

NEWSCLIPPINGS

JANUARY TO JUNE 2018

WATER SUPPLY



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Governor urges immediate steps for water conservation

The first phase of the K-IV water project will be completed this year while work on the second phase will also be started soon.



Governor Mohammad Zubair said this while meeting a three-member delegation of Hisaar Foundation, comprising Ashraf Kapadia, Simi Kamal and Zohair Ashir, at Governor House on Thursday. Another scheme for the supply of potable water to the city had been included in the development package for Karachi, the governor told the delegation.

“We must all join hands for improving access to water for the poor and landless by maximising efficiency of water use, financing urban and rural water economies, safeguarding the Indus basin, its aquifers and its infrastructure, improving water governance and management of water institutions, and building a base for science, technology and social aspects of water,” Zubair asserted.

There was an urgent need to create awareness about utilising water with prudence, the governor said. He added that farmers must also be guided and trained to use irrigation water according to the requirements of soil and avoid overusing water as it wasted a precious resource.

Need for formal water policy at national level stressed

Zubair urged the need for taking immediate steps for ensuring water security. He was of the view that youths should be trained in techniques for conserving and managing water. People needed direction regarding water-related issues, the governor said, adding that conservation of water was an issue pertaining to the whole country and it required a national plan of action for which all regions of the country needed to collaborate.

During the meeting some key issues related to water security were highlighted that needed immediate attention. They included increasing water pollution, water waste, over-utilisation of groundwater and seawater intrusion.

The governor appreciated the national water policy draft prepared by the Hisaar Foundation, calling it a helpful document as it provided ways to ensure effective use of water and preserving the same for our next generations. Kamal briefed Zubair about salient features of the proposed policy. She opined that water security was an urgent issue and it needed immediate action so that future generations could have sufficient water for their needs.

Tackling water security: Who owns the right to groundwater?

The government assigns great importance to safe drinking water, sanitation, agriculture, and rural and urban development, Zubair said, adding that cooperation between provincial governments and local bodies was needed for the effective management of water resources.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 13, 05/01/2018)

Cabinet approves Rs400bn plan for resolution of potable water, sewerage issues

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Saturday informed the Sindh cabinet of a Rs400 billion ambitious plan to ensure provision of clean drinking water and safe environment to the people of Sindh in compliance with the directives of the Supreme Court.

Officials said a meeting of the Sindh cabinet was held here at the CM House to share the improvement of existing water and sanitation system and future endeavours planned by the government.

Mr Shah said he held six consecutive meetings with all departments concerned in which facts and figures were analysed and a report was prepared for submission in the apex court hearing a petition on provision of potable water in Sindh.

A 132-page report will be submitted before SC; three names for new IGP finalised

Mr Shah told the cabinet the 132-page report contained 381 annual development programme's schemes of water supply and sewerage system.

He said that the report was stuffed with district-wise reports in which all points had been identified from where municipal, hospital and industrial sewage was discharged to ultimate source of clean drinking water. Besides, it had summaries of hospital waste treatment and industrial effluent treatment in all districts, he added.

The CM said that the report also contained a summary of proper sewerage system along with treatment plants with proper source of discharge in all districts. The list of district-wise sewerage schemes for rural areas of Sindh had been included in the ADP, he said.

Mr Shah told the cabinet members that a component-wise physical and financial progress of the Greater Karachi Sewerage Plan S-III, details of five combined effluent treatment plants projects, details of Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, K-IV phase-I of 260 MGD and a district-wise report showing the plans with their cut-off date for ensuring uncontaminated water for every district according to its population were also part of the wide-ranging report.

The cabinet was told on the implementation entire ambitious plan would cost around Rs400 billion.

The officials said that the cabinet discussed various points of the report and approved it for its submission before the apex court.

Three names finalised for new IGP

An additional item in the meeting vis-à-vis appointment of a new chief of the Sindh police was also taken up in the meeting.

The cabinet was informed that the federal government had again sought for a panel of three officers of grade B-22 having more than two-year service to retire to choose from for the post of inspector general of police (IGP).

The cabinet chose Sardar Abdul Majeed, Arif Nawaz and Maher Khalid Dad Lak for new IGP and asked the relevant authorities to send their names to the federal government forthwith.

Relocation of ATCs

Another item taken up in the meeting was shifting of the antiterrorism courts from Clifton to the Karachi central prison. There are 33 ATC courts notified by the government, of them 27 courts are functioning and six are lying vacant.

The cabinet was told that the ATCs working at Clifton, near Bagh Ibne Qasim, were required to be shifted to the central prison where a "state-of-the-art and most secure building" had been established with a cost of Rs240 million to house such courts.

The chief minister said that it became quite hard to transport terrorists from jail to ATCs in Clifton for hearing. "This is why the provincial government on the request of judiciary has established ATC courts at Central Prison."

CM Shah said the government would establish a grand library in the Clifton building after the relocation of ATCs. The cabinet also discussed the Sindh Industries Registration Act, 2017, which provided for registration and organised and planned growth of industries in the province.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn, 17, 07/01/2018)

K-IV water project delayed yet again

Karachi's mega water project, K-IV, has been hit by delays. There is hardly any progress on the project even after a lapse of a year-and-a-half and a drastic surge in cost, which has risen to Rs51.9 billion from its original estimate of Rs25 billion.



The provincial government had assured citizens of water-scarce Karachi that the first of the three phases of the K-IV project would be completed by June, 2018. The second and third phases of the project would have water capacities of 260 millions of gallons per day (MGD) and 160MGD.

CM demands funds for completion of K-IV project

The work for phase one commenced on June 10, 2015, following an inauguration by former Sindh chief minister, Qaim Ali Shah. The groundbreaking ceremony of the project was held in the presence of incumbent Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and former governor, Dr Ishratul Ibad.

The federal and Sindh governments had agreed to contribute 50% funds each for the project. While the government and project director had been assuring completion of the project by June this year, a progress report about phase I, 260MGD, of K-IV puts the completion date at December next year.

However, the report doesn't explain the reasons for the delay in the completion of phase I.

For the past couple of years, the water crisis in the city has taken an ugly turn. Hence, further delay in the project will prove to be troublesome for the citizens.

'Even the K-IV will not be able to meet Karachi's water requirements'

According to the progress report, the completion date for phase I has been extended till the end of next year, contrary to the claims by ministers and the project director about completion in June this year.

As per the report submitted by the project director on December 26, 2017, physical completion of phase one is only 30%, while the financial progress stands at 27%.

Sindh government grants K-IV's phase-II clearance

While the delay in the project will add to the miseries of the citizens, the Pakistan Peoples Party itself will face a setback in its vote bank in the upcoming elections over the non-completion of an important project because several political parties will criticise the Sindh government over the issue. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, 04, 18/01/2018)

Commission unsatisfied with security at pumping stations

Justice (retired) Amir Hani Muslim has instructed the local government secretary and Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing director to seek the help of the police and Rangers to ensure security of the board's installations.



The retired Supreme Court judge and head of the apex court-appointed judicial commission to investigate poor sanitation and water supply in the province visited the Pipri, Dhabeji and Gharao pumping stations on Sunday.

He came down hard on the secretary and MD over the poor maintenance and lack of hygiene at the board's installations. The commission sought details regarding the use of funds and extension works on water filtration plants. Various officials of the KWSB and government officials accompanied Justice (retired) Muslim on his visit to the pumping stations.

The commission inspected operations and works of the water board and took reports from senior officials. Justice (retd) Muslim inquired about the chief chemist, to which the authorities replied that the post of chief chemist was vacant. They added that an advertisement for the post had been published.

Justice (retd) Amir Hani Muslim-led commission to start proceedings today
Expressing surprise over water testing being done once every 15 days, the commission inquired why the tests were not conducted on a daily basis. In response the authorities said 140 million gallons of water per day was supplied to the city but barely 50% is filtered.

Seeking details of the funds provided, Justice (retd) Muslim inquired about the steps taken to upgrade the filtration plants as per the recommendations of the commission. He also voiced his dismay to the KWSB managing director over the appalling hygiene conditions at the Pipri pumping station. "You are supplying toxic water to the people," he said, ordering arrangements to ensure water quality.

He said that the Rangers and police should be deployed at pumping stations to ensure security at key installations. The commission expressed dissatisfaction at the local government secretary for not sharing details on the Dhabeji pumping station, instructing him to take swift action to supply clean drinking water to the citizens and provide a detailed report of the operations of the station. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , 05, 22/01/2018)

Judicial commission orders removal of K-IV project director

The judicial commission directed on Thursday the provincial chief secretary to remove the current project director of the K-IV project along with other delinquent officers in other departments in consultation with the chief minister.



Justice (retd) Amir Hani Muslim issued these directives while heading the Supreme Court-appointed judicial commission to implement its recommendations and orders passed regarding provision of safe drinking water and improvement of sanitation conditions in Sindh.

During the proceedings, the commission expressed its grave concerns to Chief Secretary Muhammad Rizwan Memon regarding competence and performance of officers of different departments.

To the commission's query, Health Secretary Fazlullah Pechuho submitted a report regarding steps to ensure installation of the incinerators at public hospitals for safe disposal of hazardous medical waste.

However, Justice (retd) Muslim told him to explain what practical steps had been taken for disposal of medical waste instead of merely showing paperwork.

Rs400b set aside for water, sanitation schemes in Sindh
Pechuho said the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation takes the waste from hospitals and admitted that there was no proper place to dump such waste.

He informed the commission that a place to install an incinerator was identified in Liaquatabad, but the residents opposed it. Another incinerator installed at Civil Hospital, Karachi is not functional, he added.

Justice (retd) Muslim remarked that he will personally visit Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Abbasi Shaheed Hospital and other health facilities in Lyari for inspection.

To a query regarding the status of the K-IV project, a major water supply scheme for Karachi, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) Managing Director Syed Hashim Raza Zaidi said that he had already submitted a plan on its completion.

The commission expressed its concern over the failure of K-IV project's director to appear to explain the project's status to the commission. Expressing its concern on the ineligibility and attitude of the project director, the commission directed the chief secretary to remove the officer.

It noted that 78 employees were posted at the treatment plants I and II, but none of them had recorded their attendance in the last 14 months.

Provision of clean drinking water 'top priority'

Expressing his helplessness, the local government secretary said they were employees of the KWSB, thus he could not take any action against them.

Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar, who appeared on the commission's notice, said he had approached the Sindh High Court for implementation of the SC's order regarding dissolution of Sindh Solid Waste Management Board. He said the issues pertaining to non-lifting of garbage in Karachi had started emerging eight or nine years ago.

He presented a report on suggestions to resolve the issues relating to non-supply of clean drinking water and sanitation in the city. Justice (retd) Muslim came down hard on LG Secretary Rizwan Awan and remarked that the commission will have to recommend to the SC to initiate contempt proceedings against him over non-compliance of the orders.

The secretary said anyone who was asked to do work demanded money from him.

Addressing the chief secretary, the commission remarked that it had serious concerns over the performance of government officers and cautioned him to refer their matters to the National Accountability Bureau for inquiry and also to the SC for contempt of court proceedings.

SC wants district-wise reports, cutoff dates for water and sanitation projects

He asked the secretary to ask the government whether it would remove them itself or the commission will have to pass an appropriate order against them.

Secretary Memon requested two or three days to obtain instructions from the CM. The commission granted him time till January 30 to receive instructions from the government and submit his report.

He was also directed to submit a report mentioning which projects could be completed by the end of June 2018.

The commission also directed a five-member committee comprising experts and lawyers to work out a plan regarding completion of rehabilitation of water filtration plants as well as water supply schemes initiated by the public health engineering department and Water and Sanitation Authority, Hyderabad, by the next date.

Furthermore, it issued notices to the planning and development commission secretary, the Karachi Port Trust's chairperson, the Defense Housing Authority's administrator and chief executive officers of all the cantonment boards in Karachi to file their reports regarding water and sanitation schemes. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE , By Naeem Sahoutara, 04, 26/01/2018)

Judicial commission wants water sanitation schemes working plan today

The judicial commission directed the provincial chief secretary to submit the working plan for the water supply and sewerage schemes in the province by today (Wednesday).



Justice (retd) Amir Hani Muslim, who is heading a Supreme Court-appointed commission to probe into failure of the provincial authorities concerned in non-supply of clean drinking water and deteriorating sanitation conditions in Sindh, issued the directive during Tuesday's proceedings.

Previously, the commission had directed the chief secretary to furnish a working plan in order to ensure completion of water supply and sanitation schemes across the province.

CM reviews water and sanitation schemes

On Tuesday, the matter for the working plan to be submitted by Chief Secretary Muhammad Rizwan Memon was fixed before the commission. However, the chief secretary was reported to be busy before a bench of the Sindh High Court and could not attend.

Planning and Development Board Chairperson Muhammad Waseem Khan was also reported to be busy in a meeting with the chief minister.

Justice Muslim fixed the matter for today (Wednesday) with a direction to the chief secretary and planning and development board secretary to be present.

He ordered that the directives issued to the provincial local government department secretary will be complied with and the chairperson of the task force will follow the same.

Water and sanitation: 28 treatment plants in nine districts approved

Additional Health Secretary Rehan Iqbal Baloch informed the commission that the health secretary was out of town.

Justice Muslim told the officers that he had inspected the Services Hospital, Karachi, and Lyari General Hospital, Karachi. "All the hospitals are in pathetic condition," he said.

Baloch said he had visited Civil hospital three months back and the conditions had improved.

When, confronted with the issue of medical waste lying in the Civil hospital and Lyari General Hospital by showing the photographs taken by the commission during a recent visit, the secretary was speechless.

Rs400b set aside for water, sanitation schemes in Sindh

Additional Advocate-General Muhammad Sarwar Khan requested for time to submit the working plan.

Justice Muslim remarked that since time had been sought for the submission of the working plan, therefore, no comment is made on the working of the health department in Sindh.

"The health department has failed to comply with the directives and orders issued by the apex court at times relatable to the installation of the incinerators and other requisite facilities at the larger interest of the public," the commission noted.

On a query, the commission was informed that the tenders were invited in December, 2017. "No plausible explanation has been offered by the additional health secretary in regard to the unhygienic conditions prevalent in the hospitals of Karachi visited by the commission," the commission observed.

SC wants district-wise reports, cutoff dates for water and sanitation projects

Therefore, it directed the chief secretary to submit the working plan in the first instance by today (Wednesday), after which appropriate orders will be passed regarding the working of different departments, which has a direct nexus with the objectives for which the commission had been constituted. (The Express Tribune, 05, 31/01/2018)

Kamal warns K-4 project will not end Karachi's water woes

Pak Sarzameen Party chairman Mustafa Kamal has said Karachi will continue to face serious water problems even after completion of the much-hyped K-4 water supply project because of non-allocation of a fresh water quota to the country's commercial capital.



Mr Kamal, who has been claiming that his party is doing issues-based politics and not on ethnic lines, explained that at present work was under way to complete the phase 1 of the K-IV

project that would add 260 million gallons per day to existing 650 million gallons daily being supplied to the city by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board from Keenjhar Lake and Hub Dam against the real demand of 1,240MGD.

He said that the construction work for the phase 2 was yet to begin, but even with the successful completion of the two phases of the K-4 project, how water would be supplied to these lines as the existing quota for Karachi — i.e. 1,268 cusec allocated during the Zia regime — had already been exhausted.

The city gets only 1.51pc of province's total water quota

"I have submitted before the Supreme Court that the last quota of the 100MGD was utilised by the K-3 project and thus the K-4 project may not receive new water resources as per the existing circumstances," he said.

Mr Kamal, under whose tenure as the Karachi mayor the city saw completion of the K-3 project around 10 years back, said Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah had said on record that if the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) provided more water to Sindh, then he would be in position to provide that to Karachi.

"Irsa provides around 36,370MGD of water to Sindh of which Karachi receives only 550MGD that makes up a small 1.51 per cent of the total quota of Sindh," he said, adding that it was ironic that the population of Karachi was over one-fourth of the total population of the province but the water it got was not even 5pc of the province's total share.

Mr Kamal, who was also a former chairman of the KWSB, said that he had requested the Supreme Court that the current water requirement of the city was around 1,200MGD and "it is essential to allocate the same from Sindh's share so that K-4 Phase- 1 & 2 shall have required resources to supply water to Karachi".

He said that the K-4 project was a corridor of around 130 kilometres beginning from the Keenjhar Lake and ends on the outskirts of Karachi and it had the capacity for future extension by simply laying more water lines.

It was a 1,000-foot corridor with a maximum capacity of 10 dedicated 100 feet lines each planned for the expansion over the next 50 years as per the increase in demand for Karachi.

But, he said that contrary to the CM's claim that Phase 1 would be completed by June this year, in view of the current pace it appeared that the completion of K-4 would be in 2020.

He said that to save the cost and with minimum additional funds K-4 Phase-2 must be initiated and completed alongside Phase-1.

He pointed out that even if K-4 was completed, it would not be able to supply water to the people of Karachi as main trunk lines and internal network of the KWSB within the city had not been upgraded and no new trunk lines lay to ensure supply of water to the uncovered areas such as Lyari, Orangi, Defence, etc.

The PSP chief said there was a dire need to install main trunk line to cover the entire city to ensure water supply.

In the absence of a proper line network, the tanker mafia would continue to operate in the city with impunity.

He also disputed the provisional results of the sixth population results that put the population of Karachi at a mere 16 million.

In fact, for all practical purposes the population of Karachi was approximately 25m and according to international experts it would reach 30m by 2020, he said.

He contested a recent claim made by the Sindh CM that in the light of the provisional census results Karachi required 800MGD of water to meet its requirements.

“This will be a huge planning error to ignore at least nine million people and their need of water for daily life,” he said.

