

NEWSCLIPPINGS

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LAW & ORDERS



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Car lifting, motorbike and mobile phone snatching increased in Karachi in 2020

The year 2020 witnessed a rise in car lifting, snatching of motorbikes and mobile phones and theft of two-wheelers compared to 2019. Moreover, the police registered FIRs of street crimes more than past several years in an attempt to pursue the cases, officials and sources said on Saturday.

However, snatching of cars, kidnapping for ransom, extortion and bank robberies decreased during the same period.

According to crime statistics compiled by the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), 1,452 cars were stolen in 2019 and 1,527 in 2020.

Similarly, 1,897 two-wheelers were hijacked in 2019 but 2,431 motorbikes were snatched in 2020.

A total of 28,609 motorcycles were stolen in 2019, which climbed to 34,908 in 2020.

The number of mobile phones snatched in 2019 was 19,862 against 21,578 snatched in 2020.

Eleven persons were kidnapped in 2019 but in 2020 only three incidents of kidnapping for ransom were reported.

This was considered as a significant reduction in the organised crime category after launching of a targeted operation in Karachi in September 2013. As the CPLC data showed 115 persons were kidnapped for ransom in 2014.

Kidnappings, extortion, bank robberies decreased in the year

Similarly, bhatta (extortion) has also registered a decrease as 32 incidents of extortion were reported in 2019, which came down to 22 in 2020.

It was pointed out that in 2014, 937 cases of bhatta were reported.

Bank robberies also reduced as three incidents of robbing of banks were reported in 2019 and in 2020, only one incident of bank robbery took place. The data showed that in 2014, 19 incidents of bank robberies took place.

385 murders

The CPLC data showed that 363 people were killed in 2019 for various reasons while 385 persons were murdered in 2020. But in 2014, 1,629 people were killed.

Additional Inspector General of Karachi Ghulam Nabi Memon said that organised crime like kidnapping, targeted killing, extortion and terrorism had decreased significantly as in 2013 as many as 2,800 people were killed, which means eight murders a day that had been brought down to 1.3 murders a day. Kidnapping for ransom was "almost nil" as cases of kidnapping of two girls, Bisma and Dua Mangi, were traced last year and only one case was outstanding.

The city police chief admitted that in street crime, motorbike theft and house robberies were major challenges. Mostly drug addicts were involved, particularly in lifting of bikes as they sold the same for Rs5,000-Rs10,000 only.

"We have focused on narcotics as part of a strategy to control street crimes as raids are being conducted at dens and peddlers being arrested as the police have prepared a list of 1,200 peddlers in the city," said Mr Memon.

After every 15 days, performance of the police was being assessed against narcotics.

Besides, major reasons of acquittals have been addressed. The city police chief recalled a major reason for acquittals and bail of criminals was "delayed" FIRs as SHOs avoided showing an increase of crimes in their respective area to avoid being reprimanded by high-ups, but now the SHOs have been encouraged to register FIRs immediately for early detection of the crimes.

A second major reason for acquittals, particularly of drug peddlers, was that seized narcotics were being sent to the chemical examiner very late. That has also been addressed and, resultantly, the criminals are being convicted by model courts for narcotics set up last year in the metropolis.

Moreover, Madadgar-15 response has been improved significantly as they respond within minutes. The city police chief said that major gangs of house robberies have also been traced and busted.

Proposals

CPLC chief Zubair Habib said that they have made 2014 as a "datum line" for assessing crimes in the metropolis, which indicated a significant reduction in homicides as over 1,600 people killed in that year, which has now been reduced to 385. He recalled that in crime index, Karachi was at number of 26 in 2016 but it was at number 103 in 2020, indicating a significant increase in terms of safety.

Mr Habib said the use of guns in street crimes has been decreasing as compared to the past as snatching incidents were being reduced. He said most lifted vehicles were being taken to Balochistan. He suggested at least eight to 10 interchanges should be set up on Northern Bypass on the pattern of motorways as at present there was no interchange on the bypass, which was being used by criminals to take vehicles to Balochistan.

He said the theft element in street crimes was increasing partly because of joblessness that might have been compounded because of Covid-19. He said the "White Corolla gang" has been busted, which recently carried out 15 house robberies in DHA and Clifton.

The CPLC chief said Khamiso Goth in New Karachi has emerged as a major point of the illicit drug trade where police have taken action and similar actions in other parts of the city may help control street crimes. He regretted there was a time when Madadgar-15 did not respond to the citizens' complaints about crimes. For example when the son of the then chief justice of the Sindh High Court was kidnapped, Madadgar-15 did not respond but now with efforts of the police and the CPLC, Madadgar-15 responds within seven minutes and this response time would be reduced further.

The CPLC head said it was a good initiative that the city police has decided to register FIRs immediately since September 2020 to address the people's grievances. He said that in Sept 2019, 5,000 FIRs were registered but 8,800 FIRs were registered in Sept 2020 after the police's initiative.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 03/01/2021)

Qari remanded in FIA custody in child pornography case in Karachi

A local court on Saturday remanded a seminary teacher in the custody of the Federal Investigation Agency in a case pertaining to child pornography.

The FIA on Friday claimed to have arrested a religious tutor over allegations of child pornography and harassing a teenage girl. On Saturday, the investigating officer produced the suspect before the judicial magistrate concerned to seek his physical remand in police custody for interrogation and investigation.

The IO mentioned that the FIA's Cyber Crime Circle had arrested the suspect in Gulshan-i-Iqbal on a complaint lodged by a woman.

According to the complainant, she had hired a qari (religious teacher) for home tuition to teach her children.

Later, her 13-year-old daughter complained that she had been physically abused by the qari, said the IO, adding that the teenage girl also complained that the accused also allegedly took her obscene pictures and on their basis, he was trying to harass and blackmail her, demanding money.

The IO informed that a mobile phone was recovered from the custody of the suspect and had been sent to a laboratory for forensic analyses and obscene images of the victim/minor girl were found in the device.

He requested for 14-day physical remand of the suspect in custody of the FIA for interrogation and completion of investigation.

However, the judge remanded the suspect in FIA custody for three days with direction to the IO to produce him on the next date along with an investigation report.

A case has been registered under Sections 22 (spamming) and 24 (legal recognition of offences committed in relation to information system) of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 and Section 109 (abetment) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 03/01/2021)

Polite for police?

Lately, the police appear to have gone on a spree killing people with impunity. In the early hours of Saturday, a team of the Anti-Terrorism Squad gunned down a university student, aged 21, named Osama Satti in Islamabad. This is what happens when protectors become destroyers. The state entrusts the police with firearms to protect people; and in a democracy, in effect, it is the people who provide law enforcers with weapons. It is a cruel irony that the same weapons are used for purposes other than they are intended for. In the latest case, there is circumstantial evidence to indicate that the killing was driven by malice, spite and grudge, and this aspect makes the case all the more serious as it points to a stark misuse of power and also serves a blow to the trust put in society's protectors.

First, the police's version: they had signalled a suspicious-looking car to stop but Osama, who was driving the vehicle, tried to speed away. They chased the vehicle and fired at the tyres. Two of the bullets hit the young man and he died. However, in the FIR that the victim's father lodged with police, he said his son told him a day earlier that five cops of the Islamabad police had hurled abuses at him and threatened him with dire consequences. He claimed that on the fateful night when Osama was returning after dropping off a friend, five policemen hit the backside of the car and fired 17 bullets from all four directions killing him on the spot. High-ups of the police reportedly stopped the department from issuing an official statement on the issue.

After being pressed by family members of the victim, a DSP admitted that Osama was killed due to 'negligence' by the police, and that "he was innocent." According to the officer, all the policemen involved in the killing had been arrested. Let us wait for the reports of the investigations ordered into the case. It has become absolutely necessary to inculcate in the police force the importance of restraint. It is this quality that distinguishes man from beasts. When all choices seem wrong, choose restraint.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 05/01/2021)

Sit-ins in solidarity with Mach victims expand to different parts of Karachi

While the members of Balochistan's Shia Hazara community refused to bury the bodies of the miners killed in a brutal attack in Mach demanding visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan, sit-ins in Karachi continued for the fourth consecutive day and organisers further expanded them to other parts of the city. The demonstrators called for immediate action from the federal and provincial governments.

The protests also badly crippled city life, hitting the traffic movement and forcing rescheduling of a few flights. Rail and air traffic was seriously affected owing to the sit-ins being staged at different places in the city to express solidarity with the Mach victims. The sit-ins were expanded to a number of neighbourhoods including Sharea Faisal, Malir 15 and Teen Talwar, in the city, blocking traffic on main roads. The main sit-in was being held at Numaish.

'The protestors are peaceful and only seeking their constitutional right'

The outrage over the Mach incident erupted all over the city with people expressing solidarity with the Hazara community and demanding immediate steps to punish the culprits. The spokesman for the Majlis-i-Wahdatul Muslimeen said the protestors including women and children were there only to express solidarity with the families of the victims.

"They are peaceful and only seeking their constitutional right," he said. "The protests have been joined by people from all walks of life and beyond their sectarian or political association. They all are united in these testing times for Hazara community. We demand the government and Prime Minister Imran Khan to play their due role before it's too late."

The MWM leaders while addressing the sit-ins vowed that the protest would continue till the next decision of the central leaders. They said that the demands of the heirs of Mach tragedy were legitimate and should be accepted.

"The global terrorist organisation ISIS and its tool Lashkar-i-Jhangvi were involved in this barbarism," said Allama Sadiq Jafari, secretary general, MWM Karachi. "Foreign hands are patrons of banned religious parties unless effective action is taken against them. Until then, law and order cannot be established. This is not the first attack on the Hazara tribe. Leaders of the banned parties openly issue fatwas for killings. Why action is not taken against them according to the Constitution and law of the country?"

A traffic official said that the sit-ins were staged at several places across the city, including Abbas Town (Abul Hasan Isphani Road), Kamran Chowrangi at Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Powerhouse Chowrangi in North Karachi, Numaish (M.A. Jinnah Road), Sharea Faisal and Malir 15. One track of Sharea Faisal was also closed for traffic, he said.

"Similarly, the road leading from Capri Cinema to Gurumandir was closed for traffic and [people were] directed to use the Soldier Bazaar route," he added. "The deployment of the traffic officials has been enhanced who are backed by the Pakistan Rangers, Sindh and Karachi police. If the protest continues on Thursday, the traffic police would announce alternative route plan for the motorists early in the morning."

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 07/01/2021)

Sit-ins against miners' killings continue

The Shia Ulema Council, Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen and Imamia Students Organisation, staged sit-ins at multiple spots across Karachi on the second day on Wednesday, continuing to protest the killing of 11 miners of Hazara community in Mach, Balochistan.

Expressing solidarity with the miners' families, the protesters called for giving them justice.

"Their [the miners' families] only demand is that Prime Minister Imran Khan visit them, condole the deaths of their beloved family members and give assurance that the perpetrators of the attack would be caught and punished at the earliest," said one of the protesters.

The protesters claimed the involvement of international organisations in the attack and maintained that such incidents would continue to take place unless action was not taken against foreign elements perpetrating such brutality.

They warned of widening the scale of the protest if their demands remained unmet by Wednesday [yesterday] evening.

The demonstrations were held at Numaish Chowrangi, Nipa Chowrangi, University Road near Safari Park, Abul Hassan Isphani Road, Kamran Chowrangi, Natha Khan Bridge, Quaidabad, Shah Faisal Colony, Power House Chowrangi, Khuda ki Basti, Nazimabad no.1 and other locations.

Traffic jams

Meanwhile, traffic jams were witnesses in various areas, as roads remained blocked during the demonstrations.

Long queues of traffic choked University Road, MA Jinnah Road, Sharea Faisal and the National Highway. Both track of Abul Hassan Isphani Road also remained closed for traffic.

However, traffic was diverted from affected roads to alternative routes.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 07/01/2021)

Great-grandson of Sindh Madressatul Islam's founder shot dead

Zain Hassan Effendi, the great-grandson of Sindh Madressatul Islam (now University) founder Hassan Ali Effendi and maternal cousin of former president Asif Ali Zardari, was shot dead by five attackers inside his home near Quaid-i-Azam's mausoleum on Wednesday.

Jamshed Quarters police claimed that Mr Effendi, a businessman in his 50s, was shot dead apparently during the robbery resistance in his home in the Cosmopolitan Society near Gurumandir.

SSP East Sajid Amir Sadozai said that five armed men entered the bungalow by scaling its wall and broke the lock of the bedroom of Mr Effendi on Wednesday morning.

Deceased was also a cousin of Asif Zardari

The police said that the gunmen snatched mobile phones, valuables and gold from the residents and opened fire on Mr Effendi when he reportedly resisted the snatching of gold ornaments from his wife. He suffered serious bullet injury and was taken to Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead.

He suffered a single bullet in his mouth, which got stuck in his body and was retrieved and given to investigators, said an official of the hospital.

Mr Sadozai said that police collected six spent bullet casings from the crime scene.

The police officer said the armed men took away one wallet, two mobile phones, a gold ring and a gold chain of Mr Effendi's wife. The police officer said that the gunmen did not search the home.

Mr Sadozai said that it was still too early to say anything about the incident. The police were investigating the murder to ascertain whether it was a robbery or some other motive was involved.

The British-era Sindh Madressatul Islam (now University) was established in 1895 by Hassan Ali Effendi, who was inspired by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who had pioneered modern education for Muslims of India by founding the famous Aligarh Muslim University.

Meanwhile, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah visited the residence of Mr Zain Hassan Effendi and met the grieving family members. Two police mobile vans were deployed at his residence after the murder.

Body found

A man in his early 30s was found dead on the outskirts of the city on Wednesday.

Manghopir police said that one-day old unidentified body of the man with torture marks was found in bushes off the Northern Bypass near Hamdard University. A spokesman for Edhi Foundation said that it appeared that the body had been eaten by animals. The body was taken to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital for legal formalities.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 07/01/2021)

Sit-ins continue as civil society asks why PM has not visited Quetta

Sit-ins in solidarity with the heirs of the Mach tragedy victims in the city expanded to further locations on Thursday while civil society activists staged a protest outside the Karachi Press Club to condemn the barbaric incident, calling upon the state to bring the perpetrators of the outrage to justice.

Meanwhile Shia Ulema Council and Majlis-i-Wahdatul Muslimeen in coordination with other organisations held protest sit-ins in Hyderabad, Thatta, Jacobabad, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Nawabshah, Badin, Naushahro Feroze and several other cities and towns for the second consecutive day on Thursday.

The sit-ins caused severe disruption in the flow of vehicular traffic on different sections of highways as well as roads within the cities and towns.

Thursday's protests in Karachi were a little more organized than past days allowing smooth traffic movement at a few spots, however at most locations routine life and smooth flow of traffic was affected.

'We feel ashamed that the loved ones of those who were slaughtered are not heard'

A Civil Aviation Authority official said that due to the absence and delayed arrival of the majority of passengers at the airport some 17 local and international flights were either cancelled or rescheduled.

The protesters at around 14 different spots in the city remained peaceful and determined to continue their support to the Mach victims and their families.

According to a Twitter post by the city's traffic police, sit-ins were being held at Numaish (M.A. Jinnah Road), Sharea Faisal, Malir 15, Jauhar More, Surjani Town (Khuda Ki Basti), Steel Town Chowrangi, Five Star Chowrangi (North Nazimabad), Nipa bridge, IRC Imambargah, among other locations.

Leaders of the MWM, which has mainly organised the protests supported by other parties, wondered about the “arrogance” of the rulers who failed to understand the level of the tragedy.

“We as a nation feel ashamed that the loved ones of those who were slaughtered for no reason are not heard even in these testing times,” said Allama Baqir Abbas Zaidi. “It was the test of the rulers to prove their character, meet their promises and take the first step forward to make this country a welfare state. But they are failing miserably.”

The sit-in organisers said that the protests would continue and would only come to an end when the families of the victims decided to call them off in Quetta.

Civil society protest

Joint Action Committee (JAC) and members of civil society held a protest demonstration against the gruesome killing of 11 Hazara community mine workers in Mach outside the KPC.

Carrying placards with slogans calling for the protection of Hazara lives, the participants demanded arrest of the terrorists and provision of Rs1.5 million compensation for each killed worker.

JAC leaders Karamat Ali, Anis Haroon, Qazi Khizar and Saeed Baloch condemned the killings of Shia Hazara workers in Balochistan. They also condemned the “stubborn” attitude of the prime minister for not visiting the bereaved families, who staged a sit-in in Quetta and demanded Imran Khan visit them.

Karamat Ali said that this government is not paying attention to the miseries of the common people. “It is so ironic that people are sitting in such cold weather with the corpses of their loved ones and the PM has not yet gone there,” he said.

Khizar Hayat of HRCP said: “We only demand our rights which are enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan.”

They condemned both the federal and Balochistan governments for their failure to protect human lives in the province. They said the FC has a number of checkpoints in the province but despite that terrorists killed the workers and fled easily. So far the law enforcement agencies have not arrested the terrorists, they said adding that it is utter failure of the security agencies and provincial government.

The demonstration was also attended by Provincial Minister Nasir Hussain Shah.

Other civil society activists who were present at the demonstration included Habibuddin Junaidi, Mehnaz Rahman, Samar Abbas, Paryl Mari, Dr Haroon Ahmed, Dr Riaz Shaikh.

The speakers expressed solidarity with the families of the victims and some JAC leaders later visited the main protest sit-in at Numaish Chowranghi.

(By Dawn Reporter 13, 08/01/2021)

Six bikes torched as protesters, commuters clash on Sharea Faisal

As protest sit-ins against the Mach tragedy continued on Friday in the city, at least six motorbikes were torched after a clash broke out between protesters and commuters on main Sharea Faisal, police said.

Protest sit-ins were being staged at over 20 locations in the city, causing traffic chaos and disrupting flight schedules. Protests were also held in other cities and towns of Sindh.

Groups of Shia community members continued their sit-ins at various places in Hyderabad, Sukkur, Jacobabad, Thatta, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Naushahro Feroze, Shikarpur, Kandhkot-Kashmore, Larkana, Qambar-Shahdadkot and Sanghar districts.

A large number of passenger and cargo vehicles were seen stuck in long queues due to the blockage of highways and arterial roads as protesters held their sit-in in the middle of the thoroughfares.

Workers demand ‘genocide’ of Hazaras be stopped

There were complaints about essential supplies not reaching vegetable and fruit markets, creating fear of a shortage of such commodities.

Meanwhile, workers’ groups organised a protest to condemn the Mach massacre and express solidarity with the Hazara community.

Bikes torched

The police said that some protesters had tried to block the main road near Natha Khan Bridge at Military Cut on Sharea Faisal.

Sharea Faisal SHO Iftikhar Ahmed said since it was morning, there was a huge rush and traffic was being forcibly diverted towards Natha Khan Goth and Shah Faisal Colony. The commuters resisted it and a scuffle broke out between the protesters and the commuters in which stones were thrown.

