

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

JANUARY TO JUNE 2017

## SEWERAGE & DRAINAGE



### Urban Resource Centre

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## Removal of encroachments from Mehmoodabad treatment plant ordered

Judicial commission also orders LG secretary and KWSB MD to ensure Haroonabad and Hawkesbay treatment plants are functional within six weeks

The judicial commission investigating the non-provision of clean drinking water, sanitation facilities and a healthy environment to the people of Sindh directed the DIG East, the deputy commissioner and anti-encroachment police on Saturday to ensure that the encroached 40 acres of the Mehmoodabad treatment plant were reclaimed from land grabbers.



The judicial commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro observed that the state of affairs apparently not only pointed out the apathy and negligence on part of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board but also led to the conclusion that the its officials were hands in gloves with the encroachers in the entire scheme.

The deputy commissioner, the DIG and the SSP East appeared before the commission in connection with the encroachment of Mehmoodabad treatment plant land.

DIG East Arif Hanif submitted that the entire treatment plant area was more than 120 acres but the KWSB had entered into an agreement the defunct City District Government Karachi for the allotment of 50 acres for a housing scheme.

He submitted that after the allotment, people started encroaching upon the remaining land of the facility. Currently, 40 more acres were encroached upon.

He submitted that although the KWSB had an inbuilt security system to monitor and watch its installations, but so far its action was confined only to the issuance of some toothless and fruitless notices to wrongdoers without any follow-up.

The DIG East undertook that if any assistance was required by the KWSB for removing the encroachments and reclaiming the land to make the treatment plant functional, he police would be ready to do so.

KWSB sewerage and pumping chief engineer Azam Khan submitted that an FIR against the encroachments was lodged four years ago but he was unaware about what action was taken against land grabbers and currently how many people were illegally occupying the land.

He also admitted that no complaint or report was ever made to the secretary local government or other quarters against the encroachments.

The commission directed the deputy commissioner, the DIG, and the SSP East to immediately take measures to remove the encroachments from the Mehmoodabad treatment plant land and submit a report within a week.

Regarding the allotment of 50 acres land to the defunct CDGK for a housing scheme, the commission issued notices to the federal and provincial law officers to assist it in understanding as to under what law such an agreement could be executed.

The commission was informed that if proper security was provided to the KWSB staff, the treatment plants in Haroonabad and Hawkesbay behind the Mauripur truck stand could be made functional too also given that financial issue was also addressed as per the KWSB Act.

The local government secretary briefed the commission about the upgrading of the treatment plants. The commission observed that the exercise was being carried out since 2011 but nothing had been done yet.

The commission directed the local government secretary and the KWSB managing director to ensure that the Haroonabad and Hawkesbay treatment plants were made functional within six weeks.

On the Mehmoodabad treatment plant, the authorities of the local government and the KWSB submitted that the facility could be made functional within three months if proper security was provided to the staff.

The DIG and SSP East assured the commission that the KWSB staff would be provided protected in accordance with the law for running the facility.

The commission was informed that 200 acres were allocated for a treatment plant in Korangi and that land too could be encroached upon if appropriate steps were not taken to make it functional.

The commission directed the KWSB managing director to produce the records of the Haroonabad, Mehmoodabad and Hawkesbay treatment plants including their functioning, fund allocation and consumption of budget.

The KWSB chief was also directed to inform the commission about initiatives taken by the board to revive these facilities including the details of staff deputed there,

The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency director general, a Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (technical service) official, the local government secretary and the irrigation secretary also filed their statements.

(By Jamal Khurshid The News 13, 15/01/2017)

### **Environmental hazard: Judicial commission inspects toxic water disposal in Kotri**

Like other canals springing from the Kotri Barrage, the canal which supplies water to Karachi from the Indus River continues to be polluted by toxic industrial, municipal and hospital waste water. The contamination occurs mainly in Kotri taluka of Jamshoro district where a combined effluent treatment plant for SITE's industries, treatment plants for municipal waste and hospital waste remain either dysfunctional or non-existent.

On Friday the Supreme Court's (SC) judicial commission on water and sanitation inspected the treatment plant and sites from where poisonous liquids are being released into the KB Feeder Canal. The visit laid bare the inferior toxicity treatment system being practised at the plant, built at a cost of over Rs1 billion on a order given by the Sindh High Court (SHC) in 2010.

It is the same canal which will supply water for the Rs51 billion K-IV project, which was inaugurated in August, 2016, and aims to supply 260 million gallons of water to Karachi per day.

The Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, who heads the commission, to the plant's private operators elicited vague answers. "You are misleading the commission. Be honest," said Hyderabad commissioner Qazi Shahid Pervez to Syed Faisal, a chemical analyst at the plant, when his replies about sudden stoppage of waste water's discharge in the canal from the plant failed to convince the officials. The move was considered to be an act of hiding the scale of pollution.

Water expert Dr Ahsan Siddiqui, whom the SHC has given responsibility of monitoring the water quality of Manchar and Keenjhar lakes daily, pointed out that the plant is devoid of a water testing laboratory. The operator reluctantly admitted that the private operator's lab was located in Karachi.

"The quality check of treated water being released into the canal has to be carried out after every four to five hours," said Sindh Environment and Protection Agency (SEPA) director-general Naeem Ahmed Mughal.

Dr Siddiqui also explained that the plant is failing to carry out chemical oxidation and biological oxidation demand processes, which are quintessential for toxicity treatment. "They are throwing poisonous water into the canal which has become a health and environmental hazard for the people of Jamshoro, Thatta and Karachi as well as Keenjhar Lake."

Mughal said the agency has checked noncompliance of the standards. Pervez and Jamshoro deputy commissioner Munawar Ali Mahesar also informed the commission of having repeatedly told the private operator to address the problem but to no avail.

Advocate Amjad Sehto showed the judge the electricity bill of the plant for December, 2016, which was only Rs32,000. "This makes it evident that they are not actually running the plant."

The commission also visited the point from where a tuberculosis centre's and municipal waste is being discharged into the canal.

The Kotri taluka's 2.7 MGD water filtration plant also appeared dysfunctional as the municipal official admitted their failure and capacity to maintain the plant. The official agreed to a suggestion that the public health engineering department, which built the facility and handed it over to the municipality, should be given the responsibility of maintaining it.

### **Hyderabad**

The commission ordered Liaquat University's hospitals in Hyderabad and Jamshoro to adopt hospital waste management standards recommended by SEPA and to complete the process for constructing incinerators. During a hearing at the SHC's circuit bench in Hyderabad, the commission received complaints of rampant garbage dumping and burning in the populated areas.

The commissioner also informed the judge that Qasimabad Municipal Committee (QMC) was overstaffed with around 300 unnecessary clerical and supervisory staff. It was also disclosed that 18 Muslims are appointed among 209 sanitary workers but they perform duties of computer operator and drivers. Local government minister Jam Khan Shoro, whose younger brother Kashif Shoro is chairperson of the QMC, was blamed for such appointments.

"This is a criminal drain of financial resources," said Pervez, who fired hundreds of contractual staff of Hyderabad Development Authority in June.  
(The Express Tribune 15, 21/01/2017)

## **KWSB, KCB give judicial body contradictory statements**

Water utility contests cantonment board's

claim that no building plan approved sans NOC

A judicial commission investigating into Karachi's water issues heard differing views on the matter of high-rises being erected without acquiring the water utility's no-objection certificate (NOC).



The Karachi Cantonment Board (KCB) said on Wednesday that no plan for a multi-storeyed building was approved unless the developer submitted an NOC issued by the Karachi Water & Sewerage Board (KWSB). The water utility, however, contested the claim.

The judicial body, headed by Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, is looking into the issue of non-provision of potable water, sanitation and healthy environment to the people of Sindh.

KCB Additional CEO Mansoor Alam claimed that to ensure provision of potable water and a working system of solid and liquid waste management in buildings under their jurisdiction, they do not approve any plan in the absence of an NOC. He sought time to submit the certificates issued by the water utility.

On the other hand, KWSB Managing Director Misbahuddin Farid claimed that the cantonment board was following no such procedure. He also sought time to file comments in this regard.

The judicial body directed CEOs of the Clifton, Malir, Faisal and other cantonment boards to explain the system they adopt before they approve a plan for a high-rise in their respective jurisdictions to ensure

availability of potable water and a working sanitation system. The representative of the Defence Housing Authority also sought time to file comments.

The commission directed the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation commissioner to submit a comprehensive report on maintenance of drains falling within the domain of the municipal body.

