

NEWSCLIPPINGS

JULY TO DECEMBER 2018

EDUCATION



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CM accepts teachers' demands after police thrash, tear-gas protesters

Police on Thursday afternoon used tear gas against teachers who wanted to march on Bilawal House from the Karachi Press Club to lodge a protest, and just hours later the Sindh government accepted demands of the protesting teachers unconditionally.



The teachers wanted to lodge their protest at Bilawal House against the Sindh government for not accepting their demands for promotions and regularisation of services.

The police action angered PPP leadership, including former president Asif Ali Zardari, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and Home Minister Sohail Anwar Siyal, who ordered immediate release of the detained teachers, and action against the policemen who tear-gassed them and baton-charged them.

21,000 NTS-passed teachers to be regularised; overall 33,000 to benefit

The chief minister in a meeting with teachers' representatives — Wali Chalgari, Sikkander Ali Jatui, Ghulam Rasool Mahar, Mumtaz Shah and Zafarullah — accepted all their demands unconditionally, which would benefit 33,000 teachers.

The meeting which took place at the CM House was also attended by Education Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar, principal secretary to CM Sohail Rajput, finance secretary and School Education Special Secretary Nasir Abbasi Soomro.

As a result, 21,000 NTS-passed teachers, including those qualified from Sindh University and Iqra University, will be regularised, and 12,000 others who were denied time scale since 1992 will now be given grade 16.

Mr Shah also ordered release of NTS teachers' salaries, working in Karachi, which had been stopped. He also expressed extreme displeasure over the police action.

"Teachers deserve respect and the police action against them is unacceptable," he said.

Giving details of the police action, Karachi-South SSP Javed Akbar Riaz told Dawn that the teachers had been protesting outside the KPC for the last one week when the authorities had baton-charged them and used water cannons to prevent them from moving towards the Chief Minister House as rallies were banned in the red zone area.

The SSP said the authorities concerned had informed the teachers that the acceptance of their demands would take some time but the teachers wanted to move towards Bilawal House if notification would not be issued by Thursday afternoon.

"In the meantime, activists from different political parties also joined the protest," said Mr Riaz.

The senior officer claimed that the police tried to dissuade them from taking the law into their own hands and avoid holding protest rally in the red zone, but they did not listen.

"As several teachers accompanied by political activists tried to move towards Bilawal House from the KPC, we used only tear gas to stop them.

"As many as 60 teachers have been detained," added the SSP.

The home minister appointed West zone DIG Zulfiqar Ali Larik as an inquiry officer to determine the responsibility for the police action.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 17, 05/01/2018)

Government introduces education programme for adults

The government has decided to initiate an 'Education Adult Programme' which will be funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) and the Japan international Corporation Agency.



The six-month programme will be introduced in five cities – Karachi, Hyderabad, Tando Allahyar, Jamshoro and Thatta. Initially, 300 centres will be established in Thatta and 300 teachers will be hired to run the programme.

Men and women aged 16 and above are eligible to apply. By enrolling in a three-year non-formal education programme, the students will cover academic content up to grade five, which will get them an admission in secondary schools. Directorate of Literacy and Non-Formal Education Director Mohammad Alam Thahim said that the chief minister approved the programme and it will begin soon.

'Quality education key to development'

The programme was introduced previously and continued to function at several levels but was discontinued eventually due to shortage of funds, among other reasons. Several aspects, including class schedule, programme duration, subjects, centres, syllabus and teacher hiring details were undecided.

However, a government-approved syllabus will be implemented this time around. As per a survey conducted, women are taking a keen interest in the programme as it will teach them how to read and write. The students will also be taught budgeting.

Apart from that, beautician and plumbing courses, sewing, stitching lessons, hand-washing practices, health and cleanliness and etiquette training will also be a part of the programme.

(By Saba Naz, THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 13, 05/01/2018)

KU student and brother picked up by men in plain clothes

Another student of the University of Karachi hailing from Balochistan went 'missing' with his younger teenage brother after the two were "allegedly picked up by men in plain clothes and in police uniform" in a pre-dawn raid on their house off University Road on Thursday, family and a human rights body claimed.

They said that 22-year-old Mumtaz Sajidi, a final-year student of the KU international relations department, and his 18-year-old intermediate student brother, Kamran Sajidi, were whisked away from their home in Madhu Goth off University Road.

The family tried to put up resistance and know the identity of the men but they failed, leaving them in the belief that the incident was "a case of kidnapping".

The family denied the boys' associations with any political, ethnic or religious organisation, but admitted that Mumtaz was quite active with different civil society groups for the recovery of Sagheer Ahmed Baloch, a second-year political science student of the university.

Sagheer has been missing since Nov 20 after being 'kidnapped' on the campus, and his family has lodged an FIR with the Mobina Town police station over his 'kidnapping'.

Mumtaz Sajidi's elder brother Naeem Sajidi said: "We originally hail from Khuzdar, but our family has no history of any political association.

"We saw several people, including policemen and some in plain clothes who took away my two brothers on Thursday morning. We kept asking them about their identity and motive for it, but in vain. We don't

know who they are, so we have no other option but to take it as a kidnapping. My brothers are simple students and Mumtaz only participated in peaceful demonstrations of civil society for the recovery of Sagheer Ahmed Baloch.”

Like Sagheer’s family, Naeem also approached the police for the registration of a ‘kidnapping’ FIR of his two brothers, but did not get a positive response from the police.

At the Gulistan-i-Jauhar police station, he was asked to wait for at least 24 hours.

“They just registered a complaint in the daily diary and refused to register any FIR. I told them that I was an eyewitness to the incident, but they did not pay any heed to it. Right now we are waiting for any good news regarding our brothers before moving to court for the registration of an FIR,” he added.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed serious concerns over the kidnapping incidents and demanded the production of the young students in court.

“So far we know that Mumtaz was only participating in demonstrations. You cannot spot people only for raising voice for any action they believe is not right. It’s an alarming trend and we demand the immediate recovery of these youngsters. The fresh incidents would not help anyone’s cause, but it would worsen the already fragile situation,” said Asad Iqbal Butt of the HRCP.

(By The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Dawn, 17, 05/01/2018)

Police once again rain batons, teargas on protesting teachers

After baton-charging protesting sugar cane farmers and political workers on Wednesday, police in Karachi used extreme force to stop a group of protesting teachers from attempting to march towards Bilawal House on Thursday.



Sixty teachers were taken into custody outside the Karachi Press Club and were later released. The protest had entered its 11th day and a large contingent of police was stationed to halt the teachers’ progress.

Surprisingly, the protest came after Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah approved the regularisation of 21,000 teachers who had been appointed through Iqra University and Sindh University tests.

He made this decision during a meeting with teachers’ association representatives Wali Muhammad Chalgari, Sikandar Ali Jatoi, Ghulam Rasool Mahar, Syed Mumtaz Shah and Zafarullah. The meeting was also attended by Education Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar, Principal Secretary to the CM Sohail Rajput, the finance secretary and Special School Education Secretary Nasir Abbasi Soomro, among others.



Police don’t spare the rod with Sindh’s teachers

The teachers’ body said that the teachers who have qualified the Sindh University and Iqra University tests must be regularised along with the National Testing Service (NTS) -qualified contract teachers.

The CM directed education department to issue orders to regularise the Sindh and Iqra University-qualified teachers. “As far as the NTS contract teachers’ regularisation is concerned, it has been approved by the cabinet,” said Murad, adding that the meetings’ minutes had also been issued. “We are regularising the NTS contract teachers without any conditions,” he assured.

The teachers also spoke to the CM about 12,000 teachers who were appointed in 1992 in grade B-17 but have been denied time scales. The CM directed the education and finance secretaries to resolve the issued within 28 hours.

The CM also directed the education secretary to release the salaries of NTS teachers working in Karachi, which had earlier been stopped. Murad told the delegation that he was ready to resolve the teachers’ issues as long as they supported him in improving the education standard.

The protest

The protesters pelted stones at the police and in turn were charged with batons. The law enforcers also fired teargas shells at the teachers.

The roads leading toward the press club and Bilawal House in Clifton were blocked during the hour-long episode, causing a massive traffic jam on surrounding roads such as Daudpota Road, MA Jinnah Road, Dr Ziauddin Road, II Chundrigar Road, Club Road, near Fawara Chowk, Zaibunnisa Road and Abdullah Haroon Road.



The police, however, was able to stop the protesters from heading towards the Bilawal House and arrested at least 60 teachers.

Some of the protesters reached MT Khan Road via Burnes Road, from where they headed toward Bilawal House, however, they too were taken into custody by the police. The detained teachers were later shifted to different police stations in District South.



“Interestingly, CM sahib has already fulfilled their demands and assured them that a notification would be issued as per procedure, but the protesting teachers insisted that the notification be issued immediately,” said District South police chief SSP Javed Akbar Riaz. “The police tried to convince them [to leave] but they did not listen and started marching towards Bilawal House.”

SSP Riaz said that the police finally started using teargas shells to disperse the protesters and began taking them into custody. “We did not use batons to disperse them,” SSP claimed. “We just use teargas shells and detained them,” he said.

Bilawal slams govt’s use of force on protesting teachers in Karachi



The SSP said this time the police are looking to register cases against the protesters. “It has become a routine matter in the Red Zone,” he said, referring to frequent protests in the area. “We did not register cases in the past but we are now considering registering cases if such protests happen in the future. It would be a good practice to stop such protests.”

The protesters condemned the action against their group. “Is the law of the jungle [operating here]?” questioned Haji Shafi Sathio, president of the All Sindh Primary Teachers Association. “Our demands are the same. We are demanding our rights and the Sindh government should fulfill our demands.” He said that the teachers were just shouting slogans and peacefully marching towards Bilawal House but the police started charging us at them with batons and using teargas.

The teachers have held several protests in the recent past, some of which have gained the notice of civil society and the government. Pakistan Peoples Party Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had taken notice of the brutality against teachers and asked the CM to meet their demands.

Official response

Home Minister Sohail Anwar Siyal took notice of the force used against the teachers and appointed a DIG level officer to conduct an inquiry into the matter.

The CM also took notice of the incident and told the home minister to have the arrested teachers released. He also summoned a detailed report on the police action. Teachers are the most respected people in society and their humiliation will not be allowed at any cost, he said.

He directed Siyal to take action against the policemen who initiated action against the teachers. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 13, 05/01/2018)

More than 5,000 schools in Sindh closed down since 2012

The number of students in government schools has decreased to more than one million in the past six years, while 23,000 schools have no electricity and 98% of them do not have labs. Though new institutions are being set up, incompetence on the part of the education department has resulted in the closure of more than 5,000 schools.



These statistics were revealed in an annual census report of the education and health departments and the education management information system.

The report said that there were 47,557 elementary, secondary and higher secondary schools in Sindh in 2012, which have been reduced to 42,383. According to the education department, this includes the closure of non-functional schools. However, after Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah's education emergency, more than 2,000 schools were reopened.

Though there has been a decline in the number of students in government schools, an increase was witnessed in the number of teachers hired. The total number of teachers in 2012 was 1.4 million which increased to more than 1.5 million. Various technologies are being used to enhance the quality of education the world over, however, thousands of schools in Sindh do not have access to basic facilities.

CM admits to failure of education emergency

According to the report, there are more than 16,000 schools in Sindh without any boundary walls while another 15,000 schools do not have any washrooms and in more than 18,000 schools, students do not have access to clean drinking water. Besides this, there are more than 23,000 schools without electricity. Out of the total 42,383 government schools remaining in Sindh, more than 75% of the them do not have a playground while 98% schools do not have any laboratory facilities.

In addition to this, more than 41,000 schools do not have a library either. It was also disclosed that only about 14,000 schools had functional buildings while another 15,000 schools have buildings that require extensive repair work. More than 6,000 schools' buildings have been termed dangerous while another 5,000 school buildings are without a roof.

Education experts said that the appointment of unqualified officers and political interference is the cause for decline of education in the province. An annual increase in the education budget was also witnessed and a major part of the budget is reserved for salaries. (By Saba Naz, THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 04, 11/01/2018)

Protesters ransack school building after alleged molestation of minor girl

A watchman of a private school in Ibrahim Hyderi was detained by police on Friday for allegedly molesting a minor girl student, which triggered a protest by area people who broke windowpanes of the school building, earthen flowerpots and ransack the premises, officials said.

Quoting the father of the minor girl, Malir SSP Rao Anwar Ahmed told Dawn that the incident allegedly occurred on Thursday morning in the M. F. Grammar High School. The girl informed her parents in the night that she was not feeling well. The minor girl told her parents that an "uncle at the school touched her private parts".

The parents first took her to a nearby lady doctor, who examined her and ruled out the possibility of a criminal assault, the police officer told Dawn. The father told the police that he was furious over the incident and visited the school on Friday morning to lodge his protest.

The Malir SSP claimed that in the meantime, a woman leader of a political party in the area also arrived there and allegedly called some people, who broke windowpanes of the building, earthen pots, etc, on the school premises.

The school administration called the Pakistan Rangers, Sindh, who rushed to the spot and contingents of the police also reached there and detained the assault suspect.

The police officer said that the father appeared reluctant to lodge an FIR of the incident and get the minor girl examined by doctors at any government hospital.

The SSP added that the unmarried suspect hailed from Thatta district and his two uncles already worked in the same school as watchmen.

During the initial probe, the detained suspect claimed that he performed his duty at the school at night and left in the morning. He denied his involvement in the incident and any wrongdoing.

The police said that the suspect was detained for further questioning.

The Malir SSP said during ransacking of the school, it was also rumoured that another such incident had also occurred at the school a few days ago but so far, no one approached the police to report the incident.

The Malir SSP said the authorities had decided that a case would be registered against the protesters for ransacking the school building. He claimed that the police had obtained the video of the ransacking by rioters. On Friday evening, Sindh Home Minister Sohail Anwar Siyal visited Ibrahim Hyderi and met the father of the girl.

Talking to the media, the minister claimed that the girl was not subjected to a criminal assault.

The minister, who was accompanied with Additional IG of Karachi Mushtaq Ahmed Mahar and DIG East Sultan Ali Khowaja, claimed that this incident was being used for gaining political mileage by a political party.

Without naming anyone, he said the leader of a political party allegedly tried to portray it as an incident of 'criminal assault'.

The minister urged the parents, teachers and other citizens to properly inform their children about such things.

He directed the Additional IG Karachi to suspend Ibrahim Hyderi SHO who "misrepresented the incident as an assault against the girl"

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah also took notice of the incident and issued orders for immediate inquiry and action.

"This is unacceptable," said Mr Shah, adding that he wanted inquiry, action and other proceedings into it.

Earlier, PTI leader Haleem Adil Shaikh visited the home of the girl but her parents reportedly refused to meet him.

Talking to the media outside the home, the PTI leader claimed that two children were recently killed after rape in Quaidabad and Shah Latif Town, but the police were not taking these cases seriously.

Meanwhile, IGP Sindh A. D. Khowaja took notice of the incident and sought a detailed inquiry report from the DIG East.

He also directed the DIG East to take area elders and other stakeholders into confidence to effectively control the law and order situation and keep a strict watch on miscreants.

Mr Khowaja also directed the DIG East to brief supervisory officers about timely action in such incidents.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 17, 13/01/2018)

Replies sought on alleged illegal establishment of Nazeer Hussain University

The Sindh High Court (SHC) told the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) officials to file written replies on a petition against the alleged establishment of Nazeer Hussain University, which is named after the late father of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) founder Altaf Hussain, on an amenity plot in Federal B Area.



A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, sought the reply by a date to be later notified by the office.

The bench was hearing a petition filed by Fazle Haq regarding alleged conversion of amenity plots, ST-2 in Block-14 and ST-5 in Block-6, in the Federal B Area. The petitioner had told the court that the university was built on an amenity plot which was originally reserved for a park.

During a previous hearing, the court was informed by the counsel of the defunct City District Government Karachi (CDGK) that the university was constructed on four acres of land. But, an additional 10 acres was also allotted in pursuance of a memorandum of understanding between then CDGK and university management.

However, the court had directed the defunct city district government's lawyer to justify the nazir's report which stated that four and 10 acres of land were granted to the Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation, the charity arm of the MQM. The city government's lawyer had informed the court that no title documents with regard to additional land were available, however, it was yet to be ascertained whether such an MoU constitutes any right in relation to occupying additional land.

SC gives two days to clear amenity plots in Karachi

The court had observed that prima facie memorandum is not justification to retain additional land. Referring to the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's land director, the SHC nazir in its report had stated that four acres of land from ST-2 had been sanctioned on March 17, 1991 by the then Sindh government and the plot was sold at a fixed price for the purpose of education in favour of Khidmat-e-Khalq Committee (now Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation).

The senior director of the KMC had mentioned in the nazir's report that a master plan of Gulberg Town was available in the shape of a book but details of the plot were not available in it.

During Friday's proceedings, the judges observed that there was no restraining order passed by the court against demolition of illegal constructions of the varsity on the land in question.

They further observed that KDA was free to initiate action against the illegal constructions. However, the judges directed the KDA officials concerned to submit a written reply regarding the establishment of the varsity and the land in question. Hearing was adjourned for a date to be later notified by the office. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 04, 13/01/2018)

SHC seeks data on government schools

The Sindh High Court (SHC) sought on Friday information from the education secretary about the number of functional and non-functional government-run schools in the province.



A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, also directed the secretary to submit details regarding allocation and utilisation of funds for the government schools in the last five years. The secretary was told to submit such details by January 31.

The judges were hearing a petition jointly filed by two civil rights campaigners, Muhammad Alamgir Khan of FixIt and Atam Parkash of Justice Helpline Trust, who took to court the provincial chief secretary, secretaries of the education and finance departments and member of the education sector planning and development board over poor standards of education in the province.

The petitioners informed the court that there were not enough middle and high schools in the province to provide necessary education to children. Citing a survey report, the petitioners argued that around 6,000 government schools were not functioning in the province, while there were more than 40,000 ghost teachers and non-teaching staff across the province.
Former AIG approaches SHC for denial of promotion

The petitioners' lawyer, Nadeem Shaikh, argued that political influence was a main factor behind the decline in education standard in Sindh. He alleged that this was evident with past experience when the provincial government asked the government teachers for biometric verification to confirm their employment but the whole procedure was sabotaged by corrupt teachers and politicians.

Shaikh recalled the provincial assembly had passed the Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill in February, 2013 to provide free-of-cost education to every child in the province. "Clause 3(1) of the said Act clearly mentions that every child of the age of five to 16 years regardless of sex and race shall have a fundamental right to free and compulsory education in a school," he argued, referring to the law.

The judges were informed that according to a survey conducted by the Sindh education department, 77% of schools were in unsatisfactory condition and almost 50% did not have basic facility of clean drinking water.

The petitioners maintained that the Sindh government claimed to promote education in the province under its 'education emergency' plan but no improvement had been observed in the education sector and the conditions had, in fact, become worse.

There were two parallel systems of education in the country, the petitioners maintained. One of the systems was related to public sector and the other one was the outcome of private investors, they claimed.

SHC seeks record of SIUT's Sukkur hospital

The petitioners requested the court to order the constitution of a joint investigation team consisting of members from all investigation authorities, including the Pakistan Army, and direct them to investigate the matter impartially and honestly.

Report of an NGO

Education in the province has been a hotly debated issue this year. With Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah declaring an 'education emergency' across Sindh, reports have poured in of schools without basic infrastructure or facilities.

Referred by the petitioners, the recently published report of Alif Ailaan, a non-profit organisation working for educational reforms, has revealed the poor state of facilities and standards of learning in Sindh.

As many as 155 districts of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Azad Jammu and Kashmir have been ranked in the report on the basis of facilities at schools and educational standards. The report's infrastructure parameters include electricity, water, toilets, boundary walls and building conditions, while the education scores comprise learning, retention and gender parity.

Regrettably, not a single district of Sindh was placed among the top 60 on the count of primary schools' infrastructure. With a 77.5 score, Karachi's District East is ranked at 61st place and happens to be on

the top in Sindh. But even in that district are around three dozen schools without walls. In the category of middle schools, District South is ranked at 57.

Defrauding NICL: SHC allows NAB probe against JS Investments

In Sindh's second largest city, Hyderabad, around 150 primary and middle schools are without boundary walls, based on comparison of Alif Ailaan's district ranking and data of the Sindh Education Management Information System. The district is ranked at 68 in the primary segment and 62 in the middle school category.

Sujawal, which finds itself among the lowest ranks at 143 and 148 in the primary and middle school categories respectively, has an estimated 1,000 schools which do not have surrounding walls. Likewise, among more than 4,000 government schools in Tharparkar, 57% primary and 30% middle schools are without walls.

Similarly, 57% primary and 26% middle schools in Thatta district and 60% primary and 31% middle schools in Kashmore district also lack boundary walls. Up to 54% primary and 32% middle schools in Mirpurkhas and Jacobabad, 52% and 36% in Badin, 44% and 40% in Umerkot and 40% and 20% in Tando Muhammad Khan also do not have walls.

The situation in Dadu, Ghotki, Sanghar, Benazirabad, Khairpur and other districts vis-a-vis the walls does not appear better.

The boundary walls, besides being one of the security prerequisites, also help improve attendance and enrolment. Parents particularly are not willing to send their daughters to such schools because of safety concerns.

(By Naeem Sahoutara, THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 04, 13/01/2018)

CJP takes private medical colleges, hospitals to task in Sindh

The Supreme Court (SC) constituted on Saturday a five-member committee for the inspection of private medical colleges to report on admission procedures and determine the availability of teaching facilities across the province.



The committee will comprise the provincial health secretary, vice-chancellors of Jinnah Medical University, Aga Khan University and Dow University of Health

Sciences and two senior lawyers.

A three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar, which constituted the inspection team, also ordered the medical superintendents of all hospitals to submit their personal affidavits, along with details relating to availability of medical and treatment facilities, functional and non-functional equipment, strength of the staff and transfers and postings of medical staff.

To begin with, the committee was directed to conduct inspection of Jinnah Medical University tomorrow (Monday).

The bench, which also comprised justices Faisal Arab and Sajjad Ali Shah, issued these directives while hearing a suo motu case relating to poor conditions of public and private health facilities in the province at the SC's Karachi Registry.

