

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

*JULY TO DECEMBER 2025*

## URBAN SERVICES



## Urban Resource Centre

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A-2, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Westland Trade Centre, Block 7&8, C-5, Shaheed-e-Millat Road, Karachi.  
Tel: 021-34387692, Email: [urckhi@yahoo.com](mailto:urckhi@yahoo.com), Website: [www.urckarachi.org](http://www.urckarachi.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/URCKHI](http://www.facebook.com/URCKHI) Twitter: <https://twitter.com/urckhi>

## Mayor blames TMCs, gas utility for city's crumbling roads amid rains

As Karachi reels from battered streets and traffic chaos following the first spell of monsoon rains, a fresh political storm is brewing over the partnership between the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and the city's town administrations for an ongoing infrastructure revamp, as the city mayor claims the arrangements between the two sides have turned vast swathes of the metropolis into dug-up trenches.



In a sharply worded letter addressed to Sindh's Minister for Local Bodies, Saeed Ghani, Mayor Murtaza Wahab has openly voiced his displeasure, highlighting what he terms a "matter of public importance" and levelling serious allegations against the Town Municipal Corporations (TMCs).

In the letter, the mayor asserts that although billions have been collected by towns in the name of "road cutting charges" from utility companies — most notably SSGC — little to no rehabilitation work has followed. The result: roads in ruins, growing public outrage and a post-rain mess that could have been avoided, he says.

"It appears that despite receiving huge amounts, repair work has not been carried out by the respective towns," the mayor writes, calling the condition of the roads "dilapidated" and blaming the worsening situation on the inaction of town administrations.

According to sources within the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), this is not the first time the mayor has flagged the issue. But this time, his tone is unmistakably direct — and accusatory. The letter does not merely highlight mismanagement; it hints at a deeper rift over jurisdiction and authority.

At the core of the controversy lies SSGC's wide-scale infrastructure upgradation, which involves road cutting across the city. While SSGC has been paying hefty sums to towns for permission and restoration work, Mr Wahab contends that much of this is taking place without the involvement of KMC — despite many roads being under its jurisdiction.

"In numerous meetings with the Honourable Chief Minister Sindh, the matter was raised that funds collected for road restoration should be used solely for that purpose." Yet, he alleges, towns have not only failed to restore the roads but have also overstepped their authority by charging fees on roads legally under KMC's control.

Insiders suggest that the letter is the culmination of months of simmering tensions. While towns argue they are coordinating directly with SSGC to ensure a speedy infrastructure rollout, the KMC views the arrangement as a circumvention of its authority — and a recipe for administrative chaos.

"The roads are being dug up with impunity," a KMC official said on condition of anonymity. "And when citizens complain, it's KMC that takes the blame — despite the towns pocketing the funds."

The mayor's letter is seen by many as an attempt not only to call out inefficiencies but also to distance his administration from the growing public anger over the city's crumbling road network.

### TMCs reject criticism

Meanwhile, the towns dismissed the mayor's concerns as "politically motivated" and accused the KMC of attempting to usurp their legitimate administrative authority.

In a joint statement issued on Monday, New Karachi Town Chairman Muhammad Yousuf, North Nazimabad Town Chairman Atif Ali Khan and Model Town Chairman Zafar Ahmed Khan held the mayor and the local government minister responsible for the situation that emerged in the aftermath of Karachi's first spell of monsoon rains.

The town chairmen stated that the mayor, in his letter to the provincial local government minister, had levelled baseless accusations against town officials in an attempt to deflect blame from the mismanagement and incompetence of the KMC.

Expressing deep concern over the prevailing conditions, the local government representatives urged the mayor to fulfil his responsibilities rather than engaging in a "dirty blame game".

They asserted that the KMC was responsible for cleaning all major drains, while both the KMC and the local government department were tasked with reconstructing major roads ahead of the monsoon season. However, they said, both entities had failed to carry out their duties in time.

The statement further noted that Rs600 million had been allocated for the drainage and cleanliness project, but the work was delayed and not completed before the rains. "Had the two bodies completed their work on time, the current situation could have been avoided," it read.

Addressing the allegations regarding road reconstruction after SSGC's excavation, the town chairmen clarified that such work was only to be undertaken after the gas utility completed its installations — and would be initiated in due course accordingly.

"The mayor cannot simply shrug off his responsibilities by blaming others for his own shortcomings," the town chairmen added. (By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 01/07/2025)

### Gas utility says not at fault for dug up roads

The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has disbursed Rs11.9 billion to the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and various Town Municipal Corporations (TMCs) for road-cutting and rehabilitation during a period from July 2024 to June 2025. The gas utility was under fire from political and civic circles for digging up roads for laying pipelines, however, SSGC sources said that the company had made timely disbursement of the mandatory road cutting charges.

It was the responsibility of the metropolitan and town corporations to utilise these funds in a justified manner, they said.

According to the data, released by the SSGC, the gas utility made the highest payments of Rs3.55 billion to TMC North Karachi and TMC North Nazimabad. TMC Model Colony received the second-highest payment of Rs2.10 billion. Other payments included Rs1 billion to TMC Lyari, Rs7.3 million to TMC Jinnah, and Rs6.2 million to TMC Malir.

