
NEWSCLIPPINGS

JULY TO DECEMBER 2019

SEWERAGE & DRAINAGE



Urban Resource Centre

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Five-year-old boy dies after falling into open manhole

The body of a five-year-old boy was found from a sewer in Jamshed Quarters, a day after the child had been reported missing. Police said that the child had fallen into an open manhole while playing in the street outside his home.

The victim, identified as Calvin, son of Joseph, had gone missing from Police Lines, near Jamshed Quarters Police Station on Monday. When police received information about the body of a child that was found from a sewer, they reached the site and shifted the deceased to Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital for medico-legal formalities. Later, the body was handed over to the family.

A father's plea

Speaking to the media, the child's father said his son fell into the manhole of a sewer while playing with his friends. In the CCTV footage of the incident, Calvin can be seen falling into the sewer while walking in the street. The other children didn't notice him falling and walked ahead. Joseph added that his son fell into the manhole because its lid was open but someone closed it after he fell in.

When the staff of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) came to unblock the sewer, they opened the lid and found his son's body there, said Joseph. He added that Calvin, a student of second grade, was the youngest of his three children.

A child, who is a resident of the same neighbourhood, said that the sewer of a bungalow in the street was blocked and residents of the bungalow had opened its lid to unblock it. Calvin fell into the manhole when it was open and the bungalow's residents had later placed the lid again, the child added.

According to residents of the area, the lids of several manholes have been missing from the past several years. While the KWSB and other relevant authorities have been informed about it multiple times, no action has been taken in this regard.

The residents said that they have arranged lids for many open manholes themselves. The authorities should look into this matter seriously and lids should be placed on all the open manholes, they said.

The politics of manholes

Open manholes are a common sight in Karachi, not just in congested localities but on major thoroughfares too. In 2016, Alamgir Khan, who is now a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf lawmaker, ran a campaign on social media to raise awareness about the issue and also jolt the provincial authorities into action.

As part of the Khan-led Fix-It campaign, volunteers had even spray-painted the portrait of then CM Qaim Ali Shah next to the open manholes. The aim, according to Khan, was to attract the authorities' attention towards the issues that affected the citizens of the port city. The stunt proved effective – the chief minister took notice and ordered the authorities to seal the manholes. (By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 03/07/2019)

At monsoon's mercy: Karachi drains being cleaned at snail's pace

Karachi's perennially clogged drainage system remains its Achilles' heel come every monsoon, putting the city at risk of urban flooding.

With the rainy season virtually upon us, the city administration has sprung into action to clear the blocked drains. But like the several development works in the metropolis, efforts to unclog the drains are progressing at a snail's pace.

According to details gathered by The Express Tribune, all of Karachi's more than 550 rain drains are either clogged or encroached upon and need to be cleared urgently before heavy rains lash the city.

"The accumulation of waste dumped by citizens, government and private institutions is causing the storm-water drains to choke all over the city," said a Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) officer, speaking on condition of anonymity. He blamed massive encroachments for the city's choked drainage system.

"For over four decades, encroachments have prevented the smooth flow of rainwater. This causes the drains to choke and subsequently, parts of the city are flooded."

Slum-dwellers are not the only offenders in this case. Ironically, those responsible for running the city's administration, including the KMC, district municipal corporations, cantonment boards and even the provincial government are responsible for obstructing rain drains. "In most cases, the city administration has built government offices, markets and parking sites on numerous stormwater drains," the officer added.

City and district authorities seem to be unprepared for the heavy rains despite the buzz of monsoon growing louder with the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) releasing its forecast for the season. "Staff at the municipal bodies are not interested in clearing the nullahs, primarily due to lack of interest," an official familiar with the matter said.

Commenting on the efforts to clear the city's clogged storm-water drains, District Central Municipal Corporation Chairman Rehan Hashmi said the ongoing cleanup work will be completed in a week. "The rainwater drains are spread over 35km within the Central district limits. The management, with its limited resources, has completed 70 per cent of the cleanup work and the remaining will be done in a week," he said.

Experts believe the accumulation of solid waste chokes the city's natural waterways and the lack of regular cleaning results in blockages that cause the rainwater to spill over, creating problems for the citizens. Besides, the construction of markets and other establishments over drains, solid waste dumped into the drainage system is a serious obstacle in the passage of rainwater.

Encroachments

With no protective walls present around the stormwater drains of the city, the drainage system remains vulnerable to the ever-present threat of encroachment. Within the last year alone, the city administration has removed encroachments on Gujjar nullah, City nullah, Mehmoodabad nullah, Nehr-e-Khayyam and Akbar Road nullahs. The encroachments at Soldier Bazaar nullah, Chakor nullah, and Kalri nullah have also reportedly been removed.

As per official claims, the anti-encroachment drive has restored a number of nullahs. However, the provincial government's secretariat building, the ombudsman's offices and a number of government hospitals built on the drains are yet to be removed. According to an independent estimate, 90 per cent of encroachments are still present on the storm-water drains due to which the drains could not be completely cleaned.

Cleanup operation versus waste

Since June 2018, municipal bodies have cleaned 38 nullahs on the directives of the Supreme Court-mandated water commission. Over the past 12 months, Rs1.2 billion has been dished out for the cleaning and desilting of storm-water drains in various parts of the city.

Unfortunately, the absence of a system to manage solid waste that finds its way into these channels continue to be the number one reason behind Karachi's choked drainage system. "Slum dwellers continue to dump waste into the drainage system. This will not change without a proper waste management system," a source familiar with the matter said.

Drain pathway

According to details, there are small and big storm-water drains scattered all over the city. The storm-water drains carry rainwater into Lyari and Malir rivers, from where the rainwater flows into the Arabian Sea.

Over the past few decades, even moderate and mild rains have brought life to a grinding halt in Karachi. The streets are inundated with rainwater and it takes weeks to clean certain areas.

According to urban planners, the city had a remarkable sewerage system until 1980. Natural rain drains in the city were connected to Malir and Lyari rivers, which would smoothly drain rainwater without flooding the city.

Now, rainwater pooling on the city roads takes a long time to drain because most stormwater drains in the city are choked with silt and garbage if not obstructed by encroachment.

Too little, too late

Six municipal corporations in the city have initiated the cleaning operation to clear choked nullahs. Although the cleaning operation is underway at several points, officials may not be able to complete the task before rains hit Karachi.

Some of the worst storm-water drains are situated in the Korangi district, known as Karachi's industrial hub. The storm-water drains in the area are clogged with heaps of garbage at various points.

The task of cleaning the nullahs in UC-1, UC -6, UC -7 and UC -9 is somewhat slow at the moment. In North Nazimabad and New Karachi, open drains serve as a dumping ground for the resident. They are obstructed with heaps of garbage at various points.

Similarly, rainwater drains in Liaquatabad, a densely populated area surrounded by several commercial zones has also been choked with garbage, making it impossible to clean them.

(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 27/07/2019)

Poor sanitation plagues Bhains Colony cattle market

Karachi's Bhains Colony is the third-largest cattle market in the city where hordes of people flock to purchase animals on a day-to-day basis. With Eidul Azha around the corner, the market has become busier than ever. However, both cattle traders and buyers are facing difficulties because of the deteriorating cleanliness situation of the market.

Rainwater, polluted with litter and animal dung, has formed huge swamps within the premises of the market because of which waterborne diseases are spreading among animals. What's more, no effective steps have been taken by the District Municipal Corporation (DMC) Malir to alleviate the situation.

