

NEWSCLIPPINGS

JULY TO DECEMBER 2025

HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT



Urban Resource Centre

A-2, 2nd floor, Westland Trade Centre, Block 7&8, C-5, Shaheed-e-Millat Road, Karachi.

Tel: 021-34387692, Email: urckhi@yahoo.com, Website: www.urckarachi.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/URCKHI Twitter: <https://twitter.com/urckhi>

22 rescued after Kharadar building partially collapses

As many as 22 people, including women and children, were rescued after a portion of a multi-storey residential building collapsed in the Kharadar area on Monday, officials said.

No casualties or injuries have been reported. Rescue 1122 spokesperson Hassan Ul Haseeb Khan told Dawn that a corridor and a staircase at the sixth floor of the eight-storey building collapsed, leaving residents on higher floors stranded.

He said that Rescue 1122 sent its urban search and rescue team, along with one ambulance and one disaster response vehicle, to the scene.

He said that 22 persons were rescued with help of a snorkel.

The official said that team faced difficulties during the rescue operation because of narrow lanes and congested locality. Besides, he added, a huge crowd had gathered at the site of the incident and it was difficult to move machinery.

He noted that the collapsed structure may have been weakened in the recent rains.

The rescue official said that the building had been vacated and declared unliveable because it might collapse any time. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 01/07/2025)

All 22 residents trapped in collapsed Kharadar building rescued

A six-storey residential building collapsed early Monday morning, near the Barra Imam bargah in Kharadar, trapping at least 22 people, according to rescue officials. However, all 22 people have now been rescued and no casualties have been reported.

The incident occurred around 7am when a portion of the building's roof collapsed onto the staircase, blocking all exits and leaving residents stranded on the upper floors.

Initial reports suggest that the collapse extended from the roof down to the fourth floor. The KMC fire department and urban search and rescue teams were mobilised, deploying a snorkel to pluck those trapped on the upper floors to safety.

However, narrow lanes and a tangle of overhead electrical, internet, and cable wires significantly hampered rescue efforts. The operation was completed in over 2.5 hours.

Deputy Commissioner South Javed Nabi Khoso confirmed to the Express Tribune that the building was 15 to 20 years old and had received multiple renovation notices from the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) due to its precarious condition.

He said that legal action is being initiated against the builder, and the premises have been sealed. "A structural failure caused by the collapse of the roof slab brought down parts of the building's interior, including the staircase, which trapped the residents inside," Khoso explained.

Fire Officer Zafar Khan described the operation as "extremely difficult" due to the large crowds, confined spaces, and the urgency of rescuing panicked residents.

Sixteen individuals were rescued via snorkel. He added that rescuing people from the building was difficult, as all the flats were occupied by families.

A resident of the building recounted that he heard a strange noise at 5:30am, but initially saw nothing out of the ordinary. However, when he later entered his flat, the roof had collapsed from the water tank down to the lower floors.

The resident attributed the collapse to the weight of a newly installed water tank on the roof, where some construction work had recently been completed, and painting was still pending. Edhi ambulances and volunteers reached the scene and rescued nine people, including four women, according to their spokesperson.

Last week, Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) identified 740 dangerously dilapidated buildings across the province - 588 of which are in Karachi - as uninhabitable due to the looming threat of structural collapse during the monsoon season. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 01/07/2025)

Building collapses expose gaps in safety enforcement

The incidents of building collapse during recent rain have reignited concerns over enforcement and public compliance with safety notices, as officials scramble to prevent further tragedies.

Two lives were lost and panic spread across two city neighbourhoods after portions of buildings — already declared unsafe by the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) — collapsed within days of final evacuation warnings.

According to survey reports by SBCA's Technical Committee on Dangerous Buildings, the first incident took place at Plot No LY-10, Moosa Lane, District South, where the roof of the third floor suddenly collapsed. The entire third floor was destroyed, while

the lower floors sustained significant structural damage, with visible cracks throughout the building. Two people lost their lives in this avoidable tragedy.

In the second incident, at Plot No 29 and 30, GK-04, Ghulam Hussain Qasim Quarters, a section of a six-storey building Farzana Manzil collapsed due to the weight of a rooftop water tank. One side of the structure gave way, falling through multiple floors and raising fears of a full collapse. However, no casualties were reported, although the building now shows additional structural cracks and remains at high risk of further failure.

Both structures had previously been declared unsafe and unfit for habitation by the SBCA. In the days leading up to the incidents, the authority had issued final evacuation warnings, posting notices and broadcasting alerts through loudspeakers. On the Saturday before the collapses, SBCA's demolition squad visited both sites and again warned residents to evacuate immediately.

Following the accidents, SBCA Director General Muhammad Ishaq Khoso took immediate notice and dispatched technical staff and demolition teams to the sites. With assistance from the local administration, both buildings were sealed and evacuated. Rescue personnel are currently helping residents recover their belongings from the damaged structures.

DG Khoso expressed deep sorrow over the loss of life and emphasised the need for residents to take SBCA warnings seriously. "Living in a building declared hazardous is like playing with lives," he said. He urged citizens, particularly during the ongoing monsoon season, to prioritise their safety and leave dangerous premises before tragedy strikes.

He also reminded the public that SBCA's Rain Emergency Centre operates 24/7, with technical staff working in shifts. Citizens are encouraged to report any structures compromised by rain or sewage issues by calling 99232355 or 99230939, or by visiting www.sbca.gos.pk.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 03/07/2025)

12 perish in Karachi building collapse

At least 11 people died and several others sustained injuries, when a dilapidated five-storey residential building collapsed in the Lyari neighbourhood of Karachi on Friday morning, police and witnesses said, with rescuers searching through the rubble for trapped victims.

The incident happened in Lyari's Baghdadi, near the Lea Market, just before 11am. Witnesses said that the building, which had already been declared as "dangerous" by the authorities concerned, turned into a pile of rubble within minutes, creating scenes of panic and chaos in the area.

Nearby residents rushed to save their neighbours before rescuers took over to remove the rubble along with at least five excavators. The heavy machinery struggled to access the narrow alleys, while the police baton-charged bystanders to clear the way.

Officials confirmed that the tragedy claimed lives of at least 11 people, including women and children, while many others were injured. The victims were shifted to the Civil Hospital by Chhipa and Edhi volunteers, who also participated in the rescue operations alongside the Rescue 1122 personnel.

Rescue teams, equipped with five disaster response vehicles, two snorkels, and several ambulances, were reached the site soon after distress calls. Cranes and lifters were also sent. According to a Rescue 1122 spokesperson, more than 100 personnel took part in the operation.

Heart-rending scenes unfolded at the scene as families of those trapped under the debris cried out for their loved-ones. Bystanders tried to console distraught relatives, while others watched in stunned silence. The area was soon cordoned off by police and Rangers to facilitate rescue efforts.

The deceased included Prantik, 21; Hoor Bibi, 55; Wasim, 35; and Prem, 28. A girl Fatima, who was critically injured in the tragedy, died during treatment, Civil Hospital Trauma Centre Director Dr Sabir Memon told The Express Tribune.

Medics also said that three unidentified bodies, of approximately, 30, 25 and 7 years of age were in the hospital. Dr Sabir Memon said that seven injured were currently undergoing treatment at the Trauma Centre.

Local residents told The Express Tribune that the building had long shown signs of structural instability, with concrete pieces and broken bricks frequently falling off the structure. Officials had declared the building unsafe and advised occupants to evacuate. However, several families remained reluctant.

All six family members of 70-year-old Jumho Maheshwari were at his flat on the first floor when he left for work early in the morning. "Nothing is left for me now□my family is all trapped and all I can do is pray for their safe recovery," he told AFP.

Another resident, Maya Sham Jee, said her brother's family was also trapped under the rubble. "It's a tragedy for us. The world has been changed for our family," she told AFP. "We are helpless and just looking at the rescue workers to bring our loved ones back safely."

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Arif Aziz said that up to 100 people had been living in the building. Deputy Commissioner Javed Nabi Khoso confirmed that the building housed around 20 apartments. Saad Edhi, of the Edhi Foundation described it as a "worn-out building".

"Preliminary estimates suggest that 30 to 35 people were inside at the time," Deputy Commissioner Khoso said, adding that officials were using thermal imaging technology to detect anyone still trapped beneath the debris.

Chief Fire Officer Humayun Khan described the structure as a "ground-plus-five-storey building in a hazardous state". Khoso told reporters on the spot that cracks had begun to appear in the structure shortly before the collapse, triggering some residents to flee.

Shankar Kamho, 30, a resident of the building, who was out at the time, said around 20 families were inside. "I got a call from my wife saying the building was cracking and I told her to get out immediately," he told AFP. "She took our daughter and left. About 20 minutes later, the building collapsed."

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah took notice of the incident, calling it "extremely unfortunate," and directed the relevant authorities to submit a detailed report. Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani and Deputy Commissioner Khoso also visited the site to monitor the rescue operations.

"The building was declared unsafe, but residents did not vacate. Unfortunately, forced evacuations become a humanitarian dilemma, as they render people homeless," Ghani told reporters. The minister acknowledged negligence on the part of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA).

President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed deep grief and sorrow over the tragic building collapse and offered heartfelt condolences and sympathies with the family members of those who lost their lives.

The president directed the Sindh government to expedite the rescue of the individuals trapped under the debris. He also directed for immediate determination of the causes of the incident and the implementation of effective measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also instructed that the rescue operation must be accelerated to save those trapped under the debris. "Such incidents must be prevented in the future by formulating a strategy on a priority basis," the prime minister added. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 01, 05/07/2025)

Lyari building collapse — an inevitable tragedy foretold by Karachi's illegal structures

As yet another building crumbled into dust in Lyari on Friday killing at least 10 people, the shadow of a far greater disaster looms over the city, as the fallen structure was one of 588 buildings officially declared dangerous by the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA).

A total of 107 of the "dangerous" buildings are concentrated in Lyari alone, making the latest tragedy less of a shock and more of a grim inevitability.

The building, now reduced to rubble, was no stranger to danger. In fact, the officials and sources said, it was already marked and catalogued as one of the 107 "dangerous structures" in Lyari, as per SBCA's records.

Across the city, the SBCA admits that 588 buildings are too dangerous for human habitation.

The SBCA claims to have done its job — letters sent, notices served, warnings issued. But, these actions ring hollow when evacuation orders are neither enforced nor accompanied by viable relocation options for already vulnerable residents. Most of these residents are daily wage earners and low-income families with nowhere else to go.

"We can't forcefully evacuate without the cooperation of local law enforcement and social welfare bodies. People simply don't leave," said an SBCA official.

But the reality is far grimmer. Jawad Shoaib, a Lyariite and area councillor, says the authorities are more focused on "illegal constructions" in the area and had least interest in making serious plans for the relocation of the residents of these dangerous buildings.

"If you're told to vacate but have no money, no plan, and no help — what do you do? Wait to die, or risk staying?" he asked.

Women residents stand by, as rescue workers search for survivors in the rubble of a five-storey residential building, which collapsed in Karachi on July 4, 2025. — Reuters/Akhtar Soomro

This is not the first time Lyari has mourned like this. Over the past five years, at least four major buildings have collapsed in this historic but long-neglected district. In 2020, three such incidents left 49 people dead.

In March 2020, a single-storey house collapsed after torrential rains — two lives lost, five injured.

Just three months later, June 2020, a five-storey structure crumbled, killing 22 people. Later that month, another building fell in Khudadad Market, Lyari, claiming 25 more lives. And now, in July 2025, eight more names are added to a growing list of fatalities.

That's 55 deaths in five years — all linked to crumbling, unsafe buildings in the same area.

The question hanging in the dusty Karachi air: If these buildings were already declared dangerous, why were people still living in them?

Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani sees it as a real challenge.

Talking to the media after reviewing the ongoing rescue operations at the site of the collapsed building near Aath Chowk in Baghdadi, he sought people's support for such "sensitive job".

"The real challenge arises when the government tries to forcibly evacuate residents from such buildings," he said. "It becomes a humanitarian issue, and the authorities face criticism for displacing people from their homes. However, if the goal is to save innocent lives and avoid such disasters, strict action must be taken, even if it means removing people from their shelters."

He said that after the recent tragedy, the people should think seriously about ensuring such incidents do not happen again anywhere in the city. "We may have to take away the roofs over people's heads, but at least we will be able to save their lives," he said.

Responding to a question about the "mafia of illegal builders" operating in the city, he claimed that the government had taken strict action against them, filed FIRs, and identified such builders. However, he stressed that unless citizens cooperate, this issue cannot be resolved.

"It's a matter of demand. We want to eliminate this demand. If citizens stop purchasing homes in illegal buildings, the demand will cease," he said and added that efforts are underway to cancel the feasibility of such illegal construction projects.

Later in the evening, he told a press conference that the provincial government was prepared to displace occupants of the city's dilapidated buildings in order to save lives, and relocate them to alternative sites if necessary.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 05/07/2025)

Building collapse

IT was an avoidable tragedy. Another residential building collapsed in Karachi's Lyari neighbourhood on Friday, resulting in a number of casualties, including women and children.

Nine deaths had been reported as these words were being written. It was the third structural collapse incident in the city in two days. A day earlier, the third-floor roof of a building had collapsed in the Moosa Lane area, killing two; separately, an entire section of a six-storey building had collapsed under the weight of its rooftop water tank in Ghulam Hussain Qasim Quarters, thankfully without casualties.

In each case, the buildings had been previously declared unsafe by the Sindh Building Control Authority, but evacuation orders were repeatedly ignored.

A review of the city's records reveals that there have been multiple structural collapse incidents in Karachi in recent years, with many involving condemned buildings. The question naturally arises: why has the SBCA been so helpless in enforcing its writ?

The problem is a multifaceted one: for example, citizens often resist evacuation orders for dangerous buildings as they may have no other place to go to, and they demand alternative arrangements before they agree to comply.

The SBCA is also accused of turning a blind eye to various illegalities and violations, especially the use of substandard construction materials, which has led to the proliferation of dangerous structures in the city. It is well known that in most construction projects, compliance with building safety codes is non-existent. Due to these factors, large parts of the city have turned into a sprawling mess of structures that can quickly become a death trap for their residents.

Since this problem most often affects the less privileged, the authorities seem not to treat it urgently. However, it is becoming clear that a major intervention is needed, and the administration must devise a comprehensive strategy for dealing with dangerous buildings and the threat they pose.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 05/07/2025)

Lyari building collapse

The collapse of a five-storey residential building in Karachi's Lyari neighbourhood, claiming at least 16 lives and trapping families under rubble, is yet another example of the disregard in which the state holds its citizens. The catastrophe exposes a vicious cycle of institutional failure, corruption and criminal apathy that has turned Karachi into one of the world's most dangerous, expensive and unliveable cities.

The collapsed building is a microcosm for the state of the city. The Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) issued four evacuation notices since 2023, declaring the structure "dangerous", yet no effort was ever made to get the residents to move. Utilities remained connected, and residents were never offered alternate housing, while officials were allegedly enriching themselves in return for ignoring violations.

The SBCA has asserted that their officials did everything they were supposed to, but other departments and the building's residents refused to cooperate or listen. Even if the SCBA was truthful, it is only saying that corruption and dereliction of duty occurred in other government departments.

Meanwhile, criticising the building inmates for failing to follow eviction orders when they may have nowhere else to go is problematic. Governments at every level in Pakistan have failed to provide affordable housing in any major city, so much so that even most municipal employees can't even afford to live in the city they work for, and a significant number of those who do live in the city wind up in slums or other substandard housing.

The SBCA has identified approximately 588 buildings as unsafe, and more dubious construction projects continue to emerge, sometimes without the necessary approvals. Fixing this problem before building disasters become even more commonplace requires prosecution of the complicit, regardless of their political weight; modernising building laws; and massive investment in public housing.

The government also needs to take a cue from several countries that discourage property speculation to bring down prices to levels where people can actually afford to live where they work.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 06/07/2025)

Sindh govt, SBCA earn opposition's ire over Lyari tragedy

In a unanimous display of outrage, major opposition parties — the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Jamaat-i-Islami — have condemned the PPP's Sindh government, the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) and other authorities, accusing them of "criminal negligence" which led to collapse of a building in Lyari killing more than a dozen people.

The political leaders not only demanded compensation for the affected families, but also called for registration of manslaughter cases against the officials responsible for the tragedy.

Addressing a press conference at the MQM-P's temporary headquarters in Bahadurabad, Leader of the Opposition in the Sindh Assembly, Ali Khurshidi, said that this was not the first such incident of building collapse.

PTI, Muttahida and JI seek compensation for victims, FIRs against responsible officials

"In this city, illegal constructions are flourishing under the patronage of SBCA officers, and even children are aware of this fact," he said. "The people are dying, yet illegal constructions are still underway. The SBCA officers are receiving billions of rupees in bribes. Karachi has been handed over to mafias — there's a dumper mafia, water mafia, and SBCA mafia. In Sindh, no legal work is possible without bribery. The traffic police have also turned bribery into a business."

PTI leaders visit site of collapsed building

Leaders of PTI led by its Sindh chapter president Haleem Adil Sheikh visited the collapsed building site and met the affected families.

Talking to reporters, Mr Shaikh held the Sindh government and the SBCA responsible for the incident.

Calling for accountability, the PTI leader demanded that an FIR was registered against those responsible in the SBCA and the provincial administration.

"This is no accident — it is an administrative manslaughter," he asserted and demanded that each family who lost a loved one be given Rs10 million in compensation.

Six-month rent for displaced families sought

JI Karachi chief Monem Zafar Khan demanded six-month rent and alternative residences for the victims of the collapsed building.

He lambasted the SBCA over its "failure" in discharging its responsibilities.

He too held the PPP government and the SBCA responsible for the tragedy saying that the building control authority became a hub of corruption. As a result, he maintained, the city of lights has turned into a concrete jungle.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 06/07/2025)

Search still on as Karachi building collapse death toll doubles

The death toll from the collapse of a five-storey residential building in the old area of Lea Market in Karachi's Lyari town climbed to 21 on Saturday, as emergency crews continued to search for survivors amid the rubble for a second consecutive day.

The dilapidated building, located near the 24 Ghanta Clinic in the Lyari 8 Chowk area, eventually gave way on Friday, trapping residents beneath tonnes of debris.

By Saturday evening, officials had recovered 11 more bodies, bringing the total to 21, while concerns remained that up to 10 individuals were still unaccounted for.

"We have recovered 21 bodies so far," South-DIG General Syed Asad

Raza told Dawn. "There are apprehensions that eight to 10 people are still trapped under the rubble."