Since the number of protesters was small, they were outnumbered by the commuters. They rushed for safety by abandoning their motorbikes and six motorcycles of the protesters were set on fire by the “commuters”. The vehicles were partially damaged as the police reached the spot and prevented the situation from deteriorating further. No casualty was reported.

Flights affected

The spokesman for Pakistan International Airlines said that the flights of the national flag carrier were taking off with a “little delay.” He elaborated that PK-308 and 309, which were scheduled to fly for Islamabad took off with a delay of an hour and a half. Similarly, he said, the flights to Jeddah and Multan were also delayed for almost two hours.

“The passengers have been conveyed to contact the PIA call centre before leaving home to catch the flight to determine the exact new schedule,” he said.

Workers’ protest

Speakers at a protest said the state has failed to provide Balochistan’s Hazaras protection. The event was jointly organized by Zehra Khan of Home-Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) and M. Rafiq Khan of National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) near Fawwara Chowk.

A large number of workers participated in the protest. Carrying flags and banners they raised slogans and demanded early arrest of the killers. The protest leaders said that the brutal murder of 11 innocent miners despite the presence of security officials is worrisome. They said that the Hazara community is facing a “genocide-like” situation and the government has failed to give them protection. They said that the heirs of the martyred labourers have been protesting on the roads for days now, but the government institutions have failed to meet their just demands.

They said that the wrong policies of the state have made Balochistan a “graveyard” of innocent people. They said these atrocities can only be stopped with a joint struggle of the suppressed people and workers.

The speakers said that the workers’ movement in Pakistan has always raised its voice against the violation of basic constitutional rights of different nationalities and communities living in the country. It is a matter of grave concern that the people belonging to a certain community in Balochistan have been facing “genocide” and the government has completely failed to give them protection. They said that workers belonging to the mining sector have already been facing a lot of problems. Industrial mishaps in mines have become routine and the government has not taken any steps to check them. Workers in the mining sector are risking their lives and limbs for earning bread for their families.

The speakers said it is the responsibility of the state and its institutions to provide security to its citizens. They said checkpoints are erected everywhere in Balochistan but still terrorists are carrying out their activities freely. The killers of innocent people are not being arrested despite spending of a huge budget on law and order. They said the sitting government, instead of taking action against the culprits, is shifting blame to previous governments, which shows the height of its non-seriousness and apathy. They said the heirs of the workers have raised only one demand that Prime Minister Imran Khan visit them and tender an apology for not giving them protection.

They said that the labour movement in Pakistan strongly demands that the Hazara community should be provided foolproof protection in Balochistan. Their demands should be met and their “genocide” should be stopped. The working conditions of the mine workers should be improved. It is high time that the government should change its narrative and take stern action against terrorists. All private militias should be banned and the heirs of the slain workers should be paid compensation.

(By Dawn Reporter 13, 09/01/2021)

In solidarity with Hazara mourners

As protests over Machh killings continued for the fourth day in Karachi, at least six motorcycles were set ablaze on Friday morning after commuters clashed with protesters staging a sit-in near Natha Khan Bridge.

The commuters and the protesters came to blows over the closure of roads. However, the protesters later cleared the way for the commuters, but some unidentified men had set motorcycles parked at the site on fire by then. Meanwhile, the police reached the spot and the flow of traffic was temporarily restored until the protesters blocked the road again. The killings of 11 miners of the Hazara community in Machh, Balochistan have sparked outrage and protests across the country. In Karachi alone, sit-ins were staged at over 20 locations on Friday.

The Shia Ulema Council, Majlis Wahdate-Muslimeen, Imamia Students Organisation and others staged sit-ins at multiple spots across the metropolis in solidarity with the miners’ families. Road blocks put in place amid the protests have resulted in gridlocks across the city at peak hours. However, traffic is being diverted from affected roads to alternative routes. Meanwhile, across Sindh thousands of men, women and children spent the chilling winter night on roads and highways, demanding justice for victims of targeted attack. Highways and roads remained blocked in Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Thatta, Badin, Mirpurkhad, Dadu, Nawabshah, Khairpur, Shikarpur, Sukkur, Ghotki and other districts. The movement of inter provincial traffic also remained suspended. The closure of roads has also affected the movement of container trucks and trailer trucks to the port.

(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 09/01/2021)

Police violence

THE removal of the IGP Islamabad is but total eyewash — a lame attempt to cover up the alleged murder of Osama Satti by the capital police in cold blood and cool down mounting public anger over police excesses.

The sincerity of the authorities to conduct a transparent inquiry into the incident and punish those policemen who were involved in the killing was exposed the moment the record of the case was 'sealed' to hide the glaring contradictions in different accounts of what actually transpired on Kashmir Highway last weekend. Initial accounts allegedly show that Satti was shot dead after the counterterrorism police had him pull over his car.

In a country where rights activists, journalists, political workers and others go missing every other day — in several cases, only to eventually be discovered dead — the murder of young Satti, who the police claim had a prior criminal record, is anything but an aberration. It is not for the first time that the police have killed someone, innocent or not. They are notorious for 'wiping out' suspects in custody as well as in staged shootouts. Sadly, successive governments have endorsed this gruesome practice of fighting crime by looking the other way and, in many cases, rewarding the practitioners of this strategy.

Take the example of the infamous 'encounter specialist' Rao Anwar. Backed by all-powerful spy agencies and politicians, he rose rapidly through the ranks for allegedly killing more than 400 people in the course of his career — most notably his alleged involvement in the staged encounter killing of Nageebullah Mehsud in January 2018. Likewise, the Sahiwal counterterrorism police gunning down three family members — husband, wife and their 13-year-old daughter — and their friend in January 2019 is a memory that is still fresh in the minds of the people. The way in which the survivors and families of the deceased were brought under pressure to keep them from pursuing the case against the suspected policemen, and the manner in which their release was managed by the state, reflect how deep the rot has already gone.

Satti's killing will test Prime Minister Imran Khan government's commitment to reforming law enforcement in the country. So far, it hasn't betrayed signs of any such plan. It had failed the victims' families and the public in the Sahiwal case. Its failure now to transparently investigate Osama Satti's killing and punish the policemen involved will further disillusion citizens.
(By Editorial Dawn, 06, 09/01/2021)

Domestic violence bill

FOR nearly a decade, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Bill failed to be passed by the provincial assembly. Even as all the other provinces passed their respective domestic violence bills, KP's much-needed bill was delayed due to staunch opposition — mainly from religious quarters. For instance, in 2016, the bill had been sent for review to the Council of Islamic Ideology, who rejected it on the basis of it being against religious law, or so they claimed in a press conference. Women's rights activists and female MPAs, in turn, questioned the rationale behind sending the bill to the CII to review in the first place, when this was not done with other bills, and sought clarity on which points were objectionable. Then, after the bill was again introduced to the provincial assembly in 2019, the MMA voiced reservations, delaying its passage once again. Now, according to a recent report, the revised bill is 'likely' to be passed by lawmakers in the assembly's next sitting, which is a welcome move and shows that mindsets may be changing, even if not at the pace needed. The proposed bill's stated objective is to prevent domestic violence against women, protecting them from sexual, psychological and economic abuse, and could provide many women in the province with some degree of security against violence and exploitation, particularly within the home.

In 2013, the Sindh Assembly unanimously passed the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill to protect women, children, and other vulnerable groups from physical and psychological harm. In 2014, the Balochistan Assembly passed the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, similar to the bill passed in Sindh in the previous year. Then, in 2016, Punjab, which is said to have the highest number of cases of violence against women, passed the Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Bill 2015 amidst great jubilation. It outlined the following protection mechanisms: a district protection committee, helpline, women protection officers, shelter homes, and monetary support for victims. While these bills faced their share of criticism about their perceived shortcomings, their enactment into law is a critical step, although implementation must follow for the legislation to be effective. It is vital that KP follows in the footsteps of the other provinces, and even if we do not know all the details of the bill at this point, it is imperative that it not be a toothless one.

(By Editorial Dawn, 06, 10/01/2021)

The impact on police morale

RECENTLY, Islamabad witnessed a serious crime wave preceding the tragic death of a young man in firing by police personnel on duty. The indiscriminate use of deadly force by police drew vociferous criticism from the media and civil society.



Crime control and the operational duties of police are the direct responsibility of senior commanders under the IGP, and as immediate supervisors of their subordinates, they are answerable for any lapses resulting from weak monitoring. In a case of excessive use of force, the normal procedure involves a magisterial inquiry to ascertain the facts of the incident, determine the role of the police officers concerned, and, if neglect or any other motive is established, fix responsibility for criminal action. Under intense pressure, the police made the request for a judicial inquiry and registered a criminal case under the anti-terrorism law

without awaiting the outcome of the former; the nominated policemen were immediately arrested.

To further soften the criticism, in a knee-jerk reaction the police chief of the capital city was unceremoniously transferred and made an OSD. Worse, an impression was created that the officer had been transferred prematurely due to his incompetence. This decision was made only to deflect criticism of the government for its failure to introduce the promised reforms that would check the wanton use of force by police.

The transferred police official had performed his duties efficiently for more than two years and focused his attention on his primary responsibilities as chief. He maintained order and controlled crime despite the endemic shortage of resources of manpower, equipment and transport. These difficulties did not deter him from accepting the numerous challenges that tested his nerve and competence to the limit. He addressed key issues for bringing lasting improvement in the ranks of the capital police.

Whimsical transfers of senior officers leave lasting scars on the collective psyche of the police.

There was no fresh recruitment for almost 10 years in the police. He initiated recruitment of police at various levels through a transparent process. He also cleared the backlog of promotions of members of the force at various levels, thus restoring confidence of the police in their leadership. He took over the Safe City project which was in the initial stages of gestation and faced glitches and maintenance problems. He made the project fully functional and was also able to complete a purpose-built office for the central police headquarters that was earlier housed in constabulary barracks.

For operational duties, he was, however, hamstrung by an archaic police law of 1857 which, despite the legal requirement that it be replaced with the new police law of 2002 with the induction of local government, remains in force. Under this law, he lacked operational and administrative autonomy and his officers at senior and mid-command levels were posted by the interior ministry or the local chief commissioner.

Even within this compromised arrangement, he did a good job in dealing with numerous crises that required deft handling due to the continuous media focus on the capital city. Under his guidance, the situation was never allowed to get out of hand. Despite an overall good track record, the government suddenly transferred a good officer under external pressure. Governments should learn to act with grace. Similar whimsical transfers of senior officers in other provinces and now in Islamabad leave lasting scars on the collective psyche of these law-enforcement institutions.

It must be understood that police personnel comprising armed uniformed manpower are exposed daily to high-risk operations and tend to form an emotional bonding with their commanders as comrades in arms. The maltreatment of their commanders puts the entire force under stress with a long-term negative impact on their performance and exposes the fragility of the entire set-up that is then perceived as being vulnerable to quirky political decisions.

If the head of the force is held responsible for an individual case of indiscipline or poor performance, thereby ignoring his exemplary record of two years and projecting him as a failure, it is likely that the men he has led will not accept the decision and lose all confidence in the sagacity of the government. This attenuates the morale of the force, thus preventing it from functioning effectively and facing the daily challenge of highly volatile and violent situations due to the existing challenges of extremism and terrorism confronted by these men.

Disgracing the police chief is not reform. If the government has any interest in reforming our police, it should immediately notify the application of Police Order 2002 and set up all the institutional structures of civilian oversight and independent police complaint authorities, thus letting the institutional arrangement hold the police accountable for all its actions. Taking important decisions such as the transfer of police chiefs on the basis of anecdotal evidence negates the claims of institution-building.

Without waiting for the promised reform, a decision that can be taken quickly (which would make an immediate difference to the situation) is the posting of a competent police officer after due diligence. Such an officer should be selected purely on merit with a fixed tenure so that any transfer that is made prematurely takes place through a neutral and transparent process already defined by the law. With merit-based selection and an assured tenure, he will be able to work in peace instead of worrying about his survival and turning into a darbari when he should be serving the people.

One good professional officer commanding a disciplined, armed force will make a huge difference and give relief to a large population with a salutary impact on overall governance.

Lastly, if a transfer is necessary out of political considerations then at least the dignity of the office of police chief should be protected and the change should be made gracefully without any kind of stigmatisation. It is unfortunate that this government and previous dispensations have paid only lip service to police reform, yet they try singularly to change the police for the worse and outdo their predecessors to ruin an already weakened institutional arrangement.

(By Afzal Ali Shigri Dawn, 06, 29/01/2021)

Domestic exploitation

ON Jan 30, Lahore police registered a case against a family for the murder of a 12-year-old employed as a domestic worker at their residence. Investigation reports revealed the child was deprived of food and water for several weeks and subjected to physical violence at the hands of the employer on numerous occasions prior to her death.



The most disconcerting aspect about this morbid incident is that it remains a fairly common occurrence. A quick Google search reveals numerous incidents taking place just since 2019, with victims frequently being underage girls. And these are the cases that receive some media attention — which means they're taking place in large urban centres and are visible to existing patterns of reporting. The scale of physical violence and coercion against domestic workers that doesn't end in death would be much larger and significantly harder to estimate.

Working conditions in personal and community services — of which domestic work is an integral subcomponent — should be of considerable concern to anyone interested in the politics and socioeconomic dynamics of poverty in the country. Domestic workers in Pakistan form a considerable portion of the informal economy; estimates suggest the sector's workforce to number around 4.5 million individuals, with the vast majority finding themselves in exploitative and vulnerable employment. In terms of the gender breakup, Labour Force Survey data categorises domestic work as part of personal and community services, which comprises of 60 per cent women. There is also significant incidence of child labour (employment of individuals under the age of 14) in this sector. Typical occupations under domestic work include cooking, cleaning, laundry services, and child and elderly care.

Ideologically, various tiers of the Pakistani state apparatus are not committed to the eradication of exploitative work.

Official statistics likely under-record the actual prevalence of domestic work in the economy, given its fluid and often ephemeral nature. Anecdotal accounts suggest that there is high turnover, with new urban migrants often using it as the first form of employment, given its relatively low credential and skill requirement. As was the case in the gruesome incident recounted at the start of the piece, high-demand cities like Lahore often serve as sites of inward migration by domestic workers from neighbouring districts, or from village settlements being engulfed by higher-end residential real estate developments. The surplus of rural labour produced by structural transformation in agriculture taking place across the country finds domestic work as its first (and often only) outlet.

Little surprise then that while the economy remains mired in protracted phases of stagnation, the personal and community services sector has increased its share in total GDP by just 4pc since the early 2000s.

Despite the scale of the sector, and its associated labour problems, there is very little regulation surrounding it. As detailed in my piece on the informal economy a fortnight ago, it was as late as 2013 that the Domestic Workers (Employment Rights) Act 2013 was passed but it only applied to workers within the legislative jurisdiction of parliament, ie the Islamabad Capital Territory. The province of Punjab passed its own version of the act, the Punjab Domestic Workers Act, only in 2019, which finally provided a regulatory definition of the sector itself as section 2 (g) and (h) defined respectively the act of domestic work and who constituted a domestic worker.

Yet the passage of these acts has not changed working conditions in the sector in any substantive way. Despite instituting a minimum wage condition and a working cap of maximum eight hours of work per day, various grievance and redressal mechanisms instituted under these legislations either remain unestablished or untested. These are significant challenges in a sector that is marked almost entirely by informal and transient employment contracts.

The root of regulatory gaps, as well as the continued nature of exploitation in the sector has to be analysed from a political perspective. The state will be compelled to act in favour of a segment on the back of its ideational and political incentive structure. Ideologically, various tiers of the Pakistani state apparatus are not committed to the eradication of exploitative work. The national developmental narrative — regardless of how successful it is — is one of growth, not inequality or equity.

Similarly, political incentives to act on this issue are also completely absent. The employment and exploitation of domestic workers is a pervasive phenomenon among households in both upper and middle-income segments. The 12-year-old murdered by her employer last month was working at a house located in a middle-income locality, not in an elite residential enclave. This means that while there is pervasive moral outrage on media reports of extreme violence and brutality, there is little self-reflection on the underlying practices that provide conditions for such incidents to take place. Simply put, the exploitation of domestic work — through long and ad hoc hours and low pay — is a deal that works in favour of a significant segment of society.

As is so often the case with entrenched inequality, the only glimmer of hope — and a very faint one at that — comes from associational politics of the workers themselves. In Punjab, the Domestic Workers' Union was registered by the Department of Labour Punjab under the Punjab Industrial Relations Act (2010) in 2014. The union continues to work with the Labour Department and has helped develop the template for a model employment contract. It also participates in the workings of various labour federations at the provincial and national level.

As of now, its organisational penetration is extremely low. There are currently only a few hundred members, most of whom are women keeping in line with the overall profile of the sector. While the baseline at this point may not be enough to cause substantive change, increased unionisation and representation remains the only plausible way to impact the regulatory and societal practices around this sector.

(By Umair Javed Dawn, 06, 08/02/2021)

Woman among four TikTokers gunned down in Garden

A pre-dawn gun attack on Tuesday left four young social media influencers, including a woman, dead in the Garden area where they were roaming and filming themselves apparently for their TikTok followers, officials said.

The incident remains a mystery for investigators, who were not sure about the exact motive behind the deadly attack but are considering the possibility that some personal enmity may be behind the killings.

They said they gathered initial information through mobile phone records of the victims which suggested they were on a planned road trip and nothing emerged suspicious from their phone record.

"The victims are identified as Amir, Saddam, Rehan and Muskan. They [the male victims] were in their mid-20s and lived in Baldia Town," said an official at the Nabi Bux police station. "The woman, 33, was a known TikTok influencer having over half a million followers. She lived in Landhi. All of them originally hailed from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."

Police suspect some personal enmity as the likely motive for the killing

The official said that the woman's body was found inside a car's passenger seat while the remaining three bodies were lying outside. They were all shot from a very close range. The police have also found spent bullet casings from the crime scene.

Hours after the incident the body of the woman remained unclaimed as no one came to the police or visited the hospital.

"Our initial findings suggest that Muskan and Amir were friends," said SSP-City Sarfaraz Nawaz Sheikh. "Their call records show Muskan called Amir on Monday night for a meeting later the same night. Amir brought his friends Rehan and Saddam in a car. Their phones showed recording of videos before the firing incident and they spent a few hours in different parts of the city. They were attacked by unknown armed men near Anklesaria Hospital at around 4.48am."

He said all the four victims were known social media influencers and the woman was quite popular among young TikTok users. He said the male victims were identified within a couple of hours of the incident and their families approached the police for their bodies. "Victims Rehan and Saddam had a criminal record," said the SSP. "They were recently booked in a case pertaining to aerial firing and one of them was also found involved in gambling and drugs. The motive and people behind the killings is not known yet but there are strong possibilities of some personal enmity that led to such an attack."