The Sindh Solid Waste Management Board managing director told the body that his department was tasked with managing solid waste in only the East and South districts and that the district municipal corporations were responsible for the remaining districts. He undertook to file a report on solid waste management in the city.

The judicial commission issued notices to the local government secretary, the municipal commissioners of the Karachi, Central, West, Korangi and Malir districts, and the chief officer of the district council Karachi in the matter of solid waste management.

(The News 13, 26/01/2017)

### **Half of Manora cantonment's sewage being let into sea, commission told**

Half of the Manora cantonment's sewage is going directly into the sea and the remaining is used for gardening and other purposes after recycling.

This was brought to the notice of the judicial commission on water and sanitation by the chief executive officer of the Malir Cantonment Board on Thursday.

The commission, headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro, is looking into reasons why the people are not being provided with clean drinking water and a healthy environment in Sindh.

Manoara Cantonment Board CEO Syeda Imamah Ali submitted that the cantonment board took water from an outside source through a contractor and a water filter plant established by the board.

She stated that half the sewage was being brought into cesspools where after recycling it was utilised for several purposes, including gardening, and remaining was directly falling into the sea.

She said that board was however planning to establish a treatment plant to treat the sewage before letting it into the sea. She said people were being provided with filtered drinking water, but she admitted that water was not being chlorinated in the facility.

The representatives of Karachi, Clifton, Korangi and Faisal cantonments boards filed their statements with regard to procedure being adopted by the boards for approving high-rise buildings.

They submitted that cantonment boards approved building plans only after the requisite NOCs were issued by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. They also submitted copies of some NOCs issued by the KWSB.

The KWSB managing director however raised an objection to the NOCs submitted by the cantonment boards, saying that they were not NOCs but a check list. He sought time to file comments on the statements submitted by the cantonment boards.

Representatives of the Defence Housing Authority said that none of the waterfront high-rise buildings had been occupied and would not be allowed to be used unless the community/municipal services had been provided. He also undertook before the commission that occupancy of any such building would not be allowed till the municipal/utility services were there.

The local government secretary filed statements along with annexures regarding extension/improvement of an urban drainage scheme in Jacobabad and overstaffing and appointments of sanitary workers. The commission directed the local government secretary to submit a report on solid waste management

solutions in four districts of Karachi after consulting with his high-ups about an immediate working plan to get rid of solid waste.  
(The News 20, 27/01/2017)

### **‘No demolition along Gujjar Nala till payment of compensation’**

The local and municipal authorities on Monday assured the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) that there would be no further demolition under anti-encroachment campaign to clear the 28-kilometre-long Gujjar Nala till payment of compensation to the affected residents.

However, they admitted that 90 per cent of the operation had already been done.

During a hearing called by the NCHR presided over by its chairman retired Justice Ali Nawaz Chohan, a number of affected people complained that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), during an operation against encroachments, had demolished their leased structures and had not paid the compensation yet.

“On such complaints, the NCHR chairman specially came to Karachi and summoned the KMC officers concerned,” said Anis Haroon, Sindh member of the NCHR, who along with another member, Fazila Aliyani, assisted the chairman at the hearing.

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“Senior officials of the KMC’s anti-encroachment wing informed the commission that they have approached the higher authorities for payment of compensation to the affected families. They have also held out assurance that there would be no more demolitions unless that particular issue (payment of compensation) is settled.”

She said the KMC officers admitted that they had demolished around 90pc of structures along the nala and those also included the leased ones.

“Actually, decisions are not made in the first hearing,” she said. “Parties from both sides apprised the commission of their grievances and positions. In the next phase, the commission would take this matter up at the higher level and call senior officials of the land department and the chief secretary.”

(Dawn 18, 07/02/2017)

### **‘The scale and severity of Karachi’s sewerage problem is enormous’**

Despite contributing significantly to the provincial and national exchequers for decades, Karachi has not been able to receive the kind of political ownership it deserves. Matters have become so bad that today, the city could be best described as an urbanised slum dotted with overflowing gutters and heaps of garbage. It won’t be an exaggeration to say that the city has no capacity to bear even a single day’s light rain as it can easily disrupt public life.

Faiza Ilyas recently spoke to Dr Noman Ahmed, head of the department of architecture and urban planning at the NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, to look into the severity and scale of the sewerage problem as well as to seek recommendations to improve the situation.

**Q: How would you explain the scale and severity of the sewerage problem that is closely linked to public health safety?**

**A:** I believe the scale and severity of the sewerage problem is enormous. There are several dimensions to it. The overall approach to physical planning of our neighbourhoods, densification and re-patterning of the existing neighbourhoods and all such buildings and complexes that produce sewage need to be examined.

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The pre- and post-partition Karachi is laid down along the geographical thresholds of the coastline, natural drains, leftover hilly terrain and later the north-south and east-west arterial streets. The water supply and sewerage network also follows these precepts.

However, there are serious violations of topographic requirements to make sewage flow from north to south through gravity.

Ad hoc additions and attachments to the laid-down sewerage [system] have played havoc with the normal ejection of sewage towards the south.

Inaccurate physical planning did not let the sewerage treatment plants connect with the actual flow of sewage, much of which is led through nullahs or storm-water drains.

**Q: Could you explain the causes behind the collapsed sewerage system of the city?**

**A:** An important cause is the development of a range of projects without planning and integration with an overall strategy. The various government departments prepare development schemes and submit them to the relevant government agency for budget allocation. Thereafter, the successful schemes are constructed, without an overall relationship with the plan.

**Q: Has this situation developed on account of prolonged administrative inefficiency over decades or is it a recent phenomenon?**

**A:** Yes. There have been too many changes in the local administration during the last half century. The changes are still going on.

**Q: Would you like to comment on the way the KWSB is dealing with the situation?**

**A:** There has been very little emphasis by the KWSB on improving the sewerage [system]. While many internationally assisted projects led to hardware improvement such as capacity enhancement of the plants, no comprehensive effort has been made by the board to deal with the increasing demands and modernisation of service.

**Q: Please recommend some steps for improving the sewerage system of the city.**

**A:** The utility's board may be reconstituted to make it functional, practical and relevant in respect to providing policy guidance to the KWSB. Addition of relevant stakeholders such as civil society organisations related to water and sanitation, prominent professionals, representatives of trade bodies and developers may also be considered.

Recovery of bills may be considered as a packaged service for targeted outsourcing. It may help raise the much-needed operational revenue for the board.

The KWSB must make efforts to acquire a brand name and status whereby competent engineers and management professionals may find it attractive to join the board.

(Dawn 17, 09/02/2017)

## **Industries unwilling to set up treatment plants**

Amid a dispute between industrialists and the Sindh Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) over the construction of effluent treatment plants, the losers are the citizens and the environment.

Industrialists in Karachi have threatened to shut down their industries in the city and eventually move them abroad if Sepa does not stop the action against them.

In the last month-and-a-half, the environmental watchdog shut down 30 industries and issued notices to 300 others for lack of treatment plants and releasing untreated effluent and wastewater directly into the Lyari River.

### **Industrialists decry SEPA's action against factories**

According to Jawed Bilwani, spokesperson of the All Karachi Industries Association, industrialists are ready to cooperate with the government but believe the treatment meted out to them is very harsh.

Responding to a question about installing effluent treatment plants at each factory, Bilwani told The Express Tribune that the Sindh government had already announced construction of four Combined Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) in SITE, Korangi, North Karachi and the Super Highway. He said the PC-1 was prepared at the start of 2016 at a cost of Rs11 billion.

However, if industrialists install effluent treatment plant themselves, which are costly and require a lot of space, and later the government also installs their announced CETPs then our investment will go to waste, he said.

Bilwani said it is better for the government to install these plants on their own or at least inform industrialists whether or not they plan to do it. These laws are new, while our industries are older than the creation of Pakistan therefore it will take time for us to adjust with new law, he added.

### **Hyderabad hospital gets 'closure orders' for flouting environmental protection laws**

Sepa's action against industries has been spurred by the Supreme Court.

According to National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH) president Muhammad Naeem Qureshi, the citizens are suffering due to the negligence of both industrialists and the Sindh government.

He added that this is the time for the government to draw a line and announce the construction of their own treatment plant or else bind industrialists to install their own.

What Sepa is doing is just saving itself from the Supreme Court so that during the course of the hearing it will be able to show its performance, he claimed. They should focus on long-term planning but that is never their priority, lamented Qureshi.

### **Saving The Environment: Ghotki DC inaugurates plantation drive**

Fifty million gallons of sewerage is being dumped into the sea daily and we have turned this blue water black, he said, adding that the dark grey sand of Clifton beach is an example of this.

