

January 2018

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

SEVERAL INJURED IN TENANTS-POLICE CLASH IN CHARSAKDA

Dawn, January 26, 2018

CHARSAKDA: A tenant woman set herself on fire in protest against police action to evict them from houses and land in Ijara village on Thursday while over a dozen people, including police personnel, were injured in clashes with the peasants and their female family members. The woman, who is said to have received severe burns, was taken to the tehsil headquarters hospital.

According to the district administration officials and local residents, women and children of tenants came out of their houses when the police and FC personnel tried to use force to evict them from the land occupied by them in Ijara village of Tangi tehsil.

During the protest, a woman sprinkled kerosene oil on her body and set herself on fire. She got burn injuries and was rushed to the THQ hospital in critical condition.

Later, sensing gravity of the situation the administration decided to give 20 more days to the tenants to leave the land and houses, which belonged to landlords of the area. The decision was made after a meeting with representatives of tenants.

Moreover, nine tenants, including women and children, were injured when armed men of the landlords stormed their houses to evict them in Hando village.

The district administration claimed that tenants had been removed from 285 kanals in Qandaharo, Mir Ahmed Gul and Hando villages.

Deputy commissioner Mutazir Khan and district police officer Zahoor Afridi while addressing a joint press conference said that the police personnel had taken action to reclaim the land occupied by peasants in the light of Peshawar High Court verdict.

They said that the land had been handed over to the owners. They said that some tenants were also arrested during the action.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1385383>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 15TH TO JANUARY 21ST 2018

'ILLEGAL' LAND ALLOTMENT ISSUE TO BE SENT TO ACE, SC TOLD

Dawn, January 15th, 2018

Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: The Supreme Court of Pakistan was informed on Sunday that the provincial authorities would refer the matter of the Mehmoodabad Treatment Plant land 'illegally' allotted by former city nazim Syed Mustafa Kamal to the Sindh Anti-Corruption Establishment for investigation.

In compliance with the court's earlier order, the provincial government's chief law officer placed before a three-judge bench of the apex court the report of the local government secretary on the allotment of 49.1 acres of the treatment plant land to the affectees of Lines Area by the then City District Council.

Headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, the bench was conducting the suo motu proceedings on pollution.

During a previous hearing the apex court had asked the local government secretary to conduct an inquiry into the allotment of land reserved for the treatment plant after Mr Kamal had deposed that the land was allotted to the affectees of the Lines Area. Later, the court directed Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to conduct the inquiry into the matter when he appeared before the court in "drinking water case".

The local government secretary's report said that the district council of the City District Government Karachi (CDGK) on Feb 2008 passed a resolution for allotment of the treatment plant's land to the people displaced due to the construction of the Preedy Street.

The report said that the record revealed that 1,319 plots of 120, 80 and 20 yards were carved out for the affected people on the orders of the then city nazim.

It said that the original note sheet regarding the approval of allotment of land was missing, but its photocopies were provided by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. "The note sheet reveals that at para-6 the managing director of the KWSB informed the then nazim, who was also chairman of the KWSB, regarding handing over 49.25 acres to the CDGK for utilisation of same for resettlement. The then nazim in his capacity as the chairman of the KWSB approved the proposal on 26-12-2008," the report said.

In its conclusion, the local government secretary stated that the land reserved for the treatment plant was of amenity purpose and using it for any other purpose was violation of Section 10 (2) of the Sindh Disposal of Urban Land Ordinance 2002 and the Sindh Building Control Authority regulations.

He said the CDGK was not authorised to convert the purpose of amenity land to residential as the land did not belong to the KMC/CDGK.

The local government secretary further concluded that although the land belonged to the water utility, approval of its board was not obtained and "only the chairman of board who also nazim of CDGK (Mr Mustafa Kamal) accounted approval for allotment of land to the affectees of Lines Area as resolution of CDGK council and note date 26-12-2008 submitted by the managing director of the KWSB to the nazim CDGK/chairman KWSB".

The local government secretary stated that the matter needed a thorough probe by a professional investigation agency to fix responsibility. "The chief secretary has been requested to refer the matter to the Anti-Corruption Establishment or any other investigation agency", he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1382943>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1ST TO JANUARY 7TH 2017

ARMY ISSUED ALLOTMENT LETTER FOR 293 ACRES IN D-11

Dawn, January 01, 2018

Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has issued a letter for the allotment of 293 acres of land, out of a total of over 1,000 acres, to the army for a new general headquarters (GHQ) and other military offices in Islamabad.

The allotment was made following a high profile meeting of army and CDA officials on Dec 19, which was chaired by Member Estate Khushal Khan and in which many important decisions regarding allotting land to the army were made.

“A few days ago, after the clearance of all dues, we issued an allotment letter for 293 acres of land in D-11 to the army,” CDA Member Estate Khushal Khan told Dawn, adding that possession of the land had already been handed over.

He said his team has been working on implementing all the decisions taken during the Dec 19 meeting.

The CDA will be allotting over 1,000 acres to the army for the construction of a new GHQ and other military offices in Islamabad. The army had shelved its plan for moving the GHQ from Rawalpindi to Islamabad in 2008-09 due to financial constraints and on the instructions of the then army chief, Ashaq Pervez Kiyani.

CDA is to give over 1,000 acres to the army for moving GHQ, other military offices from Pindi

But now, the army wants possession of the land for starting the project.

CDA officials told Dawn that issues regarding an office complex to be built on 138 acres were discussed in detail on Dec 19.

The meeting was informed that a formal allotment letter has not been issued due to an outstanding annual ground rent of Rs84 million.

“We have started file work to waive off annual ground rent as it was the CDA’s fault to not hand over possession of the land to the army for the construction of offices. So, there is no justification for imposing an annual ground rent charge on the army,” the member estate said.

The meeting was told that 870 acres in Zone III of the capital to the north of E-10 and D-11 was allotted to the Defence Complex Islamabad (DCI) for the construction of an office complex for the GHQ, Joint Staff Headquarters, Ministry of Defence and DCI.

The area of the office complex has now been reduced to 694.56 acres and an allotment letter for this land will be issued once the army pays off delayed charges amounting to about Rs225 million.

The resettlement of locals of the area was also discussed and the meeting was told that a summary in this regard has been submitted to the CDA board in which the allocation of a new sector has been

proposed as H-16 will not be enough to accommodate them. Sources in the civic agency said it is thinking about acquiring land in I-17 and H-17 for the resettlement of locals whose land will be acquired for army installations.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380028/army-issued-allotment-letter-for-293-acres-in-d-11>

GOVT ASKS PUNJAB UNIVERSITY TO GIVE LAND TO RELIGIOUS PARTY

Dawn, January 02, 2018

Imran Gabol

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Monday asked the Punjab University (PU) administration to hand over its prime two kanals to a religious party.

Adviser to Chief Minister Khwaja Ahmed Hassaan held a meeting with the university authorities at 90 Shahrah-i-Quaid-i-Azam on Monday and forced them to let the government acquire the land without any delay.

PU Vice Chancellor Zaffar Mueen Nasar, four deans, resident officers 1 and 2, the treasurer and the director of sports were present.

The Punjab government had acquired the land of a seminary at Chauburji to accommodate the route of the Orange Line Train project, and now forced the university to give up its land to compensate the seminary.

One of the participants in the meeting told Dawn that the university authorities asked Mr Hassaan to build the seminary in question on the acquired land of the PU near the PIA Planetarium.

“The provincial government told the PU administration and teachers that the land would remain property of the university and the mosque or seminary would also be constructed by the PU using its own procedures and offices,” a varsity official told Dawn.

“The fact is the government’s agreement with the mosque committee reveals the contract guarantees allocation of land for the mosque/seminary at a place in the university grounds at Old Campus and it will always remain in the legal control of the mosque administration while the PU administration will have nothing to do with it.”

The PU Academic Staff Association recently passed a resolution against the proposed land plan. They said under the PU Act, the land only could be used for academic purposes.

Last week, a meeting of all PU deans and principals of constituent colleges was held under the chairmanship of the VC Dr Nasar for a syndicate meeting they demanded that Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif stop snatching the PU land and instead, construct the mosque on the premises of other government offices on Lake Road (next to Madrassatul Banat).

In the last decade, the government has taken over over 33 PU kanals for the expansion of Pekhewal Mor, the Baba Ground (a.k.a. Chishtia High School Ground) next to the Punjab Secretariat, over 305

kanals for Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, eight-kanals for the Orange Train and now eyes on two kanals more for the same project.

The Punjab government has not paid even a single penny to the PU for the land.

Sources say then VC Dr Mujahid Kamran gave away the land for road under an unwritten promise from the government that he would be given the third tenure as PU VC.

The road has cut the once lush green serene PU New Campus into two halves .

The road claimed the life of a female student when a bus hit her on Dec 13.

The provincial government had also promised to build two underpasses and paying Rs300 million to the PU for the acquired land. Despite the passages of years, the government has not fulfilled its promise.

The government also violated the agreement regarding construction of the commercial market on both sides of the road.

The New Campus land was bought from the government by paying around Rs6.4m in 1963.

In 1997, then VC Prof Dr Khalid Hameed Sheikh had preferred quitting the post, instead of giving four marlas to the government for a slip road at the Barkat Market crossing.

Teachers urged the chief justice to take suo moto of 'snatching' of the PU land.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380277>

SSWMB LAND TO BE CLEARED OF ENCROACHMENTS

The Express Tribune, 3 January 2017

A major portion of the land allocated to the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB), the authority responsible for the collection, transport and disposal of solid waste in Karachi, has been encroached upon by the land mafia.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah was informed about this during a meeting on the affairs of the SSWMB at CM House on Tuesday.

“Karachi is not a tribal area where people have developed their own states within a state. It looks like the police and local administration are not cooperating to take action against the land mafia,” the CM said, giving a 48-hour ultimatum to the administration to evacuate the waste management board’s land. He directed the Karachi commissioner and inspector-general of police to start operation against land grabbers and report back to him.

Shah also constituted a committee under Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro with the local government secretary, Karachi Development Authority (KDA) director-general and others as its members to resolve all issues related to the land of the SSWMB.

An SSWMB officer informed the meeting about unlawful occupation of the waste management board's land in District East. "We have 10 acres of land in Deh Gujhro near Sohrab Goth. When we started constructing a boundary wall, local land grabbers attacked our labourers, demolished the construction and stopped the work," he said. Shah expressed extreme displeasure at this and directed the land to be recovered within two days.

Similarly, the meeting was also informed about a six-acre landfill situated in Dhobi Ghat in District South. SSWMB officials said the land was earlier used as a landfill by the District Municipal Corporation (DMC) South and, later, it was handed over to the SSWMB for the same use. The officials added that when the SSWMB started construction on the site, some locals resisted.

The SSWMB managing director (MD) informed the CM that despite requests to the local police and anti-encroachment cell, no help was received by the board against land grabbers and work on the landfill had to be abandoned.

Citing another case pertaining to 11.47 acres of land in Korangi Sector 2, the SSWMB MD alleged that when the board tried to construct a boundary wall on the land, it was stopped by army personnel who claimed that it was their land. To this, the CM directed the chief secretary to check the records to ascertain the actual ownership of the land.

"I also want a detailed report on whether the KDA can allot land to any organisation," the CM said in the meeting.

Similar reports were presented by the SSWMB in the meeting regarding its land in Korangi Industrial Area, Landhi, Bin Qasim, Baldia Town and Malir. The CM ordered immediate removal of encroachments on the land. "What are the police and district administration doing? I will not spare anyone found negligent in removing encroachments," he said.

The CM was told that rehabilitation of existing landfill sites and their conversion into sanitary landfill sites was a very important component of integrated municipal solid waste management. It was informed that the revenue department had allocated two pieces of land of 500 acres each in Deh Jam Chakro and Gaond Pass areas for landfill sites.

The SSWMB had taken over the operation and maintenance of both sites from the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and planned to rehabilitate and convert them into scientifically designed sanitary landfill sites as per international standards, the meeting was informed. The CM directed the administration to ensure that no one encroached upon the two locations.

Officials informed the meeting that the revenue department had handed over 3,000 acres of land for a landfill site near Dhabeji in 1996, adding that a garbage train was started to transport garbage from Karachi for disposal at that site but later, the scheme was abandoned and most of the land was encroached upon. The CM directed the KDA DG to present him a detailed report on the land near Dhabeji.

According to a statement issued by CM House, the SSWMB shared a plan during the meeting to reserve 200 acres of land for a hospital waste disposal site including an incinerator and 300 acres for industrial solid waste disposal. A consultant firm had already been hired which was carrying out feasibility study of the scheme, the meeting was told.

Earlier, the local government minister and SSWMB MD gave a presentation to the CM, informing him that the SSWMB was created for collection, transport and disposal of solid waste in Karachi and other cities and towns of the province in an efficient, scientific, holistic and integrated manner.

Total waste generation of Karachi was about 12,000 tons per day, of which 9,000 tons of waste was generated in areas under the administrative control the KMC and DMCs, Shoro said. The remaining 3,000 tons of waste was generated in areas of other civic administrative bodies such as the six cantonment boards, Sindh Industrial Trading Estate, Pakistan Railways and Civil Aviation Authority, the local government minister added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1599140/1-sswmb-land-cleared-encroachments/>

THE GWADAR LAND SCAM

Business Recorder, January 3rd, 2018

Pervasive corruption in this country has not spared even the Gwadar development project, crown jewel of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, even though it is at the centre of national attention. According to a press statement issued the other day by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman, Justice Javed Iqbal, investigations show the Gwadar Industrial Estate Development Authority had completely ignored the rules in allotting commercial and industrial plots in the port city, distributing them among favourites and relatives with the help of facilitators (revenue authority and provincial government officials). In so doing, notes the statement, applications of eligible industrial and other investors were rejected.

Distressing as this information is, it comes as no surprise. It has been a while when press reports revealed that some 12,000 acres of state land were illegally allotted to certain individuals with the support of politically influential people and in connivance of revenue officials. Illegality of the activity was challenged in the relevant forum and the land was restored to the government. Still, some of the beneficiaries of this largesse wouldn't give up.

They approached the revenue authorities and managed to grab back 3,167 acres of state land from a helpful senior member of the Revenue Board. The giveaway, once again, was challenged and suspended by the Board sitting in full strength, and later the suspension was upheld by the High Court. The affair is full of deceit and fraud. As the court remarked "nobody knows how the settled land owned by the state has been transferred to the private sector that too for peanuts". It also made the unsurprising observation that "the provincial government and the Board of Revenue cannot be absolved of their responsibility in this regard."

Someone has to pay a price for such corrupt practices; in this case, probably the entire country. For these illegal allotments can only discourage genuine investors, adversely impacting the development of various projects associated with the new port. The NAB chairman's decision to pursue the case cannot be welcomed enough.

He has vowed to deal with an iron hand the corrupt, he said, are out to jeopardize economic progress of Gwadar. Hopefully, all those involved in the scam will finally be brought to account, putting a complete stop to this illegal and unfair practice. Aside from dishonest distribution of state lands, there is also the issue of land acquisitions from local people at cheap rates. Attention should be paid to it. Once the development process picks up speed, the prices will rise, causing heartburn among not only those affected in Gwadar but in all of Balochistan where a sense of deprivation is already very high. The city planners need to come up with price regulations before it is too late.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/01/20180103332336/>

MURAD TELLS COMMISSIONER, IG TO GET LANDFILL SITES CLEARED OF ENCROACHMENTS

Dawn, January 03, 2018

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday expressed displeasure over reports of encroachment of land reserved for landfill sites and directed the commissioner and the inspector general of police to start an operation against land grabbers and get the land cleared.

He was presiding over a meeting of Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) at the CM House here on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro, Information Minister Nasir Shah, Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon, Karachi commissioner, local government secretary, SSWMB managing director and other officials concerned.

The chief minister asked the Karachi Development Authority's director general to give him a detailed report about the plots he had vacated from land grabbers as he wanted to provide recreational facilities on them.

For this, Mr Shah constituted a committee under the local government minister with the local government secretary, KDA DG, land utilisation department member and others to recover the plots of land and suggest their use.

"If recovered land is not utilised, the land mafia will grab it again," the chief minister said.

He added that all institutions had to extend support to the SSWMB so that it could perform its duty to the best of its capacity.

Giving presentation to the chief minister on the occasion, Mr Shoro and the SSWMB MD said the city produced 12,000 tonnes of garbage every day, of which 9,000 tonnes was generated in the municipal areas, including district municipal corporations and District Council of Karachi.

"The remaining 3,000 tonnes of waste is generated in areas of other civic bodies such as the six cantonment boards, SITE, KPT, Pakistan Railways, Civil Aviation Authority, etc," they said.

"Currently, transportation cost of waste is high because the landfill sites are more than 35 kilometres away from the city centre. This distance is even more than 50km from some areas of Karachi."

The meeting was told that two landfill sites — Jam Chakro and Gaond Pass — comprising 500 acres each, were available for disposal of waste.

"Unfortunately, both sites are simply dumping grounds far from international standards of sanitary landfill sites.

A piece of 10.14 acres of land at Sector 12- B, Korangi Industrial Area, Sharafi Goth, has been acquired and a boundary wall has been constructed around it. A computerised weighbridge is being installed and is expected to be working within the next 60 days.

“However, actual work of garbage transfer stations (GTS) couldn’t be undertaken due to heaps of more than 400,000 tonnes of garbage on the site accumulated during the last three decades,” the two said.

“This garbage is being lifted and transported for dumping at landfill sites. So far, over 200,000 tonnes of garbage has been transported to the landfill sites.”

The meeting was informed that garbage transfer stations in Deh Okiwari, Deh Gujro, Deh Gangiaro, Bin Qasim, Malir, Mewa Shah, Dhobi Ghat, Qasba Colony, Baldia Town and Hawkesbay could not be protected by the boundary wall due to encroachments.

Similarly, on learning that DMC West was using 12 acres as informal garbage transfer stations at K-28 Phase-II Trans-Lyari Quarters, the chief minister directed the Board of Revenue to allocate the land to SSWMB for GTS.

On an SSWMB request, he directed the chief secretary to provide land for establishment of GTS for Central and Korangi districts.

He was further informed that the revenue department had handed over 3000 acres for new landfill site near Dhabeji in 1996. A garbage train was started to transport garbage from Karachi for disposal at this site but later on the whole scheme was abandoned. The site was visited along with revenue officials of Malir district in 2015 and 2016 and it was found that most of the land had been encroached upon.

The chief minister directed the chief secretary to provide 3,000 acres from N.C.136 Deh Dhabeji, Chak No 1, Malir for the establishment of new landfill sites for Karachi.

Mr Shah was told that the SSWMB had reserved 200 acres for hospital waste and 300 acres for industrial waste.

“A consultant firm has already been hired which is carrying out ‘techno-economic feasibility study’ of the scheme.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380418/murad-tells-commissioner-ig-to-get-landfill-sites-cleared-of-encroachme>

KP GOVT, CHINESE CO TO DEVELOP HATTAR ECONOMIC ZONE-EXT

Business Recorder, 4 January 2018

PESHAWAR: KP government has signed an agreement with China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) for development of Hattar Special Economic Zone-Ext (1,000 acres).

In pursuance of the MoUs signed in KP-China Roadshow (April 2017), the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after deliberations signed the agreement with CRBC to develop Hattar Special Economic Zone-Extension that is expected to generate 100,000 job opportunities.

The agreement was signed by Adil Salahuddin, interim Chief Executive Officer, KPEDMC on behalf of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunhwa and Li Zhihuai, General Manager CRBC, Pakistan at Chief Minister KP Secretariat. The ceremony was attended by CM KP, Secretary P&D, Secretary Industries and Chairman KPBOIT.

KPEZDMC along with China Road and Bridge Corporation- a Company state owned enterprise by the Government of the People's Republic of China plans to develop a 1000 acres of land as Special Economic Zone at Hattar.

Hattar Special Economic Zone will have industries like Pharmaceutical, Textile, Food and Beverages, steel and various engineering related industries.

Investment of Rs 100 billion is expected by industrialists from Pakistan and abroad. The existing SEZ at Hattar has been fully booked and construction of few factories has already begun. Due to exceptional demand by investors at Hattar, the KP government has imposed section 4 on 1000 acres of land to develop the extension of SEZ.

At the ceremony KP CM Pervez Khattak said, "This is another milestone achieved by the Government of KP. This project will bring prosperity in KP by providing much needed job opportunities in the region. KP government is working towards bringing about a conducive and enabling environment for investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In order to build upon its natural strengths, KP Economic Zones Development & Management Company is currently working on development of Special Economic Zones across the Province to promote industrial growth.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/01/04/8-page/691838-news.html>

TCKP REJECTS REPORT ABOUT LEASING OUT FOREST DEPT LAND IN SWAT
Dawn, January 04, 2018

PESHAWAR: The Tourism Corporation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (TCKP) on Wednesday debunked reports that it had leased out forest department's land in the Malam Jabba ski resort in violations of rules.

It said that no forest land had been transferred to the company which had been given the lease only of land measuring a total of 12 acres to build a hotel and a ski lift – the same piece of land where once a hotel and ski lift existed prior to their destruction by militants in Swat.

The land measuring 275 acres remains under the ownership of the forest department and hence there was no question of violation of any rules and regulations for the purpose.

A report carried by a section of the media on Wednesday said that the provincial government had illegally transferred SAMSONS group of companies 275 acres of forest department's land.

While reacting to the report, TCKP said that the provincial government had constituted a committee comprising of seven provincial departments to initiate the process of rehabilitation of Malam Jabba Hotel, ski/chairlift.

It said that after due process, the project was awarded to the highest scoring bidder SAMSONS Group of Companies, Lahore. "And after obtaining formal approval from the competent authority, a formal lease agreement was signed by the Tourism Corporation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the highest bidder in September 2014," it said.

It said that the 275 acres land was previously with the federal government and a hotel and a chairlift existed at the site. It said that in 2007-08 militants destroyed the chairlift and hotel building.

Following the 18th amendment, Malam Jabba property was transferred to the KP tourism department in June 2013. TCKP and KP-BOIT advertised this land for setting up a hotel, chairlift and ski resort in March 2014.

Lease agreement was signed in September 2014. Difference of opinion arose between the forest department and the lessee about the meaning of access rights – as who has access and for what purpose and under what conditions as the said 257 acres land was notified forest land.

The tourism department's contention was that the said land belonged to MJR and the land was transferred to it from the federal government under the 18th amendment and therefore it had the right to advertise it for the same purpose as was the case with MJR.

This, however, prompted the lessee to move the Peshawar High Court through a writ petition.

It said that to ensure that the project is not stalled as it was expected to be a major contribution to economy of the militancy-affected area, a meeting dated 27/4/2016 chaired by the chief minister decided that in order to avoid confusion the term "access rights" mentioned in the agreement would be elaborated to mean that the 257 acres would be available only for roaming facility to visitors, for sightseeing and enjoying eco-friendly tourism.

The hotel and ski lift would be made on 12 acres only and simultaneously the lessee would withdraw the court case. It said that about the remaining area of 257 acres, one kanal and five marlas is not to be de-notified by the forest department. It will continue to be owned by the government through the forest department and remain under the ambit of the Forest Act.

To clear any ambiguity on this count once and for all, the addendum to the agreement specifies that this land is to be only used by tourists visiting the ski facility/area only for walking, sightseeing and enjoying eco-friendly tourism.

It said that a site visit to Malam Jabba will confirm that the construction and ski lift is in the same area (12 acres) as before. The remaining land of 257 acres will remain under the ambit of the Forest Act and to be used only for roaming of the tourists.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380703/tckp-rejects-report-about-leasing-out-forest-dept-land-in-swat>

PUNJAB UNIVERSITY VC RESIGNS 'INSTEAD OF GIVING LAND TO SEMINARY'

Dawn, January 6th, 2018

Imran Gabol

LAHORE: Punjab University Vice Chancellor Zaffar Mueen Nasar on Friday resigned from his post, apparently over the issue of the university land which the Punjab government wanted to give to a religious party.

Prof Nasar tendered his resignation to Punjab Governor/Chancellor Malik Rafique Rajwana, citing 'unavoidable circumstances'.

Talking to Dawn, Mr Nasar said he was facing immense pressure from the elements in the Punjab government to hand over two-kanal land of the PU Old Campus sports ground to a religious party for constructing a seminary.

“The whole teaching community in the university was against handing over the land to the government; therefore, I preferred to resign instead of giving in to the government pressure,” he said. Mr Nasar had joined the office on Dec 28, 2016.

The Punjab government had acquired the land of the seminary near Chauburji for the Orange Line Train project and was forcing the university to give up its land to compensate the seminary, which belonged to a religiopolitical party.

The PU Academic Staff Association had also passed a resolution against the proposed land plan, saying that under the PU Act, the land could be used only for academic purposes. They also said that teaching community would resist if the PU administration dared hand over the land to the government.

The Punjab government on Jan 1 had asked the PU administration to hand over its prime two kanals to a religiopolitical party.

Adviser to Chief Minister Khwaja Ahmed Hassaan, in a meeting with the PU VC, deans, treasurer and resident officers, held at 90 Shahrah-i-Quaid-i-Azam, had forced the participants to let the government acquire the land without any delay.

A week before this meeting, all the PU deans and principals of constituent colleges, in a meeting held under the chairmanship of the Dr Nasar, had demanded Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif stop snatching the PU land and construct the mosque on the premises of other government offices on the Lake Road (next to Madrassatul Banat).

On the other hand, a tussle was going on between the VC and the Punjab Higher Education Minister Raza Ali Gillani, which, according to some PU senior faculty members, was a reason behind the departure of Dr Nasar.

Mr Gillani had recently written to the chief minister, seeking removal of Dr Nasar, accusing him of committing financial irregularities and violations of rules in various projects and recruitments. He had accused the VC of illegal appointments and exercise of the chancellor’s powers without approval and administrative malpractice.

The minister also suggested in his report that the Chief Minister Inspection Team (CMIT) should look into the serious allegations against Dr Nasar.

Prof Nasar had earlier said that the provincial minister had pressurised him to make illegal postings and give admissions to students against merit and that his denial had turned the minister against him. He also said that he would move the court against the minister for leveling baseless allegations of financial corruption against him.

The minister’s spokesman had denied the allegations regarding pressurising Dr Nasar for illegal postings and admissions.

PU Teachers Front, in its statement, disputed with the claim of the VC that he resigned on the land issue. It repeated the similar allegations that of the higher education minister. The VC was also accused of supporting the Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) by his opponents. Pro Nasar termed the allegation baseless.

The IJT spokesman condemned the Punjab government for grabbing PU land and pressurising Dr Nasar in this regard.

“We students of PU fully support Dr Nasar on taking stand in front of the Punjab government on the land issue and would go to any extent to save the university assets for academic future,” he concluded.

Academic Staff Association (ASA) president Javed Sami urged the CM to appoint full-time vice chancellor after advertising the post.

In 1997, the then PU VC Prof Dr Khalid Hameed Sheikh had preferred quitting the post, instead of giving four marlas to the government for a slip road at the Barkat Market crossing.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1381111>

February 2018

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

STUDENT KILLED IN INDIAN SHELLING

Dawn, February 28th, 2018

Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: A grade five student lost his life while another man was injured in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Tuesday due to shelling by Indian troops from across the Line of Control (LoC).

Casualties occurred in the Nakyal sector of Kotli district, said Waleed Anwar, assistant commissioner of Nakyal.

He said that Zain Imtiaz, 11, was hit by splinters of a mortar shell in front of his house in Dharoti Naari village and died on the spot.

Elsewhere in the same sector, 26-year old Muhammad Farid was injured in Kunda Tarkundi village, Mr Anwar said.

