

NEWSCLIPPINGS

JANUARY TO JUNE 2025

WATER SUPPLY



Urban Resource Centre

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Karachi's water crisis to ease with Hub Canal, KB Feeder projects: CM Sindh

Reaffirming the provincial government's commitment to address the pressing issue of water supply to Karachi, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday said that the city's water crisis would be significantly alleviated after the completion of the Hub Canal and KB Feeder projects.

He said that the city's water supply system was being enhanced under a \$1.6 billion programme supported by the World Bank which included operational upgrades and expansions under Phase 2 to enhance efficiency.

The chief minister, who visited the two projects' sites in Thatta and Hub, said the new Hub Canal Project would be completed by Dec 2025, while the KB Feeder Project was progressing swiftly with a 40 per cent completion expected by the end of the year.

He said that KB Feeder lining would conserve 510 cusecs of water to meet the growing need of Karachi.

Says schemes are expected to be completed by 2025-end

Mr Shah said that the project's first phase, which focuses on canal lining and strengthening its embankments, has already shown impressive results, conserving 510 cusecs of water — enough to meet the needs of Phase I of the K-IV water supply project.

"Once completed next year, the KB Feeder is projected to deliver an additional 260 million gallons of water daily (MGD) to Karachi, significantly alleviating the city's water crisis," he said and added that the increase would supplement the ongoing K-IV project, which aimed at supplying water from Keenjhar Lake, with its first phase set to deliver substantial quantities.

The CM said that his government was investing Rs12.76 billion in the Hub Canal project, which aimed at increasing its supply capacity by December 2025.

"As part of the K-IV augmentation plan, these upgrades will include the construction of three new reservoirs and improvements to pumping stations, ensuring efficient water distribution throughout the city," he said.

Mr Shah said that the city was set to make significant improvements due to the rapid advancement of key infrastructure projects.

He revealed substantial progress on the Kalri Baghar (KB) Feeder project, a crucial initiative to enhance the city's water supply.

The CM emphasised the Sindh government's unwavering commitment to securing its water rights and its determination to complete these vital projects, despite challenges such as limited federal funding for the KB Feeder.

The chief minister also highlighted the rapid advancement of the Malir Expressway, which is expected to be completed in 2025.

"This project promises to reduce commute times in and around Karachi significantly and underscores the Sindh government's commitment to improving not only water security but also overall urban infrastructure and connectivity," he said.

The CM claimed that Sindh's development pace surpasses that of other provinces and even the federal government.

He pointed out that despite Sindh contributing half the funds for the Jamshoro-to-Sehwan road project, the completion remains pending, while Sindh has successfully finished several major projects using its own resources.

To a question, he announced plans to expand the Bus Rapid Transit system across Sindh, further enhancing public transportation.

He was accompanied by Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro and Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab.

(By Tahir Siddiqui and Ghulam Hussain Khwaja Dawn, 13, 01/01/2024)

Sindh govt told to recover Rs20bn in outstanding water dues from federal bodies

The Public Accounts Committee of the Sindh Assembly has directed the provincial government and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) to approach federal government departments and entities for the recovery of outstanding water bills of over Rs20 billion.

The matter of outstanding dues against several federal government institutions, including armed forces, was taken up by the PAC on Nov 27, last year and during the examination of audit paragraphs of the water utility from 2019 to 2021 it was revealed that they owed Rs20.691bn water dues.

Sources in the water utility, however, said that the total outstanding water dues against the federal entities had now swelled to over Rs25.803bn.

They said that the Pakistan Steel Mills alone owed over Rs12.354bn to the water utility.

PAC chairman Khuhro laments Centre has put province's fiscal issues on the back burner

The sources said that the outstanding water dues against army and navy were Rs2.1bn and Rs1.4bn, respectively. The Clifton Cantonment Board owed over Rs1.9bn to the water utility.

The dues are outstanding against several federal government institutions, including Air Force, Port Qasim Authority, Pakistan Railways, Pakistan State Oil, Sui Southern Gas Company, Printing Corporation, Marine Fisheries, Cotton Export Corporation,

Karachi Shipyard, Pakistan International Airlines, Pakistan Machinery Tool Factory, Cotton Export Corporation, Coast Guards, and cantonment boards, and Quaid-i-Azam Mazar.

On Dec 30, last year the secretary (committees) of the provincial assembly wrote a letter to the additional chief secretary of Local Government Housing and Town Planning and CEO of Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation and asked them to make serious efforts for the recovery of the outstanding dues against the federal government departments.

Meanwhile, PAC Chairman Nisar Ahmed Khuhro in a statement on Wednesday urged the federal departments to clear longstanding dues of water charges amounting to Rs20,691.321 million unpaid since 2016 and said the provincial government was writing to the Centre demanding early clearance of the dues.

He said that the additional chief secretary of local government department and the water utility chief had been directed to write to the federal government in this connection.

The PAC had summoned the departments concerned to its meeting scheduled for Jan 21, he added.

Mr Khuhro said that the federal departments had been reluctant to pay the dues to provincial government since 2016 and the bills kept piling up.

He said that the Centre had put the province's financial issues on the back burner. "It is a great excess being done to the province which is already seeking its due share in the National Finance Commission Award," he said.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 02/01/2025)

Two Karachi men die after inhaling toxic gases in water tank

Two men died after inhaling toxic gases while cleaning an underground water tank of a residential project in Gulistan-i-Jauhar whereas four persons, who attempted to save their lives, became unconscious, rescue services officials said on Thursday.

Rescue-1122 official Hassaan Khan told *Dawn* that two employees of housing project Falak Naz, located in Block-18, went down a large underground water tank for its cleaning.

However, they were not properly trained and entered the tank without masks or protective gear, Mr Khan added.

And as they did not come back for a considerable time, four other persons, also employees of the high-rise building, went inside the tank to save them but they also became unconscious.

Realising the gravity of the situation, the residents approached Rescue-1122 for help, the rescue official said.

He said Urban Search and Rescue Team along with a disaster response vehicle and ambulance arrived at the spot and started the search operation.

The people were rescued and sent to a nearby private hospital where two of them, identified as Moid, 40, and Ahmed, 30, were declared dead on arrival while Sartaj, 20, Haider, 25, Noor, 27, were admitted for treatment.

The fourth one was a minor who was provided first aid on the spot by the rescue team.

Their deaths were apparently caused due to toxic gases in the underground water tank, Mr Khan opined. The rescue team members cleaned the tank from toxic gases after the incident, he told.

Guard shot dead in 'accidental fire'

A private security guard was shot dead in an 'accidental fire' in the Defence Housing Authority on Thursday.

Sahil SHO Iftikhar Arain said the rifle of Muhammad Noman, 30, went off "accidentally" at Zulfiqar Commercial. As a result, a bullet hit his chest and he died. He was the guard of an under-construction bungalow.

The body was shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for medico-legal formalities.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 03/01/2025)

Why Karachi Thirsts for Water

"The present water supply of Karachi, like that of many Eastern Cities, is insufficient. It has a capacity of only 11 to 15 million gallons per day, whereas the water demand for the city in the first stage of development is estimated to be 70 million gallons per day, increasing to 270 million gallons per day in the future."— The Merz Rendel Vatten (MRV) Plan, 1951

"The present water resource technology is costly, wasteful of water, makes Karachi vulnerable to system failure, and does not support agriculture development or environmental enhancement in the region. Water demand is increasing rapidly."— The Karachi Development Plan 1974-1985

In the heart of Karachi, a city known for its vibrant energy and bustling markets, a silent struggle unfolds each night. Jameel, a resident of Korangi, one of the city's densely populated areas, rises in the middle of the night from his slumber, not to greet the dawn, but to wrestle with the city's most pressing crisis: water scarcity.

In the early hours of the day, Jameel joins a silent army of Karachiites armed with blue-coloured water cans and recycled plastic buckets. They gather around the water mains, their faces etched with a mix of desperation and resignation. A diesel generator, a lifeline in this water-starved city, roars to life, powering the pumps that draw precious water from the mains.

Water 'tankers' barrelling down the road are a common sight even in Karachi's 'posh' areas, illustrating the greatest issue confronting this city's residents — water scarcity. But why have numerous 'development plans' since 1951 failed to address this worsening issue, and will projects such as the K-IV, if it ever comes to fruition, actually be the permanent solution to the megapolis' unending water supply crisis?

Zahid, a resident of Paharganj in North Nazimabad, has witnessed a chilling transformation in his access to water. Gone are the days of reliable, consistent supply. Now, water has become a scarce commodity, rationed by an unseen hand. For days, sometimes weeks, his taps remain stubbornly dry. The once robust water pressure that easily filled his overhead tank has dwindled to a mere trickle, barely reaching the underground reservoir. This isn't just a personal inconvenience — it's a symptom of a deeper malaise gripping the neighbourhood.

Those who can afford them have resorted to desperate measures, installing diesel-powered suction pumps to wrest water from the dwindling supply lines. These powerful pumps, however, create a vicious cycle, further depleting the already meagre flow for those who cannot afford such expensive and polluting solutions.

Zahid, like many of his neighbours, is trapped in a precarious situation. He faces the daily indignity of water scarcity, the constant anxiety of not knowing when his taps will run again, and the frustration of watching his neighbours circumvent the system while he is left to fend for himself. This is not just a water crisis, it's a crisis of equity — a stark reminder of the widening gap between the haves and 'have-a-little' in a city already grappling with numerous challenges.

The recent water crisis in Karachi, triggered by the 84-inch water line damage on the Redline Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route, has raised serious concerns about the city's water governance. Karachi faces a severe water crisis due to a confluence of factors. Rapid population growth has outstripped water supply, while ageing infrastructure, line losses and inadequate water sources further exacerbate the situation.

With inadequate implementation, past urban planning efforts have also fallen short, hindering the realisation of solutions. The K-IV water supply project — planned back in 2002/2003 and meant to supply 650 million gallons of drinkable water per day to the city — is plagued by delays and cost overruns, hindering its progress. The city's future hangs in the balance, teetering on the brink of a humanitarian crisis, unless bold and decisive action is taken to address this critical issue.

The K-IV water supply project — planned back in 2002/2003 and meant to supply 650 million gallons of drinkable water per day to the city — is plagued by delays and cost overruns, hindering its progress. The city's future hangs in the balance, teetering on the brink of a humanitarian crisis, unless bold and decisive action is taken to address this critical issue.

KARACHI'S THIRSTY PAST

The historical evolution of Karachi's water supply system demonstrates a consistent struggle to meet the city's growing demand, despite efforts to diversify sources and improve infrastructure.

Before the establishment of the Karachi Municipality in 1852, residents of the city relied on wells and reservoirs for their drinking water. Prominent among these water bodies were Raam Talao, Ratan Talao, Frere Talao, Nanakwara Talao and Rambagh Talao, which were scattered throughout the old city. The term 'talao' is often used in the context of smaller water bodies or ponds, particularly in certain regional dialects, and might refer to a more specific or less sizeable body of water compared to a talaab. Additionally, rainwater was collected in a few reservoirs.

The city's growing population and expanding urban footprint necessitated a more reliable and efficient water supply system. In 1885, the municipality began distributing water through pipes, marking a significant improvement in water delivery. However, the supply remained insufficient and often brackish.

The Dumlottee Wells water supply scheme was launched in 1885 under the supervision of municipal engineer James Strachen. Initially, two wells were dug to supply water to the city. By 1947, the number of wells had increased to 14, but this still proved insufficient to meet the rising demand.

As Karachi continued to expand, the city sought additional water sources. In the 1930s and 1940s, water from the Haleji conduit was introduced as a supplementary source. This diversification of water sources helped alleviate the water shortage to some extent, but the city's growing population and increasing urbanisation soon outpaced the available supply.

In the post-Independence era, Karachi's journey to secure a reliable water supply dates back to the early 1950s. Under the leadership of Khawaja Nazimuddin, the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme was initiated in 1953. This ambitious project aimed to provide the city with an additional 280 million gallons of water per day (MGD) through four distinct phases.



The primary source of water for this scheme was Keenjhar Lake, a vital reservoir located in Thatta district. Over the years, the project was implemented in phases, with each phase contributing 70 MGD to the city's water supply. By 1987, all four phases were completed, significantly enhancing Karachi's water infrastructure.

In subsequent years, the city's water supply was further augmented. In 1998, the K-II project added another 100 MGD to the city's daily water supply. This was followed by the K-III project in 2006, which contributed an additional 100

MGD.

THE WATER SUPPLY PREDICAMENT

Karachi's water supply relies on multiple sources, three surface water sources and one underground source, with each facing its own set of challenges.

The Haleji Lake, established in 1930, contributes a relatively small amount of water to Karachi, supplying approximately 30 MGD. The Keenjhar Lake, a more recent addition to the city's water supply system, was developed post-Independence and currently supplies a significant 587 MGD. The Hub Dam, conceived in the 1960s, became operational in 1981. Despite being designed for a capacity of 100 MGD, it currently operates at 49 MGD. This shortfall has contributed to the city's water woes.

The fourth source of water for Karachi are the Dumlottee wells, which are underground sources. Unfortunately, out of the 14 wells, only three remain functional, further limiting the city's water supply.

To address the water crisis, Karachi has been implementing various initiatives, such as the K-IV water supply project and some water conservation measures. However, the city's water supply infrastructure remains fragile, and the demand for water continues to outpace supply.

The evolution of Karachi's water supply institutions reflects a shifting approach, moving from a state-centric model of provision towards a more market-oriented and decentralised approach.

In 1953, the Karachi Joint Water Board was established to expand the water supply system by drawing water from the Indus River. This marked the initial step towards a centralised water supply system for the city. Then, in 1953, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KW&SB) was established as a unified institution, to take charge of both water supply and sewerage services in the city.

In 1981, the Karachi Water and Management Board (KW&MB) was formed to oversee the distribution of water and implement cost recovery measures. In the efforts for decentralisation in 1996, KW&SB was separated from the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) through an act, granting it greater autonomy and operational flexibility.

The KW&MB was given both distribution and cost recovery powers, but the KMC was still responsible for its revenue and sewerage maintenance. Hence, the KW&MB was upgraded to the KW&SB in 1983. It was placed under the Government of Sindh, but its board of directors had the mayor of Karachi. In 1996, KW&SB was separated from KMC and was brought back under mayoral supervision, until it was separated again under the new Sindh Local Government Act, 2013. Lastly, in 2023, The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KW&SC) was established, marking a further step towards corporatisation and improved service delivery.

The water distribution system is ageing and inefficient, plagued by issues such as leaks, water theft and unequal distribution, hindering the effective delivery of water to the city.

The KW&SC operates a vast and complex water supply system. It relies on a network of over 150 pumping stations to transport water over 10,000 kilometres of pipelines. The system is designed to supply over 900 million gallons of water daily to a population of over 1.4 million consumers. Additionally, the KW&SC manages over 400,000 valves to regulate water flow. A significant part of the problem is the city's old and poorly maintained water infrastructure, which has led to leaks and inefficiencies.

Water theft is a major issue as organised groups illegally tap into water supply lines, reducing the availability of water for law-abiding consumers. Moreover, devices that increase water pressure have disrupted the distribution system, causing unequal access to water. The lack of transparency in retail water distribution further allows exploitation by local officials and individuals, leading to unfair distribution.

MANAGING KARACHI'S DEMAND

Besides the other factors of spillage and theft, Karachi's rapidly increasing population is a primary driver of the city's severe water crisis, creating a widening gap between water demand and supply. According to estimates, the city's per capita water demand is currently at 54 gallons per day (GPCD). With an approximate population of 24 million, the cumulative demand for water is estimated to be a staggering 1,080 MGD.

However, the current water supply falls far short of meeting this demand. Relevant staff at the KW&SC estimate a shortfall of 430 MGD. This means that Karachi is facing a daily deficit of over 400 million gallons of water. Experts are of the opinion that, in order to bridge this gap, the city will need to increase its water supply by 100 MGD every five years. This highlights the urgent need for sustainable and long-term solutions to address Karachi's water crisis.

The reasons for the exponential rise in demand are many but the most oft-cited is the rapid increase in population of the port city. Others include the breakdown of the joint-family system and the resulting increase in housing units, the unplanned sprawl of the metropolis, and changes in the lifestyle of the populace. Due to a shortage of space, only Karachi's increase in population is discussed here.



The pace of growth has been particularly rapid in recent decades. For instance, between 1951 and 1981 (in a span of 30 years), the city's population grew by 4.3 million. However, in the subsequent 17 years (1981-1998), the population surged by a further 4.4 million more residents.

Residents line up outside a water hydrant in the Sakhi Hassan neighbourhood to get their names registered for water tanker deliveries: Karachi's rapidly increasing population is quickly widening the gap between water demand and supply | White Star

DESPERATE MEASURES

Faced with a crippling water shortage, Karachiites have resorted to a desperate array of measures to quench their thirst. These range from digging wells and boreholes to tap into dwindling groundwater reserves, to purchasing water from private vendors, and even relying on bottled water from commercial companies. Citizens are also increasingly turning to widely scattered filtration plants and acquiring potable water from water tankers.

This patchwork of solutions reflects the city's struggle to cope with a water crisis that has reached alarming proportions. It is difficult to estimate the number of water wells and borings in the city, as the KW&SC is still struggling to regulate the use of sub-soil water.

The Census 2023 data offers a fascinating glimpse into the varied sources of water supply across different districts of Karachi. The city's reliance on multiple sources, including tap water, motor pumps, dug wells, filtration plants, boiled water, and others, highlights the complex nature of its water infrastructure and the challenges faced by its residents.

As mentioned in the Census of 2023, a significant majority of Karachi's population, 51.73 percent, relies on tap water as their primary source. However, it is important to note that the reliance on tap water has declined over the years — around 80 percent of Karachi's residents relied on piped water according to the census of 1998.

A substantial reliance on motor pumps, 18.48 percent, suggests potential groundwater depletion and water quality issues, especially in areas with limited access to piped water. The increasing use of filtration plants (6.51 percent) and boiled water (9.45 percent), points to concerns about the quality of water from other sources, particularly in terms of contamination and impurities.

In the Census 2023 data, the "Others" category encompasses a variety of sources, including rainwater harvesting, tanker water and other unconventional methods, reflecting the diverse strategies employed by residents to secure water. The city's reliance on multiple sources, including tap water, motor pumps, dug wells, filtration plants, bottled water, and others, highlights the challenges in ensuring a reliable and clean water supply.

The seven districts of Karachi provide stark insight into the varied sources of water supply. Central Karachi predominantly relies on tap water for 60.72 percent of its usage, indicating a relatively better access to municipal water supply. However in the Census of 1988, the reliance of District Central on piped water was around 90 percent.

The South and Korangi districts show a significant reliance on motor pumps (26.59 and 26.73 percent respectively), raising concerns about groundwater depletion and potential water quality issues. Korangi district's notable reliance on bottled water (12.91 percent) suggests concerns about the quality of tap and groundwater sources. Kemari District, with its high dependence on 'Other' sources (45.5 percent), reflects the challenges in accessing reliable water supply in this area.

In the old city area, maashkis [water bearers] can still be seen providing water to apartment complexes. Most of these sources use KW&SC water lines. Due to densification and non-availability of water from the water provision system, communities have installed suction pumps on the lines and have converted their outlets into stand posts, with proper management of the cues. The authorities turn a blind eye to this 'spillage', as it relieves the burden of water provision from their shoulders.

Historically, the provision of water through water bowsers, commonly known as 'tankers', was utilised as an emergency service. Later, it became a viable alternative for the water-starved communities. Water is also supplied by water tankers to those parts of Karachi where water supply systems do not exist or function. The water tankers get water from KW&SC designated hydrants or from 'illegal' hydrants that use tube wells to tap shallow water aquifers.

The number of illegal hydrants is increasing and many apartment complexes have developed their own tube wells. As per media reports, the number of tankers operating in the city range from 8,000 to 10,000, with approximately 40,000 to 50,000 deliveries per day and a revenue generation of a staggering Rs160 to Rs200 million per day (conservative estimates), making it a complete industry.

These water bowsers come in all shapes, sizes and capacities. Besides traditional medium and long body truck bowsers, donkey carts, Shehzore trucks and Suzuki carriers with generator-driven motors are commonly used for water transportation in narrow streets and alleyways.

K-IV: ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DELAY

In 2002/2003, a lifeline for Karachi was envisioned: the K-IV water supply scheme. This ambitious project aimed to quench the city's insatiable thirst by transporting water from the distant Keenjhar Lake in Thatta District to the bustling metropolis, through a 121 km long conduit. The much-touted K-IV water supply project, a crucial initiative to address Karachi's water crisis, has been plagued by significant delays and cost overruns, hindering its progress and raising concerns about its effectiveness.

Initially estimated to cost Rs25.5 billion and be completed by mid-2019, the project's revised cost now exceeds Rs247 billion, with the projected completion date now pushed back to 2027.

A host of factors have contributed to these setbacks, including financial constraints, bureaucratic hurdles and technical complexities, and 'right-of-way' issues. The project's route has been a contentious issue, leading to legal battles and delays in land acquisition. The 121 km long K-IV emerges from a higher point in the Keenjhar Lake and heads away from the sea up to just touch DHA City, cross the Super Highway (or M9) and crawl through what is now Bahria Town towards Hub and stops at Deh Allah Piyaae. Given the various localities it crosses, it is easy to see why there have been delays in land acquisition.

Moreover, the slow implementation of the K-IV augmentation plan (which consists of two major components: civil work and the establishment of a grid station, along with the installation of a transmission line) and inadequate coordination with other stakeholders (such as agriculturists, farmers, civil society leaders and Thatta residents), has further hindered progress.

While the K-IV project is touted as a silver bullet, it is crucial to address the root causes of Karachi's water crisis. Karachi faces a severe water crisis due to insufficient supply, ageing infrastructure and rapid population growth and, until these issues are

addressed, the water crisis will continue to keep coming back, K-IV or no K-IV. Residents such as Jameel and Zahid will continue to experience daily struggles for access to water, often resorting to desperate measures in order to ensure that their families have access to water for their daily tasks.

Historical attempts to address Karachi's water crisis, such as the K-IV water supply project, have faced long delays and challenges. Such delays and challenges themselves highlight the need for rethinking the very paradigm under which the government plans to ensure equitable access to the most vital of the city's resources.
(By Mansoor Raza and Nudrat Fatima Junaid Dawn EOS, 01, 05/01/2025)

City faces water shortage due to power shutdown at Dhabeji station

The city faced a shortfall of 100 million gallons of water on Sunday due to annual maintenance work by the K-Electric at one of its key pumping stations.

A Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) spokesman said that the power utility carried out the first phase of its annual maintenance work for 2024-25 at the Dhabeji Pumping Station on Sunday.

He said that the maintenance activities occurred from 8am to 8pm, resulting in a 12-hour power shutdown at the station.

The spokesman said the electricity supply to various feeders of the Dhabeji Pumping Station was partially disrupted and the city experienced a reduction of 100 MGD in its water supply.

He said Karachi's regular supply was 650MGD and 550MGD was supplied to the city during the maintenance.

The spokesperson said that water supply to the city from the Dhabeji Pumping Station was restored in the evening, and there was no water crisis in the city.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 06/01/2025)

Water politics

Water scarcity is one of Karachi's most pressing issues, a dilemma that has only intensified over the decades despite numerous development plans and promises. The city's current water supply, ranging from 11 to 15 million gallons per day, is a mere fraction of the burgeoning demand. In the first stage of development, Karachi requires at least 70 million gallons per day, with future projections skyrocketing to an overwhelming 270 million gallons per day.

Karachi's water supply infrastructure, like that of many Eastern cities, is outdated, expensive and inefficient. The existing technology is not only wasteful but also leaves the city vulnerable to system failures. The ubiquitous presence of water tankers under the influence of the so-called tanker mafias cannot be ignored. These groups have thrived in the vacuum left by the government's inability to provide a consistent water supply, turning a public necessity into a lucrative, exploitative enterprise. The tanker mafias have created a parallel water economy, profiting immensely from the city's water woes. They control access to water, often diverting supplies meant for public distribution and selling it at exorbitant prices.

To combat this crisis, a multidimensional approach is necessary. First and foremost, there must be a comprehensive overhaul of the water supply infrastructure with an emphasis on modern, efficient technologies that minimise waste and ensure equitable distribution. Simultaneously, the government must take decisive action against the tanker mafias, dismantling their networks and restoring control over the city's water resources. While the challenges are immense, the solutions are within reach if there is a collective will to prioritise the city's water security. Failure to do so will not only exacerbate the current crisis but also jeopardise the city's future as a liveable and thriving metropolis.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 06/01/2025)

KWSC CEO involved in embezzlement suspended

Sindh government has suspended Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) CEO Salahuddin Ahmed.

A major crackdown has been launched against the issuance of licences for groundwater extraction and water theft within the corporation. Sindh Anti-Corruption Authority has been approached to conduct a transparent probe into matter. As part of the action, Sindh Services and General Administration Department has suspended the KWSC chief executive.

He has been barred from coming to the office until the inquiry is completed which is ordered to be completed within two weeks.

Sources said that an embezzlement worth millions of rupees had come to light in the name of issuing licences for groundwater extraction.

After the embezzlement was revealed, 70 licences were cancelled. Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan has been given additional charge of Chief Executive Officer and MD until the final results of the inquiry are submitted.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 07/01/2025)

KWSC officials accused of creating water shortages

Allegations have surfaced that officials of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) have fabricated a water crisis in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Block 13 D-2, leaving residents without access to water for extended periods. Some areas have faced water cutoffs for two years, while most locations have been affected for over a year.

Residents are forced to rely on unhealthy underground water or purchase water tankers at exorbitant rates. The Sindh government's inadequate policies have resulted in no new water supply projects, and corrupt water board officials have evaded accountability.

Residents affected by the crisis report that Karachi has faced a water shortage for 16 years, and their patience has worn thin. If the issue remains unresolved, conflicts over water may escalate.

A resident of Block 13 D-2 said they have been experiencing severe water shortages for eight years. Until 2016, their area received water for several hours daily without issues. However, the water supply abruptly stopped at the end of the year.

After lodging a complaint, Assistant Executive Engineer Nabil Ahmed inspected the pipeline, claiming it was damaged due to iron corrosion. However, residents alleged that Ahmed deliberately damaged functional pipelines to sell illegal connections.

Despite reporting the matter to senior officials, no action was taken against Ahmed. A new pipeline was installed under Ahmed's supervision in 2017, but it also became nonfunctional over time. Residents accuse Ahmed, under the protection of Executive Engineer Wasif Farooqi, of deliberately damaging pipelines to secure new tenders for pipeline installations. This cycle has repeated multiple times, allowing corrupt officials to demand bribes from residents for water connections.
(By Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 19/01/2025)

MPAs' concerns over water shortage, frequent traffic jams echo in Sindh Assembly

The Sindh Assembly on Monday echoed with the opposition members' concerns over the acute shortage of water and frequent traffic jams across the city.

Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani told the house that the city's water issue would be addressed to a large extent after the completion of K-IV project.

In his call attention notice, Jamaat-i-Islami's (JI) lone member Muhammed Farooq said that there was an acute water shortage in parts of his constituency such as Shah Faisal Colony, Green Town, Rafah-i-Aam and Jamia Millia and the other adjoining areas.

