

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

***JANUARY TO JUNE 2020***

## WATER SUPPLY



## Urban Resource Centre

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### **KWSB to supply water to city's rural areas**

Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that rural areas of Karachi have been placed under the control of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board to address the problem of water supply and sewerage system.

Speaking to journalists on Thursday, he said that the governing body of the KWSB in its meeting decided that all rural areas would be provided water and new lines by the board to address water and sewerage problems in these neglected areas.

The minister said that the KWSB governing body had issued orders to re-administer all rural areas in the Karachi District Council to facilitate water/sewerage system in these areas.

He said that water projects under the Karachi District Council and public health engineering and all the sewerage projects would be handled by the KWSB.

Mr Shah further said that these areas were under the control of the KWSB in 2017, but later under a policy they were not in the ambit of the water board. "But now the KWSB governing body has approved re-administration of these areas in the water board," he added.

The minister said that after this approval, the water board would now post superintending engineer, XEN (Civil) and XEN (E&M) in the next three days for redress of the issues in these areas.

He said that after this decision all the rural areas where the water board was already supplying water under the bulk water supply would now improve the quality, quantity and supply of water.

Mr Shah said the KWSB could now increase its revenue by collecting water and sewerage bills from these areas.

He further said that the initiative would improve the system of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board.

The minister said that the provincial government was trying to improve the sewerage, sanitation and water supply in those areas on priority basis to resolve the old issues of the people of these areas.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 16, 04/01/2020)

### **Revamping of Hub water source for Karachi planned**

Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah on Sunday said the authorities concerned would revamp the water supply from the Hub source under a public-private partnership project to ensure that 100 million gallons per day (mgd) of water reach the teeming provincial capital.

"The city should receive 100mgd water from the Hub source, which has not been possible most of the time due to variety of reasons, which included dry seasons and technical reasons. We are going to make sure that the city gets water to full capacity," said the LG minister after presiding over a meeting at his office.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, he said supplying water to the needs of the city was a key priority of the Sindh government for which various strategies had been planned.

"The water supply and all other components related to the Hub source's link with the city are going to be revamped as per our planning in which the Public Private Partnership Unit would play a key role," said Mr Shah.

LG secretary Roshan Shaikh, managing director of the KWSB Asadullah Khan, KWSB chief engineer Zafar Palijo, director general of the PPP Unit Khalid Shaikh and several other senior officials attended the meeting.

*Officials directed to set up a technical committee headed by the KWSB MD*

Minister Shah directed the officials to set up a technical committee headed by the MD of KWSB with some other KWSB officials and two members from the PPP Unit as its members.

The committee would examine all aspects involving the water supply from Hub Dam and submit its recommendations to the LG minister.

The meeting participants were informed that the system linked to the Hub Dam had got gravely damaged and worn out, which cost a great deal to the deficient water supply from there to the city, particularly Karachi's neighbourhoods in its western and central districts, which mainly rely on the source in the area separating Sindh with Balochistan.

The broken system costs at least half of the water supply, conceded by the officials in the meeting who said that not more than 50mgd water could reach the city in a normal day because of it. The rest of 50mgd water gets wasted, they added.

"This is the main reason behind water scarcity in the areas, which are hooked up to the Hub source," said an official.

The participants in the meeting agreed that revamping the whole system that carried water from Hub to Karachi was the only solution to reduce water scarcity in the city.

They also discussed other issues relating to the performance of the KWSB, which included uninterrupted pumping of water to the city. Shifting the KWSB's pumping system to a reliable solar system was debated upon.

"We examined various aspects of converting the KWSB's system to solar power system and have decided to study it further before taking a policy decision," said Minister Nasir Shah.

He said the meeting participants also discussed various water supply schemes across the province.

Besides, alternative sources of water were explored and installation of plants to treat water for Karachi and the rest of Sindh was also discussed threadbare.

(By Hasan Manssor Dawn, 13, 06/01/2020)

### **SHC orders to remove 'private persons' from KWSB pumping stations, eliminate tanker mafia**

The Sindh High Court (SHC) ordered on Tuesday to "eliminate tanker mafia" and getting the "private persons [contractors] to vacate Karachi Water and Sewerage Board's (KWSB's) pumping stations."

The directives were issued by a two-member bench, comprising Justice KK Agha and Justice Mubeen Lakho, while hearing a plea pertaining to the shortage of water in Baldia Town and other areas.

The counsel for the petitioner maintained before the court that private contractors have been charging money in exchange for water supply to various areas. At this, the court reprimanded Central and South District SSPs.

A report on illegal connections in Malir District was also submitted to the court by Malir SSP. The report states that KWSB has been informed of illegal connections in the area and if KWSB takes the initiative, a case will be registered and action will be taken against the offenders. The report also mentions that several areas, including Memon Goth and Gadap, haven't been receiving water due to complete lack of water connections and hence, the residents have to rely on tankers and wells to acquire the precious resource.

South deputy commissioner, who also appeared before the court, informed the bench that assistant commissioners have been directed to carry out a survey and prepare a report on illegal connections in the district.

Later during the hearing, KWSB managing director (MD) informed the court that 155 pumping stations were operating under KWSB in Karachi.

"We have no concern with how influential a body is?" the bench remarked in response to KWSB MD's statement. The court rebuked him and questioned, "Who has appointed you as the MD when you don't know about the [illegal] connections?" The court held him responsible for illegal connections found anywhere in the city, stating that his [poor] performance was no longer hidden from anyone.

Commenting on the situation, Justice Agha said, "Tanker mafia has been making millions via illegal connections." The court questioned the MD on whether KWSB had taken control of the pumping station through which water was to be supplied to the deprived areas and had the tanker mafia been eliminated. In response, the MD informed the court that KWSB has taken control of the pumping station.

At this, Justice Agha asked him to think again about his answer, adding "you will be held responsible if tanker mafia becomes active again."

The court directed KWSB MD to submit a detailed report on illegal connections and water tankers. It also directed police to take immediate step for eliminating tanker mafia and removing private persons [contractors] from KWSB's pumping stations. The pumping stations are to be provided security against "irrelevant persons," the court said, addressing police officials.

Orders have also been issued for KWSB to ensure the supply of clean water to the deprived areas and the residents are not to be charged any sum in exchange.

Directing all relevant SSPs, West District Municipal Corporation chairperson and secretary of public health engineering to attend the next hearing, the court adjourned the hearing till February 25.

### **Curbing rabies**

A bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Yousuf Ali Sayeed granted a seven-day extension for the approval of PC-1 plan for the project, 'Fight against Rabies and Population Control of Dogs', while ordering the chairperson of the task force formed for monitoring the spread of rabies and growth in the population of stray dogs and the local government secretary to establish a complaint cell and a helpline within three days.

The directives were issued by the bench while hearing a plea seeking action against the population growth of stray dogs and unavailability of anti-rabies vaccine in Sindh.

During the hearing, the petitioner, Advocate Tariq Mansoor maintained before the court that the taskforce chairperson hadn't taken any action on Central District Municipal Corporation's complaint.

The court inquired, "What happened to the project [that was to be launched] for vaccinating stray dogs and forming a taskforce?" At this, Sindh additional advocate general informed the court that PC-1 for the project was sent to the chief minister for approval and requested for a week's extension to get the approval.

Additional local government secretary informed the court that cantonment board officials and other relevant persons have not been attending meetings called to discuss about the taskforce.