The funeral prayers for the boy were offered in Nakyal after which his body was taken to his native village for burial.

Earlier, an unpleasant scene was created at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Nakyal, after its administration initially refused to provide an ambulance to ferry the body of the boy to Dharoti Naari village, located barely seven kilometres away from there. Later, the administration provided the ambulance to the people.

Meanwhile, a large number of people also staged a protest in the town's Parawa Chowk against unrelenting shelling by Indian security forces across the dividing line.

In Islamabad, the Foreign Office summoned Indian Deputy High Commissioner J.P. Singh and condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations by the Indian occupation forces along the LoC in which Zain lost his life, adds PPI.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392170/student-killed-in-indian-shelling>

TWO SOLDIERS MARTYRED IN INDIAN FIRING

Dawn, March 1st, 2018

Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: Two Pakistani soldiers were martyred after Indian troops resorted to unprovoked firing from across the Line of Control (LoC) on Wednesday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

The casualties occurred in Bhimber sector, located in the southernmost Bhimber district of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, according to the army's media affairs wing.

"Indian troops initiated unprovoked firing in Bhimber sector. Two Pakistan Army soldiers embraced shahadat," the ISPR said in a late-night press release.

The deceased soldiers belonged to two different districts of Azad Kashmir.

The ISPR identified them as 32-year-old Sepoy Mohammad Munir Chohan, a resident of Rakri Chohan village in tehsil Forward Kahuta of Haveli district, and 28-year-old Sepoy Aamir Hussain, a resident of Danna village in tehsil Samahni of Bhimber district.

The ISPR said that Pakistani troops responded to Indian firing and there were reports of substantial damage to posts on the other side of the LoC.

The heavily militarised LoC that splits the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir into two has been constantly witnessing exchange of fire in a serious breach of a ceasefire agreement signed by the two armies in November 2003.

Resultantly, a number of civilian casualties have occurred in Azad Kashmir.

According to the AJK State Disaster Management Authority, 14 civilians have lost their lives while another 62 have been wounded in the ongoing Indian shelling.

The Foreign Office summoned on Tuesday Indian Deputy High Commissioner J.P. Singh and condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations by the Indian occupation forces along the LoC after a boy lost his life due to the shelling.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392471>

NUCLEAR WORRIES

Dawn, March 1st, 2018

Sadia Tasleem

ON Jan 13, 2018, people in Hawaii were shocked to receive text messages warning of an imminent missile attack. After what many said were the most horrifying 38 minutes of their lives, they received a second message that it was a false alert, the result of human error at the emergency operations centre. But in the context of a simmering crisis between the US and North Korea, the possibility of a missile attack seemed real, and with it the potential for nuclear war.

Too often, debates about nuclear weapons revolve around concepts of operationalising nuclear deterrence, escalation ladders and flexible responses. But these debates tend to obscure the fact that nuclear weapons are real and their use is not impossible. A crisis sparked by a false alert, fake news, an inflammatory tweet, a social media gimmick, a computer glitch, a hacked network — any of these could spark conflict that results in nuclear weapons being used.

Ironically, attention drawn to a US-North Korea crisis or other potential flashpoints makes the nuclear establishment in Pakistan fairly comfortable. After all, we are not the focal point of what we often think is the Western media's negative attention. But does that mean there is no cause for worry about a nuclear war in South Asia?

We must revisit our beliefs regarding a nuclear war.

All is not well between India and Pakistan. In recent times, the Indian air chief has threatened to target Pakistani nuclear assets, while the Indian army chief talked about calling Pakistan's "nuclear bluff". The DG ISPR warned of a befitting response. All this on top of the ever-increasing levels of violence along the Line of Control.

These reminders of the fault lines and sabre-rattling between India and Pakistan call for introspection, for thinking through our preparedness to deal with crises, and to gauge our ability to protect citizens from our own follies. We must revisit our fundamental beliefs and unstated assumptions about the possibility of crisis and a war that may turn nuclear.

Advocates of nuclear deterrence believe that nuclear weapons prevent war and therefore their inhumanity in some strange ways serves the cause of human survival. Nuclear proliferation optimists flaunt the deterrence role of nuclear weapons by referring to what John Lewis Gaddis called an era of 'Long Peace' — itself a debatable notion for those familiar with the intense arguments between Gaddis and our very own Eqbal Ahmad. Eqbal brought home the brutality of the supposed Cold War and 'Long Peace' by looking at it from the perspective of its victims.

However, the nuclear industry and deterrence discourse of the Cold War has made nuclear weapons fetish objects and nuclear deterrence sacrosanct for many here as elsewhere. We are fond of quoting Bernard Brodie's 1946 observation that, "from now on the chief purpose of military strategy is not to win wars; it is instead to prevent one". Quite often we treat this as a departure point to teach nuclear deterrence during the Cold War without realising that Brodie's voice was not reflective of a consensus; it was just one among many voices. In fact, the US and the USSR never thought a nuclear war was impossible and spent considerable effort and money planning to fight one.

And yet, nuclear war didn't break out. Was it because it looked too real? Was it because it was too deadly and the human mind too sane to blunder into a nuclear inferno? Or was it mere luck, as former US defence secretary Robert McNamara suggested? It is as difficult to answer these questions as it is to determine the precise role of nuclear weapons in preventing war during the Cold War. But it is important to keep thinking about these questions and how they apply to South Asia today. There are no assurances that nuclear weapons won't be used.

Indeed, the fact that we in Pakistan assume that nuclear deterrence prevents large-scale wars itself may create enough reasons for both India and Pakistan to opt for escalation in a crisis.

Yes, a nuclear war is too dreadful an idea to think about; too inhuman to contemplate. But that doesn't change the fact that there are wars, and savagery and brutal weapons that have the ability to annihilate human species from the face of this earth. Our inhibition does not change the fact that organisations and states continue to develop the instruments of death and destruction without guilt or remorse and many people in many places endorse those weapons with pride.

In sum it is important to understand that the possibility of escalation in a future crisis in South Asia cannot be precluded only because we know nuclear weapons are too deadly or because others have not fought nuclear wars. It is equally important to resolve conflicts and find ways to reduce and eventually eliminate all weapons of mass destruction in South Asia and elsewhere..

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392485/nuclear-worries>

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

GOVERNANCE INNOVATION AND LAND DISPUTES

The Express Tribune, February 13th, 2018.

Last week, I visited Chakwal for some work. At the deputy commissioner's office, I was invited as an observer to an unusual meeting. All the district revenue administration and police leadership were present and providing an update on something called Revenue-Police Committees, set up in each tehsil of Chakwal district.

These committees, established only three months ago at the direction of the DC and the district police officer, objectively look at land-related disputes, providing a verified record of rights and titles and amicably resolving such conflicts, where possible, preventing prolonged litigation. So far, a total of 44 cases have been referred to these committees, out of which 26 have been resolved, reflecting a resolution rate of 59%. None of the parties in these resolved cases felt the need to either appeal the committee's decision or to go for civil litigation.

I was greatly impressed on three counts. Firstly, the focus of district administration on something very relevant to the local context was admirable. Not only land-related disputes are quite common in rural settings but a significant proportion of crimes are also known to have land disputes as their root cause. In most cases, the opposing parties muddle the situation through involvement of both the police and land revenue administration separately and generating multiple conflicting reports on titles — by greasing a few palms. Such tactics complicate the case facts and lead to civil litigation that may take years. Only last month, the Supreme Court decided on a 100-year-old property inheritance case, originally started in 1918.

Availability of both agencies together along with availability of original record however helps in objectively looking at facts and leaving little ground for confusion or malafide intent on the part of either party.

Secondly, such initiatives provide a platform for alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Use of ADR can prevent litigation and reduce the judiciary's workload. The chief justice of Pakistan recently disclosed that in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, only one judge is available for 62,000 people, whereas in the Lahore High Court, only one judge is available for 2.2 million people. Every civil

judge has to deal with an average of 150 cases daily with about 2.4 minutes to hear each case. Furthermore, taking pendency into account, the disposal rate for civil cases was 55% in 2014 in the courts of district & sessions judges across Punjab.

For a complainant, the median cost of a single interaction with courts and the police in Punjab is about Rs17,000 (UNDP survey in 2012). Considering that each case involves multiple such interactions increases the cost to hundreds of thousands of rupees for citizens.

There is already a broad realisation of these impediments and the Lahore High Court has set up ADR centres in the province. So far 13,500+ cases have been referred to these centres, with 8,500+ mediated successfully.

Thirdly and most importantly, the initiative provides a classic example of a local home-grown innovation undertaken by civil servants. In this particular case, the local district leadership realised that merely through better inter-agency cooperation, it could enhance transparency in how such disputes are handled and provide quick relief to citizens. The police and land revenue administration are twin pillars of local governance in a district. Working together systematically to tackle a major justice-sector problem is a simple, practical and cost-effective solution.

Governments all over the world are on the lookout for innovations in public service delivery to improve efficiency, reduce costs and enhance citizen satisfaction. The ideal nursery for such innovations however continues to be the service delivery front-end, where local problems are best understood and can be resolved. The Jhang Model of seeking citizen feedback to check corruption was introduced by a former DCO a few years ago and gained attention of the Punjab chief minister, resulting in provincewide replication. The role of the government therefore is to recognise and take stock of such innovations, review and refine them and scale them up for improved governance.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1633091/6-governance-innovation-land-disputes/>

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

CLASH OVER LAND DISPUTE LEAVES EIGHT DEAD IN CHAGAI

The Express Tribune, February 5th, 2018.

Eight people lost their lives in a firing incident over land dispute in Chagai district of Balochistan on Sunday.

“The deadly clash that took place earlier over scuffle between the Mohammad Hasni tribe and the Afghan refugee tribe Noorzai,” said Dalbandin Assistant Commissioner Habibullah Musakhail. “Mohammad Hasni tribe attacked the Noorzai tribe that led to a gunfight.”

In the clash, Noorzai tribe lost six men while Mohammad Hasni tribe two, he added.

Frontier Corps and Levies personnel reached the site and cordoned off the area. The bodies were shifted to Civil Hospital, Quetta.

According to hospital sources, the deceased were identified as Haji Abdul Baqi Mohammad Hasni, Abdul Wali, son of Haji Abdul Baqi Mohammad Hasni, Muhammad Nabi Noorzai, Haji Toor Noorzai, Abdul Bari Noorzai, Sardar Sher Agha, Mohammad Ashraf and Ubaidullah Noorzai. Chagai Deputy Commissioner Imran Ibrahim Bangulzai said the injured were shifted to Prince Fahad Hospital in Dalbandin. The bodies were handed over to their heirs after fulfilling medico-legal formalities.

People of Hasni tribe complained against local administration about criminal negligence. They said that they had requested the authorities to take steps and measures to avoid such a chaotic situation in the future.

Deadly firing incidents has created fear among the people dwelling in Barabcha.

Authorities are investigating the case but no one has been arrested so far.

In June last year, four members of a family, including three brothers, were killed in a firing incident over a land dispute in Kohistan.

Police sources said the incident happened in Kohi Palas area where a person from Azadkhel tribe allegedly opened fire on people from the rival Cholaskhel tribe, killing four people.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1626242/1-clash-land-dispute-leaves-eight-dead-chagai/>

INQUIRY INTO CDA LAND DIRECTORATE'S AFFAIRS DELAYED

Dawn, February 5th, 2018

Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: A high-profile inquiry into the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) land directorate's handling of plots, initiated by the Capital Administration and Development Division (CADD) minister in December and was to be completed within 10 days, has been delayed.

CADD Minister Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry had ordered an inquiry into dubious corrigendum based allotments of over a hundred plots in the CDA on Dec 28 last year. The inquiry was supposed to end on Jan 7, 2018, but has not been completed yet.

Sources in CADD said the inquiry, which is being carried out by Joint Secretary Tariq Moj, has yet to make serious progress.

However, Dr Chaudhry said the inquiry was delayed for administrative reasons, including the change of the CADD secretary.

He added that he was following the inquiry and that he thought the report would be completed within a week.

The inquiry officer is also looking into plot allotments made in violation of the rules after a ban on allotments was lifted.

Former CDA chairman Sheikh Anser Aziz had suspended two land directorate deputationist officials – Land Director Irfanullah Khan and Deputy Director Rana Farhan – for over a hundred corrigendum-based allotments after August 2017.

Mr Aziz had also announced the cancellation of all corrigendum-based allotments made in aforementioned period, and directed that a fact-finding inquiry be conducted into the matter.

But sources in the authority said that neither the cancellation of the allotments nor the inquiry could be initiated because Mr Aziz was removed as chairman on Dec 29 by the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

An inquiry is being conducted into the alleged scandal by CADD.

A directive from the CADD minister from Dec 28, 2017, quoted him as saying: “Earlier, on receipt of complaints from public, I imposed ban on allotments of plots on 16-05-2016. After prolonged demands & protest of affectees against this ban, the same was lifted on 12-05-2017, however, I personally observed that affectees have not been benefited at all, therefore, an inquiry needs to be carried out.”

Last August, the land directorate allotted plots to various people in the high valued I-11 sector and lower valued I-12 sector in balloting without following any policy.

Six plots in F-11/4 were also transferred to F-11/1 and F-11/2. The price of a plot in F-11/4 is around Rs7 million, whereas a similar sized plot in F-11/1 or 2 is worth Rs15m.

In addition, over a hundred plots were allotted through corrigendum – a method through which plots are shifted from one site to another due to issues with the physical possession of the land or with the allotment letters – allegedly to benefit specific individuals.

An inquiry into the allotment of preferred plots in C-15 and C-16 that began in 2016 has yet to be completed, for reasons best known to CDA officials.

Sources said that the inquiry had found that several influential people had preferred plots allotted in their names in connivance with CDA’s information technology directorate.

CDA officials even claimed that a senior authority official who had played a leading role in the development of C-15 had dozens of plots allotted in the names of front men.

The inquiry report has yet to be completed. Sources said that former and current CDA officers last month conveyed to the inquiry committee not to probe the matter further.

Salman Warraich, a former CDA member administration who was removed from the post in December 2016 for various reasons, has also claimed that he was removed because he was supervising the C-15 and C-16 inquiry.

Located at the foothills of the Margallas, C-15 is spread over 4,000 kanals that were acquired according to the ¼ formula, under which the CDA gives landowners one developed plot in exchange for four undeveloped ones.

CDA officers said several bureaucrats within and outside the authority bought land from the CDA through property dealers and were given preferred plots, making millions in the process.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1387380>

\$5M PROJECT AIMS TO EMPOWER SINDH'S LANDLESS FARMERS

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, February 5th, 2018

AN internationally funded project was launched in Sindh last week in an attempt to improve land tenancy for landless farmers.

Landless farmers (or haris) in the province usually have access to land as tenants through paperless agreements between them and landlords. Without having any documentation, these farmers often end up as vulnerable bonded labourers.

The project — Improved Land Tenancy in Sindh — was launched by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations with the financial assistance of the European Union (EU).

Under the project, four million euros (\$5m) will be spent over the next four years to benefit 12,600 households in eight districts, including Dadu, Jamshoro, Larkana, Matiari, Mirpurkhas, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan and Sujawal.

According to FAO, 4,800 informal tenancy agreements between haris and landlords will be conducted to contribute to improving livelihoods and reducing poverty along with ensuring a better use of natural resources in the targeted areas.

Agriculture is the backbone of Sindh's economy and is a multifaceted sector with farreaching implications on issues ranging from rural poverty, food security, water resource management, infrastructure development and employment opportunities to export earnings. About 30 to 35 per cent of the province's population lives below the poverty line, and a majority of the poor are rural. The EU is collaborating with the FAO on promoting the establishment in Sindh of a land tenure system that can sustainably improve the equitable access to, and governance of, land and natural resources, allowing for improvements in agricultural production, food security and nutrition, according to EU Ambassador to Pakistan Jean-François Cautain.

The project will contribute to poverty alleviation in Pakistan as well as a sound management of natural resources, in particular for smallholder farmers and other users of natural resources.

Commenting on the project launching, the late Sindh Minister for Planning and Development Hazar Khan Bijarani had hoped to see programmes of poverty alleviation all across Sindh. He had lauded the FAO-EU efforts to help the Sindh government improve livelihoods in rural areas with a focus on rural women.

Explaining the benefits of the project, FAO Representative in Pakistan Mina Dowlatchahi said the project would implement elements of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) for unlocking the potential of agriculture and rural development in Sindh.

It will enable farmers to improve their livelihoods and adopt climate-resilient and innovative agricultural practices. It will also promote nutrition education through Women Open Schools and nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions.

The VGGT will be used to improve tenure security for farmers taking into account agricultural productivity and gender inequality issues. These guidelines are a set of internationally accepted standards of good practices in relation to tenure governance, which can guide decision-making and policy development regarding matters related to tenure security in the context of arrangements between landlords and haris.

Land and water governance will be improved in the eight districts of Sindh in line with the VGGT, with a focus on female and male smallholder farmers and other disadvantaged population.

The relations and interactions between landlords and haris are challenging and in such a situation instances of bonded work emerge. At the same time, land governance issues and tenure insecurity hinder efforts to enhance agricultural productivity. That situation has put more than 70 per cent of households in food insecurity; therefore, tenure security and responsible land governance are necessary to overcome these issues.

The FAO says the project will be instrumental in the introduction of governance arrangements leading towards secure tenancy within the framework of the existing legal and institutional framework. It will also help develop capacity of local institutions working to improve life in rural Sindh.

One of the main objectives of the project is to support the establishment of agreements between landlords and haris to ensure that both parties have rights and duties avoiding exploitative practices. It will strengthen capacities of local institutions for responsible governance of tenure aligned with the VGGT. Furthermore, the project will enhance tenure security through the use of the VGGT while tackling agricultural productivity matters and gender inequality issues.

The objectives of the project have strategic alignment with the VGGT and sustainable development goals since the two goals of sustainable development are to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, besides ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

SDG-1 ensures that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources.

SDG-2 targets aim to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers.

Major stakeholders of the project are the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Sindh Revenue Board, provincial departments, civil society organisations and private sector organisations, besides poor rural population in selected districts.

A project management unit has been established at the FAO office in Hyderabad. To speed up the project activities at field level, technical staff has been moved from the FAO Multan to Hyderabad.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1387359/5m-project-aims-to-empower-sindhs-landless-farmers>

ARMY TO BE COMPENSATED IN F-12 FOR ITS PRE-PARTITION LAND

Dawn, February 8th, 2018

Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: A longstanding land dispute between the army, Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Federal Government Employees Housing Foundation (FGEHF) was resolved during a meeting on Wednesday.

A high level meeting was held at the Ministry of Defence and was chaired by Defence Secretary Lt Gen Zamirul Hassan Shah. The meeting was attended by officials of the Military Land and Cantonment (ML&C) Directorate, housing ministry and CDA, according to a source.

It was decided that the CDA will allot 33 acres of land to the army in F-12 in lieu of the army's land in G-13, which is being operated by the housing ministry. The CDA will be giving the army land in F-12/3 in place of its land in G-13.

The army owned land in various areas of Islamabad since before the partition and the land in G-13, which has been occupied by the housing ministry, has remained a property of the army since British rule.

The source said the issue of ML&C and the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) claiming they have land in G-12, G-13, G-14 and along Kashmir Highway was also resolved during the meeting and the army will now be given alternate land, most likely in H-13.

When asked CDA Member Estate Khushal Khan, who also attended the meeting, said: "I cannot share the details of the meeting, but I would say that many issues were resolved amicably in today's meeting."

Another participant of the meeting also said the land dispute was amicably resolved.

"CDA will allot land to the army in F-12 and the army will also be given alternate land in place of their land in G-12, G-13," he said.

A CDA official said the Urban Planning Wing of the authority has earmarked 33 acres of land on the map of F-12/3 for allotment to the army after the completion of formalities.

In December last year, officials of the ML&C Directorate and RCB had during a meeting at the CDA Headquarters discussed the long pending jurisdiction issue between the civic agency of the federal capital and RCB.

According to CDA officials, ML&C Director General Maj Gen Syed Najamul Hassan Shah and other officials of the directorate had met with the then CDA chairman Sheikh Anser Aziz and discussed land issues pertaining to the CDA and the cantonments.

In the December meeting, an official said, cantonment officials presented maps which implied that the area which currently falls under the jurisdiction of Islamabad's Noon police station and a portion of the Jhangi Syedan union council were part of Rawalpindi.

RCB officials had told the CDA that two important army installations — EME College and CMT Depot — were also located in the area which is evidence that the area falls under RCB jurisdiction. Sources said this issue was also discussed in the current meeting.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1388090/army-to-be-compensated-in-f-12-for-its-pre-partition-land>

March 2018

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

SINDH REJECTS BALOCHISTAN'S CLAIM OVER LAND IN KIRTHAR

Dawn, March 29th, 2018

KARACHI: The Sindh government has rejected Balochistan government's claim over 0.248 million acres of land located at the top of Kirthar Range and said that this land in Kirthar Range plateau is high above Gorakh Hill station and has already been declared part of Qambar district.

This was stated by Senior Minister Nisar Ahmad Khuhro while addressing a press conference here in Sindh Assembly committee room on Wednesday along with MPA Nawab Ghebi Sardar Chandio.

Mr Khuhro advised the Balochistan government to give up its claim on the land because it was part of Sindh and would remain its part.

He said Sindh was a smaller and friendly province, but would never compromise on its border and areas, nor would it allow anyone to encroach even an inch of its land.

Mr Khuhro held the press conference in response to a press talk addressed by Khuzdar district council chairman Shakeel Durrani the other day in which Mr Durrani had claimed that the said land belonged to Balochistan.

Mr Durrani's statement came after a statement was given by MPA Aslam Bizenjo in the Balochistan Assembly in response to a question asked by someone in this regard in which Mr Bizenjo had said that the land belonged to Balochistan and an impression was given as if Sindh had encroached upon Balochistan land rich with minerals.

Mr Khuhro said this claim and impression of Balochistan was baseless.

He showed a map and gazette of 1876 in which it was shown as part of Qambar District.

He said that the Sindh government would take up this issue with the Balochistan government because it was a serious matter and it appeared that a resolved issue was being raised once again by certain elements.

Mr Khuhro said that the Balochistan government had also constituted a three-member committee.

“Let it work, but Sindh will not back an inch from its land because Sindh is the owner of this land.”

He requested his friends in Balochistan to give up their claim over the piece of land and avoid raising a new contentious issue.

Mr Khuhro further pointed out that Sindh neither had occupied minerals of Balochistan nor had encroached upon the land of Balochistan.

On the occasion Sindh MPA from Qambar Shahdaskot Sardar Chandio recalled the history of the plateau showing documents to prove that it was part of Sindh from the British Raj; as such Balochistan's claim over the plateau was beyond comprehension.

He said "mischievous elements" used to raise the issue in the past also, but not only in Pakistan Survey maps, but even from the days of Khan of Kalat period it was shown as part of Sindh.

Responding to a question, Sardar Chandio said this time this issue was raised during local bodies' election by certain elements to get political mileage.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1398126/sindh-rejects-balochistans-claim-over-land-in-kirthar>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 19TH TO MARCH 25TH 2018 ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO CHOLISTANIS FROM APRIL 1

Dawn, March 19th, 2018

BAHAWALPUR: The allotment of land to Cholistanis under the Punjab chief minister's package will begin on April 1. This was claimed by ex-senator Saood Majid Chaudhry and MPA Khalid Jajja at a joint press conference here on Sunday.

They said in the first phase, 27,000 lots [12.5 acre each] comprising about 200,000- acre land would be allotted to [eligible] 15,000 applicants.

It merits mentioning that the CM had announced the Cholistan package amounting to over Rs2 billion in 2014.

MPA Khalid Jajja said the chief minister has approved the construction of a water tunnel from the Mailsi-Siphon (MS) link at a cost of Rs6bn to channelise about 1,600 cusec canal water to Yazman and other Cholistan areas. "Out of this, 300 cusec water will be released into the canals falling within the jurisdiction of Bahawalpur tehsil."

Jajja said work on the provision of Sui gas to Yazman and its attached Cholistan areas was in progress. "At present, work to lay under-ground Sui gas line from Ahmedpur East to Head Rajkan is under way."

To a question, he said as many as 1,200 water tobas (ponds) in the desert areas of Cholistan had been repaired while the existing water supply pipelines in the vast desert were upgraded to meet the needs drinking water needs of humans and livestock during the coming summer season.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396123/allotment-of-land-to-cholistanis-from-april-1>

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

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES

Business Recorder, 13 March 2018

The Board of Investment (BoI) has approved and notified seven special economic zones (SEZs) at specific locations and each SEZ has been further earmarked for specific industries. In Sindh, three have been approved and notified – (i) Khairpur (140 acres) for agro-based industry and data processing units; (ii) Bin Qasim (930 acres) for light engineering, auto vendors, steel fabricating units, chemical and food, pharmaceuticals and electrical and consumer goods; and (iii) Korangi Creek (140 acres) for value-added garments, textiles, packaging and printing, warehouses and logistics, consumer goods, food and pharmaceuticals.

Another three SEZs have been notified in Punjab that will serve textile and cotton, engineering and construction, pharmaceuticals, electronics, food and beverages and information technology: (i) Quaid-e-Azam Apparel Park (1536 acres) located at M2 at the Sheikhpura Interchange (Lahore-Islamabad motorway); (ii) M3 (4356 acres) located near Sahinwala Interchange; and (iii) Value-Addition City (225 acres) located 20 kilometres from Islamabad. And finally one SEZ has been approved and notified in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) at Hattar Phase VII (424 acres) to be dedicated for mining, marble and fruit processing units.

While the location of the SEZs in Punjab and KPK reflects the advantage of the road network under the aegis of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that would no doubt attract Chinese companies, the SEZs' location in Sindh is focused on taking advantage of an existing asset namely the port. Be that as it may, the BoI reportedly did engage with the provinces prior to identifying the location of SEZs though KPK expressed a desire to locate SEZs in backward areas as a means to encourage productivity there – an objective that is difficult to achieve as new industry would be attracted to where there is infrastructure and skilled labour rather than to an area where neither is readily available.

However, it is disturbing that the BoI has limited the use of SEZs to specific industries. Thus to limit Hattar SEZ to mining, marble and fruit processing plants is to limit productivity to the province's existing output and that in itself cannot be supported.

Successive Pakistani governments have been enamoured by the idea of setting up SEZs with the overarching objective of fuelling economic activity through facilitating the provision of infrastructure as well as fiscal incentives. It is quite inexplicable as to why our successive administrations have not focused on eliminating red-tapism that remains a serious impediment to setting up industrial units in this country in spite of widespread acknowledgment that bureaucratic bottlenecks are a major hindrance to prospective investors.

In addition, Pakistan's tax system remains unfair, inequitable and anomalous and this again has been acknowledged in all relevant quarters backed by recommendations made by several research studies (local and international) that are gathering dust in relevant ministries. Unfortunately, however, the tax system is not even rationalized on many counts, including the failure of the Federal Board of Revenue to rationalize the input/output tax adjustment of sales tax on services between the centre and the provinces – an issue that erupted as far back as in 2013.

To conclude, one would hope that the identification of industrial units that can be set up in any SEZ must be left to the industrialists and at the same time the impediments to increased output must be

removed nationwide especially as regards the prevailing lack of rationalization with respect to the input/output tax adjustment.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/13/20-page/704689-news.html>

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT: ILLEGAL OCCUPANTS EVICTED FROM 7,063 KANALS OF LAND

The Express Tribune, March 15th, 2018

The government evicted illegal occupants from 7,063 kanals of land worth Rs14 billion in the past four months.