He added that legal proceedings would be launched against those found responsible for the tragedy once the rescue operation concludes.

Rescue teams, including a specialist urban search and rescue unit, have been deployed to the site, utilising advanced equipment such as life locators, listening devices, scanners and radar technology in the hope of finding survivors.

"The debris removal operation is running in parallel with the search," Rescue-1122 spokesperson Hassaan Ul Haseeb Khan told Dawn.

Ambulance and volunteer services at the scene reported that the collapse has so far claimed the lives of at least 18 people and left five others injured.

According to Edhi Foundation workers, the bodies recovered include seven women, 10 men, and a 10-year-old child.

The injured, among them three women, have all been transported to Civil Hospital Karachi.

By Saturday, rescuers had cleared debris down to the ground floor on one side of the site, while on the other, work had reached the third floor.

At Karachi's Civil Hospital, Dr Summaiya Syed, the city's police surgeon, confirmed the death toll and said 10 injured people had been brought in since the collapse.

"One person died during treatment, six have been discharged, and three remain admitted, with one in a serious condition," she said.

Authorities have identified several of the deceased as Ayush Jamna Das, 12; Shani Juma, 65; Kailash Juma, 40; Usha Kailash, 35; Prakash Shivjee, 50; Chetan Shivjee, 35; Rohit Arsi, 30; and Geeta Rohit, 24.

According to the surgeon, Rohit and Geeta were a couple who had married only recently.

However, conflicting reports emerged over the exact death toll, as Deputy Commissioner South Javed Nabi Khoso told Dawn late on Saturday that 80pc of the ongoing operation was completed and 19 people had been confirmed dead and 13 injured, while police, hospital, and rescue officials had earlier reported 21 fatalities.

The majority of the victims are believed to be from the Kutchi Maheshwari community, officials said.

The disaster has prompted visits from political leaders, who met with grieving families at the scene.

State Minister Kheeral Das Kohistani, visiting on behalf of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, said, "We are not here for any political motive but to express sympathy with the families on behalf of the prime minister."

Senator Nihal Hashmi echoed the sentiment, urging unity and support for the victims.

"This was not time for partisan politics but extending help to the families," he said.

Raja Ansari, a spokesperson for the federal government, called for a "transparent and impartial inquiry" into the causes of the collapse and for those responsible to be held to account.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 01, 06/07/2025)

Clifton plots scam lands KMC ex-bosses in the soup

A provincial anti-corruption court has summoned two former administrators of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, two former municipal commissioners, and several senior officials to appear on July 15 in a major case involving the illegal allotment of government plots worth billions of rupees and large-scale corruption.

The court was hearing a case concerning the illegal allotment of valuable amenity plots and abuse of power. Notices have been issued to former administrators Muhammad Hussain Syed and Rauf Akhtar Farooqi; former municipal commissioners Samiuddin Siddiqui and Matant Ali Khan, former director land management Najamuz Zaman, former director auctions Abdul Ghani, Additional Director KDA Khalid Zafar Hashmi, former Assistant Director KDA Syed Jameel Ahmed, former Assistant Director KDA Abdul Rasheed, Younus Qidwai, Omni Group Director Abdul Ghani Majeed, and Agha Sher Shah. The court has directed all accused to be present on the given date.

According to the prosecution, the reference was previously under trial at the NAB court. In 2024, the NAB chairman transferred the case to the provincial Anti-Corruption Establishment.

After a detailed inquiry by the department's committee, the case was formally submitted to the court.

The accused are alleged to have illegally allotted two amenity plots in Clifton and are accused of abusing their authority for personal gain and engaging in corruption.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 08/07/2025)

Death toll in Lyari tragedy rises to 27 as rescue work concludes

As the death toll rose to 27, the three-day rescue operation to find survivors and retrieve bodies from the rubble of a five-storey building that collapsed in Lyari last week has been completed, officials said on Monday.

Among the deceased were 15 men, 10 women, one teenage boy and one infant girl. Of the injured, one woman was in critical condition and was admitted to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) for treatment, while 12 others were discharged after receiving first aid. Of the 27 victims, 20 belonged to the Maheshwari community.

"Rescue operations, which began on Friday morning, concluded on Sunday evening," said Rescue-1122 spokesperson Hassaan ul Haseeb Khan.

He said no further casualties were found, confirming that the total number of fatalities remained at 27. All bodies had earlier been recovered and sent to the CHK for medico-legal formalities.

The spokesperson said that the team used the same high-tech equipment that was used during the recent earthquake in Turkey. Devices such as life detectors enabled them to rescue several individuals with only minor injuries. Without this technology, the use of heavy machinery might have caused damage to the bodies.

He added that over 100 personnel took part in the rescue effort over the course of three days, working in different shifts.

'Rs1m compensation termed insufficient'

Commenting on the incident, Sandeep Maheshwari, a local resident and human rights activist, told Dawn that 20 of the 27 victims were members of the Maheshwari community. He noted that all were working-class individuals. He said three nearby buildings, also home to many members of the community, had been evacuated without any alternative accommodation being provided.

Mr Maheshwari termed the Sindh government's announcement of Rs1 million in compensation as "insufficient" and criticised the rescue operations, claiming they focused more on "removal of debris" than on "saving lives".

He added that the government now planned to demolish 56 "dangerous" buildings in Lyari, creating fear and uncertainty among residents over whether they would be offered alternative housing.
(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 08/07/2025)

Death-traps

The state's dereliction of duty is costing innocent lives. The collapse of a five-storey residential building in Karachi's Lyari neighbourhood, which has so far claimed at least 27 lives, is the predictable outcome of a system that no longer functions to protect its people. For over a year, the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) had declared the structure unsafe and issued four evacuation notices. Yet residents remained inside, utilities stayed connected, and no serious attempt was made to enforce the orders or offer relocation.

This failure is part of a larger, more dangerous trend. Karachi is teeming with illegal constructions - many of them towering above what is legally permissible - built through backdoor approvals and palm-greased inspectors. Authorities like the SBCA routinely shrug off responsibility, blaming residents, other departments or "lack of cooperation" while continuing to approve dubious projects or turn a blind eye to violations. If this is not complicity, it is at best cowardice. Following public outrage, the Sindh government suspended the SBCA Director General. But scapegoating a single official is not reform. Over 588 unsafe buildings have already been identified in the city. How many more must collapse before Karachi's institutions stop hiding behind bureaucracy and start saving lives?

Fixing this crisis does not demand notices and suspensions. It requires the prosecution of all those complicit - regardless of rank or political affiliation - and the modernisation of building laws. There must be serious commitment to public housing so that residents are not forced to live in death traps. Every crumbling wall and buried body is a testament to a state that refuses to act. Until that changes, Karachi's skyline will remain a monument of neglect.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 14, 08/07/2025)

Demolition of dangerous structures begins

Following the tragic collapse of a five-storey residential building in Lyari's Baghdadi area that claimed 27 lives, the authorities have launched a demolition drive targeting other dangerous structures in the vicinity.

Teams from the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) have begun tearing down dilapidated buildings identified as hazardous. According to Building Inspector Zulfiqar Shah, two buildings are currently being demolished in phases after evacuation, while a survey is underway for a third structure.

Assistant Commissioner Lyari Shehryar Habib confirmed that all three buildings have been completely evacuated and temporary arrangements have been made to relocate the displaced residents to community centers and KMC-run schools. He added that it may take up to 10 to 15 days to completely demolish a single building.

Meanwhile, affected residents have expressed dissatisfaction with the government's response and warned of protests if they are not compensated and provided permanent housing. They demanded clarity on the government's plan for their rehabilitation and vowed to raise their concerns at the Chief Minister's House, Governor House, and the Sindh Assembly.

Security and rescue teams remain stationed in the area to oversee ongoing operations.

Lyari collapse claims 27 lives as rescue operation concludes

A 50-hour-long search and rescue operation in the Baghdadi area of Lyari - where a five-storey residential building collapsed on Friday morning - concluded on Sunday, with 27 confirmed deaths and 10 injuries. "Twenty-seven people lost their lives in the Lyari tragedy, while eleven others were injured. Among the deceased are eleven women and sixteen men, including a one-and-a-half-year-old girl," confirmed the Civil Hospital administration.

The report states that 26 bodies were brought to the hospital, while 55-year-old Fatima succumbed to her injuries during treatment.

"Of the injured, ten people were discharged after receiving medical treatment. However, 30-year-old Sanatia remains under treatment," it stated.

The list further noted that most of the injured sustained head injuries in the incident. Many of the deceased belong to the Hindu community.

According to rescue officials, the final body was recovered - after 48 hours of digging through debris - was that of 15-year-old Muhammad Zaid, found trapped near the building's staircase. His body was moved to Civil Hospital for legal formalities.

Zaid's elder brother, who survived the collapse, told reporters he had tried to pull his younger sibling out of the building when the structure began to crack but lost his grip during the escape. Tragically, Zaid, their father, and two other brothers died in the collapse.

According to Rescue 1122 officer Hasnain and Edhi Foundation volunteer Farooq, Zaid's body was found at a location from which five other bodies had previously been taken out. However, his was buried too deep under the rubble to be immediately detected. After renewed efforts by family members, search teams returned to the location and recovered Zaid's body using specialised equipment.

During the operation, cash, cheques and jewellery were recovered from three separate locations and handed over to the local union council chairperson.

Rescue 1122 South In-Charge Hameer Wahid told Express News that 95% of the debris had been cleared, and no further victims were believed to be trapped.

"No families remain at the site waiting for missing persons," he said. He further added that rescue operations were deliberately prolonged to ensure careful recovery of bodies. Several rickshaws and motorcycles parked beneath the building were also destroyed. Locals said the area underneath the structure was routinely used for parking.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 08/07/2025)

Heads roll after Lyari tragedy

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has immediately suspended the Director General of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) and has constituted an investigation committee, which will submit its report on the tragic incident within two days.

Sharjeel Memon expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic incident of building collapse in Lyari while addressing a press conference on Monday. He said that Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah chaired an emergency meeting and decided that strict action would be taken against irresponsible and corrupt officers and officials.

The investigation committee, headed by the Commissioner Karachi, has been instructed to immediately demolish 51 extremely dilapidated buildings in the city. Another 588 unsafe buildings will also be inspected to ensure that hazardous structures are vacated and demolished in a timely manner.

Saeed Ghani stated that the affected families will be given Rs one million each as compensation. He further said that all officers who have been posted in the affected area since 2022 will be included in the inquiry, and a case will be registered against officers whose negligence is proven.

Home Minister Lanjar stated that action would be taken against those responsible for criminal negligence.

In response to a question, the senior minister said that the government is reviewing the situation in slum areas, noting that 740 buildings across Sindh require repairs.

He added that relocating residents would not pose a problem, as similar arrangements were successfully implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and for flood victims.

Answering a question, Saeed Ghani said that illegal constructions are a serious issue in Karachi and it is the responsibility of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) to prevent them. He added that amendments to the SBCA rules are underway, and suggestions have been sought within two weeks to enable effective action against illegal constructions and derelict buildings.

He added that the government is also considering whether the authority to demolish buildings should remain with the SBCA or be entrusted to a private institution.

Senior Minister Sharjeel was accompanied by Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar, Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, and Excise and Taxation Minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 08/07/2025)

SBCA chief sacked as govt moves to raze 'dangerous' buildings

Four days after the collapse of a five-storey residential building in Lyari, the provincial government has suspended the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) director general and issued notices to occupants of two adjacent buildings to vacate the premises, paving the way for the demolition of the weakened structures.

The decision to this effect was taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday.

It was also decided to demolish all "dangerous" buildings across the city and introduce a proper procedure for approving building plans.

A notification issued by the chief secretary said that the SBCA DG Ishaque Khuhro's services were "placed under suspension with immediate effect for the reason of misconduct and inefficiency".

Shahmir Khan Bhutto, a grade 20 officer serving as the secretary of the chief minister's inspection, enquiries and implementation team, was notified as the new SBCA chief.

The meeting, held at the CM House, was attended, among others, by Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon, Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar and Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani.

The meeting was informed that there were 588 "dangerous" buildings in Karachi, including 426 in the South district alone.

The chief minister directed the Karachi commissioner to conduct a comprehensive survey to assess the living conditions and ownership status of families residing in these hazardous structures, as 51 buildings had been classified as "extremely dangerous".

Hours after the meeting, the SBCA issued notices to the occupants of two buildings in close proximity to the collapsed structure to vacate and remove their belongings.

The provincial government's decision to bring major reforms in the SBCA comes after the five-storey building, with an illegal penthouse constructed on top, collapsed in Lyari, claiming 27 lives.

The sources said that the chief minister expressed extreme displeasure and annoyance at the performance of the SBCA and ordered strict action against the delinquent officials involved in the illegal approval of building plans.

They said the meeting was informed that there was no record of approval of the building plan from the SBCA, and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) had complained in 2022, stating that the building was deemed unsafe in a survey conducted at that time.

The sources said that Mr Khuhro was the SBCA chief when the HRCP had complained about the dangerous building, and a six-member team had carried out the survey and recommended the demolition of the third floor. However, the third floor was never demolished.

The chief minister directed the registration of an FIR against those responsible for criminal negligence and mandated a thorough inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the collapse.

Ministers' presser

In a subsequent press conference, Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon, LG Minister Saeed Ghani and Home Minister Zia Lanjar provided updates on the decisions made during the emergency meeting.

The senior minister said that the chief minister had also ordered the chief secretary to identify SBCA officers who were responsible for the area in 2022, when the building was declared dangerous.

He said that the Karachi commissioner had been tasked with submitting a detailed report within 24 hours on the number of residents in these hazardous buildings to facilitate prompt demolition efforts.

"A comprehensive survey report of all dangerous buildings is expected within two weeks," he added.

The LG minister said that other SBCA officials who were suspended included the director, deputy director and building inspectors assigned to Lyari.

He said that the Sindh government had announced Rs1 million in compensation to the families of the 27 deceased people.

The LG minister said that there were 51 buildings in Karachi that were “extremely fragile and should be demolished”.

He said the city commissioner had been directed to provide the number of residents and units in those buildings, as well as details of whether they own the property or have rented it, so that the process of demolishing them could be started.

“The Karachi commissioner also has to provide assessments of the 588 buildings which were declared dangerous within two weeks so that we can decide which of the buildings need to be destroyed and which can be fixed through major repair,” he added.

He said that if any negligence, even by the SBCA DG, was found in the inquiry, then he would also be included in the FIR.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 08/07/2025)

Notices issued on plea for FIR over Lyari building collapse

A sessions court on Tuesday sought a report from police on an application seeking registration of an FIR against the city mayor, director general of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) and others over the collapse of a five-storey building in Lyari last week.

Advocate Muhammad Haroon has filed the application under Sections 22-A and 22-B of the criminal procedure code (CrPC) for registration of an FIR against Mayor Murtaza Wahab, the SBCA chief, heads of utility companies and officials of other public departments for their alleged wilful misconduct and “criminal negligence” in connection with the collapse of the Lyari building.

The applicant also requested the formation of a joint investigation team (JIT) under the supervision of the court to probe a “pattern of illegal constructions, building collapses, forged approvals and loss of life across Karachi”.

After a preliminary hearing, the additional district and sessions judge (South) issued notices to the SSP complaint cell (South) and the SHO of the Baghdadi police station to submit their respective reports.

Referring to the tragic incident in which at least 27 people lost their lives and several others sustained injuries, the applicant contended that an FIR should be registered under relevant sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) against officials of public departments responsible for enforcing building safety regulations, as well as those who approved utility connections from K-Electric, Sui Southern Gas Company, Sindh Environmental Protection Agency and others.

He also held the fire department responsible for failing to conduct inspections or ensure emergency access in high-density areas.

The applicant alleged that, despite repeated written complaints by residents, no action was taken by the SHO of the concerned police station or the SSP South, claiming that police officials had been “routinely providing protection to builders and land grabbers involved in illegal constructions.”

He also claimed that it was a matter of public knowledge that bribes were allegedly collected by police officials and SBCA personnel on a per-floor basis to permit unlawful vertical expansion.

“These systemic corrupt practices have directly contributed to repeated building collapses, including the tragic incidents in Lyari, Ranchor Line, and Usmanabad,” he submitted.

Citing a Supreme Court ruling in a suo motu case on illegal construction in Karachi, the applicant asked the court to direct the police to record his statement and register an FIR against the proposed accused.

(By Sumair Abdullah Dawn, 14, 09/07/2025)

Occupants of nine buildings start vacating as demolition drive begins in Karachi’s Lyari

With the provincial government setting up a high-powered committee to investigate the recent collapse of a multi-storey building in Lyari that killed 27 people, authorities have ordered occupants of nine “dilapidated” buildings to vacate their homes as an operation begins to demolish one of the “weakened” structures in the same vicinity.

The developments came in the wake of the tragedy, which also left several families displaced and raised alarm over the state of “ageing and illegally constructed buildings” in the city.

Some occupants of such buildings were seen emptying their homes on Tuesday and transporting their belongings to temporary abodes.

A number of residents also staged a protest demonstration, demanding that the government provide alternative housing before demolishing the properties they had purchased with their hard-earned money.

In the early hours of Tuesday, demolition crews began tearing down one of the nine newly identified structures as part of an emergency safety drive.

Officials said the buildings had been found to be structurally “unsound” and posed a severe risk to occupants and nearby residents.

A spokesperson for the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) confirmed that notices had been issued to the occupants, urging them to vacate immediately in order to avoid further tragedies.

Governor visits displaced families

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Tuesday visited the site of the collapsed building.

During the visit, he faced a group of emotional residents and activists demanding accountability and immediate relief.

Public outrage over the tragedy continues and has led to street protests in the affected area.

Mr Tessori, accompanied by senior administration officials, met with the affected families and promised swift support.

He announced that each displaced family would be allotted an 80-square-yard residential plot.

"We stand with the victims during this difficult time. We will ensure no family is left without shelter," he said, adding that interim housing arrangements would be made until permanent plots are allocated.

Speaking to the media, Governor Tessori vowed to personally look into the matter.

"I will be sending all my recommendations regarding this tragedy to the Sindh government through a formal letter. This is no minor matter. There will be no silence, and those responsible will be held to account," he stated.

He also urged the provincial government to provide six months' rent and temporary relocation within the same locality for residents evacuated from the dangerously unsafe buildings.

He further assured that the Governor House would remain actively engaged in relief efforts, offering essential support including ration supplies and employment opportunities for the affected families.

