

JANUARY 2019

***NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 21ST TO
JANUARY 27TH 2019***

***ON SC'S ORDERS: SBCA CANCELS ORDERS ISSUED TO
CHANGE STATUS OF LAND USE***

By Naeem Khanzada Published: January 26, 2019

KARACHI: Days after the Supreme Court banned the conversion of residential and amenity plots for commercial use and ordered to raze all illegal constructions in the metropolis, the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) has cancelled all its previous regularisation orders and started issuing notices to proprietors to end commercial activities on residential properties within three days, failing which their structures would be demolished. The authority has also banned the conversion of residential and amenity plots for commercial use henceforth.

The notice, a copy of which is available with The Express Tribune, was issued by the SBCA after the authority's Master Plan department identified 930 commercial establishments, whose land status had been changed from residential to commercial between 2004 and 2019.

The action comes after the SC's hearing on January 22, when the court had expressed annoyance with the SBCA DG, warning that he would be removed from the post if their orders weren't complied with. "Go and demolish every structure that is in violation of the city's original master plan and restore [Karachi] to its 40-year-old state," Justice Gulzar Ahmed had ordered, besides seeking the Sindh government's suggestions to restore the city to its 40-year-old condition. "Let the Sindh government take over the city if the local government can't run it," he remarked.

According to an official of the Master Plan department, who spoke to The Express Tribune on the condition of anonymity, the majority of these 930 plots are located on Sharae Faisal, PECHS, North Nazimabad, Tariq Road and Gulshan-e-Iqbal. The 23-page-long report includes details of the plot number and the area in which it is located.

According to the official, these residential plots were converted for commercial use in accordance with the government's policies after their owners had paid billions of rupees in fees. What will be the future of high-rise structures built on these plots?" he wondered.

As news of the SBCA's notices circulated among property owners, they expressed apprehension over the fate of their investments that had been made through official channels and following all rules and regulations in place at the time.

As many as 26 major thoroughfares have been regularised for commercial use over the years, with the property owners taking advantage of the change in land status and converting their properties for commercial use after submitting the requisite challans prescribed by the government.

According to the Master Plan department, various roads were declared to be commercial in Karachi for the very first time in 1975. Subsequently, the Sindh government, which handled the land use affairs at the time, had converted several roads in 1978, 1980, 1989 and then 2001.

Hundreds of citizens, who owned properties on these roads, had opted to change the status of their plots for commercial use and had paid billions of rupees in fees for the purpose. The SBCA has now ordered these property owners and tenants to cease all commercial activities on these plots. Failure to do so could result in “demolition, sealing, registration of FIR, prosecution in court of law or any other penal action permissible under the rules,” states the notice issued by the authority. When the SBCA DG Iftikhar Qaimkhani was contacted for his comments regarding the authority’s future course of action, he excused that he was really busy and couldn’t speak on the matter.

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<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1896953/1-scs-orders-sbca-cancels-orders-issued-change-status-land-use/>

SENATOR CRITICISES ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR GOVT HOUSING SOCIETY

Ikram Junaidi Updated January 25, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Senator Kalsoom Parveen on Thursday criticised the government decision to vacate land near Park Road to develop a housing society for lawyers, judges and bureaucrats.

During a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works, Senator Parveen announced that she would bring affected people – those whose land is acquired for the development – to the next committee meeting.

She told the committee that although the government can vacate land and remove local residents for dams, airports and the like, “they should not be removed for a housing society project for lawyers and judges”.

She added: “Moreover, rather than giving them the market rate for the land, they are being told they will get the four decades old government rate.”

Villages on outskirts of capital being vacated for housing society for lawyers, judges

Senator Parveen had raised the forcible land acquisition in Mauza Tamma and Mohriyan on Sept 19, 2018, after which the matter was sent to the standing committee.

On Thursday she told the committee that the Ministry of Housing and Works had no right to vacate the land by force.

“How can you remove poor people from their homes to build houses for those who can afford to buy expensive residences,” she asked, before suggesting that the housing and works minister, Islamabad chief and deputy commissioners and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) should be called to the next committee meeting to discuss the issue.

However, a Housing and Works representative told the committee that the matter is sub judice and so it would be better to wait for a court decision, which will be announced in a week.

Committee chair Senator Mir Kabeer Ahmed Mohammad Shahi said the committee could not interfere in a sub judice matter and suggested it be discussed at the next meeting, by which time the court will have announced its decision.

After the meeting, Senator Parveen told Dawn it was unfortunate that the matter was being delayed using the cover of the court.

“Cases heard in court are discussed everywhere, so why can we not discuss them? The residents of both villagers have been living there for 400 years, but now the government has been trying to vacate the land for a housing society where lawyers and judges will reside,” she said.

To her understanding, she added, the Ministry of Housing and Works can only develop societies for government servants. She said it was going beyond its limits to establish a housing society for lawyers.

“I have been told that Prime Minister Imran Khan directed for a housing society for lawyers and judges to be made, but no one is ready to show me a written directive from the premier. I assume that the project is being made using Imran Khan’s name,” she said.

Senator Parveen added that the residents of the villagers have been told they will be compensated based on rates from 40 years ago.

Even if an award of Rs1.5 million per kanal is announced, it will be 10 times below the market rate, she said.

She added that she feared the situation would lead to a law and order situation, and advised the government to avoid it.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1459576/senator-criticises-acquisition-of-land-for-govt-housing-society>

SC IMPOSES BAN ON USE OF CANTONMENT LANDS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

TANVEER AHMED | JAN 25TH, 2019 | KARACHI

Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday imposed ban on use of cantonment lands for commercial purposes and ordered the removal of commercial activities from the lands, meant for cantonment purposes. SC also directed Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to restore the city as per its original master plan by holding a provincial cabinet meeting to take a decision in this regard and submit a report within two weeks.

At Karachi Registry, a two-member bench of SC comprising Justice Gulzar Ahmed and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah issued these directives while hearing a case related to use of residential land for commercial purposes and illegal allotment of land rejected the report of Sindh Government about the restoration of city to its old shape. Chief Secretary Sindh Mumtaz Ali Shah, Commissioner Karachi Iftikhar Shilwani and officials of various government departments were present during the proceedings.

Justice Gulzar Ahmed remarked, “This report is of no use” and directed Advocate General Sindh to take back this report. “If we issued the orders for taking back this report, your entire government would be sent reeling,” Justice Gulzar remarked.

He asked Advocate General Sindh to refrain from singing lullabies. “Do you know what the singing lullabies are meant for? It means just listen to lullabies and go to sleep,” Justice Gulzar stated.

The judges, he added, are not sitting here to listen to these “bedtime stories” and stated that Sindh Government is not able to do anything substantive despite having a capable bureaucrat like Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah as the chief secretary of province.

According to written order of SC, the bench directed Director Lands, Cantonment Board Karachi along with Cantonment Executive Officers to appear in next hearing and submit reports to the court about the removal of all sort of commercial activities from the cantonment lands particularly Global Marquees on Emergency Military Medical Supplies Land for Sindh and Balochistan.

Besides, adjacent marquees, marriage halls, grand convention hall shall also be removed, it added. The Court ordered that all cantonment lands meant for cantonment purposes are to be used only for cantonment purposes and not for any other use and their use shall be restored. A report in this regard shall be made available to this court on the next date.

Director General KDA told the court that Aziz Bhatti Park has been cleared from all encroachments from where Customs Club, Nursery and Softina Marriage Hall have been removed and whole land of park has been made available and it is being developed as a model park of the city of Karachi for recreation of the residents of Karachi.

On the land of old Sabzi Mandi a marriage hall has been constructed by military people, which the court ordered to be removed and Askari Park shall be restored and it is ensured that proper park on the whole land of old Sabzi Mandi is available for the public.

Justice Gulzar said that all constructions in the riverbed of Malir River should be demolished after Advocate General Sindh told the court that that there is no water in the river. Court sought the report in two weeks in this regard.

Managing Director KW&SB submitted a report in SC, stating that the order of this Court dated 22.01.2019 has been complied with to the extent that Marriage Hall and KW&SB Officers Club constructed on KW&SB Land at Shahrah-e-Faisal have been demolished.

Managing Director KW&SB stated that work for making a public park on this land will be started immediately and KW&SB is going to achieve it within a period of two months. Advocate General Sindh stated that he is going to consult with all relevant authorities of the government of Sindh in coordination with KDA, KMC and Cantonment Boards of Karachi so also other agencies like KPT, CAA, PIA, Evacuee Trust, for bringing the city of Karachi to its glory which will be best suited for the people and residents.

He will consult with all the top city planners as to how the existing buildings which may have to be removed from the city, will be removed, the people who are dislocated and displaced by such plans are rehabilitated.

The bench also directed to issue notices to Chairman KPT, Chairman PIA, Chairman Karachi Electric, State Life Insurance Corporation, Commissioner KMC, Airport Security Force (ASF), DG CAA for next date by adjourning the hearing of the case for two weeks.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190125442153/>

SC REJECTS BAHRIA TOWN'S RS358BN OFFER FOR KARACHI LAND

Nasir Iqbal January 23, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Bahria Town (Pvt) Limited on Tuesday enhanced its offer to Rs358 billion from earlier Rs250bn for the land it possessed in Karachi's Malir district where it developed an upscale housing society, but the Supreme Court rejected it, terming the bid not reasonable.

A three-judge SC bench headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed fixed the matter for hearing on Jan 29 when it will determine the actual price of the land after hearing all the parties, including the National Accountability Bureau as well as a battery of counsel representing the Bahria Town.

"Please avoid writing 'not appeared to be reasonable'," requested Khawaja Tariq Raheem, one of the lawyers representing the third party interest in the entire project.

Barrister Ali Zafar, the counsel for Bahria Town, explained that out of the total Rs358bn, Rs150bn was for 7,068 acres which the Bahria Town had got from the Malir Development Authority (MDA) in exchange of its land and Rs208bn for 9,828 acres which the developer had encroached upon in the area. The amount will cover the total purchase of land as well as its regularisation.

Court terms bid not reasonable, regrets government departments not cooperating with it

"We have calculated the amount on the latest available price of Rs167 million per acre," the counsel said, adding: "If we calculate the price available under the Colonisation of Government Land Act (COGLA) 1912 during the 2015 period, the rate will be Rs2m per acre."

The counsel claimed that the total revenue the developer had earned from the entire deal in Malir district was Rs492bn. He said the Bahria Town proposed that the complete payment of Rs358bn would be made in instalments over the next eight years, adding that he wanted to give only such commitment which the developer could possibly fulfil.

"In case the land goes back to the MDA, it will turn out to be another Karachi," the counsel said, adding that even the Supreme Court would not be able to run such a gigantic scheme.

At the last hearing on Jan 15, the Bahria Town had offered to deposit Rs250bn to avoid legal proceedings for acquiring land in a questionable manner for its projects in Karachi, Islamabad and Murree. But the Supreme Court had declined the offer.

On Tuesday, the court asked Ali Zafar to consult his client again for improving the offer further.

"You must understand that our hands are tied in view of the May 4 judgement in which the Supreme Court had declared the grant of land to the MDA by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of the private land developer — Messers Bahria Town — and anything done under the provisions of COGLA by the Sindh government as illegal, void ab inito and as such of no legal existence," observed Justice Azmat Saeed.

The land was granted for launching an incremental housing scheme. But instead of launching the scheme, the MDA exchanged it with the Bahria Town to launch a scheme of its own, the judgement had held. The MDA was created under the Malir Development Authority Act 1993 for the purpose of development of certain areas of Karachi division.

During the hearing, Ali Zafar offered Rs282bn and then raised it to Rs315bn for the entire 16,986 acres of land, saying this was quite a reasonable figure. “My neck is on the guillotine and I want to get out of it fast,” the counsel said, referring to the developer. The counsel emphasised that NAB through its entire history would be able to recover a mere Rs226bn only.

During the hearing, the court also took exception to a chunk of land identified as purple in the map presented by the Survey of Pakistan as it showed the land in the possession of the Bahria Town when the latter itself did not claim the same to be there.

The bench regretted that even the government departments were not cooperating with the apex court, warning that the Bahria Town would have to suffer heavily because of the negligence on the part of these departments. “We are convinced that our efforts are being frustrated,” Justice Saeed observed, regretting that the custodians of the land had no idea how to protect the state land.

At one stage, the court even hinted at issuing contempt of court notices to the representatives of Survey of Pakistan.

Justice Muneeb Akhtar expressed surprise over the isolated chunk of land in possession of the Bahria Town but surrounded by the state lands shown as purple. He wondered how the developer would have access to these lands — either through a tunnel or what. “Why on earth you will acquire two isolated islands?” Justice Akhtar asked and then hastened to add that it appeared that it was in the mind of the Bahria Town that it would develop these lands in future.

During the hearing, Survey of Pakistan’s Karachi director Asad Ali, who was also part of the demarcation process of the lands, presented a huge brochure of Prism Marketing, an authorised dealer of the Bahria Town, and alleged the marketing dealer was still indulging in the sale and purchase of the lands shown in purple colour in the map in violation of the earlier ban imposed by the apex court on all kinds of transactions in the area.

At this, the bench issued a notice to Prism Marketing, asking it to make a representation before the court, and warned that if it was proved that the dealer had indulged in the sale and purchase of the lands, the police would be at liberty to take action in accordance with the law.

The court ordered the Malir deputy commissioner to take control of the land shown in purple in the map and said he would be personally responsible for even one inch of the land.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1459233/sc-rejects-bahria-towns-rs358bn-offer-for-karachi-land>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 14TH TO JANUARY 20TH 2019

DEPARTMENTS AT ODDS OVER AUCTION OF FOREST AREAS FOR MINING

Manzoor Ali January 18, 2019

PESHAWAR: Two departments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have locked horns over the auctioning of designated forest areas for mining purposes, which the former declares a serious threat to forest protection in the province.

Sources told Dawn that the forestry department had shared a list of 41 sites falling in the designated forests, which mines and mineral department had auctioned for mining purposes.

They said the forestry department wrote a letter in that respect on Jan 10 to the secretary of the mines and mineral department saying the practice of granting mining licences to auctioneers in designated forests poses serious threat to forest protection and conservation of precious natural resources and therefore, all fresh applications should be thoroughly scrutinised at the preliminary state.

Forestry dept insists mines dept's move threatens forest protection in province

The department noted that around 40 per cent of around 5,000 applications received online for mining exploration licences were about forest areas.

Earlier in Nov last year, the government had formed a cabinet committee to amend Section 33 of the Forest Ordinance, 2002, to enable mines and tourism departments to use forest areas for commercial purposes.

A four-member committee is headed by senior minister for sports and tourism Mohammad Atif Khan.

The letter noted that sections 26, 33 and 44 read with Section 2(19) (b) (IV) of the KP Forest Ordinance, 2002, prohibited removal of stones, rock or mineral and surface soil and all products of mines quarries in designated forests.

It said the Mineral investment Facilitation Authority (MIFA) in its meeting on February 2018 decided that cases of renewal/conversion of areas auctioned for mining purposes which are overlapping with reserved, protected and guzara forests be declined. It said 24 no objection certificates for extractions of minerals with protected forests were cancelled, which several cases of illegal mining in forest areas were referred to the mines department for stopping the activity and cancelling the lease; however, mines department did not bother to respond to the correspondence.

It said that law department has also endorsed the view that the all types of mining and stone crushing activities were prohibited in designated forests and that DG Mines and Minerals, who happened to be chairman of Mineral Titles Committee (MTC) was also requested on several occasions to ensure that areas auctioned for mining should not fall inside designated forests.

“The MTC has deliberated 1228 cases for award of mineral titles from Jan 10 to Dec 26, 2018, wherein 262 cases involving 274, 43 acres designated forests were declined,” it said, adding that despite declining of the award, in most of the cases mining activities were being carried out in the forest areas.

The letter added that the DG Mines department has explicitly requested to exclude the cases falling in forest areas from MTC agenda while a thorough verification process reported that out of 425 licenses a total of 41 fell inside designated forests.

The department said all fresh application should be properly sorted out by the DG Mines office and for this purpose forestry department has already shared its GIS data with the mines department.

It said despite MIFA decision and subsequent departmental correspondence, huge number of cases involving forest land is being placed at the MTC agenda.

The department asked the mines department to exclude cases involving forest land from grant of mineral titles and such proposals should not be placed before the MTC at all.

“The matter should be given top priority otherwise; forestry department is constrained to approach the chief minister KP for implementation of MIFA decision,” it added.

When contacted, DG (mines and mineral development) Muntazir Khan said the law department was acting as mediator in the issue.

He said a tripartite committee including officials of law, mines and forestry departments would visit the areas to decide whether the areas fell in the designated forests or not and then make a decision.

He said the committee’s findings would then be placed before the cabinet committee headed by minister Mohammad Atif Khan.

The minister and secretary for the forestry department were not available for comments despite repeated attempts.

Published in Dawn, January 18th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1458227/departments-at-odds-over-auction-of-forest-areas-for-mining>

STATE LAND OCCUPIED IN GHARO

The Newspaper’s Correspondent January 15, 2019

THATTA: A group of influential land-grabbers used earth-moving machines and a large number of labourers to level a hilly tract of state land along National Highway near Gharo town and occupy it, Dawn has reliably learnt.

When Thatta Deputy Commissioner Usman Tanveer tried to stop the occupation of state land with the help of revenue staff and police, the land-grabbers exchanged hot words with the officer and one of them pelted his vehicle with stones, said sources.

The DC, however, denied reports of attack on his vehicle and said that he had visited the site as part of the administration’s ongoing anti-encroachment campaign. From next day onwards he would demolish all illegal structures in and around Gharo and get state land vacated in the light of directives of Supreme Court irrespective of social status of the encroacher, he said.

He said that he had established a special cell at his office in Makli where anybody involved in encroaching upon state land would be summoned. If his documents were found to be genuine he would be allowed to retain the property, otherwise the encroachment would be removed at all costs, he warned.

Published in Dawn, January 15th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1457582/state-land-occupied-in-gharo>

QCCI URGES RE-ALLOTMENT OF LANDS IN GWADAR

By Mohammad Zafar Published: January 15, 2019

QUETTA : The Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industries (QCCI) on Monday urged the government to re-allot the lands to local industrialists in the proposed Gwadar Industrial Zone, demanding an end to illegal allocation of plots in the area.

In a joint statement, QCCI President Jumma Khan Badezai, Senior Vice President Salahuddin Khilji and VP Yaseen Raisani said that the provincial government was neglecting local industrialists and business community in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

They lamented that their demands regarding the project were not accepted despite approaching the government several times.

“Lands in the proposed Gwadar Industrial Zone were being allotted to outsiders while local traders were sidelined from major investment opportunities,” they said.

The QCCI called for immediate cancellation of illegal land allotments in the zone, adding that the authorities concerned should hold an investigation as plots were allotted to ‘outsiders’ lacking any business background.

The economy cannot be boosted if the local industrialists and businesspersons are neglected in the corridor project, they said.

On January 12, the federal finance minister said that a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Gwadar was being developed but it would take some time.

The minister was addressing members of the business community during his visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI).

He said both the federal and provincial governments had agreed to work in the meantime on the existing industrial estate in Hub area and all infrastructure facilities, including 1,200 megawatts of electricity, would be provided.

In addition, Pakistan is likely to sign a number of investment deals, including the construction of a multi-billion-dollar oil refinery in the port city of Gwadar, during a visit of the Saudi crown prince next month.

This was revealed by Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry on Sunday.

Moreover, during the past week, the Senate Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs endorsed its sub-committee’s recommendation to make the entire Gwadar city a tax-free zone.

Recommendations were presented in a report by sub-committee convener Senator Kauda Babar to the Senate panel with Senator Nuzhat Sadiq in the chair. All of the recommendations have been given the green light.

The Senate committee also endorsed the suggestion that investors in Gwadar should be facilitated like those in other special economic and export processing zones.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1888436/1-qcci-urges-re-allotment-lands-gwadar/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 7TH TO JANUARY 13TH 2019

SC ORDERS END OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES ON MILITARY LANDS

By Nasir Butt Published: January 13, 2019

KARACHI: Justice Gulzar Ahmed of the Supreme Court (SC) ordered on Saturday the closure of all commercial activities being carried out on military lands. While presiding over a meeting on the implementation of apex court's orders on the removal of encroachments, Justice Ahmed also ordered the immediate removal of parking lots established outside the restaurants along Rashid Minhas Road as well as tables and chairs placed on footpaths and service roads.

These major decisions were made in a review meeting of Karachi's anti-encroachment operation at SC's Karachi Registry on Saturday. Presided over by Justice Ahmed, the meeting was also attended by Local Government secretary, Karachi police chief, Municipal Commissioner Dr Saifur Rehman, the focal person of Chief Secretary, officials of Karachi Development Authority (KDA), Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Civil Aviation and senior officials of Cantonment Board and other agencies.

In a major landmark decision, Justice Ahmed asked the authorities to detach Karachi's Master Plan Department from the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) and place it directly under the provincial government.

The meeting also ordered the immediate demolition of a cinema, Nueplex, constructed on military estate on Rashid Minhas Road as well as demolition of walls built in front of Dolmen Mall on Sea View Road in Clifton. "Were these walls constructed to create a separate route for certain people?" asked Justice Ahmed. He also ordered the removal of parking spaces outside the buildings on Korangi Road.

While ordering suspension of all commercial activities from military lands and removal of the cinemas built there immediately, Justice Ahmed said that illegal constructions would not be allowed no matter how influential anyone was, adding that it had been decided that these lands would be vacated.

Directing to hand over the master plan of Karachi to the Sindh government, Justice Ahmed remarked that SBCA and other institutions had ruined Karachi. He said that the provincial government should study the city's master plan, take it into consideration and start new planning.

Apparently referring to federal government departments, the Sindh government complained that several institutions were not cooperating, to which Justice Ahmed ordered all the institutions to cooperate.

Justice Ahmed also ordered to remove the nurseries established on footpaths and relocate the activities of welfare organisations away from the footpaths. He remarked that footpaths should only be available for the pedestrians.

The SC also ordered the immediate removal of encroachments from Aziz Bhatti Park and other parks.

Earlier last month, the SC directed all the cantonment boards of Karachi to ensure that there was no commercial activity, construction of marriage lawns and halls on the military lands, which should only be retained and used for the earmarked purpose.

Justice Ahmed had said that it was expected from the cantonment boards' directors and the DHA to work for the welfare of general public by providing them hospitals, libraries, parks and playgrounds. The SC directed the cantonment boards' directors that there should be no commercial activity on the military lands as that may be creating security issues.

The SC had observed that the allotment on the open spaces by the DHA was contrary to the law and against the proper use of the land. Justice Ahmed directed to remove all encroachments from the DHA greenbelts and plantations be made therein so the open spaces were properly utilised.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 13th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1887060/1-sc-orders-end-commercial-activities-military-lands/>

SC RESTORES LEASE OF GRAND HYATT LAND, DIRECTS FIRM TO PAY RS17.5BN OVER EIGHT YEARS

Malik Asad January 10, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has restored the lease of a plot meant for a luxury hotel that was cancelled after the lessee built and sold residential apartments.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) had cancelled the lease of the 13.5 acre plot to M/s BNP in July 2016 due to a number of violations and irregularities.

The SC on Wednesday set aside an Islamabad High Court (IHC) order in this matter and restored the lease, directing the private firm to pay the CDA Rs17.5 billion over eight years.