Justice Nisar clarified that the proceedings were not meant to stop the process of admissions at the private medical colleges. "We are sitting here to safeguard the fundamental rights of the citizens," he added.

CJP suspends medical college VC, summons Rajwana's son

However, the top judge told the representatives of private medical colleges and universities that admissions will now be subjected to the order of the court.

It directed the provincial health secretary and others to submit the criteria and procedures required for admissions at private colleges and universities.

Meanwhile, the apex court granted 15 days to the private medical colleges and varsities' management to ensure implementation on the laws regulating admissions, teaching and other facilities.

Supreme Court upholds LHC decision to disband PMDC

Justice Nisar cautioned them that implementation of the laws will be ensured at any cost, therefore the management of the private medical colleges as well as the hospitals must mend their ways.

The bench directed the medical superintendents of all the hospitals run by the government to submit complete record relating to availability of treatment facilities, functional and non-functional equipment, strength of the staff, their transfers and postings. Such reports should be supported by the personal affidavits of the medical superintendents, the judges ordered.

The bench asked Dr Asim Hussain, the head of the Dr Ziauddin chain of private hospitals, to assist the court in resolving the issue of excessive fee charged by private colleges.

Small quarters, garages being used as medical colleges: Justice Nasir

"We want that the children of the poor should also become doctors. Education is not only for the rich," remarked Justice Nisar.

VVIP movement

The CJP set an example for ending the VIP culture by visiting the mausoleum of Mohammad Ali Jinnah without any protocol early Saturday morning.

Later, while hearing a human rights application against the blockade of public thoroughfares and roads for the VVIPs movement, the CJP ordered that no public thoroughfare or road should be blocked for movement of any political or VVIP personality all over the country.

"The SC will not tolerate suffering of the public because of road blockades," he remarked. He directed the provincial government to ensure that public roads should not be blocked for more than two minutes, as prescribed in the law.

Earlier, Advocate-General Barrister Zamir Ghumro said that the law provides for interrupting vehicular traffic on the roads for two minutes due to VVIP movements. However, he maintained that no public thoroughfare in the province had been blocked on a permanent basis. (By Naeem Sahoutara, THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 04, 14/01/2018)

Protesting FUUAST teachers arrested and released

About two dozen teachers of the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), including women, were released shortly after their alleged detention on Monday.



A number of teachers of the university were protesting against the Senate's attempts to bring back the varsity's deposed vice-chancellor who was removed on charges of plagiarism and other malpractices. The teachers were detained by the Aziz Bhatti police from inside the varsity.

"The teachers were protesting over multiple issues. We were also there but by the evening, the teachers started sitting in our police mobiles insisting we take them to the police station," said Aziz Bhatti SHO Muhammad Hanif. "I agreed with them but I took them to the office of the East deputy commissioner, from where they went home."

The officer said that the police did not arrest them, as it was not a police matter. He also denied that the law and order situation went out of control.

PTI warns of protest unless Bilawal House road opened

On the other hand, Dr Shakeel Farooqi, secretary-general of the Federation of All Pakistan University Academic Staff Association (FAPUASA) condemned the arrest of the teachers who were peacefully protesting. "Whoever decided to arrest the teachers has contributed to a fast spreading unrest in the universities throughout Pakistan," he said. Dr Farooqi demanded the president of Pakistan free FUUAST from the stronghold of an "obnoxious lobby which has been trying to run the affairs of the university in illegal manner for the last many years". He said the mysterious silence of chancellor's office translates into support of wrongdoers who certainly cannot run the university without teachers. Dr Farooqi added that FAPUASA-Sindh is meeting in Karachi today (Tuesday) to decide further action.

He warned the Karachi administration to act sensibly and diffuse the tension that arose from the arrest of the teachers.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 04, 16/01/2018)

Assembly asks govt to ensure security at schools in Sindh

The Sindh Assembly adopted on Tuesday a resolution asking the Sindh government to ensure that all government and private schools, including seminaries, take proper security measures to protect children of all ages.



The resolution was moved by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Saira Shahliani. In her speech, Shahliani demanded that each student, teacher and non-teaching staff be provided identity cards. "No child should be allowed to leave school unless their parents or guardians can prove their identity," she said, adding that school administrations must make sure the children are monitored till they leave school

"I also request government and private schools to hire more female teachers," said Shahliani. All political parties in the assembly supported her resolution. The education minister said the government has already taken such measures soon after the chief minister announced the education emergency. Muttahida Qaumi Movement MPA Heer Soho suggested enacting a law on this issue.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf MPA Khuram Sher Zaman diverted the attention of the House towards 25,000 schools without basic facilities in the province. "Where has the emergency been declared?" he questioned.

Brothers' murder

The government dismissed an adjournment motion to discuss the murder of grain traders in Mithi, Tharparkar district.

Moving the adjournment motion, Pakistan Muslim League – Functional (PML-F) parliamentary leader Nand Kumar Goklani requested the speaker to adjourn the assembly's proceedings and take up his adjournment on 'peace in Thar' which has now been sabotaged.

Army chief lauds training standards at Quetta military school

It is the only place in Pakistan where one can witness an oasis of religious harmony and the crime ratio is negligible, but now the situation is deteriorating, lamented Goklani. "A recent example can be gauged from the killing of two Hindu brothers Dileep and Chandur Maheshwari, who were killed by dacoits in broad daylight" he said.

Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani asked Goklani to speak about whether the adjournment motion was within the assembly rules. Referring to the rules of the provincial assembly Goklani said, "This is a public interest issue and recent occurrence. No one has earlier discussed this in the house, so my adjournment motion is fit for discussion."

Soon after, Durrani inquired about the Sindh government's version on it, Parliamentary Minister Nisar Ahmed Khuhro said the government opposes it.

Goklani started justifying his plea and said, "I know that opposition members business, even for a good cause, will be discouraged here, but please take up this adjournment motion because it is serious issue."

Home Minister Sohail Anwar Siyal said, "I am personally monitoring this issue. We have formed a committee under the supervision of the Mirpurkhas DIG and the IG himself has visited the area. I assure the house that the killers of the Hindu brothers would be put behind bars."

After the home minister's statement, the speaker called the adjournment motion out of order without listening to Goklani'.

After heated speeches, the speaker adjourned the session till tomorrow (Thursday).
(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 04, 17/01/2018)

NED university to plant 2,500 trees, plants

The NED University of Engineering and Technology has initiated a green campus project in view of the university turning 100 years old in 2021. Under the project, a campaign has started to plant 2,500 plants and trees, out of which 100 have already been planted.



The site plan of the project has been prepared in which 16 types of plants and trees will be planted. Initially, 70 date trees have been planted from the central door of NED till the walls of Karachi University (KU).

100 saplings planted during SEPA plantation drive

Other projects were also initiated which includes changing the lighting at the varsity to LED lighting. The expenditure of the projects will be borne by the alumni of the varsity.

An ex-student, Sohail Bashir, who works for a Japanese company has taken the responsibility of planting date trees and has already planted 70 of them. The company involved in planting the trees will also be responsible for maintaining these trees for a year.

The date trees will be planted as far as the wall that unites NED with KU. Inside the university, the plantation will take place in the soccer field, car parking area, vicinity of Habib Bank Limited and National Bank of Pakistan, tennis court, basketball complex and other places.

100,000 trees to be planted in District Central by 2017 end, says DMC chairperson

According to the plan, Royal Palm, coconut palm, washing to new palm, Senegal date palm and traveler palms and other types of trees and plants will be planted.

NED University Vice Chancellor (VC) Sarosh Lodi said that a graduate of the varsity, Asad Jafar, works as the chief executive officer of a company that has agreed to install LED lighting. Lodi said talks were held with Jafar, who agreed to install the LED lights without any profits. Funds for the installation are being arranged, Lodi said.

The VC said that details of the project will be published on the website soon and everyone can choose a position of their choice to plant a tree with their name. He said those cooperating with the university include two alumni members, Ajmal Farooqi and Bashir from Saita Corporation. Others include Arif Raza from Amcorp Engineering and Construction (Pvt) Limited, Faisal Naqvi from Gasco Engineering, Ameerul Islam from Jersey Precast, Kazim Mansoor from Soilmat Engineers and Ghulam Farooq and Farhat Adil. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, 05, 18/01/2018)

KU celebrates 58th foundation day

Hundreds of new entrants to the University of Karachi (KU), most of them accompanied by their parents, had a strange experience on the first day at the varsity's campus. For them, it was a unique feeling to become part of the procession and other proceedings organised on Thursday to mark the 58th foundation day of the university.



The day is celebrated on January 18. This year, it was celebrated with more zeal than usual as the varsity administration decided to start the new academic session the same day. Newly enrolled students and their parents also participated in the walk. Huffaz, all from the KU faculty, recited the Holy Quran as they, accompanied by KU Vice-Chancellor Dr Muhammad Ajmal Khan, deans of faculties, a large number of KU's teaching and non-teaching staff and alumni, marked in a procession from the Silver Jubilee Gate to the convocation ground with students showering rose petals on the participants along the route.

A ceremony was organised at the convocation ground of the varsity. Addressing participants, the VC highlighted various feats achieved by the varsity's faculty and students. KU students have earned fame across the globe, Dr Khan said, adding that KU was also performing well in the field of research. The varsity published several research papers last year, he boasted.



'Pakistani scientists doing excellent work overseas'

The VC also highlighted the financial crisis being faced by the varsity. He appealed to the Sindh government, Higher Education Commission (HEC) and philanthropists to help overcome KU's financial crisis. "The biggest university of the metropolis cannot run under such circumstances," he feared.

According to Dr Khan, the financial crisis at the varsity had gotten to such an extent where the administration was struggling to pay salaries to the varsity's employees. "The gross salaries surpass the total income of the varsity," Dr Khan lamented.

Dr Khan also commented on reforms in KU's admission policy. He admitted that earlier the varsity admitted many students due to political parties' pressure. To avoid intervention from all sorts of foreign elements, the admissions at the varsity had now been completely computerised, the VC said.

The day's history

Former president of Karachi University's Teachers Society Shakeel Farooqi, who conducted the proceedings, informed the gathering about the significance of January 18. According to Farooqi, the varsity had shifted to its current location on January 18, 1960. Earlier it was situated in the old city area in four to five different buildings around 12 kilometres away from its present location.

The VC at that time, Dr Bashir Ahmed Hashmi, organised a procession, at which, under the supervision of Maulana Ehtishamul Haq Thanvi, 30 huffaz recited Holy Quran from the Silver Jubilee Gate to the old convocation ground, where the new administrative block stands today, Farooqi said, adding that the tradition had been continued over the years.

Governor to inaugurate three-day AERC conference

Ejaz Ahmed Farooqi, the president of Unikarians, KU old boys association, announced that the Unikarians will undertake the construction of a new building in the chemistry department. He called upon former students to play their role in helping the university in its financial crisis.

A former VC, Dr Zafar Saeed Saifi, recalled the old times when the campus was relocated to the present site. When there were no roads, no houses. The area wore a deserted look then. He also recalled the great contribution made by former VCs such as Dr Hashmi and Dr Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi in the development and promotion of the university to its present shape and strength.

(By Saba Naz , THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 04, 19/01/2018)

SHC orders private schools to reinstate students expelled for non-payment of increased fee

Extending its interim order that restrained private schools from raising their fee more than five per cent, the Sindh High Court on Friday directed private schools to restore the admission of students expelled from their respective institutions over non-payment of fee that was increased sharply.

The court also ordered the management of the private schools to accept students' examination forms for the coming season.

Headed by Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, the bench was hearing a set of petitions filed by parents of children studying at private schools against their managements for increasing fee more than five per cent in violation of rules and regulations.

The judges expressed displeasure when they were informed that some of the students were expelled from different private schools when their guardians refused to pay the exorbitant fee.

The victim students' counsel told the judges that certain schools also did not accept the examination forms of the students.

Court extends its interim fee restraint till further orders

"How could students be expelled when the court already stayed the fee increment?" one of the bench members said.

The private schools' counsel, however, denied the claims and said there must be some misunderstanding as no student was expelled from any school.

The bench directed the school managements to restore the expelled students to their original position against the payment of normal tuition fees as was being received before it was enhanced, further ordering them to accept students' examination forms.

The court extended its interim order that restrained private schools from raising their fee more than five per cent till further orders and put off the hearing to Feb 15.

Earlier, the petitioners had submitted that the school management could not increase the fee more than five per cent in an academic year as per rules; however, some private schools had increased the fee more than 10 per cent.

They asked the court to direct the authorities concerned to restrain the school management from increasing fee and follow the rules and regulations.

Muttahida worker acquitted

An appellate bench of the high court headed by Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto acquitted Aijaz, alias Tona, said to be a Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) worker, in cases pertaining to possessing explosives substance and illicit weapon.

Aijaz Ahmed, arrested in March 2015 within the remit of the Nabi Bux police, was awarded 21 years collective imprisonment by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC).

The convict though his counsel challenged the punishment awarded by the trial court and submitted that the prosecution had failed to submit any concrete evidence against him.

The defence counsel argued that the ATC did not follow due procedure while convicting Aijaz. The court was requested to set aside the judgment of the trial court and order the release of the convict.

After hearing the arguments from both sides, the SHC bench set aside the punishment and ruled that the convict should be released if not arrested in any other case.

Conviction upheld

The same bench upheld one-year imprisonment awarded to a drug peddler by the Anti-Narcotics Court.

The trial court had sentenced Mohammed Ishaq to suffer one year rigorous imprisonment in jail and fined him.

He was arrested from the Karachi airport red-handed while smuggling the drugs.
(B Tahir Siddiqui Dawn 17, 20/01/2018)

89.9% of Sindh's schools only offer primary education

When Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari compares the performance of his party's Sindh government with the provincial governments in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), he takes pride in the Sindh health department's accomplishments. But, the education sector is noticeably absent from his praise when Bilawal appeals to voters in his speeches to judge the PPP's services in the health sector against Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz's metro buses in Punjab and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's tree plantation in K-P.



Perhaps the reason is that he realises that the education department has not fared well enough to render a sense of achievement. And the recently launched annual schools census report for year 2016-17 explains this discontent.

The 214-page report titled 'Sindh Education Profile' was launched at an event in Karachi this week by the provincial education department. It encompasses an array of parameters assessing academic standard, enrollment and a range of facilities.

Education: a solution for Pakistan

One of the many interesting features of the report is the statistics of the number of government schools, which show a yawning variance from the primary to the higher secondary levels. According to the census, 38,132, or 89.9%, of the total 42,383 schools in the province provide only primary education.

The middle and elementary schools, which provide education beyond primary level, amount to only 6% of the primary schools at 2,241. There are 1,719 secondary schools and 291 higher secondary institutions.

Hyderabad region

With an exception of Hyderabad district where around 19% government schools offer middle to secondary education, the percentage in the remaining eight districts in the division varies from a meager 4% to 11%. Badin district, with 2,934 government schools, has the highest number in the division. But, against its 2,763 primary schools only 101 offer middle and elementary education, 60 secondary and 10 higher secondary.

Similarly, out of 1,821 schools in Dadu district, 1,679 are primary while only 57 offer middle, 70 secondary and 15 higher secondary education. Among Sujawal district's 1,390 schools, only 30 offer middle, 18 secondary and six higher secondary education while the remaining 1,336 are primary schools.

For the students in the neighbouring Thatta district, prospects for acquiring middle to higher secondary education are no better than in Sujawal. As many as 1,195 of the 1,282 government schools in the district are limited to primary level of education. Only 42 offer middle, 38 secondary and seven higher secondary education.

Reflecting a direct effect of the huge difference, the census shows that against 176,000 students at the primary level in Dadu, only over 43,000 are admitted in classes up to 10 and 3,600 others to the college level. Likewise, against 157,270 students enrolled in the primary schools of Badin, the combined strength of students in the upper level schools, including college, stands at less than 38,000.

As many as 61,580 students are enrolled in primary schools in Sujawal and 63,758 in Thatta. In comparison there are just 9,305 and 12,458 students in classes six to 10 and 1,148 and 1,087 in college respectively in the two districts.

Unesco report: Low salary of teacher at core of Pakistan's education woes

Some 2,650 primary and 168 upper level schools in Badin, 1,492 primary and 141 upper level schools in Dadu, 1,078 primary and 49 upper level schools in Sujawal and 1,024 primary and 80 upper level schools in Thatta are functional. Sujawal's Kharo Chann taluka has the lowest enrollment of 162 students in up to class five and only six primary teachers are posted in the taluka. From classes six till college, not a single student is enrolled.

Mirpurkhas region

In the desert district of Tharparkar, a total of 3,439 government schools exist. But a staggering number of 3,179 schools, with an enrollment of 122,590 students, are of the primary level. With only 260 middle to higher secondary schools, the enrollment equals only around one-fourth of the desert's primary students.

The coterminous Umerkot district only has 141 middle to higher secondary schools against 1,887 primary schools with an enrollment of around 92,416. In comparison, the students from class six to college level total about 25,000, which is less than 30% of the strength at the primary level.

In Mirpurkhas district, there 1,808 primary, 81 middle, 19 elementary, 74 secondary and 16 higher secondary schools with a total of 162,368 students, of which 118,202 are enrolled in the primary section.

In the division, 1,664 primary and 184 upper level schools in Mirpurkhas, 2,741 primary and 250 upper level schools in Tharparkar and 1,699 primary and 134 upper level schools in Umerkot are functional.

Larkana division

Merely around 8% of schools in Kambar-Shahdadkot district provide middle to college education while 1,328 are primary schools with a registration of 145,666 students against 41,126 in classes up to 10th grade and 2,362 in colleges.

'Students' futures shaped by primary education'

Out of 1,427 schools in Jacobabad district, 1,310 are primary while there are just 117 middle, elementary, secondary and higher secondary schools. A similar difference also exists in the enrollment with 113,558 students studying in the classes up to class five, 27,077 in the middle and high schools and 3,712 in colleges.

In Kashmore, Larkana and Shikarpur districts there are 1,264, 1021 and 982 primary schools respectively and 104, 137 and 119 middle, elementary, secondary and higher secondary schools.

In the division, 1,213 primary and 116 upper level schools in Kambar-Shahdadkot, 1,239 primary and 113 upper level schools in Jacobabad, 1,143 primary and 101 upper level schools in Kashmore, 991 primary and 136 upper level schools and 895 primary in Larkana and 115 upper level schools in Shikarpur are operating.

Sukkur division

A symmetrical imbalance is also found in the three districts of Sukkur division where against 2,966 primary schools in Khairpur district, only 324 schools provide middle to college education. The strength of students from classes six to college stands at roughly one-third of 246,619 primary students.

In Ghotki and Sukkur districts, 1,759 and 1,027 primary schools exist respectively in comparison to 132 and 160 schools from middle to higher secondary. Some 2,764 primary and 321 middle to higher secondary schools are functional in Khairpur, 1,654 and 127 in Ghotki and 951 and 160 functional in Sukkur.

Nawabshah division

Less than 7% of 2,955 schools in Sanghar district provide middle to higher secondary education and the remaining are limited to primary education, enrolling 188,062 students against 54,432 up to class 10 and 4,961 in the higher secondary. Some 2,134 schools in Nawabshah and 2,006 schools in Naushero Feroz districts are primary while 227 and 229 respectively range from middle to high secondary schools.

Primary education: In Pakistan 6.2m children still out of school, says report

The schools which are functioning in these districts include 2,561, 2,040 and 1,952 primary schools in Sanghar, Nawabshah and Naushero Feroz districts respectively and 186, 226 and 222 upper level schools.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , By Z Ali, 04, 22/01/2018)

Karachi sees increase of 1,500 new private schools in last five years

A lack of government schools and the dwindling quality of education has increased the number of private schools in the province. In the past five years, nearly 1,500 new private schools have been registered in Karachi.



The Sindh directorate of inspection of private institutions registered 257 schools in 2013, 341 in 2014, 220 in 2015, 322 in 2016 and 274 in 2017.

Education in Sindh suffers due to poor sanitation

Private schools have been increasing in the city and a new school is opened each day, which is why we see a new school in every nook and cranny of Karachi. In the past five years, nearly 1,500 new private schools were registered in the city.

The highest number of school openings was seen in 2014 with the enumeration of 341 schools. The directorate of inspection of private institutions has sent letters to the education department numerous times to enumerate the registered and unregistered schools, however, progress has yet to be made.

According to the directorate, there are nearly 20,000 private schools, out of which 12,000 are registered while others are unregistered. The World Bank is being approached for the enumeration of the private schools, which is expected to be completed in the next six months.

Winter vacation for public, private schools in Sindh announced

According to the annual Reform Support Unit (RSU) report of 2016-2017, a district institution run under the education department, nine million students are presently enrolled in the schools, out of which 4.2 million are enrolled in government schools, 1.1 million in other government schools and 350,000 students study in madrassas.

Meanwhile, more than 3.2 million students are enrolled in private schools. The division for the enrollment is more than one million students in pre-primary, 1.4 million in primary, 700,000 in middle schools, 200,000 in secondary schools and 53,000 in higher secondary schools.

Parents see the government schools in a predicament and the standard of education falling. Where with each passing year, the standard of education should improve, the futures of the government-enrolled students seem to be doomed.

Ghost schools still haunt Sindh education sector

Private schools have been increasing due to the massive training differences at private and government schools. A mother residing in the Jamia Cloth Market area shared with Express News that government schools are deprived of basic necessities such as electricity, water, ceilings and walls and washrooms. Instead of encouraging creativity, government schools undermine the talents of school going children, which is why no well-to-do parents would send their children to a government school, she said adding that in such circumstances, parents prefer a small private school.

She said that poverty compels parents to enrol their children in government schools, otherwise everyone wants their children to get a private education.
(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE By Saba Naz, 04, 22/01/2018)

Footpath School equips children with the skills to fight back

The brutal rape and murder of seven-year-old Zainab in Kasur has opened the eyes of the public to the crimes perpetrated against children every day. To counter this, a school in Karachi has started teaching street children self-defence.



The brainchild of Syeda Anfas Ali, the classes are being organised especially for street children because they spend most of their time on the streets without adult supervision and are therefore the most vulnerable to sexual predators.

Ali, who is president of the Ocean Welfare Organisation, said she wanted to start the training much earlier but the tragic death of Zainab made her realise that she must help protect future Zainabs.