The data further revealed that TMC Saddar and Chensar each received Rs260 million, while TMC Landhi was paid Rs210 million. The SSGC paid Rs490 million to the KMC for road-cutting and restoration works. The lowest amount of Rs0.227 million was paid to TMC Gulshan.

Despite these massive disbursements totaling over Rs11 billion, the roads across Karachi remain in disrepair.

Interestingly, SSGC never issued even a single protest letter to any TMC over their failure to restore the roads, nor did its legal department sign any binding agreement before releasing such a huge amount.

Sources further disclosed that SSGC did not obtain any formal assurance from TMCs that the roads would be rebuilt after payments.

However, due to the public outrage following the recent downpours, SSGC has now initiated the process of drafting protest letters to KMC and the concerned TMCs, questioning why roadworks have not been completed despite receiving the huge payments.

SSGC insiders expressed concern, saying, "If the company aggressively protests or takes legal action, it may face complications in acquiring road-cutting permissions in the future from these municipal bodies."

(By Ehtesham Mufti The Express Tribune, 04, 02/07/2025)

### Karachi teeters, yearns for ownership

Karachi, my Pride of Place, is in a shambles. Once prided as the 'city of lights' and a cathedral of arts, culture and education, today this metropolitan of around 30 million people, a prospective economic powerhouse, is in ruins and has been ripped off its glory and magnanimity. Its infrastructure is dilapidated; civic amenities, now incurred by its inhabitants at an exorbitant cost, have gone for a toss; and the once proudly mentionable norms and ethos are nowhere.



The city is bulging and exploding. It is literally unplanned, and the claim of it being a town properly laid-out by the colonials is a myth today. Thanks to 'China-cutting', an arbitrary and illogical truncation of land, even over sewerages and amenity plots, Karachi is rapidly turning into a ghetto. As part of modernisation, it is witnessing a stampede of high-rises, pinned on a poor architecture sans parking and safety exits.

It is polluting; possesses severe environmental hazards with solid-waste choked in drainages; awaiting monsoon rains to expose its fault-lines; and has to deal with an inadequate infrastructure, such as parks and playgrounds, and a sizzling healthcare system. Millions of students, from primary to secondary, have no alternative but to rely on fleeing, quality-less schools, and a higher education with an extortionate price-tag.

The metropolis does not have a public transport system et al, and the world's 12th largest city is devoid of a formal taxi network too. Millions either commute on junked four-wheelers that fleece them to the core, or haplessly hop on Chingchi (a mocked version of auto-rickshaw). Not to ever dream of a Metro or Circular Railway!

The conurbation with an area of 3,780 sq-km is encircled with cantonments (garrisons), and its dwellers hardly have a say in their affairs. Karachi, unlike any other world mega city, does not have a police of its own and the law-enforcement is at the mercy of federal and provincial maneuverings with least regard for its citizens. Not to mention mafias, drug-traffickers, criminal gangs and political masqueraders who rule it at impunity.

Pakistan's largest urban centre grapples with water shortage with private hydrants under the paramilitary and their cahoots minting billions; an electricity cobweb that is rusted and lethal, piling pilferage on its consumers; and a local tax and levies collection machinery that is corrupt and devoid of any accountability.

It is no surprise that millions of Karachiites are in a miserable fate. Many more are in depression owing to an unending socioeconomic pushback they have to face to stay afloat. A city that generates an average of 65% of national revenue has mysteriously nothing to share with its genuine dwellers. It is a pity that Karachi lacks a local government too, and the obliterated and politically-leech Karachi Metropolitan Corporation is not even privy to collection of property taxes under its nose.

None own the city, neither the people nor the political elite, as they all are on their own waywardly scrambling in a parasitic manner. Less said the better about governance and the Mahishmati Raj (a phrase derived from ancient Haihayas kingdom) which ensures that its subjects are in tatters under a perpetual despotic rule.

It is, thus, no surprise if the Economist Intelligence Unit has ranked Karachi as the fourth least livable city in the world. Its Livability Index, 2025 has simply mirrored as to where the municipality, its aristocracy and residents stand in the comity of nations. The city is a manifest of ad hocism that has evolved into an amoebic demographic-cum-economic denominator, and is mysteriously alive and kicking.

Though the city is glittering at face value and is home to some greatest philanthropy, it is teetering underneath. Its folk are in disgust and pain. Karachi is in need of a genuine political mandate, not the one tampered at midnight, or agreed on a hybrid equation. All it desires is ownership by its natives and its due share from the national mainstream. It is in an existential crisis and the city must be rescued.

(By Ishtiaq Ali Mehkri The Express Tribune, 14, 29/07/2025)

### Where did the gas go?

IN most middle-income countries, particularly across the Global South, it's rare for households to receive piped natural gas directly into their homes. Pakistan is one of the few exceptions. In cities like Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, gas flows directly into people's kitchens, a convenience many developed countries still don't offer. We've taken it for granted.

But step outside these urban centres, and the story is different. Rural areas continue to rely on LPG cylinders or even firewood to cook meals. And unlike piped gas, there's no real national infrastructure for LPG. Distribution is patchy, pricing is unstable, and most of it runs through private dealers. We focused too much on expanding the pipeline grid and never developed this system.

Yet now, despite all this infrastructure, there's a question a lot of people in urban Pakistan keep asking: why does the gas disappear every night at 9 pm?