Buyers of apartments built on land for luxury hotel include the prime minister

The IHC had upheld the cancellation of the lease and directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to proceed against the officials responsible for leasing the land and relaxing rules and extending favours to the company in post-bid changes.

The company had challenged the high court's decision in the SC, before a bench led by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar.

The CDA's counsel had objected to one of the three members of the bench, pointing out that Justice Ijazul Ahsan had acted as counsel for the company.

The objection was overruled by the chief justice, who said it did not matter if Justice Ahsan was ever counsel for the private firm, and that the case was altogether different.

He also snubbed the CDA for 'sleeping' for more than a decade after leasing the land and waking up after people invested millions in the project.

“Why was the lease revoked unilaterally and without keeping in mind the buyers’ rights,” the bench asked.

The buyers of these apartments included Prime Minister Imran Khan, former chief justice of Pakistan Nasirul Mulk, Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Ehsan Mani, Khawaja Mohammad Asif and Federal Ombudsperson for Protection of Women Against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Kashmala Tariq.

The CDA leased the land to M/s BNP in 2005 to build a luxury hotel by Jinnah Convention Centre. The lessee instead built 240 luxury apartments.

In an earlier proposal submitted to the SC seeking the regularisation of the plot, M/s BNP had agreed to pay the CDA Rs15bn if it was allowed to use the land in question for commercial ventures and on the assurance that the company would be cleared in inquiries pending with the National Accountability Bureau and the Federal Investigation Agency.

According to the last auction, the cost of the aforementioned land if auctioned for commercial purposes and not for a hotel would be more than Rs58bn.

In its reply, the authority had maintained that the CDA was “empowered to cancel the lease and the appellants were provided opportunity of hearing before doing so. The action taken is within the parameters of law”.

The CDA added: “The real market value of any plot could only be determined by market forces through open auction provided that the land use/purpose and planning parameters along with floor area ratio are clearly defined in the auction brochure which wasn’t the case at the time of disposal of the subject plot.”

Generally, the reply said, the CDA leases land for a 33-year period that can be extended subject to CDA policy in vogue with the payment of renewal charges. In this case, a 99-year lease was executed through an unregistered instrument, and possession was handed over on 15pc payment.

The plot was auctioned for the construction of a luxury hotel, but the building plan approved was more or less mixed-use commercial.

This violated the planning parameters and by-laws approved by the CDA board on Oct 11, 1997.

In the course of the arguments, the petitioner’s counsel adopted before the court that the auction of the plot was conducted in an open and transparent manner and there had been no objections from any quarters to date about corruption in the bidding process.

He defended the construction of served apartments on the land, saying the IHC has misconceived the concept and upheld the cancellation of the lease.

Published in Dawn, January 10th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1456529/sc-restores-lease-of-grand-hyatt-land-directs-firm-to-pay-rs175bn-over-eight-years>

SC ASKS THREE DEPTS TO FIND LANDS OF BAHRIA TOWN

Nasir Iqbal Updated January 10, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court ordered three top government institutions to ascertain the actual lands in physical possession of the Bahria Town (Pvt) Ltd, Malir, which according to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is 25,601 acres.

A three-judge Supreme Court bench, headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, ordered the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco), the Survey of Pakistan and NAB to sit together and identify lands which Bahria Town claims is not in their possession and have erroneously been added to Bahria Town by NAB.

The bench had taken up the implementation of the May 4 judgement of the Supreme Court.

Suparco, Survey of Pakistan and NAB told to sit together and identify lands which the firm claims have been added in its name erroneously

The judgement concerns with cases involving the grant of 9,385 acres of land in 43 Dehs, consolidated by the Malir Development Authority (MDA) and then handed over to the Bahria Town in 2015. The land is situated about nine kilometres from the toll plaza on the Karachi-Hyderabad Superhighway, a 25-minute drive from the Jinnah International Airport.

In its May 4 judgement, the Supreme Court had held that the grant of land to the MDA by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of the private land developers — Messrs Bahria Town — and anything done under the provisions of Colonisation of Government Land Act, 1912, (COGLA) by the Sindh government as illegal, void ab initio and as such of no legal existence.

The lands were granted for launching incremental housing scheme, but instead of launching it, the MDA exchanged it with the Bahria Town to launch a scheme of its own, the judgement had held.

The MDA was created by the Malir Development Authority Act, 1993, for the purpose of developing certain areas of the Karachi division.

The directions came when Barrister Ali Zafar, who represented the Bahria Town, disputed the claim of NAB and asserted that figures being cited by NAB were wrong since NAB had included 1,664 acres of lands of the adjoining Jamshoro district which were private-owned properties besides the bureau had added another 10,000 acres with the Bahria Town.

He said that 7,318 acres was government land which could be taken out and according to Bahria Town's calculation the total lands the builder tycoon owned was 16,200 acres and not 18,336 acres as was claimed earlier.

NAB's Investigating Officer Qamar Abbass told the Supreme Court that as per the determination of the Survey of Pakistan, the actual lands in possession of Bahria Town was 25,601 acres out of which 7,220 acres were illegally exchanged in Feb 2015 with MDA by Mr Malik Riaz.

In 2016, the actual lands in possession of the Bahria Town were 12,156 which swelled to 25,601 acres, the NAB investigation officer told the Supreme Court.

NAB Prosecutor General Syed Asghar Haider informed the court that NAB had completed its investigation into the Malir development case and the reference in this regard was being vetted, but the formal reference would be finalised in two to three weeks.

The investigation officer said that 1,644 acres which Bahria Town claimed to be situated in the Jamshoro district was also Sindh government's lands, adding that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board had also informed NAB that the private builder had carried out 59 unauthorised borings of which 1.7 million of gallons of water was being extracted from aquifer on a daily basis.

In addition to this Rs5.5 billion was still outstanding with the MDA which the builder had to pay for the layout plans.

The Sindh Building Control Authority is also claiming that all buildings had been constructed illegally in Malir district by the Bahria Town, the investigation officer said, adding that no taxes for the registration of lands had been paid to the Sindh government by Bahria Town.

Justice Saeed, however, asked NAB to investigate and file separate references against the builder, adding that rights of the Sindh government would be protected at all cost. The judge observed that the court expected that an appropriate action would be taken against the departments concerned and the builder.

Published in Dawn, January 10th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1456637/sc-asks-three-depts-to-find-lands-of-bahria-town>

PM FOR PROPER USAGE OF GOVERNMENT LAND

RECORDER REPORT | JAN 10TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Imran Khan Wednesday directed to intensify the process of identification of government properties and also the departments and officials not cooperating in that regard.

Chairing a meeting regarding proper utilization of government lands and properties here at the PM Office, he directed the committee concerned to evaluate the properties identified so far.

The prime minister, while directing for action against the land mafia and illegal slums dwellers in big cities, said alternative residences must be provided to the poor people dislocated in that connection.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Defence Pervez Khattak, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Minister for Law Dr Farogh Naseem, Secretary Housing Dr Imran Zeb Khan and high officials.

The prime minister was informed about the progress of the committee formed for identifying the government properties and their future use. The meeting was informed that so far 1,412 properties of the federal government had been identified and 112 of them verified. Total area of the verified properties was 44,350 kanals having billions of rupees worth.

The meeting was briefed that 43 properties consisting of 44,350 kanals land had been identified in Punjab so far and 91 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It was informed that various options were under consideration regarding future use of the verified properties.

The prime minister was briefed that utilization of billions of rupees government properties in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Multan, Abbottabad and other cities could be made a permanent source of income.

He directed the Law Minister to review legal aspects of the utilization of verified government properties.

The meeting was also briefed about illegal occupation of government properties and lands in Karachi and other cities.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190110438493/>

SINDH CABINET CANCELS ALLOTMENT OF 70,000 ACRES OF FOREST LAND

Habib Khan Ghori Updated January 08, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh cabinet on Monday cancelled allotment of 70,000 acres of forest land and decided to launch an operation to get 145,245 acres of illegally occupied such land vacated from influential persons.

The cabinet meeting also approved a Rs900 million donation for the Thar Foundation for investment to pay Rs100,000 annually to each of the 757 families affected by Gorano reservoir and Dukkur Chho Pond as a compensation.

By another decision, it approved two fare slabs for Qingqi rickshaws — Rs10 from 0 to 6 kilometres and Rs15 for more than 6km per passenger — and approved the amendment in the Sindh Local Government Act 2013 for the removal of a mayor, deputy mayor, chairman or vice chairman from the office if a vote of no-confidence was passed against him with a simple majority.

Amends LG law to remove mayor, others with a simple majority of council members

These were among the decisions taken by the cabinet, which met here at New Sindh Secretariat presided over by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. The meeting, which lasted for four hours, had an agenda spread over 30 items. Those who attended the meeting included Chief Secretary Mumtaz Shah, all provincial ministers, advisers and special assistants.

In the backdrop of the order of the apex court to get all forest land vacated, the meeting was informed by Forest Minister Syed Nasir Shah that 13,000 acres out of 145,245 had already been retrieved from illegal occupants. The chief minister asked the minister to get the remaining land vacated at the earliest with the help of police and Rangers.

Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh stated that 757 families living in a one-kilometre radius of Gorano reservoir and Dukkur Chho Pond had been affected apart from those 471 who had been displaced owing to the development/excavation of Thar coalfield block-II.

The cabinet also approved a compensation of Rs100,000 for the 471 affected families of Thar block-II to be paid by Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company because they were leaseholders. The 471 families were also being provided with one house in two villages — Senhri Dars and Tharyo Halepoto.

The cabinet asked the chief minister to approach the federal government to pay the affected families from oil and gas fields compensation on the same pattern and ensure local development.

The meeting extended the period for the completion of the installation of an automatic meter-reading system till May 2019 by Hesco and Sepco.

Under an agreement for which Rs27.398 billion was paid to Discos (Hesco Rs10.228bn and Sepco Rs17.17bn) to clear all outstanding electricity dues for the period from July 2010 to 2016.

In addition, a monthly amount was also agreed to be paid to Hesco, Rs555.82 million, and Rs513.73m to Sepco, till the installation of AMR systems.

The cabinet on the suggestion of Agriculture Minister Ismail Rahu approved the sugarcane price to the growers not lower than Rs182 per 40kg. The meeting also authorised the agriculture minister to appoint market committees.

Approving the two-slab Qingqi fares as suggested by the transport department, the chief minister asked why the registration of the rickshaws was delayed and directed the officials concerned to ensure proper safety precautions in the rickshaws and also register them.

Regarding allotment policy, Secretary Services and General Administration Zulfiqar Shah briefed the cabinet on the present status of the allotments saying that there were six residential colonies of the provincial government in Karachi.

The cabinet discussed the allotment status and said that the forcible vacation of the accommodation from those residing there against the policy would be ethically wrong. Therefore, the cabinet approved one-time waiver for the present allottees and till their retirement they would be entitled to staying there. However, no allotment against the policy would be made onward.

The cabinet approved recruitment for the posts in BPS-1 to BPS-15 on merit. The chief minister directed publication of advertisements in the press and making selection committees. In lower grades only locals would be recruited. However, there would be a five per cent quota for the disabled and 5pc for minorities.

The cabinet constituted a three-member committee under Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh to frame rules for recruitment and to start recruitment.

The cabinet approved amendments to the Local Govt Act 2013 presented by Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani for the removal of a mayor, deputy mayor, chairman or vice chairman from office if a vote of no-confidence was passed with a simple majority which at present requires a two-thirds majority of the total number of members of the council.

The cabinet authorised the local government minister to appoint the remaining members of the Hyderabad Development Authority and other authorities where required.

By another decision, it approved the creation of a separate department in place of the Sindh Board of Investment and also renewal of contract of Prof Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan Rajput as chairman of the Charter of Inspection and Evaluation Committee.

The irrigation department presented three names, Imtiaz Qazi, Idrees Rajput and Abdul Basit Soomro, for chairman of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority. The cabinet approved the appointment of Basit Soomro as the two other were not available technically.

Published in Dawn, January 8th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1456081/sindh-cabinet-cancels-allotment-of-70000-acres-of-forest-land>

CROWN PRINCE'S VISIT: MOU FINALISED FOR SAUDI ARAMCO OIL REFINERY IN GWADAR

By Tribune Report Published: January 8, 2019

Pakistani is likely to sign a number of investment deals, including the construction of multi-billion-dollar oil refinery in the port city of Gwadar, during the upcoming visit of Saudi crown prince Muhammad bin Salman to Pakistan next month, a Saudi newspaper reported, quoting Pakistani officials as saying.

The newspaper said that both the countries have finalised a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the construction of the Saudi Aramco oil refinery, following a 15-member Saudi delegation's visit to Gwadar last week.

A high level Saudi delegation will visit Pakistan in February during which both the countries are expected to sign a number of investment deals. Pakistan authorities, according to the newspaper report, expected \$15 billion investment from Saudi Arabia.

Last week, "a 15-member delegation of Saudi Arabia visited Gwadar as part of the finalisation process of the MoU for Aramco oil refinery," Haroon Sharif, Minister of State and Chairman of Pakistan Board of Investment (BoI), told Arab News.

"We have finalised the MoU for the construction of Aramco oil refinery," Sharif said, adding that "the agreement will be signed at an 'appropriate time'," he added. "We are going to sign MoUs with Saudi Aramco and Acwa Power within few weeks."

According to the BoI chief, Aramco would construct a petrochemical complex, housing the multi-billion dollar oil refinery, while Acwa Power would invest in renewable energy sector. Both the projects would bring in an investment between \$6-10 billion, he said.

"I am expecting around \$15 billion investment from Saudi Arabia in the next three years," Sharif told the newspaper, adding: "We estimate that roughly around \$40 billion investment will be made by these three countries [Saudi Arabia, UAE, and China] in the next three to five years."

During the recent visit of the Saudi delegation to Gwadar, the Chairman of Gwadar Port Authority, Dostain Khan Jamaldini, gave a briefing about the current developments, including the port, progress on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar Master Plan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1883459/2-crown-princes-visit-mou-finalised-saudi-aramco-oil-refinery-gwadar/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 31ST TO JANUARY 6TH 2019

A QUESTION OF POSSESSION: CJP ORDERS DECISIVE ACTION IN LAND CASES

By Our Correspondent Published: January 6, 2019

LAHORE: Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar directed Syed Babar Ali Shah of Packages Industries to deposit a token amount of Rs500 million with the Supreme Court against unpaid rent on state land. The lease of the said property had expired in 2015.

A two-judge bench, led by CJP Nisar, was hearing the matter at the Supreme Court Lahore Registry while Justice Ijazul Ahsan was the other member of the bench. CJP Nisar also ruled that the land, leased out to the industry, would be put on sale through open bidding instead of the lease deed being extended.

Abdullah Malik, a social activist, had filed an application with the court. He challenged the Packages Industries' possession of state land, measuring 231 kanals and 19 marlas despite the expiry of the lease. He complained to the court that the industry had not paid a single penny to the government against its possession and also established a shopping mall on the leased land, thus violating the law.

The counsel for Syed Babar Ali Shah told the court that the land was first given to his client in 1955 on a 30-year lease to establish an industry. The lease was extended for another 30 years in 1985, while his client's application for further extension of the lease had been pending with the authority concerned since 2015.

To a query, the counsel told the court that the shopping mall had not been constructed on the leased land. He added it had been constructed on the purchased land of the industry. The inordinate delay in deciding the application for lease-extension, pending with the concerned authorities, irked the CJP. The country's top judge said those officials involved in the delay had been enabling the extended unlawful possession on the land.

On the court's orders, the Lahore deputy commissioner and member colonies of the Board of Revenue (BoR) appeared before the court after a short interval. The member colonies told the court that the government had not made any policy to revise the leases of state land and decided to auction them instead. The bench observed that the inaction on part of the government officials caused an annual loss of Rs200 million to the national exchequer.

Syed Babar's counsel assured the CJP that this client is ready to pay rent for the land's possession after the expiry of lease whatever the court would determine the amount.

The CJP directed the counsel to deposit Rs.500 million with the court within a week as a token amount, while the rent would be determined by a team of banks surveyors.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar took a disputed property, which is currently under the control of alleged gangster Khawaja Tareef Gulshan alias 'Tiffi Butt', and ordered the Punjab Forensic Science Laboratory to examine its documents.

A two member SC bench, headed by CJP Nisar, was hearing a petition filed by Humaira Khawar at the Supreme Court Lahore Registry. She claimed to have been dispossessed of her property by Tiffi Butt. Justice Ijazul Ahsan was the other member of the bench. As proceedings commenced, the CJP ordered his counsel to ensure the presence of Tiffi Butt in the courtroom. After a short interval, the suspect was produced and hearing resumed. The CJP asked Tiffi his name, to which the latter replied “Tareef Butt”.

The country’s top judge informed the suspect of the application filed against him. Tiffi replied by denying the charges and saying he would relinquish any property if it was proven that he possessed it illegally.

“No one will be allowed to occupy someone’s property,” CJP Nisar told Tiffi Butt in no uncertain terms. He added that the property would go into the possession of the person who succeeded in proving ownership.

The CJP directed the petitioner to inform the court about her grievances. The petitioner said a property of three kanals and six marlas at Androon Kashiri Gate belonged to her family from 1952 to May 3,2017.

In 2012, they learnt that documents had been forged for one kanal of their property to put it in the name of one Rana Ashfaq. Later, one kanal had been transferred to several buyers. She said her family had been dispossessed by Butt of the property.

SP City Muhammad Maaz Zafar told the court that the version of the woman was correct to the extent that the property was in her family’s possession till 2017. SP Maaz disclosed that Tiffi Butt, in connivance with police officials, occupied the property.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 6th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1882347/1-question-possession-cjp-orders-decisive-action-land-cases/>

LDA CITY CONTROVERSY: OFFICIALS LIKELY TO DO WITHOUT 17,000 KANALS

Khalid Hasnain January 05, 2019

LAHORE: The LDA City housing project is likely to be squeezed from 58,000 to 40,000 kanal or so as the authorities may not be able to acquire a chunk of over 17,000 kanal at Mauza Toor Warraich due to land consolidation (Ishtmal) issue.

Moreover, the section 4 of the land acquisition act announced for acquiring the aforementioned land has been suspended by the court, it is learnt.

“Ishtamal means consolidation of the land occupied by the growers in small pieces. Consolidation is always done by the revenue officials (patwaris etc) under the law. And whenever the officials start process in this regard, disputes over location and value / cost of the land etc emerge since every landowner wants consolidation of his / her scattered pieces of land at good location. So in a situation like Mauza Toor Warraich, it will be difficult for the government to acquire non-consolidated land of this mauza,” said an official of the Lahore Development Authority.

“Moreover, the section 4 imposed for acquiring land of this area has also been suspended by the court due to non-consolidation of 17,000 kanal in this mauza,” the official claimed.

The LDA governing body had approved launch of the project on May 25, 2011 after issuance of a notification under section 18 of LDA Act, 1975 on May 20. Subsequently, another notification under section 13 (3) of the law was issued on Oct 27, 2011, regarding announcement of execution of the scheme. The notification under section 4 (1) (2) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 was issued on Nov 24 about the acquisition of over 58,000 kanal in Mouzas Halloki, Toor Warraich, Thay Panju, Sidher, Rakh Jhedu, Katcha and Kahna.

When asked why the government imposed Section-4 of the act for acquiring Mauza Toor Warraich’s land in 2011 despite knowing about the Ishtmal issue, he said actually the area was surrounded by the land being acquired by the LDA through development partners. The government perhaps thought that as the process to acquire the land and develop such housing projects takes a considerable time of 15 to 20 years, the consolidation of 17,000 kanal could be done meanwhile, enabling it to acquire the same with development of the land side by side.

Accountability Bureau launched a probe into its affairs following several complaints related to files in excess of the land available or mutated in the name of the LDA. Since there are 9,000 people / affectees who purchased files of plots, the Supreme Court of Pakistan took up the issue.

The court also ordered six days ago that the committee comprising the Punjab chief secretary, the provincial housing minister, the officials of the NAB, the LDA and others should submit a report within 10 days regarding the resolution of the issue.

Talking about the ongoing exercise to compensate 9,000 affectees in the form of giving them plots, the official said at present 14,000 kanal existed / mutated in the name of the LDA. This included a compact piece of 5,000 kanal while the remaining 9,000 kanal were scattered and development could not be made.

“The development partners being probed by NAB say that they may acquire around 4,000 kanal more connecting the scattered pieces of 9,000 kanal. In this way, they claim that there would be 13,000 kanal available for the project’s phase-1 where 9,000 affectees could easily be accommodated.

Similarly, they say that the compact piece of 5,000 kanal can be used for the scheme’s phase-2 with acquisition of further 6,000 kanal connecting this.

The official said likewise the remaining land (17,000 kanal) situated in the mauzas other than Toor Warraich could be acquired at a later stage for developing the phase-3. The total land (excluding the 17,000 kanal of Mauza Toor Warraich) for the project would be 41,000 kanal or so.

“The LDA will be happy if it succeeds to develop the scheme on 41,000 kanal,” he said.

Published in Dawn, January 5th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1455493/lda-city-controversy-officials-likely-to-do-without-17000-kanals>

LAND GRANT TO LANDLESS PEASANTS CANCELLED

The Newspaper’s Correspondent January 05, 2019

SANGHAR: Thousands of acres agricultural land granted to landless peasants in 2004 in Sanghar district was cancelled and reverted to government on Friday.

Shaheed Benazirabad (revenue) additional commissioner Yousuf Abbasi took action over the land grant allowed by then executive district officer (EDO) of revenue in the wake of inquiries by National Accountability Bureau and complaints to ombudsman.

In his order, the additional commissioner observed that the land had been given by the EDO against the land grant policy.

The officer conducted hearing over the matter after issuing show-cause notices to the grantees and inviting their objections if they had any but he revoked the grant without hearing their arguments through a large number had filed objections.

The land was granted in 26 dehs in Sanghar taulka. Most of the peasants had paid government's dues after which they were issued allotment orders, Qabooliat, form A and form VII-B by the revenue department.

Published in Dawn, January 5th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1455629/land-grant-to-landless-peasants-cancelled>

SC IRKED BY SINDH GOVERNMENT'S RELUCTANCE TO RECOVER LAND

ZULFIQAR AHMAD | JAN 3RD, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar on Wednesday expressed displeasure over the Sindh government's reluctance to recover hundreds of thousands of acres of illegally allotted and grabbed land in a case pertaining to deforestation in Karachi.

The Chief Justice, while heading a three-member bench, asked if any measures have been taken by the provincial government regarding its forest land.

"Seventy thousands acres of land have been leased illegally," Sindh's additional advocate general told the court, adding that demarcation of forest land is under way.

When Justice Ijazul Ahsan inquired how the land developer got hold of forest land, the petitioner Qazi Athar said that the property developer was given 11,000 acres of forest land in Karachi and another 4,000 acres in Nawabshah.

The Chief Justice expressed disappointment over Sindh government's inaction to recover its land, saying: "Forests are very important for the environment. If they do not want to work, they should leave this country. Such people are not capable of running the government."

"I have never seen a government that is admitting that its land has been illegally occupied but is still not taking any action," the CJP said.

The petitioner contended that PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari had converted forest department's 2.8 million acres into revenue land – a move, he said, that was later declared null and void by Sindh High Court.

Besides, the petitioner claimed that the then Sindh chief minister Qaim Ali Shah did not get a satellite survey of the land conducted despite court's orders.

