5.86 million women in Balochistan – 47.5% of the unit's total population.

ICT

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) population stands at 2.0 million, which is 1.2 million higher than the 1998 census. In percentage terms, it has grown by 149%.

Islamabad has the highest annual growth rate of 4.91%, which is more than double of the national average. The share of urban population in Islamabad has significantly declined from 65% to 50.57%. There are about one million or 47.2% women in the capital territory.

FATA

The population of the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas stands at 5.1 million. There has been a 1.8 million increase in the population of the autonomous region, registering 57% increase.

The annual growth rate in FATA remained 2.41%, equal to the national average. The urban population is only 2.83% while 49% are women.

(By Shahbaz Rana The Express Tribune 01, 26/08/2017)

Census results raise questions

AFTER a prolonged delay, the census exercise is finally over and the first provisional results have popped a number of surprises. The population growth rate has actually increased by 30pc since the 1998 census, and the implications are truly alarming. The country's total population now stands at more than 200m; with a growth rate of 2.4pc it will double again in less than 30 years if the growth rate continues unabated. This flies in the face of repeated assertions that the growth rate has been reduced to 1.89pc as stated in successive Economic Survey documents. "Increasing population growth raises the dependency ratio and puts pressure on education, health system and food supply", the last Survey noted after announcing that the total population was 199m.

But now, the figure of 207.77m for the total population means the population growth rate has been far higher than what the authorities estimated and used as the basis for their population welfare programmes and to plan service delivery. The figure is staggering, and is an even larger challenge — almost at the level of an emergency — for our policymakers as the country's ability to feed, house, clothe and provide opportunities for this enormous mass of humanity simply cannot keep pace with the increase. Since the last 1998 census, it was assumed that the population growth rate had come down to 1.8pc — a figure that was heralded at the time as a huge success. That assumption now stands reversed, presenting the authorities with a hard task in making family planning policies, and aiming for a sharp decline in infant mortality rates. Above all, it means the Rs8bn that the government has been allocating for population welfare programmes in recent years will need to be increased dramatically, and the design and delivery of the programmes themselves strengthened, if the emergency is not to swamp us in the foreseeable future.

Beyond the aggregate numbers, the details given in the provisional data bring further surprises, leading some to allege 'number fudging' at this early stage. Whereas the reflex to attack the credibility of the data needs to be resisted at this point, it is critical that the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics move quickly to make the full, disaggregated data available to independent researchers. The surprises are there in many indicators. For example, Punjab's population share has fallen sharply, that of Sindh has risen

marginally, while KP and Balochistan have surged, rising by 1.3pc and 0.9pc respectively. These are enormous increases, and they defy research that has shown fertility and birth rates coming down across the country in the 19 years since the last census. They also beg the question of where this additional population has come from since both provinces, KP in particular, have seen large out-migration in these years. Have the fertility rates been much higher than originally thought, or has in-migration been even higher? Even the urban-rural proportions beg an explanation. The last census changed the definition of an urban area to mean those areas presided over by municipal or metropolitan corporations, which resulted in large swathes of peri-urban settlements around cities falling outside the definition of urban. That census famously underestimated the urban population of the country, leading to massive distortions in all those policies that rely on this distinction, from property taxation regimes to planning for urban service delivery, as well as allocations from the centre for rural-based industries.

It is not known what definition of an urban area the latest census has used, but if the last definition hasn't been changed, then once more large swathes of urban populations have not been counted as such. The provisional estimate for Karachi's population, which reportedly has come in at 16.5m, is far too low to be credible, considering it would take a growth rate lower than the national one to keep the total population figure at this level in 2017. Either Karachi has seen drastic reductions in fertility rates or in-migration has fallen since 1998 — both beggar belief. The PBS ought to make it a priority to release the disaggregated data so the more granular details of the result can be tested against the prevailing research. Until that happens, no policy decisions should be based on the census data, while attacks on its integrity should also be resisted.

(Dawn, 08, 27/08/2017)

All set for launch of Rs10bn video surveillance project today

The Sindh government is going to formally launch a "video surveillance project" with 10,000 high-definition cameras to be installed at 2,000 spots in the city at an initial cost of Rs10 billion, replacing the existing system being run by police, officials said on Sunday.

The project will formally kick off on Monday when the SI Global — a private technology organisation — begins its work as a "consultant" to the provincial authorities advising them on how to make the system effective and lasting. The consultant had been tasked to complete this job within three months after which the execution phase would be initiated, the officials explained.

"The Supreme Court had ordered the provincial authorities to develop an effective video surveillance system in the city when it had been informed that footage obtained through the existing system had failed to help police in identifying suspects," said an official privy to the project's details.

Envisaged by former Karachi nazim Syed Mustafa Kamal, the then city government had formally launched its Command and Control System for the surveillance of two signal-free corridors — Sharea Faisal to SITE and Surjani Town — in June 2008.

The new system will become part of Safe City project

Later, the Sindh police, too, launched a separate video surveillance system for Karachi in 2010 with an initial estimated cost of Rs500 million. In 2013, the police took control of the local government's Command and Control Centre. Currently, the Sindh police operate nearly 2,000 CCTV cameras across the city.

However, quality of the system always remained under question and finally the provincial authorities have moved to improve the technology, replacing the existing two-megapixel cameras with the high-definition ones.

The SI Global would complete its consultancy job by the year end after which, the official said, the Sindh government would go for acquisition and installation phase. "The cameras will be installed initially at 2,000 key locations of Karachi," said the official. "These 2,000 locations have been selected after feedback from intelligence agencies, Karachi police and special units of the Sindh police like Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and Special Investigation Unit (SIU)."

The official expressed the hope that the project would be completed before the end of the current financial year. Once the project was completed, the video surveillance system for Karachi would become part of the Safe City project, he added.

"The objective of Safe City project is to build public safety by improving the Sindh government efficiency pertaining to emergency response, command and dispatching, strengthening the ability of risk control, emergency management, and making it capable of dealing with all kinds of social security events and sudden emergencies, such as crimes, traffic accidents, street criminal activities, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and so on," said the official while explaining the concept of Safe City project.

"To ensure public safety, government and municipal agencies require the most advanced security solutions. The Safe City project actually is a concept to develop a technology-based integrated solutions for all civic, law-enforcement and investigation agencies so that they can proactively assess, investigate and manage high-risk situations. It will also assist them for on-foot investigations and criminal pursuits, collection of evidence for crime scene and in counter-terrorist operations."

(By Imran Ayub, Dawn, 15, 28/08/2017)

Sindh's six divisions see fractional change in population

The concentration of population in six administrative divisions of Sindh fractionally changed during the past 19 years, with Karachi Division's population increasing to 16.05 million or slightly over one-third of the province's total population.



Any change in the population concentration patterns influences delimitation of seats for the National Assembly and the provincial assembly.

Out of the 16.05 million Karachi Division's population, Karachi city's population was 14.91 million or 92.9% of the division's total inhabitants.

Karachi remains the most populated division of the province, followed by Hyderabad, Larkana, Sukkur, Shaheed Benazirabad and Mirpurkhas Division.

However, the percentage of people living in three divisions –Hyderabad, Larkana and Shaheed Benazirabad – slightly decreased during the past 19 years, showed the 6th Population and Housing Census results of the Sindh province.

The percentage of people living in Karachi Division increased 1.23% to 33.6% of the total population of the Sindh province.

Similarly, Sukkur Division's population inched up by 0.26% to 11.56%. Mirpur Khas Division's population also slightly went up by 0.3% to 8.8% of the total provincial population.

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics presented the provisional results of the 6th population census in the meeting of the Council of Common Interests on Friday. The final results are expected to be available by April next year.

6th census findings: 207 million and counting

According to the provisional results, Sindh was the most urbanised federating unit of Pakistan where the majority of people – 24.9 million or 52% – live in urban areas.

Sindh's total population is estimated at 47.88 million, which is 17.5 million or 57.3% higher than the 1998 census results. The province had an average 2.41% annual growth rate, which is slightly above the national average.

Overall, Sindh's share in total population of Pakistan remained unchanged at 23%.

Karachi Division

Karachi Division's total population has been recorded at 16.051 million – higher by 6.195 million people or 62.85%, according to the provisional results.

Out of this, the Karachi city's population was 14.91 million. Compared with the 1998 census results when 95.9% people used to live in urban areas, now 92.9% people are living in the metropolitan city.

The maximum concentration of Karachi Division's population was in Karachi's District West where 3.9 million lived, according to 2017 results. The district's population grew by 87.4% or 1.825 million people during the past 19 years.

The Malir District witnessed the highest increase in Karachi Division, as the district's population increased by 105.7% or 1.03 million to 2.1 million inhabitants.

The District Central's population increased by 30.4% to 2.97 million. District East's population increased by 97.5% or 1.435 million during the past 19 years to 2.9 million people.

Similarly, District South population was 1.791 million – higher by 21.2% or 313,000 persons.

Korangi District population was 2.45 million people, which was 896,000 people or 57.4% higher than the 1998 results.

Hyderabad Division

Hyderabad Division that comprises nine districts has a population of 10.592 million, up by 3.76 million or 55.1% during the past 19 years. The division hosts 22.12% of the Sindh province's total population.

The maximum concentration of division's population was in Hyderabad District where 2.2 million people live. Hyderabad district population grew by 47% or 704,000 people during the past 19 years.

The Badin District's population grew to 1.8 million – higher by 63% or 698,000 individuals. Dadu district population stood at 1.55 million – up by 40% or 444,000 individuals.

Jamshoro District witnessed the highest increase among all districts in Sindh – 70.6% – and its population stood at 993,142 individuals.

Matiari district population increased to 769,349 with a 55.7% increase. Sujawal district population increased to 781,967 with 52% increase during the past 19 years. Tando Allahyar district population stood at 836,887 individuals and the district registered 69.6% increase.

Karachi up top, but not by much

Tando Mohammad Khan district population stood at 677,228 –registering 54.6% increase during the past 19 years. Thatta district population stood at 979,817 with 63.5% increase. The net addition in the district population was 380,000 people.

Larkana Division

The Larkana Division population – comprising five districts – increased to 6.192 million people. There was an addition of 1.98 million with an increase of 47%. The division hosts 12.93% of the province's population – a reduction of 0.87% in past 19 years.

The maximum number of people lives in Larkana district where 1.524 million people reside. There was net addition of 522,000 people, which is 34.3% higher.

Jacobabad district population increased to 1.006 million, with a net addition of 279,000 people, which is 38.4% higher. Kashmir district's population was 1.089 million and the district witnessed an addition of 412,000 people, which was 60.8% higher than 19 years ago.

Kambar Shahdad Kot district's population was 1.34 million people, which was higher by 417,000 people or 45.1%. Shikarpur district's population was 1.231 million and there was a net addition of 351,000 people in 19 years. The population was higher by 39.3%.

Sukkur Division

Sukkur Division – comprising three districts – has a population of 5.538 million, which was higher by 2.09 million or 60.6%. The division hosts 11.56% of the province's population – up by 0.26% over 1998 results.

Ghotkhi District registered the highest increase of 70%, as its population increased to 1.646 million. There was a net addition of 677,000 people in 19 years.

The Khairpur District population was 2.4 million – the maximum in the division – and it was up by 55.3% or 856,000 individuals. The Sukkur District population was 1.487 million, which was higher by 59.8% or 556,000 individuals.

Mirpurkhas Division

The Mirpurkhas Division comprising three districts has 4.228 million people – higher by 1.69 million or 63%. The division has 8.8% of the province's population.

Mirpurkhas district population was 1.5 million, which was higher by 499,000 or 49.6%. Tharparkar district has the maximum population of 1.649 million, which increased by 80% or 735,000 people during the past 19 years. The Umarkot district population was 1.07 million – up by 409,000 individuals or 61.6%.

Shaheed Benazirabad Division

Shaheed Benazirabad Division also comprises three districts and hosts 11.03% of the province's population. It was half a percentage point less than 19 years ago.

The division's population stood at 5.28 million that increased by 50.4% or 1.77 million people.

Sanghar district is host to 2.05 million people, which increased by 738,000 or 56%. Naushahro Feroze district's population was 1.61 million, which was higher by 525,000 people or 48.2%. The Shaheed Benazirabad district population was 1.6 million. It increased by 46% or 510,000 people.

(By Shahbaz Rana The Express Tribune 03, 28/08/2017)

20pc of Pakistanis live in 10 cities, census reveals

The population in the country's 10 largest cities has grown by 71 per cent over the past 19 years, and currently stands at 41 million, as compared to the 24 million who lived there in 1998.

The population of these cities accounts for 20pc of the country's population, according to provisional census figures released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics on Monday.

With 14.9m people, Karachi retained the title of the most populated city, registering an increase of over 57pc from the 9.4m people that lived there in 1998.

Lahore comes in at a close second, with 11.13m residents in 2017 — a more than 75pc increase from the 6.3m figure from 1998. Faisalabad moves into third place after Karachi, Lahore; populations of Peshawar, Islamabad doubled over past 19 years. The industrial town of Faisalabad emerged as the third most populous urban centre in the country, with a population of around 3.2m. This is nearly a 60pc increase from the just over 2m people that lived there in 1998.

Rawalpindi, the garrison city, ranks fourth in the top ten with 2.1m residents in 2017, compared to 1.4m in 1998, registering an increase of around 60pc.