This was disclosed in the quarterly “Government Performance Report” prepared by the Performance Management and Reforms Unit (PMRU) at the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa’s (K-P) chief secretary office.

According to the report, the government conducted anti-encroachment drive across the province. Apart from evicting illegal occupants on 7,063 kanals of land, encroachment on 217,000 kanals of land was also removed.

Moreover, the government decided as many as 6,100 civil cases apart from deciding 134 departmental cases though reconciliation in the past four months.

On the directions of the chief secretary, the deputy commissioners conducted 274 Khuli Kacheries (town halls) across the province in their respective districts where people presented 2,559 complaints. Of these, 1,399 were solved on the spot while 772 complaints were sent to the concerned departments for effective action.

The report added that 1,035 illegal crush plants were sealed throughout the province while 447 plants were issued licenses after they fulfilled the legal formalities.

As many as 7,000 water tanks were cleaned and chlorinated, while 708 illegal billboards were removed from different places.

The PMRU has developed a citizen portal through which citizens can access the chief secretary.

Its members have doubled in the past four months, from 95,000 to 200,000. These members have filed as many as 16,000 complaints, of which 12,000 complaints have been resolved while the remaining have been referred to the concerned departments for necessary action.

Individuals, not NTS responsible for paper leak.

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Individuals, not NTS responsible for paper leak.

After papers of the National Testing Service (NTS) for school teachers were leaked earlier this month, prompting the government to cancel the papers at the very last minute, a probe committee has found that individuals, not the testing company was responsible for the leak.

The committee, comprising the special secretary for education Arshad Khan, Education Director Farid Khattak and NTS Chief Operating Officer presented its findings to the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Education Department, a statement by the department read on Wednesday.

It stated that the committee found that the NTS, as an organisation, was not involved in the leakage. Rather, four employees were found to have been responsible for outing the paper.

“All these were arrested by the Abbottabad police and are currently in jail right now,” it said, adding that the inquiry committee had also recommended involving ETEA in addition to NTS to improve transparency of the testing processes.

On March 4, the K-P Elementary and Secondary Education department cancelled the NTS test for the post of primary school teachers (PST) following complaints of candidates from different districts across the province.

According to the NTS data around 176,516 candidates applied for the post. Half of the candidates appeared on the first day of the test and the rest were to appear on the second day.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1660170/1-quarterly-performance-report-illegal-occupants-evicted-7063-kanals-land/>

APEX COURT WANTS STRICT ACTION AGAINST CHINA-CUTTING

The Express Tribune, 17 March 2018

The Supreme Court (SC) directed on Friday the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) to take strict action to end illegal carving of land, commonly known as China-cutting, and remove illegal encroachments from 35,000 amenity plots in the metropolis.

A three-judge bench, comprising Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan, Justice Gulzar Ahmed and Justice Umar Ata Bandial, gave these orders while hearing a case relating to the allotment of an amenity plot to a female petitioner by the KDA after her own plot was encroached upon in New Karachi.

At the outset, the bench members inquired from the KDA director-general (DG) about action against the illegal carving of thousands of amenity plots in the city and encroachments on them.

The DG submitted a report, stating that encroachments had been removed from more than 17,000 amenity spaces in compliance with court's earlier directives.

Justice Ahmed remarked that thousands of amenity spaces were still encroached upon. He asked the DG what steps the authority took to recover them. The judge observed that there were encroachments everywhere in the Gulistan-e-Jauhar locality.

An illegal furniture market had been set up at a space reserved for parking in front of the Samama Shopping Mall, the judge told the KDA DG and ordered him to remove the same.

A law officer for the KDA informed the SC that the authority needed help from the police and other departments concerned to launch anti-encroachment operations, to which the bench members remarked that it was the KDA's responsibility to seek assistance from the relevant authorities.

"First a donkey cart is parked at an open plot, then a flag is raised and then the land is encroached [upon] by setting up huts," the bench remarked.

The apex court directed the KDA DG to end the illegal carving of amenity plots, remove all encroachments from them and submit a progress report to the court.

On November 28, a KDA director informed the SC that many amenity plots in Karachi had illegally been occupied, carved out into small plots and sold. According to the authority's statement, there were 35,000 amenity plots in 112 areas that had been encroached upon.

The apex court ordered the KDA DG and others to remove all encroachments from such plots within two months.

After two months, the KDA chief informed the court that 1,569 amenity plots were retrieved through demolition operations against 239 houses, 509 structures, 204 boundary walls, 371 shops, 167 marriage halls, 12 hotels, four dispensaries and hospitals, and 18 thallas (paved works).

A report submitted by the KDA DG also stated that operations were also carried out at eight amenity plots illegally converted into commercial plots, 14 warehouses, four offices, 12 farmhouses and seven illegal cattle pens.

A breakup suggested that 189 operations were carried out in Gulistan-e-Jauhar Scheme 36, 22 in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Scheme 24, 274 in North Karachi, 847 in Surjani Town Scheme 41, 104 in Korangi, 43 in Landhi, 38 in Federal B Area Scheme 16, 22 in North Nazimabad, 28 in Malir and two in Shah Faisal Colony.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1662113/1-apex-court-wants-strict-action-china-cutting/>

LAND MAFIA, ENCROACHERS STILL ACTIVE IN KFH
Business Recorder, 17 March 2018

KARACHI: Strategically located Karachi Fish Harbour is faced with a severe encroachments and land grabbing from different illegal groups, which put a stiff resistance with threats if officials continued the cleaning operation against them.

Officials of Karachi Fish Harbour Authority (KFHA) told Business Recorder on Friday about the resistance and threats they received from different groups who occupied land illegally and hold authorized businesses. “These groups are a real threat in the way of different schemes worth Rs1.5 billion to develop the harbour on modern lines,” they said.

They said that operation against the illegal trade of fish cutting and shrimp peeling, unauthorized construction by such groups inside the harbour and abandoned boats parked at the navigational channel are the key targets for the authority. “But resistance is huge against the cleaning operation,” they added.

However, they said that the Sindh Trawlers Owners and Fishermen Association (STOFA) also put a stiff resistance against the removal of vessels that have been left abandoned at the navigational channel for years, which created not only congestion but also contributed to the sea pollution. Over the past four days of operation, the authority removed nearly 100 boats from channel with around 40 still remaining.

The removal of boats from the congested channel provides a huge space for operational vessels to berth the harbour for discharging catch and loading of ration and other key material, they said, adding that the KFHA has also requested the Sindh Home Department to deploy Rangers there to help the officials continue the operation. “Hoping Rangers will reach the harbor soon,” they said.

The cleaning operation aims to make the harbour stink and dirt free, revamp the existing infrastructure and facilities and develop the entire port on modern lines and ensure all kind of safety including hygienic and working condition, they said, adding that the KFHA also requested the Pak Navy to assist it during the drive. “This drive is carried out in a way to make it conclusive for once to scale back the pollution from sea.”

The rehabilitation scheme is going to start soon as the concerned company will get a contract by end of this month, they said. The authority has also issued a letter to different state-run institutions including Rangers, Police Department and Sindh Home Minister for a help. It states, “Karachi Fish Harbour Authority is a vital installation/key point and located at a strategic location. Hence, its security is of utmost important in nature.”

It further said, “KFHA is all set to start its ADP Schemes Rehabilitation and Renovation of Karachi Fish Harbour funded by Governor of Sindh. Keeping in view the smooth execution of the ADP Schemes KFHA has recently launched an operation with the assistance of Pakistan Navy against illegal encroachers, unauthorized business of fish cutters.” The letter also highlighted the threats and resistance from groups to its officials who are carrying out the drive.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/17/5-page/705317-news.html>

NAB SAYS ILLEGAL LAND ALLOTMENT IN MALIR RIVERBED CAUSED RS15BN LOSS
Dawn, March 17th, 2018

KARACHI: The Karachi chapter of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has found that the illegal allotment of 307 acres in the Malir riverbed during 2011-12 for housing societies not only

damaged the natural structure but also caused a loss of over Rs15 billion to the national exchequer, an official said on Friday.

He said this was uncovered in an inquiry by the bureau and on its basis NAB's Karachi chapter had sought the approval from its chairman to launch a proper investigation into the alleged violation of rules and destruction of natural resources which may lead to filing of references against top provincial and local administration officials, including the then chief secretary.

"A principle decision was made for recommendation to the NAB chairman for authorising four investigations in an inquiry concluded against Sindh government functionaries and others regarding realignment and construction of Malir River Bund for the purpose of housing societies and illegal allotment of land from within Malir riverbed," said a NAB statement issued after the meeting of its regional board here.

The meeting, which was chaired by NAB Karachi director general Mohammad Altaf Bawany, reviewed the progress made so far on different inquiries and investigations.

"It was concluded in the inquiry that 307 acres of land were illegally allotted to various beneficiaries in violations of law and rules by way of fresh allotment and exchange after squeezing the boundaries of Malir River," the statement said. "The inquiry recommended for four investigations contains prima facie allegations of misuse of authority allegedly committed by 20 government officials including senior officers of chief secretary level and below, along with various beneficiaries and frontmen. Preliminary calculation of the loss to the national exchequer is Rs15.7 billion."

The board meeting, it said, also approved an investigation for filing a reference against officers of the district accounts office, Dadu and others on charges of embezzlement and misappropriation of pension funds allocated to the district administration.

"The reference allegedly contains charges against Ghulam Mustafa Lund, Muhammad Nazir Bhutto — both former district accounts officers of Dadu — and others for corruption, misuse of authority for personal illegal gains and thus causing loss to the national exchequer worth Rs736 million," said the statement.

Accused Ghulam Mustafa had also entered into a voluntary return agreement whereby he agreed to deposit in the exchequer an amount of Rs356m and was still defaulting for remaining Rs146m, it added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1395760/nab-says-illegal-land-allotment-in-malir-riverbed-caused-rs15bn-loss>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 4TH TO MARCH 11TH 2018

508 AGRI PLOTS MADE HOMES

Business Recorder, 10 March 2018

Abdul Rasheed Azad

ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary body was informed on Friday that Capital Development Authority (CDA) distributed 610 plots worth Rs930 million among various people for agriculture purpose but

the allottees of 508 plots turned the farmhouses into residences, resulting in massive financial losses to national kitty.

Briefing the sub-committee of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) held under the chairmanship of Mian Abdul Manan, officials of the Auditor General Pakistan (AGP) said that during former dictator Pervez Musharraf's era CDA allocated farmhouses in Chak Shahzad area of the federal capital on lease basis for agriculture purposes but majority of the land receivers instead of building farmhouses and cultivating crops, especially vegetables, built residential buildings.

The AGP officials said that among the land receivers were retired army generals like Pervez Musharraf, retired civil bureaucrats, industrialists and politicians.

The committee directed chairman CDA to conduct weekly raids on the farmhouses and compel those who are violating the set rules and regulations to follow the law or cancel their allotments.

The chairman committee asked the CDA officials what action had been taken against the violators. The CDA officials replied when they took action against the violators they went to the court and now the issue was in the court where CDA was pursuing the matter.

Mian Abdul Manan said the land allocated to the people for agriculture farmhouses had been turned into marriage halls and residential buildings. He added that all those giving lectures to parliamentarians on corruption had received land in the name of farmhouses but used it otherwise.

The CDA officials said the idea behind farmhouses was to provide fresh and cheap vegetables to the residents of the capital city but the plan had failed.

The panel also discussed the issue of Grand Hyatt Hotel Islamabad and directed the CDA to present detailed report on the subject within one week.

Member Committee Arif Alvi said the issue was not being resolved for the past four years and every time officials were coming up with a new story. He added if the panel was taking serious action against the people involved in Grand Hyatt Complex, his party would fully support the move.

The panel also hinted at referring Bhara Kahu Housing Society scam to the National Accountability Bureau, saying the CDA had yet to respond on the housing society pending since long.

The audit officials briefing the panel on the subject stated that various violations were pointed out by AGP in Grand Hyatt Hotel Islamabad consisting of 47 floors, including roof top with height of 710 feet without consulting and obtaining NOC from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Pakistan Air Force (PAF).

The CDA officials said that as per approved bye-laws, height of the building of Grand Hyatt Hotel was fixed as 65 feet (6-storeys) with reference to the floor level of the existing building of Convention Centre. Later on, 47-storeys height was allowed without the approval of the CDA on the request of purchaser revised the payment schedule of Grand Hyatt Hotel through post-bid change in the contract and extended a favor to the allottee. The commercial plot was auctioned for construction of five-star hotel (Grand Hyatt) at lesser value as compared to sale of similar commercial plot (Centaurus) resulting in a loss of Rs7.5 billion.

It is to be mentioned here that the case was actually identified by the auditors of DAGP during the audit of CDA and on the basis of audit paras raised by the auditors of DAGP, the PAC in its meeting held on 28-29.05.2014 discussed the irregularities in Grand Hyatt Hotel lease/construction and issued directions to refer the case to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to probe the matter and arrest those who are involved in this deal within one day and also to provide a copy of the case to PAC within three working days and initiate action against the CDA officials who inked the deal with BNP Group, and a case should be registered against the then CDA officials involved in this deal and directed the principal accounting officer to furnish information regarding any change approved the Master Plan of Islamabad.

The PAC also directed to conduct structure assessment and soil testing from the Engineering Council as against the structure design for constructing 13-storey Tower, the owners were constructing a 33-storey building and to submit a comprehensive report to PAC within one month and directed the principal accounting officer to examine with the help of the FBR, the income tax paid/payable by the purchasers of the flats worth billions of rupees.

The committee took serious note of the facts and figures revealed during the briefing regarding the 1st bidding process of Grand Hyatt Hotel and substantial changes made in the subsequent bidding documents/advertisement and directed the secretary Capital Administration and Development Division to provide a comprehensive report along with original relevant documents in the light of PAC meeting to the committee within a week.

The Joint Venture/Group was changed after declaration of the bid for sale of plot of Grand Hyatt Hotel, rendering the process of pre-qualification non-transparent. Mandatory bank guarantee was not obtained for 85% balance payment of Rs4.1 billion of Grand Hyatt Hotel.

The PAC, in its meeting held on 14.10.2016 had directed the principal accounting officer (PAO) to take action against the officers/officials concerned and provide the relevant documents of this issue within a week. In pursuance of audit findings and PAC directives, the CDA Board, in its meeting held on 29.07.2016, cancelled the lease agreement/allotment of M/s BNP.
<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/10/7-page/704038-news.html>

April 2018

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

DELAY IN APPROVAL OF LAND RIGHTS BILL ASSAILED

Dawn, April 23rd, 2018

BUNER: Kashtkaran committee of Malakand division on Sunday decided to stage a sit-in in front of the Chief Minister House in Peshawar against delay in signing of a bill regarding the right of land ownership by the chief minister.

The bill, they said, had been passed by the provincial assembly but still awaiting chief minister's approval.

They were speaking at a jirga held in Pir Baba area addressed by Kashtkaran committee senior vice-president Gul Rehman, general secretary Khan Zaman of Swat district and others.

The speakers said thousands of peasants had been cultivating crops on lands situated in the hilly areas of Malakand, Hazara and Kohistan for decades. They claimed that they were real owners of the lands, but in revenue record the land was mentioned as the property of the forest department.

The elders regretted that though the provincial assembly had passed the bill the chief minister was reluctant to sign it into a law.

They said to press their demands they had decided to convene a jirga at the district level and stage sit-in in front of Chief Minister House. They said they would hold a five-day-long protest, adding the protest might be extended if their demands were not met.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1403253/delay-in-approval-of-land-rights-bill-assailed>

MENACE OF LAND GRABBING

The Express Tribune, April 28th, 2018.

There is a tendency among the Urdu and English media to pay scant attention to problems being faced by the rural population in Sindh. The reason is that there is a lack of interaction between the urban and rural population. Often urban people only meet with rural landlords, not common people, hence it has been noticed that there is a tinge of resentment among the urban population against the rural ones. They don't realise the challenges and difficulties that common people face there.

A nexus of officers and politicians, pursuing their own vested interests, have made poor citizens' lives miserable. The combined effect of incompetence and corruption has created a strong perception that the government no longer exist because no department appears to be functioning in accordance to its mandate. As a result, signs of frustration, disillusionment and anger are obvious in the population but no one notices it.

Johi, a sub-division in Dadu district, is a case in point where land grabbers have been given a carte blanche to encroach upon state land. With political patronage, the land grabbers have taken over almost all prime lands of the town. Among the encroached land is the irrigation department's land, car garage and surrounding land of Mukhtiar Office Johi and freshwater ponds. They haven't even spared historical places such as an ancient Hindu temple.

To what extent the writ of the government has been eroded can be easily gauged from the fact that the Dadu deputy commissioner and the XEN Irrigation issued a report against such illegal encroachments but no action was taken. The land grabbers have rented out these illegally constructed shops and regularly earn from government property!

Unfortunately, it is becoming a trend now. The government officers concerned either choose to remain aloof or just try to save themselves by preparing some paperwork, but avoid taking the culprits to task. Recently, a group of land grabbers started construction on a plot of land measuring 12,000sq ft in the heart of the town, located opposite the Mukhtiar Office Taluka Johi. They have built four shops and a small filling station and are further spreading their wings. Surprisingly, Johi's top administration official remained ignorant about the matter.

Noticing their helplessness, a local resident and academic attempted to mobilise residents of Johi to challenge the land grabbers. Though a majority of the people privately supported him, they didn't dare to come out in his support in public.

Initially the Mukhtiarkar Johi indirectly facilitated the land grabbers when the complainant approached his office with a request to take swift action to halt the illegal construction and protect the government land. His response was that all the revenue record has been burnt in riots following the murder of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, so on what basis can the complainant claim that it is government property.

When copies of the land document, available with citizens of Johi, were shared with him, the same were sent to the DC Dadu as well as the commissioner of Hyderabad. Based on the documents, the DC asked the Mukhtiarkar to conduct a thorough inquiry into ownership of the land.

Within a month, the Mukhtiarkar completed the inquiry report and made it public. The report confirmed that it is the state's land and no one has the permission to build anything on it. Moreover, his report mentioned that in 1993, Civil Court Johi had issued orders to demolish the illegally constructed four shops, which hasn't been implemented to date!

Despite the deputy commissioner's order to keep the plot vacant and the civil court's order to demolish the illegal construction, the land grabbers have resumed additional construction. Who will stop the land grabbers from advancing their nefarious plan, as this issue is not just limited to Johi but is present almost everywhere in rural Sindh? Does anyone care?

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1697074/6-menace-land-grabbing/>

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

GILGIT SIT-IN ENDS AFTER ASSURANCE TO RESOLVE LAND DISPUTE

Dawn, April 19th, 2018

GILGIT: The two-day sit-in by hundreds of residents of Chilmisdas area of Gilgit ended on Wednesday evening after assurance by the officials that a land dispute between them and the government would be settled through a land reforms commission.

Following successful negotiations between the protesters and GB officials, Gilgit deputy commissioner issued a notification, stating that all the concerned should take all possible measures to prevent land development within boundaries of Chilmisdas till resolution of the dispute through land reforms commission.

On Tuesday, GBLA Deputy Speaker Jaffarullah Khan, Gilgit deputy commissioner, SSP and other officials failed to convince the protesters to end their agitation. The protesters continued their sit-in on the night between Tuesday and Wednesday.

Earlier, on Wednesday, the villagers blocked the Nomal-Gilgit road and chanted slogans against the GB chief minister, and his PML-N government.

The protesters alleged that 5,500 kanal of land in Chilmisdas was inherited by the residents of nearby Nomal valley, but the government was forcibly occupying the land and allotting it to government organisations without their permission and paying compensation to them.

Addressing the protesters, opposition leader in GBLA Mohammad Shafi Khan said the land in Chilmisdas inherited by Nomal residents for centuries. He said in 2004, the government had constituted a committee to settle the land dispute between the government and locals, which had decided to allot 1,600 kanal of land to the Karakoram International University, to which the local had agreed.

However, he said later the government did not honour the decision of the committee and continued allotting land to public sector organisations.

He said the government had recently formed land reforms commission to settle such issues, and till compilation of the commission's report, land could not be allotted to anyone.

Maulana Sultan Raees, chairman of Awami Action Committee, said the AAC would support every movement for public rights. He said the government should protect life and property of GB people rather than depriving them of their inherited rights.

GB chapter PPP president Amjad Hussain Advocate said the government was grabbing land of locals in the name of Khalsa-i-Sarkar (official land).

He warned that the locals would approach the Supreme Court if the government did not accept their right over land.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1402388/gilgit-sit-in-ends-after-assurance-to-resolve-land-dispute>

NAB TURNS THE SCREWS ON SAAD IN LAND LEASE, PARAGON CASES

Dawn, April 20th, 2018

Zulqernain Tahir

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Thursday initiated a probe into award of 'precious' railway land in Lahore on lease by Railways Minister Khwaja Saad Rafique and also sought explanation from him in the 'dubious' land deal with the Paragon Housing Society.

NAB's Lahore chapter has sought an explanation from Mr Rafique and his younger brother Khwaja Salman Rafiq (Punjab health minister) regarding "exchange of their 50-kanal piece of land with 'developed plots' measuring 40 kanal in Paragon Housing Society through an agreement.

"NAB has asked the Khwaja brothers to tell it a 'formula' under which they got 40 kanal of developed plots (in Paragon) in exchange of a piece of raw land (in 2016)," a source told Dawn.

Terming the deal 'dubious' as such a practice is not a routine in land exchange matters, the NAB has not yet received a reply from the Khwaja brothers.

Their spokesman told Dawn that the land exchange in question had been made legally as it had already been clarified by the railways minister in his presser. When asked whether the ministers used their influence/connection to enter into this land deal beneficial to them, the spokesman said: "This is

not the case as they (ministers) are paying development charges of the land (they got in exchange in Paragon).”

He further said a reply in this regard had been submitted to the NAB.

An official told Dawn that the Khwaja brothers’ claim of getting 40-kanal developed plots in return of the 50 kanal raised doubts over the land deal.

“It is very simple that the land they got in exchange is more costly than 50-kanal raw land,” he said, adding that it was one of the ‘rare’ cases in the country.

“Usually a land owner gets 30 to 33pc developed plots/land of the total raw land he surrenders to the public or private sector developers such as Defence Housing Authority or Lahore Development Authority. The same happens in cooperative housing schemes,” he said.

The NAB believes that the Khwaja brothers should not get more than 16 kanal if this deal would have been made on existing market practices.

Meanwhile, the NAB Lahore would launch an investigation against Saad Rafique for the purchase of machinery for the 4,500HP locomotives and repair of the rail track and awarding a ‘precious’ land of railway in Lahore on lease.

Saad Rafique says he served the railways with dedication and honesty. “I fought against corruption and nepotism in the railways throughout my tenure. I am hurt by such allegations,” he says.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1402610>

LAND PRICE OF CPEC SEZ APPROVED BY PSM BOD

Business Recorder, 21 April 2018

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors (BoD) of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) has approved Rs 22 million per acre price for Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to be established under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on the instructions of Ministry of Industries and Production (MoI&P), well-informed sources told Business Recorder.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the BoD held in Karachi under the chairmanship of Engineer Memon Abdul Jabbar.

The Board, sources said, has also approved an upfront payment of 35 per cent, in addition to freezing the price for the next three years.

The sources said, directives of Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production were placed before the PSM Board in its 395th meeting held on March 3, 2018. The Board decided that the proposal to earmark 1500 acres of PSM land for CPEC-related Special Economic Zone is approved in principle.

The modalities regarding price, terms and conditions of lease/licence, timing of cash flows, annual increase in price/value etc will be negotiated with BoI and MoI&P by the committee comprising the following members: (i) Engineer Memon Abdul Jabbar- Chairman PSM Board;(ii) shakeel Ahmed Mangnejo-CEO PSM;(iii) Dr. Iftikhar Ali Shallwani- Additional Secretary (MoI&P); (iv) Raziuddin-CEO (KPK-OGDCL) and ;(v) Arif Sheikh- acting CFO(PSM).

The committee in its meeting discussed the proposal from Additional Secretary Incharge MoI&P on allocation of land for CPEC- SEZ. He cited his meeting with Secretary BoI wherein it was decided that approximately 1500-3000 acres of land will be required for establishment of a Special Economic Zone for CPEC in BQIP which has also been agreed upon in principle by the Chinese side.

It was also decided that the price of land would be capped till the end of CPEC project subject to approval by the Boards of Privatisation Commission and PSM or the price of land would be determined after the latest valuation of land by PSM BoD which would be fixed for three years and thereafter evaluated on the basis of an increase @ 10 per cent per annum till the end of the CPEC project (2030).

In the light of the letter written by the MoI&P, the committee brain stormed and deliberated on the price, cash flow, price escalation mechanism and terms and conditions. In this regard the earlier agreement with NIP was also examined.

The committee also discussed two options given by Secretary MoI&P in his letter of March 8, 2018 and noted the average returns on different asset classes over a period of 17 years since 2001. The committee observed that the PSM board had already given approval in principle to earmark 1500 acres of land for CPEC related SEZ.

The committee after threadbare deliberations proposed the following options for consideration of the Board of Investment (BoI) and the Ministry of Industries and Production subject to approval of PSM Board: (i) the transaction of land will be on the basis of Government to Government (G to G) basis; (ii) the latest price valuation of Rs 22 million per acre fixed for NIP land (initial price) shall also be the price of the land proposed for CPEC-SEZ. This rate shall be applicable till the date of signing of the agreement or 30th September, whichever is earlier. In case the transaction with BoI or the relevant government entity is not executed by September 30, 2018, the PSM shall have the right to revise the initial price;

(iii) the initial price or the revised initial price as the case may be shall be frozen for three years. The price at the commencement of fourth year (after signing of agreement) shall be fixed at 50 per cent above the initial price or the revised initial price as the case may be or the initial price or the revised initial price as the case may be shall be frozen for a period of three years. The price at the commencement of fourth year (after signing the agreement) shall be fixed through valuation to be undertaken by the PSM; (iv) the price of subsequent years (i.e.) commencement of year 5 and onward shall be increased by 15 per cent annually.

For the sake of clarity, the price at the commencement of year 5 shall be 15 per cent above the price fixed through any of the methods discussed the meeting; (v) minimum 35 per cent of the lease money shall be paid to the PSM upfront before the execution of the agreement for transfer of earmarked land; (vi) the lease period for the land shall be 60 years;

(vii) The annual ground rent shall be at the same rate as for NIP allottees. The annual revision in ground rent shall be the same as for NIP allottees; (viii) subject to modification in the light of (i) and (vii) and the remaining terms and conditions will be the same as the agreement between PSM and NIP of July 13, 2007; and (ix) any objections raised by any government, authority or public entity to the lease/transfer of earmarked land shall be addressed/resolved by the federal government.—

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/04/21/1-page/711789-news.html>

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

FARMERS WITH 50 ACRES OF LAND TO BE INCLUDED IN 'E-CREDIT SCHEME'

Business Recorder, 12 April 2018

LAHORE: As many as 314,000 small farmers have been credited through E-Credit scheme aimed at financially empowering the growers to have sufficient sources to carry out agriculture.

The provincial agriculture department is disbursing loan of Rs 40,000 per acre for Kharif season during the current financial year. A spokesman of the agricultural department said the provincial government has also decided to include farmers having land up to 50 acres in this E-Credit Scheme. "This scheme has been infused a fresh blood into the dead veins of Agriculture sector since its inception.

Provincial Govt is taking solid measures for the socio-economic uplift of farmers and has revolutionised the agriculture sector. Small scale farmers and tenants have benefited from the scheme in a big way as they found sufficient resources for sowing their crops," the spokesman added.

