

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

JULY TO DECEMBER 2020

## SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT



### Urban Resource Centre

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## SEPA issues guidelines for Covid-19 waste disposal

The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency issued on Wednesday guidelines for healthcare facilities on the handling and disposal of Covid-19 patients' waste.

As per the instructions issued by SEPA, on the directives of the Sindh chief minister's adviser on environment Murtaza Wahab, the guidelines are to be adopted by facilities treating Covid-19 patients across the province.

The guidelines, issued under Section 6 of the Sindh Environmental Protection Act, 2014, state that facilities' owners and management will be responsible for ensuring the proper handling and disposal of the waste.

### Waste collection, transfer and disposal

The waste is to be first shifted to a storage room at the facility from the place of production, before being transported to a waste disposal site, also located on the facility's premise. It may then either be treated at the facility's disposal site or be prepared for transportation to another location for treatment.

It is to be packed in at least two thick plastic bags tied properly, which in turn are to be put in hard containers labelled 'Covid-19', with each bag not weighing more than 10 kilogrammes.

All facilities are required to maintain a record of the number of bags disposed of, waste containers transported to disposal sites in dedicated vehicles, the number of trips made to waste disposal sites and the quantity of waste disposed of during each trip. Besides, the guidelines state, the incinerators being employed for the purpose must comprise two chambers with suitable temperatures and ideally work on the mechanism of plasma gasification.

### Disinfection

In addition, the guidelines outline the method for disinfecting the containers and vehicles used for carrying and storing the waste.

The inner and outer surfaces of the containers are to be disinfected at least three times a day, and vehicles after each trip.

### Instructions for staff

The guidelines require each facility to constitute a dedicated team to collect and handle Covid-19 patients' waste. This staff, as well as those transporting and incinerating it, is to wear PPE and make use of appropriate gadgets.

Besides, staff handling and disposing of the waste are to be tested for the coronavirus every alternate day, while workers having cough, fever or any other illness are not to transport the waste and must use sanitisers before entering healthcare facilities, especially after transporting the waste to disposal sites.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 04, 02/07/2020)

## SSWMB to clean districts Central and Korangi

The Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) will now perform the responsibility of cleaning districts Central and Korangi of Karachi, it emerged on Wednesday.



Sources told Dawn that DMC Central Chairman Rehan Hashmi and DMC Korangi Chairman Nayyar Raza met the local government secretary at his office and requested him to assign the task of cleanliness to the SSWMB in their districts.

They said that LG Secretary Roshan Shaikh gave a positive response to the two DMC chairmen telling them that the transfer of responsibilities from the DMCs to SSWMB would be executed after consultation with the local government minister.

The LG secretary also told the DMC chairmen that on the request of the provincial government, the World Bank had given a special grant which would be utilised only for the cleaning of rainwater drains.

*No slaughter of sacrificial animals during Eidul Azha on roads as special places will be designated this year*

He told them that the task of cleaning drains would be accomplished by project director CLICK Zubair Channa in coordination with focal person of KMC Masood Alam.

"The grant received by the World Bank shall be exclusively utilised for the purpose of rain nullahs' cleaning," Mr Shaikh said adding that a designated team for the completion of the task would be on the ground from the next day, but they needed proper support from the DMC officials, who could locate and identify sensitive and possible choking points.

The sources said that both the district chairmen assured the LG secretary that the technical staff of their respective DMCs would be assisting the drain cleaning team unconditionally during the whole process.

They also informed the LG secretary that rain emergency units had already been established in DMC offices.

### No slaughter of sacrificial animals on roads

Mr Shaikh also told the meeting participants that on the instructions of court no one would be allowed to slaughter sacrificial animals in their home or at roadside as allocated places would be designated for this purpose.

“All the district administrations have been asked to locate and identify a place in every union council which will be designated for the purpose of animal sacrifice this year. We won't allow anyone to slaughter animal on roads and homes as federal and provincial governments will follow the guidelines given by the court for this purpose,” he said.

