

NEWSCLIPPINGS

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SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT



Urban Resource Centre

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Garbage dumping fine comes under fire

The Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) and the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) have started a joint action against vendors and citizens who throw garbage on the road instead of dumping it at designated places in Karachi.



According to officials from the SSWMB, during the campaign launched in November 2023, notices were issued to the owners of 12 shops located at the Boat Basin and Burns Road Food Street, while four shopkeepers were fined a penalty of Rs25,000.

“So far, the campaign has been implemented in the South District. However, the KMC has not yet deployed inspectors on a regular basis in other districts, therefore the campaign has not yet been started in other districts of Karachi. After the appointment of KMC inspectors in other districts, action will be initiated against those who throw garbage on the roads in these areas as well,” revealed Director

of Operations at the SSWMB, Tariq Nizamani.

On the contrary, urban planning experts and environmental activists opined that merely imposing fines on some shopkeepers and citizens will not resolve the problem, which requires the relevant institutions to improve their performance and create awareness among the citizens.

Environmental activist and writer, Mehmood Alam Khalid felt that curbing garbage dumping on roads cannot be achieved by merely imposing fines on shopkeepers and citizens. “For this, there is a need to improve the efficiency of the concerned institutions and create awareness among the public. At least 20,000 tons of garbage are generated in Karachi every day, almost half of which is not collected. Some of the garbage picked up is also dumped inside the city on the way,” said Khalid.

“It is true that dumping garbage in front of houses and shops is a crime. But the question is, are there designated places for dumping garbage everywhere? And do the relevant institutions pick up the waste collected in each area or not? If garbage is not removed from every place and from every area, then before taking any action, the concerned institutions should first fulfill their responsibility and make arrangements for the removal of garbage,” commented Zahid Farooq, an urban planner associated with the Urban Resource Center.

On the other hand, Farhan Anwar, renowned urban planner and Assistant Professor at the Habib University, believed that there was a need to create awareness among the locals and institutions on the economic importance of waste disposal. “They should be told that the waste generated in Karachi is not just garbage, it should be considered as an important economic resource. In this context, the relevant institutions should also make policies and create awareness among the public. Many employment opportunities can be created through this waste,” said Anwar.

Concurring with Anwar, Nizamani conceded to the Express Tribune that no campaign could truly succeed without public cooperation and awareness. “Alongside our own efforts, waste collection companies have also been made responsible to take steps to create awareness among the public. We will also start an awareness campaign across the schools of the city, so that awareness can be created among children as well,” said Nizamani.

(By Razzak Abro The Express Tribune, 04, 06/01/2025)

Police bust dirty business of illegal garbage collection

Seven members of a gang involved in illegal garbage collection business have been arrested in raids conducted within the limits of Zaman Town Police Station, Korangi Zone Police Station and Awami Colony Police Station in the Korangi area.

The gang, run by illegal immigrants, had allegedly scared off the official waste collectors and started lifting garbage door-to-door against payment.

They would separate plastic, metal and organic waste and sell it respectively to the recycling factories to make a handsome income. The rest was dumped in drains or burnt. Police conducted the raids on the request of Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) Managing Director Tariq Ali Nizamani.

The operation was carried out by local police based on information provided by SSWMB officials and company representatives. The group had devised a mechanism to disrupt waste management operations. The gang members would prevent SSWMB personnel from carrying out their duties, affecting the door-to-door garbage collection process.

They would collect waste from households and dustbins placed by the SSWMB in various areas, sell the valuable waste, and dispose of the remaining garbage in open spaces or drains, Nallah, leading to sanitation and clogging issues in the city.

Under the supervision of Deputy Director District Korangi, Imtiaz Bhutto, Afghan nationals involved in waste collection were also arrested. The SSWMB MD requested police to take further action against such groups engaged in illegally collecting waste from homes, spreading and burning garbage, and running unauthorised waste businesses.