The court also asked why Hasnain, a minor boy who was mauled by dogs in Larkana, couldn't be treated at Chandka Medical Hospital. The hospital's medical superintendent informed the court that the boy was shifted to the National Institute of Child Health (NICH) in Karachi as it had better treatment facilities.

At this, Justice Mazhar asked for details pertaining to the initial treatment provided to the boy and reprimanded the MS for presenting an incomplete report to the court. "Why did you bring an incomplete report?" he asked, adding that plastic surgery should have been performed on Hasnain.

Irrked, the court remarked that it has asked multiple times why Hasnain was not treated properly.

The local government additional secretary presented a report to the court, according to which more than 46,000 stray dogs have been killed in the province.

"What is the point of making any effort if all the dogs are to be killed before the implementation of the project for controlling rabies and population of stray dogs?," the court commented. "What will be the advantage of establishing centres on the basis of Turkish models if the implementation is delayed?"

The court also inquired about the progress on setting up a complaint cell, stating, "Who will people approach if they have a complaint [about stray dogs or rabies]?" The local government additional secretary said they may then approach DMCs.

At this response, Justice Mazhar warned the secretary to resolve the issue or else the court would have to summon the chief secretary.

Besides, reports on the issue from East, West, Korangi and Malir Districts were submitted to the court.

Concluding the hearing, the court ordered district administrations and the provincial government to continue action against stray dogs and directed Defence Housing Authority and cantonment board officials to attend meetings called to discuss the taskforce.

It also granted a seven-day extension for get approval for PC-1 of 'Fight against Rabies and Population Control of Dogs' project and directed the taskforce chairperson and the local government secretary to establish a helpline service and a complaint cell within three days.

Concluding the hearing, the court issued a show-cause notice to NICH's executive director, expressing dissatisfaction on reports pertaining to Hasnain's treatment and ordering the executive director to appear before the court in personal capacity. Directing the chief secretary to ensure compliance to all orders issued by the bench, the court adjourned the hearing till January 29.

#### **Students barred from attending classes**

The same bench also ordered the administration of a private school, The Academy, to appear before the court at the next hearing of a case pertaining to the expulsion of students from classrooms over not paying additional fee. The court has also sought fee structure and other relevant details from the school's administration.

During the hearing, one of the school's students informed the court and he and several others were asked by the school administration to leave classrooms as they hadn't paid additional fee. "We were made to sit in the library the entire day and were not permitted to attend classes," he said.

Irrked at the administration, the court remarked that contempt of court action would be taken against the school administration if it continued to bar students from attending classes.

The complainant informed the court that the fee was raised by approximately nine per cent 10%. The additional advocate general too maintained before the court that the school administration had provided false information about fee structure.

At this, the court sought fee structure and other details from the school administration, also ordering it to appear before the court at the next hearing on January 27.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 15/01/2020)

## Water shortages

THE Senate standing committee that was informed about water being 'unutilised' downstream of Kotri should disregard these words, and focus, instead, on getting Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda to answer its summons. During a hearing, the standing committee on water was told by the Member Punjab of the Indus River System Authority, Rao Irshad Ali Khan, that water worth \$29bn flows downstream Kotri Barrage into the sea 'unutilised' every year. Mr Khan urged the construction of more dams for water storage so that this water could be utilised for irrigation purposes. His argument, as well as the calculation he presented, is entirely flawed and should be ignored. The more important observation during the hearing was made by the committee's chair, when he noted that the water minister seemed to have plenty of time for making himself and his government appear absurd thanks to his controversial stunts on TV talk shows, but had no time to appear before parliament, which is his constitutionally mandated duty.

It must be emphasised again and again that dams are not the solution to Pakistan's growing water challenges. Pakistan's per capita availability of water is only slightly above 1,000 cubic metres per annum, which is considered the threshold below which a country can be defined as 'water scarce'. Water withdrawals from the country's river system and groundwater reservoirs are staggeringly high by any standards. The United Nations has estimated that 74pc of the country's renewable water supply is withdrawn, whereas a value of 25pc is considered high stress. The same percentage in Iran is 67pc, India 40pc, Afghanistan 31pc and China 19.5pc. Clearly, Pakistan is squandering its water resources, and an increased amount of water withdrawal from the system will only aggravate the problem, not solve it. In December 2019, the World Meteorological Organisation noted that a new tool to estimate the likelihood of conflict due to water scarcity showed Pakistan to be at "significant risk" of experiencing water-related conflict in some parts within the next 12 months.

Time and again, those who have taken a close look at Pakistan's water economy have said the problem is not lack of storage, but the wasteful utilisation of this precious resource. The existing irrigation system collects less than a quarter of its operation and maintenance cost from water charges (abiana), with the rest having to come from government resources. The lack of proper pricing is at the heart of the water economy's dysfunction. But for water pricing to work, a proper system of measurement across the irrigation system down to the farm is required. The Senate committee ordered such a telemetry system to be installed. The Irrigation bureaucracy needs to focus its attention on these solutions rather than constantly ask for more dams. And the senators should brush aside any demands for more water withdrawal infrastructure, and insist on sound measurements as a start.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 18/01/2020)

## Bilawal opens 100mgd pump house at Dhabeji

Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari inaugurated on Tuesday a new pumping station of 100 million gallons per day (mgd) at Dhabeji. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and others accompanied him while he was unveiling the plaque.

The PPP chairman asked the Sindh government to construct Haleji Lake Road for the convenience of the people of the area and visitors. After unveiling the plaque of the pumping station, he visited the complex and was briefed by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board managing director.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the topmost issue for the people of Sindh was the availability of safe drinking water when his party went to the masses and gathered their demands.

The new pumping station would help allay the water woes of the people of Karachi while water would also be supplied to Thatta, Sujawal and Gharo from there, he said.

"Similar projects aimed at improving infrastructure have been initiated elsewhere in Sindh," said the PPP leader. He said new lines had been laid on thousands of kilometres in the province.

*CM vows to supply 260mgd more water to Karachi soon*

Mr Bhutto-Zardari appreciated CM Shah declaring that he was the "most efficient" chief minister in the country.

Murad Ali Shah said the Council of Common Interests' meeting was not summoned within a year and when it was called its minutes were delayed and when the minutes were finally released they were deliberately written in a "manipulative" manner to further delay the implementation of the decisions taken in the meeting.

"This is how things are moving but even then we will continue to struggle to get the due rights of the people of Sindh," he said. Provincial ministers Saeed Ghani, Syed Nasir Shah and Murtaza Baloch; advisers Murtaza Wahab and Aijaz Shah Shirazi; senior officials and party workers of Thatta, Sujawal and Karachi attended the ceremony.

Mr Shah said that after a hue and cry for over a year, a CCI meeting was convened. The minutes of the meeting were delayed for around one month and when the minutes were released, he found them "hotchpotch", thus, he sent them back after necessary corrections.

He thanked Mr Bhutto-Zardari who, within a month, inaugurated the third phase of the development schemes and projects.

"You had inaugurated roads and underpasses in Karachi twice within 15 days and now after another two weeks you have inaugurated the newly established 100mgd pumping house," he said.



He added that the people of Hyderabad had also requested the party chairman to inaugurate their water supply, sanitation and road sector projects.

Syed Murad Ali Shah announced that the PPP chief would soon perform the stone-laying ceremony of Ghotki-Kashmore bridge on the Indus. "This would be a third bridge on the river being constructed by our government from its own resources," he said.