Under this E-Credit scheme farmer can get loan from Akhuwat, National Rural Support Program (NRSP), Telenor Bank, National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) and Zarai Taraqiyati Bank of Pakistan (ZTBL). He further said this interest free loan contribute a great deal towards achieving 5.75% growth rate in agriculture sector. Under this scheme, Government of Punjab will provide interest free loans to farmers having up to 25 acre agricultural land where farmers will get loan on subsidized rates.

For this scheme, farmers will have to visit offices of Land Record Management and reproduce their original CNIC, mobile numbers and other details of their land. Spokesman further said Punjab Govt has also provided smart phones to registered farmers under Khadim-e-Punjab Kissan Package and they will get information about loan status through smart phone app. Farmers may contact with Agriculture Helpline 0800-15000 & 0800-29000 to get more details about E-Credit scheme, the spokesman concluded.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/04/12/20-page/710253-news.html>

PROTESTERS, RAILWAYS POLICE CLASH DURING ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE IN NAWABSHAH

Dawn, April 13th, 2018

Zulfiqar Memon

NAWABSHAH: Ugly scenes were witnessed when residents of a locality posed resistance to an operation carried out by a Pakistan Railways (PR) team along with the department's police to demolish a settlement around Talpur Phatak in Nawabshah city on Thursday.

A pregnant woman was injured during baton charge and scores of people were affected by tear-gas shelling during the police action.

More than two dozen thatched houses were bulldozed and some of them were gutted in a fire, which the protesting residents alleged was deliberately caused by the demolition squad.

Reports from the area suggested that the PR team, led by Engineer Muzammil Hussain, escorted by a contingent from the Railways police station proceeded to the Talpur Phatak locality, a couple of kilometres from the city's main railway station, and tried to evict occupants of the houses. However, the occupants argued that it was not possible for them to vacate their houses immediately, and claimed that no prior notice as per the prescribed law had been served to them. They said they had been residing in the locality for many years.

The PR officials rejected their argument saying that all structures in this locality had been raised illegally as the land belonged to the Railways department. They insisted that the occupants must vacate the land forthwith, and started bulldozing some of the houses. While a few families rushed to their houses to take out their belongings in order to comply with the officials' eviction order, many others held a protest demonstration raising slogans against the PR team and police.

The protesters advanced up to the nearby tracks and blocked rail traffic. In the meantime, a fire broke out in a portion of the locality which engulfed several thatched houses causing panic among the protesters and other residents of the area.

The police also baton-charged the protesters and lobbed tear gas shells to get the rail traffic restored.

An expecting mother, Ms Pariya, was injured during the police action and scores of other people were affected by the shelling. Enraged protesters reacted by pelting the police personnel with stones.

Later, the Railways police detained a man, Mr Preetam, and took him away.

Shahzado Bagri, Bhora Punjabi, Manzoor Chauhan, Bhoro Bughio and residents of the locality told reporters that the demolition operation was started without any advance notice having been served to them. They alleged that police deliberately set their thatched house on fire and subjected the area residents to baton-charge and shelling without any valid reason.

According to them, more than two dozen houses were destroyed in the demolition campaign and the fire while household goods, furniture and other valuables were gutted in the burnt out houses.

Many families were rendered shelter-less due to the sudden demolition operation, they added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1401211/protesters-railways-police-clash-during-anti-encroachment-drive-in-nawabshah>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 1ST TO APRIL 8TH 2018

SC TO TAKE UP PETITION ABOUT KILN WORKERS' RIGHTS TODAY

Dawn, April 2nd, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court will take up on Monday a petition to determine whether brick kiln workers have the same rights as enjoyed by other citizens.

A three-judge SC bench headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar will take up the petition filed by Manzoor Ahmed and others through Advocate Aftab Alam Yar.

The petitioners sought a curb on exploitation at the hands of brick kiln owners as well as measures to end the practice of 'banddis' (slavery for life). They called for laws and minimum wages for labourers falling under this category.

The petitioners also requested the apex court to order the government to make arrangements for imparting education to adults and providing health and basic facilities at the grass-roots level in case of an emergency or burn injuries.

They alleged that the kiln owners consistently violated the fundamental rights of labourers through bonded labour.

This particular class was left without any legal remedies, the petitioners said while highlighting that their place of work and conditions were not in accordance with the prescribed scale as determined by the government.

The workers were not receiving minimum wages for 'pakka/kacha' bricks as prescribed by the government from time to time which, thus amounting to economic exploitation of the petitioners and co-workers. They said the wages should be reviewed in view of the price hike.

According to the petition, the workers would remain illiterate contrary to the obligation on part of the government to provide basic education.

It said the slavery had been abolished and the sale and purchase of human beings were prohibited under the Constitution, but the kiln owners were still binding the workers by making them advance payments — a tool to make their generations slave.

The petitioners said the kiln workers did not find their place in the industry and laws applicable to it as there was no registration of 'bhatta mazdoors'. They said the laws remained inapplicable to them and did not provide them atmosphere, space and time as guaranteed in other industries such as in the matters of leave, wages, health facilities, group insurance, holidays, working hours, old-age benefits, etc.

Moreover, the petition said, the material used in kilns to fire bricks was injurious to the workers' health. It added that the liberty of the petitioners and co-workers was compromised and their right to move and freedom of expression remained under eclipse because of the alleged fascist attitude of the kiln owners, who also deprived the workers of using their right to vote.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1399047/sc-to-take-up-petition-about-kiln-workers-rights-today>

30,000 POWER LOOM SECTOR LABOUR IN PUNJAB ARE JOBLESS: PBIF Business Recorder, 3 April 2018

KARACHI: President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF) Mian Zahid Hussain has said that tough competition from China, increased cost of doing business, high energy tariff, excessive smuggled cloth in the market and decline in orders from Afghanistan have rendered 50 thousands of 300,000 power looms units in Punjab closed and around 30,000 labourers unemployed.

“The rest of the workers are facing severe problems in earning their livelihoods due to these reasons that engendered closure of units,” he said, adding that round 2800 units of power looms in Faisalabad are also on verge of closure due to said reasons. He lamented this situation in Faisalabad that is called Manchester of Pakistan and that is being honoured as the centre of industry producing textiles, hosiery, industrial chemicals, agricultural equipments and many other products.

He said our industries can compete in the international markets, if the government pays attention and provide subsidised energy tariff to export-oriented industries.

To Mian Zahid, pathetic situation of industries during the tenure of industry-friendly government in the country was a matter of grave concern.

He said in connection with infrastructure required for electricity distribution from the Thar I and II Projects, the \$1.5 billion Matiari to Faisalabad transmission line are to be built under CPEC project. He said it would improve electricity supply to industries and around 20 percent of those units in the city, which were closed due to energy shortage, would be restored.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/04/03/5-page/708476-news.html>

FIVE DIE IN BAKERY BLAZE

Dawn, April 4th, 2018

LAHORE: Five people died of suffocation and one suffered injuries after a blaze broke out in a bakery near Barkat Market in Garden Town on Tuesday morning.

Erupted at 6:31 am, the fire spread so steadily that dozens of people living in several apartments at the upper portions of the seven-storey building – Garden Heights – got trapped.

Initial reports suggested that the fire first erupted in the bakery and later spread to two floors.

Several vehicles of the Rescue 1122 rushed to the site followed by a police contingent.

An official said rescuers had to face a huge amount of dense smoke in seven storeys. He said the rescuers found it hard to get access to the trapped people as the owner of the plaza was non-cooperative (police later took him into custody).

Seven-storey plaza lacks firefighting facilities

The official said the first responding team of Rescue 1122 used self-contained breathing apparatus and made their entry into the building.

As soon as they got access to the rented quarters, they found five people lying dead in various rooms.

They all were working as employees at different business outlets in the surrounding areas, particularly Barkat Market, the official said.

The firefighters continued with their efforts and contained the fire from spreading to major portion of the building.

It took them two hours to extinguish the fire, he said adding that most of the trapped people were rescued using aerial platform and turntable ladders (TLs).

Sajid, who was among those trapped in the building, said he along his two roommates immediately rushed outside shortly after they found dense smoke entering their room.

He said the corridors of the plaza were so much narrow that they could hardly find exit amid many other people to leave it for safe place.

Some of them managed to reach the rooftop while several others moved towards the windows seeking help of the rescuers, Sajid said.

A rescuer said the entire building didn't have fire-safety facilities. Even no smoke detector and fire-extinguishing equipment were installed at any portion of the plaza.

The building had no emergency exit and fire alarm to help the trapped people in such an extraordinary situation which is no less than a criminal offence, he lamented.

Operations DIG Dr Haider Ashraf said plaza owner Aleem Khan was taken into custody after some complaints of serious nature surfaced during the incident.

He said the bodies were shifted to the city morgue for autopsy.

The deceased have been identified as Shahbaz (25), Shahid (40), Talib (30) and Shakeel (15). One is yet to be identified.

The DIG, however, denied reports about the injury to any other living in the building, saying the deaths occurred due to suffocation.

The cause [of the fire] could not be ascertained but rescuers suspect a short circuit.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1399380/five-die-in-bakery-blaze>

SIX KALAT COAL MINERS DIE OF SUFFOCATION
Saleem Shahid

Dawn, April 05, 2018

QUETTA: At least six workers were suffocated by poisonous gas in a coal mine in the Sikandarabad area of Kalat district late on Wednesday night.

Levies officials said a group of workers was digging deep in the mine when poisonous gas accumulated there and they fainted. People outside the mine tried to rescue them but without success.

Rescue teams and Levies personnel reached the area after receiving information about the workers trapped inside the mine and launched a rescue operation.

“The rescuers found six coal miners dead inside the mine,” a senior Levies official posted in the Surab area told Dawn by telephone.

He said the bodies were shifted to district hospital Surab.

“They died after inhaling methane gas,” Levies officials said, quoting the hospital sources.

The deceased were identified Abdul Sattar, Pir Jan, Shabbir Ahmed, Jan Sher, Muhammad Rizwan and Muhammad Azam.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1399669/six-kalat-coal-miners-die-of-suffocation>

May 2018

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

NAB gets 10,000 acres of fraudulently allotted state land in Sindh cancelled

Imtiaz Ali Updated May 25, 2018

KARACHI: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Thursday claimed to have retrieved 10,000 acres of grabbed state land off the Superhighway, where some major housing schemes had been launched in connivance with revenue officials.

“In an investigation against revenue authorities on allegations of fake allotments of land at Thana Bula Khan, Jamshoro, NAB has been successful in getting thousands of lands cancelled by the revenue authorities,” said a NAB spokesperson.

Three officials were arrested in the case on April 17 who were wanted for making bogus entries in the record of rights with respect to state land, fraudulently shown as private land, added the official.

On the basis of established “irrefutable evidence”, NAB has got more than 10,000 acres of state land, usurped by the land mafia, cancelled by the revenue authorities of Jamshoro district.

‘731 acres of the retrieved land belong to DHA City’

The NAB spokesperson said that 731 acres of Deh Babbar Band, Bula Khan taluka, was part of a “large housing scheme” whereas the rest of the land located in dehs Hathal Buth, Bula Khan taluka, was part of other various housing schemes situated along the main Superhighway.

In a major success, state land was restored back to Sindh. The estimated value of the land is around Rs75 billion.

The revenue authorities have now banned issuance of sale certificates in the said lands.

“Investigation is at final stages for which [a] reference shall be filed against [the] accused persons soon,” said the NAB statement.

However, a NAB press release was silent on the number of housing schemes launched off the Superhighway.

Sources familiar with NAB investigation told Dawn that the accountability body had taken notice of Dawn’s investigative stories about two major housing schemes off the Superhighway and initiated an inquiry into it.

Initially, the sources said that NAB took up the issue of 731 acres, which the NAB press release just mentioned as belonging to a “large housing scheme”. In fact, this scheme was DHA City, said the sources, which has been now retrieved.

The sources pointed out that DHA City was spread over a few thousand acres, of which 731 acres were acquired through changes in the revenue record.

The sources said that these retrieved lands belonged to around five to six housing schemes off the Superhighway.

The sources suggested that NAB should identify those housing schemes as innocent investors were pouring in their hard-earned money to purchase lands there to save them and prevent creation of third-party interest in these schemes.

Published in Dawn, May 25th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1409862/nab-gets-10000-acres-of-fraudulently-allotted-state-land-in-sindh-cancelled>

Govt gives Torghar forests back to local tribes

The Newspaper’s Correspondent May 26, 2018

MANSEHRA: The provincial government has given the ownership rights of Torghar district’s forests back to the local tribes.

Adviser to the chief minister Zargul Khan declared it the landmark decision of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government

“All forests in Torghar district are yet again the property of the local people,” he told reporters here on Friday.

In 2011, the Awami National Party’s government had changed the status of Torghar from a tribal area to a settled district before taking the control of all forests by declaring them own property.

“Now, we (PTI government) have revoked that policy through which the ANP government had snatched the old right of Torghar tribes to the local forests,” Mr Zargul said.

ANP govt had taken control of region’s forests in 2011

The adviser said the ANP government’s move was no less than a conspiracy against the people of Torghar.

He said the local tribes could again use forests stretched across the district as a source of livelihood. Mr Zargul said a committee formed by the chief minister had recommended the return of the forests to the people of Torghar and that the provincial cabinet had approved it for implementation.

WATER SCHEME launched: The public health department on Friday launched a drinking water scheme in Balakot.

The Mangal water scheme, whose completion was delayed by two years, cost the government Rs5 million.

Sub-divisional officer of the public health department Syed Shahab Haleem, who inaugurated the scheme, said the supply of drinking water to the people had begun.

He said the scheme had been successfully executed with the help of funds offered by local MPA Mian Ziaur Rehman and that it would effectively address the issue of water shortage in the area.

ELECTORAL WIN CLAIMED: Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal leader Mufti Kifayatullah has claimed that the recently-revived religious alliance will sweep the coming general elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to form the government.

“We (MMA member parties) are united and will emerge more powerful after the coming elections than what we’re post 2008 elections. We’ll certainly form next government in the province,” he told reporters here on Friday.

Mr Kifayatullah said the MMA government would enforce Islamic laws in the country, remove the interest-based system with an Islamic system, and work for the people’s real development.

Published in Dawn, May 26th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1410015/govt-gives-torghar-forests-back-to-local-tribes>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 30TH TO MAY 6TH 2018

TWO BROTHERS KILLED OVER LAND DISPUTE IN LAKKI

Dawn, April 30th, 2018

LAKKI MARWAT: Two brothers were killed over a land dispute in Mammakhel locality near Naurang town here on Sunday.

Police said Muslim Khan along with his sons was threshing wheat in the fields near the village, when his brother, Hamidullah, came there and attempted to stop the thresher. The two got involved in an altercation which led to both sides opening fire at each other.

As a result, both the brothers received multiple bullets and died instantly, police added.

Muslim Khan's son Abdullah told Shaheed Asmatullah Khan Khattak police that he along with his father was busy in threshing wheat when Hamidullah came there and threatened to stop the thresher. "At the same time he opened fire killing my father on the spot," he claimed.

On the other hand, deceased Hameedullah's mother, Shamim Bibi, told police that she and her son had gone to the field of Muslim Khan to discuss some matters with him. "But Muslim Khan and his sons, Abdullah and Mustafa, opened fire on us killing Hamidullah on the spot," she maintained.

Police said they had registered separate cases against the nominated accused under relevant sections of law and started further investigation.

Meanwhile, police claimed to have arrested three proclaimed offenders and a facilitator of criminals during separate actions on Sunday.

An official said Tajori police raided a suspected hideout in Tajori city and arrested a wanted criminal, Awal Khan. He said he was wanted in the murder of MNA Aisha Gulalai's former assistant.

The official said the same police raided the hideouts of outlaws in Shagai and Walai localities and captured a criminal, Adam Khan. He said police also arrested a facilitator of miscreants identified as Naeemullah during a raid. Shaheed Haibat Ali Khan and Shahbazkhel police raided a hideout in Tabi Murad village and arrested a proclaimed offender named Noman Shah.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1404774>

SC STOPS BAHRIA TOWN FROM SELLING, ALLOTTING PLOTS, FLATS

Dawn, May 5th, 2018

Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday barred Ms Bahria Town Karachi from selling any plot or constructed apartment in the housing scheme on the outskirts of the port city, declaring the grant of land to the Malir Development Authority and its exchange with the land of the private land developers illegal and void ab initio.

Thus, the government land would go back to the government while the land exchanged for the government land would [go] back to the Bahria Town, the apex court declared in a judgement authored by Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan.

The three-judge bench by a majority decision also declared that as a third party interest had been created in favour of allottees, the Board of Revenue might grant the land afresh under Colonisation of

Government Land Act-1912 (COGLA) and Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar might constitute an implementation bench of the apex court to determine terms and conditions of the fresh grant.

Justice Khan, who headed the bench, pronounced the judgement that also ordered National Accountability Bureau to resume its inquiry into the matter and take its investigations to its logical end within three months.

The bench had taken up a number of petitions involving the grant of 9,385-acre land in 43 Dehs — about nine kilometres from Toll Plaza on the Karachi-Hyderabad Superhighway and a 25-minute drive from the Jinnah International Airport —to the Bahria Town Karachi in 2015.

The land was granted for the launch of an incremental housing scheme. However, the MDA instead of launching the scheme exchanged it with the Bahria Town through its henchmen to allow the latter to launch a scheme of its own. The allegations levelled in the petitions moved before the apex court said the government land value was far higher than the value of the private land it was exchanged for.

For the purpose of development of certain areas of Karachi division, the MDA was created under the Malir Development Authority Act 1993.

Justice Maqbool Baqar dissented with the majority decision and suggested that a nine-member committee be constituted to assess and evaluate the market price of the lands at the time of their exchange between the MDA and Ms Bahria Town Karachi.

Justice Baqar suggested that the committee to be headed by former Punjab chief secretary Nasir Mahmood Khan Khosa should carry out the exercise with the assistance of senior most officers from the Survey of Pakistan as well as a similar department in Sindh. He said Ms Bahria Town Karachi should deposit Rs2 million with the Sindh High Court within four days towards the expense that may be incurred by the committee and would also deposit further amount if needed.

Justice Baqar said the committee should complete its task within two months and submit its report to the apex court so that an appropriate order is passed accordingly. According to him, the Sindh police chief and Rangers director general be asked to provide adequate security to committee members during the conduct of the exercise, whereas the MDA, Karachi Development Authority, the local government department, Karachi commissioner, Board of Revenue, land utilization department, provincial secretary finance and others facilitate the assessment by the committee.

According to the majority decision, since a great deal of work has been done by the Bahria Town Karachi and a third party interest has been created in favour of hundreds of allottees, the land can be granted to the Bahria Town afresh by the Board of Revenue under the COGLA provisions.

The judgement said an implementation bench of the apex court to be constituted by CJP Nisar would determine terms and conditions of the fresh grant, the land price and related questions such as whether it would be the price at which the Bahria Town sold the land to the people by and large, how much of the government land and how much of the private land has been utilised by the Bahria Town and what Bahria Town was entitled to receive in terms of money on the account of land development.

The verdict said the private developers would not sell any plot or any apartment after the announcement of the decision, as any allotment made after the announcement of this judgement would be considered void.

The judgement said as a huge amount of money on account of allotment of plots, build-up units and commercial buildings was still outstanding against the allottees, some makeshift arrangement should be made to facilitate the recovery and secure it.

The bench ordered the additional registrar of the Supreme Court Karachi registry to open a special account facilitating the deposit of the outstanding amount against the allotments through pay orders, demand drafts or cross-cheques.

Meanwhile, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which had earlier initiated an inquiry into the matter, will pick up the thread from where it left and take its investigations to its logical end. The bureau will also collect its initial investigation report which was submitted before the court in a sealed envelope to complete further probe within three months from the date of the announcement of the judgement, according to the verdict.

The judgement said NAB would also move a reference before the accountability court concerned against all those found responsible for causing loss to the state exchequer.

The verdict said it came to the court attention that lands had also been allotted to the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and many other societies on cheaper rates. If so, the verdict said, the chief justice would be requested to take a suo motu notice so that all of them are treated alike.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405714>

PROPERTY DIRECTORATE: SENATE PANEL REJECTS FBR MOVE TO ACQUIRE LAND FROM BUYERS

Sohail Sarfraz & Zaheer Abbasi

Business Recorder, May 5th, 2018

The Senate Standing Committee on Finance has rejected the Federal Board of Revenue's move to establish Directorate General of Immoveable Property with extraordinary powers to acquire land from buyers, arguing that it was provincial domain and cautioned that it would be declared unlawful before the superior judiciary. In another major development, the finance committee has also rejected a proposal of the Finance Bill 2018 for charging fee on offshore digital services.

While reviewing the Finance Bill 2018, the Senate Standing Committee on Finance continued its proceedings here at the Parliament House on Friday under the chairmanship of Farooq H Naek and unanimously rejected the FBR's proposal for establishing Directorate General of Immoveable Property through Finance Bill 2018-19. It has been recommended that the matter of DC rates and FBR's powers of purchasing immovable properties be placed before the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

A detailed discussion took place on the issue of FBR's powers to purchase immovable properties. However, the treasury member Musaddik Malik remained quiet over FBR's move to get approval of panel of the Upper House of Parliament while all other members sternly opposed it.

Naek said, "I want to give advice to the FBR to withdraw this proposal from the Finance Bill 2018 otherwise there will be severe backlash from all sides. The government should take up this issue at forum of Council of Common Interests (CCI) for taking them into confidence for enhancing DC rates for valuation of property."

The FBR's Member Tax Policy Dr Mohammad Iqbal told the committee that the Prime Minister announced economic reform package ahead of budget 2018-19 under which the government announced to get powers of acquiring land from the buyer if the fair market value was not declared at doubled rate.

"We are facing problem on valuation of property as the DC rates and FBR notified rates have failed to yield the desired results," Dr Iqbal admitted before the committee.

Former Secretary Finance Dr Waqar Masood, who has been invited by the Senate panel on special invitation to get technical advice, said that the immovable property was domain of provincial government and cautioned that it would stand nowhere. He proposed that the FBR could move Directorate General of Immoveable Property Tax because tax on gain of property was part of federal legislative list.

The senators including Farooq H Naek, Mir Ateeq and Mohsin Aziz strongly opposed the FBR for getting extensive powers through Finance Bill 2018. Under the Section 230F of Finance Bill, the FBR has proposed that Directorate-General of Immovable Property shall consist of a director general and as many directors, additional directors, deputy directors and assistant directors and such other officers as the board may, by notification in the official gazette, appoint.

The directorate-general may, subject to the provisions and conditions as may be prescribed, initiate proceedings for the acquisition of property for the reasons shall be initiated, where the directorate-general, on the basis of valuation made by it, has reason to believe that any immovable property of a fair market value has been transferred by a person, hereinafter referred to as the transferor, to another person, hereinafter referred to as the transferee, for a consideration which is less than the fair market value of the immovable property and that the consideration for such transfer as agreed to between the transferor and transferee has been understated in the instrument of transfer for the purposes of ? (a) the avoidance or reduction of withholding tax obligations under this Ordinance; (b) concealment of unexplained amount referred to in sub-section (1) of section 111 representing investment in immovable property; or (c) avoidance or reduction of capital gains tax under section 37.

The directorate-general may appoint any valuer or expert as it considers necessary for the purposes of determination of valuation including fair market value of immovable property. The mode and manner of appointment of a valuer or expert shall be as may be prescribed. The valuation made under sub-section (4) and reasons that consideration is less than the fair market value shall be recorded in writing.

No proceedings shall be initiated in respect of any immovable property after expiration of a period of six months from the end of the month in which the instrument of transfer in respect of such property is registered, recorded or attested, the Finance Bill 2018 proposed.

Under the Finance Bill 2018, a fee for offshore digital services shall be Pakistan-source income, if it is paid by a resident person, except where the fee is payable in respect of services utilized in a business

carried on by the resident outside Pakistan through a permanent establishment; or borne by a permanent establishment in Pakistan of a non-resident person.

Every banking company or a financial institution remitting outside Pakistan an amount of fee for offshore digital services, chargeable to tax under section 6, to a nonresident person on behalf of any resident or a permanent establishment of a non-resident in Pakistan shall deduct tax from the gross amount paid at the rate specified in Division IV of Part I of the First Schedule, it added.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/05/20180505368507/>

June 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 18th TO JUN 24th 2018

NAB to probe scam involving DHA, Bahria Town, CDA

Syed Irfan Raza Updated June 21, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Wednesday initiated investigations against administrations of Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Islamabad, Bahria Town and Capital Development Authority (CDA) for over Rs62 billion DHA Valley and its Phase-II (extension) scams.

The anti-graft watchdog also decided to start probe against the son-in-law of ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif retired Capt Safdar and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa president Ameer Muqam for having assets beyond their known sources of income.

The NAB closed down a case of Khushhal Pakistan Programme funds against Nawaz Sharif who has already been facing four other cases.

110,000 civilians, and 41,000 serving and retired military officers and families of martyrs suffered losses

These decisions were made in the executive board meeting that was chaired by the bureau's chairman, retired Justice Javed Iqbal.

An official press release regarding the meeting said: "The administrations of the three organisations were accused of being involved in non-development of DHA Valley and DHA Phase-II extension causing irreparable losses to hundreds of thousands of people who had invested their hard earned money in these projects."

In October 2016, former army chief Gen Raheel Sharif had given a go-ahead to NAB to take stern action against retired military officers and civilians involved in the DHA Valley scam. However, the then NAB administration did not take significant action.

A top NAB official, on condition of anonymity, told Dawn that a senior official of the army had called on NAB's former chairman Qamar Zaman Chaudhry in July 2015 and had assured full support to the bureau in investigating the matter.

It is NAB's second action against Bahria Town's chief Malik Riaz in a month as the anti-corruption watchdog had already started inquiry against him.

The DHA Valley scheme, meant for the bereaved families of martyred military personnel, was proposed on the site of a small dam called the Dadhocha dam on Punjab government's land.

The DHA Valley case was started on the complaint of a resident of Rawalpindi, retired Lt Col Mohammad Tariq Kamal, in Sept 2010, who alleged that the real estate project DHA Valley was being developed on the area reserved for the lake adjoining the proposed Dadhocha dam. Following the verification of the complaint on June 13, 2011, the bureau had authorised an inquiry on July 3, 2012.

Names of former army chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani's brothers and some other retired officials of the army are also part of the scam as their firm was hired to provide land for DHA Valley scheme. The petition said the DHA, Bahria Town and a real estate/construction firm Habib Rafique had entered into a contract to develop various housing schemes, including DHA Valley, DHA Phase II extension, DHA Express Way and DHA Villas in Rawalpindi, as a joint venture.

According to the petitioner's evaluation, the DHA Valley was valued at Rs110 billion, DHA Phase II Extension at Rs70 billion, the Express Way at Rs50 billion and DHA Villas was valued at Rs100 billion. DHA-I and DHA-II are said to be developed housing societies, but DHA Valley is yet to be developed.

The NAB inquiry said that the people who had paid money to get the plots in DHA Valley had found that they were fooled because they were deliberately not informed by the DHA management about the agreement between DHA-I and Bahria Town over land development. In 2009, the DHA had transferred all the funds raised from the public — Rs62bn — to the accounts of Bahria Town. But, Bahria Town failed to develop the scheme.

About 110,000 civilians, 41,000 serving and retired military officers and families of martyrs were cheated in the scam. The total land in question is of 165,000 kanals.

