

NEWSCLIPPINGS

JANUARY TO JUNE 2020

KMC LOCAL BODY



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Karachi mayor's son, guards booked for hurting boy in DHA

The son of the Karachi mayor and over half a dozen men, including his security guards, were booked for beating up a boy in Defence Housing Authority (DHA) on New Year's Eve when he questioned their act of allegedly firing into the air, officials said on Friday.

An official of the Darakhshan police station said that Taimur Wasim and around eight to 10 others, including his guards, were booked for beating up the 19-year-old student, Hasnain Haider, on the night of Dec 31.

The police registered the FIR (2/2020) under Sections 337-H (hurt by rash or negligent act), 506 (criminal intimidation), 427 (mischief), 337-A (shajjah) and 34 (common intention) of Pakistan Penal Code.

Complainant alleges suspects fired into the air before chasing and hitting him

According to contents of the FIR reviewed by Dawn on Friday, the complainant said he was a resident of Clifton who along with his friend was waiting for other friends at a petrol pump in Phase-VIII of DHA when two Vigo vehicles arrived there at around 10pm on Dec 31. Around eight to 10 persons including security guards were travelling in the vehicles. They allegedly resorted to firing into the air, the complainant said, adding that when he inquired about the gunfire and abusive language, they again resorted to firing.

He said that he and his friends left the place in their car but were intercepted by the two Vigo vehicles near Hamza mosque. After stopping their car, the guards who disembarked from their vehicles along with Taimur Wasim told the complainant that he was the son of Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar. The complainant said he was beaten up by the guards and Taimur who allegedly used a pistol to hit him. The guards also smashed the windowpanes of the car. They attempted to force him to sit in their vehicle but on the resistance of his friends, the suspects hurled threats and abuse at them before rushing away.

While relatives and friends of the complainant on Friday staged a protest demonstration outside Karachi Press Club demanding arrest of the suspects, the official of Darakhshan police station admitted that no one had been arrested in the case so far. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 15, 04/01/2020)

And this, our Mayor

Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar has issued an apology on behalf of his son, Taimur Wasim, who, along with his guard, had allegedly assaulted a young man on New Year's Eve. On January 3, a first information report (FIR) was registered against Akhtar's son, Taimur Wasim, and his personal guard at the Darakhshan Police Station for allegedly assaulting Hasnain Haider in Defence Phase 8 on December 31.



The confrontation began on New Year's Eve when the guard accompanying Taimur had allegedly resorted to aerial firing, prompting Haider to inquire why he was doing so. In response, the guard and the mayor's son allegedly beat him up. "When they were asked to stop firing, they beat me up and even threatened to kill me," Hasnain said in the FIR.

The complainant said he was waiting for other friends at a petrol pump in Phase 8 of DHA when two Vigo vehicles arrived there at around 10pm on December 31. Around eight to 10 persons including security guards were travelling in the vehicles. They allegedly resorted to aerial firing, the complainant said, adding that when he inquired about the gunfire and abusive language, they again resorted to firing.

He said that he and his friends left the place in their car but were intercepted by the two vehicles near Hamza Mosque, which is a short distance away. After stopping their car, the guards disembarked from their vehicles along with Taimur Wasim who bragged that he was the son of Karachi Mayor. The complainant said he was beaten up by the guards and Taimur who allegedly used a pistol to hit him. The guards also smashed the windowpanes of the car. They attempted to force him to sit in their vehicle, he claimed, but on the resistance of his friends, the suspects hurled threats and abuse at them before rushing away.

Hasnain immediately drove to Darakhshan Police Station to register the case where he was asked to have his medical examination done first. He had his medical checkup for a wound he had sustained during the altercation. The complainant claimed that the police were first reluctant to register the case, but then they lodged the FIR. This is clear from the date of the FIR – registered on January 3 for an incident that took place on December 31.

Mahboob Abbasi, who is the victim's father, later told the media that the Karachi Mayor phoned him only after the FIR was lodged and protesters had gathered outside the press club. It was after a hue and cry was raised that the police registered the case.