He pointed out the dearth of marine life within a 20 nautical mile radius of the beach, adding that this is affecting the seafood business and the ecosystem. It could reach a 50 nautical mile radius if we continue to ignore it, he warned.

### **SEPA version**

Sepa's director-general said that they are taking action against the industries who continue to spread pollution in the city. He added that a few industrialists are ready to install effluent treatment plants but those who are not willing have to come under the law.

He added whatever action Sepa has taken is according to the powers conferred to it under Section 21 of the Sindh Environmental Protection Act, 2014.

Talking about the CETPs, he said the government will work on its end but there is a major responsibility on the industrialists as well. He said the CETP construction is in process.

### **Winds of change: 'Climate change leading to environmental disasters'**

#### **Rift between two governments**

According to Karachi Water and Sewerage Board official Saleem Siddiqui, who, along with ministry of industries developed the PC-1 of the proposed CETPs, the Sindh government is very keen to take up the project but there are some delays from the federal government.



On the other hand, industries secretary Abdul Raheem Soomro said the project is supposed to be initiated on a 50/50 basis as its cost is going to be shared by Sindh and federal governments.

He added that the project is supposed to be completed in three years but judging by the federal government's attitude, they are unconcerned about a city that earns them trillions annually.

He said the project file was forwarded five months ago and has been lying with climate change secretary Abu Akif, who is supposed to forward it to the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) which comes under the federal ministry of planning, development and reform.

(By SHEHARYAR ALI The Express Tribune 15, 03/03/2017)

## **Eco unfriendly: KWSB draws ire over plan to uproot trees**

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) should not blame their inefficiency on the trees that provide oxygen to the city and should instead focus on enhancing their own system, said the deputy director of the parks and horticulture department of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, Nadeem Hanif.



He was speaking to The Express Tribune in response to a press statement issued by the KWSB where its managing director Misbahuddin Farid demanded chopping off trees along the routes of its pipelines.

In the press statement released on Friday, Farid demanded the municipal authorities, including cantonment boards, remove eucalyptus, conocarpus and other trees as their roots have penetrated underground water pipelines, causing hurdles in water supply. He also said that they have found 25 to 30 foot-long roots in the pipelines, therefore the trees above these pipelines should be immediately removed.

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### **KWSB to set up own power plant**

However, Hanif was of the view that it takes 10 to 15 years for a tree to grow and cutting them in a single day for such a thing is very painful for him. He said he is worried about the number of trees that have been chopped up in the past years in the name of development work.

He added that God knows what is coming this summer, as instead of increasing plantation, greenery has been reduced in the name of development work. We will fight such actions at any cost and will demand the water board either fix their pipelines or replace them but we will not sacrifice our trees, he vowed.

Farid said KWSB has written to the authorities to remove the trees immediately and threatened that the KWSB would take action if nothing was done.

We are not against trees but eucalyptus specifically spreads its roots towards moisture, such as our pipelines, he explained, adding that it should be removed immediately, as well as other problematic trees. Farid point blank refused to participate in a plantation campaign as a conciliatory gesture for those opposing the removal of the trees.

### **Saving The Environment: Ghotki DC inaugurates plantation drive**

Horticulturist and ecologist Rafiul Haq said the situation has emerged due lack of planning. The KWSB should point out problematic trees and their location and later the relevant department should remove them in such a way that they can be replanted elsewhere.

However, he said that usually people find situations like this as an opportunity and chop down trees for their own interest, which should not happen. The relevant authorities should ensure that only trees that are causing problems are removed, said Haq.

He explained that while there are types of trees, such as eucalyptus, which penetrate the ground vertically and can easily pierce concrete pipelines. However, we should also learn more about trees before planting them and focus on trees with roots that grow horizontally, he said.

### **Clean environment: G-B campaign to fight pollution**

Sharing his views on urban planning, chairperson of NED University's department of architecture and planning Dr Noman Ahmed said authorities should focus on finding alternatives to removing trees, KWSB should also replace its older pipelines and should adopt modern technology like replacing the concrete pipelines with PVC pipes, as many countries have also adopted this.

He added that no roots can penetrate PVC pipes and no one will be able to create illegal connections from a PVC pipeline, as a small hole can damage the whole pipeline, therefore PVC has a lot of benefits.

He was of the view that this will help them in the long run, as step-by-step we should improve our existing system.

(By SHEHARYAR ALI The Express Tribune 13, 05/03/2017)

## **SC orders removal of KWSB managing director, secretaries**

Supreme Court (SC) ordered the provincial government on Monday to immediately remove three officers, including Karachi's water board chief and two secretaries, for holding posts they are ineligible for.

Apart from the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing director Misbahuddin Farid, the apex court ordered removal of the non-cadre officers: Parkash Lal, who was holding the acting charge of law secretary, and Ahmed Junaid Memon, who was working as irrigation secretary.

A three-judge bench, headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim, directed the provincial chief secretary to appoint 'eligible' officers as KWSB chief, and secretary for the law and irrigation department by Tuesday (today).

### **Change of guard: Sheikh given charge of KWSB after Farid's ouster**

The apex court's bench, which also comprised justices Qazi Faiz Isa and Faisal Arab, was hearing a case on poor supply of potable water and deteriorating sanitation conditions in Sindh at SC's Karachi Registry.

The judges had resumed the hearing to see the report submitted by a SC-appointed judicial commission to inquire into the causes and reasons of water scarcity, sanitation deterioration and its impact on the environment.

During the proceedings, the additional secretary of the provincial services department, Sohail Qureshi, pointed out that Farid was illegally holding a technical post despite being a non-technical person. Farid fairly conceded he was not a cadre officer but was posted under the SC order on grounds that it was a technical post.

### **KWSB to set up own power plant**

Justice Hani observed perhaps, at the relevant time, it was not brought to the court's notice that the MD was not a technical post but was an administrative office notified as cadre post by the Sindh government. The bench directed the provincial chief secretary to appoint an eligible cadre officer as the chief of KWSB immediately.

The judges confronted advocate-general Barrister Zamir Ghumro about non-performance of the law department, which was being run on the acting charge basis by an officer, who was not qualified to hold the post of law secretary.

Justice Hani observed that all the provincial secretaries were notified as cadre officers and the Sindh government cannot post a non-cadre officer as secretary. Nothing that the law secretary's office was

vacant for several years, the bench also ordered the chief secretary to immediately appoint any cadre officer to the post by Tuesday (today).

“Likewise, the office of the secretary irrigation is also an administrative post, but is held by a non-cadre officer,” Justice noted, directing the CS to appoint any cadre officer to the post of irrigation secretary by Tuesday.

### **Improving water supply, sanitation**

In December last year, the court formed the commission, headed by a sitting judge of the Sindh High Court, to conduct the inquiry on a day-to-day basis and submit a report within six weeks.

At the outset, a comprehensive report, containing 130 pages, supported by documents was submitted by SHC’s Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, which was taken on record.

The judges directed the office to display the report on its website since this was a public interest matter. With the court’s permission, a video prepared by petitioner Shahab Osto was also shown in the courtroom showing the state of water, disposal of sewage and waste in different cities was shown to the officers concerned.

The judges noted that no one disputed that the video did not accurately depict the dismal prevailing state of affairs.

Farid informed the bench that there were three sewerage treatment plants installed at Mehmoodabad, Shershah and Mauripur in Karachi. To this, petitioner Usto pointed out that all three plants have not been working for the last 23 years. A sewerage treatment plant’s functioning life is 80 to 100 years, he added. Farid replied that the sewerage treatment plant at Shershah was not working due to lack of repairs.

### **Water hydrant case: Sindh High Court summons KWSB managing director**

“Do you know where a sewerage system was introduced in the world,” Justice Qazi Faiz Isa asked the provincial officers, who were unable to answer. “It was in Sindh, at Moen Jo Daro,” he told them.

Meanwhile, the local government secretary said the land of Mehmoodabad sewerage treatment plant had illegally been leased to individuals by the former city nazim, Syed Mustafa Kamal.

The bench directed AG Ghumro to file a reply on behalf of the provincial government on the inquiry commission’s report. Ghumro sought time to go through the report and submit a reply.

It also directed AG Ghumro to visit all the water filtration and sewerage treatment plants in Karachi along with the KWSB chief and the petitioner and submit details about the current status of the plants along with photographs by Wednesday.

### **Poor performance**

The judges confronted AG Ghumro on the poor performance of departments being run by officers on acting charge.