As the government continues to identify more dangerous structures, questions remain about the authorities' capacity to both enforce regulations and ensure humane treatment of residents displaced by such enforcement.

Five-member committee notified

The Sindh government on Tuesday formed a five-member inquiry committee headed by Karachi Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi, comprising Special Secretary Ayesha Hameed, SBCA's Nadeem Ahmed and Asif Ali Langah and the local government department's Hammadullah Seehar.

"The committee has been directed to conduct a thorough inquiry into the incident, which occurred on 4 July 2025, and submit its findings within 48 hours. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) also mandate the committee to identify those responsible for negligence and propose recommendations to prevent similar incidents in the future," said a statement detailing the notification.

"Furthermore, the committee is tasked with developing a mechanism for the evacuation of residents from buildings deemed dangerous. It has been authorised to co-opt any relevant officer required during the course of the inquiry."

The committee held its maiden meeting on Tuesday.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 09/07/2025)

Three-month rent assistance announced for families displaced by demolition of 54 dilapidated buildings in Karachi

Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani on Wednesday revealed that after the collapse of a building in Lyari, some 54 other dilapidated structures, mainly in the old city area, were being demolished to avert any tragedy.

"The process of evacuating buildings declared unsafe is also underway at a rapid pace," said Mr Ghani while talking to reporters after a meeting with chairmen of different towns associated with the Jamaat-i-Islami.

"The government has decided to provide immediate rental assistance to those displaced by the demolition of dangerous structures. For all buildings being vacated and demolished due to structural risks, the Sindh government will pay three months' rent to the affected residents as a temporary relief measure."

The minister clarified that the support would not be limited to homeowners alone as the tenants living in these hazardous buildings would also receive three months of rent from the government.

In meeting with JI town chairmen, Saeed Ghani says dedicated committee to oversee rehabilitation of affected people

If needed, the financial support could be extended to six months or even a year, depending on each family's situation and the progress of their rehabilitation, he said.

"We've established a dedicated committee to oversee the complete rehabilitation of the affected families and ensure that no one is left behind," the minister said.

PTI files resolution in PA

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) legislators have demanded that a high-level probe body is formed, which should be comprised of members of the Sindh Assembly, to look into the "horrific" incident that claimed 27 innocent lives.

Parliamentary party leader of the PTI in the Sindh Assembly Muhammad Shabbir Qureshi submitted a resolution in the assembly addressing the alarming rise in building collapse incidents in Karachi.

Referring to the recent tragic Lyari incident, Mr Qureshi demanded that all negligent officials were identified and held accountable.

"The resolution further demanded that officers involved in corruption and criminal negligence face strict legal consequences," said the statement.

"The resolution also urged the Sindh Assembly to approve the resolution and initiate a full debate on the issue of illegal constructions in Karachi, calling for policy reforms to prevent future tragedies."

Governor sets up cell

A cell has been established in Governor House to assist affected families.

The cell will coordinate with relevant government agencies to ensure timely support and resolution of complaints from affected families, said a statement.

"Governor Kamran Tessori has also announced helplines — 1366 and 021-99204748 — for victims seeking help," said the statement.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 10/07/2025)

'Doomsday images' haunt Lyari building collapse survivor

In an unbelievably remarkable tale of survival, a 25-year-old man cheated death by a whisker when a five-storey residential building collapsed in Lyari's Baghdadi area earlier this week.

The young man, Rashid, was on the rooftop collecting his tools when the structure gave way — an unexpected twist of fate that saved his life as tons of concrete and debris came crashing down.

"I was retrieving my tools when my family began shouting for me to get out," Rashid recalled. "Seconds after they rushed outside, the entire building collapsed. From the rooftop, I saw the ground swallow our home." From his elevated position, Rashid witnessed the full horror of the disaster. "It was like doomsday," he told The Express Tribune. "I saw bodies crushed beneath the slabs-one with the head stuck in the rubble and the torso hanging out. That image will haunt me forever."

Rashid sustained injuries to his leg during his escape and was treated at the Civil Hospital. Though discharged, he continues to experience severe pain and difficulty walking. "They didn't even give me a prescription," he said, adding that he now relies on friends and relatives to cover his ongoing medical expenses.

Displaced by the collapse, Rashid and his family have temporarily moved to a rented house in Moach Goth. Despite his injuries, he returns to the debris site regularly, hoping to recover his tools so he can resume work as a shutter repair mechanic. "I want to stand on my own feet again. I can't sit idle or wait for help," he added. Rashid revealed that no government official has visited or offered support since the tragedy. His family, like many others affected, remains without any official assistance.

Amid the devastation, Rashid's determination to rebuild his life stands as a quiet testament to resilience and self-reliance. "I survived by chance," he said, "but now I have to survive on my own."

(By Kashif Hussain The Express Tribune, 04, 11/07/2025)

Eight SBCA officials arrested in Lyari building collapse case

Eight officials of Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) were arrested on Thursday for manslaughter, criminal negligence, etc following registration of an FIR about collapse of a five-storey dilapidated building in the Lea Market area of Lyari on July 4. Owner of the building was also arrested.

The tragic incident, occurred within the remit of the Baghdadi police station, had claimed the lives of 27 people, including women and children.

South-DIG Syed Asad Raza said that nine officials, besides the present owner of the building, were nominated in the FIR one of them was not arrested due to his poor health.

He said the FIR was registered on the complaint of an official of the local government department.

Present owner also taken into custody

The DIG said that the arrested SBCA officials were its directors and deputy directors. He identified the current owner of the building as Raheem Bux Khaskheli.

One senior official, who wished not to be named, told Dawn that the officials were arrested from the SBCA head office at Civic Centre, where they were called to appear before an inquiry committee to submit their version about the circumstances leading to the collapse of the building.

An inquiry committee led by the commissioner of Karachi was formed by the chief minister of Sindh, which had begun its work.

The body's meeting was held at CM House on Wednesday.

A member of the body had asked the SBCA to call the concerned officials of Lyari / district South for a meeting at their head office at Civic Centre on Thursday. The official said that a police party arrived at the SBCA head office and informed the management that detention of SBCA officers was required for investigation into the building collapse case.

"The police officers said that they had 'directions from the above' to detain the officers," said the official.

According to contents of the FIR, complainant Hamadullah, a section officer of the Local Government, Housing & Town Planning Department said that the building Phota Mansion spread over 527.3 square yards was constructed in 1986.

Its owner got built the five-storey plus ground floor building in two portions and for a considerable period, both portions had been in a dilapidated condition and became unliveable.

One portion, having 20 flats collapsed on July 4 due the criminal negligence of the SBCA officials and the owner, resulting in loss of 27 precious lives.

According to the FIR, six directors namely Syed Asif Rizvi, Syed Zaram Haider, Syed Irfan Haider Naqvi, Ashfaq Husain, Jalees Siddiqi and Faheem Murtaza and other nominated officers were aware of the dilapidated condition of the building.

But the said officers completely failed to perform their official duty during the 2022 to 2025 period, and committed negligence and carelessness by not taking any "serious steps".

The FIR said the said officials "deliberately" did not mention in the official record that the said building was dilapidated. Because of their negligence, one portion of the building collapsed and 27 people lost their lives.

The present owner of the building Raheem Bux Khaskheli and other unknown owners also knew that the building was no more liveable.

The complainant said he wanted legal proceedings against the SBCA officials and owners of the building.

The FIR was registered under Sections 34 (common intention), 217 (public servant disobeying direction of law with intent to save person from punishment or property from forfeiture), 218 (public servant framing incorrect record or writing intent to save person from punishment or property from forfeiture), 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing buildings), 322 (punishment for qatl-bis-sabab), 337-Ai (whoever, by doing any act with the intention of thereby causing hurt to any person, or with the knowledge that he is likely thereby to cause hurt to any person causes shajjah-i-khafifah) and 427 (mischief causing damage amounting to Rs50) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 11/07/2025)

Nine unsafe buildings evacuated in Lyari, says Sharjeel

The Sindh government has taken action to address safety concerns in Lyari by evacuating nine unsafe buildings and beginning the demolition of one dilapidated structure.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said the provincial government would provide three months' rent as financial assistance to the affected families.

The move comes after a recent [building collapse](#) in the area claimed [27 lives](#), prompting the government to take measures to prevent similar incidents. The Lyari tragedy has raised serious concerns about building safety in the area. The government has declared 740 buildings as unsafe, with 51 categorised as extremely hazardous.

The provincial government has also formed a five-member inquiry committee to investigate the cause of the collapse and recommend preventive measures.

The senior minister said the newly appointed Director General of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) had taken a strong stance against corruption and negligence within the organisation.

He added that all SBCA officers were required to submit details of their assets accumulated over the last five years within 15 days. "This move aims to promote transparency and accountability within the organisation," he said.

Mr Memon said that strict action would be taken against SBCA officials involved in the construction or protection of illegal buildings.

He further announced that the provincial government would introduce the Sindh Electric Policy 2024 next month, which includes a subsidy of Rs18 per unit on electricity in the Nooriabad and Dhabeji industrial zones to promote industrial development.

The senior minister said that the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority had directed K-Electric and other power companies to refund excess charges collected from consumers in April and May 2025. The refund amount is Rs4.035 plus 50 paise per unit, providing relief to consumers.

He also said that the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency had launched a crackdown on illegal wastewater discharge at Sea View, directing teams to submit a report within 48 hours.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 14, 11/07/2025)

Lyari tragedy: sacked SBCA officers cry foul

Judicial Magistrate (South), Kalsoom Sahito, has remanded SBCA officials including five directors, two deputy directors, one inspector, and the building owner to police custody for three days in Lyari building collapse case.

The police presented arrested officers of the SBCA, including Zargham Haider, Syed Irfan Haider Naqvi, Ashfaq Hussain, Muhammad Jalees Siddiqui, Syed Faheem Murtaza, Asim Ali Khan, Faheem Ahmed, Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah, and Rahim Hussain Shah.

The defendants claimed that they were arrested under political pressure and had no role in the approval of the building which was constructed when they were not even appointed.

During the proceeding, the court inquired about the number of registered cases. The investigating officer (IO) confirmed that only one case had been filed following the building collapse. The police sought physical remand to continue their investigations. Inspector Zahid Hussain requested maximum remand time, explaining that the accused persons possess important documentary records that need to be retrieved. He stated that due to the negligence of the accused, 27 people lost their lives, and four others were injured. The court also summoned the building owner.

Defence lawyer Zeeshan Rajpar argued that Rahim Bakhsh, the owner, is also a victim. He has lost his son, son-in-law, and three other relatives in the incident.

Advocate Shahab Sarkhi stated that the building in question was constructed in 1986 and that the SBCA possesses relevant records. He questioned why the authorities had not yet identified who approved the building, who issued the completion letter, or who granted the structural approvals. Sarkhi pointed out that the building had already been declared dangerous before its collapse, and he called for a thorough examination of the approval documents.

He criticised the ongoing harassment of the people, asking what the minister's problem was in bringing the necessary records to light. He stated that the issue of who provided the completion plan should not be our concern, urging those affected to file a case but insisting that the investigation be conducted properly.

Sarkhi condemned the arrests made under political pressure just three days after the tragedy, noting that some individuals were detained and later released due to political influence, and that no ministers had been implicated in the case. He said, arrests made without investigation, are illegal.

SBCA officers claimed they were not posted in that area, still they were implicated in the case.

GM Qureshi advocate argued that the prosecution had stated in the remand papers that they lacked records. He pointed out that arrests occurred following the provincial minister's press conference and alleged favouritism in the arrests made, asserting that the Director General of SBCA is responsible for the incident.

Zeeshan Rajpar further highlighted that the building owner, Rahim Bakhsh, lost his granddaughter and great-granddaughter in the incident. He rhetorically questioned why Bakhsh would allow them to stay in an unsafe building if he knew about its condition. Rajpar claimed that Bakhsh did not possess title documents and argued that all the charges against him are bailable.

Advocate Javed Chhatari contended that the accused are not responsible for the incident and argued that the IO lacks evidence against them. He noted that the building was constructed 50 years ago, and no one knows who granted permission for it. He described the arrests as unwarranted harassment without proper proof and urged the court to grant bail.

However, the court handed over the accused to the police on a 3-day physical remand.
(By Nasir Butt The Express Tribune, 04, 12/07/2025)

Residents protest eviction after Kharadar building declared unsafe

For the second day in a row, residents of a residential apartment building in the old city area of Kharadar remained stranded under the open sky after being forcibly evicted when the structure was declared unsafe by the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA).

The affected families have appealed to the Sindh governor and other senior officials, calling for an independent structural assessment of the building by a credible engineering firm. They allege the eviction was unjustified and driven by vested interests.

The eviction follows a tragic incident in Lyari's Baghdadi area where 27 people lost their lives after a derelict building collapsed. Following the tragedy, the Sindh government launched a city-wide crackdown against illegal and unsafe buildings in the metropolitan city.

As part of the drive, the SBCA sealed Hajra Manzil, a six-storey building in Kharadar, deeming it vulnerable. Residents were given only 24 hours to vacate the premises. According to the displaced families, no alternative accommodation was provided, and many of their belongings remain locked inside the sealed building.

The residents say that the building is structurally sound, with no visible cracks in the foundation, beams, or pillars. They allege that the eviction was orchestrated by a local builder who had earlier offered them Rs1.5 million per unit- far below the market value of Rs seven to eight million for vacating their apartments.

"This was not a case of public safety. This was a land grab in the guise of safety," said one resident, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Until we are allowed to return to our homes, we will continue to stage our protest here."

They further claim that the SBCA used heavy-handed tactics, including disconnecting electricity and gas connections, removing metres, and sealing the building's main gate. Notices declaring the structure unsafe were reportedly pasted both on Hajra Manzil and an adjacent, visibly dilapidated building -which has been uninhabited for years but has not been sealed.

The residents allege they were given just 12 hours to leave and that women and children were forcibly evicted. "We were thrown out without warning, and now we are on the street," said another affected resident.

The SBCA has yet to officially respond to the residents' claims or provide clarification regarding the inspection and criteria used to declare the building unsafe.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 13/07/2025)

Eight SBCA men among 10 sent to prison in Lyari building collapse case

A judicial magistrate on Monday remanded eight officials of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) and two owners of a building that collapsed in Lyari in judicial custody.

Investigating Officer (IO) Zahid Hussain Shah produced the 10 suspects before Judicial Magistrate (South) Kalsoom Mustafa Sahto and sought an extension in their physical remand for another 11 days.

At the outset of the hearing, the IO informed the court that further custody was required to obtain technical evidence and to coordinate with the relevant department for collection of documents and related reports. He added that the extension of physical custody was also necessary to apprehend remaining suspects in the case.

However, the defence counsel opposed the plea and requested that the suspects be sent to jail on judicial remand.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the magistrate turned down the IO's request and sent all 10 suspects to prison on judicial remand.

According to the FIR, the five-storey building was constructed in two portions, and for a considerable period, both portions (buildings) were in dilapidated condition and unliveable. It added that one building with 20 apartments collapsed on July 4 due to the "criminal negligence" of the SBCA officials and the owner.

The FIR said the SBCA officials were aware of the condition of the building over years till its collapse. It added that the officials "completely failed" to perform their duty and "committed negligence and carelessness".

It also said the officials "deliberately" did not mention in the official record that the building was dilapidated. It also added that the present owner of the building and other unknown owners also knew that it was not liveable for humans. Despite this, the owners gave several flats on rent to members of the Hindu community and committed negligence.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 15/07/2025)

New survey ordered amid doubts over Sindh's 'dangerous' buildings list

As the dust has barely settled over the questions raised about the Sindh Building Control Authority's (SBCA) role in the Lyari building tragedy, fresh doubts emerged on Tuesday about the competence, operational mechanisms and professional integrity of the building authority's officials after Sindh Local Government (LG) Minister Saeed Ghani ordered a fresh province-wide survey of all "dangerous" buildings, acknowledging that some structures may have been "wrongly categorised as hazardous".

Chairing the first meeting of the newly formed committee on hazardous and dilapidated buildings, Mr Ghani emphasised the need for transparency and accuracy in identifying structurally unsafe buildings.

"While numerous buildings have been declared dangerous, there have been complaints suggesting that some designations were incorrect," a statement issued after the meeting quoted the minister as saying.

To ensure a thorough and credible survey process, the minister announced that committees, under the supervision of respective deputy commissioners, will oversee district-level inspections. These committees, the statement said, will now include one representative each from the Association of Builders and Developers (Abad), the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) and the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners (PCATP).

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary for Local Government Sindh Wasim Shamshad, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi, SBCA Director General Shahmeer Bhutto, SBCA Director (Admin) Mushtaq Soomro, Abad Chairman Hassan Bakhshi, Vice Chairman Tariq Azeer, PEC representative Lt (retd) Muhammad Iqbal, PCATP member Suhail Bashir, Engineer Arif Bilgrami, South Deputy Commissioner Javed Latif Khoso and Municipal Commissioner Lyari Hammad N.D. Khan, among others.

Just a day after the collapse of the Lyari building, which claimed 27 lives and left dozens homeless, the Sindh LG minister had addressed an emergency press conference and revealed that 588 buildings across the city had been declared hazardous — 456 of them located in District South, including 107 in Lyari alone.

Tuesday's meeting held detailed discussions regarding the 588 identified dilapidated buildings, including 59 classified as "extremely hazardous".

"The Karachi commissioner presented an update, revealing that 29 of the 59 critically dangerous buildings have already been vacated and data on their residents compiled. Efforts are ongoing to evacuate the remaining buildings to prevent any potential disasters," the statement said.

However, it added that Mr Ghani had instructed that the revised survey be conducted swiftly, with progress reports to be submitted at the next committee meeting.

The minister also announced that the Sindh government would provide three months' rent support to residents displaced from the already vacated 29 buildings and those affected in the Baghdadi area of Lyari. Further recommendations would be made by the committee regarding compensation or other assistance for tenants with pagri rights and owners, the statement added.

"The Sindh government is committed to addressing this longstanding issue with full seriousness and transparency," Mr Ghani said.

"The committee has been designed to include not just public officials but also stakeholders from the private sector, including architects, planners, and engineers, to provide well-rounded and technically sound recommendations."

The committee will formulate both short- and long-term policies to address the resettlement and compensation of affected residents. It will also evaluate whether certain buildings, with minor or moderate maintenance, can be made habitable again, rather than opting for complete evacuations.

"Daily survey reports from district committees will be submitted to the Karachi commissioner, who will consolidate and present the findings at future committee meetings," the statement said.