Gujranwala emerged as the fifth most populated city in the country, housing 2.03m people as opposed to 1.1m in 1998. The population of Peshawar, the largest city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, doubled over the past 19 years, reaching nearly 2m in 2017.

Multan, the fifth largest city in Punjab and the only major urban centre in south Punjab, currently houses 1.9m people, compared to the 1.2m who lived there in 1998.

Hyderabad, the second major metropolis in Sindh, housed 1.7m people, an increase of over 48pc from the previous census, which was 1.2m in 1998

The capital city, Islamabad, occupies the penultimate spot in the top ten, with a population of just over 1m people, nearly double from the 529,180 people who lived here in 1998.

The population of Quetta, the only major metropolis in Balochistan, registered a population increase of 77pc, going from 565,137 residents in 1998 to just over 1m in 2017.

Balochistan

The sparsely-populated province of Balochistan, with its sprawling administrative divisions, saw the population of Quetta division — which includes Chagai, Pishin, Nushki and Killa Abdullah districts as well — emerged as the most populous division with 4.1m residents as against 1.7m, showing an increase of 144pc.

Kalat, which includes Mustung, Awaran, Kharan, Khuzdar and Lasbela, was the second most populated division in the province with a population of 2.5m as against 1.4m in 1998, showing an increase of 73.8pc.

The population of Nasirabad division rose from 988,109 to 1.60m; Makran division from 832,753 to 1.5m; Zhob division from 956,443 to 1.5m; while the population of Sibi division more than doubled from 630,901 in 1998 to just over 1m.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

In KP, the Malakand division — which contains Buner, Chitral, Shangla, Swat, lower and upper Dir — emerged as the most populous division, witnessing a 76.3pc increase from 4.3m to 7.5m.

Peshawar division was a close second, with its 7.4m against 3.9m in 2008, showing an increase of 88.7pc.

Hazara, which includes Manshera, Battagram, Abbotabad, Kohistan and Haripur, has a population of 5.3m, a 52pc increase from the 3.5m in 1998.

Mardan division has a population of nearly 4m, up nearly 61pc from the 2.5m in 1998; Kohat division rose from 1.3m to 2.2m people; the Bannu population swelled to just over 2m from 1.1m in 1998; while in Dera Ismail Khan, the population was declared to be 2m in 2017, against 1.1m in the previous census.

Sindh

The sprawling Karachi division, with its six districts, registered a total population of over 16m, a 63pc rise from the nearly 10m people that lived there in 1998.

The second biggest concentration of population was in Hyderabad division, which housed 10.6m in 2017 as against 6.8m in 1998, an increase of 47pc.

Larkana's population rose from 4.2m to 6.2m; Sukkur division expanded from 3.4m to 5.5m; Shaheed Benazirabad division (formerly Nawabshah) went from 3.5m to 5.3m; while Mirpurkhas went from 2.6m to 4.2m in 19 years.

Punjab

Unsurprisingly, Lahore division emerged as the most populous in the country's largest province, with 19.4m people living in its four districts in 2017, a growth of 61pc from the 12m recorded in 1998.

Gujranwala division, which includes Gujrat, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Narowal and Sialkot, has a population of 16m, 41pc increase from the 11.4m in 1998.

Faisalabad division, meanwhile, has a population of 14m, a 43pc increase from the 9.9m people who lived in Faisalabad, Jhang, Chiniot and Toba Tek Singh in 1998.

In south Punjab, Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan divisions registered growth of 45pc, 50pc and 69pc, respectively. Multan's population stood at 12.3m in 2017 against 8.4m in 1998; Bahawalpur had 11.5m people as against 7.6m; while DG Khan's population rose from 6.5m to 11m in 19 years.

Rawalpindi division saw 50pc growth from 6.7m to 10m; Sargodha went from 5.7m to 8.2m; while Sahiwal was the lowest populated division, with just 7.4m in 2017, up from 5.4m in 1998.

(By Mubarak Zeb Khan, Dawn, 01, 29/08/2017)

Sindh govt rejects census results as a 'conspiracy' against province

The Sindh government has rejected the initial results of the recently held population census saying that showing a lesser population [than projected] in the province is a "conspiracy" by the federal government against Sindh. It has decided to call a multiparty conference to consider issues emerging from the census results. It said Sindh in no circumstances would give up its due share and would not allow the federation to commit injustice to it.

The views of the Sindh government were announced by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Nisar Ahmad Khuhro in his policy statement on Monday. Elaborating the decision of the Sindh government, Mr Khuhro said that showing a reduced population of

Sindh was a calculated move of the federal government, which had conspired against Sindh to deprive it of its increased share in the divisible pool on the basis of the census in the National Finance Commission Award.

According to the initial results made public officially, the total population in Sindh reached 47,886,051 in 2017 from 30,439,893 in 1998, showing a yearly population growth rate of 2.41 per cent while the rural population reached 22,975,593 in 2017 from 14,744,436 in 1998, showing a growth rate of 2.36pc. Similarly the total urban population is 24,910,458 in 2017 against 15,695,457 in 1998, showing a population growth rate of 2.46pc.

PPP plans to convene a conference after consulting other parties

Mr Khuhro, who is the senior minister in the Sindh cabinet, issued this statement as the first official reaction of the government to the initial results of the recently conducted census as Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has gone to Saudi Arabia to perform Haj.

He recalled that the Sindh government had expressed its apprehension during the time the census was being conducted but the federal government failed to remove its apprehensions. And now showing a reduced population in its initial results had proved that all apprehensions of Sindh were true, he added.

The senior minister said that in view of its apprehensions the Sindh government had demanded that during the house enumeration every person present in the house be provided a photocopy of the data form so that no one was left uncounted, but the federal government did not pay any heed to Sindh's demand and kept the results of the census secret for a long time, which amounted to a conspiracy by the federal government against the province.

He said the Sindh government had decided to call a multiparty conference soon on issues emanating from the outcome of the census after contacting all political parties. "Sindh would not give up its rights in any circumstances and get its due share. Sindh will not allow the federation to commit excesses with the province."

(By Habib Khan Ghori, 17, 29/08/2017)

Karachis rural population increases by over 275pc in census

While the urban population of Karachi division comprising six districts has increased by over 63 per cent since the previous census conducted in the country 19 years ago, a surge of over 275pc was recorded in the rural population of the division during the corresponding period.

In the 1998 census, the total population of Karachi division was 9.856 million — 9.44m urban population and 407,510 rural population.

However, according to the provisional results of the 2017 census, the total population of Karachi division is 16.051m with 1.14m rural population — about triple that of 1998's figures — and 14.91m urban population.

The provisional results suggested that the rural population increased with an average annual growth rate of 5.56 per cent.

The gender-wise break-up of Karachi's total population is 8.439m male, 7.610m female and 1,497 transgender. Of the 1.14m rural population, there are 606,588 males, 534,499 females and 82 transgenders. The urban population comprises of 7.83m males, 7.07m females and 1,415 transgenders.

Four of the six Karachi districts do not have any rural population/area. The total rural population is concentrated in Karachi's West and Malir districts.

According to the district-wise data for Karachi division, population of Central district (all urban) is 2.971m compared to 2.277m in the 1998 census. The population increased with an average growth rate of 1.41pc.

The population of Karachi East (all urban) has almost doubled in the last 19 years as it was 1.472m in 1998 and now it stood at 2.907m with an average growth rate of 3.64pc.

Karachi South's population (all urban) in the current census is 1.791m compared to 1.478m in 1998. The annual growth rate is 1.02pc — lowest in any of Sindh's districts.

Korangi's population (also all urban) is 2.457m compared to 1.561m in 1998 with an average annual growth rate of 2.41pc.

The West district of Karachi division has a total of 3.914m people compared to 2.089m in the 1998 census. The average annual growth rate is 3.35pc. The rural population in the district in 2017 increased with the annual growth rate of 7.34pc to reach 283,247 (73,568 in the previous census). The urban population increased with the growth rate of 3.14pc to 3.631m (2.015m in 1998).

The total population in Malir district is 2.008m in 2017 (more than double than of 1998, which was 976,193). It increases with an average annual growth rate of 3.86pc. However, the rural population in the district increased to 857,922 from 333,942 in 1998 with 5.08pc annual growth. The urban population increased to 1.150m compared to 642,251 with an annual growth rate of 3.11pc.

Hyderabad division

Besides Karachi division, there are five more divisions in Sindh and Hyderabad came as the second most populated division after Karachi.

The total population of Hyderabad division that comprises nine districts — Badin, Dadu, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Matiari, Sujawal, Tando Allahyar, Tando Mohammad Khan and Thatta — in the 2017 census is 10.592m compared to 6.829m in 1998. The average annual growth rate is 2.33pc.

The total population of Hyderabad district is 2.199m — 366,708 rural and 1.832m urban — compared to 1.494m in the previous census. The average growth rate in the district is 2.05pc.

Badin district's population is 1.804m — 1.414m rural and 390,378 urban — compared to 1.106m in 1998. The average growth rate in the district is 2.60pc.

The population of Dadu district is 1.550m — 1.167m rural and 383,169 urban — compared to 1.106m in the previous census. The average growth rate in the district is 1.79pc.

Jamshoro's population in 2017 increased to 993,142 — 558,955 rural and 434,187 urban — from 582,094 with an average growth rate of 2.85pc.

The population of Matiari district is 769,349 — 586,759 rural and 182,590 urban — compared to 494,244 in the last census. The average growth rate in the district is 2.35pc.

Sujawal's population is 781,967 — 696,262 rural and 85,705 urban — compared to 513,702 in the last census. The average growth rate in the district is 2.23pc.

The population of Tando Allahyar increased to 836,887 — 575,094 rural and 261,793 urban — compared to 493,526 in 1998 with an average annual growth rate of 2.81pc.

Tando Mohammad Khan's population is 677,228 including 535,178 rural and 142,050 urban. It is the smallest district in terms of population in Sindh.

The population of Thatta district is 979,817 — 803,759 rural and 176,058 urban — compared to 599,492 in the previous census. The average growth rate in the district is 2.61pc.

Sukkur division

The total population of Sukkur division that comprises three districts — Sukkur, Ghotki and Khairpur — in the 2017 census is 5.538m compared to 3.447m in 1998. The average annual growth rate is 2.52pc.

Sukkur district's total population is 1.487m — 767,788 rural and 720,115 urban — compared to 931,387 in the 1998 census. The average growth rate in the district is 2.49pc.

The population of Ghotki district is 1.646m — 1.242m rural and 403,538 urban — compared to 968,797 in the previous census. The average growth rate in the district is 2.82pc.

Khairpur's total population is 2.404m — 1.628m rural and 775.850 urban — compared to 1.547m in 1998. The average growth rate in the district is 2.34pc.

Larkana division

The total population of Larkana division that comprises five districts — Jacobabad, Kashmore, Qambar Shahdadkot, Larkana and Shikarpur — in the 2017 census is 6.192m compared to 4.210m in 1998. The average annual growth rate is 2.05pc.

The population of Jacobabad district is 1.006m — 709,170 rural and 297,127 urban — compared to 727,190 in the last census. The average growth rate in the district is 1.72pc.

Kashmore's total population is 1.089m — 835,556 rural and 253,613 urban — compared to 677,120 in 1998. The average growth rate in the district is 2.53pc.

Qambar-Shahdadkot's population is 1.341m — 943,478 rural and 397,564 urban — compared to 727,190 in the previous census. The average growth rate in the district is 1.97pc.

The population of Larkana district is 1.524m — 822,754 rural and 701,637 urban — compared to 1.001m in the 1998 census. The average growth rate is 2.23pc.

Shikarpur district's population is 1.231m — 928,232 rural and 303,249 urban — compared to 880,438 in the last census. The average growth rate is 1.78pc.

Mirpurkhas division

The total population of Mirpurkhas division that comprises three districts — Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar and Umerkot — in the 2017 census is 4.228m compared to 2.585m in 1998. The average annual growth rate is 2.62pc.

Mirpurkhas district's population is 1.505m — 1.080m rural and 425,752 urban — compared to 1.006m in the last census. The average growth rate is 2.14pc.

The population of Tharparkar district is 1.649m — 1.517m rural and 132,071 urban — compared to 914,291 in the last census. The average growth rate is 3.15pc. Umerkot's population is 1.073m — 829,785 rural and 243,361 urban — compared to 664,797 in 1998. The average growth rate in the district is 2.55pc.

Shaheed Benazirabad division

The total population of Shaheed Benazirabad division that comprises three districts — Sanghar, Naushahro Feroze and Shaheed Benazirabad — in the 2017 census is 5.282m compared to 3.510m in 1998. The average annual growth rate is 2.17pc.

The population of Sanghar district is 2.057m — 1.468m rural and 588,405 urban — compared to 1.319m in the last census. The average growth rate is 2.36pc.

Naushahro Feroze's population is 1.612m — 1.232m rural and 379,802 urban — compared to 1.087m in the last census. The average growth rate is 2.09pc.

The population of Shaheed Benazirabad district is 1.612m — 1.123m rural and 489,337 urban — compared to 1.102m in the last census. The average growth rate is 2.02pc.

(By Azfar-ul-Ashaque, Dawn, 19, 30/08/2017)

Census realities

WITH Pakistan's population at 207.8 million and an annual growth rate of 2.4 per cent, alarm bells must be ringing for policymakers. A key issue is how census managers have handled Pakistan's urban question, its impact on basic services management and urban planning to adapt to the effects of climate change. Numerous studies show that temperatures in South Asia will exceed habitable levels by the end of this century. Disruptions in agricultural outputs and economies will trigger deepening vulnerabilities at every level, from the individual to the country.