Abbasi said later Wasim Akhtar along with his son, Taimur Wasim, had visited his residence in Clifton, where MPA Nusrat Abbasi, former bureaucrat Dr Shafqat Abbasi and senior politicians including Syed Ghulam Shah and Asif Baladi were also present. Abbasi said Akhtar, while issuing his apology, insisted that such an incident should never have happened.

While this is all well and good, several questions do arise from this incident. To begin with, why is the Mayor's son parading around the city in a convoy of official vehicles accompanied by government paid guards? This from a Mayor who supposedly has

no budget. What gives this young man the right to order the attack on innocent citizens and why isn't the government taking any notice of this?

Let us be fair. The only reason Hasnain Haider was able to register the complaint was because of his family's own political connections.

The problem, of course, has to do more than with the Mayor's son. It has to do with the police. Why was the FIR registered so late? What action has the police chief taken against the SHO?

Karachi drivers are sick of four-wheel drive vehicles which are almost never checked by either the police or the Rangers. In most instances, the drivers force other vehicles off the roads or out of their way and their guards sitting in the back, usually with unregistered arms and ammunition, threaten anyone who disobeys.

The police seem helpless. Despite loud claims, it cannot stop the rapid proliferation of such vehicles, usually roaming the streets sans proper number plates and with tinted glasses. Possibly because most senior police officials, including the DIG Traffic, are also guilty of the same practice. So who then will bell the cat?
(By Kamal Siddiqi The Express Tribune, 17, 06/01/2020)

City needs no new civic law but implementation of existing ones

Karachi does not need any new civic laws but strict implementation of the existing ones to make this megacity liveable, a moot was told here.



According to details, a roundtable conference on the topic of 'A public private partnership for a clean Karachi' organised by Karachi Citizens Forum was held at PMA House here the previous evening.

Dr S.M. Qaisar Sajjad, secretary general, Pakistan Medical Association, who conducted the programme, said that there is increase in number of cases of waterborne diseases, mosquito and fly-borne diseases, skin infections, conjunctivitis and other ailments because of unhygienic conditions in the megacity.

There are about 30,000 garbage pickers and scavengers in Karachi who contract several diseases because of improper methodology of garbage collection, which is the major cause of epidemics in the city.

CM's adviser says master plan for the city is in the works

Lack of civic sense

Nargis Rahman, chairperson Pakistan Women's Foundation for Peace, said citizens also indulge in delinquent behaviour, littering, burning garbage, water contamination or water theft and disregarding the basics of civil living. In this connection we met key stakeholders, ulema, educationists, industrialists, traders, and were given a very patient hearing and promised support.

Industrialists and traders, as captains of industry and wealth, can take up responsibilities in treating their effluent, keeping their premises and service lanes clean and organised and beautifying roundabouts, parks, playgrounds at very low cost, she said.

She said we are shocked at the dissonance, division of authority, responsibilities, and the lack of coordination, collaboration and cooperation between the 18 different agencies responsible for Karachi's civic governance.

Along with this are ghost workers, corruption, lack of funds, encroachment, political interference etc, which obviously means that there is a huge structural lacuna that needs to be addressed urgently.

Ms Rahman further said that Karachi needs a master plan; its problems cannot be solved without a master plan.

Kamal Azfar, former governor Sindh, informed the participants that three master plans were prepared for Karachi in the past and the Karachi Improvement Act was also passed in 1950. We don't need new acts [and laws] but work on the city's infrastructure to solve its problems. He stressed upon the need of empowering the mayor to resolve the civic issues of Karachi.

Burden of diseases

Dr Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, general secretary PMA Karachi, talked about the burden of diseases in the city and said that due to the civic crisis diseases like diarrhoea and typhoid were already widespread in Karachi and now its residents are badly affected by drug-resistant typhoid, which is not easily cured. The burden of diseases is worsening day by day.

Naval Wasvani was of the opinion that corruption is involved in lifting garbage. The garbage heaps are sold and are not lifted until they get the maximum rate.

Dr S. Tipu Sultan, former president PMA Centre, said burden of diseases is increasing day by day in Karachi due to non-availability of clean water. Worsening sewerage system and heaps of garbage are adding to the miseries of the people. Corruption is also the main reason behind this mess.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Adviser to Sindh Chief Minister on Law, Environment and Coastal Development, in his concluding remarks requested all the stakeholders and responsible institutions to come forward for collective efforts to solve the civic problems of Karachi.

