

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

JANUARY TO JUNE 2021

## SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT



### Urban Resource Centre

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### **'Policy on waste-to-energy project in two weeks'**

Policy for generating electricity from waste will be completed in two weeks and it will be submitted to Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah for approval. This emerged on Friday in a meeting jointly chaired by Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and Energy Minister Imtiaz Ahmed Shaikh.

It was decided that the LG and energy departments would work jointly on the project to generate electricity from waste.

The meeting was told that Karachi generated 8,000 tons of solid waste daily, which can generate up to 200 megawatts of electricity.

The ministers said that the most important benefit of the waste-to-energy project was that it could dispose of the city's waste in an environmentally friendly manner. Mr Shaikh said that work on the project should be expedited and in this regard the final policy report should be completed in two weeks for submission to the CM.

A committee headed by the LG secretary was also constituted to prepare the policy report. The committee will also include energy secretary, head of PPP Unit and other officers.

The energy minister said that work should be done as soon as possible to implement the project so that Sindh could be the first province to implement this eco-friendly scheme.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 09/01/2021)

### **Firing at SSWMB van leaves two injured**

A pedestrian and a Chinese official travelling in a Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) van were injured after two unidentified men, who were on a motorcycle, opened fire on the vehicle in Lyari on Tuesday.

While the pedestrian, 45-year-old Khalid, sustained gunshot wounds in his arm and abdomen, the Chinese official, 26-year-old Jason Yahu, was injured by shattered glass that splintered as a result of the firing. Two others, the driver and a translator, inside the SSWMB van remained unhurt.

The injured were shifted to Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital.

Later, the police reached the spot and collected evidence from the crime scene.

Speaking to the media, South DIG Javed Akbar Riaz said the perpetrators opened fire at the van just as it entered the limits of Baghdadi Police Station.

The DIG added that Jason visits different areas with SSWMB teams for different projects and it was during a routine visit that the two men opened fire at the vehicle he was travelling in.

He said an investigation has been launched into the matter to determine who perpetrated the attack and the motive behind it.

According to the DIG, two bullet shells of a 9mm pistol were found at the crime and sent for ballistic testing.

The police have registered a case for the shooting at Baghdadi Police Station under sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act and that pertaining to attempted murder besides other sections of the Pakistan Penal Code against unidentified men.

According to City SSP Sarfaraz Nawaz, the case has been registered on behalf of SSWMB manager, Babar Hussain.

A Counter Terrorism Department team also carried out geo-fencing of the crime scene.

Besides, the CCTV footage of the incident surfaced later in the day. In the video, the attackers are seen chasing the SSWMB van on a 70CC motorcycle. One of them was wearing shalwar kameez and the other had donned a shirt and trousers. Both of them wore caps.

#### **Not a first**

This was not the first incident in which a Chinese national has been targeted in Karachi. Apart from the Chinese consulate attack in 2018, it appears that Chinese nationals are frequently targeted in the metropolis, especially by terrorists associated with nationalist groups.

On December 22 last year, a Chinese national and his translator narrowly escaped an attack at a car showroom located on the Super Highway. An unidentified pillion rider had fired shots at the showroom near the Jamali Flyover when the Chinese national was visiting the showroom. The attackers, who were on a motorcycle, had fled in the direction of Quetta Town after opening fire.

An FIR was subsequently lodged at the Sachal Police Station on a complaint filed by the showroom owner, Abdul Baseer. The police had inserted Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act in the FIR. No suspect has been arrested as yet, however, and the cops claim to be investigating the matter.

Shortly after the attack, banned nationalist party, the Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army had claimed responsibility for the attack.

Prior to that, on December 16, 2020, two unidentified men on a motorcycle had attempted an attack on the owner of China Town restaurant in Clifton. The perpetrators had installed a magnetic improvised explosive device in the Chinese citizen's vehicle and the same nationalist party had subsequently claimed responsibility for the attempted attack.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 04, 10/03/2021)

### **Poor waste management**

After Karachi and Lahore, it's now Multan that has been in the news over lack of cleanliness and poor waste management. A month-long special cleanliness drive has been ordered by the acting Deputy Commissioner, but the Multan Waste Management Company says it has the capacity to lift only 800 tonnes of waste — of the 1,000 tonnes that Multan produces — owing to the lack of resources and man-power. The rest accumulates onto roadsides, blocking drainage systems.