He said the incident took place at a desolate place and the police had not found any eyewitness to the crime.

He said police were collecting facts and other evidence to set the course of the investigation.

Headway in Boat Basin double murder

Meanwhile, investigators made some headway in the investigation of the murder of a young man and woman, who were shot dead in Boat Basin late on Monday night.

"The victims have been identified as Adnan and Ainee," said an official. "They both lived in Hijrat Colony. Ainee was married but Adnan was single and he worked as a waiter in a restaurant. He originally hailed from Kohat."

The official said that the woman's husband was missing since Monday night and his mobile phone was also powered off. The victims were targeted in a street near Boat Basin when they were going somewhere on a motorbike. "The CCTV footage found from one of the area houses showed the bike was being followed by a four-wheeler minutes before the firing incident."

The incident, the official said, seemed to be linked with some personal enmity. The disappearance of the deceased woman's husband, who ran a shop in Hijrat Colony, also raised some questions, he added.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 03/02/2021)

'No political party being targeted in Malir operation'

Reacting to allegations levelled by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders (PTI) on demolition drive in Malir, Sindh government spokesperson clarified on Saturday that the drive was being conducted against land mafia and was not aimed at targeting any political party.

Speaking to the media at Kidney Hill Park, where he reviewed the progress of encroachment's removal, Wahab said the opposition leader should appreciate the government's move to raze "illegal structures" instead of taking offence.

"Has the action been taken against Haleem in particular?" questioned Wahab, and then continued: "The action has been taken against those persons the lease for whose properties has expired."

Wahab warned that of action against any person attempting to hinder the drive.

Separately, Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani said while addressing a press conference that it was illegal to build farm houses and establish residential schemes on land leased for agricultural purposes.

He further elaborated that the authorities had razed structures built on lands whose 30-year-lease had either expired or they were being used for purposes other than they was leased for.

Ghani maintained that there were clear orders of the Supreme Court (SC) regarding action on such properties, adding that the chief justice of Pakistan had personally directed the deputy commissioners of all districts to carry out the action.

"It is ridiculous that the PTI is dubbing the operation against the encroachments an act of political revenge just because properties that have been razed belong to its leader(s)," he said. "Those who had congratulated the Lahore chief minister for a similar operation are trying to make the demolition of encroachments in Karachi controversial."

He said the anti-corruption department and the Board of Revenue had been taking action against such illegal occupation of land, but many had acquired stay orders from the courts, albeit adding that all such stay orders were quashed by the SC.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 07/02/2021)

Demolition drive, protest and political strife in Karachi

Citizens and cops clashed in Malir on Saturday, in the backdrop of an anti-encroachment drive, during which approximately 70 farm houses across five dehs and two sub-divisions were demolished and 548 acres of allegedly illegally occupied land was vacated. Given that most of these farm houses were owned by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders- notably opposition leader in the Sindh Assembly Haleem Adil Sheikh- their relatives and other influential personalities, the demolition drive led finger pointing, with the ruling party in Sindh, the Pakistan Peoples Party, and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf engaging in a war of words.

The action

The demolition drive was conducted by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's anti-encroachment department on the directives of Malir deputy commissioner Ghanwar Laghari. Sindh Building Control Authority officials, district administration and other relevant authorities assisted the operation.

Preceding the operation, the Malir DC had issued a notification on February 3, 2021, ordering a three-day demolition drive, from February 6 to February 8, in Deh Khakar, Deh Konkar, Deh Tore, Deh Kharkharo, Deh Malh and two sub-divisions, Murad Memon Goth and Shah Memon Goth.

The notification had been sent to the Karachi Commissioner, police, Rangers and anti-encroachment department.

Consequently, Malir assistant commissioner Farooq, accompanied by police personnel and heavy machinery, commenced the operation on Saturday morning.

According to the relevant authorities, the lease of the properties in question had expired in 2015, but they owners continued to occupy them illegally. The officials also pointed out that while the land was leased for poultry farming and agricultural use, it was being used for other purposes.

Resistance

As soon as the drive started, scores of workers from the farmhouses gathered to resist the move.

They staged a protest for over an hour, due to which traffic flow on the Super Highway was affected.

Later, Haleem too joined the protest, declaring the demolition drive "illegal and an act of political revenge."

He claimed that he had acquired an stay order against the demolition of the structures from the court and threatened the anti-encroachment team and the Malir DC of taking up the matter with "higher officials."

The operation was suspended a short while later.

Reportedly, the protesters pelted stone at police, as a result of which the glass of official cars was broken and law enforcers had to step back and leave.

Later, a complaint was lodged at Gadap City police station against the demolition drive.

Plea filed

Besides, Haleem's relatives filed a plea against the demolition in the Sindh High Court.

The court has issued contempt of court notices to the Sindh chief secretary and other officers, barring them from continuing the demolition drive. It has also issued a new stay order on the razing of the structures and summoned the parties on February 23.
(By Amir Farooq The Express Tribune, 04, 07/02/2021)

Has foreign aid impacted police?

Improving performance of the police by providing good physical environment, better salary packages and building capacity have always been hot topics of discussion with all and sundry. With this aim, different reform commissions and national and international bodies have made various recommendations from time to time.



The enactment of the Police Order 2012, and later on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Act have been steps undertaken to remodel and restructure the police on the lines of a functional specialisation in accordance with the democratic aspirations of the people.

The War on Terror particularly brought to focus the role of the police as the first line of responder and defender to international forums. As a result, the United States, EU, Japan and China in particular, through their aid bodies such as USIP, INL, DFID, UNPDP and UNODC started pumping in enormous amounts of finances and efforts to revamp the police to confront the challenge. Of course, their documents also focused upon improving

criminal administration with an objective to ensure the rule of law and peace building, with an eye upon the citizenry to enjoy fundamental rights.

In this context, the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa was taken as a case study, because this was the region which bore the major brunt of terrorism. Initially for the police, it was a new type of terrorism in the form of insurgency, and it was very hard to counter the insurgent attacks and investigate. Gradually, by the time-tested trial and error method, the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Police built up its own capacity in countering this kind of crime. Under this burden, the strength of the provincial police grew from 32,000 to around 85,000 by 2018. The procurement of weapons and other equipment was all done through their own budget.

The assorted donors offered their packages with strings attached to their own varied agendas, and fixed certain parameters upon the recipient, leaving no room for the beneficiary to wiggle. Most of the funds of the donors concentrated on intangibles, ignoring the fundamentals in the areas of infrastructural development, procurement of arms and other equipment. An overlap in themes and geographical areas had been observed, resulting in great wastage of resources. However, this flaw was cured by developing the Strategic Development Programme Log Frame, which was undertaken in alignment with the provincial budget during the period of 2013-2014, while the author was the home secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The outcome of these programmes was stated to be: (i) Improved oversight, governance, and accountability of the security and justice sector; (ii) Improved security and justice service delivery to citizens through strengthened institutions, including reduced incidence of damage to life and property; and (iii) Trust between citizen and state increased. Of these outcomes, the output of (ii) enhanced processes and improved functional specialisation, including through infrastructure development and capacity building of police, prosecution, prisons, reclamation and probation, Provincial Public Safety and Police Complaints Commission, judiciary and legal professions, according to national laws and international standards; improved effectiveness of police investigation, including through improved production and utilisation of intelligence and forensic evidence; and improved capacity and processes of courts for efficient and effective delivery of justice services. Outcome (iii) focused on output in enhanced citizens' legal awareness to demand and access services — improved availability of citizen-friendly and gender responsive policing and enhanced crime reporting systems.

In this context, the donor-supported projects were Strengthening Rule of Law in Malakand (assisted by UNDP), Criminal Justice Sub-Programme 2 (assisted by UNODC), Rule of Law Programme in K-P (assisted by EU), Peace Building initiative for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Project (assisted by DFID), and Conflict Victim Support Programme (assisted by USAID). Meanwhile the K-P government undertook the Safe City Project Peshawar (PC-II approved), De-Radicalisation Programme for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Automation of Home Department, 23 secure armouries across the province and construction of Joint Police Training Centre at Nowshera, Phase-I (assisted by INL) of police line Hangu, construction of Central Police Office in Peshawar, construction of Javed Iqbal Shaheed Police Line Kabal (assisted by INL), Special Development Support for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police (SDSP-I), Project Coordination Unit for Implementation of Law & Order initiatives in K-P, Special Development Support for K-P Police (SDSP Phase I and Phase III), the establishment of offices for Special Branch Police K-P, traffic warden system for Peshawar, construction of police lines Daggar, construction of police station at Kotkai and police checkpost at Miskni and Kambat, Dir-Lower, Special Development Support for K-P Police (SDSP-IV) and Creation of Model Police Stations (SDSP-V), enhancing and strengthening the capacity of BDU, construction and supervision of joint police training centre in Nowshera, construction of headquarters for CTD, development of police infrastructure for police stations at Kabalgram, Chauga, Olandar, Dandai Distt, Shangla, Swari at Distt Buner, Gawaleri and GAT-Poechar at District-Swat, Kuz Paro District Kohistan. Apart from that the construction of buildings for the school of investigation, school of intelligence, school of explosive handling, and school of riot and mob management are other feathers to the cap through our own funds.

While comparing the SDPF, one can easily assess that only INL and USAID made substantial contributions towards the construction of buildings for the Elite Police Training College at Hangu, and for the raising of security checkposts, equipping the special branch and building police lines and police stations. As compared to that, the others lagged behind and whatever funds they provided were either spent on intangibles or emoluments of the personnel engaged by those bodies without taking into consideration the priorities of the department. For instance, the top-most priority was the establishment of state-of-the-art forensic science laboratory and close circuit cameras, but the donors refused to fund such projects. They kept on spending millions of dollars by renting out buildings in Islamabad, paying salaries to their hired staff and meeting other expenditures on seminars in posh hotels with half-baked suggestions. The irony of it all is that most of the advisers associated with those teams had no experience at the operational and policy level in any of the conflict zones, and mostly remained confined to cozy rooms either in Islamabad or Lahore. The summary of the discussion is that although millions were doled out by donors in the name of capacity building, gender mainstreaming of police and image building, no impact appears to have been made thus far in any of those fields or anywhere else. Therefore, to have a meaningful impact, it is

essential that funding to a few major projects should be made available to the police in order to avoid splitting of resources. Besides, third-party validations of such projects should also be done.
(By dr Syed Akhter Ali Shah The Express Tribune, 15, 03/02/2021)

Clash between cops, citizens stalls traffic flow in Karachi

A clash between citizens and traffic police personnel led to a logjam at Qayyumabad Chowrangi on Thursday evening.

With traffic coming nearly to a standstill on affected arteries for around two hours, several vehicles stuck on choked roads ran out of fuel and over a dozen citizens complained of having been pickpocketed during this time.

The clash took place following an argument between a resident of Qayyumabad, Ameen, and traffic police personnel.

According to Ameen, the policemen had flagged him while he was on his way home from Sohrab Goth in his newly bought car. He said the cops told him that he would be challaned as the number plate on his vehicle was temporary. While he was explaining to the officials that his car was newly bought and a permanent number was to be issued by the excise and taxation department, three cops and some citizens witnessing the scene engaged in a clash.

Ameen claimed that traffic policemen beat him and tore his clothes, took his mobile phone and went inside a nearby police picket.

This enraged passersby, who surrounded the picket, blocked the road in protest and embroiled in a clash with the cops, he added.

"The policemen then called for help and more officials arrived at the scene to rescue them," he said.

The Qayyumabad DSP, who reached the site along with others to "rescue" the cops, claimed on the other hand that the clash erupted after Ameen hurled abuses at traffic policemen and tried to flee in his car.

The flow of the traffic was restored after the protesters dispersed on the DSP's assurance that action would be taken against whoever was found at fault in the incident.

Meanwhile, the residents of Railway Colony and surrounding areas staged a protest over the non-supply of water and gas to their residences and blocked II Chundrigar Road near Shaheen Complex.

The protesters complained that the supply of water to their houses had been suspended for days and gas was being supplied for just an hour in a day.

They said they had lodged complaints on the matter with the relevant bodies multiple times, but to no avail.

As a result of the protest, II Chundrigar Road and multiple arteries in its vicinity witnessed traffic jams.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 12/02/2021)

Two brothers gunned down on flyover

Two brothers were gunned down on the FTC Flyover on Monday morning reportedly in an attack motivated by personal enmity.

According to South SSP Zubair Nazeer Shaikh, the brothers, identified as Syed Abid Hussain Shah, 50, and Syed Sajid Hussain Shah, 52, were on a motorcycle and were returning from a hearing at the Karachi city court when they were attacked.

The brothers were shot dead by unidentified assailants, who were also on a motorcycle when they opened fire at the deceased. Both the brothers died on the spot and their bodies were shifted to Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre.

As many as eight spent bullet shells were retrieved from the crime scene and have been sent for forensic analysis, said the SSP, adding that the police have launched a further investigation after gathering more evidence and recording the statements of the deceased's family.

The deceased hailed from Mansehra and were living in Karachi's Chanesar Goth.

SSP Shaikh further said that it appears that the murders were motivated by personal enmity as Sajid was involved in a dispute with his brother-in-law.

Speaking to the media at JPMC, deceased Abid's son, Syed Shehryar stated that his uncle, Sajid, was having marital troubles and subsequently entered a dispute with his brother-in-law, Syed Shahnawaz Shah.

Shehryar maintained that the dispute had also resulted in a clash earlier, after which the brother-in-law and his accomplices lodged a case against Abid and Sajid. He further said that they had been receiving threats from the accused suspects as well and they had lodged another 'false' FIR pertaining to a robbery against the deceased at Baloch Colony Police Station and another one against Sajid, pertaining to a rickshaw he owned, at Noor Jahan Police Station.

According to Shehryar, Sajid was arrested by the Anti-Vehicle Lifting Cell from his house and was returning from the hearing of the rickshaw case when the brothers were gunned down.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 09/02/2021)

Changes in colonial-era law proposed to reduce burden on criminal justice system

The Sindh police have suggested various amendments to the colonial-era Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) for enactment of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism and civil cases, bail and pecuniary punishments for suspects held for possessing a small quantity of contrabands, it emerged on Sunday.

According to official sources and documents reviewed by *Dawn*, it is also suggested that a SP-ranked officer should be made responsible for allowing any arrest or not.

They said the proposed amendments were aimed at lessening the burden on police, courts, prosecution and prisons.

"The Sindh police have proposed amendments to lessen burden on the criminal justice system," said a senior police officer familiar with the development.

'Unbridled powers'

He was of the view that there was a huge burden of 'frivolous' cases on the criminal justice system partly because of the legacy of colonial powers, which unfortunately had not been rationalised or modernised.

The officer regretted that sometimes the term 'police state' was used mainly because of the existence of Section 54 of the CrPC, which granted 'unbridled' powers to police, or an SHO, that were being abused widely due to host of reasons as these powers were not rationalised and there was no regulatory mechanism.

A four-member police team has sent its recommendations to Sindh govt

The officer recalled that when courts referred cases to the police in 2019 under Section 22-A of the CrPC it was transpired that around 90 per cent of the FIRs were frivolous. The amendment would reduce the burden of such frivolous cases on the criminal justice system, he added.

Official sources said that in pursuance of a meeting between Chief Minister's Law Adviser Murtaza Wahab and Inspector General of Police Mushtaq Ahmed Mahar, a committee was constituted by the provincial police chief on Jan 4. Headed by DIG-Investigation Farhat Junejo, it comprised DIG-Mirpurkhas Zulfiqar Larik, DIG-Training Naeem Shaikh and DIG-Finance Zulfiqar Mahar being the other members.

According to its Terms of Reference (ToR), the body is asked to propose a list of different sections of the Pakistan Penal Code 1860, where "powers of arrest are widely abused by the police and to recommend as to which rank should be responsible for allowing arrest in each of these criminal offences".

The committee was also tasked to propose amendments to the Police Rules incorporating a "calendar of evidence" for each offence to be examined by the officer responsible before allowing the arrest with a mind on prosecution of the case.

Accused's right to legal aid proposed The committee was also asked to propose as to whether there should be some ADR mechanism for decriminalising certain offences.

It was also asked to lay down a comprehensive standard operating procedure for grant of bails and release of suspects by police in allailable offences and right of the accused to have recourse to legal aid.

The sources said the Sindh police prepared the recommendations recently and submitted the same to the secretaries of the home and law departments for implementation.

The committee recommended enactment of the 'Sindh Alternative Dispute Resolutions Law' on the lines of the laws in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to reduce the burden on police, courts and prisons.

The Sindh police believed that the introduction of an ADR mechanism in the province was likely to help citizens get their petty issues resolved amicably through "an alternative process of justice involving members of civil society".

"This will also lead to decriminalisation of cases of civil nature and petty disputes, which have all the potential to turn into cognizable offences if not attended at initial stages," according to one of the documents reviewed by Dawn.

The committee has also recommended amendments to the Schedule-II of the CrPC to classify such offences where the recoveries of contraband substances like gutka, mainpuri etc was insignificantly trivial asailable by police.

It further recommended pecuniary punishments through trial for such offenders by the courts concerned in the same way the anti-beggary laws were implemented.

Finally, the committee recommended amendment to the Police Rules 26.1 and 26.2 of 1934 pertaining to general powers of a police officer to arrest or defer arrest, to include a proviso holding an SP-ranked officer legally responsible for any arrest or its deferment.

Sources said that the recommendations of the committee to the extent of their operational ambit had already been implemented by the IGP-Sindh by issuing "SOPs on arrest in cognizable cases and grant of bail and release" to the field/commanding officers. (By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 22/02/2021)

Civil society calls for implementation of Police Order, 2002

The Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network, a rights advocacy non-profit organisation, has called for the implementation of the Sindh (Repeal of the Police Act, 1861, and Revival of the Police Order, 2002) (Amendment) Act, 2019.

In a letter sent on Thursday to Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and other provincial government high authorities, the network's convener advocate Ali A Palh emphasised on making the provincial Public Safety and Police Complaints Commission and its chapters in different districts functional.

According to Palh, the provincial commission's private members have time and again expressed concerns over delays in holding regular meetings, setting up the secretariat and the allocation of resources. He pointed out that the official members of the commission did not attend even those meetings regularly.

"We [the members of the commission from civil society] have also submitted fact finding reports on alleged fake encounters in Sanghar and Mirpurkhas districts and the police's highhandedness in Jamshoro district, but haven't received any feedback," he stated.

The Act empowers the provincial commission to recommend the repatriation of the Sindh IGP before the completion of his three-year tenure and also reforms for the modernisation of laws and procedures in respect to the police, prosecution, prisons and probation services. It can also recommend essential criminal justice reforms and take cognizance of cases of police neglect, excesses, abuse of authority and conduct prejudicial to public interest.

