

January 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 22ND TO JANUARY 28 TH 2018

LOW WAGES, CHILD LABOUR, OTHER ISSUES YET TO BE RESOLVED: MINISTER

Dawn, January 26th, 2018

HYDERABAD: Sindh Minister for Labour Syed Nasir Shah has admitted that despite the fact that labourers' issues of low wages, duty timings and child labour still remain to be resolved it is only Sindh government which has formulated labourer-specific laws.

The minister said while talking to journalists at Sindh Museum on Thursday that the provincial government had established a complaint cell and helpline for workers to lodge complaints against violation of labour laws.

He said he was personally examining facilities being provided to labourers and labour unions and workers were being informed through seminars about benefits of new legislation on labour.

He said that action would be taken against the organisations and owners of industrial units which failed to implement labour laws. Benefits of labour laws must reach workers, he said.

He said that Sindh was also working on child protection rights and in this respect programmes were being organised in two schools of Karachi in collaboration with two non-governmental organisations to create awareness among students about their rights and protection. Similar programmes would be held in all schools of the province on the directives of Pakistan Peoples Party chairman, he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1385277/low-wages-child-labour-other-issues-yet-to-be-resolved-minister>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 15TH TO JANUARY 21st 2017

HEIRS OF BALDIA FACTORY FIRE VICTIMS TO GET MONTHLY PENSION

Dawn, January 16th, 2018

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: Regretting that the culprits responsible for one of the worst industrial disasters in the country were still at large, activists representing two major non-governmental organisations announced on Monday that heirs of the Baldia factory fire victims would get monthly pension as a long-term compensation from the amount paid by the Germany company for the affected families.

The press conference was jointly organised by the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) and the Pakistan Institute of Labour, Education and Research (Piler).

More than 250 workers lost their lives in the fire that engulfed Ali Enterprise, a garment manufacturing unit, in Baldia on Sept 11, 2012.

“We have been struggling to secure appropriate compensation for the heirs of Baldia fire victims since 2012. This issue is now almost resolved as a pension formula has been agreed upon with consensus and the workers’ families will start receiving monthly compensation this month,” Nasir Mansoor of the NTUF said.

The German company (KIK Textilien), which received most of the produce manufactured at Ali Enterprise, had earlier paid \$1m as immediate compensation to the families of the victim.

“The German company initially sent an amount of \$1 million for immediate relief under the agreement it signed with Piler, The amount was disbursed with the help of a judicial commission in a transparent manner,” he explained, adding that the company later sent \$5.16m as long-term compensation required under the accord.

However, Mr Mansoor said that the International Labor Organisation (ILO) had suggested a procedure of distribution which was not accepted by the affected families. An oversight committee was set up comprising representatives of the victim families, labour department, Sindh Employees Social Security Institution and labour NGOs.

“Affected families had some reservations over the pension formula, which now have been removed. The ILO has recently made this formula more effective and suggested three options for disbursing pension,” he said.

Under the formula adopted with consensus, a widow and parents of a deceased worker would get a monthly pension of Rs7,545 (in case of an unmarried victim) each.

“With one child, a widow would get Rs10,060. With two children, the amount would be Rs13,138. The pension would be distributed through the Sindh Employees Social Security Institution,” he said.

Calling the case a great victory, Karamat Ali of Piler said that this was the first instance in the world where a compensation system had been established under the ILO conventions for families whose loved ones died in a factory fire.

“We will fight for the right to pension for life and that there are no deductions in the pension amount,” he said, underscoring the need for implementing labour laws in the country, carrying out inspection of factories and creating safe working conditions.

The activists appreciated the support from local and international organisations, including Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, activists, the German government as well as the German company which took responsibility and compensated the victims, though it delayed the compensation process.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1383204/heirs-of-baldia-factory-fire-victims-to-get-monthly-pension>

PAKISTAN SEEKS HIGHER QUOTA FOR WORKERS IN SAUDI ARABIA

The Express Tribune, January 18th, 2018.

Minister for Commerce Pervaiz Malik has requested his Saudi counterpart to increase the quota for Pakistani workers in the construction and services sector in the kingdom.

He said this during the concluding session of the 11th Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) held in Islamabad from Jan 16-17 and co-chaired by Saudi Commerce Minister Dr Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi.

Talking about the Saudi government's 'Vision 2030', which is expected to create thousands of new jobs in the construction and services sector, Malik emphasised that Pakistani workers should also be accommodated.

"We suggest that the Saudi government may establish a training centre in Pakistan for the training of Pakistani manpower as per requirements of Saudi Arabia," he added.

During the meeting, the two countries agreed on a number of measures to enhance bilateral trade and cooperation, saying their existing \$2.5-billion bilateral trade volume was far below the true potential.

The two sides also discussed a preferential trade agreement (PTA), but no decision was made by the conclusion of the meeting. When asked, the Saudi minister said the proposed PTA was still under review.

Malik said, "Currently, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is around \$2.5 billion. Given the proximity and deep-rooted friendly relations between the two countries, the existing volume is far below the true potential, which needs to be enhanced by taking concrete measures.

"The measures may include mutual trade fairs and exhibitions, trade diversification to non-traditional areas, B2B meetings and reactivation of Pak-Saudi Business Council," he added.

The minister said 2.6 million Pakistani workers were playing an important role in Saudi Arabia's economy. "We hope that this is being duly recognised by the Saudi leadership and expect that Pakistani expatriates will be treated equally," the minister added.

The Saudi minister said, "We need, and are keen, to identify and explore opportunities in Pakistan. The political will and intention is there. Through dialogue we will overcome obstacles."

The Saudi delegation comprised 34 officials from 20 government entities as well as the private sector.

The two sides also agreed to expedite negotiations to finalise a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two countries' central banks.

The commission decided to reactivate Pak-Saudi Business Council by the first quarter followed by first meeting of the council. Both sides accorded approval to holding exhibitions of new products in each other's country. First single-country exhibition of Pakistan in Saudi Arabia will be held in the second half of 2018.

It was also decided to sign a bilateral draft agreement for the transfer of convicted prisoners. However, when questioned about the number of Pakistani prisoners in Saudi jails, the minister said the matter was out of his jurisdiction.

Both sides also agreed to share information and expertise in the fields of security, counter-terrorism, organised crime and money laundering.

Pakistan invited Saudi oil and gas companies to set up refineries in the country.

To a question about deferred oil payments, Malik said the matter was not discussed in the meeting. "Saudi Arabia has always been very supportive to Pakistan. We discussed the economic side of trade. Deferred oil payments were not discussed."

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1611367/2-pakistan-seeks-higher-quota-workers-saudi-arabia/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 8TH TO JANUARY 14TH 2018

POLICE TO REINVESTIGATE LABOURERS IN CASE OF MISSING CHINESE ENGINEER

Dawn, January 8th, 2018

RAWALPINDI: The police have decided to reinvestigate labourers working on the Karot Power Project in the case of a Chinese engineer who went missing last month.

The decision was made by Regional Police Officer (RPO) Mohammad Sultan Raja at a meeting on the site of the project on Saturday. The meeting was attended by the Rawalpindi city police officer, military officials, the Counter-Terrorism Department, Special Police Unit (SPU) and intelligence officials.

Pingzhi Liu, 36, went missing while working on the Karot Power Project in Kahuta on Dec 20, 2017.

Since his disappearance, several labourers associated with the project, including other Chinese nationals, have been interviewed and investigated by the police, but their efforts have proven unproductive.

In the early stages of the investigation, 11 people were detained by investigators who were later released. But police believe that they may find some information on Mr Liu if the labourers he was working with are investigated again.

A joint search operation was also initiated by military, SPU, police and intelligence personnel in the nearby Gharah Rajghan, Ghan Najar and Kanyari villages, during which 105 local residents were verified and 55 homes were searched on Friday.

In addition to Rangers and military personnel, the SPU and police have also been deployed for the project's security and that of over 650 foreigners, the majority of whom are Chinese nationals, working on the project.

A senior security official told Dawn Mr Liu's mother and nine-year-old daughter in China had been contacted by Pakistani authorities and informed of his disappearance. The family had denied that he had returned or been seen in his hometown.

Mr Liu's mobile phone, which could otherwise have helped trace his whereabouts, has also been switched off since he went missing.

The police have been investigating the disappearance on various lines, including kidnapping or the possibility that he fell in the river. But more than two weeks since the disappearance, no ransom calls have been received and sniffer dogs have not been able to lead police to any clue regarding Mr Liu.

Police said they had no reason to believe he may be in hiding or have returned to his home country out of homesickness.

Law enforcement authorities have not been able to find any information during door-to-door searches in villages neighbouring the project.

A senior police official said: "We are unable to understand where the Chinese engineer has gone."

The project in question is a China Pakistan Economic Corridor project, spread across 3,000 kanals. The residences of Chinese workers are guarded by the army, the Quick Response Force and the SPU.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1381555>

TABUK GOVERNOR ARRIVES IN DALBANDIN FOR HUNTING

Dawn, January 8th, 2018

QUETTA: Governor of Tabuk and member of the Saudi royal family Prince Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud arrived in Dalbandin, the headquarters of Chagai district, on Sunday for hunting houbara bustard. Defence Minister Khurram Dastagir and Adviser to the Balochistan chief minister on forest and wild-life Obaidullah Babit were scheduled to welcome the prince but they reached late at the airport. However, Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Admiral Nawaf Ahmad Al-Maliki, tribal elder Haji Ali Muhammad Notezai, Chagai district council's chairman Dawood Khan Notezai, deputy commissioner Shihak Baloch and other senior officials were present to welcome Mr Fahd.

Official sources said that the Tabuk governor after a brief rest met the defence minister and other officials. He later left for the area allotted to him by the federal government for hunting houbara bustard, an internationally protected migratory bird who flies from Siberia to the warmer desert areas of Balochistan, Southern Punjab, Sindh and some places in Khyber Pukhtunkhawa.

The Saudi prince would spend some time in the hunting area for which he was issued a hunting licence by the foreign ministry.

Recently, Balochistan's cabinet had barred the ministry from issuing licences to the influential Arab personalities for hunting houbara bustard without prior permission of the provincial government.

The cabinet had informed the ministry that under the 18th constitutional amendment authority to issue the licence now lay with the provincial governments.

Official sources said that the prince had his own hunting range in the Dalbandin area and comes almost every year for hunting with a big entourage.

A heavy contingent of security personnel were deployed for security of the Tabuk governor.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1381536>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1ST TO JANUARY 7TH 2018
CLOSURE OF MILLS DUE TO GAS SUSPENSION CRUNCH TIME FOR FERTILIZER UNIT
WORKERS

Dawn, January 1st, 2018
Khursheed Anwar Khan

MIANWALI: The closure of Agri Tec Fertilizer in Iskandarabad due to gas suspension has brought small-time employees and daily-wagers associated with it and their families to the brink of starvation.

The protesting workers took out a rally from the factory area to Mianwali-Bannu road and blocked traffic for a couple of hours a few days ago. The rally was also attended by a large number of people from different walks of life to show solidarity with the jobless.

Factory General Manager Rehan Munir told Dawn that he had a meeting with the SNGPL managing director last week and tried his best to convince him to restore gas supply and offered to clear all arrears as soon as factory became functional.

He said the MD had promised to present our problem in a meeting of SNGPL board of directors. But at the same time the MD repeated old offer to provide LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) at Rs 900 per MBTU against the Ogra rate of Rs 480 per MBTU.

Mr Rehan said LNG at Rs 900 increased the manufacturing cost but they could not raise price of fertilizer against the rates fixed by the federal government.

Mr Rehan said they were at loss to understand the 'double standard' of the government which was offering LNG in other provinces at the Ogra price.

He said many fertilizer units in Punjab had been closed due to this step-motherly treatment.

Mr.Rehan said the gas supplied to factory was also used for generation of electricity to feed the residential colony as well and its surrounding populace beside supply of drinking water. “Now all these areas are in dark and without water.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380062/closure-of-mills-due-to-gas-suspension-crunch-time-for-fertilizer-unit-workers>

February 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 26TH TO MARCH 4TH 2018

BILL PASSED TO REGULARISE 4,800 MORE AD HOC EMPLOYEES

Dawn, February 27th, 2018

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Monday passed a bill for the regularisation of the services of another batch of over 4,800 ad hoc and project employees with the members demanding permanent jobs for 14,500 more ad hoc employees.

These ad hoc and project employees are currently working in 58 departments, attached departments and autonomous bodies.

Earlier, the government had regularised 40,000 contractual employees, mostly teachers, through a bill passed by the assembly.

After the passage of the bill from the house, the government will issue a notification to formally regularise the services of 4,800 ad hoc and project employees.

MPAs demand permanent jobs for the remaining such govt servants

The government insists that the ad hoc and project employees, including those working on foreign-funded initiatives, were hired through the National Testing Service.

During the sitting chaired by Speaker Asad Qaisar, tourism minister Mehmood Khan moved a resolution seeking passage of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Employees (Regularisation of Services) Bill, 2018.

The opposition didn't oppose the bill.

Speaking on a point of order, Pakistan People's Party member Fakhar Azam demanded the regularisation of another batch of 14,500 ad hoc and contractual employees working in 29 departments and attached directorates.

He said the government had promised on the floor of the house the regularisation of services of all ad hoc and contract employees.

The lawmaker said if the remaining contractual employees weren't regularised, it would be injustice to them.

The chair assured him that the remaining contractual employees would be regularised very soon. He urged lawmakers to table a private member's bill in this regard and said the MPA should support the bill.

The assembly also passed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2018, meant to allow the entry of three public sector universities, including University of Lakki Marwat, University of Agriculture, Dera Ismail Khan, and University of Engineering and Technology, Mardan.

A private member's bill, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Censorship of Motion Pictures (Film, CDs, Videos, Stage Dramas and Shows Bill, 2018, was also passed by members after PPP MPA Fakhar Azam withdrew four of his five proposed amendments to it.

His one amendment to Clause 2 of the bill was incorporated.

The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's flagship Billion Tree Tsunami project once again came under fire in the house with the opposition seeking the chair's ruling to ask the National Accountability Bureau or KP Ehtesab Commission to hold inquiry into the project.

MPA Ziaullah Afridi, who has been expelled by the PTI, raised the issue on a point of order. The lawmaker pointed out that the project director had written letter to a local journalist asking him to provide 10 million saplings of various species at the rate of Rs5 and Rs2.

He said the government was trying to pressure journalists to hide its corruption in the project.

Opposition leader Maulana Lutfur Rehman, MPA Syed Jafar Shah and other opposition members supported the movers and demanded inquiry by the NAB or KPEC into the matter.

Higher education minister Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani and parliamentary secretary for environment Fazal Elahi rejected the opposition's allegations.

The opposition members also opposed the merger of the Benazir Children Hospital with the Mardan Medical Complex and demanded of the government to review the decision.

Health minister Shahram Khan Tarakai disagreed with the opposition's demand.

By passing a joint resolution, the assembly asked the federal government to use diplomatic channels to ensure ceasefire in Syria to stop the killings of children, women and other civilians.

It also approved a resolution demanding of the federal government not to reduce the number of provincial assembly seats in Abbottabad, Chitral, Haripur, Charsadda and Swabi districts.

The resolution said the number of PA seats of the respective districts had been reduced in light of the 2017 census report.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392039/bill-passed-to-regularise-4800-more-ad-hoc-employees>

CURBING ABUSE: CHILD LABOUR TASK FORCE TO ASSESS IMPACT OF LAWS

The Express Tribune, February 28th, 2018.

ISLAMABAD: A task force on child labour in the capital resolved Tuesday to initiate a system to assess the impact of prevailing laws on child labour in the city and to identify any flaws in them to devise policy and legal reforms.

National Commissioner for Children organised a meeting of the Task Force on Child Labour on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Federal Ombudsman's Secretary Asghar Chaudhry emphasised the need for evidence-based policy and legal reforms for protecting children, especially those younger, from employment.

The meeting discussed major issues on child labour and possible actions which could be taken for the rehabilitation of children forced to do labour in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). It further discussed current laws and ways to initiate an official policy and legal reforms in ICT for the future.

Participants stated that the child rights in Pakistan are violated in a number of ways such as the non-existence of laws prohibiting employment of children as domestic servants, trafficking children — domestically and internationally, their sexual exploitation, absence of an appropriate mechanism to prevent child beggary, bonded labour, use of children in smuggling and selling of drugs and corporal punishments of children.

These issues can be addressed in a systematic manner involving policy and legal reforms as well as practical steps which need to be taken for the rehabilitation of children involved in child labour.

The participants urged MNA Asiya Nasir, head of the parliamentary task force, to look into the overall issues and take practical measures for the elimination of child labour.

During the meeting, it was unanimously decided that affirmative actions need to be taken for the rehabilitation of the children involved in child labour in collaboration with the local authorities and UNICEF as well as law enforcement agencies, wherever required.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1646582/1-curbing-abuse-child-labour-task-force-assess-impact-laws/>

MOOT CALLS FOR ELIMINATION OF BONDED LABOUR

Dawn, March 2nd, 2018

HYDERABAD: Speakers at a consultation programme on Thursday called for effective and meaningful measures to eliminate bonded labour, rehabilitate liberated workers and stop the new wave of ‘bonded labourers’ triggered by occupation of sweet water lakes in Sindh.

Despite passage of 26 years, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992, had not been implemented in letter and spirit, they said at the programme titled ‘Abolition of bonded labour: state and issues of bonded labour in Sindh’ organised by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) task force Hyderabad at a local hotel here.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum chairperson Mohammad Ali Shah said the illegal possession of sweet water lakes had rendered several hundreds of fishermen unemployed who were now falling prey to bonded labour.

Purbhu Satyani of Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research said the European Union was considering GSP+ accord with Pakistan, which required the country to implement human rights as ordained in international treaties, conventions and covenants like the International Labour Organisation’s declaration of principles that prohibited forced labour.

Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child regional head Kashif Bajeer said the federal and provincial governments, political parties and civil society organisations ought to work together to eliminate the menace of bonded labour.

Rights activist Zulfiqar Halepoto said the political parties could not be unaware of the exploitation of workers, trapped in various forms of bondage, in agriculture, in brick-kiln industry, in carpet weaving factories and in mines.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392553/moot-calls-for-elimination-of-bonded-labour>

TAKING THE LEAD

Dawn, March 3rd, 2018

Parvez Rahim

FOLLOWING a tripartite labour conference in December 2017, the Sindh government has again taken the lead by announcing its labour policy — the first from a province since the 18th Amendment was enacted. Prior to this, it had enacted 13 key labour laws, starting with the Sindh Industrial Relations Act, 2013.

Taking a deep interest in an area that also involves the noble cause of labour welfare is commendable. However, the changes should not deter local businessmen and foreign investors from setting up industrial and commercial enterprises within Sindh. In pursuance of the labour policy, the edifice will be built upon existing labour laws that have already seen drastic amendments recently.

It will, therefore, be necessary to first modify those provisions that are causing difficulties in implementation. The Employers’ Federation of Pakistan has carried out the laborious task of identifying 50 structural flaws, comprising errors, omissions and anomalies in the newly legislated labour laws.

Besides rectifying these, the Sindh government also has to amend those provisions that are creating hindrances for employers to smoothly run their businesses.

Sindh's new labour policy is highly ambitious.

For instance, under section 79(2) of the Sindh Factories Act, 2015, the conversion of sick leave from 16 days at half pay to 16 days at full pay per year has boosted workers' absenteeism. Either the amended provision should be restored, or sick leave should be brought down to eight days at full pay per year. Similarly, the reduction in maximum limit of overtime work from 624 to 150 hours in a year under proviso to Section 8 of the Sindh Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 2015, is causing compliance issues for employers. This limit should be increased to 1,000 hours a year, to allow flexibility in scheduling employees vis-à-vis overtime work, the payment of which is made at double the rate of the employees' gross salary.

The Sindh Labour Policy, 2018, is highly ambitious, but this is fine given it at least recognises those areas that need to be attended to, and sets up challenging standards for employers, workers and the government. Some salient points of the policy are as follows.

First, the long standing need of consolidation and simplification of the existing 162 labour laws and rules will be fulfilled by amalgamating them into these six groups: (a) terms and conditions of employment, (b) wages, (c) occupational safety and health and working conditions, (d) industrial relations, (e) employment welfare and social protection, and (f) training and human resource development. This is an onerous task and may not be completed until the forthcoming general election. I hope that the succeeding government also realises its importance.

Second is the introduction of uniform definitions for terms such as 'worker', 'employer', 'wages', 'establishment' under all the provincial laws. What Sindh may have in mind is to bring all management and non-management staff within the scope of 'worker'. This has already been done in the definition of 'worker' under the Sindh Terms of Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 2015.

This is a sensitive issue with employers, especially in progressive organisations that promote healthy trade unionism and maintain a competitive package of salaries and perquisites for their management employees. Such a definition will not only jeopardise their organisational structure but will also hamper trade unionism. If the dividing line between unionised and management employees is obliterated under the Sindh Industrial Relations Act, 2013, then everyone, including companies' general managers, will have the right to become union members.

Third, the policy mentions that wages will be linked to performance and productivity. This is easier said than done and may give rise to bickering disputes. There is no denying that all employees of an organisation should strive to improve both the quality and quantity of their products. Ensuring compliance with the code of conduct and fulfilling job requirements will help achieve production targets. In the fully automated industries of the future, improvement in productivity will not be within the control of individual employees.

Fourth, it is mentioned that social security and EOBI will be made universal. Since the proposal has emanated from the Sindh government, it should take the initiative on this account by annulling the Sindh Employees Old-Age Benefits Act, 2014, which is still inoperative, and persuade the centre to make a constitutional provision to grant legal status to the existing federal law. This will help remove the current difficulties of EOBI's sustainability and pave the way for its universal application. Since social security is a provincial law, cooperation from the other provinces is needed to make it universal.

Essentially, enforcing laws based on Sindh's first labour policy will involve huge funds. Will these be viable for the province's existing industrial organisations?

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392877/taking-the-lead>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 19TH TO FEBRUARY 25TH 2018
PUNJAB GOVT ALLOCATES RS5BN FOR ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOUR
Business Recorder, 29 February 2018

LAHORE: Government of the Punjab has launched a comprehensive programme by allocating more than Rs5 billion which is aimed to eradicate the curse of child labour.

Under this program non-formal and formal education & professional skills would be provided to the children involved in child labour.

This was stated by various speakers during a seminar organised by Labour Welfare Department held at District Council hall, here on Monday.

The seminar was chaired by Additional Secretary Dr Sohail Shehzad, Additional secretary Labour & HRD, Government of the Punjab.

Dr Sohail Shehzad said that Chief Minister Punjab attaches special significance to completely wipe out the scourge of Child Labour which is depriving of children the opportunity to attain formal education & professional skills which is vital to establish a vibrant & productive human resource base.

The meeting was briefed that Punjab Government has launched a project under WFCL amounting to Rs180 million in four districts of Punjab which include Layyah, Jhang, Chakwal and Jehlum. Similarly at two districts of the Punjab province, Kasur and Lahore, another project amounting to Rs123 million is also under way which would extend education skills & provide soft loans to the labourers working at brick kilns.

The meeting was also briefed about another Rs190 million project that is under progress in four districts of the province which include Faisalabad, Bahawalpur, Sargodha and Gujrat. This programme is aimed to eradicate child labour and to provide Health & Education cover to the children.

The seminar was addressed by Director Labour Welfare Basharat Ali, Assistant Director Labour Zubair Hassan Rajput and Zeeshan Mustafa. During the seminar a detail briefing was also held pertaining to education supplies, monitoring check list & process of payment to partner schools.

Later, an awareness walk was also held which started from District Council hall.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/02/20/2-page/700780-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 12TH TO FEBRUARY 18TH 2018

UNSHACKLING LABOUR

The Express Tribune, February 12th, 2018.

The launching of the first-ever labour policy of Sindh is an important step towards building a framework of industrial relations around the social and economic aspirations of the province. The Sindh government sees the policy as the fulfillment of tripartite aims given that it has the ‘unanimous’ support of three major stakeholders – workers, employers and government.

However, only living proof of joint cooperation among these stakeholders will determine whether the policy is successful or not. The provincial government is already touting it as a landmark achievement and inviting other provinces to follow Sindh’s lead.

Gender parity is one of the goals of the policy – which covers the agriculture sector, home-based workers and those in other sectors – and we hope the government is able to enforce it in letter and spirit. This involves creating a favourable social environment for women in the workplace that is free from harassment and guaranteeing equal pay for women. The 45-point labour document has more lofty but tough objectives: it wants to eradicate child labour and bonded labour altogether.

To achieve this, however, the government has to firm up its own resolve and encourage different sectors to adopt necessary amendments in the policy to ensure the laws enshrined in it are passed by the provincial legislature. It would really help if the Sindh government can carry out a child labour headcount and coerce them into educational institutions after disengaging them from their work environments.

There is an urgent need to develop a system for training skilled labour, creating more jobs in the private and public sectors in urban and rural areas as well as establishing industrial support centres to promote industries in rural areas. What is central to the whole effort is bringing suitable amendments in the existing labour laws and empowering workers by establishing industrywide trade unionism.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1632522/6-unshackling-labour/>

LABOUR JUDGEMENT

Dawn, February 15, 2018

Parvez Rahim

A SUPREME Court judgement dated Dec 8, 2017 has caused a stir among employers. A three-judge bench headed by the chief justice has directed the appellant company (ie Pakistan State Oil) to regularise the services of the respondent workers employed by various contractors — 210 in number. Consequently, henceforth they will be PSO employees.