According to cattle traders, government officers and staffers, together with the elected civic representatives, are merely interested in minting money from traders by charging hefty entry fees for animals, which has been doubled because of Eidul Azha.

The Bhains Colony cattle market, which once used to be the largest mandi of its kind, is undergoing the worst cleanliness situation in its history. As a result, many traders who earlier used to take their animals for selling there are instead heading to the Malir cattle market, which also comes under the management of DMC Malir, because of its considerably better condition.

"Before 2001, the Bhains Colony cattle market was under the control of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC). After the devolution of power, however, the administration of the cattle market was handed over to DMC Malir under the Local Government Act of 2013," Muhammad Javed, a cattle dealer told The Express Tribune. "Since then, nothing has been done to keep the market clean or organised."

Other cattle traders said that there are 12 rainwater drains around Bhains Colony, but they are either choked with garbage or have been encroached upon. As a result, heavy rains wreak havoc to the market which quickly becomes flooded with water that remains stagnant for a long time.

"The accumulated water not only makes the market extremely unpleasant and smelly but it also causes the spread of diseases among animals. Their treatment and medication have become an additional financial burden for cattle traders," Javed said.

Traders also complained that there are no medical facilities, hospitals or veterinary doctors in the market and all the animals are allowed to enter the premises without any medical checkup.

"A few days ago, DMC Malir carried out partial sanitary work in the market but they left huge piles of filth there," Mumtaz Baloch, a cattle trader said, while criticising the authority. "We have lodged complaints various times before but it fell on deaf ears. As against that, when the KMC was controlling the administration of the market, they used to make efforts to keep the place clean." Baloch added that people of the area are so annoyed with the authorities that they have started cleaning the streets of the Bhains Colony themselves. Residents also said that there are no street lights and no germicide has been sprayed in the area for ages.

When approached, spokesperson DMC Malir Salim Ahmed Khan claimed that a cleaning drive has already begun in the cattle colony on the directives of DMC Malir chairman, Jan M Baloch.

"We are taking the matter very seriously and, for the purpose, the vacations of all sanitary workers have been postponed so that they can be on duty," Salim Ahmed Khan said.

"We have already sent cleaning machines to the cattle market, together with germicide sprays and dewatering pumps to tackle the post-rain situation. People should not worry as our team is on a high alert."
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 10/08/2019)

Sewage in N. Nazimabad

AT least 47,000 citizens residing in Block F of North Nazimabad have been living in a miserable condition for the last eight days because sewage from choked and overflowing gutters has inundated the streets.

The problem began with the recent spell of rain that began on Aug 10. The rains led to the choking of the drains and a steady flow of sewage started to accumulate in the streets. When its level rose it entered houses and underground water storage tanks. The residents have no choice except to use this unsafe water

The worse-hit area is Kiran Street in Block F where the sewage has been standing for more than a week as efforts to drain it have not been successful.

The situation has aggravated since and the sewage pool has expanded in size and turned black. This filthy water has now also entered Block B as well which is across the main road.

There is a perpetual foul smell in the entire neighbourhood and people are now beginning to fall sick because of these conditions. The residents fear an outbreak of typhoid if these conditions persist.

The citizens have lodged numerous complaints with KWSB officials and concerned town management but the problem still persists. They now appeal to the Sindh chief minister and local bodies department to resolve their grievances.

Zeeshan Jaffri
Karachi

[\(From the Newspaper Dawn, 09, 21/08/2019\)](#)

Sewerage water enters NICVD premises

Sewerage water entered the premises of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), one of the largest health facilities in the province.

The sewerage water accumulated on Rafiqi Shaheed Road on Wednesday caused difficulties for commuters, patients and ambulances making their way to the National Institute of Child Health, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre and the Kidney Center.

"I was surprised to see the overflow of sewerage water that has entered the hospital premises," said Executive Director NICVD Prof Nadeem Qamar. He said that the water entered the hospital on Tuesday.



Speaking to *The Express Tribune*, Qamar denied reports that the water was pumped out from the NICVD in the wake of the monsoon downpour. "The water is not coming out from the hospital," he added. "It's coming in from the outside," he added.

"This isn't the first time this has happened," said Qamar. "We have been facing this issue for a long time." He said that most of the time, the hospital used its resources to clean the sewerage. "It's not our job to clean it, but that of the civic bodies."

On the other, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) Managing Director Asadullah Khan said that the water on Rafiqi Shaheed Road was rainwater that had earlier accumulated in the NICVD. He said that the contractor of the under-construction building of the NICVD had pumped the rainwater onto the main road without informing the KWSB. He said that his staff was tasked to clean the rainwater immediately.

Interestingly, Sindh Minister for Local Government Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, who was visiting the area, said that a case will be registered against the persons responsible for throwing the water outside the hospital premises.
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 22/08/2019)

Sanitary worker killed, two others injured after falling into manhole

Three sweepers fell down a manhole near Baldiya School, Babar Market, Landhi No2 on Sunday as they were cleaning it. Two of the sweepers were fished out of the manhole and shifted to Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) but the search continued for the third. It was only hours later, that his body was pulled out from the manhole.

According to Landhi Police SHO Manzoor Arain, the injured sweepers were identified as Michael and Riaz, while the third sweeper who died in the accident, was identified as Rafiq Masih, 40. The SHO said that the sweepers did not have any safety tools while they were cleaning the manhole. They were descending down the manhole by tying ropes together.

According to the SHO, one of the sweepers had fallen in the manhole first and the other two fell as they tried to rescue him. Police and Rangers reached the site when they received information. The SHO added that people in the vicinity managed to pull out two of them through ad hoc efforts.

The victims' families told The Express Tribune that the staff of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) had taken the sweepers with them to clean the manhole, and had forced them to work on the weekend. The families named the KWSB staffers as Molana Saeed and Saleem. They said that the sweepers were threatened with pay deduction if they did not accompany the KWSB staffers for work on Sunday. However, when the sweepers fell down the manhole, the KWSB team fled from the scene, claimed the aggrieved families. A protest was staged near the place of the incident and the main road of Babar Market was blocked for traffic forcing citizens to take alternative routes.

The deceased sweeper, Rafiq, was a father to four daughters. His body was found after a four-hour long rescue operation carried out under the supervision of Landhi assistant commissioner. The deceased was shifted to JPMC for medico-legal formalities. Rangers, police, KWSB workers and Edhi volunteers assisted in the rescue operation.
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 26/08/2019)

Sanitation worker dies while cleaning drain

A sanitation worker died and two others fell unconscious after inhaling toxic fumes while they were cleaning a gutter, storm-water drain, in Landhi on Sunday, said police and hospital officials.

Landhi police officer Manzoor Arain said that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board brought sanitation workers for cleaning of a drain in Landhi-2 near Babar Market.

Three workers were cleaning the drain when they became unconscious due to noxious fumes. Two of them were rescued by their colleagues immediately and taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for treatment while the third one fell down inside the drain.

The officer said that the incident occurred at around 9.30am. The workers were apparently provided with no protective gear or equipment by the KWSB for cleaning work.

Similarly, it appeared that the water board also did not have proper machinery or equipment to retrieve drowned workers. As a result, the body of Rafiq Masih, 30, who fell down into the drain was retrieved at around 5pm with the help of a crane and was taken to the JPMC for medico-legal formalities.

Dr Seemin Jamali, executive director of the hospital, said one sanitation worker died and two others became unconscious due to gas inhalation.