(Azfar-ul-Ashfaq Dawn 15, 05/02/2018)

Water tanker crushes eight-year-old boy in Korangi

An eight-year-old boy was crushed to death by an overspeeding water tanker in Korangi area on Saturday noon which prompted the area people to protest. Later, police arrested the father of the errant driver, said officials and witnesses.

The boy, Saud Akbar, left his home in Chakra Goth and was passing through a ground when a tanker ran over him, they added. The boy sustained critical injuries to his head and was taken to Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

The incident enraged area people who got hold of the tanker as its driver managed to escape.

However, Zaman Town Station House Officer (SHO), Mohammed Ashfaq told Dawn that the police after receiving information about the incident rushed to the spot and prevented the situation from deteriorating further.

The officer said that the area people were protesting for the arrest of the driver.

Police seized the water tanker and detained Naseer Baloch, father of driver Shakeel Baloch. The SHO hoped that the driver would soon be arrested.

Man shot dead

A man was shot dead and his mother-in-law received injuries on Saturday when unknown men opened fire on the car they were travelling in, in Landhi area, police said.

Quaidabad SHO Mohammed Ali Marwat said that Fayaz Akbar, 45, along with his mother-in-law, Fatima Siddiq, 60, was going to his in-laws' house when the car came under attack.

The man sustained critical bullet wounds and was shifted to the JPMC where doctors declared him dead on arrival, said Dr Seemin Jamali, executive director of the hospital.

Dr Jamali said that Akbar received bullet wound to his head while Ms Fatima on her left arm but she was stated to be out of danger.

SHO Marwat said the murder appeared to be an outcome of some personal enmity. He said that the deceased was once arrested by Quaidabad police over charges of attempted murder. He was also declared an absconder by the court in a case registered against him under the Explosives Act.

He also remained the 'manager' of a drug den run by Saleem in Ali Goth of Ibrahim Hyderi, revealed the officer.

However, he said relatives told police that they would get an FIR registered after the burial.
(Dawn 17, 11/02/2018)

Top federal officials summoned to explain delay in K-IV funding

The judicial commission probing the provincial government's failure in providing safe water and proper sanitation to the people of the province on Saturday directed the federal finance and planning commission secretaries to appear before it to explain the federal government's reservations, if any, on the funding of much-delayed Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, better known as the K-IV project.

The city's mega water project has been hit by delays mainly due to the issue of funding between the Sindh and federal governments as there has been hardly any progress on the scheme even after its inauguration about one and a half years ago, raising drastically its cost to Rs51.9 billion from its original estimate of Rs25bn.

On Saturday, the judicial commission, headed by former judge of the Supreme Court Amir Hani Muslim, expressed grave concern over the lethargic attitude of the provincial and federal authorities in completion of the K-IV project that would add a total of 560 million gallons water daily to the city's existing water supply.

Advocate Shahab Usto, the petitioner in the water case before the Supreme Court, informed the commission that the first phase of the project would add 260mgd water to the city after completion, but through the Bahria Town project on Superhighway.

The water commission seeks details of Karachi and Hyderabad housing schemes

Justice Hani asked how much of this water would be supplied to the people of Karachi and apprehended that the water might not be supplied to the residents of the city.

The chairman of the provincial planning and development department informed the commission that the federal government was not releasing funds for the project. He further said that the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council had approved the funding of the K-IV project, but the federal cabinet objected to it.

The commission expressed displeasure when it learnt that no official from the federal government was present in the proceedings and directed the federal finance and planning commission secretaries to appear before it on March 5, when the matter would be taken up again.

Permission for high-rises

The commission head also came down hard on the director general of the Sindh Building Control Authority, asking him the reason why the permissions for construction of high-rise buildings were being granted when there was no proper sewerage system. "Twenty-storey buildings are being constructed but there is no water for drinking," he remarked.

The judicial body directed the authorities concerned to place before it the details of housing schemes of Karachi and Hyderabad by the next date of proceedings.

"Karachi and Hyderabad have been destroyed. Have you noticed that there was no master plan for Karachi. Drains have been encroached, the actual face of the city has been changed. The permissions for construction of high-rise buildings were granted without any master plan".

Industrialists tender unconditional apology

Justice Hani also expressed annoyance over the owners of 70 factories as they had reportedly restrained the judicial magistrates from inspection.

The counsel representing the factory owners tendered unconditional apology and submitted that they were ready to cooperate with the authorities.

The commission head warned that criminal proceedings would be initiated against the delinquent factory owners who did not allow the commission-designated magistrate to inspect the factories.

The commission directed the judicial magistrate to inspect factories along with the personnel of law enforcement agencies and to take strict action, if any of the factory managements restrained them from doing so.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn 17, 25/02/2018)

Water fight

Despite being adjacent to the Arabian Sea and possessing direct access to the Indian Ocean through multiple ports, Pakistan is fractured when it comes to cooperation between provinces over water allocation. This is evidenced in the Sindh Assembly's recent adoption of a resolution against Punjab and the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) on account of thievery of Sindh's water resources. The theft is allegedly due to Irsa opening the Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal and the Taunsa-Panjad Link Canal during unwarranted periods. Having garnered support from major political players, the concord between parties is peculiarly juxtaposed with the timing of the resolution. It is an election year when parties are afraid to do anything to upset their constituencies and this is a clear-cut case for the Council of Common Interests as it must consider the timing.

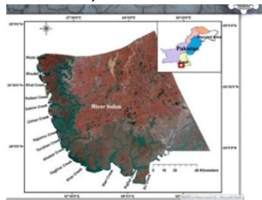
Several parties have suddenly awoken from slumber and have become alerted to Sindh's water woes notwithstanding that water scarcity has been a persistent problem for years. Yet, magically, we have resolutions, arguments, and statistics to bolster Sindh legislators' statements. Perhaps the figures offered on the number of households and villages affected should be corroborated by factual reports as the abrupt action by Sindh is suspicious in terms of the timing and lacks credence. There is no doubt about water scarcity in Sindh but we inquire about the intentions of authorities to pursue the issue at this time, as to whether they seek to appease constituencies or to resolve the crux of the matter.

Ordinary citizens of Sindh can only hope for the latter in that their leaders intend to fix water scarcity for the long term. The news of Thatta residents' consternation about bathing deceased loved ones for final rites is perturbing and we acknowledge that there truly is a problem. However, conflict-resolution between the two provinces and Irsa should hold authorities accountable to ensure that they see the resolutions through until water scarcity is eliminated.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 01/03/2018)

'Indus delta has shrunk by 92% since 1833'

In 1833, the delta of the Indus River was estimated to be stretching out over an area of around 12,900 square kilometres (sq km). However, the human impact on the environment and natural flow of the river has evidently resulted in the contraction of the delta by as much as 92% in the past 200 years.



(MUET), Jamshoro.

This was established in the results of a 15-month study conducted by a team of five academics of the United States-Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCASW) at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology

For decades, affected communities, environmental activists and academics have been highlighting the issue of sea intrusion and its consequences for the coast, delta and locals. However, the need for an authentic estimation of the sea intrusion was being felt by researchers. The USPCASW team's study was an attempt to fulfil that need with the help of satellite imagery and other research tools.

The research findings, which also included the coastal communities' perception about the sea intrusion's impact as well as recommendations to address the problem, were shared at a seminar at USPCASW on Friday.

"The delta has shrunk by 92% [from 12,900 sq km]. It currently stretches over a meagre 1,000 sq km," lead researcher Prof Dr Altaf Ali Siyal said. There are only two active creeks, Khobar and Khar creeks, in the delta which once had as many as 17 active creeks, he added.

The Indus delta is the fifth largest in the world, besides being a designated wetland according to the Ramsar Convention, the international treaty which provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The delta supports the seventh biggest mangrove forest and is the largest arid zone mangrove forest. Currently, it is being threatened by erosion, sea intrusion, soil salinity, declining river flow, shrinking active delta and climate change.

Mangla reservoir reaches dead level

The findings

The researchers studied satellite images of the Indus delta's creeks of the last 45 years starting from 1972. The creeks were divided in four zones, with two each on the right and left banks of the river. On the left side, the area from Sir Creek to Wari Creek was designated as zone I while the area between Wari and Khobar creeks was termed zone II. On the right side, the area between Khobar and Daboo creeks was designated as zone III while the area between Daboo and Phitti creeks was termed zone IV.

The study measured the shoreline erosion rate to be 45.69 metres per year in zone I and 52.1m per year in zone II. In zone III and zone IV, 27.21m per year and 31.43m per year erosion was calculated respectively.

The highest intrusion was observed in zone II where the sea has encroached upon 1.24km, followed by zone I where 1.1km was conquered by the sea.

Wetlands for sustainable urban future

The Indus delta lies in Thatta and Sujawal districts. According to the study, the latter district, which is located on the left bank, has suffered more from the erosion.

During the last four-and-a-half decades, the sea also added 42,609 hectares of delta in its tidal flood plain (TFP), which is submerged during high tide. In 1972, the pace of TFP was measured at 7.1%, whereas by 2017, it almost tripled to over 18%.

Some 81,324 hectares of the TFP are covered by mangroves, including thick mangroves, which occupy 36,245 hectares and thin mangroves, which occupy 45,079 hectares. However, the total percentage of the TFP covered by mangroves is just 12%.

Water bodies containing seawater in the delta have doubled from 1,600 sq km to 3,000 sq km, Prof Siyal said. "We find a lake after every two to three kilometres in the delta," he added.

The research also studied effects of sea intrusion on the local population. According to it, 76% locals use underground water to drink, which has become brackish and saline in over 88% area of the delta.

Turbidity, electrical conductivity, acidity level and percentages of chloride and arsenic in the underground water have been found far beyond the World Health Organisation's permissible limits.

Besides the sea intrusion, the study also researched changes in temperature and perspiration. It found that from 1960 to 1990, an average of 100 millimetres of rain was recorded during the monsoon in July.

However, during the period from 1990 to 2015, a drop of 40% in rainfall was recorded. Similarly, average temperature from March to July also showed an increase in the period from 1990 to 2015.

Plan afoot to cope with water-logging

According to the study, the delta produced 5,000 tons of fish in 1951. But the catch has now drastically slumped to only 295 tons.

Recommendations

The researchers have proposed construction of a sea levee covering at least 200km of the coastline. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, during his visit to Thatta district in 2016, had announced a similar project but it has yet to materialise.

The other recommendations include increasing the flow of water in the Pinyari and KB Feeder canals, restoring 15 defunct creeks, plantation of mangroves, cultivation of halophytes, increasing farming of shrimps and crabs, releasing 10 million acre feet of water downstream Kotri barrage and promoting tourism.

(By Z Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 03/03/2018)

Judicial commission displeased over poor state of waterworks, drainage in Badin

BADIN: Retired Justice Amir Hani Muslim, who heads the Supreme Court-appointed judicial commission, visited various water supply and sewerage installations and irrigation channels in different towns of Badin district on Thursday.



He expressed his displeasure over poor maintenance of the installations, supply of hazardous drinking water to people and dangerously unhygienic conditions in various localities caused by ill-maintained sewerage network.

Justice Muslim warned the officials concerned of severe action if they continued to demonstrate negligence by neglecting the water supply and drainage system of the area. He admonished the officials for not paying heed to public complaints regarding an acute shortage of drinking and irrigation water in the district.

The judge reminded the officials that they were supposed to ensure supply of clean drinking water in adequate quantity to each and every locality falling within their area of operation. Whoever was found responsible for the conditions prevailing in the district would be liable to punishment, he warned.

In each area visited by the commission, local people came up with complaints about unavailability of drinking water, acute shortage of irrigation water and unhygienic conditions in their respective localities. Many of them also complained that their requests for remedial measures always fell on deaf ears.

Justice Muslim gave them a patient hearing and issued necessary directives to the officials concerned. He spent several hours in Golarchi town and inspected waterworks and drains along with the officials concerned. He posed questions to the officials regarding imperfect water supply and dysfunctional drainage system.

Justice Muslim directed the Badin deputy commissioner and Golarchi town committee chairman to pay due attention to all civic problems being faced by the people of the district and take immediate and appropriate measures to resolve the issues.

He took notice of the official lethargy and apathy when, during his visit to the Golarchi filtration plant, he came to know that it had been lying non-functional for about a decade. He asked the Badin DC, Golarchi assistant commissioner and town committee chairman to make it functional within the next three months.

In his visit to an irrigation channel, Guni Wah, and nearby drinking water reservoirs, Justice Muslim saw some people filling buckets and other containers and taking them away by their motorcycles or donkey-driven carts.

He directed the officials concerned to make some suitable arrangements to facilitate the filling and transportation of water keeping in mind hygiene and easier supply modes.

When Justice Muslim proceeded to Khoski and asked the town committee chairman for an inspection of the area's drainage system, he was baffled to know that no such network existed there.

The judge expressed his anger over it and ordered Deputy Commissioner Dr Shahzad Thaheem to chalk out a drainage scheme for the town within a week and submit a report to the commission.

While on his way to Khoski, the judge visited water supply scheme of Nindo Shahar town where people complained of unavailability of drinking water for two days.

He asked the executive engineer and other officials concerned to appear before the commission with relevant record.

(By Muhammad Hashim Khan Bhurgari Dawn 19, 03/03/2018)

K-IV project completion pushed back to mid-2019



In an unsurprising yet disappointing announcement, members of the Sindh Assembly were told on Monday that the long-awaited K-IV water supply project that was to supply 260 million gallons of water per day from the Indus River will now be completed by mid-2019. The government had earlier claimed that it would be completed by June, 2018.

"It is a 120 kilometre-long route from where we are transporting the water to Karachi, so it's not an easy job," said Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro during the question and answer session. "We have finished around 40% of the work on this project and it will now be possible to complete the remaining work in the next three months," he said, adding that the Sindh government has given the project's contract to the Frontier Works Organisation but due to some unavoidable complications, the first completion target could not be met.

Speaking about the project, the minister said that three different filtration plants will be set up in Pipri, near Baqai Medical University on the Super Highway and in Manghopir. "The water will be filtered before it is supplied to citizens," he said.

Bill to regularise teachers to be presented in Sindh Assembly today

In response to a question, Shoro explained the projects passes through the 21,000 acres of private land and his department has requested the Sindh government to arrange Rs5 billion to pay this amount to people who will be displaced by the project but so far only Rs2.5 billion has been released. "We are paying the cost to the people affected by this project," he said, adding that the federal government backtracked on its earlier promise to share the compensation costs.

"The cost of the first phase of this project is Rs25 billion and the Sindh and federal governments will share the project's cost," he said, adding that after the completion of the project, Karachi's water requirements will be met.

"Sindh runs this country by generating 70% of its taxes. The federal government's step-motherly treatment is unjustified," he said. "The Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz-led government is getting taxes, gas and petrol from Sindh, but is reluctant to provide proper funds to fulfill our genuine needs," he accused.

Discussing the water distribution during the K-IV project, the minister said every day 65 million gallons of water will be supplied to the Pipri plant, 130 million gallons to the plant on the Super Highway and 65 to the Manghopir plant. He dispelled rumours that the project was being developed to solely supply water to Bahria Town. Shoro said after the project is completed, the government will start work on the S-III project to dispose of treated sewage into the Arabian Sea.

At the start of the session, the lawmakers congratulated the newly-elected senators. They also offered condolences on the death of veteran politician and former Communist Party of Pakistan

general secretary Jam Saqi. Leaders of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League – Functional and Muttahida Qaumi Movement – Pakistan paid rich tribute to Saqi and his struggle for democracy.

SC halts distribution of 24 mineral water companies

The House members also expressed their grief over the death of PPP MPA Rubina Qaimkhani's teenage son who died in an accident in Karachi a few days ago.

During the session, the health minister moved the Sindh Universities Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 for introduction and requested all members to study the bill, which will be passed on Wednesday. The assembly also adopted a resolution to pay tribute to student leaders who struggled for the restoration of democracy during the period of martial law under General Ziaul Haq. After that, Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani adjourned the session till today (Tuesday).

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 06/03/2018)

K-IV water project will not be operational this year, says minister

The completion of the Karachi Greater Water Project K-IV has been delayed by a year and it is now expected to be ready by the middle of next year, said Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro.

He was responding to legislators' queries about the issues relating to the Local Government department during the Sindh Assembly's Question Hour on Monday.

When Muttahida Qaumi Movement's Qamar Rizvi said that only 20 per cent work had been completed on the K-IV project, the minister agreed with him that the pace of work was slow and said the foundation stone of the two-year project was laid on Aug 14, 2016 and it was scheduled to be completed by June 2018 but unfortunately the deadline could not be met.

He added that the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) was implementing the project and it had committed to complete the job by June 2018.

'Real estate firm not the main beneficiary'

"The FWO has employed over 386 pieces of equipment and machinery on the 120-kilometre-long site and over 1,100 workers are working on it under three colonels of the FWO/Pakistan Army," he said.

Responding to Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Seema Zia, Mr Shoro stated that federal and Sindh governments were equally sharing the cost of the project and so far Sindh had released around Rs5.2 billion while the federal government had given around Rs6.4bn.

"Over Rs7.58bn have been spent on the project so far which is designed to bring 260 million gallons of water to the city daily," he added.

To answer Bilquis Mukhtar, the minister narrated that the federal government had refused to pay around Rs5bn which was the cost of the land required for the project though 50 per cent cost-sharing formula had been agreed upon between them.

"Keeping in view the importance of the project, Sindh is paying for it and has so far released Rs2.5bn. But we have planned to take up the issue with the federal government so that it pays its share," the local government minister added.

He said the federal government also did not agree to provide water for the K-IV which delayed the project. "Eventually Sindh provided water from its share for an early start of the project."

Responding to a question by PML-N's Aijaz Shirazi that landowners whose lands had been acquired had not yet been paid, Mr Shoro said the Sindh government had made around Rs2.5bn available and the process to pay compensation had been initiated.

"All landowners will be paid soon," he added.