The commission is supposed to have 12 members and an ex-officio chairperson. Half of the members are to be nominated by the Sindh Assembly speaker from MPAs, while the remaining half are independent members appointed by the provincial government. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter 04, 26/02/2021)

Passer-by hurt, Chinese man escapes assassination bid in Lyari

A Chinese man survived an armed attack on his car and a passer-by was shot at and wounded in Lyari on Tuesday, police said.

According to City SSP Sarfaraz Nawaz Shaikh, Jason Yahoo, 26, worked for a Chinese firm associated with the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board. He visited Lyari reportedly to assess the cleanliness situation and disposal of waste along with two locals in a car.

When the vehicle reached the Baghdadi area armed pillion riders intercepted it, opened fire and rode away. All three occupants of the car survived the attack, but the Chinese man suffered minor injuries due to broken windowpanes, the SSP said.

A passer-by, identified as Khalid Sher, 40, suffered a bullet wound in the leg. The Chinese man and passer-by were shifted to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital for treatment.

The SSP said the police were probing the exact motive of the attackers.

Two spent bullet casings fired from a 9mm pistol were recovered from the crime scene and sent to the police lab for a forensic examination.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 15, 10/03/2021)

US-based MQM-L woman activist found plotting assassinations in city, say officials

A US-based woman activist of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-London has allegedly been discovered plotting the assassination of various personalities to trigger sectarian violence and spread chaos in the metropolis.

This was stated by officials of the police's Counter-Terrorism Department and Pakistan Rangers, Sindh, at a press conference here on Thursday.

"The MQM-London's Coordination Committee member Kehkashan Haider has established target killers' groups in collaboration with India's RAW and anti-Pakistan Sindhi and Baloch groups to target law enforcement agencies, police, political and religious leaders in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi," said CTD DIG Omar Shahid Hamid.

Rangers' Col Shabbir said that some of the targets were aimed at fanning sectarianism in the metropolis. Mr Hamid added that other targets were politicians in the city but it might not be advisable to share their names with the media at this moment.

The counter-terror force chief said Ms Haider, based in Texas, US, since the 1990s, had remained a close aide of MQM founder Altaf Husain.

Sharing details of unearthing the plot to kill personalities, the CTD chief pointed out that both the CTD and Rangers obtained some "concrete evidence" after interrogation of recently held alleged hitmen affiliated with the MQM-L who were arrested in Sindh,

particularly in Karachi. Those held suspects have revealed that under directions of MQM-L chief Altaf Husain target killing teams had been “re-established”.

“These new target killing teams are being patronised by Kehkashan Haider,” said the official.

‘She has not only given a list of targets, but also informed the hitmen that when and where to target those personalities’

As per available evidence, Ms Haider had given directions to the hitmen for carrying out targeted killings and the CTD and other institutions were providing security to the personalities included in the list of targets.

He recalled that the Rangers had issued a press release about “target killers linked with the MQM-London” on Oct 4, 2017. Out of which, three hitmen were arrested by the paramilitary force. They were involved in the killing of Rashid, alias Mamu (the then chairman of UC-13, Rafa-i-Aam Society), and weapons were also seized from them.

Those suspects had also confessed to their involvement in the killing of the UC chairman before a judicial magistrate and revealed that that target and other targets were given to them by Kehkashan Haider, who had also sent Rs300,000 to them as a “reward”. Out of which, Rs150,000 was sent through hundi/hawala, which their accomplice Asif, alias Rais, had received. According to the press release, \$1,470 was received by their absconder accomplice Chand’s wife Huma through the Nagan Chowrangi branch of an international financial services firm.

The CTD with the help of Rangers utilised service of their “special informer” and obtained “explosive disclosures” about directions given to the hitmen by Altaf Husain through Ms Haider. An audio clip was also played in which Ms Haider was allegedly giving instructions to the hitman for killing.

Ms Haider had given the task to head the target killers’ team whose name was withheld by the officials to assassinate a pesh imam (prayer leader), said the CTD chief.

She had also given the task for the killing of other personalities. “She has not only given a list of targets but also informed the hitmen as to when and where those personalities be targeted.”

Ms Haider had initially promised to give Rs50,000 to the hitman, which would be raised to Rs200,000 with the provision of sophisticated weapons.

The CTD has registered a case (31/2021) against Kehkashan Haider under relevant sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act pertaining to terror financing, said Mr Hamid.

Answering a question, the CTD head said they would also approach the foreign ministry to share such information/evidence with the US embassy about terror and terror-financing activities of the US-based Ms Haider.

Responding to a volley of questions by media persons, the CTD chief said: “This has always been a purpose of the MQM-L that terrorism is spread in Karachi, so there is no doubt that it is a constant effort of theirs to once again sow fear in the city.”

Mr Hamid who has written novels on the theme of Karachi’s crimes said that it was “alarming’ that a woman based in the US was coordinating such illicit activities in the city like a mafia don”.

He said a clear line of financial transactions was appearing when they traced bank accounts and transactions, adding that the evidence of financial transactions for terror made Pakistan’s case stronger.

However, he added that money laundering aspect would be investigated by the Federal Investigation Agency.

The CTD head gave the assurance that investigations into the case would be impartial and would not target any political party. (By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 12/03/2021)

Attack on Rangers

MONDAY’S bomb attack targeting paramilitary personnel in Karachi left one Rangers official martyred and injured several people including members of the force. Though it is too early to say whether this incident signals the return of militancy to Karachi, the group that has claimed responsibility for the attack has also been behind several previous such incidents in the city. In 2018, militants of the Balochistan Liberation Army attempted to enter the Chinese consulate but were thwarted by security officials. Last year, it was behind an attack on the Karachi Stock Exchange building, in which two security guards and a policeman were martyred. In this week’s attack, it appears the bomb was planted in a motorcycle and detonated via remote control as a Rangers vehicle passed by — indicating that the area had been surveilled and that the attack was planned.

Though the previous attacks were foiled by a rapid and effective response from security forces, there is still a need for better intelligence gathering and vigilance. CCTV footage and evidence from the attack site should offer some clues to investigators, who must dedicate resources to getting more information in order to thwart the group’s future plans. The BLA time and again has signalled its intent to attack both security forces and Chinese-backed projects, citing its grievances with China’s involvement in Balochistan. It has claimed responsibility for some gruesome attacks on FC personnel in Balochistan, and has also carried out an attack on a hotel in Gwadar. As security and intelligence officials collect more information, it is worth noting that the BLA is part of a handful of armed resistance groups in Balochistan who for years have run an insurgency in the name of fighting for a greater share of resources in the

province. Alongside counterterrorism operations, it is important for the authorities to address the grievances of disgruntled Baloch people to put an end to the bloody militancy that has hurt both the economy and the objective of peace in the country. (By Editorial Dawn, 06, 17/03/2021)

Thar tops in suicide cases, moot told

Describing the data of a five-year study on suicides in Sindh as “unrealistic and grossly under-reported”, speakers at a seminar organised on Thursday at a local hotel emphasised the need for properly documenting and investigating cases of suicide as well as de-criminalising the offence to encourage its reporting.

They also called for creating awareness of helplines, increasing the number of psychiatrists across the province and a multi-sectoral and district-wise approach to help save lives.

The event was organised by Sindh Mental Health Authority (SMHA) to share and discuss findings of its research on suicides during period from 2016 to 2020 in Sindh.

It included only those suicide cases which were registered at district health offices and the police department.

The programme started off with chairman of SMHA Dr Karim Ahmed Khawaja highlighting the need for the study and acknowledging support from departments and organisations in data compilation.

“Unless we have legislation on suicide prevention, we can’t move forward and pursue this matter effectively,” he said, adding that the research team couldn’t find attempt-to-suicide cases as they were not registered.

‘Suicide study data grossly under-reported’

Thar tops list

Giving a presentation on the study, author of the study Ali Murad Talpur said a total of 767 cases of suicide were registered in Sindh in the five-year period.

The data showed that Tharparkar district had the highest number of suicides in five years (79). It also had the highest female suicides (48) in the entire province with more women (48) ending their lives than men (31).

The other district where female suicide (36) was higher than men (34) was Mirpurkhas (total 70 cases).

The number of suicide cases in other districts in last five years were: Badin (77), Dadu (73), Sanghar (66), Umerkot (64) were found to have the highest number of suicide cases followed by Tando Allahyar (40), Tando Mohammad Khan (33), Naushahro Feroze (31), Hyderabad (28), Malir (24), Shikarpur (23), Karachi West (19), Shaheed Benazirabad (18) and Sujawal (18).

Moreover Jamshoro had 14, Thatta (13), Karachi East (12), Karachi South (12), Ghotki (12), Matiari (10), Karachi Central (8), Jacobabad (7), Qambar-Shahdadkot (5), Khairpur (4), Larkana (3), Sukkur (3) and Kashmore (1).

According to gender-wise classification of suicide cases, 462 men and 301 women ended their life across the province.

The highest rate of male suicide was marked in districts Badin, Sanghar, Dadu, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas and Tando Allahyar. Female suicide cases in other districts were Dadu (36), Badin (30), Sanghar (28) and Umerkot (27).

A total of 75 suicide cases were registered in Karachi from 2016-2020 with district Malir reporting the highest number of cases (24) in five years and last year.

“We found incomplete information about the cases which made it hard to meet the study criteria,” recalled Talpur.

The team also recorded 6.1 per cent of suicide cases among children aged 10 to 15 years. It recorded 13.9pc suicide cases in 16-20 age group.

Statistics show that 33pc of suicide victims were married and 18.7pc unmarried in Karachi while 28.3pc and 21.7pc of victims were married and unmarried respectively in Larkana, Sukkur and Shaheed Benazirabad divisions.

Over 50pc of victims were married while 16.8pc were unmarried in Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas divisions.

The study identifies domestic issues emerging from financial constraints, marital disharmony, mental illness, emotional turmoil and failure in love as the most common factors behind suicide.

Societal apathy

Termining the study’s findings “unrealistic”, DIGP administration Zulfiqar Larik representing the police department said suicide cases occurring in the province were much higher in number. “We are losing lives because of our apathy. We neither realise the severity of the problem nor, as a society, have shown the willingness to address it,” he remarked, recalling that he was shocked to learn of the high number of suicides in Mirpurkhas during his posting in the district.

He underscored the need for building police capacity in suicide documentation and investigation as well as positively changing general response towards the offence through different interventions.

“We need to have a targeted approach by focusing on at least five districts reporting a higher number of cases. That would bring a 50pc reduction in suicide cases.”

During the discussion, speakers emphasised the need for training health workers in identification of mental illness, youth engagement in skill development, access to psychological counselling and carrying out district-wise studies on suicide, specifically on Thar.

“Every study has some limitations. I think the study has sufficient data to make decisions and take actions,” said Dr Haider Naqvi of Dow University of Health Sciences.

Dr Iqbal Afridi and Dr Haroon Ahmed also spoke.
(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn, 14, 26/03/2021)

Tracking suicides

DATA gathered by the Sindh Mental Health Authority over the last five years reveals that the largest number of suicides in the province occur in Thar, followed by Mirpurkhas district. According to the SMHA, a total of 767 suicides were reported in the province over the last five years. Out of them, 79 were reported from Thar while 70 were reported from Mirpurkhas. These findings were shared at a seminar in Karachi on Thursday. Speakers agreed that though the SMHA figures may provide a vague idea of the prevailing trends, the actual number of suicides in the province is much higher than reported. There could be several reasons for this: first, SMHA officials gathered data only from the district health offices and the police department, and missed those reported at private hospitals and facilities. Besides, they did not even conduct a cursory survey of suicides reported in the media. Second, apart from being a taboo subject, suicide is also illegal in Pakistan. Most families are reluctant to report it for fear of social stigma. In fact, the DIG Administration, who represented the provincial police department at the event, called the findings “unrealistic”, stating that the actual rate of suicide was far higher, including in Mirpurkhas district where he had been posted for several years.

It is sad that neither the government nor the public acknowledges mental health issues in society, let alone discusses treatment. Even if steps are taken, they are ad hoc and ineffective, and fall short of producing any lasting change. The SMHA study, unfortunately, reflects the same structural problem. Though the suggestions that emerged in the discussion, including the training of health workers to spot mental illnesses, access to psychological counselling and psychiatric treatment and training police officials to track suicide cases, are sound, they can only be acted upon once the true extent of the problem is known. For that, SMHA officials will have to carry out a detailed district-wise study of the number of suicides and their apparent causes.

(By Editorial Dawn, 06, 29/03/2021)

Son fakes robbery to seize 190-tola family gold, claim Karachi police

Police on Friday claimed to have ‘solved’ a case of a recent snatching of 190 tolas of gold (worth over Rs20 million) in Defence Housing Authority and claimed that this was a plan carefully orchestrated by a son to seize the gold of his parents kept in a bank locker.

South SSP (Investigation) Imran Mirza said that a citizen, Asghar, had lodged an FIR on March 20 claiming that robbers had snatched 190 tolas of gold from him on Khayaban-i-Hafiz, DHA, Phase-VI. According to contents of the FIR, the family was making arrangements for a marriage and he had drawn gold ornaments from the bank locker for this purpose.

When he reached home on Khayaban-i-Hafiz in a car, two suspects riding a motorbike snatched gold and cash from him.

The police said closed-circuit television camera footage provided by the complainant showed the incident of a robbery.

However, when the police after registering an FIR (21/2021) started investigation, doubts cropped up about the veracity of the robbery claim, said SSP Mirza.

Geofencing and technical data of mobile phones at the time of the incident raised more doubts.

The officer said that the parents had given the gold ornaments to their son Asghar to keep the gold in a bank locker two years ago.

“However, Asghar along with his wife had sold the 190 tolas of gold within two years.”

When his family asked him to bring back the gold from the locker on the occasion of a marriage of their brother, the complainant hatched a plan of a ‘fake robbery’ because he had already sold the jewellery, said the officer.

For this purpose, he allegedly hired services of his wife’s cousin, Faiq Ali, who is a “coordinator of a private university” in Karachi.

Faiq along with another person staged a “drama of snatching gold ornaments” and fled from the crime scene.

The officer said the investigators became suspicious about the robbery when they saw the footage as the suspects had snatched a “shopping bag” from the couple without showing any weapon to them.

Besides, geofencing of the area revealed presence of the suspects and the complainant in the same locality.

Moreover, their mobile phones' records also revealed that the suspects and the complainant remained in touch with each other during the robbery 38 times.

"During interrogation, the suspects revealed all details and the police have arrested them," said Mr Mirza.

Building collapse

A building collapsed during an anti-encroachment drive in Orangi Town on Friday, said police and rescue services.

They added that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation staff were busy in demolishing illegally built structures on Orangi Nullah when a building collapsed in Sector 9-E.

The house occupants had already left the location.

As a result, the debris of the building fell on four labourers of the KMC.

Three of them were rescued immediately and did not suffer any serious injuries.

However, the fourth one was rescued with help of machinery.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 03/04/2021)

Where is our minorities rights commission?

According to a May 11, 2020, Ministry of Religious Affairs notification, a national minorities commission was to be reconstituted. The composition consists of six members, representatives of different federal ministries, along with the secretary of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony. The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) is also a member. There are 12 non-official members from the minority community and two Muslim members. The present composition, and its governance, results in no commission at all. Such a commission is a bureaucratic eyewash, a 'tick box' and a disingenuous exercise.



Through this notification, the federal government has shown contempt for a 2014 apex court judgment, of Justice Tassaduq Jilani: a minorities commission should be set up "to monitor the practical realisation of the rights and safeguards provided to the minorities under the Constitution and law" and "have the ability "to frame policy recommendations for safeguarding and protecting minorities' rights by the Provincial and Federal Governments". It further violates recommendations of the Suddle Commission formed out of a 2016 apex

court judgment.

In addition to contempt, there are two important points to note. The first fundamental issue with this new attempted commission is that it lacks independence. It is an executive-led body that does not have the ability to self-critic nor to identify its own blind spots. It has no sting, no spine nor does it have its own thought. It will carry out functions of the executive, which will both go against the 2014 Jilani court judgment as well as the essential principle of independence much needed to address the stark discrimination faced by religious minorities. Secondly, this commission is not an inter-faith harmony commission — every time we discuss minority rights, we do not have to look at it from the point of view of appeasing the Muslim majority. If we look at it unflinchingly from a human rights' perspective, with dignity, non-discrimination and security as its focus, we would not need religious members to be part of the commission, just as we don't have such members on the National Human Rights Commission, nor in the Status of Women Commission.

Between private member bills tabled by members of the National Assembly (Lal Chang Malhi, Begum Hussain and Sanjay Perwani) regarding a commission was shut down by the Ministry of Religious Affairs on the pretext that the ministry is consolidating the draft bills into one comprehensive bill. We have not heard nor have we seen that bill to date. This is also a way for the ministry to control the issue from a religious perspective only.

The reality is: minorities in Pakistan are not safe. Their social and economic status is precarious. Their security is subject to the arbitrary whim of the unempathetic Muslim majority and the writ of the state has all but withered in the face of a violent extremist ideology. Forced conversions of young minority girls, false charges of blasphemy and violent attacks of places of worship and private homes are some of the obvious results of years of negligence and mere lip service to the country's minorities.

What this new composition does is reiterate that the government does not wish to ruffle the feathers of the orthodox religious lobby it relies so heavily on as part of its voter base. This voter base holds the dangerous and misplaced belief that religious minorities do not have inalienable rights as equal citizens. The misconception that the Muslim majority whimsically and arbitrarily gives (and takes) rights is unconstitutional, illegal and immoral. The composition of this commission reiterates this misconception. Previous governments have made this same mistake — the forming of a commission linked to politicians, the federal cabinet and bureaucracy. Ironically, the urgent need for this government to want to do everything different from previous governments does not seem to apply to this commission. They have used the same unimaginative way of looking at a commission for minorities' rights as have previous governments.

Apart from Jinnah's words for an inclusive country and constitutional guarantees of equality, Pakistan has no concrete state policy on minority rights, translating the founder's vision. There is no policy nor a legislative initiative that specifically speaks to and for minorities;

no roadmap on how to build a counter-narrative to religious extremism (the National Action Plan has almost abandoned); and little, if any, political commitment. If any political will exists, it is fragmented, afraid and lacks a clear determination to tackle the issue. This new reconstitution by the religious affairs ministry is far from addressing these gaps.

What we seek and require is a watchdog that is formed through legislation, similar to the national women's commission (the National Commission on the Status of Women Act 2012) and human rights commission (the National Commission on Human Rights Act 2012); and for provincial commissions to follow suit that coordinate and collaborate with the national commission closely; a commission that has at its core independence, including financial independence, with an advisory and recommendatory role to help identify gaps and recommend policy changes to the government of the day; and a commission that has at the forefront the security, identity and dignity of non-Muslim citizens. We seek a commission that fulfills the apex court's 2014 judgment and is empowered enough to convert the 2016 Suddle Commission's recommendations, and many more, into action. An executive body cannot fulfil such a role. Only an independent institution, with a legislative mandate can do so — outliving governments to ensure Pakistan fulfils constitutional guarantees and international commitments to change the lives of disadvantaged, fearful citizens. We must re-enforce the principle that human rights and human dignity must always be blind to religion, status, caste or gender.