She is already running a Footpath School under the Bahria Flyover near Abdullah Shah Ghazi's shrine in Clifton. The self-defence classes are held under the banner of the 'Zainab Memorial Self-Defence Training'. They are held every day from 3:30pm to 5pm.

We are getting closer to Zainab's murderer: CM

Ali said that no counseling helps children in situations of abuse or abduction. She said in that moment the only thing that will help them is skills for self-defence. "Unfortunately, we teach our children how to eat fish but not how to catch them," she lamented, adding, however, that they also provide counseling at the Footpath School.



"We tell street children about social issues and moreover don't shy away from telling them about the gruesome murder of young Zainab, which could happen to any child anywhere. Most of our children don't know what to do when faced with such untoward advances."

However, she said that they do not have enough funds to provide kits to the children who come to their training sessions. Most of the children at the sessions do not even have shoes.



The training is open and free for every child between the ages of five and 16 but the lack of funds is a constraint for the school.

The children are later given Rs10 each and something to eat, such as a packet of biscuits and juice or milk. "We treat and engage with these children like they are normal kids. Most of the kids study during our morning classes and participate in the training in the afternoon," she said. The classes started last Tuesday but the interest of the girls and boys registered for the training is extraordinary as the entire area is full of children wanting to learn some techniques, explained Ali.

"Zainab's murderer should be hanged publicly, be made an example of": Rehman Malik to Senate
According to her, we need to teach children how to defend themselves or else such issues will keep happening in the future. She said that every child at the training knows what happened to young Zainab so that they remain alert. "We have also taught them how to protest peacefully. The children also held a protest following the news of Zainab's murder," said Ali.

Children as young as five years old participate in training where they are taught how to warm up and practice some punches and kicks needed to protect themselves. Fatima, who comes to attend classes from Shireen Jinnah Colony, said that she is never going to accept anything from anyone except her parents. She said if someone wants me to take by force I will punch them or at last scream so that he runs away.

Mubashir Hasan, a Karate instructor who was teaching the session, said that they are trying to inculcate confidence among the children by making them learn a few self-defence techniques. "My aim here is to make them realise that they can do anything to keep themselves protected and should not consider themselves weaker beings."

According to Hasan, knowing basic self-defence techniques is as necessary as teaching someone how to walk or eat.

(By Mudaser Kazi, The Express Tribune, 04 , 25/01/2018)

Lyari Girls Café — an educational refuge

The streets of Lyari are populated by men. You see them smoking, gossiping or playing games, either on the footpath or in small gaming arcades. The women, however, can be spotted making their way through the narrow streets to the newly-established Lyari Girls Café where they study and receive vocational training.



The peculiarly named institute is set up on the fourth floor of a residential building and has a big rooftop, which is adorned with beautiful handicrafts and embroidered sheets. The place is also furnished with comfortable couches and has board games like carrom and ludo.

At present, more than 300 girls are enrolled in various courses of English, computers, hairstyling, makeup, grooming, mehndi application and other skills at the first-of-its-kind café in Lyari's Mandhran Mohallah.



Lyari street painted in the colours of the rainbow
Initially, it was extremely difficult to persuade girls to join the café, but now more girls are interested in joining the centre, said Aas Research and Development Organisation (ARADO) President Sultan Mandhro.

ARADO, a non-governmental organisation established a decade ago, runs the Lyari Café with the support of Terre des Hommes (TDH) – an organisation based in Germany.

Mandhro said Lyari is an area where girls are not usually allowed to leave their homes to study after matriculation. When they step out, it is to work as maids, he added.

He said the aim of setting up of the café was rehabilitation of violence-affected children and young girls of Lyari through recreation and skill development. Another was to bring these children into the mainstream.

One of the main objectives was to improve girls' education through increased access to computer technology and English language. "ARADO wanted to mainstream women of Lyari who are forced to stay home. We thought of bringing women into the mainstream so that they take part and live productive lives."

He said although Lyari is a poverty-stricken locality, its residents' spirit of volunteerism is commendable. "All our teachers work voluntarily."

Lyari Café Project Coordinator Sassi Muhammad Khan said there is no one to encourage children, especially girls, to study. "Lyari Girls Café is the first centre for girls in the area where they can come and learn various skills."

Khan said Lyari is a place of wonder and worry. "A lot of people work here for the welfare of the community. We have to make our girls stronger so that they also get an education and play their part in the welfare of society."

Beautifulizing the metropolis: Sindh CM orders reconstruction of roads in old city area of Lyari
She added that girls want to learn various skills like hairstyling, mehndi application and makeup just because they are discouraged at home from pursuing further studies. "People don't live in fear anymore since that period of violence is over, but their professional growth is still at a halt," Khan explained.

English language teacher Rimsha Rani, who studied English language at the Pakistan American Cultural Centre, said no girl in her family was allowed to study after their matric. "I enrolled myself in a college and am teaching here voluntarily. Now my younger sisters and even my aunt are studying and learning various skills."

Rani recalled that when she first sought permission to study in college she was told if she studies further she will argue with her husband.

Out-of-school children

Dawood said since the children have never been to school, it is hard to motivate them to study. "We teach them and also involve them in various games to retain their interest."



Administration Manager Kiran Usman Ghani said the café provides informal education. "We educate children for a year and then enroll them in government schools because they cannot afford private schools. We have enrolled more than 50 children in schools so far."

Ghani said children in Lyari are interested in education but due to extreme poverty, they do not go to school. Most of the children are interested in games such as football and boxing. Even girls between the ages of 10 and 18 are keen to learn boxing. "When it comes to boxing, girls in Lyari are more diligent and active compared to boys and some of them have even bagged awards in various competitions."

ARADO has been working in Karachi for the last 10 years with the core objective of building a cadre of youth in Lyari to enable them to deal with the changing needs of the world, explained Mandhro.

The organisation wanted girls to get out of the suffocating environment and involve themselves in constructive activities, he said, adding that keeping in view the violence that resulted in fear, insecurity and lack of confidence among youths, the aim was to create an environment that may create opportunities for girls to learn new things and become confident. "Computer literacy and English language courses are considered the most important vocations that a majority of girls desperately need."

The centre also has a programme for out-of-school children. "The future of children is associated with education. When we started mobilising parents to educate their children they didn't express any interest. We continued talking to them and, eventually, they started sending their children to the café," said Zulaikha Dawood, who works as a social mobiliser at the café. Children between five to 16 years of age are taught Urdu, English and Maths at the café.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , By Ishrat Ansari, 04, 29/01/2018)

KU probe body seeks action against Prof Sahar Ansari

The University of Karachi confirmed on Monday that a senior visiting faculty member had been found guilty in an inquiry into allegations of sexual harassment against him.

The news involving Prof Sahar Ansari, however, drew mixed response from literary and academic circles. An inquiry committee probing allegations against Prof Ansari, himself a prominent literary figure, was set up by the university on the directives of the provincial ombudsman.

“We conducted a thorough investigation into the case and interviewed a number of people. At least seven persons, including a female teacher, recorded their statements against Prof Ansari. No witness spoke in his favour,” Prof Nasreen Aslam Shah, a senior KU teacher, heading the inquiry body told Dawn.

‘No witness spoke in his favour’

The committee, set up three months ago, had suggested to the university administration not to invite/involve Prof Ansari in any kind of job or activity on the KU campus, she added.

Besides Ms Shah, the body comprised Prof Jamil Hasan Kazmi, currently heading the Karachi University Teachers’ Society, and Deputy Registrar (academics) Mohammad Ashraf.

According to sources, Prof Ansari is no longer associated with any academic work with the university and a divided opinion among the committee members prevented it from recommending a stricter action against him.

Prof Ansari, however, was earlier cleared by a KU committee which investigated the case against him in 2016 when allegations of sexual harassment were raised by a senior teacher of the Pakistan Studies Centre. The case was later brought to the notice of the provincial ombudsman, who directed the university to investigate it again.

Speaking to Dawn, Arts Council president Ahmed Shah said that the council had already taken notice of the matter and Prof Ansari was not allowed to take oath as a member of the governing body after he was elected.

“The council will take a decision on his membership once the court decides the case,” he said, adding that the council received similar complaints against Prof Ansari by a few civil society organisations when the case was being investigated by the KU.

“It has been 14 months that the council hasn’t kept any connections with Prof Ansari. We took action on a general negative perception against him, though court is yet to decide the case,” he said.

Dr Fatema Hasan, representing the Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Urdu, however, urged the media to refrain from ‘character assassination’ and wait for court’s verdict.

“Prof Ansari, in his 80s right now, has been into teaching for a long time and served at Balochistan and Karachi University. It’s very unfortunate that the media is involved in a malicious campaign to damage his image, though the court is yet to decide the case,” she said.

A senior KU teacher, preferring to remain anonymous, also showed sympathy with Prof Ansari and said that he wasn’t physically able to harm anyone at this age.

(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn, 17, 30/01/2018)

Sindh govt asks NGO to hand over ‘footpath school’ to SEF

A non-governmental organisation running a makeshift school for around 2,000 street children under a flyover in Clifton near the Abdullah Shah Ghazi shrine has alleged that the Sindh government has asked it to either hand over the school with children to the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) or shut it down.

However, the SEF said that it had only “requested” the NGO to become a “partner” for streamlining the education of street children roaming mainly around shrines, where they were more vulnerable.

Syeda Anfas Ali Shah Zaidi of the Ocean Welfare Organisation said that she was recently asked by the SEF to hand over the school and threatened to involve police if she did not agree to the proposal.

She said that she did not agree with the SEF over their proposal, but now she feared that this government organisation would resort to state power.

"They [SEF] have used a threatening tone and warned us that if we don't become their partner or bring children under their arrangement, they would order the police authorities to close down our school," she said. "We started this school three years ago with a few children. Now we have around 2,000 children who don't want to become part of any government scheme. We are doing this only on humanitarian grounds with no profit or commercial viability. Our contribution has been appreciated worldwide but unfortunately here things are working the other way."

SEF Managing Director Naheed Durrani, however, dismissed Ms Zaidi's allegation and said that she was "misinterpreting" the proposal, which was part of a recent policy focussing on finding solution for children roaming around shrines and other vulnerable places.

"We only humbly requested them to bring their children in our schools as schools on footpaths can never become a permanent source of education," she said. "It's absolutely wrong to say that the Sindh Education Foundation threatened the welfare body to do so."

She said that the chief minister had set up a committee tasked with finding solution for children around shrines and other vulnerable places and in the first phase "we are focusing in areas around mazars and other vulnerable places".

However, Ms Durrani couldn't come up with a clear reply when asked about the possibility of any forced closure, shutdown of the footpath schools if the managements of such facilities did not agree to the foundation's proposal. She said: "I can't comment on this. Let the government decide."

(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 17, 31/01/2018)

VLC – a place for children to be children

In a world full of stress and competition, Veritas Learning Circle (VLC) encourages children to be children. They play, listen to stories, get messy and learn.



"The mindset in Pakistan about schooling is slightly different from mine," said Muzaffar Bukhari, the founder principal of the school. With a background in finance, Bukhari is not what one would typically assume a principal to be.

"I am a product of a very mainstream, traditional education where the rankings really mattered. I remember the stress and the anxiety I felt growing up where the feeling of my self-worth was attached to my report card," he explained. He now uses his experience as a trainee counselor to counsel both parents and children.

KU students take slum children off the streets and into the classroom

"The schooling system [in Pakistan] is exactly as it was 30 years ago when I was going through it," said Bukhari. After extensive research he came upon the Finnish model, which is the best in the world. Even in times of stress, the Finns were very calm and composed, he said, adding that after studying alongside them, he found that they were happier individuals. Bukhari visited Finland from where he brought on board an educationist to set up a system on the lines of the Finnish system in Pakistan.



"I wanted to create a space where the children learn not just from the teachers but from other children and the space," he explained, adding that he has made the space inviting and welcoming for children. And his approach worked.

“I’ve been through [traditional schooling] myself and I’m fed up,” said Nida, a parent whose son has been attending VLC for the past four months. She described the school as a ‘heaven for both parents and kids’. She said the school’s non-traditional approach really appealed to her, as did the creative, family-like environment. “My child is happy and that’s enough for me,” she said in response to any ‘helpful’ criticism she may receive for not sending her child to a mainstream, established school.

Still a startup

Though the school was started in 2016, Bukhari wants to retain the startup mentality. He said he wants to retain the discipline of a startup and the personalised service offered.

He lamented that as a business, schooling in Pakistan is poorly run. Parents are paying us but they have to chase after us, he said, questioning why it seems like the more cumbersome you make the admission process, the more desirable the school becomes.

Footpath School equips children with the skills to fight back



“Parenting is a very challenging task to begin with,” said Bukhari. “The anxieties of parents are very high,” he said, adding that at VLC they aim to make the process smoother. I work with parents a lot and help them decide whether this is the right school for them and their children. There are currently over 150 students enrolled at VLC, ranging from the ages of two to six. The school plans to expand and open an elementary school in August.

Respecting the individual

“Every child has an adult in them and that adult needs to be respected. They want to have the decision-making power, feel empowered and have choice, that’s why we’ve structured the classrooms using child-led learning,” explained Bukhari. He said that at VLC the teachers do not dictate, instead they create ‘play invitations’, allowing children to be drawn to different things and learn what works for them. The school has an emergent curriculum, according to the principal, who said it changes based on how the kids are responding.

The school focuses more on the child’s emotional development and self-esteem – grades and exams can wait. According to Bukhari, when the child is ready, they show you signs that they are ready to hold a pencil and write. By forcing it on them, they will learn but it will compromise some other aspect of their personality.

Stressing the fact that VLC is not a preparatory school, Bukhari said they do not kill the ability of children to ask questions. We focus on age-appropriate milestones such as physical, emotional and social development, he said, adding that forcing children kills the joy of learning.

Schooling on wheels: Driven by the will to teach, mobile schools find their way

At VLC, children learn through play. They explore the school’s garden and classrooms and learn the same facts they would learn in a mainstream school. The school is an inclusive space, according to Bukhari, with two out of a class of 20 children having special needs.

A diverse environment

With a monthly fee of Rs17,000, the school might be out of reach for some families but VLC has a solution to that – financial aid.

The school’s financial aid programme is aimed at creating a diverse environment. Details of aid recipients are kept secret – only Bukhari and the school board know. “I don’t want this place to be a bubble with only people from one social class. Any parents who believe in the happiness of their child, well, this is the place for you,” said the principal.

A whole new world

VLC offers a number of modules, from carpentry to cooking, children are exposed to a host of activities. There are also French and Arabic classes. The school is all about healthy boundaries. There are designated walls for children to paint on and spaces where they can be messy but there are also spaces that have to be kept clean.

According to the principal, they are teaching the same curriculum as other schools in terms of milestones but the method of teaching is more application-based.

He said that rote learning is now a thing of the past because all the information you need is in your pocket. "Now the challenge is how to apply the data," he said.

At VLC, the students are exposed to whatever information a traditional system would expect them to know but in a different way.

If they are learning fractions, they do it while making a pizza in the school's kitchen.

I want every Pakistani child in school: Bilawal

They are taught to think outside the box and think on their feet.



The curriculum at VLC is based on SNAP – stories, nature, art and play. Their dedication to telling stories is apparent by the mini-libraries in each classroom. The books focus on mental health and emotions. "Stories you don't forget. Facts you do," said Bukhari, adding that learning through stories is more fun and engaging. The children are also exposed to nature, which is a both a much-needed break from technology and curiosity-evoking. They participate in gardening exercises and feed the school pets – a pony and tortoise.

Teachers, or facilitators as they are called at VLC, allow the children to be drawn to different things and incorporate that into their classroom curriculum.

According to Kiran, a teacher who has been with VLC since the beginning, there is a method to the madness. They focus on preference-led learning but do ensure that the children learn concepts, albeit without the terminology. Every activity has a goal, she explained, adding that they often focus on informal learning through songs and stories.

Another teacher, Aresha, said the school focuses on emotional health of children, which is very important. "We talk to the kids, we don't order them," she explained, adding that they explain why something is important or why it has to be done.

Shirin Karimjee, VLC's academic coordinator, feels that they are providing the kids all the skills they need to survive. "There is a structure here [at VLC] but each child is dealt with as an individual and at their own level," she said, adding that VLC isn't a factory. "We teach them to use their strengths to overcome their weaknesses," she said.

Pakistani student bags world's highest marks in Cambridge Mathematics exams

A VLC parent and teacher of Deen Kids, the theology module, Sabeen said when your child first starts school you want to know the ins and outs of their academic lives and, unlike VLC, many schools do not encourage parents' active involvement.

Here the doors are always open, she said, adding that the classes operate without pressuring children. Even if her son is not able to count to 100 or sing his ABCs like children who go to mainstream schools, she finds that he is growing in "other ways". "I'm happy and my child is happy. That's what matters," said Sabeen.

(By SIHAM BASIR THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 04, 02/02/2018)

CM orders appointment of 6,000 elementary school teachers

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who had announced in his last budget speech that he would give every district at least one English-medium school with the Cambridge system in the public sector, was told on Thursday that 15 of 25 such schools are ready to start functioning by December 2018.

These schools would be run through private management while the government would bear all the expenditures, including tuition fee, textbooks, exercise material, registration fee, examination fee and

even the salaries of the teaching and non-teaching staff while the private partner would have to run the management effectively.

This emerged at a meeting of the School Education Department, which was presided over by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah here on Thursday at the CM House. The chief minister reviewing the progress of the new school buildings, said: "I want to start these English-medium schools by end of April".

He directed the department to appoint 6,000 junior elementary school teachers so that early childhood education system, English-medium and comprehensive high schools could be started.

15 public sector schools under Cambridge system to open by December

He expressed his displeasure to know that the SNE of only five schools had been approved while 10 others were yet to be approved by the finance department. The chief minister giving approval of the SNE files during the meeting made it clear that he would not tolerate red tape. "I want that everything should be done in time," he added.

Earlier, School Education Secretary Iqbal Durrani briefing the chief minister said that out of 25 under-construction English-medium school buildings, 15 were ready. In the first phase six schools would be ready to start functioning from March while nine others would be ready by December.

He said the school buildings which have been completed and are ready to start were in Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Naushahro Feroze, Sanghar, Khairpur, Mirpurkhas, Tando Mohammad Khan, Ghotki, Thatta, Badin, Sujawal, Matiari, Tando Allahyar and Jamshoro. The schools which would be completed in 2018-19 are in Hyderabad, Umerkot, Dadu, Qambar-Shahdaskot, Jacobabad, Tharparkar and Malir while work on three other schools at Shikarpur, Kashmore and Karachi would be started next year.

Mr Durrani also briefed the meeting, which was attended by Minister for Education Jam Mehtab Dahar, P&D Chairman Mohammad Waseem, Principal Secretary to CM Sohail Rajput and other officers concerned.

He said the formation of recruitment rules for new 6,000 teachers was in process with the regulation wing. Under the approved arrangement, each English-medium school would have 69 staff members, including 39 teaching staff. Furniture for the 15 schools has been purchased. Every school would have a fully equipped science and computer lab, a library and a standby generator. These schools would be English-medium and would be operated on the Cambridge system, he added.

The chief minister said that it was quite difficult for the government to recruit good 'O' Level teachers in rural areas, therefore the task might be given to top educational institutions.

The minister and the secretary of school education were assigned the task to talk to leading educational institutions for running the management of these English-medium schools and then selection would be made through a competitive process.

He also said that the teachers for early childhood education should be recruited through genuine competitive process but these new teachers must be good at English, science and mathematics. Therefore, question papers for selection of teachers should be made accordingly. "Teachers' training is most important and I want a comprehensive plan for capacity building of the teachers in the government sector," he said.

Coal authority's earning

The Sindh Coal Authority has earned Rs560 million under royalty and cess in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

This was stated by the SCA during its board meeting. The authority requested the chief minister to enhance the annual grant-in-aid from Rs50 million to Rs90m.

The chief minister, who was presiding over the 30th SCA board meeting here at the CM House on Thursday, keeping in view the performance and scope of the SCA enhanced its grant-in-aid to Rs100m with effect from June 1, 2018.

(By Habib Khan Ghorani Dawn 17, 16/02/2018)

Chancellor's role restricted to awarding degrees

The Sindh Cabinet has resolved to oppose the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Pakistan Steel Mills and Lakhra Coal Power Plant.



The cabinet meeting held on Monday was presided over by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and began with a prayer for the recently deceased Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani and Asma Jahangir.

The CM said workers of Pakistan Steel Mills were starving due to non-payment of their salaries. The federal government deliberately turned the once profit-making organisation into a loss, he alleged, adding that the same has been the case with PIA.

“We are very clear that the land of the Pakistan Steel Mills would automatically return to the provincial government if the mills are privatised,” said Shah, adding that the federal government would have to safeguard the interests of the workers of PIA, the Pakistan Steel Mills and Lakhra Coal Power Plant. The Sindh government would resist their privatisation, he said.

The cabinet unanimously authorised the chief minister to send this message on its behalf to the federal government.

The agenda of the cabinet included a draft of the Sindh Police (Transfer, Posting and Tenure) Rules, 2017, a draft law regarding public sector universities in Sindh, an amendment in the charter of Ziauddin University, the Sindh Coal Authority Rules 2017, Sindh Nooriabad gas fired power project, a revised amendment to the Sindh Mining Concession Rules 2002 and delegation of powers to determine the composition of mines committee. The agenda also included draft legislation regarding the Sindh Ruet-e-Hilal Act 2017, Sindh Quran (Printing, Recording and Disposal of Damaged or Shaheed and Sacred Araqs) Act, 2018, amendment in the Law Officers (Conditions of Service) Rules, the Sindh Tourism Development Corporation Employees (Services) By-Laws, 2017, the Sindh Employees Social Security (Amendment) Bill, 2017 and regularisation of contract veterinary doctors under the district-wise veterinary service programme.

Cabinet amends procurement rules to expedite Blue Line BRT

The police rules were discussed in detail and the matter was deferred on the basis that the matter was subjudice as it was pending in the Supreme Court.

University law

The cabinet discussed and approved the draft law on public sector universities in Sindh. Under the new draft law, deans, vice-chancellors and pro-vice-chancellors will be appointed by the chief minister, while the governor will remain the chancellor and confer honorary degrees. The appointment of registrars and controllers of examinations would be made by the syndicate on the recommendations of a selection committee. The cabinet approved the draft law and decided to send it to the standing committee for higher education.