The bench remarked that all the secretaries are cadre officers so the government cannot post any non-cadre officer on such posts.

They observed that the present law secretary was holding the acting charge of the department for a long time.

“We, therefore, direct that the chief secretary shall immediately appoint any cadre officer to the post of the law secretary by tomorrow,” ordered Justice Hani, who was heading the bench. “Likewise, the secretary irrigation’s post is also administrative post. The chief secretary shall appoint any cadre officer on the post by tomorrow,” he added.

### **Sukkur's urban services shock judges**

The Supreme Court judges were shocked to learn that the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC), which was established by the Sindh government on a loan of \$500 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) back in 2009 or 2010, had failed to perform its functions.

They were rather surprised to know that the corporation was established by the taluka and district nazims, who had inked the agreement with the foreign lending agency.

Justice Qazi Faiz Isa observed the officers failed to produce a copy of the agreement signed between NSUSC and ADB. AG Ghumro requested for one week to produce a copy of the agreement.

"Time can be given on one condition that you give an assurance that all the provincial secretaries will drink water from taps till then," remarked Justice Isa, addressing the top provincial law officer, who only smiled in return.

The bench directed the AG to submit details, containing information about the mode and manner in which NSUSC had disbursed and utilised the funds.

(By Naeem Sahoutara The Express Tribune 13, 07/03/2017)

### **SC bench orders removal of MD KWSB**

The Supreme Court bench directed the chief secretary to immediately appoint an eligible cadre officer as managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) after MD Misbahuddin Farid conceded that he was not a cadre officer but was posted on the orders of the court on the ground that it was a technical post.

The bench observed: "Perhaps, at the relevant time, this was not brought to the notice of this court that MD KWSB is not a technical post but it is an administrative office notified as cadre post by the Sindh government".

It ordered: "Therefore, we direct the chief secretary of Sindh to appoint any eligible cadre officer as MD of KWSB immediately."

(Dawn 19, 07/03/2017)

### **Form committee to resolve water scarcity, sanitation issues, SC tells Sindh govt**

The Supreme Court (SC) directed on Wednesday the Sindh government to constitute a committee comprising experts to resolve issues relating to scarcity of clean drinking water and deteriorating sanitation conditions in the province.



A three-judge bench, headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim, passed this order while hearing a case relating to non-provision of potable water, terrible sanitation conditions and its impact on the environment in the province. Also comprising justices Qazi Faiz Isa and Faisal Arab, the bench was hearing the matter at the SC's Karachi registry. The chief secretary has been directed to propose names of the officers and experts to be included in the committee by Monday.

At the outset, the Karachi Water and Sanitation Board's (KWSB) deputy managing-director (MD) presented a report regarding the current status of water filtration and sewerage treatment plants in Karachi.

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#### **Water supply: Probe likely against Sindh high-ups**

From the report, the judges pointed out that two out of three sewerage treatment plants in Karachi had been lying dysfunctional for a long time but no steps were taken for their repair.

The head of the bench, Justice Hani, observed that the act of not making those plants functional was criminal negligence on part of the KWSB officials and others concerned.

With utmost shock, he noted from the report that the KWSB top management had not met even once in the past seven years. He asked the officials what else could be more unfortunate than the failure of the top management to meet even once in seven years.

The KWSB official conceded that the staffers at the filtration plants were not performing their duties properly. He further admitted that some non-chemists were posted at the laboratories.

#### **Court orders: Commission wants water quality testing, measurement details**

Justice Isa told the officers that the report of the judicial commission had reflected a shocking state of affairs but the water and sewerage utility authorities were still sleeping.

The bench members came down hard on former KWSB MD Misbahuddin Farid for not performing his obligations and questioned what hindered him from taking action against officials who were not performing their jobs.

Justice Hani observed that no one can consume tap water because people lack faith that the water utility was supplying them clean water.

Commission wants five-year records of water, sanitation schemes

He told the officers that since the issue of water supply was related to the lives of people, it cannot be compromised at all.

The provincial chief secretary, Rizwan Memon, assured the court that the provincial government was ready to provide funds, whatsoever, required for the provision of potable water to the people in the province.

The bench directed the chief secretary to propose names of the officers and experts to be included in the committee by Monday, March 12.

#### **LG secretary told to submit Sindh's garbage disposal plan by Jan 30**

During the proceedings, Memon produced notifications regarding removal of the two secretaries of the law and irrigation departments and the KWSB MD for being ineligible to hold the posts. He said the three officers were relieved in compliance of the court order.

The chief secretary said an officer, Iftikhar Shalwani, was posted as the secretary of the law department. He further said the secretary of education department (schools), Jamal Mustafa Syed, was given the additional charge of the irrigation secretary while the local government secretary, Ramzan Awan, had been given the additional charge of KWSB MD.

The bench told the chief secretary to ensure that permanent charge of these departments was given to competent and eligible officers. The chief secretary said there was a dearth of eligible officers at the moment and assured that qualified officers will be posted on these posts on permanent basis within a couple of days.

#### **Potable water and sanitation: Judicial commission finds fault with reports**

Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar, who appeared in the court, said there was a lack of interest and will on part of the provincial government in addressing the civic problems of Karachi. The performance of the KWSB in the last eight years is equal to zero, he added.

The bench inquired from the mayor whether amenity plots could be leased out. Akhtar informed the judges that in the past, amenity plots had been leased out and said he had sought explanation from the officials concerned in this regard.

The petitioner, Shahab Osto, said that 50 acres of land belonging to the Mehmoodabad sewerage treatment plant had been illegally allotted, of which 40 acres had been encroached. He said the mafia was also eyeing the remaining 30 acres other than the 50 acres allotted illegally of the plant's land.

### **Judicial commission: 16 civic bodies to submit details on potable water supply**

The judges inquired whether or not citizens who had built houses over illegally leased amenity land of the treatment plant could be given alternative lands.

Akhtar replied that alternative land could be given but financial compensation could not be given. However, he said, removal of illegal occupants always becomes a serious issue.

Justice Hani observed that non-functioning of the treatment plant, too, was a serious human issue, adding that the whole department was responsible for illegal lease of the plant's land to the individuals.

The bench directed the KWSB authorities to make the Mehmoodabad sewerage treatment plant functional immediately and submit a report in the court.

(The Express Tribune 13, 09/03/2017)

## **SC orders urgent revamping of Karachi's sewage treatment plants**

Asks Sindh AG to explain why NSUSC, a private company, was formed to supply water and dispose of sewage and solid waste in eight districts of province



The Supreme Court directed the chief secretary on Wednesday to ensure the revamping of sewage treatment plants and urgently take steps for the centralised monitoring of filter plants, their maintenance and the training of the staff there.

Hearing a petition seeking the provision of clean drinking water and safe environment to the citizens of Sindh, a three-member bench of the apex court headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim observed that it was unfortunate that citizens could not drink tap water because of their lack of confidence in the authorities and poor people were compelled to use contaminated water, causing the outbreak of hepatitis and other diseases.

Chief secretary Rizwan Memon submitted a compliance report before the court mentioning that the education secretary Jamal Mustafa Syed and Iftikhar Ahmed Shalwani had been appointed the irrigation and law secretaries respectively.

He also submitted that local government secretary Mohammad Ramzan Awan was handed over the charge of the acting managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board.

The court directed the chief secretary to appoint a permanent secretary in the irrigation department.

Advocate general Sindh Zamir Ghumro submitted a report about his visits to filter and sewage plants and their current statuses.

The court was informed by petitioner Shahab Usto that he had visited filter and sewage plants along with the advocate general Sindh, the KWSB MD and a water expert. He submitted that these plants needed major overhauling of their facilities, a centralised monitoring system and training of their staff.

The court took exception to the sewage treatment plants in Karachi not operating and directed the KWSB authorities to ensure that they were revamped and made functional without any delay.

The petitioner submitted that 450 million gallons of sewage was being disposed of in the sea without any treatment, affecting the marine environment.

The court directed the chief secretary to address the issue of the encroachments on the Mehmoodabad treatment plant by giving alternate space or compensation to the affected families.

The court observed that amenity land was leased out to the people affected by the Lines area project and the entire city was facing difficulties because of such actions. The court observed that the former KWSB MD had not taken action against the employees who were responsible for the treatment plants not operating.

The chief secretary assured the court that a committee would be formed for the revamping of the treatment plants as well as steps for a centralised monitoring system of filter plants, buying the required equipment and the training of the staff.