He said that 65 to 70 per cent population of the city was not getting smooth water supply, piling miseries on people.

The JI member said that boring for subsoil water was costing over Rs500,000 which was not affordable for the poor masses.

In reply to the call attention notice of the JI member, the LG minister said the construction work had been expeditiously continuing on the K-IV, which would be completed by July 2026.

He said that Shah Faisal Colony was the last area that got water through the water utility and there was often no electricity there.

The minister said that there was a water shortage in the area due to its remoteness.

He said that an 84-inch main had been broken in Gulshan-i-Iqbal for three weeks, due to which there was water shortage in different areas of the city.

Mr Ghani told the house that Wapda had been working to construct the component of the K-IV project involving the construction of the water supply line from Keenjhar Lake to Karachi as that portion of the scheme had been completed by 55 per cent.

He said the second phase of the project pertained to shifting of the service lines of the public utilities, which was being carried out under the Karachi Water & Sewerage Improvement Programme. "The CM has immediately released Rs7 billion for the completion of this component," he said.

The minister said the third component of the K-IV project was related to the construction of a 50 MW power station with a cost of Rs16 billion as Hesco was working on that portion.

He said the work on the three portions of the project was likely to be completed by December 2025. "Afterwards, the testing of the project will commence and Karachi will likely to receive additional water through the K-IV project by July 2026," he added.

Shariq Jamal of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan also took up the water shortage issue in his constituency on a point of order and said that there was no water supply to certain parts of Malir, including Khokhrapar, Saudabad and Jinnah Square.

He said that the water supply line from Malir 15 had ended at Mohabatnagar where a water mafia was instrumental to sell the commodity at exorbitant price through donkey carts and pickups to the people of the affected areas.

MQM-P's Quratul Ain Khan had also forwarded an adjournment motion on the water shortage across the city, but it was rejected by the house after the law and parliamentary minister opposed it.

He said that the opposition member's motion was not admissible as it was hit by Section 88-K of the Rule of Procedure.

However, the MQM-P member argued that her motion was maintainable as it was the matter of public importance.

Deputy Speaker Anthony ruled the motion out of order.

Traffic jams

On a point of order, Opposition Leader Ali Khurshidi took up the issue of frequent traffic jams across the city throughout the day.

He said the traffic system in the city had been completely destroyed. "A 15-minute journey in the city takes two hours," he lamented.

The opposition leader said that if the traffic police were not capable and efficient to their job, then the assembly members should be put on duty. "We all go to the roads and regulate the traffic," he said.

Conceding that the traffic jams in the city was a real issue, the law minister said that he had directed the provincial police chief to take effective measure to regulate the traffic.

He said the IGP had sought 20-day time to address the issue. "He has posted new SPs," he said, adding that he would hold a meeting with the IGP on Wednesday in this regard.

Question Hour

In reply to the lawmakers' written and verbal queries during the Question Hour, the local government minister said that 2024 had seen the maximum demolition operations against illegal construction in Karachi and the rest of the province as compared to the previous five years.

He said that recommendations would be sent to the federal government to block the Computerised National Identity Cards and passports of the elements involved in illegal constructions in addition to other punitive steps against them, including imprisonment and fines.

He said that action had been taken against 8,171 such illegal buildings from 2018 to 2024. "As many as 1,150 such operations were conducted in 2018; 1,220 operations in 2019; 976 operations in 2020; 1,308 in 2021; 1,142 in 2022; 892 in 2023 and 1,784 operations were conducted in 2024."

Bill passed

The assembly passed The Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Provincial Minister for Excise Mukesh Kumar Chawla told the house that after the amendment bill, it would be mandatory to register a new vehicle within two months, and the old vehicle's registration book would also have to be surrendered.

He said that would also be mandatory for vehicle owners to make digital cards.

Later, the house was adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30pm.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 21/01/2025)

Experts call for fair distribution, action against 'tanker mafia' to ease Karachi's water woes

Water is increasingly becoming scarce in the city, mainly due to its theft by corrupt elements who are making millions from it, rampant population growth, ageing infrastructure, line losses and various other factors which need the government's attention on urgent basis otherwise the city's water woes would keep growing.

These were the views of speakers at a seminar, "Water Scarcity in City: A Discussion on Issues and Causes," organised by the Urban Resource Centre (URC) on Wednesday, where architect and urban planner Arif Hasan stressed that along with resolving all the issues mentioned above, it is crucial to build dams around the Kirthar Range like the Thado Dam as only that can help ensure the increasing water demand of the metropolis.

During his presentation at the event, electrical engineer and URC board member Mansoor Raza explained that Karachi had been witnessing a rampant population growth for the past many years which had led to increasing demand of water.

"Besides, ageing infrastructure, unjust distribution, line losses and water theft are the main reasons why the essential utility is so less than how much is required. Even that water what is provided is of poor quality as multiple surveys have shown," he added.

Moreover, he said it is well documented who "the tanker mafia" is and the influential people involved in it. "And there is what some people call a 'conspiracy theory', that this mafia is making millions of rupees. And if that is the case, why would water be provided to lines and not tankers?" he asked.

Arif Hasan says dams around Kirthar Range are necessary to resolve long-term water needs of Karachiites

Arif Hasan said that there is a lot of corruption when it comes to water management in Karachi. He said even the World Bank estimates were quite inaccurate when it came to the cost of water related projects as the international organisation provided way higher estimates than the actual cost. That, he added was done so that Pakistan could be made to ask for loans.

Mr Hasan stressed that along with addressing all the issues mentioned by other speakers, it is crucial to construct dams around the Kirthar Range, just like the Thado Dam has been built, as only that can help ensure the increasing water demand of the metropolis in a significant manner.

He also said that there is "no culture of storing rainwater in Karachi", which is important to address the city's water scarcity problem.

Researcher Nudrat Fatima Junaid while providing an overview of the K-IV project said that the mega project is supposed to significantly reduce the gap between water demand and supply by providing 650 MGD (million gallons per day) water.

However, she also pointed out how much delays the project had faced so far since it was initiated in 2002 and how the cost had also increased exceptionally.

Farhan and Rasha, two students from the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, delivered a presentation on Dumlottee Wells in the Malir district, which were constructed by the British Raj in the 19th century to provide water supply to the city.

The key points highlighted in the presentation were how the wells were now lying useless and that if revived and properly restored, they can help provide sufficient water in city areas. Sand and gravel is also being dug out from them illegally. However, they pointed out that when the water board once approached the Sindh government for reviving and restoring them, the government had rejected the proposal.

The experts also stressed that there is an urgent need to devise a mechanism against water wastage throughout the city, just like many developed countries, as a large amount of water goes wasted on unimportant things.
(By Waqas Ali Dawn, 13, 23/01/2025)

Monthly revenue of KWSC crosses Rs2bn, claims mayor

City Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday announced that the monthly revenue of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) had surpassed Rs2 billion for the first time in its history.

This significant achievement, he said, would not only fund various development projects and operational costs for the city's water and sewerage systems but would also help settle the dues of retired employees.

"Boosting the corporation's revenue is crucial for tackling Karachi's ongoing water supply and sewerage challenges, ensuring the uninterrupted provision of services to the city's residents," said Mayor Wahab, who is also the chairman of the KWSC.

"When we took charge of the KWSC, the revenue was alarmingly low. In response, a series of reforms and measures were implemented, including facilitating consumers with easier ways to pay their water bills. These efforts have resulted in a substantial increase in revenue," Wahab said, expressing confidence that this upward trend would continue, enabling the corporation to carry out its operations more efficiently."

He also highlighted the improvements made within the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), where the revenue recovery process was strengthened. Through successful discussions and agreements with K-Electric and other institutions, KMC's income has grown, further reinforcing the city's ability to fund essential services, he added.

In line with the manifesto of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Mayor Wahab reiterated that the party would continue to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions responsible for delivering basic services in Karachi, striving for a better and more sustainable future for the city.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 14, 06/02/2025)

Bottled water contamination

Yet again, the safety of bottled water in Pakistan has come under scrutiny, and yet again, it is the consumers who are left to suffer the consequences. The Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources has declared 28 brands unfit for human consumption, with samples showing dangerous levels of sodium, arsenic, potassium and bacterial contamination. These findings are an indictment of the regulatory failures that have allowed such brands to infiltrate the market unchecked.

How did these brands gain a foothold in the first place? The Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority is responsible for ensuring bottled water meets safety standards, but its oversight appears to be little more than a bureaucratic formality. The fact that these contaminated brands were freely available to consumers before being flagged suggests a complete lack of preemptive regulation.

Testing should happen before products hit the market - not months or years after they have already been consumed by thousands. The consequences of this negligence cannot be overstated. Arsenic exposure is linked to cancer and organ damage, excessive sodium contributes to heart disease and hypertension, while bacterial contamination can trigger severe gastrointestinal illnesses. To learn that the very product meant to offer safety is itself a health hazard is nothing short of a betrayal.

The government's standard response - a belated ban on unsafe brands - is reactionary at best and ineffective at worst. By the time such announcements are made, the damage is already done. What is needed is a complete overhaul of how bottled water is regulated.

No brand should be allowed to operate without rigorous pre-market testing, and regular, unannounced checks must become the norm rather than the exception. Violators must face severe financial and legal repercussions, not mere warnings.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 09/02/2025)

Firm's claim over land meant for K-IV rejected

The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday dismissed a lawsuit filed against acquisition of land for the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, better known as K-IV.

The SHC observed that the suit was turned down as being impliedly barred by the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 while the plaintiff might still approach the collector for making a reference by invoking the Land Limitation Act, 1908 (LLA).

A construction firm had filed a suit in 2018 and submitted that it owned private land in Gadap Town and had announced to build a housing scheme there. However, a part of the land was marked by the then Karachi Water & Sewerage Board in the route plan for laying of the K-IV project in 2015.

A single-judge bench headed by Justice Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry in its order noted that the plaintiff had failed to draw an exception to the ouster of a civil suit to challenge acquisition proceedings under the LAA and all grounds urged in the suit could have been taken under Section 18 of the LAA.

However, it said that there was some force in the plaintiff submission that it was not made aware of the award, which could be impugned before a civil court, and an application to challenge the same under Section 18 of LAA would be time barred.

The bench also noted that the suit had been filed in 2018, but none of defendants disclosed about the award, including the water utility, until it was brought on record last month.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 13, 15/02/2025)

Five water tankers torched in Karachi

Five water tankers were torched by enraged people after a bike-rider was killed by a dumper truck on University Road near Jail Chowrangi on Monday night.

Police and rescue services said that a large number of people gathered on the road after the heavy vehicle ran over and killed the motorcyclist.

They said that enraged youth torched five water tankers passing through the road. Both tracks of the main road were closed for traffic after the incident.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 17/02/2025)

No end to water woes as K-IV hits another snag

The water crisis has been plaguing most areas of Karachi for years. The city, which is supplied 650 million gallons of water per day from two sources, the Indus River and the Hub Dam, has a daily requirement of 1200 million gallons. Yet even after the passage of nearly two decades, the shortage of 550 million gallons could not be addressed.

Launched in 2016 under the supervision of the Sindh government and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), the K-IV project set out to supply 260 million gallons per day of water to Karachi. In 2021, the federal government took over the project, handing it over to the Water and Power Development Agency (WAPDA). Under the new plan, its cost reached Rs126 billion, and construction was to be completed by December 2025.

According to WAPDA's General Manager South and the Project Director of K-IV Aamir Mughal, thus far 55 per cent of the work on K-IV has been completed however, due to power supply issues and other reasons, the project's completion has been delayed to June 2026, with its cost likely to be increased by 20 per cent due to the high cost of materials," said Mughal.

As per sources of the Express Tribune at WAPDA, even if this important project is completed in time, the citizens will not benefit from the additional supply of water since the three other projects associated with the K-IV are still stuck in limbo. While one project is under construction and will be completed in two years, work on the other two has not even started.

The most important of these is the Augmentation Plan, which involves the construction of an underground pipeline of K-IV from Keenjhar Lake to the Kathore area of Karachi, after which a system of bulk lines for the inner city, spanning about 100 kilometres, will be established. This project will be completed in two years.

The second project, the construction of a power station, involves a 132 KV transmission line that will be installed from the Jhampir Grid Station to the K-IV pumping complex near Keenjhar Lake, enabling the pumping complex to supply 50 MW of electricity. The construction work on the project will start soon and will be completed by December 2025.

Likewise, the Kalri Baghar (KB) Feeder Lining Project, involves the cleaning and expansion of a 38-mile long canal that supplies water to the Keenjhar Lake. This will remove any obstructions in the flow of 260 million gallons per day from the Indus River to Keenjhar Lake. This project too will be completed in two years.

Dr Syed Nawaz Al-Huda, a regional planner, was of the opinion that the Sindh government should be held accountable for the delay in the construction of the power plant, installation of bulk lines and the KB Feeder Lining Project. "Even if the federal government completes the K-IV project on time, water might not be available since the Sindh administration has deliberately delayed resolving the water crisis. Where water projects continue to face delays, executive engineers have strengthened the dirty business of the tanker mafia by creating an artificial crisis in posh and middle-class areas, due to which people are forced to buy tankers at high prices," confirmed Al-Huda.

According to a survey conducted by The Express Tribune, the connivance of the top officials of the KWSC with the tanker mafia has created an artificial water crisis in the city, which is particularly affecting areas like Clifton, Defence, Gulshan-e-Iqbal Block 13D-2 and 13D-3, North Nazimabad, Nazimabad, Liaquatabad and the Pakistan Employees Cooperative Housing Society (P.E.C.H.S) among other areas.

The Express Tribune tried contacting the Secretary of Irrigation Zarif Khedro to confirm the news concerning the delay in the completion of K-IV, but he chose not to respond.

(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 18/02/2025)

Karachi to face another major water crisis as KWSC starts line repair work

The sole water utility of the city on Saturday advised people to store water in advance and use the commodity carefully as there would be an around 40 per cent shortfall in the regular supply for the next three days.

Major localities in almost every Karachi districts — South, Keamari, West, Korangi, Malir, East and Central — would face water shortages because of repair work on two major supply lines in the city.

A spokesman for the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation said that the city received a total daily supply of 650 MGD (million gallons per day), but due to some repair work, the city would face a shortage of 250 MGD.

He said that during the repair work, water supply would be partially affected in old city area, Shershah, PAF Base Masroor, Landhi, Korangi, Liaquatabad, Nazimabad, Pak Colony, Gulbahar, etc.

Official says water shortage will persist for three days

"However, 400 MGD of water will continue to be supplied as usual," he added.

He explained that repair work on the FTM 48-inch diameter and CTM 54-inch diameter pipelines began on Saturday and expected to be completed within 72 hours. The spokesman said that once the repair work was finished, the city's water supply would improve significantly.

According to him, repair work will be carried out in affected areas, including Manzoor Goth, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, and Peeli Kothi in Liaquatabad.

He advised people to store water in advance and use it carefully to avoid any inconvenience.

The spokesman said that the KWSC Managing Director Asadullah Khan had directed that uninterrupted water supply be ensured across the city during Ramadan.

"He also instructed that all leaks in water pipelines be fixed before the holy month begins," he added.

It may be recalled that recently the city had faced multiple water crises which persisted for weeks due to the leakage of an underground main line on University Road twice.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 23/02/2025)

Basha dam affected people vow to intensify protest as talks with minister end in deadlock

The first round of negotiations between the representatives of Diamer-Basha Dam affected people and Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Amir Muqam held in Chilas on Sunday ended in a deadlock.

On his request, the protesters refused to call off their sit-in and instead urged people of other areas to join their sit-in.

The minister is the chairman of a six-member committee constituted on the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to address grievances of the dam-affected people, who have been staging the sit-in at Chilas for the last one week.

Amir Muqam arrived in Chilas, the district headquarters of Diamer, in a helicopter to negotiate with the protesters and convince them to end their sit-in.

Talks were held between the minister and representatives of "Give Rights and Build Dam" protest movement at the Karakoram International University Diamer campus. GB Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan, ministers Engineer Mohammad Anwar, Rehmat Khaliq and Shah Baig were also presented.

Amir Muqam was told that Diamer-Basha Dam affected people had been protesting for acceptance of their 31 demands including implementation of agreements made between the federal government, Wapda and the dam-affected people in 2010.

The chief minister said that in 2010 when the construction of the dam was started, an agreement was made between the then federal government and the land-affected people. He said only 10 per cent of that agreement had been implemented.

He said the land survey for the dam had been conducted by Wapda in 2007 without taking elected members into confidence. Many locals were not included in the list of the affected people.

"I am the chief minister of GB and also an elected member from Diamer and it is my responsibility to present the facts," he said. "Diamer-Basha Dam land compensation award was given in 2015, but people have alleged discrimination in the distribution of the financial package among the affected people," he said.

He said during the previous government, many meetings were held with Wapda officials to resolve the issues. He said resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected people was their genuine right.

"I had requested Amir Muqam to negotiate with the affected people's representatives on the 31 points of character of demands. He requested the representatives of the protesters to postpone the sit-in and start negotiations on the charter of demands in detail with the federal committee within a month," said the chief minister.

Amir Muqam addressed the meeting and appreciated GB people for their sacrifices for the national interest and the annexation of the region with Pakistan. He said it was priority of the federal government to resolve GB people's issues. He said the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan were protectors of the country without salaries.

He said the federal government had increased the annual budget and development projects funds for GB. He said the government was serious to settle the dam-affected people's issues.

"Despite public holidays on Saturday and Sunday, the committee members held meetings and today (Sunday) I arrived here despite other engagements," he said.

He asked the protest movement committee members to call off the sit-in and constitute a committee to start negotiations in detail with the federal committee to reach a consensus to settle the issues.

He said he can't announce resolution of the character of demands as other members of the committee were not presented.

After the negotiations, the committee members expressed dissatisfaction and announced to continue the protest and vowed to intensify their movement.

GB Minister for Agriculture Mohammad Anwar later announced that he would resign if the issues of the affected people were not resolved.

(By Jamil Nagri Dawn, 04, 24/02/2025)

Disputed canal project

THE widespread protests across Sindh against the controversial canal project on the Indus has put the province on the boil.



The Save River Indus drive is fast turning into a mass movement, bringing together diverse political forces. The issue has put the PPP, which has ruled the province without interruption for the past 16 years, in a precarious position.

Although the PPP has lately distanced itself from the federal government's decision to build six canals to irrigate desert land in Punjab, the matter has nevertheless placed the party at the centre of the storm. For many, the canal project means turning a large part of the province into barren land. And the PPP being a part of the ruling coalition at the centre cannot escape the blame for the looming disaster.

While the distribution of water from the Indus has long been a politically sensitive matter for Sindh, the latest controversy over the new canals has turned the situation in the province extremely volatile.

It has given a huge impetus to Sindhi nationalism, which had been largely dormant for a long time, with the PPP dominating the provincial political landscape.

The people of Sindh are seething and their voice needs to be heard.

Thousands of people, mostly the youth and women, are joining the protests organised by disparate Sindhi nationalist groups across the province. Many mainstream political parties and members of civil society have also come out to oppose the canal project that they believe would undermine the unity of the federation.

Growing public anger has also forced the provincial administration to challenge the federal government's divisive canal project. But there is still a lot of scepticism over the PPP's position. The party leadership remained quiet for a long time while work on the project had already started. Some allege that President Asif Zardari had assented to the project last year. It is also alleged by the opposition that the provincial government has granted thousands of acres of agricultural land to the Green Pakistan Initiative launched by the federal government and backed by the establishment. The army chief and Punjab chief minister recently inaugurated a GPI project in the southern Punjab region of Cholistan that is to be irrigated by the new canals on the Indus.

For many provincial leaders, the proposed canals echo the controversy over the long-dead Kalabagh dam project that had united the entire province in protest. A major concern is that the canals would further reduce the flow of water to Sindh. Thousands of acres of land are devoured by the sea each year with the depleting level of water flows in the Indus.

Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal's reassurance that no water will be diverted from Sindh's share has been met with scepticism. There is no surplus water available from its quota that Punjab could spare for the Cholistan canal project. How will it have the quantity needed to fill the capacity of the canals?

What is most shocking is that such a sensitive issue pertaining to the federation was never discussed and approved by the Council of Common Interests. It's also surprising that the PPP did not demand a CCI meeting earlier when the canal plan was starting to take shape, and only woke up to the disturbing issue after the opposition took to the streets. It has been several months since the protests started, but there seems to be no clear policy yet to deal with the issue that directly affects people's lives. The Sindh government has denied the allegation of failing to raise the issue with the federal government more effectively. Yet, it's lacklustre approach in dealing with a highly serious issue raises questions.

It's not just about standing up to the federal government but also the security leadership which is backing the GPI. With its huge stakes in the present hybrid system, it's not surprising that the PPP would try to avoid any direct confrontation on the issue.

PPP leaders maintain that the party will adopt constitutional and democratic methods to fight Sindh's case. That may be a wise thing to do but it would require much more to deal with an issue that is threatening the federal structure. There is a need to resolve

the dispute over the canal project sooner than later as the prevailing public unrest in the province can take a more violent turn. It's a serious crisis that could destabilise the province. With KP and Balochistan already in turmoil the growing unrest in the country's second most populated province would be disastrous for the federation.

There is a growing demand that the canal project, which nationalist leaders say is a life and death issue for Sindh, be shelved. While these leaders' words sound extreme, the people's concerns about the project are not unfounded. The major responsibility lies with the federal government and the establishment to heed those concerns. The people of Sindh are seething and their voice needs to be heard.

There exists a comprehensive constitutional mechanism for resolving water disputes among the provinces but it is hardly followed. The Sindh government accuses the federal government of failing to fully implement the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991. The unilateral decision to build the canals is a violation of the Constitution. It seems that those in power have not learnt any lesson from our history.

The ongoing public protests on the canal issue also reflect the growing distrust between the federating unit and the federation. It will only strengthen extremist nationalist forces. The widespread protest is just one indicator of the growing public discontent, particularly among the youth, against an elite-dominated system.

It's also a message for the PPP which has ruled the province for decades. It seems that the party, which claims to champion the struggle for people's democratic rights, is now only interested in protecting its own power. It seems to have lost touch with the fast-changing social and political landscape in the province. The latest wave of protests must come as a wake-up call for the party leadership.

(By Zahid Hussain Dawn, 06, 26/02/2025)

Protests over water and power outages cause citywide traffic mess

Protests over water and power shortages broke out across several areas of the metropolis on Tuesday, leading to hours-long traffic jams on key roadways.



Moreover, authorities fear further unrest as city residents, who are already grappling with a severe water crisis for the past three days, would face more hardship because the water utility is still working to repair leaks in its supply lines and the water supply would not be restored until Friday.

On Tuesday, commuters endured immense hardship as protesters blocked both lanes of several roads, setting tyres on fire and forcing traffic authorities to divert traffic on alternative routes where slow movement of vehicles was reported.

According to a traffic police spokesperson, there were several protest demonstrations and sit-ins on main roads across the city.

Although there were no protests on Sharea Faisal, Rashid Minhas Road and University Road, the key road links remained clogged throughout the day and late evening due to the closure of several adjoining arteries.

In the South zone of Karachi police, Arambagh, Eidgah Chowk, Tibet Centre and Fresco Chowk were the most affected areas because of the protests against water and power shortage, said DIG-South Syed Asad Raza.

Traffic police in a statement said that both tracks of Jahangir Road near 'Shah Najaf Cut' remained closed for traffic for over six hours due to the protests. Traffic was diverted on alternative routes. The road was opened for traffic after 10pm.

The citizens also suffered due to traffic chaos on several adjoining roads such as Numaish Chowrangi towards Gurumandir, Bahadur Yar Jang Road and Business Recorder Road. Both tracks of Jamshed Road near PSO pump remained closed for traffic. The residents of Landhi-89 blocked both tracks of the main road while Murtaza Chowrangi also remained closed.

Both tracks of the main road in Garden were also closed for traffic because of the residents' protest against water and power shortage.

Similar protests were also reported from the Korangi Industrial Area.

The DIG-South said they apprehended more protests and sit-ins and aggravation of law and order situation as there were reports that several areas of the metropolis may not get water supply till Friday owing to disruption of water line near Old Subzi Mandi.

He said these civic issues needed to be addressed by authorities concerned as police can engage the protestors in talks, help in diversion and regulating of traffic but they cannot provide water.

He said that realising the gravity of the problem, Sindh chief secretary was taking concerted efforts for overhauling the traffic situation by taking several initiatives like removal of encroachments etc. "It is a long haul but it should be religiously followed," opined the DIG.

Newly appointed Traffic DIG Pir Mohammed Shah told Dawn that during the last two months, at least 190 protests had taken place in the city mainly over water and power issues among other problems.

The most affected areas were Teen Hatti, Gurumandir, Lyari, Gharibabad, Liaquatabad, Askari Park, Subzi Mandi, Quaidabad, Dawood Chowrangi, Link Road and Sohrab Goth.

He said that almost on a daily basis, two-three protests take place against water and power issues on an average. "This is a genuine and serious issue, which needs to be addressed urgently for smooth flow of traffic and preventing traffic chaos," opined the traffic police chief.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 26/02/2025)

KWSC claims water supply restored after line repairs completed

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) claimed to have partially restored the water supply to the city on Wednesday evening, after a five-day suspension due to repair work on leaking pipelines.



Major localities in almost every Karachi districts had faced water shortages because of the repair work and the rupture of a water main on University Road due to ongoing work for the construction of Red Line.

On Wednesday, a KWSC spokesman claimed that the water supply had been restored to the affected areas after the water utility had completed repairs of pipelines at 12 different locations in the metropolis.

However, reports pouring in from several areas suggested that not a single drop reached to the residents till late in the evening.

Multiple areas in the city have been suffering from an acute water shortage after the supply was suspended on last Saturday. The water utility spokesman said that repair work was carried out in Marora Goth, Kiran Hospital, Al-Azhar Garden, SUPARCO, Old Vegetable Market, Kashmir Road, and Peeli Kothi Liaquatabad, among other locations.

"Additionally, four new valves have been installed at Karachi University," he added.

According to the KWSC spokesperson, under Phase 1 of the Siphon-19 project, leakages on the 54-inch diameter pipeline at Old Vegetable Market University Road and the 48-inch diameter pipeline from Old Vegetable Market to Liaquatabad have been fully repaired. Furthermore, an "inspection T" has been installed in the FTM line at the Lyari River to enhance water distribution.

He said that the repairs would help eliminate water shortage complaints, significantly improving supply in areas such as Lyari, Saddar, Old City Area, Clifton, Chanesar Town, Jinnah Town, Nazimabad, North Nazimabad, and other parts of Central district. (By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 27/02/2025)

Murad wants work on K-IV project expedited

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday reviewed the progress of K-IV water supply scheme under which the provincial government was taking measures to restore the KB Feeder and Keenjhar Lake.

Provincial Ministers Nasir Shah, Jam Khan Shoro, Ali Hassan Zardari, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman Planning & Development (P&D) Najam Shah, Secretary Works Mohammad Ali Khoso, Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khero, Zubair Channa of P&D, and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

Chairing a joint meeting of the irrigation department and works & services department at the CM House, the chief minister directed the authorities to prepare a plan for dualising the road from Jamshoro Phatak (railway crossing) to Hyderabad via Kotri Barrage.