#### **Murad jeers at PTI ministers**

The chief minister said some federal ministers were fond of unveiling plaques of already launched projects while "some of them have broken the nameplates of projects".

"If you are so interested in performing inaugurations of projects then come to Sindh, here we have completed a lot of schemes and we do not have time to inaugurate them," he said.

"We will give you a chance to inaugurate our schemes, and as a matter of fact, you are in a habit of inaugurating schemes that other governments had completed."

About the 100mgd pumping station, Mr Shah said all its machinery, including motors, had been imported from Germany.

"These are four pumping machines, each with a capacity of 25mgd, thus, the total capacity comes to 100mgd," he said, calling it good news for the people of Karachi.

Mr Shah disclosed that 260mgd additional water was available in the system for Karachi but due to lack of the required infrastructure and defective conveyance system that water could not be provided to the city.

"At present, Karachi is being provided 450mgd and with the commission of the new 100mgd pumping house, 50mgd additional water would be added for Karachi. It means from the Keenjhar source the city will receive a total of 500mgd," he said.

CM Shah added that Karachi was receiving 100mgd from the Hub source but due to defects in the canal, line losses had gone up to 30mgd.

The chief minister said he had held a meeting and approved renovation, revamping and reconstruction of the canal from Hub to Karachi West district to ensure 100mgd was brought to the city. Thus, the KWSB would be able to provide 600mgd to the city soon.

"We are constructing the K-IV project in collaboration with the federal government and all bottlenecks and design defects, if any, would be removed soon," he said.

Officials said the pumping station constructed under phase-I was originally commissioned in 1959. It had 1,400 horsepower motor pumps operating on diesel and gas. This old pumping station was manufactured by a German company and its pumps were still being operated or used with extensive repairs but its efficiency or capacity had deteriorated.

They said the old pumping station constructed in 1959 under phase-I of the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply scheme (K-I phase-I) had outlived its design life and had been in operation for the last 60 years. Therefore, the officials added, the government decided to construct the new pump house in its place. The new pump house has the capacity of 100mgd and it would add 50mgd to the system which was not being supplied to the city due to old machines.

(By Hassan Mansoor Dawn, 15, 22/01/2020)

### **Murad discusses water projects of over \$1b with World Bank**

Spelling out the priorities of the provincial government in a meeting with a World Bank (WB) delegation, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah claimed that he had given equal attention to the development of urban and rural areas.

The delegation, which included WB South Asia regional director Johan Roome, programme leader Lixin Gu and senior financial sector specialist Namoos Zaheer, met Shah at the CM House on Friday, discussing the provincial government's development priorities as well as the WB's ongoing and future projects.

"Urban areas need drinking water and water for industrial requirements, while the rural areas are in need of efficient agricultural water systems for the growth of the agro-sector," explained the CM, bringing up water development projects in the province.

He told the delegation that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project, assisted by the World Bank, was aimed at improving access to safe water in the city, as well as to boost the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board's (KWSB) financial and operational performance.

The project will cost \$100 million, of which \$40 million are to be provided by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), \$40 million by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and \$20 million by the Sindh government. The loan agreement was signed in December 2019.

Shah informed the WB officials that the project would include utility reforms and rehabilitation of the provincial capital's water and sewerage network. Briefing them about the progress to date, he said that the KWSB had been reconstituted, a steering committee had been formed, the project director appointed and a procurement document of \$6 million approved by the bank.

They also discussed the second Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement project of \$6 million, of which \$240 million would be given by the IBRD, \$240 million by the AIIB and \$120 million by the Sindh government. This project, according to the CM, includes the augmentation of the K-IV water project, bulk supply options and the installation of new filtration plants.

The planning and development chairperson, Muhammad Waseem, said that the CM had approved the investment plan but is yet to share it with the World Bank.

#### **Improving irrigation**

Meanwhile, Shah and the delegation also discussed the Sindh Water Sector Improvement Project (SWIP), which aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of irrigation in the Ghotki, Nara and Left Bank canals. The project, costing \$257.6 million, also includes asset management and future planning components.

Shah further said that feasibility studies were being conducted for the rehabilitation and modernisation of the Guddu Barrage. "Institutional reforms will be made, focusing on the devolution of managerial responsibilities to farmers through the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority, area water boards and farmers organisations," he disclosed.

"The impact of the project will be improved water equity and reliability for 1.8 million hectares of agricultural land and over 100 towns and villages, benefiting more than five million people," he claimed.

The project also aims to make water available up to the tail end of Ghotki, Tharparkar and Badin districts.

#### **Mobility in the city**

The World Bank representatives also discussed urban transport plans with the CM, with the 21-kilometre Yellow Line bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor to be developed with the bank's assistance under the Karachi Mobility Project.

Shah said that the World Bank had approved a loan of \$382 million for the BRT project, going from Dawood Chowrangi to Numaish, in June 2019, with the loan agreement being signed in November 2019.

Giving updates, Waseem said that the project director would soon be appointed, while the Sindh government was in the process of appointing six procurement specialists. Sindh finance secretary Hassan Naqvi pointed out that the provincial government had trained 550 Grade-17 procurement officers, of whom six would be appointed for this project.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 25/01/2020)

### **Drinking water projects**

Efforts to provide clean drinking water, especially in water-deficit areas, are laudable. The European Union is spending 40 million euros on various projects to provide clean drinking water to the people of Balochistan. "The province of Balochistan is among the top priorities in the EU's development programme in Pakistan so we have been cooperating with the provincial government to ensure facilities to the locals," said EU Ambassador to Pakistan Androulla Kaminara while speaking the other day at a convention held under the auspices of the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP). The envoy announced more social development programmes for local communities and Afghan refugees in the province. She said the EU has always valued Pakistan's efforts in providing a safe and healthy environment to Afghan refugees who fled war in their country. She expressed sorrow over the recent destruction in Balochistan caused by snowfall and heavy rains and pledged that the EU would support the provincial government in its efforts to provide relief to the affectees.

Balochistan Governor Amanullah Yasinzai and other dignitaries, present at the convention, praised the support of the EU in providing basic facilities in the province. He said the Balochistan government, with the support of social development organisations and the EU, was taking steps for the uplift of the province. He also lauded the efforts of the BRSP in this regard. Provincial Finance Minister Zahoor Buledi said the incumbent Balochistan government had launched various development projects for the betterment of the people. Balochistan is a sprawling region where the availability of fresh water is limited. Not many areas have an ensured supply of safe drinking water. Since clean drinking water is essential for human health, the projects underway to provide safe drinking water to the people assumes significance. We hope the projects are completed at the earliest and do not suffer from official red tape.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 26/01/2020)

### **SC dissolves its commission on water and sanitation in Sindh**

The Supreme Court has dissolved its commission on water and sanitation in Sindh and directed the provincial government to implement its recommendations for proper use of water resources and improve the sanitation system, it emerged on Saturday.

The three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed also directed the chief secretary of Sindh and the provincial law officer to file a comprehensive report after one month regarding compliance of the commission's recommendations.

While disposing of the main petition filed in 2016 by Advocate Shahab Usto with other applications on the water and sanitation system in Sindh, the bench asked the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to process its investigations into embezzlement of funds in installing RO/UF plants and the Sindh Coal Authority and finalise the same expeditiously.