The amendment in the charter of Ziauddin University was also approved.

Coal authority

The cabinet also approved the Sindh Coal Authority Rules, 2017. Its members were told that the Nooriabad power project was operating at full capacity and supplying 100 megawatts of energy to K-Electric. The cabinet, after a presentation by Energy Secretary Agha Wasif, approved amendments in the Sindh Nooriabad Power Company's gas supply agreement.

The amendments were mainly technical, such as shifting the commercial operation date to December 31 and deleting the word 'alternative fuel'. The amendments were made to meet the requirements of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority.

Cabinet approves bill to increase fines for eating in public during Ramazan

The cabinet also discussed and approved a revised amendment in the Sindh Mining Concession Rules, 2002. The presentation was given by Mines and Minerals Secretary Shams Soomro. The cabinet was told that the Sindh Mining Concession Rules were framed in 2002 but there was a lack of clarity in the existing definition of the licensing authority. The licensing powers were given to the secretary while the minister was made the appellate authority.

Ruet-e-Hilal

Zakat, Usher and Religious Affairs Secretary Riaz Soomro told the cabinet about the legislation on Ruet-e-Hilal and said that in order to maintain unanimity on all religious occasions nationwide and regulate Ruet-e-Hilal arrangements, the federal government has prepared a draft law.

They have requested the provincial governments to pass a resolution thereby allowing the federal government to legislate on their behalf for Ruet-e-Hilal. The other provincial assemblies have already passed such resolutions, therefore he requested that the Sindh Assembly also pass the resolution. The cabinet approved the proposal and directed the zakat and religious affairs department to submit the resolution in the assembly.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 04, 20/02/2018)

FIR lodged against school management for 'attacking' polio team

Authorities on Tuesday sealed an "unregistered school" after its administration "attacked" a polio vaccination team while denying immunisation to its students, officials said.

They said the four-member team visited the Al-Badar School in Nazimabad No. 4 for regular vaccination of children. However, the administration first denied them entry and then misbehaved when the volunteers insisted.

"The situation led to a heated debate between the two sides," said SSP Central Irfan Baloch. "It didn't end here. The vaccination team then approached the commissioner office with a complaint. Assistant Commissioner Sheikh Rafiq along with police then accompanied the team and visited the school. The situation turned ugly when a member of the school administration physically resisted the officials and in the process also damaged the official car of the assistant commissioner."

Institution was not registered with authorities

The police then intervened and took a couple of administration staff into custody. The team administered vaccine to the children, he said, adding that the Gulbahar police also registered a case against the school management and sealed it on the orders of the deputy commissioner, Central.

"An FIR was later lodged under Sections 147 and 148 of the Pakistan Penal Code that related to violence and challenging writ of the state and 186 that defines obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions against the school officials on a complaint of the health worker Mohammad Raees. One of the school staff members was later arrested. It later emerged that the school was not even registered and being operated for last several years without meeting any legal formality," added the SSP.

Two carjackers held

The Anti-Car Lifting Cell (ACLC) has arrested two suspects in Sohrab Goth for their alleged involvement in several cases of street crimes and carjacking.

"The accused have been identified as Raza Iqbal and Ehsan Saeed," said ACLC SSP Asad Raza. "They are nominated in cases registered at Gulistan-i-Jauhar and Yousuf Plaza police stations. The suspects

had also deprived a police official of his valuables and car outside an ATM at gunpoint last month. The police have also recovered the snatched car of the policeman and two pistols from them.”

Also on Tuesday, police claimed to have arrested a suspect militant belonging to the outlawed Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan.

SSP West Omar Shahid Hamid said that acting on a tip-off, a targeted operation was carried out that led to the arrest of Kashif alias Kallu.

(Dawn 17, 21/02/2018)

Sindh education dept illegally occupies DJ Science College principal's residence

The students and teachers of DJ Science College protested on Wednesday against the education department for illegally allotting the residence of the college's principal and attempting to demolish parts of the heritage building.



Holding placards and banners, the students demanded Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, who is an alumni of the college, to save the heritage building from the mafia.

“This historic bungalow of our college principal is already under the occupation of the directorate office of human resources and training of the education department. They have now issued letters to the residents of the servant quarters where they want to expand their offices,” a senior teacher of the college, requesting anonymity, said.

“Given the shortage of classrooms, we had converted the principal's residence into a classroom where we used to hold computer and geology classes. But during the last Pakistan Peoples Party government, the then education minister, Pir Mazharul Haq, set up the camp office of the Sindh Text Book Board. Now, this bungalow has been allotted to the human resources and training director-general in violation of the rules,” said the teacher, adding that a notification for the allotment of the principal's residence has been issued by the schools secretary even though the college falls under the domain of the colleges secretary.

Transfer of Islamia College control sparks outrage

A notification issued on August 5, 2017 by then schools secretary Abdul Aziz Uqaili, said that the secretary, being the competent authority, allotted the residence of the newly-created office of human resources and training DG.

In the letter, the education secretary asked the HR DG to take over possession of the entire first floor, right hall and rooms on the ground floor of the building.

“After the bifurcation plan that was introduced in 2016, the college and schools became two separate departments. How can the schools secretary allot this bungalow in 2017? This is fraud and the chief minister must take notice of it,” said an official, showing a copy of the notification.

The official added that the principal, vice-principal and teachers of the college were unaware of the decision. “When the former education minister set up a camp office around seven years ago, the college administration had expressed concerns, but the minister assured them that it was an ad hoc arrangement,” a senior teacher said.

Protest against delay in approval of Government College of Technology's merit list

“We thought some sections of the education department were temporarily working here, but it was an utter surprise for us today when they showed us an allotment copy and threatened to demolish 10 to 15 quarters already declared as a heritage site,” the teacher said.

DJ Science College is one of the most prestigious colleges in Karachi.

It was built by Hindu philanthropist Dayaram Jethamal in 1887 and Viceroy of India Lord Dufferin laid the foundation stone of the college. Some of the popular alumni of the college include renowned columnist and philanthropist the late Ardeshir Cowasjee, the CM, scientist Dr Abdul Qadir Khan and many other notable personalities.

Sources privy to the development told *The Express Tribune* that the principal's bungalow came under encroachment when former culture minister Sassui Palijo renovated it given its historic importance. "It was not only the Sindh Text Book Board camp office, but the then education minister and bureaucrats of the department used to sit here as well," sources said.

Protesting students want their degrees recognised by HEC

On the other hand, the HR officials said they had lodged complaints with higher authorities against some people illegally living in the servant quarters in the college premises. In a letter addressed to education secretary and the principal of the college, the HR and training director diverted attention toward occupants living in the college area.

"The building, with its complete premises, such as the camp office of the Sindh Text Book Board, has been allotted to us in August, 2017.

However, unidentified individuals are using the premises through partially constructed quarters illegally under claims that the space was allotted to them by the principal. The occupants have failed to give us any legal documents. You are, therefore, requested to share with us the legal position on it," the HR and training assistant director wrote in a letter addressed to the principal of the college.

In separate letter, the HR director has requested the education secretary to intervene, seeking his help in the matter and for him to play a role in having the quarters vacated. "I have attempted to contact the principal of the college, but there has been no response.

He also avoided talking about the issue. So please help us in this matter," Jamal Mustafa Kazi, the HR and training director, said.

Despite many attempts, the education secretary and minister could not be reached for comments. The spokesperson for the education department, however, called it an internal matter and said, "The issue will be resolved soon".

(By Hafeez Tunio THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 04, 22/02/2018)

Assembly passes law to regularise NTS teachers

The Sindh Assembly finally passed the law to regularise the services of 15,649 contractual teachers who had passed the National Testing Service (NTS) examinations in 2014.



These teachers were initially hired in primary, secondary and higher secondary schools on three-year contracts but the government was reluctant to issue them permanent orders. The government's delaying tactics compelled the teachers to come out onto the streets, observe hunger strikes and march towards Chief

Minister House in protest. In the ensuing chaos, they were subjected to police brutality.

Moving the bill on Monday, Parliamentary Minister Nisar Ahmed Khuhro briefed the House on the law's objectives as well as his party's policy. "The Pakistan Peoples Party [PPP] believes in generating livelihood resources. We cannot lay off anyone, as it is not our policy," he said, adding that the teachers were appointed on the basis of three-year contracts and now the government has decided to regularise them.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement parliamentary leader Syed Sardar Ahmed inquired whether the teachers' appointments were made on the basis of the urban and rural quotas. "As per the quota system, 40% share must be given to candidates living in urban Sindh," he said. Education Minister Jam Mahtab Hussain Dahar replied that the appointments were made on the basis of union councils and that the

lion's share has been given to Karachi and other towns and cities in Sindh. "There was no quota system in the appointments. All the teachers were inducted purely on merit from their respective union councils/committees," he added.

Governor summons Sindh Assembly tomorrow

When Ahmed inquired whether the contractual teachers who had qualified the Sindh University and Institute of Business Administration tests were also given permanent job orders, Dahar replied in the affirmative.

Officials in the education department said a total of 450,000 candidates had initially applied, of which 121,000 passed the written test. The government finally inducted 15,649 of those teachers. "Among them, 9,500 are primary teachers, 5,300 secondary school teachers and 849 are higher secondary teachers," a senior official working in education department told the MPAs.

College encroachment

Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League – Functional MPA Nusrat Seher Abbasi moved a call attention notice and asked Dahar why the government has failed to remove the encroachments at Government Commerce College in Khairpur Mir. "The college is occupied by influential persons in former chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah's hometown. These encroachers have erected a wall around its plot. What steps have been taken against the land mafia?" she questioned. Dahar admitted that the encroachments existed and said they were trying to have them removed.

PSP leaders attend Sindh Assembly session ahead of Senate elections

Larkana package

The assembly turned down Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf parliamentary leader Khurram Sher Zaman's adjournment motion regarding corruption of government funds in the Larkana Development Package. Khuhro said that since the case is currently being heard in court, it cannot be discussed in the assembly.

Journalists' protest

During the assembly session, journalists covering the session protested against the arrest of three reporters working in different districts of Sindh.

Holding the placards in their hands, they walked out of the session and demanded that the government release their peers.

According to the Sindh Journalists Council, an organisation of local journalists, Kamran Sahito, a journalist from Hyderabad has gone missing and the police have now lodged fake cases against him. Similarly, Deedar a local journalist from Malir in Karachi and Rifaqat Jarwar of Tando Bagho went missing a few days ago. After the protest, ministers including Mukesh Kumar Chawla and Mumtaz Jakhri and MPA Saleem Raza Jalbani assured the journalists that these reporters will be released soon.

After the legislation, Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani adjourned the session till today (Tuesday).
(By Hafeez Tunio THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 04, 27/02/2018)

OBITUARY: Ghulam Kibria: the technology guru

GHULAM Kibria, who passed away in Karachi last Saturday, was a technologist in a class by himself. He spent his whole life trying to convince rulers, opinion-makers and the people at large that mstris and workers were capable of making Pakistan a technologically advanced country.



A person known since his early youth for a fiercely independent and critical mind, Ghulam Kibria disagreed with his father, Advocate Ghulam Mustafa Khan, a staunch leader of the Muslim League in Bulandshehr (UP, India), on the political future of Indian Muslims.

The reason was not merely his association with the senior Khaksars at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Akhtar Hameed Khan and Karrar Husain, but his own understanding of the causes of the Muslim elite's intellectual stagnation and political waywardness. Much later he presented his ideas in a book that deserved a wider audience than it actually received.

One of the earliest graduates of the AMU college of engineering, Ghulam Kibria got a teaching job at the same college. While he had his differences with the dominant political leaders he had none with the people. Thus, when word reached the AMU that Pakistan urgently needed skilled professionals he packed his bag and arrived in Lahore, where he stayed for two decades except for a break when he went to England and Germany to gain experience as a shop-floor worker and acquire an abiding respect for the value and dignity of labour.

During his stay in Lahore, Ghulam Kibria's principal achievement was his leading role in establishing the Milli Techniki Idara in a portion of the Bradlaugh Hall, a polytechnic where young boys received training in a variety of disciplines free of cost and the instructors, including Ghulam Kibria himself, offered their services without any charge. This polytechnic ran for many years and enabled thousands of young men, many of them resourceless refugees, to find their feet in life and also contribute significantly to the national economy.

He also mobilised his Samanabad neighbours to solve their civic problems through community action and enjoyed persuading a few of his friends to replace their cloak of bigotry with the shining armour of reason and rationalism.

The first PPP government showed interest in Ghulam Kibria's thesis on the utilisation of indigenous technology and the skills of mistris for industrial development. It set up an Appropriate Technology Development Organisation and invited Ghulam Kibria to be its chairman with the rank of a federal secretary. Among the many projects he started, a special place was occupied by plans to use waterfalls at canals to generate electricity on a small scale, each unit enough to enable residents of a small village to have one bulb per household.

He received valuable support not only from his friends among mistris but also from senior engineers including the one who was the first Muslim to receive a high degree in engineering from a German university in 1930. The venerable old engineer was happy to carry a generator to a remote area in the Northern Areas.

When martial law was imposed in 1977 he surprised the bureaucratic community by resigning from his lucrative and influential post. But he found a lot of work as a UN consultant to study mechanised farming in several Asian countries and later on as a World Bank consultant.

Shifting to Karachi in the 1980s, he attached himself to Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) and Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Piler) for what he told me was his second education.

Ghulam Kibria's main thesis was that at its birth Pakistan had the wherewithal to rapidly develop an industrial base and was ahead of many countries, including China and Korea, but it fell behind both because its privileged classes squandered the country's valuable technological inheritance through their undemocratic and ruinous policies and faulty planning.

These views were rooted in Kibria Bhai's broader formulation about industrial development in the world. "Before the evolution and development of modern technology during the middle of eighteenth century England," he argued, "the Asian and European countries as also the countries of North African were at the same level of technological development." He then explained in perhaps his most important work — Technology Acquisition in Pakistan; Story of a Failed Privileged Class and a Successful Working Class — how England forged ahead and how Asian-African countries lagged behind!

Kibria Bhai had opportunities of vindicating his faith in his mistris when he found one in Daska who offered to produce a lathe for a tractor manufacturing company for one-tenth of the cost quoted by a

foreign bidder. The National Development Finance Corporation (NDFC) that had been approached for a loan sought Kibria Bhai's advice before sanctioning the loan. The lathe produced by the mistri received the seal of approval from the British owner of the trade mark. A Raleigh bicycle plant was later on built by another mistri.

In Ghulam Kibria's personal creed technology and industrial progress were essential tools for the people's uplift, especially of the disadvantaged. He recognised merit in fellow beings by what they were doing to banish disease, hunger and want, and not by what they believed in. Above all, he was proud of having used his hands to contribute his bit to his people's progress and happiness.

Down with multiple diseases and unable to move around during the last years of his life his main regret was "I cannot do anything for anyone now".

Adieu Kibria Bhai! Not many persons in Pakistan have earned like you a rest in peace after a life well spent in the service of humankind.

(By I.A. Rehman Dawn 05, 01/03/2018)

100-year-old college upgraded to university

The Sindh Assembly passed a law on Friday to upgrade the 100-year-old Kali Mori College into a university following years of requests from the residents of Hyderabad.

The college, which is one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Sindh, completed its centenary in 2017.

The university will now be called Government College University Hyderabad and have nine faculties and admission will be open to all students without any discrimination on the grounds of religion, caste, creed, doctrine, race, colour or ethnicity. "The Sindh government will have the power to conduct inspections of the university and take action against or remove any official, including the vice-chancellor. The VC will be appointed by the chief minister," the law said.

The university will have faculties of science, education, management sciences and commerce, information technology, medicine and allied sciences, law, arts and humanities, engineering and technology and pharmacy. "The university will follow the provincial government's policy in its admission process," reads the law.

PTI leader demands dissolution of Sindh Assembly

"This college has completed 100 years, so we are going to upgrade it to a university, giving a gift to the people living in Hyderabad," said Parliamentary Minister Nisar Ahmed Khuhro. His words were welcomed by all members in the House, who thumped their desks.

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro said the youth of Hyderabad and its adjoining areas will greatly benefit from this university. Health Minister Dr Sikandar Mandhro and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) MPA Rana Ansar, who is from Hyderabad, also spoke in favour of the university.

Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League – Functional MPA Nusrat Seher Abbasi protested after she was not allowed to move her adjournment motion on a government school in Hijrat Colony that has been non-functional for a long time. "There is no school in the area. People are running from pillar to post, but no government official listens to them," she complained, adding that lawmakers bring important issues to discuss in the House but the government ministers bulldoze them and do not let them speak. "Where should we go and where should we raise this issue?" she demanded, ripping up her agenda copy.

PTI MPA submits resolution in Sindh Assembly against Zardari's remarks on Rao Anwar

MQM MPA Nadeem Razi, who has left the party, raised the issue of a dilapidated road in Malir city. "Every other day, people sustain injuries and many have lost their lives. It has been turned into a killer road," he said, requesting the local government minister and Sindh government to take notice of it. Responding to him, Shoro said the area falls within the jurisdiction of the Karachi Metropolitan

Corporation and the provincial government has nothing to do with its maintenance. "You should approach the mayor regarding this issue," Shoro suggested.

The assembly passed a public-private partnership law. The session was adjourned till Monday. (By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 03/03/2018)

PA passes public-private partnership and Kali Mori university bills

The Sindh Assembly on Friday unanimously passed the Sindh Public-Private Partnership (Amendment) Bill, 2018, and the Government College (Kali Mori) University Hyderabad Bill, 2018.

When the house met in the morning, it took up the public-private partnership bill for consideration and passed it unanimously. MQM's Syed Sardar Ahmad, who had advised on Thursday to send the bill to the standing committee for removing ambiguities and improving it, was absent.

When the Government College University Hyderabad Bill was taken up for consideration after its introduction, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Nisar Khuhro said the Government College Kali Mori Hyderabad was a historic institution which had celebrated its 100 years of dispensing knowledge last October.

"The students of the college played an important role in the struggle for restoration of democracy in the country. It produced outstanding personalities in every field including the ex-prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, Syed Miran Mohammad Shah, A.K. Brohi, Dr Nabi Bux Baloch and Syed Abdullah Shah," he added.

"Hyderabad is known as the heart of Sindh and one can find a number of good universities in and around it, like University of Sindh, Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, LUMHS, Agriculture University Tandojam, Isra University, etc," he further said.

"Three to four thousand students who are enrolled in the college can now pursue higher education at the same place. The government has decided to present a gift to the citizens of Hyderabad in the shape of a university on completion of the college's 100 years.

"The Sindh government has set up a number of public universities and upgraded the Sindh Madressatul Islam when it had completed its century," Mr Khuhro said.

Rana Ansar of the MQM congratulated the Sindh Assembly, Sindh government, Mr Khuhro and Education Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar for meeting the long-standing demand of the youth of Hyderabad by establishing the university.

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro and Health Minister Dr Sikander Mandhro recalled that the government of the PPP always supported education and established universities.

When Nusrat Abbasi of the PML-F raised the issue of 470 students of the Iqra Fellowship School, Hijrat Colony, which was shut by the Sindh Education Foundation, Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani told her as the motion did not muster support of one fifth members of the house, it could not be discussed.

On that, Ms Abbasi tore the copy of the day's agenda and staged a walkout. Khurram Sher Zaman of the PTI also walked out with her but returned to the house after some time.

Mr Sher Zaman drew attention of the house towards occupation of the Jamaluddin Afghani Park in Sharfabad for running a restaurant.

On that, Mr Shoro said the PPP government had got 300 parks in Karachi vacated which had been occupied illegally. He gave assurance that the park would be restored soon if there was no legal issue involved.

"No one will be allowed to encroach upon the parks," he said.

Sheeraz Waheed of the MQM said Rs50 million were given by the government for lifting of garbage in the Korangi district but the state of affairs was shameful and pathetic.

Mr Shoro said the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) had started lifting garbage in South and East districts while Korangi was being paid from the octroi and zila tax share.

"If Korangi Council passes a resolution and authorises the Sindh government to lift garbage, the responsibility can be given to the SSWMB," he added.

Ghazala Sial of the PPP talked about encroachment at Musafir Khana, situated at Faizabad Colony, Khairpur Mirs district. Transport Minister Nasir Hussain told her that the issue was not his ministry's domain and the local administration was responsible for setting up a taxi stand there.

Nadeem Razi of the MQM, who had joined the PSP, drew attention of the house towards dilapidated condition of the road from Malir Halt to Malir City where accidents took place regularly.

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro said it was the responsibility of the KMC to construct a road there.

"The Sindh government has made 100 per cent payment of its estimated cost of Rs800 million to the KMC. It has even paid additional amount to the KMC for laying sewer lines and given it three months to reconstruct the road."

Senate election

Speaker Durrani said Senate election will be held on Saturday (today) and advised the members to hand over their mobile phones to the election commissioner before casting their votes.

He also said no camera will be allowed inside the assembly on the occasion including that by the media.

The speaker said all guests will not be entertained on Saturday as there is no assembly session.

Mr Khuhro said the voting would be conducted through secret ballot to preserve sanctity of the vote.

The speaker then adjourned proceedings of the house until Monday.

(By Habib Khan Ghori Dawn 17, 03/03/2018)

SHC orders govt to stop schools from raising fee above 5pc

The Sindh High Court on Monday struck down a notification of the provincial government regarding a raise in tuition fees by private schools, and restrained school managements from charging the increased fee in violation of rules.

A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Munib Akhtar, was hearing similar petitions filed by parents of students enrolled in various private schools across Karachi. The bench declared the raise in tuition fee by private schools unlawful, and directed the provincial government to form a mechanism to calculate school fees. The bench also ordered school managements not to charge extra or late fee from families of those students who were unwilling to pay the exorbitant fee.

The petitioners had stated that according to the rules, school managements could not raise tuition fees by more than five per cent in an academic year; however, some private schools had raised the fee they charged by more than 10pc.

They requested the court to direct the relevant authorities to restrain school managements from raising tuition fees above the rate allowed and to follow rules and regulations.

Govt asked to develop mechanism to determine school fees

While hearing an identical petition back in 2016, the SHC had directed the provincial education department to ensure the enforcement of sub-rule 7m (3) of the Rules 2002, which required private schools to not raise the fee they charged by more than 5pc in an academic year. The SHC had also asked the managements to revise their fee structure after seeking prior approval from the government.