Talking about the topic of the conference, he said that the Sindh government was certain that the solution to the city's problems lay in introducing public private partnership models in various sectors. We need to invest more in public private partnerships and set aside politics to clean the city.

He further said that Karachi's issues could not be solved until citizens too made efforts in this regard, and added that ground realities needed to be considered in order to come up with practical solutions.

Speaking about cleaning the city of garbage piles, Wahab said the Sindh government, cantonment boards and all citizens are equally responsible.

Murtaza Wahab also pointed out that only talking about corruption will do little to solve the problems. He said, instead, we need to focus on addressing actual issues.

'Master plan in the works'

Later, he apprised the participants of the conference that a master plan for Karachi is being prepared and the chief minister had constituted a committee to work on the development of Karachi. The committee includes city's stakeholders and engineers as members.

Dr Qazi Wasiq, Dr Mirza Ali Azhar and Dr Ismail Memon also spoke on the occasion.

(By PPI Dawn, 15, 09/01/2020)

City Council demands release of Rs162bn announced for Karachi Package

The Council of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation on Thursday, through a resolution, demanded immediate release of Rs162 billion funds of the Karachi Package announced in a meeting of the Karachi Transformation Committee.

The general body meeting of the council held in the Council Hall of KMC Building also passed other resolutions amid strong protest by the opposition. The opposition members wanted to discuss the city's problems before the approval of the 18-point agenda of the session.

Deputy Mayor Arshad Hasan presided over the meeting. Metropolitan Commissioner and Secretary of the Council Dr Syed Saif-ur-Rehman also attended the meeting.

The session descended into chaos when chairman of Union Council No 8, Lyari, Abdul Hameed, rose and invited the attention of the chair to the problems in his area. He said the roads and lanes in the vicinity were in a poor condition.

He deplored that not a single rupee was allocated for his UC in the budget book of the city's municipal administration.

Opposition councillors protest, claim no funds released for their areas

He said that no development works were carried out in the constituency due to the absence of funds. "This situation is highly deplorable and critical as we are answerable to our voters," he said.

The deputy speaker asked him to take his seat, advising him to meet him in his chamber to discuss the issues of his area.

However, the UC chairman said he would lie down on the floor of the house if he was not allowed to discuss the municipal problems being faced by the people of his constituency. The opposition members chanted slogans against the mayor as highly charged UC chairman Hameed approached the podium.

Amid uproar, the chair continued the business and the council approved all resolutions one after another with the deputy mayor smiling in the chair.

The women opposition members also joined their colleagues, tearing up copies of the agenda.

Demand for release of Rs162bn

The council through a resolution demanded the release of Rs162bn funds with the package for the current year so the city's condition could improve.

Through another resolution the council members gave approval for the upgrade of the school of nursing in the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital to a college of nursing and the SNE (sanctioned new expenditure) for the appointment of teaching staff and other necessities according to the Pakistan Nursing Council.

The council also passed a resolution with a majority of votes on the appreciation of the 16-member KMC Urban Search and Rescue team which performed well in rescue and search operation after the collapse of a residential building in Sukkur.

Other resolutions which were passed by the council included the maintenance of graveyards, right of collection of licence fee from chicken meat shops, repairing of fire tenders, amendment to the rate of fee for raw skin in the KMC slaughterhouse, providing of janitorial service in the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, naming of a bridge near Rashid Minhas Road after Major Adeel Shahid Shaheed, gate entry fee of Zulfikarabad Oil Tankers parking terminal, entry of residential apartments in the KMC jurisdiction in the record of rights, scrutiny fee for plots under a building plan, increase in lease rates, upgrade of different KMC posts, registration of graveyards and handing over of city cemeteries to the chairmen of the area with the construction of a boundary wall of Mauripur Truck Stand and parking rights.

Fateha offered

The house also offered fateha on the demise of former federal minister Syed Safwanullah, former chief election commissioner Fakhruddin G. Ebrahim, poet Arif Shafiq and for those who died in the recent snowfall and landslides in Azad Kashmir and other parts of the country and those killed in a vehicle fire incident in North Karachi.