Every winter, and now increasingly throughout the year, people are told that Pakistan is running out of gas. That we've depleted our local reserves. That there just isn't enough to go around. For the longest time, this explanation was followed by calls for more LNG imports. It made sense: if domestic supply couldn't meet demand, import the difference. The long-term LNG contract with Qatar was sold to the public as a success story. It guaranteed a steady supply. In theory, that should have solved the problem. But the shortages and the nightly cut-offs have only persisted.

*The gas cuts at 9 pm are a policy failure.*

In fact, Pakistan now finds itself in a situation that's quite unusual: we have a surplus of gas, and yet people are still being told to light candles at dinner and prep their food early. Why?

The answer lies in a mix of government mismanagement, rigid international contracts, and external conditionalities. Under pressure from the IMF, Pakistan's Economic Coordination Committee approved a 10 per cent increase in natural gas prices for industrial users and power plants but kept household tariffs unchanged.

For years, these industries had relied on cheap gas to run their captive power plants (privately operated electricity systems) to ensure uninterrupted supply for their operations. The state made this possible by subsidising the gas they used even while households were being told to ration. But the IMF called for a change. So, the government complied: subsidies were slashed, and industrial gas suddenly became expensive. Naturally, many industries responded by transitioning to alternatives such as solar, or back to the grid.

And that's where the surplus comes in. Once industry stepped back, gas demand fell. We now have more gas in the system than we know what to do with. But instead of diverting that gas to homes, it just sits there. It's forced into the system under take-or-pay LNG contracts, which require Pakistan to pay for imported gas whether we use it or not. Since it's already paid for, the system prioritises this expensive gas and squeezes out the cheaper, locally produced supply. Local producers are asked to curtail production or shut it down.

This is especially affecting SNGPL in the north, where the system is overloaded — not from demand, but from expensive imported gas households can't afford. Affordable local gas is sidelined to make space for costly LNG. Yet homes still go without gas after 9 pm.

To make matters worse, the LNG contracts don't include a resale clause. If we don't need the gas, we can't sell it elsewhere. That kind of flexibility wasn't built in. It's the kind of foresight we never seem to plan for — a recurring flaw in our policymaking.

And there's another layer to the problem, UFG — unaccounted-for gas. That's the official term for gas that is supplied into the system but can't be traced to any paying customer. In reality, a lot of this gas is lost to theft. So, the more gas the government supplies, the more loss it has to absorb. If recovery isn't guaranteed, the logic becomes: supply less, lose less. And the less gas you supply, the less subsidy you have to pay. Behind the scenes, it becomes a balancing act between preventing financial loss and delivering what citizens actually need.

So here we are. With a surplus of gas, but not enough policy clarity to put it where it's needed. With a massive pipeline network, but no plan for equitable or rational distribution. With contracts that are rigid, and priorities that are political.

The gas cuts at 9 pm aren't just a technical issue. They're a policy failure. They represent a system that's failing to adapt to changing energy realities and one that continues to ignore the actual needs of the people it's supposed to serve.

(By Srira Tahir Dawn, 07, 30/07/2025)

## Gas issues

THE extension of captive levy — already imposed on the industrial customers of the two public sector utilities under the IMF funding programme — to third-party suppliers must end policy distortion and migration of captive power producers away from the Sui companies. But this will not resolve the gas sector's bigger issue of mounting circular debt amid a glut caused by long-term LNG import agreements and dwindling demand due to high fuel prices. The 'oversupply' of gas in the SNGPL system has forced the utility to defer the import of over 170 LNG cargoes and order local gas producers to either shut down their fields or scale down production. But these are merely temporary solutions, which will only push a deeper crisis to a later date. Meanwhile, these actions will impose substantial costs on local producers, such as the state-owned OGDCL, and lead to unannounced supply suspensions for customers — all to reduce its financial losses.

The gas crisis was waiting to happen for several years. The problems — a supply glut, reduced demand, rising theft and system losses, soaring consumer prices — are not any different from the ones confronting the power sector. Warnings of a build-up of circular sector debt, due to the widening mismatch between the increasing costs of delivering gas to consumers and production, as well as SNGPL's inability to recover the full cost of expensive imported LNG were being sounded for over 10 years. Yet, nothing was done to address the issue. To effectively tackle the gas sector circular debt and associated issues, the government should, among other things, implement the WACOG law to ensure a balanced pricing mechanism reflecting the true cost of gas, including RLNG, eliminate cross subsidies distorting the market and privatise the Sui companies monopolising the sector. Increasing gas prices and levying punishing taxes on consumers will do nothing. This policy has failed to deliver in the power sector, and will not succeed in the gas sector either.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 10/09/2025)

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## 'Nearly 70pc of safe city cameras installed'

As many as 891 surveillance cameras, out of total 1,300, have been installed under the first phase of the Safe City Project, marking nearly 70 per cent progress in the current phase.

A meeting chaired by Inspector General of Sindh Police Ghulam Nabi Memon reviewed the progress on the Sindh Safe City Project, e-challan system and police emergency response.

The meeting was informed that the first phase of the Safe City Project is nearing completion and the second phase of the project is scheduled to commence this year.

The IG said that as part of the Safe City Project, Police Madadgar-15, Shaheen Force, Sindh Police Highway Patrol, AVLIC, and other police units will be integrated, and Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) will be deployed at various strategic locations.

He said that system-generated messages will be conveyed not only to ERVs but also to all field formation units.