She added that the condition of two sanitation workers, Riaz Yunus and Michael Sadiq, was out of danger.

(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 14, 26/08/2019)

Lawmakers from opposition also to be part of KWSB governing body, PA told

The Sindh government on Wednesday informed the provincial legislature that its local government ministry would constitute a new governing body to run the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board in which representatives from all political parties having representation in the house would be included.

"Everyone representing people in Karachi will be taken on board. I request parliamentary leaders of all political parties in the house to nominate their representatives for the KWSB [Karachi Water and Sewerage Board] that would be running it to resolve the longstanding issues vis-à-vis water and sewerage," said Local Government Minister Nasir Shah while responding to calling-attention notices tabled by two opposition lawmakers.

The notices were moved by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Khurram Sher Zaman and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's Adeel Shahzad in which they discussed problems of water supply and sewerage system in the metropolis.

Resolution seeks probe into child's drowning in school swimming pool

"We believe in democratic dispensation and will run such affairs by taking everyone along," said the minister.

Minister Shah said all related authorities and elected lawmakers were being included in the loop to make the city clean and restore its hygienic conditions that had deteriorated for a variety of reasons in the past few weeks.

Hub Dam replenishment

He said the recent rains had replenished the Hub Dam, which had tangibly resolved the water issues in the city's western and central neighbourhoods. However, he added, the archaic infrastructure was itself a problem which his ministry was trying to replace with a modern and efficient system.

He said the elected representatives would be consulted on policy issues as well as day-to-day problems.

He said the ministry was sincerely busy in making transparent distribution of water and revamping the existing old web of mains.

Regarding supply of contaminated water in Orangi Town, Mr Shah said recently two pipelines — a 66-inch diameter and another of 48-inch diameter — had been replaced yet issues regarding supply of water and contamination of potable water were surfacing.

He said to resolve the same issues, a World Bank-funded \$100 million project had formally been inked; its second phase would be much greater in size, which would cost \$500m — also funded by the World Bank.

Later, he told reporters that the Sindh government had no desire to see the Karachi mayor resign from the post, adding that it was collective responsibility of all authorities to make the metropolis clean.

He added that Federal Minister Ali Zaidi's cleanliness campaign was started with good intentions in which garbage was surely being lifted. But, he added, what made the situation worse was that those in whom the minister entrusted the task were not transporting the trash to the designated landfills. However, "now, the federal minister has taken notice of that issue and the garbage is being transported to the landfills".

Earlier, the PTI lawmaker called the KWSB in his calling-attention notice "the most corrupt department" in the country and demanded that the provincial government launch inquiries through its Anti-Corruption Establishment against the "corrupt elements" in the board.

Mr Zaman accused certain KWSB officials of being involved in operating water tankers in the city.

"These officials do not want to get the water and sewerage problems of the city solved. Besides, the government should also check how many of them have dual nationality since many of them have flown abroad as soon as they left their posts," he added.

MQM-P's Shahzad said the water supply and sewerage systems in Orangi Town had been destroyed because of lack of maintenance, while the people of the thickly populated neighbourhood were forced to drink water contaminated with sewage leaking from choked sewerage lines.

He said the contaminated water had alarmingly increased incidence of abdominal diseases and hepatitis.

"From now on the Sindh government and related department would be deemed responsible for the death of every child in the area because of these reasons."

Tribal feuds

In response to another calling-attention notice moved by PTI's Shaharyar Shar, Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh said tribal feuds had taken many lives in Ghotki and other districts of Sindh.

He said the Sindh government and the police were taking all possible measures to maintain law and order in the province. However, area notables, chiefs of various warring communities and clans should also help the authorities to save people from dying in feuds that could easily be resolved through mediation.

Mr Shar said the ongoing feuds in Ghotki had resulted in deaths of several young people.

Hazards of eating Malir vegetables

Later, Khurram Sher Zaman moved an adjournment motion for admissibility in which he said the people of Karachi were exposed to dangerous health hazards because of eating vegetables being grown in Malir district using water poisoned with chemicals flowing through the Malir riverbed.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Chawla opposed the motion on the grounds that it pertained to no recent occurrence.

On PTI lawmaker's words that the government was opposing his adjournment motion, but its ministers would realise their mistake when they would themselves fall victim to the same poisonous stuff, Mr Chawla responded angrily that the mover "perhaps serves the same poisonous vegetables in his restaurant".

Mr Zaman said he wanted to highlight the issue because it was an extremely serious one, which was evident from a letter that the KWSB's managing director had written to the chairman of the District Municipal Corporation Korangi referring to dangers involved in growing vegetables in such a hazardous environment.

Minister Chawla said he opposed the motion because the provincial government had taken action on the issue more than a year back when reports about the practice in Karachi were highlighted in the media.

However, he assured the mover that the government would take a similar action if that practice had resumed.

The mover withdrew his motion saying his prime concern was to draw the attention of the authorities to the matter.

Resolution on swimming pool death

The house unanimously passed a resolution tabled by PTI's Bilal Ghaffar which showed concern over the death of a sixth-grade student of the Habib Public School by drowning during a swimming class at the school's swimming pool.

The mover said 11-year-old Usman Durrani drowned during a weekly swimming class at the school while the instructors failed to take timely action to save his life.

It demanded that an inquiry be ordered by the government to assess the causes behind the death of the child.

PTI's Seema Zia said it was a grave human issue, asking why Usman's parents were informed four hours after the child had died. Besides, she asked if the instructor was qualified having training in paramedic protocols.

The health minister said her ministry would furnish recommendations on such issues to the relevant authorities. She said there should be availability of lifeguards and first aid in every school since children got injured while playing and sometimes wounds grew serious. She said the incident should not go unnoticed and school administration should be made accountable.

The resolution was passed unanimously.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 15, 29/08/2019)

Sindh govt decides to turn Nahr-i-Khayyam into recreational point for families

The Sindh government has decided to beautify and develop Nahr-i-Khayyam as a recreational point where people could enjoy themselves with their families.

This was one of the decisions taken by the Sindh cabinet which met here on Monday. The meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, also endorsed its earlier decision to enforce a complete ban on manufacture, sale, purchase and use of non-degradable plastic bags except with a weight of six to 28 grams of 30 to 40 microns from Oct 1 (today).

The decisions included the recovery of revised tariff of service charges of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) from 2016, and formation of a committee for the removal of difficulties in the implementation of certain provisions of the revived Police Order 2002.

After the meeting, Information Minister Seed Ghani briefing the media said that the cabinet also approved various measures related to Sindh Bank, including a new business viability plan for 2019 to 2020 and also to provide the remaining Rs8 billion out of the Rs14.7bn capital plan to meet the State Bank requirement.

The draft bill for the establishment of The Sindh Rescue Services 1122 was also discussed and a committee was formed comprising the health minister, the adviser on law and the advocate general to revisit the draft law and make it a regulator organisation.

Restriction on plastic bags comes into effect from today

The chief minister, while giving approval for signing an agreement with a private party to beautify, modernise and develop Nahr-i-Khayyam, said that this would be a gift to the people of Karachi and it would be for families to have picnic and enjoy sailing in beautiful boats; for literary people to enjoy their reading material and for youngsters to enjoy different flavours of coffee at the bank of beautified Nahr-i-Khayyam.

Presenting an agreement for developing Nahr-i-Khayyam as a recreational point to be signed between the Sindh government and a group of nongovernmental organisations with the abbreviation of PANI, led by leading architect Shahid Abdullah, Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah sought approval of the cabinet.