While reviewing the K-IV water supply project, the CM discussed the restoration of the KB Feeder and Keenjhar Lake, a Rs39.9 billion project, with the federal government contributing Rs19.4bn. To date, Rs4bn has been spent, and the chief minister urged the authorities to expedite the work.

Restoration of KB Feeder, Keenjhar Lake also discussed during meeting

Emphasising the importance of infrastructure and water projects for Sindh's development, CM Shah directed all departments to ensure the effective execution and timely completion of initiatives aimed at improving public services across the province.

The Chief Minister was briefed on 799 ongoing development schemes under the Works & Services Department, with a total cost of Rs. 166 billion. He stressed the need for timely completion and high-quality execution, instructing officials to finalise all ongoing projects before the end of the financial year.

The CM stated that for the fiscal year 2024-25, the government has not introduced any new schemes but is focusing on completing existing projects. Of the Rs55bn allocated this year, Rs37bn has already been utilised, while the throw-forward liability stands at Rs111bn.

Major Infrastructure & Water Projects

CM Shah also reviewed the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) system, a project initially estimated at Rs115.4bn under the federal Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) but revised to Rs172bn. He directed the officials to obtain approval for the project from the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) and noted that no expenditure had been made so far. This year's allocation is Rs100m.

Additionally, he instructed the dualisation of the Jamshoro Phatak Road up to Kotri Barrage, calling it an essential infrastructure upgrade. "The construction of this road would accommodate light traffic in Hyderabad city," he said.

Coastal Highway

During discussion on the Coastal Highway, the CM was informed that the 36-kilometer extension of the Coastal Highway is facing cost overruns. The project, initially estimated at Rs16.2bn, has seen its revised cost rise to Rs29.9bn.

(By Dawn Reporter, 13, 08/03/2025)

Mayor urges governor to get Rs175bn from Centre for K-IV

City Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab has urged Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori to secure Rs175 billion from the federal government for the K-IV water project.

He questioned whether the governor's party — Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan — wanted municipal affairs to be handled through Islamabad, despite calling for the empowerment of the local government system in accordance with Article 140-A of the Constitution.

Mayor Wahab said this while speaking at the inauguration ceremony of a model park in Metroville, SITE.

He expressed gratitude to the people of Metroville for supporting the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). He emphasised that true leadership fulfills promises and that the PPP remains among the people.

Addressing the longstanding water issues in the area, the mayor said that water used to be supplied every three months. However, after taking charge of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), his administration took action against illegal connections and hydrants.

He assured the public that the Hub Canal project would be completed by August, benefiting the people instead of the elite.

Mayor Wahab stated that Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, he himself and Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad were working towards the PPP's vision of clearing the city of encroachments.

He also mentioned the ongoing work on the Gutter Baghicha project, which will focus on water recycling.

He criticised other political parties, stating that even their rallies now resemble mere press conferences, while PPP's press conferences turn into mass gatherings.

Mayor Wahab reaffirmed the PPP's commitment to fulfilling promises and ensuring unbiased development work across all Union Councils (UCs).

He announced plans for a sports complex in Metroville and improvements in roads and drainage systems, with Rs20 million allocated per UC.

Highlighting the recent distribution of streetlights, he instructed that they be installed in public areas.

Mayor Wahab further stated that by June 30, 2025, numerous development projects would be completed and that service to Karachi would continue.

He invited young professionals to utilise the six vacant floors of the Liaquatabad Supermarket for IT-related work.

(By Dawn Reporter, 14, 13/03/2025)

Sindh Assembly passes unanimous resolution against six canals project

Amid allegations and counter-allegations between the members from both sides of the aisle, the Sindh Assembly on Thursday unanimously passed a resolution against the construction of six new canals on the Indus River.



The resolution, tabled by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, also demanded an immediate halt to any plans, activities or work related to the controversial project until an agreement with all provincial governments, particularly Sindh, was reached to ensure that the rights of the province was fully protected and respected.

The speakers from the two sides condemned the federal government's decision to construct new canals and many of them even termed it a threat to the harmony among provinces.

While the chief minister, his cabinet members and treasury lawmakers said that Sindh had consistently maintained its stance on water distribution, the opposition members questioned the role of Pakistan Peoples Party, which supported the federal coalition government.

Supporting the resolution but with reservations, the opposition members belonging to Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, Jamaat-i-Islam and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf lawmakers alleged that the provincial government had tabled the resolution with political designs and for face-saving as the people in parts of the province had already been lodging protest on the issue for the last one month.

Speaking on the resolution, the chief minister warned against any attempt to divert water from the Indus without consent of the province.

He questioned the rationale behind diverting water from Punjab's fertile lands to Cholistan, arguing that such actions would have devastating consequences for both provinces.

Mr Shah recalled Sindh's previous objections to various canal projects, leading to agreements such as the Sindh-Punjab Water Accord of 1945.

"We are being told that water will be taken from Punjab's most fertile lands and diverted to Cholistan and that we should not object," he said and asked if Punjab would allow its most productive regions, like Chaj Doab and Rachna Doab, to dry up just to irrigate a desert.

He reminded the assembly that past objections from Sindh led to the formation of multiple commissions and, ultimately, to the Sindh-Punjab Agreement, which set clear guidelines for water allocation.

The CM urged all stakeholders to adhere to the historic agreements and ensure a fair distribution of water, keeping in mind the rights of Sindh's people.

He said that the matter of new canal's construction was lying with CCI for approval. "If CCI also approves this project, we will go to the joint parliament," he added.

Supporting the resolution, Opposition Leader Ali Khurshi said that the MQM-P had also stood with Sindh against Kalabagh Dam and Thal Canal.

"If Asif Ali Zardari has cleared it at a big forum, why was there a need for a resolution in the provincial assembly?" he asked.

He said the house should be told as to how many times the Sindh government had talked to the federation about the problems of the people of Sindh. "The issue of gas was discussed, what was its follow-up in the assembly?" asked the government.

He said that the assembly sitting appeared to be a meeting of testimony and explanation and added that it was not a proper forum for opposing the project.

He said that Asif Zardari should call a meeting and oppose the canals.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the entire province was united in raising its voice on real issues.

He said that before any major project was undertaken anywhere in the world, a feasibility report was prepared, and the benefit of one specific area could not be prioritised over the collective benefit of all.

He said that even during difficult times, President Asif Ali Zardari raised the slogan of "Pakistan Khappay" (We need Pakistan), and the PPP has always given top priority to Pakistan's integrity.

Provincial Ministers Syed Sardar Shah, Zia Lanjar, Muhammad Bux Mehar, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Muhammad Ali Malkani and Jam Khan Shoro, PPP's Jameel Soomro, Nadir Magsi, Fayyaz Butt, Imdad Pitafi, Nawab Sardar Khan Chandio, Karim Soomro, Dr Sikandar Shoro, MQM-P's Sabir Qaimkhani, Fouzia Hameed, Iftikhar Ahmed, Muhammad Usman, Kiran Masood, PTI's Shabbir Qureshi, Rehan Bandukda, Bilal Khan Jadoon and Sajjad Soomro, and JI's Muhammad Farooq also spoke on the resolution.

Later, Speaker Syed Awais Shah adjourned the house to Friday at 2:30pm.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 14/03/2025)

PPP asks Centre to axe canals project, convene CCI meeting

Rejecting the federal government's proposed project of six new canals under the Indus River System, the Sindh chapter of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Saturday demanded that the federal government withdraw the plan and convene a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to address province's concerns.

At a meeting of its Sindh Council, the ruling party in the province warned that Sindh would not accept any new canal project under the Indus River System.

The meeting held at the Chief Minister House on Saturday was chaired by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and attended by PPP-Sindh President Nisar Ahmad Khuhro, CM Syed Murad Ali Shah, former CM Syed Qaim Ali Shah, PPP-Sindh General Secretary Waqar Mehdi and others.

The meeting paid homage to former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his 46th death anniversary and announced a massive public gathering on April 4 in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto to mark the event.

Party's Sindh Council announces public gathering on April 4 to mark Bhutto's death anniversary

Addressing the meeting, Mr Bhutto-Zardari reiterated PPP's firm stance against any new canal project on the Indus river and expressed support for resolutions passed by the Sindh Council opposing the federal government's proposed canals, emphasising that the party has always raised its voice against such projects that threaten Sindh's water rights.

He stressed that PPP had always been at the forefront of advocating for Sindh's rights and will continue to represent the people on critical issues like water distribution.

Mr Khuhro termed the canals project as a deliberate attempt to deprive Sindh of its fair share of water. He demanded that the federal government immediately withdraw the plan and convene a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to address Sindh's concerns.

CM Murad Ali Shah echoed these concerns, stating that the province would never accept any new canal project under the Indus River System.

Waqar Mehdi said that the party had opposed the canal project from the beginning, even before other political parties became aware of it.

The Sindh Council passed several resolutions during the meeting and demanded that water distribution be ensured as per Paragraph 2 of the 1991 Water Accord, ensuring Sindh receives its rightful share.

The resolution also called for releasing at least 10 million acre foot of water downstream Kotri Barrage.

The council demanded that Chashma-Jhelum and Taunsa-Panjinad Link Canals should remain closed except during flood conditions.

The party called for a telemetry system to monitor water flow from Taunsa to Guddu Barrage to ensure transparency.

The resolution demanded that the chairman of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) and the federal representative in Irsa be appointed from Sindh to ensure fairness in water distribution decisions.

The council dismissed accusations from the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) regarding the canal project, calling them baseless political point-scoring.

During the meeting, party members expressed complete confidence in the leadership of Mr Bhutto-Zardari, President Asif Ali Zardari and Faryal Talpur.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 16/03/2025)

KWSC chief Salahuddin resigns amid inquiry

Chief Executive Officer of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) Syed Salahuddin, who was restrained from attending office in the interest of an inquiry, has tendered his resignation from the post that he held for over two and a half years.



Following his removal from the office, Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan was given additional charge of managing director and CEO until the final results of the inquiry were submitted. The inquiry, however, is still pending disposal with the AEC, though the provincial corruption watchdog was ordered to submit its report within two weeks.

The provincial government had on Jan 7 restrained Mr Salahuddin from attending office and performing functions of MD and CEO of the water utility after the Sindh Anti-Corruption Establishment started a major crackdown against the issuance of licences for groundwater extraction and water theft within the corporation.

In his resignation letter to the chairman of the KWSC Board of Directors on March 3, Mr Salahuddin said that he had joined Senior Management Course (SMC) at the national Institute of Public Administration, therefore, he tendered resignation from the post of MD and CEO.

Attaching with his resignation a performance report, he said that he had served the water utility to the best of his ability while observing highest order of integrity and selfless devotion to duty in true sense.

Mr Salahuddin stated in his performance report that the monthly income of the KWSC from legal hydrants rose from Rs60m to Rs230m.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 17/03/2025)

Experts in Sindh reject new canals, suggest alternatives to irrigate Cholistan

Hydrology and water resources experts, rights activists and environmentalists have opposed the plan to build canals on the Indus River and suggested alternative solutions to ensure that Pakistan's agriculture sector gets modernised without trampling on farmers' rights and harming the natural flow of Indus and its ecology.



They were speaking at a seminar, "The Water Crises and Six Canals Dispute: Need for Equitable and Effective Solutions", organised by the Concerned Citizens Alliance (CCA) at the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) House here on Wednesday. The event was moderated by member CCA Tahseen Fatima.

Speaking on the occasion, hydrology and water resources expert Dr Hassan Abbas said that at present it was important to see how Pakistan could be in a win-win situation by ensuring the "Green Pakistan Initiative" without impacting the Indus River and farmers of Sindh, particularly the lower riparian regions.

"First it needs to be clearly understood whether corporate farming can be successfully and feasibly done in a desert."

He said the amount of sand and mud is quite a lot in the Indus and, therefore, the canals water would require desilting on a large scale and large ponds would also be needed for that. However, Dr Abbas added the desilting capacity of such a level was very difficult to ensure.

Similarly, he spoke of a number of other technical problems in the canals project, which, he believed, make the entire plan unfeasible and unworkable, like, for example land levelling, left-out silt, etc.

Therefore, he suggested an alternative solution based on a study conducted by some Pakistani and American experts, which recommended that instead of canals, the river bank filtration system with "horizontal collector wells" should be used to transport water to Cholistan.

That, he said, should be done through pipelines.

Dr Abbas said Sutlej River has a huge quantity of reserve water under its bed which is enough to irrigate entire Cholistan. It is pertinent to mention here that Sutlej is the nearest river to the Cholistan region.

"Moreover, that scheme would cost half the money compared to the expenses of canals and the duration would also be very less along with multiple other benefits, which are not there in the canals project." Doing that would lead to a win-win situation, the water expert added.

Dr Abbas stressed that the country needed such modern agriculture plans, not the centuries-old concepts of making more canals.

'Not issue of Sindhi nationalism alone'

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Junior, social and political activist and grandson of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, said the issue of six canals is not only an issue of Sindhi nationalism.

"It is rather an issue of patriotism as it is a problem affecting the whole country. The fight for the river is the fight for the rights of the poor," he added.

He also questioned the authority of the governments to control and divert the natural flow and order of rivers.

Moreover, Mr Bhutto said the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz were complicit in the approval of six canals project.

He said he rejected the very idea of farming for profit. "Corporate farming," he added, "has not benefited the country in any significant way."

He believed that there should rather be "cooperative farming" among farmers.

Civil rights lawyer Shahab Usto said people in the country have lost hope in the government as well as the judiciary and that there is insecurity among the public that their rights are being usurped.

He said the permission of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) was not taken for the approval of the six canals despite the fact that it was the relevant body.

Instead, authorities went out of the way and approved the plan, a method which is totally unconstitutional and illegal, Mr Usto added.

He said the plan is a "recipe for disaster" and would lead to severe consequences not only for the farmers of Sindh but also for those of Punjab while the citizens of Karachi would also be affected by water scarcity in the near future.

Similarly, social activist and environmentalist Afia Salam termed the plan illegal and unconstitutional, saying that it would badly impact the lower riparian regions of Sindh and lead to a water crisis, which is already there in many parts of the province and is forcing people to move to urban settlements.

Moreover, she said the canals project would also affect the people of Cholistan, who have now realised the problem and are raising their concerns.

Ms Salam also said that the ecology of the Indus will also be affected by such plans, which would in turn affect the lives of the people.

(By Waqas Ali Ranjha Dawn, 13, 20/03/2025)

Water-insecure Pakistan

As the global community celebrates World Water Day, Pakistan stands at a critical juncture concerning its water resources. Once abundant in freshwater reserves, our nation now confronts escalating challenges that threaten its agricultural and economic backbone. This year's theme, Glacier Preservation, holds particular significance for Pakistan, given its reliance on the Himalayan glaciers that feed the Indus River system.

Pakistan boasts over 7,000 glaciers - the largest concentration outside the polar regions. These glaciers are vital, sustaining the Indus River, which in turn supports the livelihoods of millions. However, climate change has accelerated glacial melt, leading to erratic water flows. The per capita water availability in Pakistan has plummeted below 1,000 cubic meters, marking the threshold of water scarcity.

However, this decline is attributed not only to climatic factors but also to decades of mismanagement and inadequate infrastructure. Lack of effective water storage facilities means that much of the seasonal melt and monsoon rains is lost, rather than being harnessed for use during dry periods. Compounding the scarcity issue is the alarming state of water quality. A

significant portion of the population lacks access to safe drinking water, leading to widespread health issues. Addressing this multifaceted crisis requires immediate and coordinated action. Investments in modernising irrigation practices and building efficient storage systems along with implementing conservation strategies are imperatives. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns about water conservation and pollution prevention must be intensified.

On this World Water Day, it is crucial for Pakistan to recognise the urgency of the situation. The preservation of our glaciers and the sustainable management of our water resources are not just environmental concerns but are central to the nation's future prosperity and health.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 22/03/2025)

Centre urged to ensure fair water distribution among provinces

Expressing profound concern regarding a severe water shortage in the province, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has asked the federal government to ensure a fair distribution of water so that every province receives its rightful share.

In a statement released on World Water Day, he warned that the agriculture economy of the province was at serious risk due to diminishing water availability.

"The crisis has significantly impacted farmers and fishermen, whose livelihoods depend on the Indus River," he said in a statement released on World Water Day.

He pointed out that the reduced water flow in the Indus River has jeopardised millions of jobs. He attributed the threat to the river's existence to climate change and inequitable water distribution.

"The drying waves of the Indus River are a warning sign for life and agriculture," he declared, reaffirming that Sindh will not compromise on its water rights.

He emphasised the Pakistan Peoples Party's long-standing commitment to defending Sindh's water rights.

Expressing strong concerns about the construction of new canals on the Indus river, the chief minister cautioned that such projects could worsen the water crisis in Sindh and lead to drought-like conditions.

He urged the federal government to ensure a fair distribution of water so that every province receives its rightful share.

"How can new canals be constructed when Sindh's fertile lands are already deprived of water?" he asked, demanding immediate action to prevent a potential famine in the province.

Mr Shah called for urgent action to safeguard water resources for future generations.

The CM also highlighted the importance of protecting the Indus delta, asserting that its preservation is vital for Pakistan's survival.

"The Indus river's waters have not reached the Indus delta for years, resulting in the submergence of millions of acres of land into the sea," he lamented.

Mr Shah assured that his government had formulated a robust strategy to address the water crisis and called for a collective effort to conserve every drop of water.

"Life is impossible without water; let us pledge today to protect every drop," he said and urged the public to prevent water waste and ensure a sustainable future.

'Desalination plant for Karachi'

Also on World Water Day, Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the provincial government had planned to bring seawater to the city after desalination as there was a huge gap between supply and demand in the city.

He said that the provincial government had taken vigorous steps to address the shortage of drinking water in the city.

He said that 29 modern chlorination stations were being built in different areas of the city at a cost of Rs290 million to protect citizens from waterborne diseases.

The mayor said an additional 40 million gallons of water would start coming to the city on August 14 after the completion of the Hub Canal project.

He said that new water lines were being laid at the Dhabeji Pumping Station.

The mayor also appealed to people to use water sparingly as its every drop was precious in the context of increasing global warming and expected drought.

(By Dawn Reporter, 13, 23/03/2025)

Bulk line faults perpetuate water crisis

With the arrival of 2025, the deplorable state of Karachi's water supply system has come to the fore as three consecutive incidents of damage to the bulk water lines have perpetuated a shortage of water across most areas of the city.

Mohsin Raza, General Secretary of the People's Labour Union of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), leveled serious allegations against the KWSC. "This issue has been ongoing for several years, but KWSC has not replaced the old

pipelines. Despite the World Bank providing a loan of 1.6 billion US dollars for the restructuring of KWSC, the old pipelines have not been replaced. The relief of the public should have been a priority," said Raza.

In December last year, an 84-inch water pipeline was damaged due to development work on the Red Line Bus Rapid Transit System on University Road. However, KWSC shut down the water supply from Dhabeji Pumping Station for 17 days for the repair of the pipeline.

Later, in January this year, a 72-inch pipeline burst due to an electricity breakdown at Dhabeji Pumping Station, affecting the city's water supply for two days. In the next month, the water supply to most areas of the city was shut down for another four days due to repair work on three bulk lines near Purani Sabzi Mandi. Similarly, on March 10, all pumps at the Hub Pumping Station were shut down due to an electricity breakdown, affecting the water supply in District West and District Kemari for almost a day.

"The Chief Minister should investigate why so many faults are occurring in the bulk water system. Under the supervision of KWSC, hydrants are making 40,000 to 50,000 trips daily, supplying 30 to 40 million gallons of water. In this scenario, dozens of illegal hydrants are operating in the city, stealing water from the Water Corporation's lines and selling it. Both the legal and illegal hydrants are looting citizens through the tanker mafia," claimed Raza.

A KWSC officer, speaking on the condition of anonymity, revealed that bulk water lines burst at various times throughout the year since some of them were 60 to 70 years old and had become extremely corroded.

"Electricity breakdowns and water backpressure cause the old lines to burst. These lines should have been replaced years ago. The 72-inch bulk water line from Dhabeji is also corroded and often bursts. Other bulk water lines have exceeded their lifespan however, residential houses and illegal structures have been built on top of them. Before replacing these lines, KWSC will need to remove these encroachments," noted the official.

Riaz Azhar, Chairman of the Hassan Square Union Council in Gulshan Town called out KWSC for not replacing the old lines. "Every year, bulk water lines burst, and KWSC fails to replace them. This raises questions about the corporation's intentions. Last year, during the water crisis in December, the tanker mafia made billions of rupees. This year, three similar incidents have occurred, perpetuating water shortages and strengthening the tanker mafia," implored Azhar.

Regional Planner Dr Syed Nawaz Al-Huda criticized the KWSC's higher officials for not rectifying the bulk water supply system. "An inquiry should be carried out on the performance of these officials. Every month, some pipe bursts causing water shortages in most areas of the city and forcing citizens to buy expensive tankers. The bulk water supply system should be strengthened to prevent such incidents," he emphasized.

Commenting on the matter, a KWSC spokesperson stated that Karachi received 650 million gallons of water daily from the Indus River and Hub Dam, but the city's demand was 1,200 million gallons, resulting in a daily shortfall of 550 million gallons. "The World Bank and the Sindh government are jointly replacing the 72-inch line at the Dhabeji Pumping Station. This is expected to be completed within the next four months," said the official.
(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 24/03/2025)

SHC issues notices on plea challenging canals project

The Sindh High Court on Wednesday issued notices to the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) and others in a petition challenging the planned construction of new canals on the Indus River.

A grower of Sindh, Qurban Maitlo, moved the SHC against the appointment of federal member of Irsa Asjad Imtiaz Ali and stated that his appointment was made in clear violation of a policy decision as well as an earlier judgement of the SHC on the subject matter.

Citing the secretaries of establishment and water resources divisions, Irsa chairman, secretary of the Sindh irrigation department and federal member of Irsa as respondents, petitioner Qurban Ali Maitlo submitted that he was a grower in the lowest riparian area and has a vested interest in ensuring the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution.

Representing the petitioner, Barrister Zamir Ghumro argued that Irsa's composition was illegal without its federal member being appointed from Sindh and it could not issue the water availability certificate for the construction of Cholistan and Thal phase II canals.

Irsa's federal member appointed in violation of policy decision dating year 2000, petitioner tells bench

He submitted that Mr Ali was holding his position without lawful authority as the SHC had already ruled that federal member of Irsa must be from Sindh while the Supreme Court had also dismissed an appeal filed by the federal government against such order in 2021.

After a preliminary hearing, a two-judge bench of SHC headed by Justice Mohammad Faisal Kamal Alam put the respondents on notice with direction to file their comments till April 7.

The bench also issued notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan and the provincial law officer for next hearing.

The petitioner submitted that Irsa was established under the Irsa Act, 1992 with the mandate to regulate and monitor the distribution of water sources of the Indus River, in accordance with the Water Accord, 1991, among the provinces, while the authority would be comprised of five members with one from each province and the federal government nominating one member.

He also asserted that since Sindh had witnessed the drought conditions during 1999-2002, a policy decision was taken through an executive order in July 2000 that the federal member of Irsa must be from Sindh in order to safeguard the interests of the

province which was the lowest riparian. The decision was taken in order to apply principle of proportionality as Sindh was major stakeholder of water having 42 per cent of water though reduced under 1991 Accord than the share provided in Sindh-Punjab Water Agreement 1945.

The petitioner further maintained that the federal member in question was appointed in 2019 and the same had not only been made in defiance of the policy decision but also against a judgment of the SHC handed down in May 2017 holding that the federal government was bound to comply with the executive order and appoint federal member of Irsa from Sindh.

He contended that due to the lack of proper representation of Sindh in Irsa, its decisions were biased and prejudicial to the interests of the province and the same was evident in its recent decision to construct the Cholistan and Thal canals phase-II, despite insufficient water availability in the Indus Basin while being the lowest riparian area, Sindh's unique water requirements necessitated careful consideration and protection.

Consequently, the petitioner argued that the very existence of the Indus Delta, which was already facing an ecological disaster characterised by seawater intrusion, loss of mangrove forests, dwindling fisheries, and saltwater contamination of freshwater sources, was at the risk.

He asked the court to declare that the decisions made by Irsa including but not limited to the water availability certificate for construction of such canals as unconstitutional, illegal and void ab initio.
(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 13, 27/03/2025)

Canal unrest

AS unrest in Sindh increases over the Cholistan canal plan, the PPP seems unclear on how to cool public sentiments. There are strong concerns that the project will further disturb the ecological balance in the province and deprive it of its mandated water share, putting at risk the livelihoods of tens of thousands of people and displacing communities. Many in Sindh believe that the PPP, especially President Asif Zardari, has tacitly lent its support to the controversial scheme to please the powers that be. This is in spite of the party's efforts to raise the issue in parliament and demand a meeting of the Council of Common Interests before the execution of the scheme.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah's recent media briefing was also an attempt to put at rest public concerns over the planned canal as he claimed that work on the scheme had yet not commenced. He seems to have drawn this conclusion on the basis of his information that Punjab has still not spent the funds it had allocated for the disputed canal in the budget for the present fiscal year.

In the same breath, he sought to dispel the impression that the PPP or President Zardari were implicitly favouring the plan. "The PPP has the strength and capability to halt the scheme," he said, implying that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif depended on the party's support to stay in power. "This power will be exercised only if necessary. We are prepared to go to any lengths to protect the rights of Sindh. If our concerns are acknowledged, there will be no need for extreme measures," he concluded. However, such reassurances from the party leadership are unlikely to dispel suspicions regarding the PPP's alleged complicity in the project unless President Zardari himself clarifies his stance.

The growing opposition to the project calls for pausing its execution till a detailed data-based study is prepared by experts on its potential impact on Sindh's shrinking delta due to sea intrusion driven by reduced ecological flows below Kotri. Besides, the claims that the canal would be fed by floodwaters from Jhelum or Punjab's own share should be supported with data. Boosting agricultural productivity for food security and exports is crucial for the country. But it should not come at the cost of interprovincial harmony and the federation or the displacement of communities and tenants.

With rising water scarcity in the Indus system, it is crucial to move towards a consensus-driven policymaking process. Or the canal project may turn into yet another highly divisive project like the Kalabagh dam, something that can neither be accepted nor discarded. So far those backing the project have not shown any inclination of taking all the stakeholders on board.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 03/04/2025)

Water future

THE UN's recently released World Water Development Report 2025 has amplified concerns about the water future of the Indus Basin. The report paints a grim picture of retreating glaciers that have imperilled the future of billions dependent on glacial melting. It reveals that glacier retreat in the Hindukush-Himalayan (HKH) region is alarming — 65 per cent faster during 2011-2020 compared to the previous decade. They are also melting faster than the global average.



The HKH region, spread over 3,500 kilometres, is often referred to as the water tank of 10 large Asian river systems, including the Indus. The basins of these rivers provide water to 1.9 billion people — nearly a quarter of the world's population. In the long term, diminished water flows are likely to trigger droughts that may endanger food, water, energy and livelihood security in the region.

