

Lahore News 29 July Rains damage roads, make civic conditions

By Hamid Ali

THE recent rains in the City have damaged the infrastructure, aggravating the civic conditions in most of the residential areas.

Thousands of people in different city localities are living in unhygienic conditions with ankle-deep pools and piles of scattered filth and waste around. Potholes and ditches have started appearing on roads and streets, which are constantly under water for the last several days.

Insufficient measures to overcome the problems entail with the monsoon have made the life of people difficult and troublesome. The rains lashed during the last two weeks have adversely affected the routine activities of people as major portions of roads in residential areas and commercial markets are choked with mud, garbage and waste water.

Pedestrians are the worst affected of the deteriorating civic conditions. The rains have made their visit to the city markets and bazaars quite difficult because the sides of roads and crossings are inundated or there is mud around. The absence of footpaths and encroachments in front of shops has left no way for them to walk along the roads.

While the sanitation arrangements were already insufficient and poor, the accumulation of water on roads and streets has made the job of sweeping further difficult. The situation is becoming more hopeless despite the efforts of the district government and the concerned agencies to improve the level of sanitation services during the last few weeks. A special cleanliness drive, launched few weeks ago, had failed to bear positive results. Heaps of waste can be seen on roads especially in residential areas. The civic conditions at all fruit and vegetable markets in Lahore city are worst. Pools of stagnant water, piles of waste, dirt and mud are common feature at Kot Lakhpat vegetable market for the last few months.

The situation had exposed the people to serious health hazards and environmental pollution. The level of rising dust has increased manifolds after rains, causing a number of eye and respiratory diseases among the people. The inadequate sanitary conditions with exhaust emissions into air from road traffic have led to oxygen deficiency and high pollution in the atmosphere.

A huge sum of money spent on the purchase of solid waste machinery, mechanical sweepers

and establishment of a strong communication network for the field sanitation staff could not change the dirty complexion of Lahore city.

There are many roads and streets in the localities such as Kot Lakhpat, Township, Green Town, Icchra, Allama Iqbal Town, Rajgargh, Shahdra, Sanda, Shadbagh, Mughalpura, Bagbanpura, Tajpura, Darogawala, Gulshan-e-Ravi, Icchra, and Wasonpura where the sanitation staff did not appear for sweeping. Even the posh localities including Gulberg and Shadman are wearing a deplorable look these days. The parts of roads had deteriorated, while the district government is yet to take measures for quick drainage of water.

Portions of several streets in the localities are constantly under rainwater and heaps of filth, plastic bags and waste dumped around and floating on water have created an unpleasant situation. Most of the people complained that the SWM staff did not turn up to sweep the roads and streets since the rainy season started. They expressed their resentment over the Wasais poor performance, saying the sewerage lines were choked for the last many days and the Wasa concerned staff did not come to redress the complaints.

While the sanitation staff of

the Solid Waste Management (SWM) is doing just a lip service. As far as the regular sweeping in residential area is concerned, the people are adding to the problems by dumping waste at public places.

Absence of a comprehensive strategy and the conventional method of sweeping are some of the main reasons for poor sanitary condition in the City. Since the establishment of SWM department in 1994, none of the official worked as its managing director for more than one year. A long-term policy on solid waste management could not be evolved due to frequent transfer of the SWM heads. One year after the devolution of power at local level, district city government abolished the post of MD SWM, creating a new post of district officer SWM. The SWM officials were of the view that sanitary conditions could not be made up to the mark for lack of staff, mechanical sweepers and developed landfill sites at proper places.

The City is generating about 3700 tones waste daily and in case of proper sweeping the quantity would exceed to over 4000 tones. The SWM department authorities claim that they disposed of 3000 tones waste from the metropolitan areas. The rest of the garbage and waste re-



A file photo shows the Samanabad drain overflow after rains live in unhygienic conditions.

main lying in streets and at public places.

The problems of sanitation aggravate during rainy season mainly for absence of effective drainage system in the provincial metropolis. The Wasa offi-

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The departments are responsible for roads drainage, said a senior Wasa official, complaining the dumping of waste at public places, drains and roads always make their monsoon arrangements ineffective.