Mayor Karachi Waseem Akhtar told the court that a KWSB board meeting was held after the gap of seven years just to approve water connections for high-rises in Clifton and there was no discussion over the supplying of clean water to citizens and the improvement of the sewerage system.

#### NSUSC

The court also questioned the role of the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) for executing the function of municipal administration and asked as to how a private company could be created for supplying water and disposing of sewage and solid waste in eight districts of the province.

The petitioner submitted that the organisation was created by obtaining \$500 million from the Asian Development Bank, but it had not benefited the public. Instead, sub-soil water in these eight districts had become further contaminated.

The advocate general Sindh submitted that a recent meeting of the Sindh Cities Improvement Programme had decided to drop Larkana and Shikarpur from the NSUSC coverage area.

The court asked the advocate general as to why money was being spent on NSUSC projects despite even though the Asian Development Bank had expressed concerns over its operations.

The court expressed dissatisfaction over the affairs of the NSUSC and asked as to why its audit report had not been produced before it.

The court observed that such schemes should be executed by the government, monitored by local councils and maintained by relevant departments.

The court directed the chief secretary to stop the disbursement of money for NSUSC projects and submit a report after instructions from the government to transfer its projects to the public health department.  
(By Jamal Khurshid The News 13, 09/03/2017)

### **KWSB comes under fire over Haleji Lake project**

A Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) project aimed at reducing the city's water shortfall by utilising the 'highly polluted' water of Haleji Lake drew criticism from stakeholders at a public hearing on Wednesday.

The public hearing was held at a hotel to discuss the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the Rs6bn project titled 'Additional 65 million gallons a day Water Supply Scheme from Haleji Lake to Pipri, Karachi'.

The project, however, lacks provision for a treatment/filtration system and the strategy to address the challenges posed by seepage from an effluent-carrying channel, the Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD), which runs along the highly polluted Haleji Lake, a freshwater body in Thatta district.

The KWSB project, which doesn't have any provision for a system to treat the waste water it will generate, was described as 'half-baked' by an official of the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) present at the public hearing.

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The EIA report of the KWSB project was prepared by the Environmental Management Consultants (EMC), Pakistan, Private Limited.

While appreciating the fact that the project will enhance the supply to the water-starved city and help rehabilitate the polluted lake, which comes under the jurisdiction of three different departments of the government (KWSB, wildlife, and irrigation departments), stakeholders at the public hearing questioned KWSB's wisdom of not making treatment mechanism part of the Rs6bn project. The three government departments, they said, equally share the blame for the lake's destruction.

Strangely enough, no comprehensive data about the present quality of the Haleji Lake was shared at the programme. The KWSB attracted strong criticism at the hearing often with reference to a recent report of a judicial commission that had highlighted serious gaps in operation of KWSB and Sepa.

Inclusion of a separate treatment system, it was said, was also necessary given the fact that the KWSB presently had no capacity either to properly chlorinate water or treat waste water as was found by the judicial commission.

"Highly contaminated water from the Haleji Lake will pollute supplies coming from other sources," said a participant in the proceedings.

The EMC representatives appeared to have lacked confidence on their water quality data that they had acquired while preparing the EIA report of the Haleji Lake project, as they preferred not to share its details with the audience.

One major concern about the project pertained to seepage from the RBOD that ran in close proximity to the freshwater lake — a Ramsar site that used to be called a birds' paradise — and it was said that the drain posed serious threat to the proposed project.

"Studies have shown that the RBOD and the Left Bank Outfall Drain have played havoc with the province and have turned all its wetlands into wastelands. No environmental impact assessments of these drains have ever been done," said Saquib Ejaz Hussain, an environmental consultant, while calling for an independent monitoring of the proposed KWSB project.

## **Irrigation dept's input**

According to him, the project shouldn't be initiated unless the irrigation department, responsible for releasing water into the Haleji Lake and looking after the RBOD, was taken on board and a solution to the drain seepage was found.

Members of the audience also questioned the need of the project and said that instead of taking up a new project, the KWSB should have spent money to plug water leakage and theft. Responding to the concerns expressed at the hearing, KWSB project director Sikandar Ali Zardari claimed that the project would revive the lake's glory and benefit Karachiites facing water shortage.

## **Lake cleaning**

"Cleaning of the lake has been initiated and the level of total dissolved solids (TDS) has reduced from 1,800 to 800. The lake is being continuously washed and its water quality will improve," he said.

The project director added that the existing infrastructure for filtering/treatment would be utilised for the water to be received from Haleji Lake.

The KWSB installations would be upgraded and strengthened to supply clean drinking water to the city, he said in reply to a question.



Syed Nadeem Arif of the EMC said that it was just a pipeline laying project and the EIA report only addressed the issues related to it.

Public hearing is a legal requirement under Sepa regulations.  
(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn 17, 23/03/2017)

## #FixIt campaigner is now in Malir

#FixIt campaigner Alamgir Khan has taken to Malir this time – he is spending his days and nights near District and Sessions Court, Malir. His demand is that the road leading to the National Highway be immediately repaired.



Khan, who gained fame after his #FixIt campaign in which he drew stencils of the former chief minister of Sindh, is now demanding the immediate construction of the dilapidated portion of this road, from Malir Kala Board till Quaidabad, which is a patch of 4.5 kilometres.

Earlier on, Khan has also staged a sit-in at University Road, in which he demanded the construction of the thoroughfare. Two months later, work finally began on University Road.

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### Police thrash PTI activists calling for police reforms

In Malir, Khan started the protest on Friday and plans to sit until Monday.



Talking about the thoroughfare in Malir, Khan told The Express Tribune that repair work on this road should have completed years ago. He lamented that work begins on this road but is left incomplete each time, leaving the road in an even worse condition for the commuters. He said that work was supposed to be completed here in the end of 2016 but there is no sign of any work as yet.

According to Khan, the road leads the commuters to every part of the country as it connects with the National Highway. Most of the heavy traffic also passes from here, he said. “But sadly, this road, which is the entrance of the city for the people who visit Karachi from other cities, depicts an image of a disaster,” he said.



No one from the government has contacted us yet, regretted Khan, adding that they have been sitting there from Friday and can even extend it if the government does not respond.

### ‘PTI looks to sky, PML-N on roads’

“We are also considering the option of bringing the traffic to halt but there are a few universities here and we do not want to create problems for the students,” he said. “However, if the government does not pay attention, then every option is open for us.”

Khan said the local government representatives of Malir blame Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar but this is not right. “The mayor has no power whereas the responsibility of the construction of the road is that of the Sindh government,” he said. “We have no political agenda. However, the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has a vote bank here. The local body chairman of Malir belongs to the party. Even then, they are not concerned about the area.” He added that the locals of the area visit them on a daily basis along with their families out of support. “They also provide us with food and water.”



Owais Ahmed Khan, a resident of the area, told The Express Tribune that they have no hope from the government as the piles of sand and mud have been lying here for years. “We have to cross on our motorcycles and cars from this area, which is more like an off-road track,” he said. “Only God can help us as the rulers cannot feel the problems we have to bear on a daily basis.”

### **Roads in Pakistan remain dangerous for pedestrians**

Another resident of Kala Board, Jam Karamat, said he regrets voting for PPP. "My whole family had voted for them but there is nothing for us from them," he said. "We will consider voting for someone else. It is decided that we will not vote [for the PPP] as they do not care about us."  
(By SHEHARYAR ALI The Express Tribune 14, 08/05/2017)

### **Police stops construction on KWSB land, arrest eight security guards**

Police arrested eight security guards employed by two private builders as they were barred from starting illegal construction on a land of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) on Karaz Road.

SSP East Faisal Abdullah said after the KWSB informed the police about start of construction work on its land on late Thursday night, the Sharea Faisal DSP and its SHO reached the site and arrested a security guard of one of the two builders, who claim to be the owner of the land.

KWSB staff also reached the site and filled the ditches dug by the first builder's workers.

On Friday morning, the second builder came to the site along with his security guards and stopped Karachi Water and Sewerage Board staff from its work and resorted to aerial firing.

When the police was called in, the Sharea Faisal DSP and its SHO again reached the location and arrested seven security guards of the second builder.

Sharea Faisal SHO Israr Afridi said the case of

the ownership of the land was pending before the Sindh High Court (SHC), and the two private builders were claiming that they were the real owners of the land.

The police have

registered an FIR on the complaint of Karachi

Water and Sewerage Board engineer Irfan against the eight arrested private guards.

However, the KWSB official claim that the land belongs to the water board, saying that high pressure lines are passing under.