Shahrukh Jatoi case

A special bench, headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, heard arguments presented by the counsel representing Siraj Talpur and Sajjad Talpur — the accused in the Shahzeb Khan murder case.

The Supreme Court had earlier annulled a verdict passed by the SHC, which had set aside the suspects' conviction, and ordered a retrial of the case under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. The Supreme Court had also directed the high court to decide the case within two months.

After hearing the arguments of the defence counsel, the bench put off hearing till March when counsel will continue their arguments.

Advocate Farooq H. Naek, who is representing Shahrukh Jatoi, the primary suspect, said his client was a juvenile at the time he had committed the crime, therefore, he should not be tried under the ATC. The court had maintained that this application could be heard separately, as a bench was constituted to decide the case within the stipulated time.

Earlier on Nov 28 last year, an SHC bench, headed by Justice Salahuddin Panhwar, had set aside capital punishment awarded to Shahrukh Jatoi and Nawab Siraj Talpur and life imprisonment to Sajjad Talpur and Ghulam Murtaza Lashari. The high court had also ruled that the case did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 and could be tried by a regular court.

Following their release, civil rights campaigners had approached the apex court, asking it to set aside the SHC judgment and requested that the case be tried in an antiterrorism court. The suspects were arrested again after the apex court ordered a retrial of the case under ATA.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn 17, 06/03/2018)

SHC extends stay against charging increased tuition fee by four private schools

The Sindh High Court (SHC) extended on Wednesday its earlier interim order, restraining private schools from charging an enhanced fee and taking any action against students in this regard, till April 5.



A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, passed this direction to the management of four private schools, including the Beaconhouse School System, City School and Foundation Public School. Meanwhile, the court also directed the parents to continue paying tuition fee with 5% increase, along with other dues, till final disposal of the matter.

During Wednesday's proceedings, the parents' lawyer Nouman Jamali argued that another bench in its judgment had recently quashed Rule 7(C) of the Rules of 2001 and the provincial government was directed to formulate the relevant rules, if it wished, within 90 days.

He argued that till such rules were formulated the tuition fee cannot be enhanced. He informed the bench that the management of private schools had been issuing vouchers to demand a fee with an increase of more than 5% in alleged violation of the previous stay order granted by the court.

School fee hike case: SHC wants govt to revisit rules regulating private schools

Advocate Kamal Azfar, who represented Beaconhouse School System, argued that the court had directed the government to formulate rules in consultation with the private schools. He claimed that in light of the recent court judgment, the schools had been permitted to increase their fee in proportion to expenditures.

However, he argued that the set of petition in hand had become infructuous following a judgment announced by another bench in a similar matter.

The bench asked the lawyers for the parties to further argue on the matter on April 5. Till then, it extended its earlier interim order that restrained the private schools management from charging enhanced fee and taking any adverse action against the students. Meanwhile, it also directed the parents to continue to paying 5% enhanced tuition fee till final disposal of the matter.

Casehistory

Petitioners Bushra Jabeen, Arshad Fawad, Mohammad Shariq Feroz and 600 other parents had challenged the increase in tuition fees at four private schools in an alleged violation of the Sindh Private Educational Institutions (Regulation and Control) Ordinance, 2001.

SHC rules against hike in private schools' fee beyond 5%

The parents said their children were studying at private schools situated in KDA, Gulistan-e-Jauhar and Qasimabad, and the schools' administrations had increased the tuition fee by 12% to 60% in violation of the ordinance.

Earlier, on January 19 this year, the court had directed that the private schools' administrations should not take any action by way of enhancement of fee or otherwise prejudicial to any student whose parent or guardian was a petitioner in the instant case, including and in particular but not limited by way of action, on the reminder notices sent to the parents or guardians in relation to enhanced fees.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 08/03/2018)

'Closed society, lack of diversity in universities breed terrorism'

With the rising intolerance and extremism in society, many of the radicalised minds are being traced back to universities in Pakistan. To analyse, a panel discussion was held at the KLF titled 'Universities or nurseries of terrorism?' on Friday, the event's inaugural day.

Moderated by Baela Raza Jamil, representatives of several higher education institutions, both public and private, were part of the panel and shared their views on the controversial topic.

According to scholar Mohammad Ali Shaikh, also vice chancellor of Sindh Madressatul Islam University, universities cannot be islands and they do not function in a vacuum. In fact, he said, what we have injected into society at large is having an impact on universities.

"Radicalisation is taking place in universities, but the [stage] has not yet arrived that we can say they have become the nurseries of terrorism," he said.

One reason which he highlighted for increasing radicalisation was the lack of diversity of students in universities.

"In the older times, there were so many students of different nationalities and students were exposed to different cultures and identities. When diversity is present, tolerance automatically comes. That is now lacking in the present climate."

Wasif Rizvi, president of Habib University, said it is not what universities are doing but what universities are not doing that is allowing students to become radicalised.

"If you look at the educational backgrounds of most terrorists, they usually were business graduates, engineers or doctors," he explained.

"This is because universities have become very narrow in terms of not only the disciplines they offer, but also the interaction they allow with those belonging to other areas of study.

“Students are not being intellectually refined, they are never challenged, and just form a circle of intellectual clones around themselves, which happens in a business school, in an engineering college, and in a medical school,” he added.

Talib Karim, president of IoBM, spoke about how the issue requires more hands-on approach. One such way in which his university is taking steps to negate this is by including more empathy based tests to ascertain the inner workings of prospective students.

Dr Mehtab Karim, a research professor, working extensively on the issue on youth radicalisation in Pakistan, spoke about how the youth bulge in Pakistan was a concerning factor in the path to radicalisation in the country.

“If you look at one of the more recent reports that have come out on terrorism, Pakistan is among the five top countries where the population is suffering from some kind of terrorism and the other countries affected include Iraq, Somalia etc. Two things common in these countries is that they are Islamic countries and all have very high proportion of young people.”

Dr Farrukh Iqbal, director of the IBA, also highlighted several researches conducted internationally, and said that the link between universities and terrorism dates back at least as far back as the 9/11 attacks when many, if not most of the perpetrators were very well-educated.

(By Haneen Rafi Dawn 17, 10/03/2018)

Students Forced to attend classes at dilapidated public school

A public school in Karachi is being confronted by a plethora of problems ranging from poor infrastructure to operational failures.



With no walls and ceilings, no watchman, no sweepers or provision of water, gas or electricity, the old building is home to over 150 students but has only two operational rooms.

Meanwhile, a makeshift room is being set up for the principal and school staff.

The school building serves as a meeting point for local residents. The Usmanias Government Boys Primary School lost one of its side walls due to an anti-encroachment drive in Liaquat Ashraf Colony, Mehmoodabad.

Established in 1983, the school currently functions without a boundary wall even two years after the anti-encroachment operation.

The absence of the wall has created a security issue for the school. Anyone can enter the building, while the students face breathing problems due to the dust and noise pollution in the area.

Due to lack of cleaning staff, the students must clean the floors themselves as well as dust their desks and chairs. Due to a lack of furniture, students often have to sit on the floor where a sheet is placed. Meanwhile, in addition to watchmen, the school also lacks gas and water lines for which arrangements are made from the nearby mosque.

The school originally had seven rooms, but four of them have not been in use since the walls collapsed.

Therefore, 87 girls and 63 boys are accommodated in two rooms, while a narrow room is used by the principal and school staff.

The school principal told Express News that a complaint has been registered several times against the dilapidated school condition and wall damage with the town officer, district officer and education department's website for complaints, ILMI.

However, the authorities always push aside the issue, saying that work on the school will soon be carried out and that the complaint is being reviewed by the authorities. Repeated complaints, however, have not made a difference.

The authorities once sent officers of the works and services department, who chose to take no action after their examination.

According to the principal, the school is the only primary education institution in the area. There was a time when 300 to 400 students were enrolled here, the principal said, adding that the dilapidated condition of the school has cut the student strength to half its original capacity.

“There is no clerk in the school. There was a watchman who left 15 years ago,” the principal said, adding that Rs25,000 was the annual fund received for the school management committee from the education department, but they have not been receiving the sum for the last three years.

Picture of neglect: Govt school in Swat reels under disrepair

A fifth grade student, Muhammad Subhan, told Express News that the classroom is directly exposed to sunlight and dust because of the damaged wall.

Because of a lack of walls on the upper floor, a wall has been constructed with desks and chairs, due to which we are forced to study on the floors, said Subhan.

A student of the fourth grade, Ayesha Ishtiaque, said that continuous noise of traffic makes studying an arduous task.

The school appealed to the education minister to improve the school's condition and at least rebuild the wall demolished by the anti-encroachment cell.

(By Saba Naz The Express Tribune, 05, 19/03/2018)

Sexual harassment in universities

Pakistan today is waking up to the realities of sexual harassment of women — and sometimes men — in all walks of life, from the workplace to the home and places of recreation and education. It is the latter that is attracting comment recently, with now at least four harassment cases surfacing at Karachi University (KU) in recent weeks. These are probably the tip of the proverbial iceberg. In the light of these alleged cases the KU has announced that a harassment watch committee is to be constituted in each department and that a complaint box would be placed in the Vice-Chancellors Secretariat. There will in each case be a three-member committee led by the chairperson of a department or the director of an institute. These will also include the two most senior male and female professors.

In principle this would appear to be a welcome and timely move, the biggest question being why it had not happened before when the problem of sexual harassment has been well known for decades. There is however a significant caveat. Any referral agency be it workplace harassment or, as is now also to the fore, the sexual abuse of children, has to have the confidence and trust of those that seek to refer themselves to it. Further, those that constitute the committee tasked to listen to and then investigate such cases have to have the competencies to do so effectively. These will include counselling skills and an environment of confidentiality that will give confidence and security to the victims of harassment. The structure being proposed is an utilisation of existing authority figures within KU which may seem like a plug-and-play solution.

Where such committees have been formed their success has lain with the fact that they are peer-oriented, if not suitably trained workplace colleagues outside of the power hierarchy then closer to the point of referral than senior management figures. Whilst the initiative is to be applauded, a careful reappraisal of its implementation is recommended.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 22/03/2018)

Heavy school bags

THE image of young children lugging heavy school bags is a common one across Pakistan. From elite private schools to government schools, nearly all educational institutions in this country seem to insist that youngsters carry heavy burdens. However, as medical specialists have pointed out, heavy school bags are taking a major toll on children's health. The deputy medical superintendent at Karachi's Abbasi Shaheed Hospital recently wrote a letter to school principals stating that weighty bags can cause neck, back and shoulder pain in children. The doctor added that many young patients had complained of ailments such as stiff neck and shoulder pain. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has taken a positive step in this regard by calling for the formation of a working group to look into the matter of heavy school bags and the effects this has on children's health.

Indeed, in this day and age, when nearly everything has 'gone digital' there need to be out-of-the-box solutions to lessen children's load. Many elite private schools already send homework through email and apps, yet still make children carry a heavy load of books on their backs. Perhaps more digital solutions and a sensible schedule for carrying only required books can address the problem.

Lockers may also be helpful. Public schools — lacking the advanced technologies of their more well-resourced private counterparts — must also be helped by the state to introduce classroom technologies that can reduce the load in children's backpacks, and prevent the need to carry heavy textbooks. Learning should be an exercise that engages students; youngsters should not have to dread the prospect of carrying heavy bags to school every day. Initiatives such as the one taken by the KP administration should be replicated by other provinces as well. Indeed, with the involvement of educators, medical professionals and the government, it is hoped that a solution can be reached that reduces the weight of school bags and ensures a healthy future for the coming generations.

(Dawn 08, 26/03/2018)

SHC orders BSEK to issue admit cards to matric students

The Sindh High Court (SHC) directed on Thursday the Board of Secondary Education Karachi (BSEK) controller of examinations to immediately issue admit cards to nearly 50 students so that they could appear for the exams today (Friday).

A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, also issued notices to the BSEK controller of examinations, a private school's management and others to file their comments explaining why the students had not been issued admit cards.

A group of parents of students studying in classes nine and 10 at a private school run by Genius Academy had approached the SHC against BSEK and other authorities for not issuing admit cards to their children.

The petitioners informed the judges that their children, 19 studying in class nine and 30 in class 10, were studying at the private school and the school's management had submitted forms for the enrolment of the students to the secondary education board well in time, however, the board officials were not issuing admit cards without which the students could not take exams.

The parents pleaded that an exam would be conducted today and if their children were not issued admit cards, it would waste their entire year. Therefore, the court was requested to direct the BSEK to issue their children admit forms immediately so that they could sit in the exams.

Security measures: BISE shifts exam centres due to PSL

After the initial hearing, the bench issued notices to the BSEK controller of examination, the private school's management and others to file their comments on April 2. In the meantime, it directed the BSEK controller of examinations to ensure that admit cards were issued immediately to the petitioners' children so that they could appear for the exams.

Universities law amendment bill

Meanwhile, the same bench directed a deputy attorney-general and the provincial advocate-general to submit detailed replies on behalf of the federal and provincial governments on a petition challenging the Sindh Universities and Institutions Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 that allegedly gives administrative control of the varsities to the provincial government.

The bench fixed the matter for April 19, asking Advocate Arfan Aziz, who represents the petitioner, civil rights group Pasban-e-Pakistan, to argue on the maintainability of the petition.

During Thursday's proceedings, Advocate-General Barrister Zamir Ahmed Ghumro and the deputy attorney-general raised objections on the maintainability of the petition, arguing that the bill had still not been made an Act, and hence, it was a proposed bill.

However, Advocate Aziz argued that it was a drafted bill and had been passed by the assembly in violation of the rules.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 30/03/2018)

Undeterred, private schools charge summer vacation fees

Sindh's 12,000 private schools are a law unto themselves, blatantly flouting government decrees and sometimes even court orders.

Despite the provincial government's directives not to collect summer vacation fee for the months of June and July, many parents have been asked by their children's schools to pay or else. Every year, the education minister and secretary issue circulars in the media, urging parents not to pay the fee and warning the private school managements against collecting it but their efforts produce no results.

"Three days ago, my children got their results. I received a message from the school to pay July's fee in advance with the current month, otherwise my children's result will be withheld," said Noor Bano, a resident of Kashmir Colony. She said she had no other option but to pay the double fee.

"My three children are enrolled in a private school located in Defence View. I pay Rs2,500 to Rs2,700 per month for each child. It was difficult for us to arrange the double fee, but finally we borrowed the sum from relatives," she explained, adding that most parents are incensed that the government has turned its back on implementation of its directives.

Mama Parsi School to celebrate 100 years

A few years ago, the Sindh High Court directed these schools to refrain from such practices, but the school managements have turned a blind eye to these directives.

Zakaria, a father of two, said, "I have written to the complaint cells of Chief Minister House and the education department, but no one has responded yet." He accused the private schools of working as a mafia under the patronage of government officials.

All Private School Management Association, Sindh Chairperson Khalid Shah defended his decision to charge the summer fee in advance. "No one takes us in confidence when making these decisions," he said. "Where are we supposed to arrange teachers' and other staff salaries as well as other expenses from if we can't charge advance fee?" he asked, adding that schools remain closed in June and July, but teachers and other staff still have to be paid for both months.

"Most schools start renovation of their buildings in the summer vacation so we need money in advance for these costs," he justified, adding that private schools have been facing multiple problems because parents do not pay fees on time. "Around 20% of the schools located in posh areas earn money by charging exorbitant fees. No one speaks against them," he said.

Sadiq Public School hosts flower show

Not only is a summer fee being charged in advance, private schools also increase their tuition fee every year. Middle-class families are often unable to pay this exorbitant sum and many have challenged this in court, pleading that the yearly fee increase be capped at 5%. Last month, the high court ordered the education department to frame the rules to regulate the fee hike in 90 days. However, Shah said a 5% increase is 'not possible' due to inflation. "We have suggested that the government raise it to 10% a year," he said.

The education minister and secretary could not be reached for comments, however, a spokesperson for the department said they have taken action against those schools that violated the government's orders. "Let us identify the schools, we are ready for action," he said.

(By Hafeez Tunio The Express Tribune, 05, 03/04/2018)

JICA and UNICEF to support non-formal education project in Sindh

The Japanese government will provide a grant of \$1.1 million (Rs127.3 million) to the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) to support a non-formal education project, which will provide high quality alternative education to out-of-school children in Sindh.

This was announced by Schools Education Secretary Dr Iqbal Hussain Durrani at the project's launch ceremony. According to the project, 150 non-formal education (NFE) centres will be established to provide access to high quality alternative education to 4,500 children, including 2,500 females, in Ghotki and Khairpur districts.

These NFE centres will be established by Unicef in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and will be governed by the directorate of literacy and non-formal education under the education department.

Through the initiative, 150 NFE teachers, including at least 90 females, will be trained through a child-centred interactive teaching methodology to deliver high quality NFE content for the learning of students.

The project aims to include community involvement to teach out-of school children. For this, village education committees will be formed that will comprise 20 community members, of whom at least 60% will be women. The committee members will be trained to support the effective functioning of the NFE centres.

AIOU-JICA hold teacher training for out-of-school children

According to the schools education secretary, non-formal education was among four priorities of the school education department for the next 10 years. Dr Durrani appreciated Unicef for partnering in the project. He also thanked Jica for its participation in various education projects, including the NFE centres and construction of 52 state-of-the-art schools in various districts of the province.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Japanese consul-general said education played a critical role not only for the development of an individual, but also for the overall economic development of a nation. He added that Japan would continue to support education in Pakistan.

Jica has been consistently prioritising non-formal education in its ongoing technical assistance to Pakistan since 2004, a Jica representative said, adding that the agency was implementing the Advancing Quality Alternative Learning (AQAL) project that aimed to strengthen non-formal education in Sindh. Jica expects the Sindh government to expand non-formal education as a strategy to ensure the right to education to out-of-school children under Article 25-A of the Constitution.

'Social work is no less than worship'

By supporting the Sindh education department, Unicef aims to strengthen equitable access of high quality education to boys and girls in Sindh. Non-formal education is an appropriate educational model

to provide access of education to boys and girls who are over-aged, dropouts and labourers, and who live in underprivileged regions.
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 04/04/2018)

Parents committee to protest outside schools against ‘heavy increase’ in fees

An organisation representing the parents of students enrolled in private schools on Tuesday said they would be launching a campaign against the arbitrary heavy increases in school fees and in the first phase black banners would be placed outside those schools.

“We’ll also hold demonstrations outside those schools soon,” said Kashif Sabirani, chairman of the Parents Action Committee while addressing a press conference at a hotel.

He said the action committee had also gathered a number of lawyers to form a legal aid committee, which was to compile lists of the schools which had “arbitrarily increased” fees.

“These lists will be submitted to the Supreme Court,” he added.

He said apart from expenditure on course for new classes and uniforms, a number of charges had been forged by a number of private schools, which had heavily burdened the already stretched people belonging to the middle class.

Mr Sabirani said the parents committee had been raising voice against such issues for the past three years during which they had also communicated their concerns to the chief minister and the education minister.

“Despite clear instructions by the superior courts, a number of private schools have increased their fees by 25-50 per cent in addition to making us paying thousands of rupees on the heads of various charges,” he said.

He said course books and copies which were available for Rs1,500 were being given by schools for Rs3,000 to Rs5,000.

He said their legal committee would take up those issues with the court. Besides, all evidences would also be furnished before the chief minister and the related minister with the request for taking stern action against their managements.

(By The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Dawn, 18, 04/04/2018)

Governor returns universities amendment bill for lack of uniformity

The controversial Sindh Universities and Institutes Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 has been returned by Governor Mohammad Zubair on the grounds that it does not conform to the law governing the other three provinces. The bill transfers the governor’s powers over varsities to the chief minister and has been termed an attempt to seize universities’ autonomy.

The governor has also declared that the end of Higher Education Commission (HEC) representation in public varsities in the province is illegal. A reliable source in the Sindh government told *Express News* that the bill was sent back with objections after being considered for a couple of days. Zubair said the bill will harm uniformity of educational standards. He went on to explain the importance of the Chancellor’s Committee, which comprises governors and chancellors of all four provinces.

The committee discusses problems faced by public varsities across the country and makes important decisions about them. “But when the governors and chancellors have no authority, in what capacity will they be a part of the decision?” asked Zubair. It was stated in the bill that the 18th Amendment and approved amended 2013 university bill has deprived the governors and chancellors of their authority and if further powers are taken away from them, the checks and balances system at public varsities will collapse.

Public universities will now be controlled by the chief minister

The governor also objected to replacing the federal HEC member in university syndicates with a member of the Sindh HEC. He recommended that both members be included in the syndicates. He added that through the HEC, the federal government is issuing development and non-development budget for public varsities, budget for research grants and training. The framework for the functionality of the federal and provincial HECs has been decided by a Mutual Interest Council, yet the federal body's representation in the syndicate is being terminated.

Zubair also objected to a clause in the bill that allows termination of the varsities' vice-chancellors by the CM and suggested that a committee be formed, headed by the chief justice of the Sindh High Court or any other judge, to make such decisions rather than leave the power in the hands of the CM. Regarding objections raised on sections of the bill involving the syndicate selection boards, Zubair adopted the stance that instead of government officers, neutral professors should be taken on board.

According to the 2013 amendment bill, the authority to hire the VC and finance director of any public sector varsity was transferred from the governor to the CM.

In the present amendment bill, the governor is limited to a ceremonial role. The CM will have the power to preside over award ceremonies, grant approval for PhD degrees, appoint acting VCs and deans and preside over important meetings.

'Those opposing Universities Law haven't read it'

Zubair has also turned down the provincial government's bill elevating Kalimore College into a public sector university, raising objections similar to those made against the universities amendment bill.

However, the Sindh government maintains that the governor's objections are only 'observations' relating to converting the college into a university. "The Sindh government has placed the governor as a ceremonial figure for universities, absolving him of all the responsibilities and powers he had before the bill," revealed sources.

A senior official in the Sindh government told *Express News* that as per the bill, the governor will only be responsible for presiding over graduation ceremonies and awarding honorary PhD degrees at the Hyderabad university.

"The CM will now act as controlling authority to appoint VCs, acting VCs, faculty deans and finance directors," the source said.

He added that the new bill ensures the provincial government's representation in university syndicates, senate and selections boards. The task of acting as an academic watchdog has been taken from the federal HEC and given to the provincial one. One of the governor's objections to the college's upgrade was the lack of federal representation in the university syndicate, as the varsity would be funded by the federal government.