The development of Nahr-i-Khayyam would cost about Rs1.5bn, to be financed by PANI, while the Sindh government would construct a conduit at a cost of Rs50 million to segregate and ensure smooth sewage flow.

Nahr-i-Khayyam runs from the Gizri crossing up to the sea.

The cabinet was told that for the last few years sewage had been discharged into the channel for its disposal into the sea. Solid waste was also disposed of along the banks of the channel.

The cabinet was informed that after a meeting with PANI, a draft agreement was proposed under which a park/recreational place would be developed and adopted by the NGO on the area with Nahr-i-Khayyam on the north and service lane on the south from Khayaban-i-Saadi to Khayaban-i-Iqbal.

The tenure of the adoption of land would be 30 years.

Under the proposed agreement the park will not be used for any political activity and the title of the land will remain with the Sindh government. The adopted park area will not be used for any commercial activity, except for tuck shops etc and the height of any structure will not be more than 15 feet.

Ban on plastic bags

Adviser on Environment Murtaza Wahab on a query told the chief minister that a complete ban on manufacture, sale, purchase and use of non-degradable plastic bags of all sizes had been imposed with effect from Oct 1, 2019. He said that only oxo-biodegradable plastic/shopping bags of different sizes, 10 into 14 to 30 into 40, with a weight of six to 28 grams of 40 microns to 30 microns, single side would be manufactured, sold and used.

The CM directed his adviser to meet manufacturers and sellers and take them into confidence for the enforcement of the ban.

KWSB

The cabinet directed the KWSB to implement water and sewerage service charges/tariff as had been approved by the government in 2016.

The KWSB has implemented the enhancement of nine per cent of its tariff for consumers of all categories.

Arms license free

On a request of the home department the cabinet approved enhancement of fees of gratis arms licence (non-prohibited bore) from Rs1,000 to Rs2,000 to meet the expenditures of scanning, lamination, printing, electricity, stationery, software development consumed in issuance of such computerised licences.

New police law

The home department told the cabinet that after the revival, the Police Order, 2002 was currently in field. With the revival of the law, certain new actions were to be taken such as framing of rules, issuance of regulations, executive orders, carrying day-to-day activities related to field operation etc in conformity with new law. There may be certain provisions in the act on which the office of IGP and home department or any other stakeholder might differ on their application/implementation/interpretation which might cause difficulties in giving effect to the provisions of the Police Order.

The chief minister constituted a committee under the adviser on law with the advocate general, prosecutor general, home secretary, finance secretary, secretary (I&C) S&GAD and IG police as members for the removal of difficulties.

Sindh Bank

Sindh Bank new CEO/president Imran Samad gave a presentation to the cabinet on a new business plan under which 20 new branches would be opened. The cabinet approved the bank's business viability plan for 2019-20.

The cabinet approved an amendment to the Sindh Higher Education Commission by replacing the word 'secretary' with 'executive director' in different sections of the act of 2013.

The other decisions include provision of 35 cusecs of water to power companies in Thar Block II from Makhi-Farash Canal through pipeline from Nabisar to Vajihar till the LBOD supply system was made functional.

The cabinet also revisited the draft bill for the establishment of the Sindh Rescue Services 1122, draft rules of the Sindh development and maintenance of infrastructure cess. The cabinet formed a committee to revisit the rules of the Sindh Livestock Breeding Service Authority, authorised Minister Nasir Hussain Shah and Adviser Murtaza Wahab to talk to the IBA-pass teachers to

redress their grievances and also to resolve the issue of boycott of OPD staff in the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital and losses of the KMDC teachers.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Mumtaz Ali Shah, all provincial ministers, advisers and relevant officers, such as IGP Dr Kaleem Imam, Advocate General Salman Talibuddin, the prosecutor general and others.
(By Habib Khan Ghori Dawn, 15, 01/10/2019)

Rains wreaked havoc on city's sewerage system, causing lines to collapse at 170 points

As the city received over 320 millimetres, or 12.5 inches, of rain during five spells during this year's monsoon season, authorities are now calculating the damages the wet spell caused to the ill-maintained civic infrastructure and have found that the sewerage network has been affected the most as its lines caved in at 170 key points.



Recently compiled data shows that the heavy rains in Karachi did not only claim the lives of many people, mainly due to electrocution, but the rainfall also battered the fragile infrastructure of the city that could take months to fix, leaving many city roads inundated with sewage.

The key reasons, officials said, behind the damage was below-capacity functioning of the major storm-water drains.

Karachi has received over 320mm of rainfall during the recently ended monsoon season

"There are 38 major storm-water drains running throughout the city, which play a key role during the rainy season," said a source citing the recently compiled data. "It emerged that complete de-silting and cleaning work of storm-water drains were not done before the monsoon in most cases which led to this situation. We see when rainwater starts accumulating on roads due to non-functioning of the drains, people on their own remove the covers of manholes which are basically meant to carry sewage."

As a result, he said, sewerage lines started to give in. This situation was experienced every year during the rainy season but this year's monsoon had made it worse.

"The initial findings of the survey suggest that the city's sewerage lines have sunk [at] 170 key points, which have been causing heavy outflow of sewage and damaging the infrastructure, mainly roads," he said. "The repair of the lines will cost heavily and would also put a separate financial burden on the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and the provincial government for repair of roads in their respective jurisdictions."

He said Karachi's sewerage lines, from four to 60 inches diameter, came under severe pressure during rains as the system was not designed or built to carry both sewage and rainwater.

"So every year, before the monsoon or any rainy season, depending on the forecast of the Met Office, civic bodies lay out a plan to clean storm-water drains so the city infrastructure could remain safe from the downpour," he said. "This year too the KMC and other civic agencies were asked to complete de-silting and cleaning work of the drains in their jurisdiction by June 15."

"At a meeting chaired by the Karachi commissioner, the deputy commissioners were asked to monitor the garbage removal work being carried out by the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and district municipal corporations and to check the complaints of dumping of garbage into the storm-water drains. It was decided that there must be some special arrangements by departments concerned to discourage this practice."

However, the source said, despite efforts from the authorities concerned the drains were not cleaned to their original capacity putting burden on the sewerage system.

"That's the reason that several city areas, streets and even key roads have been inundated with sewage. It would need a proper campaign to fix the problem. The repair of several lines has already been started and it could take another few weeks to complete the job across the city," the source added.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 15, 03/10/2019)

Sindh govt approves \$1.6b programme to overhaul KWSB

The Sindh government has approved the launch of Karachi Water and Sewerage Improvement Programme (KWSSIP) in a bid to make the waterboard a viable utility.

During a meeting at the CM House, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that the \$1.6 billion project was being launched to raise the operational capacity of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) so it can deliver safe and reliable water service to its consumers on a sustainable basis.

He said that the project will aid in establishing an environment conducive to private sector investment in water supply and wastewater treatment.

The \$1.6-billion project is being financed by the World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, with each having a share of 40% in the total funding. Meanwhile, the provincial government will provide the remaining 20% share.

The chief minister directed the local government minister to sign a commitment of cooperation within the next few days so that the project could be started. He also gave approval for the steering committee to monitor the implementation of the project.

The KWSSIP project has four components divided into four phases, which include reforms, securing sustainable water supply and sanitation, and project management and studies. The reforms in KWSB include overhauling HR policy and service rules, improving communication strategy, capacity building, budget, financial management, improvement in revenue collection and improving customer relations.