The waste management problem, unfortunately, runs deeper and wider. Karachi — which produces about 13,500 tons of solid waste, 40% of which can be found on the city streets — is pretty notorious in the context. Recently, Lahore has also witnessed a surge in the number of complaints about garbage issues as well, owing to the negligence of the Lahore Waste Management Company. Not many realise that Pakistan is slowly moving towards a country-wide waste crisis. A staggering 48.5 million tons of solid waste is generated across the country per year. The country severely lacks waste management infrastructure to cope with the annual 2% increase in waste generation. While other developing countries have come up with innovative ways of producing energy from waste — with some even importing it — Pakistan resorts to burning, dumping or burying its generated waste on vacant lots and landfill sites. This is not only threatening the health and welfare of citizens but is also adding to environmental degradation. At the same time, one cannot ignore that lack of urban planning, bureaucratic hurdles and low public awareness contribute equally to the problem.

The solution, however, is not just in punishing those involved in throwing waste. Instead there needs to be an integrated waste management system in all large cities of Pakistan. Hazardous waste needs to be separated from biodegradable waste before it can be used for recycling or producing energy. Authorities can also look into exporting waste since many countries have already shown interest in buying. There are many untapped opportunities, but will the officials do the needful?  
(by Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 15/03/2021)

### **Industrial waste flowing into Keenjhar Lake**

Untreated industrial waste is flowing directly in to the second-largest fresh water lake of Pakistan and an important source of drinking water for Thatta and Karachi.

With the combined effluent treatment plant (CETP) of Kotri Industrial Area out of order, the factories are releasing toxic waste in Kalari Baghar Feeder Canal or KB Canal.

In a high-level meeting chaired by the CM's Adviser on Environment Barrister Murtaza Wahab it was decided that strict action would be taken against those who despite the availability of resources release their industrial effluent without treating it.

Wahab earlier received reports of contamination of Keenjhar Lake through the KB Feeder Canal of Kotri Industrial Area because of malfunctioning of CETP.

The meeting was attended by Industry and Commerce Secretary Riazud Din, Environment, Climate Change, and Coastal Development Secretary Aslam Ghauri, Kotri Association of Trade and Industry Chairman Asif Memon, Karachi SITE MD Shehzad Fazal, and Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) DG Naeem Mughal besides other officers concerned.

Wahab expressed concern over the rising industrial water pollution. Release of untreated effluent despite having a CETP was nothing but administrative negligence.

Environment Secretary Aslam Ghauri suggested that the treatment plant of Kotri Industrial Area be repaired immediately by the authorities concerned and the industries which are reluctant to avail the services of the treatment plant for a fee, strict action to be taken against them.

SEPA DG Naeem Mughal said that according to sections 11 and 14 of the SEPA Act 2014, it is strictly prohibited to spread any kind of pollution and violators will be fined millions of rupees daily as well as their business can also be shut down.

Mughal said that industries that have not yet had a combined effluent treatment plant in their area can be asked to install a treatment plant as soon as possible while taking a lenient view for the time being. But those industries which have the treatment plant but do not play their due role to maintain it and their effluent is found to be flowing directly into the water bodies, there is no justification for granting any concession to them.

It was decided in the meeting that if the Kotri treatment plant is repaired then its treated water will be used for better purposes.

Wahab directed the concerned authorities that the same water should be used to convert the relevant area into a green zone.

The Environment Adviser also directed the MD Site and DG SEPA to get the referred treatment plant repaired immediately by the concerned agencies.

On this occasion, the Kotri Association of Trade and Industry Chairman assured their cooperation with the regulator and the concerned departments.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 05, 16/04/2021)

### **Minors wade through city's garbage on SSWMB payroll**

The Sindh Child Protection Authority may have been established in 2011, but provincial government bodies are still employing minors as janitors and garbage pickers to sweep the streets and lift solid waste in the city.

This is claimed by social activists, who have written to the Sindh chief minister, provincial minister for human rights, local government minister, the National Commission on Status of Children chairperson and the Sindh Child Protection Authority. The letter, penned by Helpline Trust, pointed out that minors are being cruelly exploited by local contractors working under the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB).