The land, the petitioner alleged, was later transferred to Omni Group and others in complete violation of court orders.

The Chief Justice said that he would not grant land developer's counsel's request for adjournment, summoning him to the Karachi registry on January 9, when the case will next be heard.

The court also ordered the parties concerned to furnish their reports in the court by January 7.

In November last year, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah told Sindh Assembly that around 149,235 acres of land have been illegally occupied by influential persons over the last five years.

In Dadu, 27,566 acres of land had been illegally occupied during the last five years, 24,161 acres in Benazirabad. 23,715 acres in Sukkur, 19,271 acres in Hyderabad, 12,238 acres in Larkana, 17,477 acres in Khairpur and 7,879 acres were grabbed in Kandhkot.

The chief minister said that a comprehensive campaign had been launched against encroachers and 15,733 acres had been vacated and the campaign against land mafia was in "full swing."

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190103436800/>

DISPUTE OVER OKARA MILITARY FARMS MAY BE SETTLED SOON

Ikram Junaidi January 01, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The long-standing issue of Okara Military Farms is likely to be resolved soon as the Pakistan Army and the Punjab government have agreed to proposals by the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) and the tenants of the farms have two weeks to reach a consensus at their end.

"It has been principally decided that criminal cases registered against the tenants will be withdrawn. Batai (share from crop), which existed prior to the year 2000, will be restored and tenants would start giving 50 per cent of their production to the army or the government. Tenants would not get ownership rights, but no one will harass them in future and they will not be dislocated," said NCHR chairman retired Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan while talking to Dawn.

He said that during a hearing held on Monday, the army acknowledged that the land belonged to the Punjab government, but claimed that it (army) was in control of it to produce fodder for its cattle and horses.

"However, the army has claimed that it used to pay rent of the land to the Punjab government and would continue paying if tenants start giving Batai, which is 50pc of their production. Moreover, Batai of last 18 years will be waived," Mr Chowhan said.

According to a statement issued by the NCHR on Monday, the NCHR chairman along with member Chaudhry Mohammad Shafique and ex-officio member Khawar Mumtaz heard the case at the NCHR headquarters in Islamabad.

The tenants of Okara Farms, Awami Worker Party representatives, Punjab government officials and a Pakistan Army officer were present during the hearing.

The tenants were represented by former senator Farhatullah Babar and Human Rights Activist Tahira Abdullah.

Mr Babar informed the NCHR that the issue had also been taken up by the Senate and a sub-committee had been formed under the chairmanship of former senator Khalid Ranjha. He said a report was submitted to the house which was endorsed by it. But unfortunately recommendations of the sub-committee were not implemented, he added.

He said the delay in resolution of this important issue had raised serious questions on the rule of law situation in the country and credibility of the government. He said the commission had looked very objectively and its interim report had already highlighted the important aspects of the issue under consideration. Had the government implemented earlier recommendations of the commission, a logical end to the long-lasting dispute could have been found by now, he added.

Commandant of the Okara Military Farms Brigadier Rana Faheem stated that nobody wanted to evict any tenant and that the army was ready to extend full cooperation to those who abide by the law. He said he had already accepted the NCHR proposal to settle the issue.

He said that there was no contradiction regarding the ownership of the land as the army had officially accepted that the land belonged to the Punjab government and it was handed over to the federal government after procedural formalities. Therefore, he added, it was wrong to say that the army had any interest in its ownership.

The NCHR chairman forwarded a proposal for the amicable solution, stating that the payment of Batai by the tenants should be without prejudice to their claim for ownership.

The tenants sought adjournment of the hearing for reaching a consensus to their end and the matter would be taken up again on Jan 17.

Published in Dawn, January 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1454767/dispute-over-okara-military-farms-may-be-settled-soon>

MOHMAND DAM PROJECT: WAPDA SIGNS ACCORD WITH LOCALS FOR LAND ACQUISITION

RECORDER REPORT | DEC 31ST, 2018 | LAHORE

The Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority signed a formal agreement with the tribal locals under the supervision of District Administration Mohmand for acquiring the land to construct Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project. This achievement has been made possible with the active support of the local administration, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government, the local elders and the Members of the National Assembly belonging to the project area.

This development has paved the way to initiate construction work on Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project in pursuit of the historic judgment of the honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan dated July 04 this year for early commencement and timely completion of Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dams by constituting the Implementation Committee on Dams.

The agreement pertaining to the rates for acquiring the land has also been endorsed by the Sub Committee on Land Acquisition and Resettlement of Mohmand Dam Project formed under the Implementation Committee on Dams.

It is worth mentioning that a total of 8675 acres land is to be acquired for construction of the requisite infrastructure at the Dam site, 56-kilometer long reservoir and irrigation network and re-regulation pond area.

Contrary to other major projects like Diamer Basha Dam and Dasu Hydropower Project, where process for acquiring the land has been lingering since long, the formal agreement with the local tribes to acquire land for Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project has been signed after consultation of a few months. The tribes of Burhan Khel, Esa Khel and Saparay Mulagoree of Tehsil Pandiali and Pranghar and MNA from Mohmand District Sajid Khan and MNA from Charsada Malik Anwer Taj signed the agreement with Wapda for land.

It is pertinent to mention that Wapda using bridge financing through its own resources, transferred Rs684 million to local administration for purchase of land.

Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project is historic and unique in nature being constructed on River Swat in erstwhile Tribal District Mohmand of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province after the delay of over five decades. The project is scheduled to be completed in five years and eight months with an approved PC-I of about Rs309 billion. On completion, the project will store about 1.2 million acre feet (MAF) of water and generate 800 megawatt (MW) of low-cost hydel electricity.

The project will significantly contribute towards development of agriculture, industrial, economic and social sectors in the country besides alleviating poverty and providing job opportunities to the locals in the project area. Annual benefits of the project have been estimated at Rs51.6 billion.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/12/20181231436033/>

FEBRUARY 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 18TH TO FEBRUARY 24TH 2019

PUNJAB GOVT OFFERS STATE LAND TO INVESTORS

RECORDER REPORT 2019/02/24

LAHORE: The Punjab government has prepared a policy to offer state land on lease to investors, said sources.

The sources said the objective of the policy is to woo investors in the province. They said the department of industries has prepared the policy that was approved by Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar.

According to the new policy, the state land could be offered to both local and foreign investors. The government would not procure land for investors, and instead it would offer state land on lease, they added. This policy has been devised to facilitate investors to the maximum in order to fetch the much-needed investment in the country.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/02/24/5-page/764891-news.html>

SC DIRECTS SINDH GOVERNMENT TO SUBMIT REPORT ON FOREST LAND'S RETRIEVAL

RECORDER REPORT | FEB 21ST, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Sindh government to submit comprehensive report on the retrieval of forest land supported by the maps. Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, who was heading a three-judge bench, said that after receiving the report they shall direct the district and sessions judges of the Sindh to verify the report.

The bench was hearing the petition of Qazi Ali Athar, who is an environmental lawyer. He informed that the land is occupied by the military personnel, judges and Bahria Town. Additional Advocate General Sindh Sabtain Mehmood submitted the report and informed the court that provincial cabinet in January 2019 had decided to cancel all the leases of forest land. He said out of total 52,922 acres of forest land, 1,800 acres have been retrieved.

Justice Azmat asked what its proof is. He said the cancellation of leases and retrieval of forests on papers is not more than an “eye wash”, adding, “We want completely vacated forests land with a proper record supported by Google maps; than this court will get it verified on ground through district judges. The land will be surveyed and demarcated through Survey of Pakistan.” Justice Azmat remarked the people have been occupying the forest land with the connivance of forest officers. He asked Sindh Chief Conservator Forest Sindh Ijaz Nizamani, “It is your province and therefore you are responsible to protect it.”

Justice Azmat thanked the petitioner for raising this issue of national importance and said, “We feel our responsibility to comply with proper conservation of forests for our present and further generations.”

Ijaz informed that no forest officer has authority to sell land, adding in 2004-2005 thousands of acres of forest land was given on lease to the people for five years and since that time they have been occupying it.

The bench ordered the chief conservator to provide district-wise list of retrieved land along with the maps and adjourned the hearing for three weeks. According to the petitioner, Sindh province has total 2,858,748 acres of forest land. Out of 605,583 acres riverine forests, 182,314 acres are of inland forest and 751,063 acres are of coastal forest (mangroves) and 1,319,788 acres are rangelands. The petitioner submitted that due to the shortage of water in 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.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/02/20190221448933/>

OLD TRICKS FOR NEW LAND

Rafia Zakaria February 20, 2019

IT was all over by last April. Hambantota, a then eight-year-old port on the coast of Sri Lanka, was already abandoned. According to the many reports published in newspapers and online, wild animals roamed the place and no ships docked. What had been built by man was fast being overtaken by nature and the wild beasts that had been displaced to make home for the promises that had once been attached to the port were taking up their prior positions.

There had been many of these promises; they included, for instance, the calculation that the 60,000 ships that sailed past the port every year on the Indian Ocean would stop to unload their cargo — were such an option be available. Sri Lanka, understandably eager to join the ranks of the giants — Singapore and Dubai — whose glories all of Asia sings, brought the vision. They, too, could be a part of the glorious ranks of the world shipping business.

China was there to help make it all happen and then Sri Lankan leader Mahinda Rajapaksa was glad to accept. China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd, China's largest government-owned enterprise, was the one to dole out the dollars. At first the terms of the debt were moderate. However, as time passed and as some of the predictions regarding the unfeasibility of the port seemed to crawl towards the truth, the conditions of the debt became stricter.

The fault of the failure of Hambantota did not lie squarely with the Chinese. Feasibility studies conducted by independent organisations had long shown that the golden promise of rivalling Malaysia and Singapore was a castle in the air that is much harder to theorise than to realise. But Rajapaksa had an election to win and the loans rolled in with the regularity with which he requested them, often at convenient interludes during the campaign.

Things that are being built have the curious propensity of being amenable to a thousand dreams.

Things that are being built have the curious propensity of being amenable to a thousand dreams and Rajapaksa, ever soft to sycophants, listened to and believed in the glorious visions that cranes and construction equipment could embolden and engender. The cranes stood tall over the sites and the many containers that would one day be loaded and unloaded off the ports seemed very close — and with them, the dream of a new and far more empowered Sri Lanka.

Except they never came. The thousands of ships that had been sailing by on the Indian Ocean continued to do just that: sail by. Hambantota was unable to attract them to its shores, tempt them with its wares and facilities, all of which had been built with Chinese money.

At first there were calls for patience, the usual sorts of hems and haws that suggest that great things take time and this certainly was going to be a great thing. The problem was that this great thing had not taken very long to build or visualise, nor to grow indebted to; it had been built fast and quick with borrowed money. A port that was supposed to be the key to the future of Sri Lanka was lying empty, its docks unloading nothing, its berths holding no passing ships. In 2012, Hambantota saw only 34 ships.

The Chinese waited a bit, the Sri Lankans began to default. Rajapaksa was voted out of office and things did not look like they were going to improve. The Sri Lankans were looking to restructure their debt. The port, as mentioned, was lying empty with the lush Sri Lankan forest that lay around it claiming it for its own.

In the end, Sri Lanka agreed to lease out the Hambantota port and an additional 15,000 acres of land to China in a 99-year lease. For that period of time, China would operate and control the port. And

indeed, as soon as China did that, ships — of which China operates many — began to dock at the Hambantota port. What had been a spooky and desolate place began to hum with activity and, most importantly, with the sounds of ships coming in and heading out.

The devil always lies in the detail, and the story of Hambantota is no exception. In its ambitious new Silk Roads plan, the Chinese are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure projects all around the world. Not all of them are even actual sea ports; an investigative report in The New York Times reported a similar large-scale deal on the border between Kazakhstan and China to build a dry port. The claims there are just as grand as those in Hambantota. Once constructed, this will be (they say) the busiest dry port in the world, connected by dizzying array of rail lines and moving all sorts of things on an international super-highway of goods.

Of course, that too could end up just like Hambantota. The port could be built with money borrowed from China and then put into operation by the hopeful Kazakhs whose ambitions have been made loftier by the brisk business being conducted in a small visa-free corridor between the two countries. Unlike Hambantota, the Kazakh dry port has not yet failed (although it does seem a bit desolate even while under construction) but if it does, it could well be that the Kazakhs have to strike a similar deal as the Sri Lankans — give over their territory because they cannot pay their debts.

In the age of budget deficits and huge debts carried by nearly every country, the seriousness of debt and the consequences that can come of it are not popular in discussion. Colonial history, when territory was similarly bought and sold, seems a long way away and the fact that the British purchased the subcontinent largely via debt defaults has largely been forgotten. In the meantime, new overlords who have read history can take advantage of its unpopularity and use old tricks to buy new land.

Published in Dawn, February 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1464934/old-tricks-for-new-land>

FOUR EX-OFFICIALS ARRESTED IN GWADAR LAND SCAM

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent Updated February 20, 2019

QUETTA: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Balochistan, has arrested four retired officials of the provincial revenue department, including two former tehsildars of Gwadar.

NAB officials said on Tuesday that former tehsildars Mohammad Jan Jamaldani and Mohammad Jan Baloch, naib tehsildar Agha Zafar Hussain and Patwari Abdul Hafeez were allegedly involved in tampering revenue record of Gwadar district and selling lands to various people and companies, causing huge losses to the national exchequer.

Sources said that an initial inquiry had revealed that some other officials of the revenue department were also involved in this scam.

After Director General of NAB, Balochistan, Muhammad Abid Javed issued the arrest warrants for the four suspects, they were arrested by the intelligence wing of the bureau and handed over to the authorities for interrogation.

Published in Dawn, February 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1464824/four-ex-officials-arrested-in-gwadar-land-scam>

ACTION DEMANDED AGAINST GRABBERS OF GRAVEYARD LAND

Bureau Report February 19, 2019

PESHAWAR: Members of the Qabristan Bachao Tehreek (save graveyard movement) on Monday staged a demonstration here to demand action against the people involved in the grabbing of the land of local graveyards.

Led by Ghulam Hussain Afridi and Syed Azhar Ali Shah, the protesters shouted slogans against the district administration for failing to act against land grabbers.

They told reporters that land grabbers had become active again in parts of Peshawar and had been carrying out their activities overnight as the relevant departments didn't act against them.

The protesters said after taking a suo moto notice, the Peshawar High Court had directed the local administration to demolish illegal structures put up on the land of graveyards and even some illegal walls were pulled down, but the people built them again.

They pointed out that some influential people belonging to Nowshera was very active to grab graveyard land in Peshawar, while the district administration had turned a deaf ear to the people's complaints in that respect.

"Whenever the locals start demolishing illegal structures, the police harass them instead of taking action against land grabbers," a protester said.

He demanded of the provincial government to order probe into the matter and ensure the immediate arrest of land grabbers.

The protesters said in some areas, old graves were demolished before their land was grabbed.

They also demanded of the Peshawar High Court chief justice to step in to protect the sanctity of graveyards.

Published in Dawn, February 19th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1464669/action-demanded-against-grabbers-of-graveyard-land>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 11TH TO FEBRUARY 17TH 2019

DASU PROJECT BODY UNDECIDED OVER COMPENSATION FOR LAND OWNERS

Khalid Hasnain February 17, 2019

LAHORE: The Steering Committee for Dasu Hydropower Project could not take decision over the compensation criterion for land owners after it observed that the special committee did not give any

recommendation, leaving the final decision on the part of the government keeping in view the options mentioned in its report.

“Actually, the report compiled by special committee members after surveying the areas and holding discussions with the landowners’ representatives had finally left three options under which the land acquisition and compensation issue could be resolved. However, it didn’t recommend anything, requesting the steering committee to take a final decision on its own if it wants to follow any of the three options,” revealed an official privy to the 13th meeting of the Dasu project steering committee that held on Feb 13.

The meeting was attended by the KP chief minister, the federal minister (water resource), Wapda chairman, Dasu project director and other members.

The official, who preferred anonymity, said that reason behind not giving recommendations to the government to take a final decision regarding compensation to the displaced people was the ‘fear’ prevailing among the government officers due to actions of the NAB, Anti-Corruption Establishment, FIA and other law enforcement agencies.

“Since February to date, NAB, the ACE, the FIA and other institutions have picked various government officers in a humiliating way, conducting their media trial. They investigated them on the pretext of various allegations and finally booked them in cases. So, the officers are of the view that whatever being done is just to target and malign the bureaucracy through so called allegations. So, the situation has really damaged the bureaucracy and it’s not ready to work. That’s why the members of the special committee just left three options for the government to opt any of them to resolve the issue rather than giving recommendation in this regard,” he explained.

He said during the meeting, some members, including an MNA and an MPA, urged the committee heads to decide the matter by opting any of the options mentioned in the special committee’s report. But they didn’t do so, stating that if the affectees are awarded compensation under one of the options (on which all landowners are agreed), a precedent would set forever and the people, in the future, may force the government to accept whatever they want. He said the participants said there would be some legal issues if the affectees’ demands are accepted.

“Actually, there are many constructions that were done after enforcement of section-4 of the land acquisition act. Under the law, no constructions can be done after enforcement of this section. But the locals did this just to get more and more compensation. If the government regularise such constructions and award compensation to their owners, it would be illegal,” the official quoted some members as discussing this aspect in the meeting,” he maintained.

He said steering committee members were also of the view that the category/options for compensation should be worked out more. So keeping in view this they sought working out the same more by the officers of the respective district administration within 10 days. The officers were also asked to submit their report to the next steering committee meeting which is likely to be held during last week of this month.

It may be recalled that following recommendations of the November 6 meeting of the steering committee, a special committee was constituted, entrusted with the task to engage and hold talks with the representatives of landowners, including an MNA, in the project area and convince them surrender their land for launching various civil works in the wake of executing the Dasu project.

The Supreme Court, soon after the formation, started working in the area, held a series of meetings with the locals and finally succeeded in agreeing them for surrendering their land to the government for the project. The landowners agreed after the Supreme Court accepted their demands — change of land category, applying compensation formula of Basha dam. They also gave affidavits to the court, undertaking that their demands would not increase more in future. They also signed a joint petition in this regard and handed over this to their MNA, requesting the government to accept their demands. The SC finally compiled its report for submission to the next meeting of the committee.

Published in Dawn, February 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1464298/dasu-project-body-undecided-over-compensation-for-land-owners>

KSEW GETS LAND FOR SHIPYARD IN GWADAR: MD

RECORDER REPORT | FEB 16TH, 2019 | KARACHI

Managing Director Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KSEW), Rear Admiral Ather Saleem said that KESW had acquired land at Gwadar for the development of another shipyard in view of increased movement of ships and maritime activities at Gwadar Port in the backdrop of CPEC. He said this, briefing a delegation of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) who visited KSEW on his invitation.

“Since its independence, Pakistan had established only one shipyard whereas there were 23 shipyards in India out of which nine were in public sector and five in Bangladesh,” he said. The KSEW head underscored the need for public-private partnership in the maritime sector as it offers huge potential of investment and earnings, including foreign exchange, in many fields such as transportation of goods through shipping, both inland and foreign countries.

He also gave some suggestions to Karachi Port Trust and Bin Qasim Port for patronising the indigenous shipping industry and buying the ships, for their requirements. The delegation head S.M Muneer lauded the efforts being made by the KSEW in ship-building and development of maritime activities as they play an important role in facilitating trade through cheap transportation of goods.

On behalf of business community of Pakistan and FPCCI, he assured the KSEW Managing Director of his full support. He also assured to extend cooperation by making the FPCCI a bridge between KSEW and government in facilitating, developing, promoting and resolution of ship building issues.

The delegation comprised: Kazi Abdul Mukhtar, former governor State Bank of Pakistan, Syed Mazhar Ali Nasir, adviser to FPCCI president, Hanif Gohar, vice president FPCCI Lahore Zaki Ahmed Sharif, chairman FPCCI Standing Committees (Central) on Reforms and Austerity Measures Arshad Rahim Khan, Shakaib Arif, COO National Foods.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/02/20190216447807/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 4TH TO FEBRUARY 10TH 2019

80PC OF LAND REVENUE RECORD BURNT IN 2007 RIOTS COMPUTERISED, PA TOLD

Tahir Siddiqui February 05, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly was on Monday informed that almost 80 per cent of the land revenue record gutted in the violent activities in the aftermath of Benazir Bhutto's assassination in 2007 had been computerised.

Furnishing a statement and replying to lawmakers' queries during Question Hour in the provincial assembly, Sindh Revenue and Relief Minister Makhdoom Mehboob Zaman said that the digitisation of the entire land revenue record was to be completed by June 2018, but it was delayed owing to delay in release of funds.

He said that the Rs486.889 million project of preservation of land revenue record and revamping of survey settlement department of the Board of Revenue would now be completed by June 30, 2019 as only 20pc record was to be digitised.

The minister said that more than 10,000 pages of old land record register had been chemically and digitally preserved and stored at laboratories established in the Hyderabad and Sukkur offices of the survey settlement department.

Answering another question, Makhdoom Zaman said that a geographic information system unit had been established in the Board of Revenue to digitise maps at deh and taluka levels to assess encroachment on state land. He said all district- and taluka-level maps had been prepared and were available online.

In reply to a question, the minister said that six digital scanning units had been established in each divisional headquarters to replace microfilm technology. "Registered deeds are scanned and indexed and stored in a centralised data centre which enabled checking of details of registered deeds," he added.

He said the National Database and Registration Authority had carried out a system study to implement automated registration and stamps' system in the province. He said the system would be implemented during the current year.

Separately, he said that 2,043 judicial matters had been filed by various persons before the BoR during the past three years. Of them, he said, 584 cases had been disposed of.

In reply to a question asked by Grand Democratic Alliance member Arif Mustafa Jatui, Makhdoom Zaman said that 287,233 100-kilogram wheat bags had been distributed free of cost among as many families in drought-hit parts of Tharparkar.

Besides, 50,973 100kg wheat bags were given to women beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme from May 18 to June 30, 2018. The minister said that Rs4.325m, sanctioned by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, was distributed among 173 victims whose houses were burnt in an accidental fire at Udani village in Chhachhro taluka.

Answering another question, he said the flood relief commissioner, civil defence and fire section were not integrated with the relief department. “The relief department is working under the command of the relief commissioner separately,” he added.

Published in Dawn, February 5th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1461818/80pc-of-land-revenue-record-burnt-in-2007-riots-computerised-pa-told>

RECOVERED LAND TO BE USED FOR PUBLIC INTEREST: ALEEM KHAN

By Our Correspondent Published: February 5, 2019

LAHORE: Senior Punjab Minister Abdul Aleem Khan has given orders to submit the details of properties recovered during the recent anti-encroachment operation throughout the province. He asked the local government secretary to furnish a division-wise report in the regard.

The senior minister further directed the Punjab Local Government Department to work in collaboration with the Revenue Department and prepare a comprehensive strategy through which these pieces of land would be utilised for welfare oriented projects in different districts. He said schools, hospitals and other such projects are on the cards for these areas.

Aleem asked that members of the assemblies be taken into confidence for their consent in this regard. He said that after the spadework, a comprehensive plan would be prepared throughout Punjab and sent to the chief minister for final approval.

He said each property evacuated should be linked with Google and it must be ensured that no one can grab it again. The minister said that every inch of land would be made available for the betterment of the common man and he would personally monitor the details.