Over the last five years, this is the second Supreme Court judgement to raise employers' concerns about how to have their non-core jobs performed through outsourcing without any legal repercussions. In a previous judgement in 2013, another three-judge bench had confirmed the status of 112 workers of the bagging and loading area as employees of Fauji Fertiliser Company (FFC) and not of the contractor.

Lessons learnt from the latter judgement strengthened the belief that the contractors' employees will not be considered as employees of the company if (a) they are under the control and management of the contractor and not that of the company; (b) they are not on the payroll of the company and management is not even aware of the number of workers employed by the contractor or of the terms and conditions of their appointment and service; and (c) the contractor has the power to hire and fire employees; he assigns work to them instead of the company doing so.

It's time to regularise the services of contractual workers.

The recent judgement was passed on an appeal by PSO against the detailed judgement of a two-judge bench of the Sindh High Court in June 2017. Referring to various judgements of the Supreme Court, the Sindh High Court had directed the CEO of PSO to consider the case of petitioners for regularising their services. The FCC judgement of was also quoted by the Sindh High Court in its support.

In the 2013 case, the Supreme Court mentioned several reasons for regularising the services of the FFC's 112 workers eg the authority to hire and fire including settlement of wages and benefits of the contractor's workers rested with the company; their work was supervised, controlled and looked after by the FFC in-charge of the bagging department and his subordinate staff/supervisors; these workers had been continuously employed by the company for a long time; they were also responsible for cleaning the machines and floors.

The Sindh High Court accepted the petitioners' plea that they had been regularly working against jobs of a permanent nature in PSO as far back as 1984.

They were eligible to be regularised under the office memorandum dated Aug 29, 2008, issued by the government. Since PSO had contended that petitioners regularised by the Sindh High Court were the contractors' employees, the Supreme Court, confirming their regularisation, averred: "As regards the question that the respondents were not the employees of the petitioner (PSO) but the contractor, suffice it to say that it is a normal practice on behalf of such industries to create a pretence and on that pretence to outsource the employment of the posts which are permanent in nature and it is on the record that the respondents have been in service starting from as far back as 1984."

A scare has been created among the employers, who think that they cannot contract out any jobs after this judgement. The employers should remember that labour laws here recognise and contain provisions regarding the contractors' establishments. However, the contracting out should only be confined to a

company's non-core jobs and the relationship of contractors and his employees should be governed and guided by the principles.

Employers engaging contractors to carry out assigned services is not exclusive to Pakistan; it is a worldwide phenomenon and quite common in developed countries. Even in China and the US, the number of workers hired by contractors to perform jobs for the principal employers is more than regular employees.

Their reasons for preferring to outsource are similar to those in Pakistan — better control over the cost of production leading to economy, ease of recruitment and replacement, lesser absenteeism among contractors' workers and flexibility in placement.

In view of the judgements in this domain by the superior courts from time to time, it is recommended that the provincial governments frame legislation to regularise such employment practices. India did so almost half a century ago when it promulgated the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970.

Under this act, a contractor is not allowed to operate unless he has been issued a licence to that effect by the government. Besides, he has to ensure the provision of all those benefits and facilities to his employees as mentioned in the act.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389432/labour-judgement>

MINIMUM WAGE: K-P TAKES ACTION AGAINST 252 INDUSTRIAL UNITS

The Express Tribune, February 17th, 2018.

In the first declaration of action taken against owners of industrial units for failing to pay workers through scheduled banks, the provincial government on Friday claimed that it has taken as many as 252 factories to task.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) government said that the labour department has filed cases against the owners and managers of these 252 industrial units and filed challans in different labour courts.

Moreover, it said that 133 cases were registered against industrial units in Peshawar, 55 in Mardan and 18 in Swat district.

Labour Department Secretary Khayam Khan, in a news conference, had directed owners of the factories to pay their workers the minimum wage of Rs15,000 through banks so that their treatment of labour could be monitored.

Khayam said that industrial units across the province had been told to comply with the laws by the end of January or face action.

“We have examined a total of 650 factories in the province and found that 252 were not complying with the order while 34 factories have been closed since November,” the labour department secretary said.

A total of 364 factories were found providing salaries through banks.

The labour department's actions come after K-P Chief Secretary Muhammad Azam Khan, after consulting the representatives of the industrial associations, had directed that the minimum wage policy of the government must be implemented in the province and had tasked the labour department to ensure that labourers are paid at least the minimum through scheduled banks instead of cash.

In late December 2017, the K-P labour department had directed all industrial units operating the province to pay workers through scheduled banks. The move was to help the government ensure that different technical and non-technical workers are provided at least the minimum wage of Rs15,000 — as per the government policy. At the time, a labour department survey had found that 306 industrial units were not complying with the directives, a number which had fallen by at least a sixth in the past two months.

Currently, the laws stipulate a Rs5,000 fine for failing to pay workers through banks. However, the government is trying to amend the law to up that fine to Rs50,000.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1637103/1-minimum-wage-k-p-takes-action-252-industrial-units/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 5TH TO FEBRUARY 11TH 2018

FOUR NEW LAWS TO CURB CHILD LABOUR IN THE OFFING

Business Recorder, 5 February 2018

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration is in process of codifying four new labour laws to eliminate child labour from workshops, small road-side hotels and specific houses.

These laws are being codified with assistance of International Labour Organization (ILO), Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.

The laws include Employment and Services Condition Act, Occupational Safety & Health Act, Trade Union Registration & Industrial Relations Act and Workers Social Security, Welfare & Compensation Act.

Official sources on Sunday said draft of two laws i.e. Employment & Services Conditions Act and Occupational Safety & Health Act have been approved in Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and same are under consideration with Ministry of Interior for onwards submission to National Assembly for legislation.

The sources said a separate court has also been constituted in ICT administration for speedy trial of labour Challan while a Vigilance Committee is also working under supervision of Deputy Commissioner, Islamabad to protect child labour on brick kilns.

Moreover, four (04) teams i.e. one Labour Officer and three Labour Inspectors of Labour Welfare Department, Islamabad have been constituted for inspection under various labour laws including child labour.

They regularly visit their respective areas and prompt action is taken against the violators.

Replying to a question, the sources said existing law does not cover domestic worker. Therefore, ICT Administration cannot inspect children working in houses. However, four separate bills have been placed before the Parliament on Child Protection & Domestic Workers.—APP

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/02/05/3-page/950676-news.html>

‘PROVINCES NEED TO FORMULATE INCLUSIVE LABOUR POLICIES’

Dawn, February 8th, 2018

Asma Kundi

ISLAMABAD: The process of formulating inclusive and gender-sensitive labour policies needs to be expedited to increase the participation of women in the labour force, speakers said at a seminar on Wednesday.

They noted that several years after devolution, provinces still do not have comprehensive labour policies, and called for political engagement to bridge the legislative gap at the provincial level and help legislatures draft bills in this regard.

The seminar, titled ‘Women’s Labor Market Participation and Childcare: Reforms for Labor Market Policy Effectiveness’, was organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

SDPI Joint Executive Director Dr Vaqar Ahmed said that Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh have yet to draft their respective labour policies.

“After the 18th constitutional amendment, it is now the responsibility of provincial governments to formulate and implement inclusive labour policies,” he said.

He added that provincial governments also need to ensure their compliance with labour rights laws as per the requirements of the GSP Plus facility provided by the European Union for duty-free exports to European countries.

Dr Ahmed said that the global gender gap index in 2017 placed Pakistan at 143 out of 144 countries, which calls for immediate action to formulate gender-sensitive labour policies to increase the participation of women.

While giving a presentation of the seminar topic, H. Elizabeth Peters, an institute fellow at the Urban Institute Centre on Labour, Human Services and Population, said there is no paid parental leave for mothers in the United States, which has resulted in a significant reduction in household income for families, particularly single mothers living alone.

She said childcare support and benefits were not too promising; childcare costs have increased over the last few years, becoming unaffordable for working parents.

Ms Peters suggested increasing access to paid leave, increasing the participation of fathers, the right duration of leave and daycare facilitation to help increase the number of women in the workforce.

Samar Hassan, a social entrepreneur, said: “A more responsive policy intervention at national and sub-national levels can improve the outcomes and quality of life of children and families, besides improving the productivity of women workforce in wages and self-employment.”

SDPI Project Coordinator Ahad Nazir said only 1pc of women have been reported as entrepreneurs in the World Bank Group’s Pakistan Development Update – Fall 2017. He said major challenges for women entrepreneurs include conflict between work and family, and financial insecurity.

He said these challenges could be addressed through effective and operational single windows at federal and provincial public interaction offices, the incentivised inclusion of women entrepreneurs in public procurement and the promotion of shared responsibilities of care.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1388077/provinces-need-to-formulate-inclusive-labour-policies>

CITY ENTREPRENEURS REJECT DRAFT LABOUR POLICY

Dawn, February 8th, 2018

Parvaiz Ishfaq Rana

KARACHI: Rejecting a proposed labour policy of the Sindh government, the city’s business and industrial community said on Wednesday that the “one-sided” document was prepared without taking all stakeholders on board.

Leaders of all major trade bodies and industrial estates unanimously rejected the recommendations of the first Sindh tripartite labour conference and the contents of the draft Sindh labour policy.

They said that since Karachi held 80 per cent share of Sindh’s total industry and also generated around 90pc revenue for the province, it was imperative that the city’s business community was taken on board in the consultative process of the labour policy.

These leaders belonging to a wide segment of trade and industry of the city rejected the idea of enhancing minimum wages up to Rs25,000 per month.

They strongly felt that instead of increasing the wages the government should have formulated a strategy to control the prices of consumer goods.

They argued that wages in Pakistan were already high as compared to regional competing countries.

In 2014, the minimum wage for an unskilled worker was Rs11,000 per month, with exchange rate at Rs101 per dollar and consumer price index (CPI) inflation was 8.62pc. Thereafter, in 2014 to 2017 the dollar exchange rate increased by 9pc from Rs101 to Rs110.55, whereas annual percentage changes in CPI inflation showed a huge decline.

In 2016-17, the dollar exchange rate increased by 9pc and CPI is reduced to 4.16pc but the minimum wage was increased by 36pc from Rs11,000 to Rs15,000 per month.

Therefore, the industry and business leaders said if minimum rate of wages for unskilled workers would be increased by 9pc as per increased exchange rate of dollar from 2014-17 even then the current minimum wage should be Rs12,000 per month.

They added that current minimum wage per month in Bangladesh is \$68, in India \$115, while in Pakistan it is \$135 per month. This meant the minimum wage in Pakistan was 98 per cent higher than Bangladesh and 17pc higher than India.

The leaders demanded that the first draft Sindh labour policy be finalised after holding broad-based consultations and discussions of industrial town associations and value-added export associations.

They also called upon the authorities to finalise the policy in the light of what the competing countries in the region had.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1387984/city-entrepreneurs-reject-draft-labour-policy>

LAWMAKERS APPEAR UNINTERESTED IN CHILD LABOUR ISSUE

Dawn, February 9th, 2018

Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of a Senate select committee called to discuss a bill against child labour was postponed due to lack of quorum on Thursday.

Other than the chairman, only three of the 24 members of the committee attended the meeting. Chairman Mir Kabeer Ahmed Shahi, senators Rehman Malik, Pervaiz Rasheed and Sehar Kamran waited for the other members for over 40 minutes.

Secretary Committee Javed Iqbal pointed out that the quorum was only complete if five parliamentarians each from the government and opposition were attending.

It was, therefore, decided to postpone the meeting.

“It is unfortunate that the parliamentarians did not bother to attend a meeting on such an important issue. The committee room should have been full but we could not even meet the quorum. I will take up the matter with Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani to ensure the availability of the senators because otherwise we will never have five senators each from the government and opposition here,” Senator Shahi said.

He asked the committee staff if Senator Rabbani was in his office, and when they said he was, Mr Shahi decided to go and meet him.

“I will request Mr Rabbani to play his role in ensuring the attendance of senators in the meeting because such an important bill should be passed before the next elections of the upper house,” he told Dawn.

The meeting of the select committee was called to consider a bill titled ‘The Islamabad Restriction on Employment of Children 2017’. There are 25 members of the committee, including the chairman.

Senator Kamran said she had been pursuing the issue for two years, especially after the incident of a 10-year-old maid who was allegedly tortured in the house of a serving judge.

The senator said she had been trying to ensure that children were protected from all kinds of abuse.

“Many parents cannot afford to give their children education and they make them work and help with household expenses. Child labour is banned in the country but the laws in this regard cannot be implemented. I suggest that every child should be registered with the government and the rules of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) be followed,” she said.

Senator Kamran said the bill guarantees that every child will get education and so they will be saved from child labour. She said child labour, in many cases, leads to the sexual abuse.

“According to some estimates, about 12.4 million children in Pakistan work. We have to make this country child labour free. According to the ILO, in developing countries, children up to 14 years of age are considered children while those below 15 are considered children in developed countries,” she said.

Expressing concern regarding the absence of senators in the meeting, she said that even the chief justice has given an observation that parliamentarians should focus on legislation.

Senator Rehman Malik said child labour was banned in Pakistan but the challenge was the implementation of the law.

“A bill regarding child rights has been passed by the National Assembly which has been clubbed with the bill being discussed in Senate and has been presented before the select committee for consensus. This is a very important bill as it ensures giving children their rights,” he said.

“A large number of children work in coal mines and factories where their health is also at risk. The upper house has done a number of legislations but it is regrettable that today only three of the 24 members of the committee were present,” he said. Senator Shahi suggested that the media bring up the matter of senators not attending the meeting as this is how they will start participating.

“I will also take the matter up with Senator Rabbani to ensure the presence of the members,” he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1388270>

GOVT UNVEILS FIRST SINDH LABOUR POLICY 2018

Dawn, February 11th, 2018

Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI: The Sindh government on Saturday unveiled its first labour policy and termed it “a framework of industrial relations, social and economic well-being of the people of the province”.

The government said the Sindh Labour Policy 2018 was formed after duly consulting all stakeholders involved.

Speaking at the event to launch the policy, Labour Minister Nasir Shah said: “This is the first tripartite labour policy which has unanimously been approved by the government, workers and employers; they have agreed on the need of working through joint cooperation.”

He said that the Pakistan Peoples Party always worked for the betterment of the poor of the country. Senior Sindh Minister Nisar Khuhro, who is also the provincial president of the ruling PPP, was also present.

Mr Khuhro said Feb 10 had historical significance as it was the day when the first-ever labour policy in the country was implemented by former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972, which could not continue due to his ouster by military dictator Gen Ziaul Haq.

He said since Sindh was the country’s industrial hub, it needed a labour policy which should also be industry friendly.

“We hope other provinces will follow suit,” said Minister Shah, who also holds the portfolio of information.

He said the policy would also cover workers in agriculture, home-based and other sectors and ensure complete gender parity.

Mr Khuhro said all the stakeholders should help the government to make necessary amendments in the policy to ensure the laws enshrined in it are passed by the provincial legislature in the coming weeks. Ingrid Christensen, the country director of the International Labour Organisation, called the formulation of the policy a huge achievement, saying it should also be followed by other provinces. She praised the government’s efforts and said her organisation would be there to make it a success.

Representatives from workers and employers including Karamat Ali, Habibuddin Junaidi, Majyd Aziz, Siraj Kassam Teli and others also spoke.

According to the policy guidelines of the new labour policy, a system would be developed in collaboration with employers to train skilled labour force; special measures would be taken to create more employment opportunities in the private sector in rural and urban areas; industrial support centres would

be established to set up industries in the rural areas for the unemployed labour force and to support the rural economy; favourable social environment free from harassment at workplace with 'guaranteed' equal remuneration to women.

It said the Sindh government would collect 'actual data' of child labour to streamline those children into schools and their disengagement from work with economic assistance.

It promised that workers' rights to form and join unions would be provided; amendments would be made in the existing labour laws to establish industry-wide trade unionism; and labour laws would be consistent with international conventions and recommendations duly ratified and accepted by the Sindh government.

Besides, contract labour system would be regulated in the light of existing labour laws and in line with the orders of the superior courts.

It said a Sindh home-based workers board would be established to monitor the rights and duties of home-based workers and to collect the data of those workers.

Besides, comprehensive legislation would be made for farm workers to ensure freedom of association and create an atmosphere of recognition of their rights by landlords; and employment laws would be legislated and institutions as per requirement should be established for agriculture workers.

Social security and old-age pension benefit would be enhanced to every industrial and commercial worker; these benefits would also be provided to agriculture, mining and home-based workers. Social security and EOBI would be made universal.

Apart from making radical changes to ensure such benefits and compensation to dependents, along with parents, of workers, the new policy's guidelines say minimum wages will be replaced with 'real wages' for which a Minimum Wages Council will be established to determine minimum wages for skilled and unskilled workers.

The decision of labour court and labour appellate tribunal would be made within 60 days; and labour welfare scheme would be extended to ensure distribution of five per cent to all workers under the Workers Participation Act.

The Sindh government would launch a survey of the workers in informal sectors and legislate terms and conditions for them; online registration of all workers, industries, shops and establishments would be made.

The labour policy was called 'investment friendly' which would facilitate industrialists for boosting economic activities in the province to attract local and international investors.

Tripartite committees will be established in all industrial zones to address the grievances of workers; facilitation desks would be established in the offices of the Sindh Employees Social Security Institution's

commissioner, directorate of labour, workers welfare board secretary and assistant commissioner-mines, labour welfare organisation to facilitate industrialists and redress the grievances of workers.

The policy also claimed to ensure a ‘complete eradication’ of child labour and bonded labour from Sindh.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1388589/govt-unveils-first-sindh-labour-policy-2018>

March 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 26TH TO MARCH 31ST 2018

THE CURSE OF UNPAID WAGES

The Express Tribune, March 27th, 2018.

There is a national malaise that runs across the public and private sectors and is a significant brake on productivity and morale. It is the non-payment of wages to those that have delivered a service. It has been going on for decades and is often accompanied by prolonged sit-ins and strikes by those affected — many of whom are women — and nothing seemingly makes sufficient impact to, in any way, change this pernicious culture.

The latest protest to gain headlines is by daily-wage teachers, the majority of them women, who have not been paid for 10 months and are now threatening to commit suicide along with their children in front of the apex court. There is about 1,800 teaching and non-teaching staff of public schools and colleges in Islamabad who have been protesting to no satisfactory conclusion.

It is the government that owes them the money despite there being no shortage of funds in the education budget. Some 400 teachers are awaiting regularisation; their appointments have been approved by the federal cabinet, but they have not been allowed to join their postings.

Arrogance, contempt and corrupt greed underpin the non-payment of wages. Money which is unspent from the education budget is sitting in a bank account somewhere accruing interest that will be siphoned off periodically into the pockets of the provincial money managers, and is most unlikely to be recycled back into the parent budget.

Declarations of an ‘education emergency’ and a determination to address urgent educational needs across the land ring hollow in the face of incidents such as this. Pakistan needs tens of thousands of teachers, teachers who are paid in a timely manner, receive in-service training and educate a generation that is in desperate need if it is ever to find a place in a rapidly-evolving workplace. The prospect — and the possibility of it actually happening cannot be discounted — is truly horrific. Pay these people before they succumb to desperation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1669814/6-curse-unpaid-wages/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 19TH TO MARCH 25TH 2018
TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE TO SUGGEST AMENDMENTS TO LABOUR LAWS
Dawn, March 20th, 2018

Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI: The tripartite standing committee met on Monday and held a thorough discussion on the existing labour laws. It decided that it would finalise its recommendations for amendment to the laws in a week to bring them in conformity with the Sindh Labour Policy recently announced by the provincial government, officials said.

With Nasir Hussain Shah, minister for labour, transport and information, in the chair, the meeting resolved that the amended laws would be more worker-friendly.

“The leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party always focuses on the working class. It is one of our party’s top priorities to enhance workers’ prestige in society and work for their welfare,” said Mr Shah while addressing the meeting held at the committee room of the secretary labour’s office.

He said the Sindh government should be credited for taking the three important stakeholders of the labour sector — labour organisations, employers’ bodies and officials in the key departments of the provincial government — on board to carry out an important activity of editing the existing labour laws through amendments and improvements.

‘New laws to be more worker-friendly’

The meeting reviewed various laws in which the participants were informed that the recommendations were in the final stage.

Mr Shah said once the recommendations were finalised in a week, they would be sent to the Sindh cabinet for its nod before being formally passed by the provincial legislature and promulgated.

“By implementing the new amended and improved laws, working conditions will improve and industrial sector at large will prosper, thus, Sindh will be in the black,” said the minister.

He said the PPP chief, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, eagerly wanted to finalise the improved labour laws and their implementation in the province.

“Thus, our committee is required to compile its recommendations in the coming seven days,” he said.

He added the legal experts should be involved in the process to examine the final recommendations so that they would be flawless when they were put before the higher forums.

For this, said the minister, the provincial government was ready to provide legal experts and advisers to the tripartite standing committee.

Labour secretary Rasheed Solangi gave details vis-à-vis proceedings of the previous sittings of the committee.

Habibuddin Junaidi of the Peoples Labour Bureau said the tripartite committee's efforts were laudable. He said the number of workers registered with the government-run Workers Welfare Board, Sindh Employees Social Security Institution and Employees Old-age Benefit Institution (EOBI) was much smaller than their actual numbers.

He said most factories and offices were not paying their workers the minimum wage of Rs15,000 as fixed by the government.

“Workers are being forced to work for 12 to 16 hours in various organisations, yet, they are not being paid the minimum wages as fixed by the government,” said Mr Junaidi.

The minister said the laws were being amended keeping all those issues in mind and for the welfare of workers. The new labour laws would open up the doors of prosperity for workers and employers alike.

Representatives of various organisations of industrialists and workers attended the meeting and chipped in with their inputs for final recommendations, officials said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396296/tripartite-committee-to-suggest-amendments-to-labour-laws>

BONDED LABOURERS, CHILDREN SET FREE

Dawn, March 20th, 2018

NAWABSHAH: The court of second additional sessions judge Ms Zahida Sikander on Monday set at liberty 16 bonded labourers, including men and women, and their 14 children who were recovered from a farm near Daulatpur.

Police raided the farmland of landlord Ghulam Mohammad on the court's directive which received an application from one Mir Khan Lashari, a labourer, seeking recovery of his family members.

The freed labourers belonged to Lashari community who had come to work at the farmland from Allah Dino Lashari village in Tando Mohammad Khan district.

They had been working on the farmland for the last eight months during which the landlord never allowed them to visit their home nor gave them money in case of illness, said Mr Lashari.

Police sources said the labourers did not appear to be captives as they were sitting in fields near Malwah branch at the time of the raid.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396279>

BABAR VOICES CONCERN OVER IMPOSING CHINESE LABOUR LAWS

Business Recorder, 21 March 2018

Naveed Butt

ISLAMABAD: General Secretary Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Farhatullah Babar has expressed serious concern over imposing Chinese labour laws on the workers, who are involved in development projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

While talking to this correspondent on Tuesday, Babar said that labour unions and other organizations of human rights of the country have shown their serious concern and resentment over imposition of Chinese labour laws in Pakistan.

He said that he read on social media that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government is preparing a draft on legislation for giving rights to foreigners for purchasing land in Pakistan. He said that the PML-N is going to do this legislation especially for the Chinese to purchase land in Gwadar.

He said labour bodies have been demanding that the rights of the local labourers in CPEC projects should not be compromised but there has been no assurance from the government in this regard. The freedom and fundamental rights of labour force should not be sacrificed for the jobs doled out to them, he said.

He said that there is a need for transparency in the all infrastructure projects under the CPEC and the public should know what the government is signing up on behalf of the work force of the country.

Earlier, while speaking during a discussion on 'Business and Human Rights' at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Babar also proposed a catalogue of workers in the informal sector like domestic workers and child labour to address issues of minimum wage and poor working conditions.

He said that business houses should be required to publish mechanism for reporting human rights violations and on how these will be addressed. He said that presently permission to undertake large projects is linked to its impact on the environment. He said that the same principle needs to be extended to the impact of a project on the human rights on workers before permission is accorded.

He said that Pakistan had signed and ratified Convention Against Torture (CAT) in 2010 and it is now obligatory to adopt domestic legislation to criminalize torture. He said that the Senate has already unanimously passed legislation criminalizing torture which has been sent to the joint session to get it passed by the National Assembly within stipulated period.

He called for early convening of joint session to pass the anti-torture legislation.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/21/3-page/706024-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 4TH TO MARCH 11TH 2018
SENATE BODY SKIPS DISCUSSION ON ANTI-CHILD LABOUR BILL
Kashif Abbasi

Dawn, March 09, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The chairman of the Senate select committee on Thursday expressed displeasure over the lack of interest among the members in discussing the Islamabad Restriction on Employment of Children Bill as 25 out of its 27 members remained absent from its meeting.

The meeting of the committee was slated to be held at Parliament House to discuss the bill moved by Senator Sehar Kamran of the PPP. However, except the chairman Mir Kabeer Ahmed Mohammad Shahi and member Senator Sassui Palijo, the other members did not turn up.

“The country has been facing several issues related to child labour, this is highly important bill but unfortunately members showed no interest in it,” the chairman said, adding the bill could not be passed even after three meetings.