So, the question still stands: where is our much needed legislatively mandated, independent, national commission for non-Muslim Pakistanis? After all, the demanding, enforcing and ensuring of inalienable rights for all is a necessity, not a privilege.

(By Benazir Jatoi The Express Tribune, 15, 06/04/2021)

Safe city project

Delay marks most public projects in Sindh. It appears to be in keeping with the saying: never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow. The Safe City Project for Karachi remains stalled even after the passage of six years. The scheme, launched in 2015, is aimed at preventing crime, better maintenance of law and order and also at enhancing tax collection. Besides telling on these aspects of civic life, the inordinate delay has also resulted in a runaway increase in the scheme's estimated cost from Rs10 billion to Rs30 billion.

Things have not made much headway over the past six years though the committee set up for execution of the project has had many meetings in this period. Under the scheme, 10,000 CCTV cameras were to be installed across the city. These cameras can capture the faces of law-breakers and those of violators of traffic rules. Unfortunately, in the absence of the installation of such cameras, crime rate is increasing in the city and many violators of traffic rules slip the dragnet of law. The plan also envisaged replacement of the traditional number plates by camera-readable radio frequency identification (RFID) number plates to facilitate crime control, to increase tax collection and help expedite other civic issues.

However, vested interests, helped by corrupt officials, seem to be influencing the delay of the important project. The pernicious influence of these elements can be gauged from the fact that between December 2015 and October 2019, tenders had been floated for the purchase of RFID number plates on numerous occasions, but the contract has not been awarded to anyone. A private firm that deals in traditional number plates, in league with officials of the excise department, is reportedly placing obstacles in the way of procuring RFID number plates.

It was also planned under the scheme to set up a helpline to facilitate Sui Southern Gas Company, K-Electric, some other civic bodies and the police in rectifying complaints. Also, complaints relating to utility services were to be registered through this helpline. The consequences of delay are manifest in minor defects in gas pipelines leading to major mishaps. On the other hand, the safe city projects have been completed in 30 cities of Punjab province. The consequences of complacency are always serious.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 07/04/2021)

Woman, two kids die in pizza shop 'cylinder blast' in Karachi

A passer-by and her two children were killed and two others wounded in what police described as a cylinder blast inside an eatery in a multistorey building on main University Road on Wednesday, officials and witnesses said.

The blast also caused substantive damage to the property and triggered panic among residents.

According to Gulistan-i-Jauhar SHO Azam Gopang, the gas cylinder exploded inside a pizza shop near the Mosamiyat roundabout at around 10.30am.

The blast was so powerful that it destroyed walls of the eatery as well as two adjoining shops and damaged a vehicle of the K-Electric parked outside.

Bomb disposal experts say the blast took place in the kitchen of a pizza shop due to gas cylinder leakage

Gulshan SP Maroof Usman told media that the ill-fated woman along with her two children came to visit her brother, who lived in the same building. She was at the stairs when the explosion took place.

The deceased were identified as Sadia Ali, 36, Fatima Ali, 4, and Abdullah Ali, 2.

The injured were identified as Burhan and Waqar. The dead and injured were shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre.

The police called the Bomb Disposal Squad which, after examination of the place, ruled out any sabotage and termed it a “gas cylinder blast”.

During the inspection, the bomb disposal experts found that the blast took place in the kitchen of the pizza shop. The experts believed that the cylinder exploded “due to leakage of gas”.

The BDS took samples of soil and other material and handed over the same to the police for investigation.

Shopkeeper shot dead in Abbas Town

A 55-year-old shopkeeper was shot dead in the Abbas Town area on Wednesday, according to police.

They added that three assailants killed Mashood Ibrahim near Faria Chowk in Scheme-33.

Sachal SHO Zubair Nawaz said that the assailants riding two motorbikes entered the shop, shot Ibrahim in the chest and tried to ride away. But a police mobile stationed at Abbas Town chased them and an exchange of gunfire took place between the assailants and police.

As a result, one of the assailants was hit by a bullet in the leg. He abandoned his motorbike and managed to escape along with his accomplices on their bike, he added.

The SHO said the victim’s family told the police they had some “personal enmity” but they did not divulge further details.

He added that the family did not allow doctors to conduct a post-mortem examination and they were also reluctant to get an FIR registered. However, the police lodged an FIR about the encounter against three unknown suspects.

The victim previously lived in the Liaquatabad area.

Meanwhile, 40-year-old Mohammad Saleem was gunned down in Surjani Town on Wednesday.

Tanker driver strangled in Port Qasim

A 44-year-old man was found murdered inside Port Qasim on Wednesday, according to police.

They added that the body of Azam Ali was found near the edible oil tanker he drives close to the main gate of Port Qasim.

The body was shifted to the JPMC, where doctors said that he was strangled.

Area SHO Imran Afridi said the incident occurred at a place which was not in the reach of the general public.

He said the victim originally hailed from Sheikhpura. His relatives told the police that they had no enmity with anyone.

The SHO said nothing could be said about the exact motive of the murder.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 08/04/2021)

TLP protests

APPEASEMENT of reactionary forces amounts to playing with fire — and, ultimately, to setting one’s own house alight. That reality is once again starkly evident, with dozens of sites in urban areas held hostage by violent mobs suffused with self-righteous rage and, even more dangerously, confident of their power to bring the country to a halt.

Since Monday, TLP activists have been demonstrating against the arrest of their leader, Allama Saad Hussain Rizvi. He was detained after announcing countrywide agitation from April 20 to demand the French ambassador’s expulsion and a ban on imports from France in protest against the publication of blasphemous images in that country. The right to protest is contingent upon doing so peacefully. In the ongoing disturbances however, many people have been injured and several killed.

Sadly, the state has carried out multiple experiments in nurturing or at least tolerating ultra-right elements to achieve dubious short-term gains. The TLP is merely the latest in a long line of such ill-conceived initiatives. Balochistan descended into an orgy of bloodletting after extremist outfits were given virtual carte blanche to carry out their sectarian agenda in return for countering the separatist, and largely secular, insurgency in the province. Even the Pakistani Taliban were handled with kid gloves in the earlier years; ‘peace deal’ after ‘peace deal’ was negotiated. Each one was violated by the militants, but it succeeded in further strengthening their position against the state.

During the Faizabad sit-in in November 2017, the TLP was similarly indulged, perhaps on account of its potential to destabilise the PML-N government and cut into the party’s vote bank. The dharna, based on an entirely specious pretext, saw traffic between Rawalpindi and Islamabad brought to a halt for 20 days, causing huge inconvenience to citizens. The impasse was resolved only after a humiliating climbdown by the government when an army-brokered deal was negotiated with the protesters, who were given envelopes full of cash for ‘travel expenses’. PTI chief Imran Khan, in the opposition at the time, took an equivocal stance instead of condemning the TLP.

If he had paid heed to history, he would have realised that if his ambition to come to power was realised, the ultra-right group would become a thorn in his side as well. But that would have required a far-sighted clarity of thought. Sure enough, when Asiya Bibi was acquitted of blasphemy in 2018, the group led violent protests all over the country. The current unrest is a result of the PTI government having promised TLP last November that they would take up the matter of the French ambassador's expulsion with parliament. Pandering to demands by reactionary forces only emboldens them further, making the challenge to deal with them ever greater. For the good of the country, and its image as a nation where extremism has no place, such groups must be strictly reined in.
(By Editorial Dawn, 06, 14/04/2021)

CM Murad approves Rs30b for Safe City project

After a delay of two years, the Sindh government approved on Friday Rs30 billion for the launch of the Sindh Safe City project, under which 10,000 closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras are to be installed across Karachi in three phases. Each of the three phases is to be completed within a year's span, starting from the next fiscal year 2021-22.

The Sindh Safe City project was conceived in 2018 to control crime and increase vigilance through modern automated systems, provision of intelligence in cases of emergencies, bringing about improvements in road traffic management and enabling officials to take prompt action to deal with natural disasters. Under this project, the provincial government aims to introduce an e-policing system, equip police stations with modern tools and install a facial recognition system.

The project remained unrealized hitherto due to objections raised by security officials, among other reasons. The objections were raised at an apex committee meeting called to discuss the project's execution under the public private partnership model.

However, on Friday, the CM approved Rs30 billion to begin the project. He took the decision while presiding over a meeting held to review the progress of the scheme.

The meeting was told that the National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) had submitted the technical and financial proposals for the project and the proposals now needed to be assessed by an evaluation committee.

At that, the CM approved the constitution of a nine-member technical committee, led by the Sindh Safe City project chief executive officer (CEO), for the purpose.

Moreover, he approved the proposal for assigning the charge of the project's CEO to Muquddus Haider and the charge of the chief technical officer to Tabassum Abbasi.

Notifications for their appointments and the formation of the technical committee are expected to be issued soon. The technical committee has been tasked with evaluating the technical and financial proposals of the NRTC in line with the project's PC-1 (a document that covers all aspects of a project) and assessing the phasing of the project as recommended by the NRTC in consultation with the Sindh Planning and Development Department.

Besides, the committee will look over the project's execution.

The CM has approved an execution plan for the project, under which the installation of 10,000 cameras is to be completed in Karachi in three phases.

In the first phase, CCTV cameras will be installed at the city's entry and exit points in South district at a cost of Rs9.9 billion. In the next phase, cameras will be installed in three more districts of the metropolis for Rs9.8 billion. The three districts that are to be covered under the second phase are yet to be decided. The last phase will see the installation of CCTV cameras in three remaining districts of the city for Rs9.7 billion.

At the meeting, the CM directed the finance department to arrange for Rs10 billion for the first phase of the project so that the funds could be issued in the next fiscal year.

"I want the project to start at the beginning of the next fiscal year 2021-22," he said, instructing Sindh Project and Development Department chairperson Mohammad Waseem to get the project's PC-1 approved by all relevant authorities and forums by the end of the current financial year.

The CM was also told in the meeting that of the 10,000 cameras that were to be installed in Karachi, 8,000 would be 12 megapixel cameras and 2,000 would be eight megapixel cameras. The cameras will be installed at over 2,000 spots with solar backup and will be connected to central and regional command centres and database centres.

At present, the CM was informed, 2,196 security cameras had been installed in the city, 1,201 of which were of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, 198 of the IT department and 155 of the Sindh Police.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 17/04/2021)

Rs30bn sanctioned for Karachi safe city plan to be launched next fiscal year

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday approved Rs30 billion to launch the Karachi safe city project.

He took this decision while presiding over a meeting to review progress of the project.

The meeting was attended by Information Technology Minister Taimur Talpur, Chief Secretary Mumtaz Shah, Planning chairman M. Waseem, Home Secretary Usman Chachar and others.

As many as 10,000 CCTV cameras would be installed in the city in three phases under the project and each phase would be completed within 12 months starting from the next financial year, 2021-22.

The meeting was told that the National Radio & Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) had submitted technical and financial proposals, which needed to be considered by the evaluation committee.

The chief minister approved the constitution of a nine-member technical committee to be headed by the chief operating officer (COO) of the safe city project to evaluate the NRTC proposal.

10,000 surveillance cameras will be installed at over 2,000 spots in the city in three phases

He also approved the proposal of assigning the charge of CEO to Muqadus Haider and chief technical officer to Tabasum Abbasi. Notifications for the evaluation committee, CEO and technical officers would be issued shortly.

The technical committee will evaluate the technical and financial proposals in line with the PC-I documents and would also evaluate the project phasing as recommended by the NRTC in consultation with the planning and development department.

The technical committee will also look after overall activities of the project, including its execution.

The chief minister approved the execution plan under which 10,000 cameras would be installed in three phases.

In the first phase, cameras would be installed at all the entry/exit points of the city and in district South for Rs9.9bn.

In the second phase, cameras would be installed in three districts, to be selected later on, for Rs9.8bn.

In the third and the concluding phase, three more districts would be covered for Rs9.7bn.

The chief minister directed the finance department to arrange Rs10bn for the first phase in the next financial year.

"I want to start the project in the start of financial year 2021-22," he said.

The chief minister also directed Mr Waseem of the planning and development department to start the process to get approval of the PC-1 from all the relevant forums by the end of the current financial year.

Mr Shah was told that 8,000 cameras would be 12 megapixel (MP) and 2,000 of eight MP. In this way, 10,000 cameras would be installed at over 2,000 locations with solar back-up.

There would be central and regional command centres and a database centre.

The chief minister was told that at present 2,196 cameras were installed at 538 locations in the city, of them 1,201 belonged to the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, 198 to IT dept and 155 to Sindh police.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 17/04/2021)

Media blackout

GOVERNMENTS in Pakistan somehow refuse to acknowledge the futility of imposing blanket bans on media coverage. It was therefore not surprising, though rather unfortunate, that the PTI government decided to go down this blind alley when violence flared up in Lahore on Sunday and the TLP cadres rampaged across the city for the entirety of the day.

The government used Pemra to forbid any coverage of the TLP failing which there could be consequences for the media. As the Pemra instructions applied to TV channels, this ban ensured that social media was the only source of information about the violence raging in the city.

With no filters for veracity, social media can be lethal if not countered with the process of verification through the mainstream media. This is what led to the TLP dominating the narrative even though much of what it was claiming may not have been accurate. Silence from government officials for the better part of the day and the total absence of coverage from the mainstream media resulted in rumours and half-baked information circulating throughout the country. Video clips devoid of authenticity in terms of time and context also went viral thereby creating perceptions that may have different from reality. Due to the media blackout, the TLP was able to blame the police for the attack and the ensuing violence. It was only much later that the police could verify that in fact it was the TLP crowd that had attacked the police station and taken many policemen hostage.

The government must realise that blacking out media coverage through Pemra is an inadvisable option and leads to more harm than good. A free flow of information is the best way to counter rumour-mongering and fake news. The government always has the advantage of pushing through its narrative through the media by sharing facts and providing access to the media. All these advantages were frittered away when the government blundered into the blanket ban.

There is no doubt that the TLP has done grievous damage to its own cause by resorting to violence and the government must not dither from taking legal action against all those responsible for damage to life and property. In this day and age, stopping the flow of information is next to impossible, which is why smart governments leverage the power of the media to build perceptions, forge narratives and mould public opinion in support of their policies. In the current stand-off with the TLP, the government needs to make the case for its strategy and not allow the organisation to frame the issue from its own perspective. Had the government not blacked out media coverage, citizens could have seen for themselves how the TLP generated violence on the streets. At the same time, the government should utilise all options to negotiate with the TLP leadership so that the situation is brought under control. (By Editorial Dawn, 06, 20/04/2021)

Violence erupts in Karachi as TLP workers clash with police

Violence broke out in many areas of the city on Monday evening when supporters and workers of the banned Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and police clashed with each other.

While no untoward incident was reported from any place in the province during the day during a strike observed on the appeal of religious scholars against Lahore violence and to show solidarity with the TLP, scores of people took to streets after sunset in a bid to resume their protest.

The most violent protest was reported from New Karachi near Saba Cinema.

Clashes at multiple locations break out following a peaceful strike in many cities and towns of Sindh

New Karachi Industrial Area SHO Yunus Khattak said that several TLP workers blocked the road to suspend vehicular traffic. He said police initially engaged them in talks to end the protest. However, they allegedly attacked policemen with stones and guns, he added. He said protesters fired shots at the police due to which a policeman, identified as Alam, was injured and shifted to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital.

The area SHO said weapons had been withdrawn from the police force as per a policy decision. Therefore, the police fired tear-gas shells and baton-charged the protesters to disperse them.

He said five protesters were injured during the police action and 12 others were arrested.

The police have registered a case against them under anti-terrorism law and on other charges.

Another violent protest was reported from Malir, where protesters tried to block the National Highway and the police used force to get the highway cleared.

Similar protests were reported from Landhi, Korangi 2 1/2 and Jamshed Quarters area. Traffic remained suspended in these areas due to the protests.

Shutter-down strike

Earlier in the day, a shutter-down strike was observed in Karachi, Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas, but the call drew mixed response in the rest of Sindh.

The strike remained peaceful throughout the day with businesses and major markets remained closed and traffic also remained thin. While TLP activists staged protests at a few places, no untoward incident was reported from anywhere in the province.

However, ports, banks, stock exchange and foreign exchange companies remained functional.

In Karachi, major commercial centres in Saddar, old city areas, Jodia Bazaar, Tariq Road, Bahadurabad, Clifton, Zamzama, etc, remained closed.

"No traditional way was adopted to force the traders and shopping centres to close. Shopkeepers voluntarily shut their businesses as they have an 'emotional attachment' with the issue," said Atiq Mir, the head of All Karachi Tajir Ittehad (AKTI).

However, he said businesses could not afford strikes during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and urged all stakeholders to sit together and resolve the issue as the situation was not good for economy and the country's peace.

In different neighbourhoods, grocery shops, general stores and banks were open.

A spokesperson for the traffic police said traffic was less than daily routine.

A police official said that late Sunday night workers and supporters of religious parties gathered near Qadhafi Chowk in Orangi Town and tried to block roads but police and Rangers dispersed them.

In Hyderabad, a complete shutter-down was observed in the city as well as Latifabad and Qasimabad talukas. No unpleasant incident was reported from anywhere in the district amid heavy deployment of police at sensitive points.

A large number of people gathered at Hyder Chowk and outside local press club. They tried to hold a sit-in at Kohinoor Chowk but dispersed peacefully when police arrived there.

Filling stations also remained shut in some areas.

Also in Mirpurkhas, businessmen, traders and shopkeepers observed a complete strike in the district. Public and private vehicles mostly remained off the road. No untoward incident took place anywhere in the district due to stringent security arrangements.

Office-bearers of the local chapter of the Ulema Action Committee led a big demonstration held outside the local press club, where Pir Ayub Jan Sarhandi and Mufti Shareef Saeedi spoke to them.

Mixed response in interior Sindh

The strike call remained largely ineffective in Jacobabad district as normal business activities were witnessed amid usual flow of vehicular traffic.

Police picked up five protesters when a small group of religious activists tried to hold a demonstration at DC Chowk.

A shutter-down strike was observed in Johi town but trade and business activities in towns of the district remained largely unaffected. TLP activists took out a protest rally in Dadu city which ended peacefully.

Due to unavailability of transport means in most areas of Dadu and Jamshoro districts, attendance in educational institutions, including universities, remained very thin.

In Badin, a partial strike was observed in some small towns of Badin district while Badin city and bigger towns like Talhar and Pangrio remained unaffected by the strike call.

Lawyers boycott court proceedings

The legal fraternity on Monday observed a strike at the subordinate courts in the city to express solidarity with the TLP.

The lawyers did not turn up to plead their cases at the City Courts, Malir District Courts and special courts and tribunals.