The DIG Traffic informed the meeting that the e-challan system has been introduced at select locations in Karachi on an experimental basis.

After the completion of the second phase, the challan system will be implemented on all roads across the provincial capital, he added.

The IG observed that with the introduction of the e-challan system, physical contact between police and the public will be minimised.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 16/09/2025)

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## Urban flooding linked to blocked drains, flawed city planning in Karachi

The Urban Resource Centre (URC) on Tuesday organised talks by experts, architect and town planner Arif Hasan and NED Professor Dr Noman Ahmed, about the current flooding situation in big cities such as Karachi during the monsoon rains.

In his talk, titled 'Understanding the impacts of monsoon rains and flooding in Pakistan', professor Ahmed pointed out that the usual monsoon pattern has now changed, as the average rainfall recorded this year in major cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Sargodha and Kasur was higher than usual.

"The low-lying areas are flooded almost as soon as it rains and citizens find themselves surrounded by water, wondering how to save their belongings," said Professor Ahmed.

"Ironically, while the roads are inundated, the rainwater drains do not receive rainwater," he pointed out. "It is because while building roads we left no margin or option for the water to flow out. New development projects have also blocked all drainage, as no one thinks about such things while planning construction," he said.

"During the heavy rain on August 19, even the vehicles brought in to clean or pump out the water from Sharea Faisal themselves stopped working as the water went into their engines," he added.

He said that normally all the rainwater should channel out to the river or sea through storm-water drains, which does not happen. He showed, with the help of maps, how rivers such as the Sutlej and Ravi in Punjab overflowed into nearby settlements.

Professor Ahmed said that the government needs to have a comprehensive strategy to manage exceptional rain and flooding events. He also suggested that they restore natural drainage channels in and around the cities, and train, equip and mobilise a volunteer force for emergency services.

Meanwhile, Mr Hasan said that water naturally flows down from the north or hilly areas to the sea in the south, but the areas it is supposed to flow through have townships now. One good example of this is Saadi Town and the other townships around it.

“You don’t meddle with nature like that. The first thing before building a settlement somewhere is to see if it is not in the way of the flow of water,” he said. “Then even the roads here are built higher and higher, while not allowing the water to flow down,” he added.

“The URC carried out a detailed survey of drains in 2020 and found that some 30 of the 34 smaller drains flowing into the big Mahmoodabad drain were blocked. The Mahmoodabad drain, too, has 18 points from where the water should flow out, though there only four happened to be open, as the remaining 14 were blocked. So the outflow is weak,” he said.

He also said that during the rains, water on the roofs of around 2.7 million houses and buildings in Karachi flows down onto the roads. But there has been no research or study carried out to see how to get this water to the Lyari or Malir rivers.

“All one needs is some common sense here to come up with long-term solutions. Here we have rendered people homeless to clean the Gujjar, Orangi or Mahmoodabad nullahs and still the flooding issue could not be resolved,” he said.

“When coming up with solutions, we should not ignore or lose sight of the people,” he reminded. “Come up with people-friendly solutions because with global warming the temperature in the mountains is rising, which means more water will flow down into the rivers while we here are senselessly settling down on floodplains,” he added.

Earlier, Zahid Farooq, one of the organisers, mentioned the rain on August 19, which affected every citizen of Karachi, rich or poor, in the same way.

Many people attending the talk also shared their bad experiences due to the urban flooding on that day.

A one-minute latest video of flooding at main NIPA Chowrangi on Tuesday was also shared with the audience to show that the water has still not cleared in several areas.  
(By Shazia Hasan Dawn, 13, 17/09/2025)

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### **Nadra to open three new ‘mega centres’ in Karachi**

The National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) has announced that it will open three new mega centres in Karachi by March 2026 to facilitate people.

The announcement was made by Nadra Director General Sindh Aamir Ali Khan at a programme organised by the University of Karachi on Wednesday.

He said that the new mega centres will be established in the areas of Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Gulberg and Surjani Town so that the public can get maximum facilities.

He said Nadra has always tried to provide maximum convenience to the people and solve their problems through technology.

Mr Khan said that Nadra is taking steps to provide convenience to the people and now citizens can get most of its services through their mobile phones.

He said that through the Pak ID App, users can avail various facilities sitting at home, which will save both time and effort.

He said that students and youngsters can help in spreading awareness about the new services of Nadra.

On this occasion, KU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi said the digitalised system not only ensures transparency but is also an excellent and effective tool for preventing corruption.

He said that the facilities provided by Nadra are not only accessible to the people living within Pakistan, but Pakistanis living abroad are also benefiting from these services, which is proof of how important the digital system is for national development and public convenience.

(By Dawn Reporter, 13, 18/09/2025)

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### **Rising numbers of stray dogs in Karachi make citizens’ lives unbearable**

The unchecked rise in the stray dog population has made life increasingly unbearable for citizens across Karachi, with frequent attacks causing injuries, deaths and widespread fear in various localities of the metropolis.

It has become a common sight to see packs of dogs roaming freely in the streets of the city, often hounding passers-by, particularly children and women, and motorcyclists.

While cases of dog bites are becoming increasingly common, around two dozen people have died due to rabies during the current year.

Sources said that the town municipal corporations (TMCs), which are responsible for taking measures against stray dogs in their respective jurisdictions, as well as the Rabies Control Programme Sindh (RCPS), established in 2018 with an objective to address rabies and eliminate deaths caused by dog bites, have failed to implement sustained control measures.