Pakistan Muslim League-F's Nand Kumar and MQM's Mr Rizvi asked if Bahria Town was the main beneficiary as it was reportedly been provided with a direct water connection from the K-IV while rest of Karachi will get only 20 per cent water from it, the minister said nobody was being provided a direct connection.

"K-IV's water will be provided through three filter plants located at Pipri, Manghopir and near Baqai University. The areas to be benefitted included Landhi, Korangi, Lyari, Central and West districts, North Karachi and adjoining localities etc."

Responding to MQM's Mehmood Razzaque, the minister said the Local Government Act 2013 did not allow UC chairmen to give permission for road cutting.

"Such permissions can only be given by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation or district municipal corporations concerned," he added.

PML-N's Shafi Jamote asked about installation of treatment plants so that additional water of 260 MGD from K-IV could be treated; Mr Shoro said two treatment plants on Lyari River and one on Malir River were being installed which would release water into the sea after treatment.

To another of his questions that why treated water was not being used for agriculture, the minister said there was no such planning at the moment.

A written answer to a question asked by PTI legislator Khurram Sher Zaman said there was no plan or proposal to hand over administrative control of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board to Pakistan Army.

MQM' Rehan Zafar, Kamran Akhtar and Rana Ansar, who had asked the questions, were not present in the assembly when their names were called.

The questions asked by them were not pressed by anyone, therefore, they lapsed.

(By Bhagwandas Dawn 17, 06/03/2018)

Someone has to take responsibility, commission tells govt officers

The judicial commission directed on Monday the federal and provincial authorities to expedite the pace of work on two major schemes – the S-III and K-IV – to supply additional water to Karachi.



In the meantime, it also restrained the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) from approving new housing schemes without no-objection certificates (NOC) issued by the civic agencies regarding availability of basic amenities such as drinking water supply and proper drainage system.

Justice (ret'd) Amir Hani Muslim, who heads the Supreme Court-appointed judicial commission on water and sanitation conditions in Sindh, passed these directives.

At the outset of the hearing, Federal Finance Minister Arif Shah informed the commission that the Centre was ready to release the required funds promised by them for the K-IV project. However, he accused the Sindh government of blaming the federal government for its own failures.

Judicial commission wants water, sanitation schemes working plan today

Justice (ret'd) Muslim observed that the trust deficit between the federal and provincial governments must come to an end in order for the project to be executed in the stipulated time period.

The federal planning and development commission's secretary, Shoaib Siddiqui, maintained that coordination between the Centre and provincial government on the issue of water projects in Sindh had improved. However, he said the federal government could provide the requisite funds for the K-IV project, as promised, if the provincial government could ensure its completion within the stipulated timeframe, which was fixed in June, 2018.

A representative of the consultancy company engaged for the K-IV project informed the commission that the project had been delayed as a quota could not be fixed for Karachi in the water to be supplied through this project.

He said that the project would provide 260 million gallons of water per day to the city, which would be a 40% addition to its current capacity.

The representative said the government had failed to find suitable land for the project till date.

Lawyers go on a rampage inside judicial complex in Multan

To the commission's query, the chairperson of the provincial planning commission, Mohammad Waseem, suggested that the deputy commissioner of Malir may be asked about the land issue.

The commission took serious notice of the Malir DC's absence, who had failed to appear despite the issuance of a notice and directive.

Justice (retd) Muslim told Waseem that he was complaining about the federal government while the provincial authorities were not doing the work on their part.

Colonel Hasan, a representative of the Frontier Works Organisation, said they were given possession of the land for the project after a delay of one year. The commission noted that the officers were placing the blame on each other and told all of them that someone will have to take responsibility.

The commission asked why the Malir DC, who was responsible for causing damage to the project, was still working on the same post.

The consultant company's representative informed the commission that the land for the Pak-Iran Pipeline project was also coming in the way of the K-IV project. The commission remarked that it may direct NESPAK to conduct a fresh survey of the land along the K-IV project to determine the factual position.

Judicial commission orders removal of K-IV project director

A lawyer representing the K-IV project said cases involving litigation over land coming in the water supply project were pending in court.

The commission directed the authorities concerned to ensure that no connection will be given to anyone from the K-IV project. The commission summoned Chief Secretary Muhammad Rizwan Memon to explain the Malir DC's absence.

Later, Memon appeared and informed Justice (retd) Muslim that the Sindh government had provided funds worth billions to the DC for the project. The commission directed the chief secretary to transfer the incumbent DC and ensure a competent officer was posted in his place. Justice (retd) Muslim also warned that he would write to the Supreme Court if the government failed to remove the officer.

Judicial commission irked by 'humiliation' of judicial magistrates

S-III project

The commission inquired from the provincial authorities as to why the S-III project had not yet been completed despite a lapse of 11 years since its announcement.

Waseem explained that the federal government was responsible for the delays, as it had released only half of the promised funds for the project. Siddiqui said the Centre was ready to release Rs3.16 billion for the K-IV project.

Refuting the provincial planning commission chairperson's claim regarding non-provision of funds by the federal government, Siddiqui alleged that funds were released as promised to the Sindh government, which in turn had failed to get the work done as promised in the agreement.

The commission directed the provincial planning commission and other authorities to issue an official notification regarding the master plan for Karachi city within one week.
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 06/03/2018)

Judicial commission takes notice of contamination of water sources

The judicial commission took notice on Friday of the dumping of hazardous waste produced by the Thermal Power Plant in Jamshoro into water sources, which were being contaminated and becoming hazardous to human health.

Headed by Justice (retired) Amir Hani Muslim, the Supreme Court-appointed commission issued a notice to the secretary of the energy commission to personally appear to explain the dumping of hazardous waste generated by it in water sources.

The commission also issued a notice to the additional attorney-general. It summoned the Hyderabad DIG to appear along with details of cases allegedly registered against citizens for protesting against the contamination of the water canal where the power plant's discharge was being dumped without being properly treated. They were told to appear along with requisite details on March 20.

Earlier, the Rangers presented a report, stating that patrolling had been intensified along the Malir riverbed to curb illegal excavation of sand and stone.

Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar left the courtroom when Deputy Mayor Arshad Vohra entered.

Judicial commission irked by 'humiliation' of judicial magistrates

The commission came down hard on the provincial health secretary and director-general of health over frequent transfers and postings of medical superintendents and project directors of different projects initiated at public hospitals.

It directed them to submit a summary containing details of transfers and postings of medical superintendents and project directors made in the health department in the last six months.

Justice (ret'd) Muslim told the health secretary and health DG that officers were frequently being transferred after the commission assigned them any duty. He told the secretary to submit in writing that no transfers and postings will be made without assigning any solid reasons.

Regarding non-availability of medicines at public hospitals, the health secretary admitted that most of the medicines provided free of charge at health facilities were sold by the staff. The commission told the secretary that private persons were coming forward to install water plants at hospitals because the government had failed to do so.

The secretary sought six additional months to ensure the provision of clean drinking water at every health facility in the province. He informed the commission that a work plan had been devised for the installation of incinerators at the hospitals to ensure safe disposal of toxic medical waste, adding a summary had also been moved to the chief secretary for approval.

Judicial commission wants water, sanitation schemes working plan today

The chief secretary assured the government will provide the requisite funds for the incinerators within one week.

The commission told the health secretary to submit a timeframe for the provision of clean drinking water and a sewerage system at the hospitals of Nawabshah, Larkana and other districts.

It also sought details from the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and Water and Sanitation Authority Hyderabad to submit details of pipelines laid down in the two cities.

The commission directed the education secretary to furnish details regarding progress in the provision of clean drinking water at schools and colleges across the province.

It also directed the Pakistan Railways divisional superintendent for Karachi to provide clean drinking water at railway stations and remove garbage along train tracks.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 10/03/2018)

Water scarcity can paralyse country, warn experts

Experts on water and environmental issues warned on Thursday of potentially disastrous consequences Pakistan faced owing to increasing water scarcity, a problem, they said, which had intensified owing to India's active strategy to control and manage water resources and the fast changing climatic patterns.

They were speaking at a briefing organised by Pakistan Water Partnership in collaboration with Farozan and The Nature magazines at the press club.

Raising the issue, Dr Pervaiz Amir regretted that water had become a highly politicised subject in the country, leaving the country without a water policy for seven decades.

He favoured construction of large dams to address growing agricultural and electricity needs of the country as the storage capacity of Tarbela and Mangla dams had been reduced over the years owing to silting.

"A dam is like a water tank. It's the people who decide how to regulate it. Small dams could only meet minimal localised needs," he said, while rejecting what he described as 'misconceptions' and propaganda on dams' constructions.

Responding to a question, he said work on Bhasha dam was at a standstill for many years whereas Dasu dam was about to be completed but it was only for the purpose of storage.

"India's strategy is to maintain status quo in Pakistan. Around 750MAF water is available to India yearly of which 287MAF is stored in dams. Its storage capacity is 30pc, which they want to increase up to 50pc. In comparison, Pakistan with 140MAF available water has a storage capacity of 7pc," he said.

Striking off Article 161

Elaborating further, Sardar Mohammad Tariq said that India had control over 85pc of water that came from Indian-held Kashmir.

Now, it was out to damage Pakistan's water interests more as it planned to finance a dam over Kabul River in Afghanistan.

"There has been a 10MAF reduction in our rivers since 2002. Unfortunately, successive governments didn't develop a comprehensive long-term plan to meet country's water needs," he said, adding that the country lost 111bn cusecs of water in past three floods.

The experts also spoke about high water wastage (owing to poor agricultural practices), which stood at around over 40pc, and suggested growing high-value crops with less water needs.

They also suggested striking off Article 161 of the Constitution under which a province with a power plant would get its royalty.

“A dam can exist or affect people of two provinces. Second, the royalty can be shared per the 1991 Water Accord,” they said.

On Karachi, they said the city needs planning and infrastructure to tackle a heatwave and a tsunami in the face of rising temperature.

“Water shortages in the city can be easily addressed by building at least three desalination plants and plugging water theft. The sea must not be used for dumping sewage and should be nourished so that people could benefit from it,” Dr Amir noted.

Both experts described polythene bags as a major threat to environment and water safety and suggested a complete ban on their usage across Pakistan, particularly Karachi.

(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn 18, 16/03/2018)

Residents of Sindh have nothing to celebrate on World Water Day

The world is celebrating World Water Day today (Thursday) under the theme of nature for water, but around 80% of Sindh’s population are at risk because they consume contaminated water.



Nothing is spared from the killer water, be it households, educational institutions, government and non-governmental offices or even public hospitals. “Out of 336 potable water samples collected from various areas of Sindh, 251 were found unsafe and only 85 were safe for human consumption,” said a report of the judicial commission on water submitted to the Supreme Court. The report stated that fluoride, sulfate, nitrate, iron, sodium, chloride sulfate, colour, odour, potassium and microbiological contamination was found in the water samples.

“If the same situation persists for the next 10 years, then we will have to set up colonies for water victims similar to lepers’ colonies we witnessed after Partition,” said Shahab Usto, a former bureaucrat whose plea led to the establishment of the commission.

Speaking to *The Express Tribune*, Usto said, “We don’t need an enemy, the unsafe water will kill our population if drastic measures are not taken”. He added that one cannot escape from air or water, which are essential parts of life. “People in the worst conditions are rushed to hospitals for treatment, but unfortunately the performance of all public hospitals is dull and they have no capacity to deal with patients,” he lamented, adding that there is no water, sanitation or even disposal system at public hospitals. “We, through the platform of the judicial commission, have done research and conducted surveys on the availability of filtration and treatment plants, drinking water and sanitation schemes and found that around 2,300 such schemes have been lying dormant for years now. With the efforts of the judicial commission, the provincial government is now compelled to revive a few schemes,” he said.

Provision of clean drinking water ‘top priority’

There are multiple sources of drinking water in the province — the Indus River and its tributaries, dug wells, rainwater based dams and ponds, natural freshwater lakes and reservoirs and ground water sources such as subsoil water, hand pumps, tube wells and reverse osmosis plants. Untreated and municipal waste, industrial waste and waste through drainage structure are among other factors that have polluted drinking water in the province.

Diarrhoea, skin conditions, infections, river blindness and trachoma can all be linked to dirty water, alongside poor sanitation and hygiene. According to a report, not only adults but newborn deaths occur in Pakistan due to infections that could have been avoided had the babies been delivered in places with safe, clean water, decent sanitation and good hygiene. “Small children with regular bouts of diarrhoea

or intestinal worms are more likely to experience malnutrition and stunting. In areas where groundwater has become saline, hypertension and eclampsia are more common,” Dr Zakir Husain Kaimkhani, a medical practitioner, explained.

The water commission, in order to check the quality of drinking water being supplied, collected 84 drinking water samples from Karachi. According to judicial commission officials, 11 samples were collected from District Malir, 11 from Central, 15 from West, 14 from South, 11 from East and 11 from Korangi, while 10 samples were collected from the Dhabeji, Pipri and NEK filtration/treatment plants. “Of 84 drinking water samples, 67 were found unsafe for human consumption due to the presence of total coliforms, which include bacteria found in the soil and among these samples 30 were found contaminated [with faeces]. High levels of microbiological contamination are [present] in Karachi’s water,” the report said.

SC takes Murad Ali Shah to task

Dr Ghulam Murtaza, a senior researcher at the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, has conducted research on underground water at government hospitals in the province. According to his findings 74% of 116 samples collected from 30 hospitals in the province were unfit for human consumption owing to physiochemical or microbiological contamination. The government hospitals from where he collected the water samples were located in Karachi, Kotri, Tando Allahyar, Latifabad, Qasimabad, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Sukkur, Khairpur, Larkana, Umerkot, Sanghar, Shaheed Benazirabad and Shahdadpur. “The government must take drastic measures to provide ultra-filtration technology to these hospitals to get rid of all kind of viruses and bacteria,” he said.

Rivers, canals and barrages in the province have been polluted and filtration plants have not been installed in several cities of Sindh to provide potable water after treatment.

In many cities of the province, people are using underground water and the quality of that water has deteriorated due to a lack of sanitation, caused by, among other things, encroachments on sub-drains, use of pesticide in agriculture and constant inflow of effluent in irrigation canals. However, there is no initiative on the part of the government to build filtration plants in such areas to provide purified water and increase the capacity of water supply.

Rs400b set aside for water, sanitation schemes in Sindh

Nadeem Ahmed, policy manager at WaterAid Pakistan, which works for water rights in developing countries, told *The Express Tribune* that 90% of people in Pakistan depend on underground water and 60 million of them use arsenic affected water. “There are two types of water — surface and underground. Unfortunately, we are creating manmade disasters by polluting our own resources,” he said. “In the 1960s, there were 5,000 cubic metres of water per person in the country. This has now been reduced to 800 cubic metres,” he explained, adding that wasting water is also a big issue in Pakistan.

“There is a dire need for timely intervention to save our water bodies from all kinds of pollution and contamination by mobilising the masses and educating our people by incorporating water issues in the syllabus, otherwise water will finish in most of our cities and towns and we will face a drought-like situation like Cape Town, South Africa is suffering from now,” Ahmed said. He referred to a hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in which says, “Do not waste water even if you are at a running stream.”

(By Hafeez Tunio *The Express Tribune*, 04, 22/03/2018)

Experts call for water efficiency, building storage facilities

Pakistan’s persistent failure to ensure efficiency in water use, especially in the agriculture sector which consumes over 90 per cent of freshwater resources, and build facilities for storing water explains why the country is ranked third among the water-stressed countries in the world. It’s an alarming situation, requiring immediate government attention.

These views were expressed by speakers during a seminar held in connection with the World Water Day organised at the Federal Urdu University for Arts, Science and Technology (Fuuast) on Thursday.

The event was organised by the geology department.

Sharing their concerns over the water crisis, speakers said that Pakistan not only faced scarcity of water, it also confronted the problem of water contamination causing death and diseases on a large scale.

This indicated that the country had no reliable and safe mechanism to dispose of its waste, including the hazardous waste from industries, which was dumped in freshwater bodies and the sea.

They suggested that Pakistan, like many other countries, needed to divide its water use into two categories; one reserved for drinking and cooking purposes and the rest constituting lower-quality water for other uses.

“Water scarcity is a serious issue that can seriously affect our agricultural economy. Moreover, what’s disturbing is to have contaminated drinking water supplies,” Prof Waqar Hussain, an expert on geology, said, adding that water-related problems were getting complicated day by day as there seemed to be no strategy in place to address them.

Citing a Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources report, chairperson of the geology department Prof Seema Naz Siddiqui warned that if the situation remained as it was, Pakistan might run dry by 2025.

“We have come to this point owing to persistent government failure to develop a mechanism on efficient water use, unfair distribution of water within the country and changing climate,” she said, while also blaming some regional countries for water crisis in Pakistan. Prof Shahana Urooj Kazmi, Dr Adnan Khan, Dr Ume Hani and Dr Aamir Alamgir also spoke.

At another event on the same subject held at Karachi University, experts spoke about the important role water played in human life and nature and underscored the need for water conservation.

Prof Abid Hasnain, a senior teacher of KU’s food science and technology department, said: “Every drop of water is a source of life and must be valued and conserved. We must educate our society, especially the youth, about the impending water crisis and what they need to do.”

Giving example of Germany, he said each house had two metres, one meant for keeping record of water use and the other for water being wasted and citizens who wasted water were fined. “We need to introduce such a system to stop wastage of water,” he said.

According to Dr Nuzhat Khan, principal research officer at the National Institute of Oceanography, water scarcity could lead to a world war and conflicts within a country, if mechanisms were not developed to tackle this issue within a state and interstate.

Acting chairperson of KU’s department of geology Prof Erum Bashir and Qazi Sadaruddin representing Al-Khidmat Karachi also spoke.

(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn 18, 23/03/2018)

65 water connections cut

At least 65 water supply connections have been disconnected by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board on account of non-payment of dues.

The board also issued notices to big defaulters, including Karachi University, against whom accumulated dues of billions of rupees were outstanding.