Climate change is already palpable in Sindh's cities: coastal storm surges, rising sea levels, hotter summers, unprecedented floods and unpredictable precipitation. Pakistan's expanding urban ecological footprint is most visible at the rural-urban interface where we find spaces of intense marginalisation, and exacerbated by decades of poor planning, incompetent engineering and avaricious development — compromising local ecologies that could withstand the shock of natural disasters.

The provisional census results show urbanisation at 36.4pc. The 1998 census determined urbanisation at 32.5pc, a figure that drew censure from various groups, with critics arguing that the conventional definition of 'urban' (confined to notified municipal limits) was inadequate for understanding the ground realities of rapid urbanisation.

Conventional census methodology does not consider the extensive transformation along the peripheries of large- and medium-sized cities, clustered urban locations along diverse types of mobilities and water bodies, enterprise-based urban locations around major industries and other establishments.

The definition of 'urban' needs to be revisited.

Indubitably, debates will continue as the statistics bureau discloses the conclusive results in April 2018. Political parties, community groups and civil society, including demographers have all voiced concerns about the partial results.

Misgivings stem from concerns about the handling and compilation of data in Islamabad rather than at the provincial level as was previously done. Additionally, dynamics like displacements and migrations from KP to large cities (especially Karachi), in-migrations to urban Sindh, horizontal population movement and consequent densification of cities have hardly surfaced in the partial results. When Sindh's growth rate is less than that of Balochistan and KP, it raises concerns about how the census was undertaken. If Sindh's urbanisation levels are deliberately understated, it will have grave, long-term consequences for planning and governance to mitigate climate change.

High population growth in our cities has generated many challenges that the state has never addressed, particularly the need for social housing. Instead, with state land abundant in several cities, katchi abadis proliferate. But the 'guardians' of agrarian land in peri-urban locations have also contributed to the expansion of informal settlements, real-estate developments and gated communities. Urban land, once considered a social asset, is now a commodity. Affordable housing has vanished — exacerbated by burgeoning land prices, high construction costs, low savings/capital accumulation among disadvantaged groups and lack of housing credit.

As in-migration to Karachi grows, migrants find shelter in katchi abadis that act as shock absorbers, mitigating certain kinds of risks for low-income groups. But this is hardly a solution. Uneven settlements, fragmented infrastructures, and environmental and social hazards constantly endanger lives in katchi abadis.

The census is more than an exercise in counting and recording basic information about everyone in Pakistan. It is also the first step in assessing the social, demographic and economic status of populations and the contexts they inhabit — which has a bearing on poverty, development, resources, budgets, constituencies, etc.

It also assesses the impact of past public investments in health, education, welfare and infrastructure. Hence, the census paves the way for various policy interventions. But this does not remove a key problem: just because you have sampled and measured

populations doesn't mean you can manage them. Nevertheless, numbers and calculations are important in policy agendas, and census methodologies underwrite concrete policy outcomes.

The definition of 'urban' and urbanisation parameters need to be revisited to enable policy decisions grounded in reality. In the coming decades, resource allocations, development programmes and infrastructural preferences will shape Pakistan's future. That this future is embedded in a new global urbanisation conjuncture, and associated anthropogenic effects, necessitates recasting census methodologies to better equip us with data reflecting ground realities. .

(By Nausheen H. Anwar | Dr Noman Ahmed, Dawn, 09, 13/09/2017)

Karachi's population — fiction and reality

Many thought that Karachi's population had surpassed 20 million by now. But census results showed that it is actually a little less than 15 million. This discovery has not resonated well with many political parties, which have claimed severe under-reporting. Their counter estimates range from 22 million to 30 million. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has of course denied any wrongdoing. But there is a need to take an objective look at these allegations vis-à-vis available data and form an objective opinion.



Karachi's urban population stood at 5.2 million in 1981. It then grew at an average growth rate of 3.49%, reaching 9.3 million by 1998. Since then, however, the growth slowed down to 2.49%, as per recent census results, with the population now reaching 14.9 million. Interestingly, even if Karachi's population had grown at the same rate, as was witnessed between 1981 and 1998, it would have still reached close to 18 million, way below what political parties are claiming. Moreover, in 2013, the total number of registered voters in Karachi division was 7.1 million –which represents 44% of the present population. The percentage in Lahore is not very different, with 4.4 million voters representing 40% of the city's population.

Half of Karachi's houses not counted in first phase of census

Let's also look at the population growth rates that would be required to reach some of the claimed population estimates. For instance, for Karachi to have 30 million people, it should have grown at an average growth rate of 6.33%, which is quite unrealistic. Just to put things in perspective, this number is so absurd that if Karachi actually had three million people and continued to grow at this rate, its population would be way more than the rest of Pakistan in the next 50 years. Moreover, these counter estimates mean that about 2-3 citizens out of every 6 were not counted. This does not seem to hold ground.

But even for Karachi to have a population of 22 million, this growth rate should have been 4.6%, significantly higher than that of Lahore. Those who had observed both cities grow over the last two decades know very well that the pace of change in Lahore's infrastructure has been much more than that of Karachi.

” Just to put things in perspective, this number is so absurd that if Karachi actually had three million people and continued to grow at this rate, its population would be way more than the rest of Pakistan in the next 50 years

Why would someone under-report Karachi's population? Deliberately categorising the urban population as 'rural' can ensure a better share for rural Sindh in employment quotas. The rural population of Karachi division, however, stands at merely 1.1 million, spread across parts of Karachi West and Malir districts. Even if we consider all of it urban, it wouldn't still make a sizeable difference to Karachi's reported population, and would merely increase it to 16 million. Moreover, the demarcation of rural and urban areas falls under the purview of the provincial government and not the PBS.

Another potential reason for under-reporting could be to make a dent in the overall population of Sindh to lessen its provincial share in federal resources and National Assembly seats. Interestingly, when compared to the last census, Sindh is the only province that has retained its share of 23% in the national population. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have gained a share, while Punjab is the only one that has lost its share from 56% to 53%. In an earlier article, I explained that this could result in the loss of 8+ seats for Punjab in the National Assembly. It is clear that Punjab is at the losing end here, not Sindh.

The third reason could be a methodological error. Such an unintentional error, however, would lead to erroneous results across the board and not just one city.

Yet another issue is of a large base and Karachi's demographics. Considering the education and income level of Karachi residents, it can be safely assumed that Karachi's birth rate should be way below the national average. Overestimates about Karachi's population are based on the notion of urbanisation, with people from other cities migrating to Karachi. These migrants, however, would translate into a smaller growth figure, considering that Karachi already had close to 10 million people in 1998. Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests some out-migration from Karachi as well during the last two decades. Besides, we must take into

account the huge inflow of people who commute to Karachi every day to earn their livelihoods. This should also be a significant chunk.

Why is it hard to believe that Karachi's population growth has slowed down? Isn't it intuitive that law and order challenges, poor civic services as compared to other major Pakistani metropolises and lack of infrastructure investments have made Karachi a less attractive destination?

'Over 10 million Karachiites missing in census': MQM-P, PSP reject results

While one can't be certain that there was no under-reporting or error in Karachi's population, the data definitely shows that the scale of such an irregularity can't be anywhere close to what is being claimed. Even at the present level, it shows tremendous growth over the last two decades. We should now accept this fact and move on. However, there is a need to look at any changes in Karachi's demarcated boundaries as well as its exceptionally low growth rate of 1-1.4% of Karachi Central and Karachi South districts, which were responsible for bringing down the city's population. Moreover, there is also a need to rectify the issues with present urban-rural classification and move towards a more realistic delimitation of urban areas.

(By Hasaan Khawar, The Express Tribune, 07, 14/09/2017)

AIIB ready to fund S-III, Malir expressway projects

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has expressed its willingness to provide funds for four mega projects in Sindh to be completed with an estimated cost of Rs137.7 billion.

The four projects are construction of the Karachi Expressway/Ring Road, Greater Karachi Sewage Treatment Project, commonly known as S-III, lining of KB Feeder and construction of the Kandhkot-Ghouspur bridge on the Indus River.

A delegation of the AIIB led by Vice President D.J. Pandian met Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at the CM House on Wednesday.

The chief minister was assisted by ministers Hazar Khan Bijarani, Syed Nasir Shah, chief secretary Rizwan Memon and other senior officials.

Referring to the S-III project, the chief minister said that 500 million gallons a day (MDG) of sewage was generated in Karachi and was being directly disposed of into the sea without any treatment. "This is a very serious issue and I want to resolve it any cost," he said.

Recalling the details, Planning and Development chairman Mohammad Waseem said that work on Rs36.117bn project was in progress as the provincial government was investing Rs7.982bn from its resources to enhance the capacity of three treatment plants and to construct a new treatment plant of 200 MGD.

Lining of KB Feeder and construction of Kandhkot-Ghouspur bridge also on the cards

He said that as per the national environmental quality standards (NEQS) requirement, industrial units were required to undertake pre-treatment of industrial effluent before discharging it into municipal sewerage system.

Presently, 94 MGD industrial effluent was generated from five industrial estates of Karachi and disposed of directly into open drains. The CM said that due to escalation of the S-III cost, the provincial government needed Rs28bn to complete the project. "This is the most important project for the city of Karachi which will make our sea free of pollution," he said.

He said that with the establishment of five combined effluent treatment plants, the provincial government would be able to meet WTO requirements for seafood exports and other issues such as protection of natural water bodies from contamination, safeguarding of soil and groundwater and protection of agricultural crops from contamination would also be addressed. About lining of KB Feeder, special secretary irrigation Junaid Memon said that the design discharge capacity of the channel was 9,100 cusecs but due to silt it is only 7,500 cusecs.

Recalling the financial aspects of the KB Feeder project, Mr Waseem said that it would cost Rs20bn.

The CM also discussed the Malir Expressway/Karachi Ring Road project. He said that Karachi had a north-western bypass whereas a mega city like Karachi should have a proper ring road to facilitate traffic, hence there was an urgent need to construct a south-eastern bypass.

He added that the proposed corridor would provide efficient movement of vehicular traffic and goods from the Karachi port to other parts of the country.

He further said that the proposed Ring Road had two major settlements — DHA City and Bahria Town — which were developing at a very fast pace and required an alternative road network to alleviate the sufferings of commuters.

In addition to the two new townships, the Ring Road would also cater to the requirement of the Education City which had been planned to establish prominent educational institutions, he said.

Giving status of the project, Mr Waseem said that an expression of interest for construction of the road on a build-operate-transfer basis was invited by the local government department.

The environment impact assessment was under process and the PC-I was being prepared. An amount of Rs61bn was required for the construction of a 47.2-kilometre-long corridor (three lanes on either side).

Mr Bijarani said that the length of the present route connecting Ghotki-Ghouspur (Kandhkot) was 152km through Sukkur Barrage and 188km through Guddu Barrage. "If a bridge, Ghotki-Kandhkot is constructed, it would connect Indus Highway with National Highway and reduce the distance between the two cities to 127km."

Mr Waseem said the project would cost Rs6.452bn.

The AIIB delegation was also briefed on other projects. However, they expressed their interest in the above-mentioned four projects. The AIIB vice president urged the chief minister to send details, present status of the projects and concept papers to them so that they could present them in their board meeting.

He added that he and his team were satisfied with the four projects and would also support the provincial government to establish a desalination plant to provide drinking water to Karachiites.

(By Habib Khan Ghori, Dawn, 17, 14/09/2017)

Census 2017: How can flawed results have any credibility?

The provisional census results released thus far appear to be marred by major anomalies and statistical errors.

Post-census activities at the dilapidated offices of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in Karachi have gone cold since the completion of the census 'enumeration-phase' in May this year.

Even the guard manning the barrier near the building in Sindhi Muslim Society does not seem to care anymore, as the centre financed by the UNFPA for post-census data-processing of Sindh and Balochistan has been shifted to Islamabad.



Meanwhile, the 'Statistics House' in the capital is a different story.

Even the basement meant for parking has been converted into a makeshift area for data-entry operations, pushing the motorbikes and vehicles belonging to employees of Grade-18 and below onto the road.

But this is a huge basement where, besides the data-entry activities, the census forms returned from 32 million-plus households in the country have been dumped.

Recently, an electrical fire in one of the upper-floor offices sent shivers through the employees as none of the sprinklers or other pieces of fire-fighting equipment worked.

Luckily it was doused before it could get out of control.

"But the basement is devoid of any fire-fighting apparatus, and a fire there would have torched the whole place in minutes", quipped one of the employees present that day.

Unfortunately, a spark of another kind of conflagration may have been lit when PBS announced the provisional results of the Sixth Housing and Population Census on Aug 28.

The total population of the country has been counted at 207,774,520 living in 32,205,111 households.

According to PBS, the total population has increased by 63 per cent over the last 19 years, an annual growth rate of 2.4pc, while the nationwide average household size is still hovering around 6.45 persons.

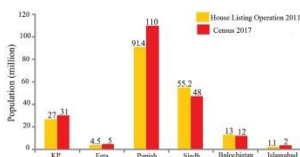
These trends portend disaster for the nation, and need to be addressed on a war footing if we are to avoid being overwhelmed by illiteracy, poverty and disease.