*Tells the provincial govt to implement its recommendations, file a compliance report after one month*

The bench in its order, issued on Saturday, said: "We have noted that on the last date, some suggestions were made for the appointment of the water commission. We find no reason why the water commission needs to be continued. The water commission appointed by this court has already submitted its report/recommendations".

It further said that it was the duty of the provincial government to ensure that recommendations of the commission were implemented.

The bench directed the advocate general of Sindh to appear before it at next hearing and submit a comprehensive report regarding compliance of the commission's recommendations and also asked the chief secretary to update the court on compliance.

The additional prosecutor general of NAB filed a report regarding embezzlement of government funds in installing RO/UF plants in Sindh and the bench noted that a similar matter was also pending at the apex court Karachi registry about the Sindh Coal Authority in which a report was also filed by the auditor general of Pakistan.

It issued directives to club both the cases and said that since these matters were pending with NAB, the investigations must be finalised expeditiously.

The bench observed that the provincial government had appropriate legislation to use and distribute water resources in Sindh and if any further law was required, it might be enacted for proper conservation, use and distribution of water resources.

Periodical reports from each district of Sindh regarding compliance of the commission's recommendations must be submitted before the bench and such reports be obtained from the commissioners of the divisions concerned, it added.

"The water commission shall cease to exist from today and the entire record pertaining to the water commission shall be handed over by the registrar of the commission to the chief secretary, government of Sindh by tomorrow, who shall ensure its safe custody", it ruled.

#### **Secretariat disbanded, registrar relieved**

The bench directed the provincial authorities to file a preliminary report about compliance after one month and also disbanded the secretariat of the water commission and relieved its registrar Ghulam Mustafa Channa and asked him to report for duty to his original department.

The bench further ruled that periodical orders passed by the commission were not to be treated as orders of the apex court, but part of the proceedings of the commission, adding that such orders were in the nature of memorandums, recommendations or diary of the commission.

The petition was filed in 2016, and thereafter the apex court had formed the commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court to hold an in-depth inquiry into the water and sanitation problems of the province and to make recommendations for improvement.

After holding a thorough probe, the commission submitted its report in the apex court and in January 2018 the Supreme Court had appointed Justice Amir Hani Muslim, former judge of the apex court, head of the commission for the implementation of the recommendations of Justice Kalhoro. Justice Muslim completed his tenure in January 2019 and since then the commission remained dormant.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 15, 02/02/2020)

### **Water woes**

THE Supreme Court-mandated commission formed in 2016 to look into Sindh's water and sanitation issues had a gargantuan task. Not only did it have to identify the problems, it had to make recommendations and oversee their implementation. The Supreme Court has now dissolved the commission, while directing the provincial government to implement the body's suggestions — included in its report submitted to the court in early 2018 — and file a compliance report within a month. One of the commission's recommendations is that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board conduct a fresh survey of all water supply and drainage schemes and prepare a master plan for water distribution and sanitation in the city. Other suggestions include, among many others, an oversight body to monitor the KWSB, an overhaul of the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency, a survey of industrial areas by the revamped Sepa, and establishment of appropriately located landfill sites across Sindh.

Official apathy and corruption in the government apparatus — the massive fraud that is the RO plant initiative is but one example — have led to a stage where water and sanitation issues in Sindh are directly responsible for a steep decline in the quality of life. One does not have to travel far in the country's largest urban centre before the consequences of this criminal neglect become obvious. Drains and natural waterways choked with overflowing garbage, roads inundated with sewage water, etc are all part of the 'Karachi experience'. The commission's findings were nevertheless an eye-opener. For instance, it seems there are 750 points of confluence between raw sewage and freshwater bodies — turning the entire 8,000km-long provincial irrigation network into a conduit for faecal material and hazardous organisms. Around 2,000 rural water supply and drainage schemes were found to be dysfunctional largely due to bad governance and the local councils' incapacity to operate them. None of the sewage treatment plants in Karachi were in working order. Therefore, while the government ostensibly spends billions of rupees annually on these schemes, the people are forced to consume contaminated water and endure unsanitary conditions, thus increasingly falling prey to various water-borne ailments eg hepatitis, typhoid, diarrhoea, etc. The commission's recommendations have kick-started work to rectify some of the



problems, but the Supreme Court must ensure that the Sindh government does not slip back into its old ways. Moreover, those responsible for the dire state of affairs should be held accountable for their crimes.  
(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 07/02/2020)

### **Rs6bn scheme to provide extra 65mgd water to Karachi ordered**

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday decided to launch a 65-million-gallon-daily water supply scheme by reviving lower KB Feeder channel through Haleji Lake at a cost of Rs6 billion.

The rehabilitation of Haleji Lake and construction of RCC-lined canal and conduit from Haleji to the Gharo pumping station would be undertaken.

He made the decision while presiding over a meeting to review the progress of schemes to provide additional water to Karachi.

Local Government Minister Nasir Shah, planning and development chairman Mohammad Waseem, Law Adviser Murtaza Wahab, principal secretary to CM Sajid Abro, LG secretary Roshan Shaikh, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board chief Asadullah Khan and others attended the meeting.

The LG minister told the chief minister that the rehabilitation of the Haleji Lake project had come to a halt in 2000.

*The project will benefit about 1.2 million residents of city's water-starved areas*

A new 65mgd pumping house would be equipped with mechanical and electrical pumping machineries at Gharo. A 72-inch-diameter mild steel main would be laid from Gharo to the high point in addition to transmission line to convey 65mgd water from high point to the Pipri filter plant.

The chief minister said 65mgd water would be provided to the water-deficient neighbourhoods of Karachi and would benefit a population of about 1.2 million.

CM Shah reviewed uplift of the Dhabeji pumping station costing Rs1.2bn. Minister Nasir Shah said rehabilitation of the existing electrical and mechanical machineries of Phase- II, Phase-III and Phase-IV had been planned. The K-II and K-III pumping house rehabilitation was necessary because they had completed their life.

The chief minister was told 65 per cent work of that scheme had been completed. He asked the minister to expedite completion of the work to pass on its benefit to the people in soonest possible time.

The chief minister also directed the KWSB to submit a scheme to his office for rehabilitation of the canal coming from Hub providing 100mgd water to Karachi West.

He said the canal had turned "totally defective" because of which half of the water leaked away. He added with its rehabilitation, 50mgd water could be saved and made available for the people of district West.

#### **K-IV status**

The chief minister was told Nespak had finalised its report and most of the points of disagreement had been settled and now a Chinese firm had come up with a new proposal.

The chief minister asked the LG minister to submit Nespak's final report to KWSB's governing body to discuss it in detail.

He said the K-IV project would begin soon. He directed the P&D chairman to keep all stakeholders including the Frontier Works Organisation and the federal government on board in the decision-making.

#### **Cabinet to decide lease issues in city**

Meanwhile, Mr Shah asked the Board of Revenue (BoR) to submit a detailed report before the cabinet on expired leases granted in old city area.

The renewal lease policy must contain various options along with lease rates to decide it accordingly.

The CM chaired a meeting, which was attended by Revenue Minister Makhdoom Mahboob Zaman, Mr Wahab, senior member BoR Qazi Shahid Parvez, member land utilisation Aijaz Baloch and others.

Minister Mahboob said in pursuance of the decision taken in the cabinet on Aug 3, 2019 regarding renewal of lease granted for building purpose in the city, a committee under him was constituted. Other members of the committee were Mr Wahab, SMBR, member LU, and deputy commissioners of Karachi East and Karachi South.