The staffers faced strong resistance from defaulters when the KWSB staffers went to disconnect water supply connections of a housing project on Thursday.

The matter was reported to the police station concerned.

A statement issued by the KWSB says that its staffers faced strong resistance from residents of Nauman Grand City located in Block 15 of Gulistan-i-Jauhar.

It said that the defaulting housing project comprised 750 units and over Rs14.2 million was outstanding against them.

The statement says that when the residents, including women and children, came to know that their water connections were being disconnected, they put up strong resistance and “harassed” the staffers, who reported the matter to the area police station.

Some other defaulters whose connections were disconnected include Paker and Leather Company and Yusuf Brothers in Landhi Industrial Estate.

Connections of Manzil Petrol Pump and Shehzad Trucking Station in Bin Qasim were also disconnected.

The board also issued notices to big defaulters. Some of the defaulters include Pakistan Steel (arrears of Rs1.95 billion), SITE (Rs600m), Karachi University (Rs150m), etc.

The water board urged the defaulters to make the payments and clear their arrears to avoid disconnections of their water supply connections, adds the statement.
(Dawn 18, 24/03/2018)

Dams, treaties, India and water

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) dates from 1960, long before climate change and global warming were almost daily headline news. A lot of water has flowed under many bridges both literal and metaphorical but the IWT has managed to endure, and Pakistan and India have not fought a war over water. With the IWT almost 60 years old now it is showing its age and events on the ground are moving faster than the treaty can be revised, which anyway is a complicated process involving global entities such as the World Bank.

The IWT is once again to the fore as the Indian minister for transport and water resources said on Monday, March 26th that India is proposing to dam the three Uttarakhand rivers in order to curb the flow into Pakistan, and has triggered some of Pakistan’s darker fears in doing so. The Indian aim is to increase storage to overcome difficulties associated with lowered levels of precipitation (Pakistan also has issues/concerns about storage and is going ahead with the disputed Bhasha dam as a result) — but inevitably less water is going to flow into the irrigation systems and fields of Pakistan.

The Indian argument is that it has a right to dam these rivers on the grounds that it is imperative for national development. It had not hitherto been able to utilise water from the three rivers for its own needs and that Pakistan was ‘benefitting’ from the ‘extra’ water contrary to the spirit of the IWT. Given the bellicose and confrontational position of the Indian government under Mr Modi, it may be that this proposal is little more than a rattling of watery sabres. Dams are large projects that take years to finance, plan and build and there is going to be no quick fix to the Uttarakhand rivers issue, but Pakistan needs to move fast on the diplomatic front and energise the arbitration mechanisms that exist within the IWT if it is not to be wrong-footed. There is now a heightened urgency for a root-and-branch review of the IWT and Pakistan cannot afford to dither at the water’s edge.
(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 29/03/2018)

Frustrated and helpless: Karachiites take to the streets over power, water shortage

As K-Electric (K-E) and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board remained unmoved, the residents of Karachi continued their protest over non-supply of water and hours-long interruptions of electricity in different localities of the metropolis.

At least three protest demonstrations were witnessed on Friday in the metropolis as citizens swarmed took to the streets in multiple areas to protest against power outages and water shortage.

A large number of residents of Sector 11.5, the Pakistan Bazaar area of Orangi Town gathered and blocked the roads to stage a protest against power outages and water shortage in Sector 11.5 and its surrounding areas.

Shouting slogans against K-E and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, the protesters burnt tyres and protested against unannounced load-shedding in the area as well as water shortage. A massive traffic jam was also caused due to the protest on the roads of Pakistan Bazaar and its adjoining areas.

Industry threatens to go on strike over power, water shortage

"It seems that the K-E and water board are targeting us, especially since Ramazan started as we are facing load-shedding of over 10 hours a day as well as water shortage," said Kashif Naeem, a resident of the area. "It is the Friday, but we were not able to perform wuzu for jumma prayers."

Following the protest and massive traffic jam, an extra contingent of law enforcers reached the site and dispersed the protesters after peaceful negotiations. The roads, however, were opened for traffic for commuters.

Similarly, residents of Quaidabad, Muslimabad Colony, Muzzafarabad Colony, Sherpao Colony, Majeed Colony, Swati Muhalla and Landhi also staged a protest against power outages and water shortage within their localities.

The residents of the affected areas gathered after Friday prayers and reached the National Highway in the form of a rally and blocked traffic on the highway for vehicular traffic for hours in protest. A large number of protesters burnt tyres on the roads in protest and shouted slogans against the K-E and water board. The protest caused a massive traffic jam on the highway.

Load-shedding, water shortage irk people fasting in Quetta

The affected residents said that water is being sold but not being provided to the residents. They blamed the water mafia for the shortage of water within their localities and also blamed the water board officials for being involved with the tanker mafia.

Former member provincial assembly, Saifullah Khalid, also reached the protest site to express his sympathy with the protesters. Law enforcers dispersed the protesters after peaceful negotiations. The protesters ended their protest after they were assured that they would be provided water through tankers within their areas from Saturday morning.

The protesters warned that they would stage a sit-in again if their demands were not fulfilled.

City of lights sizzles as mercury soars to 46°C

Karachi has been witnessing massive load-shedding and water shortage in various localities, including Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Federal B Area, Landhi, Surjani, Nazimabad, North Karachi, Lyari, Baldia Town and Saddar, especially during Ramazan.

The citizens blame the K-E and water board for hatching conspiracies against the citizens as water is being sold and load-shedding is being done in the name of maintenance and faults. Various political parties, particularly Jamaat-e-Islami also raised its voice and held several protests against the power outages and water shortage in the city.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 02/04/2018)

Water sharing and shortages

THE latest meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission between Pakistan and India has just concluded in Delhi with a renewed request from Islamabad for a visit to various sites of the Indus basin in held Kashmir. The sites include, as per media reports, the Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects on the Jhelum and Chenab rivers respectively, as well as the newer Pakal Dul and Lower Dalnai hydropower projects also on the Chenab. The number of these run-of-the-river hydropower projects that India is building on the rivers whose waters belong to Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty is increasing, and given the severe shortages that are now occurring with growing frequency in these rivers, the treaty's provisions for dispute resolution concerning the use of these waters is being tested. In the days to come, and in future meetings of the PIC, it is imperative that both countries talk to each other in good faith, make all requests for inspections on firm grounds instead of mere suspicions, and also make all arrangements for on-site visits. Water diplomacy between both countries must not be allowed to become entangled in the territorial and boundary disputes that otherwise mar their ties.

For the government of Pakistan, it is also crucial to monitor the severe shortages of water in the Jhelum river, and as far as possible, keep a close eye on downstream flows from Mangla. How the diminished stock of water is being used, and how its allocations are being impacted due to reduced stream flows is as important an issue for Pakistan's future as is the question of how the flows are being impacted by the hydropower works being build on the Indian side of the river.

At the end of the day, both countries are facing a common challenge when it comes to their water economy: climate change. No amount of acrimony and point-scoring over water projects will help either of them to manage the highly erratic river flows, snow and rainfall patterns of the future. The leadership of the water bureaucracy in both countries needs to play the lead role in sensitising their fellow citizens and political leaderships about the importance of keeping a cooperative path going forward. The Indus Waters Treaty has well withstood the test of time, and its provisions are working down to the present day in providing a platform to settle post-modern water conflicts. But climate change is a different ball game, and more than the treaty, the spirit of cooperation built between the water bureaucrats on both sides is what will carry the two countries through the coming storms.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 02/04/2018)

Water treatment plant to be installed at Quaid's mausoleum

A treatment plant is being installed at the Quaid-i-Azam Mazar to provide additional water for its lawns so that these could be kept green and healthy, it is learnt.



According to sources, the mazar faced shortage of water which reflected on the surrounding lawns; they could look healthier and greener if sufficient water supply was available, regularly.

Responding to Dawn, secretary to the Quaid-i-Azam Mazar Management Board and its resident engineer Mohammad Arif said on Tuesday that the mazar faced a water scarcity on a regular basis. He said that the water requirement for the mazar and its surrounding lawns was around 300,000 gallons a day.

However, against this demand, he said that the mazar usually got 60,000 to 70,000 gallons a day and it was lucky if the mazar could get 100,000 gallons a day for a week at a stretch. He said that despite the best efforts by the mazar gardeners, the water shortage reflected on the condition of the lawns and additional greenery, flowers etc.

After realising that the city's water utility could not be relied upon for regular and sufficient water supply to the mazar, he said, it has been decided to install a waste water treatment plant at a cost of approximately Rs60 million to get regular water supply.

He said that the waste water would be collected from the nearby Khudadad Colony nullah that carries domestic and municipal waste water. The water would be brought to the mazar grounds, treated through the sequencing batch reactor technology that is capable of providing high level of treatment and giving relatively cleaner water. The treated water would then be used for irrigating the lawns and other green areas around the mazar.

He said that the capacity of the treatment plant is 100,000 gallons a day and the cost of operating and maintaining the plant is around Rs190 per 1,000 gallons. At a later stage the plant could be expanded and its capacity could be enhanced to 200,000 gallons a day. He said that treated domestic and municipal waste water was very good for greenery as it contained natural fertiliser and nutrients.

The consultant for the treatment plant has been hired and the construction is expected to start in the next few weeks. The plant would be ready next year, he added.

(By Bhagwandas Dawn, 18, 04/04/2018)

Man held for trying to steal water for industries

Federal B Industrial Area police on Saturday arrested a contractor for allegedly illegally laying a pipeline to supply water to industrial units at high rates.

The police said the held suspect was part of the 'mafia' that punctured the main line of the KWSB to provide illegal water connections to certain industries.

"Today some of the industries through contractors tried to lay an illegal water distribution network through pipes in FB Industrial Area, Block-22, behind a wall adjacent to the Al Noor graveyard," said Karachi West Zone DIG Amir Farooqi.

The officer added that after a close study, it was found that these factories were trying to make a network of pipes on the pretext of supplying subsoil water to one another.

"What they actually do is that the contractor punctures one of the main lines of the KWSB and supplies water to the factories at high rates," said Mr Farooqi.

He said that this practice was going on in the SITE industrial area also under "full knowledge of the KWSB and presumably with the connivance of its people".

The officer pointed out that initially the superintending engineer of the KWSB was reluctant to lodge an FIR, but after he was reminded that it was being monitored by the Supreme Court-appointed water commission, the KWSB XEN agreed to lodge an FIR.

The FB Industrial Area police registered the FIR (53/2018) on a complaint of KWSB XEN Masood Ahmed Khuhro under Section 14-A of the KWSB Act and Sections 430 (Mischief by injury to works of irrigation or by wrongfully diverting water), 427 (Mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) and 349 (criminal force and assault) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

The police arrested the contractor, Fazal Kareem, and took the pipes into custody.

DIG Farooqi told Dawn that the arrested suspect was laying a water pipeline without permission from the KWSB. He deposited the road cutting fee to the DMC and they gave him permission for road cutting without checking if he had the KWSB permission.

The DIG alleged that laying, operating and supplying water was done by that mafia/contractor.

"Industrialists just buy water from them," said Amir Farooqi, adding that the same water could be supplied by the KWSB in a legal manner if they took interest in it.

"It can't be run without their connivance," said the senior police officer.

The KWSB XEN in his application before the police said that he visited the area with his staff and found eight-inch diameter pipes which were to be used for commercial purpose to supply water to the factories.

The area SHO also visited the locality and took the pipes into police custody as investigation and legal action could be taken against the suspects.

Suspect killed in University Road 'encounter'

A suspected robber was killed and a police constable wounded during an alleged encounter near the Mosamiat roundabout on main University Road on Saturday evening.

Malir SSP Adeel Hussain Chandio said that the condition of the wounded policeman, identified as Raheem, was out of danger.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 17, 08/04/2018)

'Water resources are depleting, we don't have enough for everyone'

As many as 3.6 billion people are living in water scarce conditions in the world which is almost half of today's global population.

This was stated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) Thailand's Science Adviser Dr Benno Boer at the inaugural ceremony of a four-day international conference, 'Sustainable Development: Halophytes for Green Revolution', organised by Karachi University's (KU) Institute of Sustainable Halophyte Utilization (ISHU).

United Nations (UN) has focused on this dangerous situation and suggested to utilise the currently unused salty water and barren saline lands, said Dr Boer, adding that there was a dire need to develop nature-based solutions for energy and food security.

"More than 97% of the earth's water is saline. The possibility of growing halophyte would be a great opportunity for the world," Dr Boer suggested, adding that so far halophyte biologists have been visionary and ahead of their time as they realised that scarcity of fresh water is real and they are working on solutions to ensure food security for the future.

He added that scientists must be good communicators so they may convince politicians and investors to support halophyte developments.

Pakistan dumps water worth \$22 billion into the sea every year

"I am very happy to be in Karachi and have experienced great hospitality and the fantastic Pakistani culture and food," Dr Boer said.

He lauded KU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammd Ajmal Khan for his key role in developing a meaningful partnership between Unesco and KU.

He thanked ISHU Director Dr Bilquees Gul and termed her a true role model for women scientists of the country.

"Water resources are depleting and we don't have enough water for everyone. No institute in the world, except ISHU, has done such focused work in this subject," Dr Khan claimed.

He thanked Dr Attaur Rehman for providing support as the then Higher Education Commission chairperson to establish ISHU.

He advised young scientists to work hard and trust themselves. Marketing of scientific projects is very important to attract funding and investors, he said.

Pakistan's worsening water crisis

Former chairperson of the Pakistan Science Foundation, Prof Dr Muhammad Ashraf believed research on saline agriculture and halophyte utilisation is the need of the time in the face of global climate change and salinisation of lands.

"High quality research and patents are developed at ISHU, making a pivotal contribution to global research literature," he said.

Dr Gul said that about 11% of the world's irrigated areas are affected by salinisation. The continuous expansion of salt-affected land is highest in some of the most populated and economically challenged countries, such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, posing a serious threat to sustainable agricultural production, she said.

"Many desert halophytes perform important ecosystem services. These species, when planted in brackish and saline soils near the edges, will naturally help to protect the site infrastructure from flooding, sand storms, and erosion. Secondly, halophytes may provide opportunities for the cultivation of fodder and energy crops using saltwater for irrigation," she said, adding that this was an exciting prospect given the current and projected world shortages in freshwater, but remains a relatively unexplored research area.

Halophytes provide options for livestock feeding in both semi-arid and saline landscapes. These plants vary in both biomass production and nutritive value. They are characterised by slow growth, low digestibility and high content of anti-nutritional factors.

Tube wells running dry: Water crisis in RCB and CCB reaching alarming levels

"Some of the poorest places on the planet are 'rich' in deserts and are located near plentiful salt water resources, making them suitable candidates for halophyte farming," she said.

The economic benefits for poor countries are stable growth, lower unemployment, better balance-of-trade and less reliance on foreign food aid programmes, she shared.

She added that Thar is the largest desert in Pakistan and the ninth largest in the world. With a tropical desert climate, rains play a vital role in the Thar region as underground water is rarely found.

Utilising brackish water in Thar will reduce pressure on fertile lands and fresh water resources, she said.

"We have made significant progress in research on this subject and believe that if properly implemented, it could contribute significantly in rehabilitating saline land and providing fodder to arid areas like Thar. The communities along Tharparkar are extremely poor and the introduction of this grass could greatly uplift their economic conditions," Dr Gul maintained.

(By News Desk The Express Tribune, 05, 18/04/2018)

Taking external help 50MW power plant for K-IV approved

The 25th meeting of the Public-Private Partnership Policy Board held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah approved the establishment of a 50 megawatt (MW) power project for the K-IV, a theme park and wholesale date market in Khairpur.

The projects under discussion by the board included a livestock tagging project, the local government's Karachi Theme Park, a 50MW power station for the K-IV project, an English medium school project, the Khairpur wholesale dates market and safety and security services at the National Institute of Child Health.

The meeting was informed that the government has decided to establish a 50MW power plant for phase I of the K-IV project under a public-private partnership at pumping stations No I and II near Keenjhar Lake.

The CM said that K-IV project's first phase I envisages providing 260 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to Karachi. He added that the project requires 50MW of power to meet its energy needs, therefore it necessitates the installation of a dedicated power station.

K-IV project completion pushed back to mid-2019

Shah said that the plant is expected to be gas-fired and will have an adequate back-up supply either on-site or through provision of power from a local distribution company.

The board approved the project development funding for private partner solicitation.

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro informed the meeting that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation received an unsolicited proposal from a private group for the development of the Karachi Theme and Safari Park at the existing facility of Safari Park. The unsolicited proposal is based on detailed technical, financial and legal studies for which the private group has engaged a leading firm. The board approved the project for investors solicitation.

Education Secretary Iqbal Durani said that Tharparkar is the largest district by land and area, yet it is ranked lowest in the human development index. He added that a recent development in the energy sector is that Tharparkar has given way for improvement in human development by expanding on health and education services, which can greatly reduce inequality and poverty.

The meeting was told that the CM has directed the education department to improve the quality of education in Islamkot and Tharparkar by outsourcing the management of public schools to reputable organisations. The meeting was informed that during the first phase, a preliminary list of 37 public schools have been identified for outsourcing.

Judicial commission orders removal of K-IV project director

Out of the 498 existing schools in Islamkot, 37 schools narrowed down based on level of education, gender, availability of existing infrastructure and student enrolment were identified.

Durani told the meeting that these 37 schools constitute 7.4 per cent of the total number of schools and represent 19.6 per cent of the total enrolled population of Islamkot.

The board approved the launching of the project under an English medium organisations model and approved private partner solicitation.