He said that present government started a historic operation against encroachments and it was conducted in an impartial manner. He added that the ultimate objective of this operation would also be realised by utilising these lands for the larger public interest.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Government has decided to hold bilateral dialogue with the international donor agencies in which the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, DFID and other institutions would be included. The senior minister will meet senior officials of these institutions and brief them about the ongoing and new projects of the Punjab Government

Aleem said the government had its own priorities and international donor agencies would be informed about the roadmap and strategies to be evolved for the future. He said that fortunately, all international institutions had great respect and confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

He hoped for round table conferences with these international donor agencies in which they could be taken on board about the vision of the Punjab Government. He said provincial authorities had already chalked out a plan for the coming years and a breakthrough will take place for concrete and long term development in Punjab.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1903850/1-recovered-land-used-public-interest-aleem-khan/>

SETTLEMENT OF 36,000 ACRES LAND IN PASNI CANCELLED

The Newspaper's Correspondent Updated February 04, 2019

GWADAR: The Balochistan government through a notification has cancelled the settlement of more than 36,000 acres of land in Pasni tehsil of Gwadar district and declared it government lands.

Informed sources said on Sunday that the lands cancelled were situated in 19 villages of Pasni tehsil. The notification NO-70/settlement /2018, issued on Jan 7, 2019, was signed by Senior Member of Board of Revenue Shoaib Ahmed Gola.

The government's decision has deprived people of billions of rupees' investment they had made," Ghulam Muhammad, president of Real Estate Association, told Dawn.

The villages in which lands have been cancelled were: Shumal Bandan, Char Bandan, Chikeen, Ghati, Shatngi, Girani, Gadzan Bil, Kanir Bil, Makola Sharqi, Kapar Sharqi, Kapar Gharbi, Kalmat, Chandi Kalmat, Aspiak, Makola Gharbi, Dosi, Rombaro, Shadi Kour Shumali and Zareen.

Balochistan govt's decision deprives locals of billions of rupees

Landowners of these areas have expressed serious concern over the provincial government decision and claimed that the lands declared by the government to be its own had been registered in their names for centuries in the official record as these lands belonged to their ancestors.

They said that the government should pay the price of the lands to owners if it needed it.

Balochistan National Party (BNP-Mengal) MPA Mir Hamal Kalmati assailed the Board of Revenue's decision and said it was the third time that the government was depriving owners of these lands.

He said the government did settlement of these lands twice and allotted them to the people after completing the process and now again the department concerned was doing great injustice with the people of 19 villages of Pasni tehsil.

He said that that local people were owners of these lands and they had verdicts of the high court and Supreme Court to support their claims about their ownership of the lands.

"We will not accept these injustices with the people of Pasni Tehsil and would fight for their rights at all forums," Mr Kalmati said.

Published in Dawn, February 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1461702/settlement-of-36000-acres-land-in-pasni-cancelled>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 28TH TO FEBRUARY 3RD 2019

HAZARA MOTORWAY: GOVT BEGINS PAYMENTS TO LANDOWNERS

Our Correspondent February 3, 2019

MANSEHRA: The government has begun disbursement of Rs3 billion among residents of 34 villages whose land was acquired for Hazara Motorway being built under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

“We have finalised awards of 20 villages and the rest would be completed before March this year. Payment to landowners has also been started,” stated Farrukh Jadoon, the collector of CPEC in Hazara, told reporters on Saturday. Jadoon said that Rs340 million were already disbursed among the landowners in seven villages and the process was underway.

“Now owners of the land belonging to 20 villages, whose awards have been completed, can approach the deputy commissioner for the payments,” said Jadoon. He said that land was acquired for the Hazara Motorway being built under the CPEC in the jurisdiction of Mansehra district.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/426991-hazara-motorway-govt-begins-payments-to-landowners>

PAF CONVERTS LAND FOR ‘NATIONAL SECURITY’ INTO HOUSING SCHEME IN LAHORE

Malik Asad Updated February 01, 2019

ISLAMABAD: An audit report on the aviation division has revealed that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) converted the land acquired for “national security” into a housing scheme, causing a loss of Rs1.92 billion to the national exchequer.

The report submitted to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday stated: “During audit it was found that Civil Aviation Authority (GM Walton Aerodrome Lahore) could not get vacated CAA land at Walton Aerodrome measuring 19.21 acres from PAF that forcibly occupied the land in 2006-07 on the pretext of national security and for setting up radar. However, the same land was sold out to members of Pak Falcon Society for which each member had paid the cost of land/development. This resulted in unjustified/unauthorised occupation of CAA land valuing Rs1,921 million.”

The CAA replied that there were many pending land issues between it and the PAF, which were under process for settlement, according to the report.

The audit officials, on the other hand, were of the view that matter needed to be taken up at an appropriate level to decide/resolve the issue.

Audit report submitted to PAC reveals unauthorised occupation of CAA land causes Rs1.92bn loss to exchequer

The CAA board had at its 139th meeting on Nov 2, 2011 expressed displeasure over the encroachment upon the CAA land and directed that old encroachments at all airports be identified and the airport managers/officers concerned who failed to safeguard the CAA land from encroachment be penalised.

The departmental accounts committee (DAC) had referred the audit para to the PAC in December 2012 and also directed the CAA to provide original title of allotment of land to the PAF for the setting up of radar.

In a meeting held on Jan 18 this year, the CAA informed the DAC that the issue of land between the authority and PAF was under process for settlement through proper adjustments. However, it said, the issue was being taken up with the PAF for return of the unilaterally occupied land or carrying out necessary adjustment/compensation with mutual consent.

The DAC, however, was not convinced with the CAA reply and submitted the audit para to the PAC for discussion and decision. The audit report suggested that “PAC may like to take appropriate action for unauthorised occupation and utilisation of CAA’s land”.

The CAA officials informed the PAC that the area in question was already out of bounds for civilians and, therefore, the land could not be used for residential or commercial purpose.

PAC member Hina Rabbani Khar suggested that since a senior PAF official was also a member of the CAA board of directors, the board might be dissolved. She expressed surprised that the land had been converted into the housing scheme in 2006-07, no action was taken against the officials responsible for causing losses to the national exchequer.

PAC chairman Shahbaz Sharif asked why the matter had not been settled at the DAC level and constituted a special committee headed by Senator Shibli Faraz to investigate the issue.

Published in Dawn, February 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1461122/paf-converts-land-for-national-security-into-housing-scheme-in-lahore>

ILLEGAL LAND ALLOTMENTS ‘BEING LOOKED INTO’

By Mohammad Zafar Published: February 1, 2019

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal on Wednesday said the provincial government was taking swift measures to functionalize all departments for public relief and would fulfill its responsibilities to secure local population’s rights.

A delegation from district Harnai led by provincial minister Noor Muhammad Dummar informed the chief minister about their problems and sought his immediate attention.

He assured the delegation of development across the province and pledged protection of tribal land.

“The people of mineral production areas were the first beneficiaries of their natural resources and the government has been working to introduce a mechanism to protect local population’s rights,” the chief minister said.

Discussing illegal land allotments in Balochistan during previous regimes, Kamal said, “We have been seriously looking into the illegal land allotments in Balochistan and would take action against the mafia involved”.

He added that the government had issued notices to 500 individuals allotted land and mountains.

“The provincial government is keen to provide justice to the local population and all illegal allotments will be cancelled to secure the rights of locals on their resources,” the chief minister said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1901331/1-illegal-land-allotments-looked/>

ILLEGAL LAND USE

Editorial January 28, 2019

ALL sections of the power elite are not equal. It was therefore all the more unexpected when on Thursday, at the Karachi’s Supreme Court registry, Justice Gulzar Ahmed demanded answers to certain questions that many dare not articulate, at least in public. This spectacle occurred before a two-judge bench during the hearing of a case pertaining to illegal construction in the city. The judge wanted to know why the armed forces and the Civil Aviation Authority were running wedding halls and cinemas, asking whether it was their job to do so. Driving home his point about the security risks inherent in such ventures, he assailed the existence of wedding halls in the vicinity of the Karachi airport, which was the target of a major terrorist attack in 2014, and the Central Ordnance Depot. He also ordered the wedding hall inside Askari Park to be demolished immediately and the land restored to its intended use.

In a predatory state, the levers of power are concentrated in a few hands, both elected and unelected; a supporting cast of corrupt civil bureaucrats, unscrupulous businessmen, police and local strongmen enables them and maintains the status quo. In this unequal hierarchy, the less privileged live in a state of perpetual insecurity. A recent, particularly harrowing illustration of this was the anti-encroachment drive in Karachi where thousands found their decades-old means of livelihood destroyed. A far bigger travesty than small-time traders trying to make a living in a city that has not provided them the means to do so strictly by the book are the actions by the well connected who derive illegal profits from Karachi’s real estate. Using land legally entails it being employed for the purpose for which it was allotted. Yet we see umpteenth examples of ‘china cutting’, of amenity plots swallowed up by shopping malls and wedding halls, land demarcated for sewerage plants taken over by residential colonies, etc. There must be a reckoning for those involved in such large-scale violation of land-use regulations.

Published in Dawn, January 28th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1460252/illegal-land-use>

MARCH 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 25TH TO MARCH 31ST 2019

MARKET POTENTIAL: ‘FOREIGN INVESTORS SHOW INTEREST’

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 29TH, 2019 | LAHORE

Foreign investors have shown interest in Pakistan due to immense market potential and improved governance in the country. The speakers stated this while speaking at a seminar organized by Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) to introduce “Land lease and incentives for foreign and local Entrepreneurs in Pakistan”, here on Thursday.

PCJCCI Vice President Ahmed Hasnain said that PCJCCI was making focused efforts to attract foreign investors towards Pakistan, for which the proposals were being derived to ease out the land lease procedures in the country. He said that the challenges of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy can only be addressed by creating a conducive environment for investment.

Chairman PCJCCI Standing Committee on Financial Service Dr Iqbal Qureshi said that this seminar is part of the series of PCJCCI awareness campaign on entrepreneurship and investment promotion between China and Pakistan. He asserted that the country needed radical changes in the economic policies for enhancing ease of doing business, for which land lease incentives can play pivotal role.

Fareedullah Qureshi said that entrepreneurship was viewed as a combination of innovation and risk taking phenomenon by the world economists. The promotion of entrepreneurship thrives, high growth rates creating opportunities for all spheres of society, whose positive impact, ultimately, reaches the poor strata of the society in the form of employments. The world had become more globalized, where technology and communication had allowed businesses expanding to the international markets, talent and information. He further said that the foreign remittances can be enhanced from \$20 billion to \$30 billion by giving more incentives to the investors.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190329459385/>

RS460BN QUESTION

Noman Ahmed March 28, 2019

THE Supreme Court’s acceptance of Bahria Town’s Rs460 billion offer has brought relief and joy to several stakeholders. The super realtor views this verdict as a victory for the path it adopted with this mega scheme and similar ventures.

Collusion with authorities capable of disposing state land, employing retired but still influential top brass, winning the public perception battle by tapping into the self-interested aspirations of the middle class, developing a commercial stakeholder force in the form of estate agents and go-betweens, and stretching the development to such a scale as to effectively silence critics without effort were some overt strategies.

Unprecedented as this retroactive legalisation of a monumental fraud may be, there are still several crucial questions to answer.

The land in question was meant to be used to develop an incremental housing option for the poor. This format has been found to be most effective to reach the underprivileged, bypassing the procedural rigmarole of application, computer balloting and allotment. Small land parcels of 60, 80 or 120 square yards are demarcated according to a proper land sub-division plan by the concerned authority. Bare minimum infrastructure such as basic water supply (often through non-piped formats) and transportation are provided to keep the land affordable.

Where does the fate of low-cost housing now stand?

Households wishing to avail this scheme are invited to begin living in a reception area with their belongings to prove their need, and are then moved to an identified plot and allowed to construct with the means and material they can afford, with technical and financial assistance from organisations.

As a consequence, the urban poor and low-income groups access housing without falling into the trap of speculation, time delays and overpricing. The model, which has acquired finesse since it was first implemented in Hyderabad in the 1980s, is internationally recognised for its effectiveness and has been successfully piloted in Karachi, Ghara, Lahore, Peshawar, etc. While it has no subsidy at any stage, the model requires land allocation by the land-owning agency to make it happen. With a huge chunk of land now usurped by the mega realtor, one wonders how the urban poor in this region will ever have access to affordable housing.

Usually, when an attempt was made to occupy state land for any private purpose of profiteering, the judiciary would spring into action to prevent it and uphold the public's interest. The construction in 2009 of a superstore on a playground in Karachi's Lines Area is an example. As maintained by the Supreme Court, the building had to be demolished and the land restored to its original amenity status. Despite review petitions, the honourable court maintained its original position.

However, if misconduct in land management is done on a massive scale, and supported by thousands either as catalysts, cronies or covert agents, can the legal outcome be different? It may, in fact, create a major incentive for many dormant real estate adventurers to emulate the path adopted by Bahria Town. In the final analysis, land — the most important resource for housing — will simply become inaccessible to those who are still without shelter. In other words, targeted attempts to dispose urban and regional land for housing will become next to impossible.

At its present value, the sum offered by Bahria Town would make up over 68 per cent of the expected public development programme of the forthcoming federal budget. Many inferences can be drawn from this number, not least of which is that there are individuals and business conglomerates whose financial clout is commensurate with that of national development budgets. But, somehow, the dubious and semi-documented nature of this wealth is not netted by our taxation bodies.

The court has yet to decide about the coffers into which this sum shall be deposited. If it goes back to the same institution or tier of government that colluded to make the real-estate scheme a reality, it will be tantamount to a 'big win' for the abettors of this malpractice.

One option could be to create an endowment fund to support housing for the urban poor — the actual intended beneficiaries of this land before it morphed into the present fiasco. The endowment could

have the mandate to support, develop, dispose of and manage low-cost housing access through professionally established procedures.

Manned by an independent board of directors with proven records of acumen and honesty in the housing sector, such an institution may be empowered to acquire land, develop and dispose of housing by following the refined process of incremental development. It may also be allowed to enhance its capital base by various available financial options. After all, it is the responsibility of the state to provide the underprivileged with access to decent shelter.

The writer is chairman, Department of Architecture & Planning, NED University, Karachi.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1472365/rs460bn-question>

PUNJAB TO SET UP MORE LAND RECORD CENTRES: MINISTER

KHALID ABBAS SAIF | MAR 28TH, 2019 | FAISALABAD

Punjab Minister for Revenue Col Malik Muhammad Anwar (retd) has said under the vision of Punjab CM Sardar Usman Buzdar, 115 more land record centres were being established across the province to minimize the rush of applicants on other centres for prompt service delivery of revenue department.

Minister revealed this while presiding over a meeting of Revenue Officers here at the Circuit House. Member Consolidation Board of Revenue Muhammad Ali Kamboh, Divisional Commissioner Mehmud Javed Bhatti, Deputy Commissioners Sardar Saifullah Dogar, Hafiz Shouqat Ali, Mohsin Rasheed, Syed Aman Anwar Qudvai, Additional Commissioners Rai Wajid Ali, Mehbub Ahmad, Khadim Hussain Jilani, ADCs Revenue Tariq Khan Niazi, Wahid Arjumand, Rizwan Mehmood, Tariq Niazi, ACs and Tehsildars were present in the meeting.

The Punjab Revenue Minister said the special attention was being given on raising the standard of services at land record centres. He asked the administrations of four districts to take necessary steps for the establishment of new land record centres including identification of suitable land and other necessary departmental facilities. He urged upon the revenue officers for focusing their attention on improving the land record management system and achieving the recovery targets of govt dues.

He said revenue officers should attain the full command over their professional duties for the best performance of the revenue department. He said land property and assets had much importance in the social and economic system of the society and citizens approached the revenue department for sale and purchase of their land properties and other relevant matters, the revenue officers should perform their responsibilities with honesty for maintaining transparent record of the revenue department. He stressed upon completing the remaining revenue record computerized to make it in lines with the modern technology. He also stressed upon regular disposal of revenue cases and said the applicants should be provided relief relating to the revenue department swiftly besides keeping the revenue record updated.

Revenue Minister directed for ensuring the security and safety of the record and said state land should be protected from the land grabbers. The minister cleared that the performance of the revenue department was being supervised directly by CM Sardar Usman Buzdar who bring the positive

change with regards to service delivery and provision of immediate relief to the applicants regarding the land properties matter. Divisional Commissioner Mehmood Javed Bhatti welcomed the Minister and assured for best service delivery of revenue department in Faisalabad division. He said the revenue officers would be further mobilized to meet the recovery targets and land record management.

He said the govt objectives would be achieved by working very hard with passion. He also gave the details of state land which have been got retrieved from illegal possession. He informed that 168,540 kanal state land for the rural areas and 752 kanal land urban areas had been got vacated from the land grabbers during campaign against the land grabbers. Member Muhammad Ali Kamboh said the regular monitoring of the performance of the revenue officer would be carried out for making the revenue department more active and vibrant.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190328459068/>

BAHRIA TOWN OFFER FOUND TO BE ABOUT RS 100 BILLION MORE THAN AMOUNT CALCULATED IN JUDGEMENT

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 27TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Supreme Court has noted that the offer made by Bahria Town Limited is about Rs 100 billion more than the amount calculated in the judgement dated 04-05-2018, which compensates for deferred payments in instalments. The Supreme Court on Thursday last accepted Bahria Town (Pvt) Limited offer of Rs 460 billion for its Karachi Super Highway Project land, and restrained National Accountability Bureau (NAB) from filing references against it.

The judgement released on Tuesday says; “We are enjoined by the judgement dated 04.05.2018 to protect the third party rights of 16,896 acres of land.” In that judgement one of members of the implementation bench, Justice Faisal Arab, had undertaken an exercise tentatively determined the approximate financial worth of the land.

According to that exercise, the tentative financial advantage that Malir Development Authority would have acquired, had it undertaken a scheme itself was Rs 150,000,000,000 for 7,068 acres. However, the land in question is 16,896 acres and applying the same formula, the approximate monetary benefit of the land would be about Rs 360,000,000,000.

The court said that in view of the judgement dated 04.5.2018, they had directed the National Accountability Bureau to commence the investigation against BTLK with regard to the land in question. The NAB as per the court direction had completed the investigation and also prepared the reference to be filed in the Accountability Court.

In this view of the matter, the said reference shall not be filed for the time being. However, if there is any default in making payments in terms of the aforesaid order or otherwise any other violation in any of the terms and conditions, the NAB shall immediately file the said reference, which shall be proceeded with in accordance with law.

The judgement said that in the event of default in repayments, Bahria Town Limited shall be liable to pay mark-up on any defaulted sum at the rate of 10% per annum. This shall be in addition to other penal consequences.

Each monthly instalment shall be paid/settled in full by the 7th day of each month in advance. Thirty per cent of outstanding amount of Bahria Town Limited towards its allottees as well as future sale proceeds, collected or deposited by Bahria Town shall be transferred to the designated account already opened by the Supreme Court. Such an amount shall be utilised towards the down payment and instalments.

Bahria Town undertakes to provide within 15 days the list of all its bank accounts in which such payments are to be received. The bank accounts shall not be varied without the permission of this court.

All payments shall be deposited in the designated account already opened as per directions of this court. Failure to deposit the down payment or two consecutive instalments or three instalments in total, shall constitute a default resulting, inter alia, the whole balance amount shall become due and payable.

The security for payments will be properties, undisputed land owned by Bahria Town which it gave in nullified exchange, non-saleable land or built up property in BT Karachi.

The said properties cannot be encumbered, burdened, mortgaged, varied, transferred or sold by Bahria Town without the permission of the court. The past/present directors/shareholders/promoters of Bahria Town Limited Karachi, i.e., (1) Malik Riaz Hussain s/o Malik Aashiq Hussain, (2) Ahmed Ali Riaz s/o Malik Riaz Hussain, (3) Bina Riaz w/o Malik Riaz Hussain and (4) Zain Malik s/o Arshad Malik) shall furnish personal guarantees to the satisfaction of the registrar of this court whereby they shall be jointly and severally liable for any default which may be committed by Bahria Town in terms of this order.

Bahria Town is permitted to allot and deal with 16,896 acres, the property in question, as a builder/developer only. Upon receipt of entire payment, leasehold rights of 16,896 acres may be transferred on lease by the Sindh government and/or the Malir Development Authority to BTLK for a period of 99.

Bahria Town shall complete the project and all constructions shall be compliant with all the applicable laws, rules and regulations including Sindh Building Control Authority laws.

The court said that the order relates to only 16,896 acres of land in (deh) falling within the controlled area of MDA. The Sindh government and the MDA shall ensure that any land beyond this stands retrieved and no excess land shall be allowed to be occupied by BTLK.

Any violation of this direction shall entail criminal action both against the functionaries of Government of Sindh, Malir Development Authority and the management of Bahria Town or whosoever is found responsible.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190327458748/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 11TH TO MARCH 17TH 2019

SC RESERVES RULING ON BAHRIA TOWN'S OFFER OF RS450BN ON MALIR SCHEME

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter March 14, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its ruling on whether or not to accept a fresh offer by the Bahria Town (Pvt) Limited to settle a case pertaining to its Malir or Karachi Super Highway project in lieu of payment of Rs450 billion.

“Either you have something to celebrate or nothing to rejoice about,” observed Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed while postponing further proceedings for March 21, adding that “we believe the matter has run its course”.

On Tuesday, senior counsel Barrister Syed Ali Zafar, on behalf of Bahria Town, had put forth a proposal suggesting a total payment of Rs485bn as full and final settlement for all its three cases.

Of this amount, Rs440bn was to be earmarked for the 16,896-acre Malir or Karachi Super Highway project, Rs22bn for 5,472 kanals at Takht Pari Rakh (Rawalpindi) and Rs23bn for the 4,542 kanals of Sulkhtar and Manga land (Murree). The apex court would decide about two of the cases after dealing with the developer's Malir project.

Counsel says total payment will be made in eight years

The court put off further proceedings after Advocate General for Sindh Salman Talibuddin, on behalf of the Sindh government, and Farooq H. Naek, representing the Malir Development Authority (MDA), said they had no objection to the offer made by the developer.

A three-judge bench of the court had taken up the implementation of its May 4, 2018 judgement in which it was held that grant of land to MDA by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of Bahria Town and anything done under the provisions of the Colonisation of Government Land Act 1912 by the provincial government was illegal and “of no legal existence”.

The land was granted for launching an incremental housing project, but instead of launching such a scheme the MDA exchanged it with Bahria Town that launched a scheme of its own, the judgement had held.

The apex court clarified that it would recognise only the site plan of Bahria Town, Malir, identifying 16,896 acres in the district that had been signed both by the developer and the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission.

It also told the counsel that while putting forward an offer, he should bear in mind that the court was “not sitting on a negotiating table”.

The counsel explained that the total payment would be made in eight years and that the developer would make a down payment of Rs20bn that would include Rs10.75bn which had already been deposited with the apex court.

A sum of Rs2.25bn would be paid on a monthly basis for the first five years and the remaining amount would be paid during the subsequent three years.

The court said it would deal with the issue of securities in case of default of payments later.

When the counsel requested the bench to order transfer of the land's title to Bahria Town, Justice Faisal Arab said the developer would have the power of attorney to sell and deal with the lands but the title could be transferred only when the entire payment had been made.

The counsel also said the amount the developer was paying should include all the taxes and other charges, but the court explained that the court could not rewrite the law.

When asked to comment, the advocate general for Sindh said "whatever is due under the law is due".