The council also demanded better treatment for the injured and shifting of the affected to safe places.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 15, 17/01/2020)

Mayor links delay in uplift works to release of ADP funds

Mayor Karachi Wasim Akhtar said on Monday that uplift works in parts of the city were delayed for nine months due to late release of funds of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) by the provincial government.

"The pending work of the ongoing schemes is being carried out now after the release for the first quarter," he said, adding that people were facing hardships due to present state of financial affairs.

He expressed these views while talking to media on a visit to UC 34, Korangi, to inspect the road construction and other allied works.

The mayor said that no money could be spent on uplift works without obtaining the approval of the elected council of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) under the rules.

Mr Akhtar said the development works in that area were being carried out with a cost of Rs20 million which included the 1.5km-long road construction, two culverts on drain and other works. "The drain will also be cleaned and side walls will be constructed," he added.

Later, speaking as chief guest at a reception held by the Karachi Press Club in honour of senior reporter Tahir Siddiqui, a Dawn staffer, for winning 2nd Karachi Commissioner Marathon in the veteran category for the second consecutive time, Mayor Akhtar announced that the municipal administration with the collaboration of the KPC would soon organise a 10-km "walk and jog" for general public to promote sports and recreational activities in the city.

He said that a joint committee of the KMC and KPC would be constituted for holding healthy events to create awareness about the benefits of walking and jogging among the masses.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 16, 28/01/2020)

Mayor vows to resettle displaced vendors

Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar allotted alternative spaces for shops to 405 traders, displaced from the now razed market near Karachi Zoological Garden, during a ceremony held at the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) head office on Thursday.

Addressing the ceremony, he claimed that 2,100 traders, of the total 2,600 displaced in the aftermath of anti-encroachment drives, have been given alternative spaces and pledged to resettle all displaced traders within the next two months.

No assistance of any kind has been provided to KMC for resettling the affectees of anti-encroachment drives and the civic body is using its own resources for the purpose, he rued. "[However], people living in this city are my people and I consider it my responsibility to tend to their problems."

He complained that the provincial government had promised assistance in the rehabilitation of displaced traders but only meetings were held and no practical step was taken in this regard.

The mayor, however, hailed the apex court's verdict regarding the operation against encroachments, terming it an "effort towards restoring Karachi to its original condition," and said, "All of us are responsible for ruining the city."

He said that the city was headed towards rectifying the mistakes of the past, pertaining to "China cutting", adding that the displaced vendors have been allotted alternative spaces in accordance with the law. "These spaces promise permanence and no one can ask the vendors to shift from these places." The mayor also asked the vendors to maintain cleanliness in the new allotted spaces and safeguard them against encroachments.

"We have damaged this city ourselves [and] we continue to [occupy] and do businesses on [its] footpaths, nullahs and [in] parks," he said.

The mayor claimed the previous governments “never owned the city,” adding that the Centre too failed at protecting the land in its ownership in Karachi.

“No one cares whether the city’s streets and footpaths are spacious, whether parks and grounds are available [to its citizens] and whether the city’s beauty is [being marred],” the mayor said. “Karachi is our home and it is our responsibility to beautify it.”

Metropolitan Commissioner Dr Syed Saifur Rehman, who also spoke on the occasion, said that the mayor has been concerned about resettling the displaced persons from the onset of the anti-encroachment operation, adding that it was a difficult decision to provide alternative spaces on KMC’s land.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 10/02/2020)

No response from Centre, Sindh: mayor

Despite several letters being written to the federal and Sindh governments regarding strategies to control the spread of Covid-19, there has been no response, claimed Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar in a meeting on Saturday.

“The available resources, including medical teams, doctors, paramedics, infrastructure and equipment - especially our 58 ventilators - could not be used efficiently [as a result],” he stated.

Akhtar added that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation had 14 major hospitals that were not being utilised properly in the crisis.

He maintained that the situation could have been handled better had the provincial government adopted a mutual strategy, instead of relying on different institutions separately to help citizens. Highlighting the ways to curb the further spread of Covid-19, Akhtar maintained that, as discussed earlier with private hospitals across the city, an increase in screening capabilities should be made the focus. He stated that ideally testing should be increased to 6,000 per day.