Agriculture Secretary Sajid Jamal Abro told the meeting that Khairpur is the single largest date producing district in the country. He added that poor logistics and infrastructure facilities in Khairpur in the wholesaling of dates have restricted development of an extremely high potential crop. The policy board approved to launch the project near the Khairpur Special Economic Zone.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 24/04/2018)

Water policy

THE approval of a new national water policy in the closing days of the current government is a tribute to the capacities of democracy. Water is the lifeblood of Pakistan, and since the building of the world's largest irrigation system, along with a huge storage infrastructure, in the 1960s and 1970s, the sharing and utilisation of water across sectors and among provinces has been one of the thorniest issues in our politics. The policy itself has been under discussion, on and off, for over a decade, and the final

signatures of the four chief ministers and the prime minister last week can be seen as a milestone, much like the water-sharing accord of 1991.

But now comes the hard part. The policy calls for increasing the share of resources from federal and provincial development programmes to be dedicated to the water infrastructure. At the federal level, this means accelerating work on the Diamer Bhasha dam, and at the provincial level it means public works to plug leaks through lining the water courses. The latter ought to be the biggest priority. Losses of water are estimated at 46 MAF annually, whereas the Diamer Bhasha dam will add 6.4 MAF of storage capacity. If the policy succeeds in reducing losses by a third, as is the stated goal, the amount of water it would free up would be double the capacity of the Diamer Bhasha dam, at presumably less than half the cost. Far too often, Pakistan's water woes during climate change are presented as shortage in the supply of water, whereas the real challenge is in the improved utilisation of the existing supply. This involves some investment in physical infrastructure, but also large-scale changes in farm-water management techniques and the sound measurement of water flows through the system, to give a few examples. This requires a crucial reform: water pricing — the only way to sensitise farmers to the prevailing scarcity of water, and to urge greater efficiency in the use of this resource. And yet, this is one area where the policy minces its words. It wants to link water pricing with the "users' ability to pay", which is going to be next to impossible for the state to assess. Until a realistic water-pricing regime is brought into play, mobilising investment and changing utilisation patterns in agriculture will prove to be a losing battle.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 02/05/2018)

'We are more than 20 years late in steps being taken for water conservation'

We are more than 20 years late in the steps we are taking today to conserve water. Right now, the future does not look good at all unless we start saving water, said director Regional Bureau for Science in Asia and the Pacific, Dr Shabaz Khan.

Speaking at an international workshop on Collective Community Action for Eco-Watershed Mitigation to Floods and Droughts on Tuesday, Dr Khan stressed on the need to check dams, enhancing underground storage and better crop, soil and water management. He said planting trees just for the sake of planting them will not work.

"We need to plant trees that can sustain livelihoods such as olives that give fruit and oil, to give an example," Dr Khan said. He has assisted the Australian government in managing water for a decade.

Pakistan saves water to last the country 35-40 days while other countries keep reserves to last 400 days, seminar told

Federal Flood Commission Chairman Ahmed Kamal said that while the rest of the world is saving 40 glasses of water out of 100, Pakistan only saves 10.

"If we can save at least 10 to 12 more glasses of water, Pakistan might just be able to ensure food security for the future," he said.

He said departments are still weak and cannot properly deal with natural disasters.

Participants were told said that after the 2010 floods, Pakistan lost 55 million acre feet of water to the Arabian Sea, which is equivalent to eight to 10 Tarbela-size dams.

The conference was told that Pakistan has water saved to last the country roughly 35 to 40 days when countries like Australia reserve water that can last the entire country 400 days. Speakers said the country's defence is not as big an issue as the water crisis that Pakistan will face in the future.

Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Inomata said his country is the most prone to natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and tsunamis.

“Japan has experience and knowledge to pass on to Pakistan that now ranks among the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change,” Mr Inomata said.

Organised by the Soil and Water Conservation Institute, Punjab in collaboration with Unesco, the collective community action (CCA) initiative can play a vital role in mitigating damage potential and increasing coping capacity in both extremes of draught and flood by providing support to decision makers and end users such as local authorities and disaster prevention offices.

The initiative was developed in response to the massive 2010 floods in Pakistan. Other than involving communities to enable them to help themselves, early warning systems have been developed to analyse rainfall across the country and predict intensity of floods.

Under the project, several special training programmes have been designed to empower the youth to use modern technology to develop and operate advanced costly weather systems in order to end dependency on foreign assistance as well as build capacities of farmers by introducing them to advanced agriculture methods to conserve water.

(By Jamal Shahid Dawn, 04, 02/05/2018)

Water as a weapon

Pakistan and India share a chequered history that is defined by tales of animosity and the general inability to coexist. The partition of the Indian subcontinent created a conflict over everything related to the two nations from history and heritage to precious natural resources like the waters of the Indus Basin. In 1948, an administrator in India cut off the water supply to a number of canals in Pakistan.

The Indian government was quick to label the mishap as a bureaucratic mix-up, but in Pakistan, the bitter memory still lingers.

After several years of painstaking negotiations, in 1960, the contentious issue was resolved when the World Bank brokered an agreement between the two states over how to share and manage the river system. The agreement, known as the Indus Waters Treaty, has survived every phase of the perennially troubled relationship between Pakistan and India. This was a significant development in the unsettling ties between the two neighbours. So much so that former US president Dwight Eisenhower hailed the pact as a “bright spot” in a “very depressing world picture.” However, the agreement has not prevented New Delhi from using this important natural recourse to twist Islamabad’s arm.

Our eastern neighbour has been a constant violator of the accord that has — for decades — prevented what can be termed the water war between the two. In a bid to constrict Pakistan’s water supply, India initiated a number of hydroelectric dams on the western rivers, including the contentious Kishanganga dam. Although no single dam along the rivers controlled by the treaty may affect Pakistan’s access to water, the cumulative impact of these projects provides India the capability to store enough water to restrict the supply to Pakistan at crucial moments. Pakistan has every right to forcefully pursue Indian violations of the trans-boundary water management agreement with the World Bank.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 04/05/2018)

Water shortages

REPORTS of severe water shortages afflicting large areas of Sindh and southern Punjab are on the increase, and large-scale damage to key crops, particularly cotton, paint a troubling picture. From Badin to Mirpurkhas to Nawabshah and all the way to Rahim Yar Khan, farmers are reporting that the sowing season for cotton has been badly disrupted because the water that is so essential at the time of sowing did not arrive at the scheduled time. Large sugarcane fields stand burnt, and vegetable output has suffered hugely. Demands from farmers and residents of agrarian towns have shifted away from water for irrigation. Now they are reduced to demanding drinking water since the shortages have parched more than just arable land.

Some lawmakers from Sindh have asked that the Indus River System Authority cut flows into two key link canals, arguing that these are to be used only in times of flood and not to make up for water shortages upstream. Irsa has responded that the situation in Punjab is just as bad, even though the sowing season for cotton has not begun there, while the wheat crop is ready for harvest. Thus far, the dispute at the national level has not gone beyond the confines of some testy exchanges between a few senators and key people in the water bureaucracy. Those exchanges demonstrate that the matter is unlikely to find resolution at that level. It is difficult to see what the government can actually do about the problem, given that it has been created by low inflows into the dams. But if it is true that there are significant withdrawals being made through the link canals for lands in Punjab, then the question of fairness in allocations must take centre stage. In Sindh too, the shortages have driven a politicised allocation, particularly from the Kotri Barrage, as well as illegal pumping of water by those closer to the canal head, leading to bitter complaints from the tail enders. The episode cries out for high-level attention. The Sindh government needs to wake up to its responsibility to ensure equitable sharing of the scarce quantities of water in its own areas, while the federal government must wake up to its obligations to ensure that interprovincial allocations are being done as per the spirit of the 1991 water-sharing accord. The shortages are a fact, but the acrimony they are giving rise to can be better handled.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 05/05/2018)

Survey of Thar RO plants under way

Complying with the orders of the Sindh chief secretary, the district administration of Thar has begun to conduct a survey of reverse osmosis plants installed by the Sindh government to provide safe drinking water to Tharis.

When contacted, Tharparkar Deputy Commissioner Dr Abdul Hafeez Siyal told Dawn that the chief secretary had issued a notification in the light of the directions of judicial commission on water chief retired Justice Amir Hani Muslim. He said officials of the public health department and Pak Oasis, the company assigned to install the plants, were busy in the process.

He said that after the survey, it would be decided whether the charge of looking after and installation of more plants would either be given to the private firm or any government organisation to take over the responsibility.

Leaders of various political parties have warned to launch a protest movement in Thar against water crisis both in towns and villages of the desert region.

Fakeer Arshad Kumbhar of the Pakistan Tehreek-i- Insaf, advocate Shahnawaz Hingorjo of the Qaumi Awami Tehreek and other activists and members of civil society deplored that concerned functionaries of the municipality had miserably failed to provide canal water to Mithi town and its adjacent areas for three months.

(By A Correspondent Dawn, 19, 09/05/2018)

Judicial commission irked by K-IV's 22 realignments, seeks report within a week

The Supreme Court-mandated commission on water and sanitation expressed on Monday serious resentment over frequent realignments in the K-IV project and sought a detailed report within a week.

The commission headed by former SC judge Justice Amir Hani Muslim observed that the realignments 22 times had created doubt about the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, better known as K-IV, and the project also suffered adversely.

The commission directed the consultant of the project to submit a detailed report within a week explaining which authority had allowed these realignments, written justification that why the project was realigned 22 times and facts and figures about the additional amount spent on the account of such realignments.

The applicant contended that the project had been intentionally handled in a manner that it benefited Bahria Town, it added.

'The project has been intentionally handled to benefit Bahria Town'

Barrister Salahuddin Ahmed, representing a resident of Usman Allah Rakhio Goth in Gadap Town, had filed an application last week and contended that the alignment, approved in 2016, was the only straight and shortest possible time/money-saving route.

However, he contended that realignment of the project was based on mala fide intention to achieve ulterior motive and to give benefit to Bahria Town, Karachi. He asked the commission to set aside the realignments in K-IV.

KWSB gets two days to enforce order

Expressing displeasure over the incompetence of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) information technology section, Justice Muslim ordered centralising the entire process of water supply from the bulk water pumping stations till it reached the consumers within two days.

Last week the commission had directed the managing director of the KWSB to enforce all the directives of the commission, including installation of meters at pumping stations, upgrade of its laboratories, updates of the pumping stations on website and to switch its manual working on modern lines.

MD Khalid Mehmood Shaikh turned up on Monday to offer an explanation, but Justice Muslim observed that most of the employees were either non-cooperative or they did not want to work and this fact was fairly conceded by Mr Shaikh.

Justice Muslim said that the IT section staff lacked the required competence to meet the challenges and recommended that they be trained from well-known institutions, adding that the entire system in the KWSB was not computerised and the IT manager failed to give any justification.

"I have serious reservations that the bulk water of pumping stations and onward supply can be streamlined through centralised system with this level of competence and strength of IT working," he added.

The commission directed the KWSB officials that the entire process be completed within two days which should reflect the tentative water discharge from the bulk end till it reached the consumers.

Action against absent employees

The commission ordered two contractors of a Chinese firm, responsible for lifting solid waste, to fulfil their responsibilities as per the contract and directed the district municipal commissioners to provide them human resources.

It also asked the DMCs to stop the salaries and initiate departmental proceedings against those employees transferred to the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board if they failed to perform duties as per the plan.

Drain near Empress Market

The commission directed a member of the task force to take up the issue of a storm-water drain near Empress Market at the relevant forum and submit the report after Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar said that the drain in question was rerouted by the cantonment board.

First, he said, the drain did not fall within the domain of the cantonment board, and secondly permission for multistorey buildings on the drain was unprecedented.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 17, 15/05/2018)

Sindh's opposition, treasury benches engage in heated debate over water shortages

The treasury and opposition benches in the Sindh Assembly on Wednesday engaged in a heated debate over the availability of water as some of them feared the worsening situation could lead to “water riots”.

The debate on the annual budget presented by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah for the next financial year entered its third day with Speaker Siraj Durrani in the chair.

Some 11 members, six of them belonging to the opposition benches, spoke on the merits and demerits of the financial plan put together by the government.

Lawmaker suggests speeding up work on desalination plant to address water woes

As the day's session resumed two hours later than its scheduled time, the number of members in attendance was pathetically poor, which annoyed the opposition benches. They complained to the chair that no ministers and senior bureaucrats were there to listen to them and jot down their suggestions.

Speaker Durrani pacified them and got them to end their protest by saying all speeches in the house were duly being noted down and would be taken care of by the government.

The members spoke over various issues Sindh was facing, however, everyone offered views on the problems pertaining to water.

The treasury benches generally complained about the federal government's “iniquitous” behaviour towards Sindh, a lower riparian province, vis-a-vis share in water, while the opposition members were discontented with the system that “failed” to effectively supply the available water.

“Water mafias continue to steal our water and sell it to us and they are being patronised by the persons from among us,” said Irum Farooque of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement who has left the party and assumes independent standing in the house.

She said work on the desalination plant in the metropolis should be accelerated and completed in the soonest possible time.

“We are lucky to have the sea beside our city and other districts of Sindh and this project could help us a great deal in meeting our drinking water needs.”

She feared “water riots” could break out if the issue was not resolved and the federal authorities did not ensure just share to Sindh and its effective supply to farms and houses. She said Sindh was facing more than 70 per cent water shortage warranting the provincial authorities to go for building “our own reservoirs”.

“We should not solely depend on Punjab, there are other ways too to ease the pain.”

She was unhappy over the “dead” Manchhar Lake, which lately forced 700 families of fishermen to migrate.

She asked the federal government why the Green Line bus project it funded had hit delays, which had made the lives of people miserable and also exacerbated the city's transport woes.

She asked the provincial government to rely on its own resources more instead of looking for help from Islamabad.

She added there was no mention of the Karachi Circular Railway project in the budget documents.

She said abolishing the quota system was necessary to end widespread suspicions among communities.

Awais Shah of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party blamed the federal authorities for continued sea intrusion because no water was flowing to deltaic regions of the River Indus.

He said water was not available for both irrigation and drinking purposes because of heavy shortfall caused by the federal authorities.

He said the worst water shortfalls Sindh had ever suffered had forced the provincial government to protest against the federal authorities in Hyderabad.

He asked the opposition benches to join the Sindh government for the cause of Sindh.

“The federation does not supply us adequate water, power and gas. We demand nothing, but at least give us the right to live by allowing water coming our way.”

He said sea intrusion had consumed a whole taluka in the southernmost part of Sindh; the level of subsoil water had gone “miles deep” and all this was “part of a pre-planned scheme”.

He criticised Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif for “remembering” Sindh after five years when general elections were close. He also slated ex-premier Nawaz Sharif for “speaking against the army”.

PML-N’s Sorath Thebo confronted him with her mike off asking him to focus on the budget discussion.

He said all schemes in Sukkur initiated by the PPP government were progressing as per schedule and denied the claims about delays made earlier by some opposition members.

Shaharyar Maher of the Pakistan Muslim League-Functional said the government’s claim that tube-wells were being shifted to solar energy was nowhere in sight.

He said the irrigation system was as flawed as before while Sindh’s agriculture, which contributed 35pc of the national crops, was not being adequately taken care of.

He claimed the Benazir Income Support Programme had turned poor people into beggars. MQM’s Rana Ansar said 44pc of children in Hyderabad were out of school while a good number of schools in the district were closed or abandoned.

She said none of the 12 colleges promised by the government to be established in Hyderabad was built. Besides, four libraries in Shahdadpur were closed down. She said billions of rupees spent on education had given zero result.

She said schemes and equipment of healthcare facilities had been transferred to other districts by the government.

Ms Ansar said there were 17 animals in Ranibagh and all of them were goats showing the zoo had been turned into a stable.

PPP’s Shehnaz Ansari said only those schools which had been established by the previous government to use as autaqas had been closed. She appreciated the government’s scheme to open English-medium schools in 15 districts.

MQM’s Bilqees Mukhtar, who has defected to Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP), said lawmakers should have been consulted before preparing the annual budget.

She said Sindh had immense resources, yet, there was no planning and good governance.

Mohammad Dilawar of the MQM, who has also defected to the PSP, said the government should effectively utilise the water which was available to the province. He said the figures vis-a-vis requirement of water to Sindh were flawed.

He said slashing 8.5 million people of Karachi in the census had, in fact, harmed Sindh.

PPP's Mahesh Malani said the government's policies had positively impacted the life of Thar. He said healthcare system had been "revolutionised".

PPP's Saira Shahliani said the budget had focused on development sector.

Adviser to the chief minister on social welfare said quota system was meant to help the marginalised, which should continue until the whole population came at par in terms of living standards.

MQM's Shaikh Abdullah, who has defected to the PSP, said continuous delays in Green Line project had created hardships for the people of Surjani Town.

(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn, 17, 17/05/2018)

Water crunch

Pakistan's water crisis is not new. It is a perennial issue that affects every part and person across the country. Despite being a water-intensive economy, we have allowed the scarcity of water to mature into a crisis that can effectively jeopardise every aspect of life across the country. The worsening water crisis has also gripped our largest city — Karachi — which has forever struggled with water shortage.

While massive population growth and urbanisation have been named as the main culprits for the metropolis's water woes, authorities have neglected plummeting levels at Keenjhar Lake — a major source of water supply for both Karachi and Thatta district. Supplies to Thatta have already taken a hit. The tail-end areas of the district have been experiencing a drought-like situation since the water level started descending. Dipping water levels are expected to cause a further decrease in the usual supply to Karachi in the days to come. With temperatures expected to rise in the future and longer sweltering summers expected ahead, can we as a nation afford the scarcity of such an important natural resource? Unfortunately, authorities at federal and provincial levels have failed to take serious measures to address the increasing storage of water. The matter can no longer be ignored. According to a report by the Washington-based International Monetary Fund, Pakistan ranks third on the list of countries facing a severe water crunch. While more reservoirs and dams may be a part of the solution, they are just one part. We are in dire need to diversify water resources and conserve this natural resource to ensure it is equally available across the country. Hence, now more than ever before, we need a national integrated approach to water resource management that prioritises conservation and sustainable water usage to prevent the scarcity of the most vital natural resource.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 16, 17/05/2018)

Sindh getting 50pc less water as against last year's supplies

Sindh is getting 50pc less water than what it received during the corresponding period last year at Guddu barrage upstream, the first barrage on Indus after the river enters the province, dealing a serious blow to cultivation of Kharif season crops of rice and cotton.