He said there were 1,407 quarters — 1,043 in Garden East and 364 in Garden West — whose leases had expired in 1995. Some plots had got renewal of their leases during 2007 to 2011 and 2012 to 2017. Majority of those plots and properties, however, had not been renewed.

The SMBR said the rates of renewal of the expired leases made during 2007 to 2011 and 2012 to 2017 were not applicable now; thus, new rates should be decided.

The chief minister directed the revenue minister to submit a summary for the cabinet about the expired leases and the proposed rates and other proposals, if any, so that the cabinet could discuss the matter and decide accordingly.

#### **MPA's murder**

In a statement, the CM expressed his grief and sorrow over the murder of Shahnaz Ansari, a member of the Sindh Assembly belonging to the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party.

"It is matter of immense grief and shame to see that women are also being murdered," he said.

Mr Shah called the slain MPA's husband, Hameed Ansari, and informed the latter about his orders that he had given to the police for the arrest of those involved in the murder.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn, 15, 16/02/2020)

### **Sindh CM orders to begin work on 65MGD water project**

Keeping in view escalating water scarcity in Karachi, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed officials to initiate work on a water supply scheme, costing Rs6 billion, to will provide the metropolis with additional 65MGD of water. The project's execution includes the restoration of Kalri Baghar (KB) feeder canal, which will supply water to the city from Haleji Lake via a new pumping station at Gharo.

Presiding over a meeting on Saturday, the CM elaborated that a reinforced cement concrete (RCC)-lined canal would be constructed, to carry water to Gharo pumping station, as part of KB feeder canal's restoration and the water supply scheme would also include the rehabilitation of Haleji Lake.

Briefing him, Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah said that a 65MGD pumping station would be constructed at Gharo, a 72-inch pipeline would be laid to transmit water from Gharo to the high point – a vent allowing air to escape as water fills the line – and another transmission line would be laid to carry water from the high point to the Pipri water filter plant.

#### **Upgrading Dhabeji pumping station**

Murad also reviewed the upgradation of Dhabeji pumping house.

Nasir informed him that the rehabilitation of electrical and mechanical machinery at the pumping station was needed, while two pumping houses needed an overhaul. He added that 65 per cent of the work had been completed.

At this, the CM instructed him to increase the pace of work.

#### **Rehabilitating the canal**

Murad also directed Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) officials to work on a scheme to rehabilitate the canal supplying water from Hub to Karachi, enabling it to carry water to its full capacity of 100MGD.

#### **K-IV project**

At a separate meeting, Murad was told that National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK), which had earlier raised objections over the design of the K-IV water supply project, had finalised a report on the matter as well as the selection of the design consultant for the project. The local government minister informed him that most points of disagreement were settled and a Chinese firm had come up with a new proposal for the project's design.

The CM directed him to submit the NESPAK report to KWSB, so that it could be discussed in detail.

#### **Renewal of lease**

Murad sought a report on the expired leases of land in the city from the Board of Revenue (BoR) officials, directing them to present the report at the next cabinet meeting.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 16/02/2020)

### **SHC orders DMC West to clear overdue water bills within a week**

The Sindh High Court ordered on Tuesday the district municipal corporation (DMC) of the West District to clear outstanding water bills, while hearing a plea pertaining to the suspension of water supply to Baldia Town.

In addition, the two-member bench, comprising Justice KK Agha and Justice Muhammad Saleem Jessar, also summoned the public health engineering secretary and DMC West chairperson in personal capacity.

At the hearing, the court inquired of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing director (MD) whether KWSB had cut off all illegal connections in Malir and laid water pipelines in the area. The MD replied that the department of public health engineering was to lay the pipelines in the area.

The public health engineering secretary, however, failed to appear before the court. The court expressed annoyance over his absence, at which it was informed that the secretary couldn't attend the hearing as he was busy attending a meeting at the Chief Minister (CM) House.

Later, the court rebuked the officials of DMC West for not paying water bills, adding up to Rs5.2 million.

The court stated that contempt of court proceedings would be initiated against the DMC if the bills were not cleared by the next hearing. It ordered the DMC to pay all outstanding bills within a week and summoned public health engineering secretary and DMC West chairperson in personal capacity at the next hearing on March 27.

#### **Stay extended**

A bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Yousuf Ali Sayeed extended the stay on a notification of the law department, issued to terminate additional advocate generals and assistant advocate generals of Sindh, including Ghulam Mustafa Mahesar.

Sindh Advocate General Salman Talibuddin maintained before the court that employees at the advocate general's office had been collecting their salaries for the past four months and the department was bound to pay them salaries due to the stay on the notification for their termination. "Their dues can be cleared only after they resign and they will be terminated, as per the cabinet's directives, expected to be issued in the near future," he explained.

Advocate Abid Zuberi maintained that the authority to terminate officials was transferred from the governor to the chief minister, claiming that the move was based on "mala-fide intention."

At this, the court sought a written reply from Zuberi on government's behalf.

The court extended the stay on the notification issued to terminate additional advocate generals and assistant advocate generals, seeking arguments from the counsels at the next hearing on March 11.

#### **Land occupation case**

Meanwhile, the court directed East District DIG Amir Farooqi to submit reply on a plea pertaining to the illegal occupation of land in Scheme 33 within three weeks.

The plea stated that land mafia illegally occupying the land has police officials' backing and a case against the accused was registered when Farooqi was approached to resolve the matter. The plea moves the court to stop police officials from harassing people into giving up their land.

A contempt of court notice has already issued to Farooqi, yet he didn't appear before the court at the hearing.

Commenting on Farooqi's absence, the counsel for the petitioner said, "Is police's job to ignore court orders?"

The court remarked that the police could not ignore judicial orders.

Farooqi's counsel, however, sought an extension for submitting the reply.

Accepting his request, the court granted a week's extension.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 26/02/2020)

### **Karachi faces daily water shortage of 700m gallons**

Karachi is currently facing a shortage of 700 million gallons of water on a daily basis, while the federal or provincial government have no concrete plan of action to tackle the situation.

The sprawling metropolis requires a water supply of 1.2 billion gallons of water every day at the moment. However, with water theft, leakages and just plain scarcity, the conurbation only ends up with 500 million gallons a day. And with summer – and the month of Ramzan – just around the corner, matters are likely to get worse as the water usage of the city's residents spikes.

According to a source at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), with the government's pace of work on on-going water supply projects, there is little chance that they will be able to complete them in less than two years' time.

However, talking to The Express Tribune, KWSB managing director Asadullah Khan said that they were aware of the daunting water shortage in the city. "If K-Electric provides power to the five major pumping stations of the city – Dhabeji, Gharo, NEK, Pipri and Hub – and other pumping stations, we can manage the challenge of water scarcity by adopting the strategy of supplying water on alternate days," he said, claiming that the power supply company only provided an interrupted supply of electricity to the pumping stations at the moment.

Meanwhile, he claimed, the KWSB supplied water to areas that are completely deprived of it through tankers filled from the government's hydrants, adding that the consumers had to pay for these tankers, however.

He urged citizens not to waste water. "The water you will save will be used by other citizens," he said. "There is a shortage of water in the city, but we will try our best to manage the situation with the available resources."

(By [Naeem Khanzada](#) The Express Tribune, 04, 28/02/2020)

### 'Mismanagement, wastefulness adding to Karachi's water crisis'

An important session on Karachi's water crisis moderated by Simi Kamal on the second day of the 11th Karachi Literature Festival (KLF) managed to enrich the audience with a fair bit of important information.