The provincial assembly unanimously approved last month the Government College University Bill to upgrade Kalimore College into a public sector university. After the objections raised by the governor, the provincial law department will return the bill for fresh discussions in the assembly.

The tug of war for powers is likely to take its toll on higher education in Sindh. The battle is likely to delay the establishment of Hyderabad's first public sector university, further depriving the residents of the second most populous city of a suitable institution of higher learning.

(By Safdar Rizvi The Express Tribune, 04, 09/04/2018)

Universities amendment bill referred to assembly with ‘minor changes’

In a move akin to a slap in the face of opponents of the Sindh Universities and Institutes Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018, the Sindh Cabinet approved the controversial piece of legislature once again and decided to refer it to the assembly for reconsideration with minor changes.

Recently, Governor Mohammad Zubair returned the bill and objected to its lack conformity to the standards governing the remainder of the country’s institutions of higher learning and the transfer of power from the federal to the provincial Higher Education Commission (HEC).

Since the bill was passed by the assembly on March 9 it has engendered protests and criticism aplenty. Staff and students of public universities in the province have demanded that the law, which they claim snatches varsities’ autonomy, be withdrawn.

The Cabinet meeting chaired on Monday by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah expressed its reservations on the language used by the governor in his observations. “The conduct of the governor cannot be discussed in the assembly. Since the chief minister is an elected representative and is answerable to the assembly, therefore he has been given the powers of appointing vice-chancellors through a search committee.

Bill to regularise teachers to be presented in Sindh Assembly today

Apart from this, proper procedure has been devised in the draft law to remove VCs through an inquiry committee in case serious allegations are proved against them,” said the chief minister’s spokesperson.

Official sources said that most of the cabinet members cried foul over 20 years of bungling, corruption and mismanagement at universities under the control of the governor’s office. The governor previously enjoyed full authority in varsity affairs.

“Despite the ban on contractual employees, around 250 retired employees were hired at Dow University of Health Sciences. We have now fired these people on the court’s orders,” the CM told participants of the meeting, adding that billions of rupees have been embezzled at public universities without proper mechanisms to monitor their affairs.

“There must be a proper watchdog to monitor the activities of VCs, taking action against them if they violate the rules and allegations against them are proven,” said Shah. The cabinet decided to send the draft to the law department where minor changes will be made with regards to inspections and inquiries to be conducted by the CM’s office. “Some senior officials of various departments will be included in the inquiry committee. After the amendment is vetted by the law department, the universities and boards secretary will refer the bill to the assembly,” explained official sources.

Speakers term universities amendment bill ‘an attempt to take over higher education’

The sources added there will be no need for the governor’s assent if the assembly reconsiders the amendment. “After the 18th Amendment, the assembly secretariat is bound to refer all bills to the governor for his signature, which is mandatory for making any bill into an act. If the governor refuses to sign, then the assembly itself has the authority to pass it and make it into an act,” said the Sindh Assembly secretary.

Other issues

The Cabinet also approved new External Debt Management Manual (EDMM), Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority budget and discussed rising load-shedding in the city. The members urged the federal government to name the newly constructed Islamabad airport after Benazir Bhutto.

Shah, who also holds the finance department portfolio, said that the objective of the EDMM was to outline the policies and procedures governing external debt management by the Sindh government. He added that it should be used for day-to-day management of external debt activities “where appropriate, diagrams and flow charts are used to facilitate users’ understanding of the process and workflow”. He

explained that the manual was prepared to attain the desired internal controls over external debt management policies at the provincial level.

Protest against Universities Law Amendment Bill continues

It explains activities relating to external debt management, the need for controls, the nature and content of work processes and importance of aspects such as debt recording, servicing and reporting.

The cabinet also approved a Rs555.17 million budget for the katchi abadi authority. The Rs555.17 million includes Rs200 million worth of government grants and Rs355.17 million from the authority's own resources. In the budget, 22 posts from grades BPS-1 to BPS-20 have been created and Rs45 million has been allocated for low housing schemes.

The CM was told that Rs325.17 million would be spent on salaries, Rs109 million on non-development expenditures and Rs121 million on development expenditures.

There are 1,409 katchi abadis in Sindh, of which 1,251 have been regularised. Parliamentary Minister Nisar Ahmed Khuhro pointed out that an old katchi abadi in Larkana was inaugurated by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has not been regularised as yet. To this, the CM directed Katchi Abadis Minister Murtaza Baloch to personally visit the scheme and regularise it as soon as possible.

Appointment of prosecutor-general

The Cabinet was informed that prosecutor-general Shahadat Awan has resigned due to personal reasons therefore the post cannot be left vacant for too long. The Cabinet approved the appointment of Dr Syed Fiazul Hassan Shah as the new PG and directed the chief secretary to issue a notification in this regard.

'Those opposing Universities Law haven't read it'

The members, on the recommendation of the Labour department, discussed some proposed amendments in the Sindh Employees Social Security (Amendment) Bill, 2018, the Sindh Workers Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2018, Sindh Employees Old-Age Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and Sindh Minimum Wage (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The meeting was informed that the amendments were proposed on the recommendations of the first Sindh Labour Tripartite Conference held on December 11, 2017.

(By Hafeez Tunio The Express Tribune, 04, 10/04/2018)

Brutality in the classroom

Children in Pakistan have suffered at the hands of their teachers for decades, and some of them have died. Most recently there is the well-documented case of Mohammed Hussain who was beaten to death with a metal rod when he tried to escape from the madrassa where he was a student. This in January 2018. The boy's parents subsequently forgave the murderer of their son. There are innumerable reports, both anecdotal and documented, of children being scarred, deafened and blinded by their teachers in government and private schools, madrassas and other places of religious education. So-called 'corporal punishment' has been a part of the education sector from time immemorial and it has to stop.

There is legislation on the books in all the provinces save Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) that at least seeks to curb the practice, but that is now potentially remedied by the approval of a draft bill prohibiting corporal punishment in all types of educational establishment, public, private or religious. The K-P higher education minister said that currently there was no law preventing the practice. Henceforward and assuming the bill becomes law, those that violate it may be subject to six months' imprisonment or a fine of Rs50,000 or both. The spur for the bill has been parental anger at the way their children are treated, and it is worthy of note that it was civil society that brought the change rather than the provincial legislature itself. Without angry parents the status quo would have prevailed.

Despite legislation children are abused daily and right across the country. There is a paucity of officially-collected data as to the verifiable incidence of corporal punishment, quite possibly because it would amount to a sum that would be a crippling embarrassment — and indictment of — to this or any other government. With officially sanctioned data collection not an option it is once again down to those organisations that protect human rights and specifically the rights of the child to be the terriers snapping at the heels of the federal and provincial governments. Abused children often go on to be abusers themselves. Reap as you sow.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 13/04/2018)

Public universities are now under the CM's thumb

In a blow to universities' autonomy in Sindh, the assembly pushed aside the governor's objections and once again passed the Sindh Universities and Institutes Law (Amendment) Bill 2018, thereby transferring control of public universities and examination boards from the governor to chief minister.

The bill, which was presented by Parliamentary Minister Nisar Ahmed Khuhro, was opposed by all opposition members, who called it an 'undemocratic legislation'. "We had passed this law on March 9, but it created controversy and the governor also objected to it. We are again moving this law, resolving the grievances of our teachers who are protesting against it," Khuhro claimed, referring to widespread protests by students and faculty of public universities.

The government may have pushed aside the governor's objections, but it took note of the protests and accepted a demand from the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association (Fapuasa) to rework the admission policy clause. Earlier, the law that said the government would determine the admission policy of all public universities, but now it has been changed and the admission policy will be established by the university's academic council 'under the guidance of the provincial government'.

Bill to regularise teachers to be presented in Sindh Assembly today

Another controversial aspect of the bill which has now been amended is the issue of syndicate members. In the earlier version of the bill, the finance and planning secretaries were to be members of the university syndicates, but in the revised law both have been removed. The third matter of concern for university staff and students was the clause that allowed the removal of the vice-chancellor or any other staff member by the CM if he or she was found guilty in any form of fraud or crime. According to the amendment, a committee will now be formed to investigate the issue and make a final decision.

Apart from this, no other changes have been made in the bill. Rejecting the bill, opposition members called the legislation an undemocratic effort. Opposition leader Khawaja Izharul Hasan endorsed the governor's objections to the bill and said, "The governor has not signed the bill and returned it back to the assembly because we have written a letter to him, raising genuine concerns". He added that when the assembly passed this law earlier on March 9, all the opposition members protested against it and their concerns were later reflected in the governor's observations.

Hasan said they requested the governor to not sign it because the provincial government wanted to impose its own education policy on all educational institutions. "Why should the provincial government draft the education policy of well reputed institutions like the Institute of Business Administration? This is unfair," he said.

Assembly asks govt to ensure security at schools in Sindh

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah dispelled notions that the provincial government wanted to influence the admission policy and retain all academic powers. "The universities were held hostage by the office of the Sindh governor. We are trying to free them while giving them autonomous status," he explained, adding that there will be equal representation of government and opposition members in the university syndicates. "Opposition members haven't properly read the bill, that is why they have created a fuss in the House and are worried about it," he said, adding that the governor's objections were part of the federal government's desire to roll back the provincial autonomy conferred in the 18th Amendment.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) parliamentary leader Syed Sardar Ahmed disagreed and said, "This bill is aimed at interfering in university affairs." He said that earlier no minister or even governor had the power to influence the policy. "I suggest that a committee comprising education experts be formed and that they later bring the bill," he said.

Faisal Subzwari of the MQM said that admissions at all public universities must be given on merit irrespective of ethnic background. "If any candidate qualifies the pre-entry test then he or she must be given admission in the respective varsity," he urged. "Some friends in this session spoke about Karachi University, which according to them has barred students from rural Sindh from getting admission. I want to know how many Karachi students get admission in Mehran University of Science and Technology in Jamshoro," he said. "My plea is to please allow the academic council of all public universities to make its own decision about admission policy," Subzwari remarked.

Sindh Assembly adopts resolution against Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid

"We will not allow anyone to employ dictatorial powers," said Khuhro, adding that before this law no one had dared to question the performance of vice-chancellors who were given free hand to loot public university funds. "A majority of the people in this House demand accountability even of judges and the army. So, why should VCs get away scot free?" he demanded, adding that the governor does not attend assembly sessions and no one can even criticise him. "Karachi University is my university. What is wrong with bringing it under a watchdog to make it accountable?" asked the parliamentary minister. He said all institutions and departments would cross their limits if the government failed to monitor them.

Regarding Sindh and Mehran universities, Khuhro said, "We want to devise an unbiased mechanism so that no one will have objections over admission policies."

Despite the opposition's protest, the bill was passed with majority votes.
(By Hafeez Tunio The Express Tribune, 04, 14/04/2018)

Universities bill passed again by assembly amid opposition's outcry

The Sindh Assembly on Friday once again witnessed uproar as the opposition tore copies of the universities bill and boycotted the day's proceedings.



The Sindh Universities and Institutes Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018, carrying several fresh amendments after it was sent back by the governor to the provincial government for a review, was passed again by a majority of votes.

Lawmakers belonging to all opposition groups — Muttahida Qaumi Movement and its defectors now representing Pak Sarzameen Party, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Pakistan Muslim League-Functional and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz — walked out of the Sindh Assembly and did not return.

With the passage of the bill, through which acts of 24 universities have been amended, the Sindh governor will no longer enjoy the powers to control the public sector universities since all powers have been given to the CM.

Governor Muhammad Zubair's very first observation in his seven-page comment on the bill clearly said: "The ultimate objective of a law is to set up a framework in order to ensure an equitable, transparent and effective mechanism for delivery of certain functions for the benefit of the people. The bill, in my considered opinion, seems to be lacking on all the accounts."

After reconsideration and passage of the bill returned by the governor, under Clause 3 of Article 116 of the Constitution, it would be again presented to the governor and "the governor shall give his assent within 10 days, failing which such assent shall be deemed to have been given".

'Governor's assent will be considered given after 10 days'

Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani sought the opinion from the house on the comment of the governor as was decided a day earlier before the clause-by-clause reading by Senior Minister Nisar Khuhro.

All the opposition parties rejected the bill as Leader of the Opposition Khawaja Izharul Hassan viewed it as against the very spirit of democracy.

Before him, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said he had told the house in his policy statement on Thursday that several changes had been made in the bill after it was returned by the governor, which included removal of government secretaries from top academic bodies as was earlier given after the CM got feedback from eminent academicians.

"All the secretaries have been removed. CM's principal secretary has no role in the syndicates' admission policy. The finance directors and auditors will be appointed by the government. We have strengthened the Sindh Assembly, the top forum of the province."

He said the new law would make the provincial assembly the competent forum where chief minister was answerable along with the vice chancellors.

"This law ensures everybody should be accountable. It will strengthen the universities as well as the assembly," said Mr Shah.

He said syndicates had been made stronger while the Sindh Assembly was the office where universities were accountable.

Khawaja Izhar said he along with MQM's parliamentary leader Syed Sardar Ahmed had sent a letter to the Sindh governor after the passage of the same bill for the first time last month in which they had requested him to return the bill without assent.

"All those assurances and rosy statements by the government are gimmicks," said Mr Hassan, adding it was not a matter of defending the governor, but "it is against the very spirit of democracy to bestow the chief minister with dictatorial powers".

"I would have opposed such bill even if the chief minister was from my party, MQM."

He said there were 11 elected members in the syndicate of a university during the military dictatorship of Gen Ziaul Haq and that number had been miserably decreased by the present democratic government to seven against 16 nominated members.

CM Shah said the Sindh chief minister would nominate just seven of those members from people of eminence while the number of elected members was higher than what Mr Hassan had claimed.

"Please give a patient reading to the bill, we have rescued universities which were made hostages in the Governor House," said Mr Shah.

Sardar Ahmed said the universities should be made autonomous and vice chancellors be made more powerful.

Senior Minister Khuhro said the law would offer an opportunity of monitoring institutions imparting higher education.

"We have made CM accountable for the matter and scrapped the interference of bureaucracy."

Mr Khuhro added that no governor in any province was apolitical.

PTI's Samar Ali Khan and Seema Zia, and MQM's Faisal Subzwari also opposed the bill.

The opposition launched a noisy protest with 'no, no' slogans as Mr Khuhro began reading the bill clause-by-clause.

Some of them tore up copies of the bill and hurled pieces of paper in the air while walking out of the house.

The treasury members comfortably sat on their benches in the hall of the old assembly building and got the bill passed with majority.

Later, The West Pakistan Highways (Sindh Amendment) Bill, 2018, and The Sindh Regularisation of Veterinary Doctors Appointed on Contract Basis Bill, 2018 were also passed into law in the house devoid of opposition.

Rape victim

Earlier, in response to the calling-attention notice by Nusrat Sahar Abbasi, in which she raised the issue of sexual violence against a boy allegedly by a local PPP leader in Mirpur Bathoro (Sujawal district), Home Minister Sohail Anwar Siyal said three of the four persons accused in the case were arrested on the day a video about the incident went viral and were on seven-day remand; the fourth accused had obtained bail from a court.

He said the accused had been charged with sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act. The minister said before arrest of those accused, the PPP leadership had removed the suspects from the local party post.

Responding to other calling-attention notices, Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro said induction of fresh employees was banned in municipal councils.

He said Karachi Metropolitan Corporation was given Rs7 billion for district ADP schemes which was in addition to the annual grant.

He said Thatta city received drinking water from Kalri-Baghar region's Jam branch and feasibility of water supply from Keenjhar Lake would be examined.

He said a 72-inch sewerage line was already laid in Gulshan-i-Faisal.

Mr Khuhro claimed there was no shortage of medicines and other facilities in Civil Hospital Sanghar.

Adjournment motion

An adjournment motion by Khurram Sher Zaman regarding "major irregularities or violations of the Board of Revenue pointed out by the auditor general of Pakistan report for the audit year 2016-17" was outvoted by the house after Mr Khuhro called it 'hearsay' with no report offered by the mover.

CM Shah said the AG's report was already with the Public Accounts Committee.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn, 17, 14/04/2018)

KU council wants University Act 1972 restored

The academic council of Karachi University (KU) passed a unanimous resolution on Monday, asking the Sindh Assembly to restore the University Act 1972.

The demand was made at the council's meeting held in the Arts Auditorium, chaired by KU Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Ajmal Khan.

The resolution sought that the Sindh Assembly should restore the University Act 1972 so that varsities could exercise their autonomy.

Steps like giving policy guidelines or directives, it stated, degraded the status of academic councils and would affect academic freedom.

The resolution was presented by Dr Riaz Ahmed and supported by Prof Jamil Kazmi, president of the Karachi University Teachers Society, Prof Mansoor Razzaki and Prof S.M. Taha.

The assembly recently passed the Sindh Universities and Institutes Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 carrying several fresh amendments.

The development took place after the governor, also the chancellor of public sector universities, sent the earlier version of the bill back to the government, raising a number of objections. The bill had been rejected by university teachers in toto.

Later, the government held meetings with teachers' representatives and brought the bill with new amendments.

This new form of the bill divided teachers in two groups: the one led by the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association supported the bill while the other, mainly consisting of KU teachers, strongly opposed it.

(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 18, 17/04/2018)

Education for trans people

EVERY being has the right to a life of dignity.

For the subcontinent's transgender community, this right was eroded by the ethnocentrism of the British Raj that codified their status in 1871 as a 'criminal tribe' inherently 'addicted' to crime.

In many ways, our nation has yet to correct this divergence from our tolerant roots to the systemic discrimination of trans Pakistanis.

There are glimmers of hope, however, and with it the hope that these glimmers could be signs of a broader commitment.

One such sign this week was the inauguration of Pakistan's first school for trans people in Lahore, with plans to open more schools in Karachi and Islamabad.

The school is dedicated to providing education from primary level to matriculation, and technical and vocational training, for trans people of all ages — a welcome step to ensure that adults, too, can access education hitherto denied to them, and with it the opportunity for gainful employment.

Such initiatives by civil society and NGOs deserve to be lauded, but should not lull our elected representatives into complacency.

The existence of specialised private services is an indictment of their failure to ensure trans Pakistanis' access to mainstream public services.

The task of righting the wrongs of our colonial past — and enabling trans Pakistanis to move out of the margins and into the mainstream — requires progressive codification of its own.

Last month, the Senate passed such legislation in the form of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2017.

The bill defines a trans person as anyone who self-identifies as having non-binary gender, and that any such person has inalienable fundamental rights, including the right to free and compulsory education as per Article 25-A of the Constitution.

This is affirmatively guaranteed through anti-discrimination provisions, admission quotas in both public and private higher education institutes, and supplementary vocational training programmes.

Its passage in the National Assembly and enactment by the president must be expedited before it is allowed to lapse upon parliament's dissolution.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 18/04/2018)

Improving teaching standards

A LOT of the focus on education, especially in recent times, has shifted to concerns about the quality of education. It is openly acknowledged that the quality of education being given to our children, in general, is quite poor. We have plenty of test scores-based evidence of this.



It seems that we cannot 'select' good potential teachers when people apply for teaching jobs. People apply for teaching positions after completing their education, so we have no way of checking their teaching record to see if they will be good teachers or not.

Literature on education shows, quite conclusively, that selection based on other verifiable variables, like educational background and teacher certification, explains little in terms of who would be a good teacher. So, teacher quality cannot be improved, despite testing or increasing educational requirements, through selection.

But we can 'weed' out bad teachers two to three years into a person's teaching career. Again, literature on education shows that we can identify who are good teachers, using various measures, over this teaching period. If we have a two- to three-year probationary period, we could weed out poor teachers. If we are able to do that with every incoming batch of teachers we recruit, we can substantially improve the quality of teachers in a matter of years.

Good teachers matter in student learning, but the question is how to find and train them.

The problem is that Pakistan's public sector finds it very hard to refuse confirmation to people they have hired, even if they are on probation. Teachers, at least in the Punjab, are 'confirmed' as permanent after a three-year probationary period but, irrespective of performance, almost everyone is confirmed. If selection and probation periods cannot be employed to screen out poor teachers, we can only hope to train and motivate people to be better teachers.

The evidence on teacher training does not give any easy solutions. In general, return on investments in teacher training is found to be low and quite inconsistent. We do find that training has the biggest impact when training is customised to the individual needs of the recipient. Generic trainings give poor overall results. How do we customise trainings, then, when employing a large number of teachers? Pakistan employs almost 800,000 teachers in the public sector. How do we create trainings that are (a) standardised at a certain quality, and (b) customised for individual needs?

Traditional teacher training programmes in Pakistan were generic. When teachers joined the public sector, they were given induction training, which had to be standardised to reach all teachers. Induction training still remains fairly standardised.

Provinces have also started continuous professional development programmes to support teachers throughout their careers. These programmes started off being fairly generic. For each subject, common pedagogic and content knowledge deficits would be identified through training need assessments and then there would be attempts, through standard programmes, to address these deficits.

Such programmes have been ongoing for years now. Evaluations, done externally and even internally, have shown limited impact in terms of removing specific deficits, changing classroom practices and/or having an impact on student learning.

To address this issue, Punjab has recently started experimenting with a 'specialist' based system, moving towards an even more customised programme. By appointing 20,000-odd subject specialists at the 'cluster' level, Punjab is 'customising' by bringing experts closer to teachers. The programme is too new to be evaluated, but some aspects need highlighting.

The subject specialists that have been hired come from almost the same talent pool as our teachers, so they might suffer from similar issues. And there will be quality variation across the specialists too. Quaid-i-Azam Academy for Educational Development, Punjab's teacher training body, is trying to manage this by developing more standardised modules that will then be shared with the specialists. The specialists can then pick and choose which modules to use, depending on the needs of a particular teacher.

Punjab's programme needs to be carefully observed and evaluated. Will it achieve the necessary balance between customisation and quality standardisation that it is seeking? It is an empirical question that will

become clear over time. But, given the investment going into it, it is important to have rigorous and timely evaluations so that the programme can be improved over time.

Technological changes have opened up other possibilities to consider as well. Governments, across provinces, are introducing tablets and computers in schools. This opens up the possibility of teachers having direct access to quality material through the internet. Assessment of individual teacher needs, provision of quality material for remedial work, and assessments to ensure that such interventions have worked could all be delivered through the internet. We could even think of a hybrid model that uses technology to support specialists who, in turn, help teachers.