(The News 20, 20/05/2017)

### **KWSB chief told to explain why he ignored judicial body's orders**

Commission seeks reason for lack of implementation on recommendations for laying new pipelines and revamping old water distribution infrastructure

A judicial commission on water and sanitation directed the chief of the water utility on Saturday to explain why he had failed to implement the body's recommendations with regard to laying new pipelines and revamping old water distribution infrastructure across the city.

The commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro was informed by Planning & Development (P&D) Secretary Shoaib Siddiqui that a meeting of all stakeholders had deliberated over building projects to treat effluents before dumping them into rivers and the sea, but the conference had failed to make a final decision.

The projects include construction of the Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD), five combined effluent treatment plants (CETPs) and the S-III sewerage project.

The managing director of the Karachi Water & Sewerage Board (KWSB) informed the judicial body that 330 million gallons per day (mgd) of chlorinated water was being supplied to the people on a daily basis, though it was mixed with unchlorinated water in the process ahead.

The KWSB chief also told the commission that the quantity of 250mgd of chlorinated water being supplied had been increased to 330mgd.

He said rehabilitation work on filter plants was in full swing, adding that chlorinated and filtered water would be supplied to the citizens shortly.

However, the KWSB chief was unable to satisfy the commission as to why the treatment plants TP-I and TP-III had not been made functional by the deadline issued by the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, Health Secretary Dr Fazlullah Pechuho told the judicial body that incinerators had not been installed at all public hospitals, but the government was in the process of installing them at the earliest.

He assured the commission that they would ensure that all the private hospitals and laboratories enforced the hospital waste management rules. — PPI

News Desk adds: On May 6, the body had directed the federal and provincial governments to remove hurdles in resuming work on the RBOD, the CETPs and the S-III project.

P&D Chairman Mohammad Waseem and Secretary Siddiqui told the commission about the stand-off between the federal and Sindh governments with regard to the important projects.

They said both parties had a contrary stance regarding financial liability of the schemes, but they agreed to convene a meeting to reach an amicable solution and assured the commission that the outcomes of the consultation would be presented on May 20.

Representatives of public and private hospitals had submitted their reports on implementation of the hospital waste management rules and provision of potable water at the health facilities.

The health department's representative also sought a week's time to submit a detailed report. Taking the hospitals' report on record, the commission ordered them to take action against officials responsible for any possible violations.

Petitioner Shahab Usto said the health department was yet to implement the court's order regarding installation of incinerators at public hospitals.

The KWSB chief had submitted a progress report on measures to improve the quality of water and said 345mgd of water had been chlorinated and assured the commission that the water quality would be improved. The commission directed him to submit a progress report on rehabilitation of treatment plants TP-I and TP-II and inform the body if they were made functional.

(The News 13, 21/05/2017)

### **KWSB to issue show-cause notices to ghost employees**

The judicial commission directed on Saturday the managing-director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) to issue show-cause notices to ghost employees of the water utility's laboratories.



Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court (SHC), who is heading the Supreme Court-appointed one-man inquiry commission, issued this directive during implementation proceedings at the SHC.

Justice Kalhoro observed that there had been complaints regarding the absence of the staff working at the water board's laboratories. He inquired from KWSB's MD about the staff's absence and why action was not being taken against them in accordance with the law.

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KWSB MD Syed Hashim Raza Zaidi assured that action would be taken against such employees.

The commission directed him to issue show-cause notices to the employees who were not turning up for their duties but were drawing their salaries regularly.

The commission came down hard on the federal and provincial authorities for failing to submit reports regarding progress on the long-awaited K-IV project, which is designed to provide additional water to the port city from Keenjhar Lake in district Thatta to the Hub Canal.

### **Judicial commission orders testing of water supplied to citizens in Sindh**

On May 20, the federal secretary for planning and development had informed the commission that matters related to the K-IV project had been deliberated upon in a meeting of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. He had assured that the project will be completed soon with federal government funding. But, he had brought nothing in writing to augment his claim.

Therefore, the commission had directed the federal secretary and concerned provincial authorities to inform the commission, in writing, as to what steps were being taken by them to complete the long-delayed and much-needed water project.

On Saturday, the federal and provincial authorities requested for more time to file reports, saying the same could not be done as they were busy in the annual budget for the current fiscal year.

This irked the commission, which came down hard on them for not complying with its directives.

The federal secretary informed the commission that the federal government had allocated an adequate amount in the current budget for the K-IV and sewerage projects in Karachi.

Justice Kalhoro observed that considerable time had already passed, adding that going through more reports will take another six months.

He cautioned the federal and provincial officers that the commission will be allowing time for only a specific period of time, after which action will be taken against those found responsible.

### **After water, sanitation, judiciary looks into schools, hospitals**

However, allowing the requests, the commission granted them time till June 17 to file the reports.

### **Ban on high-rise buildings**

The commission also directed the lawyer to satisfy it on the maintainability of the petition filed by the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) pleading to lift the ban on the construction of high-rise and multi-storey buildings in Karachi.

The association informed the court that the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) had, in compliance with the commission's directives, imposed a ban on the construction of buildings beyond ground plus two floors.

It argued that there was no law restricting construction of high-rise projects. It also maintained that the multi-storey and high-rise buildings were not causing water-related problems.

The commission was informed that the ban was hampering commercial activities, as the builders and developers were suffering huge financial losses.

However, the commission questioned the maintainability of their petition to lift the ban. It directed the association's lawyer to make arguments on June 17.

### **No resolution in sight for Hyderabad's contaminated water issue**

The KWSB MD filed a statement regarding work on the maintenance of water pipelines and the regulation of water tankers service.

He said that the city had a vast network of water supply pipelines, which will be replaced in different phases. However, he explained that the project's PC-I for the maintenance of the existing water pipelines had been sent to the provincial government for its approval. The board is now awaiting funds for the project.

Regarding the regulation of water hydrants, the Zaidi said a meeting of the water board and Rangers authorities was held on April 24 wherein new rates for hydrants and water tankers were fixed.

He explained that a water hydrant had been set up in six districts of Karachi in compliance with the SC's directives, adding that the same had been handed over to private contractors for operations according to the law.

He explained the water tanker operators will charge Rs1,000 per 1,000 gallons of water, while Rs1,300 will be charged for 2,000 gallons, Rs1,700 for 3,000 gallons and Rs2,800 for 5,000 gallons.

He said each hydrant will charge Rs268 per fill from the water tanker, adding that contractors will send their bills to the water board clearly mentioning the details of quantity of water supplied to the Rangers, police and other government departments. Each hydrant will be selling 40% of the water to the general public at domestic rates, while the remaining 60% will be sold at commercial rates, he added.

(The Express Tribune 15, 04/06/2017)

### **Sanitary worker's death**

THE tragic death of a sanitary worker in Umerkot in Sindh on Thursday highlights — yet again — how those who boast of providing aid and succour can fail to show even an ounce of humanity. Young Irfan Masih had been cleaning a deep manhole when he was rendered unconscious by poisonous gas. The team on the ground heard his call but had no equipment with which to pull him out immediately. Nevertheless, they managed to do so and took him to Umerkot Civil Hospital. Appallingly, though, the doctor on duty there allegedly refused to treat him, saying that he was fasting and that the patient was covered in filth. Given that the facility had no oxygen cylinder either, a young man who in life belonged to one of the most marginalised and discriminated against sections of society died. Meanwhile, three of his colleagues, who had also descended into the manhole to try and save him, were taken to a hospital in Hyderabad in critical condition.

Had Irfan's family not had the courage to approach the police, there is little doubt that his death would have gone unnoticed by society in general. As it stands, his father Nazeer has managed to have an FIR registered against three doctors at the Civil Hospital — the doctor who refused to treat him, the medical officer and the medical superintendent — as well as three employees of the Umerkot Municipal Committee; it is a shocking that even in this day and age Irfan and his colleagues had been expected to work in such dangerous conditions with next to no equipment. Irfan's death must be taken as a clarion call to improve the working conditions of one of the poorest sections of society. Meanwhile, although it has yet to be proved that the doctor did indeed refuse to treat him on the stated grounds, there is no lack of evidence that much of Pakistani society remains deeply prejudiced and ruled by antiquated notions of caste even while it celebrates the values of compassion and equality that their religious beliefs emphasise.