SSWMB MD instructed the officers concerned to identify more such groups and take legal action against them by filing cases. He said that strict measures would be taken against those responsible for environmental pollution, and legal proceedings would be initiated against them.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 03/03/2025)

Child waste-pickers

A SIGNIFICANT number of children in Pakistan participate in waste-picking for economic survival. Our legal framework, unfortunately, is inadequate in this respect and unable to protect and rehabilitate the children. With rapid urbanisation and population growth, waste generation is growing, overwhelming municipal managements. An estimated 49.6 million tonnes of solid waste is generated in the country each year, according to the 2024 ITA Pakistan Country Commercial Guide. Waste generation is increasing by over 2.4 per cent annually.



The lack of an efficient waste management system allows individuals to control waste picking and recycling with minimal government oversight. This leads to the exploitation of children, exposing them to severe health risks, malnutrition, and hazardous working conditions.

With limited formal recycling avenues, an informal sector has developed. Children as young as five years take part in waste-picking, and are often seen with large jute bags slung over their shoulders. They rummage through heaps of trash, searching for items that can be repaired, recycled, or resold, such as paper, cardboard, bottles, syringes, broken glass, cutlery, metal scraps, plastic, and wood.

They sell these items to waste collectors known as 'raddiwala' or 'pheriwala'. The recyclable items are then sold to the local kabaria (scrap dealers), who sort and clean the materials before selling them to junkyard owners or factories.

Children as young as five rummage through trash.

Although precise data on the number of children engaged in waste-picking in Pakistan is lacking, their participation is a widespread and visible reality. The majority come from impoverished and marginalised backgrounds, and include Afghan refugees, minorities, and migrants.

Pakistan's only Child Labour Survey was conducted in 1996 and revealed that 3.3m children were involved in labour. The findings of another survey have yet to be published for all provinces and regions, except Gilgit-Baltistan and Punjab. The absence of updated data makes it difficult to implement effective remedial policies.

According to Census 2023, Pakistan has a large young population, with 36.47m children under five years, 97.53m under 15 years, and 62.58m individuals aged between 15 to 29 years. Alarmingly, 36pc (25.37m) of children aged five to 16 don't go to school. Of these, 79pc never attended school and 21pc dropped out. The lack of updated child labour data, combined with the high number of out-of-school children, shows how the state has ignored the seriousness of their plight.

Since waste-picking is an informal system, the children lack legal protection and often fall outside labour and child protection laws. According to a 2023 ILO report, 69pc of children involved in waste-picking can't read or write. Some 88pc of them began waste-picking aged between five and 10 years. On average, the children earn between Rs200 and Rs500 per day.

Most (82pc) reported facing physical violence and abuse. Many have also endured emotional abuse and verbal mistreatment, expressing fear of police actions and social stigma. More than 67pc of the children are unaware of available social protection programmes.

The Constitution forbids employment of children under 14 and guarantees free and compulsory education for all aged five to 16. Following the 18th Amendment in 2010, labour and child protection were devolved to the provinces.

However, waste-pickers are independent sellers, not employees of junkyards. Therefore, they fall outside the Labour Department's scope, making them 'invisible' to labour inspections. They are rarely recognised as child labourers despite their hazardous work.

Still, waste-picking is mentioned in the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act, 2004, (amended in 2017), under Section 36B, which prohibits inciting children to engage in rag-picking. Further, certain laws such as Section 2(c) of the Sindh Child Protection Authority (Amendment) Act, 2021, provides protection to 'street children'. While 'waste-picking' is not explicitly mentioned, it is relevant since many street children collect and sort waste. Other provincial laws are silent on explicitly addressing the problem, leaving a legal gap in the protection of children.

While social protection programmes such as BISP help poor families, in order to combat child waste-picking, the provinces and Islamabad Capital Territory must explicitly provide protection to young waste-pickers in child protection laws. Labour laws should be amended to regulate recycling while supporting waste-picking communities with protection, fair wages, and occupational safety and health measures. Additionally, education, vocational training, and rehabilitation programmes will help children transition to safer livelihoods.