Published in Dawn, June 21st, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1415073/nab-to-probe-scam-involving-dha-bahria-town-cda>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 28th TO JUN 3rd 2018

Thousands of acres usurped for Bahria Town: NAB

Imtiaz Ali May 31, 2018

KARACHI: An investigation carried out by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) under the Supreme Court order against Bahria Town Karachi and government officials revealed that thousands of acres of land were usurped with the help of the officials concerned, causing huge losses to the national exchequer.

The investigation team informed a board meeting chaired by Director General of NAB Karachi Mohammad Altaf Bawany on Wednesday that it had completed the probe and a case was made out on the basis of irrefutable evidence which established that the management of Bahria Town with the connivance of relevant public office holders and officials of the revenue department, Malir district, the Malir Development Authority and the Sindh Building Control Authority had taken illegal

possession of thousands of acres of valuable government land situated on the main Super Highway (M9) in violation of Colonisation of Government Land Act 1912, MDA Act 1993 and Sindh Building Control Ordinance 1979.

The board meeting was held to review progress in investigation into the matter as per directives of NAB Chairman retired Justice Javed Iqbal to expedite the cases taken up by the Supreme Court. The meeting was also informed that a concise statement highlighting facts regarding blatant violation of laws and rules had been submitted to the apex court.

The review board praised the investigation team for concluding the case by engaging Survey of Pakistan, the Ministry of Defence, for demarcation of the land under illegal possession of Bahria Town which established that it was in possession of 12,156 acres of land, after which the real estate had been restrained by Supreme Court from undertaking further development on the land.

The NAB Karachi chief directed the investigation team to engage with the legal team for finalising queries, if any, so that the deadline given by the apex court could be met well in time.

Published in Dawn, May 31st, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1411062/thousands-of-acres-usurped-for-bahria-town-nab>

July 2018

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

Forest land leased out at throwaway rate: minister

By Our Correspondent

Published: July 17, 2018

HYDERABAD: Opponents of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have continually accused the party of leasing out forest land in the province at throwaway prices. A minister in the caretaker setup endorsed such accusations on Monday by verifying the flawed leasing of forest land during the tenure of the last provincial government led by PPP.

“The forest land has been leased out at the rate of Rs3,500 per acre but the market rate of this land is around Rs20,000 per acre,” said Khair Muhammad Junejo, who holds portfolios of agriculture, forests, fisheries and other departments in the caretaker cabinet. He was addressing a press conference in Hyderabad.

The minister also informed the media that around 104,000 acres of the forest department’s land was under illegal occupation while another 150,000 acres had been leased out.

Pakistan sets world record by planting over one million mangroves

“We are trying to address this problem in whatever little time we have [in the interim government],” he said. Junejo lamented that land leased out under agro-forestry policy should have been used to

plant trees in order to combat the effects of climate change, however, it was mostly being used for agricultural purposes.

Junejo also remarked that the agriculture extension department was overstaffed and most of its 4,200 staff members did not turn up for work. He also stated that only two inspectors were working in the office of the Sindh cane commissioner, which regulates sugar mills, whereas, against the 12 vacancies in the department.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1759702/1-forest-land-leased-throwaway-rate-minister/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 25TH TO JULY 1ST 2018

SC can't allow land grab, CJP tells Bahria Town owner

Nasir Iqbal June 27, 2018

ISLAMABAD: Unimpressed by the welfare projects and religious services of Bahria Town, Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar on Tuesday observed that the Supreme Court could not allow land grab in the country.

Hearing a review petition against the May 4 judgement of the apex court in which it had banned Bahria Town from selling any plot or constructing apartments in its housing scheme in Karachi, a three-judge SC bench headed by the CJP ordered the owner of the real-estate development company, Malik Riaz, to furnish in two weeks Rs5 billion before the court to show his commitment to resolving the issues relating to the exchange of government lands for the development project.

The court also dropped hints to attach the property of Mr Riaz. But the Bahria Town owner, who himself appeared before the court, requested it not to do so, saying that it could be used against him. He explained that he owned no property except one in the name of his wife.

Malik Riaz ordered to furnish Rs5bn before court

Earlier the court proposed to Mr Riaz to deposit Rs20 billion, but on his insistence, the amount was reduced first to Rs10 billion and then to Rs5 billion along with all the property documents and an undertaking that he would not sell any of his assets pending the current case. The property tycoon has also been barred from initiating any new Bahria Town project.

In its judgement, the apex court had declared the grant of land to the Malir Development Authority (MDA) by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of the private land developers — Messers Bahria Town — and anything done under the provisions of the Colonisation of Government Land Act (COGLA), 1912 by the Sindh government as illegal, void ab-initio and as such of no legal existence.

Thus the government land would go back to the government and the land of Bahria Town exchanged for the government land would back to the real-estate development company, the judgement had said.

Subsequently, Bahria Town through its counsel Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan moved the review petition with a plea to suspend the judgement of the apex court. The company also sought a direction for the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to not pursue corruption references against its owner.

In its judgement the SC had ordered NAB — which had earlier initiated an inquiry into the matter — to pick up the thread from where it had left and take its investigations to its logical end.

The bureau was also required to complete further probe in a period of three months from the date of the announcement of the judgement. Besides, NAB will have to move a reference before the accountability court concerned against all those found responsible for causing losses to the national exchequer.

While pointing towards Mr Riaz's counsel, the chief justice observed that though he was not referring to his client but the court could not appreciate welfare work, charity, religious services and development of the housing scheme by acting like Robin Hood who used to rob the rich only to help the poor.

Mr Riaz tried to explain his position by stating that he had always endeavoured to usher a third world country like Pakistan into the first world through development projects of world standards.

He offered to pay any amount the court suggested but also requested not to burden him beyond his capacity since Bahria Town had provided jobs to 22,000 employees, besides he was suffering with cancer.

He said he was confident that the court would not issue any order that might affect people who have plots in the development scheme and the employees working for the company.

He highlighted that though the country had been facing the worst-ever loadshedding for many years Bahria Town was providing uninterrupted power supply to its residents.

He said he was invited in Qatar to develop football stadiums for the 2022 world cup and in the United Arab Emirates to launch housing schemes, but preferred to work for Pakistan.

He enumerated a number of welfare works initiated at Bahria Town, like the development of world standard hospitals, zoos, entertainment arenas like cinema halls, swimming pools, green valleys, dancing floors and educational projects.

Mr Riaz said Bahria Town had developed a city at a place which had become centre point for the sale of illegal weapons and drugs.

Violation of order

The court was also not happy over violation of its order in the judgement by Bahria Town by opening up a separate bank account to collect outstanding payments.

In its judgement the SC had ordered the additional registrar of the Supreme Court at its Karachi registry to open a special account where the outstanding amount against the allotments be deposited. The entire outstanding amount against allotment of plots, apartments, commercial buildings etc would henceforth be deposited by the allottees with the additional registrar of the Karachi registry through pay orders, demand drafts or cross-cheques.

The court also expressed its dismay over the construction of a multi-storey building by Bahria Town in Clifton, Karachi, despite a ban on the construction of high-rise building in Karachi by the apex court earlier.

However, Mr Riaz's counsel argued that the ban on high-rise buildings was imposed after the construction of the company's building was completed.

Published in Dawn, June 27th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1416316/sc-cant-allow-land-grab-cjp-tells-bahria-town-owner>

August 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 27TH TO SEPTEMBER 2TH 2018

SOUTH AFRICAN FARMERS 'FURIOUS' OVER TRUMP LAND REFORM TWEET
RECORDER REPORT | AUG 27TH, 2018 | BELA BELA

South African farmers have demanded Donald Trump "leave us the hell alone" after the US president criticised the country's land reform plans, accusing him of trying to deflect attention from his own scandals.

"The people were furious about Trump – and I think they still are," said Preline Swart, a 37-year-old black woman who farms grain and cattle with her husband east of Cape Town.

"He's an outsider and he knows nothing about farming," she said on the sidelines of a summit of farmers, officials and industry players in Bela Bela, 100 miles (160 kilometres) northeast of Johannesburg.

Trump's Wednesday tweet, posted on the eve of the "Land Solution" gathering, touched on the overwhelmingly white ownership of farmland in South Africa – one of the most sensitive issues in the country's post-apartheid history.

"I have asked Secretary of State... (Mike) Pompeo to closely study the South Africa land and farm seizures and expropriations and the large scale killing of farmers," tweeted Trump to his 54 million followers.

His tweet apparently followed a segment on conservative Fox News about Pretoria's plan to change the constitution to speed up expropriation of land without compensation to redress racial imbalances in land ownership.

"South African Government is now seizing land from white farmers'," said Trump's post, which tagged the show's host, Tucker Carlson, as well as the channel.

"I think Donald Trump must really take his long hair... and leave our people the hell alone," added Swart.

While many of the farmers at Thursday and Friday's land summit rejected Trump's intervention, many are unsure what the government's plan to expropriate land to fix historical injustices will mean for them.

“The deputy president assured farmers government isn’t going to do anything reckless,” said conference speaker Tshilidzi Matshidzula, 30, a dairy farmer with 1,000 cattle on his ranch in the country’s Eastern Cape province.

“(But) as a farmer, although I’m black, expropriation is a serious concern. The sooner we get formal clarity on how it will be handled, the better.”

As he spoke, other black delegates congratulated Matshidzula for the speech he had just given on how to resolve land inequality.

According to President Cyril Ramaphosa, who himself farms cattle on a 5,100 hectare ranch, the white community that makes up eight percent of the population “possess 72 percent of farms”. In contrast, “only four percent” of farms are in the hands of black people who make up four-fifths of the population.

The stark disparity stems from purchases and seizures during the colonial era that were then enshrined in law during apartheid.

“I’m worried about the politicians and the politics in our country if they don’t get (land reform) right,” said Andre Smith, 49, who grows pecans and other crops on 100 hectares in the Northern Cape province.

“We don’t love Donald Trump and his outspokenness.”

South Africa’s government reacted angrily to the tweet with officials telling their American counterparts Trump’s comments were “alarmist, false, inaccurate and misinformed”.

“He doesn’t understand the South Africa situation. We have to inform him, we have to invite him to visit us,” added Smith, overlooking the conference venue’s car park, full of the white Toyota pickup trucks beloved of South African farmers.

Trump has a long history of sparking controversy on Twitter.

“Donald Trump was hot-headed – and not for the first time!,” laughed Whiskey Kgabo, a farmer of more than 30 years who grows mangoes on his rented 888-hectare plot in northeastern Limpopo province.

“I don’t have anything against Donald Trump... but he should first check that this is the position,” said Kgabo who spoke to AFP surrounded by hay bales.

Swart added that Trump, rocked by his longtime lawyer Michael Cohen pleading guilty to felonies and his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort being convicted of federal crimes, “just wants something new to talk about”.

Jannie de Villiers, 56, chief executive of the Grain SA industry trade body, rejected the Fox News segment’s suggestion that South Africa was following the same path as Zimbabwe’s disastrous Robert Mugabe-era seizures of white-owned farms.

“I don’t think we’re there, and I definitely don’t think we’re heading for that. It’s definitely not the Zimbabwe solution.”

Agricultural production collapsed and the economy almost halved in size following the seizures that started in 2000.

“But we do need to address the past and that’s not an easy process. We’ve got a non-racial consensus that we’ve messed up land reform so far,” added De Villiers. Conference speaker Riedewaan Marcus, 24, a farmer in the Western Cape province backed by the Agri Dwala foundation which supports emerging black agriculture said he was “not a fan of Donald Trump”.

“There’s a lot going on in America, and there’s a lot going on in South Africa,” he said. “Let Donald Trump do his thing. And we’ll do our thing.”

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/08/20180827402342/>

60,000 ACRES OF SINDH GOVT LAND ENCROACHED UPON, MINISTER TOLD

By Our Correspondent

Published: August 30, 2018

KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Revenue and Relief Makhdoom Mehboobuz Zaman chaired the maiden meeting of the Revenue Department in Karachi on Wednesday.

BoR Member Land Utilisation Abdul Wahab Soomro informed the meeting that around 60,000 acres of Sindh government’s land has been illegally occupied by different departments and criminals. The revenue minister assured his full support to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Board of Revenue senior member, Dr Iqbal Durrani briefed the minister regarding the performance and projects of the revenue department. He explained that the board was established in 1970 under the Board of Revenue Act 1957.

The existing land record system in Sindh comprises three isolated systems – land records held by the Mukhtiarkar of each of the 126 talukas or sub-divisions, maps held by the directorate of settlement survey and 104 sub-registrar offices.

The meeting was informed that all available land records of the 29 districts of the province maintained since 1985 had been computerised. This constitutes almost 95% of the existing records. The other 5% records pertain to unregistered Dehs and other missing records.

The central database is the largest Sindhi language database in the world and is linked with 27 districts of the province, excluding Sujjawal and Korangi. The database comprises over 15 million pages of records.

Durrani said that citizens can get land record of any district from the department’s service centres within 15 minutes at a cost of Rs150. He added that the department has set up a call centre to address complaints and receive feedback from citizens. The helpline can be reached at 111-267-247 during office hours, five days a week.

The Sindh Revenue Department has also launched a website, www.sindhzameen.gos.pk, which provides free access to over four million land records. The website is visited by an average of one million users each year. Besides, the department has also launched an android mobile application for

smart phone users to check land records online. The Sindh Zameen application has been downloaded by over 10,000 users and has a user rating of 4.3 out of 5.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1790956/1-60000-acres-sindh-govt-land-encroached-upon-minister-told/>

September 2018

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 24TH TO SEPTEMBER 30TH
2018**

IGNORED INDONESIA LAND REFORMS PUSH LEAVES OUT MILLIONS

Published: September 25, 2018

Bandung

Millions of landless peasants and indigenous people in Indonesia are being left out of an ambitious push by the government to give land titles in a process that campaigners say ignores the concerns of the country's most impoverished people.

President Joko Widodo has granted ownership certificates for customary forests as the government implements a historic 2013 ruling that removed such forests from state control and formalised local peoples' rights.

But the government's insistence on only recognising "clean and clear" land excludes conflicted areas and those where ownership is disputed, denying millions of people a chance for legal titles, said Dewi Kartika, a peasants' rights activist.

"The reform process is a top-down approach directed by the government, but it should be a bottom-up process, with the involvement of peasants, fishermen and indigenous people who know the land," she said on the sidelines of a land conference.

"The reform also does not address areas under conflict or ownership disputes. The objective of the reform is to benefit those without rights, but applying the 'clean and clear' policy will not do that," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Indigenous and local communities own more than half the world's land under customary rights. Yet they only have secure legal rights to 10 per cent, according to advocacy group Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI).

Governments maintain control over more than two-thirds of global forest area, much of which is claimed by local communities, RRI said in a report this month.

Widodo has vowed to return 12.7 million hectares of land to indigenous people and rural communities.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201809250188&EN_ID=11201809250057&EMID=11201809250025

33,000 KANALS OF ENCROACHED LAND RETRIEVED, SAYS MINISTER APP September 27, 2018

Minister of State for Interior Shehryar Khan Afridi speaks at a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday. — APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Shehryar Khan Afridi on Wednesday said over 33,000 kanals of ‘encroached land’ worth more than Rs300 billion had been retrieved during the ongoing anti-encroachment campaign in the capital.

Addressing a press conference, Mr Afridi said for the first time, action was being taken against influential people who were grabbing state land illegally.

Expressing his resolve to continue the campaign in Islamabad, the state minister said action had also been taken against 45-50 illegal shopping and commercial plazas, buildings and marriage halls established on state land in G-12 while a plot occupied by the

administration of Centaurus Mall to set up a temporary office was also retrieved. He said those officials who facilitated occupying of the land illegally would be taken to task.

The minister, however, said poor people will not be dislodged from their areas.

He said those living in slums (katchi abadis) would be facilitated and their rights protected under the law. He said he would take forward the concept of model village in the capital.

Mr Afridi said steps would be taken to resolve longstanding issues, adding that “everyone was being treated equally under the law”.

Answering a question, the minister said the identity of Islamabad Capital Territory would be restored in its true spirit, adding that through this anti-encroachment drive, a message had been conveyed to the influential that there was a rule of law and this was new Pakistan where no one would be allowed to occupy state land illegally.

When asked, Mr Afridi said he was regularly reporting to Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was monitoring the operation.

The minister appreciated the Capital Development Authority (CDA) chairman, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration and other relevant departments for their role in the drive, saying “we are working as a team to achieve the task”.

He also lauded the role of media and sought its cooperation in pointing out the issues.

Published in Dawn, September 27th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1435206/33000-kanals-of-encroached-land-retrieved-says-minister>

KP GOVT TO RELAX RULES TO OFFER FOREST LAND FOR SWAT CANTONMENT Manzoor Ali Updated September 28, 2018

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet on Thursday decided to relax rules to enable the government to hand over 19 kanals of forest land to the Pakistan Army for setting up a military cantonment in Swat district.

Spokesman for the government Shaukat Yousafzai told reporters after the cabinet's meeting that the forest land was part of over 75 kanals of the government land to be provided for the establishment of the military cantonment in the valley.

He said the government would offer its land measuring 75 kanals and nine marlas, including 19 kanals and 14 marlas of forest land, for Swat cantonment.

Cabinet says graft cases shouldn't be highlighted until strong evidence collected

Mr Yousafzai said as the forest land under the rules could neither be leased out nor put to use for any other purpose, the cabinet had to relax those rules for the purpose.

He said the Pakistan Army had restored peace in Swat valley after rendering huge sacrifices and the decision to set up a cantonment there was made after the elimination of militancy.

The cabinet also discussed the process of abolishing the Ehtesab Commission as decided by it in its first meeting earlier this month.

Mr Yousafzai said the cabinet reviewed the progress on its decision to abolish the accountability body (KPEC).

He said the commission had been directed to provide the details of its staff, cases, references, assets and liabilities to the government.

The spokesman said following the commission's abolition, the government would empower the anti-corruption establishment (ACE).

He said it was agreed that unless strong evidence of the corruption of suspects in cases were collected, the case should not be highlighted in the media to prevent embarrassment.

Mr Yousafzai said the cabinet also approved the return of Rs2 billion borrowed by the forest and environment department for the government's flagship Billion Tree Tsunami afforestation programme, to the Hydel Development Fund.

He said the cabinet approved the establishment of Directorate of Drugs Control and Pharmacy Services, which the chief minister linked to the corruption-free scientific monitoring mechanism.

Mr Yousafzai said approval was also granted to the posting of three district and session judges to the anti-terrorism court and repatriation of the ATC judges to the Peshawar High Court.

He said the cabinet also approved the issuance of certification for registration of publishing and printing of the Holy Quran to two firms, including Mohammad Iqbal Tasheul Quran Trust, Abbottabad, and Hashmat Ali Al-Ilm Publication, Peshawar, to ensure error-free publication.

The cabinet also approved an amendment bill to regularise the services of the employees of the transport department and the clearance of liabilities of 117 development projects amounting to Rs2.92 billion.

He said several contractors faced problems due to delay in payments but they would get their liabilities after relevant forums including planning and development department cleared the work they had executed.

The spokesman said the cabinet also approved a proposal to keep the laws prevalent in the erstwhile Pata intact.

The bill will be tabled before the provincial assembly next session, while the cabinet also approved additional land acquisition for Mataltan hydropower project.

A statement issued here said CM Mahmood Khan ordered the resolution of the people's problems regarding Dasu dam's construction.

He also sought recommendations for reforms in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission to free it from all sorts of influence, including political one, and said the province needed talented and capable youths to manage its affairs efficiently.

He promised tourism promotion and said a task force had already been formed for the purpose.

Published in Dawn, September 28th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1435410/kp-govt-to-relax-rules-to-offer-forest-land-for-swat-cantonment>

SC SEEKS RECORD OF FOREST LAND'S LEASEHOLDERS RECORDER REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday directed chief conservator of forests Sindh to provide a list of leases who have been granted the forest land in the last 20 years within two weeks.

The court also ordered him to submit the names of the lessees. It issued notices to the lease holders of forest land whether such lease was valid and why not the court should cancel them. The court directed chief secretary Sindh, secretary forest and wildlife and chief conservator of forests, federal secretary Ministry of Climate Change, inspector general forest and others to file the written statement, while the secretary forest Sindh was asked to appear in person.

A three-judge bench heard the petition of Advocate Qazi Ali Athar who is environmental lawyer.

Qazi Ali Athar informed the court that Sindh province has a total of 2,858,748 acres of forest land. Out of 605,583 acres are riverine forests, 182,314 acres are inland forest, 751,063 acres are coastal forest (mangroves) and 1,319,788 acres are rangelands. He said due to the shortage of water in the Indus River, unkind policies and political influence in Forest Department, 90 percent forest land has been deforested and almost entire forest land has been illegally occupied for agriculture purpose by

the political mafia, including ministers and public representative facilitated by the Sindh Forest and Revenue Department.

The petitioner alleged that the secretary forest Sindh was involved in the deforestation as he had allotted forest land to his brother Naveed Shah on lease. Justice Umar Atta Bandial inquired under what authority the land was given on lease. Chief Conservator Forest, Sindh, Ejaz Nizamani said that it was done under the Sindh Agro Forest Policy 2005.

The Chief Justice inquired from advocate general Sindh under what consideration the forest land was allotted to Bahria Town. He asked him to provide entire record of the forest land with the maps and tell how many trees were cut. Justice Umar Atta Bandial said that under the law forest land can't be allotted.

The judge inquired from the Chief Conservator of Forests, Sindh, Ejaz Nizamani whether any efforts were made by the provincial government to protect the forests. Ejaz said that in the last three decade 70 to 80 percent forest land was destroyed and given to the housing societies.

According to the petition, on June 19, 2015 the chief minister Sindh has declared in a 'Policy Statement' on national media that 9552 acres of land will be distributed/allotted to the families of martyred (Shaheed) army soldiers on ownership basis. The chief minister Sindh for this purpose issued directives to the chief secretary Sindh and concerning forest department/respondent to move a summary for approval to the chief minister Sindh for the changing of the status of forest situated at Golo Daro, Garhi Yasin, district Shikarpur.

He stated that 3,410 acres of Nasri Forest land in district Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawab Shah) were granted to a developer/private company for developing their third mega project. The entire statutory protected forest was levelled and very recently the project in the name of 'Bahria Town Nawab Shah' was announced.

In Karachi thousands of acres of Kathore Reserve Forests and green belts have been allotted to Bahria Town Karachi. This countrywide forests grabbing is in continuity of their previous projects on the statutory protected forests of Rawalpindi, said the petition.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/09/28/8-page/741307-news.html>

GOVT HOUSING SCHEME: IHC RULES AGAINST LAND ACQUISITION IN CAPITAL
By Rizwan Shehzad

Published: September 30, 2018

ISLAMABAD: A two-member bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) upheld an earlier verdict rendered by its single bench, terming the acquisition of land for a government employees housing scheme illegal, applying the principle of "you cannot rob Paul to pay Peter".

Terming acquisition of land for the Federal Government Employees Housing Foundation (FGEHF) in Sectors F-14 and F-15 illegal, IHC's Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani declared the move a classic example of deviating from law, violating constitutional guarantees, compromising state assets for personal gain and interest.

The judgment stated, “The principle of ... ‘you cannot rob Paul to pay Peter’ applies in this case. Benefit should be drawn for a community of federal government servants in accordance with the terms of objectives of the housing foundation.”

During the course of hearing, the judges observed that the FGEHF paid huge sums to various individuals for acquiring land and even federal government servants who deposited their money against their allotments.

It directed the FGEHF to decide about what to do regarding payments it received from federal government employees for allotments within a period of 30 days. It told the foundation to decide “whether they want to return the amount or otherwise”.

According to the judgment, the process of acquiring land was in violation of the law from the first day “as the very purpose behind the acquisition proceedings of areas ... in Sectors F-14 and F-15 are against the scope of Section 11 and 12 of the CDA Ordinance of 1960”.

The judges stated that officials of the CDA, the Ministry of Housing and Works and other officials involved in this process had no authority to “deviate from the law and create an interest”.

They added that every step taken towards the acquisition of [land in] Sectors F-14 and F-15 “is illegal and void”.

The judgment stated that the FGEHF had been established with a specific objective that did not cover private individuals and “any scheme prepared by the FGEHF for providing housing facility to its members has to be seen as a private interest”.

The FGEHF, the judgment stated, was allowed to buy any piece of land from open market for their scheme, but when they used state machinery with a limited objective under the companies law, “their entire working must be seen in the light of their objective only, and the purpose for which the land was acquired was too limited to hold that the same would be used for public purpose”.

Regulation 5 encompassed residential plots and developed sectors in which 75 per cent of plots shall be marketed through open balloting, 10 per cent to federal government servants and employees of autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations, 5 per cent to defence service personnel, 5 per cent to deprived groups, including widows and orphans, and the remaining 5 per cent to CDA employees.

Both regulations were violated by the CDA when it “issued an ‘LOP’ to the FGEHF that resulted in conversion of quota beyond the scheme of the Islamabad Land Disposal Regulations of 2005”, stated the judgment.

Similarly, it added, if the FGEHF intended to include other classes of people such as doctors, engineers, teachers and businessmen, it could do so after amending their objectives in accordance with the law.

Citing Intra Court Appeals, the judgment noted that people living in village Thallah Syedan raised objections against the proceedings for acquiring land in Sectors F-14 and F-15, “initiated by the Land Acquisition Collector for ‘Public Purpose’ at the request and for FGEHF”.

“Feeling aggrieved by the acquisition proceedings, the respondents filed writ petition No3496/2015 which was allowed by IHC’s Justice Athar Minallah on August 15, 2017, whereby the acquisition proceedings, all actions and orders relating to acquiring land for FGEHF in Sectors F-14 and F-15 were declared illegal, void and without jurisdiction,” stated the judgment.

“Justice Minallah had held that the CDA is the competent authority for initiating proceedings for acquisition of land in accordance with the provisions of the CDA Ordinance of 1960 and regulations made thereunder for planning and development of Sectors F-14 and F-15 for the general public,” it added.

The IHC’s division bench also declared that the decision to acquire land for the FGEHF in both these sectors was illegal. Pronouncing its judgment, the IHC dismissed all intra-court appeals.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1814801/1-govt-housing-scheme-ihc-rules-land-acquisition-capital/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 17TH TO SEPTEMBER 23TH 2018
‘30PC OF LAND UNDER WHEAT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO EDIBLE OIL SEEDS’
BR RESEARCH SEP 17TH, 2018

Shakil Ashfaq has been involved in the edible oil business since 2000 when he co-founded Shujabad Agro Industries (Pvt) Ltd. and setup the first oilseed crushing unit in Karachi. The company also manufactures and markets cooking oil and banaspati brands Eva and Maan.

Shakil Ashfaq has been elected as the President of the All Pakistan Solvent Extractors’ Association (APSEA) for the 2018-19 term. He has also served as the President of Bin Qasim Association of Trade and Industry (BQATI) and as Executive Committee member of Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturers’ Association (PVMA).

R Research recently had a conversation with him regarding the importance of promoting domestic production of oilseeds and the challenges faced by the edible oil sector. Here are the edited excerpts

BR Research: Pakistan has very high edible oil and oilseeds import bill. What can be done to reduce it?

There needs to be a long term holistic nationwide policy of edible oil, based on three major objectives. First and foremost is the growth of local oil seed crops. Right now our indigenous oilseed crops account for less than 12 percent of total edible oil consumption which is alarming. Our edible oil and oilseed import bill has exceeded \$3.5 billion. We must significantly increase our local oilseed crops volume.

Second important aspect is value addition. We need to follow the basic economic principle of value addition for our imports. For instance, we should concentrate on importing crude palm oil and refining it locally rather than importing finished products.