*Street dogs roam freely everywhere in city including educational institutions, public parks; frequent attacks spread fear among residents*

The RCPS pledges to control the stray dog population through humane methods such as trap-neuter-return (TNR) and trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR), alongside neutering and spaying instead of culling. It also promises to raise public awareness and promote empathy towards animals.

In private conversations, the TMCs expressed doubt over the efficacy of the “humane methods” as they believed that the erstwhile poison method of dog culling was a better choice.

Many residents whom *Dawn* spoke to argue that while the emphasis on “humane methods” is commendable, the programme’s implementation has delivered little tangible relief, with dog-bite cases and daily hardships steadily increasing.

They contend that without result-oriented strategies and stronger coordination with municipal authorities, the menace will only intensify, as TNR, TNVR, and even relocation to outlying areas have so far failed to bring any respite to residents.

### **Voices from neighbourhoods**

In District East’s Gulistan-i-Jauhar and Safoora, residents complain that even routine activities such as walking to the market or sending children outside to play have become risky.

“We feel safe only when travelling by car. If we are on a motorcycle or on foot, especially while carrying something, these stray starving dogs inevitably chase us. They either attempt to snatch our belongings or attack, leaving us terrified,” said one resident.

Recently, a news went viral on social media stating that even Karachi University was not free from the menace.

A student from the Department of Food Sciences was reportedly injured after falling when chased by stray dogs inside the campus.

In Surjani Town, New Karachi and other neighbourhoods of District Central, families said they had stopped allowing children to play outside in the evenings.

“Every other day we hear of dog-bite cases here. They bark at women and children, and when they panic and run, the dogs attack,” a resident explained.

“During the day one somehow manages, but at night it becomes impossible to walk through the streets,” he added.

Similarly, in Liaquatabad and Gulberg, residents complained not only of safety risks but also of financial losses. A man named Mehmood recounted how a stray dog damaged the bumper of his car, leaving him with unexpected repair costs. He said such incidents added to the burden of already strained households.

Residents of Korangi voiced similar concerns, saying the issue had now begun to directly affect public spaces such as schools and parks.

A woman expressed shock over the presence of stray dogs in the playground of a government school, warning that the safety of schoolchildren was being compromised due to the administration’s negligence.

Locals further noted that at Korangi 5 Model Park, dogs frequently chase joggers — particularly women — disrupting the calm and freshness associated with morning walks.

“Even if they don’t bite, the mere contact with clothes feels disgusting,” one resident said, adding that this constant nuisance was an example of how an unchecked problem, if ignored for long, could gradually encroach upon people’s everyday freedoms.

In Orangi and Baldia towns of District West, residents said the menace had turned simple routines such as commuting to work or attending prayers into unsafe experiences.

An elderly man said: “Nowadays it is even difficult to go for Fajr prayers. These dogs rush towards you barking or attempt to bite. One has no choice but to fend them off with stones or carry a stick for protection.”

A similar situation is evident in District South, where residents complain that walking through markets has become nearly impossible. A woman from Lyari said that dogs often chased people returning from meat shops.

A man from Malir recounted how his brother and sister-in-law were injured when they fell from their motorbike while being chased by dogs; his sister-in-law sustained a deep head injury. Such incidents, he argued, show that the menace has gone far beyond being a mere nuisance, and now poses a direct threat to both life and property.

**Authorities' response**

When contacted about measures being taken against stray dogs, Safoora Town Chairman Rashid Khaskheli said that whenever complaints are received, the sanitation department captures dogs and releases them in remote areas, sometimes in coordination with the Edhi Foundation.

He added that in cases where a dog turns rabid and poses a direct threat to residents lives, the department "have no option but to kill it by administering poison".

At a recent programme held in connection with World Rabies Day, Minister Nasir Shah has said that the Sindh Government was paying special attention to the vaccination programme to protect human lives.

He said that vaccination of street dogs can help control rabies. He said that there will also be dog lovers in society who oppose the killing of stray dogs.

(By Dawar Shoaib Dawn, 13, 13/10/2025)

**Urban safety**

Karachi's skyline is changing once again - not through new development, but through the demolition of ageing and unsafe apartment complexes. The Sindh Building Control Authority has intensified its operation to pull down structures declared dangerous in areas such as Lyari, Naya Abad, Agra Taj Colony and Gulistan-e-Jauhar. Following a series of tragic collapses, including one in Lyari's Baghdadi area that claimed 27 lives, the effort is understandable. Yet, the way it is being carried out raises serious concerns about planning and coordination.

These buildings have housed families for decades, now being torn down within days. The SBCA says the demolitions are being conducted with "extreme caution", but that caution seems limited to structural safety, not human consequence. Where will the displaced go? Has the government drawn up an alternative housing plan or set up a grievance redress system for those affected? So far, there are no clear answers. Residents have reportedly being asked to vacate on short notice, often with little to no support. In a city already grappling with overcrowding and soaring rents, such unplanned evacuations can easily create an urban crisis. Demolishing unsafe buildings is indeed a public safety necessity, but it must be done within a framework that protects people as much as property.