The LG secretary said that SSWMB would collect the offal of sacrificial animals and properly dispose it for recycling during and after Eidul Azha.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 14, 02/07/2020)

### **Covid waste disposal**

In view of the highly contagious nature of the coronavirus disease, the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency has issued guidelines for safe disposal of Covid-19 waste. All facilities treating the disease have been told to strictly adhere to the guidelines to protect those involved in the treatment and allied activities from the disease. The guidelines are part of the overall preventive measures. They make it mandatory for facilities' management to ensure proper handling and disposal of the waste.

First, the waste will be shifted to a storage room before being transferred to a waste disposal site, either located on the premises of the hospitals, or to be transported to another location for treatment. It is to be packed in two thick plastic bags, which are to be tightly tied. It is then to be put in hard containers labelled Covid-19. Each bag should not contain more than 10kgs of the waste. All facilities will have to maintain the record of the number of bags disposed of, waste containers transported to disposal sites in vehicles marked for the purpose, the number of trips made to the waste disposal site and the amount of waste disposed during each trip. The incinerators must consist of two chambers with suitable temperature and work on the mechanism of plasma gasification.

The guidelines mention the methods to be adopted for disinfecting the containers used for transporting and storing the waste. The inner and outer surfaces of the containers are to be disinfected at least thrice a day and the vehicles after each trip. All facilities treating coronavirus should constitute dedicated teams to collect and handle Covid-19 patients' waste. All those involved in the handling and disposal of such waste should wear personal protection equipment and use the necessary gadgets. All workers involved in collecting and disposing of such waste should undergo tests for coronavirus every alternate day. Those having fever, cough or any other illness should not transport the waste.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 03/07/2020)

### **Plastic ban**

ON Thursday, the Lahore High Court ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure the complete ban on the manufacturing, sale and use of plastic bags in Punjab; and it gave shop owners 10 days to comply with the order. Earlier, in February, the court had banned the use of polythene and plastic bags at all mega stores in Lahore; the ban was later extended to Gujranwala and Faisalabad. This is not the first time such a ban has been put in place, and like previous attempts, it is just as unlikely to be successful this time around. Each attempt has been met with resistance, or followed briefly, only for shop owners and customers to quickly go back to the old ways of doing business. In 2006, the Sindh government first took the initiative to ban the hazardous material from the province, followed by repeated attempts in 2014, 2018, and then again in October 2019. Federal governments, too, have tried to impose bans on the use of non-biodegradable plastic bags. Most recently, the PTI government, which is perhaps ostensibly the most environmentally conscious government in our history, imposed a ban on single-use plastic bags in Islamabad and its surrounding areas on Aug 14, 2019. But this did little to change the reality on ground.

According to estimates, Pakistan consumes between 55bn to 112bn bags each year. There is little doubt about the health and environmental harms of single-use plastics: they clog drains, pollute natural waterways, and make their way into the digestive systems of animals. And yet, despite these periodical bans, the practicality of single-use plastic bags, the lack of availability or awareness of alternatives, the low cost of manufacturing, along with the difficulties in enforcing the law, have made it difficult to discard the hazardous material from our everyday lifestyles. Until practical alternatives can be offered, taking into account the ground realities of people's lives, all well-meaning attempts to make a long-term impact are bound to fail.

(By Editorial Dawn, 05, 21/09/2020)

### **CBC, DHA told to file reports on dumping of waste into sea**

The Sindh High Court on Wednesday directed the Cantonment Board Clifton and the Defence Housing Authority to file comprehensive reports over release of sewage and dumping of industrial waste into the sea.

A two-judge bench headed by Justice Mohammad Shafi Siddiqui took exception to non-compliance with the bench's earlier order passed around a year ago since no compliance report was filed by the respondents.

At the outset, the lawyer for CBC did not file the report and sought more time.