Shah said that the cost of the second phase of the project was \$685 million, adding that it had 12 components. He shared that around 195MGD additional water would be made available for the city in the second phase.
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 08/10/2019)

Concerns raised over plan to turn Nahr-i-Khayyam into recreational spot

Environmentalists and civil society activists are sceptical about a recent government decision to develop a major storm-water drain in Clifton and its surroundings into a recreational spot and fear that the project may spell a disaster as almost all storm-water drains of the city have either been completely encroached or significantly reduced in size, causing flooding in many areas in monsoon.



Contrary to the government's claims, they also believe that the public space would be gentrified and used for commercial activities.

"We saw flooding in many areas this year. This was so because we have almost eliminated storm-water drains carrying away rainwater to the sea," said environmentalist Tofiq Pasha Mooraj.

He was sharing his concerns over the Nahr-i-Khayyam project that the government plans to build under an agreement with the People and Nature Initiative (Pani), a group comprising 15 architects, through which a park would be developed and adopted for 30 years.

Mr Mooraj emphasised that storm-water drains were not meant to carry sewage as was the case right now and it's the government's responsibility to ensure that sewage was treated before being discharged into the sea.

Need stressed for carrying out a detailed EIA study and technical evaluation of the project

He called upon the government to invite public objections before signing the agreement and ensure transparency by awarding the project to a party through a competitive process under its public procurement rules and regulations.

'Gentrification of public space'

Rejecting a government's claim that the land would not be used for commercial activities, Mr Mooraj said: "Who would invest Rs1.5 billion in a project [under the proposed agreement] without thinking of any profit? This is business and the land would be used for commercial activities."

He regretted the government policy of giving away public spaces to private parties on the grounds of shortage of funds and in the name of 'development', which in fact had restricted access of the poor to public spaces.

Endorsing reservations related to flooding, sources in the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) said since Nahr-i-Khayyam was part of a natural drainage system, the project required a detailed environmental impact assessment (EIA) study and technical evaluation by a multi-expert team including hydrologists.

A scientific evaluation was also important given the threats posed by climate change, they said, sharing that the one-kilometre-long canal had already lost half of its land to land grabbers, reducing its width from 200 feet to less than 100 feet.

Seasoned architect and activist Arif Hasan did not make any direct comments on the project, saying that he wasn't aware of its technical details.

However, he favoured a simple, low-cost project for the canal as was once prepared by the Orangi Pilot Project team, which envisaged that the channel should be covered and a septic tank built for the basic treatment of sewage.

Also, he suggested that parks should be simple, low-cost, providing safe spaces for sports to children, who were now using roads for this purpose.

Neglected parks

To Zain Mustafa, an architect and teacher, the public spaces of the city were being exploited under the guise of "development" and "beatification" when it's simple gentrification for capital and political gains.

"The government would do well to uplift the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Park located near Nahr-i-Khayyam and the one along the beach next to a shopping mall and, of course, the Bagh Ibne Qasim too.

"There are plenty of forgotten parks and other recreational spaces that can be cleaned up and made more user friendly without being ticketed or made to resemble ideas from Dubai," he argued.

The city's beautification projects, in his opinion, were not thought through rigorously and were immature at best.

Chief Minister's Adviser Murtaza Wahab defended the project and insisted that the land would remain public property and would only have small tuck shops.

"The project is to treat [the] canal's sewage and beautify its surroundings. Second, the canal would neither be blocked or covered and filled with recycled water," he said, adding that the government would construct a conduit to separate sewage for treatment.

'Trust the group'

All stakeholders, Mr Wahab pointed out, were on board. The government had the authority to award a project to a party but it would ensure that public interests were protected and follow any prerequisite legal requirements.

Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar also supported the project but was critical of the Sindh government which, he said, did not give due credit to him and his team, which had been pushing for the public-private partnership project with the Pani group for three years.

Sharing some features of the proposed project, architect Shahid Abdulla representing Pani said the first step would be canal's dredging followed by its lining and sewage treatment once the government was done with the conduit.

"The drain would neither be covered nor blocked and its opening would remain the same. The whole project would take two to three years to complete," he said, adding that the team planned to recycle and reuse 40 per cent of sewage.

To the criticism related to the project's gentrification, he said: "Trust this group (Pani). We only want to create something nice and calm for Karachiites. There won't be any commercial activity except some stalls for snacks.

"We couldn't have ticketing system because we don't own that place. Our experience at other projects, however, has showed that one has to take care of the infrastructure to ensure that it remains safe from public damage and pilferage."

The team, he said, had an uphill task of generating funds for the project, which had already been delayed for three years.
(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn, 15, 15/10/2019)

Speakers stress need to protect sanitary workers' rights

Watching humans working inside the stinking and poisonous manholes has become a common occurrence in Pakistan to the point that most people have grown indifferent to the plight of sanitary workers. Their health remains exposed to the hazards and their lives always at risk but the authorities appear unmoved.

Speakers at a discussion, organized by Strengthening Participatory Organization on Friday at a hotel, dwelt at length over the issue.

Lawmakers, officials of Water and Sanitation Authority, Social Welfare Department, Labour Department and representatives of the civil society all acknowledged the perilous nature of the work, low wages and a lack of safety standards.

They stressed the need for creating and strictly implementing the standard operating procedures for the workers. Justice (R) Majida Rizvi, the chairperson of the Sindh Human Rights Commission, asked the participants to inform the SHRC about the work safety violations inflicted on the sanitary workers. She acknowledged that another violation of the workers' rights pertained to their low salaries.

"It is regrettable that in some organisations, regular employees sit at homes while temporarily hired employees on low wages work in difficult situations in which they risk their lives," she observed.

Muzzafar Hussain Memon, the managing director of WASA, said that 70 regular sanitary workers are employed in WASA. "But 80% of them are overage and we can't force them to go and work in a manhole." According to him, WASA mostly hired sanitary workers on contract through its supervisors, tacitly acknowledging the exploitation of those workers.

Pirbhu Satyani, SPO's regional head, in his brief presentation, highlighted that the developed world has formed workplace safety rules for sanitary workers. "There is no provision to force these people to go in the manholes where there are horrible and poisonous gases," he said.

Satyani said that the workers should not only be equipped with safety gear but pre-work training and refresher training should be made part of their job. He also mentioned that the Sindh Sanitation Policy, 2017, and national sanitation policy and other regulations do not provide for the benefits of those workers.

He said that the SPO will engage WASA, HMC, HDA and other municipal administrations to help them introduce the safety measures.

Social activist, Boota Imtiaz, deplored that no government organisation took steps to stop the exploitation of sanitary workers.

“We all often see them drenched in drainage water while cleaning drains and manholes but we never do anything to alleviate their situation.”

MPA Naveed Anthony assured that he will take up the matter in the Sindh Assembly for proper legislation. He said the sanitary workers hired on contract for longer periods of time should be regularised.

Advocate Ali Palh of Sindh Human Rights Defenders briefed the participants about the Umerkot incident in which four workers had died in a manhole.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 05/10/2019)

Murad wants sewerage main fixed within 24 hour

The Sindh government has ordered replacement of old sewerage lines with new ones in the old city area and directed the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board [KWSB] to work out a plan to reconstruct all the old lines.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah issued this order while taking serious view of the collapse of a 66-inch diameter sewerage line on Club Road. A truck had fallen into the broken main. This sewerage line was laid in 1956 on the road which collapsed on Monday morning. As a result all the gutters feeding the line in the Saddar area started overflowing.

