

NGOs, CBOs INGO



Perween Rehman murder case

The anti-terrorism court adjourned the hearing on Tuesday of Orangi Pilot Project director Perween Rahman's murder case. The hearing was adjourned at the prosecutor's request.

Amjad Hussain, Ayaz Swati, Rahim Swati and other accused appeared before the court.

Counsel for the accused, advocate Abid Zaman said that a joint investigation team (JIT) has been formed to investigate the case on the directives of the Supreme Court. The final arguments are being delayed for the past several months, he said.

The prosecution requested that the case proceedings be discontinued till the JIT report is received.

The court accepted the prosecutor's request and adjourned the hearing till July 27.

The accused have filed bail pleas in the Sindh High Court. According to police, five accused have been arrested in the murder case. The accused killed Rahman in 2013, says police.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 24/07/2019)

Sindh cabinet cancels registration of 4,693 NGOs

The Sindh Cabinet decided to cancel the registration of around 4,693 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on Saturday for violating the rules and regulations prescribed by government. The meeting, which was chaired by Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah, discussed around 38 items on the agenda. The cabinet decided to revoke the powers of inspector of fisheries from Maritime Security Agency (MSA), transferred the powers of appointing the provincial ombudsman from the governor to the Sindh CM, and extended the deadline of the computerisation of arms licenses to December 31, 2019. The provincial government, however, has failed to achieve all its previous targets of computerising weapon licenses in the province.

The meeting, attended by ministers, special assistants and the CM's advisors, was informed about the last decision of the apex committee to keep vigil on NGOs. "Around 10,592 NGOS are registered in the province. We had issued notices to them to clarify their funding, performance and implementation on rules, but hardly 7,414 NGOs responded. After assessing their performance, we have cancelled the registration of 4693," said Adviser to CM on Information, Law and Anti-Corruption Barrister Murtaza Wahab while briefing the media outside the committee room of the Sindh Secretariat.

An official who was privy to the development told The Express Tribune that some NGOs have been receiving funding from international donors and indulge in anti-state activities.

Besides, the meeting decided to amend the rules and ensure transparency in the pension releasing process for retired government employees. "Biometric verification of all pensioners would be done in order to abolish ghost pensioners," said the spokesperson for CM House while referring to the meeting.

Sindh Bank

The performance of Sindh Bank also came under discussion during the meeting. The cabinet decided to grant three billion rupees to Sindh Bank. "Sindh Bank needs funds as all the accounts of its account holders have been frozen," said Wahab adding that the decision to change the Board of Governors of Sindh Bank was also made and the provincial government after consultation with other cabinet members has also decided to merge Sindh Bank and Sindh Leasing Company.

Prosecutor general appointed

Moreover, the cabinet accepted the resignation of the Sindh prosecutor general while approving the appointment of Advocate Dr Fayaz Shah as the new prosecutor general of Sindh.

Wahab who was accompanied by LG Minister Ghani, informed of his government's decision to abolish three per cent sales tax on print media. "CM has also directed the Sindh Revenue Board to immediately issue the notification in this regard. The decision has been taken in light of the financial crises being faced by media these days," he said.

Coal mining project

The meeting, which lasted for over eight hours, also approved coal mining expansion.

The energy department presented the expansion of coal mining as Phase-II of the project. Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh said that the provincial government, a major shareholder with 54.7 per cent shares, made the equity of \$110.4 million. The Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company has embarked upon a plan to launch Phase-II of the project where mining capacity would be doubled to 7.6 MTPA. The cost of Phase-II has been estimated at \$215.9 million, where the equity component is \$67 million.

Renewal of expired leases

The cabinet was told that old leases granted by the defunct Karachi collector during 18th century for building purposes in the old city areas expired in 1962. The renewal of the said leases was made under the Bombay Revenue Code 1879 at a certain rate.

These buildings are located at 23 different locations of the city where thousands of people reside.

The CM said that every year their leases were being renewed which was an unnecessary bother for the owners, therefore he constituted a committee under Revenue Minister Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman, with LG Minister Ghani, Wahab and Sindh Advocate-General as members, to review the existing law and propose new clauses so that the leases could be renewed once and for all for a given period.