(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 19/04/2020)

Mayor imposes emergency in KMC-run hospitals to cope with heatwave

Mayor Wasim Akhtar on Saturday imposed a state of emergency in hospitals under the administrative control of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) keeping in view a heatwave alert issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

He directed the senior director-medical services to ensure presence of doctors and paramedics and provision of all necessary equipment at each hospital.

“The Met department said a heatwave will hit Karachi from May 5 to 8 with the mercury expected to remain between 40 and 42 degree Celsius,” he said, asking the people, particularly children and senior citizens, to avoid going out unnecessarily especially during these days.

Akhtar directed hospitals’ managements to take special measures to combat the expected heatwave, adding that the lethargy would not be tolerated in this regard.

“Doctors and other paramedics should be called in three different shifts,” he said.

Met Office forecasts heatwave in the metropolis from May 5 to May 8

The mayor said that hospitals were already running out of space as the number of coronavirus patients were increasing day by day.

“Most of the business places are closed in the city due to lockdown and the people stay at their homes and during the heatwave the best way to save ourselves is to avoid [unnecessarily going] out and travel especially during daytime,” he added.

He directed managements of all hospitals under the administrative control of the KMC to ensure foolproof measures.

The mayor hoped that doctors and paramedical staff would also serve heatwave patients with courage just as they had been serving Covid-19 patients.

Sportsmen also hit hard by lockdown

Meanwhile, the mayor said that just like people of other sectors, sportsmen and artists were also hit hard by the coronavirus.

He said this while speaking at an event for ration distribution amongst sportsmen hosted by the Sindh Olympic Association.

Former MPA belonging to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan Mehfooz Yar Khan, Sindh Olympic Association secretary Ahmed Ali Rajput and other officials were also present.

The mayor said that all sports activities came to a halt across the world due to which people affiliated with different sports were also facing hardships.

He said that except cricket, no other sport was given priority in Pakistan as players of different sports often participate in the games through help of different NGOs.

The mayor said: "Instead of providing ration directly to sportsmen, we have decided to give tokens to their associations for the sake of their self-respect."

He added that the associations of gymnastics, table tennis, baseball, volleyball, weightlifting and others were provided tokens to distribute ration amongst their members.

Akhtar said the KMC was ready to promote sports, suggesting that a committee of former players could be formed which should be tasked to promote sports as well as helping the needy players.

He also said that the cyclers of the Sindh Cycling Association could have practice at the newly-established 62-acre Kidney Hill Park. (By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 03/05/2020)

LGs in Punjab

Sometimes government decisions leave people both bewildered and bemused. A few days ago, the Punjab government announced that the defunct union councils would discontinue public services from May 1. The Punjab Local Government and Community Development Department has intimated all deputy commissioners, designated as the heads of District Transition Teams of their districts, in this connection through a notification. The notification, inter alia, said the services rendered by the union councils up to April 30 this year would be subject to 'audit and administrative scrutiny'. This decision, seen together with a series of earlier decisions relating to local governments, raises intriguing questions.

CM Usman Buzdar deferred the local body elections due to the situation in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. In May 2019, the Local Government system, constituted under the Punjab Local Government Act of 2013, was replaced by the Punjab Local Government Act of 2019, and under the new law, all local governments were dissolved and elected representatives were sent packing. Around 33 petitions have been filed in the Lahore High Court challenging the dissolution of the local bodies, but it has not conducted hearings for the past several months. The latest decision would add to the problems of the people besides causing consternation. Also, there are reports the next LG elections in Punjab would be held on non-party basis.

The government has come in for scathing criticism from the opposition. The decision is raising intriguing questions about the intentions of the government especially because of the timing and circumstances surrounding it. Observers say it shows things are not going smoothly for the PTI government. Several political bigwigs are facing NAB cases. They are likely making behind-the-scenes moves to influence the course of politics to get out of their predicament. There is the 'political loneliness and idleness' of the once 'active' Shehbaz Sharif. The decision about UCs and the idea of 'Tiger Force' indicate that all is not well. (By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 04/05/2020)

MQM-P demands halt to delimitation of LG constituencies till publication of census results

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan has asked the Election Commission to stop the process of delimitation of local government constituencies in Sindh till the final publication of the results of the sixth population census held in 2017.