The developer requested the court to order the National Accountability Bureau to close its investigations and also to refrain from proceeding further in such investigations for all times to come against the officials, officers and directors of Bahria Town.

The court, however, said this would depend on acceptance of the developer's offer and if the proposal was rejected the law would take its course and the court would move on.

Justice Saeed reminded the counsel that Bahria Town had initially offered only Rs85bn for the Malir scheme. At this, the counsel requested the bench not to mention the amount.

During the hearing, a request was also made to allow the developer to advertise sale of land, but the court ignored the plea. In an earlier hearing, the court had barred the developer from issuing advertisements.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1469528>

SC BENCH QUESTIONS ALLOTMENT OF 20 KANALS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF JAMIA HAFSA

By Nasir Iqbal | 3/13/2019 12:00:00 AM

ISLAMABAD: A three-judge Supreme Court bench which is hearing the Lal Masjid case, on Tuesday questioned the allotment of 20 kanals in H-11 for the construction of Jamia Hafsa.

The SC bench hearing the case is headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed and includes Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Ijazul Ahsan.

The Lal Masjid conflict started with the Jamia Hafsa girls occupying the adjacent children's library on Jan 22, 2007 in retaliation for the razing down of seven 'unauthorised' mosques by the city administration.

The confrontation built up in the succeeding month and erupted into armed clashes when a Ranger was killed on July 3, 2007 by gunfire from the mosque.

The army was called in the same night and special forces stormed the mosque after the suspension of water and electricity supply failed to subdue the alleged militants inside.

The SC however, summoned complete records along with the site plans, maps and pictures to ascertain the real picture. The court also directed the Islamabad police to furnish a separate report on missing children when the parents of two children complained before the court.

Earlier on Oct 2, 2007, the Islamabad administration and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) had given an undertaking before SC for arranging for the construction of a new Jamia Hafsa building at an alternate site that was to contain a research centre and a hostel.

CDA Chairman Amer Ali Ahmed, who is also currently Islamabad chief commissioner, told the court that in 2011, land was allotted in H-11/2 for the construction of a Jamia Hafsa in line with SC directions.

The CDA chief also informed the court that in 1970, CDA had allotted 9,533 yards, of which 206 yards went to the Jamia Hafsa, adjacent to Lal Masjid, which was operating under the Auqaf Department, and Maulana Abdullah was appointed the prayer leader who was succeeded by his son, Maulana Abdul Aziz.

Maulana Abdul Aziz was removed from the position in 2004 but he still held control of the mosque, the chairman said.

During previous hearings, SC was told that an agreement was reached between the then Islamabad Capital Territory chief commissioner, and Jamia Hafsa Principal Majida Younas, also known as Ume-i-Hissan and Maulana Abdul Aziz.

The Dec 29, 2011 agreement talks about handing over a large chunk of the land in H-11/4 which was earlier reserved for the National Institute of Science and Technology for the construction of a madressah, research centre and hostel for students of the Jamia Hafsa.

The land will be given in lieu of the comparatively small plot of land where the now demolished Jamia Hafsa building stood.

The agreement also required the parties not to utilize in any manner the entire 250.56 square yards previously used by Jamia Hafsa for any purpose except for a prayer ground of the Lal Masjid. It was also agreed that no party would claim any further monetary or land compensation in the future in any form.

Justice Isa recalled that in 2011, SC had ordered that the mosque will be built by CDA the ownership of which will remain with the authority.

No one has the right to run a private organisation on CDA land, Justice Ahmed observed, adding that if someone wants to develop a mosque, they should purchase land from the authority. He added that neither Islam nor the law allowed land grabbing.

Justice Ahmed also wondered why the agreement was finalised with Ume-i-Hissan since she was the wife of Maulana Aziz, a government employee.

Justice Ahsan regretted that the federal government did not have the capacity to free a mosque on state land in the capital city.

‘Why is state land being doled out like this,’ he asked.

Deputy Attorney General Sohail Mahmood told the court the government had already complied with the earlier directions of the apex court by providing compensation.

Out of 103 people, the court was told, 11 personnel of security forces and three innocent passersby were killed along with 89 militants who were in a `state of war with the armed forces.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=13_03_2019_004_003

BAHRIA RAISES OFFER TO RS485BN FOR SETTLEMENT OF CASES

Nasir Iqbal Updated March 13, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Just a day before a formal hearing, Bahria Town (Pvt) Ltd furnished before the Supreme Court a final proposal by raising its offer to a total of Rs485 billion as full and final settlement for all the three cases pertaining to its projects in Malir, Rawalpindi and Murree.

Of the Rs485 billion, Rs440bn will go to the 16,896-acre Malir project or Karachi Superhighway Project Land, whereas Rs22bn will be earmarked for 5,472 kanals at Takht Pari Rakh (Rawalpindi) and Rs23bn for the 4,542 kanals of Sulkhtar and Manga land (Murree).

At the previous hearing on March 6, a three-judge Supreme Court bench headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed had asked Barrister Syed Ali Zafar, representing the Bahria Town, to consider increasing their offer further when the developer had proposed Rs450 billion for all the three projects.

The bench on Wednesday (today) will take up the implementation of its May 4, 2018 judgement in which it was held that the grant of land to the Malir Development Authority by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of Bahria Town and anything done under the provisions of Colonisation of Government Land Act 1912 (COGLA) by the Sindh government was illegal and of no legal existence.

Developer wants ownership of land it possesses as per proposal furnished before SC ahead of formal hearing

The land was granted for launching incremental housing scheme, but the MDA instead of launching the scheme exchanged it with Bahria Town facilitating it to launch a scheme of its own, the judgement had held.

In the fresh proposal, the developer explained that the total Rs485 billion will include fees, charges, duties, taxes on land price, regularisation fee for full and final settlement of all the three projects.

The offer also includes certain terms and conditions for payment related to the 16,896-acre Malir project. According to the proposal, the developer will make a down payment of Rs20 billion commencing six months from the finalisation of the proposal reminding that Rs10.75 billion has already been deposited with the apex court in addition to Rs4.7 billion to the Sindh government.

This Rs15.47 billion should be adjusted against Rs20 billion, the proposal stated, adding that six months period was necessary to reinstate the trust and confidence of the investors and reorganizing the inflow of the pending instalments from the allottees.

During the six months, 30 per cent of the sale proceeds collected or deposited in the Bahria Town accounts related to the project land will be deposited everyday by the developer in the accounts designated by the Supreme Court.

The proposal maintains that the remaining Rs420bn will be paid during the next eight years in monthly instalments, explaining that an average monthly instalment of Rs2 billion will be paid during the initial five years and average monthly instalment of Rs8.33 billion during the subsequent three years.

According to the proposal, the remaining 70pc of the sale proceeds collected/deposited in the Bahria Town accounts relating to the project land will be retained/ utilized by the developer for rapid and smooth completion/development/maintenance of the project, land, contractor and other expenses/liabilities payment etc.

The proposal suggests that the Bahria Town will also pay a markup at the rate of 3pc per annum commencing from the end of five years period on all amount outstanding at the end of the fifth year out of the total consideration of Rs440 billion relating to the Karachi project. The markup will be paid annually.

The developer or its sponsors would have the right to transfer any of the developed property/asset to the government in lieu of the payments outstanding or sell any property/asset else to pay the outstanding amounts, the proposal said.

Moreover, it added, the land in possession of Bahria Town would also stand transferred to it as an owner with immediate effect.

Similarly, all the ongoing enquiries, investigations by all agencies including the Federal Investigation Agency, NAB, Federal Board of Revenue, anti-corruption department will also be directed to be ceased and these agencies will be refrained from proceeding further in such investigations for all times to come.

The proposal stated that the Supreme Court would also pass an appropriate order that this arrangement would ensure that no loss, financial or otherwise, had been caused to the Sindh and the Punjab governments or any authority, departments of the federal as well as the provincial governments, it suggested. The same terms and conditions will also apply to the other two projects, the proposal added.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1469314/bahria-raises-offer-to-rs485bn-for-settlement-of-cases>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 4TH TO MARCH 10TH 2019

DASU PROJECT PANEL ACCEPTS DEMANDS OF AFFECTEES

Khalid Hasnain March 10, 2019

LAHORE: The steering committee for the 4,300MW Dasu Hydropower Project has accepted all demands of landowners/affectees, ending the main obstacle in the way of acquiring thousands of acres land required for launching civil and other works for completion of the scheme.

“It is really a major development, as the issue of land acquisition, which had been pending since 2015, stands resolved after the steering committee, in its 14th meeting held on March 5, finally accepted the affectees’ demands including increase in the cost of land, regularisation of the unlawfully built structures and change of category of land,” a senior official privy to the meeting told Dawn the other day.

During its 13th meeting held last month, the committee could not take decision on the compensation criterion for affectees after it observed that the special committee, which was assigned the task to persuade the people to surrender their land for the project, work out the financial implications (in case of acceptance of demands) and suggest measures to the government in resolving the issue, actually did not give any recommendation, leaving the final decision on the part of the government keeping in view the options mentioned in its report.

Land acquisition, related costs go up from Rs12bn to Rs36bn

After surveying the area, the special committee members in their joint report had mentioned demands of the affectees, their affidavits that their demands wouldn’t exceed further, a joint petition for the government regarding compensation etc.

They had also mentioned three options, including one regarding criteria for compensation in line with that adopted for Basha Dam land acquisition. However, they didn’t recommend anything to take a final decision in this regard owing to ‘fear’ prevailing among the government officers due to actions of the NAB, Anti-Corruption Establishment, FIA and other law-enforcement agencies [that] continued for the last one year or so in the wake of various inquiries/cases, especially over the allegations of ‘asset beyond means.’

However, the steering committee asked the provincial government (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, senior member Board of Revenue, chief secretary etc) to do some more work in this regard so as to resolve the issue in the next meeting.

“In the last meeting, the committee had rejected one of affectees’ demands that was related to change in category of land. Similarly the committee was of the view that instead giving a flat 10 per cent (per year) increase in the land cost, the affectees should be given a lump sum increase in the light of CPI (consumer price index), cost escalation, devaluation of rupee etc.

However, when a report after working out the aforementioned factors, was presented to the committee in its March 5 (14th) meeting, the difference was just about Rs4 billion or so,” the official, who requested anonymity, explained.

“So the committee members, including the Wapda chairman, the federal minister (water resources) were unanimous in resolving the issue rather than pending the matter over such a minor difference of amount for a mega project. Therefore, the committee accepted the entire demands of the affectees [finally],” he added.

The official said since the committee accepted the demands, the total land acquisition and related costs increased from Rs12 billion to Rs36bn that included Rs26bn (cost of the land) and Rs10bn for compensation regarding properties (houses, commercial buildings etc), built-up and conversion of the

land (barren to cultivable) through improvement/development made after imposition of section 4 of the land acquisition act. So the affectees' demands such as 40 per cent increase (10pc increase per year in cost of the land, 2015 to 2018), regularisation of the illegally built structures on the land after imposition of section 4, improvement of the land, change of category of land were met finally, he said.

The official said the total land required for the project was 9,875 acres that included 1,987 acres as priority land required for launching civil works. "Of 1,987 acres, we have already acquired 740 acres where we have started work," he said.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468628/dasu-project-panel-accepts-demands-of-affectees>

OPERATION LAUNCHED TO RETRIEVE OVER 11,000 ACRES OF FOREST LAND

The Newspaper's Correspondent March 10, 2019

LARKANA: A big operation has been launched to retrieve 11,247 acres of forest land illegally occupied by cultivators of various crops in Larkana district.

In pursuance of relevant orders passed by the Sindh High Court, the Larkana circle of the divisional afforestation office with the help of heavy machinery launched the operation from Amrote on Saturday.

Escorted by a contingent of police, staff of the forest department kicked off the operation to retrieve the occupied areas from unauthorised growers and peasants in 15 forests.

Divisional forest officer Iftekhhar Arain said the staff faced no resistance from the occupiers during the day's activity, in which tractors and excavators were used to uproot crops grown on the Amrote forest lands.

He said the department could seek assistance of Rangers personnel if need be and in this regard it was in touch with the home department.

The Larkana divisional circle of the forest department has 51,127 acres of forests of which 11,247 acres had been encroached upon over the years, the DFO told this reporter.

Sources said the occupiers had been cultivating different crops amid feeble action from the department. One of the crops appeared to be wheat, they added.

While destroying the standing crops, the staff also dismantled the pumping machines being used in farming.

Mr Arain said that small villages comprising katcha (makeshift) huts existing on 918 acres of the occupied forest land would also have to be removed.

The sources said that in recent weeks, the Sindh government had also cancelled leases of 1,344 acres of forest land. When asked about it, Mr Arain said if any crops were found to have been cultivated on these lands, they would also be destroyed, he said.

The 15 forests to be covered in the ongoing operation are located in all four talukas — Larkana, Ratodero, Dokri and Bakrani — of Larkana circle.

The drive would continue till March 29, said the officer.

The Sindh High Court, Sukkur circuit bench, had ordered removal of all encroachments from forests while hearing a constitutional petition (No. 1115/2008) filed by a citizen, Raza Mohammed. The bench had ordered the respondents to submit a compliance report by March 26.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468596/operation-launched-to-retrieve-over-11000-acres-of-forest-land>

SHC SEEKS COMPLETE RECORD OF LAND ALLOTMENTS

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 9TH, 2019 | KARACHI

Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday sought the complete record of land allotments in metropolis from Karachi Development Authority (KDA) with the directives to furnish this record by March 14, 2019. The division bench of SHC headed by Chief Justice SHC Ahmed Ali M. Sheikh issued these directives in a case pertaining to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) inquiries against former Local Government Minister Sindh Jam Khan Shoro and others. Jam Shoro moved the court for a pre-arrest bail in NAB inquiries related to land allotments.

NAB prosecutor told the court that one inquiry against Shoro and others have been completed and has been sent to Chairman NAB for approval. Chief justice SHC directed DG KDA to appear in person on March 14, 2019 along with the record of the allotments of lands in the city.

Meanwhile, a division bench of SHC headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar ordered Information Ministry and PEMRA to submit their replies in a petition regarding airing of Indian movies and dramas by March 15, 2019. SHC bench issued directives in a petition filed by Justice Helpline against the airing of Indian movies and dramas and requested the court to ban Indian contents in view of tense situation on India-Pak border.

Bench showed anger over the absence of counsel of PEMRA. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar said that people don't appear in hearings unless warrants were issued against them. "Issue the warrant and just see how they rush to come here," bench head stated. Court ordered to send the notice on PEMRA office at Karachi and ordered the respondents to submit their replies by March 15, 2019.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190309453182/>

OPERATION AGAINST ENCROACHMENT ON FOREST LAND IN THE OFFING

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent March 08, 2019

HYDERABAD: Senior officers of forest, revenue and police departments on Thursday vowed to launch a grand operation on Monday (March 11) against encroachment on 33,235 acres of forest land in compliance with the order of Supreme Court.

A meeting of the officers of three departments presided over by Matiari Deputy Commissioner Pervez Ahmed Baloch decided further that police and anti-encroachment force would also carry out a flag march on Saturday to warn law breakers. Action would be taken against encroachments in the light of the apex court order without any discrimination, he said.

Hyderabad divisional forest officer Sanaullah Buledi said that of 70,275 acres forest land in Matiari district 16,940 and 747 acres had fallen prey to encroachment and illegal allotment, respectively, while another 15,548 acres had been leased out as per agro-forestry policy.

He said that now total area under encroachment and illegal allotment came to 33,235 acres in Matiari district only. The forest department had also had notices published in dailies to warn encroachers, he said.

He said that Supreme Court had ordered the Sindh government on Oct 27 last year to remove encroachments and illegal allotment on forest land throughout the province and subsequently Sindh cabinet meeting held on Jan 7, 2019 in Karachi took a landmark decision to cancel all leases by forest chief conservator under the agro-forestry lease policy after which the leased land of forests came under the definition of encroachment.

“It is a good opportunity for the forest department to protect, raise and preserve forests as the judiciary and both federal and provincial governments have joined hands to save forests,” he said.

The federal government had launched plantation campaign across the country and nature was also aiding the effort with heavy rains and snowfall, creating an ideal situation for the rebirth of forests, he said.

Published in Dawn, March 8th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468216/operation-against-encroachment-on-forest-land-in-the-offing>

SENATE BODY GIVES 60 DAYS TO RESOLVE PTDC LAND ISSUE

By Shabbir Hussain Published: March 8, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Functional Committee on Devolution has given 60 days to the authorities concerned for resolving the prolonged issue of 172 acres of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) land occupied by a private firm at Gadani Fish Harbour.

The committee, which met on Thursday under the chairmanship of Maula Bux Chandio discussed the transfer of PTDC land to a private company having the petitioner in the meeting.

It was stated that the petitioner was subjected to injustice and called for addressing the reservations of the company in a proper manner. The federal government failed to ensure ownership rights, it highlighted.

The committee expressed that it would extend its support to the petitioner if the federal government did not address the reservations and the petitioner would be summoned again. The petitioner would also be able to present the report of the committee’s decision to the Supreme Court.

The petitioner maintained that his company was working on the land since 2002 and a lot of development work had been completed. “We have purchased the land from the Balochistan government. We have not encroached upon it,” it was stressed.

The petitioner argued that after working so many years, the provincial government informed that the land belonged to the PTDC and it was mistakenly sold. On this, the company pursued courts to settle the matter.

Later, the PTDC published the invitation for tenders in newspapers for the sale of the land through the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA). The petitioner said that his company won the tender after making the highest bid and awarded the letter.

The company was also informed that final approval for the land would be given by the prime minister (PM).

“Now what should we do now,” the petitioner asked and underscored that the matter is due for the commission. The Senate committee has also given its verdict in the company’s favour.

However, the problem was that the decisions were not being implemented. “What wrong have we done? If a mistake has been done, it is the fault of the government departments”.

The additional secretary of the cabinet division said that the land belonged to the federal government.

To this, committee chairman questioned if it was Centre’s property then where was it when a huge amount of development work was being carried out on the land.

In this prolonged time, the matter was referred to the court and also to the Senate committee, he said adding that the court directed the committee to give the verdict.

Chandio asked that it should be known why such a committee was not formed.

The additional secretary said that a summary has been sent to the PM proposing the formation of the committee.

Reacting to this, the chairman said that he refused Pakistan Peoples Party leader Raza Rabbani’s advice of referring the case to National Accountability Bureau or Federal Investigation Agency.

Senator Gen (retired) Salahuddin Tirmizi maintained that after the 18th Constitutional Amendment the subject of tourism has been devolved to the provinces so the assets should also be given to the provinces.

He added that the only solution was to hand over the PTDC assets to the provinces.

After this, provinces should decide for themselves regarding such matters.

Committee members were of the view that the departments handed over to the provinces through the amendment have been re-operating with different names for the federal government, which is constitutionally unjustified.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1925229/1-senate-body-gives-60-days-resolve-ptdc-land-issue/>

BAHRIA TOWN GETS LAST CHANCE TO UP MALIR LAND OFFER

Nasir Iqbal March 07, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday provided the last chance to Messrs Bahria Town (Pvt) Ltd to settle the case by further scaling up the price of the Malir lands where it had developed a housing society and revising the payment schedule.

The opportunity was granted by a three-judge bench, headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, after Barrister Syed Ali Zafar representing Bahria Town had enhanced its offer from Rs405 billion to Rs435bn, which would eventually go to the Sindh government. The bench observed that the figure of Rs435 billion did not seem appropriate and said the developer might like to consider offering a better figure.

The bench had taken up implementation of the May 4, 2018 judgement of the apex court which held that the grant of land to the Malir Development Authority by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of Bahria Town and anything done under the provisions of Colonization of Government Land Act 1912 (COGLA) by the Sindh government was illegal and of no legal existence. The land was granted for launching incremental housing scheme, but the MDA exchanged it with Bahria Town to launch a scheme of its own, the court observed.

Earlier, the developer had offered Rs405 billion after enhancing it from Rs358 billion and Rs250 billion to purchase 16,896 acres of lands in Malir and that after deducting Rs14 billion that the developer had already deposited with the court, the rest of the amount would be payable in 12 years in instalments of Rs2 billion per month for the first six years and Rs3 billion per year for the remaining six years.

SC implementation bench to hear NAB prosecutor general on 13th

The court, however, rejected the payment schedule with a direction to improve the same.

At the outset, Justice Saeed reminded the counsel that the original site plan that the Bahria Town had furnished before the court was similar to the one that the Prism Marketing, an authorized dealer of the developer, had presented.

At the last hearing, the court had expressed surprise that the sale of plots in certain precincts or areas did not fall in the area owned by Bahria.

On Wednesday, the counsel submitted an application assuring the Supreme Court that it had developed the Malir project on the land in its actual possession of 16,896 acres and that Bahria Town would provide plots and would fully compensate those who had purchased plots outside the existing boundaries.

The court said the bench would hear the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor general on March 13 and cautioned the respondent that if the NAB prosecutor general convinced the court and if the order did not come in favour of the developer, the law would take its course. But the court also assured the defendant that it had full faith in the counsel for Bahria Town when he hinted at the possibility that his client would further improve the price and reduce the period of payment.

During the proceedings, Khawaja Tariq Raheem representing residents of the housing scheme remarked that financial problems the country was facing would be solved if three or more individuals like Malik Riaz came forward.

The court asked Assistant Advocate General for Sindh Sibtain Mahmood whether the Sindh government had any objection if the matter was concluded in terms of any proposal. He said the provincial government would have no objection.

The case was then adjourned for March 13 with a directive to all the relevant parties to be present on the next date of hearing.

Published in Dawn, March 7th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468095/bahria-town-gets-last-chance-to-up-malir-land-offer>

PDP CHIEF CALLS FOR OPERATION AGAINST LAND MAFIA

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 7TH, 2019 | KARACHI

Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) president Altaf Shakoor has demanded from the Sindh Governor, Chief Minister, IGP and DG Rangers to initiate a grand operation in Sindh against land mafia to retrieve the occupied farm and forestlands. He said hundreds of thousands of farms and forestlands in Sindh continue to go occupied by land mafia and a grand province-wide operation is now overdue to retrieve these lands.

He said illegal occupation of lands in Sindh is a very serious issue, as police and district administration generally opt for not intervening as powerful politicians and influential feudal lords are often involved in this matter. He said though the apex court has already issued directives to the Sindh government to retrieve all occupied forestlands, but implementation of such directives is always painfully slow.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190307452186/>

HOUSING SOCIETIES: MANGO GROWERS LAUD PM'S DECISION TO BAN CONSTRUCTION ON AGRICULTURE LANDS

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 6TH, 2019 | KARACHI

There was an urgent need to clamp agriculture emergency and move ahead with a rationale agriculture policy in line with the ground realities, said president of Mango Growers Cooperative Society Ltd, Zahid Hussain Gardezi.

He was of the view that with dwindling water resources and capitulating fertile agriculture lands to real estate mafia, future generation may face hunger more than poverty.

He said that the farmers and peasants in Pakistan who comprised more than half of the country's population have no face value and are meted out ad hoc treatment to their problems.

A country where almost whole economy is derived through agriculture productivity, whose industry and exports are directly or indirectly associated with the toil of the farmers have never been looked after on priority by any government in Pakistan.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190306451980/>

COMPLETE LAND RECORD OF SINDH BOR LINKED WITH GIS

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 4TH, 2019 | KARACHI

All revenue record of Sindh Board of Revenue has been linked with Geographic Information System (GIS). Now, the investigating agencies and other relevant departments would be able to obtain valuable data regarding the encroachment on the state land from the Sindh Board of Revenue, said a handout.