Recently, the Met Office issued a fresh drought warning in the country. A protracted drought has manifested its severity in empty reservoirs and dwindling flows at barrages. The advisory warns that the conditions persist in Sindh, southern parts of Balochistan, and the lower eastern plains of Punjab. Overall, the country has received 40pc less rainfall. Sindh is the worst-hit, with 62pc below-normal showers recorded since September 2024. In an ominous forecast, the advisory states that the emergence of flash droughts is also anticipated in the coming months in light of the lasting rainfall deficit and increasing temperatures.

The Tarbela and Chashma reservoirs have touched dead-level, and the Indus carries scant flows. On World Water Day last month, Sindh was struggling to manage a 51pc shortage in water flows. Some canals were receiving 70pc less than the required discharges. Irrigation officials were imploring farmers to desist from sowing, as barely any drinking water was being released into watercourses. Kharif starts early in Sindh, and water requirements reach 40,000 cusecs by early April, whereas the province is receiving less than 20,000 cusecs. The weather prognosis is adding to the consternation, with a flash drought already forewarned. Temperatures in Sindh rise steeply in April, which can evaporate residual soil moisture, leaving crop fields parched. The production of Kharif crops — cotton, sugarcane, mangoes, bananas, and vegetables — will be negatively affected in Sindh if flows do not improve by mid-April.

A drought emergency should be declared.

The Indus River System Authority has declared 43pc shortfall in water during April. The emerging situation is alarming, as the frequency of drought at the early Kharif stage has increased in recent years. In five of the last 10 years, the Tarbela Dam reached dead-level by the third week of March. Meanwhile, Mangla Dam shows relatively better storage during this period. However, at such a critical stage, Sindh seldom receives any supplies from Mangla, as Punjab prefers to store water for its own Kharif needs. Sindh has been resenting this practice.

Water availability in the Indus Basin has declined over the first quarter of this century. Flows in both the eastern and western rivers have dropped due to natural and human activity. Discharge data at rim stations indicates that average inflows at the rim stations of western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab) stood at 135.82 million acre feet during the 1976-1998 period but declined significantly to 120.79 MAF during 1999-2023. Similarly, the eastern rivers (Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas) have seen a dip from 9.35 MAF to 2.96 MAF during the same period.

It is against this backdrop that new canals and corporate farming are being strongly denounced in Sindh. The province is rattled by relentless protests, vehemently decrying the construction of new canals and the corporate farming scheme in the Cholistan area.

The Indus Basin has not received any major riverine flood since 2010. The last devastating flood in 2022 was caused by abnormal rains and torrential flows from mountain ranges bordering Sindh and Balochistan. An overall declining trend in flows has become more pronounced in recent years. While the vagaries of climate can also trigger massive floods, droughts appear to be the dominant climatic feature in the coming decades. As average temperatures rise and precipitation becomes scarser, the long-term scenario turns murkier.

Both near- and long-term scenarios are unfavourable for developing new command areas or undertaking large-scale farming schemes — particularly those involving international commodity trade. Priorities must shift from engineering-centric infrastructure to conservation and improved water management. A national drought emergency should be declared to formulate a long-term drought mitigation plan and policies focused on enhancing land and water productivity.

(By Naseer Memond Dawn, 07, 06/04/2025)

SHC takes issue with Centre's pick for Irsa, stays work on canals project

The issue of an improper appointment to the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) served as the basis for a Sindh High Court (SHC) order, which on Monday restrained the authority and others from taking any further action on the planned construction of new canals on the Indus River.

A two-judge bench comprising Justice Muhammad Faisal Kamal Alam and Justice Jawad Akbar Sarwana granted 10 days to respondents so they could file their comments, after the federal and provincial law officers sought more time to file para-wise comments on the behalf of respondents.

A grower from Sindh, Qurban Maitlo, had moved the SHC last month against the appointment of Irsa's Federal Member Asjad Imtiaz Ali, claiming that the appointment was made in clear violation of existing policies — as well as an earlier judgement of the SHC on the matter.

Citing the secretaries of the establishment and water resources divisions, the Irsa chairman, secretary of the Sindh Irrigation Department and federal member of Irsa as respondents, the petitioner also assailed the water availability certificate issued by Irsa for the construction of new canals on the Indus River.

Petitioner says incumbent federal member not appointed as per policy, or in line with prior court ruling

The petitioner had asserted that in view of the drought-like conditions witnessed in Sindh during the 1999-2002 period, a policy decision was taken through an executive order in July 2000 that the federal member of Irsa must be from Sindh, in order to safeguard the interests of the province, which was the lowest riparian.

Counsel for petitioner Barrister Zamir Ghumro emphasised that the current composition of Irsa was not in accordance with the Indus River System Authority Act, 1992 and the Executive Order issued on July 10, 2000, which was also affirmed by the SHC in an earlier judgement handed down in 2017.

The petitioner also asserted that since Irsa's composition was illegal, it could not issue the impugned water availability certificate for the construction of Cholistan and Thal phase II canals.

In its order, the bench said that the petitioner's contention appeared to be correct as Irsa's federal member was supposed to be from Sindh, but the incumbent was not.

The bench also noted that during the hearing, the respondents had not disputed the fact that the member in question was not from Sindh province.

"The present structure of Respondent Irsa is under serious dispute. In these circumstances, and looking at the sensitivity of the issue, the propriety demands, that Respondents should not take any further action and measures in pursuance of the above Water Availability Certificate dated 25.01.2025," the order noted.

The court also observed that Article 155 of the Constitution provided a dispute resolution mechanism, including, appointment of commission of experts.

Article 155 extends the purview of the Council of Common Interests on resolving disputes between the federation and the federating units about their rights to water from any natural source and authorises the government concerned to make a complaint. On a query from the judges, Advocate General Sindh Jawad Dero submitted that the above provision has been invoked. The hearing was then adjourned till April 18.

Contempt notices

Another SHC division bench also issued notices to the secretaries for the water resources and establishment divisions, on an application seeking contempt proceedings against them for flouting an earlier order by the SHC.

A two-judge constitutional bench, comprising Justice Mohammad Karim Khan Agha and Justice Adnanul Karim Memon, also directed Water Resources Secretary Ali Murtaza and Establishment Secretary Inamullah Dharejo to turn up on May 7, along with their replies.

Petitioner Ghulam Abbas Leghari has filed a contempt application before the SHC, submitting that he had filed a petition in 2013, on which the SHC had ruled in May 2017 that the federal member of Irsa must hail from Sindh.

However, the petitioner asserted that this judgement was disobeyed when Asjad Imtiaz Ali was appointed federal member in 2019.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 01, 08/04/2025)

Karachi hit by another water crisis as many areas go dry for five days

Most localities in almost every district are bound to face an acute water shortage as the city will suffer nearly 40 per cent shortfall in the regular supply for the next five days due to repair works set to start on Thursday on two major water supply lines.

The areas where water disruption will occur during the repair included Clifton, Defence Housing Authority, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Lyari, Lines Area, Defence View, Akhtar Colony, Garden, Mahmoodabad, PECHS, Nursery, Baloch Colony, Orangi Town, Qasba Colony, Saddar, old city areas, PIB Colony, Hyderabad Colony, Landhi and Korangi.

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation has advised people to store water in advance and use the commodity carefully as two 84-inch diameter pipelines would undergo a comprehensive 96-hour repair operation.

A KWSC spokesman said that the water utility had planned a critical repair work on the major supply line in Abdullah Shah Ghazi Goth near Safoora Goth in a proactive move to enhance the city's water distribution system.

"The 84-inch diameter pipelines, which have been leaking for some time, are now undergoing a comprehensive 96-hour repair operation that will start on Thursday in Ghazi Goth," he added.

Speaking to Dawn, KWSC Chief Executive Officer Ahmed Ali Siddiqui said that he had instructed the officials concerned to complete the work within 72 hours. "The repair work will be carried out round-the-clock to restore the regular water supply as soon as possible," he said.

In late February, almost every Karachi districts — South, Keamari, West, Korangi, Malir, East and Central — had experienced an acute shortage of water for five days when the repair work was carried out on two mains of 48-inch diameter and 54-inch diameter respectively, though the water utility had claimed that the repair work would complete in 72 hours.

In Dec last year, major parts of the city had suffered acute water shortages for at least two weeks after an 84-inch pipeline developed leakages one after another, mainly due to the digging work on the BRT line near University Road.

As for the leakages in the main line at Gazi Goth, the KWSC spokesman said that the repair work would continue uninterruptedly around-the-clock with teams working in shifts to ensure timely completion.

"The repair is aimed at eliminating leakage and improving water pressure and supply across several localities in the city," he added.

The spokesman said that once the pipeline was fully repaired and restored, residents in affected areas were expected to see an improvement in daily water availability.

He said that there would be a temporary shortfall of 200 million gallons of water daily (MGD) in the city, which received about 650 million gallons of water daily against its requirement of 1,200 MGD, due to the ongoing repair work.

The water utility spokesman urged citizens to store water and use it carefully during this period to avoid any inconvenience.

He said that the long-term outcome of the repairs would lead to better and more efficient water distribution in the city.

The spokesman said that around 20 MGD water was supplied from hydrants through water tankers.

“The supply from hydrant in Landhi would be affected”, he said adding that the hydrant at Nipa would continue to supply water as it got water from Damloti conduit.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 10/04/2025)

Crumbling water infrastructure

Once again, Karachi stands on the brink of a water crisis. For the next five days, residents across nearly every district will face a crippling 40% shortfall in water supply, as critical repairs are carried out on two 84-inch pipelines. KWSC has urged citizens to store water in advance and use it sparingly — a grim routine that is becoming all too familiar for Karachiites.

This is not the first such episode, nor will it be the last if structural issues are not addressed. In February, similar maintenance work on other major lines left vast stretches of the city dry. In December, a cascading series of leakages in an 84-inch main line — exacerbated by construction near University Road — plunged many neighbourhoods into a two-week-long water emergency.

The recurring nature of these breakdowns is no coincidence. Karachi’s water infrastructure is dangerously outdated and overburdened. The city currently receives just 650 million gallons per day (MGD) against a requirement of 1,200 MGD, and the upcoming repair work will slash even that by 200 MGD. Decades of neglect and ad-hoc patchwork repairs have left the city’s water distribution network in a state of collapse. Temporary fixes may stop the bleeding, but they won’t heal the wound.

What Karachi needs is not another set of repair operations stretched beyond deadlines, but a comprehensive plan to rebuild the water infrastructure from the ground up. This includes replacing aging pipelines, modernising pumping stations, introducing water metering and leak detection systems, and ensuring transparency in operations. Until we shift from mismanagement to meaningful investment and structural reform, the taps in Karachi will continue to run dry and people will continue to pay the price.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 11/04/2025)

Water crisis exacerbated amid delays in pipeline repairs

A debilitating water crisis in the metropolitan city has intensified as ongoing repair work on a major water supply line has disrupted access to over 400 million gallons of water over the past two days. According to Karachi Water and Sanitation Corporation (KWSC) officials, the repair is expected to take at least two more days, leaving 40 to 50 per cent of the metropolis facing severe water shortages.

The crisis stems from leaks and bursts in the aging pipeline infrastructure, exacerbated by frequent power outages at the pumping stations. These issues have become routine and continue to hinder the already strained water distribution system. Residents in many areas are struggling to access even basic water supplies, leading to widespread frustration and hardship.

KWSC officials confirmed that repair work is underway on the 84-inch main supply line. While repairs have been completed at three to four critical points, work continues on the remaining sections. A KWSC spokesperson stated that around 200 million gallons of water is currently not being delivered to the city due to the repair works.

At present, Karachi is receiving about 450 million gallons of water daily, much below the required amount. The impact of the disruption has been felt in several neighbourhoods, including Korangi, Landhi, Malir, Shah Faisal Colony, Gulistan-e-Johar, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Jamshed Road, PIB Colony, the Old City Area, Lyari, Defence, Clifton, and Mehmoodabad.

The crisis has also affected government-operated water hydrants. Only 10 per cent of water is currently being supplied from the Landhi and Sherpao hydrants, while 40 to 50 per cent is coming from the NEPA and Safoora hydrants. However, the Sakhi Hassan Crush One and Two facilities remain operational.

Officials have called upon Karachiites to conserve water and use it judiciously during this period. The KWSC assured citizens that repair work is being expedited and is likely to be completed by Sunday.
(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 12/04/2025)

‘Canals project will devastate Indus delta, cause water crisis’

Members of civil society, along with politicians and activists, staged a rally on Sunday in protest over the federal government’s plan to construct new canals on the Indus River.

A large number of people, including women, began marching from Frere Hall towards the Karachi Press Club, where several prominent personalities delivered speeches.

The participants were carrying placards and banners inscribed with slogans against the canals project.

Speaking on the occasion, architect and urban planner Arif Hasan questioned how canals could be constructed without the consensus of all provinces, calling it a violation of the Constitution.

He said that due to sea intrusion in the delta, around 3,000 families have migrated to Karachi’s Rehri Goth and other parts of the province, as they no longer have access to fresh drinking water.

Economist Kaiser Bengali said the canals were presumably being built to irrigate the lands of Cholistan, but warned that “nature’s system cannot be changed”.

Citing the example of Africa, he noted that even the Sahara Desert could not be turned into fertile land. He added that instead of irrigating desert areas, the canals would lead to a shortage of water in already fertile regions, turning them barren.

This, he warned, would result in food shortages, especially as farmers in Punjab are already protesting over the extremely low prices of wheat.

Speaking on the occasion, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Jr said this was not just issue of Sindh only or nationalists but it was an issue of all of us, as water scarcity would also affect Karachi's water supply.

He urged the Urdu-speaking community to raise their voices against the construction of the canals.

Social worker Faisal Edhi of the Edhi Foundation said that he had recently visited Badin, where sea intrusion had spread over 12 kilometers. He warned that the lack of freshwater would further devastate the Indus delta.

Lawyer Shahab Usto of the Sindh Petitions Forum, one of the rally organisers, alleged that in the name of corporate farming, Sindh's water and land were being usurped.

Dr Ali Azhar of the Pakistan Medical Association stated that the canals would not only destroy Sindh but also Karachi. "When Karachi is destroyed, the entire country will suffer," he said.

Zain Shah of Sindh United Party asked against whom, the Pakistan Peoples

Party (PPP) was holding rallies. He claimed the PPP was merely trying to "cool down" the political temperature in Sindh, while simultaneously giving lands for corporate farming.

Azhar Jamil of the Concerned Citizens Alliance — one of the rally's organisers — along with Jamaat-i-Islami leader Hafiz Nasrullah, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leader Dr Jaipal, Prof Saleem Memon and others also spoke.

Meanwhile, a number of activists belonging to the Jeay Sindh Mahaz also staged a rally in front of the KPC. They also demanded that the controversial canals project be shelved forthwith.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 21/04/2025)

Water talks

The ensuing rift within the ruling coalition over building of six water canals on River Indus has taken a pleasant turn, as PPP and PML-N, the two major partners at the Centre, have agreed to talk it out. The good point after months of discord is that a kind of thaw has arrived, as the PPP of Sindh and the PML-N stalwarts who are running the show at Punjab and the federal dispensation have hinted at resolving the controversy through consultation rather than confrontation. The issue has apparently borne out of an ambitious agriculture initiative to irrigate barren lands in Punjab's Cholistan for which water is to be procured allegedly at the expense of Sindh. It goes without saying that the mega project either lacked consensus or it was bulldozed without taking the lower riparian province into confidence. The sourness was evident as President Asif Ali Zardari in his annual address to the parliament termed it as an anti-federation initiative.

Pakistan, being an agrarian state, cannot limit its mosaic of cultivation. At the same time increasing per yield production and mechanising the farming sectors are indispensable challenges. Green Pakistan Initiative of the Punjab government is a step in the right direction and should be replicated by other provinces by tapping new horizons of appropriate cultivation. Luckily, disbursement of water has a consensual and constitutionally-ordained mechanism between the federating units, and the pieces of legislation in the form of the 1991 Water Accord and the IRSA Act of 1992 are in need of being honoured. Any discord over new initiatives should not be politicised and rather dealt with amicably in the national interest. Sindh too on its part must indulge in introspection as the wider terrain of its cultivable land is barren, and the inflow of water can be better channelised for a greener tomorrow. It is also a given that no province should encroach on other's resources and equitable distribution of water should be ensured. One hopes Sindh and Punjab will look at the wider picture of development and make room for a give and take.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 22/04/2025)

Students march against canals project

Student activists and members of civil society converged at Teen Talwar in Clifton and marched towards Fawara Chowk, where they staged a brief sit-in to lodge their protest against the controversial canals project on Tuesday.



The protest was organised by the Save Indus Students Alliance and Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT).

The protesters were carrying placards and chanting slogans decrying the existing water woes in the province.

Muneer Hussain, a student from Hala, said: "Karachi's water is sourced from the Indus River, and the construction of new canals will drastically reduce the city's supply. If that happens, water wars could erupt and spread across Karachi like

civil unrest."

"The citizens [of Karachi] need to understand that the issue is not specific to farmers but an issue of survival for everyone," he added.

Bisma Barkat, a member of the KBT organising committee, said, "There are multiple voices present [at the protest] from all walks of life in Sindh. It does not make sense to not be one of those voices because this issue is existential for some [people]."

Speaking on how the project would affect Karachi, Barkat said that 85 per cent of the city's water came from the Keenjhar Lake, which was fed by the Indus River. "If more canals are built on the Indus River, that water won't reach Keenjhar, and ultimately, it won't reach the common man in Karachi," she said.

She continued, "If you do not get water, how do you run a metropolitan city that runs your factories and industries, which employ the poor? Even if canals are drawn, the golf courses [in Karachi] will still be maintained, but it is the poor people of Karachi who will be most affected."

Wareesha Mehtab, another member of the KBT, said, "Around 70 per cent of Karachi's population is the working class. They are the ones who will be affected the most."

She also stated that the project poses a threat to the fishermen and farmers within the metropolis.
(By Sabrina Haider, Dawn, 13, 23/04/2025)

Lawyers, opposition parties in Sindh reject PM's announcement on canals

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement of bringing to a halt construction of new canals on the Indus River has failed to convince legal fraternity and opposition parties of Sindh as they vow to continue their protest campaign and the sit-in at Babarloi bypass in Khairpur till the issuance of a notification officially annulling the controversial scheme.



The lawyers' leaders at Babarloi convened a huddle to ponder over the outcome of the prime minister and Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's meeting and decided not to end the sit-in till they saw the notification, and issued another 48-hour ultimatum to the federal government to issue the document.

Karachi Bar Association's president, Amir Nawaz Warraich, who presided over the meeting, said: "After the 48-hour ultimatum is over, we can take [more drastic] decisions such as blocking the railway tracks."

He said that they too were hearing reports about the federal government's issuing the notification and said doctors, lawyers, teachers, labourers, youth, women, men and children were united in their protest against canals.

The meeting was attended by Sindh High Court Bar Association president Barrister Sarfaraz Metlo, Sindh Bar Council's vice president Shafqat Rahim Rajput and senior lawyers K.B. Laghari and Yasir Arafat Shar.

Save Indus River Movement rejects PM's announcement

The Save Indus River Movement — a conglomerate of nationalist, religious and political parties and civil society — has rejected the prime minister's announcement meeting and termed it a "betrayal with people of Sindh".

"The people of Sindh have spoken loud and clear that they will no longer fall for lollipops or deceptive tactics," said a statement issued after a meeting of the movement's leaders.

The meeting, attended by the movement's convener Sindh United Party chief Syed Zain Shah, Grand Democratic Alliance leader Dr Safdar Abbasi, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Pakistan Sindh chief Haleem Adil Sheikh, Pakistan Muslim League-Functional's Sardar Abdul Rahim, GDA leader Hasnain Mirza, and other key leaders, said that PPP had already "compromised" Sindh's interests, making it impossible for the party to cancel the controversial project.

The meeting questioned why allocations of land were made under the Green Pakistan Initiative had not yet been revoked — despite this falling within purview of the Sindh government's authority.

"Participants [in the meeting] asserted that the May 2 lollipop will not be accepted by the people of Sindh under any circumstances, and warned the PPP that if it believes it can once again deceive the public, it is gravely mistaken," it added.

Talking to *Dawn*, Dr Abbasi said that referring the canal issue to the CCI did not signify its resolution it merely caused to prolong it. "We firmly believe there is no room for debate on this issue," he added.

"The canal project must be scrapped once and for all. We do not recognise the CCI, nor do we consider its members legitimate representatives of people. Our protest will continue unabated until our demands are fully met and the project is permanently abandoned," he said. AT sees PM-Bhutto-Zardari meet as betrayal to Sindh

Awami Tehreek's central president, Advocate Vasand Thari, said that the decision to take the canals issue to the CCI taken in a meeting between the prime minister and Bhutto-Zardari was a complete betrayal to people of Sindh.

A statement issued by the party said that despite unabated protests by Sindh's people, the leadership of the PML-N and PPP was not willing to quit their stubborn stance. As majority on the CCI was from Punjab, the council had lost its integrity, it said.

No person in Sindh trusted the CCI, which had made a wrong decision about the census and conspired to turn Sindhis into a minority, hence all its decisions were rejected, it said.

It said the prime minister had the authority to reject the controversial projects but this was not done in the PM-Bhutto-Zardari meeting. The people of Sindh had not given PPP any right to decide their fate, it said.

Thari said that he along with central leadership of the party and a large number of women from Sindhyani Tehreek would participate in the Babarloi sit-in today.

(By Waseem Shamsi and Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 25/04/2025)

Canal row

Politics of convenience prevailed as estranged allies in the coalition agreed to shelve the contentious canal issue. The proposed construction of six water canals on River Indus had almost torpedoed smooth sailing at the federal government; and Sindh was up in arms, unrelenting to compromise as a lower riparian entity.

The somersault incidentally came hours after India unilaterally held in abeyance the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, providing a face-saving to the warring allies as a consolation to patch up politically. The official word, however, is to delay the decision until the Council of Common Interest, a constitutional body on intra-provincial affairs, meets and deliberates upon its pros and cons.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PPP chairperson Bilawal Zardari looked somber as they played to the gallery by defusing the crisis. The war of words between the two allies and protests across Sindh had kept the beleaguered coalition on tenterhook for days. It is a given that no political homework was done before the ambitious decision to construct the canals to irrigate the barren lands of Cholistan in Punjab was announced at the inauguration of Green Pakistan Initiative.

While the corporate farming scheme is indeed beneficial for the country — as it attracts valuable foreign investment and ensures food security — a consensus among the broad spectrum of stakeholders as well as experts is essential for the gigantic project to go ahead.

With the controversy taking a backseat, now is the time for political parties across the board to sit down and jot down a national agenda. Provincial coordination is one of the weakest and all the federating units must pay attention to it.

The revulsion in Balochistan and K-P, and the sense of parochialism seen in Sindh and Northern Areas, is all owing to the disgust that is there because of uneven distribution of resources, and the lack of involvement of locals in decision-making. Empowering the people, respecting their mandate and ensuring that no decisions are made in haste to serve vested interests will take care of a coordinated Pakistan.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 26/04/2025)

Neglect plagues city's water filtration plants

Where the supply of water remains an incessant woe, plaguing the peace of locals in Karachi, it appears that even the measly quantity of water supplied to the residents is not fit for consumption.

Most of the water filtration plants of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KW&SC) have been in disrepair in the city for many years. As a result, due to an inadequate amount of chlorine mixed in the water, many diseases, especially the deadly Naegleria, risk spreading among the local population.

Talking to The Express Tribune, General Secretary of the People's Labour Union Mohsin Raza disclosed that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KW&SC) has nine filter plants, out of which only three are in working condition while the remaining six have been in disrepair for many years.

"As a result, forty percent less chlorine is being added to the water supply in Karachi. Hence, the water reaching all districts across the city is not disinfected and is causing various types of diseases among the citizens. Due to the negligence of the top officials of the Water Corporation, the required amount of chlorine cylinders has not been available for a long time. At some places, the staff adds the right amount of chlorine during the day but at night, chlorine is mixed in less quantity. Approximately, 645 million gallons of water is being supplied daily to the city. For this amount of water, 240 cylinders of chlorine should be available per month; however, only 150 cylinders are being supplied," revealed Raza.

On the other hand, a spokesperson for the KW&SC while talking to The Express Tribune claimed that all nine filter plants with 32 chlorinators located across six different locations were functional. "Chlorine tablets are being added to all water tankers going from the government hydrants of the Water Corporation. Apart from this, water samples are being analyzed on a regular basis in various laboratories of the Water Corporation," claimed the spokesperson.

The on-ground reality, however, proves otherwise. Last year, the Health Department of Sindh obtained more than 50 water samples from different districts of the city before testing them at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB's) laboratory. The results confirmed the presence of several contaminants including pathogenic bacteria like Vibrio cholerae, E. coli and total coliforms, all of which culminated into a diarrhoea outbreak, which affected at least 20,000 children between April to September last year.

Similarly, Naegleria fowleri, which grows in contaminated water and is activated at 35 degrees Celsius, claimed four lives last year in Karachi. Just recently, a woman died of Naegleria in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area of District East. Hence, it is expected that the amoeba will cause several casualties during the upcoming harsh summer months.

Cardiologist and health expert Dr Muhammad Akram Sultan revealed that if there is excess chlorine in water and it is used continuously, it will cause eye irritation, difficulty in breathing, coughing, vomiting, itching and stomach pain. "Water that has a high chlorine content and is used for a long time can also cause bladder and anal cancer," informed Dr Sultan.

While commenting on the precautionary measures needed to control the spread of Naegleria, the KW&SC spokesperson advised citizens to clean the overhead and underground tanks storing water on a monthly basis and avoid bathing in swimming pools, ponds and reservoirs with unchlorinated water. "Apart from this, citizens should use one chlorine tablet in a 1,000-gallon water tank, which is enough for 15 days. People should use boiled or chlorinated water while performing ablution and bathing or for cleaning the nose in general," emphasized the official.

(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 28/04/2025)

Karachi hit by another water crisis after pipeline bursts at KU

The dilapidated distribution network of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation on Tuesday played havoc with the Karachi University premises as the vast area was flooded with water leaking from an 84-inch main



that also entered the houses of teaching faculties and employees.

The leakage in main supply line is set to add to water woes of residents in most parts of the city as they would suffer nearly 40 per cent water shortage for the next four days due to the ensuing repair works.

The affected neighborhoods include Chanesar Town, Jinnah Town, Liaquatabad, Nazimabad, Pak Colony, Golimar, Shershah, Old City Area, Landhi, Korangi, and PAF Base Masroor.

The city that requires over 1,200 million gallons of water daily (MGD) will get 400 MGD water out of regular supply of 650MGD due to repair work on the Siphon No. 19, the 84-inch diameter pipeline that developed the leakage near Karachi University.

KWSC spokesman Abdul Qadir Shaikh said that the repair work was expected to be completed in 96 hours and water supply to different parts of the city would be partially suspended.

Campus inundated; repair work will take several days, says official

He said that the leak developed on Tuesday morning, prompting swift emergency action by the water utility. The repair would cause partial disruption in water supply in various areas of the city, he added.