The CM directed the KWSB to restore the collapsed portion of the line within 24 hours and simultaneously directed the local government minister to replace all the old lines on Club Road and from Ghazanfar Ali Khan Road to the Clifton pumping station (Beaumont Road).

Mr Shah also issued directives to the KWSB managing director to prepare a detailed scheme for replacing all the old sewerage lines with new ones in the old city area.

He recalled that earlier a 66-inch dia sewerage line had collapsed on Dr Ziauddin Road near CM House and its rehabilitation took many days. Now a line had sunk on Club Road and it would again cause serious problems in smooth flow of traffic. He added that the replacement of old lines with new ones had become vital to improve the system.

Meanwhile, the CM sought a report from the local government secretary about the repair of refuse vehicles by DMCs. He said the government had already released Rs88 million to three DMCs — Korangi, West and Central — on Oct 14.

He said he was keen to make cleanliness of the city sustainable and he was sure that the DMCs concerned would play their due role and keep their districts clean.

Mr Shah also directed the LG secretary to issue necessary instructions to all the local bodies all over Sindh to maintain cleanliness in their areas.

(By Newspaper Staff's Reporter Dawn, 15, 05/11/2019)

Will Karachi sink in its sewerage crisis?

Days after a sinkhole was formed on Club Road due to the collapse of a sewerage line, a portion of Ziauddin Ahmed Road too caved in on Wednesday. Consequently, the road was blocked for traffic and alternative routes were announced by the traffic police. Meanwhile, even as the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board officials made frantic efforts to fix the problem, senior officials pointed to a dilapidated sewerage network, saying such incidents had become all too common because much of the network had outlived its practical life.

Traffic chaos

On Wednesday, traffic moving towards PIDC Chowk from Lilly Bridge is being diverted towards Cantt Station, vehicles approaching Shaheen Complex from PIDC Chowk are being diverted towards Sultanabad and traffic moving towards PIDC Chowk from MT Khan Road is being diverted towards Mai Kolachi Road.

The mishap has added to the commuters' inconvenience in Karachi, who were already troubled after Club Road was blocked for traffic as repair work pertaining to the replacement of the collapsed sewerage line beneath its track continued. In the aftermath of the incident, traffic flow was disrupted on Shahrah-e-Faisal, Aiwan-e-Saddar Road and Fatima Jinnah Road, as well as near Fawwara Chowk and surrounding areas, resulting in traffic jams. According to a traffic police official, the road was flooded by sewerage water.

Meanwhile, the Karachi Water and Sewerage claimed to have installed the new sewerage line at Club Road, after which the sewerage water that had accumulated in different parts of Saddar had started to subside. According to a statement, the KWSB managing director Asadullah Khan had dispatched four suction vehicles to different parts of Saddar to clear the sewerage water. The statement added that Sindh chief minister Murad Ali Shah has directed that all the roads of Saddar should be cleared of sewerage water by today.

Why are the roads sinking?

According to Karachi Water and Sewerage Board officials, who spoke to The Express Tribune on condition of anonymity, Karachi's sewerage system has almost choked in all districts as a result of constructing high-rise buildings without proper planning and absence of a mechanism to clean the sewers and rainwater drains.

The KWSB's sewerage lines are linked with the rainwater drains in the city, with the latter spilling into the Lyari and Malir rivers, through which the sewerage water flows into the sea.

Over the years, one KWSB official explained, the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) has allowed the construction of countless high-rise buildings across the city without proper planning while the utility systems in every part of the city lack up-gradation. The worst affected are the Old City areas, where the sewerage lines are over half a century old.

According to the official, the KWSB's district offices don't even have enough cranes and suction machines to clean the drains and sewers on time. The collapse of sewerage lines is quite common these days as the sewerage lines in all districts, especially District South, have outlived their practical life and the whole sewerage system is crumbling.

Disaster in the making

According to another KWSB official, the lids of manholes in many areas are missing and citizens throw solid waste into the gutters, causing them to choke. As a result, the gutters keep overflowing, causing potholes and craters to appear in the roads and leading to hours-long traffic jams.

The official lamented that the relevant officials of KWSB also lack interest, therefore the sewerage lines are not cleaned on time. "The institution doesn't have enough lids for the manholes and cranes for cleaning the sewers due to the rampant corruption in the contracts given to procure the same," said the official, adding that the lines haven't been properly cleaned for several years now.

Meanwhile, the rainwater drains are suffering the same fate as the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and the District Municipal Corporations are not interested in cleaning them. "The drains have turned into garbage dumps," said the official.

What now?

An engineer associated with the KWSB, who also asked not to be named, told The Express Tribune that the whole sewerage system of Karachi requires a major overhaul. He added that the water board, in association with the World Bank, is working on the Karachi Water and Sewerage Service Improvement Project (KWSSIP). The project comprises four phases and its cost is estimated at a staggering \$1.6 billion.

For now, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved the first phase of the project, which is worth \$100 million. This phase, comprising 15 components, will be completed in four years. One of its components is the replacement of KWSB's sewerage lines. Overall, the first phase focuses on the repair work in the areas where the system is in the worst condition. The phase also covers the purchase of modern equipment to further strengthen the system.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 07/11/2019)

Rotten gutters

It seems we have made a quantum leap backwards in terms of civic services in most parts of the country, especially in Sindh and Karachi. We are witnessing the terrible consequences of long years of corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency.

It is stale news that the sewerage system in major parts of Karachi and other urban areas of Sindh has collapsed. The resulting gutter overflows combined with broken roads have compounded the problem. In many areas now we see dirt and mud tracks.

Expensive shining private vehicles and the sorry state of public roads give a good idea of the state of affairs in Pakistan. The rotten state of gutters in Karachi has once again attracted public attention after a sinkhole was formed in the area which is the seat of the provincial government. The chief minister had ordered officials to fix the problem within 24 hours.

But even after 72 hours on Nov 7 the work is underway. This tells enough about the slowness of the ways of the government. Officials of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board say gutters in the whole of Karachi are well past their utility, and a major overhaul of the entire sewerage system is needed. They say in the city, the government recklessly allowed the construction of high-rise buildings. This overburdened gutter lines and stormwater drains resulting in the present mess. Further, drains have also been choked because people dump garbage into them. Now the KSWB, aided by the World Bank, is working on the Karachi Water and Sewerage Service Improvement Project. The project consists of four phases and its cost is estimated at \$1.6 billion. We hope that the money is spent on the purpose for which it has been earmarked. The country is saturated with corruption. As a result, there are chaos and sorrow. Is it because we have an amazing level of tolerance for corruption? Or is it because we have the best governance that money can buy?

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 08/11/2019)

KWSB to receive 20 new suction, high pressure jetting machines

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) is being given 20 modern suction and high pressure jetting machines in addition to its existing fleet by the Sindh government to improve drainage facilities for the citizens of Karachi. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah is to hand over the keys of the machines to KWSB Managing Director Engineer Asadullah Khan

today (Wednesday). The ceremony will be held at Bara Dari and will be attended by Sindh Local Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, other ministers and dignitaries.