It would also help identify change in the area that reflected the encroachment/land grabbing during the certain period of time. By doing so it had become easy now to determine the state land owned by unauthorized owners/allottees/leaseholders consequently the encroachment on the state land.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190304451539/>

APRIL 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 1ST TO APRIL 7TH 2019

CDA RECOVERS 500 KANALS OF LAND FROM ILLEGAL OCCUPANTS

By Iftikhar Chaudhry Published: April 7, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICTA) further geared-up the anti-encroachment operation in Sector E-12.

The operation to get possession of acquired land continued on till Saturday despite it being weekly holiday. During the operation, several illegal constructions and structures built on the acquired land were demolished and 500 kanals of state land was recovered from the illegal occupants.

The operation was participated by the officers and staff of Enforcement Directorate, officers of ICT Administration, Land and Rehabilitation Directorate, Islamabad Police while rangers were also deputed to counter any untoward situation. During this operation heavy machinery of the MPO Directorate was also used to remove constructions from acquired land.

During the operation, 186 rooms and 26 boundary walls constructed illegally on the acquired land were demolished and substantial area was retrieved from illegal occupants.

In addition to this an illegal settlement over 150 kanals of state land was illegally occupied by cottages, tents etc. which were all ultimately demolished and the land was recovered from illegal occupants.

During the operation, some miscreants started stone pelting on the teams conducting the operation due to which the person operating the chain shovel and five police constables sustained injuries, all of whom were shifted to hospitals. The elements involved in this incident were arrested in obstructing official work.

CDA has reiterated that operations against encroachments on the state land will continue on without any fear or favour. In order to listen and resolve compensation issues, locals authorities have established a camp office of Land and Rehabilitation Directorate in Sector E-12 so that compensation issues could be resolved on the spot.

Even after a period of 37 years, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has failed to shift automobile workshops from I-10 Markaz.

CDA had decided to allocate a separate place for workshops which could be hazardous for the environment and human health. For this purpose, it allocated plots in Sectors I-10 and I-11 so that the workshops could be shifted.

However, despite having legal ownership of the land CDA continuously fails to evict the workshop owners who are encroaching on the land.

However, this matter has still not caught the attention of the current CDA recovers 500 kanals of land from illegal occupants

government which claims to be distressed about the cleanliness of populated areas as well as going green.

Similarly, a number of workshop owners in Sector G-7 Khadda Market are reluctant to move their running businesses despite acquiring plots in G-10.

The well-placed sources in CDA said that around 37 years ago, the government had constructed Sectors I-10 and I-11 with as many as 5,000 plots for CDA employees. Out of which around 500 plots were allocated in both sectors to these workshops.

However, the workshop owners who allegedly colluded with the CDA officials managed to avoid moving their shops despite being given possession of new plots. Furthermore, a decision in this regard was made in 1996 by the administration in which around 335 plots were allocated for these pollutant generating workshops in Sector I-10.

However, many owners, despite acquiring plots did not move and continued working in the same locations. Some owners clearly rejected the government's offer and pursued their activities.

Moreover, it has also been discovered that some shop owners are trying to persuade CDA officials to given them possession of expensive plots. Similar efforts were foiled by the Prime Minister in the previous tenure.

A high official of CDA told Daily Express that the workshop owners had refused to shift their workshops to I-11 because of the unavailability of amenities. However, it was still ambiguous whether they acquired the possession of new plots or not.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 7th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1945143/1-cda-recovers-500-kanals-land-illegal-occupants/>

PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED LAND GRAB

By Our Staff Correspondent | 4/5/2019 12:00:00 AM

HYDERABAD: Civil society activists and Sindhi Adabi Sangat (SAS) members on Thursday extended their full support to Mohan Madhosh, a publisher of Sindhi books, whose plots have allegedly been occupied by a group of armed men at the behest of some influential figure of the area.

The activists joined the protest held outside the local press on Thursday by the family members and relatives of Mr Madhosh.

The family claimed that the landgrabbers forcibly occupied their plots in Qasimabad and started construction work there. They said the occupiers were threatening them with dire consequences if they tried to lodge any complaint with police or any other authorities concerned.

They appealed to the federal and provincial governments to take notice of the matter.

SAS general secretary Ahmed Solangi, Ayoub Khoso, Taj Joyo and other leaders have expressed sohdarity with Mohan Madhosh and appealed to the police, government and judiciary to help provide protection and justice to the family. The noted that acting upon an earlier application filed by Mr Madhosh, the Hyderabad commissioner had got the construction stopped but it was resumed on Thursday (today).

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=05_04_2019_117_006

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 8TH TO APRIL 14TH 2019

IN PUNJAB, ABETTORS OF LAND GRABBERS GO SCOT-FREE

By Rameez Khan Published: April 14, 2019

LAHORE: Fearing the opening a Pandora's Box, the PTI-led provincial government seems to have deliberately turned a blind eye to the abettors of land grabbers, allowing the very functionaries responsible for protecting the government land to go scot-free during the entire stretch of the campaign to date.

According to the data collected by The Express Tribune from the all the concerned offices, apparently, no inquiry has been carried out against any government servant to ascertain why state-owned land was encroached in the first place.

The entire focus of the government was to retrieve the land from the clutches of land grabbers, and in the process, many of the FIRs lodged against illegal occupants were under sections of law that pertained to creating hindrances in government work. Per several assistant commissioners, sections of law pertaining to encroachment were not used except for in certain cases.

According to several senior government servants in the province – who have previously served as Deputy Commissioners in Punjab – no land owned by the provincial or the federal government can be encroached upon without either the connivance of the very offices entrusted with the task to protect the land or due to their negligence. In either case, an inquiry should be held to investigate the misconduct.

Officers also explained that many low-ranking government servants have made millions by colluding with land mafia. This money also travelled upwards – to superior officers – to force them to remain silent and pretend as if they know nothing.

Officers further detailed that no matter how strong the land mafia is, corrupted government officers still got their share from the encroachers in one form or the other.

“Even when some of the officers, posted as DCs during the tenure of the previous government, tried to hold inquiries regarding the activities of suspicious individuals, the matter died down because of the use of influence or through immediate relief from appellate authorities,” a senior officer informed The Express Tribune.

Officers further stated that it would be unfair to the system if some black sheep were allowed to continue to serve in the government and guard the same land that they once helped allowed to get encroached.

“It will be like allowing a fox to guard a hen house,” one of the officers opined. “[Allowing dishonest officers to continue to hold positions in the government] would be unfair to the honest, hardworking low-ranking government servants who try to make both ends meet in through their hard-earned monthly salaries.”

One of the officers, who talked to The Express Tribune on condition of anonymity, went on to say that it would be like giving an amnesty to corrupt government servants.

“The current government got its mandate on the slogan of holding accountability of the corrupt. Then why is this government shying away from probing the matter?” the officer questioned, adding that the government fears a backlash from within the system because of which it is not willing to take action.

“Unless and until corrupt officers are made to pay for their crimes, government lands would continue to be encroached without anyone batting an eye and allowing the same people to make money off the malpractice again,” he said.

Assistant Commissioner Lahore Ahmad Raza Butt, who has led the encroachment operations in the most thickly-populated commercial markets of Lahore, said that it is very difficult to find who is responsible in these matters.

“When issues are taken up with the higher authorities, there are no substantial evidences to incriminate officers,” Butt added. “[Therefore], inquiries should be held to ascertain if any government officer at any level has been involved in providing shelter to the mafias.”

Butt also confirmed that multiple FIRs have been lodged during these operations but majority were under sections pertaining to creating hindrance in government work and very few under the section of encroachment.

Speaking on the matter, Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Mujtaba Paracha said that the government has been toeing a very practical policy in securing state-owned land and putting it to good use.

“The government has been considering various options regarding the retrieved land to ensure it is not encroached upon again,” Paracha said.

On April 4, 2019, the Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Local Government & Community Development Muhammad Basharat Raja addressed a meeting and said that the local bodies have evacuated more than 100,000 acres of state-owned land worth Rs180 billion during the on-going anti-encroachment drive across the province.

“The most precious, 7354 acres of land worth Rs145 billion has been evacuated in Lahore, while 58,177 acres of land has been evacuated in DG Khan, 20,963 acres in Faisalabad, 11,740 acres in Sargodha, 4,709 acres in Sahiwal, 3873 acres in Multan, 3312 acres in Gujranwala, 2695 acres in Bahawalpur and 909 acres of state-owned land has been emptied of illegal occupation in the Rawalpindi Division,” he said.

The minister also directed the deputy commissioners and other relevant officers in Punjab to continue the drive with more strength and ensuring that no encroachments resume on such lands in future. He warned the heads of relevant departments of strict action and said that if any officer, irrespective of their seniority level, is found guilty of involvement in corruption, they will be held accountable for that.

It was also learned that per the available data, 623 FIRs had been lodged in Lahore alone while fines worth of Rs471,000 were imposed. According to almost all the officers that spoke to The Express Tribune, despite the complaints, not a single inquiry had been initiated against any government officer.

It has been learnt that the government is considering the sale of surplus state-owned land that is not required even for any futuristic use. The Express Tribune further learned that the government intends to earn billions by disposing off this land that would provide some relief to the cash-strapped government.

When approached, a member of the Colonies Board of Revenue Sohail Shehzad talking told The Express Tribune said that all district governments have been asked to identify their surplus lands and report them to his office.

“Districts governments have also been asked to identify the land that may be required for any use in future so that the remaining land with the districts can be identified,” he said. “In first phase, we propose to auction lands which are under the possession of districts, whereas in the later stages, lands under the possession of the other provincial department might also be brought for auction through the Punjab Privatisation Board,” Shehzad said.

He said that the matter was being deliberated by the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Business, adding that the third meeting of the committee was held on Monday, April 8, wherein he was expecting to receive a green signal for the finalisation of the policy discussion.

“Once through the Cabinet Committee, the matter would be then be taken to the Cabinet for its approval on the subject,” he explained.

According to another senior officer, the Board of Revenue has also sought the strength of the Punjab Privatisation Board to gear up for the gigantic task ahead.

Moreover, the board has suggested to increase the privatisation limits of its committee so as to accommodate more workload of privatisation at the committee level.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1950298/1-abettors-land-grabbers-go-scot-free/>

WB TEAM CALLS ON MAYOR

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter April 12, 2019

KARACHI: City Mayor Wasim Akhtar on Thursday assured a delegation of the World Bank of full cooperation of the city's municipal government in the development of the metropolis.

He was speaking to a delegation of the WB that met him at the head office of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation to discuss and review development projects for the city initiated by the international donor agency.

KMC Metropolitan Commissioner Dr Syed Saif-ur-Rehman and other senior officers of the municipal administration were also present in the meeting.

Mr Akhtar apprised the Bank team of the KMC's anti-encroachment drive in the city and said that the removal of encroachments at such a huge level would definitely bring about positive changes and environmental improvement in the city.

He said that the anti-encroachment department of the municipal administration used to take action against encroachment, but the anti-encroachment action initiated on the orders of the Supreme Court brought remarkable improvement in the city.

He said that the apex court had declared all allotments of the plots on drains, parks and amenity plots illegal.

The mayor said all allotments made by different departments were cancelled and the state land was repossessed during the anti-encroachment drive.

Published in Dawn, April 12th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1475480/wb-team-calls-on-mayor>

4,000 ACRES OF RAILWAY LAND RETRIEVED FROM ENCROACHERS: SENATE BODY INFORMED

ABDUL RASHEED AZAD | APR 12TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Senate Standing Committee on Pakistan Railways was informed on Thursday that over the past five years railways retrieved 4,000 acres of encroached land countrywide, worth Rs 15.7 billion.

Inspector General Railways Police Wajid Zia, while briefing the panel which met under the chairmanship of Senator Asad Al Khan Janjua, said that during the past five years more than 200,000 people were caught travelling in train without a ticket.

The panel expressed serious concerns over thousands of acres of encroached land; saying that recovery of the land must be top priority of the PR management. The panel directed the PR to take concrete steps in recovering state land from encroachers.

Wajid Zia told the Senate committee that railways had a land of 1,70,976 acres, while 3,179 acres land was currently encroached in different parts of the country. He informed the Senate body that 1,574 acres of land was encroached in Lahore, followed by 514 acres in Karachi, 528 acres in Sukkur, 248 acres in Multan and 225 acres in Rawalpindi.

The chief executive officer (CEO) PR informed the committee that live-tracking system has been activated in all trains to enable passengers to get information about train's timings and location on mobile phones. He said the tracker systems were installed in train engines across the country to keep update about the location of trains.

The passengers will receive all the information, including the train's timings, in Urdu and English languages. They would also get information during travel on engine failures and replacements, he added.

The committee stressed the need for amendments in the railway laws to make the performance of Railways Police effective. They further said that the mechanism to lease the Railways property should be reviewed in depth.

The officials of the Railways Ministry informed the committee that the rail route from Karachi to Dhabeji wasn't closed; rather it was expanded for smooth rail operations. The committee was further informed that the government had promised ownership rights to slum settlements erected before 1985.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190412463594/>

115 NEW LAND RECORD CENTRES SET UP IN PUNJAB

RECORDER REPORT | APR 12TH, 2019 | LAHORE

With a view to providing facilities relating to 'fard' and mutation of lands to the growers at their doorsteps, the Punjab government will set up 115 new land record centres (LRCs) in the province with the cost of Rs 2.19 billion. "These centres will recover their entire cost within a period of one and a half years of their establishment and will also generate millions of rupees every year," Punjab Revenue Minister Malik Muhammad Anwar disclosed this while addressing a press conference here on Thursday. Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) Director General Rao Aslam and senior officers of Board of Revenue (BoR) were also present on the occasion.

Talking about different measures and new initiatives taken by the BoR and PLRA during the last eight months, the Minister said that a policy of zero tolerance has been adopted against corruption, adding that all the revenue officers and junior staff of districts and divisions have been warned in this regard.

Dilating upon the performance of PLRA, he said that the Authority has collected revenue of Rs 1.44 billion during the financial year 2017-18. He added that PLRA would easily achieve the revenue targets set for the current financial year.

"BoR has saved a sum of Rs 1.817 billion and surrendered it to the finance department. The service structure of 'tehsildars' and 'naib-tehsildars' is being prepared on a fast-track basis for their timely promotion, as the same is lying pending due to the negligence of past rulers," he added.

The Minister said that tribal area of Koh-e-Suleman in Dera Ghazi Khan has been converted into the settlement area by uplifting its status to the level of a tehsil, which will help resolve their problems relating to 'fard' and mutation of lands at the local level. In response to a question relating to pending cases of litigation in the BoR, he maintained that all the judicial members have been directed to visit all the nine divisions of the province for early settlement of the pending cases.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190412463617/>

RAILWAYS ASKED TO RETRIEVE ENCROACHED LAND

By Our Correspondent Published: April 12, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Railways on Thursday directed the Pakistan Railways (PR) to submit details of its encroached land in Lahore, Tando Adam and Mardan division and urged the organisation to take solid steps to retrieve the land from illegal occupants.

The committee meeting, chaired by Senator Asad Ali Khan Junejo, briefly discussed the functions and performance of the PR police along with its role in stopping and removing encroachment on railways land across the country.

The committee appreciated the innovative steps introduced by railways authorities to improve services. However, it expressed deep concerns about the encroached property of the Railways.

The PR's chief executive officer (CEO) informed the committee that live-tracking system has been activated in all trains to enable passengers to get information about train's timings and location on mobile phones.

He said the tracker systems are installed in train engines to get update about train location. "The passengers will receive all information, including the train's timings, in e Urdu and English languages. They would also get information during travel on engine failures and replacements," he added.

The committee stressed the need of amendments in the railway laws to make the performance of Railways Police effective. They added that the mechanism to lease the railways property should be reviewed in depth.

Police Railways Inspector General Wajid Zia informed the committee that railways track did not come under their jurisdiction directly so they could not retrieve the encroached railways property.

He said there are 5,000 police personnel working in the field but the sanctioned strength is 7,000. The PR police needs final approval from the establishment division to overcome its shortage of staff.

Zai said about 3,979 acres land was encroached on throughout the country. However, 801 acres had been retrieved. Some 230 acres of the retrieved land are commercial in nature. The committee recommended constituting a special unit of Railways Police to retrieve the encroached land.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1948662/1-railways-asked-retrieve-encroached-land/>

DESPITE TALL CLAIMS, SINDH FAILS TO RECOVER FOREST LAND WORTH BILLIONS

By GM Jamali Published: April 12, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh government appears to be helpless in recovering forest land worth billions of rupees from individuals exercising heavy political influence, The Express Tribune has learnt.

Despite repeated claims of getting the encroachers evicted, the provincial authorities have yet to make concerted efforts and now apparently attempting to hoodwink the courts by tweaking the records.

The Supreme Court and the Sindh High Court (SHC) have time and again expressed displeasure with the provincial government over its failure to protect forests and allowing the felling of trees. On October 31, the SHC had issued an order for the illegally allotted land to be returned. In January earlier this the matter was raised again by the then Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar, who remarked, "Those with no right to govern are in power," Justice (ret'd) Nisar had said.

Maladministration, corruption, favouritism and political compromises have kept provincial authorities from implementing Supreme Court orders in this regard, exacerbating deforestation in the province.

As much as 80% of Sindh's forests have been encroached upon, with hardly 100,000 acres or just 0.3% of the province's territory remaining, according to Forest Department's estimates. The Sindh government has allowed felling of thousands of trees for commercial purposes under its 'utilisation policy' to generate revenue even as temperatures across the province rise every year due to deforestation among other factors.

A report submitted to the Sindh chief minister by Forests and Wildlife Secretary Asif Hyder Shah cited the chief conservator for the Sindh forestry department as saying that land grabbers have encroached over 145,300 acres of forest land and another 64,500 acres were illegally allotted.

On January 7 earlier this year, the Sindh Cabinet had cancelled the leases of 70,000 acres of forest land illegally allotted to different persons across the province and decided to initiate action against the influential persons who had been occupying 145,245 acres of forest land illegally. However, the action appears to have remained limited to paper.

While the chief conservator of forests, Aijaz Nizamani, claimed that they had recovered 110,000 acres of the encroached land in the past few months, he failed to provide any details to substantiate his claims. "There is no truth in the reports that we haven't been able to recover any land," Nizamani told The Express Tribune, adding that the forest department currently had 510,000 acres of land under its jurisdiction and was in fact worried about how best to protect it from encroachments. He could not, however, provide a district-wise breakup of the land they had recovered.

Meanwhile, The Express Tribune reached out to officials in the district administrations of six districts, who each refuted Nizamani's claims and said that there had been no eviction drive in their jurisdiction.

"The forest department must have evacuated the land only on paper so that the record may be presented before the Supreme Court on the next hearing," said one official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "In fact, the whole province would have known if 100,000 acres of land had been evacuated," the official added.

According to the report, the Sindh government introduced an 'agroforestry' lease policy in 2004-05 to allow local citizens to own some forest land. Under the policy, 72,000 acres of forest land in Sindh was approved for lease and distributed among 3,500 individuals.

Political interference and incompetence on the part of the field officials of the forestry department hindered the policy's implementation. For starters, the lease schedule only made it binding on lessees to plant trees on specific parts of the land allotted to them.

Then, forestry department staff, particularly divisional forest officers who had full power to cancel leases, failed to put a stop to violations of lease contract terms and conditions when lessees began committing them. Leases were cancelled only in a few cases, allegedly at the behest of individual interests.

Meanwhile, the provincial government allowed the felling of trees to sell wood and make space for agriculture under its utilisation policy without paying heed to its detrimental effects on the environment. No authority exercised vigilance in the absence of a policy to curb felling of trees, allowing influential individuals to encroach upon cleared out forest land. In collusion with local revenue officers, encroachers also built residential and commercial structures on forest land.

The revenue department also permanently allotted land owned by the forestry department without the latter's consent, going against both the government policy and the judiciary's instructions.

According to the forests and wildlife secretary's report, of the 145,300 acres of forest land encroached upon by land grabbers, 14,000 acres are located in Sukkur division, 25,656 acres in Khairpur, 2,522 acres in Mirpur Mathelo, 16,749 acres in Hyderabad, 191 acres in Mirpur Khas, 4,699 acres in Thatta, 2,870 acres in Tando Muhammad Khan, 450 acres in Karachi division, 26,588 acres in Dadu, 17,494 acres in Larkana, 2,949 acres in Shikarpur, 7,365 acres in Kandhkot, 1,056 acres in Khairpur, 21,061 acres in Shaheed Benazirabad and 1,220 acres in Badin division.

Of the 64,500 acres illegally allotted, 1,158 acres are in Hyderabad, 42,331 acres in Karachi, 900 acres in Sukkur, 1,343 acres in Thatta, 5,263 acres in Dadu, 4,992 acres in Larkana, 290 acres in Kandhkot, 6,637 acres in Khapro, 1,361 acres in Khairpur, 61 acres in Mirpur Mathailo and 164 acres in Tando Muhammad Khan.

The report expressed concerns that it has become impossible for the forestry department to retrieve the occupied land. It pointed out that the district vigilance committees formed under the charge of district and sessions judges based on SHC's directives could only make possible the recovery of seven per cent to 10 per cent of the occupied land.

The report also pointed out that the retrieved land has lost environmental benefits due to deforestation and the forestry department's lack of workforce and administrative expertise to grow forests on a large scale.

One recommendation in the report is to sell the land in question for five years through an agroforestry auction with the condition that makes it mandatory to cultivate trees on at least 50%. It states that it would be possible for the government to generate Rs2 billion to Rs2.5 billion this way.

The lease schedule should be reviewed in such a way that it ensures that lands encroached upon under the previous schedule and lands on which trees can be grown are included. The chief conservator, after completing the process in four weeks, should identify land that meets these criteria and present recommendations to the cabinet.

To ensure transparency of the financial rules and regulations, a three-member panel should grant approval for the lease, the report recommends. The chief conservator should recommend which land should be offered for lease and the administrative secretary should grant approval. This committee should be set up for every district.

The report also suggests setting up an autonomous department under the chief conservator to carry out GIS mapping and monitoring of forest land after a specified time. It recommends not allowing felling of trees under ordinary circumstances and making the department responsible for growing 100 new trees for every tree chopped down. It also calls for apprising the planning and development department of the aforementioned points before any developmental project is executed and issuing directives to the board of revenue to formulate a special team to review cases of illegal allotments.

Another suggestion put forth by the report is to initiate a tree planting and maintenance drive. The report also requests the chief minister to direct police and rangers to support the forestry department whenever needed and to make its research wing more dynamic and robust.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 12th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1948629/1-erciis-aut-reniet-despite-tall-claims-sindh-fails-recover-forest-land-worth-billions/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 15TH TO APRIL 21ST 2019

AUDIT FINDS LAND WORTH RS10B ENCROACHED IN PINDI

By Qaiser Sherazi Published: April 20, 2019

RAWALPINDI: A forensic audit report of 12 housing schemes owned by Rawalpindi Development Authority has revealed that land worth Rs10 billion has been encroached upon by highly influential people.

The report, a copy of which is available with The Express Tribune, noted that hotels, shades, warehouses, marriage halls, shops, showrooms, private offices, nurseries, roadside hotels, houses and commercial spaces and private car parks have been built at 303 points.