He said that KWSC Chief Executive Officer Ahmed Ali Siddiqui had directed the relevant teams to begin repair work without delay.

He said that the water supply from the Dhabeji Pumping Station had been suspended immediately after the leakage and the repair work would start as and when the water receded. "To ensure the safety of repair crews and facilitate the operation efficiently, water pressure in the affected pipeline has been temporarily reduced," he added.

The spokesperson said that the full-scale repair activities had already commenced and would continue uninterrupted around the clock.

The water utility advised the people to store water in advance and use it carefully to avoid any inconvenience.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 30/04/2025)

City in grip of water crisis for 17 years

The metropolitan city has been facing the worst water crisis for 17 years during which the PPP's government in Sindh has not added a single drop of water to Karachi from the Indus River.

Crisis becomes serious when main pipelines burst, and millions of gallons of water go waste. On the other hand, the tanker mafia takes benefit of the criminal negligence of corrupt officials of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC). They fleece Karachiites and illegally earn billions of rupees.

As per a survey, conducted by The Express Tribune, seven major incidents of malfunctioning of KWSC installations have taken place in the four months since December 2024, resulting in the loss of huge quantity of water. Besides this, there are countless minor incidents of water line leaks.

In a recent incident that took place on April 29 when major pipeline of 84-inch diameter burst inside the University of Karachi. Millions of gallons of water were wasted in this incident, most of the university area became a lake, several faculties were submerged and valuables, including equipment, were damaged. Classes were not held on Wednesday due to flooding of most roads and faculties.

A KWSC spokesperson said that the repair work of the burst line has started on Tuesday and it will take at least three days to complete.

KWSC Peoples Labour Union General Secretary Mohsin Raza stated that the incompetence of KWSC officials leads to frequent bulk line bursts, particularly during religious and national festivals, depriving most of the city of piped water and forcing citizens to purchase expensive tanker water. He highlighted the lack of inquiry into these recurring bursts and the transparency of related expenses.

Raza pointed out that old bulk lines from major pumping stations have not been replaced despite a significant \$1.6 billion restructuring fund. He urged Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to investigate these irregularities, suspecting a conspiracy to benefit the tanker mafia and defame the PPP.

He cited several recent incidents: an 84-inch line disruption in December due to Red Line BRT work, causing a 17-day water supply halt and reportedly billions in profits for tanker operators; a 72-inch pipeline burst in January due to an electrical breakdown at Dhabeji, affecting supply for two days; a four-day cutoff in February for repairs on three bulk lines; a shutdown of all pumps on

March 10 due to a power breakdown at Hub Pumping Station, impacting 70 million gallons to specific districts; a one-day cutoff on April 4 due to a power breakdown at Pipri Pumping Station; and an 84-inch line burst on April 9, taking three days to repair.

Raza further noted that 40,000 to 50,000 daily tanker trips from seven KWSC-supervised hydrants sell 30 to 40 million gallons of water daily, a number that significantly increases with malfunctions in major KWSC installations.

Karachi University Teachers Society Secretary Dr Maroof Bin Rauf made an appeal to the chief minister to take strict notice of the criminal negligence of KWSC in view of the KU flood.
(By Syed Ashraf Ali The Express Tribune, 04, 01/05/2025)

Karachi's water crisis

For over 17 years, Karachi has been facing an unrelenting water crisis. Despite being home to more than 20 million people, the city continues to be deprived of its rightful share of water from Indus River, with the Sindh government, led by PPP, failing to add a single drop to Karachi's supply network in nearly two decades. What was once a manageable scarcity has now spiraled into a full-blown crisis, marked by institutional apathy and rampant corruption.

At the centre of the crisis is the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), whose installations have become synonymous with disaster. At least seven major failures have occurred in just four months since December 2024. Each incident resulted in the loss of millions of gallons of water — an unforgivable waste in a water-starved city.

Add to this the countless minor leaks that go unreported, and the magnitude of systemic failure becomes painfully clear. The most recent disaster on April 29, when an 84-inch main pipeline burst within the University of Karachi, encapsulates the scale of the crisis. The university turned into a lake, roads and faculties were submerged, and equipment worth millions was damaged.

This vacuum of responsibility has given rise to a powerful and predatory tanker mafia. Exploiting both the failures of the KWSC and the desperation of the citizens, they operate with impunity, fleecing the public while earning billions through illegal means. The way forward is neither simple nor quick, but it is possible if there is political will and administrative integrity.

First, Karachi must receive its due share of water from Indus River. Second, the KWSC must undergo immediate reform. Third, the tanker mafia must be dismantled through coordinated legal action. Lastly, investment in upgrading Karachi's crumbling water infrastructure is urgent.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 02/05/2025)

Karachi's water woes show no signs of abating

Imagine a teeming city by the sea stuck in a chronic water crisis — a crisis perpetuated by inefficiency and greed of its civic authorities, a crisis used by a "mafia" as a bone to mint money, of course in connivance with some black sheep in the administration.

Yes, it's Karachi. The metropolitan city plunges into made-made water crises with regular intervals. Every time, civic authorities blame it on pipeline ruptures before offering lip-service to the parched citizens.

The latest water crisis - blamed on burst of the main 84-inch diameter pipeline near Karachi University - has exasperated after authorities shut down 10 pumps at the Dhabeji pumping station to plug the hole in the damaged pipeline. The pipeline, which burst on Tuesday morning, resulted in the wastage of millions of gallons of water and severe disruption to the city's supply.

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) has stopped the water flow and started repair work, which is expected to be completed by Saturday evening. It states that around 36 feet of the damaged pipeline — originally made of Pre-Stressed Reinforced Cement Concrete (PRCC) - will be replaced with a more durable Mild Steel (MS) pipe.

To facilitate the repair operations, 10 pumps at the Dhabeji pumping station, the city key water supply source, millions of Karachiites are facing a daily shortfall of 200 million gallons of water. Over the past three days, this has amounted to a shortage of around 700 million gallons. Several neighbourhoods have been severely affected, including Korangi, Landhi, Shah Faisal Colony, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Jamshed Road, PIB Colony, Liaquatabad, Nazimabad, Gulberg, the Old City Area, and Defence-Clifton.

Meanwhile, KWSC Managing Director Ahmed Saleem Siddiqui has constituted a three-member investigation committee to examine the causes of repeated failures in the city's main water supply lines. The committee will submit its findings directly to the MD. As per sources, the line failure may be linked to the installation of two 24-inch connections allegedly added to the main 84-inch conduit to supply Safoora and NIPA hydrants.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 02/05/2025)

KU teachers demand probe into 'KWSC negligence' over pipeline burst

The Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association (Fapuasa) and Karachi University Teachers' Society (Kuts) have called upon the Sindh chief minister to take notice of what they called "inexcusable negligence" of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) that resulted in a significant damage to KU property following the rupture of an 84-inch pipeline on the campus.

They also demanded that the Sindh government give compensation for the losses incurred by the university and its staff members.

In a letter addressed to the CM, Fareed Achakzai, the general secretary of Fapuasa, stated that the association wanted to bring his attention towards the failure of the KWSC in resolving the prolonged water leakage on the KU campus.



“The academic community is facing unprecedented disruption, and we urge you to intervene in this matter. We request your office to direct the KWSC to swiftly resolve the water leakage issue and provide fair and timely compensation for the losses incurred by the university and its staff,” the letter reads.

The Fapusa official urged the CM to ensure accountability and stated that the association fully supported the Kuts’ demand for a relief package.

Earlier, the Kuts expressed its deep concern over the recent flooding at the university and called on the Sindh government, particularly the CM, to take immediate action.

It demanded a relief and bailout package to mitigate academic, research, and residential losses, and to restore the damaged infrastructure.

Kuts also demanded a transparent investigation into the KWSC negligence to identify those responsible for the incident and taking strict action against them.

Repair work to be completed by tomorrow: KWSC

The KWSC on Thursday said that the repair work on the 84-inch damaged water supply line would be completed by Saturday (tomorrow).

A water utility spokesman said KWSC Chief Operating Officer (COO) Engineer Asadullah Khan visited the university on Thursday to inspect the supply line.

The COO was informed by the chief engineer that the repair work would be completed by Saturday evening and that the restoration of the water supply would be ensured without further delay.

The spokesman added that the KWSC team was actively working to restore water supply to the campus where the line leakage played havoc as the vast area, including staff housing colony, was flooded with water.

The COO said the repair work would be continuously monitored to ensure the timely restoration of the water supply to the affected residents.

(By Dawn Reporter, 13, 02/05/2025)

70-year-old pipes in KU had passed their shelf life, admits KWSC

A day after Karachi University teachers demanded probe into alleged negligence of the water utility over a pipeline burst, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation on Friday claimed that the design life of the damaged 84-inch line had come to an end as it had been laid around 70 years ago.

The pipeline rupture has caused an acute water crisis in several localities of the metropolis, causing hardship to citizens.

The rupture in one of the two 84-inch supply lines of Siphon No 19 had developed leakage on Tuesday, which flooded a vast area of the university, including the staff’s residential colony, that also caused significant damage to the property on the campus.

In a video statement, KWSC Chief Operating Officer Engineer Asadullah Khan said that water pipelines at Syphon 19, located near the University of Karachi, were several decades old and one of the lines was laid in 1956, while the other was installed in 1971.

“These pipelines have respectively completed a long span of 69 and 54 years, and their design lifetime has now come to an end,” he added.

Engineer Khan said that the two 84-inch diameter pipelines at Syphon 19 that began from Saadi Town and extended to the university were made of Pre-stressed Reinforced Cement Concrete (PRCC) and one of them was 16,000 feet long.

He said that the U-shaped lines in the syphon caused an increase in water pressure, and the water flowing through these U-shaped lines generated significantly more pressure compared to regular straight conduit lines. “As a result, old and weakened pipelines cannot withstand the excessive pressure, leading to bursts when the pressure rises,” he explained.

The KWSC COO clarified that the pipelines coming from Dhabeji to Karachi followed a straight conduit path and did not experience the pressure associated with U-shaped lines, this was why they remained safe.

He further stated that the damaged PRCC line was being replaced with an MS (Mild Steel) pipe, and on both sides of the pipe, four tonnes of “Sikka” would be poured after being heated to 300 degrees Celsius to ensure the strength and durability of the pipeline.

He expressed the hope that the repair work would be completed by Saturday evening, after which the water supply will return to normal.

Meanwhile, Site Association of Industry President Ahmed Azeem Alvi said that industries in the SITE area of Karachi had not received water supply for the past two weeks, bringing industrial production to a halt.

He said that the acute water shortage had severely impacted all industries, particularly textile processing units, which rely heavily on water.

"Resultantly industrialists have no option left but to close down industries and lay off workers, as supply through tankers is not only extremely expensive but also scarce," he added.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 14, 03/05/2025)

Karachi water crisis persists as KWSC struggles to repair damaged pipeline

The ongoing water crisis caused by the rupture of an 84-inch main water supply line in the University of Karachi is likely to persist as the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation is still struggling to complete the repair work on Saturday.



While KWSC Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan had on Thursday said that the repair work would be completed by Saturday night, a water utility spokesman said that the repair work was still in progress and would be completed by Sunday (today).

The leakage in the main supply line wreaked havoc on Karachi University and nearby housing societies. It also caused an acute water shortage in several areas of the metropolis.

Officials said that the city required over 1,200 million gallons of water daily and it was getting 400 MGD, out of a regular supply of 650MGD, due to the repair work on the Siphon No 19.

The KWSC spokesman said that the water would be released to the Siphon No 19 after the completion of the repair work. The water pumped from the Dhabeji Pumping Station usually took 14 to 16 hours to reach the city's distribution network, he added.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, 13, 04/05/2025)

Water allocation

THINGS may be looking up for farmers. With flows improving, the Indus River System Authority has summoned its advisory committee on Monday so that stakeholders can review the water situation and finalise availability projections for the remainder of the Kharif season. Though water availability criteria and distribution mechanisms are usually settled much earlier, this year they had to be put off because of the severe water shortage in late March. As a result, Irsa had only allocated enough water for drinking purposes to the provinces, which had forced farmers to delay sowing. Now, with more water available, the provinces can arrive at a consensus over who gets how much for the season. With the canal crisis still in the rearview mirror, it is hoped that the provinces will approach these discussions in the spirit of frankness and openness and arrive at a formula that benefits all, while also protecting their individual strategic interests. As has become clear, water could feature repeatedly as one of the key issues in domestic politics this year, and it is therefore important for all stakeholders to come prepared so that they are better able to protect the interests of those they represent.

Given the critical importance of agriculture to Pakistan's economy, it is crucial for the authorities from each province to work together while recognising and respecting each other's needs. The protests over the past few months have shown how quickly temperatures can rise over injustices in water distribution, whether real or perceived, and how they can trigger chain reactions that end up having serious negative consequences for the broader economy. The provinces also have a responsibility to communicate clearly not just with each other, but also with their constituents so that all the important stakeholders are on the same page regarding the water availability situation and adjust their expectations accordingly. It is also important that there be increased transparency in the allotment and use of water so that concerns regarding alleged theft and underreporting can be addressed. Most of all, it is Irsa's responsibility to ensure fair dealing and equitable treatment as it manages water resources. It must be diligent.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 04/05/2025)

Govt, KWSC earn opposition ire over Karachi water crisis

As Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) on Sunday claimed to have repaired the damaged 84-inch pipeline that kept one-third of the city deprived of water, opposition parties held the Sindh government responsible for "criminal negligence" for failing to maintain the basic infrastructure.

The leaders of the Jamaat-i-Islami and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan also questioned the mechanism of accountability in the KWSC, which had not yet come up with any authentic report explaining reasons for the damage occurred last Tuesday.

They said it was the sixth incident of pipe burst over past five months in the metropolis.

Advocate Saifuddin, the leader of the opposition in the City Council, visited Karachi University to inspect the area affected by the leakage of the 84-inch pipeline.

The JI leader was accompanied by several elected representatives of the local government.

On the occasion, Bulk Supply Executive Engineer Zafar Palejo briefed the JI leaders about the water supply line, its leakage and repair work.

Mr Saifuddin was told that the 50-year-old water supply line had become rusted and that the Sindh government had already been updated about the situation.

Speaking to journalists, the opposition leader said that the Pakistan Peoples Party government was continuously ignoring Karachi and its long-standing problems.

“The PPP has been ruling over the province for the past 50 years, and consecutively for the past 17 years, but it never took any drastic step to bring any positive change to the mega city,” he said.

“The self-imposed mayor and his accomplices have ruined the entire local government department. It is the criminal negligence on the part of the authorities that despite repeated warnings from experts and reports of different consultants to replace the old lines with new ones, they did not pay any heed and today Karachiites are paying the price.”

He also visited several departments of the university and interacted with faculty members.

He was told that the leaked water had caused losses to the university worth tens of millions of rupees.

Crisis in KU, Gulshan Town

Meanwhile, chairman of Gulshan Town Dr Fuad Ahmed told Dawn that the pipeline damage had not only deprived more than half of his town of water, but also ruined Karachi University.

“I have tried to bring a team of Provincial Disaster Management Authority to handle the situation at the university but in vain,” he said. “On one hand we are unable to answer the people about the time and again damages to this line and on the other academic activities of thousands of students are at risk. We have learnt that some four years ago consultants and experts in their reports have told the authorities to replace this line but the authorities’ criminal silence and negligence invited this crisis.”

MQM-P slams KWSC performance

In a statement, the MQM-P expressed deep concern over the severe water shortage in Karachi, stating that the Sindh government had taken over the city institutions and destroyed each one of them.

“The performance of the organisation responsible for supplying water to a city of over 30 million residents is utterly dismal,” the party’s Central Committee said in the statement.

“The failure of the KWSC is affecting the entire city, where any maintenance issue results in days-long water outages. In many areas, citizens are deprived of drinking water and are suffering from mental distress. The MQM-P demanded immediate repair and restoration of water supply across Karachi.

“The qualified and competent professionals must be employed to ensure water supply in Pakistan’s highest tax-paying city.”

According to the party’s Central Committee, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation has “become a hub of corruption from top to bottom” and there is an urgent need to recruit skilled and professional individuals in the organisation.

Water supply resumption

Meanwhile, the KWSC officials said that the repair work on the 84-inch pipeline passing through the university of Karachi had been completed.

“The water supply through the pipeline will be resumed at 10pm [Sunday] and by Monday evening, water supply in the city is expected to begin returning to normal,” said an official.

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

Water terrorism

India is indulging in water terrorism meant to economically wreck Pakistan’s agrarian prospects as a lower riparian state. In another blatant violation of international protocol, New Delhi virtually stopped water discharges from Chenab River into Pakistan, and that too without prior notice, resulting in decrease to about 3,100 cusecs on Monday from 35,000 cusecs on Sunday.

This destructive measure is a follow-up of unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, as a retribution to Pahalgam killings imposed on Pakistan without a credible evidence. India has tactfully opted for boosting reservoir holding capacity of hydroelectric projects in the Occupied Jammu and Kashmir at Salal, Dulhasti and Baglihar dams.

This unlawful move deserves condemnation from the international community; and the World Bank, as a trustee of the 1960’s IWT, must intervene immediately. Incidentally, the move comes close on the heels of a United Nations Security Council session wherein India’s provocative measures were slammed and it was advised to resolve issues within the ambit of tranquility.

But Delhi apparently has a roadmap to opt for and is bent upon stoking flames of war in the region. With Pakistan’s share of up to 1.2 MAF water being used to fill up three Indian reservoirs, there is a fear of flood-like situation in days and weeks to come. The so-called reservoir flushing process could cause sudden inundation, and subsequent decreased inflows at Marala would result in more water shortage for crops.

This petty water politics by India has already been termed by Pakistan as an act of war, and surely threatens escalation. As more than 80% of water to Pakistan flows from India, any sudden or sustained obstruction of the lifeline would be tantamount to inflicting death and destruction.

Authorities in Pakistan fear that it would cause additional shortage of water to Kharif crops that are already facing an estimated 21% shortfall. It is also anticipated to go ahead with building the so-called run-of-river hydropower plants in an attempt to penalise Pakistan, which is another violation of IWT.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 07/05/2025)

Water security to 2047

INDIA'S unilateral decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance threatens Pakistan's water security after six decades of cooperative management. While pursuing legal challenges, Pakistan must also implement transformative water strategies to secure its future amidst climate change and the risk of upstream infrastructural development.



This crisis will intensify in the coming decades as Pakistan's population doubles by 2050 while available water resources potentially diminish by half. Under these conditions, Pakistan must quadruple its water productivity simply to maintain current levels of water security.

Given these challenges, Pakistan needs to adopt a comprehensive strategy spanning the next 25 years to 2050, coinciding with India's projected timeline for developing the diversion infrastructure. This strategy should position Pakistan to reduce water insecurity by its centennial anniversary in 2047. The strategy should address both supply and demand dimensions, combining policy reforms and technological innovation with structural institutional transformation. The following six tracks can be followed concurrently.

Maximise water productivity: Agriculture consumes over 90 per cent of our water resources. Pakistan must extract more value from each drop of water by dramatically increasing agricultural water productivity. Following the example of Indian Punjab and Haryana, it should target annual increases of 1-2pc in water productivity for major crops. Compounded over 25 years, this would yield a 28-64pc increase in overall water productivity, enabling us to maintain or increase agricultural output with less water.

Pakistan must quadruple its water productivity to maintain current levels of water security.

This transformation requires modernising irrigation infrastructure to reduce the current 60pc water loss during conveyance and field application. Transitioning from flood irrigation to more efficient methods like drip and precision irrigation systems, implementing digital water monitoring technologies, and adopting conservation agriculture techniques that improve soil water retention would improve efficiency. The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, now facing unwise closure, has already piloted these options. The lessons can be upscaled. Critical staple crops (sugarcane, wheat, rice and cotton) currently consume disproportionate water resources relative to their economic value.

Conjunctive management of surface and groundwater resources, a cornerstone of the unimplemented National Water Policy, must become a central tenet of our agricultural water strategy. By recharging groundwater during the monsoons through nature-based solutions like constructed wetlands and modified farm practices, Pakistan can create natural subsurface reservoirs that stabilise water availability in dry periods.

These steps would help with vital agricultural exports. With consistent implementation over the 25-year timeline, Pakistan could achieve water productivity comparable to regional benchmarks, ensuring agricultural sustainability with decreasing surface water flows.

Harness hill torrents: Pakistan's hill torrent systems represent an untapped resource that could transform agriculture in mountainous regions. While currently irrigating 0.84-3.16 million acres, proper management could expand this to 17.2m acres, benefiting 15-20m people in economically disadvantaged areas. Contemporary management approaches integrating remote sensing, AI, and community participation convert destructive seasonal flash floods into productive irrigation resources.

A comprehensive hill torrent management programme could add 12-16 MAF of water annually — more than our current total storage capacity. This option avoids inter-provincial tensions triggered by the expansion of the canal network, by precisely targeting areas with the greatest need.

Develop alternative water sources: Pakistan must prioritise developing entirely new water sources, particularly for its coastal urban centres. Desalination technology offers a viable solution for Karachi, which houses 15pc of Pakistan's population, as well as for Hyderabad and other coastal cities, potentially serving 25-30m people.

Modern reverse osmosis desalination, especially when powered by renewable energy, has become cost-effective for urban and industrial water supply. Public-private partnerships can mobilise capital for infrastructural investments. By meeting coastal urban demand through desalination, Pakistan can reduce pressure on the Water Apportionment Accord, freeing up to 4 MAF of water annually from the Indus system for farming and other uses.

Complementary to desalination, Pakistan must expand wastewater treatment and reuse. Israel now recycles 86pc of its wastewater, primarily for agricultural use. If Pakistan were to achieve even half this rate, it could reclaim some 3-4 MAF annually, supplementing freshwater supplies while reducing marine pollution.

These alternative sources provide diversification to Pakistan's water portfolio, reducing vulnerability to changes in transboundary flows while addressing the specific needs of growing urban consumption.

Implement rational water pricing: Pakistan's heavily subsidised water pricing undermines conservation efforts. A 25-year plan for gradual cost recovery from industrial, municipal, and agricultural water users is essential for suppressing growing demand.

In the farm sector, appropriate pricing would encourage shifts away from water-intensive crops like sugarcane and rice in water-scarce regions. In urban areas, it would drive adoption of water-saving technologies and behaviour. Water pricing reform must be implemented with carefully designed protections for small farmers and vulnerable populations. While politically challenging, pricing reform is among the most powerful tools for addressing Pakistan's water crisis through demand management.

Transform water institutions: Pakistan should pursue a comprehensive institutional reform agenda learning from our failures and successful global examples. This includes recasting the mandates of several existing institutions and streamlining coordination between federal and provincial water institutions, and integrated hydrological data systems.

Convert crisis into an opportunity: The IWT's suspension is a frontal attack on the Indus Valley civilisation and the Indus Basin — our food machine feeding millions in South, Central and West Asia. Instead of allowing our economy and society to become hostage to India's unilateralism, it's time for us to invest in our water security and address Pakistan's chronic water management issues. A transformed water management system could fuel our economy and provide insurance against climatic uncertainties and transboundary pressures.

By implementing comprehensive reforms and adopting proven management strategies, Pakistan can build resilience against both diplomatic uncertainties and climate change impacts.

(By Ali Tauqeer Sheikh Dawn, 06, 08/05/2025)

Water war

PLANES and bombs are not the end of it. New Delhi is also up to mischief on another front. This weekend, without prior intimation, which officials say it is bound to provide under the terms of the Indus Waters Treaty, India virtually blocked water from flowing into the Chenab in Pakistan, reducing water availability for crops this side of the border. Punjab irrigation officials said Pakistan's waters were being used to fill up three Indian reservoirs with a total capacity of 1.2 MAF, and there was a possibility that the stored water would be released without warning, causing dangerous flooding downstream. "If they keep filling their dams and avert discharging, they may leave us without water for four to five days more," an official remarked. Meanwhile, India had also started the process of augmenting the reservoir holding capacity at its Salal and Baglihar projects in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. A Reuters report stated that 'reservoir flushing' was underway at the two projects to enhance their capacity to hold water, and that if other dams also started doing the same, Pakistan's water share could be adversely affected in the future. This, of course, is a serious situation that needs constant monitoring by Pakistan. The Chenab irrigates vast tracts of farmland in Punjab, and India's actions are aimed at sabotaging Pakistan's water and food security. If they continue to escalate, water disputes between the two nations have the potential to trigger a wider, more serious conflict in the future.

The Modi regime, whose judgment has been clouded by hubris ever since India's economic clout started inviting international attention, lit a fuse after making the unilateral decision to 'suspend' the IWT. Its actions have placed the treaty's status in uncertainty, at least for now. This is a dangerous game for New Delhi to be playing. Water is a lifeline for Pakistan's economy, and any actions India takes to try to alter its supply in violation of the IWT will be taken as a provocation to war by Pakistan. Islamabad has made this clear. If India continues to push the boundaries of acceptability, Pakistan may soon face a situation where its options may be limited to kinetic measures. Climate change has presented the country with severe existential crises that it needs to overcome in order to protect the lives and livelihoods of its people. Any foreign act or aggression that imperils Pakistan's waters and therefore the well-being of its people cannot be countenanced.

Without further ado, Pakistan needs to mount an aggressive legal challenge against India's move to 'suspend' the IWT and either compel or convince it to reverse its decision. Diplomatic channels should continue to be utilised to prevent any serious violation of water-sharing agreements, which have the potential to place millions on both sides in peril. The IWT has survived wars and conflict over issues much more serious than the one manufactured most recently by New Delhi. It cannot be simply undone by one side over flimsy pretexts. India must be held to its commitments.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 08/05/2025)

CM Murad unhappy with KWSC over water crisis, frequent line bursts

The performance of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) came under scrutiny on Friday after Sindh chief minister took notice of the ongoing water crisis triggered by the rupture of a main supply line about 10 days ago, and sought an explanation from the utility for the recurring leakages in major pipelines across the city.

Presiding over a meeting to review the progress of the K-IV Augmentation Project at the CM House, Sindh chief minister Syed Murad Ali Shah referred to the recent water pipeline burst at the University of Karachi and said that the frequent ruptures in water supply lines were unacceptable.

While the KWSC had claimed to have plugged the leakage in more than four days, water supply to affected localities could not return to normal despite a passage of 10 days.

"Ultimately the citizens have to suffer. Therefore, it [the issue] must be resolved once and for all," he said and also directed the KWSC to ensure proper water supply from today.

A statement issued from the CM House said that the meeting was attended among others by Energy Minister Nasir Shah, Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah and other senior officials.

The chief minister expressed dissatisfaction on the condition of distribution network of the water utility and directed the water board to conduct a comprehensive survey of all old lines and develop a five-year plan for their repair/replacement.

"The water utility needs to strengthen its system," he declared.

The rupture in the 84-inch main siphon at the university had wreaked havoc on the campus and adjoining housing societies, flooding a vast area. The water utility chief had said that the pipelines' design life had come to an end since it was laid in 1956.

Asks stakeholders to remove bottlenecks in K-IV completion

Reviewing the progress on the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme (K-IV Augmentation Works, KWSSIP-II), the chief minister urged all relevant agencies to remove administrative bottlenecks immediately.