The mover of the bill is going to retire this month after completing her six-year tenure as a senator. However, Ms Palijo said the bill should be continued through any other member.

The 27-member select committee had to adjourn its meeting after chairman and one member turned up

In a statement of objects and reasons, the mover of the bill had said child labour was a violation of fundamental human rights and a hindrance to children’s development, potentially leading to lifelong physical or psychological damage.

She said child labour perpetuated poverty through generations by keeping children out of school and limiting their prospects for upwards social growth.

“This bill is aligned with the conventions of International Labour Organisation (ILO) explicitly prohibiting the engagement of children below 14 years.

“However, the bill allows the employment of adolescents in certain non-hazardous tasks because imposition of complete ban on employment of adolescents would deprive their families of livelihood as their parents find it hard to earn just enough money to live on, so they are left with no option but to depend on the income of their children,” read the bill.

It seeks to prohibit the employment of children below the age of 14 and to regulate the working conditions of adolescents.

The bill strives to provide protection to the adolescent workers as enunciated in different international instruments and the Constitution of Pakistan.

The mover also proposed that there should be two-weekly holidays for adolescent employed by any employer.

The bill also proposed several penalties on employers who would engage children to work. It also calls for the establishment of an adolescent labour regulatory authority.

The proposed authority will consist of the chief protection officer to be appointed by the government and such number of child protection officers and other staff as the government may fix from time to time.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394045>

April 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 23 RD TO APRIL 29TH 2018

NEW LABOUR POLICY: WORKERS GIVEN DECISION MAKING RIGHTS: MINISTER

Business Recorder, April 23rd, 2018

Sindh Minister for Labour, Transport and Information Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that present government has won the hearts of labourers, workers as they have been given rights by maximum participation in decision making in the New Labour Policy.

This he said at the press conference along with workers' representatives including Habibuddin Junaidi, Karamat Ali and representatives of employers included Majyd Aziz, Secretary Labour Abdur Rasheed Solangi and Commissioner SESSI Nasimul Ghani Sahto, and others at new Sindh Secretariat here.

The Minister Labour said the government has also given the legal rights to the labourers for protection of their employments and privileges as laid down in new labour policy announced recently. Under the directions of Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the government has also transferred its powers to the labourers, which will make them more prosperous and strengthen.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said new labour policy has been consulted with the representatives of all labour leaders their organizations and it was also included the employers side in this regard. He said government's participation has been reduced from 40 percent to 20 percent while labourers' participation has been increased up to 40 percent.

Legislation was also made to protect the rights of deceased labourers and their families according to recommendations made by the labours representatives all Legislation was made on the directions of Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to safeguard the rights of labourers. He further said to compensate the Baldia factory incident workers, all issues have been settled down on priority. Board has been formed to resolve all issues of workers under new labour policy.

Employers' representative Majyd Aziz said under ILO 144 the government has taken so far decisions, it was consulted properly. He underlined the need of re-constitution of social security board. He said New Labour Policy has been devised for the benefits of Labourers, not anyone's interests. He further said New

Labour Policy would be sent to other provinces to formulate and adopt the same for their labourers immediately.

Representative of labourers Habibuddin Junaidi said the steps are being taken to implement the New labour Policy. Government has transferred their powers to the labourer's Board and right of decision making given to labourers is the historical milestone. PPP has made its promise to formulate such policy. He further said after New Labour Policy, K-Electric and other Institutions will resolve the issues of labourers. Karamat Ali of PML-N hoped that government will take steps to implement the policy as it was made in the legislation.-PR

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/04/20180423364135/>

CABINET APPROVES BILL TO REGULARISE 200,000 CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Mansoor Malik

Dawn, April 27th, 2018

LAHORE: The ruling PML-N government in its cabinet meeting of the tenure approved on Thursday the Punjab Regularization of Service Bill of 2018 to regularise the services of contract employees that enter civil service after meeting certain criteria.

The bill, after the Punjab Assembly approve it, will institutionalise recruitment and prevent hazards of contractual appointment, including political inductions and abrupt termination of services.

Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the officials to fine tune the bill with minor adjustments for tabling in the Punjab Assembly. The Punjab Regularisation of Service law will benefit some 200,000 contractual employees, mostly in education and health departments.

Sources told Dawn the chief minister rejected bureaucracy's concern about growing pension liabilities and instead asked investing Rs20 billion in the pension fund annually for "better financial management". The contribution to the pension fund should be reflected in the budget, the chief minister said.

The cabinet learned the net pension liabilities stood at Rs3.5 trillion on the close of 2014-15 financial year and were growing. It stated that the new regularisation will impact the pension liabilities after 25 to 30 years. The cabinet, however, did not agree and stressed that the government should invest Rs20 billion in the pension fund annually that currently stood at Rs49.3 billion. The cabinet also did not agree with the finance department's proposals about trying the models of voluntary pension scheme and contributory pension.

The cabinet approved long-term investment under Punjab General Provident Investment Fund Act, 2009. Sources said the government's decision to formalise the regularisation criteria would not only block successive governments to go for regular inductions based on political considerations, it would also ensure that the incumbent government would induct employees in regular service that fulfill certain

criteria. “The ‘gate crashing’ concept in employees’ induction will be discouraged and regular induction will be regulated,” an official said.

The 2010-14 performance report of the Punjab Daanish Schools and Centres of Excellence Authority was presented.

The cabinet lauded the performance of Daanish schools students. About 97 per cent Daanish schools’ graduates are now studying in famous universities, including LUMS, GIKI and NUST. The meeting was told that some 27 per cent Daanish schools’ students were double orphan. The Punjab cabinet also approved agreement for development and operation of the Fort Manro Cadet College. The meeting learned the institution, to be established at 100 acres, would serve as a game changer for the area.

The cabinet approved amendment to the Registration Act, 1908, to regulate and supervise the deed writing profession. It also gave approval to amendments in Punjab Fisheries Ordinance of 1961 and Fisheries Act of 1999 along with provision of land in the jurisdiction of Punjab province for 640-megawatts Azad Pattan Hydro Project.

It was decided that agri-marketing reforms be initiated along with approval of Punjab Agriculture Marketing Regulatory Authority Act, 2018. Besides this, the meeting also approved the Punjab Policy for the Protection of Human Rights. The draft of amendment bill for introducing proposed amendments in 1992’s act of forced-labour was given approval along-with endorsement of minutes of 29th cabinet meeting. The decisions of 43rd to 54th meetings of cabinet committee for finance and development were endorsed as well.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1404032>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 16TH TO APRIL 22ND 2018

THREE WORKERS DIE IN MILLS TANK BLAST

Dawn, April 16th, 2018

FAISALABAD: Three labourers were killed and four sustained burn injuries when tank of a mills exploded leading to collapse of a portion of its roof on Maqbool Road on Sunday.

Rescue 1122 spokesperson Faisal said they received information that five workers of United Mills sustained burn injuries when pipe of a generator burst. Owing to the blast a nearby tank of the mills also burst and a portion of the roof collapsed.

Rescuers shifted labourers – Akram of Railway Colony, Arshad of Sohailabad, Sabir of Bahawalpur, Idrees of Sattiana and Ali Ahmed of Ahsan Yousaf Road – to the Allied Hospital and four of them were said to be stable.

He said during a search operation the rescuers retrieved body of a worker identified as Zulfiqar while another labourer Arslan succumbed to his injuries at the DHQ Hospital. The mills administration had shifted Arslan to the hospital, he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1401943/three-workers-die-in-mills-tank-blast>

‘WE NEED TO AMEND OUR LABOUR LAWS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF OUR LABOUR’
Dawn, April 16th, 2018

Shazia Hasan

KARACHI: “What are the clauses, terms and conditions of agreements with the Chinese? Suppose I default anywhere, which court would I be dragged into? And not just me, the investors, too, need to know how to secure their investment and which court would be resolving their disputes,” said retired Justice Khilji Arif Hussain, director general of the Sindh Judicial Academy, at a seminar on ‘The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Related Laws, Their Importance and Enforcement’ organised by Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Law (Szabul) at a hotel here on Saturday.

He further asked if the local labour, which may not be very skillful, will enjoy the same rights and protection as foreign labour. “We need to amend our labour laws to protect the rights of our labour,” he said. “Have we also looked at environment protection?” he further said.

“I am a citizen of my country where I pay taxes. I reserve the right to know about all these things. Why keep them a secret from me?”

CPEC-related laws, their importance and enforcement discussed

Earlier, Szabul Vice Chancellor Qazi Khalid Ali had said that when two countries enter an agreement of such a high magnitude such as CPEC, there is a need for applicable and acceptable comprehensive laws for both nations.

Focussing further on the law aspects of CPEC, Dr Mohammad Raheem Awan, secretary, Law Justice Commission of Pakistan, said the ignorance of law as far as CPEC is concerned will not be excused. “Foreign investors are drawn to Pakistan because of our location.

Pakistan serves as the shortest route to get to Iran, Afghanistan, India, China and the Middle East for trade,” he said while counting the other reasons which attracts investors to this country. “There are our natural resources with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan having huge mining potentials, our cheap labour, agriculture and great market, too,” he said.

“So these foreign investors are not coming here just because they are friends with Pakistan and love us very much.”

Giving his insight, Advocate Anwar Mansoor Khan said that there were many discrepancies in the present logistics agreements between Pakistan and China, which would raise diverse policy issues and conflicts of law.

“You need coordination and cooperation between institutions here. The treaties do not seem equipped to handle the traffic of CPEC. They are not in line with international trade laws, composition laws and land acquisition laws,” he said, adding that all these documents should be made public for future investors.

Joining the discussion through Skype, Naheed Memon, chairperson, Sindh Board of Investment, said the current stage of CPEC focuses on industry bringing up lots of responsibilities on the private sector in Pakistan. “Right now we need to focus more on an export-oriented industry because after special economic zones and facilitation, which is the government’s responsibility, the rest falls on the shoulders of the private sector here,” she said.

Majyd Aziz, president, Employers’ Federation of Pakistan, pointed out that Pakistan may not be completely ready for a \$62 billion investment such as CPEC. He also said that China’s project is not just limited to Pakistan with their working on six other such corridors for trade.

“But CPEC happens to be the mother of all these projects with the Gwadar port as the linchpin,” he said while adding that the business committee here does appreciate the investment as they also are always inviting foreign investors to come to Pakistan. He also pointed out that China does not look at the micro things, they look at macro things but we here in Pakistan have to look at all aspects.

Sumera Nazeer Siddiqui, secretary, Federal Board of Investment, Government of Pakistan, said that CPEC would see Pakistan benefiting more than China. “There are many things which China would do but there are also many things which Pakistan would do as a part of CPEC. For instance, China is a great manufacturer but they are poor in branding, which we can do for them. It will be like a fusion,” she said, adding that all provinces of Pakistan will be included in CPEC.

Akbar Durrani, federal secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, said CPEC is not a game changer it is in fact a fate changer. “There is a Chinese saying that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, Pakistan has taken that step, therefore, it is not right to spread false assumptions about it that it will sideline the local people for the purpose of sabotaging the project,” he said.

Shoaib Siddiqui, federal secretary, Planning Development and Reforms, said CPEC is an agreement between two time-tested friends which has inspired confidence in the nation. He advised all Pakistanis to study the CPEC project and said that there are CPEC cells set up in some universities of the country now as the Chinese language is also being taught here as Urdu is being taught in China.

He also said that after the 1973 Constitution, CPEC is the only programme that has brought together all Pakistanis. “Everyone here is excited about it and committed to it so much so that even nationalist leaders are committed to it because everyone knows that it is definitely going to reap benefits,” he said, adding that those spreading wrong information about CPEC need to realise the harm they are doing to their own country.

Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, senior puisne judge of the Sindh High Court, said CPEC will boost the country’s economy by 2.25 per cent per annum while it is likely to generate a lot of jobs. He said that

there were 16 economic corridor related development projects under way in Balochistan, eight in KP, 13 in Sindh and 12 in Punjab right now. He said that local infrastructure along the 3,000-kilometre corridor, which directly connects the entire country will also be improved as a result of CPEC.

He said it was decided in the last meeting of the National Judicial Policy-making Committee, which was held with Chief Justice Mian Saquib Nisar in the chair, that no stay order would be allowed in any CPEC-related disputes without hearing the other party. He said special benches have been formed in the Supreme Court and all the high courts of the country to hear disputes emanating from CPEC.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1401841/we-need-to-amend-our-labour-laws-to-protect-the-rights-of-our-labour>

May 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 21st TO MAY 27TH 2018

Kiln owner booked for ‘torturing woman to death’

Shafiq Butt Updated May 22, 2018

SAHIWAL: The Saddar police on Monday registered a case against a kiln owner and his assistant on charges of torturing and killing a woman worker at their kiln at Dhako Chishti village on the outskirts of the Pakpattan city.

The victim was identified as Naseem Bibi, wife of Yaqoob Sheikh.

Yaqoob told the police Naseem and he were employed at the Zareef’s kiln for the last five years. About a week ago, Naseem demanded Zareef pay her Rs5,000 from her earned salary for medical treatment but Zareef did not accept the request.

Four days back, Naseem exchanged harsh words with Zareef who, along with his accounts assistant, Muhammad Saleem, locked her in one of huts.

Yaqoob alleged the suspects tortured Naseem for four days. He kept requesting them to let his wife go but in vain. On Sunday, Naseem fainted due to the torture and Zareef left her in Yaqoob’s hut where he found her body when he reached there. Both the suspects escaped from the kiln.

After the incident, more than 50 kiln workers along with Yaqoob blocked the Pakpattan bypass road for three hours by placing deceased’s body on the road.

Luqman, homicide officer, quoting the doctor of the Pakpattan District Headquarters Hospital who conducted the post-mortem on Naseem’s body, said there were no marks of torture on it. However, the post-mortem report has not been released yet.

Saddar police registered a murder case against Zareef and Saleem.

Anjum Matto, executive director of the Insan Dost Association; an organisation working for kiln workers, told Dawn Naseem was not registered with the labour department and a social security card was not issued to her. He said had she been registered with social security, she would not have needed money for her treatment.

Published in Dawn, May 22nd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1409164/kiln-owner-booked-for-torturing-woman-to-death>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 14TH TO MAY 20TH 2018
GOVT TO RATIONALISE PAY FOR STAFF WORKING IN COMPANIES
Intikhab Hanif

Dawn, May 16, 2018

LAHORE: The Punjab government top officials are working out “rationalised” pay packages for its officers and staff working in over 58 companies created by the PML-N Punjab government in the last 10 years without knowing whether the “company mode of public sector development” would continue or not.

They are also planning to rebrand the word pay package as allowance so that no one even the courts could question as to why the government officials working in companies get double salaries, one (lucrative) from the companies and another from their parent departments, official sources informed Dawn on Tuesday.

High salaries of certain government officials in the companies created by the Punjab government have been criticised by public. The Supreme Court too has taken a notice of it, asking such officials to return extra amount to the government.

Officials say the pay packages are being revised or rationalised under direction from the Supreme Court. Sources said on Tuesday the packages being designed would still be lucrative and plans were afoot to declare them as allowances so that they could “legally” be given in addition to the original salaries of government officials picked for companies.

There was also an attempt to apply the same “pay package or allowance” to those chosen to work in projects or autonomous bodies.

As per stated policy, government officials are allowed to work in companies in Punjab after they emerge successful in a competition for the jobs as human resource from the open market.

But, notwithstanding this stated policy, their induction in the companies and hefty salaries, which are different for different officials, have raised eyebrows even in the bureaucratic circles. There are fixed

allowances for those working in projects or autonomous bodies but bureaucrats consider them peanuts against the huge salaries in the companies. An official said officers in BS-20 and above get Rs 80,000 monthly project allowance.

When confronted officials of the departments concerned said that the new allowance was being designed after studying the allowances being given by the federal and other provincial governments. “We plan to give a maximum up to Rs300,000 allowance but those by other governments are higher,” an official said.

To justify, the officials quoted the federal government’s standard pay package for officers and staff directly recruited from open market on a contract basis for the execution of development projects revised in July last year.

According to it, those in BS-22 were getting a monthly Rs500,000, in BS-21 Rs350,000, in BS-20 Rs250,000, in BS-19 Rs175,000, in BS-18 Rs125,000, in BS-17 Rs90,000, in BS-16 Rs60,000, and in BS-14 and 15 Rs40,000 from July 1, 2017. The amounts have a ceiling but everyone gets as five per cent increase in the shape of annual increment.

Sources said the bureaucracy was designing the new pay package in full knowledge of the fact that the present mode of companies would continue only if the PML-N is able to form next government in Punjab. “The future of the companies is linked directly to the next government,” an official remarked.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1407912/govt-to-rationalise-pay-for-staff-working-in-companies>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 7TH TO MAY 13TH 2018

COAL MINE ACCIDENTS TOLL RISES TO 23

Dawn, May 7th, 2018

QUETTA: The death toll in Saturday’s incidents at two coal mines near here has risen to 23 as the bodies of five more victims have been recovered from the mine of the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) in Sur-range coal filed.

Balochistan’s Chief Inspector of Mines Iftikhar Ahmed said bodies of two miners had been recovered from the mine on Saturday and it was thought that five other miners had been trapped in the mine after being hit by a landslide inside the mine. But when rescue workers went deep inside the mine on Sunday, they found the five miners had also died.

He said the seven miners were working 3,400 feet deep inside the mine when the landslide occurred inside it, burying the seven, adding that the landslide might have been caused by some activity taking place under the mine. The mine has been sealed and an investigation launched into the incident.

In the other incident, 16 other workers were killed on Saturday when another coal mine collapsed after a gas explosion inside it in the Marwar area.

“The bodies of 16 miners have been recovered and sent to the victims’ native area in Shangla, Swat district,” said Ataullah, director of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

He said rescue workers had rescued 11 other miners who had been trapped in the mine. They were shifted to the Bolan Medical College Hospital's burn unit and four of them, who had suffered serious injuries, had been admitted there.

Sources said that after the gas explosion, a huge fire broke out in the Marwar mine causing it to collapse. Other mine workers who were present in the area immediately rushed to the site and launched a rescue operation. However, they faced difficulties as the mouth of the mine had been blocked by a boulder after the blast.

Meanwhile, activists of the Pakistan Central Mines Labour Federation (PMCLF) staged a demonstration outside Quetta Press Club on Sunday to protest against the killing of 23 miners in the two mine incidents.

PMCLF president Sultan Muhammad Khan and other labour leaders spoke on the occasion

They said lack of safety arrangements inside the two mines, including air ventilation, had caused the fatal incidents. "The owners and managers of mining companies don't care for poor workers because for them money is more important than our lives," Akhtarzada, a survivor of the Marwar incident, said.

The demonstration culminated with the adoption of a resolution by the participants, calling on Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar to take suo motu notice of the mine accidents. The resolution demanded Rs2 million compensation for each victim of the incidents.

The resolution said those found guilty of negligence be awarded punishments, mines where such fatal incidents took place be sealed and laws pertaining to safety of miners be implemented.

It urged the government to ratify the Safety and Health in Mines Convention of the International Labour Organisation.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1406134>

SINDH GOVERNMENT INCREASES SALARIES AND PENSIONS

The Express Tribune, 11 May 2018

In its budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year, the Sindh government announced a 10% interim raise in salaries of public sector employees as well as a 10% increase in pensions.

Allocations for house rent allowance and rent have also been increased by 50%. During his speech, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah announced the raise in pensions, salaries and house rents of public sector employees.

Individual pensions have been raised from Rs6,000 to Rs10,000 while the family pension has been increased from Rs4,500 to Rs7,500. The lowest pension announced for pensioners above 75 years is Rs15,000. The Sindh government has also increased support staff's overtime salary by 100%. This means support staff, drivers, dispatch riders and others will receive Rs80 per hour as overtime instead of Rs40 per hour.

The Sindh government will provide Rs5.1 billion in subsidies on grain to sell flour at cheaper rates during the next fiscal year. Rs4.2 billion has been designated as cash compensation to be distributed amongst poor and needy families during Ramazan. Rs55 million has been kept for the health insurance of Sindh Secretariat employees and the government has also decided to allocate a universal death insurance of Rs100,000 to be provided to the families of people who die in accidents. It has allocated Rs2.2 billion for this purpose.

The government has increased the funds allocated for social welfare by 17% in this year's budget, making it Rs1.87 billion, with the Child Protection Authority getting Rs200 million. The Pakistan Sweet Home orphanages will be allocated Rs36 million and HANDS, a non-governmental organisation, will be allocated Rs250 million.

Ongoing Annual Development Programme (ADP) schemes will be allocated Rs275 million and the population welfare department has been allocated Rs411 million. The budget also allocated funds for legal aid for women and children in prisons with an amount of Rs135 million. The Sindh government also allocated Rs100 million for the victims of acid attacks, for their medical needs and rehabilitation. The population welfare department's ongoing schemes will be allocated Rs250 million in the current budget.

The budget for the protection and advancement of labourers has been increased by 9% to Rs760 million.

The Sindh government's budget for minorities has seen an increase of up to 45% with an allocation of Rs848 million in the upcoming fiscal year, including a grant of Rs750 million. Ongoing provincial ADP schemes related to minorities have been allocated Rs1.5 billion, which includes Rs370 million for the Sindh Belo temple in Sukkur.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1707328/1-sindh-government-increases-salaries-pensions/>

NON-APPLICABILITY OF LABOUR LAWS TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS DECLARED ILLEGAL

Dawn, May 12th, 2018

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has declared illegal the provincial government's move to end the applicability of labour laws, including the one about the minimum wages, to the private educational institutions in the province through amendments to them.

Justice Ikramullah Khan and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim accepted a petition filed by lawyer Saleem Shah Hoti challenging the end of applicability of labour laws to privately-owned schools and colleges.

The petitioner claimed that several lawmakers, including the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's speaker, owned educational institutions and therefore, the laws were amended to end their applicability to private schools and colleges.

The bench pronounced a short order after both parties completed arguments on the petition.

Mr Hoti, who had filed the petition in the larger public interest, said private educational institutions in the province had been subjecting teachers to the worst form of exploitation and that they had been removed from the purview of the labour department for being owned by several lawmakers.

The labour department had supported the petitioner's stand saying it had opposed the law amendments in question.

Mr Hoti said the province had no law to regulate the salary of teachers and other staff and working conditions for them.

He said in 2015, the provincial assembly had passed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Amendment Laws) Act, 2015, amending different labour laws, including the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Payment of Wages Act, 2013, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Industrial and Commercial Employment (Standing Orders), 2013, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minimum Wages Act, 2013, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Industrial Statistics Act, 2013.

The petitioner said after those amendments, the labour laws in question didn't apply to private educational institutions in the province.

He said after the enforcement of the Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act 2010, the four labour laws in question were passed by the provincial assembly for the welfare of the people working in private sector educational institutions.

Mr Hoti said those laws were meant to regulate the minimum wages to certain classes of persons employed in factories, industrial establishment and commercial establishment, regulate the payment of wages, provide for regulation of industrial and commercial employment in the province, and facilitate the collection of statistics of certain kinds relating to factories, and industrial and commercial establishments.

He claimed the minimum monthly salary had been fixed at the rate of Rs15,000 in the province, while the private educational institutions had employed highly educated and qualified male and female teachers and ancillary staff members for few thousand rupees, which was both disrespectful and insufficient for them.

The counsel for private schools said the petitioner was not an aggrieved person and therefore, this petition was not maintainable.

He said the government had enacted the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Private Schools Regulatory Authority Act, 2017, ending the need for the applicability of labour laws to private schools.

The lawyer said it was up to the regulator to regulate the salaries of teachers.

The petitioner referred to a judgment of the Supreme Court arguing that even ordinary persons could file a petition in issues related to public interest.

He added that his children had also been studying in schools due to which he was also an aggrieved person and was empowered to file the instant petition.

Mr Hoti said the labour laws related to all staffers of private schools, whereas the Regulatory Authority law was only related to teachers.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1407107>

KILN WORKERS MOVE SC AGAINST 'MAFIA'

Hasnaat Mailk

The Express Tribune, May 12, 2018

A group of brick kiln workers have approached the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar against an 'organised mafia' consisting of lawyers, the advocate on records (AORs) and munshis operating within the premises of the Supreme Court'

One such worker Manzoor, who filed a petition in the apex court seeking the enforcement of brick kiln workers rights, has submitted an application before the CJP and the Pakistan Bar Council's (PBC) executive committee chairman against an AOR and lawyer for manhandling him.

"I along with 10 other applicants appeared before your court (CJP) on May 10 in constitution petition No.60/2017 and requested for change of lawyer and your honour has allowed the application. As soon as we went to the office of AOR, he started using foul language against us," said the complainant.

The applicant said since they all are illiterate, a 20-year-old social worker Farrukh Javed was helping them in writing and moving the applications. He said Javed was punched many time by the said AOR on the face in front of workers and staff of AOR office.

"We belong to the marginalised segment of society and are already exploited by all and sundry that this attack has seriously damaged our resolve to fight the atrocities being committed by elites.

"There is an organised mafia consisting of lawyers, AORs and munshis operating within the premises of Supreme Court of Pakistan who get hold of poor and illiterate applicants and then blackmail them to obtain money every now and then," he added.

The applicant requested the CJP to cancel licence of the AOR and the lawyer who was appearing in their case. He also moved an application in the Police Station Secretariat for the registration of FIR against AOR for beating up a 20p-year-old Farukh Javed.

Under the Supreme Court Rule, no case can be filed in the apex court without engaging the AOR.