The lawyer for petitioners informed the bench that the sea was being polluted by the sewage at Seaview near Chunky Munky amusement park and a fast food outlet.

The bench directed the CBC and DHA to file comprehensive reports within three weeks and in case of failure delinquent officers would be summoned for in-person appearance.

The bench passed the last order on Oct 10, 2019 when the lawyer for CBC had drawn its attention to a report already filed by the CBC before the water commission about the approval of plan for both buildings.

The counsel said that the building plans of Chunky Munky amusement park and McDonalds restaurant had not been approved by the CBC, but the same was approved and issued by the DHA.

He maintained that the sanitation branch of the CBC may be asked to file comments regarding dumping of sewage and industrial waste into the sea.

The bench said that in order to ascertain the ground reality, a notice was again issued to the DHA with direction to depute a senior officer well conversant with the facts of the case to appear before it along with approved building plan of both the buildings.

The World Wide Fund for Nature and other non-governmental organisations had petitioned the SHC in 2017 against dumping of sewage and industrial waste into the sea.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 13, 24/09/2020)

### **SHC seeks arguments over discharge of chemical waste into sea**

The Sindh High Court (SHC) sought on Thursday arguments on a petition pertaining to the discharge of chemical waste into the sea through different channels.

A two-member bench, comprising Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui and Justice Kausar Sultana Hussain, was hearing the plea, where the petitioner's counsel maintained that despite writing letters to various institutions, no action had been taken against the factories involved in this act.

Saying that chemical and untreated wastewater posed a threat to marine life, he moved the court to take action against such industrial units.

Justice Siddiqui remarked that tribunals were working on the matter. "You should have approached them instead of the SHC," he observed.

The court sought arguments about the admissibility of the petition.

#### **Quota for differently-abled**

Meanwhile, the SHC approved a request for the immediate hearing of a petition seeking the allocation of job quotas for differently-abled persons in private institutions.

The petitioner maintained in the plea that the law of quota for differently-abled should be enforced in private institutions as well, claimed that private firms refused to employ talented people with disabilities.

"If there was a quota for differently-abled people in private institutions as there is in government departments, they would be able to get jobs," he asserted.

He stated that there were both federal and provincial laws dealing with the matter, which should be implemented, adding that differently-abled people should be given a separate quota through the implementation of the law in private institutions.

The court accepted the plea for an immediate hearing and fixed October 22 for the session.

#### **Plea against arrest warrant**

A separate bench, comprising Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro and Justice Shamsuddin Abbasi, sought a progress report from the joint investigation team (JIT) over a petition against the issuance of an arrest warrant to Khawaja Rehan Mansoor by an anti-terrorism court, in a money laundering case against the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) founder and others.

The petitioner's counsel told the court that the attorney general had not responded to the request for transferring the case from Karachi to Islamabad.

The court remarked that it would first consider the case's transfer to Islamabad and then decide about the arrest warrant.

#### **Petition against tax collection**

Another bench, comprising Justice Aqeel Abbasi and Justice Zulfiqar Ahmad Khan, sought a counter-reply from the petitioner company against a reply submitted by the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) in a case regarding tax collection of over Rs190 million from a petroleum exploration company.

The FBR had stated in its reply that the petitioner was working with the government to explore Pakistan's petrol reserves, adding that it wanted to import items without paying duty. Over Rs190 million in taxes were payable by the company, it added.

The FBR added that the petitioner had been served a notice demanding an answer following the law, but it did not submit a satisfactory answer.

**Verdict upheld**

Moreover, a bench comprising Justice KK Agha and Justice Zulfiqar Ali Sangi rejected two men's appeal against their conviction for bank fraud.

The court rejected the appeal filed by Arshad Latif and Qamar Mahmood, upholding the sentences of six years' imprisonment and a fine awarded by an accountability court.

The court also disqualified the convicts from holding government posts for 10 years.