He directed the LG department to expedite the tendering process and secure all necessary No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to ensure that physical work on the Rs71.8 billion K-IV Augmentation Project begins within the next three months.

The K-IV Augmentation Project is being implemented by the LG department with financial support from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the World Bank and the Sindh government.

The project comprises multiple packages, including Package A: Water transmission main from Reservoir 1 to Y-Junction. Package B1: Transmission from Reservoir R2 to Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST). Package B2: From FUUAST to Gul Bai, and Package C: From R3 to Banaras, and a 2.7 km common corridor shared with the Karachi Bus Rapid Transit (KBRT) system.

The project's design was finalised and reviewed by an international Austrian firm, in line with Planning Commission directives. Bid documents were prepared and are being updated by the supervision consultant.

The process for hiring a Construction Supervision Consultant (CSC) has already begun. The Technical and Financial Proposals' Technical Evaluation Report (TER) was approved by the World Bank.

To facilitate the project, 18 different agencies were approached for NOCs. So far, NOCs have been secured from seven agencies.

The chief minister reiterated his commitment to accelerating the delivery of the K-IV Augmentation Project to ensure equitable access to clean drinking water for Karachi's growing population.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 10/05/2025)

Two KWSC officials suspended for failing to prevent water theft

Two senior officials of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) were on Saturday suspended for their alleged involvement in theft of water.

According to a KWSC order, executive engineer Ahsanullah Shaikh and assistant executive engineer S.M Ahsan are hereby placed under suspension on account of gross negligence in preventing illegal water theft.

The suspension came on the directives of Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab, who is the chairman of the KWSC board.

During a visit to KWSC installations on Saturday, he said that strict legal action would be taken against the officials involved in water theft in Karachi.

The mayor, who along with KWSC Chief Executive Officer Ahmed Ali Siddiqui and Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan, visited various areas to review the water crisis in the city.

He said that departmental action would also be taken against the officers involved in water theft.

According to a press statement, the aim of the visit was to make the crackdown on water theft in the city more effective and faster.

The mayor said that a complete, transparent and impartial investigation into water theft would be conducted. "Water is the right of citizens only, no one will be allowed to steal it," he added.

The mayor directed the KWSC to take all steps to ensure fair and uninterrupted supply of water in the city.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 14, 11/05/2025)

Karachiites left high and dry amid severe water crisis

While Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has recently taken notice of the water crisis and instructed the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) to restore normal supply, several localities in all the seven districts of Karachi have still been facing a severe water crisis since the leakage of an 84-inch main on Karachi University campus on April 29.



Despite the completion of the repair work on the ruptured line, water woes of the people across the city have yet to come to an end as restoration of normal supply to the affected areas has been delayed due to filling of the repaired line with water under low pressure.

Although the CM had directed the KWSC to restore normal water supply from Saturday, sources in the KWSC said that it might take several more days to resume

proper supply.

The city that requires over 1,200 million gallons of water daily (MGD) got only 400 MGD water, or around 40 per cent out of the regular supply of 650 MGD, due to repair work for the past 12 days.

The persistent water shortage piled miseries on people in the sweltering weather, leaving many with no option but to buy water on exorbitant rates.

The affected neighbourhoods include Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Sheme-33, PECHS, Bahadurabad, Tariq Road, Chanesar Town, Jinnah Town, Liaquatabad, Nazimabad, Pak Colony, Golimar, Shershah, old city area, Landhi, Korangi, PAF Base Masroor, etc.

The KWSC had initially said that the repair work on the ruptured pipeline would be completed in 96 hours. However, the repair took more time due to replacement of 32-foot piece of the damaged line.

A spokesman for the water utility claimed that normal water supply to the city had been restored and different areas were being supplied as per the schedule.

However, residents in different localities said that there was not a single drop of water in their taps for the past 12 days, making their life miserable.

A resident of PECHS, Zaid Rabbani, said that no water had flowed in their locality since the water main burst at the university. "We somehow arranged water tanker, but after paying additional price," he said.

Residents of several localities said that the water supply was restored in their areas for a very short time.

Tauseef Ali Shah, a resident of Gulshan-i-Iqbal, said the supply was restored hardly for an hour. "The pressure was also too low and we could have only two buckets of water," he lamented.

Sources in the water utility said the water pressure was kept low initially after the completion of the repair work as a precaution in view of the repair work on the damaged line.

They said the entire distribution network of the water utility had gone completely dried during the repair work and now the water level in different main lines in the city had got normal.

The sources said that the situation would normalise within a couple of days.

Leakages in main lines have been frequent as all main lines of different diameters, ranging from 48 inches to 84 inches, were laid in 1956 and 1971 across the city.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 12/05/2025)

Karachi: high and dry

Twelve days without a drop of water - for any modern metropolis, that would amount to a state of emergency. But in Karachi, it is becoming an unfortunate norm. Despite assurances and the supposed repair of a major water line ruptures, large swathes of the city continue to reel under an unrelenting water crisis. The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation's (KWSC) claim that supply has been restored offers little solace to citizens who are forced to buy water at exorbitant rates or rely on handouts from private tankers.

Persistent neglect and lack of contingency planning seem to be the core reasons why such a situation continues to persist. The 84-inch main line rupture on April 29 brought to the surface deep structural cracks in the management of the city's water infrastructure. Repairing a pipeline is only half the job; ensuring timely, equitable and efficient restoration of supply is what citizens expect and deserve. While the Sindh Chief Minister has finally taken notice and issued directives, the crisis has already caused immense hardship across all seven districts of the city. The KWSC's admission that it might take "several more days" to restore full supply is both alarming and unacceptable. Karachi requires more than 1,200 million gallons daily, yet for nearly two weeks, the city has received only a third - 400 MGD - due to ongoing repairs. Even under normal conditions, the city receives just 650 MGD, which is itself far below the requirement.

In a city where water mafias thrive and the gap in public service delivery grows by the day, such lapses only fuel resentment and desperation. The crisis demands more than reactive firefighting. It requires long-term planning and investment in resilient infrastructure, coupled with an honest acknowledgment of failures. Until then, citizens will continue to be left high and dry - both literally and metaphorically.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 13/05/2025)

Water crisis

IN large parts of Karachi, there is no water to be had. The taps have run dry for the past 12 days, bowlers have been . difficult to get hold of, and the city's water utility is nowhere to be seen. Desperate residents have found themselves forced to shell out exorbitant sums to what is often described as the 'tanker mafia' operating in the city. Securing a booking amidst the intense demand for tankers has been another ordeal altogether.

The crisis began when a two-metre-wide supply line running through Karachi University ruptured, flooding a large part of the campus and causing `millions` in losses, according to varsity officials. The KWSC, despite initially promising to resume supply within days, was unable to do so, and the crisis persisted. Irate residents from many parts of the city staged protests and blocked traffic, and the matter was eventually brought up in the Sindh Assembly. Unfortunately, no material good came from any of it.

Water shortages have accompanied the onset of summer almost every year, yet the city's authorities seem to have nothing to show for what is being done to secure Karachi's water requirements.

Indeed, with most of the city's water infrastructure laid down decades ago and never properly maintained or upgraded as the city grew, the water situation seems to be growing progressively worse with each passing year. Meanwhile, the KWSC has seemed, at best, technically inept. It is also deficient in resources needed to adequately handle a megacity's water needs. Nor does the city's problems seem to feature on the provincial government's agenda. Karachi has been in shambles for the past many years, and profiteers have gradually taken over the provision of bare necessities to its residents. Criticism of both the KWSC and the

Sindh government for their negligence in this regard is quite justified. It should not be ignored. Karachi needs a comprehensive action plan for its many issues.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 13/05/2025)

Karachi mayor orders probe into 'overcharging' by water bowser operators as shortage persists

Taking notice of a worsening water crisis in the metropolis, Mayor barrister Murtaza Wahab, who is also the chairman of the board of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), on Wednesday ordered strict action against operators of hydrants and tankers fleecing citizens by selling water at exorbitant rates.

Officials said that the mayor took a serious notice of the growing complaints of people regarding overcharging by private water tanker operators. He also ordered the constitution of a committee to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter.

They said that the three-member committee was directed to investigate and ascertain the identity of the tanker operators and hydrants involved in the unauthorised increase in the rates of water tankers and submit its report within 10 days.

The water crisis has been making people's life miserable lately as the city has been receiving nearly half of its routine supply since several main supply lines burst in the past three months, leaving major areas without water supply.

Wahab says any hydrant or tanker found guilty of fleecing citizens will face legal action

The city that requires over 1,200 million gallons of water daily (MGD) gets 400 MGD water or around 40 per cent out of regular supply of 650MGD due to repair work of the ruptured main lines.

Though the water utility always claims that the repair work would be completed in up to 96 hours, but it is never completed in the designated time, piling misery on people.

Residents said that the water tanker mafia fleeced people by overcharging whenever there was short supply of water in the city.

A resident of Gulshan-i-Iqbal said that the water tanker operators charged twice of the officially notified rates, taking advantage of the water crisis in the city, leaving people with no option but to pay excessive price for water.

"What will you do when you don't have any other means to get water for daily use?", he wondered saying that the people were compelled to pay whatever the price they [tanker operators] demanded.

According to the order issued by the KWSC chief executive officer, the committee will submit detailed information, including the identity of the tanker registration numbers and the names of the drivers involved in the activity.

The order said: "It has come to the attention of the competent authority that tanker operators have unilaterally increased their rates without any prior notice to or approval from the KWSC in clear violation of the terms of their contract. This act is deemed an offence and is entirely unacceptable."

It said that a committee to investigate the matter was constituted to investigate the matter and it would submit its final report within 10 working days from the date of issuance of the order.

The sources said that the mayor also instructed the authorities concerned to obtain detailed records and operational data from all tanker operators involved in water distribution.

In a statement, the mayor said that the objective to initiate investigation into overcharging by tanker operators was to ensure transparency and identify those responsible for exploiting citizens.

"The concerns of Karachi's residents are valid and cannot be ignored. Any operator found guilty of overcharging will face strict legal action," he added.

The KWSC chairman further said that the city administration would not tolerate any form of exploitation, especially in essential services like water supply. "The inquiry aims to restore public confidence and ensure fair practices in water distribution," he added.

The mayor reaffirmed his commitment to transparency, public service, and accountability across all sectors of municipal governance.

In another development two days ago, the water utility had replaced the in-charge of Hydrant Services Tanker Operation.

On Wednesday, the chief engineer of the bulk main water supply lines, Zafar Palejo, was also replaced with Superintendent Engineer Syed Muhammad Ijaz.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 15/05/2025)

International law & Indus wars

ON April 23, India unilaterally declared the Indus Waters Treaty to be "in abeyance" — a term neither recognised in treaty law nor found in the IWT itself. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT) — the authoritative international agreement on treaty law — instead describes a party's releasing itself from its treaty obligations as a 'suspension'.



Treaties such as the IWT are not limited by time, continuing instead in perpetuity under Article 42 of the VCLT. And under Article 57 of the VCLT, a treaty can only be suspended if it allows for such suspension, or with the mutual consent of all contracting parties. The IWT, a multilateral treaty with India, Pakistan and the World Bank as signatories, does not provide for suspension and can unilaterally only be terminated or suspended if a party commits a material breach of treaty as described under Article 60 of the VCLT. India's accusations of Pakistan's alleged role in the Pahalgam attack are completely unsubstantiated; but in any event, that attack has no nexus with the scope of the IWT nor — assuming that Pakistan were even hypothetically involved — constitutes a material breach thereof.

The scope of and obligations under the IWT, which Pakistan complies with, principally deal with the allocation and usage of river waters, and incidentally with hydropower generation from them. Any stoppage, restriction, or interference in the flow of waters in rivers allocated to Pakistan under the treaty, including the Chenab, constitutes a clear violation by India of Article III (2) of the IWT, which obligates India to refrain from interfering with the flow of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers.

Apart from these treaty violations, customary law codified in Article 2 of the ILC Articles on State Responsibility establishes that conduct in the breach of a state's international obligations, that is attributable to it, constitutes an internationally wrongful act, thus necessitating the payment of full reparations to affected parties. Violations of a state's treaty obligations constitute prima facie an internationally wrongful act, as affirmed by the Permanent Court of International Justice in the 'Phosphates in Morocco' case and the famous 'Rainbow Warrior' arbitration. Thus, India's interference in the flow of the Chenab river constitutes an internationally wrongful act and also places India in breach of Article 26 of the VCLT, which codifies the principle of pacta sunt servanda — ie, agreements must be honoured. India's culpability under international law thus obliges it to pay Pakistan reparations for the damage caused by its illegal acts.

India's interference in the flow of the Chenab constitutes an internationally wrongful act.

Article IX of the IWT provides only two methods of dispute resolution: technical disputes, including engineering issues, are referred to a neutral expert, while treaty violations and questions of its interpretation, which are legal disputes, are referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration. In the present circumstances, India did not exercise this right, arguably as it knew it stood on shaky legal ground in holding the IWT "in abeyance".

Though the Simla Agreement, a bilateral treaty between India and Pakistan, emphasises bilateral dispute resolution, it cannot be relied upon to undercut Pakistan's right to third-party dispute resolution, as India might be interpreting it to do so. The IWT, signed in 1960, predates the Simla Agreement of 1972 by over a decade and, according to Article 28 of the Vienna Convention — as well as customary international law — treaties do not operate retrospectively. Thus, the commitment to promote bilateral dispute resolution under the Simla Agreement does not limit in any way Pakistan's ability to highlight and prosecute India's violations of the IWT, including through international fora such as the General Assembly, Security Council and other UN bodies.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) outlined in the 'Gabcikovo-Nagymaros' and 'Pulp Mills' cases that states cannot rely on perceived treaty violations or other internationally wrongful acts as a premise to violate their own treaty obligations. Violating another treaty or international legal norm does not entitle a state to suspend its obligations towards the state owed under the treaty concerned; instead, it constitutes a breach of the said treaty for that state.

India's interference with the Chenab river's flow is not only a treaty violation, but also a violation of international humanitarian law considering the state of armed conflict between the two nations, as it impedes civilians' access to water. Article 54 (4) of the 1977 Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of Aug 12, 1949, (AP I) specifically outlaws the impediment of water for the purpose of reprisals.

International law explicitly prohibits the destruction or diversion of natural or ecological resources — such as rivers — for the purpose of reprisals or to achieve military objectives. This is recognised through the principle's inclusion in the Berlin Rules on Water Resources 2004, which codify customary law on water resources, and is framed as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the AP I.

During the recent military conflagration, India carried out strikes on the Neelam-Jhelum hydropower project, triggering Pakistan's right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. To protect its flow of water guaranteed under the IWT, in an armed conflict, Pakistan reserves the right to target Indian dams and dykes on transboundary rivers as a military objective, if it is necessary and proportional, if such works are being used "in regular, significant and direct support of military operations and if such attack is the only feasible way to terminate such support", as outlined in Article 56 of AP I, a treaty signed by Pakistan and now mostly considered customary international law.

This permissibility is reinforced considering the ICJ went even further to protect state sovereignty in interpreting Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, as held in its 'Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons', where the court refused to outlaw even the threat or use of nuclear weapons in extreme cases of self-defence, where a state's political survival faces an existential threat.

India is violating the law of the use of force by threatening Pakistan's political survival through its weaponisation of dams and barrages, as the Indus system provides 90 per cent of Pakistan's water.
(By Sikander Ahmed Shah Dawn, 06, 17/05/2025)

Jl stages citywide protests against water shortage

The Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) on Monday staged protest demonstrations at more than a dozen key locations across the city to condemn the worsening water crisis in the metropolis.

The protests were held at Sharea Faisal near Malir Halt, Orangi Town-5, Gulberg in Federal B. Area, Power House Chowrangi in North Karachi, Lea Market Chowk and other areas, where residents joined the JI workers demanding immediate government intervention to restore water supply.

At one of the demonstrations held outside a water tankers' hydrant near NIPA Chowrangi, JI Karachi chief Monem Zafar addressed the crowd and lashed out at the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)-led Sindh government, accusing it of deliberately mismanaging Karachi's water distribution system and promoting tanker mafias.

"This crisis is not a result of natural shortage; it's a manufactured problem. The Sindh government has failed miserably to provide water — a basic right — to millions of Karachi residents," he said, adding that the "entire neighbourhoods have gone without a drop of water for weeks, yet tankers are seen lining up at hydrants, selling water at exorbitant prices. Who is behind this mafia?"

He also criticised the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) for its inaction, alleging that water meant for residential areas is being diverted to commercial consumers under political pressure.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 17/05/2025)

PA opposition threatens to take to streets over water crisis

The city's water woes dominated the Sindh Assembly proceedings on Monday for the umpteenth time with the opposition members threatening that they would take to streets along with people if the situation was not controlled.

Voicing concern over the severe water shortage in their respective constituencies in particular and across the city in general, they said that people had become dejected and enraged due to chronic water crisis as the most essential commodity was not flowing in the taps, but available through tankers at exorbitant prices.

In his call attention notice, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's (MQM-P) Jamal Ahmed said the people of his constituency (PS-130) in North Nazimabad were enraged as after being deprived of drinking water.

He said that while the water did not flow in the taps, tankers mafia was fleecing people by selling the commodity at excessive rates.

"If the residents of North Nazimabad are not given water within two days, we will not let the hydrant in the area operate," he warned.

Mr Ahmed also said that the MPA and MNA from the constituency would stage a protest together if the water supply was not restored to the vicinity.

LG minister Ghani criticises KE for carrying out loadshedding despite timely payment of dues by govt

He also came down heavily on the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) and said that equipment at pumping stations was not in order, which further affected water supply.

The MQM-P member also questioned as to why the chief operating officer of the water utility was not being replaced despite he had retired four years ago. "Are there no other competent officers in the KWSC to replace him?" he asked.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Sajjad Ali in his call attention notice also voiced his concern over water shortage in Lyari. He had initially drawn attention of the local government minister towards poor sanitation condition in his constituency (PS-106).

He said that there were 28 pumping stations in Lyari for water and sewerage, which were given over 1,600 litres diesel, but still sewage was overflowing and no water was available in the vicinity.

The PTI member said that water was not flowing in taps across the city, while every now and then main supply lines ruptured.

He also said that load-shedding had made the life of people miserable and demanded that the house committee on electricity distribution companies must initiate action against the K-Electric (KE).

Answering separately to the call attention notices, Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani strongly criticised the KE for continued load-shedding despite the provincial government making timely payments of all dues.

He said no government building or department was a defaulter, yet electricity outages persist.

The LG minister said that the city's lone power utility must ensure uninterrupted electricity to those institutions and individuals who paid their bills in full and on time.

In reply to the call attention notice forwarded by the MQM lawmaker, he said that water was supplied in North Nazimabad via two sources — the University Reservoir and the Hub Dam.

He said that while the Hub Dam provided a 56-hour supply every 15 days, any issues like load-shedding disrupted the flow. "The University Reservoir, on the other hand, supplies around 18 out of 24 hours daily," he added.

Mr Ghani said that the ongoing repair and construction work at the Hub Dam canal was moving swiftly; it would be completed by year-end.

"Efforts are also underway to enhance water delivery from the University Reservoir in the next 2-3 weeks," he assured the MQM-P member.

In reply to the notice by the PTI MPA, the LG minister said the entire sewerage system in the area was dependent on pumping stations, which suffered from 12 to 16 hours of load-shedding.

“Generators and diesel have been arranged for these stations, and a substantial amount is also being paid to the KE to exempt these facilities from outages,” he added.

He also informed that the Lyari Transformation Project was being launched and included in the forthcoming Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Later, Speaker Syed Awais Shah adjourned the house to Tuesday.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 20/05/2025)

Water stakes

After facing embarrassment on the military and diplomatic fronts, India is bent upon escalating tensions with Pakistan by weaponising water as a means of confrontation. The risky gambit it is exercising by constructing new dams and dramatically increasing the water it draws from the reservoirs that feed Pakistan downstream is fraught with serious geological consequences.

New Delhi, perhaps, is unmindful of the fact that it is also a middle riparian state between China and Bangladesh, and this modus operandi of water terrorism could come to haunt it in the long run. Moreover, plans to double the length of the Ranbir Canal on the Chenab River, which would increase water diversion from 40 to 150 cubic meters per second, could prove to be catastrophic, along with the building of new hydropower projects on the rivers allocated to Pakistan under the Indus Water Treaty.

India knows for sure that its unilateral suspension of the 1960 IWT is not going to hold, and it will have to rescind it sooner than later. It is also aware that it cannot restrict the flow of Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers due to insufficient storage capacity. In fact, its strategy of coercion is meant for diversions using existing storage facilities. This is tantamount to provoking Pakistan and pushing it to the brink, as water forms the lifeline of the 240 million people in the agrarian state.

If the situation escalates, it could pitch both the states in a renewed military muscle-flexing as Pakistan has already declared water suspension as an act of war. India's sole intention seems to be to force Pakistan into kinetic mode, leading to targeting of specific components of Indian hydropower infrastructure, including spillways, powerhouses and dams.

This methodical madness is in need of being checked instantly. World Bank and the international community must intervene and stop India from going to war on water, as it would not remain a bilateral affair with Pakistan for long. India's hawkism to capitalise on water as an upper riparian state is myopic, and speaks of its idiotic mean mentality.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 20/05/2025)

Karachi mayor approaches CM for probe into water theft in city

In a significant development, Mayor Murtaza Wahab has officially acknowledged the scale of illegal water extraction taking place in the city and sought a formal order by the Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah for an inquiry into the widespread illegal activity that was uncovered during a recent inspection.

“During the course of this inspection, it was observed with great concern that widespread illegal water extraction was taking place in both the federal trunk main (FTM) and Customer and Technical Maintenance (CTM) Divisions. The scale and persistence of these activities point to a serious lapse in vigilance and operational oversight within the respective divisions,” wrote the Karachi mayor in a letter to the CM.

The letter by the mayor, who's also the chairman of the Karachi Water & Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), is seen as an acknowledgment of the deep-rooted issues within the water utility details alarming lapses in oversight and calls for immediate accountability.

It referred to the surprise inspection conducted on May 10, 2025, by the mayor, who was accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer of the KW&SC. The inspection revealed widespread and unauthorised tapping of water resources in both the FTM and CTM divisions.

The move, while seen by some as a long-overdue crackdown on internal corruption and negligence, has simultaneously raised serious questions about the role and oversight of the KW&SC and the Sindh government itself. The mayor's letter also outlined the grave findings of the inspection and confirms the immediate suspension of two KW&SC officials — Executive Engineer (Civil) CTM Division, Ahsanullah Shaikh and Assistant Executive Engineer, FTM Division, S.M. Ahsan — for gross dereliction of duty.

Mayor Wahab further urged that the matter be referred to the Chief Minister's Inspection Team (CMIT) for an impartial and thorough inquiry, underscoring that accountability is essential to restoring public confidence in the city's water management system.

“Their [KWSC officials'] failure to prevent and respond to such unlawful activities constitutes a serious dereliction of duty,” he said. “Given the gravity of the matter and its implications for the integrity and credibility of KW&SC's operations, it is most humbly requested that the issue be referred to the Chief Minister's Inspection Team (CMIT) for a thorough and impartial inquiry. This will not only ensure that appropriate accountability is enforced but also serve as a strong deterrent against future transgressions.”

With a population exceeding 20 million, the city has faced a chronic water shortage for decades — a crisis that has only worsened in recent years. The situation turned from bad to worse last month and intensifies with each passing day. The city requires an estimated 1,200 million gallons per day (MGD) of water, yet only about 550 to 600 MGD is actually supplied — less than half of

what is needed. The shortfall has allowed a massive black market in water to flourish, with so-called “water tanker mafias” siphoning off and selling water at exorbitant rates, often with the alleged complicity of officials within KW&SC.

The fallout from the mayor’s letter was swift. Senior MQM-Pakistan leader Senator Nasreen Jalil issued a scathing statement condemning what she described as the “collusion between the Sindh government and KW&SC.” She said the city’s water scarcity was not merely an administrative failure but a “deliberate deprivation” aimed at punishing Karachi and rewarding certain mafias.

“The people of Karachi are dying of thirst while government-backed water mafias make billions,” said Ms Jalil. “From Lyari to Landhi, and from Gulshan to Gulistan-i-Jauhar, the entire economic engine of Pakistan is being kept thirsty through a planned conspiracy.”

She also accused the Sindh government of “weaponising water scarcity” to reward political loyalties and punish dissenting neighborhoods, calling on the federal government to intervene and treat Karachi as a city in humanitarian distress.

Her remarks were echoed in recent protests by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), which disrupted the last City Council session when its councillors marched outside the KMC building, demanding the resignation of key KW&SC officials and immediate federal oversight of the city’s water management.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 23/05/2025)

Top KWSC executives in hot water after SHC suspends appointment orders

The Sindh High Court on Friday suspended the notification and the order regarding appointments of the chief executive officer (CEO) and the chief operating officer (COO) of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) till May 29.

A two-judge bench of the SHC headed by Justice Omar Sial also expressed resentment over the water utility for submitting reply on behalf of Asadullah Khan, who had been appointed as chief operating officer of the KWSC in 2022.

It said that he should not be represented by the counsel for water utility and must engage another counsel to represent him.

Rashid Siddiqui through his counsel Khawaja Shams-ul-Islam petitioned the SHC and submitted that he was an employee of the KWSC and challenged a notification and an office order issued in 2022 and in March 2025 about the appointments of Mr Khan as COO and Ahmed Ali Siddiqui as CEO of the KWSC, respectively.

Petitioner says chief executive officer and the chief operating officer were hired unlawfully

Citing the chief secretary of Sindh, secretary of local government department, chairman of the KWSC and both the officials in question as respondents, the petitioner asserted that the local government department, through a notification issued on Sept 30, 2022, had illegally appointed Mr Khan as COO for a period of three years on contract basis since he had stood retired in May 2022.

He also argued that the re-employment of the respondent as COO was made in total violation of the Sindh Civil Servants Act, 1973 and rules and the respondents did not assign any reason as to how such re-employment was in the public interest.

The petitioner further contended that Mr Siddiqui was also illegally appointed as the CEO through an office order issued on March 24, 2025 as he was admittedly an officer of BS-19/deputy commissioner East and maintained that neither he was an engineer or an employee of the KWSC and his degree was also not recognised by the Higher Education Commission.

He asserted that both the impugned appointments were made in complete defiance of Section 11 of the KWSC Act, 2023 and a judgment of the apex court in which it held that the positions in question were cadre posts and must be filled through competitive process.

Citing another judgment of the Supreme Court, the petitioner argued that the posts in the KWSC were of engineering nature and can only be filled by engineers and such provision was also applicable in the Sindh Building Control Authority, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and Karachi Development Authority.

The petitioner asked the court to set aside the impugned notification and office order and also sought an interim restraining order against both officials.

Earlier, the SHC had issued notices to the respondents as well as a provincial law officer and at the last hearing, the counsel for some respondents sought more time to file counter affidavits.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 13, 24/05/2025)

China may block India’s water if Pakistan’s cut off, Karachi seminar told

The Pakistan Institute of International Affairs (PIIA) organised an interactive session on ‘The Pakistan-India conflict’ in the institute library on Saturday.