"All members reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that no unjust decisions are made and that every effort will be taken to rehabilitate and protect the rights of residents living in buildings that can be safely repaired. For structures deemed beyond repair, phased evacuations will be planned in consultation with technical experts and stakeholders from both the public and private sectors."

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 16/07/2025)

Residents complain some buildings wrongly declared dangerous: Ghani

Sindh Minister for Local Government, Saeed Ghani said on Tuesday that a survey of all dilapidated and dangerous buildings should be conducted afresh.

He mentioned that complaints have been received about buildings being wrongly declared dangerous. Committees led by the relevant deputy commissioners are already in place across the province, including Karachi, to conduct the survey all precarious structures.

The committees will include one member each from the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), and Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners.

He expressed these views on Tuesday while chairing the first meeting of the committee formed to address the issue of dangerous buildings across the province.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion took place on 588 dilapidated buildings across Sindh, including 59 classified as extremely dangerous. Commissioner Karachi presented a report saying that out of the 59 extremely dangerous buildings, 29 have already been evacuated and data of the residents has been compiled, while efforts are underway to evacuate the remaining ones to prevent any major tragedy.

Ghani said that a fresh survey must be carried out on all dangerous buildings, as complaints are being received about misclassification.

He said that the survey should be completed as soon as possible, and its findings must be presented in the committee's next meeting.

He said that in the first phase, Sindh government will pay three months' rent to the displaced residents of the affected building in Baghdadi, Lyari, as well as those evacuated from the 29 buildings. Later, the committee will give its recommendations for tenants with pagri or ownership rights, proposing compensation or other benefits accordingly.

Ghani stressed that the Sindh government is taking this longstanding issue seriously and is aiming for a transparent resolution.

Based on recommendations from all technical experts and stakeholders in both sectors, the government will formulate short- and long-term policies for the affected residents.

Furthermore, the committee will recommend whether buildings that are salvageable through minimal or moderate maintenance can be made habitable again.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary Local Government Sindh, Waseem Shamshad, Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Commissioner Syed Hasan Naqvi, SBCA DG Shahmir Bhutto, Director Admin Mushtaq Soomro, ABAD Chairman Hasan Bakhshi, Vice Chairman Tariq Azeer, Pakistan Engineering Council's Lt. (R) Muhammad Iqbal, Pakistan Council of Architects member Suhail Bashir, Engineer Arif Bilgrami, Deputy Commissioner south, Javed Latif Khoso, MC Lyari Hammad ND Khan, and others. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 16/07/2025)

10 heritage buildings among 44 vacated for demolition in Karachi

As many as 44 dilapidated buildings, including 10 declared protected heritage in the city's South district, have been vacated for demolition in the aftermath of the Lyari building tragedy.

A meeting, chaired by Commissioner Syed Hasan Naqvi, was told that so far, 44 dilapidated buildings had been vacated in the South and East districts for the safety of the residents.

In total, out of 588 buildings declared dilapidated by the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA), 68 buildings have been declared highly dilapidated by the city administration. In the first phase, these 68 buildings will be vacated and demolished.

South Deputy Commissioner (DC) Javed Nabi Khoso informed the meeting that the 41 dilapidated buildings included 10 colonial-era structures which had been declared protected heritage. He said that the SBCA had declared these buildings as highly dilapidated in the district.

However, the DC said that the historical buildings would be demolished in consultation with the advisory and technical committee.

East DC Abrar Jaffer said that the SBCA had declared nine buildings in district East as highly dilapidated, out of which three buildings had been vacated.

He informed the meeting that the owner of a building located in Gulistan-i-Jauhar had started the demolition work himself.

It was decided in the meeting that the approval of the commissioner or the SBCA director general would be required to start the process of demolishing the dilapidated building.

The commissioner has appointed four officers, including DC South, for the survey of dilapidated buildings. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 17/07/2025)

Two sisters killed as top floor of another Lyari building collapses

Two women were killed and their children sustained injuries when the roof of another multi-storey building collapsed in Lyari on Thursday, officials said.

South DIG Syed Asad Raza said that the top (sixth) floor of a building named 'Ghani Mansion', located in Khadda Market, collapsed onto the fifth floor.

He said the bodies of two women, as well as three girls, were retrieved from under the rubble and shifted to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi. The senior officer added that the deceased women were sisters, while the injured were their daughters.

Police Surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed confirmed the deaths of two women. They were identified as Hurmat Rafiq, 40, and Hamida Rizwan, 45. The three injured were Hira Rafiq, 15, Javeria Rafiq, 12, and Sakina Rehman. Sakina's condition was described as critical.

Rescue 1122 spokesman Hassaan UI Haseeb Khan said it was a dilapidated six-storey building. Labourers were working on the rooftop of the sixth floor when it collapsed. He said that after receiving information about the incident, one ambulance and one disaster response vehicle were dispatched for rescue operation.

Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani visited the site and told reporters initial reports suggested the homeowner was getting repair work done on the roof, which increased the load and led to the collapse.

He gathered detailed information from affected residents and officials of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA), and instructed authorities to immediately relocate displaced residents to nearby community halls, marquees, public halls, or residential hotels.

He termed the incident deeply unfortunate, and said that although the building was 40 to 50 years old, it was not on the official list of dangerous structures.

New survey underway

Mr Ghani announced that committees have been formed at the district level to re-survey 740 buildings declared dangerous across Karachi and the rest of the province. These committees will comprise government officials as well as representatives of private institutions.

He said that the chief minister, chief secretary and he himself had been working daily to rehabilitate those people affected by unsafe buildings.

The minister said that on CM's directive, the list of unsafe buildings is being reviewed after receiving complaints that some properties listed as dangerous could actually be made habitable after repairs. He suspected that personal interests might be influencing some of these classifications.

"To ensure transparency, we have formed district-level committees comprising both government officials and private sector representatives," he said. "Earlier today, a follow-up meeting was held under the chairmanship of the chief secretary to discuss the urgent rehabilitation of affected people."

He admitted that the government currently lacks immediate housing options and is therefore offering temporary accommodation in schools, community halls and hotels. "We are facing some resistance in vacating such buildings," he said. "I urge residents to bear the inconvenience to save their lives. A little hardship now can prevent a deadly tragedy later."

Referring to the earlier Lyari Baghdadi tragedy, the minister acknowledged government shortcomings. "We admit our failure to prevent illegal construction under the current SBCA laws. We are working on amending the law to enable more effective action," he said.

He added that new legislation will treat builders, brokers and even buyers involved in illegal construction as criminals, allowing for prosecution under criminal law. "Following the Baghdadi tragedy, senior SBCA officials were arrested. Our objective is to uphold the rule of law," he shared.

Roof of Mehmoodabad building also collapses

Three people were injured when the roof of a building collapsed in Mehmoodabad on Thursday.

The Rescue-1122 spokesperson said that the roof of the building collapsed in Manzoor Colony. As a result, three persons sustained minor injuries. One disaster response vehicle along with one ambulance took part in the rescue operation, he added. (By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 18/07/2025)

Why buildings fall

VARIOUS reasons have been given by different agencies for why buildings collapse in Karachi. The blame is placed on the non-functioning of government agencies and the individuals in charge. However, the reasons are more basic and tragedies happen simply because the government does not provide affordable housing for lower-income groups and so they opt for whatever is possible and what the informal sector can develop.

Tens of thousands of plots are occupied by the poor by paying bribes to the police and the agencies who own the land. These plots vary from 45 to 120 square yards in size. They are usually located on the fringe of the city or in ecologically unsafe areas, such as the flood plains of Karachi nullahs and even under high-tensile wires which are dangerous to health — by law, no habitation is allowed under them. LEAs and the police are both complicit in this process. To drive maximum benefit, these settlements contain no social amenities and their streets can be as narrow as two metres. The poor who buy these plots build their homes incrementally by paying large bribes to the police and government agencies.

At some stage of development, an informal developer arrives on the scene. He makes a proposal to the owner: he says that he will give the owner something like Rs400,000 if he gives him permission to build apartments on the plots. If he does, he will also give the owner two apartments on the top floor. The owner is happy because he makes a lot of money in the process. The top floor apartments are usually used by the owner for his own living. He has never had a pukkah residence for his own use before. An agreement takes place between the two on a stamped paper which, under the law, has no validity. The building that is built has no plans and no structural details and can be as high as seven floors. The foundation is almost non-existent and the building is built of substandard, undersized concrete blocks, since the developer wants maximum benefit from land.

There are no bylaws and zoning regulations or, for that matter, structural considerations which apply to this construction. Much of Karachi's new and old poor settlements have been built in this manner, and the role of building bylaws and zoning emerged much later. Such constructions can be anything between four to eight floors. Substandard katchi abadi homes are also built by the residents themselves for their expanding families or for letting out on rent. But this was a later phenomenon, and for most such constructions, the Sindh Building Control Authority moved in to check very basic rules and regulations, and much of this was condoned by the regulating authorities.

Today, many informal developers have become quite 'formal', and they prepare sophisticated plans and agreements (legally invalid) between the owner of the house and the builder. This has become a sort of 'policy' that is respected among all the players in the game.

Many informal developers have become quite 'formal'.

Some years ago, the Supreme Court took cognisance of the matter and ordered that all illegal buildings be demolished. As a result, one seven-storey building was demolished. However, after that demolition, the process of razing illegal buildings was stopped, maybe because the scale of demolition would have been so large and the displacement of communities so enormous that it could not have been managed by the state agencies. An attempt at it would have resulted in political backlash that no government could have survived.

There are two issues involved in a solution to the issue of building collapse in Karachi: one is providing homes for the poor and the second is improving the safety of the existing buildings. Various studies on the subject have shown that most of the poor can afford up to Rs500,000 in instalments for financing a home for themselves. The additional amount required can be provided by the government as a loan for 15 years. However, the problem of providing land at an easily accessible place remains a problem and must be resolved if we are to provide homes to low-income communities. This also requires a land audit so that such places can be identified and delivered to the relevant agencies for low-income settlements. This is not an easy task, but with a strong critical will, it can be achieved. Retrofitting existing homes for safety is a more complex affair. It requires the formation of a group of 10 to 12 houses to work in tandem with formal or informal engineering support groups who can advise on how retrofitting can be done. Engineering students can be involved in the process as part of engineering courses. For both these solutions to work, a new culture would have to be developed, just as Akhtar Hameed Khan did for Orangi.
(By Arif Hasan Dawn, 07, 19/07/2025)

SBCA asked to take action against illegal high-rises in Katchi Abadis

In the wake of the recent building collapse in Lyari and the government's intensified crackdown on hazardous structures across the metropolis, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) has raised concerns over illegal and unauthorised constructions, particularly high-rise buildings, within Katchi Abadis falling under its jurisdiction.

In a formal communique issued to the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) by the office of the senior director of the Katchi Abadis department of the KMC, serious concerns have been expressed over unauthorised multi-storey buildings in slum areas.

These structures are being built without obtaining building plan approvals from the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA).

"This is not just illegal, but also dangerous. These high-rises are ticking time bomb. Constructing such buildings without any regard for engineering standards, seismic safety, or load-bearing capacity is a recipe for disaster — and we've already seen too many of those," said a senior KMC official familiar with the matter.

In its letter to the Director General of the SBCA, the KMC stressed that the Katchi Abadis department has no authority to approve building plans — its role is limited strictly to regularising possession of land in accordance with the approved Lay-Out Plan, as per KMC council resolutions.

The onus of ensuring safe construction and regulatory compliance rests squarely with the SBCA.

"In this regard, several letters have already been forwarded to your office for appropriate action time to time," the letter stated.

It said approval of building plans is the discretion of the SBCA.

Sources within the KMC say that some of these illegal buildings are as high as six to eight storeys, often built on narrow plots meant for single-family homes.

With no structural audits, no firefighting provisions, and no legal approvals, these towers loom perilously over fragile communities already lacking basic infrastructure.

In recent weeks, the SBCA teams — under mounting pressure — have carried out multiple demolition drives in high-risk areas, mainly South district of the city.

Now, Katchi Abadis have come under the spotlight.

The KMC has called upon the SBCA to take immediate and "stern action" against these dangerous developments and offered its full cooperation.

"Stern and appropriate action is required against illegal constructions/high-rise formations on immediate basis," said the KMC letter.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 20/07/2025)

300 families evicted from 56 dilapidated buildings in Karachi, meeting told

A committee formed to address unsafe buildings and illegal construction across the province was informed on Monday that as many as 300 families had been evicted from 56 "extremely dangerous" buildings in the metropolis and were being provided monthly rental assistance of Rs30,000 for three months.

The information was provided by the deputy commissioner of district South during the second meeting of the provincial committee on dangerous structures and illegal constructions held here.

According to a press release, the meeting was chaired by Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani and attended by Additional Chief Secretary Waseem Shamshad, Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi, Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) Director General Shahmir Bhutto, Association of Builders and Developers (Abad) Senior Vice Chairman Syed Afzal Hameed, Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) Senior Vice Chairman Sarosh H. Lodhi, architects from the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners (PCATP) including Architect Arif Belguami, Syed Arif Shah, Maria Aslam and others.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Ghani said that a comprehensive survey of all 740 buildings declared "dangerous" across Sindh, including 588 in Karachi, was being conducted afresh in collaboration between government and private institutions.

Saeed Ghani says any structure deemed liveable or made habitable through repairs will be removed from list of unsafe buildings

He said that the survey was likely to be completed by the next week.

He revealed that of the 61 "extremely dangerous" buildings in Karachi, 56 had already been re-surveyed and vacated, while the remaining five — four in Garden and one in Saddar — are under judicial scrutiny and will soon be vacated as well.

During the meeting, DC-South Javed Nabi Khoso presented a report and stated that over 300 families had been affected by vacating 56 "extremely dangerous" buildings.

He said that 25 per cent of them were tenants, 180 families had pagri (goodwill) agreements while rest of the families owned their houses.

The minister assured that residents' concerns would be taken into account and any structure deemed liveable or made habitable through repairs would not be included on the list of "dangerous" buildings.

He said that residents evacuated from these buildings had started receiving monthly rental compensation, which has been increased from Rs20,000 to Rs30,000 per month.

Mr Ghani also instructed Abad and other relevant institutions to conduct feasibility surveys for long-term rehabilitation of those affected, particularly on vacated plots.

During the meeting, architect Arif Shah of PCATP presented an improved version of the "Dangerous Building Assessment Form", which was unanimously approved by all stakeholders.

"Mr Shah has also been assigned to lead a special task force for training SBCA teams and other professionals, with the city commissioner to oversee the formation of this task force," said the press release.

He clarified that the committee conducting the survey includes representatives from SBCA, the DC office, PEC, PCATP, and Abad. "If more subcommittees are needed to complete the task transparently and swiftly, they will be established," he said.

He warned that in the future, no utility — including K-Electric, Sui Southern Gas Company, or the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation — will be allowed to provide connections to any building without a proper completion certificate.

If any such connections are provided unlawfully, strict legal action will be taken. Likewise, no registrar or sub-registrar of the Board of Revenue will be permitted to issue leases or sub-leases without the said certificate.

(By Dawn Reporter, 13, 22/07/2025)

SHC issues notices to SBCA over sealing of 'dangerous' Kharadar building

The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday issued notices to the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) on an application filed by residents and shop owners of a building in Kharadar that had been sealed and declared "dangerous".

The petitioners — residents and shopkeepers of Hajra Manzil, located in the Old Town Quarter (Kharadar) — challenged an impugned order of the SBCA's technical committee on dangerous buildings, under which the premises had been sealed and declared "dangerous".

After a preliminary hearing, a two-judge bench headed by Justice Muhammad Faisal Kamal Alam on Monday issued notices to the SBCA, the advocate general and others on a petition filed by residents and shop owners of a building in Kharadar that was sealed and declared "dangerous".

The court directed the zonal commissioner of the SBCA to appear along with the relevant record, including the completion certificate of the building. The matter will be taken up along with two identical petitions on July 28.

Petitioners say eviction carried out without due process

The court reproduced its earlier direction, previously issued in identical petitions, ordering the respondents to immediately and expeditiously complete the required procedure and submit a comprehensive report. The court had ordered that the report must outline possible options — including the timeframe for repairs if the building is deemed salvageable, any alternative arrangements for the occupants, and, in case the building is to be restored as a heritage site, the proposed alternatives for those residing in or operating businesses within the structure.

The petition stated that on July 11, officials of the SBCA, accompanied by area police, forcefully evicted all residents and owners from the building and prevented them from retrieving their personal belongings. It added that the petitioners were currently living in tents along the roadside without access to their possessions or essential facilities.

The petitioners contended that the SBCA had issued two ejection notices, both of which were merely pasted on the main gate of the building without any prior intimation to the occupants or owners.

Referring to the notice, the petitioners stated that it alleged the building was in a dilapidated and dangerous condition, beyond repair and unsafe for human habitation.

However, they argued that the notices were not supported by any technical report, structural assessment, or official inquiry, as required under the applicable laws and regulations.

“The unilateral pasting of notices on the building gate without due verification, without serving owners and without providing a hearing is in gross violation of the principles of natural justice, fair procedure and the petitioners’ fundamental rights under the Constitution,” it added.

(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter, Dawn, 14, 22/07/2025)

Sindh lawmakers, public asked to help identify run-down buildings

Against the backdrop of the Lyari building tragedy that claimed lives of 27, Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani has appealed to the members from both sides of the aisle and the public to identify dilapidated and dangerous buildings across the province and report to the authorities.

“If peoples’ lives are saved, they can also build their own roofs and the government can also help them,” he said while speaking at the Sindh Assembly session that began on Friday.

Responding to a call attention notices and point of order, Mr Ghani explained that the collapsed building was an illegal structure built in 1980 and had already been served with demolition notices. “Forty-five families were residing there. Following the tragedy, we offered to relocate them to community centres, marquees, halls, and nearby hotels, but they preferred to stay with relatives,” Ghani added.

Highlighting ongoing safety measures, the minister stated: “So far, 87 unsafe and dangerous buildings across the province had been vacated, including 66 in Karachi’s district South, displacing 325 families. We are not focusing on one building alone but taking a broader view to address all such cases with short- and long-term policies.”

He told lawmakers that the provincial government would increase the compensation for the families of the people killed in the Lyari building tragedy.

He said that Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah had announced that Rs1 million each would be given to the families of the deceased occupants of the collapsed building.

“PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has asked the provincial government to increase the amount of compensation, so it will be increased,” he said adding that the injured victims would also be paid compensation.

On a point of order, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan member Muhammad Usman said that the Faisal Cantonment Board had given notices to 42 buildings in Gulistan-i-Jauhar where over 16,000 people were living.

