

NEWSCLIPPINGS

JULY TO DECEMBER 2017

KMC LOCAL BODY



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Over Rs4bn DMC South budget passed

Over Rs4.05 billion budget of the District Municipal Corporation South for the year 2017-18 was passed by a majority vote at the DMC hall on Thursday.

The budget presented by Chairman Malak Fayyaz also showed a surplus of over Rs1.3 million.

Earlier giving details of the budget, he said that over half of the amount — over Rs2.54bn — would be spent on salaries while over Rs560m had been kept for development works, over Rs250m for contingencies, over Rs410m for maintenance and over Rs6.5m had been kept to meet calamities and to control pollution, etc.

Giving details of the revenue generation side, he said that the DMC South expected to generate over Rs700m from its own resources while the Sindh government was expected to provide over Rs3.34bn.

He said that the DMC was making efforts to generate more funds from its own resources so that it could provide better facilities not only to residents, but also to millions of other people who came to carry out their business, etc, in its jurisdiction which housed the city centre, wholesale markets, etc, on a daily basis.

(Dawn 18, 01/07/2017)

Sindh govt has included 14 mega projects for Karachi this year, says official

The Sindh government has allocated Rs8 billion for 14 mega development projects in Karachi in its 2017-18 budget. The projects include four flyovers along with roads, water drains and improvement of infrastructure.

Local Government Department Project Director Niaz Soomro said this on Sunday while talking to the media.

Karachi Package projects to be completed by end of May

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“Roads leading to the Cantonment Railway Station will be rebuilt with a drainage system on modern lines. Roundabouts and roads from Kandawala Building on MA Jinnah Road to Garden will also be remodeled,” Soomro informed the media, adding that modification and reconstruction of Zaibunnisa Street and Abdullah Haroon Road will also be undertaken.

“The ICI Bridge Intersection will be expanded with the installation of signals. Tipu Sultan Road will be reconstructed, while roads connecting the National Stadium to the New Town police station and Millennium Mall will also be widened,” the project director revealed.

Soomro added that two flyovers will be constructed at the intersections of Shaheed-e-Millat Road and Tipu Sultan Road and Khalid Bin Waleed Road in order to provide signal-free access to commuters from Baloch Colony Flyover to the Jail Road Bridge.

Mobile hospital launched under Gulshan Chowrangi flyover in Karachi

“A bridge will be constructed at Lea Market to decrease the traffic load. A flyover is also planned on Sunset Boulevard on Korangi Road as well,” he maintained.

The project director informed the media that the roads alongside Korangi Nullah, Lyari River near Hassan Square, Chakora Nullah near Star Gate and the nullah near Habib Bank Chowrangi will also be repaired. Water pipelines will also be shifted from these locations, he added.

Under the Karachi Mega City Project 2016-17, the Sindh government started 15 development projects worth Rs9.58 billion. Around Rs6.2 billion has so far been utilised on these projects. Ten projects have been completed, while work on the remaining projects will be completed by July, 2017, Soomro said, adding that work on the Submarine Chowrangi Underpass will be completed by November this year.

2200MW nuclear power plants in Karachi to ‘start generating electricity by 2018’

With the assistance of the Malir Cantonment Authority, a 200 feet-wide road will be constructed from Malir Cantt Gate 2 to the Super Highway via Memon Goth. The project will cost Rs350 million, he added. He also informed that efforts would be made to make Sharae Faisal into a model road.

The project director also clarified that the local government department had no role in the projects proposed by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) being not approved for the new fiscal year. “The planning and development department should be held responsible for the non-approval of development projects presented by the KMC and the KDA,” he maintained.

(The Express Tribune 14, 03/07/2017)

Vohra claims KMC did its part to clear city of rainwater

Deputy Mayor of Karachi Arshad Vohra claimed on Friday that the condition of the city would be much uglier if the manpower and equipment of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and elected municipal representatives were not in the streets to clear the rainwater inundating the sprawling metropolis over the past two days.

"We, the representatives of the city's municipal bodies, have got the streets clear of rainwater by staying put round-the-clock [in the] field where our workers worked relentlessly by using all available equipment," said Dr Vohra while speaking to reporters after visiting various rain-hit neighbourhoods across the metropolis.

He claimed that apart from the KMC and the district municipal corporations no other agency was seen working during the incessant rains that lashed the metropolis for the past two days.

He said that large suction pumps had been used outside the Sindh Assembly building and smaller pumps had been requisitioned to clear the remaining water on the roads.

The deputy mayor demanded that the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board, which is being run by the provincial government, promptly transfer the garbage from the garbage transfer stations to the designated landfill sites.

The deputy mayor, among other locations, visited areas outside the Sindh Assembly building, Sindh secretariat, PIDC Nullah, Chakor Nullah, Songal Nullah, Sharea Faisal, Millat Town, Malir and other parts of the city.

"We are using all available resources in our bid to provide comfort to citizens," he said, adding that Rs10bn packages as announced every year during the past eight years were just "peanuts".

"Karachi should have been given funds according to its needs. It is high time to plan better for a modern city."

He said katchi abadis were spread on 51 per cent of the city area and, until its problems were resolved the city would remain a backward urban habitat.

He said the funds given by the government a few months ago to the municipalities to clean storm-water drains were fully spent on the works, however, the release of such funds was interrupted for a while, yet the KMC got the work done from whatever meagre means it had at its disposal.

He asked shopkeepers in commercial areas not to throw trash on roads and called upon the market associations to arrange for better means to lift the garbage in marketplaces.

He said those who were still throwing trash into storm-water drains should be declared culpable for committing cognisable offence.

During his visit to Millat Town, the deputy mayor witnessed a sewerage main, which drains sewage to Malir River. The sewerage main had sunk because of Thursday's rains.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn 18, 01/07/2017)

SC admits plea seeking more powers for city mayor

The controversy between the provincial and local governments over the powers of the city mayor took a significant turn on Wednesday when the Supreme Court admitted for hearing a constitutional petition of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan seeking powers for the local governments under Article 140-A of the Constitution.

Earlier, the registrar of the Supreme Court had returned the petition filed by the MQM-P and Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar, raising certain objections, including the grounds for maintainability.

Later, the petitioner political party and its mayor moved an appeal against the SC registrar's decision which was set aside by a three-judge bench headed by Justice Asif Saeed Khosa in Islamabad.

Another petition seeks billions in octroi zila tax for KMC

The petitioners' counsel informed the three-judge bench that the objection about failure in providing a certificate in terms of Rule 6 of Order XXV of the Supreme Court Rules, 1980 was no longer sustainable as the requisite documents had already been submitted.

As for the maintainability of the petition, the three-judge bench observed that prima facie it met the "requirements of maintainability of a petition under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution".

Setting aside the objection of the registrar's office, the bench directed the office to entertain the petition, assign a number and then fix it for hearing before the court.

The next date of hearing would be announced by the court's office later.

The petition has been filed by barrister Farogh Naseem on behalf of MQM-P convener Dr Farooq Sattar, Mayor of Karachi Wasim Akhtar and some senior MQM-P leaders.

KMC seeks Rs29.36bn as its share in OZT

In addition to taking back control of the KMC, the MQM-P also requested the Supreme Court through a petition to order the Sindh government's authorities concerned to release Rs29.36 billion as the KMC's share of the Octroi Zila Tax (OZT) with mark-up etc.

"In view of the political realities, it is imperative that the Supreme Court should pass corrective orders so that the Sindh local government institutions are empowered," the petition said.

"Since 2008 till date, an amount of Rs1,227bn has been allocated by the Sindh government for the Annual Development Programme, but hardly any funds from the ADP [have] ever been allocated for urban Sindh and even the amount earmarked for rural Sindh has also been eaten away entirely," the petition alleged.

It further said that the PPP government legislated the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013 on Sept 16, 2013, to take over control of the devolved departments by amending Sections 74 and 75 of the act in violation of Article 140-A of the Constitution as municipal functions could not be taken over by the provincial government or be given to any other body or authority under its control.

"Thus the provincial government has abused the 2013 act by making a parallel statute, rules and regulations to usurp the power of the local governments," the petition said.

It asked the Supreme Court to order the Sindh government and its departments concerned to immediately release due share of funds to the local governments of Sindh, especially the KMC, from 2008 till date with the mark-up as well as funds of the Annual Development Programme.