Thirdly, we need to promote the health aspect. An estimated 60 percent of our consumption is of banaspati ghee with 40 percent being cooking oil. Nowhere in the world is the ratio this high.

BRR: Beginning with the first point of your proposed nationwide policy of edible oil, why does Pakistan have such low levels of oil seed production given that imports are so high?

SA: This is why we need a national oil seed policy which accounts for all factors that are disincentivising indigenous oilseed production. For instance, one major factor is the support price of wheat. A commodity that is worth \$240-250 is being provided a support price of \$320. This system causes inefficiencies and losses. When Pakistan exported it, a \$180 subsidy had to be given though it's C&F (cost and freight) value was \$200. This is a highly inefficient system. We propose to take at least 30 percent areas under wheat and give it for oil seed plantation.

Among oilseeds, farmers have had good experience with sunflower and rapeseed. In FY09, Pakistan produced about 800,000-900,000 tons of rapeseed and sunflower in Sindh and Punjab. But this year we have hardly had 200,000 tons of oilseeds mainly because of support prices of competing crops.

APSEA always announces oilseeds support price but we have to keep in mind imported edible oil prices. This is why there is the need for a holistic national oil seed policy that keeps all factors in mind.

BRR: Moving on to the second point of your nationwide policy of edible oil, can you explain value addition a bit more?

SA: Pakistan's oil and oilseeds import bill is touching \$3.5 billion. Take palm oil for instance, we keep importing finished products such as RPB palm and RPB palm olein. We need to import crude palm oil.

We have signed PTA and FTA with Malaysia and Indonesia respectively which are heavily tilted in their favour. They have imposed export tax on their crude palm oil to discourage its exports and promote refined products exports. The price difference between imported value added products and raw material is not significant.

We import 3.0 million tons of refined palm oil. That is very big volume. We have sufficient installed capacity in our refineries to process crude oil but that capacity is not being utilised.

Problem also lies on our duty and tax structure because there is no appreciable difference between imports of crude oil versus refined products. Look at India for example, the difference in duty between crude palm oil and refined products is so significant that the bulk of their imports are of crude palm oil which are then refined locally.

This makes sense economically and from a health point of view as well. Because imported refined palm oil spends quite a long stretch of time in their supply and logistical pipelines, its condition deteriorates. Locally, some companies sell it in packed form without further processing which is detrimental to health. If it was processed locally, the quality would improve.

BRR: This brings us to health, the third point of your proposed policy. Do you support the ban by Punjab Food Authority on ghee due to presence of harmful trans-fat?

SA: The ban has been proposed from 2020 and it is a good effort on their part. The way it is being implemented however, leaves a lot to be desired. They seem to imply that banaspati ghee is harmful but actually, it is the process of partial hydrogenation which used to manufacture banaspati which is

harmful. There are also healthy alternatives of producing banaspati that do not use the hydrogenation process.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have removed products using partial hydrogenation from its category of GRAS (Generally Regarded as Safe) substances. Partial hydrogenation cannot be used there for any food product.

Unfortunately, Punjab Food Authority has created confusion by banning all types of banaspati. Virtual Trans-Fat Free (VTF) Banaspati that has lower trans-fat should not be banned. There are several companies that make good quality VTF banaspati.

BRR: If you look at the LSM numbers of ghee and oil production, you can see a 7-10 percent decline in ghee production. Is this because of the Punjab Food Authority ban?

SA: The population in general wants to shift to cooking oil but the price of cooking oil is 15 to 20 percent higher than ghee. Due to movements in international market, when the gap between cooking oil and ghee diminishes, the sales of cooking oil increases. The health factor in our edible oil policy will also support cooking oil consumption and local oilseeds.

The consumer needs to be educated a little bit. Hydrogenation process that creates trans-fat only needs to take place to change the texture otherwise there is no need for it. This is why we say that remove price obstacles so that consumers graduate to cooking oils by themselves.

BRR: Which regulatory body or government body should be responsible for making the edible oil policy?

SA: Mainly, edible oil comes under Ministry of National Food Security and Research. We have talked to them several times. At one time, there was also a Pakistan Oilseed Development Board that has been abolished. Not a lot of progress has been made but we are taking it up with the new government. We are hopeful that they will be more receptive.

BRR: How big is the market for banaspati and oil in Pakistan and who are the main players?

SA: The market is about 4.1 million tons. The premium segment is about 10 percent of the total market with 5-6 major players. Many international brands are now taking interest in the Pakistani market. It's a growing segment characterized with high turnover and low margins. The market is growing by about 4 to 5 percent but it is quite saturated with limited product differentiation.

BRR: Let's talk about your company. Can you give us a history and background of your business?

SA: Shujabad Argo industries was set up in 2000. At that time, Malaysian palm oil dominated the domestic edible oil market while the local soft oils industry was just starting off. There was some local crop of sunflower seeds and rape seeds, but the bulk of oilseeds were imported, particularly canola seeds from Australia and Canada.

In 2000, we started the oilseed crushing unit at Port Qasim, and later doubled the capacity in 2002. Refining processes were added in 2005 when we started marketing packaged products such as cooking oil and banaspati ghee.

BRR: Shujabad Agro also supplies to other oil companies such as Dalda. Isn't that like supplying to your competitors?

SA: Our Company has two strategic business units. One unit takes care of the crushing side and the other looks towards our refining and packaging side. The crushing industry is growing very rapidly with the increased demand for soybean meal by the poultry industry. The biggest challenge faced by the crushing side is to handle price volatility caused by international market. To manage the risk and to cater to our volume of crushed seeds, we sell crude oil to other companies.

BRR: What types of oilseeds are used for manufacturing by your company?

SA: Mostly we use was canola, soybean and sunflower seeds. Oil seeds are crushed mainly for oil but soybean seeds are an exception because they are crushed for protein and used in poultry feed.

Worldwide, corn and soybean are mixed to make poultry feed.

Feed conversion ratio (FCR) indicates the amount of feed that needs to be given to get one kilogram of live bird. Typically, the FCR here used to be 2.0 kg but with the introduction of soybean it has been reduced to 1.5 kg because of which the cost of poultry has come down significantly.

BRR: Can you explain why the FCR has gone down?

SA: Simply put, the formulation of feed has changed. Now more nutrition is packed and good digestible protein is balanced in the chicken diet. Previously, there was limited availability of soybean meal, so cheaper and less efficient substitutes were used.

In 2013, a multinational company started production here. They introduced soybean formulation which brought about remarkable changes. It led to awareness of the importance of soybean in poultry meal preparation.

BRR: Given the US China trade war and that China has implemented tariffs on one US imports of soybeans, how do you think it will affect the domestic market?

SA: The impact on the local market will be temporary. The US is about to harvest its soybean crops of 125 million tons. China purchases about 40 million tons of soybeans from the US; both need to trade soybeans to survive.

However, there is a huge export opportunity for Pakistan that is being missed. Because of the China US trade war, China is arranging to import meal from all over the world. Initially they allowed imports from five countries among which India is the only soybean producer. Obviously, the permission means indirect imports of soybean from the US that can then be processed into soybean meal and exported to China. Pakistan is already an importer of US soybeans but we are not on the list and this is a big missed opportunity for exports.

If we want to export soybean, we will first have to get approval from China and then Department of Plant Protection (DPP). In 2012, China revised its quarantine policies and asked all exporters to register. Pakistan has previously exported 200,000 tons but did not timely respond to the Chinese queries. The countries that had been banned by China were able to resume exports within months. On the other hand, it took us three years to have the ban lifted. We got the approval in 2017 after which we did not get permission from DPP to export rapeseed meal.

BRR: What kind of challenges have you faced when you import oil or oilseeds?

SA: There is fumigation requirement in Pakistan. Three million tons of oilseeds are imported in Pakistan and they require each vessel to be fumigated with methyl bromide. It is a very toxic chemical banned in many countries due to its environmental hazards.

Another issue we face is the limited infrastructure. More than 90 percent of the imported oilseeds are unloaded at Fauji Akbar Portia (FAP) terminal of Port Qasim. It has capacity of 1.5 million tons and our imports are in excess of 3 million tons. So the costs of waiting and demurrage are quite high – last year we must have given \$4 – \$5 million in demurrages. Fumigation adds to demurrage costs because it takes time to conduct. Bear in mind that each vessel costs \$25,000 – \$30,000 a day so each additional day adds to our costs and we are bleeding precious foreign exchange.

We have been trying for the last 3 to 4 years to use KPT facilities instead but it has no oilseed storage facility. FAP has facilities to unload cargo fast. If such silos were installed at KPT with oilseed storage facilities, it would help us a lot. We are paying high demurrages costs at FAP while berths are empty at KPT. It does not make sense. Gwadar is not an option because the freight cost would be too high.

APSEA has proposed that we can finance the construction of the required facility; we just need to have space assigned to us on lease the way it has been allotted to the cement exporters.

BRR: Any last words that you would like to add?

SA: What I would like to add regarding DPP issues, that we can understand that every country needs to put Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures in place for its agricultural imports, but these must be established and implemented with clarity. No business can survive in an environment of uncertainty. We have been tangled in the same issues for years but haven't been able to even engage into meaningful negotiations with the trading countries who are already trading the same commodities in much bigger volumes throughout the globe.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2018/09/17/440609/30pc-of-land-under-wheat-should-be-given-to-edible-oil-seeds/>

**DRIVE AGAINST LAND GRABBERS TO BEGIN SOON ACROSS PUNJAB: CS
SAFDAR RASHEED SEP 21ST, 2018 LAHORE**

Punjab Chief Secretary Akbar Hussain Durrani has said that the Punjab government will start indiscriminate drive against land grabber across the province and has also chalked out a comprehensive plan in this regard. "The Punjab bureaucracy will implement Prime Minister Imran Khan's agenda and policies to achieve targets set for the first 100 days of the government," he said this while talking to the Business Recorder on Thursday.

The chief secretary said that education, health and rule of law are the top priorities of government. "The Punjab government would start a historic anti-land mafia campaign across the province to retrieve state land from qabaza groups." He disclosed that thousands acres of state land, which belongs to forest, Auqaf and other departments, is occupied by the land mafia.

Discussing details of the campaign, the CS stated that initially land mafia will be served with notices to vacate the state land and later an affective operation would be launched against them. “The government will also proceed on legal front and try to get stay orders vacated,” he added.

He also opined that courts should not issue stay orders without hearing the government’s view. Moreover, he said the government will follow the KPK model for upgrading public sector schools so that the commoners as well as government servants feel proud to send their children there.

Talking about the supremacy of law, the CS stressed to implement Supreme Court’s judgment in famous Anita Turab case. He said he has delegated all his powers to divisional commissioners so that common people should not have to visit to the Civil Secretariat for their grievances. Citing PM Imran Khan’s maiden interaction with the top bureaucracy, the CS said the premier had assured them of his support to achieve certain targets.

He further said that the PM had also promised that there would be no political interference in the matters of bureaucracy. However, he said the officers had been already conveyed to fully observe the chain of command. While responding to a query on the letters of two deputy commissioners written to the Election Commission of Pakistan and other forums against political interference, he said the officers had been directed to face disciplinary proceeding for violating the chain of command.

Responding to another question about ‘interference’ of the NAB into administrative affairs like arrest of former principal secretary to PM Nawaz Sharif Fawad Hassan Fawad and former LDA DG Ahad Cheema, he said when the concerned departments failed to initiate inquiries against officers living beyond their known sources of income, the external agencies had to interfere.

Talking about the misuse of official cars, Durrani said, “Officers will not be allowed to use vehicles beyond their entitlement and they will not be allowed to use them for pick and drop service of their school-going children. Only secretaries had been given an additional vehicle for field visits.”

About the usage of luxury and bullet-proof vehicles withdrawn from public sector companies, he said that a committee has been constituted which will decide their (vehicles) fate. However, he said the government has recommended that some of the vehicles should be kept in the pool for dignitaries. “Instead of auctioning these vehicles, it was proposed to get them repaired under austerity measures.”

About closure of public sector companies in Punjab, the CS said, “As per the policy, the companies could be rolled back after their complete audit.” He also said that the PTI leadership had directed them to complete all ongoing developments projects. There is also a proposal that retired civil servants be hired to promote education through think tanks, he added.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/09/20180921409538/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 10TH TO SEPTEMBER 16TH 2018
PAKISTAN SITTING ON BILLIONS WORTH OF ‘DEAD CAPITAL’ IN FORM OF GOVT-
OWNED LAND: PM

Dawn.com Updated September 10, 2018

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday said Pakistan is sitting on hundreds of billions of rupees in “dead capital” in the form of state land and rest houses and official residences built on that land.

The premier took to Twitter to share figures extracted from data he received regarding 90 per cent of government-owned land in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the federal areas, and buildings constructed on the estates.

According to figures cited by PM Khan, 34,459 kanals of the state-owned land is located in rural areas while 17,035 kanals is in urban areas.

I have just got figures of 90% of state-owned land in KP, Punjab & federal areas & rest houses/official residences built on this land. The figures are startling: 34,459 kanals are rural & 17,035 kanals are urban. Just the urban land with buildings is worth over Rs.300 billion!

Suggesting that this money could be used for other purposes of public interest, the prime minister said: “A country that has to borrow money to pay interest on its loans[...] is sitting on huge amounts of dead capital in the form of this govt-owned land with buildings.”

The loans that the country has been taking are burdening its future generations, Khan said, noting that the daily interest liability is a whopping Rs5bn.

So a country that has to borrow money to pay interest on its loans (burdening our future generations) – & daily interest payment is Rs 5 b – is sitting on huge amounts of dead capital (just 90% of urban holdings is worth Rs 300b) in the form of this govt-owned land with buildings

The premier’s statement comes amid an austerity drive undertaken by the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf-led (PTI) government to try and cut down on expenditures.

At a meeting of the newly formed Economic Advisory Council (EAC) last week, radical steps were discussed to curb imports, including a year-long ban on imports for cheese, cars, mobile phones and fruit that could “save some \$4-5 billion”, according to Ashfaque Hasan Khan, a university professor who is one of more than a dozen EAC members.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1432080/pakistan-sitting-on-billions-worth-of-dead-capital-in-form-of-govt-owned-land-pm>

SC QUESTIONS LAND LEGISLATION IN BAHRIA TOWN CASE

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Updated September 13, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned political connections and intention behind the passage of a law that resulted in the exchange of land between the Malir Development Authority (MDA) and Bahria Town Karachi.

“Who built a big house in Lahore and how the Sindh government doled out prized lands to a third party,” wondered Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar while heading a five-member bench that had taken up a petition seeking review of its judgement in the Bahria Town Karachi case.

In its May 4 verdict, the SC had barred the Bahria Town Karachi from selling plots or apartments from the housing scheme and also declared transfer of lands between the MDA and the Bahria Town Karachi as illegal.

Hints at referring the matter to NAB

The CJP observed that the Colonisation of Government Land Act was amended only to consolidate the lands for onward transfer to a third party with retrospective effect due to political connections. The court made it clear that it was not striking down the law. “But to derive true interpretation, we have to go into the intentions behind adopting the law,” the bench observed.

The observation came when senior counsel for Bahria Town Karachi Ali Zafar argued that the court could not question intention of legislators behind the passage of a particular law.

Around 9,385 acres of land in 43 Dehs was consolidated by the MDA and handed over to the Bahria Town Karachi in 2015. The purpose was to build a private housing society at a 25-minute drive from the Jinnah International Airport and nine kilometres from the Karachi toll plaza on the Superhighway.

At the hearing, Bahria chairman Malik Riaz tried to explain his position by claiming that never in the history of Pakistan, a quality living style equivalent to that of a five-star hotel facility — rather better than what was available in the United Kingdom or other developed countries — was available to “middle and lower middle class at affordable prices”.

Mr Riaz asked the CJP to visit the housing scheme and then determine whatever penalty he had to pay to continue with the project. The CJP retorted that he did not want to label him but Robin Hood also used to do many good works by doling out among the poor what he got from the rich.

Also representing the builder, Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan argued that the court should never lose sight of the fact that the Bahria Town Karachi converted a barren desert into a Dubai-like living facility.

Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, however, observed that the court was being asked to close its eyes and consider the quality of work by ignoring the illegality in the entire transaction. Such kind of arguments would not be acceptable in any court of the world, said Justice Khosa, adding that the court could never validate any such illegality.

Justice Khosa repeatedly reminded the counsel pleading the Bahria Town case to understand the gravity of the illegalities. The CJP observed that the court would not allow any individual to swallow or monopolize the public land, because the assets belonged to posterity.

The court, however, floated the proposal that the entire project be taken over by the MDA while assuring those who owned properties in the scheme that they would not be affected, or the builder be asked to pay the penalty, the remaining balance and the profit earned by utilising the lands.

The court also hinted at referring the matter to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to determine who were instrumental in the transfer of lands to the third party.

Mr Zafar, the defence counsel, argued that the MDA had transferred 7,068-acre land to the Bahria Town Karachi for the development of a housing scheme in exchange for land of an equal size. The value of the land provided by the MDA to the Bahria Town Karachi was Rs6.2 billion but the land that was given by the Bahria Town Karachi to the MDA in exchange was valued at Rs5.8 billion. Of this, he added, Rs240 million had been paid whereas Rs20 million was still in balance.

When he cited Article 38d of the Constitution that obligates the government to provide basic necessities of life like food, clothing housing, education etc, Justice Khosa said the purpose of that article was to provide such necessities to the destitute or the shelterless and not for the enrichment for big mansions.

Justice Khosa described the interpretation offered by the counsel as ‘beneficial interpretation’.

When the counsel argued that providing housing facilities was part of the public policy, the CJP questioned whether acquisition of land for a third party also part of the public policy.

The counsel, however, argued that proper master plan and zoning for the development of a planned city instead of current haphazard town planning was the need of the day.

The court highlighted that the developer was not selling properties to the destitute but to the rich. The court then postponed further proceedings till Oct 1.

Published in Dawn, September 13th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1432621/sc-questions-land-legislation-in-bahria-town-case>

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

GROWERS DEMAND CANCELLATION OF ALL LEASES FOR FOREST LAND

The Newspaper’s Staff Correspondent September 03, 2018

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Abadgar Board has called for rehabilitation of fast shrinking forests by cancelling all illegal leases for state land and ending occupation of forest land.

The SAB members who met here on Sunday with the body’s president Abdul Majeed Nizamani in the chair demanded an end to political interference in Sindh irrigation department.

It urged the department to ensure that water reached tail-end growers and called for action against water thieves. The Sindh agriculture department should convene a meeting of Pakistan Sugar Mills Association and growers to ensure sugar cane crushing season started on Oct 1, it said.

The meeting asked the agriculture department to seize adulterated pesticides, fertilisers and seeds which had glutted the markets and held Sindh’s rulers responsible for destruction of irrigation system, lakes and forests. It rejected Kalabagh dam but supported construction of Bhasha dam and demanded rehabilitation of Manchhar lake.

The meeting regretted that water was not available till July although it used to be in the system in April. Sindh government complained often to federal government regarding its share of water but it was itself not judiciously distributing water within the province, said the meeting.

It said that influential landowners received water first and small growers were left to bear the entire brunt of water shortage. Sugar cane season was scheduled to start after a month but the mills had not yet cleared cane producers’ liabilities, only a handful of mills had cleared growers’ dues, it said.

Published in Dawn, September 3rd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1430693/growers-demand-cancellation-of-all-leases-for-forest-land>

WATERLOGGED BUT NOT BARREN

By Asif Mehmood Published: September 8, 2018

LAHORE: Reports reveal that a piece of 70,44,000 acres of agricultural land in Punjab has become unproductive due to waterlogging and salinity while fruits, grains and vegetables are being cultivated on 3,67,000,00 acre land.

A private company has adopted the organic method to turn the sandy and unproductive lands into cultivable, with which several types of gardens, crops and vegetables are being successfully cultivated. The green garden of pears located near Kasur on sandy land of river Sutlej is one such example of how land affected by waterlogging can be made useful.

The organic method is getting massive popularity. Gardens and vegetables sprawling over hundreds of acres of lands have been cultivated over the sandy soil of River Sutlej near Kasur.

The chief of a private firm and agriculture land development Syed Babar Shah said an organic fertiliser has been prepared after years of strenuous work and research with which cultivation was made possible even on a waterlogged and saline land.

He claimed that with the help of organic fertiliser, liquid and medicinal herbs, barren, waterlogged or saline land can be made productive and cultivable.

With this method, organic fertiliser and chemical create network few feet deep underground. The farmers said the organic fertiliser produced with natural ingredients was producing better results than urea and other types of fertilisers. The farmer who used organic fertiliser and liquid said the yield and quality of crops have improved. They also fortify and lengthen the stem of plants.

Dr Mubashir, an agricultural expert, said the fertiliser and chemical sprays on crops were contributing to the environmental pollution and making people vulnerable to cancer and several other diseases. The continuous use of chemical fertilisers also affects the natural fertility of land.

Contradictory to it, the use of organic fertilisers and natural ingredients would not only help reduce the cost of expensive fertilisers and chemical sprays but also achieve better and quality results.

A land once prepared through organic procedure becomes cultivable for any type of crop. The use of organic fertiliser will make Pakistan can be transformed into a green country and food safety can be obtained with large yields of vegetable and serials.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 8th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1797858/1-food-security-waterlogged-not-barren/>

October 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 1TH TO OCTOBER 7TH 2018

SC SUMMONS TWO PTI LEGISLATORS IN LAND GRABBING CASE

Imran Gabol October 01, 2018

LAHORE: A two-member bench of the Supreme Court on Sunday reprimanded Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers Malik Karamat Khokhar and Nadeem Abbas Bara for influencing the police in a land grabbing investigation and asked them to appear before it in Islamabad on Monday.

“If the inquiry proves that you called the police to stop them from arresting Mansha, you will not return [from the court] as a member of the National Assembly,” warned Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar before summoning PTI’s MNA Khokhar to the apex court on Monday. The CJP also asked PTI’s MPA Bara to bring along his resignation letter, telling him that the court would see if he should be forgiven or not.

The bench was hearing the petition of an overseas Pakistani, Mahmood Ashraf, at the SC’s Lahore registry against the police ‘reluctance’ to take action against suspect, Mansha alias Bomb, who had allegedly grabbed his property.

CJP asks MNA Khokhar if this is the Naya Pakistan the PTI is claiming to build; orders arrest of Mansha alias Bomb

The CJP asked MNA Khokhar “if this is the Naya Pakistan the PTI is claiming to build. Have people voted for you to support land grabbers?”

The court had earlier asked superintendent of police Maaz Zafar about the suspect, Mansha alias Bomb. The officer apprised the SC that Mansha was the “member of a top land grabbing group” in Johar Town. The SP said Mansha and his sons were involved in more than 70 land grabbing cases, which were registered against them in Johar Town.

“As police had taken action [against land grabbing] on the direction of the court, they started receiving calls to stop the operation,” the officer claimed.

When the CJP inquired about the identity of those who had attempted to influence the police, the officer said PTI’s MNA Malik Karamat Khokhar had asked them not to arrest Mansha alias Bomb.

CJP Nisar immediately summoned PTI’s MNA Malik Karamat Khokhar to the apex court.

Subsequently, when the MNA appeared in court he was accompanied by PTI’s MPA Nadeem Abbas Bara though the latter had not been summoned. Apparently, Mr Bara accompanied his party leader to tell the court that SP Maaz had registered false cases against him for firing in the air and manhandling of a police officer after the July 25 general elections.

However, Mr Khokhar denied any association with the land grabber and informed the court that he would have called DIG Operations and not SP Zafar.

The chief justice then summoned the DIG and warned the MNA that if the “inquiry proves that you called the police to stop them from arresting Mansha, you will not return [from the court] as a member of the National Assembly.

MPA Bara breaks into tears

Meanwhile, MPA Bara broke into tears and said SP Maaz had registered false cases against him. He said: “I will resign if proven guilty in these cases.”

The CJP replied: “Why don’t you go ahead and resign first? Let me tell you why...because you lack the courage to do so.

“You people become thugs outside the court but shed tears here.”

The CJP said he would not allow any thug to reside in Pakistan and then issued orders to the police authorities to arrest Mansha and his sons and adjourned the hearing till 3.30pm.

As the hearing resumed after the break, DIG Operations Shehzad Akbar appeared before the court and said Mr Khokhar had called him to seek release of Mansha’s son.

Subsequently, the SC issued a notice to PTI’s MNA Khokhar for lying before the court and asked him and MPA Bara to appear before it in Islamabad on Monday (today).

The CJP asked MNA Khokhar, “Why don’t we initiate contempt proceedings against you for your wrong testimony? You recorded your statement before the court that you do not know who Mansha was. Then why did you call the DIG for the release of his son?

“Someone who lies cannot be Sadiq and Ameen. If you lie to the people, how will you answer to them?”

The CJP also ordered the DIG Operations not to accept pressure from anyone, including Prime Minister Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, and realize the power of police uniform. The DIG assured the court that he would fulfil his responsibilities.

When MPA Bara regretting his decision to accompany the MNA (to the court) begged for forgiveness, CJP Nisar asked him to also travel to Islamabad tomorrow (today). “We will see if you should be forgiven or not,” he said. “Bring your resignation letter with you, or I will write it for you,” he added.

Just a couple of days after winning the July 25 general elections, PTI’s MPA Bara and his supporters were found involved in thrashing Hanjarwal Station House Officer (SHO) Rana Afzal and his driver Mumtaz. Taking suo motu notice of firing into the air and manhandling of the police officials, the chief justice had ordered immediate arrest of MPA Bara who along with his seven accomplices later appeared before the court and surrendered. An anti-terrorism court then granted bail to MPA Bara and his seven accomplices in the case against surety bond of Rs50,000 each.

Model Town case

While hearing a petition of a Model Town firing victim, a two-member SC bench, headed by CJP Nisar, told the petitioner Basma that the apex court would look into the matter if an appeal against the high court’s verdict was filed.

The court also summoned the Model Town case report from an anti-terrorism court.

Besides victim Basma, Pakistan Awami Tehreek leader Khurram Nawaz Gandapur also appeared before the bench which took up the matter for hearing at Lahore registry of the Supreme Court.

Earlier, Basma apprised the SC that the Lahore High Court (LHC) had rejected a petition to summon ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif and former Punjab CM Shahbaz Sharif in the Model Town case.

As many as 14 people were killed and 100 others wounded in a police action during what officials described as anti-encroachment operation in Model Town on June 17, 2014.

Published in Dawn, October 1st, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1436120/sc-summons-two-pti-legislators-in-land-grabbing-case>

SLAVERY INC: HOW LEGISLATORS REINFORCE BONDED LABOUR IN SINDH

Mohammad Hussain Khan Updated October 01, 2018

The hari-landlord relationship remains undocumented in Sindh. This makes peasants vulnerable to all forms of exploitation.

Weaker laws and regulatory framework deprive haris of legal protection. In many cases, they survive in subhuman conditions and fall prey to slavery.

Sindh Tenancy Act (STA) 1950 seeks to protect their rights, thanks to a relentless struggle by one of the greatest hari leaders of his era, Hyder Bux Jatui. However, haris can hardly invoke its provisions to get their rights.

Yet this law, which describes a hari as a tenant, was amended by the Sindh Assembly in 2013. The most damaging amendment that the PPP, which derives its electoral strength from rural Sindh, introduced to it was the omission of the following words: "But the landlord shall not take any free labour from the tenant or a member of his family against his will."

In other words, legislators have legalised slavery.

According to veteran labour rights activist Karamat Ali, this amendment shows that legislators are in a state of denial as they believe landowners don't take begaar (free labour). "Legislators from urban areas also voted for the amendment," he said.