(By Rida Tahir Dawn, 07, 08/03/2025)

Khajji Ground becomes garbage dump

Once a dreaded dumping point of bodies stuffed in sacks or victims brought and executed in the dead of night, the Khajji Ground briefly regained its status as a park and playground after the Rangers operation, but now it has become a garbage dump.

The Constitutional Bench of the Sindh High Court heard the petition against dumping garbage and encroachments at Khajji Ground, Golimar, and directed the petitioner to approach the Anti-Encroachment Tribunal.

The lawyer of the petitioner argued that the ground is being used as a garbage dumping point where drug addicts live. A police station is also established inside the ground. The historical ground should be protected as a heritage site.

The Town Municipal Corporation Nazimabad lawyer argued that the Sindh government is planning to rehabilitate the ground with the financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). However, the transfer of the police station from the ground is beyond the authority of the town administration.

The rehabilitation plan was delayed due to the lack of funds from the Sindh government. However, the issue of funds has been resolved on court orders and the rehabilitation plan will be completed soon.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 31/03/2025)

Cleaning up

HE World Bank's red alert — that global waste may rise by 73pc by 2050 — spells trouble for countries like Pakistan. Low-income countries bear the brunt of the crisis due to limited infrastructure, poor urban planning and weak enforcement. If current trends continue, the global volume of waste will hit 3.88bn tonnes annually. Pakistan, for its part, generates over 3.9m tonnes of plastic every year. And yet, recycling here is virtually non-existent. Unlike in developed nations, where sorting household waste and recycling are routine, most Pakistanis dispose of all waste — organic, recyclable, hazardous — in the same bin, if not chucking it out of moving cars onto the street. This lack of a recycling culture is a major barrier. When it comes to dealing with waste, the responsibility is not the government's alone. Citizens must also change their ways. Separating waste at source, avoiding single-use plastics, and properly disposing garbage should be social norms. Governance is a work in progress. Despite rules, most cities lack the planning, infrastructure and enforcement to manage waste. Punjab has seen some initiative, with a 42-acre landfill in Lahore now being transformed into a solar park and urban forest. In KP, waste management is often outsourced to private operators with minimal regulatory oversight. Balochistan lags far behind with limited coverage and negligible recycling efforts.

Sindh's recent move to impose a blanket ban on all types of plastic bags is commendable — if enforced. Its 2019 restrictions were riddled with loopholes and poor implementation. For the new policy to succeed, dedicated waste zones and daily door-to-door trash collection is essential. The ban must be backed by enforcement: fines, seizure of goods, and closure of businesses flouting the law. The federal government must do more than draft policy papers. It must coordinate across provinces to create a national waste strategy with targets for recycling, reduction and enforcement. Funding must be linked to compliance, not mere intent. The WB report highlights the steep cost of inaction: clogged drains, urban flooding, disease and soaring methane emissions. For Pakistan, already among the most climate-vulnerable countries, unmanaged waste is not just an eyesore, it is also a threat multiplier. It is time to clean up our act. Everyone has a role to play, and every bag, bottle and banana peel counts. (By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 07/05/2025)

Trackers installed in 3,391 tankers, 28 dumpers, CM Sindh informed

In a significant development aimed at preventing heavy traffic accidents, the Sindh government has made concrete progress in implementing its policy to install mandatory GPS trackers in heavy vehicles such as dumpers and water tankers.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the installation of GPS trackers will assist in monitoring and managing heavy vehicle movements, thereby playing a key role in reducing accidents on Karachi's busy roads, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

He has reiterated his firm stance on enforcing road safety regulations and has called on all vehicle owners to comply with legal requirements.

The CM was informed that 3,391 water tankers operating in the city have been equipped with GPS trackers till Sunday.

Additionally, 28 dumpers, 82 oil tankers, 214 passenger buses and 214 small trucks have had trackers installed. The system also covers 2,763 large trucks and 137 trailers operating within the city.