According to the National Accountability Bureau, the convicts had committed fraud in the name of a transport scheme. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter The Express Tribune, 05, 09/10/2020)

**Hazardous waste being dumped without EIA, tribunal told**

An environmental tribunal on Tuesday recorded testimony of a witness in a case pertaining to issuance of approvals by the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency to private companies for collection and disposal of hazardous and infectious waste allegedly without conducting environmental impact assessment.

The three-member tribunal headed by its chairman retired Justice Sadiq Hussain Bhatti was hearing a complaint filed by a non-governmental organisation, Society for Environmental and Mangrove Protection Welfare Association, against issuance of approvals to private contractors by Sepa allegedly without fulfilling legal requirements.

The complainant cited the provincial chief secretary, secretary of environment, climate change and coastal development department, the director-general and director of the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency, and private company Unique Plastic Disposal as respondents.

On Tuesday, witness Mohammad Munir appeared before the tribunal and deposed that he was an eyewitness to disposal of hazardous and infectious waste in different parts of the metropolis and into the sea.

*'Hazardous waste is being dumped at the National Highway near Port Qasim Industrial Area and Lyari Expressway and into the sea during night hours'*

He further deposed that the private contractor companies were involved in disposing of the hazardous and infectious waste at the National Highway in vicinity of the Port Qasim Industrial Area and Lyari Expressway and into the open sea during night hours, adding that they were also burning such waste without adopting scientific methods, causing environmental issues and risks to human health.

The witness said several pictures of such activity were taken while video footage was also made of the same under his supervision since he worked for the complainant organisation.

After recording his statement, the judge adjourned the matter till Nov 17 for issuance of notice to the respondents.

On the last date, the association's president, Dr Kanwal Nazim, had recorded her statement before the tribunal, stating that Sepa was issuing approvals without conducting EIA/IEE without following provisions of the Sindh Environmental Protection Act, 2014 and its rules and regulations.

The complainant had said that hazardous and infectious waste was being collected through trucks without following the standard operating procedures (SOPs) or any scientific approach, therefore, there were chances of contamination of all natural resources.

The different organizations/companies are directly dumping the said hazardous and infectious waste into the Jam Chakro and Gond Pass, the complainant had alleged and added that it was also observed that the hazardous waste had been burnt later on, which emitted smoke, soot, dangerous gases and the same were creating air pollution in the environment.

The complainant had further testified that the staff of the association had taken some photographs and also made video recording of such hazardous and infectious waste, which had been dumped at the National Highway in the vicinity of the Port Qasim Industrial Area and Lyari Expressway.

The complainant had produced photos as well as video footage of the same in the court.

The complainant had stated that Sepa had issued approvals to different organisations, entities and persons for collection, transportation, storage, handling and disposal of the hazardous and non-hazardous waste without conducting the environmental impact assessment (EIA), which is mandatory requirement of the law.

She produced copies of such approvals allegedly issued without fulfilling formalities.

He said that in some approvals, Sepa had mentioned five conditions and in some approvals 20 conditions were mentioned.

The complainant had testified that one of the waste handling organisations, namely Unique Plastic Disposal, was being run at Mehran Town in Korangi and the incineration plant was not functional, but Sepa had issued approval for collection, transportation, handling and disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste without conducting EIA.

She further deposed that on March 4 the association issued a letter to the Sepa DG with a request to provide information regarding approval of the contractors/companies to collect, handle, transport, store and incinerate the non-hazardous and hazardous waste, but no response had been given so far.

Thereafter, on June 10 the complainant served a notice on the DG Sepa regarding contravention of the Sindh Environmental Protection Act, 2014 under Section 26(3)(b) of the act. The DG was requested to take action against the responsible organisations/companies for committing such violations of the environmental laws.

(By Naeem Sahoutara Dawn, 14, 14/10/2020)

### **Six workers die after inhaling toxic fumes in SITE factory**

Six young labourers died after inhaling toxic gases while cleaning an underground chemical tank in a factory in SITE on Saturday evening, according to officials.