Secretaries of the cabinet division, finance, chief secretary, secretaries of Sindh local government, Sindh Assembly, provincial law department as well as leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians have been named as respondents in the petition.

The OZT share of the KMC, according to the petition, came to about Rs60.34bn in eight years from 2008 to 2016, but the KMC received only Rs30.9bn, hence the KMC was entitled to be given the remaining amount of Rs29.4bn, which had been retained illegally by the Sindh government.

The petition said that the OZT did not form part of the Divisible Pool under Clause 7 of the Presidential Order No. V of 2010 that dealt with the distribution of revenues and grants among provincial governments.

The petition argued that the functions of building control ie construction laws and town planning were also municipal functions and should be devolved to the local governments, but under the 2013 act these functions had been vested in the departments working under the Sindh government.

Similarly, the petition said, matters pertaining to land control, planning, leasing and other aspects of land, including land development, were also municipal functions and, therefore, should be devolved to the local governments.

The petition asked the Supreme Court to declare illegal and without jurisdiction Section 3 of the KDA (Revival and Amending) Act 2016, Sections 74 and 75 of the 2013 act, and similar dispensations in other statutes.

The petition also asked the SC to declare that the mayor of Karachi was empowered to exercise authority under Section 4 of the Sindh Building Control Ordinance, 1979, under the local government institutions.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn 17, 14/07/2017)

Councillors collecting extortion, allege transporters

Following the example of gangsters and criminals, elected representatives also seem to have started collecting extortion in Lea Market and Kalakot areas of Karachi. Transporters and bus owners staged on Sunday a sit-in in Lea Market to protest against the extortion local representatives have been allegedly collecting from them.

The sit-in caused a severe traffic jam in the area. "We are tired of paying extortion to criminals. Now, the councillors of the area have started demanding money," said Sindh Balochistan Hub Coach Owners Association President Humayun Khan, adding that they would not ply their vehicles until the government takes action against the elected representatives.

"We run approximately 130 coaches from Hub to Karachi, but two councillors of the area, Mushtaq and Mairaj, have made our lives miserable. Every month, they demand Rs200 per coach. If any driver refuses, they beat him black and blue and do not allow the vehicle on roads," Khan alleged. He added that the situation has been continuing for months but the authorities are not interested in resolving their issues. "We lodged complaints at the Kalakot police station but nothing has been done," he lamented.

Two booked for trying to extort restaurant owner

The transporters blocked Lea Market Chowk, causing a severe traffic jam in the area. They claimed that the two councilors involved in extorting money from them belonged to the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N). "We have also informed the union council chairmen and PML-N leadership about the issue, but no one takes it seriously," Nazar Muhammad, one of the coach owners, said. "These elected representatives are supposed to resolve people's civic problems, but unfortunately they run gambling dens and supervise the gangs in the areas," he alleged.

Another coach owner appealed to the Rangers director-general (DG), who had visited Lyari on Saturday, to intervene and resolve the issue. "The Rangers DG claimed to have contained the law and order in Karachi, especially in Lyari area. We request him to take action against extortionists in the area," he said.

Mohammad Hussain, a driver who has been operating a coach for the last 10 years, said the police are aware of the illicit activities of the councillors and are working hand in glove with them.

Pindi police launches operation against transporters

Talking to The Express Tribune, the union council (UC) 11 Kalakot chairman, Firdous Aijaz, confirmed that both the councillors belong to his party and that he has also lodged complaints against their suspected criminal activities. "I will also ask the police to take action and request the party to expel the black sheep," he claimed.

However, the local SP, Aftab Nizamani, said he was unaware of any complaint registered by the transporters. "After the Karachi operation, the police and law enforcers have cleansed the area of gangsters and criminals. I am further asking the concerned SHO to look into the matter," he said.

When contacted, Mushtaq, one of the accused councillors, refuted the allegations. "I have never asked any transporter for money. It is a false propaganda against me," he declared. The other councillor, Mairaj, was not available for comments. (The Express Tribune 15, 17/07/2017)

Diversion of development funds

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

In the last fiscal year, as an example, revenue shortfalls necessitated a steep cut in the domestically financed component of the development budget, and the axe largely fell on the programmes marked to facilitate the return of temporarily displaced persons of the Waziristan operations. The amount allocated for this programme was Rs100bn, but it was cut by Rs38bn. From the remainder, around Rs24bn was then diverted to various expenditures not connected to the TDPs at all, such as paying for the contingent liabilities of the JF-17 Thunder contractual payments, as well as a 'security allowance' and raising a special security force.

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

KMC developing 'model graveyard' in Surjani

A model graveyard was being developed by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation in Surjani Town at a cost of over Rs40 million, said Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar on Friday.

Briefing media persons after chairing a meeting in this regard at the KMC head office on M.A. Jinnah Road, the mayor said the graveyard was being developed on 10 acres and would be developed in four phases with Rs10m being spent on each phase.

He said the KMC was developing the graveyard after 28 years and this model graveyard being developed in Sector 16 of Surjani Town would meet requirements of the metropolis for the next 10 years.

He said that the KMC would also be spending over Rs20m on the repair, maintenance and construction of boundary walls around the existing graveyards of the city. He said that bylaws were also being formulated for graveyards.

Earlier, the mayor chaired a meeting that was attended by KMC officials concerned, including Deputy Mayor Arshad Vohra, technical director S. M. Shukaib, additional director of graveyards Iqbal Pervaiz and others.

(Dawn 18, 23/07/2017)

'Local government system virtually abolished in Sindh'

Strong local governments are needed to address grievances of all the communities living in Sindh. The tenure of current local government (LG) system in Sindh needs to be extended to five years instead of the current tenure of four years.

Researcher and the executive director of the Institute for Progressive Ideas to Re-Inform Governance (INSPIRING) Pakistan, Dr Niaz Murtaza, said this at the launching ceremony of a research report 'Undermining Local Governance: A Review of the Sindh Local Government System, 2013' on Tuesday. The research was conducted by Dr Murtaza and Dr Saeed Ahmed Rid, while the ceremony was jointly organised by INSPIRING Pakistan and Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research.

The research study, which was conducted in Karachi and Shikarpur districts, revealed that many key functions have been reassigned to the province in the 2013 LG system, including police and building control. City development authorities have also not been placed under the elected local bodies.

Research-based studies to highlight women's issues

In his speech, Dr Murtaza said powers of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), the biggest local body in Sindh, were quite limited. Some key LG functions, including education, environment and security, do not fall under the purview of the KMC, he said, adding that some of the functions included under the KMC's domain are control of stray dogs, brick kilns and cattle colonies, which are more appropriate for union councils. The scope of powers of the KMC must be revisited so that all key LG functions for Karachi fall under its purview, the researcher said.

The researcher also pointed out loopholes in the law. Neither the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013 nor the Constitution of Pakistan mandates immediate re-elections for the local bodies within a stipulated period in case of completion of term or early dissolution, he said, adding that the law must be modified to mandate holding of elections within 90 days, in case the local bodies are dissolved.

The army-controlled cantonment areas in Karachi and elsewhere have their own separate LG structures, which create multiple and confusing jurisdictions, Dr Murtaza maintained. Such areas should be brought under the supervision of the relevant city municipal authority, he said.

Youth Festival held at the National Museum of Pakistan

Political parties hesitated to nominate persons from marginalised groups in the 2016 elections and many affluent candidates captured seats reserved for low-income persons. The application process for the elections must be reviewed to end elite capture of reserved seats, Dr Murtaza demanded.

Presently, LG system has virtually been abolished in Sindh and Punjab, said economist Dr Kaiser Bengali. Provincial governments are making companies for all LG services instead of providing powers to local bodies, he said.

"We don't have homogenous population in Sindh and we have witnessed discriminatory spending of public funds in LG system," Dr Bengali said, adding that during the former LG system under retired General Pervez Musharraf, Karachi's district city government had not spent even 1% on localities where Sindhis and Balochs were in majority. Political parties exploit ethnic communities instead of serving them, he said.

Reforms Programme: Pre-primary classes for govt schools

Dr Bengali also criticised Provincial Finance Commission, calling it a body of bureaucrats. Major taxes are kept by the provincial government, whereas LGs do not have the authority to collect taxes, he said.