Since April 9, authorities have impounded 31,677 motorbikes, while action has been taken against 2,719 vehicles for violations such as fancy number plates and tinted windows. A total of 515 heavy and light traffic vehicles (HTVs/LTVs) have been impounded.

Additionally, 25 vehicle registrations have been recommended for cancellation and 491 registrations have been suggested for temporary suspension with conditional release by motor vehicle inspectors.

(By Dawn Reporter, 13, 05/05/2025)

Karachi mayor visits facility recycling plastic, making manhole covers

City Mayor Murtaza Wahab on Wednesday vowed that transforming garbage into reusable commodity was a critical part of his administration's vision to eliminate waste and improve sanitation conditions on a large scale in the metropolis.

He expressed this resolve during a visit to the Material Recovery Facility in District South, alongside Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) managing director Tariq Ali Nizamani.

The facility is part of a growing initiative to recycle plastic and other waste materials in order to reduce environmental burden on the city.

During the visit, Mayor Wahab appreciated the efforts being made to separate re-useable waste from garbage and extract useful materials for recycling.

Vows to turn garbage into reusable commodity to eliminate waste

He specifically commended the innovative step of producing manhole from extracted materials. "These initiatives are vital for creating a cleaner Karachi. Expanding such projects will not only reduce waste reaching landfills but also convert it into durable, usable products," he said.

Turkish company's director Ziauddin, and General Manager Warasat Waris on this occasion briefed the mayor about the operations.

They explained that household and apartment waste from the Clifton area was brought to the plant, where it was sorted into various categories, including plastic, cardboard, and wrappers. These materials are then bundled and processed for further use, significantly reducing the volume of waste transported to landfill sites.

The most noteworthy innovation discussed during the visit was the use of recycled plastic to manufacture heavy-duty manhole covers for sewerage systems. The company officials informed the mayor that these covers were not only durable but also cost-effective and environmentally friendly. He added that the project was currently in its developmental phase, with plans to broaden its scope in the near future by producing other items from recycled waste.

Mayor Wahab expressed optimism that with continuous efforts and public-private cooperation, Karachi would soon witness a marked improvement in cleanliness and environmental health.

He assured full support for expanding such recycling projects citywide.

Mayor Wahab reaffirmed the city administration's commitment to sustainable waste solutions and appreciating the contributions of the SSWMB and the Turkish company in transforming Karachi's waste into valuable resources.

Washing of vehicles

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) has launched an extensive campaign against violations of municipal laws.

"The initiative targets illegal garbage dumping, washing of vehicles on roads and in front of commercial areas, and unauthorised encroachments," said the statement.

The Enforcement and Implementation Department has already initiated operations in Gulshan-i-Iqbal, District Korangi, Nazimabad, and several other key localities. Heavy fines have been imposed and strict warnings issued to shopkeepers and commercial entities, it added.

The City Council, it said, has passed a resolution under Chapter 15, Section 132, and Schedule VI of the Sindh Local Government Act 2013.

The resolution allows penalties on individuals and businesses washing vehicles on roads outside shopping malls, plazas, offices, and commercial/industrial centres, as well as those using water board supply lines in nurseries.

"It has been observed that excessive water usage for vehicle washing at various public points — including bus, van, and coach terminals — not only leads to unclean roads, but also causes significant road damage. The KMC invests substantial funds annually for the maintenance and repair of such roads," added the statement.

Additionally, illegal encroachments in different parts of the city disrupt traffic flow and create obstacles for pedestrians. "The KMC is committed to restoring order in the city by taking strict action against all municipal law violators," it said.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 22/05/2025)

Need stressed for recycling waste, nature-friendly options for plastic bags

Environment experts have called upon the provincial governments to launch environmental awareness campaigns across the country to encourage the public to adopt nature-friendly alternatives to plastic shopping bags and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles and promote reuse and recycling of waste.

A programme was organised by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FPCCI) Central Standing Committees on Environment and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its head office on Wednesday in connection with World Environment Day. The United Nations has designated this year's theme as "Beat Plastic Pollution."