By wasting nine precious years to conduct the sixth decennial census that was due in 2008, the nation may have missed the early warnings of impending disaster.

Intercensal growth rate is important to determine how great a burden would continue to be imposed by the people's need for infrastructure including schools, hospitals, housing, roads, and demand for food, water, electricity and jobs.

However, while rapid population growth of a country can be seen as a threat by its neighbours, under-enumeration within provinces or districts can stoke feelings of exploitation and disaffection.

While the earlier attempt at enumeration in March 2011 was aborted, ostensibly after 'statistical anomalies' were detected during House Listing Operation (HLO), the initial phase of a housing census, the present exercise seems no less flawed, especially where a city like Karachi is concerned.



Population changes between HLO 2011 and Census 2017.

The provisional census results released thus far appear to be marred by major anomalies and statistical errors, and the final results are certain to further polarise the country.

“Some of the inconsistencies in provincial and district results are impossible to explain,” comments a former provincial chief of population census organisation.

“These results will further exacerbate the North-South divide in the country. The issue demands a serious and urgent response from the authorities.”

While both government and opposition parties in Sindh have come out guns blazing, the provisional census results have actually promoted feelings of mistrust between them.

“The rest of the Sindh has gained in numbers at the expense of Karachi and Hyderabad. Why is the PPP crying crocodile tears? While it makes noises back home, the Sindh chief minister signs everything [pertaining to the census-gathering, data-processing procedures and even the provisional results] in Islamabad,” fumes a political activist in Karachi.

Meanwhile some experts in other provinces too have started raising muted voices of dissent, although for other reasons.

Emotions notwithstanding, it is a worthwhile exercise to take a cold, hard look at the announced provisional results.

According to the figures, 75,584,989 people live in 12,192,314 households in the country’s urban areas.

This translates into an average household size of 6.19 persons.

Let us start by examining the released figures for Karachi and Lahore as parallel datasets are readily available for them. These will also serve to demonstrate the anomalies and errors in the current exercise.

KARACHI AND LAHORE: ANOMALIES GALORE

After the 1998 census, Karachi’s population was announced as 9.8 million, of which 9.4m of them lived within 603 square kilometres of ‘urban area’ out of a total area of 3,557 sq km.

In comparison, 6.3m people were then living in an area of 1,772 sq km of Lahore, among them 5.2m within 312 sq km of ‘urban area’.

Just before local government elections in 2015, the Punjab local government department declared all 1,772 sq km of Lahore as ‘urban’.

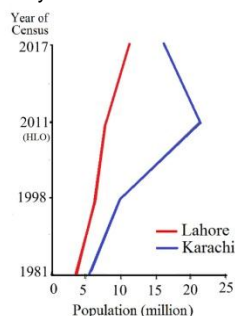
According to some experts, such a move tends to amplify land values for commercial and banking purposes, as urban land can be easily mortgaged etc, although at a punishing cost to agriculture.

For the purposes of the census, however, declaring all of Lahore as ‘urban’ would mean clubbing the rural and urban populations together, but that alone could not have doubled Lahore’s population from 6.3m to 11.1m over the last 19 years.

To solve this riddle, let us first look at the PBS materials designed during the past 10 years for the purpose of training enumerators and surveyors for the sixth decennial census.

According to PBS delimitations notified by the chief statistician Asif Bajwa, the number of households for a census block should range between 200 to 250 households.

Many statisticians and demographers worldwide were therefore using 225 households per census block for calculating the rough population of our cities.



Population (1981 - 2017): Steep increase for Lahore, implausible decrease in Karachi.

If we look at the number of census blocks for Karachi and Lahore that are on the PBS website under Census 2017 ‘Field Staff’ tables, we find 14,494 census blocks for Karachi and 6,585 for Lahore.

Using an average of 225 households per census block and multiplying them by the average urban household size of 6.2 gives us an estimated population of 20,219,130 for Karachi and 9,186,075 for Lahore.

However, if we work backwards from the totals provided by the provisional results, census-2017 has counted 2,770,074 households in Karachi and 1,757,691 for Lahore, which comes to an average of 191 households per census block in Karachi with a household size of 5.78, but a whopping 267 households per census block in Lahore with an average household size of 6.33.

These figures put the households per census block in Karachi at 21pc below national average and in Lahore at 18pc above.

To ensure rectification of precisely such anomalies, PBS had raised a fresh PC-1 in July 2014 demanding an additional Rs296m.

Subsequent releases against the subject PC-1 are listed in Federal PSDP 2016-17 at serial no. 734.

Voters lists updated till June 30, 2017 by the Election Commission of Pakistan also add to the confusion surrounding the provisional census numbers for Lahore, specifically with regard to the percentage of its residents above 18 years, a demographic value that the 1998 census calculated at 54.25pc.

Although PBS has not yet released that figure, Nadra has verified 4,867,613 registered voters (18 years and above) for Lahore. This translates to merely 43.74pc of Lahore's population of 11,126,285 as counted by Census 2017.

An epitome of urbanisation in the country, Lahore's quality of life should have improved during the last 19 years, resulting in higher life expectancy.

The census should thus have uncovered a gradually ageing population and a smaller household size, which instead has grown to 6.33 — higher than the national average of 6.19.

Explore: Karachi needs revenues of the size of a country, not of a municipality

ILLEGAL ALIENS IN KARACHI

Let us turn to Karachi in more detail.

One of the reasons that its total population as revealed by the census seems so preposterously low is because unlike Lahore, it has long hosted a large number of illegal aliens and internally displaced people.

They have flocked to settlements such as Bengali para, Arakanabad, Afghan Khaima Basti, Mohala Rahimyar Khan, Janaat Gul Town, Kati Pahari, Mohammad Khan Colony, Mianwali Colony or Landi Kotal colony.

Such localities do not exist in Lahore, nor do half its residents live in katchi abadis — considered 'no-go' areas by the police and law-enforcement agencies — as they do in Karachi.

A 2002 study by the Special Branch of police assessed that there were over two million illegal aliens in the jurisdiction of the city's 105 police stations.

Most of these aliens have come from Bengal, Burma (Rohingyas), Sri Lanka, Iran and Afghanistan. (This took place before the US-led Nato forces entered Afghanistan, which led to an exodus of Afghans into Pakistan, especially Karachi.)

According to a 2006 survey carried out by the Pak Muslim Alliance, an organisation that works for the rights of Bengali migrants in Karachi, the number of Bengalis scattered across the city was around two million.

Meanwhile, a former head of the National Alien Registration Authority says there are up to half a million Rohingyas in the city, their largest concentration outside Myanmar. Rohingyas and Bengalis are mostly involved in menial jobs including the fishing industry.

Their women clean shrimp and fish in makeshift facilities; sometimes they are even forced into prostitution. Most of these communities of illegal migrants survive in the shadows, without any officially acceptable form of identification.

The 2005 UNHCR-sponsored census for Afghan refugees documented 130,746 Afghan refugees in the Jadeed Camp and the Afghan Khaima Basti of Gadap.

But the number of Afghans living in Pakhtun-dominated katchi abadis and lower-income neighbourhoods is far higher.

Most of these illegal aliens live in subhuman conditions, often exploited by their employers and the city's powerful mafias, and fleeced by police and other law-enforcement agencies.

Meaningful results can only be achieved with the trust and collaboration of their community leaders.

According to an official conducting census in Karachi, many people unable to produce CNICs were not only dropped from the count but some were even detained by law enforcement agencies.

In some parts of the city, army enumerators, while filling their 'Form-786' were asking questions that were not even printed on their forms.

These included questions about ethnicity, sectarian identity (Shia, Sunni) and arms licences.

Form used by armed forces personnel for data collection. The word 'Sunni' can be seen handwritten on the right (circled) in this specimen.

According to him, a protest was even lodged with the authorities suggesting that such questions were scaring away people and resulting in poor public participation in the census. These details were also confirmed by a senior PBS official.

(Incidentally, in a letter addressed to the chief statistician PBS dated Dec 14, 2016, UNFPA urged that "the involvement of the military be well defined and documented, emphasising that operations at the household level will require detailed protocol/SOPs for the two-member enumerator-soldier field teams, with clear roles and responsibilities and training

needs/manual.”)

Not only illegal migrants, but displaced people from other parts of the country have also swelled Karachi’s population.

In 2009, after the chief minister Punjab refused to accept people displaced by military operations against militants in Fata, Swat and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, large numbers of IDPs started to gravitate towards Karachi.

The IDP situation became worse after the floods of 2010 and 2011 that ravaged villages across the Indus plains, triggering an exodus from KP, southern Punjab, and all over Sindh towards Karachi.

People from all corners of the country can still be found in Karachi but in Nadra records, their present and permanent residence remains unchanged, meaning they are technically still being counted as residents back home.

On August 28, Chief Census Commissioner Habib Ullah Khattak claimed on a private channel that PBS had only 6.5m CNICs verified by Nadra from the data collected.

The question is: why would PBS even need to have CNICs verified when the possession of CNICs was not a precondition for being counted?

Also, chief statistician PBS Asif Bajwa stated before a Senate Standing Committee that PBS, in collating the provisional results, shifted data for people found living for less than six months back to their places of permanent residence.

How could PBS know the period of an individual’s stay at a given place when the question pertaining to internal migration was not part of the questionnaires used for enumeration?

The information about internal migration will be collected through Form 2A as part of the 7.5pc sample survey — if that actually takes place.

If one considers the above factors and the enumerators’ training or capacity, it is not difficult to conclude that Karachi’s population has been grossly undercounted while it is difficult to explain Lahore’s population being as high as 11.1m.

CENSUS AMID INSURGENCY

There is no shortage of stupefying results from other provinces.

In Balochistan especially, population figures seem to have been adjusted for political reasons.

In the run-up to the census, the Baloch were especially agitated about the inclusion of Afghan refugees holding computerised national identity cards in Balochistan’s population, fearing that a million Afghans could fall in that category.

If counted as Pakhtuns, they would reduce the Baloch to a minority in their own province.

Census 2017. Photo by Fahim Siddiqui/White Star



To the suggestion that their fears were misplaced, they pointed to the example of the Afghan Taliban chief Mullah Mansour, who was killed in a drone strike last year while returning from Iran on a Pakistani passport and a CNIC issued from Quetta.

A divisional bench of the Balochistan High Court also passed an order directing the federal and provincial governments not to include Afghan refugees in the population census. However, PBS officials privately said they could not reject anyone, even an Afghan, who presents a CNIC.

Shortly before the census, the government appointed a seasoned bureaucrat Dilpasand Khan Buledi as provincial census commissioner.

Interestingly, the Balochistan chief minister and most Baloch politicians have been tight-lipped about the veracity of the census — they are probably waiting for the final verdict.

However, some in the Statistics Division and among Baloch civil society suggest that the Baloch population numbers have been adjusted to maintain the Baloch majority.

As an example one can cite insurgency-struck Kech (Turbat) district where free movement of men and machines has become vastly restricted due to the perilous security situation, yet the enumerators were apparently able to count a population increase of no less than 250pc — up from 413,204 in 1998 to 909,116 today.

For that matter, it is astonishing that a deprived province which has seen a constant exodus of its people since 2005 moving into Karachi and other bordering areas of Sindh and southern Punjab, and even migrating to Iran, Oman and Australia, has seen its total population almost double to over 12m from the 6.5m recorded in the 1998 population census.

Speaking of anomalies, let’s take an example from KP as well. According to a Statistics Division insider, the provisional results tabulated on the basis of the heads counted through REN-Forms (census block summaries) initially projected a population of 2.6m for Kohistan district.

However the district had registered a population of merely 472,570 in 1998.

While KP's average household size of over seven persons remains the largest in the country, someone at PBS appeared to have realised that a 550pc increase wouldn't fly with anyone; therefore the numbers were adjusted to 784,711 — similar to those for nearby Shangla.

The problem seems to have arisen due to the generation of 1,651 census blocks for Kohistan.

The enumerators, while sitting at home, generated a population of 2.6m ($1651 \times 225 \times 7 = 2,600,325$). However, going by the PBS figures of 784,711 for Kohistan's population including 101,911 households, the number of households per census block drops to a mere 60, whereas Shangla with 89,695 households and 391 census blocks, the average works out at 229 households per census block.

One wonders how PBS will resolve the anomalies between RENs, Form-2s awaiting data processing and Form-786 filled by military enumerators.

WHY DID THE CENSUS EXERCISE GO WRONG?

Barely a month after HLO-2011, the Federal Bureau of Statistics, Population Census Organisation, Agriculture Census Organisation and the Technical Wing of the Statistics Division were merged through the General Statistics (Reorganisation) Act, 2011.

A special provision in the Act increased the retirement age for the chief statistician (executive head) and other functional members of the semi-autonomous PBS from 60 to 65 years.

This enabled the then recently retired federal secretary statistics division Asif Bajwa to take over as the organisation's head. In fact most of the senior functionaries at PBS today are retirees of the Statistics Division and none of them are demographers.

Although Mr Bajwa finally retired from PBS in July this year, he was reappointed by the prime minister as consultant for the census.

While the Act makes no provision for officiating charge, yet member, resource management, Mahmood Akhtar, holds the officiating charge of Chief Statistician.

Unfortunately, he too is due to retire in December upon reaching 65 years of age.

Most of this administrative indiscipline arises from the fact that even after six years PBS has failed to frame the rules under the 2011 Act; as a result it believes that it remains free to do as it pleases.