Sindhi population in Sindh has been losing its majority and in Karachi, Mohajirs are turning into minority, claimed Dr Bengali. In 2013 elections, two Pakhtoons were elected to the Sindh Assembly and it is hoped that in 2018 elections, the number of Pakhtoon members would increase to five to seven, he said. Due to military operations a large number of Pakhtoon people have migrated to Karachi, which has increased their political power in Sindh, he said, adding that Seraikis are also migrating in a large number to Karachi due to economic reasons. All ethnicities should join together for welfare of the province and for that purpose political agreement is needed, Dr Bengali maintained.

(Tribune, 13, 26/07/2017)

CITIES: A KARACHI BY ANY OTHER NAME

Defining Karachi is always difficult. Is it a port city or an industrial hub? Can Karachi best be described as the city of Urdu speakers or is it actually a mini Pakistan? The truth is that Karachi is so large in terms of both area and population, that its neighbourhoods can easily be thought of as distinct towns, each with its own subculture and history. This is not surprising considering that the city's architectural landscape is neatly divided in precise epochs: the precolonial era, the city under the Raj, post-Partition Karachi and modern Karachi.

As the city expanded from a fishing village into a port city and then metamorphosed in August 1947 to become the capital of Pakistan, it became host to a diverse set of people and languages, each of which left an imprint on the city's map. The names of Karachi's neighbourhoods are a reflection of this phenomenon and it is interesting to note how religious sites, famous landmarks, personalities and city planners live on in the city's maps.

Meethadar and Kharadar

These names range from descriptive to prosaic. The latter ones are easy to decipher. For instance, Soldier Bazaar was the place where British soldiers and their memsahibs would do their shopping back in the Raj days. Mukka Chowk was named after a statue of a fist on the junction's roundabout, Dalmiya was where the Dalmiya cement factory used to be, Lucky Star is famous because of the eponymous restaurant located there, Pehlwan Goth was where wrestlers trained and Water Pump has an actual pump used by tankers that transported water across the city.

A history behind some of the quirkily named areas of the city

These are the easy ones but there are many parts of Karachi that have a story behind them. Kharadar and Meethadar, one of the oldest neighbourhoods in the city are among them. They predate the colonial era and mark the days when Karachi was a small fishing village called Kalachi Jo Goth. When Lord Napier conquered the city in 1842, the British thought of the original neighbourhoods as the Old Town and listed it as the first quarter out of the 26 they divided the city into.

The old city had spread over an elevated plain of 35 acres between the Lyari River and the brackish Arabia Sea. In 1729, this area was fortified with a high wall and its western gate, which was towards the sea, was known as Kharadar — a combination of “khara” for salty and “dar” meaning gate. In other words, Kharadar simply translates to the Gate of Salt Water. Kharadar is notable for being Mohammad Ali Jinnah's birthplace and where he spent his youth in the narrow lanes of the neighbourhood.

The other gate faced the north-east towards the Lyari River and was called Meethadar, from “meetha” meaning sweet and thus the Gate of Sweet Water. The Lyari River changed its course in the 19th century and even though the locality no longer abutted the sweet water, the name stuck on. Meethadar was once the main business centre of Karachi but the arrival of the British prompted the businessmen to move to Saddar, Cantonment (Cantt) and Bolton Market. Many of these were Hindus and, in fact, until Partition it was a Hindu-dominated area, the signs of which are visible from its street names such as Chandan Mukhi Lane and Vishramdas Sukhrandas Street. At the eastern end of the neighbourhood is Rampart Row, where elaborate examples of 20th century Sikh and Hindu architecture still exist.

Both Kharadar and Meethadar are distinctive of what remains of the pre-colonial Karachi. The wall that separated the Old Town from British quarters was broken down in 1860 to enlarge the city but the neighbourhoods named after the two gates lived on.

Hawke's Bay and Guru Mandir

However, if Meethadar and Kharadar are reflections of pre-colonial Karachi then the neighbourhoods created after 1842 reflect the colonial Karachi. As time passed, Karachi became a city of the Raj and its lanes and landmarks reflected the power of its colonisers.

If one goes west from the port, towards the beach, one arrives at one of Karachi's famous picnic spots Hawke's Bay. The number of Karachiites who routinely flood this beach in summer would have overwhelmed Bladen Wilmer Hawke, 9th Baron Hawke (December 31, 1901 - July 5, 1985) of Towton; he had a beach house there in the 1930s after which the beach was named.

The eldest son of Edward Julian Hawke, the 8th Baron Hawke, Bladen later became a Conservative politician and, in 1939, succeeded his father in the baronetcy, serving later as a Lord-in-Waiting and government whip in the House of Lords from 1953 to 1957 in the administrations of Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan. Before arising to the baronetcy, Bladen Hawke was posted in Karachi for a few years. Being fond of its pristine beaches, he started the trend of beach houses there. The Baron passed away 30 years ago but his name lives on in this stretch of golden sand.

Clockwise from top: people throng Hawke's Bay beach; Al-Karam Square in Liaquatabad; a busy street in Golimar; a flyover in Buffer Zone; a colonial era building in Kharadar | Photos by White Star

If you head north-east from Hawke's Bay and down M.A. Jinnah Road you move from a place named due to Karachi's colonial past to one that signifies its local diversity. The Guru Mandir locality near Quaid-i-Azam's mausoleum is so named after the Gur Mandar — famously known as Guru Mandir — which was dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva.

Finding the actual temple can be a challenge; the Gur Mandar building is not in usage and its doors and windows are barred.

Sources also say that it was initially a gurdwara, a point also noted by the Evacuee Trust Property Board. But even if the temple does not host devotees at the moment, people's memories live on and the locality is still called Guru Mandir. Interestingly, this area marked the northern boundary of pre-1947 Karachi. The areas just beyond, such as PIB (Pir Ilahi Bukhsh) Colony, were established soon after Partition to house incoming immigrants. Guru Mandir has famous eateries, a prominent mosque, a well-known dairy shop and yet, the only name people recognise and visible on maps is Guru Mandir, which was once at the edge of Karachi but is now centrally located.

Lalukhet and Golimaar

North of Guru Mandir is another area that like PIB Colony was developed to house immigrants. The locality's formal name is Liaquatabad after Pakistan's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan but it is popularly known as Lalukhet. A densely populated area surrounded by commercial zones, it is hard to imagine that the teeming shops and people were all once agricultural land that lay along the banks of the Lyari River. After August 1947, the government of Pakistan started buying land for housing projects and approached a farmer named Lalu who owned this tract. Eventually the land was purchased by the Pakistan Public Works Department from Lalu and a housing project was started to settle the Urdu-speaking Muslim refugees from northern parts of India.

Today, however, the area has several other ethnic groups besides Urdu speakers and hundreds of Sindhis, Kashmiris, Seraikis, Pakhtuns, Baloch, Memons, Bohras and Ismailis live there. For the denizens of Karachi, it is a place to strike good bargains for a number of items including furniture, clothing, shoes and jewellery. Lalukhet conjures up many images for those familiar with Karachi and if you say the word “Liaquatabad” in front of a local resident he will gently correct you with “Lalukhet”.

Another area that captures the city's colourful side is Golimaar. Golimaar and Lalukhet have something in common; the colloquial names overshadow their official ones. Golimaar is part of SITE (Sindh Industrial Trading Estate) Town and while the city administration's documents have it labelled as Gul Bahar, few people call it that. The area lies next to the Lyari River and like Lalukhet was mainly farmland before immigrants settled there. The area takes its name from the words "goli" (bullet) and "maar" ('fire' as in a verb). While many think this is because of the violence that Karachi saw in the 1980s, the roots are actually much further back. Before independence this area was used as a shooting range by the British Army.

Another source says that in those days, carriage and warhorses which could no longer be used were brought here to be shot. So, it was the British doing the shooting which gave the area its name. The Golimaar neighbourhood itself is a mass of downward sloping twisted lanes and alleys that lead to the Lyari River. If you pause at the banks there, you might find bullet shells from the days where an English drill sergeant yelled "goli maar!"

The Jamia Masjid Gulzar-i-Sadia in Paposh Nagar

Buffer Zone and Paposh Nagar

If Golimaar and Lalukhet have their roots in pre-Partition days, Buffer Zone in Federal B Area takes its name from the time when Karachi was the capital of Pakistan. The government was not just settling immigrants but also developing projects for civil servants and government officials who would be working in the capital. In 1953, Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra initiated the housing scheme, which came to be known as Federal B Area. This was all part of the Federal Capital Territory plan which was made in 1948.