The speakers were of the opinion that the government-imposed bans on plastic bags could only be effectively implemented if incentives are provided to manufacturers for transition towards environment-friendly alternatives such as biodegradable carrier bags.

They noted that the industry would stop manufacturing single-use plastic bags if there was no market demand for their production.

Participants recalled the earlier failure of Islamabad's administration to enforce a plastic bag ban despite the capital's smaller size compared to Karachi, due to the lack of engagement with both retailers and consumers in the environmental campaign.

The speakers disclosed that Pakistan produces 55 billion plastic bags annually with a 15 per cent annual increase rate. Plastic waste accounts for over 60pc of total urban waste generated in the country, a major cause of environmental degradation.

A study conducted along Karachi's coastline, they said, detected significant microplastic contamination in marine sediments.

Imran Sabir, director of the Natural Resources at the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa), informed the audience that a province-wide ban on plastic shopping and carrier bags would come into effect in Sindh from June 15, following a decision by the provincial cabinet.

He clarified that plastic bags used for wrapping industrial goods, food items, agricultural produce and merchandise would remain exempted from the forthcoming ban. This exemption, he said, was intended to ensure continued functionality in essential sectors while discouraging non-essential single-use plastics.

Several speakers stressed that simply banning plastic bags was not enough—government authorities must ensure the availability and affordability of eco-friendly alternatives, such as biodegradable, cloth, or jute bags, through public-private partnerships. Moreover, technical and financial support should be provided to local manufacturers to retool their operations for producing sustainable products. Without practical, affordable alternatives, both consumers and shopkeepers may face challenges in adhering to the new policies.

Zainab Naeem, research fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), called on the government to support start-ups and small medium enterprises offering eco-friendly alternatives to plastic products. She encouraged consumers to actively choose items made from recycled materials to reduce the environmental impact of their consumption. She highlighted that Pakistan generated over two million tonnes of plastic waste annually, making its collection, safe disposal and recycling a formidable challenge.

At another programme jointly organised by the Department of Mass Communication, Karachi University (KU) and Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa), provincial secretary for environment, climate change, and coastal development Agha Shahnawaz Khan shared that the government was set to launch a crackdown on plastic bags in major cities from June 15.

He mentioned that plastic pollution was a global environmental challenge and that 11 million tonnes of plastic waste polluted our land, water and food supply every year.

“We must adopt a circular economy and encourage eco-friendly alternatives. We need to have collective efforts to eliminate plastic bags and protect future generations from environmental hazards,” he said.

KU Vice Chancellor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi noted that 98pc of plastic bags being used were non-biodegradable and non-recyclable, posing serious environmental risks. He stressed the importance of eliminating access to plastic bags at stores and markets, promoting awareness about their harmful effects, and ensuring the availability of alternatives.

Director General Sepa Waqar Hussain Phulpoto stated that Sepa was actively promoting the “No Plastic Carrier Bags” policy and urged all sectors to collaborate in making Sindh cleaner, greener, and more sustainable.
(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 05/06/2025)

Need stressed for urgent steps to combat plastic waste

In Pakistan, nearly two million tonnes of plastic waste is generated each year, of which 86 per cent is not managed properly. This mismanagement harms human health and marine species, with over 1.7 million tonnes ending up in landfills, open dumping sites, waterways and food systems, placing Pakistan among the top 10 plastic-polluting countries globally.



This was stated by the World Wide Fund for Nature-Pakistan (WWF-Pakistan) in its press release issued on World Environment Day observed on Thursday, calling for urgent measures to address the challenge.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, approximately 400 million metric tons of plastic waste is produced annually, with 36pc consisting of single-use plastics.

On a global scale, plastics have revolutionised industries, offering cost-effective and durable alternatives to traditional materials. However, their widespread use, particularly single-use plastics (SUPs), has led to severe environmental and health concerns. These disposable plastic products, designed for short-term use, contribute massively to global pollution, with billions of items discarded daily.