On April 13, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had issued a letter regarding "delimitation of union council, union committee and ward in Town Committee and Municipal Committee for the conduct of the forthcoming Local Government Elections in the Province of Sindh".

The 2015 LG elections were held in the constituencies delimited on the basis of the 1998 census. And as the local governments in Sindh are set to complete their four-year term in August, the ECP has started a delimitation exercise based on the sixth population census so that it could conduct the next LG elections within 120 days after expiry of the term of the present LGs.

However, the MQM-P took strong exception to the ECP's plan to hold delimitation on the basis of the provisional results of the 2017 census. Party convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui had written a letter to the ECP secretary stating that under Chapter III, Section 17(2) of the Election Act, 2017, "The Commission shall delimit constituencies after every census officially published."

In the letter, a copy of which is provided to [Dawn](#), he reminded the ECP that the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics had published the provisional results of the census on Aug 25, 2017 and the Council of Common Interest has "still not published the final results" of the census.

ECP reminded of the law that says: 'The Commission shall delimit constituencies after every census officially published'

He said that parliament had passed the 24th Amendment to Constitution to allocate National Assembly seats to each province, the federal capital and Fata on the basis of provisional results of the 2017 census.

Senior MQM-P leader and Federal Minister for IT and Telecom Aminul Haque told Dawn that it was a one-time exception and now delimitation must be held on the basis of the final results of the census.

He said no response was as yet received from the ECP on Dr Siddiqui's letter that demanded an immediate halt to the process of delimitation till the publication of final results of the Census 2017.

The MQM-P letter also pointed out that the process of delimitation in the prevailing dangerous situations of the Covid-19 pandemic was not in the health interest of the people of Sindh and Pakistan.

The MQM-P and many other parties had refused to accept the 2017 census provisional results and they alleged that millions of residents of Karachi were missing as they were not counted during the census process.

Even, the first point of a memorandum of understanding signed between the MQM-P and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf before making a coalition was about the results of the Karachi census. It reads: "The resolution passed by the National Assembly regarding Karachi census and as decided by the Council of Common Interest should be implemented immediately."

In December 2019, the Sindh Assembly had also unanimously passed a resolution demanding that the federal government conduct a third-party audit to verify the provisional results of the 2017 results.
(By Azfar-ul-Ashfaq Dawn, 13, 04/05/2020)

Mayor asks KMC law dept to initiate legal proceedings to reclaim amusement park

Mayor Wasim Akhtar has asked the law department of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation to initiate legal proceedings for getting possession of 52-acre land where Aladdin Park was established.

He directed the law department to take effective measures for getting back control of the land where a party was in possession on the court's stay order. He said that the municipal administration was not being given back control of the park even after expiry of the contract which was unlawful.

A KMC spokesman said that 25-year agreement had expired and now the KMC wanted to invite bid once again for increasing its revenue.

He recalled that the party was given notice six months ago as per rules in which it was duly mentioned that the agreement was expiring on May 29, 2020.

The spokesman said that the second notice was also served while a committee was formed which gave third notice to the party after completing all legal formalities.

The party was asked to evacuate the land but it got stay order instead, he said and added the mayor had directed the law department to present the KMC's case in court.

The spokesman said that membership at a club established on the park's land was still continuing even after expiry of the agreement. He said that the court would be approached soon for getting back control of the park and tendering would begin.

He said that KMC wanted to provide cheap facility to the people and for that it is necessary that ticket at public parks should be cheaper.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 14, 05/06/2020)

MQM-P challenges delimitations in SHC

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has challenged in court a notification by the provincial election commission, pertaining to the new delimitation of constituencies and inclusion of the assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner and others in the delimitation committee.

The Sindh High Court (SHC) refused on Thursday to hear the MQM-P's plea immediately.

"There could be a lengthy debate on the demarcation of the constituencies," the court remarked, adding that it was not possible to hear the petition during the holidays.

The petition was filed by MQM-P leaders Amir Khan, Kanwar Naveed Jamil, and Karachi mayor Wasim Akhtar.

According to the petition, the method of delimitation was decided in 2013 and it was illegitimate for the election commission to form a committee for the purpose.