The Federal Capital Area (F.C. Area) would have the principal government offices and buildings and the residential area around it would be Federal B. Area (F.B. Area). The area around the government zone was designated as a buffer zone which would not be developed or populated and would keep the rest of city's population away from the sensitive places.

However, in 1959 Ayub Khan's government decided to move the capital to Islamabad and, soon after, the idea of Federal Capital Areas was killed off. Federal B Area was populated by then but there was no need of extra security around it now that government offices would be shifted to Islamabad. And so the bar on construction in the buffer zone was lifted, which made available hundreds of acres for housing projects. Today, the original zone lies between the old Federal Capital Area and other parts of the city but while they have acquired new names such as Azizabad or Dastagir, the area between Federal B Area and North Nazimabad is still formally called Buffer Zone.

Defunct government plans are the reason behind Buffer Zone but former commercial interests define another neighbourhood further north. Today you would go to Paposh Nagar for its heavenly beef qorma or herbal medicine but the neighbourhood takes its name from the thriving shoe industry that was once the main industry here. The etymology of Paposh Nagar reveals that it is a combination of the words "pa" meaning 'foot', "posh" meaning 'to wear' and "nagar" which means 'town'. In plain English, you come here to wear shoes. This area became known for the footwear and leather workshops that flourished here from the 1950s to the 1970s. With the addition of Abbasi Shaheed Hospital many people came to associate it with the hospital and soon most footwear factories moved to other industrial and commercial areas of Karachi.

Karachi's towns and localities have names that beguile and intrigue. The characters that define these names include government plans, religious sites, colonial usage and heritage. These forces are mutable and constantly shift but ultimately it is the citizens who carry on their titles as they see fit. This is not surprising considering Karachi's egalitarian nature and the final word or name lies with the people who own it.

(By Sibtain Naqvi Dawn, EOS 05, 30/07/2017)

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

District Municipal Corporation (DMC) Central has devised a plan to gradually replace existing *conocarpus erectus* – a mangrove plant species that is deemed harmful to Karachi's environment – with an environment-friendly tree species.



This was stated by DMC Central Chairperson Rehan Hashmi on Monday at a seminar on environmental protection at the Karachi Medical and Dental College (KMDC).

Hashmi informed the audience that around 100,000 trees and plants would have been planted in the district by December, 2017, out of which 8,000 saplings have already been planted.

LCS' tree plantation drive hopes to boost ecosystem

Four water tankers have been procured by District Central to water trees in the district, the chairperson said, adding that the DMC would supply around 20,000 gallons of water daily to conduct plantation drive in the district. Hashmi said DMC Central is looking after 150 parks, out of which beautification of 37 parks has been completed.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Mayor Dr Arshad Abdullah Vohra lamented the lack of resources to the city's administration for sanitation and waste disposal. Karachi generates 12,000 tons municipal garbage on a daily basis out of which only 4,000 is disposed of, he said.

Karachi requires plantation of another 20 million trees, said Senator Khushbakht Shujaat. A campaign should be launched to spread awareness among children to properly dispose of waste, she suggested.

Anti-encroachment drive launched in District Central

National Forum for Environment and Health President Naeem Qureshi bemoaned the fact that the city was deprived of around 15,000 plants and trees in the last five years due to poorly planned mega civic projects, including reconstruction of major roads. Every concerned quarter in the city should come forward to prevent tree cutting for the sake of civic development, he said. Environmentalist Rafiul Haq on the occasion gave suggestions to safeguard the environment of the city, while youth parliament president Rizwan Jaffar stressed the need for motivating youth to actively take part in the plantation drive in Karachi.

In his concluding remarks, Leader of the Opposition in the Sindh Assembly Khawaja Izharul Hassan promised that he would actively take part in the plantation drive in DMC Central. It is obligatory upon every individual and institution in the city to take practical steps in order to make the city clean and green, he summed up.

(By Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, 15, 01/08/2017)

KMC sacks 46 'ghost' employees

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) on Wednesday sacked 46 of its employees who had been drawing salaries for long without performing their duties, officials said.

"Jobs of some 46 ghost employees in the city wardens' department have been terminated," said a KMC spokesperson while speaking to Dawn.

He said the corporation had issued the final show-cause notice to 28 other KMC employees whose services would be terminated if they failed to show up before the competent authority and give satisfactory response for their prolonged absence from work.

The officials said the mayor had issued order for the removal of 46 employees in the wardens' department after he was briefed in a meeting with an inquiry committee, which he had established to furnish a report about the 'ghost' employees.

Reviewing the report of the inquiry committee, Mayor Wasim Akhtar directed all departmental heads to submit similar reports on such employees who had been absent from their workplaces for prolonged periods.

"All the departmental heads should file such reports before me about the ghost employees working under them who are not performing their duties, so action could be taken against them in accordance with Rule-4 of the Sindh Local Councils' Servants E&D rules 1974," Mayor Akhtar was quoted as saying.

He said the departmental heads would be held responsible if they did not follow such instructions.

"Ghost employees cannot be tolerated in KMC anymore and the departmental heads and other officers concerned will have to report about those long absent from their duties."

Officials said the committee's inquiry had not ended with the sacking of 46 employees.

"In fact, the inquiry has just begun," said a KMC official, adding, the committee would be working until the last 'ghost' employee was removed from the KMC, which was facing immense hardships in terms of finances and found it unable, at times, to pay salaries to its employees on time.

"There are many employees who are not showing up to their workplaces for many months but are drawing salaries regularly; this is huge injustice to those who are diligently doing their duties, yet, they find difficulty in getting their salaries on time because of the burden of wages being given to ghost employees," said the mayor.

He said only those who work honestly would have a permanent place in the KMC, as there was no place for 'ghost' employees.

The officials said the inquiry committee had been asked to present its next report soon to the mayor.

August 14 arrangements

Meanwhile, the KMC announced that it had prepared a schedule to celebrate the country's 70th Independence Day.

Officials said on August 14, a flag hoisting ceremony headed by the mayor would be held at the KMC head office. Officers of grade 16 and above have been asked to ensure their presence.

Mayor Akhtar will lay a wreath on the mausoleum of the Quaid-i-Azam; while, a rally of Karachi Fire Brigade would be carried out on the same day from the Quaid's mausoleum to the KMC head office. The rally will be attended by fire officers and fire-fighters along with snorkels and fire tenders. An exhibition of antique fire apparatus and fire tenders manufactured in 1912 by Dennis Company Merewether Model will also be held at the KMC head office.

A pictorial exhibition would be held at Sadequain Art Gallery at Frere Hall where a Pakistan Navy Band will play national songs.

(Dawn News, 18, 10/08/2017)

Rs600m sanctioned for Malir infrastructure, amenities

The Sindh government has decided to execute uplift schemes in Malir district and Rs600 million has been sanctioned for the provision of water supply, road network, bridges, gas and electricity in the area.

This was stated by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday while presiding over a meeting of elected representatives of Malir district. Those who attended the meeting included MNA Hakeem Baloch, MPAs Sajid Johkio, Murtaza Baloch, District Council chairman Salman Murad, DMC Malir chairman Jan Mohammad Baloch and Abbas Talpur.

He said he had allocated sufficient funds for Malir and envisaged a number of development schemes on which work would be started shortly and "now the onus is on the elected representatives to give ownership to the works being carried out or to be started soon".

The chief minister said he had visited different villages of Malir district a number of times. "This is why I have given special attention to the government hospitals to improve their health services," he said and added that earlier in the Memon Goth hospital doctors and nurses were reluctant to turn up to work but after it had been given in public-private partnership, it was working smoothly.

The delegation told the chief minister that various villages of Malir needed to be supplied with gas and electricity. On this the chief minister said he would talk to the K-Electric authorities to expedite village electrification in Malir. "In the first phase the village electrification in the pipeline would be completed and the new recommended villages would be taken up later," he said.

Talking about supplying gas to the villages of Malir, the chief minister said he was going to sign a new 'village gasification' agreement with the Sui Southern Gas Company. "Under the new agreement a certain number of Malir villages would be" provided gas, he said.

He assured the participants of the meeting that the villages of Malir would be provided with water supply schemes through the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. "I know a large number of villages have no water; it is on my priority list to provide them with water," he said.

Mr Shah directed the chairmen of the District Council Karachi and Malir DMC to keep their respective areas clean. "The government is providing you enough funds, therefore, the public funds must be utilised in the interest of the people of the area," he said.