Just before the census, the provincial census commissioner KP, Mumtaz Khan protested in writing with PBS headquarters in Islamabad that though he was responsible for taking the census in the province as per the Act, everything was being micro-managed by the chief census commissioner Habib ullah Khattak from Islamabad.

One factor causing widespread suspicion and heartburn remains that until recently, all the members of the PBS governing council and functional members with executive authority were filled by gentlemen hailing from Punjab.

PBS did not even heed the recommendations made by the UNFPA — that not only supported the census by contributing \$12m but also provided much needed technical support — to conduct pre-census pilots and post-census sample verifications.

According to eminent demographer, Dr Mehtab Karim, post-census verifications should be conducted immediately after the census to avoid anomalies in samples due to internal migration.

Probably to make the impending census transparent, the finance minister during a pre-census meeting of the governing council constituted a special committee of eminent demographers and non-governmental members of the council.

At least three members of that committee claimed while speaking to Dawn that none of their recommendations were addressed.

Moreover, the qualifications of some officials closely involved with the census are far from satisfactory.

According to a petition filed in the Islamabad High Court earlier this year by the outgoing member support services, Tariq Malik, the freshly inducted Member Support Services, Sarwar Gondal holds a masters degree in Computer Science from the University of Agriculture Faisalabad and was a former head of AJ&K IT Board, a small government organisation with one grade19 director, two deputy directors and one grade 17 officer.

Mr Gondal happens to be a close relative of a federal secretary who used to be chief secretary AJ&K.

Meanwhile Mr Malik, an alumni of King's College and Birkbeck College, University of London, who has a Masters in Information Technology from the University of East London, failed to get his contract renewed as member, support services (IT head) PBS, earlier this year — at a crucial time when the census was starting.

TECHNICAL QUALITY AND EXPENDITURE

During suo moto proceedings on the census, Chief Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, heading a three-Judge bench, rejected the PBS report presented before it on Nov 18, 2016 that a summary sent to the Council of Common Interests proposed the census be held in March/April 2017 on the traditional method subject to availability of the armed forces.

The CJ observed: “If it is the army’s job to do everything, then what is the need for these institutions”, referring to government institutions. “The government should just say that conducting a census is not its job.”

The PBS’s report demonstrated two things: firstly, that PBS was opting for a traditional paper census instead of the far more efficient and less expensive ‘tablet-based exercise’ and secondly that it was ready to conduct the census.

As illustrated below, PBS was far from prepared for this massive exercise. The Windows-based original software for data-processing was sourced and forms printed in 2009 through DSR UK Ltd.

But then the Windows versions changed, many fields were reduced and couple of new fields were added to the forms.

All through 2016, DRS kept offering upgrades that UNFPA agreed to finance. But PBS kept dragging its feet.

When the Supreme Court finally ordered the government to conduct the census, and PBS went back to DRS, the company refused to supply the upgraded software or printed forms at the eleventh hour during Christmas holidays. Mr Bajwa then chose Shirazi Traders to supply the replacement software.

Yet a cursory look at the DRS User Manual shows that their software has hundreds of features which are not available in the software being currently sourced through Shirazi Traders. Moreover, the replacement software only performs ICR (Ink Character Recognition) scanning and gives text data for each form.

It does not prevent any errors or cater for invalid or missing values. It does not offer an inventory nor does it stop multiple scanning of the same form.

The Statistics Division has already spent over Rs26 billion (about \$260m) on the ongoing census even while using ruthlessly truncated 1998 forms for housing and population censuses (Form-1 and Form 2).

Expenditure for the Sixth Decennial Housing & Population Census	
Expenditure Head	Rs (billions)
Civilian Enumerators	7.5
Other expenditure (Materials, vehicles, photo-paper, advertisements, touring, lunches/dinners)	7.5
Payments to Army	6
House Listing Operation (2011)	4.5
UNFPA Technical Support (US\$ 12 Million)	1.2
Total	26.7

The 7.5pc sample survey using Form-2A is yet to be conducted. The scanning of returned forms and data processing has just begun. It is instructive to compare our census with India’s 15th Decennial Housing & Population Census conducted in 2011 (its seventh since independence).

That census cost India some 22 billion in Indian rupees, (\$340m).

However, Indian enumerators used two forms with 29 and 35 questions in each about population and housing conditions in India in national as well as umpteen numbers of regional languages.

Meanwhile, the senior citizens responsible for the massively flawed census in Pakistan would be long gone before the exercise is ever completed.

Pakistan	Year	Population (millions)	Area (km ²)	Expenditure (Approx.)	Questions Asked
6 th Census	2017	207.77	796096	\$260	26
India					
15 th Census	2011	1210.19	3287000	\$340	64

There is precedent for such an outcome.

The aborted ‘anomalous’ census in 2011 cost the public exchequer Rs 4.5 billion.

No one has yet been held responsible or punished.
(By Fahim Zaman Dawn 04, 19/09/2017)

Report on census

VIRTUALLY all countries conduct censuses, often at 10-year and a few even at five-year intervals. International practices for undertaking this vital exercise are thus well established. An objective and independent assessment of the Sixth Population and Housing Census in Pakistan to gauge adherence to these tried and tested procedures is thus a valuable metric of credibility and transparency. A report based on observations by a mission from the UNFPA — which contributed \$12m and also provided technical support to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics responsible for the census — notes several glaring departures from these best practices. During the enumeration process, six teams comprising international and national observers visited 246 census blocks and observed 537 interviews selected on a random basis in all the provinces.

As with any census, this exercise — for the sake of accuracy that will subsequently impact socioeconomic planning on macro and micro levels and which also has a bearing on the politically fraught issue of resource sharing — should have taken everyone living in the country into account. Judging by the observations in the UNFPA report, Census 2017 has not done so. In order to ensure the people’s full participation, a formal publicity campaign is critical, not only to educate them on the importance of the exercise, but also instil in them the confidence that the data collected will not be used against them in any way. This was not done. Data confidentiality also ensures integrity of the results. Although the report notes the value of army personnel for security purposes, it expresses serious reservations about the collection of data by them, which it says amounted “to a parallel census and is not internationally acceptable”. Moreover, the uniformed officers accompanying the enumerators were verifying the respondents’ CNIC information with Nadra, a measure described by the report as a breach of confidentiality. This also prompts the question why CNICs were being

sought at all, when as per PBS's own assertion, the lack of one did not preclude exclusion from the census — which is as it should be. In any case, the presence of army personnel would have deterred most illegal aliens — accustomed to being rounded up by law enforcement — from participating in the exercise. The UNFPA document also records that residents in refugee villages were not counted, thereby breaching “the principle of universality”. For an exercise held almost one decade after it was due, these are deeply troubling negatives.
(Dawn 08, 26/09/2017)

CPEC hurdles

Pakistan has seen a small but significant improvement in the global competitiveness scale, as measured by the World Economic Forum Report (WEFR), climbing from 115th to 122nd place. The progress is due mainly to the promising China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The infrastructure pillar of the report — the so-called pivot of the competitiveness scale — catapulted the country to the 110th spot even as its CPEC partner lost some visible momentum. At this point we must not be carried away by the hype surrounding the project because questions still remain about our capacity to undertake the tougher tasks that lie ahead. The first among these is to ensure the country completes the projects under CPEC, especially those related to infrastructure development, on time. Delays in the expansion of rail lines and the creation of special economic zones have already exposed the lack of coordination between the federal and provincial governments. Bureaucratic red tape seems to have also undermined our planning efforts for CPEC-related projects. If we are to be competitive in today's world, there is absolutely no room for complacency or excuses. Feasibility studies should be carried out by a provincial government weeks before a scheduled meeting with their Chinese counterparts and not weeks or months after that, as observed by a federal government minister. There must be an overall improvement in our work ethic as well. Greater professionalism and commitment will help of course. The goal of development cannot be reached unless there is better governance and strict adherence to the rule of law.

These are the same conditions which allow investment to flow into the country. As academics have pointed out, CPEC and other mega projects can go forward only if we are committed to education and the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Our success or failure depends upon it.
(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 06, 30/09/2017)

State Bank report

THE latest annual report of the State Bank of Pakistan echoes much of the same view held by the IMF and other independent economists: the economy has stabilised, but a lot of the work needed to mend it remains to be done. At the heart of the stabilisation are two central facts. The fiscal deficit has shrunk to 4.6pc of GDP, down from the 6pc plus average it had maintained for the previous half decade, and down by 0.7pc from last year; and foreign exchange reserves have risen to cover seven months of imports, the most comfortable position they have been in for more than half a decade. Taken together, all that these two data points tell us is that some breathing room has opened up, but that if key structural reforms are not undertaken, the situation could reverse quickly. This is the central message of the annual report and it deserves to be heeded.

The report shows how much of the improvement has been gained through short-term measures. The improvement in the fiscal situation, for example, owes much to a rise in consumption of petroleum products as well as adjustments in the structure of its taxation. Moreover, “the share of withholding tax has increased further, which downplays the role of revenue authorities on the one hand, and increases the compliance costs of businesses on the other”. Broadening of the tax base has seen no progress, and measures to impose a cost on nonfilers of tax returns “had unintended negative fallout”, such as a growth in currency in circulation by 2pc of GDP and a fall in deposits. Broadening the base remains a priority, “without further burdening the already compliant taxpayers”, says the report. Expenditures were restrained “primarily from low interest rates, which significantly reduced [the government's] debt servicing burden” on domestic debt. These measures are fine, but they are not enough to build our future fiscal strength on.

The story is similar for reserves and external debt. Interest payments fell to 34.5pc of tax revenue, down from 43.2pc last year, accounting for much of the drop in the fiscal deficit, on the back of lower interest rates. But the quantum of debt increased rapidly, both domestic and external, despite a lower deficit. At least 20pc of the new debt acquired last year was parked in deposits with the banks, which points towards poor debt management. The real worry is about the external debt, which is high-cost and a growing amount of which is short-term. Given that exports are shrinking, FDI is not encouraging, and remittances are coming under pressure, we can expect trouble on the external front if something does not turn around soon. The report makes clear that much work remains to be done to put the economy on a sound footing, and declaring victory would be premature.
(Dawn 08, 15/10/2017)

Result of recently concluded census authentic, SHC told

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics on Tuesday informed the Sindh High Court that the result of the recently concluded census was not rigged and all the figures were absolutely authentic.



A two-judge bench was hearing a petition filed by Pakistan Qaumi Movement (PQM) chairman Iqbal Kazmi who requested the court to order the formation of a judicial commission and conduct a fresh census under the commission's supervision.

The PBS submitted the report in compliance with the court's direction and stated that the census was conducted on the directives of the Supreme Court and the decision taken by Council of Common Interests.

The PBS report said the exercise was conducted in the presence of armed forces and foolproof measures were taken to make the census transparent.

The results were submitted to CCI where chief ministers of all the provinces were present but none of them had raised any objection, it added.

The report said a key principle was followed throughout the census that only the officially notified boundaries of administrative units were used but in Karachi the limits were not extended by the Sindh local government department since 1998 except for a few dehs.

It further said that on the other hand, the Punjab government had extended the limits of Lahore to the entire Lahore district and two union councils of Kasur had also been included.

Moreover, the report said the population of Karachi in 1998 was 9.339 million and in the 2017 census, it was recorded 14.910m, meaning there was an increase of 59.66 per cent.

It said the population of Lahore was 5.143m in 1998 and in the recent census it has reached 11.126m but after the expansion of its limits.

The population of Lahore would have been counted as 8.123m if there were no changes in its limits the report added.

Earlier, petitioner Kazmi had submitted in his petition that the results of the census were not accurate and they were doctored to trample on the rights of people on the basis of their language, ethnicity and religion.

The petitioner requested the judges to direct the authorities concerned to carry out census exercises afresh under the supervision of a judicial commission to ensure transparency throughout the process.

The court was further requested to stay the general elections, scheduled to be held in June next year, until the fresh census is carried out.

'Rs16 billion recovered from 483 corrupt officers'

Meanwhile, another division bench once again directed the provincial chief secretary to submit an affidavit that no officer who had entered into a plea bargain or had voluntarily returned the embezzled amount would be given any posting.

Advocate General Zamir Ghumro informed the judges that the Supreme Court had restrained them from taking any corrective action against such employees.

"While granting the stay, the apex court had ruled that no action can be taken against those who face corruption charges of below Rs2.5m," the chief provincial law officer said.

The court was informed that Rs16 billion have been recovered from 483 corrupt officers hailing from different departments of the province.

The SHC had directed the provincial authorities to remove all the officers who were reinstated in different departments after entering into plea bargains and voluntary return (VR) with the National Accountability Bureau in corruption cases.

The chief secretary informed the judges that all officials who had entered into VR were asked to report to their respective departments.

He further submitted that disciplinary action against these officials was pending due to a restraining order by the apex court.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn 18, 08/11/2017)

'Karachi's population has been intentionally misrepresented'

The census data for the country's districts, sub-divisions and cantonment boards makes startling disclosures about headcounts in some localities of the city.



The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has released the data of the population of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's 71, Punjab's 145, Sindh's 138, Balochistan's 134 and FATA's 48 districts, sub-divisions and cantonment boards. The population of the sub-divisions of the six districts of Karachi has also been revealed, in which, Korangi's sub-division is the most populated at 1,071,560.