The environmental impact of plastic mismanagement is profound. Studies estimate that over 14 million tonnes of plastic waste enter the ocean annually, posing a significant threat to marine ecosystems. Microplastics, tiny fragments of degraded plastic, have infiltrated the global food chain, with traces found in seafood, drinking water and even human blood.

“Exposure to these plastic particles has been linked to hormonal disruptions, reproductive disorders, and increased risks of carcinogenic diseases. Moreover, plastic production and disposal also contribute to global greenhouse gas emissions, further exacerbating climate change,” the organisation stated.

It refers to a 2023 study by the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency, which highlighted that less than 10 per cent of the total plastic waste in Pakistan is recycled, with the remaining portion contributing to waste diversion inefficiencies and landfill overflows.

“The absence of an integrated waste management system and limited investment in material recovery infrastructure have further aggravated the issue. The most common sources of SUPs include food and beverage packaging, such as plastic bottles, takeout containers and wrappers, along with disposable grocery bags, straws, cutlery, and personal care products,” it said.

Research indicates that plastic packaging alone accounts for 40pc of global plastic production, making it the dominant contributor to global plastic waste accumulation. These plastics are primarily composed of non-biodegradable polymers, such as polyethylene and polystyrene, which are highly resistant to degradation. As a result, they persist in the environment for centuries, accumulating in landfills, water bodies, and ecosystems, leading to severe ecological and human health consequences.

“Pakistan ranks among the highest in South Asia in terms of plastic mismanagement rates, exacerbating issues related to urban waste disposal and public health risks,” stated Hammad Naqi Khan, director general of the WWF-Pakistan.

The world is grappling with the challenge of plastic pollution, which is negatively impacting human health, fragile ecosystems and threatened wildlife, he added.

He also said that what we need to do is to discourage plastic production and initiate a joint awareness campaign highlighting the negative impacts of plastic products on the environment and human health.

“Despite the government’s partial bans on plastic bags, the affordability and convenience of single-use plastics continue to drive excessive consumption, highlighting the urgent need for policy interventions, enhanced waste recovery systems, and a transition to circular plastic economy models,” Mr Khan added.

In Pakistan, microplastics have been detected in multiple drinking water sources, raising serious concerns about long-term human health risks.

Additionally, the plastic industry in Pakistan emits tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, intensifying the country’s climate vulnerability. The WWF-Pakistan urged to protect the environment and mitigate health risks by discouraging the production and consumption of plastic products in the country.

(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter, Dawn, 14, 06/06/2025)

Plastic wasteland

Pakistan’s plastic problem has crossed a critical threshold — one that threatens both environmental integrity and public health. With nearly two million tonnes of plastic waste generated annually, and a staggering 86% of it mismanaged, the country is teetering on the edge of an environmental crisis of its own making. According to WWF-Pakistan, over 1.7 million tonnes of this waste ends up in landfills, open dumps, waterways, and, increasingly, in the very food systems meant to nourish human life.

This unchecked surge in plastic pollution places Pakistan among the top 10 plastic-polluting nations globally — a dubious distinction that reflects not just a waste management failure but a broader policy and behavioural crisis. The proliferation of single-use plastics is emblematic of a culture addicted to convenience, yet blind to consequence. These items, designed for moments of use, linger in ecosystems for centuries, leaching toxins into our soil and water.

Pakistan is also among the worst in South Asia when it comes to plastic mismanagement, placing tremendous strain on already overburdened urban waste systems. The long-term consequences of such exposure are still unfolding, but the immediate need for action is undeniable. It is imperative for federal and provincial governments to move beyond token bans on plastic bags and adopt an integrated national plastic action plan. This must include strict regulation of SUPs, investment in recycling infrastructure, incentivising alternatives and public education campaigns to change consumption patterns. At the same time, the private sector must take responsibility for the lifecycle of its products.

Plastic waste is a direct symptom of systemic neglect and a threat to our collective future. Without coordinated and sustained action, Pakistan risks suffocating under the weight of its own waste.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 16/06/2025)