It adds that the workers are paid far below minimum wage. The document aimed to draw the attention of these officials to the issue in the hope that they would intervene and end the exploitation of minor janitors.

"As responsible citizens of Pakistan, we would like to bring your kind notice that the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB), responsible to clean Karachi from solid waste, is engaged in child abuse and child labour by employing janitors that include 12 to 15-year-old boys and girls," the letter read.

Helpline Trust Trustee Farooq Dawood Herekar said SSWMB had sublet the cleaning and sweeping of roads in Karachi to a Chinese company called KANGJIE. However, the latter sublet the task to Pakistani contractors, who have employed hundreds of janitors to clean the city roads.

"These janitors are paid an illegal and exploitative salary of Rs12,000 per month which is far below the current minimum wage of Rs17,500, as set by the government," the letter stated. It continued that janitors are neither registered with the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution nor any other form of social security.

"This again is a cruel and illegal practice," Herekar said. "Could these crimes take place without the full knowledge and connivance of organisations such as the Sindh Child Protection Authority, Sindh Minimum Wage Board and the Sindh labour department?"

The organisations urged that children below 18 years of age be immediately provided support from the Sindh Child Protection Authority.

Meanwhile, the National Commission on Child Rights, established by the federal government, has sought reports from Sindh government departments.

Iqbal Ahmed Detho, a member of the commission in Sindh, told The Express Tribune that his chairperson has repeatedly written to the provincial government. He asked for the strengthening and implementation of laws prohibiting child labour and to ensure that any person exploiting adolescents be prosecuted and punished.

"In this case, we also approached the labour department to inform the commission about complaints of child abuse and hiring of minor janitors," he said.

The commission member said his entity had also communicated with Sindh authorities to set up district level vigilance committees to advise the administration on effective implementation of the Sindh Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 2015. It also sought the rehabilitation of freed bonded labour.

"I personally visited the labour department secretary's office to inquire over the matter and consequent action, but all in vain," Detho said. He continued that the commission sought a report from the Sindh Minimum Wage Board about the meager salaries of workers. Despite several attempts, neither Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani nor his secretary could not be reached for comment. But Sindh Minimum Wage Board chairperson Zahid Hussain Khemtio said that they had written to the SSWMB. The board asked for contract agreement copies as well as the age and details of janitorial staff and other allied persons.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, SSWMB Operations Executive Director Tariq Nizamani said action had already been taken against contractors who hired minor staff. "We have outsourced the entire system to lift and dispose solid. We keep vigil on the entire system through our command and control operation which is digitised," he said.

He claimed authorities monitor the entire operations and activities of workers. "We have around 5,000 workers and employees in five districts of Karachi. I don't think any minor janitor is still working with a contractor," he asserted. The executive director assured further investigation and, if necessary, action.

The responsibility to protect children and avoid child abuses/exploitation also lies with the Sindh Child Protection Authority. Its chairperson Shamim Mumtaz said she recently took charge and would check if there were any complaints on the matter. "Give me a day or two; we will look into it," she said.

Mumtaz stressed no one would be allowed to exploit and abuse children in the province.  
(By Hafeez Tunio The Express Tribune, 06, 24/05/2021)

### **Private sector to help beautify city**

A master plan has been prepared for beautification of underpasses, flyovers, pedestrian bridges and major arteries of Karachi and the process would begin with the assistance of the private sector soon, Administrator Karachi Laeeq Ahmed said on Monday. "The latest techniques and ideas in the world will be used in the soft branding of Karachi," the administrator said this while addressing a meeting on beautification of Karachi here on Monday.

The administrator said that it is necessary to improve the sewerage system in the underpasses of the city because if the sewerage and rainwater drainage system in the underpasses is not fixed, its beautification would be of no importance. "We will also seek the support of organizations that are ready to join the beautification of Karachi with a creative mind," he added.

Ahmed said that the importance of commercial aspect has its place but it is important to improve the image of Karachi and highlight its importance in its cultural background. He was of the view that Karachi has a rich past in terms of its culture and civilization and one of the few major cities in the world. "Karachi, being a coastal city, is very important, so every citizen should play his role in the process of beautification and improvement of the city," he added. He said that work for beautification of Shakra-e-Faisal would be started soon and it would be given a new look.

(By APP The Express Tribune, 04, 01/06/2021)