A large number of cases fixed for the day had to be adjourned due to absence of the lawyers.

The litigants and undertrial prisoners faced difficulties due to the lawyers' strike.

The Mirpurkhas District Bar Association boycotted court proceeding in response to the strike call.
(By Dawn Reporter 13, 20/04/2021)

Charge sheet filed against two in sugar price hike case

The Federal Investigation Agency has filed a charge sheet against two suspects in a case pertaining to Rs110 billion speculative sugar trade and money laundering.

The FIA had booked and arrested Mohammad Jalil and Mohammad Bilal in March for their alleged involvement in the speculative sugar pricing by the "satta mafia" based in Sindh and Punjab and laundering money through illegal means.

On Tuesday, the investigating officer of the case submitted a charge sheet with Judicial Magistrate (South) Durr-e-Shahwar.

In the charge sheet, the IO stated that the FIA's State Bank Circle initiated an inquiry into reports that many suspects along with sugar industry barons, brokers and their "satta mafia" were operating in a collusive but secret mode — especially through electronic means/WhatsApp groups — to dishonestly and fraudulently manoeuvre, manipulate and artificially increase sugar prices, amidst hoax of impending sugar stocks' shortages.

FIA claims 'satta mafia' defrauded people of at least Rs110bn by increasing ex-mill price of sugar from Rs69 to Rs90

It added that the suspects were indulging in such acts while sugar stocks were lying unsold or sold/un-lifted in mills and warehouses and the demand-supply gap of the essential commodity was "artificial".

It further unearthed that the "satta mafia" in addition to their regular personal or business accounts, were also indulging in opening/operating fake/unrelated third party accounts in banks to conceal/disguise the illegitimate crime proceeds. The charge sheet stated that it had come on record that many players of Karachi/Sindh were actively participating in such activity in three main WhatsApp groups.

It claimed that the inquiry team had discovered irrefutable evidence of clandestine speculation through 16 WhatsApp groups whereby the sugar prices were being dishonestly and fraudulently ramped up.

"The satta mafia acting in active connivance with each other operated directly and through their front-men to fraudulently escalate the ex-mill price of sugar from Rs69 per kilogram to Rs90 per kg during the month of March and defrauded the masses of at least Rs110 billion during this period," the charge sheet stated.

It added that the "satta mafia" managed this dishonest and fraudulent escalation amidst a hoax of impending sugar shortages, when sufficient sugar stocks were lying in the sugar mills and godowns.

"It has been discovered that they were laundering the crime proceeds of sugar satta through various fake/benami/third party accounts and assets," it added.

It mentioned that the examination of the WhatsApp groups seized by the FIA revealed that over 23 satta players of Karachi/Sindh were actively participating in the offence with the respective sugar mills and in active connivance with satta players of Punjab.

The report claimed that the accused persons used to purchase white refined sugar from the sugar mills in Sindh and Punjab and sold it at exorbitant rates.

The IO mentioned that 35MB data, containing 17,500 pages, had been recovered from the three WhatsApp groups. It further stated that chequebooks and deposit slips and other evidence was collected from the offices of the two detained suspects during raids.

The court has yet to accept or reject the charge sheet.

A case was registered under Sections 406 (punishment for criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating or dishonestly inducing delivery of property), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using as genuine a fake document), 477-A (falsification of accounts), 109 (abetment) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) read with Sections 3 (offence of money laundering) and 4 (punishment for money laundering) of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010 at the FIA State Bank Circle.
(By Naeem Sahoutara Dawn, 133, 21/04/2021)

Sabzi Mandi becomes robbery central in Karachi

Without any fear of law enforcers, armed robbers are running amuck in the city's main wholesale/bulk supply fruit and vegetable market.

This was claimed on Wednesday by traders who said bandits robbed people with impunity.

Despite reminders and requests of traders, no additional police were deployed at Sabzi Mandi in Karachi during the holy month of Ramadan.

The traders claimed robberies and snatching incidents inside and near market entrances had increased.

According to Market Committee Vice Chairperson Asif Ahmed, 150 policemen and mobiles were deployed in Sabzi Mandi every year during the month of Ramazan to maintain law and order. A written request to deploy additional personnel was sent to the IGP several days before the start of the holy, but had been ignored thus far, he claimed.

"As a result, the Sabzi Mandi has become a centre of problems," he added.

Ahmed said the number of people and vehicles coming to the market from Sindh and Punjab doubled in the fasting month and movement on roads near the market became difficult. "Hours of traffic jams have become a routine due to the absence of police personnel and this allows criminals to rob traders, shoppers and drivers of trucks."

He added armed men walk between the vehicles caught in the jam and take money from people who have nowhere to run or offer resistance.

Ahmed claimed that instead of posting a fulltime SHO, Shahid Khattak was given additional charge of the relevant police station. He alleged Khattak had no interest in Sabzi Mandi affairs and traders were facing extreme difficulties due to such negligence.

According to Ahmed, the market had a turnover of Rs2billion on a daily basis and more than a dozen robberies and snatching incidents are taking place daily.

The market committee sent a letter to the police additional IG, demanding he take notice of the situation and provide additional police for the safety of Sabzi Mandi.

On the other hand, traders appealed to Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to question police officials who failed to provide security and take action against them.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 26/04/2021)

Violence in Essa Nagri after 'assault on minor girl'

The PIB police on Tuesday arrested a young man for allegedly assaulting a minor girl in Essa Nagri.

The incident led to a violent reaction from the victim's family and neighbours, who attacked the suspect's house and blocked the main road for vehicular traffic, police and witnesses said.

They said that the 10-year-old girl after returning from tuition told her family that she was molested by a brother of her tutor at his home.

Enraged family members and neighbours took to the street and attacked the house of the suspect, who lived nearby.

"The suspect, however, managed to run away from the scene," said an official at the PIB Colony police station. "This further enraged the girl's family and the protesters, who turned violent. By the time a police team arrived there, the protesters had already blocked the service lane along the main road with burning tyres and junk. Someone among the protesters also fired shots into the air which caused panic and fear."

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 05/05/2021)

Three 'kidnappers' killed in shootout with AVCC

Three suspected kidnappers were killed in an alleged police encounter in the Manghopir area on Tuesday. The encounter led to the recovery of two kidnap victims, officials said.

They said that a joint team of the Anti-Violent Crime Cell (AVCC) and Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) raided a hideout in Lado Goth, Manghopir, on credible intelligence reports about the presence of kidnappers associated with an organised gang, who had also held hostage some people for ransom. The raid triggered an exchange of gunfire.

"Personnel of the law enforcement agencies cordoned off the area," said an official at the AVCC. "The armed men attacked the raiding team from inside the hideout when it was busy taking positions. The attack led to response from our side, which triggered an exchange of gunfire. After the guns fell silent, the police team searched the hideout and found all three armed men dead. The team recovered two men who were held hostage."

In a statement, the AVCC said that the recovered men were identified as Mohsin Marri and Zulfiqar Wassan, who were kidnapped from SITE-Superhighway for Rs50 million ransom. A case regarding their kidnapping was registered and formal investigation process began.

"The case was transferred to the AVCC," said the statement. "The investigators as per their strategy engaged the kidnappers through families of the victims to bargain on the ransom amount."

It said that in the meantime, with the technological support of the CPLC, the investigators traced the location of the kidnappers, established their identity and ascertained their criminal group.

The AVCC identified the dead suspects as Ali Gohar, Naukaaf and Shafiullah. They were also nominated in a kidnapping for ransom case registered against them in 2020.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 05/05/2021)

Sindh govt appoints Imran Minhas as Karachi police chief

The Sindh government on Monday removed Karachi police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon and posted Additional Inspector General Imran Yaqub Minhas as the new police chief of the metropolis.

According to a notification issued by Sindh Chief Secretary Mumtaz Ali Shah, Addl IG Minhas, a grade-21 officer presently serving as the head of the Special Branch, is transferred and posted as the Addl IG Karachi range.

Mr Memon, also a grade-21 officer who was appointed as Karachi police chief in July 2019, is appointed as Addl IG Special Branch in place of Mr Minhas.

Sources in the police and Sindh government said that the transfer of the city police chief was already in the pipeline for quite some time.

Former chief Memon has been posted as head of Special Branch

A senior officer recalled that when he had chaired a meeting about street crimes in Karachi he had told the participants that it might be his last meeting as the police chief of Karachi.

'Routine administrative change'

In the meantime, the federal government had also requisitioned Mr Memon's services as the Establishment Division in a letter to the provincial government stated that as per a new policy transfer of officers was required if they had served in the same province continuously for 10 years. This transfer was deemed as imperative to have "diverse experience" and promotion in the next grade.

However, the Sindh government had shown reluctance to relieve Mr Memon, as a senior police officer said that an impression was created that the government would not replace him.

A source at Chief Minister House said that it wasn't a sudden or abrupt transfer of the city police chief and it was just a "routine administrative change".

The source said that Mr Minhas also enjoyed good reputation as there were no charges of corruption or misuse of authority against him during his service.

New police chief termed 'bold' officer

A police officer described the new police chief as a 'bold' officer.

He recalled that it was Minhas who had written a protest letter and asking for long leave when his commanding officer, Inspector General of Police Mushtaq Ahmed Mahar, was reportedly "taken away" by security personnel in October to pressure him to order the arrest of Maryam Nawaz's husband Capt Safdar.

After him, several senior police officers also wrote identical letters and such resentment in the force prompted Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to take notice of the situation as he held a press conference and spoke to the army chief who ordered an inquiry.

Meanwhile, a police spokesperson said that the new police chief had served in Punjab and Balochistan in different capacities. He had also served as the IG Prisons in Sindh.

He belonged to urban Sindh and joined the police service as ASP in 1991.
(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 11/05/2021)

New Karachi police chief vows to focus on controlling street crime

Newly appointed Additional Inspector General of Police, Karachi Imran Yaqoob Minhas on Tuesday ordered officials to formulate strict strategies to control street crime in Karachi, declaring controlling street crimes the top priority of the city police.

Right after assuming command, the city police chief held meetings with senior officers of the Karachi police and ordered the officials to adopt strictest measures to control street crime in the city, according to a spokesperson for the Karachi police.

Mr Minhas said that he would pay surprise visits to review performance of the station house officers (SHOs).

The Karachi police chief said that no negligence would be tolerated in the implementation of Covid-19 SOPs issued by the provincial government.

He warned of strict departmental action against SHOs failing to ensure implementation of coronavirus SOPs.

Imran Minhas asked his officers to maintain a friendly attitude towards public and maintain mutual cooperation.

He said the investigation department of police was the backbone of the force and directed a review of the steps taken for improvement in the investigation department.

The Karachi police chief directed the investigation and operations departments to coordinate in every possible way from the joint registration of cases to the arrest of suspects and execution of sentences by the courts.

He issued directives to the traffic police to carry out operations in accordance with law by adopting a strategy in a professional manner. The traffic police were directed to take full action against encroachments and illegal parking in the city.

The additional IGP Karachi directed the junior police officers to be polite to the people during road checks and lockdowns and at police stations as well.

(By APP Dawn, 13, 12/05/2021)

Pending court cases

In view of the growing number of cases pending in Pakistan's law courts, it has long been felt to reduce the gap between the numbers of judges and cases. As of 2018, there were 4,000 judges in the country to deal with 1.9 million pending cases. Now cases pending in the Supreme Court have increased to the record number of 49,000. The Bar Council of Pakistan, the representative body of lawyers, as well as litigants have rightly urged an immediate increase in the number of judges to expedite the disposal of the pile of cases.

The delay in deciding cases is increasing the expenses of litigants and also causing them a lot of other difficulties. The situation is such that hearing of appeals filed in the higher judiciary begins after years. Litigants are informed after long gaps that in a day or two their cases will be heard and they should be present in the court. People from far-flung rural areas somehow travel to cities to attend court hearings, where they are told that hearing had been put off without a new date having been fixed. Such incidents abound. As a result, it takes decades and sometimes even generations to decide cases. Such delays occur due to several reasons, besides the shortage of judges.

Legal experts agree that most laws in Pakistan are outdated and need to be updated and upgraded. Most laws had been introduced by the British rulers, and they were meant to keep the local subjects under subjugation. Hence these laws are not serving the needs of people of an independent country. Reforms are needed in the entire legal system in order to avoid the delay in the dispensation of justice. Under the existing system, people languish in prisons for many years before they are declared innocent. Many lives are

destroyed in the process. The present justice system is also expensive. One has to spend Rs50, 000 to recover an article worth only Rs500. Change is the only constant.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 13/05/2021)

Two ‘members of land grabbing gang’ arrested

The Ferozabad Police arrested on Sunday two men suspected of illegally occupying houses, shops and warehouses in the PECHS neighbourhood.

The arrested suspects are members of the so-called Nadeem Burger Gang. According to police, a resident of PECHS Block 2, namely Sheikh Amjad, had lodged a complaint with the Ferozabad Police stating that in his absence some people broke into his house.

They threw out his belongings and illegally occupied the premises. He said he was shocked to find a dozen armed men sitting inside his house when he returned.

The complainant added that the perpetrators threatened to shoot him when he protested their presence and asked them to leave. I then rushed to the police station to file a complaint, said Amjad.

Following the complaint, the Ferozabad Police raided the premises and took two of the alleged encroachers, identified as Umair Chaudhry and Kashif alias Kashi, into custody. Both the suspects were equipped with loaded firearms, said the police, adding that their accomplices managed to escape.

Amjad has accused Chaudhry, Kashif and eight others of trying to seize his house through illegal means.

The complainant has alleged that the perpetrators are members of the Nadeem Burger Gang and the eponymous, Nadeem Burger, has been imprisoned thrice on terrorism charges. But Burger is released on bail each time, said Amjad, adding that the people in his neighbourhood hesitate to lodge complaints against Burger as they fear the gang would harm them or their families
(Newspaper’s Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 17/05/2021)

Mob attack

IN yet another display of vigilante justice that has, unfortunately, become a regular feature of national life, a highly charged mob attacked a police station in the federal capital on Monday. Armed with batons and iron rods, the angry crowd surrounded the Golra police station and broke into the premises, damaging the offices of the moharrir, investigation officers and the station house officer.

The law-enforcement officials tried to protect themselves by locking themselves up but had to seek help from another police contingent that included personnel of the anti-terrorist squad, the anti-riot unit and the counterterrorism department. It took a heavy police contingent an hour of tear-gas shelling and baton-charge before the charged crowd could be dispersed. The protesters wanted the custody of a suspect who was under investigation for a blasphemy-related complaint. Increasingly, there is a tendency to ignore the fact that the fora to probe any offence are the law enforcers and the courts, and not a violent mob. What incidents such as these show is a deep distrust of the judicial system. Even if someone is under investigation and in police custody, the vigilantes want to administer their own barbaric form of ‘justice’.

It is unfortunate that no action has been taken to curb such behaviour and thinking — the consequences of not addressing the regressive ways of society. Mob justice is not limited to cases of alleged blasphemy. Mobs have beaten an alleged teen robber to death in Karachi (2019) and lynched two brothers in Sialkot under the very nose of police officials (2010), and ransacked a traffic police picket in Rawalpindi (2017). Not only do these incidents expose the weakness of the state and its inability to impose its writ and win the confidence of the public through good governance, they also expose the failings of our weak judicial system that often tends to favour the rich and powerful rather than protect the vulnerable. The country needs fair and transparent rule of law, and it needs it urgently.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 07, 20/05/2021)

Tribal chief held in Karachi for ‘patronising criminals’ in katcha area

The Shikarpur police on Monday claimed to have arrested a tribal chief and his two sons from Karachi for allegedly patronising kidnapers in the katcha area.

Recently, an encounter in the katcha area between police and kidnapers claimed lives of two policemen and a police photographer. A police spokesperson said that the Shikarpur police in collaboration with local police conducted a raid in Gulistan-i-Jauhar and arrested Sardar Tegho Khan Teghani along with his two sons — Imran and Abdul Fatah.

These arrests were made after lodging of an FIR at the Napar Kot police station in Shikarpur against nominated kidnapers over charges of terrorism and murder of three policemen during the May 23 operation.

The FIR lodged on behalf of the state through Inspector Syed Amir Ali Shah stated that Sardar Teghani and his both sons were “patronising kidnapers” in his native area of Garhi Tegho.

It said contingents of police conducted a raid in Garhi Tegho for recovery of kidnapped persons — Inayatullah and Naqeebullah Pathan — when nominated kidnapers attacked an armoured personnel carrier with rockets, resulting in martyrdom of three policemen.

The police admitted that after being attacked, the APC could not move and other policemen rescued the law enforcers.

Meanwhile, Shikarpur SSP Ameer Saud Magsi said that the operation against kidnapers was still going on and he was personally monitoring it.

Drugs seized

The Clifton police conducted a raid in Shirin Jinnah Colony on Monday, detained two suspected peddlers and seized 72 kilograms of drugs from their custody, said South SSP Zubair Nazeer Shaikh.

The held suspects, Mohsin and Saifullah, belonged to a “transport group”.

The main suspect was identified as Abdullah and the officer hoped that he would be arrested soon.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 25/05/2021)

Armed muggers kill four men in separate incidents in city

Amid an alarming surge in the menace of street crimes, armed bandits on Monday killed four people and wounded five others when they offered resistance to their separate mugging bids, police and hospital officials said.

They said that three of them were gunned down while the fourth one was stabbed to death.

A shopkeeper was shot dead in Defence Housing Authority. Area people got hold of two muggers and subjected them to severe beating before handing them to police.

Gizri SHO Agha Mashooq said armed pillion riders shot and injured Waseem, 30, when he put up resistance at main Ittehad Commercial. He suffered a critical bullet wound in the head and was taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

Incidents of street crime in Karachi have been increasing alarmingly

As the muggers tried to flee, area people overpowered them and subjected them to a beating.

The SHO said a robber suffered a bullet wound due to the firing of his accomplice.

The police claimed to have recovered one pistol and one motorbike from their custody.

Also in DHA, armed muggers shot and wounded a woman and a man upon resistance.

Defence SHO Azam Rajpar said that Anees Tariq, 65, drew cash from a bank in Phase-I and as she sat in her chauffeur-driven car, armed muggers emerged there and snatched Rs150,000 from her at gunpoint and rode away.

However, her driver chased the fleeing suspects in the car but the robbers opened fire while fleeing. The bullets hit Ms Tariq and her driver, Arab Khan, 30, and they were taken to the JPMC, where their condition was stated to be out of danger.

JPMC's executive director Dr Seemin Jamali said the woman suffered wounds in the right foot while her driver suffered injuries in the hip.

Robbers shoot man to death in Jauhar

A man was shot dead and his son-in-law was wounded by armed robbers upon resistance in Gulistan-i-Jauhar.

A Sharea Faisal police officer said that Wajihul Hasan, 60, and Hamza Qaiser, 35, were travelling in a car when armed pillion riders intercepted them near the Millennium Mall and fired at them when they offered resistance.