The chief minister said that he had personally witnessed the road infrastructure of Malir district. "I would reconstruct the dilapidated roads," he said.

(Dawn News, 18, 10/08/2017)

CM intervenes to settle tiff between LG ministry, KMC

The Sindh government on Thursday got the bank accounts of the province's largest municipality frozen, apparently punishing the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) for not allowing its new municipal commissioner posted by the competent authority to officially join it. However, the accounts were restored a few hours later on a directive of the chief minister, officials said.

"The accounts were frozen when the KMC refused to allow the new municipal commissioner to assume charge. However, the accounts were restored a few hours later when Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah directed the local government minister to do so," a senior official told Dawn.

Besides, he added, Mr Shah also asked the minister to withdraw Dr Badar Jameel Mandhro, the official at the centre of the row, and notify another officer's posting instead.

Municipality's accounts frozen, restored a few hours later

Earlier, the provincial local government, housing and town planning ministry on Thursday got the accounts of the KMC frozen by sending a letter to the presidents of the National Bank of Pakistan, Sindh Bank and Habib Bank Limited.

The letter stated: "The Government of Sindh has posted a full-fledged cadre officer namely Dr Badar Jameel Mandhro as municipal commissioner, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, Karachi dated 15-08-2017, but he has not been allowed to operate the accounts of the KMC and the same are being operated by unauthorised persons, which is highly objectionable.

"In order to ensure the maintenance of administrative and financial discipline and to avoid misuse of funds, it has been decided to seize the accounts of KMC being operated in your branches till further directions."

The letter further said: "In view of the above, you are requested to please disseminate this to respective branches under your administrative control with instructions not to entertain the cheques of the KMC till further orders."

A KMC official quoted Mayor Wasim Akhtar as saying that the Sindh government was itself responsible for the "chaos, bad governance and mismanagement", which was why it did not consult the mayor before notifying the municipal commissioner. "It is mandatory to get advice of the mayor before making such appointments," the KMC spokesman said.

However, the Sindh government official said Dr Mandhro was a cadre officer while the KMC had earlier appointed an officer of grade-18 to replace the municipal commissioner who retired weeks ago.

"The KMC's appointee was a junior officer. Besides, he was not a cadre officer as Dr Mandhro is. The municipal commissioner happens to be the municipality's principal accountant, thus, no other [person] can operate the accounts," said the Sindh government official.

However, he added that the chief minister asked for replacing Dr Mandhro with another cadre officer as the KMC's municipal commissioner to avoid an "unnecessary controversy".
(By Hasan Mansoor, Dawn News, 17, 18/08/2017)

Body for monitoring LG institutions remains dysfunctional

Despite having a fully-functional secretariat, the Sindh Local Government Commission (SLGC) is still incomplete and dysfunctional for want of nomination of two members of the provincial assembly — one each from the treasury and opposition, it emerged on Tuesday.

Sources said despite repeated reminders from the SLGC, the assembly staff failed to include the nomination of the two members on the agenda of the provincial legislature.

The SLGC was constituted under the Sindh Local Government Act No. XLII of 2013. The law was passed by the Sindh Assembly on Aug 19, 2013 and enforced on Aug 26 after the governor gave its assent to it.

According to the law, LG minister would be the chairman of the commission with two MPAs — one each to be nominated by the leader of the house and leader of the opposition, respectively — two qualified members nominated by the government and the law secretary as its members. The LG secretary will act as the secretary of the commission and as the principal accounting officer. However, the SLGC failed to take cognizance of the violations of the provisions of the act by local government institutions in discharging their responsibilities. These LG councils had become functional in September last and were about to complete their first year next month.

Non-functioning of commission affecting coordination between tiers of govt

The sources said due to non-functioning of the commission, the consultative planning meetings of the national and provincial legislators, mayors, deputy mayors, chairmen, vice chairmen of councils could not be held despite the fact that such meetings were supposed to be held on a periodic basis to provide a platform for their participation in development activities.

Likewise, the consultative process of the annual development plan of the council, formulating procedure for utilisation of the legislators' development grant, assessing implementation of decision of these meetings and review of development schemes was blocked, the sources said.

On the other hand, they said, complaints about violation of rules and mismanagement were being sent to the LG secretary. Such complaints were not being forwarded to the commission for a probe as the SLGC secretariat was either idle or engaged in some other duties.

According to the law, the commission's findings after inquiries are binding upon the council concerned. The commission could also recommend to the chief minister suspension for up to 90 days of a mayor, deputy mayor or chairman or vice chairman till the pendency of an enquiry against him/her.

The commission has the same powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 in respect of summoning and enforcing attendance of any person and examining him on oath, production of documents and examination of witnesses.

It is obligatory on part of the commission, whose secretariat was established and functional for the past two years, to conduct special inspections, inquiry or special audit of the council on its own initiative or on the directive of the CM and submit reports to him. The other functions, which the commission failed to discharge for want of its completion, are to resolve disputes between any government department and the council or between two councils. If the commission failed to settle the disputes, the aggrieved party may move the CM for its resolution.

The commission will also submit its annual report on the overall performance of a council and take cognizance of violation of laws and rules by it in performance of its functions.

(By Habib Khan Ghori, Dawn, 17, 23/08/2017)

Mayor questions Sindh govts plan to lift offal from only two Karachi districts

Expressing concern over the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board's (SSWMB) plan to lift sacrificial animals' offal from only two districts during Eidul Azha, City Mayor Wasim Akhtar has raised the question as to who would lift the waste from the rest of the metropolis.



Speaking to journalists at the KMC head office on Thursday after chairing a meeting held in connection with the offal collection plan, he said that while the SSWMB, as its name suggested, was for the entire province, it had given contract for lifting the entrails from only two districts.

He said that while the SSWMB was being provided full budget, it had given contract to lift offal from two districts only while the rest of the metropolis had been abandoned.

However, he assured citizens that although the SSWMB had abandoned them, their elected representatives in the local bodies, despite having insufficient resources, would serve them and would ensure that all animals' waste was collected and disposed of in a scientific manner during the Eid days.

He said that last year over 1.7 million animals had been sacrificed and this year, with an increase of between 10 to 15 per cent, nearly two million animals were expected to be sacrificed.

He said that ofal collection points had been designated in different districts/towns and trenches had been dug in different districts to bury the entrails.

He said that municipal staffers would be used for collecting guts and wherever required additional staffers and equipment/machinery would also be hired for quick lifting and disposal of ofal.

The mayor urged city councillors to be vigilant during Eid and monitor the situation in their respective areas and ensure that the staffers were working efficiently and the waste was being lifted in time.

He also urged the people not to throw animal guts in drains, sewers, etc, which would choke them.

He said such practices caused drains and gutters to overflow resulting in inundation of low-lying areas creating hardships for residents.

He said that complaints regarding ofal collection could also be lodged at telephone number 1339.

Earlier, the mayor chaired the meeting that was attended by municipal commissioner Nawaz Nasim, DMC Central chief Rehan Hashmi, DMC East chief Moeed Anwer, Korangi district chief Nayyer Raza, Izhar Khan, Ghulam Farid, Aslam Afridi and others.

(Dawn, 18, 25/08/2017)

14 schemes worth Rs8.4 billion approved for Karachi Development Package Phase-II

Out of Rs12 billion reserved for the Karachi Development Package Phase-II, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has approved Rs8.4 billion for 14 schemes of construction of roads, flyovers and drainage systems in the city.



The CM made this decision while presiding over a meeting at Chief Minister House on Thursday to review the progress of ongoing schemes launched under the Karachi Development Package Phase-I and approve new schemes for the phase-II of the package. The meeting was attended by Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro, Planning and Development Board Chairperson Muhammad Waseem, Principal Secretary to CM Sohail Rajput, Finance Secretary Hassan Naqvi, Karachi Package Project Director Niaz Soomro and others.

The approved schemes include construction of a road from Tank Chowrangi to the Super Highway via Thaddo Nalo at a cost of Rs350 million, reconstruction of Tipu Sultan Road from Sharae Faisal to Karsaz at a cost of Rs280 million, construction of bridges at the intersections of Tipu Sultan and Khalid Bin Waleed roads at Shaheed-e-Millat Road at a cost of Rs1.5 billion and widening of Stadium Road at a cost of Rs270 million. The CM also approved the renovation of Lea Market, Jodia Bazaar, Sarafa Bazaar and Juna Market areas along with laying new water and sewerage lines. These schemes would cost around Rs644 million.