All right bank non-perennial canals of three barrages are now to getting water for crops but due to acute water scarcity, irrigation authorities could release water into the canals only for drinking purposes.

Non-perennial canals of Guddu and Sukkur barrages were to be provided water for Kharif from May 15 but given available flows, irrigation authorities would only provide water to Sukkur barrage's right bank canals of North Western, Dadu and Rice canals and Guddu's Begari Feeder.

As per Water Apportionment Accord 1991 Guddu barrage is having 67pc less water, Sukkur 42pc and Kotri 66pc less.

Acute water shortage deals serious blow to cultivation of Kharif crops

Sukkur barrage's left bank canals of Nara and Rohri are getting somewhat better water flows and Kotri barrage's Kalri Baghar (KB) feeder is receiving reasonable flows for meeting Karachi's water needs. KB feeder feeds Keenjhar lake from where Karachi gets water.

On May 18 last year Guddu barrage received 72,286 cusecs against 38,620 cusecs the same day this year. Canals' withdrawal figures of Guddu barrage show it is getting 67pc less water than its allocated share and likewise Sukkur barrage is getting 49.8pc less water as compared to its allocation for May.

"Last year in May the situation was much better. And this trend of shortage this year is likely to continue over the days to come," said an irrigation official.

Kotri barrage is the most affected as it bears 66pc water shortage in its four canals, three on left and one on right side, currently.

"We are mainly releasing water for drinking purposes in four canals of Kotri barrage," said newly appointed Kotri barrage chief engineer Shafqat Wadhu.

He said that level of Keenjhar lake whose designed discharge was 9,000 cusecs had improved over the last few days and now it was being provided around 2,100 cusecs to meet drinking water needs.

Share of non-perennial canals of Guddu and Sukkur barrages gets due on May 15. Begari Feeder is still closed. However, its left bank canal — Ghotki Feeder — which is to get 6,000 cusecs, is being provided 2,000 cusecs only.

Similarly, Sukkur barrage's right bank canals — North Western, Rice and Dadu — are getting 1400 cusecs, 400 cusecs and 1150 cusecs against allocation of 6000, 4000 and 5000 cusecs, respectively.

"Indus River System Authority's advisory committee had earlier predicted 31pc shortage in Kharif but it was revised to 42pc. We believe that we will be having 50pc shortage of water at the end of the day in view of present water flows," said an irrigation official.

The persistent water shortage has badly affected cotton sowing in Sindh as only 22 per cent area has been brought under cultivation so far against a target of 620,000 hectares. Last year's cotton sowing target was 650,000 hectares.

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture general secretary Zahid Bhurgari claimed that only 35pc cotton was sown in lower Sindh areas and that too with the help of tube-wells.

(By Mohammad Hussain Khan Dawn, 17, 21/05/2018)

Would-be solution to Karachi's water issue in limbo

In the 2018-19 budget, the Sindh government has allocated only Rs60 million for a project to provide 65 million gallons of water per day to the city – a much needed project.



The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) has claimed that the project will be completed in 2019 while the budget lists the new completion date as 2021. However, the approved plan does not include a filtration plant, due to which the PC-I of the project is being revised, which will therefore raise the project costs.

From March 1, the KWSB started a new project to provide an additional 65MGD of water from the Keenjhar Lake and Haleji Lake. After the cleaning and repair of Haleji Lake, the supply of 20MGD from the lake to Karachi will be resumed after a hiatus of 25 years. The project will cost around Rs5.9 billion.

In the 2018-19 budget, only Rs60 million has been allocated for the project. According to budget documents, Rs2.5 million will be allocated in the 2019-20 budget and a further Rs2.5 billion in the 2020-21 budget.

KWSB Managing Director Khalid Mehmood Sheikh said work on the project began in March and the project will be completed in 18 months, however, the water board is trying its best to complete the project by June 2019. They need Rs5 billion to complete the project by next year.

Industry threatens to go on strike over power, water shortage

Speaking to *Express News*, Sheikh said this is one of the most important projects of Karachi and should be completed on time. He said he will request the government for a revised allocation of Rs5 billion for the project in the upcoming budget. He said confidently that the provincial government will approve the board's request and the project will not encounter any further delays.

In 1985, a share of 1,200 cusecs of water, around 650MGD, from the Indus River was approved for Sindh, which will be completed after the 65MGD project is finished.

Initially, the project was to begin right after the completion of the K-III project in 2006, which was to supply 650MGD of water. However, the board's administration then demanded 1,200 cusecs from the Indus River from the federal and provincial government for which the K-IV project was planned. After a long struggle, an additional 260MGD of water from the Indus River was approved and in relation to this the first phase of the K-IV has been in progress since last year.

Students exposed to unsafe drinking water in Karachi: report

Despite the fact that the KWSB project was approved 12 years ago, many areas still suffer water shortages. All six districts of the city are plagued by an intense water crisis, which will only worsen in Ramazan. Timely completion of this project would have reduced the city's water crisis to a major extent, however, the elected provincial government and bureaucracy failed to pay heed to residents' basic necessities.

KWSB officials, on the basis of anonymity, said that efforts to undertake the 65MGD project have been under way since 2012 but due to non-provision of funds the project encountered continuous delays. In 2015, the provincial government approved the project and an initial study was carried out in 2016-17. In the 2017-18 budget Rs1 billion was allocated but only Rs25 million was released.

The detailed study and design were carried out using the Rs25 million. Consultants completed the design within six months. Later, tenders were issued, the contract awarded to the National Logistics Cell and work on the project finally began.

The KWSB officials said keeping the budget statistics and numbers aside, this is a very important project. The water board has already started working on one part of the development project and awarded two contracts on the two other phases last month. It will utilise the budget of Rs60 million that it was allotted in the upcoming budget as mobilisation funds, but will still require more money.

According to sources within the Sindh government, the Pakistan Peoples Party-led provincial government has not allocated funds for new schemes due to the upcoming elections and a bare minimum has been allocated for old projects. Hence, Rs50 billion has been kept as block allocation. When the new government comes into power, it can allocate more funds from the block allocation to development schemes.

Karachi swelters as power supply wavers

Project director Zafar Palijo said that a 58 kilometre-long line will be constructed from Keenjhar Lake to the Pipri Pumping Station for the project. The project comprises four development projects and the construction cost is estimated at around Rs5.9 billion, excluding the construction of a filtration plant.

Phase one of the project, which is already under construction, is a 14.5km reinforced cement concrete canal from Keenjhar Lake to Gharo. The cleaning of Haleji Lake will also be reviewed and later a new line will be merged from the lake to the new canal.

Phase two is the construction of the Gharo Pump House, with its tender awarding process to be completed next month, after which construction work will commence. Phase three is an 11km long and 72 inch wide pipe from Gharo to Dhabeji. Work on this phase will also commence next month.

Phase four is the construction of a 28km-long conduit stretching from the forebay to Pipri. This stage of the project will commence after three months.

Temperatures rise to a record 42°C in Karachi

Palijo said that the provision of water from Keenjhar Lake will be 45MGD and 20MGD from Haleji Lake. He explained that the main function of Haleji Lake is to have a sustainable and stable means of supplying of water, as well as it once again being a bird sanctuary.

He said Haleji Lake is the KWSB's property. This artificial lake was created during the British era in order to provide water to the British and American soldiers stationed in Karachi during World War II. The network was built till Karsaz. In 1942, the lake was made functional and started providing 20MGD to Karachi till 1994.

But due to the Right Bank Outfall Drain project, Haleji Lake was disconnected from the canal that met the Indus River, causing the immediate halt of water supply to Karachi. Due to the suspension of water from the Indus River to Haleji Lake, the latter's water levels fell.

But five years ago, the Sindh government completed the RBOD and connected the canal from the Indus River to the Haleji Lake, but water supply to the lake has still not resumed as the board first wants to clean the lake of silt. New gates will also be installed at the lake.

(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 21/05/2018)

Sindh govt told to take steps for timely completion of K-IV project

The Supreme Court-mandated commission on water and sanitation on Tuesday directed the provincial government to take steps for the construction of other components of the K-IV project to make it functional within the stipulated time.

The head of the commission, retired SC Justice Amir Hani Muslim, was hearing an application against frequent realignments in the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, better known as the K-IV project.

After hearing officials and consultant of the project, the commission observed that the PC-I prepared and approved lacked other components, in the absence of which the K-IV project could not be completed.

When the representative of the consultant was confronted by the commission, he candidly conceded that the PC-I lacked some components such as bridges and culverts, adding that a power plant had to be installed to run K-IV.

Consultant concedes that the PC-I lacks components such as bridges and culverts

The project director and consultant said that the augmentation of the project was also required for which the Sindh government needed to take immediate steps so that by the time of completion these components were also put in place.

The chief secretary informed the commission that in addition to the PC-I, there would be three independent PC-Is prepared by the relevant departments with regard to ancillary services to the K-IV project, an augmentation plan for the provincial metropolis and establishment of a power plant for the project.

The commission directed the Sindh government to take steps in this regard so that by the time the ongoing project was completed, these other ancillary works and the power plant must be constructed and made available to ensure that the project would start functioning at the stipulated time.

The managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board said that PC-I for the augmentation plan, a component of the K-IV project, had been submitted to the planning and development department. However, prima facie it had not been processed under the impression that this component was hit by a ban imposed by the Election Commission of Pakistan last month.

Justice Muslim directed the P&D department to immediately process the PC-I for the augmentation plan as the ban imposed by the ECP would not affect the schemes which came under the direct supervision of the water commission.

The commission also heard arguments from Barrister Salahuddin Ahmed, lawyer for the applicant, and additional advocate general Sarwar Khan.

The counsel for the applicant clarified that an area, which was subject matter of these proceedings in this application, was not part of any litigation before the Sindh High Court.

The commission said that the only objection of the counsel was that the original plan did not reflect that the land in question was required for the project but a subsequent plan of 2017 reflected that the land was required.

The commission directed the consultant of the K-IV project to submit a detailed reply.

A resident of Usman Allah Rakhio Goth in Gadap Town had filed an application in a previous hearing and contended that the alignment, approved in 2016, was the only straight and shortest possible time/money-saving route.

However, he contended that the realignment of the project was based on mala fide intention to achieve an ulterior motive and to give benefit to Bahria Town Karachi and pleaded that the realignments in the K-IV project be set aside.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 17, 23/05/2018)

Water scarcity

The writer is Deputy Director, Outreach and Dissemination, Strategic Planning/Reform Unit, Punjab Irrigation Department.

PAKISTAN is inching towards a serious water crisis as per capita water availability is falling due to diminishing freshwater supplies and the exponentially increasing demands of our burgeoning population.

This year, our river inflows have been at an all-time low due to lower-than-normal precipitation in the catchment areas triggered by climate change. In recent meetings, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has pointed out acute water shortage in the Indus basin river system. Irrigation supplies for winter crops in Punjab were 40 per cent lower than historical averages. More than 90pc of our fresh water is used in agriculture and 60pc of our population is directly or indirectly associated with agriculture.

Demand for drinking water in cities is growing rapidly as they expand sans prudent urban water management. Many parts of Karachi are already experiencing a Cape Town-like Day Zero.

The challenges are twofold: decreasing river inflows and reckless water management. Let's begin with water scarcity. The Falkenmark Water Stress Indicator sets 1,000 cubic metres per capita as the threshold where water shortage starts hurting economic growth and human health. Pakistan began in 1947 with 5,650 cubic metre per capita fresh water annually, way above this threshold.

Post Indus Waters Treaty, river inflows have dwindled whereas population growth has continued unabated. In 2010, a water management expert associated with the Punjab Irrigation Department said that our annual water availability was 1,000 cubic metre per person and these figures were based on population projections.

The 2017 census data changes the water availability equation altogether making our annual per capita fresh water around 850 cubic metres; it puts us in seriously water-scarce countries' basket. Our diminishing river inflows can be attributed to the increasing number of dams our upstream neighbour continues to build on our rivers and lower-than-normal precipitation in the catchment areas because of climate change.

New reservoirs are needed immediately.

Meanwhile, we've shown wanton disregard for managing our water resources — surface and ground — efficiently. In the last six decades, Pakistan hasn't built a single major water reservoir. Wapda sources claim Pakistan fritters away water worth Rs25 billion every year. Tarbela, one of the two existing reservoirs, has lost its storage capacity by over three million acre feet due to silt buildup. Our failure to build any new reservoirs after its construction in the mid '70s, shows our short-sightedness and ineptitude. Out of the 145 MAF we receive annually, we store only 14 MAF.

According to Irsa figures, Pakistan has been discharging an average of 30 MAF annually into the ocean whereas the requisite environmental flow downstream of Kotri is less than 8 MAF. We are practically squandering liquid gold by not building new reservoirs. During the dry winter season, our irrigation system relies solely on water stored in the Tarbela and Mangla dams. This year both have been at dead level throughout the spring season, so the tail reaches of the Indus basin irrigation system have not had any significant supplies.

The tale of our ineptitude continues. Lack of ample reservoirs to store monsoon inflows and dry winters put extra pressure on our aquifer. Our farmers and our urban water supply facilities pump huge amounts of precious groundwater. In Punjab alone, there are some 1.2m tube wells performing agricultural, urban and industrial duties. We are pumping far more than we are putting back into the aquifer. Experts say Pakistan has around 3 MAF to 4 MAF shortfall of groundwater discharge annually, and our aquifer is receding at an alarming rate. Rainwater harvesting and partially treated sewage lagoons for groundwater recharge are two available solutions but we are light years away from adopting these on a large scale.

Our agriculture sector's affinity for flood irrigation is costing us dearly too. Not only are we wasting fresh water by adopting archaic irrigation methods, we are also registering the lowest per acre crop yields regionally.

All is not lost. We need swift action. Now that our national water policy has been formally approved, it should not collect dust in office cabinets. Our national and provincial water management bodies, local government bodies and public health and irrigation departments must commit themselves to implementing efficient water resource management.

For starters, the provinces should jettison political games and agree on building new water storages. Water experts say, the way our population is swelling we need a Tarbela-size reservoir every decade. Along with water policies we also need federal and provincial water commissions to monitor efficient water resource management at all levels. We also need to usher in a new regime of efficient water use in our cities, farms and industries. But let's take the first step and build a new dam to store the monsoon surplus. Now.

The writer is Deputy Director, Outreach and Dissemination, Strategic Planning/Reform Unit, Punjab Irrigation Department.

(By Farooq Ahmed Dawn, 09, 29/05/2018)

Water shortage prompts Karachi's residents to take to the streets

From Korangi till Orangi Town—two areas flung in two different corners of the city—the entire city of Karachi is deprived of water.



Muhammad Mustafa, a resident of Korangi, said this to the charged up crowd at a sit-in organised on Thursday by Jamaat-e-Islami in front of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) office to protest against the water shortage in the city.

“Where does the water of the city go?” asked Mustafa. “Water tankers are available round the clock. From where do these water tankers get water?” He accused the Sindh government of minting money through the water shortage.

A protester from Orangi Town claimed that in Orangi Town’s Sector 16, people only get water once in a while. “It has been two-and-a-half months and our taps are still dry,” he said.

Water and power woes: Abbasi to fix all that ails Karachi

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have sold the water of this city to real estate developers, he claimed. “They have literally done that,” he asserted.

The protesters were holding placards with slogans of ‘Karachi ko paani do [Give Karachi water]’, ‘Water theft is not acceptable’ and ‘Incompetent water board is not acceptable’.

The residents of Karachi have been facing a water and power crisis for a long time. However, their miseries have been exacerbated during Ramazan because of the scorching heat. Not only are areas such as Orangi Town, New Karachi, North Karachi, Lyari, Shah Faisal Colony, North Nazimabad, Baldia Town, Keamari and Agra Taj Colony not receiving enough water, posh areas under the administrative control of the Cantonment Board Clifton and Defence Housing Authority are also affected by water shortage.

Addressing the protesters, JI Karachi Amir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said despite the intense heat and Ramazan, the people of Karachi came out to protest against the KWSB and Sindh government. “People of Karachi want their right to water,” he said, adding that the government was unwilling to provide water to the people of Karachi even during Ramazan and the heatwave.

Protests against load-shedding continue

Rehman accused both the MQM and PPP of being responsible for the miseries of the residents of Karachi. The K-IV project, which was supposed to start in 2006, was initiated in 2016 and is still at a standstill, he said.

The JI Karachi Amir also accused Pak Sarzameen Party Chairperson Mustafa Kamal of deliberately delaying the K-IV project when he was the mayor of the city and a part of the MQM. Being directly responsible for the water crisis in the city, MQM representatives better not talk about Karachi’s water woes, he said.

Meanwhile, the KWSB issued a statement in which it said that the water board was trying its best to ensure regular water supply to the city.

Other protests

Residents of North Karachi and Landhi also resorted to protests on Thursday on the water shortage and blocked thoroughfares near Do Minute Chowrangi and Babar Market respectively.

The demonstrations staged at both locations disrupted traffic flow, resulting in severe traffic jams on the surrounding roads. The protesters said while they were already suffering loadshedding by K-Electric (K-E), the KWSB's inability to supply water added to their miseries.

Unabated load-shedding drives JI onto the streets of Karachi

The demonstrators claimed that water was not being provided to their areas for the last couple of days. Residents of Baldia Town also staged a sit-in on the Northern Bypass against prolonged load-shedding in their area. They chanted slogans and blocked the road for traffic.