It was explained by PIIA chairperson Dr Masuma Hasan there was a need to hear different voices, especially the voices of the youth, regarding the recent conflict. Therefore, they decided to call on their research assistants to talk about the different themes of the conflict, as identified by them, for the audience to then take it from there.

Taking the audience through the events of the past month or so, she also reminded how India, out of the blue, with no credible evidence, held Pakistan responsible for April 22’s Pahalgam attack, which was an intelligence failure on the part of India.

“Then India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 and Pakistan suspended the Simla Agreement of 1972,” she said.

"Then on May 7, India launched Operation Sindoor against Pakistan. While defending the country very well, Pakistan retaliated on May 10, which was followed by a ceasefire after US president Donald Trump's intervention," she added.

Research assistant Mohammad Usman presented a paper on 'Water Assets and Resources'. He said that if India were to stop the water flow to Pakistan, it would risk flooding its own upper regions. "But if they stopped our water during the dry seasons, it could be a concern for us because the flow of water is lower and storage matters the most. It can affect our farmers, which could result in lower yields," he said.

"But if India blocked our water, it would require significant infrastructure, which will take years to build and would also require billions of dollars," he said.

In war with India, Pakistan reasserts itself through controlled display of sophisticated force, say experts

"As for the weaponisation of water, or the water bomb, a concept when the upper riparian state blocks the flow of water and then suddenly releases a significant amount of water without notifying the lower riparian state, you have a big flood. Here in the case of Pakistan and India, Pakistan is the lower riparian state and India the upper riparian state. But in the case of China and India, China is the upper riparian state and India the lower riparian state, especially in Brahmaputra. China can also block India's water," he pointed out.

Research assistant Syeda Maliha Sehar read a paper on the theme of 'Political and Military Interests'. "We saw a maturity of new capabilities developed through the Pakistan-China military partnership," she said.

"By deploying Chinese-origin systems designed to destruct Indian surveillance and communications, Pakistan directly challenged the technological dominance of both Indian and Western-aligned platforms. Pakistan's response served to dismantle long-standing perceptions of asymmetry, re-framing Pakistan, not as a reactive or inferior actor, but as one capable of leading with precision, restraint and strategic innovation. In doing so, Pakistan reasserted itself in the region's power dynamics not through escalation but through controlled exhibition of a sophisticated force," Maliha added.

Another young researcher Safa Rehmat spoke about 'Cyber Warfare and Digital Espionage'. "Cyber warfare in this conflict involves hacking, data breaches and misinformation campaigns. Both the Indian Research and Analysis Wing [RAW] and the Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI], as well as the people of both countries, have developed sophisticated cyber capabilities," she said.

Speaking about the 'War of Narratives', Research Assistant Syed Shahryar Shah said that perceptions came to be just as important as the conflict. "The actual conflict lasted a few days but we are carrying on with the narratives," he said. "What matters now is not what happened but what people believe happened," he added.

Another Research Assistant, Asif Ali, spoke of 'The Kashmir Flashpoint'. "The Indian authorities have already begun a crackdown in Kashmir. Following the Pahalgam incident around 2,800 Kashmiris have either been questioned or detained by the Indian authorities and this is something that is likely to continue," he pointed out.

Another paper was presented on 'Media, Misinformation and Public Opinion' where Safa Rehmat, again, spoke of the things reported wrongly in the media on both sides such as India attacking the Karachi port while showing old pictures of Philadelphia and also reporting that Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff had been captured. Pakistan also chipped in by reporting the capture of Indian female air force pilot Shivani Singh and the raising of white flags of truce from the Indian side.

Saad Asad Brohi spoke of 'Regional and Global Responses'.

The discussion, which followed included a comment about it being easy to blame someone else for one's own internal problems, which is what India did after the Pahalgam attack.

Someone also pointed out that war was not one-dimensional. There are also dimensions such as economy, diplomacy, politics, etc, to think about. It was also mentioned that the armed forces of Pakistan certainly deserve accolades, but there was also a need for good governance in this country.

One person in the audience then got up to thank Indian PM Narendra Modi for providing an opportunity for unity in Pakistan. (By Shazia Hasan Dawn, 13, 25/05/2025)

KWSC recovers Rs12bn in water dues from defaulters, Sindh PAC told

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation has recovered Rs12 billion, out of over Rs31.7bn, water dues from the federal and provincial organisations after the intervention of the Public Account Committee of the Sindh Assembly.

The matter of outstanding dues was taken up by the PAC on Nov 27, last year and during the examination of audit paragraphs of the water utility from 2019 to 2021 it was revealed that the federal and provincial institutions owed Rs31.77bn water dues.

The federal government organisations owed Rs20.6bn, Sindh government department Rs9.8bn and the municipal bodies Rs1.25bn to the water utility.

Earlier this week, the water utility informed the PAC that it had successfully recovered Rs12.594bn as of March. It said that Rs10.37bn was recovered from the federal government institutions and Rs2.21bn from Sindh government departments.

However, the PAC was informed that no amount was recovered from the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation that owed Rs1.25bn to the water utility in water dues.

The federal government and Sindh government institutions that have paid the water utility dues include Pakistan Steel Mills (Rs6.84bn), Gadap and Ibrahim Hyderi towns (Rs2bn), provincial public health engineering department (Rs425m), Cantonment Board Faisal (Rs91.34m), Pakistan Air Force (Rs57m), Sindh Government Hospital Korangi No. 5 (Rs55.69m), Deputy Postmaster General (Rs36.9m), Pakistan State Oil (Rs9.8m), Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (Rs8.41m) and Pakistan Navy (Rs4.55m).

PAC Chairman Nisar Khuhro said that the federal government was requested to pay the remaining Rs10.31bn water dues as soon as possible.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 25/05/2025)

Residents block roads at Karachi's Sakhi Hassan hydrant to protest water crisis

Driven to desperation by water crisis in the city and mainly in Central district, a large number of residents of North Nazimabad, Buffer Zone, Nusrat Bhutto Colony and Shadman Town on Sunday gathered at the Sakhi Hassan water hydrant to protest against the prolonged disruption in water supply to their areas.

With feel-like temperature soaring past 40°C and humidity adding to the misery, frustration among the public reached boiling point.

The Sakhi Hassan hydrant is the only operational hydrant supplying water to the densely populated Central district.

The protesters, including women and children, blocked both sides of the road outside the hydrant, disrupting traffic for hours.

Many carried empty water containers, which is a symbol of the growing desperation in the city, already reeling under infrastructural challenges.

Many areas continue to face severe shortage

For over a month, large parts of Karachi, particularly in the Central district, have been experiencing a severe water shortage.

Areas like Buffer Zone, North Karachi, North Nazimabad, Federal B Area and Shadman Town have reported little to no water supply for weeks, forcing residents to rely on expensive private water tankers or travel long distances to fetch water.

"This is not the first protest," said Shahid Ali, a resident of Shadman Town. "We protested here two weeks ago. The authorities made promises, but nothing changed. We're still without water. How long can people survive like this?"

The city's total daily water demand is estimated at over 1,200 million gallons per day (MGD), whereas the supply falls drastically short, hovering around 550 to 600 MGD even under optimal conditions.

Both experts and officials agree that chronic infrastructure issues, rampant water theft, deep-rooted corruption within Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation and poor governance have further exacerbated the situation.

Electricity outage at Gharo pump

The fresh crisis got further deeper when the KWSC issued a statement attributing the latest disruption to a technical fault caused by a power outage at the Gharo Pumping Station — a critical component of the city's water supply network.

According to the KWSC spokesman, a cable fault at 10:35am led to a complete shutdown of the pumping station.

"Due to a cable fault on KE's network, the Gharo Pumping Station is non-operational at the moment," the statement read. "We are in continuous coordination with KE to restore operations. However, the fault has not yet been resolved."

The Gharo Pumping Station is responsible for supplying nearly 30 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to key areas of Karachi, including Port Qasim, Bin Qasim Town, Shah Faisal Town, PNS Mehran, PAF Base Faisal, and Karsaz. With its operations stalled, several districts face further strain on already stretched water resources.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 26/05/2025)

Karachi mayor seeks consensus in City Council to address water crisis

The city's persistent water crisis took centre stage at the City Council meeting on Tuesday where Mayor Murtaza Wahab informed the members that the K-III water line was being elevated to curb illegal connections and water theft.

He said that joint action would be taken against water theft and urged the council members to move forward with consensus to resolve the city's water supply issues.

The City Council meeting, presided over by the mayor, was called at the request of the opposition to discuss acute shortage of water in the city.

During the proceedings, several opposition members also criticised the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) for its failure to provide smooth water supply to the city.

The mayor, who is also the chairman of the board of the KWSC, shared that the K-III line was being rebuilt as an elevated conduit to reduce water theft. He announced strict monitoring of all water hydrant nozzles, including obtaining written affidavits from the responsible officers.

He also announced the formation of a committee comprising members from both the government and the opposition to oversee the hydrant issues.

Mr Wahab said that the city's registered consumers were just 1.4 million, compared to KE's 3.8m customers. "Yet, water bills are delivered to only 500,000 households and an even smaller number pay," he noted.

He also mentioned that funding had been approved to exempt the water supply and drainage pumping stations in Lyari and Saddar Town from power outages.

The mayor said that since he assumed office, the water utility's revenue had increased from Rs1.1 billion to Rs1.8bn.

The mayor also expressed strong reservations over the absence of the top officials of the KWSC in the meeting and lamented that despite his clear instructions in the previous meeting, the chief executive officer (CEO) and chief operating officer (COO) of KWSC were not present.

He informed the council that the Sindh High Court had suspended the appointment orders of both officers. "We have filed an emergency application to recall the court's decision but until the matter is decided, they cannot attend the council proceedings", he added.

However, the absence of the water utility officials did not deter the mayor to proceed with the meeting. "We will deliberate on the issues and all key points will be communicated to the relevant officers later."

The situation took a tense turn when the mayor asked the chief engineer of the water utility to leave the session, arguing that he was not the appropriate official to respond to policy-level questions.

Opposition Leader Advocate Saifuddin protested over the mayor's decision, urging him to allow participation of the available officials.

Zubaida Iqbal, chairperson of UC-6, Manghopir Town, demanded the installation of solar panels at pumping stations. "Due to prolonged load-shedding in our area, water supply suffers," she said, adding that solar-powered systems could ensure uninterrupted pumping and reduce waste.

Council member Najmi Alam informed said that a significant portion of water was being consumed by informal settlements, commonly known as katchi abadis, which were not billed at normal slab rates.

Mr Alam said that a major chunk of city's water was being consumed by unregulated neighbourhoods and called for an end to the disparity between regularised and informal settlements. "We cannot sustain KWSC without expanding the tax net," he added.

He said that people were illegally installing pipelines and charging for water in some parts of district West.

Mr Alam also raised critical concerns regarding the financial viability of the water utility. "The corporation's monthly billing barely touches Rs600m, which is insufficient for its operational needs," he said, adding that there were over 400 vacant posts in the revenue department and billing coverage remained abysmally low.

The house was later adjourned to Friday to continue the debate on the water crisis.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 28/05/2025)

KMC session over water crisis ends in slugfest

A special session of the Karachi City Council was convened at the KMC Headquarters to discuss the debilitating water crisis in the metropolitan city. Attendees at the meeting, chaired by Mayor Murtaza Wahab, included both treasury and opposition members, as well as senior officials from the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC).

The session, which lasted over two and a half hours, focused on pressing concerns related to water shortages, poor distribution, water theft, and institutional inefficiencies. The meeting was adjourned by the mayor and will reconvene on Friday.

Despite assurances of attendance, KWSC CEO Ahmed Siddiqui and COO Asadullah Khan did not show up in the session due to recent Sindh High Court orders revoking their appointments. Their absence drew concern from several council members.

A contentious moment arose during the meeting when Mayor Wahab asked KWSC Chief Engineer (Bulk) Syed Ijaz Ahmed to leave, stating that he was not the appropriate official for the discussion. This move was strongly objected to by opposition leader Saifuddin Advocate, who deemed it disrespectful and inappropriate.

Many council members expressed surprise, especially as another senior KWSC official, Chief Engineer (Distribution) Muhammad Ali Sheikh, remained present without being questioned. The incident led to accusations of political bias and undue targeting of officials.

PPP leader Najmi Alam criticised the KWSC's operational structure and revenue generation. He proposed dividing the utility into three administrative zones with designated officers to enhance efficiency. Alam highlighted that despite leasing rights being granted to numerous informal settlements, proper billing procedures are not in place. He noted that KWSC generates only Rs600 million in revenue, with 400 vacant positions and widespread unauthorised water connections, particularly in District West.

During the session, Shahid Farman, Chairman of the Union Council in Karachi Admin Society, made serious allegations against Farhan Ghani, Chairman of Chanesar Town and brother of Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani. Farman claimed that Ghani

was shielding water theft in his jurisdiction and that KWSC staff had admitted being unable to act due to political interference. This accusation sparked a heated exchange with PPP council members, which Mayor Wahab eventually calmed.

The city mayor acknowledged that water theft, particularly from the K-III supply line, remains an issue. However, he claimed that efforts are ongoing to curb the problem. He also presented a comparison between KWSC and K-Electric customer bases, noting that KWSC has only 1.4 million registered customers, compared to 3.8 million for K-Electric. He stated that only half a million water consumers are billed, and an even smaller fraction actually pay their dues. Since taking office, the mayor said the KWSC's revenue has increased from Rs1.1 billion to Rs1.8 billion, but the funds are largely consumed by operational and maintenance expenses.

Meanwhile, outside the KMC Headquarters, retired employees staged a protest demanding payment of pensions and arrears pending for over a decade. The demonstrators chanted slogans against the mayor and the Sindh government, calling attention to their prolonged financial hardships.

A delegation from the MQM-Pakistan, led by opposition leader in the Sindh Assembly Ali Khursheedi, joined the protest in solidarity. The issue of unpaid pensions affects retirees across all local government bodies, from Karachi to Kashmore, he said, holding the mayor accountable for the disbursement of payments and demanded financial autonomy for local governments.

The MQM delegation departed after a brief media interaction, while the protesting retirees attempted to enter the KMC building but were prevented by security personnel. The demonstration concluded peacefully.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 28/05/2025)

Karachi University seeks Rs200m in damages over pipeline burst

The Karachi University (KU) administration has sought Rs200 million compensation from the Sindh government on account of damage caused to the university infrastructure and property following a rupture of an 84-inch pipeline last month.



In a letter to the secretary of universities and boards department, the university registrar has stated that the pipeline burst in the early hours of Tuesday, April 29, 2025, resulted in flooding of residential units and academic departments, causing severe damage to the university property.

“The whole unfortunate incident lasted for almost a week causing electrical power outages and significant material losses. It also severely affected academic continuity and welfare of students and staff. The rupture occurred in the water supply line maintained by the Karachi Water and Sewerage

Corporation [KWSC],” the letter says.

According to the letter, the university suffered losses worth Rs200m as a result of the incident.

“We would appreciate if you take immediate action on the matter and request for the initiation of necessary procedures for compensation,” the letter says.

Meanwhile, the Karachi University Teachers' Society has held a meeting, calling upon the chief minister to take notice of KWSC's “criminal negligence” and bind the utility to compensate the university for the damage.

The teachers warned that they might opt for protest for their rights, if relevant authorities didn't pay heed to their issues.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 14, 29/05/2025)

Key targets achieved in K-IV project, claims Wapda chief

Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) chairman (retired) Lt-Gen Sajjad Ghani on Thursday claimed that a number of key targets in the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, better known as the K-IV Project, had been achieved.

“Concerted efforts are being made to complete Phase-I of the project by June 2026. However, the prompt availability of the required funds is key to completing the project as per schedule,” he said while speaking to the project management during his visit.

The Wapda chief made a detailed visit to various work fronts to review the construction progress. These included the intake and pumping stations at Keenjhar Lake as well as the water conveyance system comprising pressurised pipelines being laid from Keenjhar Lake to Karachi.

The project team, along with the consultants and contractors, briefed the Wapda chairman on progress across all eight contracts, which include the intake, pumping stations, pipelines, water reservoirs and filtration facilities.

The chairman was informed that two critical activities i.e., inserting two water carrier pipelines in sleeve pipes at the main railway crossing and hydrostatic testing of the first 15km of the pipeline have recently been completed, while the second hydrostatic testing for another 25km single pipeline will be carried out in June.

Timelines for the remaining works, plans to achieve targets, financial progress and funding requirements were also discussed during the briefing. The cumulative physical progress of the project stands at 63 per cent. So far, Rs75.21 billion have been spent on the project, while the PC-I cost for Phase-I amounts to Rs126.4bn.

Underlining the importance of the K-IV Project for Karachi, the Wapda chairman directed the project team to accelerate construction activities to meet the deadlines.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 30/05/2025)

Opposition, treasury at Karachi City Council unite against water shortage, theft

The City Council on Friday voiced grave concern over the acute water shortages in Karachi, with opposition warning of protests if the water supply doesn't improve within days.

The council meeting on the city's water crisis, also attended by the top management of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), witnessed intense discussion and protests from the opposition members who came down heavily on the water utility for its failure to ensure smooth water supply to the city.

The opposition members criticised the mayor and his team, alleging corruption and poor governance in the water utility.

Union Committee chairpersons from various towns raised complaints about water theft, illegal hydrants, tanker mafia operations, and dysfunctional water infrastructure in their respective areas.

270 pumping stations exempted from power loadshedding, members told

One of the council members lamented, "We have grown old visiting the water board with no results."

Opposition Leader Advocate Saifuddin voiced strong concern over tankers' operations and alleged collusion between influential builders and water officials.

"We will not allow this forum to become a silent spectator. If improvement is not seen within days, we reserve the right to protest outside," he said.

Responding to the council members' concern, Mayor Murtaza Wahab, who presided over the meeting for some time, vowed to end water theft collectively, noting that Karachi needs 1,200 million gallons of water per day (MGD), but only receives 500 MGD.

The mayor, who is also an elected UC chairman, left the council hall after a while handing over the chair to deputy mayor and sat among UC chairpersons on the council floor upon his return, directly addressing their concerns during the heated session.

The gesture generated spontaneous applause from members and was widely seen as a symbolic act of accessibility and solidarity.

"I have come down because I believe in staying grounded. I am here to listen. I am your public servant," Mayor Wahab said.

Taking a strong tone on water theft, he said: "Those stealing water from the poor deserve God's curse. We have shut down several illegal hydrants, but powerful interests reopened some of them. Point them out again — and I will ensure they are closed."

Mr Wahab stressed that operations against illegal hydrants would only be successful with proper guidance and that the canal from Hub Dam would be completed by August 14.

He also pointed out the need to enhance the revenue of the KWSC and urged for collective efforts to resolve the city's water and sewage problems, cautioning against negative propaganda.

Later, presiding over the meeting, Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad noted the pressing issues with K-Electric, announcing that a KE delegation would be invited to the next session.

He said that the water utility was working to solve the city's water issues, and the committee proposed by the mayor would help expedite these solutions.

Addressing the council, KWSC Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan informed members that 270 pumping stations had now been exempted from loadshedding, but admitted that technical faults such as cable failures continued to affect some zones.

He said key installations like Dhabeji, Pipri, Gharo, and Hub were being monitored closely. "The K-IV project is now under Wapda's jurisdiction. Our role in land clearance has been completed, he added."

The water utility COO also assured that the BRT-aligned Nipa-to-Jail Chowrangi water line would be completed on priority and that leakage repairs were ongoing.

The meeting was adjourned to a date to be announced later.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 31/05/2025)

SHC orders govt to appoint permanent chief of KWSC in two months

Restoring the chief executive officer and chief operating officers of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) on their positions, the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday directed the provincial government to appoint a permanent CEO of the water utility within two months.

A two-judge bench of the SHC, headed by Justice Omar Sial, also expressed resentment over "non-serious attitude" of the Sindh government and water utility during the proceedings and asked the provincial law minister to increase the province's effective and knowledgeable legal representation.

It noted that the KWSC controlled the supply of potable water and sewage disposal in the city but its efficacy in this regard was debatable as a large number of residents continued to be deprived of drinking water and were compelled to buy it at exorbitant rates.

However, the bench believed that improving the workings of the utility was a matter best left to the executive and also vacated earlier interim order through which it had suspended the notification and order regarding the appointments of the CEO and COO of the KWSC.

Bench restores incumbent CEO, COO

KWSC employee Rashid Siddiqui had petitioned the SHC, challenging a notification and an office order issued in 2022 and in March 2025 about the appointments of Asadullah Khan as COO and Ahmed Ali Siddiqui as CEO of the KWSC, respectively.

His lawyer Khawaja Shams-ul-Islam submitted that Mr Khan was illegally appointed as the COO through a notification issued on Sept 30, 2022 for a period of three years on a contract basis since he stood retired in May 2022, while the appointment of the CEO was also unlawful since he was not of the requisite grade.

Additional Advocate General (AAG) Zeeshan Adhi had taken a contrary view and also raised the question of laches.

The bench in its order stated that after the resignation of the last permanent managing director/CEO Salahuddin Ahmed, Mr Siddiqui had temporarily replaced him until a regular officer was appointed under Section 11 of the KWSC Act, 2023.

It noted that the appointment of both the officials in question apparently did not breach the law in the field. "The law does not stipulate that a retired person cannot be appointed to those posts nor does the law stipulate that only a particular grade can hold such a post," it noted.

"The KWSC controls the supply of potable water and sewage disposal in Karachi. Although its efficacy in this regard has remained debatable, as the residents of a large part of Karachi continue to be deprived of potable water, and as a consequence, residents of Karachi are compelled to buy water at exorbitant rates, we believe that improving the workings of the KWSC is a matter best left to the executive. The matter in front of us is not public interest litigation," the bench ruled.

At the same time, it noted that efforts being taken by the KWSC should also not be brushed under the carpet as Karachi is a vast city and stopping the senior officials from work can potentially cause irreparable loss and damage to the people of Karachi.

The bench further observed that this matter basically related to a self-acknowledged whistle-blower, who after a passage of two and a half years had realised that certain appointments at the senior level were made incorrectly in the KWSC.

It said that the courts must not interfere in executive matters unless a clear breach of law was demonstrated and the petitioner was unsuccessful at this stage.

"We are, however, constrained to observe the non-serious attitude of the Sindh Government and the KWSC during these proceedings.

This petition has been pending a hearing since Jan 2025. None from the government of Sindh/KWSC took it seriously until we were compelled to make a restraining order on 23.05.2025. Only after that did the government/KWSC appear rudely woken from their slumber, and proper assistance was rendered. The petitioner arose from a slumber after more than two years," it added.

The bench noted that the three main governing principles of injunctions were in the favour of the KWSC and therefore, it was recalling the interim order passed on May 23.

The SHC also observed that it was not appropriate for senior offices of the KWSC to be filled with temporary postings. The AAG informed the bench that the KWSC has already initiated the process of appointing a permanent CEO.

While adjourning the hearing for a date to be fixed in the third week of August, the bench said, "We are hopeful that the correct candidate, whose appointment complies with all conditions stipulated by the applicable law, rules, and regulations, shall be appointed within two months from the date of this order".

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 13, 31/05/2025)

Weaponising water: India's destabilising role in South Asia

India's aggressive and unilateral approach to regional geopolitics, exemplified by its suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), is a stark reminder of its willingness to prioritise hegemonic ambitions over regional stability. This weaponisation of shared natural resources highlights India's increasing disregard for international norms and raises critical questions about its commitment to sustainable and cooperative regional development.

India also failed to present credible evidence linking Pakistan to the Pahalgam incident and instead used unfounded allegations to portray Pakistan as a scapegoat while rationalising its own escalating hostility. Such actions further obstruct dialogue and hamper regional cooperation.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has consistently advocated for a fair and neutral investigation into the Pahalgam incident, showing its commitment to justice and transparency. Even in the face of aerial provocations and civilian casualties, Pakistan refrained from retaliation until it was left with no choice.

India seems to be using unfounded accusations to strategically target Pakistan internationally and deflect from its internal issues, like human rights abuses in Kashmir and anti-Muslim violence in India. It much prefers hostility and dominance over constructive engagement and peacebuilding.

South Asia is already one of the most water-stressed regions in the world, facing climate change, resource shortages and economic inequality. The IWT once ensured fair distribution of water between India and Pakistan, but India's decision to weaken this treaty now threatens Pakistan's agricultural sector, which supports over 70% of its population.

Cutting water supplies worsens Pakistan's food security and hinders climate adaptation while also setting a dangerous precedent for powerful nations to weaponise shared resources. Such actions sow mistrust, making regional cooperation even harder.

India's actions reveal a deep contradiction in its foreign policy. On one hand, it wants to be seen as a global leader in climate action and international cooperation, aiming to be a vishwaguru (global teacher). While on the other, its divisive regional behaviour reflects selfishness and power plays. This double standard damages India's global reputation and weakens its moral authority on climate justice and sustainable development.

Global response to this crisis has been disappointing. While Pakistan's procurement of \$1.4 billion from the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility is a positive step for climate adaptation, India's IWT violation barely faces accountability. Global inaction sends a dangerous message: powerful nations can break treaties without consequences. This ultimately encourages similar behaviour elsewhere and weakens international systems.

South Asia now stands at a crucial moment. The region can either continue down a path of conflicts fuelled by resource disputes or work together to find common solutions. The South Asian Water Security Initiative (SAWSI), building on the principles of the IWT, could promote fair water sharing, joint efforts to combat climate change, and better regional (By Sadia Zahra The Express Tribune, 14, 31/05/2025)

Experts call for tapping rainwater, fixing leakages to end water crisis

Tapping rainwater, plugging infrastructural flaws, sealing leakages and addressing the "deep-rooted corruption" in the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) are some of the urgent and practical solutions offered by experts on Saturday to resolve the city's persistent water crisis.

These measures were highlighted and discussed at length by engineers, urban planners and former officials at a seminar titled "Karachi Water Crisis & Its Solutions," held under the "Rebuild Karachi" initiative of the Pakistan Engineering Forum at a local hotel.

At the same time water resource experts, urban planners and political stakeholders also raised serious concerns over the ongoing deprivation of Karachi's residents from their basic right to clean water, pointing to the crumbling infrastructure of the KWSC, rampant "official theft," entrenched corruption within the utility, chronic mismanagement of rainwater and the persistent apathy of both provincial and federal authorities toward the city's growing crisis.

During the seminar, experts in engineering, infrastructure development and former senior officials of the KWSC highlighted how particularly during the last two decades of nepotism, political compromises, and a prevailing culture of neglect have fostered corruption and enabled exploitation of the city's water resources. They were of the view that these systemic issues have led to the near-total collapse of the city's water supply system.

Karachi can have enough water if rainwater and other resources are properly managed, moot told

Prof Dr Syed Imran Ahmed of the NED University of Engineering & Technology cited his extensive research over the past two decades—conducted for both the KWSC and the World Bank — which has been instrumental in identifying the challenges and critical importance of water supply in Karachi.

Referring to his 2020 study, Prof Ahmed candidly shared his findings, stating, "I set out to investigate the issue of water theft, and while I hesitate to say this, the truth is that the theft was official — not by KWSC itself, but by certain other officials."