Approximately, 20 AORs are actively working in the SC Islamabad registry. Interestingly, every AOR has employed two-three munshis for their assistance. Usually, the AOR charges around Rs15,000 to Rs20,000 fee for just filing a case in the institution branch.

However, Supreme Court staff and Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) members are complaining against some AORs and their munshis. A senior bar member confirmed that a number of complaints have been received by litigants for charging of extra fee by AORs munshis.

On the other hand, there are few senior AORs like Chaudhry Akhtar, who are highly regarded in the legal fraternity due to their integrity. Even a senior SC official fears that though there is zero corruption in the SC staff, money is being taken in their name by litigants.

He said the AOR should not be allowed to engage more than one munshi in SC premises.

The PBC members Kamran Murtaza and Raheel Kamran Sheikh said the SC rules should be amended for ending the AOR system in the apex court, adding that it is duty of state to provide inexpensive and expeditious justice to the citizens under Article 37 d of the constitution

The superior bar members also feel that there is a need to regularise the system of charging fee by the lawyers. Raheel said only a few per cent lawyers are involved in most of the litigation in the country and they are charging in millions of rupees, which is unjustified.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1708153/1-kiln-workers-move-sc-mafia/>

GOVT URGED TO FORMULATE RULES OF RECENTLY PASSED HOME-BASED WORKERS' LAW

Dawn, May 13th, 2018

KARACHI: With the passage of the Home Based Workers Act 2018 approximately five million workers, mostly women, would get benefit and their due rights, said Sindh Labour Minister Nasir Shah on Saturday.

He was speaking at a workers' function organised by the Sindh labour and human resources department and the Home Based Women Workers Federation at the Arts Council of Pakistan.

Briefing the audience regarding the efforts made to formulate the law, the minister said that a long and comprehensive process had been followed under which all stakeholders gave their input after which the legislation was passed by the Sindh Assembly on May 9, 2018.

He said after the passage of this legislation basic labour rights had been guaranteed to home-based workers.

Lauding the passage of the act, HBWWF general secretary Zara Khan urged the government to formulate relevant rules for the act so that it could be implemented instantly and workers benefitted from it.

Now under the act the people working from their homes had been recognised as workers in legal terms and they would have access to various facilities/benefits — medical facilities, pension, workers welfare fund, maternity leave, minimum wages, dowry grant, etc, — that were available to other workers.

Sindh labour secretary Rasheed Solangi said that under the act a council comprising representatives of the government, trade unions, etc, would be set up that would carry out a comprehensive survey of home-based workers in trades that they were associated with.

Committees at the district level would also be set up that would carry out registration of workers so that their rights could be protected.

National Trade Union Federation leader Nasir Mansoor on the occasion said that the International Labour Organisation had passed Convention 177 in this regard in 1996.

He said over 15 million Pakistani home-based workers had been struggling for years and urging the government to ratify this convention.

He urged other provinces to follow the initiative taken by Sindh and pass such legislation in their respective provinces so that home-based workers there could get benefit and secure their rights, including right to participate in trade union activities and collective bargaining, etc.

He said that home-based workers were involved in different fields ranging from shoemaking, jewellery making, handicrafts, fisheries, bangle making, sports goods, etc, generating over Rs400 billion for the economy. Most of their products were exported.

Trade union leaders, including Habibuddin Junaidi, Rafiq Baloch, Saira Feroz, Shabnum Azam, Pakistan Institute of Labour Rights and Education's Karamat Ali, Ahmed Shah of the Arts Council, and others also spoke.

A large number of the representatives of home-based workers from all over the province attended the function that was organised to celebrate the passage of the act protecting their rights that they had been demanding for the past many years.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1407281>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 30TH TO MAY 6TH 2018
SC APPROACHED TO OVERTURN VERDICT SUSPENDING RAISE IN WAGES
Dawn, April 30th, 2018

Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has been asked to overturn the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Feb 28 order of suspending amendments to the Provincial Employees Social Security Ordinance, 1965 that allow for enhancing wages of workers from Rs10,000 to 12,500 per month or more, and daily wages from Rs400 to Rs600.

The petition was moved jointly before the apex court by the Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (Pessi), the Punjab Employees Social Security (Pess) Lahore director, and the Pess Sheikhpura director,

who argued that the ad-interim relief offered by the high court was issued in violation of the law and principles earlier enunciated by the apex court.

The petition has been filed through Advocate Raheel Kamran Sheikh.

The 1965 ordinance was promulgated by the Punjab government to introduce social security that would ensure certain benefits to workers and their dependents in the event of sickness, maternity, workplace injury or death and medical care of dependents, disablement pension and gratuity, survivor's pension, death grant in case of death and medical care in case of employment injury, etc. These benefits are covered under Chapter V of the 1965 Ordinance and are specified in Sections 35 to 47A of the ordinance.

Likewise, Pessi was created to protect and secure the interests of low-income workers and employees in the Punjab. The institution strives to provide health care facilities and cash benefits to secured workers and their dependents employed in industrial or commercial establishments operating in the Punjab.

Essentially, the petition argued, the ordinance was in the nature of a beneficial and remedial legislation enacted for the purpose of welfare of labour.

As a result, a number of industrial units — Shafi (Pvt) Ltd, Tanveer Cotton Mills (Pvt) Ltd, Tanveer Spinning, Weaving Mills and five others — approached the high court, challenging the vires of the amendments made to the 1965 ordinance.

According to the petition, a notification issued on Oct 18, 2012, raised the wages of workers to Rs12,500 from Rs10,000 per month or Rs600 from the earlier Rs400 daily wage, whereas, under the notification of Jan 30, 2013 the monthly wage was raised to Rs15,000 from 12,500. Under a notification dated Oct 12, 2014 monthly wages were raised from Rs15,000 to Rs18,000 and the daily wage to Rs750 from Rs600. A notification dated June 15, 2017 raised the monthly wage to Rs22,000 or Rs1,000 per day. But the high court had suspended these notifications and ordered the petitioners to continue contributing the amount of social security payable before the issuance of the notifications, as per law, in which the upper wage ceiling was fixed at Rs10,000 per month or Rs400 daily wage rate.

The petitioners argued that the high court had acted with complete disregard for the law enunciated by the Supreme Court while suspending the notifications.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1404740/sc-approached-to-overturn-verdict-suspending-raise-in-wages>

AGONY PROLONGS FOR WORKERS OF CLOSED FERTILISERS UNIT

Dawn, April 30th, 2018

MIANWALI: Financial problems of over 1300 workers of Agri Tech Fertilizers in Iskandarabad continue to multiply as the unit has been non-functional for past seven months due to gas suspension.

The supply was not restored even after Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's announcement at a public meeting at Kalabagh on Feb 10.

The labour union held a marathon sit-in in front of the factory for five months and took out a rally from Iskandarabad to Mianwali but things did not change.

Almost all local politicians of various parties visited the sit-in camp to gain sympathies of workers but the matter remained unresolved.

Adding to workers' misery, the factory management says it can no longer fund projects like water treatment plant and subsequent supply of drinking water to residential colony, running of five schools and a college, a hospital with a trauma and dialysis centre, free transport service for children studying in Mianwali schools and colleges.

The factory stopped working when the SNGPL suspended gas supply seven months ago and asked the management to use RNLG.

The management refused to accept the offered rates on plea that its cost would rise many fold and they would not be able to remain competitive in the market. It sought same price for RLNG as being offered to fertiliser plants in KP and other areas.

The management met the PM on March 26 and he again assured to advise the SNGPL to restore the gas.

The factory management met the SNGPL MD on April 2 who categorically refused to restore the gas supply without a written executive order of the prime minister..

MNA Obaidullah Shadikhel who met the PM on this issue recently said the gas supply would be restored very soon.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1404692>

LABOUR DAY RALLIES HELD ACROSS BALOCHISTAN

Dawn, May 02, 2018

QUETTA: Members of trade unions took out processions and rallies across Balochistan on Tuesday, demanding basic rights for labours and workers in the province.

The main event to mark International Labour Day was organised at the lawns of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation, where representatives of All-Pakistan Labour Federation, Central Mine Labour Federation, Railway Mehnat-Kash Union and other trade unions paid tribute to the Chicago martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the protection of labours' basic rights.

“Our rulers have luxurious lifestyle as they travel abroad for medical treatment while their children study abroad, but labourers and less privileged people live without even basic facilities,” said Labour Federation president Ramzan Achakzai while addressing the gathering.

Back in 1886, he said, brave labourers in Chicago launched a movement for their basic rights, but they were brutally killed. “It was due to their sacrifice that working hours for labourers decreased from 16 to eight a day,” he added. Criticising government's indifferent attitude towards labourers, the leaders of

trade unions said the country's economic development relied on working class as they were the backbone of the industry and other development sectors. The labour leaders demanded that the minimum monthly salary of the labour class should be fixed at Rs30,000.

Rallies and congregations were held also in Khuzdar, Kalat, Mastung, Dera Murad Jamali, Nasirabad, Gwadar, Pishin, Loralai, Zhob and other cities and towns of Balochistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405122>

MURAD SAYS HE HAS A PLAN FOR BETTERMENT OF CHILDREN WORKING IN SHOPS

Dawn, May 2nd, 2018

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the labour workforce is the engine of our industrial growth and economic system and real human uplift lies in the development of the country's labour class.

He said that the Pakistan Peoples Party was from the very beginning trying to protect the rights of workers and after former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto it was his daughter Benazir Bhutto who further improved the labour laws to eliminate child labour.

He said now his government was planning for the welfare of children working in shops to support their families by providing them a stipend equivalent to their earnings and give them technical education so that they could be accommodated in different industrial units and factories. The chief minister was speaking at a programme organised by the provincial labour department to observe the World Labour Day on Tuesday here at the CM House. He also distributed welfare grants among the labourers.

He recalled that it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who had presented the country's first-ever labour policy in 1972 under which the Workers Welfare Ordinance, Employees Old-age Benefit Institution (EOBI) and Industrial Relations Ordinance (IRO) were introduced.

He said that the IRO had ensured job security of workers and industrial units and companies were bound to give bonus to their workers. He said that Ms Bhutto worked hard to eliminate child labour and improved labour laws. She reinstated the services of thousands of workers who were removed by dictators from different organisations, he added.

Worker-friendly legislation

Mr Shah said that his government not only presented a comprehensive labour policy prepared in consultation with all stakeholders but also made effective legislation to protect the rights of workers.

He said that the Sindh government legislated the Sindh Companies Profit (Workers Participation) Act, 2015; The Sindh Differently Aabled Persons (Employment, Rehabilitation & Welfare) Act, 2014; The Sindh Workers Welfare Fund Act, 2014; The Sindh Terms of Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 2015;

The Sindh Shops & Commercial Establishment Act, 2015; The Sindh Factories Act, 2015; The Sindh Compensation Act and various others.

The CM urged industrialists to contribute as per their share in the workers' fund so that necessary facilities such as health, education and houses could be provided to the workers of the province. "They are the strength of your companies and they are the power of our economy," he said.

He said as "the martyrs of Chicago are being remembered today, I don't want to forget the workers, male and female, of the Baldia factory who were burnt alive in this city. Their sacrifice will always be remembered."

He also recalled the services of former president and PPP co-chairman Asif Zardari who he said introduced the 18th Amendment to the Constitution during his tenure as president under which various labour laws and functions of the federal government were devolved to the provinces.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Raza Rabbani shed light on the struggle of labourers for their rights all over the world. He also spoke about different laws introduced by the PPP government for upholding the rights of workers.

Mr Rabbani criticised the prime minister for inaugurating a new airport in Islamabad on the international labour day and also condemned him for not naming it after Ms Bhutto.

Labour Minister Nasir Shah discussed the new labour policy and termed it a big success of the PPP government.

Planning and Development Minister Saeed Ghani, labour leader Habibuddin Junaidi, industrialists Siraj Kassam Teli and Majyd Aziz also spoke.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405050>

RALLIES HELD ACROSS SINDH TO OBSERVE LABOUR DAY

Dawn, May 2nd, 2018

HYDERABAD: To mark the International Labour Day on Tuesday, political parties, trade unions, workers' organisations, human and civil rights bodies and welfare groups held rallies, staged sit-ins and organised protests all over Sindh to highlight the plight of workers.

Workers raised slogans against privatisation, demanding job security and rights in line with different labour laws.

They also demanded raise in workers' salary and various facilities in line with the labour laws of the country.

They also paid tributes to Chicago workers who sacrificed their lives for obtaining rights of labourers.

In Hyderabad, various trade unions staged rallies to mark the day outside the local press club under the sweltering sun as the mercury hit 47 degree Celsius.

The All Pakistan Wapda Hydro Electric Workers Union (CBA) in collaboration with the Pakistan Workers Confederation (PWC) staged a big protest rally to mark May 1.

Activists of the Barabari Party Pakistan and Sindhi Mazdoor Tehreek staged separate rallies.

The HMC Staff Union, Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign and All Pakistan Nadra Employees Union from Hyder Chowk marched to the local press club, carrying placards and banners inscribed with pro-worker slogans.

The Sindh National Tehreek organised a seminar to mark the day.

SUKKUR: Rallies were taken out and other events were held in different towns of Sukkur, Ghotki, Kandhkot-Kashmore and Jacobabad district.

According to reports, separate rallies were taken out by the Sindh Taraqqi-pasand Party (STP), Qaumi Awami Party, Sindh United Party and Pakistan Peoples Party in Kandhkot from the Library Chowk and press club to the Clock Tower. In Ghotki district, different rallies of the labourers from Ubauro, Daharki and other towns were taken out to Mirpur Mathelo where an event was held under the banner of the Watan Dost Mazdoor Federation.

In Jacobabad, the STP took out a rally from the party district office.

In Sukkur, different labour organisations took out a joint rally from Hira Medical Centre to the Clock Tower Roundabout.

The labour wing of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Sukkur also held an event.

MIRPURKHAS: Labour Day was observed here on Tuesday like other areas of the country as various rallies were taken out by various organisations from the railway station roundabout.

SHIKARPUR: Many social organisations, political parties and individual social workers took out rallies from various places of the city to Lakhi Dar Clock Tower and also held programmes at various places to express solidarity with workers and labourers.

BADIN: Here tributes were paid to the Chicago workers by several labour organisations.

A rally was staged in front of the local press club, with activists carrying placards and banners inscribed with slogans paying homage to the workers.

KHAIRPUR: The Muttahida Mazdoor Federation of Khairpur took out a rally from the Civic Centre Chowk to demand rights for workers and labourers.

Later, a public gathering was held at Phool Bagh Khairpur. Addressing the event, speakers said that a policy should be framed under which the concept of keeping labour as slaves must be curbed.

Several other labour organisations held rallies and organised programmes to mark Labour Day.

MITHI: Rallies and walks were organised in Mithi and other towns of the desert district.

A large number of STP workers took out a rally in Mithi town to pay tributes to the labourers who had laid down their lives in Chicago for their rights.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405040>

K-P FINALISES ITS FIRST LABOUR POLICY

The Express Tribune, May 2nd, 2018.

PESHAWAR: As the nation marked World Labour Day, the provincial government has finally prepared a draft policy for labourers in the province.

Prepared by the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Labour Department, the K-P Labour Policy 2018, hopes to ensure decent working condition for all workers, irrespective of nature of work, in compliance with basic international labour standards (ILS) on working conditions, hours, health and safety, holidays and wages.

Finalised after discussing with all concerned stakeholders, the department has submitted the draft policy to the government for approval.

The 26-page policy, available with The Express Tribune, states that the provincial government, in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), international partners, the federal government and organisations of employers and workers, would gradually discourage non-standard employment and eradicate child labour and forced labour.

The policy also seeks to address all types of discriminations in wages and employment due to gender, creed, ethnicity, origin and religion.

It further notes that special efforts would be undertaken to make law effective in the formal sector apart from extending its reach to the informal sectors, contract workers, mine workers, home-based workers, agricultural sector and other categories of vulnerable workers.

Moreover, the policy has the objective of promoting youth employment facilitating them through technical education, focusing on labour export, career counseling and job placement and development of a labour market information and analysis system.

Under the policy, the government will establish a modern training institute which will train people, to inspect staff and social partners on labour laws, labour administration, industrial relations and social dialogue.

The policy will also prioritise the health and safety of workers at the workplace. It is designed to protect workers in general and mine workers in particular. It provides for an institutional arrangement, preventive measures and rescue management to promote a hazard-free work environment in the province.

The policy suggests capacity building and training of the presiding officers of labour courts, authorities under the K-P Payment of Wages Act and Workmen Compensation Commissioners.

The policy will ensure that they are trained on labour laws, rights and obligations of workers and employers meaning thereby that they could be able to understand the nature of the disputes/ issues while deciding the cases.

The policy will also ensure that women workers are facilitated at the workplace and beyond to ensure their maximum participation in the labour force.

The minimum wage board will be strengthened under the policy by linking it with research institutions and universities with the purpose of promoting research on factors affecting workers' micro-economy. The findings of such studies will be considered by the board during wage fixation.

The policy suggested conducting research on labour issues, various dimensions of labour force, demand and supply side determinants, child labour, forced labour, bonded labour, gender aspects, labour inspection, labour laws, policies, wages and various categories of workers, like, contract workers, piece rate workers, casual labour, temporary labour, part-time workers, workers of informal sector, home-based workers and domestic workers.

The quota for specially-abled people will be protected under the policy as enshrined under the Employment & Rehabilitation Ordinance, 1981. Moreover, the policy will help facilitate their employment. Other provisions of the act will also be ensured in all the industrial and commercial establishments of the province.

Like the specially-abled, the policy will also seek to integrate members of the transgender community into the workforce through programmes for promotion of transgender in skill development and job placement in industrial and commercial establishments.

To monitor the implementation of the policy, a policy-steering committee under the K-P Minister for Labour will be constituted. Apart from monitoring implementation, the committee will review the targets of the policy and support the implementing partners in integration, coordination and implementation of the policy.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, K-P Labour Department Chief Inspector Factories Wajid Khan said that this was the first time that the provincial government had developed a draft for the relief and rights of labourers in the province.

He confirmed that they had completed the draft after consulting with stakeholders last week and that the policy will be submitted for the approval of the provincial cabinet.

To a question, the chief inspector said that even if the current government could not approve and pass it before its tenure ends later in May, it could also be presented to the next government.

Wajid termed the policy a great step for the betterment of labourers in the province.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1700207/1-k-p-finalises-first-labour-policy/>

RALLIES, PROTESTS CALL FOR RIGHTS OF WORKING CLASS

The Express Tribune, May 2nd, 2018.

Workers and activists of different labour unions marked the May Day on Tuesday with rallies in Lahore and other cities of the country to press the government to address the issues of labourers.

The city's central rally was taken out from Hamdard Hall Lytton Road to Lahore High Court building under the banner of All Pakistan Trade Union Federation (APTUF).

Holding banners and placards inscribed with diffident slogans and demands, a large number of workers including women from different industrial units took part in the march. A good number of domestic workers were also part of the rally. The participants shouted slogans against inflation, forced labour, unemployment, poverty, contract labour system and exploitation of workers' rights. They called for bringing reforms.

APTUF General Secretary Aima Mahmood and other labour leaders including Sultan Khan, Fazale Wahid, Salma Liaquat, Nasir Mahmood, and Munir Dogar addressed the rally.

Addressing the participants, Aima Mahmood, who also heads Working Women Organisation (WWO), criticised the government for not addressing issues of labourers, farmers, unemployed youth and women workers.

She highlighted the plight of female employees at workplaces. "The government has failed to stop child labour despite tall claims as a large number of children could be seen working in factories, bakery units, brick kilns and other places," she said.

According to her, both the government and the opposition were equally responsible for the plight of labourers. She also blamed political parties for not highlighting labourers and farmers' issues in the policy-making process. "Both sectors," she said, "make around 80% of the country's population." Aima, on the occasion, called for the unity among workers. "Without unity workers cannot succeed in getting their rights. It is a matter of great concern that labour class has badly failed to get their rights in the past

decades despite the surge in the number of trade unions in Pakistan. The reason for the failure, she said, was the division among their ranks.

Aima also demanded participation of male and female workers in the policy-making process. “All the government plans in the past for bringing reforms in labour and agriculture sectors badly failed because of the absence of main shareholders (labour unions) in the policy-making process.”

Sultan Khan and Fazale Wahid asked political parties to include practical plans for labourers and farmers in their manifestos.

The workers of Railways Workers’ Union, Working Women Organisation, Sheheen Workers Union, Miller and Flips Union, Hamdard Union, Ittehad Union, Model Town Society, Labour Colony Association, Unilever Union and others participated in the march.

In another event, representatives of Red Workers Front (RWF) also held a rally at Hamdard hall.

Addressing on the occasion, RWF organiser and employee of WAPDA, Maqsood Hamdani said the workers of Pakistan should think about General Strike as the ruling class was not interested in addressing the issues of labours class.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1700125/1-rallies-protests-call-rights-working-class/>

OPPOSITION LEADERS SLAM GOVT OVER ‘ANTI-WORKER’ POLICIES

The Express Tribune, May 2nd, 2018.

Anti-worker and flawed policies of the rulers have pushed labourers, farmers and workers to the wall. It has become impossible for the common man to make ends meet as prices of all essential commodities and utilities have skyrocketed.

Leaders of different opposition parties expressed these views in their May Day messages on Tuesday.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Ejaz Ahmad Chaudhry has demanded of the government to announce a minimum wage of Rs25,000 and resolve basic issues of workers and farmers on priority. He highlighted that his party salute to the martyrs of Chicago and was committed to continuing its struggle for the rights of labourers and farmers.

“Swelling inflation has crushed workers and labour class, he remarked. “Now the time has come that labourers and workers should stand up for their rights and support the PTI which is struggling for their rights for past 21 years,” he said.

“The rulers have killed the farming community economically as no farmer is getting even its input farming cost. All the policies of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government are anti-worker but they should realise that no country in the world could flourish by snatching basic rights of its

labour community,” he maintained. He said labourers and workers have a pivotal role in the development of Pakistan but their wellbeing was not even on the priority list of the rulers.

Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-i-Azam (PML-Q) President Chaudhry Shujat Hussain and senior central leader Chaudhry Parvez Elahi were of the views that the PML-Q government had undertaken historical works for workers and promise to continue their legacy in future. They said industrial and agricultural workers in Punjab were getting prosperous due as the government was offering free education, free medicines and social protection. Separate social security hospital and labour colonies were built in Punjab.

Parvez said the PML-Q government worked day and night for the working class of the country, undertook legislation for providing relief to the workers earlier and would also do the same in the future as well so that the working class get more relief.

Pakistan Awami Tahreek (PAT) chief Dr Tahirul Qadri demanded full implementation of all labour laws of the land which were under suspension ever since the emergence of Sharifs on the political landscape. He asked end of contract system in private sector institutions and restoration of all benefits for workers and employees. Qadri also paid homage to the martyrs of May 1 who laid down their lives for the cause of working class. “Now it is up to the working class to unite for their rights and struggle for to ensure complete implementation of labour laws in Pakistan which were under suspension since last three decades,” he said.

He said working class must reject disqualified Sharif and his party that played a pivotal role in a usurpation of rights of working class by encouraging contract system in private establishments. He requested the Chief Justice of Pakistan to take suo motto notice of long violated labour laws and ensure their implementation of the sake of millions of oppressed workers and businesses employees.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1700136/1-opposition-leaders-slam-government-anti-worker-policies/>

THREE KILLED IN QUETTA WALL COLLAPSE

Dawn, May 3rd, 2018

QUETTA: Three people were killed when an under-construction wall fell on them in the eastern bypass area of Quetta on Wednesday, police said.

Two of the deceased were labourers who were working on the wall when it collapsed while the third was a watchman.

The bodies were taken to the civil hospital.

The labourers were identified as Abdul Jabbar, a resident of Nushki, and Muhammad Adil, a resident of Green Town in Karachi.

The name of the third deceased could not ascertained.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405311>

SIX LABOURERS GUNNED DOWN IN KHARAN

Dawn, May 5th, 2018

Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Six labourers, two brothers among them, were gunned down and another one was injured in a remote area of Balochistan's Kharan district close to the Pakistan-Iran border late on Thursday night.

Official sources said on Friday that the labourers who were working on a tower being set up by a private mobile phone company in the area were sleeping in their camp when unidentified people opened fire on them with automatic weapons.

They said the assailants who came on motorcycles managed to escape after committing the crime.

Soon after receiving information about the incident security personnel rushed to the area and shifted the bodies to the district hospital in Kharan. The injured was taken to the Bolan Medical College hospital in Quetta. He is said to be in a critical condition.

An official told Dawn that security personnel found six bodies and one injured man inside the camp. He said all the six men received multiple bullet wounds and they died on the spot. He said all the victims hailed from Okara district of Punjab.

Sources said the incident took place in the Lejah area, some 90km from Kharan town. They claimed that the mobile company had not made security arrangements for the labourers.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

The bodies were later shifted to Quetta from where they would be sent to the victim's native towns.

The deceased were identified as Fakhruddin, Javed Ali, Amanat Ali, Muhammad Mazhar, Waqis and Shahzad aka Shadi. The injured was identified as Faryal Bhatti.