They suffered bullet wounds and were taken to the JPMC, where the 60-year-old died during treatment.

Killing in Saeedabad

A 34-year-old man was shot dead by robbers in Saeedabad.

Police said that Naveed Jameel was killed by armed robbers when he put up resistance near Ali Chowk in Sector 4-C.

The body was shifted to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital for medico-legal formalities.

Stabbing

A man was stabbed to death and another injured by robbers upon resistance off Superhighway.

The Sachal police said that two persons identified as Jumma Gul, 35, and Kand Agha, 22, were stabbed by robbers over resistance near the Jamali bridge at Punjab Bus Stand.

They were shifted to the Patel Hospital in Gulshan-i-Iqbal, where Agha died during treatment.

A 32-year-old man was shot at and hurt by robbers on main Sharea Faisal.

The Ferozeabad police said that Mujahid was wounded when he resisted a robbery bid near Dunkin Donuts.

He was shifted to the JPMC for treatment.

Man, married woman killed in Lyari

A man and a married woman were gunned down in what police described as a so-called honour killing in Lyari on Monday.

The police said Yasir Asmat, 34, and Sofia, 38, were shot dead at the woman's home in Rexer Lane near Islam Chowk.

Kalakot SHO Asif Munawwar said that the victim woman's husband, Javed, and his brother were allegedly involved in the double murder.

He said the killings appeared to be an outcome of "honour killing".

The suspects managed to escape from the crime scene.

Woman shot dead in Ittehad Town

A young woman was shot dead allegedly by her husband in Ittehad Town on Monday.

Police said that Irum Shahzadi, 34, was killed by her husband, Hamid Ali, over a family dispute at their home in Juma Bazaar. The suspect managed to escape.

Area SHO Zafar Ali Shah said that the couple had three children and it was a love marriage.

Body found

The bullet-riddled body of a young woman was found near Qayyumabad on Monday.

The Zaman Town police said that the body was recovered from C-Area near a local Christian graveyard.

The identity could not be ascertained till the filing of this report. The body was shifted to the JPMC to fulfil medico-legal formalities. (By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 01/06/2021)

Karachi street crime

OVER the past few decades, Karachi has witnessed grotesque violence, including targeted killings, political, ethnic and sectarian violence as well as acts of terrorism. While thankfully levels of violence in the aforesaid categories have come down, street crime remains a major headache for the city's people. Criminals appear to strike at will, accosting people drawing cash from banks or ATMs; threatening people trapped in traffic jams; and shooting citizens over resistance to mugging attempts. On Monday alone, four people were killed while resisting muggers in the metropolis. So rampant has armed mugging become in the city that people are advised not to risk their lives and hand over their cash and mobiles/valuables to criminals. Moreover, concerns have been raised in the Sindh Assembly about the resurgence of armed gangs and the sale of narcotics in the Lyari area. MMA lawmaker Abdul Rasheed, who represents the area, told the house that police were doing little to curb crime in Lyari.

A solid strategy is needed to check the increase in street crime in Karachi. The city's new police chief Imran Yaqoob Minhas, who took office last month, told the media that battling street crime was his top priority. These intentions need to be translated into action on the ground. Patrolling should be increased while cameras should monitor points where muggers are known to strike. The police need to counter street crime aggressively as too many precious lives have been lost to trigger-happy criminals. As for Lyari, the state needs to ensure one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods does not become a hotbed for criminal gangs once again. There must be zero tolerance for gang activity and the sale of drugs in the area. Moreover, the state needs to offer alternatives to the impoverished area's youths so that they do not fall into the clutches of gangs. Along with better law enforcement, educational, sports and economic activities must be promoted in Lyari to ensure the area's people have avenues for upward mobility. (By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 02/06/2021)

Guard hurt in grenade attack on Clifton multistorey building

A private security guard suffered injuries in a grenade attack outside a multistorey building owned by Bahria Town in Clifton on Wednesday afternoon, police said.

SSP South Zubair Nazeer Shaikh said that two men riding a motorbike threw a grenade at Bahria Icon Tower near Bagh Ibne Qasim in Clifton and rode away. As the grenade exploded, security guard Muneer Nazeer, 35, suffered injuries.

The Bomb Disposal Squad was called in and they confirmed that it was a grenade and not a cracker, the SSP said, adding that the guard suffered minor injuries.

He said that investigators were probing the incident to ascertain the motive behind the attack.

However, Counter-Terrorism Department's DIG Omar Shahid Hamid said the grenade attack might be linked with Bahria Town Karachi's (BTK) issues related to Malir.

Investigators see outlawed SRA's hand in the explosion

He explained that recently several nationalist groups launched a drive against the BTK in Malir and apparently the attack was linked with the controversy.

The DIG pointed out that the grenade used on Wednesday was similar to those used by the banned Sindh Revolutionary Army (SRA) in some previous attacks. Besides, the style of the attack also appeared to be the one adopted by the SRA, he added.

'Lyari gangsters' kill man in Pak Colony

A man was shot dead and his two sons were wounded in the Pak Colony area on Wednesday.

Area SHO Nadeem Ahmed said that Shabbir Rehman, 55, and sons, Asad Kabir, 35, and Waqar Rehman, 30, were on their way home after offering prayer at the Lyari Expressway near Garden when armed men opened fire on them. They sustained bullet wounds and were shifted to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital, where doctors pronounced Shabbir dead. The officer said that Lyari gangsters led by Riaz alias Batakh, were involved in the incident.

Woman stabbed to death

A woman was stabbed to death allegedly by her estranged husband in the Sukkan area on Wednesday.

The area SHO said that Rehana got separated from her husband, Aslam, recently. She was passing through Kubra Masjid in Lalabad when the suspect stabbed her and fled.

The body was shifted to the JPMC to fulfil medico-legal formalities.

Nine hurt in firing during drama shooting

Nine young persons were shot and wounded when a private security guard started indiscriminate firing over some trivial issue during the recording of a television drama at a house in Defence Housing Authority on Wednesday, according to police.

A Clifton police officer said that the guard, Gul Bhai, started firing and wounded nine persons due to a conflict with the producer in Khayaban-i-Shujaat.

The police arrested the guard along and confiscated his rifle. All injured persons were shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, where doctors said none of them suffered life threatening wounds.

SSP South Zubair Shaikh said that the guard did not want the artists to spread dastarkhwan on the floor to have lunch. After an argument, the guard fired with his repeater rifle on the floor and the pellets hit nine persons who suffered minor injuries.

They were identified as Mohammad Yusuf, 37, Akbar, 25, Zahid Ali, 27, Mohammed Shahzad, 27, Mohammed Awais, 22, Farhan Alam, 34, Shahzad, 37, Faisal Mehmood, 40, and Qambar Ali, 31.
(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 03/06/2021)

BTK residents hold peaceful protest against 'blatant terrorism'

The residents, builders and property dealers of Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) on Monday held a peaceful demonstration against the attack by miscreants on Sunday, which caused losses worth billions of rupees on the grand housing scheme, calling it an "act of terror".

Bahria Town Dealers Association Chairperson Raheel Haroon, while talking to the media, said that BTK has repeatedly stated that it did not occupy anyone's lands unjustly and if anyone proves illegal possession of even an inch of his land, BTK will be held responsible.

He said that BTK has already faced an independent investigation and is still ready to do so. BTK not only brought foreign investment of expatriate Pakistanis, but also succeeded in providing employment and high quality housing facilities to the people of Sindh.

Haroon said BTK will never reciprocate violence with violence rather it will adopt the path of knocking the doors of the court and the government, the representative of the business community of BTK said.

Cases filed

Meanwhile, 120 suspects accused arrested in riot and arson cases in BTK were produced before anti-terrorism administrative court.

The court approved a two-day remand of the suspects on the request of Gadap City police station investigation officer who said police want to question the suspects about their accomplices.

Three cases have been registered at Gadap City police station, two by the SHO Ashraf Jan of the precinct on behalf of the state and one by the security manager of BTK. The cases bear Anti-Terrorism Act Clause 7.

Meanwhile, East District SSP Investigation Arab Mehar has formed 12 investigation teams to probe the incident.

Political leaders visit BTK

A representative delegation of Muttahida Qaumi Movement visited BTK to express solidarity with the affected people. Senior Deputy Convener Aamir Khan, Deputy Convener Kanwar Naveed Jameel, Wasim Akhtar and elected representatives of the party denounced the attack by miscreants and termed it failure of the government to provide security to citizens. MQM-P leader Farooq Sattar has called a protest at the Quaid's Mazaar on June 11.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 08/06/2021)

Over 100 remanded in police custody for two days in Bahria Town violence case

An antiterrorism court on Monday remanded in police custody as many as 120 leaders and activists of the Sindh Action Committee (SAC) held for allegedly resorting to violence, ransacking and torching private properties in Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) during their protest against the mega housing scheme a day before.

Following Sunday's violence, police arrested the suspects and booked them in cases pertaining to torching restaurants, shops, vehicles and looting money from ATMs.

On Monday, the investigating officer produced the suspects before the administrative judge of the ATCs to seek their physical remand in police custody for interrogation and investigation.

The IO submitted that the physical custody of the suspects was required to get their criminal record checked and arrest their alleged accomplices, who were still fleeing.

PPP, Muttahida, PTI leaders visit the housing project on Superhighway to express solidarity with residents

He sought 14-day physical remand of the suspects, but the judge remanded them in police custody for two days and directed the IO to produce them on the next date. The IO was further told to submit an investigation report on the next date as well.

The judge also directed the IO to ensure provision of medical treatment to some suspects, who were produced in injured condition.

According to the FIR, the BTK's security manager stated that some nationalist groups including the Sindh United Party, Jeay Sindh Mahaz, Jeay Sindh and Awami Tehreek had on May 21 announced a protest against the BTK.

He stated that the nationalist leaders including Qadir Magsi, Jalal Mehmood Shah, Sanan Qureshi, Jan Mohammad Junejo along with 8,000 to 10,000 people gathered outside the BTK's main gate [on Sunday], where they delivered speeches against the project and allegedly incited their workers to violence.

The complainant added that the protesters removed barricades, manhandled the security staff and put the main gate of the housing scheme on fire on Sunday. Later, he added, the leaders along with their activists entered the commercial area, ransacked two shops, three ATMs, looted the money and torched five restaurants in Tauheed Plaza.

The FIR added that the protesters also set fire to vehicles by throwing some chemical.

A case was registered under Sections 395 (punishment for dacoity), 397 (robbery or dacoity with attempt to cause death or grievous hurt), 435 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage), 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house, etc) and 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) read with Section 7 (punishment for acts of terrorism) of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 at the Gadap City police station.

Also on Monday, representatives of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party, opposition Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf and senior politician Dr Farooq Sattar separately visited BTK on Superhighway to express solidarity with the residents who suffered financial losses and mental agony due to Sunday's violence.

Sindh govt to hold 'impartial' probe

PPP leader and Education Minister Saeed Ghani along with his party MPs from district Malir paid a visit to the scene of destruction and met the owners of the properties destroyed in the violence.

He said that the Sindh government would hold a fair and impartial investigation into the incident and all those involved would be taken to task immediately.

He said that the government would extend all possible help to the violence victims and the losses to their properties would be estimated.

Mr Ghani assured the residents that Sindh government was with them and it would take stern action against all those responsible without getting into anyone's pressure.

MQM-P blames 'Sindhudesh terrorists'

A delegation of the MQM-P headed by senior leader Amir Khan visited Bahria Town and assured the residents that the party would not leave them alone.

Later, talking to reporters, Mr Khan said that “terrorists belonging to Sindhudesh”, who he said enjoyed full backing of the PPP government, attacked the housing scheme, chanted anti-Pakistan slogans and took the law into their hands.

He said that despite raising anti-Pakistan slogans no treason case was registered against any of the groups involved in the violence in the name of a protest.

He demanded that the federal government use its constitutional powers and ensure protection to the life and property of the people of Sindh.

PTI demands action

PTI's Khurram Sher Zaman along with his party's MPAs and local leaders visited BTK and condemned the police for failing to stop miscreants from damaging and ransacking properties.

He said that residents of BTK faced a huge financial loss and it was the responsibility of the Sindh government to pay compensation.

He demanded strict action against political parties whose activists chanted anti-Pakistan slogans during the protest demonstration.

Mr Sher Zaman said that the local PTI chapter had requested Prime Minister Imran Khan to play his role on the matters of Sindh as there was no hope from the provincial government.

Sattar calls for Sindhi-Mohajir unity

The head of his own faction of the MQM-P, the Organisation Restoration Committee (ORC), Dr Farooq Sattar also visited Bahria Town and met the affected traders and businessmen.

He said that the violence was an attempt to pit Sindhis and Mohajirs against each other but they would foil this conspiracy with their unity.

He said that it appeared that the government had given a free hand to “Sindhudesh elements” to do whatever they want with complete impunity.

Earlier, he told a press conference that he would hold a protest demonstration at the Quaid's mausoleum on June 11.

(By Naeem Sahoutara # Azdar-ul-Ashfaque Dawn, 13, 08/06/2021)

Elements involved in BTK incidents to face strict action: CM

Strict action will be taken against elements involved in the Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) incident, said Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday.

Speaking at a press conference in Sindh Assembly he said that peaceful protest is right of every citizen but no one is allowed to damage public and private property and raise anti-state slogans.

Regarding the BTK incident, he said that the Sindh government had talked with the protesters and their leaders had assured of holding a peaceful protest and not saying anything against the state of Pakistan on which the provincial authorities provided them tents and drinking water too.

However, some people vandalised private property and raised anti-Pakistan slogans which will not be tolerated, the CM said.

He said that video evidence of the arson attack was available and through it, miscreants are being identified and arrested. The footage of where these people came from and what they did was clear, they will be tracked, arrested, and brought to justice, the CM said,

Meanwhile, Sindh Information Minister Nasir Hussain Shah said that he was saddened by the tragic incident that took place in BTK "The Sindh government apologises to the people affected by the attack of the miscreants. It was our responsibility to provide security to the citizens," he said talking to media during his visit to BTK.

Education Minister Saeed Ghani, MPA Sajid Jokhio, and others were also present with him. He said that PPP being a democratic party acknowledges people's right to protest, but it would not allow violence.

Separately, Sindh Governor Imran Ismail said that it was due to the timely action by Pakistan Rangers, Sindh, that prevented a major catastrophe in BTK on Sunday.

Talking to the media at the Governor House he said that the police remained a silent spectator. In the meantime, Sindh Assembly in its session on Tuesday denounced the attack by miscreants at BTK. The lawmakers expressed hope for the early recovery of the injured people and suggested compensation for the people who had suffered losses in the vandalism.

PTI MPA Khurram Sher Zaman said it is hoped that Sindh CM will give a policy statement on the issue.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 09/06/2021)

Bahria Town violence

BEHIND the immaculate façade of Bahria Town Karachi, violence has been ongoing since years. Indigenous farming communities have been coerced into surrendering the land they have called home for generations and seen their livelihoods destroyed. Police contingents have raided goths and threatened those who continued to resist their strong-arm tactics, sometimes arresting them on spurious terrorism charges. Bahria Town personnel, along with local authorities, have overseen the bulldozing of villages, the destruction of tube wells, the uprooting of orchards and even the levelling of graveyards. All this suffering, the very erasure of a people's way of life and their history, scarcely found a mention in the media.

On Sunday, a different kind of violence took place at the sprawling gated community. The occasion was a protest called by the Sindh Action Committee against the real estate developer's modus operandi on the outskirts of Karachi. According to reports — of which this time there was no shortage— a mob broke away from the protesters gathered in front of the main entrance and pushed their way inside. They set fire to two international food franchises, a car showroom, realtors' offices, several vehicles and the main gateway itself.

The wanton destruction of property, and the panic and fear caused thereby, is condemnable. There must be a transparent probe to determine the identity of the perpetrators and look into why matters took such a turn despite the presence of police contingents who would have had advance notice that a large number of people and organisations from across the province, including nationalist parties, were going to converge outside BTK.

The SAC has pointed the finger of blame at Bahria personnel themselves for having staged the violence to sabotage their peaceful protest. Whatever the case may be, there appears a danger at this point that a legitimate rights movement, based in the very real deprivation inflicted by ruthless corporate interests hand in glove with the power elite, could be hijacked by groups with a broader agenda against the state.

One could ask why nationalist parties have suddenly shown up after being nowhere on the horizon in all the years Bahria was working to depopulate villages in the district. Those directly affected by the firm's seemingly unstoppable expansion in the area could find themselves crushed in what could follow this new development. The events on Sunday have already provided the perfect excuse for law enforcement to crack down on locals.

But there is another danger, one the state must consider in the interest of Pakistan's future. The impunity with which Bahria and other powerful land developers operate, trampling the law and the rights of local populations, is straining the fragile bonds between the different ethnic groups in the country and also deepening the sense of socioeconomic inequality. Such a model of 'development' is unsustainable — and as phony as the replica Eiffel Towers that dot Bahria's gated communities.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 09/06/2021)

120 workers of SAC remanded in Bahria Town attack case

An antiterrorism court on Wednesday remanded in judicial custody 120 leaders and activists of the Sindh Action Committee (SAC) arrested for allegedly resorting to violence, ransacking and setting fire to private properties in Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) during their protest against the mega housing scheme.

Following Sunday's violence, police had arrested the suspects and booked them in cases pertaining to torching restaurants, shops, vehicles and looting money from automated teller machines (ATMs).

On Wednesday, the investigating officer produced the suspects before the administrative judge of the ATCs upon expiry of their physical remand in police custody and requested the court to extend the same by 14 days for interrogation and investigation.

Turning down the request, the judge however remanded them in judicial custody and directed the IO to produce them before the court on next date along with an investigation report.

JSQM head Sanan Qureshi produced in court

The IO also produced a nationalist leader, Sanan Qureshi, along with four other suspects and requested the court to grant their 14-day physical remand in police custody for interrogation and investigation in the same case.

However, the judge remanded them in police custody for two days, directing the IO to produce them on next date along with an investigation report.

According to the FIR, the BTK security manager stated that some nationalist groups, including the Sindh United Party, Jeay Sindh Mahaz, Jeay Sindh and Awami Tehreek on May 21 announced a protest against the BTK.

He stated that the nationalist leaders, including Qadir Magsi, Jalal Mehmood Shah, Sanan Qureshi, Jan Mohammad Junejo along with 8,000 to 10,000 people gathered outside the BTK main gate [on Sunday], where they delivered speeches against the project and allegedly incited their workers to violence.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 14, 10/06/2021)

Mob attacks Shah Latif police station after arrest of BTK violence suspect

Four persons, including three policemen, were wounded when a mob attacked the Shah Latif Town police station following the arrest of a man allegedly involved in the recent Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) violence on Wednesday, police said.