MQM-P’s Najam Mirza demanded that a special parliamentary committee be formed on this issue in which the opposition should be included.

The LG minister said that there was a lot of criticism of the government for the building collapse in Lyari, which was justified to some extent. “I accept my responsibility as a minister,” he added.

MQM’s Rashid Khan said on his point of order that notices had been given to 74 buildings in Hyderabad, and women were insulted by the police during eviction and people were made to sit in the dark streets of the night without any compensation.

The LG minister said that people should be evicted from the dilapidated and dangerous buildings. “Although evicting people from their homes is a painful process, exhuming bodies can be a more painful process,” he added.

He further said families displaced due to these evacuations were being immediately provided with three months’ rent to help them resettle in the first phase, while legislative committees are working daily to address the issue systematically.

Responding to another call-attention notice raised by MQM-P's Sikander Khatoon regarding the delay in cleaning stormwater drains in Shah Faisal Colony, the LG minister clarified that the drains were under the jurisdiction of Shah Faisal Town.

"Due to delays on their part, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation has taken up the task, and work is ongoing round-the-clock on these six drains," he assured.

Objections over Ajrak number plates

The opposition members also raised various objections regarding the issue of number plates printed with Ajrak design in Karachi.

The parliamentary party leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Shabbir Qureshi, said that people in Karachi were facing problems over the issue of new number plates. He said that the traffic police were harassing the motorcyclists on the issue of number plates and action should be taken against the policemen.

Provincial Excise Minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla said that the new number plate having security features had been introduced in 2022. "Ajrak will remain on number plates, this is the culture of Sindh," he added.

The minister said that Ajrak number plates had been in operation for two to three years. "If there are any issues, they should be discussed and Ajrak should not be made an issue," he added.

MQM-P member Najam Mirza said that Ajrak was not a problem but people were suffering as they were getting challans worth thousands of rupees.

The Sindh Assembly unanimously passed a resolution condemning the murder of a couple in Balochistan, demanding the strictest punishment for the culprits involved in the murder.

The resolution, presented by PPP's Sadia Javed, asked the Balochistan government to conduct an impartial investigation into the incident.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 26/07/2025)

Building on MA Jinnah Road begins to sink, lives at risk

The Karachi Development Authority (KDA) has once again raised alarm over a dangerously dilapidated multi-storey building located on the central MA Jinnah Road, warning that it has begun to sink and could collapse at any moment, posing a serious threat to human lives.

The building, situated on Plot No MC-4 and MC-7 in Sector 1 of the Lines Area Project, was constructed in 1986-87. Over the years, rainwater has accumulated in its basement like a stagnant pool, severely compromising the structural integrity of the entire building.

Despite never being fully occupied, the building has been periodically painted and advertised for residential sale. According to KDA officials, flats have been marketed to unsuspecting citizens even though the structure has long been unfit for habitation. On July 25, 2024, KDA Lines Area Project authorities had formally written to the Director General of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA), warning that the building was not safe for occupancy and requesting its immediate demolition. The letter also urged authorities to consider declaring the structure a "heritage building" in order to ensure proper preservation or removal in a responsible manner.

Sources say that SBCA only issued routine responses to the letter, and no practical action has been taken so far. Now, with the building reportedly beginning to sink into the ground, the threat has grown significantly.

On July 24, 2025, the KDA Lines Area Project's Deputy Director (C&S) issued a new letter to the SBCA Secretary for Dangerous Buildings, reiterating the urgency of declaring the structure officially hazardous and demolishing it immediately.

KDA officials have warned that any further delay could result in a major tragedy and loss of life if the building collapses.

Following the tragic building collapse in Lyarri that claimed 27 lives, SBCA has intensified its drive to vacate and seal dangerously dilapidated buildings across the city. A committee of expert structural engineers has been conducting ongoing surveys to identify and assess high-risk structures.

According to the committee's reports on District South, a total of 59 buildings have been declared extremely dangerous — including 10 heritage buildings. These structures are located in densely populated old city areas such as Arambagh, Lawrence Quarters, Napier Quarters, Saddar Bazaar, Telu Ram Quarters, and Old Town.

In the first phase of the operation, 41 of these buildings have already been vacated and sealed in order to protect human lives. The process of evacuating residents from the remaining buildings is ongoing, with assistance from local authorities. In the next phase, steps will be taken to initiate demolition procedures for these unsafe structures.

The SBCA has urged citizens to report any buildings — internally or externally damaged, structurally weak, or visibly deteriorating — particularly in older, congested neighborhoods. Citizens can report such buildings at any time via the SBCA online portal.
(By Naeem Khanzada The Express Tribune, 04, 28/07/2025)

Karachi's main industrial estate reels under collapsing infrastructure

Once a flourishing industrial stronghold, Karachi's Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) — one of the country's largest industrial zones that provides livelihoods to hundreds of thousands of workers — is now grappling with infrastructure failures.

Deteriorated roads, a crumbling sewerage system, and dismal sanitation conditions have made daily commuting a nightmare, especially for those who work in this area to earn their living.

The dust, filth and squalor have reached such levels that pedestrians are forced to think twice before setting foot on the roads. Yet, with no alternative, they are left to endure the worsening conditions.

The absence of functional streetlights leaves vast portions of the area pitch dark after sunset, making commuting during night hours unsafe.

While the monsoon situation has already become unbearable in the rest of the country, what lies ahead for the city during the peak season remains a worrying question.

The situation is prompting widespread frustration among hundreds of thousands of daily commuters, labourers and factory workers.

SITE was originally established to promote ease of doing business and facilitate industrial growth.

According to its official website, SITE Ltd is responsible for the allotment of industrial plots, the development and maintenance of road infrastructure, and the management of storm-water and industrial effluent drainage systems. It is also tasked with collection and disposal of solid waste, supposedly in accordance with local regulations.

However, the on-ground realities speak volumes about the body's inefficiency and failure in streamlining its responsibilities.

Estate Avenue

Estate Avenue, the largest road under SITE Ltd's jurisdiction — beginning near the Deputy Commissioner's office in Kemari district and extending to Mauripur Road near PAF Masroor Base — serves as a crucial artery of industrial estate, but now narrates a tale of neglect.

Heaps of garbage and rubble lie scattered across multiple spots on both sides of the road. Particularly on the stretch where the PSO petrol pump is located near the Sher Shah bus stop, stagnant puddles of water and mud are visible almost every 20 seconds of driving.

Though there is little trace left of a pedestrian footpath, walkways are either damaged beyond use or buried under mounds of rubbish and debris. The very concept of cleanliness appears to be missing from the area altogether.

In almost every road and street, wherever a path ends or there is a culvert, a deep pothole typically follows.

Many of the inner streets branching off from Estate Avenue are also in a dire state — broken and submerged under overflowing sewage water.

Crumbling road, disrupted traffic

The road descending from Bab-i-Khyber, Metroville, and connecting to Estate Avenue is broken at nearly every point. Piles of garbage line the roadside. The uneven, filthy surface not only slows traffic but poses safety hazards for commuters and motorists alike.

Whether on foot or by vehicle, everyone is forced to navigate through these hazardous, dust-laden roads. The ever-present clouds of dirt mean that white or black clothing is easily soiled after even a short walk.

One half of Central Avenue — particularly the stretch from SDM Pulya to Ghani Chowrangi — is completely destroyed. It is now submerged in dirty drain water and sludge. The other track is only marginally better, also marred by disrepair and uncleanness.

There is no provision for pedestrian walkways here either — footpaths, if they ever existed, have long vanished.

Moin Akhtar Road, starting from Nauras Chowrangi and merging with Estate Avenue at Siemens Chowrangi, is yet another example of neglect.

There is either no footpath or it remains buried beneath heaps of garbage and filth. No signs of any cleaning activity can be seen here from the regulator.

The road leading to the SITE Gas Turbine Power Station — which connects to Central Avenue — is also in a state of deterioration. At almost every turn, garbage dumps remain unattended. Patches of stagnant sludge and foul-smelling puddles dot the road, turning it into a hazard zone for workers, commuters, and their vehicles.

Nauman Road, which eventually links up with Fakhruddin Valika Road, is in a similarly deplorable condition, along with its adjoining streets. Accumulated sewage water within the lanes has made passage extremely difficult.

Speaking to Dawn, SITE Limited spokesperson Kamran Usman said that funds are allocated in SITE Limited's annual budget for the cleaning of drains, road repairs and overall infrastructure improvement.

He said that funds had been allocated in the budget for financial year 2025-26 and work on road repairs and the cleaning of drains will commence shortly.

(By Dawar Shoaib, Dawn, 13, 28/07/2025)

Keamari gets tasteful makeover with 'Fish Food Street'

A new culinary destination has opened in Keamari, as the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) unveiled the city's first 'Fish Food Street', designed to promote local cuisine, tourism, and cultural vibrancy in one of the oldest seaside districts of the metropolis.

The inauguration ceremony on Sunday drew a large crowd, including residents, foodies, and dignitaries from across the political spectrum. Among those present were Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, MPA Asif Khan, MPA Liaquat Askani, Deputy Parliamentary Leader Dil Muhammad, Mauripur Town Chairman Humayun Khan, Vice Chairman Asif Kausar, City Council members, and other elected representatives.

City Mayor Murtaza Wahab, who formally inaugurated the food street, said that Keamari's Fish Food Street is more than just a culinary hotspot - it's a symbol of revitalisation. "A new centre for entertainment and taste has been established for the people of Karachi," he said, highlighting the colorful aesthetic of the area with its vibrant umbrellas, decorative lighting, and inviting nighttime ambiance.

The mayor further stated that the food street offers a rich variety of local and traditional cuisine, particularly fresh seafood and BBQ, catering to both residents and tourists. Comfortable seating, family-friendly arrangements, and scenic surroundings aim to enhance the overall visitor experience.

Mayor Wahab explained that the project includes 62,000 square feet of paving blocks, 35,000 square feet of tuff tiles, 25 Victorian-style light poles, and 1,400 running feet of new sewerage lines. Two grand arch-style entrance gates with signage, 3,000 feet of kerbstone, 100,000 square feet of road patchwork, and the installation of 500 colourful umbrellas add to the charm and functionality of the space.

"This project gives citizens a unique recreational space where aesthetics and accessibility come together," he said. "Under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, such people-centric projects are being developed across Karachi without discrimination."

He stressed that the Fish Food Street fulfills a long-standing demand of Keamari residents, who had hoped for a food street on par with Burns Road.

"Promises were made before, but never kept," Mayor Wahab said. "Now, under PPP's governance, we're not just making announcements - we're delivering."

Looking ahead, the city mayor shared additional development plans for Keamari and adjacent areas.

He announced progress on rerouting heavy port traffic away from residential areas via Shahrah-e-Bhutto to Kathore. The section from Qayyumabad to Quaidabad is already operational, serving more than 12,000 vehicles daily, while the Kathore segment will be inaugurated by Bilawal on Dec 31.

He also cited the restoration of key infrastructure, including Netty Jetty, Jinnah Bridge, and ICI Bridge, all undertaken during the current PPP-led government.

In addition to transport and food infrastructure, Mayor Wahab highlighted improvements in health, water supply, sanitation, and sports facilities. He announced that a 100mgd canal from Hub Dam will be inaugurated on August 14, bringing much-needed water to Keamari and Karachi's western districts. He also referenced the TP-3 sewage treatment plant in Mauripur, being developed to support both environmental conservation and local fishermen.

Health services are also expanding in the area, with a SICVD satellite center recently opened in Baldia Town to provide cardiac care close to home. For recreation and sports, a new sports complex in Mauripur Town is expected to open by year's end, while a Rs1.2 billion complex in Baldia will be completed by March 2026.

Reaffirming his commitment to inclusive development, the mayor said, "Karachi is a beautiful bouquet of communities. It's not language or ethnicity that divides us - it's the mindset of division that must be rejected." He called on all political parties to work together on a "Charter of Karachi" for unified action on the city's challenges.

The mayor announced the restoration of six historic markets in Karachi to preserve the city's heritage, adding, "I was born here, and I will continue working for this city like it's my own family. Karachi's revival is underway - and everyone is invited to be a part of it."

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 05/08/2025)

Cabinet decides to reassess buildings declared 'protected heritage' in Sindh

The Sindh government on Thursday decided to reassess 3,371 "Protected Heritage" buildings in Sindh through committees of experts, following reports that some have deteriorated so severely that they pose safety risks and no longer retain their original heritage value.

The decision was made in the Sindh cabinet meeting which was chaired by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah which discussed host of issues ranging from launch of the CNIC-based vehicle registration to the transfer of MDCAT examination responsibility to IBA-Sukkur.

Among the key decisions included the formation of “a committee or multiple committees of experts” to reassess the 3,371 buildings currently declared as Protected Heritage across the province.

These heritage sites were originally identified and notified under the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act, 1994. Earlier, an Advisory Committee was constituted to guide preservation efforts. Subsequent surveys — including one by NED University in 2008-9 and a departmental re-survey in 2017-18 — concluded with 3,371 sites being declared Protected Heritage due to their architectural and historical significance.

Key govt decisions include launch of CNIC-based vehicle registration; transfer of MDCAT responsibility to IBA-Sukkur

“However, over the years, many of these buildings have faced structural decay due to environmental exposure, unauthorised alterations, and lack of maintenance-especially in the case of privately owned properties,” said a statement issued by the CM House after the meeting.

“Some structures have deteriorated to the point of becoming dangerous and may no longer retain their original heritage value. Given this, the culture department proposed three options for reassessment committees, each comprising experts in architecture, conservation, urban planning, history, and structural engineering. The cabinet approved the constitution of committee (s) to assess the buildings and submit their report with recommendations to the government.”

Alongside the approval of the reassessment initiative, the statement said that the cabinet also sanctioned Rs20 million for the execution of this important project, which aims to revisit, re-evaluate, and re-categorise the declared heritage sites across Sindh.

The cabinet also finalised a comprehensive MDCAT Admissions Policy for the MBBS and BDS programmes across public and private medical and dental colleges in the province, in compliance with the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) Act, 2022 and a Sindh High Court directive.

“Sukkur IBA Testing Agency (SIBA) has been designated as the current testing agency due to its satisfactory performance in MDCAT-2024, but future selections will remain performance-based,” said the statement.

“The health department retains the authority to conduct the admissions process directly or through any nominated medical university. A supervisory committee will be notified by the department to oversee the process when handled by a university.”

The MDCAT policy, it said, includes strict adherence to PMDC rules for merit determination, pass percentages, and eligibility. Sindh domicile is mandatory for applicants, with verification through Juvenile Cards and Biometric authentication.

The seat allocation and distribution for all medical colleges and universities will be published in the Annual Prospectus, which cannot be altered by the admitting universities, said the statement.

The provincial cabinet also approved “in-principal” the CNIC-based vehicle registration model and its legal amendments to bring Sindh’s system in line with global best practices and recent reforms in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

Before the approval, the statement said, the cabinet reviewed the proposal forwarded by the excise department to introduce a CNIC-based vehicle registration system, along with Personalised Registration Marks (PRMs).

“The new system will link registration marks directly to a vehicle owner’s CNIC rather than the vehicle’s chassis, allowing owners to retain and reuse their personalised number plates even after selling their vehicle. The Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) will now be based on the chassis number, which remains the permanent identifier of the vehicle,” said the statement.

The PRMs, it said, can be retained, reused, or surrendered by owners. The system enables real-time traceability of vehicles and aligns with international standards. The CNIC-linked registration promotes easy tracking of taxpayers’ assets and improves administrative convenience, added the statement.

“The CM directed the Excise & Taxation Department to develop the CNIC-based system and then begin its testing, followed by amending the necessary law. The CNIC-based vehicle registration would not be implemented immediately, but the CM would hold follow-up meetings to oversee its implementation once it has been properly tested,” said the statement.

The cabinet also approved amendment to the Sindh Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (Amendment) Act, 2025, enabling the appointment of BS-19 and BS-20 officers as Chairmen of the education boards across the province. The amendment comes in response to administrative challenges and the limited availability of BS-21 officers, who were previously eligible for these roles.

“The new amendment to Section 15(1) now permits the appointment of BS-19/20 officers by transfer as chairmen,” said the statement.

“The chairmen will continue to serve a three-year term, with eligibility for reappointment. The Controlling Authority retains the power to make appointments either by direct recruitment or transfer. The latest amendment aims to ensure smoother appointments and more effective governance of Sindh’s education boards.”
(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter, Dawn, 15, 08/08/2025)

SHC summons director parks on plea against renting out amenity plots

The Sindh High Court on Thursday summoned the director parks in a petition challenging the commercial use of public parks in the metropolis.

A two-judge bench of the SHC, headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro, directed him to appear on Aug 26 and apprise the court of how many parks have been handed over under public-private partnerships in accordance with a City Council resolution.

Opposition leader in the City Council, Saifuddin Advocate, along with Jamaat-i-Islami's chairmen of TMCs, including New Karachi, Liaquatabad, Gulberg, Nazimabad, North Nazimabad, Model Colony, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Jinnah, and Landhi, as well as a member of the City Council, had filed a petition last month challenging the City Council's decision to allow the conversion of amenity park plots for commercial use on a rental basis, allegedly in collusion with private parties.

At the last hearing, the SHC had issued notices to the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), Karachi Development Authority (KDA), and other respondents, as well as the provincial law officer, for Aug 7.

However, at the outset of the hearing on Thursday, the lawyers for the KMC and KDA filed powers of attorney (vakalatnamas) and sought more time to submit their comments.

The bench in its order said, "Adjourned to 26.08.2025, when director parks, Karachi shall be present in person and apprise the court as to how many parks have been leased out or given on the basis of public-private partnership in terms of resolution 134".

Earlier, the petitioners submitted that the KMC, in collusion with private entities, was unlawfully converting amenity park plots into commercial ventures under the guise of public-private partnership agreements.

They also contended that such commercial activities included establishing sports grounds and charging exorbitant fees for their use, parking water tankers, and conducting other profit-driven operations.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 16, 08/08/2025)

Corrupted building controls

The acquittal of top Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) officials in the Nasla Tower Karachi case has left everyone questioning what it will take to penalise corrupt developers and city officials responsible for zoning and other administrative duties.

In the Nasla tower case, for example, the Supreme Court had already ruled that the building was illegal, meaning that the builders and their associates in the government were undoubtedly liable on account of corruption or incompetence. The fact that the lower court did not convict based on lack of evidence implies that either it has higher evidentiary standards than the senior-most judge of the highest court in the land, or that the prosecution was so bad that they could not close an open-and-shut case.