He also dispelled the misconception about water scarcity, emphasising that Karachi could have more than enough water if rainwater and other available resources were properly managed. He shared the findings of his studies of two major resources of water supply to Karachi – Hub Dam and Keenjhar Lake.

"Karachi is an arid area and on an average we receive nine-inch rain," said Prof Ahmed. "But through watersheds between Keenjhar Lake and Karachi we can tap 1.83 million acre feet water after every single rain. What do we need? We need some infrastructure to have this amount of water. And all this water, which is scattered, would be available even for agriculture purposes."

Muhammad Bashir Lakhani, a renowned water resources expert and project consultant for the K-IV initiative, shed light on the city's alarming water shortfall during the seminar.

He explained that the city, with a population of nearly 30m, receives only 550 million gallons per day (MGD).

"First, there's an inadequate supply, and then even that limited amount doesn't fully make it into the city's distribution system," Mr Lakhani said.

"We have the capacity to receive up to 680 MGD daily, but our outdated infrastructure simply can't handle it. We face issues with transmission capacity, malfunctioning pumping stations, and critical flaws in the operational system. For example, we release 100 MGD from Hub Dam, but by the time it reaches the Manghopir Reservoir, it's reduced to just 60 MGD," he said.

Mr Lakhani went on to challenge the official narrative regarding water “leakages” that account for the missing supply. In his view, the reality is far more concerning.

“It’s not leakage — it’s theft,” he asserted. “The same volume of water that’s officially reported as lost is actually being consumed by illegal hydrants and water tankers. Before we can fix these issues, we need to see the situation for what it really is,” he said.

In his address, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) Karachi chief Monem Zafar slammed the continued neglect of Karachi’s water crisis, calling out government inefficiency, unfair resource distribution and systemic underreporting of the city’s population.

“Karachi is the fifth-largest city in the world and the largest in Pakistan, with a real population of over 35 million people—far beyond the officially reported 20.3 million. This deliberate undercounting has systematically deprived Karachi’s residents of their due rights, resources and representation,” he said.

Highlighting the paradox of a coastal city suffering from acute water shortages, he said that despite being right next to the sea, Karachi remains thirsty. There’s no scarcity of water—there is a scarcity of justice in its distribution, the JI leader added.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 01/06/2025)

Need for water reservoirs

Pakistan is in a realpolitik puzzle in terms of its water scarcity. The issue has aggravated since India unilaterally suspended the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, and went on to deny the lower riparian state its due of lifeline. Likewise, on the domestic front, the nation is engaged in a debate on how to overcome the pestering shortage of the essential commodity, as India has virtually stopped water discharges from Chenab River into Pakistan, resulting in a decrease from 35,000 cusecs to about 3,100 cusecs.

Last but not least, India is also laying its hands on altering capacity at hydroelectric projects in the Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to adversely impact Pakistan’s share of downstream water. All that is needed at this juncture is to marshal a new water policy, and come up with enough reservoirs for self-sufficiency in electricity and agriculture; and that requires increased water storages and efficient water usage.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was on the mark as he called for building new reservoirs, and completing the ongoing Diamer-Bhasha Dam. The proposed dam, initially estimated at Rs479 billion, has been in limbo for six years; its timely commissioning will provide 6.4 maf water. But that is just one instrument of water holding.

Pakistan needs to build many more such reservoirs, as has been done by Iran, India and Turkiye over the last few decades. The tongue-in-cheek call from the PM that other reservoirs to store water must be considered in national interest might have a referral to Kalabagh Dam, and other projects, that fell pretty to political bickering.

Now is the time for greater inter-provincial coordination on a masterplan to secure water needs by eulogising indigenous geological potential.

While Pakistan has launched a successful diplomatic offensive to browbeat India on its water terrorism, the need is to effectively take it up in the lawfare domain too. Pakistan must knock at relevant international courts, and raise the IWT’s suspension with the World Bank too. Pakistan has a genuine and lawfully-ordained stance, and all it needs is professional cajoling to put down India on its hegemonic mat.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 05/06/2025)

Another KWSC pipeline bursts at Karachi University amid water crisis

While the city continued to face a severe water crisis on Eid holidays, the dilapidated and outdated water distribution and supply infrastructure of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) once again played havoc with the University of Karachi (KU) after a 36-inch supply line burst, submerging the access to the cemetery on the campus on Eidul Azha.

The leakage, being repaired, inundated a large portion of the road leading to the university’s graveyard. People were forced to wade through the ankle-deep water to reach the graves of their near and dear ones for paying homage, a common practice during religious festivals.

Residents of the KU staff colony said that they had timely reported the leakage to the water utility, but it did not take immediate steps to plug the leakage.

Had the water utility acted promptly, a large amount of water would not have been wasted, besides saving people from the ordeal they went through on the Eid days, the residents lamented.

Earlier in April, a burst water main near KU, an 84-inch diameter pipeline, had led to a water crisis and flooding in on the campus, impacting residential and academic buildings, and causing significant losses for the university. The repair work had caused a severe water shortage and disruptions in the city’s water supply for over 10 days.

Chief Engineer Water Trunk Man (WTM) of the KWSC Syed Muhammad Ijaz said that a leakage had been reported in the joint of the 36-inch diameter line. “The repair work has been started, which will be completed soon,” he added.

The KWSC chief engineer said that the damaged line supplied water only to Scheme 33 and the repair work would not affect the regular supply to any other area in the city.

He said that water had been supplied to Scheme 33 as usual on Sunday night and now the next supply would be made on Thursday as per the schedule.

"During this time, the citizens will not face any kind of trouble or shortage," he said.

The chief engineer further said that the repair work on the damaged line was in progress on an emergency basis and the technical team of the water utility was present on the spot.

"The repair process is being carried out rapidly so that the line can be fully functional soon," he added.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 10/06/2025)

Situationer: Allocations for water reserves shrink despite tensions

Without a robust national strategy, Pakistan risks accelerating ecological decline, compromising food and water security.

As several crucial water-storage and dam projects in Pakistan — either planned or under construction — grapple with declining allocations, delayed cash flows, and interrupted releases, the decision to reduce annual funding for water-sector initiatives under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and Annual Development Programme (ADP) is not only surprising, but deeply alarming.

This cut comes at a time when India has increasingly threatened to curtail downstream river flows to Pakistan, further exacerbating the situation.

In the newly tabled federal budget for 2025-26, the Ministry of Water Resources was allotted Rs133 billion under PSDP — Rs2bn less than the previous fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2025. This reduction is particularly concerning given the ministry's own admission that it failed to complete 25 out of 59 water-sector projects during the fiscal year 2024-25.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb revealed in his budget speech that only 34 projects were completed at a cost of Rs295bn, leaving a quarter of the planned work unfinished.

Of the Rs133bn allocated this year, Rs102bn is dedicated to 34 ongoing projects. Of this, Rs95bn is earmarked for 15 key initiatives — including Rs32.7bn for Diamer-Basha Dam, Rs35.7bn for Mohmand Dam, Rs3.2bn for Karachi's bulk water supply (K IV), Rs10bn for lining the Kalari Baghar Feeder Canal, Rs4.4bn for telemetry systems in the Indus basin, Rs1.8bn for the Patt Feeder Canal, Rs690 million for Kachhi Canal flood repairs, and Rs5bn for Awaran, Panjgur, Garuk and Gishkor dams.

Water experts have expressed strong concern over this decline in funding, especially given India's unilateral suspension of the decades-old Indus Waters Treaty and its threats to restrict Pakistan's river flows.

Former Wapda member (water) Jawaid Latif lamented that the sluggish progress on reservoirs, dams and hydropower schemes stems mainly from low PSDP allocations, insufficient cash flow, inflationary pressures and frequent design changes.

According to Wapda's own monthly report, nine major storage projects — including Diamer-Basha (4,500MW), Mohmand, Nai Ganja, Kurram Tangi stages I and II, Mangla Dam raising, Gomal Zam, Satpara and Darawat dams — are either ongoing or completed.

Meanwhile, 11 hydropower schemes such as Dasu Stage-I, Tarbela extensions and Neelum-Jhelum, along with 10 additional dams like Chiniot, Bhimber, Hingol and Bara, are at various study or construction stages.

Projects with timeline

Wapda anticipates completing Diamer-Basha by 2029, Mohmand by 2027-28, and Nai Ganja by 2026. Run-of-the-river Dasu Stage-I and the Tarbela 5th Extension are expected in 2027 and 2026, respectively, while K IV Stage-I and the Kachhi Canal extension are slated for completion in 2026 and 2025.

The 18.4MW Kurram Tangi Stage-I is projected to be finished by December 2025. Once completed, these projects are expected to generate over 9,012MW of electricity and add 9.693 million acre-feet (MAF) of water storage to the national grid by 2029.

Presently, Pakistan's major reservoirs — Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma — stand at capacities of 1,550 feet, 1,242 feet, and 649 feet, respectively, holding a mere 13.7 MAF against the nation's annual inflow of 145 MAF.

"Wapda has written a number of letters to the Planning Commission and others concerned for increasing allocation under the PSDP and releases in accordance with the actual allocations, but to no avail," said Mr Latif, the former Wapda member, highlighting the importance of completing the water storage projects at the earliest.

Allocations

Under the PSDP for the ongoing fiscal year, the government, in accordance with the Water Resource Development Programme Vision-2025, allocated Rs107.664bn instead of the reported Rs135bn, whereas the expenditure on various projects remained over Rs93.5bn till April 30.

The allocations for dams or water storage projects in FY25 under PSDP amount to over Rs63.3bn, followed by Rs39.34bn for canals' projects, Rs3.09bn for research, investigation and monitoring and Rs1.94bn for engineering studies. Likewise, the allocation for hydropower projects was Rs169.92bn, whereas the expenditures till April 30 were Rs74.47bn.

For hydropower study projects, Rs8.3bn was allocated, whereas the expenditures were just Rs787m till April 30. It means that either the government made fewer releases or Wapda couldn't utilise the funds fully as allocated under the PSDP. For fiscal 2026, Rs90.2bn has been allocated for the generation and provision of cheap and green electricity projects.

According to another water expert, who worked as a senior executive for the hydro-resource planning for Wapda and retired a few years ago, the excellent model for hydro-resource planning and launching water storage projects was introduced in Ayub Khan's era.

"In 1985, I saw the first study of Mohmand Dam, which is yet to be completed after four decades. Hope it will be completed in December this year," said the former Wapda official, who wished not to be named.

He said lack of timely decisions, commitment, funds and increasing exchange rates were among major challenges to the launch and completion of water storage projects. Also, security concerns, such as those faced by the Dasu hydropower project executors, also increased the cost of the project.

He said international funding institutions were also not eager to sponsor the projects, which, according to them, have no revenue stream that could ensure repayment of the loans. On the other hand, the provinces remain anxious to receive net hydel profits from Wapda, but are little interested in investing their net hydel profits in the water sector.

Chenab and Chinot dams

Terming the Chenab River "the most vulnerable" as Pakistan that has a complete right to use under Indus Waters Treaty has no dam in its basin, while India made various run-of-the-river projects on this river, the official said, suggesting the government immediately start work on the Chinot dam, which is ready for construction project.

Talking to *Dawn*, Riaz Hussain, a water resource engineering specialist, said Pakistan's current water crisis is a function of insufficient storage, erratic supplies and external geopolitical pressures. With only 13.7 MAF of water storage against an annual inflow of 145 MAF, the country loses valuable surface runoff.

Nearly 80 per cent of Pakistan's cultivable land — roughly 40m acres — relies on Indus Basin irrigation, while over 22m acres remain uncultivable primarily due to inadequate water availability and distribution. Recent Indian upstream interventions, exacerbated under strained bilateral relations, pose serious risks to downstream flows, undermining the Indus Waters Treaty.

The expert warned that without multipurpose dams, small-scale storage, smart urban recharge systems, telemetry-driven monitoring, and precision irrigation — all knitted into a robust national water strategy — Pakistan risks accelerating ecological decline and compromising food and water security. A national water strategy must blend infrastructure, diplomacy and community engagement, he added.

According to a Wapda spokesman, the authority is committed to water, food and energy security of Pakistan as it has been implementing the largest development portfolio comprising eight mega projects in the water and hydropower sectors.

These projects, according to him, are destined to revolutionise the economic landscape of Pakistan with much-needed water and low-cost hydel electricity for socio-economic uplift.

Wapda's under-construction projects include Diamer Basha Dam, Mohmand Dam, Dasu Hydropower Project, Tarbela 5th Extension, Kurram Tangi Dam Stage-1, Nai Gaj Dam, Kachhi Canal Extension and Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme (K-IV).

Scheduled for completion in a phased manner from 2025 to 2029-30, these projects will double the Wapda hydel generation from 9,500MW to 19,500MW with an addition of about 10,000MW of clean, green and low-cost hydel electricity to the national grid.

Besides, these projects will also add 9.7MAF to the gross water storage of the country, sufficient to irrigate another 3.9m acres of land and provide 950m gallons per day for drinking purposes to Karachi and Peshawar. "These projects have also been providing about 35,000 job opportunities throughout Pakistan," he said.

However, the Wapda spokesman didn't comment on the issues related to financial arrangements, delays and other constraints. (By Khalid Hasnain Dawn, 01, 15/06/2025)

No surplus water

IN a knee-jerk reaction to the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, the campaign for new dams has been resuscitated. The prime minister, too, has emphasised the need for new dams.



However, an essential condition for dam construction is surplus water. Contrary to claims that water is wasted as it enters the sea, flows in the Indus river system are plummeting. Flow patterns during 1976-2000 and 2001-2024 exhibit contradictory patterns in the Indus basin rivers. A look at the flow pattern at four critical points sheds more light. Pakistan's river network is divided into two broad categories of the eastern rivers (Sutlej and Ravi) and the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab), under Indian and Pakistani control respectively. The eastern rivers debouch into the Indus below the Panjnad barrage. An analysis of 50 years of river flows at these locations reveal that the waters in the basin are decreasing.

Climate change and transboundary diversions have affected river flows. The average inflows of western rivers at their rim stations were 135.6 MAF during 1976-98. However, average inflows by 1999-2022 had decreased to 120.8 MAF. Similarly, the average annual flows in the eastern rivers have reduced from 9.35 MAF during 1976-98 to just 2.96 MAF during 1999-2022.

Flows below the Panjnad barrage — the point of confluence of three eastern rivers plus the Jhelum river — also registered a decline of 65pc. The average annual discharges below the Panjnad barrage during 1976-2000 were 20.5 MAF. This declined to 7.5 MAF in 2001-2024. Consequently, the annual canal withdrawals of the provinces reduced from 102.73 MAF (1977-78 to 1981-

82) to 95.85 MAF over 25 years. Similarly, the average annual flows below Kotri Barrage tumbled from 40.7 MAF to 14.8 MAF from 1976-99 to 1999-2023. This is corroborated by the fact that 12 of the last 25 years witnessed less than 10 MAF flows below Kotri Barrage.

Dam construction requires sufficient water.

Declining inflows and increased upstream diversions and storage have taken a huge toll on barrage discharges in Sindh located at the tail end of the Indus basin. The frequency of floods at Guddu Barrage has also experienced a drastic reduction. Guddu Barrage received medium floods of over 400,000 cusecs for 23 years during 1976-2000. However, floods of the same level were registered for only 10 years over the last 24 years. Likewise, the frequency of high flooding of 500,000 cusecs declined from 20 times to only seven in the same years. Sukkur Barrage experienced five super floods of over 800,000 cusecs during 1976-2000. Compared to that, only one super flood was experienced in the subsequent 24 years.

The disturbing trend has been captured by a World Bank report Pakistan's Water Economy: Running Dry. The report warns that due to rapid glacial retreat, the Indus basin is likely to endure a colossal decrease of 30 to 40 per cent in its flows in the coming decades.

The UN's World Water Development Report 2025 has also underscored concerns about our water future. The report reveals that glacier retreat in the Hindukush-Himalayan region is alarmingly high — 65pc faster during 2011-2020 compared to the previous decade. These ice and snow deposits are also melting menacingly faster than the global average.

It does not take a genius to conclude that river flows in the basin are declining sharply. It makes the situation more complicated for water managers. They ought to shun their over-simplistic panacea of constructing new dams and diversions. The waterscape of the Indus basin merits prudent decision-making. Many water quacks continue to insist on their trite prescription of more dams, without realising that the present river flows are not enough to cater even to our current water needs. Moreover, under-construction storage and diversion projects also require a substantial quantum of water, a fact that is often ignored when prescribing new dams. The ongoing projects require an estimated 12 MAF of additional water. These projects include the Bhasha dam (6.4 MAF), the Mohmand dam (0.88 MAF), the Kurram Tangi dam (0.9 MAF), the CRBC Lift cum Gravity project (1.19 MAF), the Kachhi canal (1.21 MAF), the Raine canal (1.25 MAF), the Pat Feeder Extension (0.1 MAF), the Nai Gaj dam (0.16 MAF) and other small storage sites.

Pakistan's national water policy has rightly emphasised the need to increase water efficiency and productivity. The policy also recognises the need for the conservation of water-dependent ecosystems, especially in the Indus delta, which have been degraded to precarious levels due to massive upstream diversions in the last century. Pakistan needs to move from concrete structures to the efficient use of water.

(By Naseer Memon Dawn, 07, 16/06/2025)

Karachiites heave sigh of relief as rain breaks months-long dry spell

Residents of Karachi heaved a sigh of relief on Thursday night as moderate to heavy rainfall brought much-needed reprieve from the scorching summer heat. The maximum temperature recorded was 38 degrees Celsius.



While the showers exposed the city's perennial infrastructure woes, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast more rains in the coming days.

Almost all city areas plunged into darkness with the start of the rain.

Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Malir, Landhi, North Karachi, Clifton, Saddar, Nazimabad and Gulshan-i-Maymar experienced moderate to heavy rainfall, while heavy showers were also reported on the city outskirts.

The PMD said that the monsoon system entered Sindh from the southeast, triggering rain across Karachi.

Several parts of the city witnessed flashes of lightning accompanying rainfall.

The impact of the rain was quickly felt across the metropolis as many neighbourhoods witnessed power outages. Electricity feeders tripped due to the wet conditions.

Meanwhile, rainwater also accumulated in several low-lying areas, particularly in parts of Korangi, Liaquatabad, and Orangi Town. Many vehicles broke down due to flooding on roads.

Municipal authorities had earlier claimed to have cleaned major storm-water drains ahead of the monsoon, but Thursday's rain that inundated streets and roads, raised concerns about the city's preparedness.

Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, in a late evening statement, said that drainage teams were on the ground and that efforts were underway to clear clogged areas.

Rains across Sindh

The rains ended the prolonged dry spell across Sindh, bringing relief from the sweltering weather conditions. Meanwhile, three children died in two separate rain related incidents.

Oppressive heat was being reported in many districts since last month and the Met Office had made a forecast two days back about an early monsoon rainfall till from June 25 to June 28.

While weather turned pleasant in all areas that received rainfall, the joy proved short-lived as power breakdowns were reported in several areas, plunging many districts of Hesco region into darkness.

In Hyderabad the rain that started at 8.15pm continued for 30 minutes.

Barring a few days of June's third week, the temperature in Hyderabad had been consistently at 40 degrees Celsius or above.

The Thursday's temperature was recorded at 40.5 degree Celsius and the people were experiencing suffocating weather conditions since morning that peaked in the evening and ultimately strong gusty winds started to blow to precede the rainfall.

Rooftop of a seminary in Tandojam's Muzzafarabad Colony caved in, resulting in death of two children. They were identified as Waheedullah, and Zain. Around 13 children were injured in the incident. Reports suggest that the rooftop of an adjacent house had first fallen on seminary causing its collapse as well.

The injured were taken to Liaquat University Hospital, City branch, from Tandojam.

Another child Fayyaz Phulphoto died in Khairpur when the roof of his house collapsed in a village.

Power supply went off as soon as rains started in most areas.

A Hesco spokesman confirmed that 45 feeders of Hyderabad city remained disturbed out of 156 and 90 feeders faced issues in rest of the Hesco region, which has 659 feeders.

Dust storm visited areas of Babarloi, Tando Masti, Shah Hussain, Thehri that also damaged solar power systems at various locations. Rains also damaged date palm trees.

Severe heat had been reported in Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Sanghar districts. The areas received rains in the evening.

Gusty winds and rainfall were reported from Matiari.

Badin also received light rain which continued at a moderate speed, causing accumulation of water on city roads. No casualty was reported.

Rainfall with thunderstorm hit Mirpurkhas and its outskirts.

There are reports of rains from Mirwah Gorchani, Digri, Jhuddo, Tando Jan Muhammad, Kot Ghulam Muhammad, Sindhri, Naokot, Jhilori, etc.

Farmers have expressed their happiness as they were facing acute water shortages for their cultivated crops, including cotton.

Heavy rainfall accompanied by a severe thunderstorm lashed Thatta and Sujawal districts, leading to considerable damage, particularly to the agricultural sector and vulnerable communities in coastal areas.

Furthermore, several huts in the coastal belt of Thatta were severely damaged.

Warning of urban flooding

Earlier, the Pakistan Meteorological Department had released an urban flooding warning for several cities, including Karachi.

According to the department's advisory, "a westerly wave grips western parts of the country, which are also seeing continued penetration of the monsoon currents". The latter weather system is likely to intensify further.

It said that Tharparkar, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Dadu, Sukkur, Larkana, Khairpur, Naushahro Feroze, Shaheed Benazirabad, Hyderabad, Tharparkar, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Jacobabad, Ghotki and Kashmore could receive rains.

The department warned that heavy downpour/windstorm and lightning would affect daily routines, leading to urban flooding and water-logging in low-lying areas.

The Pakistan Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has directed all concerned deputy commissioners/relevant authorities and stakeholders to take all necessary measures.

(By Imran Ayub, Mohammah Hussain Khan and Faiza Ilyas Dawn, 13, 27/06/2025)

People suffer as Golimar's sole RO plant on verge of collapse

There are people with water containers, jerrycans, buckets and bottles gathered around two big blue fiberglass water tanks behind the Trans Lyari Reverse Osmosis (RO) plant at the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Park in Purana Golimar.

A small water pump, running on an illegal electricity connection from some far away pole in Pak Colony, pumps water into the tanks. As for the main taps of the RO plant, there is no electricity on that side so they don't work. You only run into a few drug addicts sprawled under some shady trees there.

Babu Lassi, an area resident, says that the makeshift water arrangement at the back of the RO plant has been done by residents of UC1, UC2 and UC3. "Without it this area would be devoid of potable water altogether," he said, adding that they don't even know who runs the RO plant.

"The chemical being mixed into the water is also substandard," he added. "The RO plant is being run by some company but the staff who work here have no employee cards to show who they work for. They are even worse than third-party contractual employees. No one, not the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation, nor the town or any union council owns them," he informed.

Residents allege authorities don't care about the facility as lawmakers living nearby receive water through bowsers

Providing some background on the RO plant, the residents said that it was constructed from Mohtarma Fauzia Wahab's funds of around Rs43 crores. But they said that it was still incomplete. Some said that it would help if they could build an overhead tank to store water.

"Sadly many well-known and powerful politicians, including sitting and former MNAs, happen to live close by but they get their water through bowsers," said another area resident.

"I still remember when on May 14, 1995, the then Prime Minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was passing through this area when we residents stopped her motorcade to inform her about their hardships regarding water supply. At that time Kamal Azfar was the governor of Sindh and through his cooperation a dedicated water pipeline was laid here. But water could be supplied through that pipeline only once. Now we are hearing about another separate pipeline from Hub to Baldia. Why can it not be extended till here?" said a senior resident.

Mohammad Farooq, the Trans Lyari RO plant operator, said that the plant is capable of supplying 250,000 gallons of water in a day though it has not happened as yet. "The area needs uninterrupted electricity for the RO plant to work," he pointed out. "But out here there is no power for 12 to 15 hours a day. Maintenance, too, is an issue. It seems like no one remembers that there is an RO plant, and that also a very big one, here," he said.

"The RO plant membrane urgently needs replacement. We also don't get the standard chemicals. We are making do with substandard stuff from the market. And on top of that, we don't get paid regular salaries. Still, we are here on duty for the people," he said.

It was also explained that the RO plant needs all three of its motors running in order to work full capacity. With it not happening, since most of the time there is no electricity, the people collect water from the makeshift arrangement at the back of the plant, which runs on one small motor. "We are just making do," he said.

Not just the area residents, people from Mewa Shah, Bara Board, Garden and Jahangirabad along other places visit the Trans Lyari Park RO plant.

Mohammad Pervaiz, another RO plant worker there, said that many parts of the RO plant have also been stolen. "It was closed for some 10 months in 2018 after the management of Pak Oasis, which had been running it since 2014, packed up and left. Most of the employees here also left because they were not getting any salaries anymore. Then the drug addicts in the area walked off with whatever piece of equipment they fancied, including the generator parts.

"We get cash payments as salaries after two or three months now. Sometimes the area residents gather money to pay us, sometimes the UC people help us out," he said.

"Qadir Patel is an MNA who lives nearby. We appeal to him to at least regularise these employees," said Saleem Baloch, another area resident.

Dawn was informed by UC3 Chairman Waja Wali Mohammad that he is hopeful of things improving. "I have written many letters to the people concerned. We also have new bore wells in the park. Besides two of the five bore wells here were faulty which have also been repaired now," he said. He also mentioned that he was trying to convince K-Electric to switch the RO plant connection from Golimar to Pak Colony, where power issues are lesser. "Here we have no power for 12 to 15 hours and in Pak Colony at least they get 18 hours of electricity a day," he added.

(By Shazai Hasan Dawn, 13, 29/06/2025)

Watershed decision

The Permanent Court of Arbitration's (PCA) supplemental award affirming its jurisdiction over the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) despite India's unilateral suspension marks a critical juncture in South Asia's most volatile water dispute. But with India categorically rejecting the ruling in Pakistan's favour, it must be noted that dangerous fissures are being exposed.

This is because international law is only enforceable if state parties act in accordance with the law, or superpowers ensure their enforcement. Recent history has shown India to be a rogue state, conducting assassinations in foreign jurisdictions and starting wars on flimsy grounds without offering evidence. Unfortunately, unlike other rogue states, India's market makes it attractive to many Western nations, meaning that enforcing a legal arbitration decision is going to be an uphill task.

In what can only be seen as mocking the court, New Delhi has questioned the legitimacy of the PCA, even though it is involved in half a dozen other ongoing arbitrations before it. The only difference is that most of those other arbitrations were initiated by parties based in developed countries, including the UK and South Korea.

The arbitrator's ruling that IWT requires mutual consent throws cold water on India's attempt to hold it "in abeyance" following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. Perhaps more significantly, the case, which was brought by Pakistan over India's proposed Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects, appears to confirm that India has no authority to build any dams or barriers that would alter the flow of the river without Pakistan's consent.

However, even if New Delhi is to be believed and this issue can only be discussed bilaterally, they would still need to treat Pakistan with due respect. Unfortunately, India's leaders have clearly succumbed to delusions of grandeur, earnest in their delusions that when India talks, the US and Russia listen, rather than the other way around.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 30/06/2025)