DSP Jehan Khan Niaz said that the workers fell unconscious when they were cleaning the chemical tank inside the SM Denim Company near Naurus Chowrangi. They were taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital where doctors declared them dead on arrival.

He said that the company hired sanitary workers through a private contractor for cleaning the underground tank. They were not provided proper equipment for cleaning the chemical tank.

He said that after autopsy, the police would record the statements of the heirs and the factory management and the contractor would be booked under relevant sections of the law.

A Chhipa spokesperson said three of the victims were identified as Garadari Lachman, 23, Bhora Mana, 22, Ramesh, 20 while the identity of the rest of the victims could not be ascertained till late in the night.

All the victims were stated to be in their 20s.

*Police say workers were not provided proper equipment for chemical tank's cleaning*

#### **Man found slaughtered**

A 49-year-old man was found dead in Federal B. Area's Block 20 on Saturday, according to police.

They added the body of Khawaja Qamar Raza with his throat slit was recovered from his rented home.

Samanabad SHO Waqar Kaiser said that the deceased was married and had no children. His wife had gone to meet her parents while his younger brother, Hashim, was asleep in another room. Both the brothers had returned home after attending a majlis on Friday night. He was a manager at a hotel near the airport but lost his job due to coronavirus pandemic.

He said it appeared to be a suicide case but added that the police were investigating.

#### **Fire at chemical factory**

A huge fire erupted in an industrial unit and spread to another building in SITE on Saturday, according to police and fire officials.

They added that the blaze broke out in a chemical factory (East Land Corporation), dealing with paints at around 10am. Sensing the gravity of the situation, the firemen declared it as a third-degree fire and called fire tenders from across the metropolis. Besides, fire tenders from the Pakistan Navy and Karachi Port Trust also joined in firefighting.

The officials said that chemicals were kept inside the factory, which exploded due to which fire spread to a nearby factory, Abdullah Industries.

Several fire tenders managed to control the blaze in the evening. The cooling work continued till late in the night.

DSP Niazi said fire officials informed the police that an electric short-circuit might have triggered the fire.

A Chhipa spokesperson said that Ghulam Murtaza, 20, suffered injuries as he jumped from a wall of the building to save himself from the fire. He was admitted to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital for treatment.  
(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 18/10/2020)

### **City of garbage**

In recent years, Karachi has become synonymous with garbage heaps, overflowing gutters, total lack of public transport and water shortage. These problems are more man-made than due to natural reasons. Heaps of garbage can be spotted at roadside, around hospitals, schools, colleges and graveyards. There are cemeteries where people carrying bodies for burial have to wade through knee-deep dirty water. The provincial government, with the cooperation of the federal government, has

rebuilt a few of the ruined roads after they remained neglected for several years. Only time will tell about the quality of the road repair work.

What sets apart Karachi from other cities of the country and of the world are its tall and hugely broad garbage towers. The provincial government has announced umpteenth times that the garbage dumps will soon be cleared, but these promises have remained unmet. At places where large dumps of garbage have been formed, one finds, especially around government buildings and hospitals, walls carrying warning that those caught throwing garbage around government buildings and hospitals will be arrested, prosecuted and jailed: by the order of (an important government official). The official's designation is mostly in bold letters. The order and warning inscribed on walls are meant for effect — so that those breaking the rule can desist from disposing of waste carelessly. Unfortunately, keen observers and even not-so-keen observers of the ugly scene are now taking the opposite meaning of the writing on the walls — lifting garbage is a punishable offence, so those found clearing the offensive litter will be arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned.

Garbage, stray dogs and the crumbling civic infrastructure in Karachi are the main topics of discussion in homes, restaurants, clubs and other such places. Garbage has become a problem with a capital P. Those whose job is to lift garbage, without a doubt, don't want to work, so residents have become used to living with the unpleasant, offensive and disgusting refuse. (By Editorial The Express Tribune, 14, 20/10/2020)

### **Committee proposes division-wise bodies for garbage lifting building control**

The coordination committee on federal projects in Sindh on Saturday proposed to allow the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) as a policy formulation organisation while for operational purposes there would be separate autonomous bodies on district/divisional level, including Karachi.