Karachi needs creativity-led urban development

The other schemes approved are remodeling of 12000 Road in Landhi, reconstruction of Cantt Station Road along with laying new sewerage and water supply lines, improvement of road from Fawara Chowk to Garden, construction of an interchange bridge at CCI Intersection and widening of the bridge over Korangi Nullah.

Construction of bridge at intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Gizri Boulevard has also been approved at the cost of Rs70 million, while a storm drain from Star Gate to Chakora Nullah will be constructed at a cost of Rs200 million. Funds amounting to Rs70 million will be spent on the construction of a storm drain at Hassan Square.

The CM also reviewed ongoing schemes of Karachi package phase-I. He directed the project director to expedite the work on Submarine underpass. "This is one of the most important schemes and I want to inaugurate it by the end of November," the CM said.

Limofied marks Independence day with Karachi launch

Shah also directed the local government minister to personally monitor construction of storm drains along Sharae Faisal and University Road from NED University to Safoora Chowrangi.

"I want you to complete all the formalities, including invitation of tenders etc. so that by the end of the current month, inauguration ceremony of phase-II could be held," the CM said.

(By Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, 14, 08/09/2017)

SHC asks KMC whether it can allot spaces on streets for commercial use

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has directed the law officer for the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) to argue whether the corporation had legal authority to allot spaces on public streets in the city for commercial purposes.

A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, gave time as a last opportunity to the KMC's lawyer to argue on this issue on the next date of the hearing. The judges were hearing a petition on Tuesday against encroachments in the city's historic Jahangir Park.

Jahangir Park was gifted to the residents of Karachi by Zoroastrian philanthropist Byramji Jahangir Rajkotwalla in 1893. The park was initially called Byram Bagh but later its name was later changed to Jahangir Park.

Former IG corruption case: Sindh High Court seeks progress report from NAB

Renovation work has recently been carried out by the Sindh government at the park. However, the petitioner, Agha Attaullah Shah, informed the judges that several cabins had been set-up on the street adjacent to the park, which caused inconvenience to visitors. Shah argued that public streets could not be allowed to be used for commercial purposes, but the KMC had failed to take notice of it.

On the other hand, the lawyers representing the metropolitan corporation and the shopkeepers argued that the KMC had lawfully allotted the spaces on the street to the shopkeepers after fulfilling legal formalities.

"The Municipal Streets Law of 1926 gives lawful authority to the metropolitan corporation to allot the spaces on the public streets to set up cabins or shops," the KMC lawyer argued.

SHC directs Nawabshah commissioner to ensure no civil servant works as journalist

However, the judges directed the lawyers representing the KMC and the shopkeepers to argue on the matter of whether the corporation had the lawful authority to allot spaces on public streets for commercial purposes. "The decision in this case will have a far-reaching impact across the province," observed the bench's head.

The hearing was adjourned till a date to be later notified by the office.

(By Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, 15, 15/09/2017)

No development in sight for District Malir

District Malir, a district that is home to over two million residents, has been neglected by the authorities and its state is deteriorating.



The district is widely used by commuters and traders while exiting the city, however, all the tiers of the government have so far neglected the district as no new schemes have been proposed for the district and some old schemes have been pending for over five years.

The residents of the district have had their hopes dashed by the lack of development in the area. But the residents had reason to hope. The provincial and national assembly seats in the district were won by members of the province-ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The local government chairman of the area also belongs to the same party. In August, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah promised Rs600 million for development projects in the province but so far there seems to be no development in sight.

Whether it is a main road network including internal arteries and main thoroughfares or the matter of waste disposal, the residents complain that the authorities are inattentive.

Construction of Malir 15 Flyover continues at snail's pace

A resident of Model Colony, a town in Malir, Owais Ahmed Khan said that since the last five years they have not seen a single development work in the area. If the provincial government has initiated any sort of development work it has become a headache for us, since their completion date is 'never', he lamented.

Khan shared that Malir has historical importance and many people have been living here even before Partition, however, over time the negligence of the government has shaped the area into something resembling a rural town. He said there are several projects in the area that are still incomplete, such as the Malir 15 Flyover, which could have been completed ages ago. "One can easily see the non-seriousness of the provincial government by looking at this single project," he said.

Gesturing towards a group of children playing with paper boats in rainwater accumulated on a street, Khan said the water has been here for over 45 days and is a breeding ground for various diseases, such as chikungunya and dengue, but the authorities have done nothing to remedy the situation. "It seems like there is no government here," he lamented.

Another resident, Najeeb Hasan of Jaffar-e-Tayyar Society, said Muharram has already arrived but there is garbage everywhere, including around the imambargah. He said the roads are filled with garbage, adding that in some areas it looks like roads were never built.

Talking about the recent by-elections, Najeeb said that he and many other residents here voted for the PPP candidate. It was a chance for the PPP to exhibit its work in this district and the area could have served as a model for the upcoming elections, however, they are more interested in politics rather than serving those who elected them, he said.



District Council Malir Chairman Jan Muhammad Baloch said he has no support from Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar. He accused him of being the mayor of only two districts in the city, while the other four, including Malir, are being neglected by him.

He claimed that projects initiated by the Sindh government are either completed or near completion, however, the mayor has not completed the main thoroughfare in the district – the road leading from Kala Board to Quaidabad.

He asked how a district could run its affairs without the help of the city's mayor. We are working here with the support and funds of the provincial government, he said.

Information minister denies merging of Jamshoro dehs in Malir

One resident, however, felt that the district administration should take a lesson from the armed forces. Shahid Hasan said the same district that is plagued by so many problems is also home to a well-maintained cantonment area. Malir Cantt is an example of how the affairs of local bodies can be dealt with if those incharge are serious about their jobs, he said.

Historian and social activist Gul Hasan Kalmati said a large portion of District Malir is made up of rural areas, such as Dumba Goth, Memon Goth and Gadap Town, which itself has many small goths within it, however, these areas are usually neglected by the authorities.

Kalmati, while commenting on the performance of the authorities, said that it seems like there is a lack of coordination between them. "There are funds but the ability to utilise them is lacking," he said.

(By SHEHARYAR ALI THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 25/09/2017)

City Council demands Rs500bn package for Karachi uplift

The city council on Wednesday passed a resolution demanding that the Sindh and federal governments immediately sanction at least Rs500 billion as a joint package for Karachi's development.



"Karachi is a huge metropolis. It badly needs to rectify its dilapidated infrastructure [so that] people of the sixth most populated city of the world can be provided with basic civic facilities," said the resolution passed by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) council at its general meeting at the KMC building.

The meeting, which was presided over by Deputy Mayor Arshad Vohra, passed nine resolutions of which eight were passed unanimously.

The resolution demanding Rs500bn from the provincial and federal governments for the city's uplift was tabled by Junaid Mikati of the Jamaat-i-Islami. Fellow council member Hanif Memon seconded it.

It was passed with a majority as some members did not show their hands. Those members belonged to various parties, thus, not any particular political party opposed the resolution.

Work on 168 schemes in the city will begin on Oct 15, says Vohra

Other eight resolutions, all passed unanimously, pertained to fumigation in the city; repairing and maintenance of fire brigade vehicles; rehabilitation of a road from Gulbai to PAF Base Masroor Gate No 1 near Hawkesbay; providing funds to union committee chairmen from the fund meant for uplift of city neighbourhoods; approval for recommending award of contract for entry fee at Beach Park, Gulshan-i-Jinnah and Hill Park to the parks committee for further review.

Mr Vohra said work on 168 schemes in the city would begin on Oct 15. He said the KMC funds were being provided to union committees; however, the metropolitan authorities were engaged in carrying out patchwork on various large streets of the city.

Karamullah Waqasi, parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party, said everything including resolutions meant to be tabled in the council should first be given to the relevant committees to make them presentable. He said the performance of the district municipal corporations was better than the KMC's.

He said the union committees were powerless despite the fact that their chairmen and members had to face their constituents, day in day out.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Aman Khan Afridi said the population of stray dogs had alarmingly increased in the city meriting immediate attention of the municipal authorities.

Mohammad Amir said Karachi was the revenue engine of the country, yet it was not being given the funds for the uplift it deserved.

Habib Hasan echoed the same demand, citing that the city should be given resources matching its population.

Advocate Arif Khan said all the departments of the municipal bodies should be free from corruption.