The addition of these 20 machines will raise the number of suction and jetting machines operated by KWSB to 56. The new high pressure jetting machines are equipped with European technology and contain an automatic hydraulic system as per the latest standards. These machines comprise of 10 suction and 20 jetting machines that work as pairs. The suction machines have a tank capacity of 7,000 liters instead of 5000 liters while the jetting machines are equipped with 8000 liters tanks. They are attached to a tracker system to monitor the movement of these machines while back cameras have also been installed to avoid accidents.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 13/11/2019)

Activists demand regularisation of sanitary workers

Human rights activists demanded on Monday that contractors register sanitary workers with social security institutions in order to allow them to receive the benefits laid out in social security laws, such as compensation of Rs500,000 in case of their death. They also said that these workers, often considered as 'untouchables' in society, should receive a budget allocation for their social wellbeing.

They were speaking at a conference, entitled "Stand Up for the Rights of Sanitary Workers," jointly organised by the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

SHRC chairperson Justice (Retd) Majida Rizvi, who was chairing the conference, explained that the SHRC received many cases of sanitary workers who had to clean manholes without any safety kits. "SPO and SHRC are going to distribute 250 kits among sanitary workers in Hyderabad, but the main problems facing them include job security, wages and health insurance," she stated. "We want to ensure their rights and safety," she added, saying that the SHRC wanted to help design legislation for this and that it was carrying out research to uncover gaps in the existing laws.

"The Sindh government has formulated a compensation mechanism for these workers, but they have been unable to implement it," she noted, stating that her organisation was working to fix this.

Zulfiqar Shah, the joint director of the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research, highlighted the role played by sanitary workers in maintaining the environment. "If they stop working in protest, we cannot imagine the hardships the public would face," he pointed out. "The government should thus take the initiative in protecting them."

He stated that sanitary workers work under unclear legal frameworks and employment procedures. "Some of them are associated with the local government, while others work with municipal corporations, town municipal authorities and others, but their employment is not clear," said Shah, giving the example of the Water and Sanitation Agency in Hyderabad, which claims to only have 70 sanitary workers but has not hired more. "These workers are not regularly employed and they do not receive pensions or other benefits."

Sindh Labour Federation president Shafiq Ghauri said that the main demand for sanitary workers should be regularised employment with all the benefits that other employees enjoy. He pointed out that the government depended on contractors to hire these workers on daily wages, but it should regularize their jobs.

"These contractors are not responsible when workers die or get injured on the job," he said. "Contractors should be bound to register these workers with social security institutions so they can access medical benefits." He maintained that in case of injury or death, the workers should be compensated with Rs500,000.

Saying that the welfare of workers should be prioritized, Ghauri also proposed that the corporate social responsibility funds should be used for their benefit.

Pirbhu Satyani, the regional head of the SPO, said that sewer workers, who cleaned deep manholes, were the most vulnerable of sanitary workers in Pakistan. He claimed that while such workers were provided with security measures such as vaccinations and safety kits around the world, these measures were missing in Pakistan.

(By PPI The Express Tribune, 05, 11/12/2019)

No plans to privatise KWSB, Sindh Assembly told

The Sindh Assembly was told on Wednesday that the provincial government had no intention to privatise the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board as it was against the policies of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party.

"We are neither privatising the Water Board [KWSB] nor will we allow anyone to do this," said Saleem Baloch, parliamentary secretary for local government, while responding to a calling-attention notice moved by Abdul Rasheed, the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's sole member in the house.

"Pakistan Peoples Party is a staunch opponent to the idea of privatisation; how can we do something that we have always opposed so openly?" said Mr Baloch during the proceedings presided over by Speaker Siraj Durrani.

Mr Rasheed referred to certain media reports while presenting his calling-attention notice and sought explanation from the provincial government to shed light on the claims in those reports suggesting the Sindh government was considering privatisation of the KWSB.

“Such reports have augmented the concerns of the people of Karachi who are already receiving deficient supplies of water,” he said. He said the KWSB’s privatisation would certainly create concerns in the people as they had endured the consequences of the privatisation of the erstwhile Karachi Electric Supply Corporation.

‘How can we do something that we have always opposed so openly?’

The parliamentary secretary said the government, instead, had decided to introduce reforms in the structure of the KWSB to improve its performance that had not been satisfactory so far.

“Our aim is to improve the service delivery by the KWSB for which a detailed strategy has been chalked out,” said Mr Baloch. Information Minister Saeed Ghani, who had been local government minister previously, echoed similar sentiments.

“Neither would we privatise the KWSB, nor have we made any such plans for it.”

He said certain elements had spread rumours that had perturbed the people as well as the staff at the KWSB.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan’s Ra’na Ansar withdrew her calling-attention notice as she expressed her satisfaction over the policy statement furnished by Mr Ghani a day earlier vis-à-vis the alleged ‘stoning to death’ incident of a 10-year-old girl in the mountains of Dadu.

She thanked the minister for offering a detailed statement in the house, adding that the government should make efforts to ensure children were protected in the province.

Teachers’ scrutiny

Responding to another notice given by the Grand Democratic Alliance’s Nusrat Sehar Abbasi, Culture Minister Sardar Shah, on behalf of the chief minister, said scrutiny of the teachers who had passed the NTS tests was going on before regularising their services.

He said those teachers had been recruited in the previous tenure of the PPP government after they passed the NTS test. He said the government had already regularised 1,680 teachers while those who passed Iqra test had also been regularised.

Ms Abbasi said the government had not regularised those teachers despite getting a law passed for their regularisation from the Sindh Assembly in 2015.

She criticised the provincial authorities for resorting to baton charge against the teachers who were peacefully protesting for the acceptance of their demands.

She said the Sindh government had double standard vis-à-vis regularisation of teachers as it had regularised those belonging to Karachi while the teachers from Hyderabad were being ignored.

Minister Shah said teachers had the responsibility of structuring a society and it was not befitting for them to violate the law. He added that the law enforcement agencies would act if anyone tried to create a law and order situation. He assured the house that the issue would be settled soon.

Schools in bad condition

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf’s Shahnawaz Jadoon informed the house about the dilapidated conditions of schools in his constituency — Keamari, Machhar Colony, Sultanabad and Salehabad.

“Schools in these areas lack furniture and other basic facilities. The school buildings are in poor condition.”

He claimed the condition of schools in Sindh was worse than the schools being run in the PTI-ruled Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Minister Shah challenged the PTI lawmaker’s claim, saying the latter’s party held sway over the KP and Punjab, and both provinces were “way behind” Sindh concerning indicators on education. He said more than 12.5 million children were out of school in Punjab alone.

“I request the opposition members to indicate such problems to our government instead of going for rhetoric and criticism for the sake of criticism.”

He said the government in Sindh was committed to its resolve to provide education to every child in the province irrespective of whether a school was located in the constituency of treasury or opposition members.

“It is our duty to improve our education system and we are here to act if you guide us about such improvements.”

The PTI's Jamal Siddiqui claimed in his calling-attention notice that the Beaconhouse School was still taking advance fee from students, which was a violation of the Sindh Private Education Institutions (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2005 as well as contempt of the apex court's orders.

Mr Shah said registration of a number of schools had been cancelled by the provincial government for the first time for being involved in such violations. He said the department would take action if a formal complaint was submitted to it.

Speaker Durrani said most such schools were being run as an industry and not as the place to impart education.

"I also have concerns over these schools," said the speaker.

Later, the chair announced assent to four bills by the governor. The bills are: The Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019, The Sindh Institute of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences (Amendment) Bill, 2019, The Sindh Reproductive Healthcare Rights Bill, 2019 and The Sindh Charities Registration and Regulation Bill, 2019.