Whatever the reason, the case is part of a now-familiar script where the powerful officials responsible for Karachi's crumbling skyline are miraculously absolved. Recall the Gulbahar building collapse five years ago, where the building's owner and four of his relatives were convicted of manslaughter. Yet not a single senior SBCA official faced the music, even though somebody had to sign off on the building violations that led to the disaster. Whether corrupt or incompetent, at the very least, that person should have faced some consequences. Unfortunately, investigations are lethargic, evidence is mysteriously "lost," and prosecutions are feeble at best.

The system is clearly broken, and because of this, the SBCA operates with a brazen sense of impunity, knowing that no matter how egregious their oversight or how deep their corruption, their powerful allies will ultimately protect them. Just a few days ago, a fireworks factory blew up on MA Jinnah Road, with deadly consequences. Whoever allowed an explosives factory to operate in the city needs to be taken to task, but the record suggests they will only spend a few hours or days in lockup before going home to reap their unjust rewards. Until we break this cycle and demand accountability at every level, tragedies will continue and high officials will keep skating past justice.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 23/08/2025)

SHC dismisses petition against construction of 14-storey project in Bath Island

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has dismissed a petition challenging the construction of a 14-storey building in Bath Island, Clifton and ruled that the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA), Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and the Master Plan Department can commercialise or amalgamate plots in accordance with the Karachi Building and Town Planning Regulations (KBTPR) 2002.

A two-judge constitutional bench of the SHC, headed by Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha, rejected the petition filed by several residents of the Gulshan-i-Faisal Cooperative Housing Society, Bath Island, against the construction of the multistorey commercial/residential building and the conversion and amalgamation of its plot.

The bench ruled that land use planning primarily ensures the responsible use of land and that land use conversion involves changing the designated use of land, such as from residential to commercial.

"This requires permission from the relevant authority to ensure compliance with regulations set forth by the KMC, SBCA, and the Sindh Master Plan, as well as to protect the environment", the bench added.

Constitutional bench rules SBCA, KMC can commercialise, amalgamate plots in accordance with KBTPR 2002

The petitioners had approached the SHC in 2017, and the housing society itself sided with the petitioners, confirming that the land was designated residential, even though the original lease from 1976 classified the area as commercial and limited its construction to ground plus two floors.

They argued that the land was originally commercial, but its use was legally converted to residential in 1984, and that this status had been maintained for decades. They further claimed the developer had acquired additional land, increased the plot size and proposed a new plan for a 14-storey building.

However, the counsel for the developer contended that the project was entirely legal and within the bounds of the law, with all necessary approvals and no-objection certificates (NOCs) obtained from the SBCA and KMC for construction on the amalgamated 871-square-yard plot.

In its order, the bench noted that the core question was whether the petition was maintainable under Article 199 of the Constitution, which allows a high court's intervention only when all other legal remedies have been exhausted or no alternative legal remedies exist.

It further stated that there were conflicting claims among the parties. The KMC maintained that the property remained officially classified as commercial and that NOCs were issued in accordance with the rules—a position supported by the SBCA and a 2020 letter from the Sindh Master Plan Authority.

"Prima facie, the KMC, SBCA and Sindh Master Plan Authorities have the power to decide if the plots can be used for commercial purposes and amalgamated. This would be based on rules from the KBTPR 2002, including things like zoning and environmental impact assessments", the bench noted.

However, it observed that the parties were engaged in a heated dispute, with conflicting claims regarding the building plan, plot subdivisions and amalgamation. Both sides relied heavily on documents to support their arguments. It also appeared that the SBCA, KMC and Sindh Master Plan Authorities were not siding with the petitioners.

As such, the court held that it was difficult to determine the correct position without a full review of all the evidence. The SHC's constitutional jurisdiction, it maintained, is not ordinarily meant to adjudicate disputed questions of fact, especially when such issues cannot be resolved solely through admitted documents.

It further observed that the SHC could not determine factual disputes concerning the residential status of the subject plot or the legality of its amalgamation, as these were matters of contested facts. Therefore, the court dismissed the petition and all accompanying applications for being non-maintainable.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn, 13, 23/08/2025)

Fresh land grab attempt at KU sparks protests

Karachi University (KU), one of Pakistan's largest higher education institutions, is once again at the centre of a land dispute as attempts to encroach upon its property have triggered student protests, faculty outrage, and heightened security measures. Within the span of a single week, two incidents have raised fears that organised land grabbers are targeting the university's valuable real estate.

Students block University Road after encroachment attempt. The first incident occurred on August 29 near the Silver Jubilee Gate of KU, where an attempt was made to occupy a piece of land adjacent to the main entrance. University staff intervened to prevent the takeover, after which hundreds of students staged a demonstration. Carrying placards and chanting slogans against the land mafia, they blocked University Road, one of Karachi's busiest arteries, causing significant traffic disruption.

The protest was led by Jamaat-e-Islami's MPA Farooq Farhan and KU's student leader Kamran Sultan. Farhan alleged that elements within the KDA, including former officials, were directly involved in the attempted land grab.

"The same people who grabbed public parks and housing plots in the past have now turned their eyes on educational institutions," he charged.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 02/09/2025)

Apartment building sinks in Jauhar

Two blocks of a residential apartment complex in Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Block 10, partially sank into the ground early Tuesday morning, leaving around 300 residents homeless and forced to live under the open sky. Preliminary findings have attributed the deeply distressing incident to possible soil erosion caused by a nearby drain.

The Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) sealed Blocks C and D of the affected building, known as Yasir Terrace, declaring them unsafe for living. Residents have been barred from re-entering the flats to retrieve essential belongings, despite widespread appeals.

Displaced residents - including women, children, and the elderly - are encamped out in the open within the residential complex premises, without any official support or relief from the government. No temporary shelter, food, or medical assistance has been

provided so far, although a welfare organisation, Al-Khidmat Foundation, has stepped in to provide clean water and food to the affected families.

Said Qazi Akbar, a resident of the building, voiced his anguish over the situation. "We're left with nothing. The authorities have sealed our homes and won't let us even collect essential items. It's raining and we're sitting under the sky — where are we supposed to go? He told The Express Tribune.

According to initial accounts, the incident occurred at around 5:30am on Tuesday when a loud explosion startled residents of Yasir Terrace. Panicked residents rushed out of their flats, fearing an earthquake. Soon after, the ground floor of Blocks C and D began to sink, causing visible cracks and structural damage. Windows shattered and parts of the buildings buckled under pressure.

"Residents had been complaining of gas leakage for days. It's still too early to confirm whether the collapse was due to a gas explosion or the weakening of the foundation caused by the adjacent drain," said Muhammad Ashfaq, a union committee member of Yasir Terrace Phase 2.

Following the incident, Rescue 1122, police, and local officials responded swiftly. The Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) sealed both buildings after a technical inspection, with police securing the site. Assistant Commissioner Syed Aamir confirmed that rapid water flow likely weakened the foundation. Residents may retrieve belongings only after formal clearance.

Though Blocks A and B appear stable, further inspection is needed. Over 70 nearby homes were evacuated due to continued rainfall and visible land damage. A nearby road has also been compromised.

Displaced families are urging the Sindh government and SBCA to provide temporary shelter.
(By Aamir Khan The Express Tribune, 04, 10/09/2025)

Dwellers along Lyari river won't be forcibly evicted for sake of WB-funded uplift: CM Murad

Acknowledging Karachi's unplanned growth, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday said the provincial government was spearheading a comprehensive, World Bank-backed master plan focusing on transport, water supply, drainage, waste management, and other critical sectors.

Speaking to the media after visiting Mazar-i-Quaid on the 77th death anniversary of the country's founder, he said that studies for the master plan had been completed. These cover vital components such as transport, electricity, water supply, drainage, waste management and overall development.

Stressing the need for humane solutions to the city's unregulated expansion, the chief minister said that no resident of informal settlements along the Lyari River would be displaced without adequate support and resources.

Mr Shah said that infrastructure upgrades under the master plan included construction on Bhutto Road, a 39 km highway linking Qayyumabad to the M9 Motorway," he said, adding that the new road and a two-kilometre link road were under construction, with 15km currently in safe active use.

"The Shahrah-i-Bhutto project is valued at Rs52 billion under a public-private partnership, managed by developers, engineers, financial institutions, and project managers," he said.

Discussing recent flooding in parts of Karachi, the chief minister said that water pressure issues had been addressed by raising retaining walls, with ongoing monitoring under his supervision.

He added that flood warnings for the border areas between Sindh and Balochistan had not been forecasted. "Water flowed through feed channels onto the Motorway / Superhighway and Saadi Town," he said, adding that infrastructure challenges along the motorway were being addressed through ongoing interventions, with water crossing permissions still pending.

The CM also said that while Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan had suffered damage by floods, the Sindh government was taking all possible steps to minimise losses. "Safety of people's lives and protection of barrages and embankments remain top priorities," he reiterated.

Mr Shah described the Sukkur Barrage as facing an unprecedented situation where 10 gates had to be closed after three years. "Instead of simply closing the gates, concrete was used to seal them, showcasing engineering innovation," he said.

Originally designed to withstand 1.5 million cusecs flows, the barrage's capacity was reduced to 960,000 cusecs after the closure of these gates. "To date, the flow through the barrage has reached 1.1 million cusecs," he said.

He added that ongoing maintenance efforts focused on gate replacement, critical to the barrage's longevity. "For the first time since its construction, the barrage floor was opened and repaired to extend its durability," he noted.

He explained that following the floods of 2011, 2012 and 2022, efforts had been made to clear blockages and enhance infrastructure on both banks of major water bodies, including Manchhar Lake.

Acknowledging the global challenges of flood management, Mr Shah stressed the need for unity, a positive outlook, and consistent political will. "Water projects require both technical expertise and sustainable political commitment," he said.

CM Shah stressed that Pakistan could progress towards development and stability by adhering to the principles of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

He lauded the recent show of national unity in the face of Indian aggression in May, and strongly condemned ongoing Indian atrocities in Held Kashmir, as well as Israeli aggression in Palestine and Qatar.
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 12/09/2025)

Flood-displaced families take shelter on sidewalks

The footpaths of Teen Hatti and Garibabad bridges have turned into makeshift shelters for hundreds of flood-hit families after the recent overflowing of the Lyari River washed away their homes.

According to residents, more than 300 shacks and all belongings inside were swept away by the surging waters. Women, children, and elderly members of the affected families are now living under the open sky on the footpaths, without access to food, clean drinking water, or toilets.

Most of the displaced belong to poor Hindu households, though residents stress that families belonging to all religions live together peacefully in the informal settlements along the Lyari River. Many of them earn their livelihood by selling flowers, trading second-hand clothes, or collecting junk. Now, with their homes and even motorcycles lost to the flood, many have been reduced to begging. "This was like doomsday," recalled Kranti, who fled with her children as the water rose to the top of Garibabad bridge. "Within minutes, everything was washed away - our homes, our food, our belongings."

Another resident, Krishma, said they are now left "empty-handed on the footpath." "Life changed in a terrifying moment. Our huts, our clothes, even utensils were gone. Now our children sleep under the open sky."

Women have voiced particular concerns over the absence of toilets and privacy. "Girls and women are living on the sidewalks without facilities. It is a constant source of fear and hardship," said another resident. Several families also reported that dowry items of young girls were swept away, raising fresh anxieties about future marriages.

Despite the scale of destruction, locals say no government body or welfare organisation has come forward with assistance.

"We have been living under the Teen Hatti bridge for years, earning a livelihood by selling flower garlands," said Mohan Das, a local Hindu community leader. "But after the flood, everything has changed. We are called nomads, but we have nowhere else to go."

Social worker Sapna Devi said the small settlement school at Teen Hatti has also closed after being damaged by the flood.

"The children are roaming aimlessly, the shacks are gone, the toilets destroyed. We don't have the means to rebuild," she said, appealing to the chief minister for urgent help.

Residents, meanwhile, are trying to rebuild their shacks with their own limited resources. "Neither the government nor any public representatives have come to help," said Reshma, a mother of 11, who is now living under a tree near the riverbank. "We are surviving on whatever little we can manage, but how long can this go on?"

For the displaced families of Garibabad and Teen Hatti, the Lyari River flooding has not just destroyed homes - they have upended lives overnight.
(By Aamer Khan The Express Tribune, 04, 15/09/2025)

2,000 Police Foundation tenants evicted

Eviction notices have been issued to over 2,000 tenants of the Police Foundation across Sindh. Additionally, following orders from IG Sindh, local police stations have sealed more than 200 shops in Karachi and other cities across Sindh. Reportedly, these properties had previously been sealed as well, based on a Supreme Court ruling.



Traders who were conducting business in these shops until just yesterday are now left helpless, sitting on pavements with their goods. On behalf of the affected tenants, Chairman of the All Karachi Traders Alliance (AKTA), Atiq Mir, submitted an appeal to the IG Sindh's office. Mir described the move as "extremely heartless and ruthless," warning that nearly 100,000 families could face unemployment and starvation as a result. Further, Mir noted that the individuals are legal tenants of the foundation and have committed no illegality. He also pointed out that the shops being sealed are a major source of income for the foundation, which supports underprivileged members of the police force, including families of martyrs. Mir

appealed to the chief justice of Pakistan, the governor of Sindh, and the chief minister of Sindh, to intervene on humanitarian grounds.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 20/09/2025)

Cracks, crumbling ceilings and no evacuation

The deteriorating condition of the Government Degree Girls College Green Belt in Mehmoodabad has raised serious safety concerns, as a bureaucratic tug of war between the college administration and the College Education Department's Works and Services Wing continues to delay the evacuation of the dangerously dilapidated building.

Located under the administrative control of the Sindh College Education Department, the building has been declared structurally unsafe. Cracks have spread across the structure, portions of the ceiling on the ground floor are on the verge of collapse, and the upper floors are also reportedly unstable. Despite repeated warnings, the premises remain occupied by nearly 700 enrolled students and staff, putting their lives at risk on a daily basis.

This alarming state of disrepair was first highlighted by the college principal in a formal communication to the regional director of colleges several months ago. In response, the Works and Services Department issued several letters — dated August 26 and September 1 — urging immediate evacuation of the premises to avoid any untoward incident. However, no meaningful action has been taken thus far.

According to sources, a plan was initially devised to shift the Green Belt College temporarily to another government college in the Azam Basti area. However, the administration of the proposed site reportedly resisted the move verbally, leading to a stalemate.

As a result, the college continues to function in the same dilapidated building. Only a few classrooms have been vacated, with some classes now being held in makeshift arrangements inside laboratory rooms.

Repeated attempts by The Express Tribune to contact the college principal, Prof Anees Fatima, remained unsuccessful. Despite several SMS messages and calls, she did not respond to requests for comment.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Regional Director of Colleges Prof Qazi Arshad admitted the dangerous condition of the building and revealed that it was either constructed beside or directly over a stormwater drain, which has further complicated matters. He criticised the Works and Services Department for bypassing protocol and writing directly to the college administration. "We have now sent soil samples for testing. Once the report is received, a final decision will be taken regarding relocation," he added.

In its August 26 communication, the Works and Services Subdivision-I had categorically termed the building "extremely dangerous" and advised immediate evacuation. A follow-up letter on September 1 reiterated the urgency, specifically directing the administration to vacate the unsafe sections of the college.

Despite these clear warnings, the building remains occupied, leaving the lives of hundreds of young students and teachers hanging in the balance.

(By Saddar Rizvi The Express Tribune, 05, 04/10/2025)

Owners granted bail in Lyari building collapse case

The Sindh High Court on Friday granted bail to two interned brothers, who owned a dilapidated building in Lyari that collapsed and killed 27 residents in July.

A single-judge SHC bench headed by Justice Omar Sial observed that all Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) officials nominated in the case had already granted bail and the applicants also deserved the same concession on the grounds of consistency.

On July 7, one of the two portions of a ground-plus-five-storey building in Lyari was collapsed in July this year in which 27 residents lost their lives and four sustained injuries.

Rahim Bux and Taj Muhammad, owners of the collapsed building, approached the SHC through their counsel after the trial court had dismissed their post-arrest bail applications.

After hearing both sides, the bench noted: "The learned additional prosecutor general has been unable to distinguish the case against the applicant from that against the individuals who have been granted bail. On the grounds of consistency, the applicant, too, deserves the same concession. The applicant [Rahim] is an aged and infirm man who is not required for any further investigation."

It allowed their bail applications against a surety bond of Rs500,000 each.

Ten officials of SBCA including six directors, two deputy directors and as many building inspectors as well as two clerks were also named as accused persons in the FIR and they all have already obtained bail.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 11/10/2025)

Citizens' input sought on new master plan

The Karachi Development Authority hosted the first Open House event for the Greater Karachi Regional Plan 2047 at Frere Hall, marking a crucial step towards developing a comprehensive scheme for the city's future growth and uplift over the coming months.

Citizens were encouraged to participate by providing feedback on the presentations displayed at the public exhibition, either through direct discussions with team members or by submitting comments via a feedback form and dropping it in the designated comments box.

Notably, despite the event's significance, none of the city's prominent political leaders or civil rights activists attended the "public exhibition" to provide their input, suggestions or proposals for the city's development and uplift.

Commissioned from an international consultant, Dar Al-Handasah, with the support from Pakistani consultants, the plan will be developed over a 24-month period starting from December 2024.

Dar Al-Handasah Country Manager Rami Beydoun told Dawn at the exhibition that the upcoming plan would build upon the foundation of the now-expired Karachi Strategic Development Plan (KSDP) 2020, addressing a wide range of challenges across social, economic, and environmental spheres to create a comprehensive roadmap for the city's future.

He said the development of the regional plan would go through five stages over a 24-month period. "We are in the first phase of inception and data collection and situation analysis would start in the second phase," he added.

Dar's Principal Urban Planner David Gundry said that four major surveys — household, environmental, transportation and land use— would be conducted shortly to gather data on living conditions and demographics.

The urban planner said the sample size of the survey was approximately 34,547 households and it would be conducted by 80 enumerators and 16 supervisors.

He said the plan would be designed to be implementable, but would also need to be adaptable, flexible and responsive to future change.

Mr Gundry said the public exhibition marked just the beginning of the planning process, and they were eager to gather input from a diverse range of citizens on what changes they deemed essential for Karachi's development.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 18/10/2025)

Passerby killed as building collapses after gas cylinder blast

A passerby was killed and five others were injured when the front portion of a two-storey building collapsed, and debris struck them following a gas cylinder explosion in the New Karachi area on Friday evening, police and rescuers said.