Landowners maintain accounts of expenditures that they settle with haris after the harvest. Haris till the land under no written agreement

Practically, the hari-landlord relationship is governed under no law. Haris are not registered under the record of rights as permanent tenants as per the 1950 law. Usually, peasants share expenses incurred by their landlords as the latter purchase all inputs either by themselves or through local financiers. These local lenders charge interest rates that are multiple times higher than the mark-up on a typical bank loan.

For instance, a local lender provides farmers with a urea bag at Rs2,400 on credit even though its actual price varies between Rs1,600 and Rs1,700. The loan is usually adjusted once the crop is harvested and sold either in the market or to the same lender.

This undermines the monetary interests of haris who have to make do with a meagre share in the profit after the deduction of expenses. Landowners maintain accounts of expenditures and settle the same with haris after the harvest. Haris till the land under no written agreement.

A landlord lets haris cultivate separate pieces of land. They depend on the landlord for meeting their day-to-day needs as he ensures the supply of irrigation water, seeds, fertiliser, pesticides and tractors.

Although the STA is considered a pro-peasant law, rights bodies have come up with some draft amendments to make it more progressive. However, the Sindh government hasn't considered those amendments yet.

Many people believe that elected representatives in rural Sindh are primarily from powerful landed aristocracy and get support from their urban counterparts. Overall, 10 amendments have been made to the law. But there hasn't been any meaningful impact as far as conditions of the haris are concerned.

The STA calls for setting up tribunals to resolve hari-landowner disputes. But no such body has been set up so far.

One draft amendment calls for placing the tribunals under the judicial magistrate instead of a taluka-level assistant commissioner as enshrined in actual STA.

Another draft amendment calls for making a tribunal's decision challengeable in "higher civil courts" contrary to the actual provision that says, "A decision of tribunal or in appeal by collector (deputy commissioner) and then by commissioner shall be final and shall not be called in question in any court." But these amendments have not been considered.

Interestingly, farm workers and those working in the fisheries sector are now covered by the definition of "industrial labour" under Sindh Industrial Relations Act (SIRA) 2013. But the rules under the SIRA have not been issued yet.

Sindh Abadgar Board Vice President Mahmood Nawaz Shah says relevant departments lack the capacity to implement tenancy rules. Laws like the STA couldn't take effect under a weak governance structure.

Mr Ali says conditions for farm labour are extremely poor. "They have no right to form a union. When a hari is not registered with the revenue department, he and his family can be evicted by the landowner any time," he says.

Any payment of advances to haris is prohibited under Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 2015

An identical situation exists even in the formal labour sector where third-party employment by factory owners is commonplace now, he adds.

The cases of bonded labourers are usually reported against the backdrop of the poor implementation of tenancy laws. Such haris escape from the clutches of landowners to avoid paying the debt they obtained in advance. Any payment of advances to haris under Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 2015 is prohibited. But the law is rarely implemented.

Peasant rights activists claim that 13.46 million people were employed in Sindh in 2012. Of them, as many as 7.74m were based in rural areas. A majority of them work as sharecroppers — landless tenants or peasants — as well as wage labour.

Trade unionist Nasir Mansoor asserts that even the STA has become obsolete now. He believes that only getting haris freed from bondage is no solution to the issue. An entirely new consultation is

needed to look at the hari-landlord relationship, he stated, adding that peasants will continue ending up as losers otherwise.

Published in Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, October 1st, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1435964/slavery-inc-how-legislators-reinforce-bonded-labour-in-sindh>

PUNJAB-WIDE DRIVE LAUNCHED AGAINST ENCROACHMENTS, LAND GRABBING Dawn Report October 02, 2018

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Monday launched a campaign against encroachments and land grabbing across the province. The drive in Lahore will begin from Tuesday (today).

Prime Minister Imran Khan had directed the Punjab chief minister and cabinet members on Sept 1 to immediately launch an anti-encroachment drive and take action against land grabbers across the province. Chief Minister Usman Buzdar met PM Khan again in Islamabad and briefed him about the anti-encroachment and anti-land grabbing drive.

Sources say the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government has announced launching of the operation without considering that by-polls on multiple National and Punjab Assembly seats were scheduled to be held this month.

In a meeting of provincial ministers and administrative secretaries presided over by the chief minister, it was identified that some 31,687 kanal of land of the Board of Revenue, Lahore Development Authority's (LDA) 636 kanal and forest department's 35 acres were encroached upon by land grabbers. Similarly, 32 buildings and some plots of the Metropolitan Corporation (MC) and Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) were also identified as being encroached upon.

Meanwhile, senior minister Aleem Khan asked the departments concerned to adopt a comprehensive strategy to remove encroachments in the province and establish a proper monitoring system in every division. A daily progress report should also be presented to the government, he added.

The minister said that telephone, gas and electricity connections of the illegal occupants should immediately be disconnected permanently. Some respite could be given to widows, orphans and the very poor people on the basis of humanity who will be given time to collect their belongings.

LAHORE: The city administration is all set to launch a month-long operation from today to retrieve 31,687 kanal of state land.

According to an action plan finalised by the administration, in the first week starting on Tuesday the teams comprising officials of the city administration, LDA and enforcement staff of the MC and zonal municipal administrations would conduct the operation around Sabzazar truck stand, commercial buildings (LDA and MC), Anarkali, Walton Road, Urdu Bazaar, Madina Market, Township, Circular Road, PIA Road (including Neelam Ghar), Ferozepur Road (Lytton Road to canal), Dharampura Bazaar and Allama Iqbal Road, Daroghawala Chowk (Basi Morr), Samsani graveyard shops and nursery, Walled City, Rang Mehal Chowk and Lohari Gate.

In the second week, the teams would retrieve occupied land in Makkah Colony, Gurumangat Road, Ichhra main bazaar, Johar Town, Baghbanpura, Haq Nawaz Bazaar, Shalimar Link Road, Akbari

Mandi, Karim Block, Moon Market, Sikandar Block market, Jallo Morr, GT Road (both sides of Quaid-i-Azam Interchange), Sabzazar (D Block), Landa Bazaar, Loha Market and Montgomery Road.

In the third week, the operation would be launched on Beadon Road, Temple Road, Shalimar Market, Sabzazar (C, P, H-1 blocks), Shahdara (GT Road), Bajwa Hospital, Barkat Market, Model Town Link Road, Islampura, Rajgarh, MAO College Road (Atif Chowk and adjoining areas), from Yateem Khana to Thokar Niaz Baig, Suha Bazaar, Data Darbar, Ravi Road and Batti Chowk, Faisal Town, Kotha Pind, Moon Market and Liaquatabad, Queen's Road, Abid Market, Mozang Adda, Liberty Market, Main Market Gulberg and Ek Moria Pul to Shadbagh (Gol Ground).

The fourth week will take the operation to Bhalla Chowk, Allah Hoo Chowk, Shaukat Khanum and Madr-i-Millat Road, Bilal Ganj and Karim Park market, Ferozepur Road, Qainchi to Gajjumatta, Katcha Jail Road, Kamahan Road, Begum Kot and Sheikhpura Road.

“The deputy inspector general (operations), deputy commissioner and other senior officers will be core members of the campaign, and another plan has been finalised to save the retrieved land from re-occupation,” Deputy Commissioner (DC) retired Capt Anwarul Haq told Dawn on Monday.

Out of the two teams tasked with conducting the operation, one will comprise 40 officials of LDA and MC, and the second will have officials of the MC and WCLA. “Both teams will be provided with 30 trucks and other heavy machinery besides police security during the operation,” the DC added.

The LDA administration has also constituted a special task force for assisting its Enforcement Directorate to achieve the desired objectives of the crackdown.

“The task force comprises 40 officers and officials of various ranks. As per the standard operating procedure, the director concerned of a particular scheme will be present during the operation along with representatives of the land acquisition and law directorates,” a spokesman said in a press release.

Published in Dawn, October 2nd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1436288/punjab-wide-drive-launched-against-encroachments-land-grabbing>

November 2018

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

LAND TO LANDLESS, PEASANT, THE TILLER

By Rasul Bakhsh Rais

Published: November 14, 2018

It seems the decisions of the Supreme Court of Pakistan matter when it comes to enforcement. The case in point is getting the public land under illegal occupation both in urban and rural areas vacated. The SC verdict and the media debate have highlighted the existence of land mafia, as if it has just happened. We, the helpless citizens of Pakistan, have watched helplessly illegal occupation of public lands for decades, including construction of mosques and madrassas on public parks, green areas throughout the country. In our law books and by the function of expedient politics, pious men cannot be treated as a part of the land mafia, as nobody wants to push a hand into a proverbial hornets' nest.

The softness of the state over illegal takeover of public land for ‘religious’ purposes has encouraged more of the same. A tour of Islamabad would reveal to you how boundaries between law and religion dissolve in the form of illegal establishment of madrassas over public land and perpetual expansion in every possible direction. Silence by all those who might matter in checking illegality has been a consistent policy. Just a question; will the law of vacating public lands be applicable only to the poor peasants of the riverine areas, which I will talk about shortly.

The state and the state functionaries have been conniving with, and even helping the powerful land mafias of the country. Consider, how many times and how many pieces of real estate have bureaucrats, journalists, and members of the political class or their families have been given by the housing societies? Since it is about the most powerful one, the Federal Investigation Agency or the National Accountability Bureau may never go after these ‘respectable’ people. Even a layman with little knowledge of politics would tell you how and why power to act or not act by bureaucracy is exchanged for favours—in kind and cash.

For decades, I have observed the poor landless families in Rajanpur Punjab, clearing public land around the river, which is flooded in summer, to cultivate in the fall and winter. The Indus delta enriches fertility of land every monsoon season by leaving a very thick sheet of fine soil. Use of machinery and chemical fertilisers has added to the productivity of land. This brought in more powerful local actors into riverine areas, claiming bigger chunks of land, that in some cases displaced weaker peasants. Cultivable public lands have been sold and leased by the land grabbers, while the poor peasants have sustained themselves by clinging on to small pieces.

Last month, the peasants in Rajanpur, and may be true in other districts as well, have been told to leave the land barren. If they sowed wheat crop, the local administration would arrest them and register cases against them. Tens of thousands of peasants wouldn’t have anything to feed their families next spring.

We are not sure what the Punjab government wants to do with the riverine or other public lands. There is no policy as yet; there should have been one even before the peasantry was evicted. Probably, they would like to dispose of all kinds of public lands for good to put money in the ‘empty’ treasure of the provinces and the federal government. What about broadening the tax net, and taxing the rich? It is rather a difficult proposition, as it tests the competence and integrity of the FBR.

Depriving the landless poor of public lands that they have cleared and been cultivating for generations would be unfair, unjust, and even politically unwise. These lands justly belong to the landless poor. They deserve to be given ownership rights.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 14th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1846619/6-land-landless-peasant-tiller/>

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

GRAND OPERATION

24,000 kanal of occupied land retrieved

KHALID ABBAS SAIF

FAISALABAD: Under the directions of CM Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar, the district administration has retrieved 24 thousand kanals occupied state land worth Rs5.47 billion during the grand operation

against land grabbers in last month. This was revealed by Deputy Commissioner Sardar Saifullah Dogar while briefing to the parliamentarians during a meeting.

CPO Ishfaq Ahmad Khan was also present in the meeting beside Parliamentarians Faiz Ullah Kamoka, Ch Asim Nazir, Ajmal Cheema, Firdous Rai, Latif Nazar, Khayal Kastro, Mian Waris Aziz, Shakil Shahid and others.

The Deputy Commissioner informed that 32029 kanals state land was under illegal possession of the land grabbers according to the revenue record and 23618 kanals state land was retrieved in Tehsil Jaranwala while 7023 kanals land was vacated in tehsil Samundri. He told that the operation would be continued to retrieve the balance land from the illegal possession. He also gave the details of implementation on Clean Green Punjab Programme and said various steps had been taken to improve the cleanliness position in urban and rural areas while near about two lac saplings had been planted on available sites by different departments under this programme.

The DC said grand operation was also continue against the theft of electricity and a cell had also been set up in DC Office for receiving secret information about the incident of electricity theft. He informed that coordinated strategy had been evolved to curb the menace of electricity theft and initiative had also been taken by the District Enforcement Committee against the big fish of electricity theft besides supervising the operation against them. The Deputy Commissioner informed that improvements were also bringing in the quality of service delivery of the departments for providing swift relief to the public. He told that the public complaints were being attended directly from 10am to 12pm daily.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/11/06/5-page/748039-news.html>

CHINESE FIRMS REFUSED LAND OWNERSHIP: CM

By Mohammad Zafar

Published: November 8, 2018

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan has said the provincial government has denied land ownership to Chinese companies.

Talking to the media on Wednesday at the conclusion of his five-day visit to China along with Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said the government wanted equal share in the province's land resources. He revealed that Chinese companies had been pressurising for land ownership in Gwadar.

Kamal said the government would not compromise on the natural resources of the province, calling them the 'only assets of Balochistan'.

He termed his visit to China as a 'successful experience'.

The CM said that during a recent meeting, the provincial cabinet had decided to provide land to Chinese companies only on lease or rent. He said unless the revenue structure in Balochistan was revamped, the coming governments would keep facing financial issues.

He said the foreign companies willing to invest in Balochistan would have to hold meetings with the provincial government. He added that the federal government was playing the role of facilitator and partner in this regard.

Kamal said that during the Shanghai Export Expo, he came to know of which resources in Balochistan had a great potential for the Chinese markets.

He announced that the government would conduct a roadshow in China in two months to win the confidence of Chinese companies for investment. He called for solid policy and planning to attract investment from Chinese companies.

“Balochistan’s natural resources and geographical location give us an edge for securing foreign investment,” he added.

Referring to the financial crisis in Balochistan, he said the government needed Rs400 billion to complete development projects under the Public Sector Development Fund (PSDP). He claimed that the Balochistan government had been reducing expenditures and was confident of curbing the financial crisis.

Speaking on the supply of potable water in the province, he said the government had restored the water supply in Pasni. He assured that Gwadar would receive four to five million gallons of clean water in the next eight months and claimed it would be sufficient for the whole district.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1842800/1-chinese-firms-refused-land-ownership-cm/>

December 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 24TH TO DECEMBER 30TH 2018 INDUSTRIAL ZONES FOR TRIBAL DISTRICTS PLANNED

Bureau Report Updated December 30, 2018

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan on Saturday announced the establishment of economic zones in tribal districts of the province and ordered the early finalisation of the matters about the Rashakai Economic Zone.

He was chairing a meeting at the Chief Minister’s House here, where adviser to the chief minister Abdul Karim, head of Strategic Support Unit Sahibzada Saeed, industries secretary, and Peshawar commissioner Shahab Ali Shah were in attendance.

According to a statement, the participants discussed the opening of a road to link Afghanistan with the Central Asia to make the region an economic hub in light of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project.

CM orders early finalisation of matters for Rashakai Economic Zone

They focused their discussion on the province’s mega projects, including the finalisation of concessional agreement, financial model and the infrastructure development for the Rashakai Economic Zone, the energisation of CRBC for power production and agricultural productivity, hydel power generation in Malakand and Hazara regions, the provision of cheap electricity to local industries, boosting of trout production, establishment of a model village in erstwhile Fata, and other relevant matters.

The chief minister said all needs for the Rashakai Economic Zone should be fulfilled to get the approval of the federal government for the purpose by Jan 15, 2019.

He ordered the finalisation of the plan for the provision of electricity produced locally in Malakand division for food processing and agro-based industrialisation and tourism-related activities.

Mr Mahmood said the CPEC project had brought multifaceted challenges along and therefore, strong commitment was needed to meet those challenges.

“We will train our youths to cope with the growing challenges of producing skilled manpower,” he said.

The chief minister said the tribal districts would get economic zones under the CPEC project for which all public sector institutions should take necessary measures.

He said the electricity generated by Matiltan and other hydropower stations would be provided to the food processing, agro-based, livestock and tourism-related industries at cheaper rate, which would ensure the socioeconomic development of northern districts of the province.

Mr Mahmood said peace was the basic prerequisite for economic growth.

“Once peace is there, the region will have the bright prospects for growth,” he said asking stakeholders to prepare themselves for availing themselves of the growing opportunities created by the CPEC project.

The chief minister asked the IT and science and technology department to prepare an ‘integrated dashboard’ for the one-window operation to facilitate investors, traders and industrialists in the province.

PANEL FORMED: The CM has constituted a committee to propose ways for doing business easily in the province.

A statement issued here said the chief minister will be the patron-in-chief of the committee, which will be headed by special assistant to the chief minister Kamran Khan Bangash and will comprise special assistant to the chief minister on industries, the secretaries of planning and development, finance and excise and taxation departments, and chief of the KP Board of Investment and Trade as members.

The committee members will prepare recommendations for departments and stakeholders, interact with members of the KP chamber of commerce and industries, Federal Board of Revenue and Securities and Exchange of Commission of Pakistan, and produce a detailed report on a one-window solution for the facilitation of businesses and industries.

Published in Dawn, December 30th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1454396>

ACE STARTS PROBE INTO PUNJAB FOREST DEPARTMENT’S ‘MISSING’ LAND

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter December 24, 2018

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) has started investigating Punjab Forest Department's 'missing' land in Islamabad, which is included in the district land revenue record but not in the Forest Department's record for the last 18 years.

During investigations into a case pertaining to a private housing society along Mouza Maloot, ACE found the old record of the Punjab Forest Department. The old record contains details of land which is not included in the current record when the department has not sold or leased the land in question.

A senior ACE official told Dawn that the department has sought the land record from Islamabad and Rawalpindi and found that the Punjab Forest Department owns land measuring 133 acres in Islamabad.

No mention of the 133 acres in forest department's records the last 18 years even though it was not sold or leased

"The revenue record clearly shows that the forest department owned the land since before Islamabad was established and was in its possession till 2000. However, some portions of the land were included in Bahria Enclave in recent years," he said.

The official added that his department then sought a report from the Punjab Forest Department which said it had no record of the land for the last 18 years.

He said the forest department had told ACE that the land was included in its record till 2000 and that the current administration did not know what happened to documents for the land in question after that.

The revenue department's record from 1960 to 2000, available with ACE, shows the land was owned by the Punjab Forest Department.

ACE then started an investigation into the matter after getting approval from its director general in Lahore, he said.

Adnan Mazhar was appointed investigation officer. The team will get the revenue record from Islamabad and Rawalpindi as well as from the forest department to ascertain how the record was tampered with, if at all.

"Bahria Enclave will be asked to provide details of the land next week which will be compared to the revenue record," he said.

The official added that revenue officials and those of the forest department will be questioned and that ACE has sought details of the officials working in both departments from 2000 onwards.

ACE Regional Director Arif Raheem told Dawn the investigation into the matter was in the initial phases and that some of the 133 acres of land was now included in Bahria Enclave.

He said the department is looking into whether the state land was encroached on or was leased without policy.

He said ACE is also probing into embezzlements in development works worth billions of rupees in the division from Jhelum to Attock. He added that there were many complaints about revenue officials which are being investigated.

Published in Dawn, December 24th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1453214/ace-starts-probe-into-punjab-forest-departments-missing-land>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 17TH TO DECEMBER 3RD 2018
CONTRACT AWARDED TO DIGITIZE LAND RECORD

OUR CORRESPONDENT

QUETTA: The Balochistan Board of Revenue has awarded a Land Records Management Information System (LRMIS) contract of Rs248 million for a three year term to the SUS-JV, a consortium led by Systems Limited in partnership with Ultra Soft System.

The initiative is expected to increase land revenue for the provincial government through a computerized, streamlined and user friendly process, says a press release on Monday.

The LRMIS is an extension of a project launched by Systems Limited in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

“This phenomenal project reaffirms our belief in technology and technological progression as a crucial element in solving Pakistan’s existing problems,” said the firm’s CEO Asif Peer.

He also said, “Our work in the public sector is our contribution towards a progressive Pakistan and automating and digitalizing the country’s future.”

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201812180070&EN_ID=11201812180028&EMID=11201812180010

DRIVE AGAINST DRUG MAFIA, LAND GRABBERS TO GO ON: MINISTER

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Updated December 20, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of State for Interior, Shehryar Khan Afridi, has appealed to the judiciary not to grant bail to those arrested on charges of committing heinous crimes like drug trafficking and land grab.

Addressing a police passing-out ceremony on Wednesday, the minister urged police to continue the drive against drug peddlers in the capital without fear or favour.

He described the performance of Islamabad police in the recent drive against land grabbers as exemplary.

The anti-encroachment drive would continue as long as the government did not repossess every inch of land encroached upon, Mr Shehryar stated.

Dwelling upon the operation against drug mafia, Mr Afridi said over the past two months, 354 cases had been lodged at different police stations of Islamabad while 385 drug peddlers were arrested.

The minister praised the role of Islamabad police in the war on terror, recalling that 41 of its members had been martyred. Twenty-three of the recruits who passed out this year belong to the families of martyred police officials, he added.

“The federal government has decided to introduce model policing in the capital and the new cadets will prove to be the frontline soldiers of this model,” Mr Afridi stated.

“From now on, young cadets will be visible on Islamabad’s roads and give an example of friendly policing,” the minister stated. “No police official will be allowed to humiliate people.”

Mr Afridi said the government had decided to enhance the capacity of Islamabad police so that it could serve as a role model for other cities. Prime Minister Imran Khan had already announced a special package for Islamabad police, he recalled.

Mr Afridi claimed that the government had cleared all requests submitted by Islamabad police chiefs over the past 11 years. “The capital’s force will get all basic facilities like health and housing.”

Modifications will be made in Islamabad Police Act to equip the force with powers and resources needed to tackle challenges of the day, the minister said.

Mr Afridi said police had recently done what was unthinkable only a few months ago by taking action against land grabbers regardless of their wealth and clout. “Nobody will go off scot-free if he assists the drug and land mafia.” He said those journalists and influential persons who use drugs and provide protection to drug dealers would also be taken to task as per law.

Islamabad IG Mohammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan assured the minister that police would go all-out to turn the government’s vision into reality.

The measures taken by the government to strengthen the force would soon bring about a qualitative change in policing methods, Zulfiqar Khan added.

He assured the minister that Islamabad police would keep the dignity and self-respect of citizens in mind.

Published in Dawn, December 20th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1452471/drive-against-drug-mafia-land-grabbers-to-go-on-minister>

BODY FORMED TO PROBE LAND GRABBING ALLEGATIONS

Munawer Azeem Updated December 21, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The district administration of Islamabad has constituted a committee to probe land grabbing allegations made by residents of Noon village.

The committee was constituted by Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafqaat in response to a request made by Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations) Waqaruddin Syed to redress the grievances of the villagers. The superintendent of police (SP) Industrial Area is chairman and the assistant commissioner Potohar, subdivisional police officer Shams Colony, naib tehsildar Patar, station house officer of Noon police and others are members of the committee.

The committee will investigate and redress the land and revenue issues of the residents of the village and its surrounding areas and submit its report on every Monday to the deputy commissioner.

At least nine people approached the police and separately lodged complaints. However, so far the police have registered only two cases.

The complainants alleged that a group was active in the village and occupied their lands by pressuring the owners through their agents.

An officer of the capital administration said only the sessions court had the power to decide on issues related to land and revenue. The sessions court decides such cases on the basis of reports from police and the revenue department, he added.

However, the villagers approached the police to get their land and revenue issues resolved.

The police can act only when someone is trying to occupy the land or house of a citizen while the revenue department establishes the ownership.

In Islamabad both the complainant and the accused produce ownership documents, the officer stated, adding the revenue department established the actual ownership but the dispute was decided by the court.

Likewise, the police act when law and order situation is created or an offence is committed, he added.

The police cannot decide the ownership of a property but with the assistance of the revenue department can investigate the matter and submit a report to court, he added.

When contacted, the deputy commissioner said the committee was constituted for quick and speedy disposal of the complaints.

The police will register a case and initiate legal proceedings against anyone found guilty of making false claims about ownership or occupying land, the DC said.

Published in Dawn, December 21st, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1452700/body-formed-to-probe-land-grabbing-allegations>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 10TH TO DECEMBER 16TH 2018
LAND DISTRIBUTION, LAWS NEED TO BE REFORMED, SEMINAR TOLD

Shazia Hasan Updated December 11, 2018

KARACHI: The issues of property matters and housing and the prevention and remedies to improper planning seen in private and cooperative housing societies in Karachi were looked at in length at a seminar organised by the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) in collaboration with the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) here on Monday.

“There are five areas in my view where we have seen issues,” said SBCA director general Iftikhar Qaimkhani.

“The first issue is that the land acquired from the government for a housing scheme does not reach the targeted group. The purpose may have been providing land to the homeless but it ended up with people already living comfortably in their homes in the city. And since they didn’t need a home badly, there was no pressure to develop it,” he explained.

“Revisions on the initial planning, layouts and master plans are a violation. Violations and corruption are related to each other,” he said.

“Then many societies and private schemes here are allotted to people with the knowledge that infrastructure development there will take more than 20 to 25 years so that the allottees sell them off at cheap prices,” he said.

“We at SCBA see so many violations and corruption all around. These include violations of building by-laws,” he said.

‘Violations (of building laws) and corruption are related to each other’

Chairman of Gulzar-i-Hijri Bilal M. Akhtar said there were so many issues in developing private and cooperative societies because there is no mechanism of monitoring and also because NAB “leaves its work incomplete”.

“NAB does a clean-up operation and the menace starts almost as soon as they leave due to a lack of implementation of rules and laws,” he said.

Naveed Izhar of the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) pointed towards the menace of dual allotments, title changes, etc.

Nadeem Rasheed Khan, director of the SBCA’s complaint section, said that good management helped people settle down in various housing societies and cooperative schemes but there were also other societies which did nothing for the development of the land given to them for the people. “SBCA receives many complaints but we can’t control all,” he said.

Tariq Qureshi, deputy director of the Anti-Corruption Establishment, said that sometimes housing schemes were also announced without having land in hand. “To stop such problems, including the problem of double allotments and title change, NAB, ACE, KDA, KMC, the department of land revenue, etc, should all be on the same page to save the public from getting fooled.”

Land distribution

Dean of NED's department of architecture and planning Dr Noman Ahmed said that 'land' was the main issue and its distribution, development and governance were the basic issues. "Do you see land as an asset or a saleable commodity?" he asked. "In urban planning we see land as an asset for society, so we want it to fetch the best market value. But Karachi has a growing population and half of it lives below the poverty line. The distribution of land is not done well. The poor cannot buy land so they settle in katchi abadis. Only those who are rich have access to land," he said.

Hasan Bakhsh, chairman of the Association of Builders and Developers (Abad), asked NAB to take the responsibility of getting rid of all the ills within private and cooperative housing schemes. "I request the DG NAB to take the initiative. He should form a committee to look into matters including obliging people, and he should give the committee a timeline for the tasks," he said. "And pray tell me why and how whoever comes in as a secretary of a cooperative society seems to stay there for life?"

Senior NAB official Haroon Rashid said there was no practice of surveying land here. "And so everyone is playing a game," he said.

"If you don't like land, you want to exchange it or transfer it. Meanwhile, the secretaries of cooperative societies are clueless of things such as Form-1 and Form-2. There are also many sale deeds for the same piece of land," he said.

"This city of Karachi is what runs the entire country but if you ask me, things are so bad here that we waste good land due to ill will and stupidity. Even my little village is better than Karachi, where there is no water, no sewerage system, no planning. Even the roads at places are so narrow that I can't turn my car on them. I have even experienced this in the DHA," he said.