There is also a need for transparency in identifying which structures are truly hazardous. Karachi's older neighbourhoods, especially in the city's south and central districts, are filled with ageing apartment blocks occupied by low-income families. Without a clear, publicly accessible process for verification and relocation, the demolition drive risks deepening mistrust between citizens and the authorities.

The government's priority must go beyond pulling buildings down and must include relocation and compensation. Safety and humanity must go hand in hand. If Karachi is to rebuild, it must do so with its people at the centre of that vision.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 26/10/2025)

**Gas utilities push for higher tariff**

The two gas utilities — SNGPL and SSGCL — have sought more than 10.7 per cent and 7.6pc increase in their prescribed gas prices, respectively, to meet their revenue requirements for the current fiscal year.

The prescribed gas prices are revised twice a year under the law, following determinations by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra), based on which the government sets consumer gas prices for various consumer categories. The government has also committed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide timely biannual notifications of gas rates to avoid a further build-up of circular debt, which has already exceeded Rs3 trillion.

Ogra has announced a public hearing on Nov 7 to consider a petition filed by the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Ltd for a 10.7pc hike or Rs189 per million British thermal unit (mmBtu). SNGPL demanded the existing prescribed price of Rs1766.50 per mmBtu be increased to Rs1,955.50 per mmBtu for current fiscal year.

The Lahore-based SNGPL claimed a Rs53bn shortfall in its revenue requirements for the current fiscal year, as well as an additional Rs582m subsidy for LPG air-mix plants. On top of that, SNGPL has also claimed an additional Rs317 per mmBtu cost on account of RLNG diversion.

**Public hearing fixes for Nov 7 as SNGPL and SSGCL aim to cover shortfalls and imported gas costs**

The combined increase in gas rates has thus been estimated at Rs506 per mmBtu, roughly taking the total cost increase by 28.7pc to Rs2,272 per mmBtu. It said the company had included the cost of RLNG diverted volumes to indigenous gas consumers as part of the cost of gas in light of the ECC decision ratified by the federal cabinet on Oct 30, 2023.

This is despite SNGPL earlier claiming a reduction in sales volumes, mainly due to an increase in gas rates over the past two years, which made it unaffordable for consumers, but now wants a further increase in the prescribed prices.

On the other hand, Sui Southern Gas Company Ltd requests Rs125.41 per mmBtu or a 7.6pc increase in its prescribed price. It demanded that the existing price of Rs1,658.56 should be increased to Rs1,783.96 for the current fiscal year.

The Karachi-based SSGCL estimated a shortfall of Rs24bn in its revenue requirements for FY26. In addition, it claimed another "unrecouped" shortfall of Rs34.3bn since FY23. It demanded that it be included in the revenue requirement for next year, thereby raising the total demand for the prescribed price to Rs1,962.55 per mmBtu for 2025-26.

SSGCL has claimed an additional amount of Rs57.87 per unit on account of RLNG cost of service, which is also separately notified monthly by Ogra. This takes the total cost to Rs 2,021 per unit.  
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 09, 29/10/2025)

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### **No chairs, tables of eateries on walkways along Karachi's major roads**

The city commissioner on Friday announced a 'zero tolerance' policy for placing chairs and tables on walkways and pavements along the roads that are 100 feet wide or more and strictly prohibited restaurants and eateries from encroaching on these areas.

As per the new standard operating procedures, no outdoor placement of chairs and tables or any obstruction on footpaths, service lanes or road shoulders along the major arteries (100 feet or more) would be allowed.

However, eateries on 60-100 feet commercial roads and below 60 feet neighbourhood streets can use the space with a prior no-objection certificate (NOC) from the town office and deputy commissioner concerned without obstructing movement of pedestrians or vehicles.

As per the mechanism of obtaining the NOC, the proprietor of an eatery will submit an application to the town municipal office with a trade licence, rental agreement and an undertaking.

*Commissioner announces 'zero tolerance' against encroachments by roadside food outlets, tea shops*

The joint verification of the application would be conducted by the town municipal officer, traffic police and mukhtiarkar to assess obstruction, hygiene and nuisance potential.

The town officer will forward their recommendation to the deputy commissioner for conditional approval, valid of one year.

#### **255 eateries unsealed**

As many as 255 roadside tea shops and restaurants sealed for encroaching on walkways and pavements are now set to reopen after agreeing to follow the new SOP guidelines.

Officials said that the city administration on Friday decided to unseal the closed eateries after their association assured implementation of the newly framed guidelines.

They said that the decision to unseal was taken after the written assurance of implementation of the SOP by the restaurants association and the submission of a written affidavit by hotels.

Commissioner Syed Hasan Naqvi had formed a committee, headed by Additional Commissioner Ghulam Mehdi Shah, to prepare the SOP.

The committee, which also comprised deputy commissioners of districts East and Central and representatives of the restaurant association, to submit proposals to make it mandatory for hotels to be kept within their limit.

According to the SOP, roads have been divided into three categories: zero tolerance roads, 100 feet wide or more; commercial and secondary roads, 60-100 feet wide; and neighbourhood streets, below 60 feet wide.

There will be no encroachment on a road of one hundred or more feet at all.

The decision to determine the desired location for the hotel or tea house will be made with the confirmation of the authorised representative and traffic police and the recommendation of the town officer. The concerned DC will issue the NOC.