A similar arrangement was also proposed for the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA).

This emerged in a meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah here at the CM House.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Asad Umar and Aminul Haq, provincial ministers Saeed Ghani, Nasir Shah, Corps Commander Lt General Humayun Aziz, Chief Secretary Mumtaz Shah, and other relevant officials.

The coordination committee while discussing cleanliness of storm-water drains concluded that they would remain choked until an efficient system of garbage lifting was evolved in the city.

*A revised PC-I for K-IV is being prepared in view of increasing cost*

It was pointed out that due to the improper lifting of garbage from roads, the garbage thrown in the nullahs choked them resulting in urban flooding.

Keeping in view these factors, the meeting proposed to the provincial government to allow the SSWMB to function as a policymaking organisation while all the divisional headquarters may have separate and autonomous bodies responsible for lifting, sweeping, door-to-door collection, transportation of garbage to the garbage transfer stations and then to landfill sites.

In this proposed arrangement, Karachi, Hyderabad, Larkana, Sukkur, Mirpurkhas and Shaheed Benazirabad would have separate solid waste management bodies for keeping the cities clean.

#### **422 dangerous buildings**

The meeting was told that there were 422 dangerous buildings in the city but the buildings which collapsed during the last few months were constructed illegally.

The stoppage of illegal constructions or buildings was necessary to save lives. Therefore, the meeting proposed to the provincial government to allow the SBCA to serve as a policymaking organisation while Karachi, Hyderabad and divisions may have separate autonomous bodies for building control.

It was also pointed out that every new constructing should have a specific lifespan and in case of its collapse before completion of its life the builder should be held responsible.

The chief minister said that the provincial government would consider the proposal of the coordination committee favourably. The committee discussed the matter of removal of encroachment along the embankments of major nullahs.

When the issue of the width of nullahs and the size of embankments emerged, the meeting proposed to appoint a consultant to design the nullah as per the master plan and submit a report so that encroachments could be removed.

Meanwhile, the meeting decided to work out a detailed plan for rehabilitation of people living along nullahs.

#### **K-IV being modified**

The meeting was told that the PC-I of the K-IV water supply project was being changed/modified because its construction cost had increased considerably.

Planning and Development chairman Muhammad Waseem said that the revised PC-I was being prepared in coordination with the KWSB and the ministry of water.

It was also pointed that the Wapda chairman along with his team would visit the K-IV site on Nov 5 for further action. The completion of the K-IV project has been assigned to the federal government while augmentation works would be carried out by the provincial government.

The advocate general Sindh was directed to get the stay orders vacated so that impediments in the completion of K-IV could be removed.

The meeting was told that the local government department was working to check whether the capacity of additional water supply from Haleji could be enhanced from 65MGD to 130MGD.

NESPAK was conducting a study regarding the availability of water which was being expedited, he added.

The chief minister directed the LG department/water board to take immediate remedial actions with regard to improving the existing water supply mechanism and curbing the menace of illegal connections/hydrants.

The LG minister said that work on curbing the “menace of valve man” to improve the existing water supply system was in progress. The meeting also agreed to enhance the capacity of the Thado dam to secure water losses and to avert flash floods during heavy rains.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 01/11/2020)

### **‘Saaf Suthro Sindh’ no more**

Owing to the suspension of funds from donors, the provincial government has finally called off its Saaf Suthro Sindh programme. Under the now nixed programme, the Sindh government, in association with World Bank and various NGOs, had planned to make the province free of open defecation by 2025.

Launched in 2018, the campaign targeted 13 districts of Sindh. It was touted to be an integral part of the provincial government’s sanitation policy, drafted in 2017 in pursuit of achieving the United Nation’s sixth Social Development Goal.