Rescue-1122 spokesperson Hassaan Ul Haseeb Khan told Dawn that the cylinder blast occurred inside a building in Rajpar Mohalla of Ayub Goth. Due to the impact of the blast, the front elevation of the building collapsed, and debris hit six people.

They were injured and taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, where doctors pronounced Irfan Asghar, 25, dead. He was passing through the area when the accident occurred.

The injured were identified as Kamran Haider, 12; Asif Kamal, 40; Zubair Dilber, 25; Zaib Husain; and an unidentified man in his early 20s.

Regarding the blast, Mr Khan said it occurred in a ground-plus-two-storey building.

He added that the building was damaged up to 50 per cent, with its front elevation completely destroyed. No one sustained burn wounds, as the injuries were caused by falling debris from the building's cemented structure.

He said there could be multiple reasons behind the blast, such as a substandard-quality cylinder or over-pressurisation. Additionally, a human error, like the lighting of a match, might have triggered the explosion.

The building's occupants were seen blaming each other for the incident. Residents claimed the blast occurred inside a shop on the ground floor, while the shopkeeper insisted it happened in the residential portion.

However, Sohrab Goth SHO Mumtaz Marwat told Dawn that it was not a cylinder blast but rather a gas leakage explosion. According to initial findings by the Bomb Disposal Squad, rooms were filled with gas, which triggered the explosion.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 18/10/2025)

DHA Karachi residents raise civic concerns in rare meeting with authorities

The residents of Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Phase I met up on Sunday with representatives of DHA, Cantonment Board Clifton (CBC), the Sindh government, K-Electric and the area police to discuss the problems being faced by them on a day-to-day basis, such as water crisis, alarming security issues and persistent power theft through illegal kunda connections.

Phase 1 is DHA's oldest residential area, established in 1962.

The residents of the phase, including women, turned out in huge numbers at the meeting.

It was also reminded that houses in DHA Phase 1 come under the A-1 category with the highest property taxes and the highest lease transfer fees. And yet there are as few facilities in Phase 1 as a *katchi abadi*.

Once a model DHA area, Phase I becomes as backwards as a katchi abadi due to persistent water, power crises and security issues, meeting told

After patiently listening to their complaints, Chief Minister's Adviser Tariq Hassan suggested underground electricity connections to bring an end to the power theft. He said that unlike any other phases of DHA, Phase 1 is surrounded by three katchi abadis. He suggested a way of restricting the entry and exit of the area to at least control the security issues.

Representing DHA Vigilance, Lt Col Mohammad Khalid said that they have had meetings with residents and the police regarding the security of the area.

"We stand with you on this matter; you have our full support. We are working with the support of the police and KE. We have removed 55 kundas in the last two weeks. But they come back almost as soon as they are removed. Still, we are trying to come up with a way to bring an end to this power theft once and for all. You will see a change in the next two weeks," he assured, while encouraging the residents to also meet with the new DHA Administrator, Brig Ameer Nawaz Khan.

Gulshan Solangi from KE also assured to look into the matter. "If underground connections are needed, that shall be done," he said.

DSP Dr Saifullah said that they are also very well aware of the issues faced by the oldest residents of DHA. "We will install at least six police check posts at the entry and exit points. We will also work towards increasing street lights and security cameras in the area," he said.

Area SHO Ghulam Nabi Afridi also assured improved security for DHA Phase 1.

CBC Vice President Najeeb Wali said that he appreciated the gathering and how so many stakeholders and all departments sat together for resolutions to their issues. "It is how problems are resolved," he said.

Bringing up the water crisis which Phase 1 also faces like the rest of DHA, he said: "Tankers are the water kundas here, but I'm happy to share that a 10 MGD Dumlottee water line is now approved for DHA. It will solve DHA's water crisis," he concluded. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 20/10/2025)

KDA to get Rs2.89bn for uplift projects

A substantial sum of Rs2.89 billion was approved on Tuesday for development projects, including the construction of new roads under the Karachi Development Authority (KDA).

The decision was made during a meeting of the Sindh Cabinet's finance committee, chaired by ministers Nasir Hussain Shah, Zia Lanjar, and Saeed Ghani.

Informed sources said that the move to entrust the KDA with the city's infrastructure development was based on a proposal from the local government department. The decision is being viewed as significant, especially since several of KDA's ongoing projects are already facing delays due to various challenges.

Sources added that the local government department had expressed reservations about the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's (KMC) capacity to manage additional responsibilities and recommended transferring the uplift projects to the KDA.

A press release said that the finance committee meeting, which was also attended by secretaries from multiple departments, reviewed requests for both development and non-development funds. It also discussed the financial challenges faced by various government institutions in executing public relief projects.

One item on the agenda, the construction of a stadium at St. Patrick's High School under the school education department, was postponed due to the absence of the relevant secretary.

The committee approved Rs299 million for the transport department to procure e-bikes for women under the non-Annual Development Programme (ADP) scheme.

Other approvals included a water supply scheme for 35 villages in Gadap Town, District Malir, sourced from the M-9 Superhighway, as well as salary payments for Rescue 1122 personnel deployed in flood-affected areas, funded by the World Bank.

An increase was also approved in the cost of construction of the road from Nawabshah to Saeedabad and the construction of a drain in it to Nawabshah under ADP Scheme 3332.

The purchase of vaccines under the health department was also approved.

The meeting further approved various schemes of the work, culture and tourism, climate change and coastal departments.

The agenda of the departments whose secretaries were not present at the meeting was deferred to the next session, with instructions that any secretary whose items were on the schedule must attend.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 14, 22/10/2025)

SHC gives SBCA 45 days to decide on amenity plot misuse

The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday directed the director general (DG) of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) to make a decision within 45 days regarding the alleged misuse of an amenity plot in Kathiawar Housing Society, which is currently being used for a commercial school.

A division bench of the SHC, comprising Justice Yousuf Ali Saeed and Justice Abdul Mobeen Lakho, issued the order while hearing a constitutional petition filed by Altaf Shakoor, Chairman of the Pasban Democratic Party (PDP). The petitioner's counsel Advocate Khuram Lakhani argued that the amenity plot was wrongfully converted for commercial purposes.

The bench remarked that the petitioner's grievance revolves around the alleged unlawful conversion of the amenity plot into a commercial school, a move that violates the intended use of the plot as a public amenity.

During the proceedings, the petitioner's counsel informed the court that a formal application had been submitted to the SBCA DG, requesting appropriate action. He further stated that the petitioner would be satisfied if the SBCA DG was directed to take a decision on the matter in accordance with the law.

Speaking to the media after the hearing, Altaf Shakoor criticised the growing trend of commercial activities taking place on amenity plots in Karachi. He alleged that this phenomenon was a result of collusion between office-bearers of cooperative societies and corrupt bureaucratic elements.

DUET students allowed to sit in exams

The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday allowed three engineering students of Dawood University of Engineering and Technology (DUET) to appear in their upcoming examinations on a conditional basis after their admissions were cancelled by the university administration.

The bench, hearing petitions filed by students Muhammad Uzair, Muhammad Zohaib, and Muhammad Sajid, was informed that their admissions had been suspended and later revoked following allegations of misconduct. The students had approached the court challenging the university's notification, which they claimed was issued without any inquiry or opportunity to defend themselves.

Representing the petitioners, Advocate Usman Farooq argued that the disciplinary action lacked transparency and violated due process. The defence counsel contended that no evidence was presented, nor were the students heard before their admissions were cancelled.

25 bonded labourers freed in Benazirabad

In a separate matter, the Sindh High Court was informed that police had successfully rescued 25 members of a single family who had been held captive and forced into bonded labour for nearly two years in Benazirabad district.

The report was submitted before Justice Hasan Akbar in compliance with the court's earlier directives after relatives of the victims filed a petition seeking their recovery.

According to the police report, the operation was carried out near Main War Stop in Benazirabad, where the victims were found confined on the agricultural land of Ali Asghar Jamali. The rescued individuals included men, women, and children - among them a two-month-old infant.

Police stated that the victims had been illegally detained and forced to work without pay. Following the rescue, they were safely relocated and provided medical assistance.

Justice Hasan Akbar appreciated the efforts of police teams from both relevant districts for ensuring the safe recovery of the hostages within the stipulated timeframe. The court had earlier ordered police to execute the recovery operation within three days and submit a detailed compliance report.

The judge observed that bonded labour remained a serious human rights concern in rural Sindh and directed authorities to take strict action against those responsible for keeping workers in illegal confinement.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 23/10/2025)

KDA allegedly awards Rs11b contracts without tender

Alleged irregularities have been unearthed in development projects after revelations that the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) awarded contracts worth Rs11.33 billion without following the mandatory tendering process. Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has ordered an immediate high-level inquiry into the matter.

According to official sources, the Sindh Contractors Association lodged a formal complaint alleging that the KDA had granted multibillion-rupee consultancy contracts to a private firm, Atif Nazar, without advertising or competitive bidding.

Following the complaint, the chief minister formed an inquiry committee to investigate the alleged irregularities.

The probe will be jointly conducted by Minister for Local Government Nasir Hussain Shah and Minister for Planning and Development Jam Khan Shoro, according to the official notification. The committee has been tasked with reviewing all consultancy and development contracts awarded by the KDA, particularly those exceeding Rs11 billion, and identifying any violations of procurement rules and financial regulations.

The complainants stated that several major development projects, including the Karimabad Underpass and Munawwar Chowrangi Underpass, were awarded without public advertisement or bidding.

Documents reviewed by investigators show that the cost of the Karimabad Underpass project was initially set at Rs700 million, but was later escalated to Rs3.81 billion, allegedly by applying new rates to an old tender in violation of rules.

The investigation documents further reveal that the continuation of work on an old tender, rather than cancelling and re-advertising it, has been deemed a "serious procedural violation."

Declaring Atif Nazar & Company as an "in-house consultant" without due process was also described as a blatant breach of procurement regulations, especially as the firm was directly permitted to prepare and submit its own PC-1 (project documents).

Sources within the provincial government said CM Shah has directed that the inquiry be transparent and impartial, with strict action to be taken against those found responsible.

They added that the revelation has raised serious concerns over the credibility of Karachi's ongoing development works.

"There are growing complaints that major city projects are being handed to favoured contractors, causing cost escalations and unnecessary delays," a senior government official disclosed, adding that the government is considering expanding the scope of the probe to include other ongoing schemes.

In the first phase, the investigation will focus on KDA projects where contracts worth billions were allegedly awarded by bypassing procurement rules, resulting in financial loss to the exchequer.

Both the Karimabad and Munawwar Chowrangi underpasses have already suffered delays and inflated costs due to these alleged irregularities.

CM Shah has vowed to ensure accountability in all development authorities and reaffirmed that "no one found guilty of misuse of public funds will be spared."

(By Naeem Khanzada The Express Tribune, 04, 27/10/2025)

Possession of plots ordered for affectees of housing scheme

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has ordered that possession of plots be granted to 650 affectees of Gulshan Raufi Scheme 33 until the next hearing. A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Umar Sial, issued the order during a hearing related to the non-allotment of plots to these affectees, despite previous court orders.

The petitioner's counsel, Malik Altaf Javed, informed the court that over 800 affectees are still awaiting allotment of their plots, even though the court had previously ordered the builder to provide them as far back as 2020. The allottees had booked plots in various sectors of Gulshan Raufi Scheme 33, including Sectors 21-B, 19-B, 6-D, and 6-C.

In 2020, the SHC had ordered the builder to allot plots to the affected people and had also directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to assist in the process. Despite these clear instructions, the affectees have yet to receive their allotted plots.

The court criticised the prolonged pending status of the case, which has now been ongoing for seven years. Justice Umar Sial remarked that it was regrettable that the case had not been resolved, especially given that five years had passed since the initial commitment was made to the affectees. He further remarked that senior citizens among the affectees were particularly affected by the prolonged uncertainty.

During the hearing, the court expressed its frustration over the inaction, pointing out that despite clear court orders, the matter had yet to be resolved. Justice Sial ordered that possession of the plots be granted to the affectees by the next hearing, warning that failure to comply would result in the cancellation of interim bail granted to the accused builders.

The builders implicated in the case include Rehmatullah, former senator Qasim Lasani, and Manzoor Raufi. The court adjourned the hearing until November 18, directing all parties involved to ensure that possession is granted to the affectees by that date. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 06/11/2025)

Sindh Building Control Authority urged to stop illegal construction across Karachi

Leader of the Opposition in City Council Advocae Saifuddin has demanded that the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) take immediate step to stop illegal construction across the metropolis.

The demand was by a delegation, led by Saifuddin, which called on SBCA Director General Muzammil Hussain Halepoto at his office on Tuesday.

The two sides discussed the proposed building control law and a memorandum highlighting the issues arising from illegal construction and preventive measures was presented, said a press release.

Saifuddin informed the SBCA chief that illegal construction on small residential plots were not only a violation of building rules but also cause serious civic problems such as water shortages, sewerage, electricity, gas and parking problems.

"In many cases, six- to 12-storey buildings are illegally constructed on small residential plots in collusion with SBCA staff," he asserted.

He proposed that elected representatives and deputy commissioners should also be included in efforts to curb illegal construction.

The SBCA chief briefed the delegation about his future course of action against illegal construction and shortage of resources and manpower faced by the authority.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 12/11/2025)

Mazar-e-Quaid's marble dome gets new shine

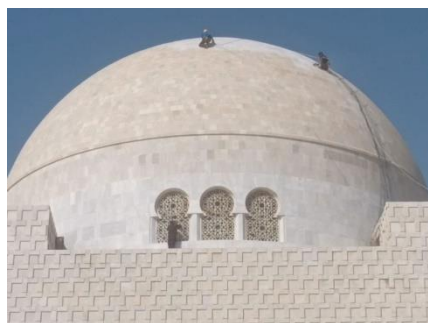
After nearly a decade, restoration work on the 72-foot-wide marble dome of Mazar-e-Quaid has begun to restore its signature white brilliance. The process, which includes complete grinding, polishing, and filling of cracks in the Malagori marble, started this week and will continue for 15 days as part of preparations for Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's birthday celebrations on December 25.

In recent years, the dome was cleaned only on national occasions, but after months of monsoon rains and years of accumulated dust and pollution, the marble had lost much of its original sheen. Officials said this year's effort goes beyond routine washing, involving deep restoration to bring back the marble's natural colour and shine.

According to Mazar-e-Quaid's Resident Engineer Abdul Aleem Shaikh, the marble used in the construction of the mausoleum is a rare and precious stone, not easily available in Pakistan today. "Ordinary washing removes surface dust temporarily, but the marble soon becomes dull again. This time, we are carrying out full-scale grinding and buffing. Once completed, the dome will regain its pristine white appearance," he said.

Shaikh explained that workers are also filling tiny cracks and gaps that have appeared between the marble tiles over the years, using a special chemical designed to preserve the structure for up to 18 months. The restoration is being done with utmost care, avoiding heavy machinery that could damage the marble's original texture and composition. "We want to maintain the historical and aesthetic authenticity of the monument," he emphasised.

The Express Tribune team visiting the site observed skilled craftsmen at work atop the structure, using electric grinders and fine tools to smooth the marble surfaces and polish the decorative latticework beneath the dome. Every step of the climb from the ground to the dome, through marble staircases and protective walkways, reflected the foresight of architect Yahya Merchant, who had designed the mausoleum with long-term maintenance and safety in mind.



Built over 63 acres, the mausoleum is one of Pakistan's most visited national monuments. Routine upkeep and horticultural maintenance continue throughout the year, but special efforts are made before December 25 — the birthday of the nation's founder. Along with marble restoration, the grounds are being landscaped, plants trimmed, and lighting fixtures cleaned in preparation for the traditional changing of the guard ceremony on the day.

In response to rising temperatures and urban pollution, the Mazar management has also expanded the green cover around the site. "In 2010, there were around 4,500 trees on the premises. Now, that number has been increased to over 8,000," Shaikh said. "The trees serve a dual purpose — enhancing the monument's beauty and shielding the marble from the heat and carbon dioxide emitted by vehicles on the busy surrounding roads."

Officials say the results have been encouraging, with the large number of trees helping maintain a moderate microclimate within the mausoleum complex.

The management added that the ongoing restoration and cleaning are essential to preserve the historical and architectural value of the monument. "The goal is to ensure that visitors, on the Quaid's birthday and beyond, can once again witness the mausoleum in its full splendour — glowing in the same brilliant white that has symbolized national pride for generations."

(By Aftab Khan The Express Tribune, 05, 13/11/2025)

SBCA claims demolishing 1,858 buildings this year

The Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) has demolished than 1,858 illegal constructions so far this year, said the authority's spokesperson on Sunday.

Acting on public complaint, SBCA Director General Muzammil Hussain Halepota, directed demolition staff to halt illegal work on the first floors of two buildings in Bath Island and PECHS, the spokesperson said.

He further confirmed that operations have begun at four highly dangerous plots in Lyari and Gizri, while 23 buildings with unauthorized additional floors have already been dismantled.

Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain has issued special instructions for a large-scale crackdown against illegal constructions in the city. Acting on these directives, SBCA has expanded operations to District South, Korangi, Central, and East, where unauthorized portions, shops, and rooftops have been demolished.

Spokesperson Shakeel Dogar clarified that all actions fall under violations of approved maps and land-use regulations. DG Halepota, speaking to The Express Tribune, emphasised that illegal constructions will not be tolerated under any circumstances. He has instructed Director Demolition Rehan Khan to accelerate operations, ensuring that the campaign continues without discrimination.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 17/11/2025)

Call to build climate-resilient homes in urban, rural settings

Leading architects, planners, health experts, development specialists and government representatives at a conference held on Friday underscored the need for redesigning homes, neighbourhoods and public systems to withstand intensifying climate pressures in both urban and rural settings.

The annual conference was organised by Aga Khan University's (AKU) Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) in partnership with Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Pakistan.

This year's theme, 'Climate Change and the Built Environment: Promoting Resilience & Adaptation in Low-Income Settings', set the stage for a day focused on evidence, solutions and innovative approaches.

The conference's opening day featured keynote presentations by Prof Sajida Haider Vandal of THAAP (Trust for History, Art and Architecture of Pakistan), Christopher Burman and Joseph Augustine (University College London), and Dr Zahra Hussain representing Laajverd, showcasing climate-smart architecture, indigenous design approaches, and community-led adaptation innovations.

Delivering a special message via Zoom, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the national urgency for climate adaptation.