The commissioner said that the city administration will continue action against encroachments in the city and the unsealed eateries would be monitored.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 15/11/2025)

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### **Karachi introduces dedicated ambulance lane for faster emergency access**

In a landmark move aimed at improving emergency response times, the city has activated its first-ever dedicated ambulance lane on a public road. The special corridor has been made functional on Mansfield Street in Saddar, one of Karachi's busiest commercial hubs.

According to Deputy Commissioner District South, Javed Nabi Khoso, the ambulance lane was established following a comprehensive anti-encroachment operation in the area. He said that once illegal structures were removed, authorities were able to create a clear and uninterrupted emergency route, marking the first such designated lane for ambulances in the city's history.



Khoso emphasised that ensuring smooth access for emergency vehicles and safeguarding citizens' lives remains the administration's top priority. He added that the initiative reflects a broader plan to enhance urban mobility, especially during life-saving situations.

The deputy commissioner further announced that similar emergency lanes will be introduced on other major roads across District South to facilitate the rapid movement of ambulances and reduce delays caused by heavy traffic congestion.

The move has been widely welcomed as a significant step toward strengthening Karachi's emergency response infrastructure, particularly in

densely populated commercial zones where congestion often hinders rescue operations.

(By Sajid Rauf The Express Tribune, 04, 27/11/2025)

### Karachi's misery

THE Sindh government finally appears to be stirring from its slumber. With millions of Karachiites daily navigating the misery of perpetually choked, severely dilapidated roads, it is now finalising a Rs25bn 'special package' to repair damaged infrastructure. "Funds are not an issue; I want work to be done on a war footing," Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah reportedly said at a meeting this Monday. But if funding is not an issue and the city is to be rehabilitated expeditiously, why, then, was no thought given earlier to the pockmarked and potholed roads that seem to have almost come to define Karachi? For months, the cost of civic authorities' neglect has been borne by the long-suffering residents, who have paid heavily in the form of lost time and productivity, damage to their automobiles, and health complications due to the constant clouds of dust now hanging over the city from dug-up roads and incomplete infrastructure projects.

The Karachi mayor also has some answering to do. While seeking the funds, he informed the attendees of the aforementioned meeting that 315 inner city streets were "severely damaged and require urgent attention", and that another "60 major roads across the city were scheduled for reconstruction". All of that damage did not occur overnight. Granted that managing a city as big as Karachi is not an easy task, but those responsible for its upkeep should have been keeping up with its requirements, not letting issues turn into crises. Major arteries like University Road have been in an abhorrently dilapidated state for many months, and no real effort seems to have been made to ease the problems this has caused. Large parts of the city seem to have been forgotten altogether, and their streets have been falling apart for years now. The Sindh government and the city's administration need to commit to their responsibility. There is a big challenge ahead of them.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 27/11/2025)

### PA demands end to gas loadshedding in Sindh

In a rare show of unity in the Sindh Assembly, the treasury and opposition joined hands to adopt a unanimous resolution against an acute shortage of gas in the province, pushing the provincial government to raise the issue at the Council of Common Interests (CCI) and restore normal gas supply.

The house unanimously expressed serious concerns over the long hours of "low or no gas supply" even after the recent upgradation of the Sui Southern Gas Company's infrastructure.

The resolution, tabled by Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's lawmaker Muhammad Aamir Siddiqui, sparked unity among members, who highlighted their frustration with the ongoing gas crisis and urged the provincial government to take concrete steps to address the issue.

The MQM-P member's resolution had initially focused on Karachi's gas shortage, but was later modified to encompass the entire province of Sindh at the request of a treasury member, paving the way for unanimous passage. Presenting the resolution, he said that there was no gas in Karachi and urged the chief minister to raise the matter in the CCI.

*Treasury members support opposition's resolution against SSGC; asks govt to raise issue at CCI*

He also pointed out that the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) had given Rs14 billion to different towns municipal corporations (TMCs) in Karachi for the reconstruction of roads dug by the gas utility, but still roads could not be built.

Fully supporting the opposition members' resolution, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the gas shortage was an important issue of the entire province.

Rashid Khan of the MQM-P highlighted Hyderabad's gas woes, pointing out the irony that despite the Tando Alam gas field being nearby, the city still faced severe shortages.

Jamil Soomro of Pakistan Peoples Party criticised the federal government's gas allocation policies and said that Sindh's resources were being exploited, citing Article 158 of the Constitution, which guarantees priority supply to gas-producing regions.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Shabbir Qureshi demanded that CNG pumps be closed in the country to prioritise supply to domestic and commercial consumers.

Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro said Sindh produced 2,000 MMCFT gas but often got only 900 MMCFT. He demanded rightful share for Sindh.

The house also unanimously adopted a resolution of another opposition member, MQM-P's Farah Sohail, urging public awareness on empowering girls and women through education and skill development.

**Resolution condemning hefty traffic fines rejected**

Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah rejected the resolution of Jamaat-i-Islami member Muhammad Farooq to condemn a hefty increase in traffic violation fines through e-challan after the senior minister opposed it.

The minister said that the matter pertaining to enhanced fines was already taken up by the high court and it could not be discussed in the house.

PTI's parliamentary party leader Shabbir Qureshi withdrew his resolution seeking 14-year age relaxation for provincial government jobs.

Opposing the resolution, Labour Minister Saeed Ghani said that the provincial government had originally granted a 15-year age relaxation for government jobs, which remained in place for several years.