The official sources said the security personnel launched a search operation in the area after the incident. However, no arrest was reported.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdu Quddus Bizenjo condemned the killing of labourers and termed it an inhuman act. He said elements involved in the incident would soon be brought to justice.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405713>

LATEST FARMING TECHNIQUES LURE GROWERS TO AGRI EXPO

Dawn, May 5th, 2018

LAHORE: The seventh Dawn Food and Agricultural Expo attracted a large number of people on its second and concluding day at the Expo Centre here on Friday.

More than 44 local and international companies set up their stalls at the two-day exhibition which was visited by farmers, students of agriculture institutes, academia, professionals and others associated with livestock, agriculture and food sectors.

The exhibitors displayed their latest products and technologies such as agriculture and livestock implements, cattle feed, seeds and fertilisers, while banks and insurance companies had also set up stalls to inform visitors about how they could apply and take advantage of agriculture loans and insurance schemes.

Aziz Ahmad from Vehari said he had come here to see new technologies for sowing and harvesting of wheat and paddy crops, which he would grow on his farm. He further said living at a far-off place in the province he could only dream of seeing these machines.

Iqbal, a dairy farmer from Okara, was interested in getting information about maize silage and its advantages over traditional animal feed. He said the exhibition provided him a chance to find out about new and better animal care techniques and milking machines.

“We’ve received serious business customers and are expecting our technology to grow in Pakistan,” said a representative of Cattlekit, a Turkish company.

The exhibition also provided a platform to discuss issues related to agriculture, livestock and food sectors. ‘Farmers’ Perspective on Current Farming Sector Scenario’ and ‘CPEC: Impact on Agriculture’ were themes of dialogue on the second day.

Talking about the farmers’ perspective, Pakistan Kissan Ittehad President Khalid Mahmood Khokhar called for reducing the cost of production of farm produce and providing local growers a level-playing field and facilities and subsidies equal to being provided to their counterparts in China and India so that they could compete with them in the international market.

To set things right, he demanded support price mechanism for all major crops claiming that in India growers of 27 crops were protected through the support price mechanism against just one (wheat) in Pakistan.

Khokhar also called for latest research in developing new seeds, pesticides, farm techniques and machinery. He also criticised the government for what he called framing poor policies. He demanded professionals and not bureaucrats be appointed as the agriculture secretary. He also demanded imposition of agriculture emergency and taking immediate steps for saving the sector from disaster.

Progressive farmers Rabia Sultan and Babar Sardar also highlighted the problems being faced by the sector. Ms Sultan said problems of farmers stood outstanding for decades though many committees had

submitted their reports and recommendations to the authorities concerned. She said the government should do something for at least reducing the cost of production of farm produce.

Mr Sardar was hopeful that with proper technology and hard work the farming scenario could be changed as he believed local farmers and lands had the potential; what they lacked was education, training and resources to overcome the issues.

In the session on CPEC's impact on agriculture, former water management director general Chaudhry Ashraf said the country could compete with Chinese farm products only if it managed to enhance its per acre yield. He stressed introducing high value, high tech and high productivity concepts in agriculture practices here.

Rana Mahmood Akhtar of the agriculture department said they were focusing on high-value farming by initiating contests among fruits and vegetables growers besides offering cash subsidy to those who adopted edible oil crops instead of traditional wheat, sugarcane and rice crops.

He referred to high-tech centres the government was setting up for renting out on easy terms latest farm machinery to interested growers and research being conducted to develop new and better seeds of various crops.

Osman Khan from the Lahore University of Management Sciences called for carefully seeing feasibility of transfer of technology from China and negotiating better with Chinese on high tariff being imposed on exports from Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405641>

18 LABOURERS PERISH IN COAL MINE ACCIDENTS NEAR QUETTA

Dawn, May 6th, 2018

QUETTA: At least 18 workers died and several others suffered injuries when a gas explosion and mudslide struck two coal mines in Balochistan on Saturday.

The blast occurred because of accumulation of methane gas in three branches linked to the main mine in the Marwar area. The mines collapsed, dumping the rubble at the exit point and trapping the workers inside.

The other incident was caused by a mudslide in a mine in the Sur-range area, some 60km east of Quetta.

“At least sixteen miners died in the Marwar mines,” said Chief Inspector of Mines Iftikhar Ahmed.

Mr Ahmed, who rushed to Marwar leading a rescue team, said: “Eleven bodies have been retrieved so far and the rescue operation is in progress.”

Mudslide and gas explosion hit mines in Balochistan's Marwar and Sur areas

Nine coal miners were rescued. They were taken to the Bolan Medical College Hospital, Quetta, where two were said to be in serious condition.

Quetta Commissioner Javed Anwar Shahwani confirmed 16 miners were killed in the Marwar mines. “Rescue teams found the way in the affected mines and launched the rescue operation which is still going on,” he said.

Nine of the deceased were identified as Abdul Rahim, Muhammad Bashir, Abdul Waheed, Muhammad Khalid, Nasarullah, Abdullah Khan, Abdul Haq, Liaquat Ali and Abdul Latif.

According to media reports, the labourers belonged to the Shangla area of Swat.

Most of the bodies were in a bad condition.

Official sources said that 25 to 30 workers were inside the mines, run by a private company, when the explosion occurred.

Provincial Disaster Management Authority director Ataullah Baloch said the rescue operation would be completed on Sunday.

Two more workers were killed and five others injured in a landslide inside a coal mine of the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation in the Sur-range coal mine field.

Levies officials said seven workers were inside the mine when the incident took place. A rescue operation was in progress till late in the evening.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Central Mines Labour Federation president Sultan Mohammad Khan said that over 27 miners were killed in the two accidents and several others injured.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405907>

July 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 16TH TO JULY 22ND 2018

High demand for semi-skilled migrant workers in GCC to continue

Amin Ahmed July 22, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The labour market demand for low- and semi-skilled migrant workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries private sector is projected to remain high in the short-term, as there are numerous mega projects coming up including the ‘Expo 2020’ in UAE and World Soccer Cup 2022 in Qatar, ILO says in a report.

There are also infrastructure and service needs for a growing GCC population since many of these labour intensive jobs cannot be mechanised or nationalised, according to a report on labour migration, skills development and the future of work in the GCC countries, published by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In the long-term, there will still be a structural demand for migrant workers in a segmented labour force like domestic work, construction and such jobs which national population is not inclined to carry out.

With the adoption of new technology the number and profile of migrant workers is expected to change

However, the number and profile of migrant workers is expected to change according to the pace at which employers adopt technology and nationals accept skilled and semi-skilled opportunities in the private sector. The adoption and creation of new technology will also generate more skilled, specialised employment opportunities in the fields of medicine, engineering, environment, among others in the long run.

Between 2000 and 2010, the GCC countries have produced close to 7 million jobs, yet this figure was still insufficient to close the GCC nationals' unemployment rate. Youth and total unemployment rates have remained high, particularly among university graduates. In 2016, youth unemployment was 10 per cent in the UAE; 13.5pc in Kuwait; and 20pc in Saudi Arabia.

The potential consequences of a large unemployed young population in terms of unrest and dampened economic growth are well understood in the region, report says.

Another feature of the GCC labour markets is the low but rising rates of female labour force participation.

In some GCC countries, the rate is just under the global average of 52pc, but the global average of literacy rates is not nearly as high as they are in the GCC countries.

Despite higher educational attainment rates than men, women continue to face multiple social and cultural barriers to entering the workforce as well as the same discrimination in hiring practices that women in the West and other regions face.

ILO estimates that at least 2.1 million additional migrant domestic workers will be required in the GCC countries over the next few decades due to the changing demographic profile and family structure. The demand for care workers, ranging from domestic workers to health care professionals including nurses and midwives, is intricately linked with the healthcare conditions and demographic transitions in the GCC countries.

In addition to child care needs, the GCC countries will increasingly depend on migrants for elderly care. In the UAE, the proportion of the population over sixty in 2010 was 40,000 and is projected to increase by 207,000 in 2025. In Saudi Arabia, at least ten million people are expected to be 65 or older by 2050.

Studies suggest that public expenditure contraction in the care economy, combined with falling state capacity to provide welfare, and has created a greater need for migrant care workers who are employed by households.

Not all GCC countries have decreased their public health expenditure, but recent reforms to health insurance in Abu Dhabi now mandates all locals to pay 20pc — as opposed to 100pc full health insurance coverage — for treatment in private hospitals.

The report says the current GCC countries' population of 53 million is projected to increase by 25pc to over 66 million by 2030, reflecting both relatively high — although declining — fertility rates.

This demographic transition has produced a young and rapidly growing labour force. Across the GCC countries, the median age was 31.4 in 2015, from a low of 29.0 in Oman to a high of 33.4 in Kuwait and UAE.

Published in Dawn, July 22nd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1421670/high-demand-for-semi-skilled-migrant-workers-in-gcc-to-continue>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 9TH TO JULY 15TH 2018

32 bonded peasants freed

A Correspondent July 11, 2018

BADIN: The district and sessions judge Javed Ahmed Baloch on Monday set at liberty 32 bonded peasants who were recovered after raid on a private jail in Gul Mohammad Tangri village near Talhar town a day before.

Talhar police conducted the raid on the orders of the court after one Sewaji Kolhi filed an application, seeking liberation of his family members and close relatives from the private jail.

He stated in the application that the landowner was not giving his relatives their share in crops for the past two years and he subjected them to torture whenever they demanded their right.

Published in Dawn, July 11th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1419205/32-bonded-peasants-freed>

August 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 13TH TO AUGUST 19TH 2018

DEATH TOLL IN QUETTA COAL MINE TRAGEDY RISES TO 15

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated August 15, 2018

QUETTA: The bodies of five more miners, who were trapped in a coal mine that caved in following a methane gas explosion on Sunday, were retrieved on Tuesday.

This brings the final death toll in the mine tragedy in the Sanjdi area to 15, as according to officials no other miner or volunteer is left in the mine.

Thirteen labourers were working in the 400-foot-deep mine when its major portion collapsed after the explosion on Sunday. All the 13 miners were trapped under the rubble when volunteers launched rescue work.

Of the five volunteers, who went into the mine for rescue, two died on Monday due to accumulation of poisonous methane gas inside the mine. The bodies of eight miners and the two rescuers were retrieved during a larger rescue operation. Three volunteers were also shifted to Quetta Civil Hospital in critical condition.

“The remaining five miners could not be saved despite rescue efforts,” said Chief Inspector (mines) Iftikhar Ahmed on Tuesday.

Published in Dawn, August 15th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1427062/death-toll-in-quetta-coal-mine-tragedy-rises-to-15>

LABOUR UNIONS CALL FOR SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter August 17, 2018

KARACHI: Highlighting the inhumane conditions workers, especially miners, are forced to work in the country, representatives of various labour organisations called upon provincial governments to strictly enforce labour laws and ensure that workers perform their jobs in a safe environment.

They were speaking at a press conference at the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) Pakistan office on Thursday to raise their voice over lack of health and safety standards at workplaces, especially mines.

Speaking about the recent tragedy in Sanjdi area of Quetta, they said that of the 13 workers who were present in the 400-foot-deep mine at the time of the explosion, bodies of only eight workers had been recovered so far.

“According to the latest information, all miners died along with two rescue workers. This is very tragic. However, this is not the first incident of its kind. Earlier, 27 workers died due to suffocation after a blast in their mine in Quetta,” said Nasir Mansoor, the deputy general secretary of NTUF.

Seventy coal miners have been killed since May in various accidents in Balochistan alone.

“The number of such accidents is constantly rising, indicating complete violation of the mines act by mine owners and the government's indifference to the suffering of the workers,” he added. He said that the plight of labourers in other provinces was also not different and what labour organisations had been

demanding of the governments was strict enforcement of labour regulations and laws to ensure safety of labourers and forcing employers to follow health and safety standards.

“Nobody has learnt any lesson from the 2012 Baldia factory tragedy that took lives of 260 innocent workers, the death of 30 workers at Gadani ship-breaking yard in 2016 and other occupational mishaps which happen almost on a daily basis in different parts of the country,” Mr Mansoor regretted.

He also talked about the textile, garments and hosiery sectors which are helping the country earn huge foreign exchange, but where working conditions were very bad and workers were vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation.

“These sectors report the highest number of industrial mishaps every year,” he said.

These sectors, they said, come under the Sindh Industrial Relations Act, 2013, but ironically the government had not framed any rules under this law in the last five years, depriving millions of workers of their rights.

Riaz Abbasi, general secretary Atlas Group of Companies Workers Union and Bashir Ahmed Mahmoodani representing the Gadani ship-breaking workers’ union, also spoke.

Published in Dawn, August 17th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1427409/labour-unions-call-for-safe-working-environment>

MOOT DEMANDS GIVING HARIS LEGAL RIGHTS AS LABOURERS, ENDING WATER SHORTAGE

August 19, 2018

MITHI: A Hari conference here on Saturday demanded giving labour rights to the Haris under the SIRA 2013, end the “artificial shortage” of water in Sindh, declare the Thar Desert a calamity-hit area and give jobs to the local people in the Thar Coal field, said a press release issued by the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF).

The NTUF and the Sindh Agricultural General Workers Union (CBA) jointly organised the conference at Mahao Bheel Goth of District Mithi, which was presided over by union president Ali Ahmed Panhwar. It was largely attended by the representatives of Hari and agricultural workers. Addressing the conference, the speakers said that five years had already passed since the recognition of the agricultural and fisheries workers as legal workers under the Sindh Industrial Relations Act 2013 (SIRA2013).

Under this act, it was agreed to give social security, pension, grants, welfare schemes, and the right to make unions and CBAs to the workers of the agricultural and fisheries sectors like the industrial workers; however, the relevant departments of the Sindh government have yet to make implement the law. As a result, millions of workers of the agricultural and fisheries sectors are deprived of their legal and constitutional rights.

Speakers said at conference that like the industrial workers, the agricultural workers are facing serious threats to their health and life due to lack of health and safety measures at their workplaces. They are not given any training to properly handle dangerous fumigation, pesticides and fertilizers. In case of illness and death there are no facilities of medical treatment and compensation for them and their families.

They said today feudal lords, so-called religious and spiritual leaders had made their fiefdoms in Sindh which were like slave states. No political or religious party is ready to raise voice for these virtual slave Haris, who are facing kidnappings and forced marriages and conversions of their daughters, they said, adding murder and rape cases are on the rise, affecting the Haris, especially belonging to minorities.

The speakers said that due to the prolonged drought, the Thar region is facing a famine-like situation, which is turning into a human tragedy. People are facing hunger and diseases and their animals are dying due to lack of water and fodder. In this grim scenario, people are forced to migrate; however, there is no one to understand their problems and resolve them.

Moreover, speakers said, in the Thar Coal projects, the locals are not given jobs and non-locals are invited to work on their coal projects.

They said that presently the artificial shortage of water in Sindh has become a huge crisis. On the one hand there is a manmade shortage of irrigation water and on the other powerful and influential feudal lords have made their monopoly over distribution of water.

They use the water courses as per their sweet will and the small growers and peasants are deprived of their fair share of canal water. They said that there is no mechanism of setting crop rates in consultation with the representatives of Haris and as such Haris and small cultivators are left on the mercy of market mafia and commission agents, who set the crop prices to serve their petty interests.

The speakers demanded giving the Haris all their rights, including social security, pension, right to making trade unions and CBAs, besides making rules for the Sindh Industrial Relations Action 2013 (SIRA 2013) to ensure its immediate implementation. They asked to take urgent steps to overcome the artificial shortage of water in Sindh and ensure just distribution of water.

“The safety and health of Haris working in farms and fields should be ensured. The Haris should be brought in the orbit of the Occupational Health and Safety law, passed by the Sindh Assembly. A mechanism should be formed to set the rates of paddy, sugarcane and other crops in consultation with the representatives of the Haris. “All basic facilities of life should be given to the villages of Haris including water, electricity and gas. They should be given paved roads and drainage schemes.”

The speakers demanded that schools, dispensaries and hospitals should be set up in villages. The legal and constitutional right of the Haris to make their unions and CBAs under the SIRA 2013 should be recognized, discriminatory attitude to the Haris, especially Hindu Haris, and kidnappings and forced marriages of the daughters of Haris and forced change of religion should be stopped. The speakers also demanded that harassment of and discrimination against women Haris should be ended and the women Haris should be given wages equal the male Haris. The Haris should be given representation in

assemblies as per their proportion in population. The feudal system should be ended and the government lands distributed amongst the Haris after bringing land reforms.

Those spoke included NTUF central deputy general secretary Nasir Mansoor, Sindh Agricultural General Workers Union (CBA) President Ali Ahmed Panhwar, general secretary Lal Bux Lallan Sathio, vice president Sabaghi Bheel, information secretary Mushtaq Ali Shah, union leader from Mithi Moti Ram Bheel, Abdul Aziz Wago, Heranand, Saleem Jamali and others.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/357060-moot-demands-giving-haris-legal-rights-as-labourers-ending-water-shortage>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 30TH TO AUGUST 5TH 2018 PAKISTAN HOME TO WORLD'S THIRD-LARGEST 'SLAVE' POPULATION

By Reuters

Published: July 31, 2018

LONDON: At least 40 million people worldwide are estimated to be trapped in modern slavery today – more than ever before – as poverty, conflict and crises fuel the growing global slave trade.

From men made to work in factories, farms and fishing boats and women forced to sell sex to people exploited for their organs and children sent to beg or forced to marry, human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises.

North Korea, Eritrea and Burundi are estimated to have the world's highest rates of modern-day slavery, with India, China and Pakistan home to the largest number of victims, according to the United Nations and Walk Free Foundation.

The United Nations has designated July 30 World Day against Trafficking in Persons, with the world striving to meet a UN goal to end forced labour and modern slavery by 2030.

10 million slaves go missing from survey in India

Here are some key facts and figures about modern slavery and human trafficking worldwide.

People can be trafficked for various forms of exploitation such as prostitution, forced labour, begging, criminality, domestic servitude, forced marriage and organ removal.

The face of human trafficking is changing, with more children and men falling prey, and more victims trapped in forced labour than a decade ago, the UN says.

At least 40 million people are victims of modern slavery worldwide – with nearly 25 million trapped in forced labour and about 15 million in forced marriages.

Almost three-quarters are female – and one in four a child with modern-day slavery most prevalent in Africa followed by Asia and Pacific.

Eradicating the menace: 'Those involved in bonded labour to face the music'

North Korea has the world's highest rate of slavery, with about one in 10 people enslaved, followed by Eritrea 9.3 %, Burundi 4%, Central African Republic 2.2%, Afghanistan 2.2%, Mauritania 2.1%, South Sudan 2%, Pakistan 1.7%, Cambodia 1.7% and Iran 1.6%.

India is home to the largest number of slaves globally, with 8 million, followed by China 3.86 million, Pakistan 3.19 million, North Korea 2.64 million, Nigeria 1.39 million, Iran 1.29 million, Indonesia 1.22 million, the Democratic Republic of the Congo 1 million, Russia 794,000 and the Philippines 784,000.

Human trafficking generates an estimated \$150 billion each year in illicit profits for traffickers and slave masters.

The United Nations' latest global goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, passed by UN member states in 2015, call for the eradication by 2030 of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, and an end to child labour.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1769802/3-pakistan-home-worlds-third-largest-slave-population/>

September 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 10TH TO SEPTEMBER 16TH 2018 SIX YEARS ON, PLIGHT OF WORKERS REMAINS UNCHANGED IN COUNTRY

Shazia Hasan Updated September 12, 2018

KARACHI: The empty blackened structure of Ali Enterprises, the Baldia factory, in which over 250 garment workers were burnt alive, still stands as a horrific reminder of the tragedy that took place in 2012.

Invited by the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) and Association of Baldia Factory Fire Affectees (ABFFA), the families of the dead gathered here on Tuesday to mark the sixth anniversary of the fire. Representatives of the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and local NGOs were also present on the occasion along with senior activists and trade unionists.

Families of deceased workers gather to mark sixth anniversary of Baldia factory fire

There were the aged parents, mothers, widows, siblings and children of the late workers. Little children who were just toddlers six years ago held on tight to framed photographs of their late parents.

Nasir Mansoor, the deputy general secretary of NTUF, said that the Baldia factory incident was one of the biggest accidents in the industrial sector and it still failed to bring any positive change to the lives of workers.

“Workplaces are still unsafe. There was a worker who recently died of electric shock, there are workers dying on a daily basis at the ship-breaking yards of Gadani, and there are casualties in coal mines, but we

find no mention of workers or any facilities for them in the 100-day agenda of the new government,” he said.

“Workers are not even given the right to make unions in the organisations they work for, while big orders for clothing and other things are outsourced to factories and they are expected to work extra hours just like slaves without any benefits,” he said.

Saeeda Khatoon, who lost her 18-year-old son in the fire and who founded the ABFFA, said the heirs of the martyred and maimed workers are still awaiting justice even after six years.

“They have been knocking at the doors of courts at local and international level so that justice can be [served] to them. They are still protesting,” she said.

Karamat Ali, executive director of the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Piler), said that institutions formed by the government for welfare of labour have failed to discharge their duties and they are fully safeguarding the interests of employers.

“The working conditions in all industrial entities including garment and textile factories that make goods for international brands are worse than slavery conditions.

“The owners of local factories, international brands, and the government departments related to labour have formed an anti-worker nexus and now there is hardly one per cent of 68,000,000 workers who have the right of making trade unions,” he said.

“Skilled workers here are not given even the minimum wages as prescribed by the government for unskilled workers. And there is a third party contract system in 95 per cent of factories, which is against the verdict of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The right of social security and pension is also only available to five per cent workers,” he said.

‘Death cells’

Gul Rahman, NTUF’s president in Sindh, said that factories like Ali Enterprises were no different than ‘death cells’.

“The supervisors of these factories are harsh and nasty. They ill treat and threaten the workers,” he said.

Zaheer Arif of the ILO said they have tried coming up with a compensation structure for the families of those who died in the Baldia factory fire.

“We designed the compensation structure with Piler, NTUF, Sindh Employees Social Security Institution (Sessi), etc, and money has already been transferred in the accounts of the family members of some 200 workers who could be identified,” he said.

Habibuddin Janaidi of the Peoples Labour Bureau said that even if the families were compensated, there is really no replacement or compensation for the life of a loved one. “Your loss can never be filled,” he condoled with the bereaved families of the late workers.

Liaquat Sahi, general secretary of the State Bank Democratic Union, said the government and the legislatures exposed themselves by their careless attitude towards workers, especially the families of the late workers of Ali Enterprises.

He added that he was surprised at the chief justice of Pakistan’s comments that he was not in favour of trade unions.

“Hearing him say such things is like witnessing the funeral of trade unions in this country,” he further said.

More speakers, including NTUF president Rafiq Baloch, Miriam Saage of ECCHR, Liana Foxvog of Clean Cloth Campaign, Abdul Aziz of ABFFA, Bashir Shakir of Pakistan Textile Federation, Niaz Khan of Carpet Workers Union and Riaz Abbasi of NTUF also regretted that all this is happening despite the ILO conventions, GSP Plus and Global Framework Agreements.

They said that international brands get their goods made in local factories while deceiving their buyers about not violating any labour or human rights and they use private social audit companies which issue them fake certificates after getting money from them, claiming that these factories are respecting the international labour and safety standards.

Published in Dawn, September 12th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1432341/six-years-on-plaint-of-workers-remains-unchanged-in-country>

WORKERS OF COAL GASIFICATION PROJECT HOLD RALLY AGAINST PLIGHT

A Correspondent September 12, 2018

MITHI: A large number of officers and workers of the underground coal gasification (UCG) project took out a rally here on Tuesday outside Thar Press Club and at the plant site in the village of Bhabanio Bheel near Islamkot town in protest against non-payment of salaries for the past three months.

Leaders of the protesters told local journalists that it was due to an indifferent attitude of the high-ups of the Sindh energy department that over 450 workers (85 per cent from Thar) related with the UCG mega project were facing hardships.

Dr Manik Lal, Raja Gohar, Dileep Kumar, Abdul Manan Larik and other leaders alleged that the government of Sindh altogether disowned the project despite the fact that manpower had been hired through proper advertisement and test/interviews after a board was constituted by the energy department for execution of the plan.

Chief of the mega project, Dr Samar Mubarakmand, had written several letters to the energy department authorities regarding suspension of the project development funds, but in vain, they said

“In his final letter, he stated that it is not possible for the project management to continue the project under these circumstances, hence the energy department may nominate their representatives to take over assets/machinery worth billions of rupees or arrange sufficient funds to sustain the project,” they added.

The protesting employees of Thar were of the view that at this point of time when their region was facing a severe drought this year too and their children were dying from malnutrition, stoppage of their wages by the government of Sindh was a criminal act.

“The vision of Thar coal belongs to Sindh as actually this is the project of the Sindh energy department being funded by the federal government under the ministry of planning, development and reforms and Planning Commission (PC),” they added.

The mega project was launched in 2009 for producing gas from coal reserves on experimental basis and it successfully achieved the target in 2011 within two years.

Thereafter, a project for 100MW was approved to generate electricity through the UCG costing Rs9 billion while so far only 33per cent of the allocated funds have been released. “The UCG project is now able to generate 8MW electricity through coal gas, but the federal and provincial governments neither purchase power from it nor [are they] releasing funds to run the project,” they said.

They demanded appropriate measures to save the around Rs4bn worth project built from taxpayer money and future of the 450 workers posted at this project for the past eight years.