"And if we talk of societies, well, we are still running them on the laws made in the 1800s. A plumber or gardener here buys land from someone sitting under a tree! This is because there is no authority here that covers all areas and for which everyone is treated equally. Separate housing schemes, different cantonments are no good. The way is to bring all under one authority," he said.

Published in Dawn, December 11th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1450647/land-distribution-laws-need-to-be-reformed-seminar-told>

SINDH GOVT TOLD TO TAKE OVER 1,100 ACRES LAND OF ROHRI CEMENT FACTORY
The Newspaper's Correspondent December 13, 2018

SUKKUR: The Sindh High Court (SHC) Sukkur bench has ordered the provincial government to take possession of about 1,100 acres land of the Rohri Cement Factory till outcome of the decision on applications filed in the case.

An SHC bench, comprising Justices Mohammad Shafi Siddiqi and Rasheed Ahmed Soomro, on Wednesday heard the case of taking government land on lease by the administration of the cement factory.

The hearing was attended by Assistant Commissioner Mushtaq, a counsel on behalf of Rohri Cement Factory and other officials.

During the hearing, the officials of administration said that lease of land was illegal while the counsel asked the court for grant of a grace period.

The court ordered the Sindh government to take over the possession of the land and adjourned the matter with directions to the counsel to conclude his arguments on Dec 20.

Cleanliness

In view of the worsening situation of cleanliness in Sukkur city, the SHC bench at Sukkur has formed a committee headed by the secretary of the provincial local bodies department.

A bench comprising Justices Mohammad Shafi Siddiqi and Rasheed Ahmed Soomro on Wednesday heard the case of lack of cleanliness in the city and that of encroachments.

The hearing was attended by Sukkur Mayor Arsalan Islam Shaikh, Deputy Mayor Tariq Hussain Chohan and other officials.

During the hearing, the court asked them the reasons behind the worsening condition of the city due to lack of cleanliness and formed a committee, issuing directives to review sanitary condition of the city and submit a report with the court within 45 days.

Published in Dawn, December 13th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1451031/sindh-govt-told-to-take-over-1100-acres-land-of-rohri-cement-factory>

USMAN BUZDAR'S MAIDEN PRESSER: BAHRIA TOWN, ITTEFAQ FOUNDRY IN ILLEGAL STATE LAND OCCUPATION

Mansoor Malik Updated December 14, 2018

LAHORE: The Bahria Town Lahore is in illegal occupation of almost 100 kanals state land and owes the Punjab government Rs5.24 billion, says Chief Minister Usman Buzdar.

In his maiden presser since becoming the chief executive of the province, Mr Buzdar said on Thursday the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) had recovered state land in Sillanwali tehsil of Sargodha district worth Rs2.5 billion from former federal minister Anwar Aziz Ch, father of PML-N leader Danial Aziz.

“The Punjab government has also launched fresh investigation into the illegal allotment of land in Harbanspura area in Lahore, which was to be cancelled way back in 1973. Former finance minister Ishaq Dar is one of the accused in the illegal allotment of land worth Rs5 billion.”

Flanked by his spokesman, law and information ministers, the chief minister said eliminating corruption and retrieving state land from illegal occupation would remain the focus of the PTI government. He said the ACE had, during the last three months, recovered land worth Rs32 billion as well as cash of Rs2 billion.

Referring to an inquiry into the affairs of the Ittefaq Foundry (owned by the Sharifs), he said the mill had been in illegal occupation of 240 kanals state land, including 71 kanals of the federal government.

The chief minister said the Bahria Town had occupied 37 kanal, 15 marla land worth Rs2.35 billion belonging to the Punjab Cooperative Board for Liquidation, where a hotel and a mall had been constructed, and 60 kanal auqaf land worth Rs1.77 billion. Similarly, he said, the Bahria Orchards scheme of Bahria Town owed the government Rs1.12 billion.

The chief minister said the Supreme Court had cancelled the allotment of Harbanspura land in 1973 but the FIRs were lodged against illegal occupants in 2011. A subsequent inquiry was shelved in three months. He said a fresh inquiry had been ordered to retrieve the illegally occupied land worth Rs5 billion.

Stating that the government had cancelled PML-N senators and leaders' illegal allotment of rooms in the Punjab House, Islamabad, the chief minister said the legislators were liable to pay Rs63.7 million.

Giving the breakup, he said Senator Asif Kirmani was supposed to pay Rs6.496 million, senator Pervaiz Rasheed Rs9.6 million, senator Mushahidullah Rs2 million, former MNA Anusha Rehman Rs2.3 million, Zubair Gull Rs2.4 million and former advocate general Mustafa Ramday Rs3.9 million. He also said former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had spent over Rs10 million to entertain his personal guests. Mr Buzdar said former chief minister Shahbaz Sharif had declared four residences as his camp offices — Jati Umera, 196-H and 180-H in Model Town and 41-S DHA Lahore. He claimed that the former CM had deployed over 2000 policemen for his security duty. "I have declared no camp office. Only 60 policemen are on my security duty and the CM secretariat is saving Rs3 million per month under the head of petrol consumption," he said.

The chief minister said the Punjab government had set its direction and fixed targets, which would be explained in the 100-day event shortly. He said the Punjab government would begin evaluating performance of the cabinet members within the next few days.

Mr Buzdar avoided some questions' direct answers and cleverly took refuge in media assertions that he was a puppet CM and his powers were being used by someone else. Responding to questions about transfer and postings of Punjab IGP and other officials, the chief minister said: "How can you level allegations like misuse of powers by me when you portray me as a toothless chief minister".

Giving details of the retrieved land, Mr Buzdar said 456,000 kanals land was recovered in the D.G Khan district, followed by 136,000 kanals in Faisalabad, 56,000 kanals each in Lahore and Sargodha, 35,000 kanals in Sahiwal, 24,000 kanals in Multan, 22,000 kanals in Gujranwala, 14,563 kanals in Bahawalpur and 7,345 kanals in Rawalpindi.

The chief minister said the government had prepared a data bank of the retrieved land for its better use. "The government will consult and decide about the distribution of land to the departments concerned."

Answering a question about ACE's performance and removal of its director-general, the chief minister said the DG was not removed but promoted to BS-22. He said that he would again be posted as the ACE DG after regularization of the posting.

CHINA VISIT: Usman Buzdar is scheduled to visit China next week for talks on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He will leave for China on Dec 17 (Monday) evening and return after three days. Due to his visit, a scheduled event to unveil the Punjab government's 100 days plan has been postponed and will be rescheduled upon his return.

PML-N REACTION: Responding to Punjab CM's presser, PML-N spokesperson Marriayum Aurangzeb said former chief minister Shahbaz Sharif was haunting the PTI government with his untiring service for the people during the past 10 years.

Chiding the chief minister for his performance during the first 100 days of his government, Ms Aurangzeb said Mr Buzdar should work like Mr Sharif before criticizing the latter. She also asked the chief minister when he would address a press conference about the establishment of south Punjab province.

The PML-N spokesperson said the 'puppet' chief minister would never be able to come up to the expectations of the people of Punjab. She suggested Mr Buzdar to consult his senior minister Aleem Khan (who also faces allegations of land grab) for the retrieval of land from illegal occupation.

Published in Dawn, December 14th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1451295/usman-buzdars-maiden-presser-bahria-town-ittefaq-foundry-in-illegal-state-land-occupation>

REVENUE OFFICIALS AMONG 18 INDICTED FOR ALLOTING 731 ACRES TO DHA CITY
Naeem Sahoutara Updated December 16, 2018

KARACHI: An accountability courts has indicted 18 people, including revenue officials/officers, builders and private persons, in a case pertaining to alleged illegal allotment of 731 acres of valuable state land to DHA City off the Superhighway.

The National Accountability Bureau had filed a reference relating to allotment of 731 acres in Deh Babbar Band, Bula Khan taluka along the Superhighway. The federal anti-graft watchdog had nominated 18 persons for getting the precious government land allotted through fake entries in the land record.

Judge Rashida Asad of the Accountability Court-I read out charges to which they pleaded not guilty and opted to contest the case.

The court summoned all prosecution witnesses on the next date to record their testimonies.

The accused government officials are: then mukhtiarkars of Thana Bola Khan Irshad Kamalani, Ghulam Muhammad Memon; then deputy commissioner Jamshoro Sohail Adeeb Bachani; then additional deputy commissioner-I Jamshoro Habib Ahmed; then assistant commissioners Thana Bola Khan Javed Soomro and Mumtaz Ali Channa; then revenue surveyor, director of settlement, survey and land record, Hyderabad Mr Liyar; supervising tapedar Abdul Rahim Burfat; Ghulam Mustafa Dawach, Ghulam Nabi Mallah.

The accused prepared fake record to sell the land to DHA, Karachi

The private persons indicted were Mian Khan Palari, Muhammad Hanif Lalani, Mian Bux Lalani, Imam Bux Lalani, Farooq Qasmani, Muhammad Iqbal and his brothers Ghulam Dastagir Jokhio and Nazir Ahmed Jokhio.

Their indictment said that despite knowing that the fake revenue and survey record pertaining to Survey Numbers 301 to 498 were prepared and valuable government lands measuring over 731 acres and 28 ghuntas were fraudulently sold to the Defence Housing Authority Karachi by the accused officers/officials of the revenue and survey department, Hyderabad together with accused Lalani and others.

The court also charged Lalani with starting efforts to get the backdated letters prepared and signed by mukhtiarkars Baharuddin Mangi and Abdul Latif Brohi, who remained posted in Taluka Bola Khan in 2009 to fraudulently show that the Ghat-Wadh Forms and Survey Numbers were genuine.

The prosecution also named both Mr Mangi and Mr Brohi as witnesses in the reference.

Lalani was also charged with initiating efforts by making requests to the then mukhtiarkar and assistant commissioner, Thana Bola Khan, in 2009 to get the survey numbers (301 to 498) made by them. Moreover, he was charged with hiring the services of Mallah's being the then Tapedar of the revenue department.

Mallah, who remained posted as Tapedar of Thana Bola Khan (in 2009) during tenure of Mr Mangi and Mr Brohi, was charged with approaching them from time to time and luring them to sign the supporting documents relating to the said Ghat-Wadh Forms in backdates. However, both of them had refused, but as per the plea of accused Lalani and Liyar, accused Mallah managed their fake signatures and brought the signed documents to them, which he together with Lalani, handed over to Liyar.

Subsequently, the court charged them with misusing their official authorities and managing fake, fabricated revenue and survey record relating to 731-28 acres of the government land situated in Deh Badar Band, Tapo Hathal Buth in Taluka Thana Bola Khan of Jamshoro district in the name of the accused persons and causing heavy losses to the government exchequer, thus committing offence of corruption and corrupt practices as defined under Section 9(a)(iii)(iv), (vi) and (xii), punishable under Section 10 of the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999.

It also charged the deputy and assistant commissioners, revenue officers and surveyors with conducting illegal survey of the Hyderabad and Jamshoro districts for the purpose of illegal mapping of the DHA City and providing the same to the DHA Karachi illegally.

Private accused persons Mian Bux Lalani and Imam Bux Lalani were charged with obtaining confirmation letters regarding the ownership of the land and no-objection certificate (NOC) for sale to obtain illegal pecuniary benefits in connivance with the revenue officers/officials concerned.

Mian Lalani was also charged with finally selling the land to DHA Karachi through its secretary, retired Brigadier Inam Karim for the sale consideration of Rs1.6 million.

Moreover, as per the registered “Conveyance Deed” No. 23, Book No. 1, dated: 6-3-2015 and Digital Scanning No. 15-30-23, both Lalanis received residential plot files for the area admeasuring 18,000 square yards (360 files for 500 square yards). The market value of these files was estimated at approximately Rs900m.

The private persons in connivance with the officials got fake entries made in the land record and got the same allotted to the large housing scheme in 2015 which caused losses to the tune of nearly Rs3 billion.

It alleged that the government land admeasuring approximating 523-8 acres (Survey Numbers 359 to 498) situated at Deh Babar Band, Tapo Hathal Buth, Thana Bola Khan, Jamshoro near Super Highway (M-9) were fraudulently sold to DHA Karachi in 2015.

It further mentioned that two revenue entries (126 & 127) both dated March 30, 2015 along with two corresponding registered documents, according to which DHA Karachi purchased 523-8 acres from accused Imam Bux, Mian Bux and Javed Hussain at the sale consideration of approximately Rs9,250 per acres and the sellers were paid by DHA Karachi in the shape of 733 files of residential plots, each measuring 500 square yards, at DHA City Project.

The prosecution further mentioned that 208-20 acres situated in the same vicinity and (Survey Nos.301 to 358) was also purchased by DHA Karachi from accused Mian Khan Palari, who was paid in terms of 402 plot files and in this way total land measuring approximately 731-28 acres and bearing survey Nos 301 to 498 were sold/purchased to/by DHA Karachi in consideration of 1,135 plot files.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1451601/revenue-officials-among-18-indicted-for-allotting-731-acres-to-dha-city>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 3RD TO DECEMBER 9TH 2018
SECURING LAND RIGHTS FOR PAKISTANI WOMEN
By Syed Mohammad Ali

Published: December 7, 2018

Land ownership remains highly skewed within our country. The lack of access to land is even more glaring when we look at the minuscule proportion of women who own land in both rural and urban settings. Providing women land ownership is one sure way to address a range of gender-empowerment challenges plaguing our country. It is thus noteworthy that our Ministry of Human Rights has recently launched a public campaign concerning the rights of women to inherit land under Islamic jurisprudence and the Constitution.

The ongoing official campaign aims to not only create awareness about women’s land rights but also to provide free legal advice via a helpline. The ability of a helpline to help ensure that women can secure land ownership is perhaps limited. The ministry thus also plans to create a list of volunteer lawyers in every district to aid people requiring free legal assistance, based on cases reported via its 1099 helpline. The success of this initiative depends on how many lawyers take up cases of women

being denied their property rights and whether they can win these cases in court. It would also be useful to spread the news about this facility to poorer segments of society.

To bring religious elements into the fold, the ministry has also uploaded a video message of the chairman of the Islamic Ideology Council (IIC) which asserts that influencing women using familial, social or cultural pressures to give up their lawful right to inheritance violates the laws of Islam and the Quran. This video message should be broadcast via mainstream media and even played at mosques around the country during their Friday sermons to maximise its impact.

Unfortunately, women in our country are being denied the right to inheritance due to a combination of factors. A deep-rooted patriarchal system, biased interpretation of divine directives and the laws of the land, and an inefficient mechanism for implementation of laws all work together to deny women their right to own land in both urban and rural settings.

Under the Muslim Family Law, women have rights to inheritance. They are entitled to acquire property through purchase, inheritance, gifts, will, etc. Additionally, there are other sources of acquisition of property meant solely for women, such as dower, dowry and bridal gifts. Yet, women in our country do not own land in practice.

National laws which provide for women's landownership rights have so far failed to translate into real change on the ground. Besides longstanding constitutional provisions affirming the right of women to own property, the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Bill passed in 2011 is specifically aimed at preventing women from inheriting property. Yet, it did not realise that there are many underlying reasons why women do not contest their lack of land ownership.

Many female births and even marriages are often not recorded, which complicates land ownership and inheritance. Even if a woman does inherit land on paper, she will often forgo her share in favour of her brothers, whose support she relies on in times of need. Since brothers often take on the responsibility of providing dowry for their sisters, they stake a claim on her inherited land as compensation.

Moreover, our existing legislation does not have the concept of co-ownership of marital property. Widows customarily lose their right to inheritance if they remarry outside of the family of the deceased husband even though the law prescribes otherwise.

These varied challenges are not easy to overcome, and they do need a multidimensional strategy of awareness raising amongst families to allow women to own land, and amongst women themselves to demand their right to own land. The state must also do its bit to address documentation and other above-mentioned legal impediments which continue to undermine women's land ownership.

If women in our country can own even half the amount of land that men do, it will lead to a revolutionary change in their economic and decision-making powers.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 7th, 2018

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1861646/6-securing-land-rights-pakistani-women/>

SEVEN NEW SEZS PLANNED IN PUNJAB

By Our Correspondent

Published: December 9, 2018

LAHORE: The Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA) has recommended the establishment of seven new Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Punjab.

Cumulatively, the investment in these new projects is estimated at around Rs27 billion (\$194 million) which are set to attract manufacturing concerns, leading to import substitution and creation of around 400,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Punjab Minister for Industries, Commerce and Investment Mian Aslam Iqbal, while chairing the SEZA board meeting at the Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT), emphasised that government's role was critical in order to encourage and expand industrialisation.

The objective of the meeting was to review and sent applications for the seven new SEZs to the approval committee. The PBIT has played a key role in drafting and evaluating proposals of these industrial parks for declaring them as the SEZs. The list of priority SEZs includes Rahim Yar Khan Industrial Estate, Bhalwal Industrial Estate, Vehari Industrial Estate of the PIEDMIC, Rachna Industrial Park of the National Industrial Parks and other such industrial zones.

Speaking at the meeting, the minister of industries said the establishment of the seven new SEZs would definitely lead to trade enhancement, job creation and effective administration of industries.

SEZA will provide a one-window facility and respective provincial governments will delegate authority for implementing labour, environmental and other laws and for the collection of local and provincial taxes.

The provincial governments will also depute representatives of their respective departments in the SEZA office.

Benefits under the SEZ law will be granted to all the industrialists investing in SEZ development which include one-off exemption from customs duties and taxes for all capital goods imported into Pakistan.

Other benefits include exemption from all kinds of income taxes for 10 years, immediate access to high-quality infrastructure, uninterrupted power supply, public utilities and support services to all industrialists in the SEZs.

The PBIT/SEZA Punjab is endeavouring to promote incentives offered by the SEZ law by providing guidance to prospective investors, receive and review applications.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 9th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1862970/2-seven-new-sezs-planned-punjab/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 26TH TO DECEMBER 2ND 2018
MOST OWNERS AGREE TO SURRENDER LANDS FOR DASU POWER PROJECT

Amin Ahmed | Khalid Hasnain Updated November 26, 2018

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: As the World Bank once again extended the deadline for Dasu hydropower project funds utilisation, the government has finally managed to convince most of the project affectees to surrender their lands to facilitate the launch of main civil works without further delay, it emerged on Sunday.

Officials privy to the development said that a majority of the landowners gave an undertaking to a Hazara division commissioner-led committee that they would not demand an increase in compensation amount and for change of land category in future.

Located on the Indus River, some 240km upstream from Tarbela dam, in the Kohistan area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the 4,320MW Dasu hydropower project is being funded by the World Bank. For a third time, the deadline for utilisation of the project funds, which were approved in 2014, has been extended by a year due to slow progress attributed mainly to the issue of land acquisition.

“During ongoing extensive efforts, the teams formed by the committee held a series of meetings with the landowners / affectees by involving local politicians and notables. At the meetings, most of the participants were unanimous that there were some lacunas in the process initiated in the past to acquire land for the project. However, the teams noted their current demands and asked them to submit in writing on stamp papers with the undertaking that they wouldn’t demand more in future,” a senior official told Dawn. He added that a majority of the landowners handed over the affidavits to the committee members.

World Bank deadline for use of funds extended by one year

The official explained that a comprehensive report would be submitted to a steering committee that would finally forward the same to the federal government. It would be up to the federal government to accept the demands, approve and release funds in this regard.

The committee constituted over two weeks ago had been asked to compile and submit a report about the meetings, affectees’ demands, financial impact (in case of acceptance of demands) and recommendations within 15 days or so. However, it may take another month to file the report as it is currently looking into legal issues under the land acquisition act, powers conferred to the government officers under the law for resolving such issues, executives’ jurisdiction, limits of the project steering committee, award of compensation to the affectees etc.

“The situation is improving gradually, as the teams have succeeded in convincing many affectees. You can say that there are positive signs related to land acquisition,” added the official while requesting anonymity.

Another official said Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) actually needed a total of 9,875 acres for the entire project. Of this, he said, it urgently required around 1,987 acres for civil works and a colony, while the remaining 7,888 acres were needed for the reservoir and other purposes.

While 740 acres of the total 1,987-acre priority land had been acquired last year, he said, adding that the committee managed to receive undertakings from the landowners for the acquisition of most of the remaining 1,247 acres.

He said the committee played a leading role in resolving the land acquisition issue. “Hopefully, the ongoing efforts would bear fruits, as Wapda will soon get the land it requires for the project with immediate effect,” he said.

In view of the delay in start of works, the World Bank recently extended the deadline for utilisation of funds, approved in 2014. This will be the third one-year extension till Nov 20, 2019 through an amendment to the financing agreement between Pakistan and the World Bank.

The total financing of the bank is \$588.44 million and an IDA guarantee of \$460m with IDA allocation of about \$115m.

According to a WB report, only 5.6pc of the allocation has been disbursed. It stated that land acquisition had still only reached 740 acres out of the 1,987 acres required for the construction.

The report stated that frequent interruption of work by project affectees delayed payments by Wapda to revenue staff and to project affectees. Other factors, it added, including lack of control on illegal construction, poor safety management by contractors and consultants as well as delayed decisions by Wapda on procurement or contract management contributed to slow progress on land acquisition.

A WB mission recently agreed to a number of short-term actions to expedite land acquisition and project implementation. These actions were discussed and agreed upon at the project steering committee meeting, which was jointly chaired by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister and federal minister for water resources earlier this month, and also at a wrap-up meeting with Wapda and the ministry of water resources on Nov 12.

According to the report, the government requested the World Bank to extend the deadline for utilisation of funds till Nov 20, 2019, and reconstituted the project steering committee with federal minister as its chair.

Despite these issues, the report stated some important progress on the project was observed with the access roads reaching the main colony area and the 132kv grid station. The contract for the construction of the colony has been signed, while access roads to diversion tunnels are complete and the main batching plant has been set up.

Excavation work for diversion tunnel, critical path activity, was also expected to start, but any further delay in land acquisition would result in a corresponding delay in commissioning of the first phase of Dasu hydropower project, the report pointed out.

While the total size of the project is 4,320MW, due to capital constraints faced by the government and Wapda, the project was proposed to be developed in two stages each further divided into two phases of 1,080MW.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1447691/most-owners-agree-to-surrender-lands-for-dasu-power-project>

LAND RETRIEVED WORTH RS145BN RECORDER REPORT

LAHORE: Up to 84 thousand acres land worth around Rs 145 billion has been retrieved in the ongoing operation against land grabbing and encroachments.

This was revealed in a high-level meeting chaired by the Punjab chief minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, which reviewed progress on the ongoing operation against land grabbing and encroachments.

Addressing the meeting, the CM said that every inch of the state land will be retrieved from the powerful squatters. However, he said operation will not be conducted in katchi-abbadis and against poor people like daily wage earners. He directed that removed encroachments must not be reestablished on the retrieved lands. Feasible recommendations should be formulated to best utilize such properties and a complete data and record should also be compiled, he added.

He further directed that this operation should be continued with full vigor and made it clear that no leniency will be tolerated in action against the big fish. He said the districts showing best performance in this operation will be encouraged. He directed that district-level anti-encroachment committees should regularly monitor the progress and added that he is regularly reviewing this progress.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/m/2018/11/27/8-page/751246-news.html>

MYSTERY PERSISTS OVER SIZE OF LAND POSSESSED BY BAHRIA TOWN The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated November 30, 2018

ISLAMABAD: Three different claims emerged during proceedings in the Supreme Court on Thursday about the size of land in the possession of Bahria Town (Pvt) Ltd, Karachi, with the developer's counsel claiming it had over 18,000 acres.

As the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) told a three-judge bench headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed that the land in possession of the company was 12,156 acres, the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) put the figure at 16,778 acres (as of Oct 13). On July 20, 2012, Bahria Town, Karachi, possessed 12,156 acres.

However, the senior counsel representing Bahria Town, Barrister Ali Zafar, surprised most people in the court by claiming that the land possessed by the builder was 18,336 acres, of which 7,068 acres had been acquired from the Malir Development Authority (MDA) under a special arrangement.

He also explained that some of the land had been acquired by the developer privately from private owners in Jamshoro district that borders Malir district.

SC asks Sindh advocate general to determine whether the builder has committed contempt of court

To substantiate his claim, the counsel submitted to the court a detailed layout plan of the housing scheme launched by Bahria Town, Karachi.

During previous hearings the court had asked that the exact size of the land in physical possession of the company be determined, with proper description as well as prices of the built-up properties and plots.

In its May 4 judgement, the apex court had held that the grant of land to MDA by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of the private developer — M/s Bahria Town — and anything done under the provisions of Colonisation of Government Land Act 1912 (COGLA) by the Sindh government was illegal, void ab initio and of no legal existence.

The land was granted for launching an “incremental” housing scheme. But instead of launching the scheme, MDA exchanged it with Bahria Town, the judgement held. MDA was created under the Malir Development Authority Act 1993 for the purpose of developing certain areas of Karachi division.

“The greatest mystery in Pakistan is to know what the actual size of the land in Bahria Town’s possession is,” regretted Justice Saeed, the head of the bench monitoring implementation of the May 4 judgement.

The court ordered Suparco to compare and reconcile the layout plan of Bahria Town with their images and point out discrepancies if any.

The commission would also take into consideration the private land acquired by the developer, Justice Saeed said, adding a clarification was required, more particularly about the exact boundaries of Bahria Town.

Earlier, the court rejected a report submitted by a Suparco director, Dr Sanaullah Shah, when he tried to explain that the boundaries of the housing scheme were difficult to ascertain while the development work was still continuing.

“This is not what we expected from the government department,” Justice Saeed said, adding that the bench could engage a foreign company to do the job.

At the conclusion of the proceedings, Justice Saeed advised the Bahria Town’s counsel to cooperate with NAB in their investigation; otherwise “they would have to face the consequences”.

During the proceedings, NAB had told the court that despite repeated notices, Malik Riaz and his family members had not joined the investigation.

Similar notices have been sent to different banks maintaining accounts of Bahria Town but their replies are still awaited.

NAB assured the court that it was aggressively pursuing the case but said its investigation suggested that Bahria Town was in defiance of the court’s earlier restraining order about selling built-up units or plots.

NAB said it had also issued notices to utility companies like water and sewage departments and gas companies to furnish memorandums of understanding for the supply of various provisions to Bahria

Town. The water and sewage department had replied that it had not signed any agreement with the developer for supply of water to the residents.

When a resident of Bahria Town tried to interrupt the court's proceedings, Justice Saeed pointed to Barrister Zafar and said such interruptions reflected badly on the builder.

The court could consider holding in-camera proceedings in the case, he said.

The bench also asked Advocate General of Sindh, Salman Talibuddin, to go through the reports filed by Bahria Town and determine whether the builder was guilty of committing contempt of court. In case he was convinced that contempt of court had indeed been committed, the Sindh government might move an application for appropriate proceedings against Bahria Town.

Population growth

A separate bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar postponed further proceedings about population growth till Dec 13 when it was told that a one-day national conference on the issue is scheduled to be held on Dec 5.

Under the auspices of the Supreme Court, the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan would hold the conference at which Prime Minister Imran Khan would be the chief guest.

The conference would be held in the Supreme Court building and would be presided over by the chief justice.

Additional Attorney General Nayyar Abbas Rizvi told the court that the Council of Common Interests (CCI) in its meeting of Nov 19 had approved the recommendations of a task force and had appointed different task forces in the provinces in this regard.

At the last hearing on Oct 30, the chief justice had ordered the government to call a meeting of CCI for formulating a policy about the "population bomb".

Earlier, a task force headed by Dr Fida Muhammad Khan of the Federal Shariat Court had expressed concerns that Pakistan's population would double in the next 30 years.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1448540/mystery-persists-over-size-of-land-possessed-by-bahria-town>