Moreover, the report notes that it is not just private institutions who have indulged in this practice, but government officials in the police and the municipal corporation, as well as financiers of various political parties, have also been involved in this illegal act for the past 35 years.

The report further reveals that there are over 20 small-to-medium sized encroachments in the Sherpao Colony while Millat Colony had 13, Ansari Market Scheme had 31, Gunjmandi Fruit Market had 19, Ghazni Colony had 15, Asghar Mall Scheme had 19, Saidpur Road Scheme had 19, Eidgah Scheme had 15, Dosehra Ground Scheme had 15, Mohanpura Scheme had 26, Civil Lines had 66 and Saddar City Road had 44 large-sized encroachments.

Amongst the shocking discoveries is that a traffic police warden receives Rs7,000 from stalls and shops set up on the footpath in front of Gulistan Cinema on the main road.

In Sherpao colony, a number of shops have been set up after sheds were erected outside shops in Sherpao colony.

Near Committee Chowk, a traffic police post has been encroached on.

A municipal auto workshop and a mosque have been built on RDA land behind Pindi Hotel.

Further, rent-a-car vendors occupy shops which were built by the Town Municipal Authority (TMA) apparently on RDA land in front of Larosh Hotel. The TMA also apparently receive rent from these shops.

The rent-a-car businesses also park their cars on the road, blocking the thoroughfare.

There were a number of private offices and schools which were found operating in residential plots.

On Saidpur Road Scheme and Asghar Mall Scheme, multiple houses were found to have been built while encroaching on park land.

In Civil Lines, a lawyer's hospital was found built on a residential plot.

In Mohanpura, Ansari and Ganjmandi markets, most encroachments were of store owners placing their goods outside the store limits.

In one instance in Mohanpura, a bathroom was built by encroaching on a road. A fully covered arcade built with bricks and steel were found.

Moreover, several officers of the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) have also been reportedly found to be involved in land grabbing.

RDA chairman Arif Abbasi, who confirmed the findings of the report, said that the audit was conducted by the authority and that it was currently being analysed.

“Those who have encroached upon government land will be sent soft notices,” Abbasi said, adding that those who do not voluntarily vacate the land, will be issued red notices after which the authority will launch a zero-tolerance crackdown to retrieve all encroached government land.

The audit report was completed within 45 and contains the names and phone number of the land grabbers as well as specifying the encroached space.

The 40-page report is expected to be dispatched to Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar. RDA will seek support from police and magistrate during its potential operation.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 20th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1954918/1-audit-finds-land-worth-rs10b-encroached-pindi/>

PAC PANEL WARNS OF SENDING LAND CASE TO NAB, FIA

By Our Correspondent Published: April 16, 2019

ISLAMABAD: A sub-committee of the Public Accounts Committee on Monday directed the Sindh Revenue Department to submit a fresh survey report regarding demarcation of a land owned by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in Karachi within two weeks.

The committee, chaired by member National Assembly (MNA) Shahida Akhtar Ali, warned both the CAA and the Sindh Revenue Department that in case of non-compliance of its directives, the committee would send the matter either to the Federal Investigation Agency or the National Accountability Bureau.

The Auditor General of Pakistan, in its report, had highlighted anomalies in the demarcation of the land owned by the CAA. The CAA officials requested the committee to issue directives to the Sindh Revenue Department for fresh demarcation of the land through Geographic Information System (GIS).

“We wish that the land dispute between the CAA and the Sindh government may be resolved amicably,” Shahida Akhtar Ali observed. A committee member Iqbal Muhammad Ali asked officials who else laid claim on the land apart from the Sindh government.

“I have heard that [the Pakistan Peoples Party leader] Nabil Gabol is also one of the claimants of this land,” he added. Shahida Akhtar Ali remarked that a woman named Ayesha was also claiming ownership of the land.

A Sindh Revenue Department official said according to their record, a company owned by Capt (retd) Abdul Haleem Siddiqui was owner of the land. He requested the committee to send the matter to Survey of Pakistan for fresh survey of the land.

The audit officials requested that the fresh survey must be time-bound.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1951678/1-pac-panel-warns-sending-land-case-nab-fia/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 22ND TO APRIL 28TH 2019

SAUDI ARABIA FOR EXPLORING MORE AVENUES OF INVESTMENT IN GWADAR

RECORDER REPORT | APR 26TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Saudi Arabia has expressed keen interest for exploring more avenues for investment in Gwadar as there is huge potential for trade and economic activities. This was deliberated during a meeting of Chairman of Saudi Shura Council with Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at a reception hosted in honour of the Saudi Shura Council, says a press release issued here on Thursday.

Senate chairman while talking to chairman of Saudi Shura Council Dr Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin Ibrahim Al-Shaikh and addressing a reception in honour of the visiting delegation here has observed that mutual trust and confidence has been witnessed in the decades long friendship between the two sides.

Referring to the investment opportunities in Pakistan, the Senate chairman observed that conducive environment exists for multi-sector investment and Saudi investors can benefit from the investment opportunities.

Sanjrani considered the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman highly important as it will help in laying the foundation for a new era of cooperation. The chairman Senate said that Saudi investment has helped rejuvenate the confidence of international community on Pakistan.

He said that during visit of the Crown Prince, the memoranda of understanding envisaging Saudi investment worth US\$ 20 billion were signed which is a manifestation of the fact that Saudi Arabia considers Pakistan an important country. –PR

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190426467394/>

SINDH CABINET APPROVES LAND FOR FIVE MORE POWER PLANTS IN THAR

RECORDER REPORT | APR 26TH, 2019 | KARACHI

Sindh cabinet has approved allotment of land for setting up five more power plants near Islamkot in Tharparkar. It was revealed to the media at a briefing on the decisions taken by the provincial cabinet. Adviser to the Sindh Chief Minister on Information, Law & Anti-corruption Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the cabinet also approved the first tranche of compensation for 757 affected families of Gorano dam and each family would get Rs 100,000 annually.

He said Sindh cabinet also discussed budget strategy. The cabinet meeting was informed that under National Finance Commission and OZT share, Rs 411 billion instead of Rs 669 billion had been transferred to Sindh government during fiscal year 2018-19. He said the shortfall had soared to Rs 269 directly affecting the development agenda of Sindh government.

The CM's adviser criticised the federal government, accusing it being the incompetent PTI government that made life of common people miserable through tsunami of inflation engendered by its policies. He said economy of the country was in alarming condition as the debt burden increased to Rs 1.6 trillion in last nine months while prime minister is not paying attention to make economy of the country better and instead he was using impolite and indecent language against his political opponents.

“Sindh cabinet has approved Rs 1 million each for the families of three victims belonging to Bajaur who were killed in an unfortunate incident in Larkana,” he said. Murtaza Wahab further said that Rs 20 million, one government job and one plot were approved by the cabinet for the police constable who embraced martyrdom in the attack on Mufti Taqi Usmani in Karachi.

He said Sindh government has fixed sugarcane price at the rate of Rs 182 per 40 kg for the season 2018-19. He said the cabinet approved the Sindh Explosive Act and referred it to the standing. “Amendment to the Sindh Advisers (Appointment, Powers, Functions, Salaries, Allowances and Privileges) Act, 2003, has been approved and referred it to Sindh Assembly,” he said, citing that under the clause (II) of the article 130, Sindh Chief Minister may appoint five advisers in his cabinet.

The adviser to Sindh CM said that powers of parole and allotment of B-class had been delegated to Secretary Home. He said Parole Law 1894 existed since British era and it had been used in case of any medical emergency to inmates or death of their relatives.

“A committee has been setup headed by a minister to evolve mechanism for check on prices,” he said, adding that PPP had never demanded resignation of Fawad Chaudhry but it only wanted resignations of those federal ministers who had links with banned sectarian outfits. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan had accepted demand put forth by PPP chairman and had removed some ministers and also declared them incompetent ones. He said PM’s decision in this regard had fully vindicated vision and sagacity of PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

Answering a question, Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that corruption reference regarding Karachi Intermediate Board would go to its logical conclusion in a completely transparent manner.

To another question, he said, Sindh government was well aware of situation of Thar and the Revenue Department has moved a summary for extending the wheat facility in Thar. He said decision in this regard would be taken at next meeting of Sindh cabinet. He said process would begin soon to fill 41 vacancies transparently.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190426467413/>

Nasir Iqbal Updated April 24, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court said on Tuesday it intended to find a solution under the law in the cases relating to encroachment of forest and Shamlat lands by Messers Bahria Town (Pvt) Ltd in the areas of Rakh Takht Pari in Rawalpindi, and Sulkhtar and Manga in Murree.

But, at the same time, a three-judge bench headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed made it clear that the window of opportunity in the two Supreme Court judgements in these cases was limited since these were forest lands which had to be reverted to their original state.

Earlier on March 21, the apex court had accepted Rs460 billion offer made by Bahria Town for the land for its Super Highway (Karachi) project. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1474734>

Forest land encroached upon by Bahria Town has to be reverted to original status, apex court observes

The court had taken up the implementation case of the three judgements of May 4, 2018 relating to Bahria Town namely the Karachi project and Takht Pari and Murree lands.

“We are not going to accept any fait accompli,” Justice Saeed observed while issuing notices to the Punjab government and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the Rakh Takht Pari case.

In the Murree case, the court also issued notices to the Environment Protection Authority of Punjab, saying the format of the case was much bigger.

When Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan, representing Bahria Town, mentioned other housing societies which also had encroached upon forest lands in Rawalpindi, like the Korang Town Housing Society, Airport Housing Society, CBR society, Police Foundation, PWD Housing Society, Doctors Colony, Media Town, etc, Justice Saeed wondered why he was missing some other names.

At this Advocate Khawaja Tariq Raheem, also appearing on behalf of Bahria Town, said that the court was referring to the Defence Housing Authority.

The court asked Additional Advocate General (AAG) for Punjab Qasim Ali Nawaz Chowhan to ensure that representatives of the forest department and all allied departments should be present when the cases would again be taken up on May 14. The AAG also accused Bahria Town of squeezing the banks of the River Korang.

On May 4, the Supreme Court in a majority judgement had held that the area of Takht Pari — 6km away from Rawalpindi near G.T. Road — encompassed 2,210 acres and not 1,741 acres. Therefore the exchange of land between Bahria Town and the Punjab forest department and the attestation of mutations were based on erroneous assumption about the area.

Likewise, in the case relating to 4,542 kanals of Sulkhatar and Manga (Murree) land, the court had held the land came under the category of Shamlat land and could be used only for limited purposes.

In the Karachi case, Bahria Town furnished details of land given in exchange to the Malir Development Authority and securities and accounts. The developer told the court that it had furnished Rs1.37 billion, 30 per cent of the amount it had received, whereas Rs10bn had already been deposited in the account of the court.

The Supreme Court also asked Aitzaz Ahsan to change the personal guarantees, as directed earlier, in a week.

One of the counsel representing Bahria Town said its chairman was in the United Kingdom due to serious threats to his life after the amount he had to pay to the government had been revealed.

Meanwhile, Bahria Town also filed an application requesting that the case be disposed of as it was ready to settle the Takht Pari case by purchasing 684 acres or 5,472 kanals for Rs13.13bn in 60 quarterly instalments, the first instalment to be paid three months after the court accepted the offer.

The developer also requested the court to order ceasing of all on-going investigations by all agencies, including NAB, and also direct the agencies to refrain from further investigations.

It also requested for a directive to the Punjab government to provide assistance to ensure conducive atmosphere for normal business activity, saying these arrangements would also mean that no financial loss had been caused to the government.

The application said due to the development carried out by Bahria Town, the value of the land in the vicinity had gone up manifold which also provide a tangible monetary advantage to the government.

The standard of the development carried out by the Bahria Town stood established as being the highest international standard, the application said.

Published in Dawn, April 24th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1478064/sc-wants-to-find-solution-in-pindi-murree-land-cases>

MAY, 2019

***NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 6TH TO MAY 12TH
2019***

ANOTHER LAND SCAM

Editorial May 12, 2019

AN old land scam in Karachi has been revived and is once again being perpetrated on hapless citizens looking for affordable options in a housing market increasingly beyond their means, where demand far outstrips supply. A recent investigative report in this paper about Malir Development Authority's Taiser Town Scheme 45 laid bare the project's dubious history which inspires little confidence in its ability, or even its intention, of fulfilling the stated objective of providing affordable housing for low- and lower-middle income families. In the 23 years since the scheme was first launched, even basic infrastructure remains missing; there is no provision for electricity, gas or water supply to the area. What there is in plenty, however, is people's yearning to have a house of their own, and their expectation that a government project would be a safer bet than a private, profit-driven scheme. This has enabled unscrupulous land authorities to entice many into parting with their hard-earned money. After all, empty promises are more difficult to resist when one is living hand to mouth in a one-room rented abode. Given it can take decades before a final verdict in civil cases is obtained, those affected — especially when they belong to the lower socioeconomic strata — are left with little recourse.

Questionable housing projects such as Taiser Town are intrinsically linked with the dire housing shortage in the country. The urban housing demand in Pakistan is at least 350,000 units per year. At present, the backlog is 11.5m units, a figure that increases by 200,000 annually. The most affected by far are the lower- and lower-middle income segments of the population; one obvious outcome is the densification of the localities in which they are already living and the consequent decline in the quality of life. Yet it is two decades since any major government housing scheme has been announced in any urban centre. Karachi, with its high levels of rural-urban migration, is particularly affected. Shelter is a fundamental human need. However, instead of the government disposing of land keeping social and developmental factors in mind, the land bureaucracy has become partners in crime with shady real estate developers and builders backed by sections of the power elite. Profit is the bottom line. Consider that the thousands of acres occupied by the colossal Bahria Town Karachi had been reserved for MDA to develop a low-cost housing scheme, and the scale of corruption becomes clear.

Published in Dawn, May 12th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1481774/another-land-scam>

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ORDER ON KARACHI MILITARY LAND IRKS SC

Naeem Sahoutara Updated May 10, 2019

KARACHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed dissatisfaction over a compliance report submitted by the defence secretary regarding removal of encroachments and commercial structures

from lands belonging to the military lands department in Karachi and ordered that its directives on the matter be implemented in letter and spirit.

A two-judge bench of the apex court, comprising Justices Gulzar Ahmed and Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel, resumed at its Karachi registry the implementation proceedings in a case about operation for removal of encroachments from amenity spaces across the metropolis, including the cantonment areas.

At the outset of the hearing, defence secretary retired Lt Gen Ikramul Haq along with attorney general Anwar Mansoor Khan filed a report regarding compliance of the court's directives issued on Jan 22 for removal of commercial activities from land belonging to the military lands department across the city.

However, the bench members termed the report "unsatisfactory and an eyewash" and asked the defence secretary why all the directives contained in the order had not been complied with in letter and spirit.

AG, defence secretary told to end commercial activities from cantonment areas

Attorney General Khan informed the bench that apart from a couple of points all the directives in the order had been implemented in letter and spirit.

The head of the bench, Justice Ahmed, told them that the entire order remained to be implemented and asked why a large marriage hall on the Pakistan Air Force land and the Global Marquee wedding hall near the FTC building had not been demolished in compliance with the order.

Expressing dismay over the state of affairs, the judges said the defence ministry was not acting on court orders and wondered what the purpose of the Supreme Court was.

"Should the apex court be shut?," asked Justice Ahmed while looking at the government's top law officer and defence secretary, adding they needed to implement the court's orders to first remove encroachments including the marriage halls and other commercial constructions from the cantonment areas in an anti-encroachment operation.

When asked whether the army had the authority to allot state land, Attorney General Khan maintained that the army was not a beneficiary of such moves.

Justice Ahmed noted that parks and playgrounds in the city had been taken over and named after martyrs. "Who knows maybe even I will become a martyr or be killed," he said.

The attorney general said that although martyrs were afforded a high status, there were a number of conditions that must be fulfilled to become a martyr.

"Do you mean to say I will not be able to become a martyr?," the judge remarked in a lighter mood and added "we were born to be martyred".

Citing the example of Defence Housing Authority, the judge said that state land in Karachi had been handed over to private parties by the military.

The bench told the defence secretary to ensure that all the encroachments being used for commercial activities were removed from all the military lands across the city in compliance with the court order.

It also instructed the director, Military Lands Karachi, to submit a compliance report to this effect by the next hearing.

The bench also expressed displeasure with the Pakistan International Airlines authorities for not demolishing a marriage hall being run on its land despite the order and told the officials concerned to demolish such marriage halls “right today”.

Published in Dawn, May 10th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1481347/non-compliance-with-order-on-karachi-military-land-irks-sc>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 13TH TO MAY 19TH 2019

‘28PC OF KCR TRACK CLEARED IN TWO DAYS’

Shazia Hasan May 17, 2019

KARACHI: “The area to be cleared to make way for Karachi Circular Railway [KCR] is 11 1/2 acres of which so far, in these two days, Pakistan Railways have successfully cleared about 13,300 yards, which comes to 28 per cent of the total area. Our prime focus right now is providing right of way for the project,” said Pakistan Railways Divisional Superintendent (DS) Syed Mazhar Ali Shah during a press conference at the City Station here on Thursday.

He said that their work to have the land vacated started soon after the Supreme Court order of May 9 whereby the Railways administration was directed to work with the local administration and clear the area for the trains to run in the next 15 days.

“Thereafter we met the commissioner Karachi to start the joint operation, which officially kicked off on Wednesday [May 15],” he said.

He reminded what the KCR would mean for citizens. “The KCR is in the better interests of the people of Karachi, who can do with better public transportation,” he said. “Later the KCR will be linked with the Karachi to Peshawar ML-1 project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor [CPEC] that will be like a transformation of the transportation system of this country as it will have a great impact on urban transportation,” he added.

Resettlement of people removed from encroached land is Sindh govt’s responsibility, say PR officials

Responding to a question asked about the people occupying the land that needed to be cleared, the DS said that the people were sitting on Pakistan Railways land at the cost of national interest. When asked about the 324 acres of land reserved for providing alternative settlement for the people affected by the KCR, he said that it was something that the Sindh government has to look into and not the Railways.

“But,” he added, “according to the design of the KCR network, 67pc of it happens to be elevated with just eight kilometres on ground level.”

When it was pointed out that the people living along the lines who were being called ‘encroachers’ were saying that they had been leased the land by Railways people themselves, the DS said that they have zero tolerance for anyone from the Railways involved in such matters.

“Earlier, until 2016, it was the Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA] which was working on KCR. JICA carried out the research, feasibility study, etc. Then later after 2016, the urban transport project came back to government of Sindh to be linked with the Green Line, Orange Line, etc, all of which is aimed at an efficient mass transit and transportation system that is a part of CPEC,” he said.

“But first things first, the loop line we want to clear right away,” he said, adding that Pakistan Railways would be sharing briefings about daily developments about their overall network, including the bottlenecks with the media throughout the operation on a daily basis.

Published in Dawn, May 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482702/28pc-of-kcr-track-cleared-in-two-days>

KCR LAND’S RETRIEVAL: SC ORDERS REHABILITATION OF PEOPLE TO BE DISPLACED

TANVEER AHMED | MAY 17TH, 2019 | KARACHI

The Supreme Court has ordered the relevant authorities to rehabilitate the people to be displaced from the operation for revival of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) and expressed the hopes that it would be done in one year. The SC in a detailed judgment on revival of KCR issued guidelines and directives for the revival of KCR as well as for rehabilitation of those to be affected from the operation to clear its track.

A two-member bench of SC comprised of Justice Gulzar Ahmed and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan in the detailed order stated that court Secretary, Railway with regard to operation of circular train in Karachi so also the local train. Secretary assured that so far the work of railway is concerned, the same will be completed within a period of fifteen days and thereafter the Sindh Government will take over the said project and run the trains both circular as well as the local.

The Sindh Government shall ensure that circular railway as well as the local railway get in operation within farther one month’s time, order stated and added that Chief Minister, Sindh, Mayor of Karachi, Chief Secretary, Sindh, the Commissioner, Karachi and the Railways Authorities shall ensure that this schedule of operation of circular as well as local train is adhered to and this service is made available to the people of Karachi within this period without fail and whatever assistance is required the Federal Government, Planning Division, shall give its input and ensure that the train is made operational within this period.

The Secretary, Railway stated that the matter regarding removal of the encroachment from the railway land has already been initiated and that he will ensure that all encroachment from the railway land is removed.

Court, however, noted that there are almost like thousands of residents on the encroached land who are residing there; and doing their business and such has been brought about by the railway itself.

It ordered the railway to ensure that the removal of encroachment will be made but the people who are dispossessed or dislocated from this operation are accommodated appropriately and for this purpose the railway is going to take assistance from the Federal as well as the Sindh Government and also from the Mayor, City of Karachi.

Secretary, Railway informed that a survey in this respect has already been made and all encroachers have been identified and their list has been prepared and the matter has also been discussed with the Sindh Government who has agreed to provide appropriate location for the resettlement of these encroachers.

Court cautioned both the Railway Ministry as well as the Sindh Government that wherever these encroachers are going to be settled, proper amenities like of a modern living shall be provided to them and such place is not going to be allowed to become another slum in the city of Karachi.

In this regard proper consultation with city planners and developers should be obtained in advance so also all engineering concerns as well as the environmental authorities be taken on board.

Court hoped that all these things will be done on top priority by all these authorities and the shifting will be achieved within a period of one year. Court ordered that progress report in this regard shall continuously be given by the Mayor of Karachi, Chief Secretary, the Commissioner, Karachi as well as the Secretary, Railway.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/05/20190517475970/>

SC SEEKS WORKABLE PLAN FROM BAHRIA TOWN IN LAND CASE

Nasir Iqbal Updated May 15, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked property tycoon Messrs Bahria Town (Pvt) Ltd to come up with a workable plan showing a way forward in cases related to the encroachment on forest and Shamlat lands in the areas of Rakh Takht Pari, Rawalpindi and Sulkhatar-Manga lands, Murree.

A three-judge bench, headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, also asked Barrister Syed Ali Zafar and Khawaja Tariq Raheem, the counsel for the real estate tycoon, to also compare the lands in their client's possession with those mentioned by the deputy commissioner in his report as having been encroached upon by Bahria Town.

The court had taken up the implementation case of two judgements of May 4, 2018 pertaining to Bahria Town projects in Malir, Takht Pari and Murree.

Nearly two months ago, the Supreme Court had approved the Bahria Town's offer of Rs460 billion for the Malir project.

Bench to study proposals filed by real estate tycoon for Rawalpindi, Murree lands

On Tuesday, the bench made it clear that the SC would issue necessary directives in the cases related to the lands in Rawalpindi and Murree after going through the proposals and set of solutions submitted by Bahria Town.

At the outset, Barrister Zafar told the court that his client would file a report identifying Shamlat and other areas in the forest land which were in Bahria Town's use.

Before postponing further proceedings till May 23, the Supreme Court observed that it would not go beyond the May 4 judgement. At this, Khawaja Tariq Raheem interjected that his client accepted the judgement.

On May 4, the apex court had in a majority judgement held that the area of Takht Pari — located six kilometres from the Rawalpindi city near G.T. Road — encompasses 2,210 acres and not 1,741 acres. Therefore, the exchange of land purportedly encroached upon by Bahria Town and the Punjab forest department as well as the attestation of mutations were based on erroneous assumption about the area.

Likewise, in the case pertaining to the 4,542 kanals of Sulkhtar and Manga land (Murree), the SC had held that the area belonged to Shamlat and could be used only for limited purposes.