The petition further stated that the demarcation report had not yet been made public, while the delimitation committee would also have an impact on the local elections, therefore, the notification of the commission should be declared null and void.

Talking to the media, Khan said a notification had been issued by the provincial election commission to form committees for delimitation.

He added that the term of local government bodies was coming to an end in September and the MQM-P already had reservations over the delimitations of the constituencies.

"The census has also been rigged," said Khan, adding that the provincial government had retained local government powers. 'Illegitimate detention'

Meanwhile, the SHC also sought arguments from the parties in a petition challenging the detention of a man acquitted of involvement in the PIDC bomb blast case.

Sindh police chief Mushtaq Ahmed Mahar appeared along with the Sindh home secretary and other officials during the hearing, which was held in the chambers of Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro on the request of the provincial advocate general.

As per the petition, the acquitted man, Abdul Hameed Bugti, had been detained for 30 days after his acquittal by the home department under the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance. His counsel contended that court orders had been violated in his extended detention. Bugti had been declared a fugitive in 2002 and was arrested in 2005.

According to the home secretary, the details of Bugti's detentions had been kept confidential. He claimed that Bugti had been held in jail after his acquittal based on information received from various agencies.

Bugti's lawyer argued that a person could not be kept in jail for life on the basis of suspicion alone, adding that none of the accusations against his client had been substantiated.

The court sought arguments from the parties on June 25.
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 19/06/2020)

KMC passes Rs24.85b budget

The council of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) passed a budget of Rs24.85 billion for the upcoming fiscal year.

Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar presented the fourth budget of his tenure before the council on Monday, allocating around Rs2.5 billion for the district annual development programme (ADP). No new taxes were imposed for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The current receipts in the KMC budget are Rs.20.67 billion whereas the capital receipts are Rs 1.66 billion.

Meanwhile, Rs15.57 billion of the budget have been set aside for establishment expenditures, Rs200.96 million were earmarked for repair and maintenance, while the estimation for development works is Rs4.38 billion.

"We have taken all-out measures to ensure the provision of facilities at the grassroots level," claimed the mayor, adding that the pandemic had affected the entire world badly and made it difficult to plan for the future. "Our resources, which were nominal even before the lockdown, have almost dried up now," he added, pointing out that the KMC's biggest source of income was grants from the Sindh government.

Giving details about the budget, he said Rs680 million was earmarked for the repair and maintenance of roundabouts, roads, footpaths and sewerage lines in all six districts of Karachi, while the Special Development Project and Nehr-e-Khayyam uplift scheme were to receive Rs120 million each. The same amount has also been fixed for different works at the union council-level, while Rs100 million has been set aside for purchasing ventilators. Rs100 million is also fixed for purchasing equipment for hospitals under KMC's administrative control.

Elaborating further, Akhtar revealed that Rs100 million had been reserved for the development of Kidney Hill Park, Rs300 million for uplift work at Shahabuddin Market Parking Plaza, Rs100 million for the uplift and lighting of major arteries and Rs100 million for uplift at various parks in the city.

Similarly, Rs100 million has been earmarked for cleaning drains, and Rs75 million each for the maintenance of flyovers, underpasses and bridges, the establishment of a fire station, development of landfill sites and the uplift of an oil tanker parking terminal.

The KMC also allocated Rs52 million for development work at the Karachi Zoo and Safari Park, as well as Rs50 million to purchase animals and birds.

Discussing the expected revenue in the upcoming fiscal year, he claimed that a grant of Rs13.19 billion was expected from the Sindh government, while K-Electric owed KMC Rs4.41 billion and Rs2.5 billion was expected to come in from the district ADP.

He further gave details about the revenue received over the last four years, stating that though Rs3.33 billion was to come in during the outgoing year, KMC received only Rs625 million, while in 2018-19, it was given Rs2.5 billion out of the allocated Rs5 billion. In the two years preceding that, Rs5 billion were allocated, but they only received Rs4.1 billion each year, he added.

"Around 400 schemes in Karachi were badly affected while we could not begin work on 300 schemes in the city due to the major cut in our funding," Akhtar lamented, adding that the KMC still owed Rs8.5 billion to contractors. "We had incorporated schemes suggested by the opposition last year too, but they could not be completed on time because of the shortage in funds."

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 30/06/2020)