Firdous Naqvi of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf said the council members should be aware of the contracts being awarded by the parks and other departments.

Asif Siddiqui said the house should raise voice for restoration of the octroi tax, which had been KMC's key source of revenue.

Comrade Jiskani said entry into the Beach Park should be free for public.

Hanif Surti, Waqar Tanoli, Kulsum Shama, Abdul Majeed, Tajuddin, and Fazal-ur-Rehman also spoke.

Estate official suspended

KMC officials said it was brought into the notice of Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar that a deputy director of the estate department had issued challans of 20 shops in Korangi-4 without his approval and “received huge sums while taking advantage of his posting” in return.

Mayor Akhtar suspended the deputy director and ordered an inquiry to investigate his ‘unauthorised and illegal’ actions. “No corrupt practice would be tolerated in the KMC and whoever is involved in such things will be immediately removed from his post and have to face strict action,” said Mayor Akhtar in a statement.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn 17, 28/09/2017)

KMC hospital on a downward spiral

Elderly patients being treated at the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) Leprosy Hospital in Manghopir said that until it was looked after by the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC), under the supervision of Dr Ruth Pfau, the standard of services was excellent.



The patients would get a healthy breakfast – bread, eggs, butter and one litre of milk – every day, as well as lunch and dinner.

However, the conditions have not been the same since the KMC took over the lone specialised treatment facility for skin diseases and it worsened with each passing year.

The hospital management says that they suffer from a shortage of funds. “They’ve only given us this bed and provide a dressing facility,” a patient who has been living in the hospital for the past 20 years told *The Express Tribune*.

Nation salutes leprosy crusader

“We are thankful that the welfare organisations provide us food twice a day,” another patient said, showering praises on the Alamagir Welfare Trust and Saylani Welfare Trust.

An employee at the facility, Muhammad Yaseen, said that the private contractor they hired stopped providing food to the patients four years ago as the KMC failed to clear their dues. He said Saylani provides lunch seven days a week and Alamgir provides dinner four days a week.

According to Yaseen, for the remaining days they appeal to locals for food. “No permanent arrangements for breakfast have been made, leaving the patients to rely on only two meals a day,” he said.



An official of the hospital, requesting anonymity, said a new 50-bed block for the treatment of infectious diseases was set up years ago.

“A hostel for nursing staff was also built but the buildings are gathering dust, as the new block has yet to be made functional by the management,” he said, adding that equipment for the laboratory and blood bank have not been used in years.

Institute named after Dr Ruth Pfau

The official said that with the construction of a new block, the strength of beds in the hospital had been increased from 200 to 250, but the KMC failed to allocate funds in its budget for the employees of the hospital's infectious diseases department, claiming that the block has not been handed over to them by the engineering department.

Besides providing specialised treatment for leprosy patients, a number of ailments such as hepatitis, tuberculosis, eye and other skin diseases are also diagnosed and treated at the leprosy hospital.

“Leprosy has not ended in Pakistan, instead it has been controlled,” Dr Muhammad Ali Abbasi, KMC's senior director of medical and health who also worked on the leprosy control programme with Dr Pfau for 26 years, said, arguing that a vaccine for this disease had not been discovered yet.

According to him, that is why patients with leprosy are still coming for treatment. He said the hospital was initially set-up by philanthropists in 1886 and named Heera Nand Leprosy Hospital. In 1960 it was transferred to the KMC. Later, treatment and monitoring was handed over to Dr Pfau in the early 70s till 2009. Medicine and food were also provided by the MALC, he added.

Civil Hospital Karachi to be renamed after Dr Ruth Pfau: CM Sindh

The doctor, who is retiring soon, is optimistic about the fate of his proposal. “Two months ago the KMC council passed a resolution about transformation of the Manghopir hospital into a research and training institute for infectious diseases.” He said 90% of the work on the building is complete and once everything is finalised staff will be hired.

(By Mudaser Kazi THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 01/10/2017)

Karachi's District East now a shadow of its former glory

Populated by almost three million people, District East, Karachi's third most populous district is a mixture of posh and slum areas with poor infrastructure.



Comprising Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Bahadurabad, PECHS, Sindhi Muslim Cooperative Housing Society, Karachi Admin Society and Safoora, among others, the district lies in the heart of the city and borders districts South, Korangi, Malir and Central, as well as Defence Housing Authority, one of the city's other 'posh' areas.

Being summarily ignored by authorities, the residents of District East are angry at what they call the 'ignorant behaviour' of the government. The area, once highly sought after, has now lost its charm due to widespread encroachments and unplanned commercialisation.

An example of this is the newly-reconstructed University Road. While some sections have yet to be completed, the finished section between Hassan Square and NIPA Chowrangi was occupied by encroachers mere weeks after being inaugurated. It is now home to scores of illegally parked vehicles of people visiting restaurants, coaching centres and hospitals situated on the main thoroughfare.

Karachi is again a city of lights: DG Rangers

A traffic police official performing duty in the area, Ashraf Chaudhary, said that the road is wide and has around five lanes but even if it had 10 lanes the situation would be the same, as the authorities have failed to remove encroachments. When asked why the traffic police failed to take action against illegal parking, however, he had no answer.

Explaining how the city has suffered at the hands of ill-planning, environmental activist Raza Gardezi pointed out that we are seeing the results of ill-planning. He questioned how a thoroughfare could be declared commercial without any planning for the future.

To explain this point he used an analogy of a residential plot being converted into a commercial building. If six to 10 people were living in a 1,000 square yard house and it is converted into a commercial plot with a 15-storey plaza built on it, at least 400 people will be living on a plot that was meant to house only 10 people.

Gardezi added that the burden on the sewerage and water lines would be increased tenfold. Parking the vehicles belonging to those 400 people would be a problem, as we have very few designated parking spots, which means the residents would park their vehicles on the road, making it more congested.

UK's Red Arrows to perform at Karachi's Sea View

He added that in the 1980s the trend of high-rise plazas began in the city and later the policy of commercialisation spread in 2002 in which suddenly more than 20 major thoroughfares of the city were declared commercial without any future planning or modification of existing infrastructure.

Whether it is the dilapidated roads, broken water and sewerage lines or increased garbage, you have to blame the ill-planning of the government authorities which has created a mess in most parts of the city.

Gardezi shared that most of the posh areas in the city lie in District East but they have lost their charm due to massive commercialisation. He pointed out that some of them, which include Delhi Mercantile Society, Muhammad Ali society, Dhoraji Society, Sindhi Muslim Cooperative Housing Society, PECHS and KDA scheme 1, were once populated by the elite of the city.

But they are now selling their houses due to the commercialisation, which has ruined the once peaceful environment of these areas.

All these areas now littered with high-rise residential plazas, which are a huge burden on the existing utility and infrastructure system of the area, he added.

How the mighty fall: District Central in disrepair as garbage piles up

A resident of Muhammad Ali Society, Omar Motiwala, who is an exporter by profession, said that his family has lived in the area for the past 50 years but it can no longer be considered a posh locality just because it has houses on 6,000 square yard plots.

Motiwala questioned who in their right minds wanted to see broken sewerage lines and dilapidated roads outside homes they have spent massive sums on. Now we are also considering selling our house with a heavy heart, he said.

East District Municipal Corporation (DMC) Chairman Moeed Anwar unsurprisingly passed the buck for the area's issues onto the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, claiming that the problem lies in the sewerage system of the area which has broken all the roads. He said the water board is responsible for the mess but is of no help, therefore they have decided to renovate the water lines with their own budget since it is a waste of funds to re-carpet roads over and over without rectifying the root cause.

Anwar said his performance has been better during the rain emergency and that he wants to carry it forward by serving his voters by maintaining the areas that fall within his jurisdiction. He admitted to the encroachment issue and claimed that within the next 48 to 72 hours all the encroachments from University Road will be removed, as per his directions.

No development in sight for District Malir

The deputy commissioner of District East, Nadeem Abro, told *The Express Tribune* that work is under way with the coordination of the DMC team to renovate all the areas of the district, whether they are posh areas or slums.

He said the road network on an internal level in the district is dilapidated but instead of opting for patchwork again and again they want to rectify the actual issue that has worsened the condition of the roads, which is either the movement of water tankers or broken water lines.

Past ill-planning has affected the area, however, the present situation is in our hands and we will improve the condition of the area by improving the road network and maintaining parks, said Abro.