Ibrahim Hyderi's population was recorded at 1,045,815, compared to its 1998 population of 438,921. Surprisingly, the populations of Manora, Aram Bagh and Saddar have decreased since the 1998 census, according to the PBS statistics. There has been a decline of 41.31% in the population of the Manora sub-division. The registered population in this sub-division as per the 1998 census was 10,008 while in the present year, the population decreased by 4,134, with a population of only 5,874 being counted. As per the 1998 census, the Aram Bagh sub-division had a population of 131,880 while in 2017 it decreased by 3,506 and dropped to 128,374. In the Saddar sub-division, the population was recorded at 42,187 in the 1998 census but in 2017, the population decreased by 5,721 reaching 36,366.

Sindh chief minister expresses reservations on census results

The Gulzar-e-Hijri sub-division witnessed the highest increase in population, where the total population rose by 539% – from 114,789 in 1998 to 734,252 in 2017. In Manghopir a 503% increase was recorded.

Faisal Cantonment Board is the only cantonment board in Karachi spread over three districts. Faisal Cantonment falls in districts Korangi, Malir and East, however, its population was recorded under the head of District East by the PBS. Principally, the population of the Faisal Cantonment Board should have been shared in the three districts.

According to experts, the decline in the population in important trade and residential areas like Saddar and Aram Bagh creates doubt on the veracity of the census process and its results. After the 1998 census, several residential buildings were constructed in these areas, thus making the population decline questionable.

Political parties such as the Pak Sarzameen Party, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) – Pakistan have all expressed reservations over the results of the 2017 census. During a recent public gathering the MQM-Pakistan rejected the data and called for a fresh census to be conducted in a transparent manner. Similar demands have been made by other political leaders. Members of the provincial assembly bashed the census results during a recently-held session, calling for transparency in the process.

'Over 10 million Karachiites missing in census': MQM-P, PSP reject results

"No one heeded our reservations and recommendations in this exercise. We had suggested they provide us one copy of each block and update the REN form [census block summaries] on their website, but they refused," said Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah during the assembly session. Murad has been a strong opponent of the census results and repeatedly called for the statistics to be publicised.

According to experts, the PBS has yet to share statistics on the number of families or settlements in the city. Such figures will corroborate the statistics shared by the bureau.

The PBS informed the Sindh High Court on Tuesday that the key principle followed in the 2017 census was that only officially notified boundaries of administrative units were used. It said that in the case of Karachi, the city limits had not been extended by the provincial government department since 1998, except for a few dehs (villages).

Information Minister Nasir Shah, however, said the delimitation is a lame excuse. "The population of Sindh, especially Karachi which is the capital of province, has deliberately been shown as less than it is," he claimed, adding that many people from other provinces have shifted to Karachi, but its growth rate has been shown as less than Lahore.

"Not only have people from other provinces moved here, but a large number of people from rural Sindh have also shifted to Karachi, making it the largest city for Sindhi-speaking people," Nasir said, adding that the PPP government has serious reservations over the census and the federal government must resolve them.

(By Syed Ashraf Ali THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 13, 09/11/2017)

Stakeholders call for transparency in CPEC affairs

Most speakers at a seminar held on Thursday expressed serious concern over the way the government was handling affairs of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), contending that it neither properly negotiated the CPEC projects in the country's interests, nor did it take relevant stakeholders on board before or after striking deals.

They also complained that details of the CPEC project, which apparently lacked an overall feasibility report, were being kept secret whereas the government was yet to allay fears of local businessmen and manufacturers — particularly those of small and medium-sized enterprises — facing threat due to the project.

Titled 'CPEC — Prospects, Challenges and Way Forward', the programme was held at the National Institute of Management, Karachi.

The four-hour long programme provided the audience with ample evidence that the federal government has so far completely ignored the business communities as well as locals in Gwadar in relation to the project and there is a dire need for winning their trust and getting them on the CPEC bandwagon.

This was indicated by completely divergent views presented during the seminar by those who are either involved in the project's execution, monitoring it or who have a big stake in it.

"I fully support CPEC provided we do it right. Undoubtedly, the project has the potential to change the geography of Pakistan's economy but there are important questions on the project that need to be answered," observed senior economist Dr Kaiser Bengali.

He shared a few instances when he tried to get the project's overall feasibility report from the Planning Commission but couldn't.

"I was told that it's confidential. I think such a report doesn't exist, though studies of individual projects have been carried out."

He also asked whether a cumulative environmental impact assessment report of the project had been prepared.

"What is Pakistan's share in Gwadar port revenue? What will be the impact of transit trade on Pakistan's manufacturing sector? What will be the impact of tax exemptions to CPEC-related foreign imports on Pakistan's manufacturing sector?" he asked.

The Pakistan share in Gwadar port revenue, according to him, was nine per cent, though the government hadn't announced it. "What kind of business is this in which revenues are less than the expenditure?" he questioned.

He also raised concerns over the impact of balance of payments linked to CPEC-related foreign exchange inflows (loans) and outflows (debt repayment, profit remittance).

Highlighting concerns relating to Balochistan, he said that non-availability of water was a major issue in Gwadar and there should be a desalination plant in the district [playing a central role in CPEC].

Sharing similar concerns, Babu Gulab, the chairman of district council, Gwadar, urged the government to adopt an inclusive approach and take local stakeholders on board.

"The important thing is to give space to local people, or else we will allow the other narrative to establish itself," he said.

Describing CPEC as a ray of hope, Zahidullah Shinwari heading the Peshawar Chamber of Commerce and Industries said that the underdeveloped regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Fata could benefit a lot from the project.

"Right now, there is no strategy in front of us. We don't know how local industry (barely surviving amidst many challenges) would compete with Chinese products," he noted, adding the government should only allow import of value-added products.

He criticised the government for entering into agreements that envisaged generation of costly electricity.

"The CPEC could be a game changer but are we ready to benefit from it? We have to end the 'seth' culture if we want that our labour force is employed by Chinese investors."

Mehmood Nawaz Shah of Sindh Abadgar Board talked about the issues the agriculture sector was facing in Pakistan and said that 30 to 40 per cent of vegetable and fruit produce go wasted because the country lacked processing units.

Shamsul Islam of Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry expressed disappointment over government policies that had rendered local products uncompetitive in the regional and international markets.

"The domestic markets are flooded with imported goods [forcing manufacturers to explore other investment options]. People are investing their money in the real estate business," he said, adding that Pakistan was the only country where a foreign investor didn't need a local partner to start off business.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, chairman of the parliamentary committee on CPEC, spoke about the need to see CPEC from the regional and global perspective and said Pakistan was at the centre stage of new developments.

"China is rising as a global power. It has seen remarkable transformation over the decades and [is] now leading the world in science and innovation. Moreover, there is an emergence of greater South Asia," he explained, adding that CPEC was a strategic partnership above government and political interests.

The parliamentary committee, he said, was acting like a bridge and all the four provincial governments as well Gilgit-Baltistan were on board.

He, however, agreed that CPEC affairs should be made transparent and the culture of secrecy was not the answer.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, having multiple portfolios and representing Sindh in relation to CPEC at the federal level, rejected what he described as 'misconceptions' surrounding CPEC and said if critics bring data, the government of Sindh would take their case forward.

Roshan Ali Shaikh, the director general, NIM, Karachi, retired Major General Zahir Shah, advisor infrastructure development and CPEC in Punjab, Planning and Development Board and Chinese Consul General Wang Yu also spoke.

(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn 17, 17/11/2017)

Roti Bank: Taking from the rich and giving to the poor

Not all banks deal solely in monetary transactions. In Karachi, there is a bank that accepts deposits and passes them on to people free of charge. The Roti Bank provides two free meals a day to the city's underprivileged.



The small red shop, which appears to sell prepared food items, is situated on the road leading to Guru Mandir from Numaish and is an initiative of Roti Bank. It offers free food to those low income and needy people who cannot make ends meet.

Inside the red shop workers are busy packing food items which the bank gets from their kitchen or as donations while another worker hands out food to the hungry.



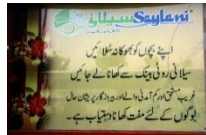
Muhammad Asif works as a security guard at a private security company and earns Rs12,000 per month. He pays monthly house rent of Rs5,000. According to him, the remainder of his salary is not enough to run his

house. "My wife and I used to eat a single meal a day, very rarely could we have two meals a day before we found out about this facility," he said.

These days, he gets meal free of charge. Sometimes he takes food home for his wife and the workers at the bank have never hesitated in providing him food on an almost daily basis for the past 20 days.

'Heavy migration from rural areas posing food security threat'

Azra, a mother of seven, was also present at the bank to get her evening food along with her seven-year-old son. She submitted her documents, including her national identity card and her husband's along with the birth certificates of all her children, for which she will be issued a Saylani free food card for the entire month.



"Sometimes, when my husband brings home enough money at the end of the day I don't come to take food in the evening so that other needy people can benefit from the Roti Bank," explained Azra, adding that in times of sky rocketing prices, it is difficult to have two meals a day and the Roti Bank is helping

people like them eat.

A single mother of four children who visited the bank said at least Rs300 is required to prepare food for five persons a day, which she cannot afford. Getting food from Roti Bank gives people hope that they will not starve if they cannot make ends meet, she said.

Muhammad Ikram, a worker who packs food to be given to the people who visit the bank, said that sometimes a white collar worker feels guilty about taking the free food but they try to convince them to take it. "We tell them that their families won't be able to recognise [that it has been donated] since there are no marks on the plastic bags to protect their self-respect."



People from as far as Surjani Town, Orangi Town, New Karachi and Korangi come to get food from the Roti Bank, said Ikram, adding that the bank's popularity is due to word of mouth. "They spent Rs50 on bus fare and get free food worth hundreds for their families," he said.

According to the worker, the menu at the bank keeps changing – from biryani, chicken and mutton qorma to keema, vegetables and daal packed in boxes along with naans.

Arif Lakhani, a trustee of the Saylani Welfare Trust and one of the organisers behind the Roti Bank, is happy they were able to come up with an idea that has allowed hundreds of residents of Karachi to be fed.

Pakistan facing chronic food insecurity: business forum

According to Lakhani, they play the role of a bank as they keep food provided to them by affluent people and give it back to those in need. It was opened on August 14 this year and the team hopes to open five to six more Roti Banks in different part of Karachi by the middle of 2018 as everyday more people turn up at the bank.



"On a daily basis 700 to 900 meals are provided to people. Around 100 to 150 families have registered and will be issued cards in the coming days through which they can get food for the entire month," he told *The Express Tribune*.

Lakhani added that the initiative is also helping those who do not want to disclose their identities but still need free food. (By Mudaser Kazi THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 20/11/2017)

CPEC Long Term Plan

THE seventh Joint Cooperation Committee meeting ended on Tuesday leaving more questions than answers in its wake.

This was supposed to be the meeting to finalise the so-called Long Term Plan for CPEC, which details all that will be done in the country under the umbrella of the corridor till the year 2030.

Yet, at the end it is not clear whether we have a final LTP or if some more work remains to be done.

The details shared with the public after the meetings ended are far too scattered to build a picture of what all has been agreed upon.

To this day, the public does not know what exactly their government is committing their country to.

All we know is that the plan is so massive in its scope as to be a 'game changer' for the country, and a few details about some projects that are being implemented within its framework.

If this is true then it is all the more important to have wider public buy-in so we have a clearer idea of how exactly the game will be changing.

But what we do know is that in reality the game is far bigger than what the government is projecting, and it is only just beginning.

Going forward, it is crucial that the government live up to its pledge to bring greater transparency to its dealings with the Chinese.

The pledge has been repeatedly given by the minister leading the negotiations, Ahsan Iqbal, in multiple forums including on television, and he must adhere to it.

The full, detailed LTP document must be made public, not any shortened or summarised version of it.

Of late, we have begun to hear language coming out of the Planning Commission that seeks to retreat from this pledge.

In one place, for example, the commission has said that the plan “will be shared with all stakeholders”, without elaborating who they consider to be a stakeholder.

The minister, when asked about his intentions to make the detailed plan public, simply said “it would be a good idea” without giving any indication as to when the step will be taken.

In all his earlier pronouncements, he was clear that the LTP document can only be made public after it had been finalised.

Now that we have crossed that threshold, it is time for the minister to deliver on his word.
(Dawn 08, 23/11/2017)

CPEC’s difficulties

THERE are growing indications that things are not going as well with CPEC as we are being told. Since the government did not release any meaningful details following the recent, seventh round of the Joint Cooperation Council — the crucial forum where the details of the various projects that come under the CPEC umbrella are being negotiated between the Pakistani and Chinese sides — news has managed to trickle out that many of the projects considered central by Pakistan have suffered setbacks.

Explore: CPEC’s precarious balancing act

The first news related to the Diamer-Bhasha dam project that was the most recent addition to the bouquet of projects being considered under the plan. That information emerged during a parliamentary committee hearing in which a former Wapda chairman said that the Chinese were asking for terms that Pakistan was unwilling to give in order to finance the mega dam.

The next bit of news came after the meeting itself, when reports trickled out that the framework agreements for the Peshawar-Karachi railway project, known as the Main Line 1 project, as well as the Karachi circular railway, could not be signed during the meeting.

Also read: CPEC master plan revealed

For the circular rail, there appeared to be good reasons for the delay, but for the ML1 project, it was merely stated that cost estimates will take another two to three months to be finalised.