The angry protesters claimed that due to severe power cuts, they were unable to obtain water. They decried that they were eating sehri and iftar without power on a daily basis. They appealed to the federal government to take notice of K-E's apathy to their woes.

Unannounced load-shedding of up to 10 hours a day was taking place in Baldia Town, the protesters said. They also claimed that there were no kundas in Baldia Town No 4 and all residents paid their electricity bills on time.

Upon receiving the complaints of a severe traffic jam, police authorities reached the Northern Bypass and conveyed assurances from K-E to the protesters that their issue will be resolved, upon which the protesters ended their demonstration.

(By Our Correspondents The Express Tribune, , 05, 01/06/2018)

Residents protest over prolonged outages, water shortage

People in various localities of the city took to the streets in protest over prolonged unannounced loadshedding by K-Electric as well as an acute water shortage on Friday.



Two major protests took place in Orangi Town and Quaidabad where people blocked main roads for vehicular traffic.

The residents of Orangi Town's Sector 11 1/2 and adjoining areas lit bonfires on main road and chanted slogans against the power utility and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. The protesters said that KWSB was not supplying water to their areas and due to an acute shortage they could not even perform ablutions.

They also said unannounced loadshedding had made their lives miserable. The protest caused a severe traffic jam. A contingent of police rushed to the scene and managed to convince the protesters to vacate the road peacefully.

In Quaidabad, residents of Muslimabad Colony, Muzaffarabad Colony, Sherpao Colony and other areas lodged a protest at Dawood Chowrangi against frequent power outages and lack of water supply.

They staged a sit-in on both tracks of the National Highway owing to which the vehicular traffic was suspended on the key artery that links the city to the airport.

The protesters accused the KWSB of selling their water.

The police reached the spot and held talks with the protesters. They persuaded them to vacate the highway after assuring the protesters that water would be provided to their homes through tankers on Saturday morning.

Police deny reports of rape in Defence mall

Police on Friday said that no rape incident had taken place on Thursday at a shopping mall in the Defence area where a clash between police and shopkeepers took place when the law enforcers tried to arrest a shopkeeper for his "misbehaviour with two women there".

SSP South Sarfraz Nawaz Shaikh told Dawn that two women reported to police at a camp outside the Gold Mark shopping mall located on main Korangi Road in DHA that a shopkeeper had “misbehaved with them and slapped them a few days ago”.

The police went inside the mall and arrested the shopkeeper on their complaint. “Other shopkeepers came in support of the held person, forcibly got him released from custody and beat up policemen during a scuffle,” the SSP said.

Afterwards, the Defence police lodged an FIR against the shopkeepers and raided the shopping mall and arrested those allegedly involved in thrashing the policemen.

“There was no rape incident [at the mall],” the SSP asserted, denying all rumours being spread on social media in this regard.

He said that shopkeepers claimed that the women had “stolen something from the shop” so there was a brawl between the women and the shopkeepers.

However, due to the scuffle between police and shopkeepers the complainant women slipped away, “therefore facts couldn’t be ascertained”, said the SSP.

(By The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Dawn, 17, 02/06/2018)

No one to blame but ourselves for water woes

In the last two months, Pakistan has gone through stages in the water supply cycle to finally hit the bottom line.



It all started with routine water shortages, progressed to an exceptional dip in the river flow, gathered urgency when the dams started emptying and finally has reached drought like conditions — spelling disaster for the agriculture sector and exposing Kharif crops (cane, cotton and rice) to varying degrees of dangers.

Currently, the country’s entire water supplies are only enough to meet human consumption demand leaving crops, orchards and fodder without sufficient water.

This period has also created history for dam operations and river inflows. Both reservoirs have repeatedly hit dead levels, something that has never happened before.

Currently, the country’s entire water supplies are only enough to meet human consumption demand leaving crops, orchards and fodder without sufficient water

So far the Tarbella dam has already touched dead level four times — in the first week of March, on April 30, May 7 and finally on May 29 where it currently stands. During the intervening period, the dam only improved by a foot or two before dipping to death again.

Mangla dam lost all its water in February and has still not been able to take off despite historically being an early riser.

The abysmal river flows are also making history. The earlier record of early Kharif water shortages was created in 2001 when supplies were short by 44 per cent. Right now, shortages are over 60 per cent because of empty reservoirs and abnormally low river flows.

Last Thursday (when this piece was written) total national supplies were at 157,000 cusecs — A relatively better day in term of supplies — as compared to 392,000 cusecs on May 31, 2017.

The unfortunate truth is that this drought is of our own making. According to the record of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), Pakistan wasted around 10.50 million acre feet (MAF) to the sea last Kharif and then immediately started the following Rabi season with a massive shortage of 37 per cent.

With low rains and less snowfall, the shortages swelled to 40 to 45pc in April this year, which rose to the current 60pc in early May. Had the country managed to save even one-third of the wasted water after meeting delta requirements, it would have been in much more comfortable position.

Irsa now sees some relief by the end of June when temperatures in catchment areas rise above 35 degree Celsius and cause snow melt. It is praying for a break in the current cycle of high and low temperatures in catchment areas that are translating into huge fluctuations in river supplies.

With water supplies touching rock bottom and becoming ever more erratic, farmers and agricultural planners are at a total loss on how to deal with the situation for by praying. According to them, these conditions will impact crop yield. They are not sure about the extent of the damage but are certain that the country should be prepared for trouble.

The critical stages of three major Kharif crops (cotton, cane and rice) are making them nervous. At present, cotton sowing is only around 60pc complete and has run into exceptionally high temperatures in the plains of Punjab.

With the entire crop under extreme heat stress with no water supplies the sowing of the remaining 40pc will become difficult and yield of the already sown areas an uncertain proposition.

Water is particularly vital for cotton given the new BT varieties, which cover more than 90pc of sown area, need more water for maturity. Last year, cotton production increased by 11.85pc, playing a major role in overall sectoral growth of 3.8 per cent.

Similarly, rice registered 8.65pc growth last year, taking the total yield up to 7.44m tonnes — a record figure. The crop right now is nearing the transplanting stage in Punjab and will need a massive amount of water.

The farmers transplant the crop in almost six inches of standing water, which seems to be an impossibility to achieve given the current state of affairs.

Sugarcane production grew by 7.45pc last year and helped the sector recover by a good 3.81pc. This year the crop may become a drag as it is currently at a very critical stage of rapid growth but water — the most vital input — has gone completely missing at this stage. In some areas of Punjab, reports of the crop's sun-burning have started trickling in.

(By Ahmad Fraz Khan Dawn, Business & Finance, 04, 04/06/2018)

Orangi Town residents cry foul over water crisis

A large number of Orangi Town residents took to the streets again on Tuesday, demanding their problems pertaining to civic amenities be solved.



Orangi Town, which falls in the District West, has been facing a severe water crisis for the past month. Residents of Islam Chowk in Orangi Town blocked the road between Orangi No 11 and 12 and traffic came to a halt for around three hours.

The area is deprived of water for the past 20 days.

“We do not even have water in mosques for wuzu [ablution],” said a young protester, Muhammad Ali. “It has been 20 days now. Enough is enough.”

The protesters burnt tyres on the road and chanted slogans against the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) and the Pakistan Peoples Party-led Sindh government.

Breaking the windows of a Mazda bus, the residents attempted to set the bus on fire, which was squashed by the police.

Sindh irrigation dept told to ensure provision of water for Karachi, tail end areas

“Water is released when there is no electricity in the area. They have kept us without water even in Ramazan,” said a resident, adding that fasting has become extremely difficult as electricity and water is not available at sehri and iftar time.

Despite countless complaints, no action is being taken, he said.

Another female protester, Sania Bibi, said that its election time. “With what face these politicians come and ask us for votes?” she questioned, asking the politicians to spend one day with the residents of Orangi Town and see how miserable their lives have become due to water shortage. “We do not even have water to drink,” she said.

The worst-affected areas are Orangi, Baldia Town, New Karachi, North Karachi, Surjani Town, North Nazimabad and Nazimabad in West and Central districts.

The residents of District West also complained that illegal connections from water lines were given to the industries operating in the area. “I can show you how illegal connections have been given to several factories operating in Orangi Town,” said Ali.

Ruckus in Sindh Assembly as MPA stages ‘sit-in’ over water shortage in constituency

The situation has become so bad that there are reporters of water distribution on ethnic grounds by the KWSB, which Ali termed as “alarming”.

Areas of East and South districts are also adversely affected. In Mehmoodabad, water supply is at a halt. Water supply to Azam Basti has been suspended from the water pump in Mehmoodabad.

“Thousands of gallons of water is being wasted on roads due to suspension of water supply,” said Ali Asghar, a resident.

When *The Express Tribune* visited the area, the water line was seen leaking.

Asghar asked why the KWSB has halted the water supply to their area and are not repairing the faulty water lines.

Water supply

Most of the areas of Central and West districts are provided water from the Hub Dam, where according to the KWSB spokesperson, Rizwan, hardly 35 million gallons per day (MGD) of water is being supplied to the city.

The overall requirement of the city is 1,200MGD and the city is getting less than half of it, that is 500 MGD water, which includes supply from the Hub Dam.

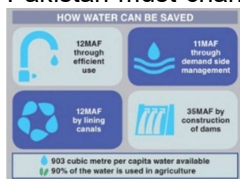
Kharif crops likely to suffer due to severe water shortage

For Orangi Town, Rizwan said the area is at the tail end due to which it is facing problems. When asked about the water shortage in Azam Basti and illegal connections to the industrial area, Rizwan did not comment.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 06/06/2018)

Call to make Indus waters treaty part of foreign policy

Pakistan must change its cropping patterns, water usage habits and planning mechanisms, and develop multiple storages and make the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty part of an aggressive foreign policy if it intends to avoid a disastrous future.



This was the crux of a detailed briefing by retired Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain to a Senate body on Wednesday. The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) chairman also criticised the resettlement plan for the Diamer-Bhasha dam

prepared by the government led by Gen Pervez Musharraf in 2006, and said that it was causing problems to this day.

Stressing the importance of the Kalabagh dam, the Wapda chief proposed to give its operations and management to Sindh given the province's genuine concerns that it would dry out. He said the country should now graduate from decades-old planning processes, time-consuming approval processes and execution of projects through innovative financing solutions for major development projects.

Lamenting that Pakistan had become hostage to a group of five international consulting firms, Mr Hussain said a professional organisation like the National Engineering Services of Pakistan (Nespak) had been reduced to a parking place with more than 921 incompetent and unqualified inductions made on political grounds.

Wapda chairman says resettlement plan for Diemer-Bhasha dam made by Musharraf-led government in 2006 is causing problems to this day

He said the capacity and the quality of local companies and consultants had to be enhanced to meet the growing future needs of agriculture, irrigation and energy.

In his remarks, he observed that 60 per cent of the country's population was directly engaged in agriculture and livestock and despite being named in the 15 most water scarce countries — with a per capita availability of about 903 cubic metres — Pakistan had one of the most water intensive agricultural sectors in the world. He said the country had the fourth highest rate of water use internationally. The chairman said that 90pc of the country's water was used in agriculture and the matter must be taken up in the Council of Common Interests to figure out a way to reduce water usage for irrigation and domestic use.

He said Pakistan had a total of 155 dams compared to the 5,102 in India. Pakistan can only store water for 30 days compared to the 170 days' capacity of India. Pakistan needs to narrow the gap between the growing population and its needs and the number and capacity of water reservoirs. There is need to reduce the cultivation of sugarcane and other water intensive crops.

The Wapda chief said the population is set to grow by 50 per cent to 312 million by 2050, which would push demand for water considerably. Therefore, the country is destined for disaster unless it changes its planning, practices and governance methods quickly.

For this, he said parliamentarians and political leaders must play a major role. He said about 12 million acre feet (MAF) of water could easily be conserved through efficient use, another 11MAF could be saved by provinces through better managing the demand. A further 12MAF could be saved through lining of canals, and 35MAF could be made available through construction of dams.

He said Wapda was working on adding one MAF storage by 2023 through small dams while about 9MAF storage would become available by 2030 on the completion of the Diemer-Bhasha, Mohmand, Kurram Tangi and Chiniot dams. Plans were also underway for the development of Kalabagh, Shyok, Dudhial, Akhori, Skardu and Rohtas dams to provide additional storage of another 25MAF by 2050.

The three-phased development plan would need a cumulative financing of Rs5 trillion in more than three decades. With public sector financing of 30pc, the remaining funds could be arranged through public-private partnerships and commercial arrangements, he said.

Responding to questions from senators, the Wapda chairman said Sindh had some genuine concerns over the Kalabagh Dam, which is otherwise technically a sound project, and on which construction could begin in a day — realizing enormous benefits.

He said maximum river flows were available over three months and more than 25MAF water went down the sea excluding the 8.6MAF allocated for downstream Kotri for environmental needs. This meant water

downstream kotri could be maintained round the year with the Kalabagh dam instead of just for a few weeks.

Responding to another question, he said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) objections over the Kalabagh dam were not valid because the dam's objectionable height had been reduced by 10 feet while now under construction Mohmand dam would completely alleviate any dangers of flooding in the Peshawar and Nowshera valleys. He said it was for the political leadership to create a consensus on the project.

Mr Muzammil said they were facing problems over the Bhasha dam due to KP and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) not cooperating and despite a land acquisition worth Rs80 billion, authorities have been unable to start the project. The land owners were also creating problems, as he added that about a dozen people have lost their lives due to firing on land on the boundaries of KP and GB.

Talking about the Indus Cascade, he termed it the most precious asset of the country. He said that the Indus enters Pakistan at an altitude of 8430 feet and gives us a drop of 7030 feet till Kalabagh at an altitude of 1400 feet giving us multiple sites along the stretch for building reservoirs and run-of-the-river projects.

He said due to the contentions between Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Board (PEDO) and the federally-run, Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), Chitral was not getting the required power supply, getting only seven megawatts of electricity from a plant of 36 megawatts.
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 07/06/2018)

People standing for hours to procure water tankers

The recent water crisis across the city has left the people highly perturbed. The scheme announced by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing director (MD), according to which people could call water tankers from homes, has miserably failed.



Residents of District Central are compelled to stand in queues at the hydrant at Sakhi Hasan while fasting. Many cannot endure the heat while standing in queues and have to break their fast.

A lady in the queue, Dilshad Bibi, shared that she lived near Anda Morr and her area was not receiving water for several weeks due to which lives of the residents of the area had become miserable. She lamented that even in the holy month of Ramazan, people did not have enough water to perform ablutions. To whom should we convey our problems, she said.

A Shadman town resident, standing in a queue, decried that the people had to stand for several hours to procure water tankers. The office registers the names, addresses and mobile phones of those who want water tankers. As many as 300 tankers are given to the queue of men while 100 tankers are given to women. Once the 400 tankers are given, the remaining crowd is sent back and they have to come next day again to go through the same ordeal.

Frustrated and helpless: Karachiites take to the streets over power, water shortage

The people in queues alleged that the staff deputed at the hydrants provided tankers to people who came on somebody's recommendations and who even did not stand in queues.

According to people, tall claims made by the KWSB MD were baseless, according to which people could call water tankers from homes.

They said that if the government officials wanted to witness the agony of people, they should visit Sakhi Hassan hydrant where women along with men stood in queues and sit on roads for several hours to procure tankers.

Continuing water theft

It has been reported that water theft on a massive scale is adversely affecting the water supply to various parts of the city.

Judicial commission takes notice of contamination of water sources

The citizens are deprived of water due to the corruption of the KWSB officers. According to sources, various parts of the city are facing water scarcity, including Korangi, Landhi and Shah Faisal Colony.

The main water trunk passes through the Ghagar Phatak, Marshalling Yard and Port Qasim through which 22 million gallons per day (MGD) water is supplied to various parts of the city. It has been reported that in connivance with some KWSB officers, elements involved in water theft have been stealing water from the main line through over 29 illegal water connections between Ghaghar Phatak and Port Qasim, due to which out of 22 MGD, 8 MDG water is stolen.

Due to these illegal connections, water supply in various parts of the city is being affected. The sources shared that a group with the water board is actively involved in the theft of a large amount of water daily through technical means, due to which water does not reach many areas.

Orangi Town residents cry foul over water crisis

After Port Qasim, more illegal connections have been taken out from the line after Bhains Colony, where further 5 million gallons of water is stolen. The mafia steals 13 MGD water of 22 MGD meant to reach the respective areas. Only 9 MGD water is then left for the city. The sources say that water is being stolen in a highly organised manner. Despite the knowledge of an organised network involved in water theft, no measures have been taken by the KWSB.

(By Our Correspondents The Express Tribune, 04, 08/06/2018)

Water woes

The writer is a professor and dean, Faculty of Architecture and Management Sciences, NED University, Karachi.

KARACHI's raging summer has exposed intrinsic shortcomings in the overall water supply, with ordinary folks, especially in remote peri-urban areas, most affected. Long queues at designated and non-designated hydrants showed a largely dysfunctional piped water system. The city's centre and affluent south rely heavily on exorbitantly priced tankers. This state of affairs is not sustainable in the short or medium term. That Supreme Court-mandated water commission has been inquiring into Sindh's water and sanitation affairs proves the gravity of the situation and the urgent need for solutions.



The status of water supply cannot improve unless relevant institutions undergo reform and capacity building. In March 2017, the Supreme Court advised on reforms for the Sindh government, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and other public bodies. These included: revising the water quota for Karachi, having civil society representation in KWSB, fixing existing water plants, recovering pending water charges from public departments, limiting water hydrants to emergency use, installing water meters for bulk consumers, instituting a geographic information system for scientific monitoring, prioritising completion of the first phase of the K-IV project, and revamping distribution lines all the way to tail-end users.

The then provincial government submitted a comprehensive report to the court, pledging compliance with the directives. The caretaker government must consider revisiting this task to ensure that Karachi's citizens get timely relief.

Supply lines at the bulk and neighbourhood level must be examined for their performance efficiency.