Khalid Mahmood Shaikh, a member of the founding team of the Sindh Public Private Partnership Unit who was also with the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, said 95 per cent of public sector institutions in the country didn't enjoy a good reputation.

Responding to a question about the reputation of the KWSB, he added that inefficiency of such institutions was an issue. He quoted a line from Shamsur Rehman Farooqi's novel Kai Chaand Thay Sir-i-Aasman, "teen paisey ki amadani hai uss mein se aik paisa to maashki le jata hai." He pointed out we have maintained this tradition.

Mr Shaikh said he worked for a year in the water department. The basic issue was of mismanagement. There was tremendous wastefulness. It could be controlled but there were political and administrative compulsions. Karachi got water from two major sources: Keenjhar Lake and Hub Dam. The former has a quota of 650mgd water but due to technical issues (pumping lines at Dhabeji) no more than 450mgd can be had. Also, Hub canal was in a bad shape and work was being done to improve it, he added.

*An expert says 95pc of govt organisations don't enjoy good reputation*

Hubco's Farrukh Rasheed said when the power issue emerged in Pakistan the company gave a vision to solve the crisis. It has made an investment which will be able to generate around 4,000MW and provide it to the grid.

Further evaluation brought to their notice the issue of water. Figures show by 2025 scarcity would reach an extreme level.

He said all over the world governments alone don't resolve water issues. It requires a public-private partnership. So the company decided to take part in resolving the crisis by taking measures such as water recycling.

Babar Siddiqui, who also represents Hubco, said a few years ago the company thought that since it's been working in Karachi as well, why shouldn't it do something that could give back [something positive] to the city.

In that regard, water came up as one area that needed attention. Their effort started from zero. The things that came to the fore were: how could the quantity of water be increased (Karachi is closer to the sea whose water can be processed, but it's an expensive proposition). Also, why not treat sewage for industrial use.

Answering a question about the role of the media in the issue, journalist Wusatullah Khan said that the media was neither aware nor had the desire to know about the issue. He then went on to talk about how people complicate issues in order not to solve them. He gave an example that when he was a kid he used to drink water from taps.

Mr Shaikh took issue with Mr Khan saying it's easy to simplify difficult things by writing articles, but the fact of the matter is it's a complex issue. Political will is weak in this context. Since Mr Khan mentioned tap water that he used to drink, Mr Shaikh commented he'd also know about the mortality rate 20 years back compared to what it was now.

(By Peerzada Salman 15, 01/03/2020)

### Karachi water woes

The summer season is yet to fully set in but Karachi has started to feel the heat of water shortage. Currently this sprawling city of 22 million is facing a shortage of 700 million gallons daily of water, much less than its requirement of 1.2 million mgd. The city seldom gets more than half of its water needs through pipelines of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. Water tankers fill the gap. People have to buy water tankers from the KWSB, and in most cases, from the tanker mafia at exorbitant rates.

The water shortage is likely to worsen with temperatures rising in the coming days. The KWSB managing director blames K-Electric for the current water woes, saying power being provided by the electricity supply company to the five major pumping stations of the city was erratic because of which the functioning of the pumping stations had been badly affected. He says if the pumping stations get uninterrupted power supply, an adequate amount of water can be supplied to consumers. He says in areas that are at present not receiving piped water, the KWSB was supplying water through tankers on payment of charges. There are, however, many localities in Karachi where households have not received piped water for years but they pay their water bills regularly for fear of disconnection. Residents in such areas purchase tankers or cans.

The city has been facing water shortage for the past many years, and the situation has been deteriorating with the passage of time. Last year Sindh, of which Karachi is the capital, received heavy rainfall. The Hub dam was filled to a considerable extent. People were expecting that there would be no water shortages in the current year. But such hopes seem to have been belied. As for the K-IV water supply scheme, there are several difficult-to-surmount obstacles in the way of its completion. Judicious use of water is the only option.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 03/03/2020)

### **Water bowser knocks down couple, minor daughter**

An apparently fast-moving water bowser knocked down a young couple and their little daughter in Korangi Industrial Area on Saturday evening, said police and hospital officials.

The family was on their way on a motorbike when the water bowser hit them on Jam Sadiq Bridge.

They sustained critical injuries and were taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, where doctors pronounced the couple and their daughter dead on arrival, said a hospital official.

The victims were identified as Akhlaq, 32, his wife, Nazneen, 25, and their five-year-old daughter Muntaha.

Korangi Industrial Area SHO Rana Haseeb Ahmed said that the tanker driver escaped from the crime scene leaving behind the tanker, which was seized by the police.

### **Old man burnt to death**

An old man was burnt to death in the Garden locality on Saturday, said police and rescue services.

They added that the blaze erupted in a flat near Shoe Market. As a result, 80-year-old Mohammed Qasim was burnt to death. Short circuit is stated to be the cause of the fire.

The body was taken to Burns Centre of the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital.

The area police officer said that the victim was married but the couple had no children. His wife had gone somewhere for some work and he was alone when the incident happened.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 15, 08/03/2020)

### **Minister pledges operation against West dist water mafia**

Sindh Minister for Information, Local Government, Housing & Town Planning, Forest and Wildlife Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that the water mafia operating in district West of Karachi would be brought to book with the help of Rangers and police. The minister said soon an operation in this regard would be initiated.

He said this while presiding over a meeting of elected members of the provincial assembly and relevant officers of district West on Sunday.

Those who attended the meeting included MNAs Abdul Qadir Patel, Shahida Rehmani, MPAs Liaquat Ali Askani, Naaz Baloch, special coordinator to the Chief Minister of Sindh Rashid Rabbani, Waqar Mehdi, former MPAs, Nadeem Bhutto, Humayun Khan, secretary of Local Government Roshan Ali Shaikh, managing director of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, director general of Karachi Development Authority and municipal commissioner of Karachi Municipal Corporation.

The meeting participants reviewed the ongoing development projects in district West.

The minister said that all problems related to water supply and leakage of sewerage lines would be resolved on priority basis. He directed the officers to make functional the Mianwali Pumping Station located in district West within a month to provide relief to residents of the area.

The minister said he wanted the closure of all illegal water hydrants functional in the district.

He asked the officers to take severe action against all those operating these illegal water hydrants. Syed Nasir Hussain Shah also ordered that the RO plants installed in Lyari Park were also made functional swiftly.

The meeting participants decided that the supply of water through Hub Dam, which was currently at 40 million gallons per day (MGD), be made to its full capacity, that is of 100MGD, to help resolve the woes of the people living in district West.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that chairman of Pakistan Peoples' Party Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had clearly instructed all elected members of the party to serve the people of the province without taking into consideration that they voted for the party or not.

He directed the officers of the water board to stop the practice of blocking the supply of water to the areas which were getting sufficient amount of water just to provide water to other areas. He said that instead of this practice the water to the areas which were facing scarcity of water should be provided with some other sources.

The meeting also approved the proposal regarding up-gradation of Hub pumping station.

### **Urban forestry project**

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah also presided over a meeting regarding the urban forestry project. He said the urban forestry project on both sides of Lyari riverbed was one of the priorities of the Sindh government.



The agenda of the meeting included project of urban forestry and rehabilitation of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Park.

The minister said that both of these projects would be completed as early as possible. He said that the urban forestry project would be extended.