Literature shows good teachers matter in student learning, but the question is how to find good teachers and/or how to support them to deliver better teaching. Selecting teachers on the basis of quality does not seem feasible: we do not have visible markers through which to identify who has the potential to be a good teacher.

The only option for us, it seems, is to train teachers to deliver better teaching. Given the size of public-sector education systems, this is no trivial problem. How do we deal with the large system, the need for standardisation and the need to customise?

Punjab's experiment with specialist training has yet to be evaluated, and technological options have yet to be fully explored. So we do not have a working model at present. Until we do, it is hard to see how the quality of education can be improved to any significant degree in the public sector.

The writer is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives and an associate professor of economics at Lums, Lahore.

(By Faisal Bari Dawn, 08, 20/04/2018)

SU orders campus signboards in Sindhi and English

Article 251 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan states that, "Without prejudice to the status of the national language [Urdu], a provincial assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language".

The University of Sindh (SU) seems to have forgotten to consult the Constitution before issuing a notification on Tuesday to convert all signboards and building titles within its campuses to English and Sindhi. The failure to mention the national language sparked controversy, even though the varsity denied that its aim was to exclude Urdu.

The notification (No SU/G/396 dated April 17, 2018) states that it is notified for general information of all that signboards and building titles at SU, Jamshoro and all other campuses shall be in bilingual format (Sindhi and English). "All heads concerned are requested to take necessary action in this pursuit," it reads.

Controversial University Law draws teachers' ire

The notification is being viewed as contrary to constitutional provisions and the apex court judgment. Referring to Article 251 of the Constitution and SC judgment of 2015, Advocate Muhammad Nadeem Shaikh of the Justice Helpline said it seemed like contempt of court and is very much against the Constitution of Pakistan.

He also recalled that then chief justice Jawwad S Khawaja gave a landmark judgment after which it was made compulsory to correspond in Urdu language in all official matters. "Urdu should have been mentioned in the notification," he said.

In 2015, the Supreme Court (SC) took up two petitions pleading for implementation of Article 251. In its order (constitutional petitions No 56 of 2003 and 112 of 2012), the apex court stressed the importance

of the national language and expressed displeasure over the government's 'very casual and non-serious' attitude towards the issue.

"We may also emphasise here that implementing Article 251 is not just a matter of obeying the Constitution, it has real practical implications for the Pakistani public," said then chief justice Khawaja.

"The government appears to be acting on the untenable premise that it has the right not to adhere to Article 251 of the Constitution. This is most disturbing. The language of Article 251 leaves no room for such an interpretation. Article 251 uses the term 'shall', which shows that it is a mandatory provision and not an optional or directory one," said the judge.

Though the SC case pertained to the federal government's delay in implementing Article 251 and using Urdu as the official language, the judgment is applicable in this case as well.

Sindh University case: SC summons land acquisition officer Up in arms

On Thursday, news of the notification went viral. It lit up television screens and spread like wildfire in social media and sparked political outrage.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) – Pakistan's Leader of the Opposition in the Sindh Assembly Khawaja Izharul Hasan issued a statement saying that the notification signifies a mind-set of slavery. "Urdu is our national language," he said, adding that the notification is against the dreams of Quaid-i-Azam.

MQM MPA Faisal Sabzwari also condemned the exclusion of Urdu in the notification and said that efforts should be made to bring the people of Sindh closer rather than divide them.

Pak Sarzameen Party Chairperson Mustafa Kamal termed the notification a conspiracy against the Sindhi population. The Pakistan Peoples Party, he said, is instigating the Sindhi population, while the MQM is doing same with the Urdu speaking population.

Backtracking

The management of SU, however, insisted that they never placed a ban on Urdu at their varsity. "There is an important department of Urdu at SU, where education till doctorate level is provided," the statement reads.

Judicial inquiry says condition of SU hostel worse than jail

SU Vice-Chancellor Dr Fateh Muhammad Burfat told *The Express Tribune* that most of the building titles and signboards at the varsity are in English and the people of the vicinity mostly understand Sindhi. That was the reason, he said, the varsity decided to also mention the titles in Sindhi as well as Urdu.

When reminded that there was no mention of Urdu in the notification, he replied that some titles are already in Urdu and that is why they did not find it necessary to mention it in the notification separately, as they thought it was already understood. "Urdu is our national language and Sindhi is our provincial language and we respect that," clarified Dr Burfat.

Meanwhile, SU Registrar Abdul Qayoom Memon said that all the documentation work at the varsity is done in English or Sindhi, as students are not able to easily understand Urdu.

In the 1970s, he explained, Sindhi was approved as the official language of correspondence at SU and in light of that approval, the academic council issued the recent notification. "We did not issue the notification out of any ulterior motive," he said.

Govt serves another blow to the governor's authority

Dr Burfat, on the other hand, said that the varsity will issue another notification with amendments. The new notification, he said, will also have the word Urdu mentioned to end this controversy.
(By Oonib Azam The Express Tribune, 04, 20/04/2018)

Govt criticised for ignoring minorities in draft education policy

Speakers at a conference held at Karachi University on Wednesday strongly criticised the current education policy as well as the draft of National Education Policy 2017, arguing that the government ignored the principles of diversity, religious freedom and inclusivity.

The conference — 'Right to education without discrimination' — was organised by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) in collaboration with the Pakistan Study Centre (PSC) of KU and Peace and Development Organisation (PDO).

The participants represented a cross section of society with representation from academia, media, government departments, textbook publishers, civil society and students.

Need stressed for promoting religious tolerance, diversity and national cohesion

Panellists included former PSC director Dr Syed Jaffar Ahmed, Rana Asif Habib heading the Initiator Human Development Foundation and CSJ director Peter Jacob.

Starting off the discussion, Dr Ahmed said that the vision of Pakistan's founders was based on a modern and sovereign state. Unfortunately, however, the society couldn't progress towards this vision, he said, highlighting factors which negatively impacted the society and its people.

'Class-based education system'

"A class-based society makes a class-based education system," he observed.

He also criticised the media and said it was playing a role in spreading religious extremism and hatred.

Other speakers also criticised the education policy 2009 currently in place and said that it was not only violating Articles 20, 22 and 25 of the Constitution, but also in contravention of the international human rights law (Articles 14 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 13 (1 and 3) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Article 18 (4) of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

The government, they said, had prepared the draft of the National Education Policy 2017 that had completely ignored principles of diversity and minorities' needs.

The proposed policy relies on Articles 31 and 25-A (Islamic way of life, right to free and compulsory education) of the Constitution, but ignored the constitutional guarantees under Articles 20, 22 and 36 about religious freedom, safeguards against discrimination in educational institutions with respect to religion and protection of rights of religious minorities.

The proposed policy, it was said, was a replica of the previous one in the sense that it failed to curb religious discrimination.

The education policy and textbooks, they said, presented several discriminations on the basis of religion which explained why religious minorities lagged behind in national average in literacy — Christians 11 per cent and Hindus 20pc, according to the national population census 1998.

The speakers emphasised the need for promoting religious tolerance, national cohesion and accommodating religious diversity.

A number of recommendations were presented during the discussion and speakers urged the federal government and respective provincial governments to consider implementing some key measures as early as possible for improvement in the education system.

They suggested that Quaid-i-Azam's Aug 11, 1947 speech to the constituent assembly should be included in the school and college textbooks and that the federal and provincial governments should provide a special educational plan to enhance literacy among religious minorities and other groups, giving due regard to economic and social marginality.

In addition, educational institutions nationalised for around 35 years should be provided with adequate compensatory funds to enhance their capacity and operations.

In order to make the policy of a five per cent job quota for minorities successful, they suggested an equivalent quota for admissions of minority students especially in colleges, universities, technical training institutes, etc.

It was also recommended that teachers' training, school environment and co-curricular activities should be designed in a way to maintain respect for all religious traditions, values and acceptance for religious diversity.

(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 17, 26/04/2018)

Sindh's oldest public school is regaining its past glory

Chief Minister (CM) Murad Ali Shah has said that the historic Narayan Jagannath Vaidya (NJV) Government Higher Secondary School was not simply a school. It used to be an honour to be a student at NJV, but with time, it has lost its glory, he lamented.



He stated this while talking to the media after visiting the school on Saturday.

He was accompanied by Education Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar. The CM was received at NJV by Education Secretary Iqbal Durani, Forest Secretary Sohail Akbar Shah, Sindh Education Foundation Managing Director Naheed Shah Durani and the administration of the NJV Government Higher Secondary School and Akhwat Foundation.

The education minister, education secretary and forest secretary briefed the CM about the history, renovation and educational activities at NJV school.

The school stands tall on main MA Jinnah Road even after 163 years. Visionary Vaidya, after whom the school is named, worked with great zeal and self sacrifice for the advancement of education in Sindh. Housed in a beautiful historic yellow sandstone building, NJV is one of the 600 buildings listed as a heritage site. It is the oldest public school in Sindh and was started back in 1855 with 68 male students. It moved to its current location in 1876, with a total of 477 students. It even had the honour of housing the Sindh Assembly. As the first public school in Sindh, NJV school was pivotal in providing education to the people of the province.

Rekindling old ties: NJV school facelift to be completed by end of January

In 2015, the Sindh government stepped up to revive the NJV school to its original grandeur physically and academically by entrusting and working alongside Akhwat in maintaining the quality education free of charge.

Pakistan has one of the world's largest pools of youth under the age of 16. Akhwat is working to equip them with proper educational and vocational skills to meet the challenges of tomorrow through its educational services for the marginalised, which includes adoption of rural schools.

They have adopted over 300 non-functional public schools to provide high-quality education and facilities. One such school is the NJV Government Higher Secondary School.

Addressing the teachers and Akhwat Foundation, Shah said that the real development of the province and country lies in the education of poor children.

"I am quite happy to see children from the lower-middle class clad in uniforms, speaking confidently in English in their classrooms. They know how to deal with their seniors as well," he said, adding that this is what he wanted to see in every government school.

Pakistan's biggest art exhibition begins at NJV High School

The NJV school has a tradition of creating leading politicians, engineers, doctors and musicians and various others who shone their name and the names of their parents, school and the country in their respective fields. "I am sure this tradition will be kept alive and a new class of national leaders will be generated in every field," he said.

"Believe me, today I have felt spiritual satisfaction to see the glories of this school and its building being restored," he said, adding that he was with the private management of the school and would always be supportive, not just as a CM but as an individual.

The CM visited the school's classrooms, science laboratory, art classes, computer laboratory, playground and interacted with the students. He enjoyed in the company of the students in the nursery, hearing them recite poems and tell him stories.

Efforts made

Before engaging in other substantive operations, a massive civil works project was undertaken to renovate the school and bring facilities like functional bathrooms, clean water, functioning doors and electricity.

The barren ground and rooftop were transformed into an astroturf football field, tennis and basketball courts. There is a cricket pitch as well. Kids who attend NJV school are the ones who cannot afford it.

Therefore, they are provided free of charge education, uniforms, transport, snacks and books.

Revisiting forgotten heritage through art at the Karachi Biennale

For now, the number of buses is not enough to facilitate all students so transportation is only provided to students living far. Currently, there are over 1,000 students enrolled and 45% of them are girls.

Home economics classes are given to both boys and girls where they learn to cook and bake. Every morning, there is a home period where students are taught basic hygiene, manner and social behaviour. Students are also engaged after school with classes like English, maths, chess and scouts.

Media talk

The CM said that the 1980s were a dark period in Karachi's political history and there was a wave of fear and insecurity among the people.

Replying to a question regarding the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) – Pakistan rally at Tanki Ground in Azizabad, the CM said that everyone has the right to do politics and organise public meetings.

"There is no ban on political activities, but we will not allow a wave of fear and insecurity to be created as was created during the 1980s in the name of politics and so-called service to the people of Karachi," he said.

"The people of Karachi are educated and cultured, which is why they have rejected those who destroyed the peace of this city, polluted politics with terrorism and hatred just to establish their sway," Shah said.

The city now belonged to each and every person who lived and worked in it, Shah believed. We have to make the city a city of peace and tranquility, he said.

The CM said that people had not heard of Tanki Ground in Liaquatabad. Ever since Pakistan People Party (PPP) Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a public meeting at the ground and received unflinching support and response from the people of the area, everyone is rushing there to hold public meetings, the CM claimed.

“We have set a tradition and now others are following it. Let them follow us, but they know very well that the people are not with them,” he said.

Shah claimed that in the elections of 2018, the people of Karachi would vote for the PPP as it has served the people of the city with its heart and soul.

Responding to a question about the next budget, the CM said that funds would be allocated for all the ongoing schemes but authentication to utilise them would be for three months only.

“We will make a block allocation [of funds] which the next government will be able to utilise for another nine months, from October this year to June next year. But, authentication will have to be taken from the provincial assembly,” he said.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 06/05/2018)

First batch of Habib University passes out

Students throw their mortar boards into the air in jubilation at the convocation on Saturday.—Faysal Mujeeb/White Star

Some 84 students — 47 young women and 37 young men — became the first batch graduating from Habib University at its very first convocation held on its campus on Saturday evening.



The student body of the graduating class was a diverse mix of students who graduated in four major disciplines — BSc (Honours) Social Development and Policy, BA (Honours) Communication Design, BS Electrical Engineering, and BS Computer Science.

Receiving their degrees, the students also introduced themselves through videos in which they stated their achievements or described their thesis projects.

While congratulating them, president of Habib University Wasif A. Rizvi spoke of ‘The visions of Janice’, a concept that “looks behind as well as forward”.

He said that the meaning of a liberal arts education, which Habib University is known for, was teaching how to think and subscribing human value to education. “And your education is really the job of a lifetime. I wish you way more than luck. I wish you Yohsin,” he said.

Governor of Sindh and patron of Habib University Mohammad Zubair said that it was a privilege and honour to be present at the first convocation of the university.

He congratulated them and praised the graduates and their parents for “taking a risk and making the biggest contribution to the nascent university, and raising such outstanding kids”.

He also invited the top achievers in the graduating student body to Governor House.

The chief guest on the occasion, Babar Ali, congratulated the students.

In her valedictorian speech, Saadia Asad Pathan said: “You trusted us as we stepped into this university; trust us as we step out.”

Later, the chancellor of Habib University, Rafiq M. Habib, presented the chancellor’s Yohsin Award, the most prestigious award of the institution, to graduating student Abdul Wahid Khan.

(By The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Dawn, 16, 07/05/2018)

KU head of department goes missing

A senior professor of the University of Karachi has gone missing and is believed to have been taken away by law enforcement agencies soon after he left the KU on Friday evening, his colleagues said on Saturday.

Prof Dr Riaz Ahmed, head of the Applied Chemistry Department at KU, had left the varsity on Friday evening for his home but could not reach there.

Dr Jamil Hasan Kazmi, president of the Karachi University Teachers Society (Kuts), told Dawn that the professor had made phone contact with another faculty member at around 9.45pm on Friday when he left the varsity. He went missing somewhere on his way home.

Teachers condemn 'disappearance' of their colleague, warn of protest

A senior police officer, who wished not to be named, told Dawn that the police had not received a "formal application" from the family about the KU professor's disappearance.

Answering a question about media reports that Dr Riaz Ahmed was suspected to be a "sympathiser" of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), Kuts official Dr Kazmi said they had not heard Dr Ahmed speak at any forum in support of the PTM's cause.

Meanwhile, Kuts held an emergent meeting at KU, which condemned the "mysterious disappearance" of their colleague.

They said the 'disappearance' of the professor was likely to create a negative impact on society.

Kuts expressed their concerns over the "atmosphere of suffocation and fear" at KU.

They said they were concerned that such incidents were happening at KU repeatedly, which had adversely affected the academic and research atmosphere at the varsity besides disheartening the faculty.

Expressing resentment over the disappearance of Dr Ahmed, Kuts urged the army chief, chief justice of Pakistan, prime minister and the chief minister of Sindh to ensure immediate recovery of the professor.

They also said the entry test for MPhil and PhD candidates would be held on Sunday (today) as was scheduled "in larger interest of the students" but its results would not be announced till Dr Riaz's recovery.

Kuts also announced that it would hold a protest demonstration and a press conference at the KU's Arts Lobby on Sunday at around 12.30pm after the entry test. All professors would wear black armbands on Sunday while another meeting of Kuts would be held on Monday at the Arts Auditorium to chalk out a future line of action, said Kuts secretary Dr Moiz Khan.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 17, 13/05/2018)

A charter for education

It has been a painfully slow process for representatives of key political parties to agree on a minimum reform agenda for the education sector and demand special attention from both the provinces and the federal government. The task of improving the quality of education is overwhelming enough when one considers other huge challenges such as enrolling over 23 million out-of-school children in the country.

It requires both sound strategy and proper enforcement to address those challenges as well as coordinated steps for the provision of quality education to all children. This involves a national resolve to improve learning outcomes in schools and devising mechanisms for delivering on the state's obligation to provide compulsory and free education to children, especially those aged between five and 16 years.

Only since 2013 we have seen our provincial governments prioritising education as never before. Punjab claims to have been a trend-setter among the other provinces, citing its renewed focus on quality education over this period of time. If Pakistan is facing an education emergency, it is still entirely possible to come out of that — through courageous political commitment and will and of course implementation of reform strategies. Effective management of teachers and principals can spur the spirit of reform.

We must however give more time for reform to settle into place. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, for instance, is banking on initiatives that will pay dividends in the long term, say, up to 10 or 15 years. But the strategy can only be successful if the education budget is raised substantially. The higher the investment, the greater will be the gain. In the coming years the country must enforce a minimum reform agenda which envisages a sustained increase in provincial and federal education allocations. By signing the charter for education and pledging to include it in their manifestoes, political parties have taken the first giant step towards reform.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 16/05/2018)

Sindh CM distributes 145 cash prizes among position holder students

Chief Minister (CM) Murad Ali Shah said that around Rs3 billion is being spent on the enrolment, registration and examination fees and cash prize distribution among the position holders of all educational boards operating across Sindh.



This he said while speaking at a cash prize distribution among the position holders of all educational boards at the banquet hall of CM House on Tuesday. The prize distribution ceremony was attended by Education Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar, Principal Secretary to the CM Sohail Rajput, Universities and Boards Additional Chief Secretary Muhammad Hussain Syed, Colleges Secretary Pervez Seehar, the chairman of all the educational boards, educationists and parents of the position holders.

The CM distributed cash prizes worth Rs927 million among 145 position holders and 36,157 A-1 graders of all the groups of matriculation and intermediate examinations of all education boards.

CM accuses federal govt of intentionally causing load-shedding in Sindh

There are eight education boards, including the Technical Board and Shaheed Benazirabad Board, which is scheduled to start functioning from next year.

Some 550,000 students are receiving higher secondary classes education, while 750,000 are studying in secondary classes. The number of students who have obtained A-1 grades in all the boards stands at 36,157.

The CM gave a Rs300,000 cash prize to each first position holder, Rs200,000 to the second, Rs100,000 to the third and Rs25,000 to each A-1 grader.

The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Mirpurkhas bagged 21 position holder cash prizes, BISE, Sukkur got 39, Larkana 28, Hyderabad 24, while Board of Intermediate Education, Karachi got 24 cash prizes.

Sindh faces triple jeopardy: Murad Ali Shah

The CM said that when he had taken charge as the chief minister, he had decided to waive registration, enrolment and examination fee and give cash prizes to the position holders. The overall enrolment, examination and registration fees cost comes to over Rs1.76 billion to the government, while cash prizes worth Rs927 million were released. Shah said he was happy to see a large number of position holders and A-1 graders sitting under the roof of CM House. "You are the future of our nation and I am sure one day you will achieve excellence in different fields," he said, congratulating the students, their teachers and parents for receiving cash awards.

“Keep it up and I am sure you will also achieve the highest prizes in your further educational activities,” he told the students.

The CM said he was working hard to improve the educational standard in the province. “One day, our students, particularly of the public sector educational institutes, will compete internationally,” he said, adding that to achieve this excellence, the teachers, parents, boards and civil society have to join hands to eradicate the copy culture.

Mobile services will not be suspended during PSL final: Murad Ali Shah

The education minister also spoke on the occasion and congratulated the position holders and urged the A-1 graders to work hard to achieve positions in their next examination.

Just after the distribution of cash prizes, the CM took selfies with the prize recipients.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 16/05/2018)

Education-employment link

The writer is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives and an associate professor of economics at Lums, Lahore.



RECENTLY, a friend needed to hire an administrative and finance officer for an entry-level position in office administration. He advertised the post on one of the relevant internet sites. He received 500 applications for the post. After sifting through the CVs, he could only find seven that seemed to be good enough. He called the seven people for interviews. Two candidates did not show up; later, they said they had forgotten they had an interview. From the five people that he did interview, although he took the best, he felt he had to compromise on expectations significantly to give this person a chance.

All the candidates in his short list had postgraduate degrees and some even had a few years of experience. Still, it was difficult to find the right person for the entry-level job.

There is something very broken in the education-employment connection in our economy. Though usually it is just termed, in popular literature, a skill mismatch, it is clearly more than just that. Most of the time we hear complaints that universities are just churning out humanities and social science graduates where we need scientists, engineers, technicians and skilled people. There might well be a mismatch between the skills we require in our industries and what the universities are able to produce, but the above example is not about that.

We advertised for a similar entry-level administrative job a few years ago. We received 1,100 applications for the position. After sifting through all the CVs, we could only shortlist 10 candidates for interviews. Of the 10, there were only three who came even close to what we wanted and were expecting. Three out of 1,100! Not a story of mismatch alone.

The quality of education has become a major stumbling block.

The story is not very different on other counts. Pass rates for civil services examinations have dropped to two to three per cent for each examination. Tens of thousands of candidates take the exams, the Public Service Commission announces there are hardly a couple of hundred that it can pass. What skills are being matched there?

It seems that the major issue, in the cases given here, is that of quality of education. The quality of education being given to our students across the board is so poor that most of the graduates coming out of universities do not even have the basics that are needed for any job in the marketplace or even for being a productive citizen. Their language skills, Urdu and English, are poor, their numeracy skills are very elementary, their education does not teach them the basics of communication, interpersonal behaviour management or self-management, but most importantly, and damagingly, they do not even

have a grasp of the basics of logic, inductive/deductive reasoning, argumentation, rhetoric, critical or even common-sense thinking. And, usually, they do not know how to learn either.