Now comes a report that three important road projects, brought into the CPEC framework in the sixth JCC meeting held last December, have also suffered setbacks.

According to the report, the Chinese have developed new rules for approving financing for CPEC projects, and each of the latter will have to be resubmitted through the new procedures before financing can be arranged.

All of these might prove to be temporary difficulties, and the projects mentioned (except for the Diamer-Bhasha dam which appears to have been scrapped), could be back on track within months. Or this could be the moment when CPEC is changing gears, entering a new phase of its construction beyond the ‘early harvest’ power projects, and the enterprise is growing beyond the ability of the government to effectively manage.

As CPEC grows, its implementation becomes more complex and unwieldy given the small number of people involved in drafting the Pakistani position in the talks. The only antidote to the growing difficulties the government appears to be running into is greater transparency, which is becoming more urgent with the passage of time.

(Dawn 08, 06/12/2017)

Pakistan’s economic promise

The writer is a former Pakistan ambassador to the UN.

THE recent oversubscription of the foreign loans sought by the Pakistan government, and the relatively favourable rates on which these were obtained, indicates that lenders seem to have shrugged off this year’s sharp (20 per cent) fall in the Pakistan Stock Exchange and concerns about widening trade and budget deficits, domestic political turmoil and threats of US sanctions.



The market’s optimism about Pakistan’s economy is well placed. Despite bad or indifferent management, the country’s GDP has grown, in nominal terms, from \$80 billion in 2002 to \$300bn in 2017. In Purchasing Power Parity terms, the Pakistani economy’s size is \$1 trillion. And, these statistics do not count the estimated 36pc of the economy which remains undocumented.

The planning minister asserted a few days ago that economic growth this year would have reached the 6.5pc target (instead of 5.3pc) were it not for the domestic political turbulence. But the government's economic decisions appear to be clearer and quicker under the stand-in prime minister. And, the blockade of the capital by religious zealots was too recent to affect the growth statistic. It is investment which largely determines the rate of growth.

The market's optimism about the country's economy is well placed.

Until two years ago, growth in Pakistan's economy hovered around 4pc or less. It rose to 5pc last year and 5.3pc this year mainly due to the investment in energy and infrastructure under the CPEC project.

It is estimated that to eliminate extreme poverty and double per capita income (from \$1600 to \$3200) in a decade, Pakistan's economy should grow at 7pc annually. To achieve this level of growth, investment in the economy (external and internal) should be around 20pc of GDP ie around \$60bn annually, equal to the entire amount committed so far under CPEC.

Most of this \$60bn in annual investment will have to be mobilised by Pakistan itself, from its domestic revenues, national capital markets, the private sector and external earnings.

Although tax collection has increased recently, Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio is still much lower than the global norm of 16-18pc. Well managed, tax revenue can be doubled.

Apart from enlarging the tax net, the government can effect enormous savings by selling off or shutting down the dozen or so state-owned corporations (white elephants) which are costing the exchequer around 2pc of GDP each year.

Similarly, subsidies (for electricity, water, fertiliser production, textile and other exports), unless efficiently provided for specific development goals, encourage 'rent-seeking' and corruption, distort the economy and waste precious state resources. They must be progressively eliminated.

Third, once fully developed, Pakistan's capital markets can be a significant source of investment.

Fourth, a well-conceived and energetic effort is required to mobilise domestic and foreign private investment.

While money can be mobilised, investment must be deployed strategically to create sustained growth, employment and development. There are five areas which deserve to be accorded priority: physical infrastructure, social development, agriculture, manufacturing and technology.

Under CPEC, Pakistan's energy and transport infrastructure requirements are being addressed with China's cooperation. Hopefully, this vital enterprise will not be derailed by malign internal or external intervention. CPEC should be enlarged, as envisaged, to encompass cooperation in the industrial and other sectors of the economy.

However, building Pakistan's 'social infrastructure' — education and medical facilities; water and sanitation; urban and rural transport systems — is equally if not more important than physical infrastructure. This is essential to create the human foundation for modernisation of the economy and should have first call on the national development budget. Some progress in these sectors has been made in Punjab and KP; not so in Sindh and Balochistan.

Agriculture contributes 25pc of Pakistan's GDP and absorbs 40pc of its labour force. Pakistan possesses the largest integrated irrigation system in the world. Yet its per unit agricultural output is one of the world's lowest. It wastes over 30pc of its water and food production. Unless agricultural production grows at more than the present 2-3pc, Pakistan will be unable to feed its growing population. What is required is clear: more equitable land distribution (to smaller, more productive farmers, 50pc of whom do not own any land); upgradation of the irrigation system; focused financing of advanced techniques for efficient water use, improved seeds, cultivation and harvesting, storage, transport, marketing and processing of agricultural products.

Likewise, unless it industrialises, Pakistan will be unable to grow rapidly or provide employment for its 'youth bulge'. Since Pakistan's growth is driven mainly by domestic demand, it is well placed to develop its textiles, steel, heavy machinery, engineering goods, automotive, electronics, petrochemical, consumer goods, and food-processing industries, without relying on exports.

As every industrialised country has done historically, Pakistan will need to 'protect' its nascent industries from external competition for a time. The WTO rules permit developing countries to do so. If a foreign company can sell a product in Pakistan, it is unlikely to invest in producing it there. Premature trade 'liberalisation' is a recipe for deindustrialisation. Pakistan's access to foreign markets in any sector will be meaningful only once it is competitive in that sector. Islamabad should renegotiate all so-called FTAs and review its trade regime to build in the protections required by its industries.

Technology is key to economic dynamism. Every industrial process, every business model, is being transformed by the application of digital and other technological innovations. Pakistan must absorb these developments like a sponge, mobilising public and private entities, at home and abroad, to find the most efficient and productive ways to promote growth and development in targeted areas, often leapfrogging the existing techniques applied in advanced countries. In the final analysis, this will be one of the two decisive factors in Pakistan's economic success or failure.

The second is the quality of Pakistan's governance. A modern state requires a functionally competent, honest system of governance which can set the rules, create capacity, ensure fair competition and equitable distribution of the fruits of growth and development.

After decades of misrule, the people must accord first priority to evolving an answer to the question: how to secure a leadership that is dedicated to Pakistan's national interest, not its own; one that is enlightened, honest and accountable; one that can respond to the enormous challenges and opportunities that face Pakistan today?

The writer is a former Pakistan ambassador to the UN.

(By Munir Akram Dawn 08, 10/12/2017)

'City's important matters being controlled by the market'

Eminent development experts Arif Hasan and Yasmin Lari on Sunday said there were certain factors that hindered the city from becoming a jewel of Pakistan.

Mr Hasan said the chief hindrance in making Karachi a truly modern megacity was the fact that the city's matters were being controlled by the market and not politicians and the bureaucracy.

"The city's important matters are being controlled by the market, while Lahore is developing because it is being controlled by politicians and bureaucracy as it should be," said Mr Hasan while speaking at a session of the arts and ideas festival organised by the Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU) on the concluding day.

Four-day SMIU festival concludes

Mr Hasan said there were 36 market associations in Empress Market alone. Similar situation was elsewhere, thus virtually ruling the metropolis.

He said a comprehensive planning was highly needed to develop the metropolitan city. Besides, he added, the citizens of Karachi should come forward and own the city.

Mr Hasan said there were numerous reasons for the destruction of the old heritage of Karachi. Among them, he added, the fact remained there that those historical buildings and places were located in the areas where it was extremely hard to save them.

"Unless we get certain strong institutions, no positive change in the city is forthcoming. While, the institutions which we had in the past have already become history," he said.

He said there was no master plan offered by the Karachi Development Authority. Besides, certain legislation related to the development issues had messed up the situation further.

He asked universities and students to play their role for the city's betterment.

Mr Hasan said Karachi could not become a world-class city with the present propositions. He added it needed better planning, modern modes of transport, construction of footpaths etc.

Ms Lari, chief of the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, said the city was saturated with ever-increasing population, but it offered no better means of transport.

Besides, she added, supply of clean drinking water was an issue while the sewerage had broken down.

"Trees are being cut, footpaths have disappeared and circular railway system is a thing of the glorious past," she said.

She said the city needed toilets, particularly for its female population. Besides, once a rich city, now suffered from abject poverty.

Ms Lari said most of the heritage buildings in the city were stone-built and needed heavy funds to get restored.

"Every citizen should play one's part to make Karachi a clean and better city."

She also called for eradication of "mafias" to improve the public transport system.

The festival concluded after four eventful days which were decorated by international lectures given by foreign scholars, distinguished lectures by national experts and several other activities in which faculty and students both enthusiastically participated. Dr Muhammad Ali Shaikh, vice chancellor of the SMIU, said the prime minister would place the foundation stone of the university's new campus in Malir, where the SMIU had got 100 acres.

He said the project would cost Rs12 billion and initially Rs1.63bn had been allocated.

"It is a matter of a few years when the SMIU will have a new sprawling campus in Malir," he said.

He said the key purpose of the festival was to familiarise the youth with new ideas that could help them succeed in their future life.

He said the festival was organised on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Pakistan's independence and the new generation would have to play a positive role to make the country a modern nation in the world. He said the event would be an annual feature.

Delivering the distinguished lecture, Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui, federal secretary for planning and development and former commissioner of Karachi, said administrative accountability was needed more than financial accountability.

He said many projects were pompously inaugurated but because of little follow-up they became non-functional.

"The same has been happening in Karachi. A number of such projects have met the same fate in Karachi. Unless administrative accountability is begun, the country cannot progress in real terms," said Mr Siddiqui.

He said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was an extremely important project for the country because construction of roads was the very foundation of a country's development.

"Through this project Pakistan will link with other countries of the world, and it would fetch wealth in terms of increased exports. CPEC will help increase the country's GDP by 23 per cent," he said.

He dispelled the impression that more Chinese than Pakistanis were employed with the CPEC projects.

Dr Weimin Delcroix-Tang, a professor at the University of Sanya, Hainan, China, presented her essay on the 'double-sidedness' of the oceanic culture of China's tropical island Hainan.

She said located in between the South China Sea, the eastern and western, marine and continental, indigenous and Hakka cultures met and interacted.

In a session on women and gender issues in Pakistan, Shaista Muhammad Ali, honorary adviser on cultural and gender affairs, SMIU, Mehnaz Rehman of Aurat Foundation and scholar Khalida Ghouse spoke.

They called upon mothers to keep their children away from being affected with gender discrimination. They said anti-harassment law helped keeping safe both women and men. They called upon the government to effectively implement the pro-women laws.

Naheed Memon, chairperson, Sindh Board of Investment, advised the youth to start their own businesses instead of waiting for jobs. She said expertise was more important for starting a business than wealth.

Dr Sahar Ansari, poet and educationist, spoke on the creative and philosophical aspects of Dewan-i-Ghalib, Quratulain Hyder's Aag ka Darya, and Ashfaq Ahmed's Zaviya.

He said the era of Ghalib was full of bards and masters such as Ibrahim Zauq, Momin Khan Momin and Bahadur Shah Zafar, but Ghalib earned more respect and fame as he had greater imagination and had mastery in reflecting his thought process.

He said Aag Ka Darya covered the subcontinent's history spread over 2,500 years stuffed with a fantastic style of narration. He said Ashfaq Ahmed was inspired by Shaikh Sa'adi.

Ameena Sayyid, managing director, Oxford University Press, Pakistan, spoke on the rampant book piracy issues in Pakistan. She said it deprived writers of royalty they deserved and also cost publishers heavily.

She said reading habit had not faded away in Pakistan, but it was a country of many cultures and entities, thus, the standards varied vis-à-vis topics of books.

During the festival, some 40 sessions were held and attracted good audiences. They included lectures by international and national speakers, panel discussions, screening of documentaries, photography and painting exhibitions and singing and quiz competitions. Shah Latif's seven heroines were depicted in tableaus during four days.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn 15, 11/12/2017)

CPEC delay a setback or 'operational hiccup'?

The lack of adequate information on the outcome of the crucial 7th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) held in Islamabad last month has triggered speculations about the future of a number of proposed large transport and infrastructure projects.

The way details of the negotiations between the two countries on the future shape of bilateral cooperation around the Corridor initiative has trickled out has led many to conclude that China is probably backing out of its earlier commitments to finance and implement schemes direly needed by Pakistan.

The delays, for example, in the finalisation of the plan to upgrade Peshawar-Karachi railway line (ML1 or Main Line 1) and (Chinese) financing for three road development projects have widely been construed as 'major setbacks' for bilateral economic and financial collaboration around the trade route that will connect Western China with the Middle East, Africa and Europe via Gwadar port. Pakistan's rejection of the Chinese conditions for constructing the Diamer-Bhasha hydropower project and Beijing's request to use yuan as 'official currency' in Gwadar further 'strengthened' this perception.

But does the 'development' on these projects — or lack of it — signify a setback for the future of economic cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad? Or does it merely represent operational hiccups as the Corridor project moves into a new phase?

With little information flowing out of the JCC meeting, according to Hasaan Khawar, a researcher who has done extensive work on the Corridor initiative, the interpretation of its 'outcomes revealed so far' can be very subjective in nature.

He is of the view that the agreement on framework for future bilateral cooperation under the Long Term Plan (2014-2030) in the spheres of industry, agriculture, tourism and finance is a major breakthrough. "Now the cooperation between the two countries is going to move beyond connectivity and energy projects."