That office-bearers of the Pakistan Medical Association have threatened the medical community will boycott out-patient departments and emergency services across the district if the doctor arrested is not

released is further evidence of how meaningless the Hippocratic Oath seems to have become in the country. They should instead be lobbying for justice.  
(Dawn 08, 05/06/2017)

## **Complying with SC orders, Sindh doubles water, sanitation budget**

In Sindh, where a Supreme Court-appointed judicial commission is conducting proceedings to monitor and ensure execution of incomplete development schemes meant to supply clean drinking water and improve sanitation conditions, the second consecutive Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)-led government plans to increase spending on these facilities twofold by increasing the budgetary allocation by 114%.



The statistics of the election-budget, which was announced on Monday, suggested Rs11.76 billion has been allocated for development schemes meant to improve provision of clean drinking water and sanitation in the province in the fiscal year 2017-18.

This amount is a 114% increase over the current year's allocation of Rs5.50 billion.

Foreign financial assistance of Rs300 million increases the government's allocation by 2.5%, raising the total amount spent on sanitation and clean drinking water schemes to Rs12 billion.

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### **Water and sanitation: New machines to help locate, fix leaks**

The PPP-led Sindh government faced an embarrassing situation when a resident of district Shikarpur moved the Supreme Court seeking provision of basic amenities like clean drinking water and sanitation in the province. Almost all development projects relating to water and sanitation remained incomplete in the province even by the middle of the PPP's second consecutive tenure.

In the 2017-18 fiscal year the government plans to spend this sum on 148 projects. There are 98 new schemes but 50 of these were planned years earlier but never completed. Thirteen schemes are for the revamp and repair of the sewerage pumping stations, sewage treatment, water filtration plants, upgrade of the sewerage system and others in Karachi, Hyderabad and other cities.

For the desert region of district Tharparkar, two new schemes have been introduced; one to lay a water supply pipeline from Bhotio village to Milkana in the Chachro taluka and the other to supply water from Doongri to Bhansar to be operated on solar energy. The cost for these schemes is estimated at Rs32.52 million.

### **Water, sanitation given due attention in budget**

The Supreme Court had, in December last year, constituted a judicial commission to investigate the authorities' failure to provide potable drinking water and improve sanitation across the province.

The inquiry commission, headed by a sitting Sindh High Court judge, Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, had ordered a province-wide inspection of water and sanitation schemes by the district and sessions judges to determine the actual status of the schemes.

The commissioner himself had inspected various water sources to see the level of pollution, sewerage treatment and water filtration plants.

Completing the six-week long proceedings and inspections, the commission had submitted its report to the apex court, concluding that various water and sanitation-related projects had not been completed due to corruption, mismanagement and poor monitoring systems of the provincial government.

### **After water, sanitation, judiciary looks into schools, hospitals**

Many of those schemes, as shown in the budget documents, were supposed to be completed by June this year. However, work on most of them was not even initiated.

On the basis of the commission's report, the Supreme Court bench had ordered the provincial government to wrap up its private entity, the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC), which had received millions of dollars in aid from the Asian Development Bank but had failed to deliver in the northern cities of the province.

In the upcoming fiscal year, the PPP-led provincial government plans to initiate work on those schemes and complete them.

Apart from this, there are 48 long-term projects that have been carried forward for years. One such example is the project to construct the Right Bank Outfall Drain.

(By Naeem Sahoutara The Express Tribune 13, 08/06/2017)

## **Sanitation workers**

The writer is a researcher in the development sector.

OF all categories of occupations, the most invisible and least talked about work in our country is sanitation or management of human refuse, wastewater, effluents and solid waste. According to a 2015 World Bank estimate, 64 per cent of Pakistan's population has access to improved sanitation facilities which include pit latrines, composting toilets and flush/pour flush services.

In our urban centres, sewage is conveyed through underground sewer networks to treatment plants (rarely) or directly to the water bodies (mostly). Managing human refuse of some 200 million people requires a significant number of workers even if the available facilities do not serve the entire population. So, who are these people who carry out sanitation tasks at hundreds of tehsil municipal administrations, some municipal corporations and thousands of union councils? Do they have a voice?

These are the workers at the lowest tier of the sanitation services. They maintain, inspect, clean and unclog sewers and, when needed, descend via manholes into fecal sludge, without protection equipment or tools. They do not have a voice. There is no union or federation of sanitation workers — unlike in other countries — to let us hear their collective voice. We only know that the majority of these workers belong to a minority community, discriminated against and shunned by the majority. We come to know of their existence when they suffer fatal accidents in the line of duty, or when they are treated inhumanly in the most unpardonable manner like an injured worker from Umerkot was reportedly treated in hospital.

There is no collective voice for those who clean our sewers.

Cleaning sewers is hazardous as the worker is exposed to biological and chemical agents. There is potential of contact with viruses, bacteria and other microorganisms and thus the risk of hepatitis, leptospirosis and tetanus. Sewers also contain methane, carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulphide which can lead to asphyxiation and death.

An ILO study found that wastewater workers encounter at least “15 accident hazards, three physical hazards, four chemical hazards, three biological hazards, and three ergonomic and psychosocial hazards in the course of their daily duties”. According to a 2016 report, sanitation workers “face a fatality risk that is 10 times higher than workers in all other industries”.

The hazards are to be controlled through appropriate work procedures, administrative controls, engineering and technology, and workers' education and training. In civilised countries, sanitation workers are provided with liquid-repellent coveralls and gloves, boots, goggles, respirators and splash-proof eye/face shields. They receive vaccination and are trained in the use of tools and educated on the hazards and preventive measures.

Proper sanitation is the building block of any civilised nation. Investment in sanitation yields immense dividends for the nation in terms of improved health status and well-being of the citizens. Pakistan spends a meagre 0.18pc of its GDP on sanitation, says a WHO report of 2015. The first ever, and presumably the last, national sanitation policy of 2006 identified a number of stakeholders, except labour, who play a key role in the implementation of plans. The document mentioned training ‘technicians’ in passing.

The Punjab sanitation policy draft of 2015 has listed the role of 13 stakeholders, including the departments of agriculture, irrigation,

education, health, even auqaf. But no role for the labour department is envisaged. Why is labour not mentioned as a stakeholder in sectoral policy documents? Though the generic labour policy document does have a broader regulatory framework for the entire workforce, labour concerns specific to different sectors deserve to be identified in other policy documents. The 2006 policy vowed to develop and use locally appropriate cost-effective technologies.

The draft Sindh sanitation policy of 2014 talks of development and the use of smart, cost-effective technologies. The Punjab policy plans to use remote sensing and GIS technology and recognises the need of product development through innovation and “support to applied research for identifying cost-effective technology options across the sanitation chain”. While the world has moved on to modern sewer tools, we are stuck in a rut with manual inspection. The latest to inspect and maintain the sanitation network is the sewer line rapid assessment tool, a sound-based tool used to identify clogging in a sewer line.

The IT ministry, while striving for its ‘vision of digital Pakistan’ seems to think that just the use of broadband subscriptions to over 30m is about to usher the country into the digital era. This is living in a fool’s paradise. Unless adequate investments are made by the government, and technological solutions promoted to improve basic facilities and the daily lives of the largest number of people — users and workers both — the country will remain stuck in a primitive era regardless of how many of us possess smartphones.

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(By Zeenat Hisam Dawn 09, 12/06/2017)

## **Death of a sanitary worker**

“I am a man” were the chants that rang in the air as hundreds of charged sanitation workers marched through the streets of city of Memphis, Tennessee. The year was 1968 and the month was February. The working conditions for the black sanitation workers had always remained inhumane while the pay structure was abysmal. But it was the accidental death of two of their co-workers that had impelled the sanitation workers to take to the streets.

Though the struggle turned out to be long and arduous one, the sanitation workers were eventually successful in convincing others that they too were human beings and, therefore, entitled to a minimum level of protection and benefits. What sanitation workers of Memphis had achieved then, their counterparts in Pakistan still don’t have even half a century later. They still have to prove to their countrymen that they too are “men” and are entitled to certain rights.

The death of Irfan Masih, a sanitation worker, at a government-run hospital in Umerkot on June 1 – after the doctor on duty refused to treat him for inhaling poisonous gases that he was exposed to while cleaning a clogged sewer – provides a window into the actual state of affairs. Such jobs are solely performed by the least privileged segment of society: the Christians. The workers are not provided any safety gear, equipment or formal training in what they do. They have to work under extremely hazardous and life-threatening conditions. Serious accidents are not uncommon in this trade. People treat these workers with extreme contempt and refuse to interact with them, even under the most serious of the



circumstances. There are no insurance covers or post-accident benefits within the system for such workers.