Over the last four to five years, I have had the experience of hiring at many different levels. From doing interviews for admission in graduate programmes to hiring administrative/finance staff, research assistants/associates, junior faculty, professors, deans and even heads of institutions, I have, quite literally, done hundreds of interviews. We even conduct written tests for some of the positions. There have been very few positions, in my experience, that have required very specific 'skills' that individuals needed before they could become a good candidate for a job: in some cases we need research assistants who must have prior experience in certain computer programmes.

For most jobs, one looks for quality of education that the person has had, the quality of their experience, if relevant, the kind of person the candidate is, and the ability of the person to deal with questions/issues that would be relevant for the job in question. The quality of education becomes the major stumbling block.

In interviews and in written tests, candidates show the poor quality of not only their language skills, but also of their education when they cannot even put together a coherent argument. They do not know how to read an article and make sense of what the author has said. They are unable to comprehend the implications of what they read, cannot generalise from their reading, cannot find examples to apply their reading to, cannot adapt their reading to apply to their situation and context and cannot generalise from their own context to create counter or confirmatory arguments.

The ability to critically engage with either the written word or with one's environment is a necessary, if minimal, condition for being able to respond to the demands of any job. A lot of candidates are not able to do that.

But the story does not end there. It is not just that their education has not equipped them to be able to engage with their environment effectively; for many, their education has also crippled them so that it is hard for them to acquire these skills while they work. There are very few jobs where on-the-job training cannot happen. But if, even after a couple of years of experience, a person is not able to deal with his/her job well, there is an issue: there must be a problem in how they learn.

It is, of course, not the case that there are no good candidates at all or that all institutions provide education of a poor quality: there are some high quality educational institutions in the country. But their number is very small. Good graduates from such institutions do get recognised and command better returns as well. But the problem is for the millions who are spending 16 to 18 years in schools and universities and ending up being poorly educated and trained, and much more damagingly, being educated in ways and habits that make it difficult for them to change and become better learners. We can take up the question of how to start addressing the problem later.

The writer is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives and an associate professor of economics at Lums, Lahore.

(By Faisal Bari Dawn, 08, 18/05/2018)

KU, BIEK exams postponed today, tomorrow due to heatwave

The ongoing heatwave in Karachi led to the postponement of scheduled examinations on Monday, today (Tuesday) and tomorrow (Wednesday).



Karachi University and the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi (BIEK) both postponed their examinations scheduled on these days but said the examinations scheduled on Thursday, May 24, will continue as per schedule.

Last week, the Pakistan Meteorological Department issued a warning saying that Karachi would be hit by a heatwave from Saturday. This raised concerns in the city as officials and residents alike want to prevent a situation reminiscent of the 2015 heatwave that killed 1,200 people in Karachi.

The city is experiencing hot winds from the deserts of Sindh and warm winds of Balochistan instead of the usual cool south-western sea winds it receives. On Monday, mercury reached 43° Celsius. With the halt of the sea winds, the odds of a heatwave increase day by day. The humidity level on Monday was unusually low and was recorded at a mere 5%. Meteorological Department Regional Director for Karachi Rashid Ahmed said this warm spell will remain till Thursday and will then begin to subside. Doctors have advised residents not to venture out of their houses unnecessarily, keep themselves hydrated and wear light coloured clothes.

Karachi swelters as power supply wavers

The heatwave coupled with increased load-shedding has left citizens in despair. Residents of Lyari took to the streets in protest against the lack of water supply by burning tyres and blocking roads for traffic, while chanting slogans against the Karachi Sewerage and Water Board (KWSB) authorities. This resulted in a heavy traffic jam on the Kajhor Bazaar Road.

The protesters, who included women and children, dispersed after assurances from the KWSB incharge. The protesters said from the first day of Ramadan, their water supply has been cut short. Despite registering several complaints with the authorities concerned, there was no action taken, hence the protest.

Police and Rangers reached the scene as soon as they received complaints of a traffic jam. Nasir Shah, the incharge of the KWSB in Lyari, also reached the scene. After negotiations, the protesters left peacefully.

Residents of Gulbahar renewed their protest on Monday against load-shedding and lack of water supply. The protests led to a traffic jam at Lasbella intersection as protesters blocked the adjoining roads. Citizens across the city are up in arms against the KWSB and K-Electric.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 22/05/2018)

No World Bank funding forthcoming for Sindh public schools: secretary

World Bank funding to revamp quality and infrastructural standards at public schools across Sindh is set to cease with the 'below par' execution of the Sindh Education Sector Reform Project II.



Declaring the pace of work on the initiative unsatisfactory, the international financial institution said it was unlikely that the project would be completed on time. A January report on the project by the World Bank said progress on two fronts, teacher recruitment and disbursement-linked indicators, was poor.

Just as appointment of teachers had been dogged by delays, it took the government inordinate time to nominate quality schools. The document went on to add that the project was unlikely to be completed by its original December, 2018 deadline if progress was not hastened.

In an earlier June, 2017 report, the World Bank noted poor increase in enrolment across Sindh's public schools. The document also mentioned how satisfactory progress had not been registered in enrolment despite the introduction of teacher recruitment, attendance monitoring, school consolidation and examination reforms.

'Stop tinkering with education in Sindh'

The dismal results of the four-year programme are being highlighted as it enters its final year. The World Bank, on the other hand, is yet to approve funding for other projects. The international financial institution has expressed no interest in financing any new projects, sources said.

The initiative, originally green-lighted in March, 2013, started nearly a year later in 2014. Slated to end in June, 2017, the programme's completion deadline was later revised to December, 2018.

A cursory examination of figures available with The Express Tribune reveals that a mere 2% increase in school enrolment has been registered over the initiative's penultimate and final year.

The number of children enrolled across province-wide public schools stood at 4,145,219 in 2015-16. The figure rose to 4,229,128 over 2016-17.

Despite billions of dollars in aid and government protestations to the contrary, experts say the school education department has failed miserably in revamping standards across public schools.

Sindh education reform

Of the province's 42,383 public schools, only 57% have access to potable water, 55% lack power and a little over 60% feature toilets and boundary walls. Negligible improvement has been recorded on these accounts over the programme's concluding years.

A 7% increase has been recorded in schools with access to drinking water. An 8% rise has been registered in schools electrified. Washrooms and roofs have been added to 8% and 2% schools respectively.

The student to teacher ratio stands at 28:1. A classroom is available per 39 students. The student to school ratio stands at 100:1. Poor enrolment explains the low ratios, experts opine.

Latest standardised achievement test results, last released in 2017, are also representative of poor quality of education imparted across public schools. A dismal 26.1% boys and 27.5% girls of 180,453 grade five students cleared the tests across English, mathematics and science. Class eight students performed slightly better with 28.9% boys and 32.4% clearing all three subjects, according to the Reform Support Unit statistics.

Whither education 'emergency' in Sindh?

School Education Department Secretary Iqbal Durrani confirmed the development. He told The Express Tribune that no World Bank funding was forthcoming for any initiative following the conclusion of the Sindh Education Sector Reform Project II.

Durrani, however, claimed that all project targets had been realised. The secretary said the World Bank would be approached for funds on this very basis.

(By Safdar Rizvi The Express Tribune, 05, 29/05/2018)

Mass student expulsions

FAR from being places of enlightened and spirited debate, institutes of learning in Pakistan all too often train youth for obsequiousness to authority.

For protesting against not being given permission to attend an Iftar party, which would fall after their 6pm curfew, 320 female students of Minhajul Quran University Lahore were expelled on Sunday.

A few days before, a leaked video of Pakistan Awami Tehreek leader Khurram Nawaz Gandapur verbally abusing the students went viral.

It showed him, in a fit of rage, accusing them of not being raised properly, insinuating what fate might befall them in a private hostel, and threatening to have them all thrown out.

However, as per the PAT's own spokesperson, the varsity's affairs are not Mr Gandapur's responsibility. This incident is indicative of our culture's deeply problematic relationship with its youth.

Our authority figures (even self-appointed ones) often forget that respect is earned; it cannot be taken for granted as a right.

Their distorted perception, and its corollary, that young people must respect the powerful without question, has led us down many a wrong path.

Added to this is the gendered moral policing of female students through onerous regulations on their attire, physical proximity to male students and movement.

The varsity has a duty of care to ensure the safety and good conduct of its students on campus, but this should not (even if, allegedly, at the behest of parents) extend to infantilising students, most of whom are legally adults.

While it is unjust to penalise the students en masse for the protests of a few, even those few have the right to protest.

Any institute committed to imparting a progressive education must be aware of the need to redress the patriarchal silencing of women by encouraging a safe space in which they can speak up — even in disagreement — without intimidation.

As for the expulsion itself, the varsity must immediately reinstate the students and issue a formal apology for Mr Gandapur's unbecoming behaviour.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 30/05/2018)

Report shines light on Sindh's poor performance in education

Despite a hefty budgetary allocation, the provincial educational department continues to underperform. Sindh allocated Rs202 billion during the 2017-18 financial year for the development, transformation and performance improvement of public educational institutions.



Statistics regarding enrolment rates of primary school children lack improvement, according to a recent report prepared by an educational performance watchdog. The report provided information of 43,000 of the 48,677 government schools in the province and was issued by the director-general of monitoring and evaluation.

In an alarming revelation, the report mentioned that over 12,600 schools remain shut while 23,355 of the 123,356 teachers have not been reporting for their duties. The absent teaching staff includes 1,773 teachers who have been on leave for a while and another 2,000 teachers who have been identified as 'ghost teachers'. Of the ghost teachers, 6.7% are posted in Jamshoro, 5.2% in Tando Muhammad Khan and 3.8% in Shikarpur.

According to the report, of the 3.99 million students enrolled in government schools across the province, only 1.64 million are currently attending school, while 1.45 million remain permanently absent. In addition to this, over 8,000 of the 36,000 non-teaching staff at public schools are virtually non-existent and another 657 are working as 'ghost staff'.

'Quality education essential for progress'

The public education sector also suffers from an acute shortage of teachers at over 17,000 schools. The report states 339 schools in Karachi, 1,981 in Tharparkar, 1,625 in Badin, 1,422 in Khairpur, 1,253 in Sanghar, 1,078 in Umerkot, 1,034 in Shaheed Benezirabad, 967 in Mirpurkhas, 900 in Naushero Feroz and several other districts of Sindh have only one teacher for the entire school.

The situation is also not good on the infrastructure side. According to the report, 19,000 schools of the province lack boundary walls, 23,600 schools are without furniture, 12,381 without electricity, 20,600 have no bathrooms and 14,263 lack drinking water facilities.

The report makes several recommendations which include effective accountability, supervision of monitoring and evaluation committees and tighter controls and actions by district education officers and directors against absent teachers and staff.

The report also recommends daily updating of data pertaining to teachers and administrative staff, including their appointments, transfers, terminations and retirements to help authorities come up with more accurate and realistic statistics and performance measures. The report also recommends that the authorities remove the count of temporary and makeshift schools from the database so that proper monitoring and evaluation can be done.

Rural barriers: Women urged to attain education

District-wise statistical data of schools should be uploaded through the database centre. Monitoring and Evaluation Director-General Syed Khalid Shah said that the monitoring and evaluation department came into existence with the cooperation of the school education and literacy department and global partnership for education in 2015 with the aim to monitor and evaluate public schools in Sindh. He said that our chief monitoring officer visits one school two to three times a month and then finalises its data. Our work is only to identify shortcomings, while it is the responsibility of the education department to take action, said Shah.

We prepare reports on a school's condition, students' enrolment, presence of teaching staff and attendance of non-teaching staff including various other aspects, he explained.

Education Secretary Iqbal Durrani told *Express News* that the names of ghost employees have been published in newspapers and the employees have been directed to explain their positions within 15 days or else their appointments will be cancelled.

Regarding the infrastructure of schools, he said that at the moment we are focusing on 4,500 schools and they are being made into model schools because most of the students are enrolled at these schools, he said.

'Stop tinkering with education in Sindh'

Answering a question, Durrani said that to update the database, a list of ghost employees has been provided to the district officers in case some have retired and the information has not been updated. Involving the officers will give a clearer picture of the situation on the ground.

Experts say that in the past, billions of rupees were allocated for the education sector but positive results were not attained, due to which there is no effective system for monitoring of developmental funds. For the improvement of the education system, an effective and reliable system is desperately needed.

(By Saba Naz The Express Tribune, 04, 01/06/2018)

Education: 23m broken promises

Reforming the education sector will be a colossal challenge for the next governments at the centre and in the provinces, no matter what claims political parties make in their manifestos.

Some 23m children are out of school in Pakistan because governments have neglected education, even though free universal education from ages five to 16 years is a constitutional right.

Access to public schooling remains dependent on family income, geographical location and gender. Most children drop out by the age of nine; and girls from poor communities are least likely to attend school.

On top of this, Pakistan's gender enrolment gap is the widest in South Asia after Afghanistan. If this election is to change the status quo, voters should elect representatives for their commitment to education.

In 2013, political parties, including the PPP, PTI and PML-N identified education reform as improving learning abilities, reducing teacher absenteeism and eliminating gender disparities in schooling among other issues. But the reforms undertaken have been a drop in the ocean.

While the PML-N government increased enrolment, gave stipends to girls, and pioneered merit-based teacher recruitment in Punjab, it failed to offer education expertise and resources to other provinces.

Although a part of the coalition government in Balochistan, it abandoned educational reforms in a province where 1.89m children remain out of school.

In KP, the PTI's ambitious education policies showcased a first-time party's keen intentions. But the trajectory starting out with promises towards implementation remained thorny.

A new government should focus on policy implementation improving learning scores, enrolment and retention in a province where 51pc of girls remain out of school despite budgets higher than the UN recommended 20pc baseline.

Meanwhile, for too long, the PPP-led Sindh government's atrocious report card has needed attention, especially the concern of 'ghost' teachers and the wide gender gap.

In the 2018 manifestos, parties would do well to commit to bringing out-of-school children into the education system, indicating the duration, sustained reforms and budgets required to achieve the goal.

Only realistic goals and incentives are beneficial. Reforms vary countrywide which means policy consensus across party lines will provide opportunities to learn from best practices.

The major goals are to ensure that education spending is 4pc of GDP as stipulated by the UN, to improve resources for those students who gain the least, and to ensure schooling is not discontinued at any stage.

Replicating some successful public-private partnership school models seen in Punjab and Sindh can also be an election goal, as could regular reviews of district performances and ensuring accountability.

Nelson Mandela noted: "Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world." Only parties with a vision can understand the truth of his words and work towards implementing their promises.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 05/06/2018)

Educated militants

YET again, we have been reminded of how perilous are the recent gains in the fight against religious extremism. The Sindh police on Monday arrested three suspects in Karachi with alleged links to banned organisations. Two of them are educated individuals with post-graduate degrees. Among them is a faculty member at a public university in Dera Ismail Khan who had joined the TTP and participated in attacks on Nato and Pakistani security forces. The second man, an IT expert with an MBA from a prestigious institute in Karachi, was, according to police, assisting the militant Islamic State group with IT-related matters.

The militant from the educated middle class, a phrase that once seemed to be a contradiction in terms, no longer has the power to shock. Not after Faisal Shahzad — who had an MBA from a US university — tried to detonate a bomb in New York's Times Square; or after Saad Aziz, an IBA graduate, was convicted in the Safoora Goth carnage case. Some women have made it to this category as well, such as Naureen Leghari, a medical student who travelled to Syria and received training from IS. And this is far

from an exhaustive list. Nevertheless, after a hard-fought peace, the recent arrests reinforce concerns about the extent to which radicalisation has seeped into society. Last year, a few months after Mashal Khan's lynching by a mob of fellow students, the HEC directed university administrations to take measures to prevent their campuses from becoming breeding grounds for extremism, recognise signs of radicalisation among students, and offer them counselling opportunities. Militants from educated backgrounds can in some ways be more dangerous because even while they may need to connect with militant networks, they are often inclined towards 'lone wolf' attacks, and are, therefore, more difficult to detect. To completely excise such ideologies from society requires unflinching, consistent efforts, not the least of which is an intellectually stimulating academic environment where different worldviews can be freely debated and diversity of opinions is valued.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 13/06/2018)

How to run a university into the ground

Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University (BBSU) in Lyari was inaugurated amid much fanfare by the Pakistan Peoples Party government in 2010. Eight years on, the varsity seems to be struggling to meet the academic standards pledged at the time of its creation.



Upgraded from the Lyari Degree College after being given degree-awarding status, the varsity currently boasts five faculties – Pharmacy, Management Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Computer Science and IT and Law. None of these faculties currently have a dean.

The varsity itself is being run by Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhtar Baloch for the past four years. Meanwhile, it has been unable to fill the posts of registrar or examinations controller for the past several years. The finance director stationed by the provincial government is also due to retire soon.

The outgoing provincial government failed to fill in the vacant posts, including those of the registrar and examinations controller, leaving the varsity in an administrative mess for the past several years. The founding registrar, Dr Mehboob Sheikh, completed his tenure in July 2014, after whom the seat has been lying vacant.

Five Pakistani students graduate from South Asian University in New Delhi

Ever since, the day-to-day matters are being looked after by a 17-grade assistant registrar Mohsina Sikandar, who has been given the additional charge of deputy registrar.

For the first three years, the university's examination office was led by 75-year-old Prof Noor Muhammad Memon, who stayed on the seat long after his tenure ended, before handing over the charge to a contractual examinational controller. The university does not have any full professor except its vice-chancellor, while the rooms of associate professors also remain vacant.

Sources affiliated with the varsity told The Express Tribune that BBSU has failed to attract any qualified professors even after numerous calls for vacant positions and newspaper advertisements. This, despite the fact that the varsity has made an attempt to incentivize the jobs by offering an additional emolument for professors under the title of 'Lyari allowance'.

Meanwhile, the provincial government has turned a deaf ear to the demands by its administrators, including calls for land allocation to set up a proper university campus. After several letters to the CM House, the university did receive written approval for a 200-acre piece of land at Hawkes Bay, but the provision remains in limbo at the provincial board of revenue for the past eight years.

Bahria University comes under fire for 'six-inch distance between students' notification

Since its inception, the varsity has held only one meeting of its senate body on November 21, 2014. According to reports, the university's budget was spent without approval from its senate body, prompting the chancellor's office to order an independent audit into any embezzlement of funds.

The current administration did publish a call for proposal in the newspapers, but did not receive expression of interest from any audit firm. The second ad for the same brought one audit firm on board and the tender was awarded without any competition. According to sources, the company that had undertaken the task, left the varsity without completing its audit.

BBSU boasts seven departments within its five faculties, the latest being the Pharmacy department. It does not, however, have a single PhD among its over 30 staff members. Nor does the varsity publish any research journals of its own, putting a big question mark on its academic and research standards.

According to VC Dr Baloch, following the approval of the Sindh Universities Amendment Bill 2018, the university has been given powers for recruitment on top administrative posts, including the registrar and controller of examinations. "Both posts will now be filled in by the varsity's selection board," said the VC, adding that the case for an independent audit will also be reopened in the upcoming senate body meeting and a letter in this regard will soon be sent to the relevant stakeholders. On the appointment of full-time professors, Dr Baloch said the university had received applications and the administration was hopeful that the faculty requirements would soon be met.

(By Safdar Rizvi The Express Tribune, 04, 19/06/2018)

Govt irked as private schools hustle big bucks

The provincial education department has blamed private schools, particularly those catering to students from higher-income families, for the illegal and unjust increase in admission and monthly tuition fees.



Many of these schools have been issued notices in this regard. Almost all of them have responded through their legal advisers that the matter is pending before the court and that the provincial government must wait for the verdict to be announced.

School guard allegedly assaults five-year-old girl in Karachi

This has been revealed in a report submitted on June 6 by the Sindh Education Department's Directorate of Inspection and Registration of Private Institutions in the Sindh High Court. The report names several well-known institutions such as the The City School, Foundation Public School (FPS), Head Start School System, The Indus Academy, Daud Public School, Lyceum School and Nixor College, DHA, among others as the major culprits.

The report compiled by Sindh Private Institutions Director Mansoob Siddiqui reveals details of action taken against these schools on several occasions, as well as complaints the directorate received from parents of students studying in these institutions. The action was taken under the Sindh Private Education Institutions (Regulation and Control) Ordinance 2001, Amendment Act of 2003, the report adds.

SC sets deadline to provide a solution for footpath school

Siddiqui, in the report, contends that the complaints from parents against these institutions included unjust increases in fees, charging fees for the months of June and July from students appearing for their matriculation exams, violations of the academic calendar, disputes between schools' management and staff over salaries, threats to students for not paying illegally hyped fees, maltreatment of students, non-payment of salaries to staff for the months of June and July and forcing students to buy books, stationery and uniforms on inflated prices from the school. Parents have also accused the management of some schools of subjecting students to physical abuse.

The report points out one complaint in particular received against Nixor College located in Defence Housing Authority Phase V.

The complainant, in this case, had accused the institution of illegally charging an exorbitant amount in the name of admission fees, the report said, adding that action was taken against the school and it was asked to refund the amount.

Meanwhile, the Lyceum School located in Clifton was accused of “discriminatory admissions, favouritism, unauthorised collection of tuition fees and charging hefty amounts in the name of admission fees.”

Several other complaints were received against the The City School, Foundation Public school, Head Start School System, and The Indus Academy, among others, regarding illegal increases in tuition fees, on which the directorate had issued show-cause notices. In response, the schools, through their legal advisers, Kamal Azfar and Asad Shakeel, had maintained that the matter was subjudice and that the provincial government should await the court’s verdict.

Planting a ‘SEED’ of entrepreneurship

The report adds that the SHC, on October 17, 2014, had issued a decree that the Sindh Private Education Institutions Regulation and Control Ordinance, 2001, stood abolished and had been changed to the Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2013, passed by the provincial assembly. As per the order, the Directorate of Inspection and Registration of Private Institutions would have no right to take action against private schools in the province.

On April 6, 2017, the Supreme Court had annulled the SHC verdict and reinstated the powers of the authority. The SC, in its hearing, had also appreciated the directorate’s efforts and directed other provinces to follow its example.

(By Safdar Rizvi THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 04, 28/06/2018)