The minister said that the RO Plant of the park should be made functional immediately.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 13, 09/03/2020)

### Water, water...

WATER is both a blessing and a curse for the coastal communities that live along the Indus delta region. Earlier, a report in this paper gave a glimpse into how sea intrusion in recent decades has changed the centuries-old way of life for the people of Kharo Chan in Sindh. As water consumes entire villages, the families are forced to relocate. In Thatta alone, according to some reports, over 2m acres of land have been lost to an expanding sea. Additionally, when saltwater destroys once fertile farming lands, or mixes with groundwater, entire communities are at risk of suffering from food and water insecurity, disease, and falling below the poverty line. Meanwhile, insufficient freshwater reaching the delta has made it increasingly difficult for residents to access clean drinking water. Much has already been written about the mismanagement and unfair distribution of water between the provinces, and the damage caused by the construction of dams and barrages along the Indus River, which has resulted in Sindh receiving a trickle of the water supply it is due under the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991. The lack of freshwater flow and increased salinity also poses a grave threat to the Indus delta's once dense mangrove forests. Not only do these forests protect the land from sea intrusion and prevent natural disasters, they also serve as breeding grounds for a diverse range of aquatic wildlife, and the fishing communities are dependent on them.

While March 22 marked World Water Day, the event was largely overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic and the sudden rise in the number of cases around the world. As often said, one of the simplest and most effective ways to counter the spread of the virus is by practising basic hygiene and regularly washing hands with soap. But how will people who do not have access to water do that? This is a good time as any to remember that water and sanitation are human rights, not luxuries.  
(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 28/03/2020)

### Lockdown may have eased water crisis for now, but has left KWSB in a quandary

The coronavirus pandemic has come as a blessing in disguise for the water starved-residents of Karachi. If the lockdown continues through Ramazan, the city may not see protests, a yearly phenomenon, as days get hotter in the coming weeks.

"With commercial activity at a standstill and industries closed, domestic supply got better," said an inside source at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, requesting anonymity. Almost 100 million gallons per day (mgd) of 550mgd is now all being diverted for domestic use.

Even the tankers seem to have disappeared from the roads, although the water board insists the tankers distribute not more than 12-13mgd. "Our tanker service is operational, but it is much easier for residents to get the tankers these days as there is a ban on commercial supply from tankers for the time being and all tanker service is kept available for the domestic user," said the KWSB spokesperson, adding that they closed it to minimise crowding at the hydrants.

But he said these unusual circumstances are masking the gravity of the water crisis. The actual demand for Karachi is 1,200mgd which means there is a shortfall of 650mgd. Admitting the government was unable to meet 55 per cent of the city's demand, he estimated that by 2030, the demand could reach up to 1,500mgd.

But inside the KWSB, the situation is rather grim. "We are going through a serious existential financial crisis," said the source from the board. "Our revenue has dipped enormously as two-thirds of it was coming from the industrial and commercial consumers, but now their meters are showing negligible consumption. Only one-third of the more than one million domestic consumers pay their water bills and the recovery ratio is dismally low, he said and remarked that the paying consumers were unlikely to be able to pay the KWSB bills owing to the lockdown and the financial crisis they may be in.

"Wilful or otherwise, our system is such that we cannot withdraw our service from them as it would cost us more to do that," he lamented. In any case, they do not intend to take any such measures at a time when water and soap are considered necessary weapons against Covid-19.

But if this continues and they do not receive any relief package from the provincial government, they may not be able to survive any longer or pay April's salaries to the over 11,000 staff. "Monthly we pay Rs600 million just for salaries and pension to those on our roll," he said.

In addition, empty coffers mean severe operational issues. "The quality of service will be compromised if we do not have money to buy essential supplies like chlorine, fuel for our vehicles, or to get our machines repaired. It may be difficult to keep our secondary or tertiary pumping stations operational." He also feared that because there was no timeframe attached to the lockdown, many projects that were in the pipeline may either get delayed or not take off at all if the financial crisis deepens.  
(By Zafeen T. Ebrahim Dawn, 13, 29/04/2020)

### Artificial water shortage plagues Gulshan-e-Iqbal

An artificial water crisis appears to have been created in Karachi's residential neighbourhood of Gulshan-e-Iqbal, for which a collaboration of top Sindh government officials and the city's water board is to blame.

The artificial shortage, which has forced residents into buying expensive water tankers to make it through the month of Ramadan, has also increased business for private tanker owners who have been making bank on the extant water crisis.

Moreover, reports suggest that the area's water shortage is linked to the Karachi Water and Sewage Board's (KWSB) water trunk main department being involved in stealing water from the residential areas of Gulshan-e-Iqbal and siphoning it to a 24-hour hydrant at Nipa Chowrangi. Since the hydrant is used for refilling tankers throughout the day, residents of the affected neighbourhoods believe that the local tanker mafia has been robbing the citizens by selling them their own water at exuberant rates.

According to Syed Mujtaba Ali, a resident of Gulshan-e-Iqbal, a severe water crisis grips his neighbourhood every summer, intensifying during the month of Ramadan.

"Previously, whenever we filed complaints about the crisis with the relevant departments of the water board, we would be told that the shortage is due to the increase in population," he said. "However, the government imposed the coronavirus lockdown almost two months ago, as a result of which all commercial and trade activities have remained suspended and water was once again being supplied to all areas of Gulshan-e-Iqbal with full pressure till the month of April."

As soon as Ramadan started, though, the unprecedented water crisis once again returned to Gulshan-e-Iqbal, claimed Ali. "According to the schedule, the area is still being supplied with water for six hours four days a week but there is no water in our taps to show for it," he added.

Speaking to *The Express Tribune* on condition of anonymity, a KWSB official shared that the entire water board system is too dilapidated to function, while its water trunk main department is also riddled with corruption and bribery.

"There are two water supply systems in the city and each has its own superintendent engineers and staff. The water trunk main system handles canals coming from River Indus, Hub Dam and bulk lines, whereas the local water distribution system supplies water to houses and residential areas through pipelines, valve operations and gravity," he explained.

"When the trunk main fails to supply water to the local system, water cannot be supplied to the houses in the area either," the source informed. "This is all done to create an artificial water crisis to help boost the business of the tanker mafia. This scheme is not only peddled within the water board, but is also endorsed and supplemented by top Sindh government officials, while the citizens who foot the water board's bill are forced to buy expensive tanker water," he claimed.

On the other hand, a KWSB spokesperson, when contacted by *The Express Tribune*, denied the allegations and said that no water from Gulshan-e-Iqbal was being siphoned to the Nipa hydrant.

"Technically speaking, this is impossible. The water shortage is only attributed to higher demand and lower supply in view of the increasing population. Currently, the water board is faced with a shortfall of 55 per cent, which has affected water supply in various areas of the city," he reiterated.

"Furthermore, contrary to claims, the Nipa hydrant only operates 18 hours a day while the supply to commercial tankers is completely cut off. Only water tankers operating at official rates of Rs1,000 for a 1,000 gallon tanker, Rs1,400 for 2,000 gallons and Rs1,800 for 3,000 gallons, are accommodated at the hydrant. In addition to that, free water tankers are also provided to several unprivileged areas under the supervision of the deputy commissioner," he asserted.

(By Ashraf Ali *The Express Tribune*, 05, 04/05/2020)

### Non-functional RO plants create water scarcity

Despite spending billions of rupees on the installation of Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants in various districts of Sindh to ensure the supply of clean drinking water, most of the plants have stopped functioning due to their substandard quality. What's more, employees hired to run the plants have not been paid their salaries for months, forcing them to take to the streets and stage a protest.