Sindh Ombudsman

There has been a dispute in the past over the appointment of the provincial ombudsman. Despite the passage of the 18th Amendment, the Pakistan Peoples Party government allowed Muttahida Qaumi Movement Governor Dr Ishtatul Ebad Khan to appoint the ombudsman. Now, the government has taken back these powers. In this connection, the cabinet observed that in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the provincial ombudsman was being appointed by the CM but in Sindh the governor has the powers to appoint the ombudsman. The cabinet approved the amendment in The Establishment of the Office of Ombudsman for the province of Sindh Act 1991 (Act No.1 of 1992) by replacing the word Governor with the Chief Minister.

Computerisation of arms license

Home Secretary Abdul Kabir Kazi informed the cabinet that there were 1,055,476 arms licenses manually issued in the province.

Despite extending dates for the computerisation five times, only 535,843 licensees have gotten their licenses computerised.

At this the CM said that the date for computerisation of licenses may be extended, for the sixth time, till December 31, 2019, after that all un-computerised licenses would be declared illegal and the arms would be confiscated. The cabinet approved the proposal.

School education reforms

Education Minister Sardar Ali Shah said that there were 49,103 schools in Sindh, of which 44,317 were primary, 2,693 elementary while there were 1776 high schools and 317 higher secondary schools. He admitted that there were only 11,308 schools or around 20 per cent schools, with toilets, boundary walls, electricity, drinking water and other basic facilities. He added that 11 per cent schools, around 5,922 have no facilities while 37,705 or 69 per cent schools with missing facilities.

He added that there were 7,611 shelter-less schools, 10,516 single room schools, 18,507 two-room schools. Moreover, he said, that there were 18,660 schools which were being run by a single teacher and 12,136 schools without any teachers and 11,441 schools with no enrolment – non-viable schools. Around 4.2 million children were out of school, said the education minister.

Education Secretary Qazi Shahid Pervaiz said that 90 per cent teachers of government schools were for arts subjects, and 10 per cent were science teachers. He said that efforts were being made to recruit science, maths and english language teachers. The cabinet was told that 40,000 teachers have been given training but have not shown any visible changes in their teaching methods. Besides, the curriculum was out-dated and needed to be revised.

Disclosing his reform agenda, the education minister said that he has taken two steps – civil society dialogue at Hyderabad and Karachi and school profiling. He said that one or two-room primary schools located in close vicinity were being merged. His other reforms include the decentralisation of primary school management through clustering with one hub school having a Grade BS-17 headmaster, as well as plans to upgrade eligible primary schools to elementary schools and club middle schools with adjacent primary schools to make one elementary school.

The CM directed the education department to establish 300 model schools with the facilities of early childhood classes, transportation facility for female students and female teachers. The cabinet decided to run these schools through outsourcing model.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 04/08/2019)

Who you gonna call? Edhi

Not all superheroes wear capes. In Karachi, you will find them in red shirts with 'Edhi' written in large bold letters across the front. But even if they are not extolled for everything that they do for the people of Karachi, they continue doing their jobs silently, not expecting a word of gratitude or appreciation in return.

With the large gaping void left by the Sindh government, it is institutions like the Edhi Welfare Foundation that have kept the city functioning thus far. Be it the world's largest ambulance service, the cemetery for unclaimed or unidentified bodies, the orphanages or the welfare homes, the EWF has quietly helped the city stay afloat in the absence of political will and apathy.

The latest in their acts of benevolence is the rescue operation initiated by the EWF to get stray dogs off the streets. Over the last couple of months, EWF workers have rescued over 3,000 stray dogs from different areas of the city. "A couple of months ago, we received some calls regarding stray dogs and that is then we decided to start this campaign," the EWF spokesperson, Muhammad Bilal, told The Express Tribune.

Currently, said Bilal, they were receiving around 30 calls from different parts of the city. "There are 12 dedicated workers who catch stray dogs round-the-clock," he added. "The workers have to visit the entire city. It's not an easy task for these boys but they have to address public complaints. And they do it properly," he added.

For years, the Edhi workers have been collecting injured and sick animals from different parts of the city. The animals and birds they rescued included donkeys, horses, cats, crows and black kites. But dogs were a whole new experience. In the beginning,

some of the workers were injured as it was the first time they had attempted to catch stray dogs – and that too, without any training. “They learnt how to handle stray dogs with the passage of time,” he explained.