However, the biggest dilemma is that we have never considered who is doing this extremely unpleasant – and rather nauseating – job for us and, most importantly, how. It is, in fact, taken for granted that tonnes of sewage water and human refuse keep flowing through whatever kind of sewer lines we have. No one stops to think that if and when these lines get clogged, who goes and unclogs them for us.

This is not happening in one or two towns, or in one province or another. It is happening in each and every town of our beloved motherland. And yet, such a large body of sanitation workers does not have a voice or even collective bargaining power. No one bothers about their existence or plight. They are voiceless, faceless and invisible. By virtue of the very nature of their work, they are exposed to all forms of hazards that are mostly of a biological, chemical, physical or psychological nature. These are immediate concerns as well as those that can have slow-onset impacts.

Many accidents happen in sewer lines on a regular basis. Some are reported and others mostly go unreported. But does that move any leaf anywhere? Is anyone bothered about these incidents? Two workers lost their lives a couple of years ago in the same sewer lines in Umerkot under same circumstances. But did that change anything for the sanitation workers? Will Irfan Masih's tragic death wake us from our deep slumber and remind us of their human status? Unfortunately, nothing will happen until we make a conscious attempt to understand the issue.

To begin with, any civil society organisation must come forth and take upon itself the task of organising the sanitation workers. It can create awareness among the people about the issue. Detailed research needs to be conducted into the plight of sanitation workers and efforts should be made to find possible solutions to the problems they face. The concerned agencies at all levels should be urged to provide all possible safety gears and equipment to the sanitation workers. They should provide training along modern lines to sanitation workers. Workers should be provided comprehensive medical cover and medical and life insurances. And above all, their salaries should correspond – at least to some degree – with the difficult nature of the work they perform.

Those at the helms of affairs at the federal, provincial and local tiers should bring in as much mechanisation as possible. Given the nature of work, the world is already moving away from manual interventions in sanitation matters and embracing mechanical options. We should try to adopt these techniques. Not a penny invested into the sanitation sector should be wasted. The more we invest, the healthier the nation will be.

There is, however, a much larger issue to address too. Several decades have passed since Pakistan came into being. But why is it that the situation of minorities – especially the Christians – is not improving, if not getting worse? Overwhelmingly illiterate and extremely poor, they do not have any other option but to take up menial jobs. They mostly live in shanty towns and eat and wear in an inexpensive way. What went wrong and where? The government as well as society as a whole should realise their responsibility and failure in this regard.

A comprehensive plan should be devised to improve the conditions of the minorities. It must be implemented sooner rather than later. Their skills and literacy level needs to be enhanced on an emergency basis to increase their employability. More job opportunities should be created for them. Small and medium-sized loans should be liberally extended to them so they can set up their own businesses. In doing all this, resources should not be a constraint. Since they involve Christians and other minorities, many developed countries and international agencies would be prepared to fund such initiatives. All that is needed on our part is commitment.

As for the doctor who allegedly refused to touch Irfan Masih in the emergency, there is a simple question to consider: what has he learnt from fasting – which supposedly teaches us to empathise with the poor and inculcate a spirit of sacrifice – if he refused to save a life? The doctor could have saved the worker

instead of using his fast as a pretext to not touch his filth-covered body. This reminds one of the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that many people get nothing out of fasting but hunger and thirst.

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(By Dr Ehtasham Anwar The News 06, 22/06/2017)

## **Polluted water of Indus delta threatens coastal life, ecology**

All 18 creeks of the Indus delta have been polluted to the extent of giving rise to serious health and ecological implications, reveals a recent study conducted by Karachi University's Institute of Environmental Studies.

Out of 18 creeks surveyed, 11 are located in Shah Bundar while seven exist in the Keti Bundar area. The largest creek is Torshan, approximately 34km long.

Titled 'Water quality appraisal of Keti Bander and Shah Bander creeks of the Indus delta', the study is published in a UK-based journal *Desalination and water treatment* (2017). Authored by Dr Aamir Alamgir under the supervision of Prof Moazzam Ali Khan, it's the third study conducted to examine water quality within these designated areas and the first to evaluate pollution levels in the creek system.

Thirty-six samples collected during six field surveys were analysed for heavy metal contents such as arsenic, cadmium, lead and zinc as well as for cyanide, oil and grease, biochemical oxygen demand, dissolved oxygen, total phosphate, phenol and total organic carbon values. The objective was to assess levels of pollution in the Indus delta creek system.

According to the study, the complex distributary system (creeks) of the Indus towards the sea created the world's second largest submarine fan in the Arabian Sea. The creek system of the Indus covers an area of about 5,000 square kilometres, which finally merges into the Indus delta. The major changes of the river Indus had occurred near its mouth and the main channels shifted significantly westward four times until it occupied the present course.

"The wide channels of eastern delta (Khar, Wari, Kajhar, Sir and Kari creeks) penetrate deep inland leading to floods during summer monsoon particularly in lower delta plain and the Rann of Kutch. Because of gradual shifting and reduced flow in the river, the tributaries of the river have converted into tidal creeks having high salinity values. The pollution of these creeks is also a major problem affecting the delta region," the study says.

### **Progression of seawater**

The three-year study found high salinity along with low dissolved oxygen values, indicting progression of seawater into the creek system. It also found bacterial load exceptionally higher in all samples in terms of organisms of public health importance that mainly attributed to domestic waste water originating from nearby squatter settlements.

Oil and grease content of water was also substantial, suggesting operation of faulty boats in the area. It also suggests that the natural system of removal of oil through the process of photo-oxidation and biodegradation is not working efficiently because of lesser availability of oxygen.

"Excessive concentration of oil and grease could be deleterious to marine life. The concentration of phosphate ranged between 2.1 to 4.6 mg/L mainly attributed to the agriculture runoff," it says.

The mean dissolved oxygen concentration of creek water samples ranged between 4.2mg/L to 5.7mg/L. The lowest dissolved oxygen concentration was observed at Khaddo and Bhorro creek while highest was observed at Sattah Wah.

Low dissolved oxygen concentration, according to the study, could be due to high biochemical oxygen demand which indicates the stress of the creek ecosystem.

The sites showing relatively higher biochemical oxygen levels are close to human settlements. This suggests that the organic load is mainly of anthropogenic origin. Similar results were also reported by other researchers, indicating that the oxidation of organic matter results in the reduction of dissolved oxygen concentration.

The highest concentration of phosphates was observed at Torshan creek (4.6mg/L), the main tributary of the Indus. This area represents extensive agriculture on both sides.

The concentration of heavy metals was in the order of zinc, nickel, lead, arsenic, chromium and cadmium. High level of these metals can harm creek ecosystems, plants, and animals and cause health problems in humans. The mean cyanide concentration was also high, though the source of cyanide could not be traced and needs further study.

“In essence, the study reveals that creeks of the Indus delta are heavily polluted mainly because of anthropogenic sources. The continuous accumulation of pollutants in the creek area may have severe ecological and health implications,” the study says.

#### **Ground, surface water contamination**

Earlier, studies conducted in 2015 had showed that ground and surface waters in the areas of Keti Bandar and Shah Bandar were not fit for human consumption.

For the ground water analysis, 56 samples were taken at depths ranging from 30 to 50 meters for bacteriological and physico-chemical analyses. Interviews with community representatives indicated that the water was also used for drinking purposes.

The findings showed concentrations of sulphate and phosphate well within the tolerance limits but high levels of organic and faecal pollution followed by turbidity and salinity. Concentrations of metals including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, iron, zinc, lead and nickel were also determined. Of them, lead and nickel exceeded health standards.

“Ground water pollution can only be addressed through improvements in irrigation strategies, sanitation and sewerage infrastructure. Research into how farmers can be incentivised to refrain from overexploitation of groundwater is promising to reduce levels of salinity.

“These efforts are particularly important in the coastal areas where global climate change is likely to increase frequency of floods and storms,” the study says.

The results of another investigation into surface water contamination revealed that water was not suitable for drinking as per WHO guidelines and National Standards for Drinking Water Quality Pakistan.

Under the study titled ‘Vulnerability to climate change of surface water resources of coastal areas of Sindh, Pakistan’, 17 water samples were collected from canals, some owned by the government and others by private individuals, as well as from downstream river Indus.

“Most of the residents were found using polluted water for drinking purposes. Agriculture run-off, sewage leaks and metals quite often contaminate the surface water resources. None of the inspected canals, however, were protected in any way from contamination of the water after it had been discharged from the source,” the study says.

Increasing variability in rainfall pattern and reduced flow in the Indus downstream had aggravated water shortage problem, it added.

(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn 14, 29/06/2017)