Published in Dawn, September 12th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1432329/workers-of-coal-gasification-project-hold-rally-against-plight>

‘CSR ACTIVITIES CANNOT HIDE PLIGHT OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THAR COAL PROJECT’
By Our Correspondent

Published: September 12, 2018

intense militarisation of mega projects in Pakistan, observed the Karachi Urban Lab (KUL) Director Dr Nausheen H Anwar. “There’s a mega project obsession with major political parties of the country,” she added.

Dr Anwar, who is an associate professor of city and regional planning at the Institute of Business Administration’s (IBA) Department of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts was speaking at a session titled, ‘Land Acquisition and Media Reporting’ at the Centre for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ), IBA, on Tuesday. The session focused on work conducted by Dr Anwar and Dr Amiera Sawas over the past 18 months in the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park, Bahawalpur and Thar Coal Project on large-scale fossil fuel and green energy projects and their impact on land access and livelihood of ordinary citizens. Dr Sawas is a researcher in climate change and risk at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

According to Dr Sawas, energy mega projects are like taking one step forward and two steps back in terms of climate. “There’s going to be massive environmental impact of coal expansion and any emissions we are going to make through coal is going to impact Pakistan,” she said.

As part of their research in at Thar, Dr Anwar said that they collected data on the sources of income of the local residents. They found that their primary source of income was pastoral, which is rain-fed agriculture. She, however, feared to see major changes in terms of their income. According to her, the Thar Engro Coal Power Project cannot be sugar-coated through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and philanthropy efforts. She said that media never asked Engro about their carbon emission report. “It’s almost impossible to quantify carbon emissions. The most you can do is speculate,” she said, adding that the project is highly unsustainable in the short and long run, before terming it “exploitative”.

Referring to the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park in Bahawalpur, which is a 100MW solar powered plant spanning over 500 acres and hosting 392,158 solar modules, Dr Anwar said that several villages were destroyed when the project was constructed by the Government of Punjab in May 2015 at a cost of \$131 million.

The piece of land on which the project is constructed was under governmental control. “Media reported nothing about the compensation scheme,” she said and also questioned the project’s Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIA).

For the land in Tharparkar, she said that it wasn’t so straight forward. “The pastors have a special relation with their land which you and I cannot understand,” she said, adding that the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company and Sindh government’s Board of Revenue faced several challenges hence they termed certain pieces of land legal and certain illegal, and then came up with a compensation package. “But the directly affected were the pastoral communities in Thar and Bahawalpur,” she said, adding that it was a question of access to land. “The more you expand the project, the more you will continue the relocation,” she explained.

The Land Acquisition Law

The law under which land acquisition takes place is the colonial-era Land Acquisition Act 1894, which she said has recently been amended in India after intense land activism emerged.

According to this law, any land can be acquired by the state for public purpose. However, the ‘public purpose’ isn’t clear, according to Dr Anwar. This, she explained, enables the military, government, private, and corporate actors to buy or annex land for profit from ordinary citizens.

The other flaw in the law, according to her, is that there was no recognition of communal rights. “The Thari people had right of access to their land for generations,” she said, adding that the knowledge of how to use that land is internal to that community only.

The model villages, she said, are beautiful and climate friendly but the lifestyle of an average Thari is different. “The local media has been complicit in encouraging the discourse that people of Thar are backward,” she said calling it a “colonial narrative.”

She explained that in Thar when a family feels the need to expand, they expand, whereas we call that encroachment. In model villages, when they will be given properly-built houses, they won’t be able to expand.

Law and activism

“There’s not a single story of activism in Bahawalpur,” Dr Anwar remarked. “But in Thar there has been tremendous activism. However, the media coverage is very superficial for this issue”.

Recommendations

Dr Anwar recommended that a public commission be formed to measure the land and ascertain its market value. She also recommended more transparency on projects such as the issuance of long-term EIA reports.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 12th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1800971/1-csr-activities-cannot-hide-plight-people-affected-thar-coal-project/>

TWO WORKERS KILLED IN COAL MINE BLAST

The Newspaper’s Staff Correspondent Updated September 16, 2018

QUETTA: Two miners lost their lives and two others were wounded inside the Duki coal mine on Saturday.

The labourers faced the catastrophe after they went deep inside the mine and it caved in because of a methane gas explosion.

Levies force said that two miners died and two others were rescued by their colleagues.

The dead and the injured were taken to the district hospital where the bodies were identified as that of Jan Muhammad and Alizai, both hailing from Afghanistan.

The bodies were dispatched to their home country while the injured were being treated in the hospital.

Published in Dawn, September 16th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1433239/two-workers-killed-in-coal-mine-blast>

COAL PLANT WORKERS PROTEST DENIAL OF SALARIES BY SINDH GOVT

Hanif Samoon September 16, 2018

MITHI: A large number of unpaid workers of Underground Coal Gasification plant, who staged a demonstration outside Islamkot press club on Saturday demanding release of salaries of three months and regularisation of jobs, rejected the energy minister's attempt to shoulder off the plant's responsibility and pass the buck to the federal government.

The protesters' leaders, Mohammad Ismail Boohar, engineers Abdul Manan Larik and Safdar Memon said at the gathering of plant workers that the 450 workers of UCG plant were shocked at the Sindh Minister for Energy Imtiaz Ahmed Sheikh's statement claiming that the provincial government was merely a facilitator in the UCG project and it was initiated and funded by the federal government.

They rejected the statement and termed it a mockery of facts. The federal government had clearly stated in a letter to the energy department that its role was only of a provider of funds for the plant as per approved PC-1, they said.

They said the proof that the project's execution had been sole responsibility of Sindh government from the day one was that the entire recruitment process was carried out by the energy department after placing advertisements in leading newspapers.

The department issued notifications for formation of test and interview committees for vetting applicants and approval of posts and issued offer letters to the successful candidates after clearance of job tests, they said.

They said the chief minister had directed secretary of energy in May 2018 to examine the case of UCG employees but the directive did not follow any action. The execution of the project was the sole responsibility of the energy department, they repeated.

Amid the crisis and uncertainty at the plant, the project management was nowhere to be seen and Rs4 billion worth assets had been left to gather rust and at the mercy of a few security guards, they said.

They deplored that they had met leaders of Pakistan Peoples Party several times to press them to resolve their issues. They did agree in principle that the employees' issues were genuine but did nothing to release them salary and regularise their jobs, they said, adding they would continue the protest till their demands were met.

Sindh Minister for Energy Imtiaz Ahmed Shaikh said the provincial government was in contact with the federal government urging it to release Rs230 million funds for payment of salaries to the plant workers.

He insisted that the mega project was launched and funded by the then federal government and the Sindh government was to act only as a facilitator in carrying out work on site in block No5 in Thar Coalfield.

He said that he had assured the unpaid workers soon after he was inducted in the cabinet that he would request the chief minister to write again to the authorities concerned in the federal government, demanding release of funds for the payment of salary.

He said the Sindh government had written a letter to the authorities concerned in Islamabad a few weeks back drawing their attention towards non-payment of salaries to over 450 workers and their protest over non-payment of emoluments for three months.

“I had assured leaders of the protesting workers that the Sindh government will never want anybody to become jobless or face financial hardships for lack of funds,” he added.

Published in Dawn, September 16th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1433117/coal-plant-workers-protest-denial-of-salaries-by-sindh-govt>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 3TH TO SEPTEMBER 9TH 2018

CALL FOR FRAMING RULES UNDER HOME-BASED WORKERS ACT

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter September 08, 2018

KARACHI: Speakers at a meeting on Friday demanded that rules under the Home-Based Workers Act 2018 be framed as soon as possible so that workers could benefit from the new law.

Speaking at a consultative meeting organised by the Home-Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF), they said that now, after the passage of the law the home-based (HB) workers had been recognised as workers in legal terms and were entitled to get all benefits that were available to industrial workers etc.

Senior trade unionist and Peoples Labour Bureau leader Habibuddin Junaidi said that efforts should be made to approach the Sindh Employees Social Security Institution, the Employees Old Age Benefit Institution, the Workers Welfare Board and other such workers' welfare organisations so that HB workers' registration process with these organisations could be initiated.

He, however, expressed regret over the slow pace of government's working and cited an example that though minimum wage of Rs16,200 per month had been announced some time back, it had not yet been notified, so the workers were not yet able to get it.

Nasir Mansoor of the NTUF said that rules under the act be framed as soon as possible so that registration process of workers could be initiated and they could get benefits that were available to other workers.

He said that though the International Labour Organisation had announced the Convention relating to home-based workers (ILO C 177) in 1996, only a few countries had so far ratified it.

Within Pakistan, the Sindh government was among the first which had formulated a law about it. But the law could not be implemented unless rules were framed, he added.

HBWWF official Zehra Khan demanded that a home-based workers council at the provincial level be formed and fund for the home-based workers be set up instantly so that it could be used for skill development and betterment of workers.

A 12-member committee was also formed at the meeting to review lacunas in the law by studying the proposed bill and the act passed by the assembly.

This committee would also see as to how the act could be made purposeful by suggesting amendments to other related laws like Sessi and EOBI laws.

Karamat Ali of the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Piler) said that some lacunas had been identified in the newly passed act so efforts should be made to amend the law to plug these gaps and further strengthen the act.

Farrukh Zaidi of the labour department, Shaheen Mangi of the Minimum Wage Board, Faseeh Karim of the Employers Federation, Farhat Parween, Mir Zulfiqar, Liaquat Mangi, workers' representatives Saira Feroz, Basit Ali, Riaz Abbasi and others also participated in the discussion at the meeting.

Published in Dawn, September 8th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1431559/call-for-framing-rules-under-home-based-workers-act>

October 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 22TH TO OCTOBER 28TH 2018

WORKER INJURED IN CYLINDER BLAST DIES

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter October 22, 2018

KARACHI: One of the six workers wounded in a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinder explosion inside an industrial unit of Korangi on Saturday afternoon succumbed to his wounds during treatment on Sunday, Awami Colony police and hospital officials said on Sunday.

The condition of three other workers was stated to be critical as well.

Awami Colony SHO Shahid Khan said that the cylinder blew up inside Kamran engineering company in Sector-27 of Korangi Industrial Area in which five persons were burnt while the sixth one received head injuries.

Electric panels are manufactured at the factory, where the LPG cylinder exploded.

The police officer said that the exact cause of the explosion could not be ascertained yet.

The wounded workers were taken to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi for treatment.

Additional surgeon Dr Qarar Ahmed Abbasi told Dawn on Sunday that one injured worker, Saud, 18, died during treatment. He had received 100pc burns.

Dr Abbasi added that the condition of two other burnt workers — Kasoo, 30, and Tariq, 55 — was critical as they also sustained between 95 per cent and 100pc burn wounds.

The hospital official said that Jameel, who received head injuries, was also in critical condition.

Other wounded workers were identified as Zia, 20, and Anees, 25.

The area SHO said that so far no one had approached the police for lodging a case against the factory owner.

Published in Dawn, October 22nd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1440536/worker-injured-in-cylinder-blast-dies>

SKILLED MANPOWER: LABOUR EXPORT PROPOSED TO BRIDGE TRADE GAP

By Imran Rana

Published: October 24, 2018

FAISALABAD: The export of skilled manpower could not only bridge the import-export gap, but would also help increase the inflow of remittances from \$20 billion to \$40 billion, suggested a business leader.

By focusing on that area, Pakistan would also be able to avoid dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of a bailout programme. “However, in this connection, harmony is imperative between the government and public and private-sector departments,” emphasised Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s (FCCI) former vice president Ahmed Hassan on Tuesday.

Speaking at an awareness session organised by the Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF), Hassan pointed out that Pakistan was fetching around \$24 billion from exports while around \$20 billion were being sent by expatriate Pakistanis in the form of remittances.

However, he lamented that the country’s import bill amounted to around \$60 billion and it was growing at a rapid pace. “We have to take necessary remedial measures to enhance exports and trim imports through viable policy interventions,” he stressed.

Calling the youth a precious asset, Hassan said Pakistan must utilise it with proper market-driven skills in order to export them to different potential markets around the world.

“Pakistani skilled manpower is in huge demand in the US, Europe and Gulf states,” he said. “We should concentrate on the European countries where the birth rate has been negative for the past many years.”

He suggested that a special syllabus should be designed to impart knowledge about different countries so that the skilled manpower could be absorbed easily in specific societies.

He underlined the need for the private sector to play its role and train labour for sector-specific needs. The youth should be equipped with hi-tech skills so that they could be easily absorbed in different countries in addition to catering to immediate needs of CPEC-related projects.

Appreciating Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision, FCCI Acting President Mian Tanveer Ahmed said the government as well as the business community had identical views on the revival of national economy and they would have to work together to steer Pakistan out of the economic crisis.

He welcomed the subsidy of Rs44 billion for gas supply to five export-oriented sectors at uniform tariffs and hoped that it would reduce the production cost and give a boost to national exports.

“A positive response from the business community to water and other important issues is highly appreciable and hopefully we will settle these issues very soon with active support from our patriotic businessmen,” declared Prime Minister Imran Khan on an earlier visit to Faisalabad.

The premier said ill-conceived policies of previous governments coupled with politicisation of administrative and government institutions posed a serious threat to the national economy. However, he remained optimistic that the PTI government would be able to address these issues in active collaboration with the business community.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 24th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1832412/2-skilled-manpower-labour-export-proposed-bridge-trade-gap/>

LABOUR AMENDMENTS

Parvez Rahim October 25, 2018

THE 18th Amendment was passed in April, 2010, but a controversy still rages: should it be rolled back? Realistically, after a constitutional amendment, or in fact an amendment to any law, is passed, it is difficult to reverse or nullify the same without compelling reasons. It should also be remembered that the 18th Amendment was formulated after comprehensive deliberations by a parliamentary committee, comprising members from all parliamentary parties, to meet the long-standing demand of provincial autonomy.

Devolving health, labour and education to the provinces through this amendment has created issues, but not of such a magnitude that they can't be addressed. Take labour. The Sindh government boasts of devolving the highest number of labour laws in comparison with the other three provinces. While this may be so, Sindh has made unbridled amendments to the laws, thus jeopardising the interests of both employers and workers. It is ironical that the 18th Amendment came about when the PPP ruled at the centre. Now it is the PPP provincial setup that is making such amendments, which will scare off investors.

After devolution, two categories of companies have emerged for the application of labour laws, those which exist only in one province and those which exist in more than one province. The Federal Industrial Relations Act, 2012, has been enacted for the industries located within the Islamabad Capital Territory and trans-provincial companies.

Some key laws should go back to the centre.

Since the 18th Amendment is here to stay, I have mentioned some key labour laws, which should remain with the provinces and at least three which need to go back to the federal government. The three are welfare laws and their return to the federation will not only ensure their survival but also be instrumental in continuing to achieve their purpose.

The Industrial Relations Ordinance, 1969: All provinces and the centre have promulgated their respective industrial relations acts after devolution. They are similar to each other and meet the spirit of the 1969 ordinance. But a major difference between the federal and provincial acts is that there is no duration of collective labour agreements prescribed by the former, while in the provinces they can only be reached for a maximum of two years.

The Industrial and Commercial Employment (Standing Orders) Ordinance, 1968: Provinces other than Sindh have almost adopted the 1968 ordinance; however, Sindh has not only changed its name but also made drastic changes to it. The Sindh Terms of Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 2015, has made it applicable to all employees of a company including management staff, but excluding the occupier and manager. In addition, the outsourcing of services has been prohibited. Both these changes have negative repercussions for industries.

Factories Act, 1934: This act was already administered by the provinces prior to devolution, so nothing significant has taken place. However, taking advantage of the privilege to make amendments to the act, Sindh has prohibited the contracting out of services and promoted absenteeism by doubling the quantum of sick leave for workers.

Shops and Establishment Ordinance, 1969: KP has extended its act of 2015 to establishments, to which it did not apply previously such as educational institutions, health centres, labs, hotels, cinemas etc. Besides, overtime limits have been made realistic as an employee can now be engaged in such work for 24 hours per week, which was previously 150 hours per annum. The other provinces should also adopt this provision.

Employees Old-Age Benefits Act, 1976: If this most beneficial of welfare laws is to survive, its status as a federal law should immediately be restored through a constitutional amendment. This will stop many controversies and litigation affecting the act, bringing relief to pensioners.

Companies' Profits (Workers' Participation) Act, 1968 and Workers' Welfare Fund Ordinance, 1971: As KP and Balochistan have fewer industries, they, along with Punjab, continue to be governed by the act of 1968 as they have not devolved it. Only Sindh has done so, giving rise to controversies and litigation in

the superior courts. The bulk of money collected under both enactments goes to the welfare fund constituted under the 1971 ordinance.

Prior to devolution, these funds were collected by the FBR and would then be transferred to the provinces according to prescribed ratios. The money generated was supposed to be spent on the construction of houses for workers, their education, training, re-skilling and financing of other welfare measures for them. This process has been discontinued since 2010, and requires immediate revival. Let these two laws also be transferred to the centre through the same constitutional amendment as that for the EOBI.

The writer is an industrial relations professional.

Published in Dawn, October 25th , 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1441223/labour-amendments>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 15TH TO OCTOBER 21TH 2018
CALL FOR CENSUS, REGISTRATION OF MINERS WITH WELFARE ORGANISATIONS
Saleem Shahid October 19, 2018

QUETTA: Leading human rights activist and former director of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), I.A. Rehman, has said problems being faced by workers could not be resolved until society changes its attitude towards the labour class and considers issues of the workers as its own.

Speaking at a consultative meeting organised by the HRCP's Balochistan chapter here on Thursday, Mr Rehman said that everybody in society was just taking care of their own problems and not giving attention to issues of labourers and low-paid workers and that attitude was increasing difficulties being faced by the labour class.

Mr Rehman said that holding of such conferences could play an important role in finding a solution to the issues of the labour community.

He said that such conferences had been very successful in Sindh and suggested that more such meetings should be arranged in all provinces. He said that companies working on different projects should fulfil their social responsibilities and spend funds for the welfare of their workers and provide health, education, drinking water and other basic facilities to them.

Mr Rehman further said that census of mine workers should be conducted according to the verdict of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and they should be registered in welfare organisations.

He suggested that in case of death of a worker in a mine accident, the compensation amount should be increased.

He said that children working on a daily wage basis should be provided education facilities.

Referring to the fisheries' sector, he said that people affiliated with the fishing profession since centuries should not be affected by the CPEC and Balochistan should be given its share in the mega project.

A large number of human rights activists, leaders and workers of political parties, journalists, lawyers attended the meeting.

The participants in the meeting discussed issues being faced by the labour class in different sectors, including coal mines, industries and several other organisations.

It was observed that miners working in the coal-mine industry were the worst affected and mine owners deprived them of their rights.

Labour leader Sultan Mohammad talked in detail about problems of mine workers. He said that they were working in very dangerous situation in coal fields, as mine owners did not implement labour laws. He added that lack of safety measures for miners was the major reason of huge casualties of workers in case of a mine accident.

The meeting also noted that departments concerned were not fulfilling their responsibilities in monitoring the implementation of labour laws.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1439947/call-for-census-registration-of-miners-with-welfare-organisations>

70-DAY CLOSURE OF BRICK KILNS BEGINS AHEAD OF APPROACHING SMOG

Reuters October 20, 2018

ISLAMABAD: To combat worsening smog, the government has ordered all traditional brick kilns to close for 70 days starting from Saturday (today), as it promotes new cleaner kilns that could cut pollution up to 70 per cent.

But the measure has produced an outcry both from kiln owners, who want incentives to make the switch, and from kiln workers who fear losing income.

“How I will provide food to my three children during the closure of kilns?” asks Sumaira Bibi, 35, who with her 60-year-old husband frames up to 1,200 bricks a day for a kiln near Islamabad, earning about \$8 daily.

Under the government order, all traditional kilns must shut from Oct 20 until Dec 31 to cut smog that has blighted parts of Punjab province, and other areas of the country, in recent years.

The country has about 19,000 such kilns, said Shoaib Khan Niazi, president of the All Pakistan Brick Kiln Association.

The government has also ordered that all kilns be converted to “zig-zag” technology, a design change that makes more efficient use of fuel, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. No deadline for the switch has been set.

Owners, workers unhappy with the decision for separate reasons

An internal zig-zag structure in kilns, combined with the use of an air blower can cut the consumption of coal, slash emissions substantially and improve the quality of bricks produced, said Malik Amin Aslam, an adviser to Prime Minister Imran Khan on climate change issues.

Traditional kiln owners, however, are demanding a shutdown of no more than a month, and insisting on government help to make the design change.

Mehar Abdul Haq, a brick kiln owner in the Kasur district of Punjab, said kilns should be shut for a maximum of 30 days or only on days when there is smog.

He said about 20 kilns in Punjab are in the process of being converted to zig-zag technology, with five or six now operating using it.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, a Nepal-based non-governmental organisation, has carried out two training programmes on the technology for kiln owners here, aiming to cut smog and climate-changing emissions.

But Haq said converting a conventional kiln to the new technology costs \$15,000 to \$20,000, a hefty investment.

We have demanded of the government either to give loan on easy terms or provide interest-free loans to convert to the technology – but in vain, he said.

Efficient but inconvenient

Shoaib Niazi, of the brick kiln owner’s association, said a 70-day closure would cause unemployment not only at brick kilns but also in the coal and construction industries. It would also drive up the cost of bricks, he said, adding that an average of 100 to 150 people worked at each brick kiln.

“Neither are we getting financial support nor technical from the government,” he said, though he admitted the zig-zag technology was environmentally friendly and energy efficient.

The technology uses 30 to 40 per cent less energy than traditional kilns, and cuts the costs of bricks produced by up to half, Niazi said.

Naseem-ur-Rehman, a Punjab spokesman for Environmental Protection Agency, said brick kilns were a major contributor to smog, along with vehicle emissions and burning of crop stubble.

Smog is a particular problem from late October through mid-January.

“We cannot end smog at all but we are trying to reduce it through steps at all levels,” Rehman said.

The new technology has benefits for kiln owners as well, he said, including cost and time savings, and a reduction in substandard bricks produced.

“What we are seeing is that this technology reduces carbon emissions by more than 70 per cent,” he said, which means those kilns using zig-zag technology will be allowed to operate during smog season.

But other kiln owners should expect that “we will keep on shutting these kilns after intervals to force them to convert to zig-zag”, he said.

Mome Saleem, an Islamabad-based environmentalist, said the closure of kilns would help cut smog but other industries needed attention too.

The government should formulate an inclusive strategy to combat the smog instead of just shutting the kilns, she suggested.

Arif Jeewa, former chairman of the Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan, said a shutdown of brick kilns would have no impact on commercial construction industry because it relied instead on cement blocks.

Aslam, prime minister’s adviser, said the government was moving now to try to avoid smog problems in the months to come.

“We are shutting down brick kilns and factories that emit greenhouse gases in excess,” he said.

The closure will have an economic impact, but so does their continued and unabated operation, which has a huge environmental impact, said the adviser.

Published in Dawn, October 20th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1440148/70-day-closure-of-brick-kilns-begins-ahead-of-approaching-smog>

DOCK WORKERS’ DEMAND PQA, CHINESE COMPANY TO GUARANTEE THEIR RIGHTS

Published: October 20, 2018

KARACHI: The dock workers’ fight for their rights outside the Karachi Press Club against the Port Qasim Authority (PQA) and a Chinese cargo handling company, M/S Huaneng Fuyun Port and Shipping (Pvt) Ltd, entered its 26th day on Saturday.

The Chinese company has been given independent rights for berths number three and four at Port Qasim for 30 years on Build-Operate Transfer (Bot) basis and is handling the coal supply at the port for the Sahiwal Energy Project being run under another Chinese company – Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy Pvt Ltd. Berths are a ship’s allotted space at ports.

One of the protesting workers, 55-year-old Muhammad Rafiq, hasn't been home since the start of the protest. His two sons present at the camp were trying to convince their father to go home and take some rest. "His blood pressure is high. He needs rest," said his younger son, visibly perturbed. "Abba [father] hasn't gotten his salary for the past nine months. It's difficult to make ends meet at home and he's sitting here at the protest," he added. Rafiq was one of the first ship loaders at Port Qasim when it started its operations in 1981. He vividly remembers when the first ship anchored at the port in the month of November back then, when the area was nothing but a wilderness.

Most of the workers at the PQA are from tribal areas of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. "We habituated the port," Rafiq said sitting on a charpoy leaning against the footpath. When at work, he nonchalantly said, they don't eat a proper meal for days. "We have lost our fellow workers at the port due to non-availability of safety gadgets," he said, adding that after devoting their entire lives to the ports they own it more than anyone else. "How can they just ask us to leave?"

Rafiq is not the only worker whose livelihood is at stake. As many as 1,757 dock workers of the PQA are suffering because of weak workers' legislation, according to PQA labour union's Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) General Secretary Hussain Badshah.

Background

Travails of dock workers at ports aren't new. This terminology emerged in London in the 18th century, when around 65,000 dock workers protested for their rights. "Earlier, the dock workers used to get work on pick and choose basis," said Badshah, adding that when a ship used to anchor at the port, the company used to pick few of the dock workers for loading and unloading goods. He explained that the rest of the workers used to suffer from unemployment.

Then there came a rolling system mechanism, according to which every worker would get the work turn wise and the port would pay them all a fixed amount monthly and overtime if any. "This also safeguarded their health and other allowances," he said.

This Dock Workers Act was then adopted in India in 1934 and in Pakistan in 1948. The act was further amended in 1973 through an ordinance, Dock Workers [Regulation of Employment] Scheme. In 1974, it became an Act, which the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) adopted.