“The government had initially identified over 5,200 villages across 13 districts to equip with proper toilet access and sanitation systems. Upon completion, the same project was to be replicated in the remaining 16 districts too. However, the sudden suspension of funding from the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development, citing Covid-19’s impact on the country, has left us with no option but to shut down the initiative,” said Saaf Suthro Sindh project director Farooq Ahmed Siddiqui.

According to the project director, the initiative had been live for over eight months and had yielded promising results during this time.

Started with the help of local NGOs under World Bank Guidelines, Saaf Suthro Sindh had been mobilising community members to build their own toilets and adopt sanitation practices.

“As part of the process, local NGOs would form village committees and educate people about the impact of open defecation on health and the environment. Through this practice, we had so far declared 2,400 out of 5,200 villages free of open defecation,” claimed Siddiqui, adding that relevant district government administrations had verified this feat and issued certifications to villages upon their achievement of the required sanitation targets.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Siddiqui also said that in the absence of donors, he wanted to request the provincial government to allocate funding for Saaf Suthro Sindh, so the project could once again be resumed.

On the other hand, as per officials privy to the provincial government working in this regard, the sanitation policy was launched by the Public Health Engineering Department in May 2017. However, all work related to the building of latrines and equipping villages with sanitation systems was handed over to the local government, which kept delaying the project.

“Where they claim to have built over 2,400 latrines, in actuality the number is less than 1,000. Even so, building sanitation systems is the easiest part. The real task is to maintain them,” maintained a senior official.

Siddiqui, though, expressed the belief that all village committees had been empowered and mobilised enough to be able to sustain the systems on their own.

According to water and sanitation expert Niaz Nadeem, approximately 53,000 Pakistani children under the age of five die from diarrhoea each year, stemming from poor water and sanitation facilities. Excessive diarrhoea is also a leading cause of stunting, which currently affects 44 per cent of the country’s children. “This hinders child growth and leaves them lagging in school, and other vital spheres of life,” elaborated Nadeem.

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and WaterAid Pakistan are among some organisations that assist the federal government and provinces in terms of frameworks to plan, prioritise and allocate funds for safe water services in the country. In



addition, they aid in the implementation of Pakistan Approach for Total Sanitation (PATS), to sustain an open defecation-free environment both in rural and urban contexts.

“We are already working in various districts and supporting local communities in building toilets and increasing access to sanitation. We have so far declared one union council in Badin to be free of open defecation and are currently working in Tharparkar, Thatta, Khairpur Mirs and Dadu districts for the same cause. That being said, we are ready to extend our aid to the Sindh government in doing so as well,” WaterAid communications officer Sara Akmal told *The Express Tribune*. (By Hafeez Tunio *The Express Tribune*, 05, 05/11/2020)

### **Waste recycling facility operated by persons with disabilities launched**

The Network of Organisations Working with People with Disabilities (NOWPDP) has in partnership with Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited launched a recycling facility in Karachi to facilitate waste management and promote environmental sustainability.

Run entirely by persons with disabilities, the facility employs 11 individuals, including three women.

Working on the principles of reduce, reuse, and revive, the newly-launched facility creates an ecosystem to enable an end-to-end waste management solution.

A network of drivers with waste collection vehicles have been created as well.

They collect waste from litter hotspots around the city. The waste is brought back to the recycling facility, where it is sorted and solid waste, including plastic, is broken down through a crushing process which is scheduled once a week, in view of environmental safety. They are then remodelled and revived into reusable items.

Omaid Ahmed, CEO, NOWPDP, said, “While we have been working for the social and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities for years, we realised we also have a role to play for environmental sustainability. Bringing both of our objectives together, we have initiated this upcycle campaign. The recycling facility will not only clean our city and conserve its environment, but it will also empower our persons with disabilities and will help to change the mindset surrounding their true abilities.”