Giving a policy statement on the floor of the house, Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that an investigative committee comprising assembly members was being constituted to look into the tragic death of a three-year-old boy who fell and drowned in an open manhole.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 03/12/2024)

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**No gas from 10pm to 5am daily this winter: SSGC**

The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has announced that domestic consumers in Sindh will continue to face daily gas closure from 10pm to 5am during the winter season due to severe shortages.

A gas utility spokesperson said that the revised schedule was part of the load management plan approved by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC).

She said that no gas loadshedding was planned for domestic sectors in Sindh and Balochistan. However, a night-time gas closure from 10pm to 5am would be implemented to maintain line-packs for the subsequent day, she added.

According to the spokesperson, the CNG sector will bear the brunt of the shortage with weekly closures.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 04/12/2025)

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**A city's shame**

The recent death of a three-year-old boy who drowned in an open manhole in Karachi is yet another reminder of the incompetence and corruption of city managers in the country's largest urban centre. The boy was reportedly the 22nd child to die after falling into a manhole in Karachi this year alone. One death would have been a tragedy; 22 is a crime of the highest order.

While the city government is going through the same old playbook with a few officials being suspended and promises of inquiries, if they were actually serious, heads would have rolled 21 deaths ago. Instead, the government opens a blame game with nearby stores and construction companies, ignoring that its own negligence and corruption allow unscrupulous private parties to get away with wrongdoing. There is a reason why nations of laws do not need to worry about manhole cover thefts, and it is not because people there do not try — it is because the thieves are punished, and the stolen covers are quickly replaced.

In front of TV cameras, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab took responsibility for the recent incident, yet no one has suffered any real consequences. If Wahab were serious, he would have taken executive action to address the situation, or, if the bureaucracy is too powerful, he could always resign as mayor and turn to his pre-politics profession — law — to personally file a case against the government.

The government also needs to seriously look into installing plastic manhole covers wherever safely possible, as these have almost no resale value for criminals but are safe to use as long as their load rating is not exceeded. Composite manholes with higher load ratings are also available, and although they can be somewhat pricey, the long-term savings from their not being stolen would compensate for the additional financial cost, not to mention the human cost of missing manhole covers.

(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 05/12/2025)

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**Sindh Assembly calls for modernisation of Karachi's fire-fighting system**

The Sindh Assembly on Tuesday voted unanimously in favour of an opposition-sponsored resolution that called for the comprehensive modernisation of Karachi's inadequate and substandard firefighting system.

MPA Qurat-ul-Ain of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, who moved the resolution on 'private members' day', told the house that Karachi presently had only 20 fire stations, 36 fire tenders, four snorkels and roughly 700 staff.

She said that the city of over 20 million people actually needed at least 200 stations and 34,000 staff.

She pointed out that Karachi's population and the number of highrise buildings were growing, while the existing fire brigade system remained substandard and inadequate to handle any emergency.

The MPA highlighted the urgent need to upgrade equipment, improve response times and expand staffing to better protect the city's residents from fire hazards.

She said that a modern, well-equipped fire service was essential for public safety and urged the provincial government to allocate the necessary resources without delay.

She called for swift implementation of the resolution once passed.

Supporting the opposition member's resolution, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar conceded that the fire brigade in the city was in dire need of modernisation.

"All efforts will be made to improve the system," he assured the house.

The resolution noted that Karachi, as the country's largest metropolis and its financial hub, was exposed to significant fire risks because of its dense population, bustling commercial activity and a complex basic infrastructure.

It said that there was an urgent need to modernise the existing system so that emergencies arising from fire outbreaks could be responded to effectively.

"This house resolves to urge the provincial government to upgrade the firebrigade system, take immediate steps to meet international standards and strengthen its capacity to handle disasters", the resolution concluded.

The resolution was put to a vote by the chair and it was carried unanimously.

#### **Martyrs of East Pakistan remembered**

At the outset of the proceedings, the house offered fateha for the martyrs of the Army Public School Peshawar and the East Pakistan tragedy.

The house, through a resolution of an opposition member, unanimously paid a heartfelt tribute to the martyrs of the 1971 war and to the Bihari community, who fought alongside the Pakistan Army and gave their lives defending the nation.

Supporting the resolution, tabled by MQM-P's Ejaz-ul-Haq, Minister Lanjar paid tribute to the martyrs of East Pakistan.

However, Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah expunged some remarks of the MQM-P member after Pakistan Peoples Party member Ghulam Qadir Chandio said that the opposition member's speech had given an impression that only one community had made sacrifices.

#### **Resolution for empowered LG system withdrawn**

MQM-P's parliamentary party leader Taha Ahmed Khan withdrew his resolution calling for amendments to Article 140-A of the Constitution to strengthen constitutional guarantees for local governments after the law and parliamentary affairs minister assured the house that a committee would be formed to examine the issue.

A resolution, tabled by MQM-P's Syed Adil Askari, seeking establishment of a general university in Karachi was rejected with majority votes.

The house also rejected a resolution of MQM-P member Muhammad Aamir Siddiqui regarding concerns over the condition of streets and internal roads across the city.

Besides, the resolution of MQM-P Qurat-UI-Ain Khan seeking enactment of laws to prevent immorality in the society was also rejected by the house with majority vote.

Later, the house was adjourned to Friday.  
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 17/12/2025)