According to officials figures, the provincial government set up around 2,222 RO plants worth Rs13 billion in water-starved areas of Tharparkar, Badin, Matiari, Sanghar, Benazirabad, Thatta, Umerkot, Khairpur Mir and other districts of Sindh. The scheme, however, could not see the light of the day as the majority of the plants remain closed for maintenance. Workers say that the government bought machinery of substandard quality because of which the plants have been going out of order since the early days of their installation.

"We haven't been paid a penny for the last 10 months. We have now locked the RO plant and will not resume our work until our salaries are released," a contractual employee who was protesting with other colleagues in Bhit Shah of Matiari District said.

The closure of the plants has led to severe water scarcity in various districts where underground water is unfit for human consumption.

The ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government claimed to have installed Asia's biggest RO plant in Mithi, Thar, with a total capacity to filter two million gallons of potable water in a day. PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari inaugurated the plant in 2015, and a huge sum of money was spent on its publicity. However, the fate of the plant hangs in the balance as it hardly runs three to four months in a year.

"This plant has been closed because we don't have membrane for water treatment," Jawaharlal Kella, a public health engineer who looks after the RO plants in Thar, told The Express Tribune.

"Reverse osmosis (RO) is a water purification process that uses a partially-permeable membrane to remove ions, unwanted molecules, and larger particles from drinking water, making it fit for drinking," he said. "Since we have run short of membranes, our plant is closed for many days."

As against his claim, locals from the area say that the plant has been non-functional for the last three months.

According to government figures, around 600 RO plants of various capacities had been set up in various areas of Thar. Out of the total, 60 per cent are closed per official figures.

"Even those plants which are still functional are not working properly because of which people are not being supplied clean drinking water," an official in public health who is familiar with the development said.

Initially, several Sindh cabinet members and PPP leaders denied the allegations, saying that the reports of plant closures are untrue. Later, however, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah confessed that the RO plants have been closed and called a meeting to discuss the matter in October 2018.

The CM not only ordered a committee to probe the issue, but he also directed the finance department to release Rs336 million for the maintenance of RO plants. Sources privy to the development said that the funds were released to Pak Oasis Company, which has installed almost all the RO plants. But after two to three months, the same situation came to the fore.

"How will the plants work when all are faulty and substandard machinery is used?" an official of the public health engineering department said. "The commission members visited the RO plants in Thar and other areas, expressed serious concerns about the issue, and held the public health department and others responsible for it. They directed the departments concerned to revamp the system, but all went in vain," he said. Taking notice of the non-functional RO plants, the Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah constituted a committee comprising officials of public health, the NED University and Pak Oasis Company last year. The recommendations made by the committee, however, were not made public.

Despite many attempts, the public health engineering department's secretary was unwilling to speak on this issue. However, his assistant referred the matter to the Pak Oasis Company.

When approached, a senior official of the Pak Oasis Company, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that funds were not released to them by the Sindh government, which has created the problem.

"We get a quarterly budget from the provincial government. They have not issued the money for the last two quarters that is why the plants could not undergo maintenance," he said. "The situation will return to normalcy as soon as the government releases the fund."

(By Hafeez Tunio The Express Tribune, 05, 07/05/2020)

### **KWSB tanker charges**

THE Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) online water tanker service costs Rs1,800 per tanker of 3,000 gallons capacity. This includes transportation charges for a round trip of up to 20 kilometres.

An additional Rs65.52 per km is charged for distances exceeding 20km. These transportation charges have remained constant for quite some time now.

One would have thought that with the recent repeated reductions in the price of diesel, totalling more than Rs40 per litre, the authorities at the helm of KWSB affairs would have found it expedient to pass on some of this benefit to the consumer in the form of reduction in transportation charges.

This is perhaps expecting too much from the top echelons of utilities supposed to provide public services. The Sindh government should provide the citizens of Karachi relief by directing the KWSB officials to reduce transportation charges of water tankers.

Muzzammil Ahmed  
Karachi

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## Water projects slip down priority list in Sindh budget

While Karachi finds itself at the centre of a water crisis that has been worsening for years now, the Sindh government has apparently put the city's water needs on the backburner, setting aside just Rs150 million for a 65 MGD excess water project in the provincial budget for the coming year.

The project, which was approved in 2014 and construction for which began in 2017, was planned so that it would reach completion within two years. However, it has remained in limbo for the past year, mainly due to lack of funds and the government's apparent lack of interest.

Considered crucial for overcoming the prevalent water scarcity in Karachi, it is now likely to face further delays with the government failing to allocate sufficient funds for its completion.

Similarly, just Rs50 million has been earmarked for the much-vaunted K-IV bulk water project, which was initially to see its completion in 2018.

Karachi needs 1,200 million gallons of water daily to sustain the needs of its population. However, the city is only supplied with 406 MGD of water. Under the distribution system of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, 364 MGD and 42 MGD of water is provided for domestic use and the industries, respectively.

### Improving water and sanitation

In a bid to improve the water supply and sanitation system, the government has earmarked Rs50 million for the construction and repair of filter plants at Gharo, Pipri and COD, as well as North East filter plant, running under the KWSB. Once rehabilitated, the plants will improve water filtration for Karachi by 210 MGD.

Apart from this, Rs15 million has been set aside for the construction of new filter plants in Karachi, while Rs62.5 million has been allocated for the upgrading of the K-III, K-II and NE pumping stations, Rs62 million for the upgrade of Hub pumping house and pumping station, Rs37 million for the upgrade of Gharo pumping station and Rs25 million for the upgrade of Damloti pumping station.

Separately, Rs37.5 million has been kept for laying down water pipelines in Defence Housing Authority, Qayyumabad and other areas.

Besides, the Sindh government has earmarked Rs18.7 million each for all six districts of Karachi, to spend on the repair and replacement of water and sewerage pipelines.

As much as Rs100 million has been set aside for the procurement of machinery and sewerage cleaning in Karachi. In addition to this, sums have also been allocated for the construction and repair of various roads and drains across the city.

### Rehabilitation schemes

The provincial government has also announced Rs330.11 million for the Competitive and Livable City of Karachi Project, which it has launched in collaboration with the World Bank (WB). The project, aimed at carrying a property survey of the metropolis and enhance its living conditions, is to cost Rs33.6 billion, of which Rs32.2 billion will be paid by the WB and Rs1.4 billion by the Sindh government.

It has further reserved Rs25 million for controlling environmental pollution at Clifton Beach and to protect and preserve marine life.

### Solid waste management

Besides, the government has set aside another Rs330 million for establishing six garbage transfer stations in Karachi. Moreover, Rs240 million has been allocated for the establishment of two landfill sites, Rs23 million for a feasibility study pertaining to hospital waste management and Rs26 million for a study pertaining to industrial solid waste management.

### KWSB overhaul

Furthermore, the government has earmarked Rs70 million for the first phase of Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project, which has been initiated to make the water board a viable utility.

Jointly launched with the WB and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the project is to cost around Rs14.7 billion, of which Rs5.8 billion is to be paid by the WB and as much by the AIIB, while remaining Rs2.9 billion is to be furnished by the Sindh government.

The government has separately earmarked Rs22 million for carrying out a study of the project, so that a project implementation unit can be set up.

(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 19/06/2020)