Once caught, the dog is transported to the Edhi Animal Hostel located on the Super Highway near the Toll Plaza. The injured and sick are treated and neutered before they are let go in open spaces around the main highways. “The healthy ones are also released after 24 to 48 hours,” said Bilal, adding that the EWF did not have the capacity to keep all the animals for a longer period of time.

Confusion

But what if Karachiites didn't have the EWF to count on and had to pin their hopes on the government machinery to which they pay their taxes. When The Express Tribune contacted officials of various government agencies and departments to ascertain whose job it was to control the population of stray dogs, there was only confusion.

“It's not our responsibility,” said Dr Syed Saif-ur-Rehman, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's Metropolitan Commissioner. “There is bit of confusion, but we don't deal this matter,” he clarified.

Explaining the complex system, Dr Rehman said that the District Municipal Corporations (DMCs) are responsible for controlling the population of stray dogs in their respective areas. “Our job is to handle municipal services, including looking after parks, roads, hospitals, libraries and other such activities,” he added.

For his part, an official of the local government department said that the system is neither confusing nor complex. “The officials at the ground level are not clearly briefed on whether they should kill the stray dogs as has been done in the past or a new method is being adopted to control the population,” he added.

The official said that some animal rights activists had raised a hue and cry over the inhumane way of culling dogs and had forced to abruptly stop the old system, without coming up with a formula of dealing with the growing population of stray dogs. “When nobody comes forward, Edhi workers step up to help,” said the official.

Role of the DMCs

There is no helpline set by either the provincial, city or district governments where citizens can register their complaints regarding stray dogs. “I was wondering who to call to catch stray dogs roaming outside my street,” said Muhammad Usman, a resident of Baldia Town. “And the only answer I got was to dial 115 [Edhi's number].”

Usman said that he had lodged a complaint at the Edhi helpline a couple of days ago and hopes that a truck will soon come and catch at least a dozen stray dogs from his neighbourhood. He added that he had also sent a message to his Union Committee member, but had received no response.

The DMC chairpersons seem confused too. “There is a technical issue in the way we are now being told to control the population of stray dogs,” commented Jan Muhammad Baloch, the chairman of Malir DMC. “We were told not to kill stray dogs. Look at the growing population now,” he remarked.

“Yes, it's our job to control the growing population of dogs in our areas,” admitted Baloch. “The drive was halted but we have recently decided to restart it. I have told the boys to bring Gulaab Jamun [a traditional sweet], add a capsule [of poison] to it and feed it to the dogs,” he said, adding that citizens normally call him on his cell phone if they have any complaints. “The uniform system of complaints doesn't exist here,” he said, adding that residents have to approach their public representatives directly.

Like other DMC chairpersons, Baloch is unsure if the new method would be effective in controlling the population of stray dogs. The plan Baloch referred to was devised by the Sindh government on the directives of the Sindh High Court and involves vaccinating stray dogs and neutering them. The plan, according to the local government secretary, Roshan Sheikh, will ensure that there are “no stray dogs in Sindh after five to eight years”.

Baloch, however, is not too optimistic. “We have been hearing about these kinds of methods for years but nothing has happened,” said Baloch. “Such plans are never implemented. Let's see what's going to happen with this one,” he laughed. (By Sameer Mandhro The Express Tribune, 04, 20/11/2019)

Sindh's charitable organisations liable to government regulation

The Sindh Assembly passed a bill on Friday to keep a check on funds and donations collected by charitable organisations and other institutions to ensure that the money is not used for any criminal or terror activities in the province. Moving the ‘Sindh Charities Registration and Regulation Bill 2019’, Sindh Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Mukesh Kumar Chawla said that the law is being passed to make effective provisions for the registration, administration and regulation of charities, fundraising, collection and the utilisation of such funds by charities and other institutions.

The regulatory body

In the bill, there is a provision for the creation of a commission, titled, ‘Charities, Registration and Regulation Commission’ which will have 12 members, including two MPAs nominated by the Sindh Assembly speaker. The commission will discharge its functions, exercise its powers and conduct its proceedings in the prescribed manner. The minister, adviser or special assistant to the chief minister on social welfare will be the chairperson of the commission and in his absence, it may be any other person nominated by the CM.