"Pakistan's future will depend on how boldly we reimagine our cities, homes, and public institutions in the face of climate change. Building resilience is not optional — it is a national development priority," he said, adding: "Conferences like this help translate research into policies that enable safer, more inclusive, and climate-adaptive environments for all Pakistanis."

Underscoring the gravity of the issues being addressed at the conference, Prince Rahim Aga Khan, in a statement read at the event, emphasised that, "Climate change is one of the greatest threat multipliers of our era. Its impacts intensify disease, malnutrition, displacement, learning loss, and poverty. These burdens fall disproportionately upon women, children, older adults, and marginalised communities. Addressing them is not optional; it is imperative for equity, stability, and sustainable development."

In his remarks, AKU President Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin reaffirmed the university's commitment to advancing climate resilience. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 29/11/2025)

KMC plans five new graveyards as existing cemeteries run out of space

Amid a [burial-place crisis](#) that could leave Karachi with nowhere to bury its dead by the year 2040, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) has decided to establish four 500-acre graveyards on city outskirts and a new 25-acre graveyard within the metropolis.

The Sindh government has in principle agreed to this proposal and is likely to approve it soon.

The KMC's plan came to the fore after repeated warnings that almost all city graveyards have run out of space for burial.

The situation has not only set off alarm bells but also exposed a set of troubling facts that are fast turning into a new challenge for Karachiites.

The sources said Karachi Mayor Barrister [Murtaza Wahab](#) pushed for the plan which got the provincial authorities' nod after which the KMC could acquire plots at different locations.

"In recent meetings and back-to-back discussions between the two sides [the KMC and the Sindh government] it was finally decided that four major locations measuring around 500 acres each would be marked for the KMC graveyards at different city outskirts. A 25-acre piece of land has also been sought within the city which is also expected to receive a go-ahead from the Sindh government. The land within the city is expected to be marked near the newly built [Shahrah-e-Bhutto](#)," said an official.

A KMC official said that the city has nearly 220 graveyards, of which 192 are formally allotted. Among the allotted graveyards, 173 are for Muslims and 19 for non-Muslims which included 12 Christian cemeteries and five Hindu cremation grounds.

"Of these allotted sites, 46 are overseen by the KMC, 20 are run by the Defence Housing Authority, various cantonments and government bodies, while 112 — 99 Muslim and 13 non-Muslim — are managed by social organisations, community groups and private entities. An additional 14 graveyards are operated by various institutions or individuals," he added.

He said that amid complaints that old graves were being demolished to make room for new burial spaces, the KMC had already imposed a ban on burials in several major graveyards of the city, including Society Graveyard near Tariq Road, Model Colony Graveyard, Paposh Nagar Graveyard, Korangi No. 6 Graveyard, Yaseenabad Graveyard and Azeempura Graveyard. However, he acknowledged that the ban was not being fully enforced on any of these graveyards in practice.

With least focus of the law-enforcement agencies and deteriorating situation at most graveyards, the burial grounds are also fast becoming safe havens for drug traffickers and criminals, he added.

Another official said that the growing control of "mafias" on the city graveyards was not only a problem for Karachiites, but also had led to encroachments and illegal plotting, commonly known as "China-cutting".

"The reality is that there is no space in the city's well-known and traditional graveyards and this is the fact which KMC officials and certain other elements are exploiting," said the official.

"If a family wishes to bury its loved one in a specific graveyard, only grave-related expenses can reach Rs100,000 Rs150,000. Most people are not even aware that at KMC-run graveyards, the grave and burial fee is just Rs9,300. But due to fast shrinking space, this job has become a mafia's business. If the plan prepared and proposed by the Karachi mayor meets the reality, it would be a great relief for the Karachiites."

(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 30/11/2025)

Historic Kotri church undergoes restoration after 179 years

As the Christmas season fills the air with joy and anticipation, a historic church in Kotri's Railway Colony is being lovingly restored to its original grandeur. Built in 1846, the Kotri Railway Line Church stands as one of Sindh's oldest places of worship. Nearly 179 years later, its renovation has begun—an effort that carries immense significance for the Christian community of Hyderabad and surrounding areas.

For local Christians, the restoration is more than just bricks and mortar. It is a reaffirmation of their heritage, their faith, and their place in Pakistan's diverse social fabric. The timing, coinciding with Christmas, adds to the symbolism: a season of hope, renewal, and unity. Families preparing for festive celebrations see the revival of this church as a gift that strengthens their spiritual bond and preserves a legacy for future generations.

The project was formally inaugurated by Sindh Assembly Deputy Speaker Anthony Naveed, alongside Director General of Archaeology Abdul Fattah Sheikh, Bishop Kaleem John of Hyderabad Diocese, and other community leaders. Their presence underscored the government's commitment to protecting minority rights and preserving cultural landmarks. Naveed highlighted that Sindh has long been a beacon of interfaith harmony, where people of all religions live with respect and dignity. He described the church's restoration as "a practical proof of religious freedom and solidarity with minority communities."

Officials shared that the renovation will be completed in approximately 150 days, with no compromise on quality. The project, costing around Rs30 million, will also include basic facilities such as washrooms and improved infrastructure. According to the Director General of Archaeology Abdul Fattah Sheikh, Sindh has over 3,200 registered heritage buildings, with nearly 200 already restored—including several churches. The Kotri Railway Line Church, however, holds special importance due to its age and historical value.

Community members expressed joy at the initiative, noting that the church had long required attention. For them, the restoration is not only about preserving a building but also about safeguarding a space where generations have gathered for worship, weddings, and Christmas services. The revival of this sacred site during the festive season is seen as a powerful message of inclusion and respect.

Beyond the Christian community, the renovation resonates with broader society. It reflects Pakistan's commitment to ensuring minorities enjoy freedom of religion and equal opportunities.

As Deputy Speaker Naveed remarked, "True progress is only possible when every citizen is given dignity, equality, and protection." The Kotri church's restoration is thus more than a heritage project—it is a symbol of peace, love, and brotherhood.

(By Junaid Khandaza The Express Tribune, 05, 03/12/2025)

World Culture Festival comes to an end after 39-day run

The second edition of the World Culture Festival organised by the Arts Council of Pakistan came to an end on Sunday evening after a 39-day run.

Speaking at the concluding ceremony that coincided with Sindhi Culture Day, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said he was proud that Karachi had successfully hosted more than 1,000 artists from 142 countries during the festival.

He called the festival an "unprecedented cultural achievement" for Sindh and Pakistan.

The chief minister said it was 39 days back that he had inaugurated the event. "It is an honour for me to be at the closing ceremony. Karachi was once the capital of Pakistan. The capital was moved to Islamabad. But the cultural capital is still Karachi. The city is alive and vibrant. It is also unpredictable."

He said, "For the government of Sindh, culture is not our policy, it's our identity. The Culture Department has been working very hard. The number of events that have been happening far exceed the events happening before. For us, this is an answer to the violence and war happening around the world."

CM Murad says he's proud of Karachi hosting over 1,000 artists from 142 countries

He said that Arts Council President Ahmed Shah told him that the event had two main goals or mottos. First, to talk about peace, not wars, especially [it's] an homage to the several thousand people who died in Gaza. The second message that they wanted to put across is to use art to make the world aware of the disaster that happened due to climate change. "I believe during these 39 days, you had several performances that highlighted the issue of climate change."

The chief minister thanked all those who made the festival success and the more than 1,000 artists who had travelled from all over the world to Karachi for the event.

"The closing today coincides with our Sindhi Culture Day. From here you go out to celebrate Sindhi Culture Day. As I said, for us Sindhis, culture is not a policy, it's our identity. Our cultural history is so rich. Sindh is a land of peace. This is the only province in Pakistan where you'll find people speak all languages of not just Pakistan but all languages of the world... We are the only province which has directly elected non-Muslims in the assembly," he said.

He said we need to build bridges through art, and ensure that humanity is united through culture, music, theatre and visual arts, especially at a time when the world is full of conflicts, highly polarised.

He praised Mr Ahmed Shah for his energy, saying he must have been here at the council 18 hours a day for the last 40 days. "I'd especially like to congratulate the people of Karachi who were able to arrange such a mega event. Karachi is a happening place. We have our problems like all big cities. Three days ago, I was in Islamabad. At a meeting, one of the high officials [of another province] said that people of his province were leaving to reach Karachi because Karachi has many opportunities."

Before his address, the chief minister distributed shields and ajraks to the ambassadors, consuls-general, government officials and international artists who were present on the occasion.

Earlier, in his welcome speech, Ahmed Shah profusely thanked those who had supported the festival, particularly the artist community.

"We did it. And we will do it again. We have created a global community which is against violence. They are for peace. They believe in gender equality. They are against child abuse. We want peace all around the world. No more wars. Artists don't want war. Artists want equality," he said.

(By Peerzada Salman Dawn, 13, 08/12/2025)

Forgotten clock towers in Karachi wait to tick again

The metropolitan city of Karachi, is often portrayed in headlines as chaotic and overwhelmed by modern sprawl.

But scattered among the skyscrapers, traffic-choked roads, and dense informal settlements stand reminders of a different city — a port once celebrated for its order, elegance, and architecture.

Among the most striking relics are Karachi's historic clock towers — orange and rose-pink structures from the late 19th and early 20th centuries — that once guided the city's rhythms.

Today, many are crumbling, forgotten, or overtaken by encroachments, leaving historians and conservationists worried that a rare chapter of the city's past may soon disappear.

In the heart of downtown Saddar, squeezed between Chinese dental clinics and corner grocery shops, stands the 19th-century clock tower of the Eduljee Dinshaw Charitable Dispensary — now a Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) facility.

The Victorian-era structure, built in 1882, is still in use as a dispensary, but its once-white wooden windows are now blackened by exhaust. The clock mounted above its entrance has no hands - frozen for decades. On a recent morning, pigeons perched wearily on its weathered stonework as health workers inside carried out free dengue tests.

At the back, emergency staircases crumble, paint long stripped away. Rusting spiral steps toward the tower's top recall a time when caretakers wound the clock every day.

A few kilometers away, the Lea Market clock tower — once a favorite public gathering place — sits in even worse condition.

A makeshift vegetable market sprawls through the building, while dozens of auto rickshaws treat the entrance as a permanent and illegal terminal.

"This was a favorite gathering place for everyone in the area, both young and old, until the 1980s," said Mukhtar Baloch, a 70-year-old retired teacher.

"I still remember the days when this place was a hub for political and social discussions and public meetings. But over time, it's lost its glory, just like many of our other heritage sites."

Forgotten city's heartbeat

Karachi-based heritage researcher Shaheen Nauman said that around 11 clock towers were documented across the city until 2019, most built between 1882 and 1931.

Recent surveys uncovered four more in the southern districts, bringing the known total to 15, including Merewether Tower (1884), Holy Trinity Cathedral (1885), Empress Market (1889), Poonabai Mamaiya (1889), Sydenham Passenger Pavilion (1913), Lakshmi Building (1924) and Lea Market (1927).

Of these, only three still function, Nauman said, and the rest are waiting for official attention.

"These towers were built between the late 19th century and early 20th century, when watches were a luxury that very few could afford," she explained.

Urgent preservation needed

There are glimmers of hope. At Empress Market — a centerpiece of colonial-era Karachi — the clock tower has come back to life thanks to the passion of local artist and technician Bilal Asif.

Once buried beneath hundreds of illegal vendor kiosks, the market regained its historic facade after a sweeping anti-encroachment drive in 2018. But its iconic clock remained broken until Asif stepped in.

"It was a huge challenge to bring back to life a clock that had stopped decades ago," he told Anadolu.

"But I accepted the challenge and made it tick again. It took weeks of hard work, but I'm glad we managed to successfully restore it."

Today, this is the only hybrid-powered tower clock in Karachi. Among the other clock towers that still function the one at the KMC head office requires weekly winding, whereas the Merewether Tower clocks are solar powered.

Despite occasional restoration efforts, experts fear the broader picture is bleak.

Architect and heritage advocate Marvi Mazhar called for structured intervention. "These clocks must be declared heritage property. There should be monthly checks and the notes must be logged, so that there can be accountability and inquiries, if needed," she said.

Nauman agreed that if one tower can be revived, others can too. "These forgotten clock towers were once the heartbeat of the city.

They symbolize time itself, and its deep significance in human life," she said. "When the clock at Merewether Tower or the KMC building chimes, its sound takes us back a hundred years — to a time when it was the only guide for setting the rhythm of daily life."

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 15/12/2025)

Building research capacity

LITERATURE on teacher impact shows that good teaching provides a significant delta on student learning, compared to average or poor teaching. Simply put, teachers matter and good teaching is important for ensuring better learning outcomes.

However, recruiting, motivating, and keeping good teachers gainfully and efficiently employed is not easy. In Pakistan, a couple of decades back, teacher recruitment was seen as having too much discretion with not enough reliance on rules. Allegations of corruption and nepotism in teacher recruitment were common. Many of these charges were based on facts. Two decades ago, reforms were introduced to move to more rules-based (merit-based) recruitment. This has definitely reduced the allegations, and litigation on recruitment issues has also decreased. But has it improved teacher and/or teaching quality? Has it improved student learning? And what unintended consequences has it led to? These are important follow-ups for completing the loop for feedback and continuous improvement. 'Merit'-based recruitment might reduce corruption, but does it allow us to differentiate between good and bad teachers? If not, the reform might be of limited value.

Many places worldwide have significant requirements for specific courses, diplomas and even degrees before a person can become a teacher. When we moved towards merit-based recruitment, provincial governments removed the requirements for education degrees before joining as a teacher. This has increased the pool of candidates for teaching (a physics graduate can come into teaching directly) but many of these applicants did not choose to be teachers and have no understanding of what teaching is: you can be good at physics but teach it badly. How has this impacted learning outcomes?

Some jurisdictions even have teacher licensing. Teacher licensing has often been talked about in Pakistan but it was only recently that Sindh introduced it. But will licensing improve teaching and learning? We have 1.5 million or so teachers in Pakistan and still suffer a shortage. Will licensing help? Is it only for government schools or also private schools? Will teachers be required to have licences in low-fee private schools, where sometimes they teach Matriculation- or Intermediate-level students? Who will pay for the cost?

Recruiting, motivating, and keeping good teachers efficiently employed is not easy.

Once a teacher has been recruited, is she a teacher forever? Does she need any education, training or upgradation? Is there a role for continuous professional development and how is it to be structured? Punjab has some 450,000 teachers. How do you design effective professional development systems for such large numbers? Do we design devolved systems or centralised ones? How do we ensure quality and some level of uniformity across the system? We have had continuing professional development systems in place, but the general feeling is that they don't seem to work and haven't had the intended impact and definitely not the one needed.

Once deployed, how do we keep teachers motivated to teach effectively for the entire length of their careers — 30-35 years? What are effective career paths for teachers? If a teacher is a good Grade 1 teacher today, how do we ensure that she will be a good, motivated and effective Grade 1 teacher in 10, 20 or 30 years from now? What should happen to her financial returns and other 'incentives' so that she is able to have a rewarding career in Grade 1?

We do not have research on most of these important questions. Which means we do not have effective feedback loops on policies. Policies keep coming and getting implemented. But what consequences do they have? How can we improve if we don't have effective feedback loops that research consequences and impact?

What is heartening is that there is an increasing realisation — in government and academia and among development partners and research institutions — of the need to have these feedback loops and to do relevant policy research on important questions. Most education departments already have specific implementation and planning units to structure some of this work. Development partners have historically funded and encouraged some research, but this has recently become more structured and is being given due importance. Academic research output has also been steadily increasing in education in Pakistan.

The most recent and current impetus has come from a very innovative research support programme funded by FCDO and called the Data and Research in Education-Research Consortium. DARE-RC has funded some 35 studies in the education sector, five to six of them on teacher issues. These studies are in collaboration with education departments. The programme is of medium term (it just closed the fourth round of call for proposals).

The results of the studies will allow us to bring out relevant issues more clearly, and some of them will start answering some of the questions raised above. By focusing on local researchers, the programme is also developing the capacity for research in education in Pakistan and a community of practice in the area. The hope is that other programmes, following this one and funded by government and partners, will continue to build on this approach, so that we not only have answers to the questions but also the local capacity to do such work. We will always have more questions and we need communities and people who are able to answer them so that we can keep improving outcomes in education.

Pakistan must have around 1.5-2m teachers today. With millions of children still out of school, and with most in-school children getting a poor quality of education across the country, we need more teachers — more motivated and committed teachers — and a lot more teacher training to ensure better content knowledge as well as a sound understanding of optimal pedagogical strategies. We also need much better policies for management and regulation of teaching, and effective feedback loops to ensure things keep improving.

In this context, DARE-RC offers an interesting model for developing the capacity needed for such work. I hope education departments will not only look at the outcomes of the research studies being done under DARE-RC, but also at how the research capacity being built can be strengthened and deepened beyond the programme. This is important if we are to ensure our policies improve over time.

(By Faisal Bari Dawn, 06, 19/12/2025)

Sindh govt plans province-wide survey of heritage buildings

The Sindh government on Monday planned to launch a province-wide comprehensive survey of heritage buildings to strengthen the protection, preservation and documentation of the province's cultural assets.

Officials said that the decision, aimed at creating an up-to-date inventory of historic structures, was taken at a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Heritage in Sindh, chaired by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah.

They added that the survey would enable the provincial government to take more effective conservation measures and ensure that the province's rich architectural legacy is safeguarded for future generations.

Among others, the meeting was attended by representatives of the culture and works and services departments, director generals (DGs) of the Sindh Building Control Authority and the Antiquities Department, Advisory Committee member Hameed Haroon, renowned heritage expert Dr Kaleemullah Lashari and architectural consultant and committee member Sohail Ahmed Kalhoro.

The chief secretary noted that the previous province-wide heritage survey, carried out in 2017, identified and officially designated 3,371 structures as protected heritage properties.

He said that, as time had passed, it had become crucial to re-evaluate the present condition of those structures, identify additional heritage sites and secure their legal and institutional safeguarding.

The chief secretary added that heritage buildings represented the cultural identity and historical legacy of Sindh, and that their preservation required updated data, strong technical capacity and effective enforcement of laws.

He instructed that the Sindh Secretariat's support for the heritage department's technical committee be strengthened, ensuring more efficient decision-making and oversight.

The meeting also decided to bring in skilled professionals from the private sector to enhance the Secretariat's support for the technical committee, so that the expertise needed for heritage conservation, restoration and regulatory work is readily available.

It was also decided to make heritage protection laws more stringent and effective to prevent illegal alterations, encroachments and damage to heritage properties across the province.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 30/12/2025)