The performance audit report on car parking structure, Lines Area, Karachi, March 2015-16, was also laid.
(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn, 16, 12/12/2019)

Regularisation of jobs of sanitation workers sought

Highlighting the plight of sanitation workers, rights activists at a press conference held on Thursday demanded that the government regularise their jobs, grant them facilities that were given to employees of government departments and ensure that they were provided with safety kit at work.

They also called for an end to discrimination they frequently faced at the place of their employment and society's derogatory attitude towards them.

"Sanitation workers deliver vital services in society. Unfortunately, however, neither society nor the government is willing to treat them with respect and address their issues affecting their life and families for decades," said Shafiq Ghori, president of the Sindh Labour Federation.

Explaining these problems, he said sanitation workers worked on contractual basis and, therefore, remained deprived of key fundamental rights, for instance, the right to medical facility or health insurance — which could provide some monetary support to families, especially whose loved ones die or suffer injury while cleaning sewers.

Activists call for end to discrimination against such workers

"Sanitation workers are very vulnerable to death, injury and illness as they work in degraded environmental conditions, at times toxic. The local media has recently reported death of some sanitation workers in Umerkot, Hyderabad and Karachi," he said.

Injustice in govt dept

The speakers referred to the National Sanitation Policy 2016 and Sindh Sanitation Policy 2017 which, they said had no mention of sanitation workers who otherwise were the main stakeholders in this sector.

They urged the government to take representatives of sanitation workers on board before designing such policy documents, incorporate their concerns to avoid any gaps in a policy that ensured protection of their rights.

They also spoke of injustices at government institutions and said sanitation workers in union councils, town municipal administrations, district councils and municipal corporations had been working without regularisation for 20 years.

"They are being deprived of wages as prescribed in the government rules and are being paid Rs14,000 or less against Rs17,500 set as the minimum wage for unskilled workers [by the government]," said Pirbhul Satyani, regional coordinator at Strengthening Participatory Organisation in Hyderabad.

The organisation and Sindh Human Rights Commission, he pointed out, had provided safety kits to 250 sanitation workers. Such kits should be provided to all sanitation workers, he demanded.

Zahid Farooq of Urban Resource Centre, Karachi, said since 1994 no appointment had been made in this sector on regular basis and sanitation workers were recruited only on daily wages, which deprived them of many fundamental rights.

"These contractors do not take responsibility while workers die during duty or get injured. The government must regularise them and provide them with pension and packages as per laws.

"Contractors should be made bound to register these workers with social security institutions and Employees Old Age Benefits Institution so they may get medical facilities, pensions and other benefits," he said, adding that a family should be compensated with Rs500,000 in case of workers' death.

Discrimination, he said, was rampant in this sector as employers set wages of the staff according to their own whims.

The government must declare discrimination a crime and bring offenders to justice, he said.

Asked about any reliable data on the number of sanitation workers, Boota Imitiaz, a community activist, said the government had been approached a few times on this subject but it didn't share any information.

Karamat Ali of Pakistan Institute of Labour, Education and Research informed journalists that a petition had been filed in the Sindh High Court, seeking implementation of laws pertaining to the fundamental rights of workers in this sector.
(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn, 15, 20/12/2019)

Steps to improve sanitary workers' conditions suggested

Speakers shed light on the plight of sanitary workers in Sindh at a conference titled 'Shaping a safe and dignified future for sanitary workers in Sindh' organised at a hotel here on Monday by Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) and the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC).

Retired Justice Majida Rizvi, chairperson of the SHRC, informed the audience about the commission. She said the SHRC had been working since 2013. It was in 2008 that the government, keeping in view the human rights violations that were taking place in the region, realised that such a body should be formed, and the same year it established a directorate. In 2011, the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act came into being. It was notified in 2013 under which the commission was set up. The SHRC has two powers: one, it entertains applications about human rights violations; two, it has the powers to take suo motu action.

Shazia Shaheen gave a presentation on a project titled 'Promotion of social well-being of sanitary workers in Sindh'. She called the project a 'movement'. Her presentation was followed by a documentary.

Minister says the Sindh government is coming up with schemes to improve their grades and salaries

Zulfiqar Shah talked about the research done on the status of the rights of sanitary workers.

Boota Imitiaz gave a community perspective on the subject. He praised the SPO for raising awareness on the lives and work of sanitary workers, arguing that prior to that no one even wished to shake hands with them. He also put forward some suggestions, such as on how to handle the issue of working on a contractual basis, health insurance for the workers, putting an end to delay in salaries and removing post-pension obstacles from the workers' careers.

Shafiq Ghauri lauded the effort of the organisers in enabling society understand the gravity of the problem, as a result of which major English language newspapers were now publishing reports about them.

Civil society activist Anis Haroon said the moot was creating awareness of a segment of society that did not have a voice. "They (sanitary workers) put their lives in danger to keep the environment clean. We talk about human rights of farmers and labourers but forget sanitary workers. We are not willing to treat them on the level of human beings," she said and urged the sanitary workers in the hall to develop leadership from within their ranks.

Executive Director of the Indus Resource Centre Sadiqa Salahuddin said civil society had always spoken about the marginalised communities in Pakistan but it had to be said that it's hard to find any other community being marginalised the way sanitary workers were. They suffered from severe discrimination but civil society had not paid enough attention to them. She called 'doable' the recommendations given by some speakers to improve the workers' condition.

Veerji Kohli, special assistant to CM Sindh on human rights, delivered an impassioned speech. He said the first thing that we needed to change about the whole scenario was our mindset. "Who are we to decide what rights they have or don't? Are there only Hindu and Christian sanitary workers in the rest of the world?" he said. "We don't treat them like humans. We don't share food with them or even like to talk to them. It's the mindset that should be changed," he emphasised.

After that a sanitary worker, Ishaq, was requested to express his views on the matter. He narrated a sad tale. He said he had been working for the last 22 years and had four children. His eldest daughter is 13 years of age. To date he's living in a rented house and hasn't been able to buy a place for himself.

Minister's assurance

Nasir Hussain Shah, Provincial Minister for Local Government, arrived late in the programme and left early because he had to be with his party chairman for an important development-related event. He said his government was working to improve sanitary workers' conditions. It was coming up with schemes to improve their grades and salaries, and also to make sure that they used safety kits.

SPO chairman and former senator Javed Jabbar said he learned a great deal from the speakers, and one of the things he got to learn was that it's not just our social responsibility [to raise awareness on the subject] but also our political and national responsibility. He asked whether it was an issue related to Pakistan. There are about seven billion people in the world a large number of which were connected [through handheld devices], and yet this so-called enlightened man had kept part of his mind in darkness. There's prejudice. There had been some positive changes, such as the one that took place in 1948 when all nations got together to come with a UN Declaration on Human Rights that said all of us are equals. However, to date, there existed prejudice. For example, in the US, the blacks were ill treated by the white police the same way as they were treated in history.

“So human nature is a complicated thing. When we talk about sanitary workers, we should know that they are not just suffering from professional prejudice (paishwarana ta’asub) but the issue also has a religious element. This requires a rethink, and the change in the mindset should begin at our homes.”

At the end of his speech, he remarked that our sanitary workers were the real VIPs.

Muzaffar Memon, Iftikhar Qaimkhani, Tanzeela Qambarni, Ramesh Kumar, Karamat Ali and Rasheed Solangi also spoke.
(By Peerzada Salman Dawn, 15, 31/12/2019)