Many of them have outlived their utility or become defective due to organised thefts. For a comprehensive picture, this should include an assessment by third-party experts. A programme may then be prepared to

repair leaking pipes and joints, starting with remote residential areas. Supply standards and specifications must also be updated to reflect current lifestyles and urban densification.

What will it take to fix Karachi's broken supply system?

It is also important to revisit revenue collection from retail and bulk consumers of the service. While water from tankers costs around Rs3 per gallon, the normal bills charged to consumers are 10 times lower than this. A realistic tariff, backed by solid financial analysis, must be worked out to enable the utility to sustain operations and maintenance of the network. A 'willingness to pay' also needs to be promoted through campaigns targeted at consumers. In my research, I found that many users simply refuse to pay their bills, believing that water is nature's gift to them.

Some years ago, in Orangi, Baldia and Surjani, the communities constructed collective tanks to manage and distribute water to less privileged households. These were constructed on public spaces and could store about 2,000-4,000 gallons. Once water was procured through tankers purchased with pooled funds, it was then distributed under joint management of the areas' people. Efforts must be made to revive this option, which became ineffective several years ago when people were made to believe that piped water will soon be available in abundance.

The Indus river, from where Karachi gets the bulk of its water, is a highly contested source. It is safe to predict that acquiring additional quantities of water in the future may prove nearly impossible. Alternative options, such as desalination, must be explored. There are examples around the world for us to learn from to generate large quantities of water with fewer costs and investments.

One of the most efficient large-scale desalination plants was set up in a Middle Eastern territory in 2013.

It is capable of generating 160 million gallons of fresh water from the sea, at a cost of Rs0.25 per gallon or \$0.58 per cubic metre. Desalination experts believe that this is a much lower cost compared to the normal \$1 per cubic metre elsewhere in the world. This plant costs around \$500m but is able to prove its worth by accounting for 20 per cent of the input to that territory's water supply.

Karachi possesses a spread-out coastline and can certainly benefit from desalination after undertaking proper feasibility studies, reviewing past attempts that did not work, and implementing appropriate engineering improvements.

Nowadays, technologies are also available that can harvest water from the atmosphere. As Karachi maintains a high rate of humidity for most of the year, it may be useful to instal low-tech solar- and wind-powered atmospheric water generators of small and medium scale.

It is, however, important to remember that such solutions need to be attempted by cutting through bureaucratic red tape. The sooner we embark on approaching out-of-the-box solutions, the better it will be for improving the quality of life of millions living in Karachi.

The writer is a professor and dean, Faculty of Architecture and Management Sciences, NED University, Karachi.

(By Noman Ahmed Dawn, 09, 08/06/2018)

Judicial commission warns of referring K-IV project delay to NAB

The Supreme Court-mandated judicial commission on water and sanitation has expressed its displeasure over the delay in the completion of K-IV project which will supply 260 million gallons of water per day from the Indus River to Karachi.

During the hearing on Monday, the commission's head, Justice (retd) Amir Hani Muslim, warned the project's consultant Usmani and Co that he may refer the matter to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

“As a last chance, this matter is adjourned till July 3 and if no clear picture is provided, the commission may consider whether it is a fit case for reference to NAB or not,” he stated in the order.

The groundbreaking of the project was performed in August, 2016. It was scheduled for completion in June, 2018, at the cost of Rs15.25 billion, funded jointly by the federal and Sindh governments.

Judicial commission comes down hard on KWSB

The project was to supply water through the filtration plants at Pipri, Manghopir and near Baqai University to districts Central and West, along with Landhi, Korangi, Lyari, North Karachi and their adjoining areas.

Former local government minister Jam Khan Shoro revealed in March this year that the project was unlikely to be completed even by the end of 2018. He admitted that pace of the project, being executed by the Frontier Works Organisation, had remained slow.

The commission also ordered the project director of K-IV to submit records under which the consultancy was awarded to Usmani and Co Ltd. “For months, attempts [were] made to get the explanation of the consultant as to why realignment was done for 22 times but till date no substantial material has been provided.”

The company’s executive director, Col Ajmal Rasheed, explained to the commission that the delay caused by the realignment of the project’s route had saved money, which had to be otherwise spent to acquire private land.

Judicial commission orders early completion of filtration, sewage treatment schemes

“Out of 13,000 acres of land [for the project], 2,076 acres was private land. After the adjustment right now the private land is about 1,053 acres ... Had the private land remained 2,076 acres, the compensation cost would have been much higher,” he informed the commission.

Col Rasheed further explained that the Sindh government had evaluated cost of the reduced private land at Rs5 billion. “While carrying out the adjustment [realignment], the client ensured utilisation of the government land instead of private land,” he added. The executive director also admitted that changing the original route had added Rs3 billion to the project’s cost.

However, the commission was not satisfied with this explanation. It observed that the consultant was not authorised to evaluate the cost of land as it was the responsibility of the Sindh government’s revenue department.

Treatment plants

Justice (retd) Muslim directed the Defence Housing Authority (DHA), Cantonment Board Clifton and the commission’s focal person, provincial secretary Asif Hyder Shah, to submit a work plan for the establishment of a treatment plant in DHA by July 2. The plan will also include supply of drinking water in DHA phases I to VIII besides outlining the location and capacity of the treatment plants.

DHA told to set up treatment plants by December

The commission appreciated the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Sindh government for agreeing to end their legal dispute over a piece of land and to designate the site for the construction of a treatment plant. Mangroves will also be planted on the land which measures around 150 acres and which is currently in the possession of the KPT. There had been a legal dispute between the Sindh government and trust over the ownership of the land.

“The KPT and Sindh government agree to give up their stand whatsoever in the larger interest of the public ... The treatment plant should be constructed and made operational.” The commission tasked its focal person with demarcating the land and submitting a joint statement along with officials of the Sindh government and KPT.

(By Z Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 12/06/2018)

Govt wants Rangers to help stop water theft

The Sindh government has decided to deploy Rangers at different canals, distributaries and channels to stop water theft so that water can be provided to tail-end areas.



This was decided by caretaker Chief Minister Fazal-ur-Rahman while presiding over a meeting of the irrigation department at the CM House. It was the second meeting within a week which was called to look into the problems the growers were facing at the tail end.

At the earlier meeting on Monday, the CM had directed the irrigation department to take strict action against water thieves by registering FIRs against them so that water can be provided to the farmers at tail-end areas.

CM directs irrigation secretary to identify spots from where water is stolen

On Thursday, after a briefing by Irrigation Secretary Jamal Shah about the flow of water at Guddu, Sukkur and Kotri barrages, Mr Rahman said the Nara Canal had a capacity of 13,649 cusecs against which it withdrew 10,500 cusecs.

The irrigation secretary said there was water theft at different distributaries and added that 50 FIRs had been registered so far.

The CM said the Rangers would be deployed to aid the police so that water theft can be controlled.

“The cases of theft should be registered directly against landlords,” he added.

The CM directed the irrigation secretary to identify the spots of canals, distributaries and branches from where water was stolen and hand over the list to the home secretary who would then coordinate with the Rangers about their deployment.

The chief minister also spoke with the Rangers DG for deployment of his soldiers along the canals.

The CM was informed that withdrawal from the Guddu Barrage was 3,054 cusecs for Begari Sindh, 7,700 cusecs for Desert Pat and 6,626 cusecs for Ghotki feeders.
(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 17, 15/06/2018)

Re-thinking the national water policy

PAKISTAN approved its first National Water Policy on April 24, 2018. Following this, a recent wave of discussions on social media seems to have brought the water crisis back to the forefront.



Many believe that the construction of the Kalabagh dam will solve Pakistan's water crisis. The active water storage capacity of the Kalabagh dam is estimated to be 6.1 million acre-feet (MAF), whereas Pakistan is expected to face a demand-supply gap of approximately 83 MAF by 2025.

According to the United Nations Development Programme's report, "The Vulnerability of Pakistan's Water Sector to the Impacts of Climate Change", Pakistan needs to build at least 13 dams having a water storage capacity equivalent to the Kalabagh dam.

Keeping this in mind, the National Water Policy is inadequate to address the country's water issue as it is vague on many key aspects, technically unsound, and does not contain updated information about the state and quality of water resources.

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The per capita water availability estimates, presented in the policy document, are derived from the old estimates of water availability in the country. Based on Pakistan's total renewable water resources and population in 1951, the water availability was estimated to be 5,260 cubic metres per capita per year.

The policy is inadequate for addressing the water issue as it is vague on many key aspects, technically unsound, and does not contain updated information about the state and quality of water resources

The current per capita water availability estimates are about 1,000 cubic metres. However, Pakistan's renewable water resources have decreased significantly. There has been a gradual decline in surface water flows and our groundwater depletion rate is one of the highest in the world.

Even the estimates of the total renewable water resources at 138.4 MAF suggest a water availability of 823 cubic metres per capita per year which is significantly lower than 1,000 cubic metres.

The situation is much worse than these estimates if we distinguish between water availability and water accessibility. The reason to do so is that the majority of the fresh water (both canal water and groundwater) is being polluted by wastewater.

According to an estimate, the total quantity of wastewater produced in Pakistan is 962,335 million gallons which ultimately finds its way to freshwater bodies and groundwater aquifers. Untreated wastewater makes much of the fresh water in eastern rivers and canals (especially in Ravi) inaccessible.

Pakistan is included in the list of top five countries which account for about 86 per cent of the global wastewater fed cropland, says a study published in IOPscience, a leading scientific research journal.

Of these countries China, Mexico and India treat 71pc, 54pc and 22pc of their urban wastewater, respectively, but Pakistan treats only 1.2pc of its urban wastewater. About 7.2m acres of land are being irrigated with untreated wastewater in Pakistan.

Currently, Pakistan extracts 50 MAF of groundwater which is mainly used for irrigation. Due to excessive pumping Pakistan's groundwater abstraction rates have exceeded the annual recharge rate of 55 cubic kilometres per year.

Consequently, the groundwater tables are lowering rapidly in different parts of the country. Some hydrologists think that there could be a decline of 10-20 metres in the groundwater tables in the upper and the lower regions of the Rachna Doab in north-east Pakistan by 2025.

Despite this, Pakistan continues to exploit groundwater resources to grow and export water-intensive crops such as rice. Pakistan's rice water productivity- at 0.45kg per cubic metre — is 55pc lower than the average water productivity of 1kg per cubic metre for rice in Asian countries.

Pakistan also exports rice at competitive prices in the international export market. A recent study reported that about 11pc of the global groundwater depletion is due to the international food trade.

The National Water Policy does not address the issue of growing and exporting water-intensive crops such as rice, cotton and sugarcane. Pakistan's water resources face a number of challenges including over-extraction, contamination, and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and population growth, etc.

Population growth will worsen the crisis as on an average, we use 350 billion litres of surface water daily, which translates to 1,684 litres per capita per day. In less than half a month, we extract about 8.5 cubic kilometre of groundwater, which is higher than the active storage capacity of the Kalabagh dam.

Each Pakistani produces daily about 65 litres of wastewater which is not being recycled. This requires a massive public awareness campaign in the country on an immediate basis to create awareness about conservation measures and more comprehensive policies to address the water crisis effectively.

The writer is an assistant professor at the Institute of Agriculture Extension and Rural Development, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

(By Muhammad Arif Watto Dawn, Business & Finance, 04, 19/06/2018)

Thatta's water needs

More than five billion people could face severe water shortages by 2050 due to climate change, increased demand and contaminated supplies, according to a United Nations report on the state of the world's water.

While the threat of water shortage might not seem imminent for many of Pakistan's urban dwellers, the people of Thatta have been living through this perpetual nightmare for much of their lives. Besides having to contend with periodic natural disasters in the form of droughts and floods, the residents of Thatta have struggled for their survival due to the perennial absence of basic civic facilities like access to clean water and sanitation. Over the years, the people of Thatta have experienced a series of misfortunes that include the rampant spread of disease, depleted healthcare facilities, systematic administrative neglect and above all — hollow promises by our elected representatives that are never meant to be kept. But this must end now because for too long the resilient people of Thatta have been deprived of the very basic facilities that many of us take for granted. The unavailability of these basic facilities have jeopardised every aspect of human life in the area — including education. While, children all over the world have a universal right to a clean and safe school environment, this lack of basic sanitation and clean water means that each year, Thatta's children — those who are fortunate enough to enroll — lose a significant number of school days due to the spread of common viral diseases like diarrhoea. The spread of disease is further compounded by lack of proper medical facilities in the area. So for those who are contesting the upcoming general election the challenging question now is: How will you serve your deprived constituents who deserve nothing less than clean water supply, sanitation, healthcare and the right to proper education?

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 21/06/2018)

Water crisis looms over city as Hub Dam level goes critically low

Water level in Hub Dam has reached a critically low degree as only around seven inches of water is reportedly left in the reservoir, which may last hardly for a couple of days.

Major portions of district West and some areas of district Central has been facing an acute water shortage because of the dwindling supply from the dam, highly placed sources said. They added that alternative arrangements were being made to supply water to these areas.

However, supply from the dam was expected to increase once water pumps being installed began operating in the next few days, the sources added.

The 30-kilometre-long canal supplies around 100mgd water to Karachi

A spokesman for the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), responding to Dawn queries, said he could not confirm the exact measurement of the level of water in Hub Dam at the moment but conceded that it was quite low. He said that many areas connected to the dam were facing a severe water shortage while water from the Indus supply system was being provided to those areas.

The sources said that lack of rainfall in the dam catchment area had made the situation drought-like, while a major area of the dam's reservoir — around 26 square kilometres — had almost dried up with hardly half a foot of water left.

The designed capacity of the roughly 30-kilometre-long long Hub canal supplies around 100 million gallons of water daily (mgd) to the metropolis.

Its old structure and poor maintenance had resulted in leakages and breaches because of which hardly 80mgd of water was being supplied to consumers at the time when enough water was available in the dam. However, during the current situation around 12mgd of water is being supplied to the city.

Diversions from Indus distribution system

Meanwhile, a certain quantity of water was being diverted from the Indus distribution system to Hub Dam so as to mitigate the scarcity of this commodity, he said.

The KWSB spokesperson said that currently around 12mgd of water was being supplied from Hub Dam while the KWSB was installing heavy duty water pumps in the reservoir to supply from it an additional 35mgd of water to the city. The pumps were expected to be operational in the next couple of days.

Also, around 50mgd of water coming from the Indus source was being diverted to the Hub pumping station to be distributed through its network to water scarce districts of West and Central, he added.

Many old public tanks had been restored and rehabilitated while many more were being constructed in the affected areas to restore supply through water tankers, he added.

However, the KWSB was making efforts to judiciously distribute water to all areas of the metropolis, particularly localities which were water scarce, even though water was in limited supply, he concluded.
(By Bhagwandas Dawn, 15, 25/06/2018)

Protesters demand immediate supply of water

A large number of people from parts of West and Central districts staged a protest demonstration at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board's office on Sharea Faisal and demanded that water be provided to their localities immediately.

The protesters said that their areas — Pahargunj, Kati Pahari etc — and other areas of both the districts got scarce supply of water during the past few weeks owing to which residents faced great hardship. They demanded that arrangements be made for instant supply of water to their localities.

The protesters were chanting slogans and asking that when water was not coming in the pipelines in their areas, where the water tanker operators got water from to sell at exorbitant rates in the areas, where a majority of the population belonged to the low-income group.

A senior KWSB official, Asad Khan, spoke to the protesters and told them that there was an overall shortage of water in the city, and their localities in West and Central districts were connected with the Hub Dam, where very little water was available now. He said that earlier about 100 million gallons of water daily was supplied from the dam, but now only a fraction of it was available.

He assured the protesters that efforts were being made to provide water to the water-scarce areas through alternative sources and "hopefully" the situation would improve shortly.

Responding to Dawn's queries, a KWSB spokesperson said that the city's requirement of water was around 1,200mgd, but currently only around 500mgd water was being supplied to it, so almost the whole city faced a water shortage.

He said earlier around 100mgd water was supplied from the Hub Dam but owing to no rains in the dam's catchment area, the water level in the reservoir had gone critically low and currently only around 20 per cent of the normal supply was coming from there.

He said that since almost the entire West district and many portions of Central district were hooked to the Hub source, those areas were getting very little water. He said that almost 50mgd of water was being diverted from the Indus water supply network to the Hub pumping station for supply to those areas.

He said the KWSB was installing heavy-duty pumps in the Hub reservoir and they would be operational in the next few days after which around 35mgd water would be coming to the city. He said he hoped that once the pumps became operational, the situation would improve in the water-scarce areas. He said that with the present storage at the dam, those pumps could supply water to the city for six to eight weeks. By then the monsoon would have started and there would be sufficient rainfall in the dam's catchment area.

He said that in the meantime the KWSB was supplying water through tankers. He said many community water tanks had been rehabilitated and constructed so that people got water from there till the situation improved.

(By Bhagwandas Dawn, 17, 26/06/2018)

SC seeks report on Manchhar Lake within two weeks

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the provincial authorities to come up with a report about measures taken to control pollution in the largest freshwater reservoir of Pakistan, Manchhar Lake, within two weeks.

A two-judge bench of the SC headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed told the irrigation department secretary and other officials concerned to furnish details of the allocation of funds for the lake and how much money had been spent on it.

While hearing a case about a suo motu taken in 2010 regarding contamination of Manchhar Lake at the Supreme Court Karachi registry, the bench also directed the officials to inform it within two weeks that when water of the lake would be fit for human consumption.

Justice Ahmed deplored that the proceedings had been pending for the last eight years, but there had been no progress. He warned the officials that they could be sent to prison if they failed to produce desired results.

The apex court had taken notice of the increasing contamination of the lake in 2010 because of disposal of effluent from the Main Nara Valley Drain, now converted into the Right Bank Outfall Drain.

(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 17, 27/06/2018)