Under this Act, for the welfare of dock labour, the Karachi Dock Labour Board (KDLB) was constituted whose chairperson is also the KPT chairperson. The board, according to Badshah, is only functional in KPT, while the PQA, which started operations in 1981, never adopted the Dock Workers' Act or the KDLB.

An executive officer of KDLB, Ahmed Shehzad, explained to The Express Tribune that their board provides services to KPT and charges them under cess tax. For every container at the port, he explained, the KPT pays their board some percentage, while the companies such as of stevedore and shipping agents also pay them a certain amount and they provide them with the labour that includes dock workers.

With this, he explained, the minimum fixed wage of every worker is Rs18,000 and they also pay for their welfare. “We pay the workers on behalf of KPT,” he explained and added that the PQA workers were not under their jurisdiction and hence, since the inception of the PQA, they faced problems.

At PQA

The PQA, according to Badshah, has sold berths to private companies, such as Qasim International Container Terminal (QICT), Fauji Akbar Portia (FAP) Marine Terminals and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal (PITB). “These companies abide by the Docker Workers’ Act when they operate at KPT,” he said adding that at the PQA, they have been given exclusive rights to handle the containers by the PQA on Bot-basis.

The QICT hired a private contractor to load and offload goods, which hires cheap and inexperienced labour from the market. The FAP also brought in its own workers a few years back, and the dockworkers who had gathered to protest against the move were subjected to a brutal baton charge by law enforcement agencies.

The real problem, he said, arose when the Chinese cargo handling company, M/S Huaneng Fuyun Port and Shipping (Pvt) Ltd, was given berths number three and four at Port Qasim in 2016 by former Pakistan Muslim League -Nawaz ports and shipping minister Kamran Michael.

After reservations from the worker’s union and a protest at the National Highway and the Port Qasim road, a memorandum for the provision of work at berths number three and four of Port Qasim was signed on October 23, 2017, between the Chinese company and the workers’ union. According to the agreement, the Chinese company would work for 30 years on the Bot model and the company agreed to hire the labour from the labour union to work on berths number three and four. “If there will be a need for more workers at these berths or for a need to replace any worker, the required workers or replacements will be firstly taken from existing 1,751 dock workers working at Port Qasim,” the memorandum reads.

The labourer started working for the company in July 2017. However, one of the employees of the company, on the condition of anonymity, told The Express Tribune that the Chinese company used to hold payments of dock workers and in July 2018, they simply asked them to leave. After this, Badshah said, they went to the labour court and obtained a stay order. “In return, our salaries were completely halted,” he said.

According to the company’s employee, the management wants to hire less paid workers because the labour unions are demanding their allowances, which the management does not want to pay.

Political apathy

The incumbent minister for Maritime Affairs – formally known as Minister of Ports and Shipping- Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf’s Ali Haider Zaidi visited their sit-in in 2016 against the PQA and the Chinese company. Prime Minister Imran Khan, Badshah said, addressed the sit-in on telephone back then. Up till now, he said, only PTI’s elected MPA from Sindh Assembly, Shahnawaz Jadoon, had visited their camp

and assured to resolve their issues. PQA Chairperson Asad Rafi Chandna did not respond to the repeated phone calls for a comment by The Express Tribune.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 20th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1829722/1-dock-workers-demand-pqa-chinese-company-guarantee-rights/>

SIX FACTORY WORKERS INJURED IN KORANGI CYLINDER BLAST

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter October 21, 2018

KARACHI: Six workers of a factory were injured when a gas cylinder exploded inside the industrial unit in Korangi on Saturday afternoon, officials said.

Hospital sources said that the condition of three workers was critical as they sustained up to 100 per cent burn wounds.

Awami Colony SHO Shahid Khan said that the cylinder of the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) exploded inside the Kamran engineering company located in Sector-27 of Korangi Industrial Area.

He said that five workers suffered burn injuries and the sixth one, identified as Jameel, got head injuries caused by some flying hard and blunt instrument. His condition is also said to be critical.

The condition of four injured is critical

The factory manufactures electric panels, he said.

The area SHO said that the exact cause of the explosion could not be ascertained immediately.

The wounded workers were shifted to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi for treatment.

Additional Police Surgeon Qarar Ahmed Abbasi said that five workers got admitted to the Burns Centre while the sixth one was admitted to the trauma centre.

He said that the condition of three burnt workers — Saud, 18, Kasoo, 30, and Tariq, 55 — was critical as they sustained burn wounds between 95pc and 100pc.

Other wounded workers were identified as Zia, 20, and Anees, 25.

The area SHO said that a case would be registered against the owner of the factory.

‘TTP man’ among three held

The Counter-Terrorism Department of the Sindh police on Saturday claimed to have arrested three suspects, including one linked with banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, for their alleged involvement in street crimes.

The CTD conducted an operation in Korangi and arrested Taimur, Salahuddin and Ghalib.

Taimur and Salahuddin were linked with a street crime gang. They committed offences in the vicinity of Korangi's 100 Quarters and Korangi Causeway, CTD SSP Junaid Ahmed Shaikh said, adding that besides his involvement in street crimes, suspect Ghalib was also linked with the TTP.

The police claimed to have recovered two pistols, two mobile phones, one CPU, literature and CDs of the proscribed outfit and cash from them.

A case was registered against them and the CTD also recommended to the authorities to include suspect Ghalib's name in the Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 to keep a watch on his movement in future.

Published in Dawn, October 21st, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1440255/six-factory-workers-injured-in-korangi-cylinder-blast>

KARACHI CONVENTION DEMANDS RIGHTS FOR HOME-BASED WORKERS

By Our Correspondent

Published: October 21, 2018

KARACHI: A convention on Saturday called for registration of home-based workers with social security institutions, fixing their minimum wages and enacting laws to grant them a legal status.

The Home-Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) hosted a convention at the Godhra Community Hall in New Karachi on the occasion of the International Day of Home-based Workers. The convention was headed by HBWWF General Secretary Zehra Khan, while Saba Faisal Edhi was the chief guest. Home-based women workers belonging to different cities and different industries attended the convention.

Khan said that as per an estimate there are 100 million home-based workers around the world and out of them 50 million reside in South Asia – of which 80% are women. However, these workers, despite being part of the production process, are deprived of their legal rights. They are forced to work on low wages and in difficult working conditions. She further said that a declaration was passed by South Asian women workers and other unions and federations in Kathmandu, Nepal, that measures would be taken for the rights, social protection and legal identity of over 50m home-based workers in the region.

Khan appreciated the provincial government for taking the lead in announcing the Home-based Workers Act 2018 in May and made history by recognizing more than five million home-based workers in Sindh. Under this Act, the home-based workers would be given equal rights as enjoyed by the workers of the formal sector of union making, electing their collective bargaining agents (CBA), social security and pension.

Deputy General Secretary of National Trade Union Federation Nasir Mansoor regretted that law to regulate home-based workers was not being implemented.

Information Secretary of Home-based Women Bangle Workers Union Hyderabad Shakeela Khan said, “The notification of minimum wages for home-based workers of glass bangle industry is yet to be issued despite the notice issued three years ago”.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 21st, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1830497/1-karachi-convention-demands-rights-home-based-workers/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 8TH TO OCTOBER 14TH 2018

WORKERS PROTEST SEALING OF FACTORIES

The Newspaper’s Correspondent October 08, 2018

GUJRANWALA: Hundreds of workers of different factories on Sunday staged a demonstration against sealing of the units by the district administration for creating environmental pollution.

Hanging roti (breads) in their necks the workers, who were mostly employed in factories on Sheikhpura Road raised slogans against sealing of the units for emitting smoke hazardous to human health.

Leading the protesting workers, former president of Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ikhlaq Butt, Shiekh Abdul Rauf and Sarfraz Siddiqui told the media persons that the district government was sealing industries, rendering thousands of workers jobless.

They warned it was a symbolic protest and it would be widened to other areas of the city.

They also asked the factory owners to avoid burning prohibited material as fuel in their units and install chimneys at the prescribed height to curb pollution.

Assistant Commissioner Hena Arshad said the district administration was sealing the smoke-emitting factories under ongoing anti-smog campaign.

ARRESTED: Kamoki Sadar police on Sunday claimed to have arrested an alleged bootlegger and seized 95 bottles of liquor from his possession.

Sadar SP Shahbaz Ilahi said police seized the liquor from a car near Sadhoki and arrested the suspect, Naseer Masih. A case has been registered against him.

Published in Dawn, October 8th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1437477/workers-protest-sealing-of-factories>

November 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 19TH TO NOVEMBER 25TH 2018

PUNJAB'S LABOUR POLICY IN THE OFFING

RECORDER REPORT

LAHORE: "Punjab government will announce its new Labour Policy 2018 soon incorporating the key thematic areas including related issues of labour community primarily focusing on achievement strategies regarding effective implementation on labour laws and standards."

This was disclosed by Punjab Labour Minister Ansar Majeed Khan while addressing the participants of inaugural ceremony of uninterrupted 11kv electricity supply feeder of Social Security Hospital.

Ansar Majeed Khan assured the management to fulfill the vacant posts of specialist doctors and provide latest electronic medical machinery to Social Security Hospital Islamabad.

The minister visited different wards and sections of the hospital and inquired from the patients regarding the medical facilities being provided to them.

"Punjab Labour department have geared up the registration process of industrial workers to achieve the target of six million. The total number of registered workers in the province is only one million at the present," the minister added.

Registration process will provide education and healthcare facilities to all the secured workers.

Commissioner Punjab Employees Social Security Institutions (PESSI), Saqib Manan, Director Labour Rawalpindi, Raja Tehseen-Ul-Hassan, Director Medical, Dr Ejaz Shah, MS SS Hospital, Dr Khalil Ahmad, Labour Union leaders along with representatives of IESCO, Health and related departments were present on the occasion.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/m/2018/11/23/16-page/750720-news.html>

CAMPAIGN TO REGISTER WORKERS TO START SOON

By Imran Rana

Published: November 23, 2018

FAISALABAD: Punjab Labour Minister Ansar Majeed Khan has announced plans to set up an additional social security hospital in Faisalabad besides the existing ones and has hinted that legislation is ready to ensure swift utilisation of the Workers Welfare Fund in the same province where it has been collected.

He expressed these views while speaking to business community at the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI).

He added that only 200,000 to 300,000 workers were registered in Faisalabad compared to more than 2 million labourers working in the city.

Khan declared that an emergency drive would be launched shortly for registering maximum number of workers so that they could be incorporated into the social security net.

According to the minister, a new legislation is under consideration to safeguard the interest of domestic workers including cooks, drivers and maids. Expressing serious concern over the prevailing poor condition of the labour colony and schools, he promised that he would review a proposal whether these entities could be utilised for the prime minister's plan of constructing five million houses in five years.

Khan reassured businessmen that he would highlight the issue of notices being sent to small shopkeepers and "an inquiry will be conducted to discourage this practice in the future."

Talking about the slab system, the minister pointed out that collection of the social security contribution was being automated. "This way, the entire system will be interlinked and become efficient in addition to avoiding corruption complaints," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Agriculture Minister Nauman Ahmad Langrial told the businessmen that the government was already providing a subsidy of Rs500 per bag of fertiliser.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 23rd, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1852495/2-campaign-register-workers-start-soon/>

PUNJAB CABINET APPROVES LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL POLICIES MUHAMMAD SALEEM | NOV 24TH, 2018 | LAHORE

The Punjab Cabinet which met here on Friday accorded approval to drafts of the Punjab Labour Policy 2018, the Punjab Occupational Safety and Health Act 2018, Punjab Domestic Act 2018, Agricultural Policy 2018, Punjab Whistleblower Protection Act and Vigilance Commission Act 2018 and Punjab Prevention of Conflict of Interest Act 2018.

The Punjab Cabinet also approved amendments in the Punjab Right to Information Act 2018, the Punjab Right to Public Service Act 2018, the Police Order 2018 (ADR committees). The draft of law about policy for reallocation of sugar mills in Punjab was also given approval along with a draft law for the establishment of Punjab Skills Development Authority.

The meeting also approved draft law for giving concession on property tax in six computerized districts. Draft amendment in the Punjab Motor Vehicles Rules 1969 under the Provincial Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1965 was approved to introduce automated registration card in Punjab. Amendment draft of the Punjab Restaurant Invoice Monitoring System Rules 2015 and the Punjab Sales Tax for Service Enforcement Rules 2014 were also approved. Draft laws relating to enforcement of provincial sales tax on intercity transportation, transportation of luggage through roads or provision of services through pipelines were also given approval.

The Punjab Cabinet also accorded approval to the draft acts for the establishment of Namal Institute and bifurcation of the Punjab Institute of Neurosciences from Ameer-ud-Din Medical College/Postgraduate Medical Institute Lahore. It also gave approval to the draft relating to the nominations and establishment of search committee for dealing with relevant matters including determination of educational qualification, experience and other matters for filling the post of vice chancellor of Punjab Tianjin University of Technology Lahore.

Notification regarding establishment of Punjab University of Technology Rasool in Mandi Bahauddin was also validated by the Punjab Cabinet. It validated the audit reports of the Auditor General about public sector companies.

The Punjab Cabinet decided to auction the luxury vehicles; 22 such vehicles will be auctioned while six bulletproof vehicles will be given to police for security. It was decided in principle that the policy of vehicles' allotment should be examined. The Chief Minister directed to constitute a high-level committee which will devise a unified policy for the allotment of government vehicles. Supplementary grant for the release of arrears amounting to Rs4.60 billion for 1263-megawatt RLNG power project of Punjab Thermal Power Limited in Jhang was also approved by the Punjab Cabinet.

The Cabinet also decided that recruitment process through the Punjab Public Service Commission will be continued while cabinet committee will present its recommendations on case to case basis for other recruitments. Health and education departments will be permitted for recruitment on priority basis, it decided.

The meeting also validated the reports of Auditor General of Pakistan for Punjab government's civil works departments, commercial audit and evaluation receipt of taxes, forestry department and others for 2016-17 and 2017-18.

The Cabinet decided to constitute a cabinet committee for the construction of Dadhocha Dam on Ling River on BOT basis. Upto 35 million gallon water will be provided to Rawalpindi city from this dam, the meeting was told. It was decided to expand the scope of health insurance program across the province and this program will soon be started in 19 more districts. The rate of provincial sales tax will be zero for health insurance program. The cabinet meeting also accorded approval to Punjab Industrial Policy 2018 along with procedure of allotment in labour colonies.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister Usman Buzdar said that implementation on industrial policy will help to increase investment and employment opportunities. He directed that solid measures should be taken to implement this policy, adding that every step of the Punjab government is taken for public welfare.

The Punjab government is working like a team and targets of 100-day program of the Prime Minister have been achieved, he added. It is for the first time in the history of the Punjab province that a number of draft laws have been approved and we will jointly work for the durable development of the province, he said.

Giving briefing to media, Punjab Minister for Information & Culture Fayyaz ul Hassan Chohan said that such draft laws have been given approval for the first time in the history of the province which will be wholly helpful in solving the basic problems of people.

Giving details of such decisions, he said that health insurance program will be started in 19 more districts while the rate of provincial sales tax will be zero on health insurance program. He said that draft law has been approved to give concession on property tax in six computerized districts of the province.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/11/20181124426048/>

PUNJAB CABINET APPROVES LAWS, POLICIES FOR PEOPLE WELFARE

Fawad Maqsood November 25, 2018

LAHORE: The Punjab cabinet has approved a number of laws and policies for people's welfare under the 100-day reforms plan of the provincial government.

The legislations included Punjab Industrial Policy, Establishment of Punjab Skills Development Authority (PSDA), Punjab Labour Policy, Occupational Safety and Health Act 2018, Domestic Workers Act 2018 and Punjab Agriculture Policy, said a handout, issued here on Sunday.

The Punjab Industrial Policy includes measures for facilitating private sector investment growth by providing an enabling eco-system, boosting productivity and competitiveness to drive up exports and compete with imported goods, ensuring level playing field for domestic and foreign players across sectors, creating attractive job opportunities for Punjab's rapidly growing labour force and placing special focus on disenfranchised segments of society — impoverished districts, women and the disabled people.

Establishment of the Punjab Skills Development Authority will help in implementing policies and standards established by National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), register and regulate public and private TVET institutes and assessment agencies.

It will also regulate the enforcement of apprenticeship regime, devise and enforce a mechanism of monitoring and inspection of TVET service providers and assessment agencies for ensuring compliance to the national and/or provincial standards and encourage TVET institutes to develop courses according to territorial needs in conformity with the national standards.

The Punjab Labour Policy 2018 has been formulated to focus on labour rights, guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan, Labour Laws and ILO Conventions. The special focus in the policy is on Occupational Safety and Health, Minimum Wage, Freedom of Association and Elimination of Child Labour, extension of Labour laws to the informal sector and reinvigoration of Labour inspection regime.

By promulgating the Domestic Workers law, the most neglected strata of informal sector of the society will get an identity of a 'worker' and a forum to resolve their issues. The promulgation of Occupational Safety and Health Act 2018 will secure workers by minimising the hazards or risks that may negatively impact their health, safety or well-being at their workplaces.

Under the Agriculture Policy, Government of Punjab stipulates specific measures in the immediate future articulated in the 100 days agenda of the government.

The new agriculture policy promotes inclusive growth among all stakeholders with a specific focus on women and rural youth.

It includes measures to increase farmer profitability, reduce the cost of inputs for farmers, introduce regenerative agriculture and weed management, encourage crop diversification to improve crop-mix and optimize subsidy programs through targeting and ICT technologies among other steps.

The passage of all these policies points towards the fact that the Punjab government is well on its way to achieving its 100 days reform agenda in the province.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2018/11/25/454632/punjab-cabinet-approves-laws-policies-for-people-welfare/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 12TH TO NOVEMBER 18TH 2018
SIX WORKERS DIE, ONE INJURED AS BOILER EXPLODES IN KARACHI FACTORY
Imtiaz Ali November 15, 2018

At least six workers died while one sustained burn injuries after a boiler exploded inside a factory in Karachi on Wednesday within the limits of Shah Latif Town police station, according to police and hospital officials.

Police said that the boiler blast occurred in Honda Atlas factory near Landhi Manzil Pump. As a result, seven workers received burn injuries.

The injured were shifted to Burns Centre of Karachi's Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital where Shah Zaman, 34, Muhammad Saleem, 35, Imran, 30, Khalid, 33, Aamir Sufi, 35, and Inayat, 25 succumbed to wounds during treatment, said Additional Police Surgeon Dr Qarar Ahmed Abbasi.

The victims who lost their lives had all received 100 per cent burns, added Abbasi, while further revealing that Faheem, the only survivor has received 10 per cent burn wounds.

Area SHO Ghanwar Ali Mahar said that no case has been registered so far.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah took notice of the incident and sought a report from the city commissioner and the secretary of the Labour Department.

Expressing grief at the tragedy, CM Shah ordered an investigation into the reasons behind the boiler's explosion and asked when the last inspection had taken place on the factory premises.

He instructed the commissioner to provide every possible assistance to the families of the victims and asserted that no effort must be spared to save the life of the injured labourer.

Karachi East Zone DIG Amir Farooqi told Dawn that initial probe revealed that the explosion occurred due to gas leakage. He pointed out that initially the factory management themselves tried to control the fire and later on called the fire tenders.

DIG Farooqi vowed that a case would be registered against the factory owners over 'accidental deaths' of the workers.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1445584/six-workers-die-one-injured-as-boiler-explodes-in-karachi-factory>

`UNINTENTIONAL MURDER` CASE OF SIX FACTORY WORKERS REGISTERED

By Our Staff Reporter | 11/17/2018 12:00:00 AM

KARACHI: The Shah Latif police have registered a case against M/s Atlas Engineering Company Ltd, Landhi, invoking the section of 'unintentional murder' after six workers were burnt to death and another one was injured in an explosion on the factory premises.

Police linked the tragic incident to 'negligence' of the factory management.

There was 'excessive gas pressure' as per report submitted by the police's bomb disposal squad.

'The police have registered FIR (755/2018) against Atlas company under Section 322 (punishment for qatl bis sabab: whoever commits qatl bis sabab shall be liable to diyat) and 34 (common intention) of Pakistan Penal Code,' said East Zone DIG Amir Farooqi.

The senior officer said the case had been registered on behalf of the state as the heirs did not approach the police. So far no one had been arrested in the case, he added.

According to contents of the FIR obtained by Dawn, the police investigators called the bomb disposal squad unit officials who examined the company.

The BDS officials in their written statement concluded that the blast occurred in the furnace due to 'excessive gas pressure'. It showed alleged negligence of the firm.

The complainant of the case, sub-inspector Qurban Ali, told Dawn that the FIR was registered on behalf of state through him as they waited for the relatives, but they did not arrive. He promised that whenever they approached the police, they would be included as complainants of the case.

The officer said six persons had been burnt in the explosion so badly that they were not in a position to give any statement to the police officers when they visited Burns Centre of Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital on Nov 14.

Six persons namely Mohammed Amir, 25; Inayatullah, 40; Mohammed Saleem, 30; Shadman, 45; Khalid, 35; and Imran, 38, died of 100 per cent burns while the seventh, Faheem, got admitted for treatment.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=17_11_2018_117_002

PAKISTAN WITNESSED NEGATIVE WAGE GROWTH IN 2015-16: ILO

Amin Ahmed Updated November 18, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has warned that Asia-Pacific still faces structural weaknesses in its labour markets despite two decades of economic growth.

In its 'Asia-Pacific Employment' and 'Social Outlook 2018', released on Friday, ILO pointed out that although the regional unemployment rate is projected to remain 4.1 per cent through 2020, the vulnerable employment rate is expect to creep up towards 49pc, reversing a downward trend of at least two decades.

The region's future prospects will require that economic growth go hand in hand with a further expansion of decent work, it says.

While real wage growth surpassed labour productivity growth between 2010 and 2016 in almost all countries, the increase in wages of employees looked especially strong in China, Thailand and Vietnam. However, negative wage growth was witnessed in Pakistan in 2015-16 at minus 4.7pc.

In Pakistan's education sector, 6.6pc of the total female employment in 2016 was well behind the 72.9pc share in agriculture and 12.7pc in manufacturing.

Pakistan stands out with 15.3pc of women working from their homes, and 37pc working on the land (in agriculture) in 2017.

Structural transformation has been strongly felt in the region, with employment moving from agriculture mainly into services and only to some extent into industry. Most of the loss in agriculture was taken up by the increase in employment in the services sector, where 740 million jobs have been gained since 2000. Manufacturing jobs decreased slightly from the peak in the mid-2000s, with more job losses accruing to women than men.

The report says while the Asia-Pacific region has made rapid progress to substantially reduce extreme poverty, one fourth of all workers in the region — 446m workers — still lived in moderate or extreme poverty in 2017 and nearly half of the workforce — 930m people — were still making a living in vulnerable employment as own-account or unpaid contributing family workers.

With 1.9bn workers — 1.2bn men and 700m women, the Asia-Pacific region represented 60pc of the global workforce in 2017.

Asia and the Pacific has the most people working, relative to the working-age population. Employment-to-population ratio stands at 59.7pc, compared with 58.6pc at the global level.

Large numbers of workers in the region, especially those in low-paid jobs, work more than 48 hours per week.

The average hours worked in Southern Asia and Eastern Asia in 2017 were the world's highest, at 46.4 and 46.3 hours per week, respectively.

In Eastern Asia, almost one in five workers worked in excess of 60 hours per week. The regional unemployment rate at 4.1pc is the world's lowest and well below the global rate of 5.5pc in 2017. But while the global unemployment rate has held steady since 2015, the rate in the Asia-Pacific region has increased slightly by 0.1 percentage point.

In total there were 80.9m unemployed persons in Asia and the Pacific in 2018.

At 10.4pc, unemployment rate among youth remained unchanged from 2015, while the global rate increased to 12.6pc. Thirty five per cent of the region's unemployed were youth (aged 15—24), although youth made up only 20pc of the working-age population.

In general terms, the labour market gains evident in the Asia-Pacific region in the past few years remain present but fragile.

Decent work deficits persist in all countries in the region and continue to weigh heavily on development trajectories.

Over the coming years, economic growth is expected to remain strong in the region, with growth rates of 5.6pc expected for 2018 and 2019, compared with 3.9pc at the global level.

Yet, there are lingering fragilities in the foundations of growth in the region that have the potential to offset the positive forecasts.

Recent threats of increased trade protectionism are already having an impact on investment in the manufacturing sector, which many workers in the region continue to rely on for their livelihoods and occasionally their first foray into paid employment. Demographic trends, and in particular the impact of ageing societies, are adding strain to the already-limited social protection systems and call into question the future labour productivity gains.

Published in Dawn, November 18th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1446301/pakistan-witnessed-negative-wage-growth-in-2015-16-ilo>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 29TH TO NOVEMBER 4TH 2018

CHILD LABOUR

Editorial November 03, 2018

AS many parts of the country came to a standstill, with loud mobs damaging property and blocking traffic, the news of a 15-year-old domestic servant being allegedly tortured and strangled to death in an affluent Karachi residence barely created a ripple. Mohammad Imran's murder follows similar cases

including that of a 10-year-old domestic help who had 20 torture marks on her body, with her hand burnt on a stove. We live in a casteist and classist society. The mistreatment of domestic help — and by extension, child domestic workers — is all too common in Pakistani cities. Domestic labour falls under the category of informal work, or ‘invisible’ labour. There are no clear laws to guarantee their rights, and no regulations to check whether the rights they are entitled to (eg minimum wage) are ensured. In Pakistan, we are not even sure who comes under the category of a ‘child’ due to the prevalence of contradictory laws. But just because they belong to the ‘invisible’ workforce does not mean we turn a blind eye to their mistreatment.