He added that after the lines are repaired, the roads will be built, otherwise it is a massive waste of their budget.

Drainage work in District Central under way

Surprisingly, he praised the level of teamwork between the East DMC and deputy commissioner's office, saying they are working together to improve the condition of the district.

Abro said he will ask the DMC to take immediate action against encroachers. Commenting on the delay in the completion of University Road from Karachi University onwards, he mentioned that there was a delay in the laying of water and sewerage lines, vowing that the road would be inaugurated within a month.

(By SHEHARYAR ALI THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 09/10/2017)

Experts lament lack of planning in Karachi's development

The lack of planning on the part of the governance system not only results in denial of fundamental rights to the people but also paves the way for malpractice and corruption.

This was the crux of a discussion by panelists of a session on 'Ecology of Karachi in Neoliberal World' as part of the three-day Karachi Conference held at the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi on Sunday.

The panelists included experts in town planning and urbanisation, solid waste management, environment and ecology. Urban planner Farhan Anwar chaired the session while journalist Mahim Maher was the discussant.

Anwar said there was no proper plan made for the development of a metropolis like Karachi, adding that it was important to understand the ecology of the port city before developing a master plan.

Taimur Suri, who teaches culture-related courses, presented a paper on cultural ecology and city's iconic Bin Qasim Park. He said there was a need to understand the impact of parks on the lifestyle of people.

He showed the latest pictures of the park, which depicted its barren land on which manholes were apparent. Suri claimed that a sewerage system was being laid beneath the park's land to benefit commercial companies.

The soul of the city has lost its charm

Lawyer Shahab Usto, on whose petition the Supreme Court constituted a one-man judicial commission to investigate the failure of the authorities to provide clean drinking water and sanitation in Sindh, said the provision of clean drinking water is a fundamental right of every citizen guaranteed under Article 9 of the Constitution.

He also showed a video based on the visits of the inquiry officer to freshwater and groundwater resources in most parts of the province as part of inspections that unveiled that up to 85% of the people in Sindh were forced to drink unsafe and filthy water.

In Karachi, up to 91% of water supplied to its residents is similarly not safe for human consumption, while in public hospitals up to 85.4% of the water consumed was unfit for humans.

Usto claimed that none of the 7,000 reverse osmosis (RO) plants proudly installed by the provincial government across the province were providing safe drinking water as determined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

In his presentation on health and the pharmaceutical industry, Dr Tipu Sultan said Pakistan had high rate of maternal mortality, almost equal to the war-torn Afghanistan.

Karachi, and its issues, not a new phenomenon

Despite being the world's fifth largest population, a nuclear power and one of the big artilleries, the country ranked third highest in terms of the burden of diseases, as it spent merely 1% of the GDP on health, Dr Sultan maintained.

Highlighting mismanagement in the health sector, Dr Sultan said 80% of the health budget was spent on the 30% urban population, while in sheer contrast, 20% funds were spent on 70% rural population.

He underscored the need for action on the part of the regulatory bodies to stop unethical practices committed by pharmaceutical companies.

Syed Muhammad Taha, the general secretary of civic rights group #FixIt, said that the 35 million youth of the country need to stand up for their rights to change the system.

Inspired by a campaign launched in Russia to draw the leaders' sketches on roads to move them into action to fix civic problems, Taha said #FixIt also initiated a similar campaign in Karachi by drawing the images of then Sindh chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah on the roads. However, the campaign achieved no result, as funds allocated by the government to fix the open manholes were embezzled by corrupt officials, he claimed.

'EIA public hearings have become a meaningless formality'

In his presentation titled 'Modernisation of Solid Waste Management: Past and Present', Dr Mansoor Ali said Karachi had the potential to reduce the garbage generation by 20% as the public had basic sense of solid waste management, adding that the reduction in garbage generation could be achieved up to 40% if the government acted in a proper way.

Dr Ali and other panelists believed that more landfill sites were needed to ensure proper disposal of the garbage. Commenting on the move by the Sindh government to award contract of collecting solid waste in the city to a Chinese firm, the experts said the idea had somehow failed as the company did not have an ultimate system to finally dispose of the garbage.

Concluding the session, Anwar said goals could not be achieved without having proper governance system, adding that the good governance required well-thought conceptual planning and infrastructure, while the projects came at the later stage.

However in Pakistan, the government works on projects such as the Bus Rapid Transit System or Karachi Circular Railway, which were not part of a proper plan.

The government should learn from the successful models of town planning such as Khuda Ki Basti and others evolved and executed by the non-profit organisations and improve the working of its departments, Anwar summed up.

(By Naeem Sahoutara THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 14, 30/10/2017)

Sindh local bodies

The writer is a senior fellow with UC Berkeley and heads INSPIRING Pakistan, a progressive policy unit.

LOCAL government (LG) bodies were reintroduced in Sindh in 2016 after a gap of nearly six years. Well-designed LG systems help in improving the quality of local services, empowering poor communities and reducing ethnic conflicts. The current Sindh LG system is the first one to be introduced by an elected regime, which may help ensure greater political ownership towards LGs.



The elections were laudably held on party basis and the act provides clear division of labour and line of authority to LGs in rural areas. But devolution to Sindh LG bodies must be increased further to help achieve better both the technocratic (improving local services) and political economy aims (empowering communities and reducing ethnic conflicts) of LGs.

Several gaps undermine the ability of Sindh LG bodies to properly meet the technocratic aim of improving local services' quality. Many key LG functions have been reassigned to the province in the 2013 system — eg, police, major local development activities and buildings control — compared with the 2002 system. City development authorities have not been placed under elected LGs either.

The description of the functions of mayors/chairpersons and their authority over bureaucrats are vague. The ability of LGs to fill even junior positions has been curtailed by the province. The act authorises the province to take over any functions assigned to LGs and start an inquiry into the affairs of any LG council. These powers must be circumscribed to make them exceptional under defined situations.

Communities are not aware of LGs' role.

A provincial finance commission is provided to allocate LG funds among districts. But the presence of opposition and LG officials in it is inadequate and it is still not fully functional. There is still a lot of ambiguity and overlap of financial powers between different tiers of LGs. The Sindh Local Government Act, 2013 doesn't mandate immediate re-election for LGs within a stipulated period in case of completion of term or early dissolution. Given past delays in holding LG elections, the act must mandate elections within 90 days.

The term of LG bodies must also be increased from four to five years. Taluka councils are missing in the new system. It may be difficult for the district council to deal directly with so many rural union councils spread all over. Local councillors lack offices, training and job descriptions.

The Sindh system also misses a chance to meet the political economy aim of reducing rural-urban ethnic gripes. The powers of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) seem extremely limited for Sindh's biggest LG body. Many key LG functions do not fall under its purview, eg, health, education, environment, overall development, security etc. The main functions included under its domain — eg, control of stray animals and cattle colonies — seem trivial for it.

The powers assigned to KMC seem grossly inadequate compared with not just similar cities nationally (Lahore) and globally but even smaller cities in Sindh. Karachi has been divided into six districts each having a district municipal council (DMC) and union councils (UC). This makes sense given Karachi's size and ethnic diversity. But the six DMCs are made almost autonomous with little linkage with the KMC. Army cantonment areas in Karachi have their own separate LG structures which create multiple and confusing jurisdictions and further reduce KMC powers.

The list of taxes assigned to the KMC is much shorter than those assigned to other LG bodies despite it being the biggest LG body in Sindh. A properly designed LG system for Karachi could help in tamping down the demands for a separate province there.

Finally, the Sindh LG system also suffers from gaps which undermine its ability to fully meet the political economy of empowering communities. Political parties have often not nominated persons from marginalised groups in the 2016 polls and affluent candidates have often captured even seats reserved for low-income persons. The act does not mandate organisations below UCs which could represent natural communities.

Community-level groups can help mobilise poor communities and apply strong upward accountability pressures on the UC and higher LG structures. Katchi abadis and villages house the majority of the population of major cities but get much lower levels of municipal services. It is important such areas are allocated adequate funds. Low-income communities are not very well aware of the functions and domains of the new LGs, and awareness-raising must be undertaken in these communities.

Thus, the Sindh system needs major changes to better achieve not just the broader political economy goals of restructuring of empowering weaker classes and reducing conflicts but even the less ambitious technocratic goals of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local public services.

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(By Dr Niaz Murtaza Dawn 09, 05/12/2017)