Aside from trainings on waste management and recycling, the initiative deploys vehicles that collect waste from different parts of the city. These vehicles have been adapted to be inclusive of persons with disabilities. Once waste is collected, it is sorted at the facility, cleaned and then crushed into pellets. The pet bottles and crushed pellets, which are a high-demand material, are sold directly to the market and also upcycled into items of everyday use. The textile division also promotes reusable cloth bags that are designed by the team and stitched by the trained individuals. Once fully trained, the individuals can earn an average monthly income of Rs20,000 to Rs30,000.

Speaking at the launch of the facility, Sadia Dada, director communications of PMPKL, said, “The challenge of littering is not new to our country nor the efforts to combat it. Lack of awareness and infrastructure for disposal are key drivers abetting this bad habit. We are very excited about this collaboration with NOWPDP, which is not just about playing our part in anti-littering, but also to be working with such aspirational people to achieve this goal as well. We learnt so much in the process. Most importantly, how minor changes in the way we work can create room for each and every individual of society to be a part of it.” (By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Dawn, 14, 09/12/2020)

### **WB approves \$200m for Sindh resilience project, \$100m for Karachi waste management**

The World Bank has approved \$300 million loan for two projects in Sindh — the Sindh Resilience Project to build resilience to natural hazards and the Solid Waste Emergency and Efficiency Project to strengthen solid waste management in Karachi to tackle recurrent urban flooding and public health emergencies.

The World Bank resident mission in Islamabad announced on Wednesday that the approval of \$200m by the executive board as additional financing for Sindh Resilience project will strengthen linkages between disaster risk management and the health sector by establishing the Sindh Emergency Service to strengthen capacity for disaster preparedness and emergency response, including health crises such as Covid-19.

“Building resilience to natural disasters and health emergencies is an important and urgent agenda in Pakistan, that will help save lives and protect the economy,” said Najy Benhassine, World Bank country director for Pakistan.

“The debilitating impact of recent floods in Karachi, droughts and extreme rainfall in Sindh, and of course the Covid-19 pandemic, make it imperative that risk reduction investments strengthen multisectoral dialogue and coordination at the city, provincial, and national levels to ensure protections for vulnerable communities and fight the spread of disease,” Mr Benhassine said.

The project will also help improve irrigation infrastructure to protect vulnerable communities living in rural areas, which will directly benefit 750,000 citizens in drought-prone areas of Khirthar range and the Nagarparkar region in the Tharparkar district.

“The establishment of Sindh Emergency Service will greatly enhance the government’s responsiveness to natural disasters and emergencies, particularly in a megacity like Karachi where many lives are lost due to insufficient emergency medical services,” said Ahsan Tehsin, task team leader for the Sindh Resilience Project.

"The project will also improve water security for rural communities that suffer from chronic malnutrition and poverty and are forced to migrate due to water insecurity," he said.

**Karachi solid waste management**

The \$100m Solid Waste Emergency and Efficiency Project (SWEEP) will improve solid waste management services in Karachi and upgrade critical solid waste infrastructure to reduce urban flooding and public health risks.

The project will focus on emergency waste removal to restore storm-water drainage capacity before the next monsoon season, especially in vulnerable communities around drainage and waste-collection sites.

The project will help improve living conditions for at least half a million residents of Karachi and increase protection for workers by introducing safety protocols that improve labour conditions.

SWEEP will also address deficiencies in existing solid waste infrastructure by constructing and upgrading critical infrastructure, such as collection, transfer and disposal facilities.

It also leverages the Competitive and liveable city of Karachi project approved in June this year to advance long-term planning, policy reforms, and behavioural changes required to improve the solid waste management sector.

"Engaging citizens and community members, including informal workers, is essential for sustainable and safer waste management solutions," said Suhaib Rasheed, task team leader for the SWEEP scheme.

"Equally important is a focus on financial sustainability, which will require continued efforts to develop private sector partnerships and sustainable revenue streams to offset the costs of delivering these vital services," he said.  
(By Amin Ahmed Dawn, 14, 10/12/2020)