The provincial government will designate one of the director-generals ranked at Grade 20 from within the social welfare department as the director-general of the commission. The deputed official will also work as the secretary of the commission – responsible for the administration and implementation of decisions. According to the law, the commission will maintain public trust and confidence in charities. It will register, regulate, and sanction fundraising of the charities.

“The commission will ensure that charities and promoters comply with their legal obligations in exercising control and management of the administration of charitable funds,” reads the law. It states that a mechanism for developing a central database for the effective monitoring and evaluation of such organisations, among other technicalities will be developed.

Enacting the law

After the law is implemented in the province, it will be mandatory for all charitable organisation to get registered with the commission. The commission may cancel the registration of such organisations if they commit violations of the provision under this Act or its rules. “If, after evaluation or audit, the commission is satisfied that any charity has failed to comply with the obligations envisaged under the law then the commission can impose fines, not exceeding one million rupees,” states the law. “If any part of any donations collected for any charitable fund is used for any purpose or object other than the purpose for which it was collected, or is otherwise misapplied or misappropriated in any manner shall be deemed to have committed the misuse, misapplications or misappropriation of the charitable fund and shall be liable to punishment of imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, but which shall not be less than six months,” it reads.

Besides, the commission may appoint a charity trustee or any officer or office-bearer of a charity within a period of six months, if such charity fails to remove a trustee involved in moral turpitude, dishonesty or deception or if he/she has been adjudged bankrupt. With regards to the fundraising responsibilities of charity trustees, the law states that a charity trustee shall be responsible for controlling the assets and will work for the protection, proper investment and utilisation of funds ensuring that the charitable funds or property are not misused or allowed to go waste as a result of mismanagement.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 23/11/2019)

Sindh cancels registration of over 7,100 NGOs for not sharing financial records

The move, they said, was part of the government campaign to streamline the data of NGOs across the province — a task that had not been carried out in decades — and in the process it had found out that more than 10,000 these organisations were registered with the regulatory body with most of them enjoying no checks.

Even in some cases the addresses of NGOs' offices, details of their office-bearers and area of their interest were not found in the record, they said.

“There are a total of 10,500 registered NGOs in Sindh,” Sindh Social Welfare Secretary Muhammad Nawaz Shaikh told [\[Dawn\]](#). “We took an initiative and decided to streamline their data, tighten the checks, which are required under the Registration and Control Ordinance, 1961 and monitor their performances or contributions.

10,500 non-governmental organisations are registered in the province

“In the process, we found that there are over 8,000 NGOS which do not share any data, financial records or details of their activities with the regulatory body,” he said.

The situation, he said, prompted action from the government and it made multiple announcements and sent those NGOs several reminders to meet the required formalities but, in most cases, in vain.

Finally, he said, the social welfare department, being the regulatory body, had recently cancelled registration of 7,193 NGOs across Sindh.

As mentioned by the secretary, a majority of the NGOS failed to meet the legal requirements which suggested serious checks on their financial records and activities.

A guideline issued by the social welfare department for the registration of such an organisation stated that audit of financial records and submission of an annual report was a must under the 1961 law.

“An income and expenditure account, which shall be compiled at the case of each financial years and shall be audited by a chartered accountant or auditor or auditors approved by the registration authority and shall be submitted to the said authority within six months of the close of the financial year,” reads Section 9 (C) of the guideline.

Section 10 (2) of the guideline says: “[A] copy of the annual report shall be submitted to the registration authority immediately on its publication.”

Although the Sindh government's move is largely seen as a good initiative for streamlining the data of the NGOs and to regulate their operations properly, experts question the role of the regulatory body which has been ineffective for years in keeping a check on registered organisations in the name of social development.

“We recognise that there is a large number of NGOs doing a wonderful job and making huge contributions in different areas,” said Anis Haroon, a well-known social development campaigner, rights activist and at present a member of the National Commission for

Human Rights. "The situation right now is because of ineffective regulatory measures. The authorities should be proactive and should take regular actions against the organisations not meeting the requirement instead of doing it after years or decades."

Due to ineffective performance of the regulatory body, she said, "fake NGOs" or those made for vested interests also tarnished the image of the organisations genuinely contributing to society and for human development. There was still a gap, which could be filled by good NGOs mainly in education and health sectors of Sindh, she said Haroon.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 16/12/2019)