Article 11 of the Constitution states that “no child below the age of 14 years shall be engaged in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment”. Article 25-A makes it compulsory for governments to provide free education to all children between the ages of five and 16. Last year, Sindh also passed the Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, which establishes 15 as the minimum age for employment and 19 for employment in hazardous professions. But because none of these laws specifically cover domestic work, which is not considered a ‘hazardous’ occupation, cases of injustice (when reported) come under criminal law. While it’s true that the problem of child labour is connected to desperate poverty, this is not a reason to not pass laws that will ensure the protection of young workers and punish those who subject them to violence and abuse.

Published in Dawn, November 3rd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1443253/child-labour>

PUNJAB’S INDUSTRY, LABOUR POLICIES IN FINAL STAGES OF COMPLETION: IQBAL LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Industries, Commerce and Investment Mian Aslam Iqbal has said the provincial policies about industry and skilled labour are in final stage and they would be announced soon.

Speaking at the inauguration of landmark three-day Digital Printing, Machinery & Signage Technology Exhibition (DPS World) here at Expo Centre Saturday, he said “we are taking efforts to promote industry and commerce sector in the province.”

He said “almost all things about our 100-day plan have already completed and we will have a meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan on November 07, where we would give a presentation on our policies on industry, skilled labour, giving loans to youth and other related matters.”

He said “our follow up meetings on these issues are under way with Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar.”

He said in past the crucial industries department was given a serious focus but “this time we are committed to revamp this important sector.”

He said industrial sector was a key for creation of jobs and improving economy, boosting exports and earning foreign exchange.

He said “we are also giving focus on export zones where tax holidays and other incentives would be given to the industrialists and investors.” He said this landmark Digital Printing, Machinery & Signage Technology Exhibition (DPS World) will set new standards in the digital printing and signage industry of Pakistan.

However, a large number of visitors thronged the Expo Centre to witness the DPS World exhibition, which has provided an ultimate platform for consistently evolving industry of digital printing, graphic imaging and signage where visitors and exhibitors correlate with printing manufacturers and producers, technologists, graphic architects, latest industry trends, design houses and interior designers surrounded by marketing and media professionals.

M Saleem Khan Tanoli, CEO FAKT Group said: “Holding of the exhibitions is aimed at creating a platform for potential buyers and sellers from different parts of the world so that they could exchange their information about the ground-breaking digitization solutions with local businessmen and entrepreneurs. These experts from around the world will also help participants to choose the best possible machinery and technology that can suit their business needs.”

He said with this kind of Digital Printing & Signage Technology Exhibition, FAKT was setting new standards in the digital printing and signage industry of Pakistan. ‘It will open up more doors for the Pakistani finished products in the international market down the road.’

Tanoli also mentioned that in DPS 2018 more than 125 companies are participating from 25 countries like China, Turkey, UAE, UK, USA, Japan, Pakistan and many more. Some big names that are exhibiting this year include SPG Prints, ATEXCO, MS Printing Solutions, Sign Trade, Sabri, GR Trading, Awami Traders, EPSON Robustelli, Mimaki, Grapho Scan Supplies, Cubetex and many more. “We are expecting around 10,000 visitors for this year’s mega event,” concluded Tanoli.—NNI

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/m/2018/11/04/3-page/747770-news.html>

December 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 24TH TO DECEMBER 30TH 2018

GOVT TO BAN CHILD DOMESTIC WORK: MINISTER

Asma Kundi December 25, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The federal government will be putting a complete ban on child domestic work and negotiations are underway with all stakeholders to address the issue of missing persons, Federal Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari said on Monday.

Speaking at a seminar on Child Protection: Issues, Solutions and Opportunities, the minister announced a few other pro-child legislations including anti-corporal punishment, the Zainab Alert Bill, the Child Protection Bill and awareness campaigns for child sexual abuse and the existing child protection laws.

The event was organised by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (Sparc) and the Child Rights Movement.

Dr Mazari said there is no space for enforced disappearances in the new government. She said her ministry is working on a bill for transgender rights and on curriculum revision with the education ministry and that the new curriculum will be taught in all public and private schools as well as madressahs.

Senator Mohammad Ali Saif said Pakistan is overloaded with legislation and that the main problem is the lack of implementation, poor governance and lack of finances.

Sparc Executive Director Sajjad Ali Cheema said 24 million children are out of school, that child labour still exists despite laws banning it and hoped the government will take positive initiatives for the protection of children.

Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Secretary Dr Hafiz Ikramul Haq said the state is responsible for making child protection laws and implementing them effectively.

Riphah International University Islamabad Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Anis Ahmed said Islam is a religion of peace and liberates human beings, who are all born free.

“We need to provide enough resources to families so they can buy food and send their children to school. Families should be urged to take care of new mothers in order to improve the health of children,” he said.

Member of the Sparc board of directors Anees Jillani said Pakistan has one of the longest constitutions in the world and that it only mentions children twice, in Article 11 and 25-A.

Child labour is restricted in the formal labour sector while there are no restrictions on child labour in the informal sector, he said. He demanded the government ban child labour in all sectors and strictly implement labour laws.

Published in Dawn, December 25th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1453395/govt-to-ban-child-domestic-work-minister>

POOR SAFETY STANDARDS POSE THREAT TO WORKERS' HEALTH

By Usman Hanif

Published: December 25, 2018

KARACHI: Unsatisfactory working conditions and poor safety standards at workplaces pose a grave threat to health and lives of labourers as well as cause heavy losses to factory owners in Pakistan.

Diseases, injuries and deaths, due to occupational hazards, take some two million lives and cost the global economy about \$1.25 trillion annually, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In Pakistan, as well as other countries like Bangladesh, Mali and Nepal, 70% of workers worked in the informal sector and were subject to poor working conditions, stated an ILO report titled "Safety in numbers: pointers for a global safety culture at work".

"Fire eruption in factories of Sindh and Punjab, deaths of labourers due to collapse of tunnels in Balochistan, unreported deaths at the Gadani shipbreaking yard, along with other incidents related to occupational safety occur at least once in a month," said economist Kaiser Bengali.

"We don't have any occupational health and safety system at all; the Baldia factory inferno is an example," he pointed out.

It is not just the informal sector where accidents occur regularly, but sometimes human lives are also lost and workers' health is affected badly in the formal industrial sector despite having proper structures.

"Melting metal surged from a furnace in a Landhi factory and affected workers and the machinery nearby," stated the Sindh government in a statement issued in mid-November after a major accident at the factory where six people were burnt to death.

The company conducted some experiment but it could not take precautionary measures, said one of the injured.

Developing countries suffer huge losses due to work-generated illnesses, accidents and deaths, which account for up to 10% of gross domestic product, according to the ILO report.

Poor health and safety impacts, higher absenteeism, low morale and loss of skilled, experienced employees in which companies have invested create hurdles in the way of recruiting high-quality employees by the companies. Companies had to bear compensation payment, material damage to equipment, fines and disputes with trade unions, public authorities or local residents, it said.

Most of all, the companies lost their goodwill with their clients. In some high-profile cases, companies may face complete or partial loss of licence to operate, the ILO said.

"It is not just factories but also most of the big residential, office and commercial buildings in Pakistan have no arrangements to fight fire and no emergency exits, neglecting the safety of people," remarked Bengali.

Supermarkets in Karachi are a perfect example of negligence, where thousands of people come to shop but they have no emergency exits in case of any blaze.

A year ago, fire broke out at a renowned restaurant at Do Darya, Sea View, Karachi, which showed the lack of safety measures in such places, he pointed out.

“Poor occupational health and safety also hurts efficiency of workers but businessmen think for the short run,” Bengali said. “The Baldia factory inferno is an example of extreme lack of occupational health and safety measures.”

On the other hand, he said, the builders of Margalla Towers, which collapsed in the 2005 earthquake, escaped the law, though residents had been complaining for a year about cracks appearing in the building.

“It is not just the owners who are responsible for occupational hazards but the country also does not have any occupational health and safety culture at all; businessmen may not want to invest in protective measures but workers also do not care about the safety measures even where they are provided,” said Gulfam Nabi Memon, former joint labour director, Government of Sindh.

“We need to develop the culture, behaviour and attitude for occupational health and safety,” he emphasised, adding “you can see workers working without helmets and gloves and weld without taking care of safety measures.”

“Baldia factory incident was a big disaster, different organisations tried to get compensation for the victims but that was not the solution,” said Zulfiqar Shah, a social activist associated with the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER).

The solution was to bring some big reforms in occupational health and safety, but nothing substantial happened after that incident, he said. “We are standing today exactly where we were in 2012 when that incident left many grieving.”

Published in The Express Tribune, December 25th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1873979/2-poor-safety-standards-pose-threat-workers-health/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 17TH TO DECEMBER 23RD 2018

121 CHILD LABOURERS RECOVERED IN PUNJAB

By Imran Adnan

Published: December 19, 2018

LAHORE: The Punjab Labour Department has recovered 121 children illegally employed at different factories and business.

Punjab Labour Department Secretary Sara Aslam disclosed that special teams of the department had raided 926 places on information gathered from different sources. She highlighted that the department also registered 98 cases at different police stations against the illegal employment of young children.

She said all labour inspectors have been directed to take stern action against people involved in child labour as the department had launched a grand campaign against this menace across Punjab. The department was also taking initiatives to protect the basic rights of employees in commercial institutions.

According to the Bureau of International Affairs' report titled "2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour", Pakistan has made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. It highlights that Sindh passed the Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, which establishes 15 as the minimum age for employment and 19 as the minimum age for employment in hazardous work. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa also passed the Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, making education free and compulsory for children between the ages of five and 16. In addition, four provinces allocated funds to conduct child surveys, using the ILO-UNICEF statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Methodology.

However, the report states that children in Pakistan are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, including forced domestic work and bonded labour brick kilns. Balochistan has not established a minimum age for work or hazardous work in compliance with international standards. In addition, provincial governments do not have the resources to adequately enforce laws prohibiting child labour, the report highlights.

Though there are no national statistics available, the provincial data of Punjab and Sindh provinces shows that 12.4% and 31.5% children, ranging between the age of five and 14, work in Punjab and Sindh, respectively. It shows that 77.1% children of the same age group attend school with 8.2% combining work and school in Punjab. Similarly, in Sindh, 60.6% children attend school and 11.6% combine work and school.

The report further highlights that child labour is employed in almost all sectors, such as agriculture farming, raising livestock, fishing (including deep-sea fishing), manufacturing industry, leather tanning, brick kilns, mining, quarrying, welding and steel fabrication, carpentry in small workshops, etc.

It indicated that a national child survey has not been conducted since 1996 and the lack of recent data hampers the ability of the federal and provincial governments to accurately assess the scope and prevalence of child labour. Many child domestic workers are working under conditions of forced labour, including debt bondage, sexual assault and extreme physical abuse. Some children work with their families as bonded labourers in the production of bricks.

It points out that the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan had devolved all child welfare and labour issues from the federal government to the four provincial governments. Until each province repeals or adopts a replacement law, federal child labour laws are in force. According to the Constitution, both federal and provincial governments can pass legislation on criminal law.

The Punjab provincial assembly passed the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children (Amendment) Act, which increases the penalty for using children for begging and prohibits the use of children to sell goods with the intention of begging.

In addition, in 2018, the federal government enacted the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, which brings the law into compliance with international standards by exempting children from the requirement that force, fraud, or coercion must be proven in order to constitute trafficking and by including all trafficking for forced and commercial sexual exploitation. The federal government also enacted the Islamabad Capital Territory Child Protection System Act in 2018. The Act provides minimum ages for work and hazardous work, provides a hazardous work list, and criminally prohibits worst forms of child labour in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

However, Pakistan's federal and provincial laws are not completely in compliance with international standards on child labour. The federal government's minimum age for work is not in compliance with international standards because they do not extend to informal employment. Balochistan province has not established a minimum age for employment or for hazardous work, although in October 2017, the provincial government drafted a Prohibition of Employment of Children Bill to ban the employment of children in 37 hazardous employment industries.

Meanwhile, hazardous work prohibitions for the federal government and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh provinces do not cover brickmaking and domestic work, in which there is evidence that children are exposed to environmental health hazards in brickmaking and physical abuse in domestic work. Additionally, Sindh's laws setting the minimum age for work do not extend to informal work because they apply only to factories that employ 10 or more employees, shops, and establishments.

Also, federal law does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. Although the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act prohibits the use of a child for the production of pornography, the law does not prohibit procuring and offering a child for the production of pornography. Moreover, it does not prohibit using and procuring a child for prostitution or pornographic performances.

Federal and provincial laws, with the exception of the Punjab, do not prohibit the use of children in drug production and drug trafficking. The federal and provincial governments, again with the exception of Punjab, have not enacted laws that prohibit the recruitment and use of children by non-state groups for armed conflict.

On enforcement, the report states, the government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labour. However, gaps exist within the operations of the Provincial labour Inspectors that may hinder adequate enforcement of related laws.

Following the devolution of federal powers to provincial governments, the provinces are responsible for enforcing labour laws, including those involving child labour law violations. Limited inspection data is available for the provincial governments. The number of labour inspectors is insufficient for the size of Pakistan's workforce, which includes approximately 64 million workers.

In order to comply with the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching one inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Pakistan should employ about 1,628 labour inspectors. Provincial agencies that support law enforcement are also severely under-resourced. For example, labour inspectors

receive insufficient resources, which hamper the inspectorate's ability to take the microscope to workplaces.

In 2017, research could not uncover labour inspection information for Sindh and Balochistan provinces. However, data from previous years showed that labour inspections varied across provincial governments. In previous reporting periods, inspections were conducted regularly in Punjab, but in Sindh, inspectors stopped conducting unannounced inspections due to complaints of harassment by employers.

In 2016, it indicates that 39 inspectors in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa conducted 45,367 inspections. Each inspector, therefore, conducted an average of 1,163 inspections during this period. This is a high number of inspections conducted by each one and it is unknown whether this affects the quality of inspections. Across the provinces, fines and penalties were assessed infrequently and were insufficient to deter employers from using child labour.

In 2017, the report points out that criminal law enforcement agencies in Pakistan took action to combat child labour. However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1870028/1-121-child-labourers-recovered-punjab/>

LHC ORDERS PUNJAB GOVT TO BAN EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 15 AS DOMESTIC HELP

Rana Bilal Updated December 20, 2018

The Lahore High Court on Thursday ordered the Punjab government to ban the employment of children under the age of 15 as domestic workers, and take legislative measures on the issue.

“The rights of domestic workers have been violated ever since Pakistan came into being,” the court remarked before directing the provincial lawmakers to regulate the wage structure and working hours of domestic help.

The high court was hearing a March 2018 petition moved by Advocate Sheraz Zaka questioning failure of the then provincial government to implement the rights of domestic workers.

The petitioner stated that in 2015 the Lahore High Court had already instructed the government to legislate on the rights of domestic workers but its orders were not implemented.

The court today ruled in the case after the incumbent Punjab government furnished a draft of Domestic Workers Bill 2018.

The state prosecutor told the court that as part of the proposed bill, domestic workers' shifts will be limited to eight hours, whereas special courts and committees will be formed to resolve their problems.

The court, upon learning that the proposed draft plans to proscribe the employment of under-15 children as domestic help, expressed its satisfaction and deemed it a positive measure.

In March, after taking up the said petition, the high court had constituted a commission comprising the labour department secretary, a representative from Unicef and three lawyers to ensure that the provincial government takes legislative measures to protect fundamental rights of domestic workers.

Justice Jawad Hassan had at the time observed that domestic workers were being subjected to long hours of work and were also being harassed by their employers as recently several incidents surfaced involving torture of underage domestic workers.

The judge had further observed that if wages of workers in industrial establishments could be notified under Minimum Wages Act 1969, the wages of domestic workers should also be notified.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1452575/lhc-orders-punjab-govt-to-ban-employment-of-children-under-the-age-of-15-as-domestic-help>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 10TH TO DECEMBER 16TH 2018

WOMEN WORKERS DEMAND EQUAL WAGES

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter December 11, 2018

KARACHI: Home-based women workers on Sunday organised a rally outside the Karachi Press Club demanding an end to harassment at workplaces and ensuring standard structure of wages.

The rally was organised by the Home-based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) in connection with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

A sizeable number of home-based women workers and female workers related to various industries took part in the protest. HBWWF's general secretary Zahra Khan led the rally.

Addressing the rally, speakers said the number of women workers in Pakistan had been on the rise.

They also referred to a report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that said the number of women workers in garment sector alone had increased by 33 per cent.

One of the speakers said that sadly women workers were facing violence and discrimination in all forms and manifestations, which was affecting their social and economic life.

Ms Khan said in Pakistan gender-based violence was a reality, and society overall justified it on the basis of traditions, culture, beliefs and morality.

She said the Constitution gave equality to citizens and abolished gender-based discrimination. "The silence of the government and society over violence and discriminatory treatment to women, which is violation of human rights, is a serious matter. Occurrence of these incidents is increasing rapidly and no practical steps are seen to end this menace."

She said the National Assembly had passed a bill against harassment of women at workplace in 2010 but it had not been implemented as yet.

United Home-based Garment Workers Union's general secretary Saira Feroze said maltreatment of women at workplaces was still in vogue and women workers were given less wages as compared to male workers for the same labour. "Mostly, women work on contract and are deprived of all legal and constitutional rights."

Saeeda Khatoon, chairperson of the Association of Affectees of Baldia Factory Fire, said as work was being shifted from formal to informal sector, working women were kept further away from realisation of their legal and constitutional rights and they could not knock the door of the courts.

"There is no law to govern their wages. Their wages are determined by the contractors and middlemen at their sweet will, and when they demand increase in their wages, they are threatened to be sacked," she said.

Published in Dawn, December 11th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1450641/women-workers-demand-equal-wages>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 3RD TO DECEMBER 9TH 2018

DRIVE AGAINST CHILD LABOUR FROM TODAY

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter December 03, 2018

LAHORE: The Punjab government is all set to launch its "awareness campaign for combating child labour" as it has included the programme as pilot project in its first 100-day agenda.

The Labour and Human Resource Department is already implementing an Integrated Project for Elimination of Child and Bonded Labour in all 36 districts seeking universal primary education for the vulnerable children falling under a certain age.

Minister Ansar Majeed Khan will inaugurate the awareness campaign at Saeed Awan Centre for Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (CIWCE) here on Monday (today).

International Labour Organization Country Director Ms Ingrid, representatives from European Union, Unicef, trade and labour unions, academia, NGOs along with parents and children will participate in the inaugural ceremony.

Educational kits will also be provided to the out-of-school children enrolled by the department.

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PUNJAB NEW LABOUR POLICY TODAY

Amjad Mahmood Updated December 07, 2018

LAHORE: Punjab is going to launch its new labour policy here today (Friday), suggesting some lawmaking to enhance the role of social partners in improving the condition of workers.

In the official document, an attempt has also been made to extend the legal and welfare covers to domestic and home-based workers.

To be formally launched by Labour and Human Resource Minister Ansar Majeed Khan, it proposes a steering committee to oversee implementation of the policy through a unit, serving as secretariat of the Labour Policy.

A senior official told Dawn that in view of the demands for decent living wages, the policy entrusts the Minimum Wages Board with holding tripartite meetings, also attended by eminent economic experts, for identifying the minimum level of wage enough to subsistence as per current inflation and consumer price index before giving a decision, acceptable to all the stakeholders.

Necessary provisions will be added to all relevant laws for addressing discrimination in remuneration and employment on basis of sex, religion, caste, origin, etc and the payment of wages through scheduled banks.

Promising a law on domestic workers, the policy proposes a separate inspection regime for effectively implementing domestic workers policy within months.

For curbing child labour 'gradually', it recommends a province-wide survey of child workers, extending scope of vigilance committees, introducing online reporting mechanism and notifying inspectors under the new child labour laws for effective implementation.

It calls for more steps to discourage bonded labour like preferring to procure bricks for public projects from the kilns adhering to the law and improving reporting.

The policy also suggests a centralised database of workers allocating unique code to all establishments and linked with the Federal Board of Revenue, Punjab Revenue Authority, all directorates, hospitals, dispensaries, social welfare centres and other relevant departments and units for easy cross-verification of workers, their documents, contributions and dues.

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FEATURES OF NEW LABOUR POLICY HIGHLIGHTED

Dawn Report December 08, 2018

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Labour and Human Resource Ansar Majeed Khan on Friday launched the Punjab Labour Policy 2018.

The policy launching ceremony was organised at the Industrial Relations Institute, Township, in the presence of a large number of workers' representatives, employers and government officials of different departments.

Speaking on the launch, the minister said the PTI government had taken numerous steps to ensure social and economic welfare of the workers during its first 100 days. He said some of the steps included finalisation of the Punjab Labour Policy 2018 which would also highlight future policy interventions focused on result-oriented implementation of prevailing labour laws and identification of key objectives to be achieved both in the short as well as long run along with implementation strategies.

Policy takes flak for lack of implementation methods

Mr Khan said all the targets, identified in the Punjab Labour Policy 2018, were finalised after thorough tripartite consultations.

The Punjab Labour Policy 2018 elaborates future policy and strategic interventions in predominant areas of labour interest, especially elimination of child labour and enrolling such children in schools, payment of monetary incentives through Khidmat Cards, eradication of bonded labour, enhancement in notified minimum wages for the workers, free medical facilities even after retirement, health cards, extending coverage for the secured workers, new legislation on occupational safety and health (OSH), separate legislations for domestic and home-based workers, promotion of tripartite consultations, freedom of association and facilitating trade unionism, women's participation in industrial progress, elimination of gender discrimination and harassment, establishment of labour colonies for the workers, timely payment of welfare grants to the workers, including marriage grant, death grant and talent scholarships and protection of GSP+ status, ensuring continuance of preferential export quota through effective and result-oriented compliance with the eight core conventions of International Labour Organisation.

Reacting to the new labour policy, the trade unionists said the policy lacked substance as the document unveiled no concrete measures or the methods of its implementation.

Ume Laila Azhar from HomeNet Pakistan, a network of organisations working for home-based workers, termed the labour policy a good document but added that lacked timeframe for the initiatives specified in it and also failed to set a mechanism for their implementation.

Lauding the pledges made for gender equality and insurance of retired workers, she demanded the government immediately form an implementation cell and allocate budget for realising these objectives.

She recalled that the earlier policy announced in 2015 had contained similar promises but failed to produce the desired results as no mechanism to achieve the goals was defined.

Powerlooms workers leader Aslam Miraj regretted that no steps had been suggested in the policy for ensuring registration of industrial workers with Social Security department and Employees Old Age Benefit Institution (EOBI) nor any timeframe had been set for adjudication of cases pending with various labour courts.

Textile Garments Workers Federation president Niaz Khan pointed out that neither employers nor employees were consulted before formulating the policy and thus was devoid of very important input from the two major stakeholders. He said the document did not include measures for ensuring real freedom of association as most of the private sector industries were disallowing trade union activities on their premises.

Labour Education Foundation director Khalid Malik appreciated recognition of informal sector workers, including domestic help and home-based workers, in the policy but said that it might have been improved had the policymakers consulted all the stakeholders. He quotes Labour Minister Ansar Majeed Khan as saying after launch of the policy that he was for registration of all industrial workers and wanted labour department teams to sit outside each industrial unit to check whether each and every employee was registered with the social security and the EOBI. He said the minister believed that his steps would begin bearing results within two to three years.

Mr Malik, however, asserted that GSP Plus, a low-tariff export facility for European destinations, compulsions were making successive governments to announce 'half-hearted' steps without devising any implementation mechanism as poor allocations for labour department spoke volumes of the intentions of the authorities.

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NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 26TH TO DECEMBER 2ND 2018

AUSTRALIA TO FACILITATE SIALKOT'S FEMALE WORKERS

Abid Hussain Mehdi December 02, 2018

SIALKOT: Australia wants to extend its full financial and technical support to manufacturing sector in Sialkot as well as ensure maximum women empowerment in the industrial city.

This was said by Acting Deputy High Commissioner of Australia in Pakistan David Preston while addressing a meeting at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Saturday.

The meeting was headed by SCCI President Khawaja Masud Akhtar. SCCI Senior Vice President Waqas Akram Awan and leading exporters were also present on the occasion.

The Australian envoy discussed in detail the issues being faced by the women workforce in Sialkot industries. He stressed the need to encourage women empowerment on a priority basis.

Australia's Market Development Facility (MDF) can facilitate a comfortable and safe working environment to the female workers in the city's industrial units. He said that this would provide financial security to not only the female workers but their families as well. He said that conducive and safe working environment for women could play a pivotal role in women empowerment.

Both the SCCI and MDF joined hands to work hard mutual towards ensuring maximum women empowerment in local industries.

The high commissioner disclosed that Australia's MDF institution also wished to help Sialkot's exporters. Preston added that Australia intended to promote strengthened mutual trade ties between Pakistan and Australia. "There are bright opportunities to develop B2B contacts between Pakistan and Australia."

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