Area SHO Nek Mohammed Khoso said that a police party conducted a raid in Arbani Goth on the outskirts of the city off National Highway and took into custody a suspect for his alleged involvement in the BTK incident.

Subsequently, he said, around 100-150 people attacked the Shah Latif Town police station, where an exchange of gunfire between the attackers and police took place.

He said a protester, identified as Abdul Rasool, suffered a bullet wound and was arrested in an injured condition along with his four accomplices, identified as Mudassir, Abdul Nabi, Lal Mohammed and Ghulam Rabbani.

The SHO said that the protester was hurt by the firing of his own accomplices and not the police.

CTD formally associates senior PSP leader Anis Advocate in RAW inquiry

He claimed that three policemen — Waseem, Ubaid and Ramzan — suffered injuries caused by sticks and stones. The situation came under control after a contingent of police arrived there.

He said that the people who attacked the police station allegedly belonged to a banned nationalist group.

All the wounded persons were shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for treatment.

'Gangster' held in Lyari

The Baghdadi police on Wednesday carried out a raid in Phool Patti Lane near Dubai Chowk and arrested a man, said to be associated with one of the several gangs operating in Lyari.

City SSP Sarfaraz Nawaz Shaikh said Mohammed Adeel alias Gudal was the "target killer commander" of the gang led by Zahid Ladla. A hand grenade was recovered from him.

During initial questioning, he revealed that Ladla had tasked him for the assassination of a police officer and three informers. He had carried out reconnaissance and was ready to do the job within the next few days.

He also told the police that he was involved in some grenade attacks targeting the traders who refused to pay protection money.

"He is a habitual criminal and cases are already registered at different police stations," said the SSP.

CTD seizes PSP leader's mobile phone, passport

The Counter-Terrorism Department on Wednesday officially associated Pak Sarzameen Party leader Anis Advocate with the investigation into RAW-related activities.

"The CTD summoned Anis Advocate again today [Wednesday] for further questioning regarding his role in MQM's India-related activities," said DIG Omar Shahid Hamid. "He was questioned regarding recruitment of MQM activists for training in India on behalf of RAW. His answers were unsatisfactory and he has formally been made part of the investigation," he added.

He said that the PSP leader's passport and mobile phone were being seized for a forensic analysis and procedure had been initiated for blocking his computerised national identity card (CNIC).

"He has also been informed that if he leaves the city he may be treated as an absconder," the DIG said.

Earlier, the CTD had arrested two MQM workers, who told investigators that they were allegedly trained by Indian intelligence agency RAW and their links with it were established by their leaders Dr Farooq Sattar and Anis Advocate.

The CTD had summoned both the leaders on June 4 and they denied any links with the held suspects. However, the investigators had again called Anis Advocate as they were not satisfied with his replies at that time.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 10/06/2021)

Robbers shoot senior academic to death upon resistance

The director of a private engineering institution and a senior academic was killed by armed robbers when he attempted to resist their robbery bid on Stadium Road on Friday, police said.

SSP East Sajid Amir Sadozai said that Prof Dr Zahir Ali Syed, 70, was heading home in his car from the Usman Institute of Technology (UIT) in Gulshan-i-Iqbal.

He said he dropped his driver near Khatoon-i-Pakistan Girls Collage on Stadium Road and went a short distance when two armed men riding a motorcycle intercepted his vehicle signalling him to stop.

The SSP said his driver was witnessing the scene and he tried to head towards the car suspecting something was not right. While the armed men were looking towards the driver, the professor accelerated the car in order to escape, but the robbers fired at him and rode away.

A bullet hit the professor and the vehicle went out of his control. He was immediately taken towards the nearby Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), where he died of excessive bleeding. He suffered a single bullet wound in the armpit and the bullet got stuck in the body.

The SSP said that it appeared to be a robbery-related murder and not an incident of targeted killing.

No casualty reported in a fire that broke out in the media cell of Bilawal House

He said the victim was the director of the UIT.

Meanwhile, the students' wing of the Pak Sarzameen Party strongly condemned the killing and said that the death of a renowned academic like Dr Zahir Ali Syed in a "car snatching attempt" was a big loss to the country and the nation.

Engineer Syed Usman of the Pak Sarzameen Students Federation urged the chief justice of Pakistan to take notice of the killing and order arrest of the killers forthwith.

Robbers shoot four upon resistance in city

A couple was among four people who were shot at and wounded by armed robbers when they offered resistance in separate incidents on Friday, according to police.

Yunus Subhan, 38, and his wife, Anum, 34, were shot when they put up resistance to a robbery bid in Orangi Town No 8, said Mominabad police.

They were shifted to the AKUH for treatment.

In Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Shakeel Arif, 24, was shot by armed dacoit near the Nipa flyover, the Aziz Bhatti police said.

The wounded man was shifted to the JPMC for treatment.

In another incident, Shaharyar Ibrahim, 24, was shot at and wounded when he resisted a robbery near Murtaza Chowrangi in Korangi, said the Awami Colony police.

The injured was shifted to the JPMC.

No one was arrested in all the three incidents.

Fire at PPP office near Bilawal House

A fire broke out in the media cell of Bilawal House in Clifton on Friday, gutting office furniture but causing no casualty, according to officials.

Bilawal House's media cell is not located at the residence of former president Asif Zardari and PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, but in another house in the same vicinity. Surendar Valasai, the in-charge of the PPP's media cell, said that the blaze erupted in the building "accidentally". He said the staff working there had left the premises immediately.

He said that the fire broke out in the garbage spread nearby and the building caught fire.

A fire brigade official said that at least 10 to 12 fire tenders controlled the blaze after hectic efforts. He said that the fire was not a huge one but owing to the importance of the site of the blaze, they had sent several fire tenders to take part in firefighting.

Clifton SHO Pir Shabbir Haider said the fire did not cause any damage to the building infrastructure, as only wooden stuff was destroyed.

He added that the police were waiting for the report of the fire brigade about the exact cause of the fire.

A traffic police spokesperson said that the road from Bilawal House towards Ali Baba was closed for vehicular traffic in the aftermath of the fire.

Sindh Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh, who visited the spot, said that an electric short-circuit triggered the fire. He added that it would be investigated as to why the fire broke out.

Suspect beaten by mob dies

A suspected robber, who was beaten up by a mob, died during treatment at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre on Friday, according to an Edhi Foundation spokesperson.

An angry mob got hold of two suspects during a robbery at Jauhar Chowk in Orangi Town two days ago. They subjected them to severe beating before arrival of the police.

Both the suspects were shifted to the JPMC for treatment in a critical condition where one of them died on Friday.

The deceased was in his early 30s. His identity could not be ascertained immediately. The body was shifted to the Edhi morgue in Sohrab Goth for identification.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 12/06/2021)

Suicide in Thar

THARPARKAR is an appropriate case study for examining the factors that lead some people to the desperate, final act of ending their lives. The district, according to a recently concluded five-year study on suicides in Sindh, topped the list with 79 cases. When the figure was disaggregated according to gender, the area also registered the most number of female suicides in the province, with 48 women ending their lives compared to 31 men. Recently, the Sindh Mental Health Authority, with financial assistance from the Thar Foundation and technical input from psychologists, the provincial health department etc, has launched a 'psychiatric autopsy' of the suicides that took place in the area from 2016 to 2020. The objective of the first-ever such exercise in Pakistan is to uncover the reasons why so many in the district chose to end their lives.

The figures cited above tell but part of the story: they denote only completed suicides registered with the district health office and police. They do not include attempted suicides, nor completed suicides that may not have been reported as such due to the stigma attached to this act. Moreover, the unfortunate fact that attempted suicide is criminalised in Pakistan, attracting one year's imprisonment, naturally leads to cover-ups. Sadly, it also inhibits people from seeking the help they need to address their suicidal ideation. The report on the five-year study cited above pointed to mental illness, domestic problems and poverty as the main factors that drove people in Sindh to commit suicide. A number of mental health experts have also linked the troubling incidence to climate change and the consequently increased frequency of prolonged droughts in Tharparkar. The local economy in the desert area is heavily dependent on rainfall and erratic weather patterns are having an impact on livelihoods and pushing many deeper into poverty.

Significantly, the segment of Thari society where most cases of suicide are found is in the lower-caste Hindu community. Women, possibly due to gender-related pressures in an oppressive society, are more likely to make attempts at committing suicide. The psychiatric autopsy should enable a more in-depth analysis of the events leading up to the suicides and the risk factors that contributed to them. Suicide must be decriminalised, and a more empathetic approach adopted to understand why some people turn their backs on what is a very human instinct for survival, and deliberately choose death over life.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 14/06/2021)

11 nationalist leaders get pre-arrest bail in Bahria Town violence case

An antiterrorism court on Tuesday granted interim pre-arrest bail to 11 leaders and activists of the Sindh Action Committee in cases pertaining to resorting to violence, ransacking and torching private properties in Bahria Town Karachi during their protest against the housing scheme.

Police booked Riaz Ali Chandio, chairman of the Jeay Sindh Mahaz; Abdul Khaliq Junejo, leader of the Jeay Sindh Mahaz; Gul Hasan Kalmati, leader of the Sindh Indigenous Rights Alliance with Murad Bux Gabol, Jahanzeb Kalmati, Jan Sher Khan, Ali Hassan, Aurangzeb Jokhio, Mohammad Munawwar, Dad Karim and Mohammad Akram in cases pertaining to torching restaurants, shops, vehicles and looting money from ATMs during their protest on the Superhighway on June 6.

On Tuesday, they appeared before the administrative judge of the ATCs after obtaining protective bail from the Sindh High Court.

They moved a joint application asking the court to grant them pre-arrest bail in the present cases, arguing that the police had registered false and fabricated cases in collusion with the BTK owner (Malik Riaz).

The defence counsel argued that most of the sections of the Pakistan Penal Code mentioned in the FIRs were bailable.

Without touching the merits of the case, the judge granted interim pre-arrest bail to the applicants subject to furnishing a Rs25,000 surety bond each.

The matter was fixed on June 26 for confirmation of the interim bail or otherwise. However, they were directed to cooperate with the police in investigation.

Two cases were registered on behalf of the state accusing the nationalist leaders of delivering anti-state speeches and inciting the public to wage war against the state.

A third FIR was lodged by BTK's security manager stating that some nationalist groups, including the Sindh United Party, Jeay Sindh Mahaz, Jeay Sindh and Awami Tehreek, on May 21 announced a protest against the BTK.

He stated that the nationalist leaders, including Qadir Magsi, Jalal Mehmood Shah, Sanan Qureshi, Jan Mohammad Junejo, along with 8,000 to 10,000 people gathered outside the BTK's main gate [on June 6], where they delivered speeches against the project and allegedly incited their workers to violence.

The complainant added that the protesters removed barricades, manhandled the security staff and put the main gate of the housing scheme on fire.

Later, he added, the leaders along with their activists entered the commercial area, ransacked two shops, three ATMs, looted money and torched five restaurants in Tauheed Plaza.

The FIR added that the protesters also set fire to vehicles by throwing some chemical on them.

JSM chief gets bail in 13 cases

The same court also granted ad-interim pre-arrest bail to JSM chief Abdul Khaliq Junejo in 13 separate criminal cases registered by individuals at different police stations. He was told to furnish a surety of Rs25,000 in each case.

The matter was fixed on June 26 for confirmation or otherwise of the interim bail.
(By Naeem Sahoutara Dawn, 14, 16/06/2021)

Rs119.9bn earmarked for maintaining law, order in Sindh

With an increase of over Rs6 billion, the Sindh government has allocated Rs119.97bn in the head of law and order in its budget for fiscal year 2021-22 compared to Rs113.87bn allocated in the last fiscal year.

The government also promised to spend Rs100 million to adopt modern and international practices in DNA tests in the province.

Details issued with the budget documents titled Citizens Budget 2020-21 carry next year's plans and estimates allocated under the head of "Law & Order".

Rs1.1bn is set aside for procurement of arms and ammunition for Sindh police

Third largest resource allocation

"In keeping with the principles of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah who said that 'the scrupulous maintenance and enforcement of law and order are the prerequisites of all progress,' the Sindh government has kept law and order as one of its topmost priorities," said Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah while delivering the budget speech.

"Our commitment to establish and maintain law and order is also evident from the fact that home department (including police, jails, Rangers and other security agencies) is the third largest department in terms of resource allocation with a share of 13 per cent in total current revenue expenditure in FY 2020-21. Home Department has been allocated Rs 119.97bn in next FY 2021-22 as against CFY budget estimates of Rs113.87bn; which is an increase of 5.4 per cent," he said.

Last year, the Sindh government had announced over nine per cent increase in the budget for security in the province, fixing it at Rs109.788bn, with a promise to recruit 3,000 policemen.

With serious challenges of coronavirus outbreak and emerging situation amid the pandemic, the provincial authorities sounded more concerned about the health and social sector.

Last year, the Sindh government had announced a Rs4bn increase in the budget for security in the province with a promise to enhance local crime prevention through police patrolling with dedicated funds of Rs2bn that would upgrade the old police fleet.

Budget document says that the recurrent allocation of the home department had been kept at Rs119.973bn, which included allocation of Rs106.913bn for Sindh police; Rs5.016bn for jails and Rs8.045bn for home administration, including significant allocation for Sindh Rangers.

"The government of Sindh has established a secretariat 'Provincial Public Safety & Police Complaints Commission Sindh', with Rs99.003 million, to empower the ordinary people of the province against bad policing concept," it said.

An amount of Rs3.695bn is allocated for purchase of physical assets for the Sindh police. Of the amount, Rs2bn would be for procurement of transport and Rs1.1bn for arms and ammunition.

A sum of Rs57.578m is allocated for the welfare of prisoners through a designated committee.

The government also allocated Rs100m to adopt modern and international practices in DNA testing in the province.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 16/06/2021)

SAC leaders condemn BTK violence, point finger at Sindh govt

The Sindh Action Committee (SAC) addressed a jam-packed press conference here at the Karachi Press Club on Thursday to share with the media their stand on Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) and the happenings on June 6 when they held a peaceful protest on M-9 Motorway, which was made to look like something else.

Narrating the incidents of that day, Syed Jalal Mehmood Shah said that they were all there by 12 noon, but between 2pm and 2.30pm, there were many other people who were strangers to us, and who were allowed to enter Bahria Town and cause destruction.

"We kept disowning them. We kept pointing them out while saying that they were not from among us. We were peaceful protesters. We would never hurt anyone or damage anyone's property and we condemn what happened," he said.

"We also know who the culprits were. They were not just from Bahria Town itself, they were also people sent by the Sindh government to make us look bad and to make our peaceful protest a failure, to make it backfire. And for this and for not being able to prevent and control the violence, the Sindh government needs to apologise," he said.

'To be built on 16,800 acres, Bahria Town has now spread to 50,000 acres'

He also pointed out that Bahria Town was supposed to be built on 16,800 acres of land. "But then because there was no demarcation carried out for this land, it has now spread to 50,000 acres."

Qadir Magsi said that they could not openly accept the illegal taking over of their land. "This is the land of Sindhis, which is being used in experiments of modernising Sindh. How will they feel if we went to Bilawal House and change its furniture, etc, in the name of modernisation, improvement and development? We are not anti-progress. We are not against modernisation. But if you want to develop Sindh, you do it with the approval of the true owners of Sindh, the indigenous people of Sindh," he said.

"The government wants to take over our land and sell it to the rich. Is Sindh a new Palestine now? And are the indigenous of Sindh new Palestinians? What is Sindh? Do you see it as an orphanage where people come from outside and get themselves registered as voters while the indigenous people are pushed aside and forgotten?" he said.

Coming to June 6 and the protest called by them, Dr Magsi said that their intention was to only hold a peaceful sit-in on the service road outside Bahria Town. "But with the service road closed with barbed wire and containers, we all found ourselves on M-9 facing teargas and rubber bullets, which also injured women and children, who had come to join us in our protest. They had come despite hurdles such as being yelled at and stopped for not wearing masks and the taking out air from the tyres of their vehicles by police. Still, we told them to hold their sit-in wherever they have been stopped in their tracks," he said.

"We question the law enforcement agencies that stopped these peaceful protesters but were missing from the scene when the real trouble started. Why didn't they stop the mob? We kept saying that the troublemakers were not our people, but they are still making arrests from Karachi to Kashmir of people who are a part of the Sindh Action Committee. We are still saying arrest those who were really involved in vandalism that day instead of targeting peaceful writers, artists and activists who feel for Sindh. There are around 30 FIRs registered against these educated people," he said.

Riaz Chandio said that the SAC saluted all those who joined in with them for the peaceful protest and sit-in. "Sadly, they are also facing the brunt of the police excesses now. There is plenty of video footage from that day, which is being erased now. The chief minister of Sindh is also involved in hiding evidence. He is also pointing fingers at us because he is also part of the establishment that has its eye on Sindh's land and Sindh's resources. It's all a big conspiracy against the demography of Sindh," he said.

Advocate Sajjad Ahmed Chandio said that Bahria Town and its unchecked growth had already been called 'illegal' by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. "There is no other example of disobeying court orders anywhere in the world like it has happened here in Pakistan. The Supreme Court's decision should be implemented. The court has said that all construction outside the actual area of Bahria Town is illegal but the people of old goths there are still forcibly being removed from their ancestral lands in the middle of the night as the mighty Malik Riaz grabs more land," he said.

"We have not even witnessed such injustice even in dictatorships of Yahya Khan, Ayub Khan and Ziaul Haq. The spirit of dictatorship has entered the Pakistan Peoples Party now."
(By Shazia Hasan Dawn, 13, 18/06/2021)

Two handlers held as pet dogs maul lawyer in Karachi

Two dog handlers have been arrested as pet dogs attacked and injured a senior lawyer in Defence, it emerged on Monday.

As a lawyers' body demanded immediate action and proper investigation into the case, a senior police officer told [Dawn](#) that the police had taken action by arresting two servants/handlers of the dogs after lodging FIR.

"Some arrests have been made in the case," said South SSP (Investigation), Imran Mirza. The officer added that concerted efforts were under way to arrest a suspect, Daniyal who has fled while his father, Humayun Khan, has already got bail from a local court.

The officer revealed that they have also incorporated Section 324 pertaining to attempted murder in the FIR apart from other relevant sections.

The police and lawyers said that senior advocate Mirza Akhtar Ali, who is father of advocate Taimur Ali Mirza, was injured on the road. He was passing through the area in DHA when Daniyal was standing outside his home along with two pet dogs when the hounds attacked the lawyer on June 16.

"After the attack, the senior advocate was left bleeding and severely injured on the road and neither the owner nor anyone [from] his household helped him or provided medical assistance," said Karachi Bar Association, which condemned the incident through a resolution.

"They left him on the road and ran away." The senior advocate had suffered serious injuries which required emergency extensive surgery and he is currently hospitalized.

The KBA said that they had information that the same dogs had previously also attacked others in such manner.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 22/06/2021)