He also does not agree with suggestions that the delays in road development and railway line up-gradation projects meant a reduction in China's interests in them. "I don't think that China is backing out (as some commentators have since suggested)." Beijing is just trying to be a little cautious because of (volatile) political conditions here, pausing for a moment as CPEC enters its next phase. Moreover, it does not have unlimited funds and would want to invest in projects and places where it can get better results.

China is probably focusing on implementation of the projects that are already in the pipeline rather than adding more to the wish list. The total size of CPEC-related investments is said to have crossed \$30bn with the overall commitments exceeding \$60bn. Apart from some road projects, all other projects are being financed by commercial and concessional Chinese loans. But the government is yet to come clean on the break-up of the Chinese investment pledges in terms of financial arrangements — debt, investment, grants, etc.

Last week the IMF was reported to have conveyed to Islamabad that repayments on account of CPEC-related investments will peak after seven years and reach \$3.5bn to \$4.5bn a year. The IMF estimates the CPEC-related outflow's impact on Pakistan to grow from 0.1pc in 2019 to 1.6pc of GDP (gross domestic product) a year by 2024.

Background telephonic interviews with two senior officials at the Planning Commission of Pakistan show that the government is not worried about the delays in the rail and road projects.

Does the 'development' on these projects — or lack of it — signify a setback for the future of economic cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad?

"Let me clarify one thing. It wasn't China that backed out of \$14bn Diamer-Bhasha hydropower project. Islamabad pulled out of the deal because of the conditions involved. That is not a setback at all. We are still negotiating the dam outside CPEC but personally I don't think any Chinese firm will take it unless we agree to their conditions," one of the two officials explains.

"As far as railway projects are concerned we need to work more on their feasibility. It is incorrect to assume that China has lost its interest in those projects. We just need to work more on different technical and financial aspects before we take these up with the Chinese authorities on balanced terms. You must remember that large projects like \$8.2bn ML1 take years before these enter the execution stage."

The other official argues that the 'setbacks' to CPEC as referred by some commentators are no more than operational hiccups and manifestation of an "evolving relationship between the two countries around the Corridor project".

"Instead of letting early harvest projects set a time benchmark for future investments, we should now focus on commercial sustainability of the projects in the pipeline. We don't want to go for a commercially unviable project only because it looks good."

In his opinion, it is time for both the countries to "get out of the project mode and implement the long-term plan to deepen economic partnership. If Pakistan wants to benefit from this new trade route, we should use this connectivity for enhanced bilateral cooperation in industrial and agriculture sectors for transfer of technology and knowledge."

(By Nasir Jamal Dawn Business & Finance 03, 11/12/2017)

CPEC long-term plan to be made public on Dec 18: Ahsan Iqbal

Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has announced that the long-term plan (LTP) for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that was signed on Nov 21 will be made public on Dec 18. Making the LTP public was a commitment given by the minister back in June.



In his address before hundreds of delegates gathered for the CPEC Business Opportunities Conference hosted by the Dawn Media Group here on Tuesday, he emphasised how the CPEC is a "game-changer" for Pakistan, pointing out that the pace of its implementation is accelerating and there is no room for complacency given the rapid pace of change in the world economy. "We cannot remain idle, if the world slows, we need to create new demand. There are around three billion people living in this region and 25 per cent GDP, which the CPEC will be

in a position to connect."

Highlighting the investments coming into Pakistan under the CPEC framework, the minister chose to castigate the western governments, saying that "the Chinese are doing what the Americans and the Europeans should have done after the end of the Afghan war" that evicted the Soviets from Afghanistan. "That war helped bring down the Berlin Wall, and made Europe safe. But we here in Pakistan are still paying the price for it."

He pointed out that 85 million jobs are going to be relocated out of China to developing countries due to rising labour costs there, and Pakistan must make every effort to capture as large a share of these as possible.

The Deputy Chief of Mission at the Chinese embassy, Lijian Zhao, underlined the importance of removing bottlenecks in order to promote economic growth. He described China's four-decade-long experience of sustained growth as unique in the history of the world, and said it was made possible only after infrastructure and energy bottlenecks were removed in the early 1980s. "Today we are doing the same thing for Pakistan through CPEC," he went on, to applause from the auditorium.

To promote cooperation in fields of thermal power, hydropower and new energy, he said, Chinese enterprises had been engaged to invest in Pakistani energy projects and make optimal utilisation of local resources, such as Thar coal. "Investments have been made to remove the power bottleneck, reinforce the main grid structure and power transmission and distribution network, and improve power supply reliability."

He said China energy infrastructure development projects, which are mega power plants, will help Pakistan overcome loadshedding. There are so many benefits for Pakistan through infrastructure development. Pakistan will be linked with Central Asian states, through building SEZs. Foreign investment will come that will ensure better markets, job creation, better salaries for employees, strong foreign reserves and creation of industrial parks, he said.

Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui, Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms, shed light on the CPEC and said "we have to counter the notions against the project which are designed to malign this breakthrough achievement".

Dr Ishrat Husain, former governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, in his keynote address spoke of those advancing "negative propaganda" against the CPEC, and emphasised that the best way to counter this is for the government to "release as much information as possible about CPEC."

He said that the CPEC could add up to two percentage points to Pakistan's GDP growth rate, but emphasised that strengthening of institutions would be crucial to realising this benefit. "SEZs will create enormous employment opportunities for our human resource. Right now, the most important thing for us is to complete these projects on time without cost overruns," he added.

Naheed Memon, Chairperson of the Sindh Board of Investment, talked about the opportunities and said "we are here to facilitate Chinese companies and welcome their investments in infrastructure, energy and development". She said the Chinese companies could also explore sectors as logistics, services, transport, food processing and assured full cooperation. She said government to government projects would meet the demand of Pakistan while industrial partnership would have greater impact on people's lives. Chinese companies could also find venues in sectors of customer care and "we have raw material for their businesses as well", she said.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Information Minister of Sindh, said "we support the CPEC projects and Sindh will facilitate Chinese investors as well as local companies to invest in the province". He welcomed and appreciated the efforts of companies which are working in materialising the CPEC projects.

Hameed Haroon, CEO of Dawn, opened with warm remarks welcoming the delegates delivered in fluent Chinese and underscored the crucial importance of long-term cooperation between China and Pakistan.
(Dawn 01, 13/12/2017)

Rising external debt

THE latest data on external debt that the State Bank released on Thursday paints a worrisome picture of the direction in which the economy is headed. External debt of the country increased by \$10bn in the first quarter of this fiscal year compared to the first quarter last year. And this does not include the \$2.5bn in the bonds floated recently. The bulk of this increase has come since March this year, and given the recent flotation of bonds in the global markets, the figure is set to accelerate in the coming months. As part of this story of increasing external debts, there is an accompanying growth of external debt-service payments. For example, two years ago, the country paid \$5.3bn in debt-service costs, including principal and interest. The next year, this figure rose to almost \$8.2bn, with both components, principal and interest, registering an increase. Thus far in the first quarter of the fiscal year, the debt-service figure has come in at \$2.1bn, which if extrapolated forward, indicates no change from last year in the best of scenarios. Even that is worrisome, given that we are shoring up our reserves with borrowed money.

The rising external debt is the other side of the growth story that the government constantly reminds us of. Pakistan's GDP growth rates have indeed begun to tick upward since 2013, but the pace of accumulation of external debt implies that in substantial measure, these upticks have been earned through borrowed money. The fresh borrowing undertaken recently by floating bonds in international capital markets should not impact the total debt of the state since the government claims that it will be retiring an equal amount of domestic debt this week. If it does this without raising additional revenues so that the fiscal deficit target is not impacted then the net effect will be to transfer domestic debt to the external account. But even without a net increase in total public debt, the rising external liabilities are a problem because of the depreciation of the rupee, which increases debt-service obligations accordingly. Those who use this fact to argue against the depreciation of the exchange rate demonstrate a lack of familiarity with how debt markets work. There is no way that a strategy built on borrowing and paying for growth can be sustained without the bill eventually becoming due.

(Dawn 08, 18/12/2017)

CPEC — the inner vision

It has taken far too long for the details of the China-Pakistan Economic corridor to come into the public domain, and now that it has it is very much a mixture of good-ish news and news that is potentially uncomfortable for all manner of groups and entities associated with it. The Long-Term Plan (LTP) is that Chinese currency renminbi is to have a status at par with the US dollar, a goal very close to the Chinese heart as it seeks to internationalise its currency. The LTP also details the vulnerabilities and threats that have to be overcome by Pakistan, not the least of these being realignments in foreign policy by regional and global powers, particularly America. Also highlighted are deficiencies of governance and uneven regional development, both issues that are well-enough known and which the Chinese would like to see if not completely resolved then seriously addressed.

New terminology was introduced. CPEC is made up of core and radiation zones that make up 'one belt, three axes and several passages'. How that will translate into the fractious provinces of Pakistan is yet unknown, lacking as they do the capacity to think and act beyond the purely local. Assuming that the known unknowns are resolved CPEC is going to be transformative, speeding up industrialisation and the urbanisation processes across the country.

Aside from Pakistan being told to sharpen up its act it is the decision regarding the renminbi that is going to be the long-term game changer as it reduces reliance on the almighty dollar. A range of financial instruments and processes are going to emerge over the next three years. The renminbi is to have a role at every level with investment banking and a Cross-Border Inter-Payment System that will facilitate the free flow of funds to name a few. All this will go largely unnoticed by many millions, but Pakistan has entered into a pact that is potentially Faustian if it is unable to make the reforms that the Chinese are saying have to happen for CPEC to reach its potential. We live in interesting times.
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CPEC and labour

The writer is a researcher in the development sector.

WORK on the high-profile China-Pakistan Economic Corridor appears to be in full swing since implementation began in October 2015. While a lot has been disseminated on the quantum of investments, loans and repayments, and potential contribution to the country's GDP, there is lack of information on a key player — labour: the workforce that is building, and will be building and running the projects under CPEC.



Human labour is mentioned but mostly as 'employment generation' or 'creation of jobs', and hence pushed out of sight in the CPEC narrative. Even the muted and cautious debate on CPEC as a manifestation of Chinese economic imperialism focuses on socio-cultural impacts and remains silent on labour. Questions raised by several scribes in the media have yet to be addressed by CPEC officials.

According to various estimates, CPEC projects would generate between 400,000 to 700,000 jobs during 2015-2030. Apart from numbers and general assumptions, there is hardly anything on labour in the discourse on CPEC. One can view the categories and number of jobs (mostly professional, technical, administrative, skilled) in advertisements on a local website, and also learn about efforts towards skilling of the labour force by the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority, Punjab.

Challenges to our workforce must be discussed.

Missing is the analysis of the impact of CPEC on prevalent practices and conditions vis-à-vis labour. How would CPEC, the biggest development assistance ever received by Pakistan, affect labour? Would such large-scale employment in a mammoth enterprise dent the aspect of informality of labour? Will trends in employment laws be affected by the incoming investment? How would labour respond to CPEC's need for higher productivity? Will its projects offer an opportunity to our unorganised labour to reinvent itself?

On the face of it, the labour that is employed to work on the infrastructure and energy projects is being regulated under domestic labour laws which suffer from weak implementation. Several special economic zones coming up under CPEC are to be regulated under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2012 whose Article 30 makes all labour laws of Pakistan applicable to SEZs. The construction phase of the infrastructure and energy projects requires a large number of contract and subcontracted workers.

CPEC's official website lists eight infrastructure and 15 energy projects in various phases of completion/implementation. Project-specific details on the website do not include any information on the workforce.

Four energy projects (three wind farms in Sindh and one coal-based power plant in Punjab) became operational in 2017. Of the four rail-based mass transit projects, Lahore's Orange Line Train Project is in the construction phase. Since construction began two years ago, there have been reports of about 100 on-site deaths and injuries. Causes of fatal accidents include falling from a height, electrocution, collapsing structures and fire at the makeshift residences of low-tiered workers. In early 2016, Chinese and Pakistani consultants met to discuss the higher rate of accidents. It was noted that the contractors were not implementing the health, safety and environment plan. Despite the concern of officials, nothing changed.

Similar to construction, energy transmission and distribution sector is also fraught with danger and strong safety measures are required. There has been no news of work-related accidents for CPEC energy projects because there is no mechanism for reporting and documenting accidents. In addition, energy projects are installed at some distance from settlements, hence away from the public eye, while the Orange Line is in the city, visible and within the media's reach.

The majority of our workforce is poorly educated and unskilled. Employers and contractors do not ensure safety standards or provide safety training to workers. There seem to be no plans to improve and extend education. The literacy rate was stagnant at 58 per cent in 2017 as in the preceding year while gross enrolment rate declined by 3pc.

CPEC projects are in their early phase of implementation and the SEZs are in the planning stage. Though trade unions are fewer and weaker, trade union federations are aplenty, affiliated with international federations and with representation in many tripartite bodies. It is time they came together to discuss opportunities and challenges posed by CPEC.

Civil society groups and labour organisations should facilitate workers (as they did in the case of GSP Plus) to advocate for compliance in CPEC projects, demand transparency, raise awareness and campaign for universal education and skill training.

CPEC officials should add a labour advisory group in the institutional framework currently comprising five working groups, and provide regular briefings on its policies on labour and healthy, safety and environment to allay public concerns. The writer is a researcher in the development sector.

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