At a previous hearing, Bahria Town through an application had requested the court to dispose of the case as it was ready to settle the Takht Pari case by purchasing 684 acres or 5,472 kanals at Rs13.13 billion in 60 quarterly instalments, the first instalment to be commenced three months after acceptance of the offer by the court.

The developer had also asked the court to order ceasing of all ongoing investigations by all agencies, including National Accountability Bureau, and also restrain them from further investigations.

The court was also requested to direct the Punjab government to provide all assistance to ensure atmosphere conducive for normal business activity.

According to the applicant, Bahria Town carried out development works as per international standards due to which the overall value of the land in the vicinity went up manifolds, thus providing a tangible monetary advantage to the government as well.

Published in Dawn, May 15th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482361/sc-seeks-workable-plan-from-bahria-town-in-land-case>

JOINT OPERATION TO RETRIEVE ENCROACHED KCR LAND TO BEGIN TODAY

Tahir Siddiqui Updated May 15, 2019

KARACHI: The city administration with the assistance of the Pakistan Railways and other institutions will launch a major operation from Wednesday (today) to retrieve the land of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) from encroachers, it emerged on Tuesday.

Official sources said that a decision to this effect was taken in a meeting chaired by Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Shallwani and attended among others by divisional superintendent of the PR and managing director of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority (SMTA).

The Supreme Court had last week given two weeks to the PR authorities to retrieve the land along the tracks of the KCR and hand it over to the Sindh authorities, who were also asked to make arrangements for making the KCR functional within a month afterwards.

According to officials, more than 29 acres of KCR land is occupied near Wazir Mansion; another two acres from Wazir Mansion to Orangi Nullah; 1.5 acres from there to Nazimabad; another 2.5 acres from there to Liaquatabad; and 3.25 acres from there to Gilani Railway Station.

Senior administration, police and Railways officials will lead the anti-encroachment operation

Two acres of the KCR land is illegally occupied from Gilani Railway Station up to Urdu University; another 4.25 acres till the University of Karachi; and one acre to Depot Hill near the Drigh Road station.

Talking to Dawn, Commissioner Shallwani said that the revival of the KCR had become extremely important in view of its inclusion in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

“The revival of the KCR is an important issue and it must be resolved through joint efforts of all stakeholders,” he added.

The commissioner said that the operation against encroachments within 50 feet of the two sides of the KCR track would be launched on Wednesday.

“A constant vigil on the two sides of the track will be maintained once the encroachments are removed”, he said.

Meanwhile, sources said that the meeting decided to immediately launch the operation to clear the right of way (RoW) for dual track on a priority basis.

They said that the deputy commissioners concerned along with SSPs concerned, senior officials of PR’s land department would be the focal executing team on the ground and lead the grand anti-encroachment operation.

The sources said that necessary security arrangements would be made by the city police during the operation to cope with any untoward situation.

During the meeting, they said, the commissioner proposed that the PR might revive the operation of the KCR on the existing railway system, given the limited capacity and resources of the provincial government at this stage.

However, the sources said that the Railways DS contested the proposal and told the meeting that any decision to this effect had to be taken by PR and the Railways ministry.

They said that the deputy commissioner of West district informed the meeting that 4.5 kilometres, out of 7.5km, had been cleared from all illegal encroachments.

DIG Operation (Railways) Azhar Rasheed Khan, KDA chief Abdul Qadeer Mangi, SMTA chief Iqtidar Ahmed, Shaikh Talib Fatah, anti-encroachment director Faisal Bashir Memon, DC South Syed Salahuddin, DC East Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, DC West Zahid Memon, additional DC Central Kamal Hakeem and other officials attended the meeting.

Published in Dawn, May 15th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482413/joint-operation-to-retrieve-encroached-kcr-land-to-begin-today>

SENATE PANEL WANTS BABUSAR TOP ROAD LANDOWNERS GET CURRENT MARKET PRICE

By Our Correspondent Published: May 15, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Senate sub-committee on communication has directed the district administration and the communication ministry to pay the Kaghan-Babusar Top Road landowners as per prevailing market rate instead of the price assessed 17 years ago at the launch of project.

The Senate panel in its meeting held on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to resolve the land acquisition issue of Kaghan to Babusar Top road.

Almost 17 year have passed but the government has not paid the landowners of the said project.

The owners were now demanding payment as per market rate instead of what National Highway Authority (NHA) was offering 17 years ago.

The sub-committee meeting was held in the Senate building on Tuesday under the chair of the Convener Senator Behramand Khan Tangi, which was also attendd by the NHA chairman Jawad Rafiq Malik, minister official from the district of Mansehra and others.

The committee took up the Babusar Top Highway project and land acquisition matter. The convener stated that despite passing of 17 years, the process of land acquisition after payment to the owners has not been closed.

Senator Salahuddin Tirmizi stated that 17 years ago NHA acquired land for Babusar Top road project at Rs380 million, now NHA officials say that the landowners are of the view that property value has increased therefore they should be paid Rs2.16 billion, whereas the Mansehra district administration has suggested an amount of Rs1.47 billion.

On the comments of the NHA official on the increased payment, Senator Tangi said that the demand of the owners to seek six per cent mark up on unpaid amount was justified.

NHA officials said they were in dialogue with the owners, but with zero outcome, the NHA-38 has ensured the land acquired would be paid soon if they agreed on the price, but the owners of the lands demands Rs2.16 billion, while NHA wants to pay 17 years old price of Rs380 millions.

“How incompetent were the officers of the NHA at that time that despite the knowledge that the prices of the land would increase with the passage of time, they did not clear the dues of the people in the project 17 years ago and now owners were demanding increased rates,” Tangi said.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 15th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1973055/1-senate-panel-wants-babusar-top-road-landowners-get-current-market-price/>

ENCROACHERS ON KCR LAND IN PANIC AFTER COURT ORDERS THEIR REMOVAL

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated May 14, 2019

KARACHI: Residents and shopkeepers said to be encroaching on Pakistan Railways land for many years have been in a state of panic since last week after the Supreme Court (SC) ruling called for vacating the land within the next two weeks to make way for the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR).

The SC, last Friday, gave two weeks to the Pakistan Railways authorities to retrieve the land from the people settled along the tracks of the KCR and hand it over to the Sindh government after ensuring that all those affected have been rehabilitated. The Sindh government, too, has been given a month's time for making the KCR functional.

“The people are very upset obviously, and understandably so,” Mohammad Ali Shah Kazmi, legal adviser for the Karachi Circular Railway Affectees Action Committee told Dawn.

‘The resettlement plan should have been carried out much before the removal of encroachments’

When asked why they were upset when the SC also spoke of providing them alternative places, he said that they should have moved to those so-called alternative places by now.

“It is the month of Ramazan and after learning of the court's orders the poor people have not even been able to eat at Sehri or Iftar properly,” he said.

“The resettlement plan should have been carried out much before the removal of encroachments.”

According to information shared by the Karachi Circular Railway Affectees Action Committee there is a resettlement action plan in place since 2013, which says that some 4,653 people will be moved and resettled elsewhere. “They were to be resettled near Juma Goth, adjacent to Shah Latif Town. There was also a tender notice floated for a boundary wall around the 324-acre open plot reserved for the purpose,” he said.

“Each affected family was to get a little home on 80 yards of land with Rs50,000 and transport for moving house with 30 days' notice. They still have letters that say so. But there are no houses built on that land and there is no place for these people to go,” the legal adviser added.

Though no one in Pakistan Railways was willing to speak about the matter openly, sources say that they are not really sure how to go about it. One source in the Railways said that they could not do much unless the Sindh government provided them force. With that not having happened and with the court order looming over their heads, the Railways have called their own police from several cities that comes under the federal government to do the needful. Meanwhile, the fate of the affected persons remains unknown.

Published in Dawn, May 14th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482081/encroachers-on-kcr-land-in-panic-after-court-orders-their-removal>

RESOLVING THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTIONS

RECORDER REPORT | MAY 13TH, 2019 | EDITORIAL

The apex court's ongoing effort to rid Karachi of encroachments from amenity spaces and commercial use of cantonment lands is getting frustrated as influential players try and resort to stalling tactics. Resuming on Thursday its proceedings regarding implementation of its January 22 order, a two-member bench comprising Justice Gulzar Ahmad and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan, had expected a compliance report but found the report submitted by the Defence Secretary “unsatisfactory and an eyewash.” Justice Ahmad reminded the secretary that the order had to be fully implemented,

expressing his displeasure over the fact that wedding halls and marquees in Karsaz and PAF bases remained operative. The court further observed that no one had the authority to give possession of state lands to private persons, yet the Defence Housing Authority had handed over state land to private parties. The defence ministry's involvement in such activities has long been a subject of public controversy. The resistance in the present instance does no good to its image. It can also cause it trouble, as the court warned non-compliance would invite contempt proceedings against the officers found responsible for disobedience.

The bench also took up a petition seeking contempt proceedings against the provincial minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani for his reported statement that he would prefer to resign rather than allow razing of any illegally constructed building. The city Mayor, Waseem Akhtar, had also made defiant remarks saying "we will not demolish buildings." Their concern about rendering people homeless is understandable, so is the plight of the occupants of illegal buildings who may have been trapped into buying these properties by unscrupulous developers in collusion with elements in the relevant government departments and agencies. Things being where they now are, a way can still be found around the problem provided the government has the will to resolve it, which is to find alternative housing for the affectees. In fact, the provincial government cannot absolve itself of responsibility for illegal constructions and the resultant haphazard growth of Karachi. It is worth noting that when the court asked them for the city's original master plan devised in 1952, along with subsequent changes to it, both the Sindh Building Control Authority Director General and the Mayor claimed to be unaware of it. No wonder as the court noted, 70 percent of the city has been occupied through unauthorized constructions, even the circular railway tracks have not been spared by encroachers. The court has now directed the Commissioner of Karachi to remove all illegally built multi-storey buildings in Delhi, Punjab, TNT and Neelam Colonies, strictly in accordance with the law, also giving Pakistan Railways two weeks to retrieve the land along the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) tracks, with directions for the Sindh government to make KCR functional within a month.

It is about time Karachi got a new master plan that balances the demands of growth with proper use of land, and betters the environment. A starting point for all relevant authorities, the Ministry of Defence, provincial and district governments would be to implement in letter and spirit the court directives pertaining to illegal constructions.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/05/20190513472837/>

JUNE, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 10TH TO JUN 16TH 2019

NEW SYSTEM FOR ISSUING LAND OWNERSHIP DEEDS ON THE CARDS

By Our Correspondent Published: June 12, 2019

LAHORE: The government will introduce a new system for issuing land ownership deeds through commercial banks in the province. A meeting chaired by Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar was held in this regard on Tuesday.

Addressing the meeting, the CM said that separate counters will be established in banks to issue ownership deeds and this step will further facilitate the people. The Punjab government has also decided to initiate an online system for issuing land ownership deeds. This system will begin from July 1, he said.

He ordered that a system for depositing dues should be introduced at every land record centre, adding that the project of extending the scope of land record centres should be completed as soon as possible.

“Land record centres should be established in government buildings on a permanent basis,” he said. He maintained that immediately disposing of public complaints relating to matter of revenue is essential. Any delay in this regard will not be tolerated, he said.

He expressed that the land utilization policy should be ensured after its early approval and the settlement process should be completed as soon as possible in Dera Ghazi Khan division.

He added that a transparent system for promoting farming will be introduced by leasing state land. Buzdar stressed that public complaints regarding revenue officials will not be tolerated and that a helpline should be activated to overcome corruption.

Punjab Revenue Minister Malik Muhammad Anwar, Planning and Development Board chairman, Punjab Land Record Authority chairman and other officials also attended the meeting.

Further, the chief minister said that development projects in the province will be strictly monitored to ensure transparency and to ensure that funds are correctly utilised.

In this regard, the Chief Minister’s Inspection Team (CMIT), the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) and other departments have been directed to monitor development schemes. Further, an effective monitoring system has also been designed to oversee different projects such as the DG Khan Development Package.

Officials have been ordered to implement the monitoring mechanism and all line departments should ensure transparency at every level, he said.

Buzdar stated that he should be updated about the progress on a daily basis, adding that there will be no compromise on the quality of construction work.

He maintained that top quality public welfare scheme will be ensured. The proper utilisation of public funds can be ensured by maintaining the high quality of development schemes, he said.

“No one will be allowed to waste resources in the province. Any delays and leniency will not be tolerated,” he said.

CMIT, ACE and other line departments should strictly monitor the process so that schemes are completed well within time, he said.

In a statement on World Against Child Labour Day, celebrated on June 12 (today), the chief minister maintained that child labour is a socio-economic issue which has multiple factors contributing to it.

He stated that child labour is a criminal offence. “Protecting children’s rights is the collective responsibility of society,” he said.

Children are a national asset. Paying attention to their upbringing and education is the responsibility of each and every person, he said.

Child labour can be eliminated through consistent efforts and the people should also realised their responsibility in this regard, he said.

“Eradicating child labour is our mission and every possible effort will be made in this regard so that children can remain safe,” he said. The purpose behind observing this day is to educate people about the hazardous effects of child labour.

We should all reiterate our commitment and accelerate our efforts to eliminate child labour from society, Buzdar concluded.

Published in The Express Tribune, June 12th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1990340/1-new-system-issuing-land-ownership-deeds-cards/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 17TH TO JUN 23TH 2019

SHC GRANTS NAB DG TWO WEEKS TO SUBMIT REPORT ON ILLEGAL LAND ALLOTMENT

By Our CorrespondentPublished: June 20, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) granted on Wednesday two weeks to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) director-general (DG) for the submission of a report regarding the illegal allotment of 94 acres of land in Malir by former Sindh chief minister Qaim Ali Shah.

A two-member bench comprising Justice KK Agha and Justice Omar Sial heard the case. The former Sindh CM appeared before the court with his counsel.

The court inquired where the NAB DG’s detailed progress report was, to which the NAB prosecutor argued that two weeks were required for submission. Justice Agha remarked that the orders to submit the report with signatures of the NAB DG were clear. He added that the court wants the NAB DG’s report instead of the report submitted by the investigation officer (IO).

The court granted two weeks for submission of the report and ordered the IO to complete the investigation by September 9. The court also extended the interim bail of the accused.

According to the NAB, Shah illegally allotted 94 acres of land to Mehran Society and Golf Builders. Later, he cancelled the allotment and now Sindh government is in possession of the land.

The SHC issued notice to Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation (KKF) over the plea filed by former senator Ahmed Ali, affiliated with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, in relation to money laundering through the welfare organisation. The court also ordered to fix a date for hearing of the case after judicial vacations.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Saleem Jessar heard the plea against the transfer of the money laundering case to Islamabad. The Federal Investigation Agency’s (FIA) Assistant Director Aijaz Ahmed appeared before the court. FIA officials submitted a reply.

The court inquired from FIA officials if the KKF was still operating to which, the officials replied that while the organisation had closed down on paper, it was still present on the ground.

The assistant attorney general maintained that Ali himself was a part of the KKF. The case has been transferred from Karachi to Islamabad. The judicial bailiff informed the court that the KKF's office was closed and nobody was there to receive the judicial notice.

The court inquired from the petitioner's counsel why his client's account had been sealed and remarked that the accused must have committed corruption. Ali's counsel, Baqir Mehdi, argued that evidence of money laundering was not clear.

The MQM's former senator challenged the decision of transferring the money laundering case to Islamabad's anti-terrorism court (ATC). The plea argued that the transfer was initiated on a letter by the home department and it was illegal. The trial of the case should be conducted where the crime has occurred.

In a separate case, the two-member bench, comprising Justice Agha and Justice Sial, ordered the NAB's investigation officer (IO) and prosecutor to ensure their presence before the court with all relevant documents over the bail plea filed by former information secretary Zulfiqar Ali Shallwani in the millions of rupees corruption reference.

The counsel for the petitioner argued that his client had been imprisoned for one and a half years. He said that statements of nine witnesses have been recorded. He added that the plea has been under trial for eight months and each time a hearing is scheduled, NAB officials ask for an extension.

NAB's prosecutor argued that the IO of this reference was in Islamabad and asked that the hearing be adjourned. The court ordered NAB's IO and prosecutor to ensure their presence at the next hearing with all relevant documents.

The court has also forwarded the matter to the chief justice, calling for the formation of a new bench for the reference.

The corruption in the information department was done under the guise of automation. According to NAB, two accused, Ata Muhammad and Noor Muhammad Leghari, are on bail while the other accused, Shallwani and Mansoor Ahmed Rajput, are in prison.

The SHC expressed annoyance over failure to allot land for the construction of bus terminals and sought details on the land while hearing a case pertaining to complete restriction on entry of heavy traffic in Karachi.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ai Mazhar and Justice Agha Faisal heard the case.

The court asked if they wanted to bring back heavy traffic on the roads of Karachi. The court remarked that the Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) was not providing the land and the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) did not have the funds for the construction of bus terminals. Are we solving our problems? The problems of traffic are the problems of Karachi's citizens.

The counsel for KMC argued that they did not have possession of 150 acres of land at Northern Bypass. The counsel maintained that money to purchase the land hasn't been paid and that's the reason the allotment process couldn't be completed. He added that the KMC was facing a financial crisis and cannot make the payment.

The court inquired from the counsel for SRB as to why they were creating an obstacle when the chief minister had given his approval for the project. The court ordered the parties to consult each other over the payment.

The court remarked that the approval of CM means that the land should be allotted. The court ordered to hand over 50 acres of land in Mochko to KMC for oil tankers and sought the details of land reserved for the construction of bus and oil tanker terminals. The hearing has been adjourned till August 6.

The high court cancelled the interim bail of former Karachi Port Trust (KPT) secretary Gulab Khan in the corruption reference on KPT Cooperative Housing Society.

A two-member bench headed by Chief Justice Ahmed Ali Shaikh and Justice Omar Sial announced the verdict on bail pleas filed by co-accused of former federal minister Kamran Michael. NAB officials arrested Khan from the SHC. The court also rejected the bail plea of another accused, Muhammad Ismail.

According to the NAB, 16 plots in KPT Cooperative Society were illegally allotted at extremely low rates. Michael collected Rs110 million as bribe for the allotment of three commercial plots.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1996126/1-shc-grants-nab-dg-two-weeks-submit-report-illegal-land-allotment/>

JULY, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 1ST TO JULY 7TH 2019

PINDI FOREST LAND RETRIEVAL FROM BAHRIA TOWN: CABINET TO REQUEST SC TO FIX PER KANAL PRICE AS PER MARKET RATE

Mansoor Malik Updated July 02, 2019

LAHORE: The Punjab cabinet on Monday engaged in a heated debate over the issue of forest land occupied by Bahria Town Rawalpindi, and resolved to approach the Supreme Court for payment on the basis of the present day price.

Chief Minister Usman Buzdar presided over the 14th cabinet meeting and considered a seven-point agenda. However, the issue of retrieval of forest land from Bahria Town was not reflected on the agenda.

A large portion of forest land in Rawalpindi (Takht Parri and other Shamilat) had illegally been included in the Bahria Town scheme. The land retrieval case had reached the Supreme Court where the housing scheme management had presented two payment proposals at Rs2.4 million per kanal and Rs1.1 million per kanal since a large number of houses had already been constructed on the land in question.

Though some cabinet members wanted to give a go-ahead and collect the payment, sources said that many of the members did not agree to any proposal asserting that the price of the land was much higher than the price being offered. Some cabinet members even proposed seeking compensation for the environmental damage, as the forest land was illegally occupied and trees were cut.

After over an hour, the cabinet decided that the Punjab government should approach the Supreme Court and request that price should be fixed per kanal according to the market rate.

Moving on to the agenda items, the CM approved appointment of Shah Nawaz Nasir Shah as general manager of Punjab Pension Fund.

A proposed policy on emergency flood protection works was also approved for saving the local population, agricultural lands and gardens in the wake of possible threats of flood. It was decided that the name of the cabinet's sub-committee for flood would be changed to the cabinet's committee for flood, and the provision of necessary funds also approved in principle.

The chief minister directed line departments to complete their prior engagements in the wake of a possible threat of flood, adding that district administrations will be provided resources on priority.

The meeting also approved proposed amendments to the draft Punjab Witness Protection Rules and Punjab Sugar Factory Control Rules 1950. It also decided to entrust the matter of amendments to the Punjab Sugar Factory (Control) Act 1950 to the provincial cabinet committee for legislative, which will submit its final recommendations after reviewing the matter. The decisions made in the 12th meeting of the cabinet were also endorsed.

Provincial ministers, advisers and special assistants, the chief secretary, inspector general of police and administrative secretaries were among those who attended the meeting.

MEDICAL ENTRANCE TEST: The Punjab government plans to propose to the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) to reduce the medical college entrance test weightage from 50 per cent to 30pc. The FSc marks may be given 70pc weightage.

The government plans to write to the council to call a meeting of all four provinces' health departments and relevant bodies and discuss the long-awaited medical colleges' entrance test issue and resolve it once and for all.

Chief Minister Buzdar presided over the meeting to discuss that the weightage of medical colleges' entrance test be redesigned in line with the engineering universities' tests that carried 30pc weightage, while the remaining 70pc weightage was attached to the FSc results.

The meeting participants wanted that the Punjab government take a decision as it enjoyed powers under the 18th Amendment. However, sources claimed that the 18th Amendment ordinance was about to lapse and the previous law would be restored.

The meeting was also told that the PMDC had already decided not to consider matriculation examination marks, as until now it carried 10pc weightage towards calculation for medical colleges' merit. The council has also decided to raise the minimum FSc marks to 70pc for being eligible to sit the entrance test.

The PMDC had decided to do away with the negative marking in the entrance test and now 200 questions would be asked carrying one mark each. It has also recently decided that the medical colleges' entrance test should be held simultaneously across the country on Aug 25.

The CM directed to submit the final review of medical entrance test weightage after seeking proposals from the stakeholders.

Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid told the meeting that the entrance test for medical colleges would be held in the last week of August. She said the PMDC would be consulted for the determination of test numbers for admission to medical colleges.

Published in Dawn, July 2nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1491599/pindi-forest-land-retrieval-from-bahria-town-cabinet-to-request-sc-to-fix-per-kanal-price-as-per-market-rate>

78,444 ACRES OF FORESTLAND ILLEGALLY ALLOTTED BY BOR, MINISTER TELLS PA

Tahir Siddiqui July 02, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly was informed on Monday that 78,444 acres of forestland was allotted illegally to various persons and institutions by the provincial revenue authorities.

While furnishing a statement and replying to lawmakers' queries during Question Hour in the provincial assembly, Forest and Wildlife Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said the Board of Revenue had illegally allotted the forestland to private persons and institutions and the forest department had not given a no-objection certificate to anyone for the allotment of forestland.

The minister said that more than 80 per cent of the land was illegally allotted by the revenue department when the Pakistan Peoples Party was not in the provincial government.

Answering a supplementary question, he said the forestland was illegally allotted from Karachi to Ghotki and the forest department was making all-out efforts for the cancellation of illegal allotment at the revenue authorities' level.

“So far, an area of 78,444.25 acres of Sindh forestland has been illegally allotted by the revenue authorities to various persons and institutions,” Mr Shah added.

Giving further details, he said that the illegally allotted area of 58,516.05 acres was under litigation as 507 cases were pending disposal in the revenue department and different courts where forest department was vigorously fighting for retrieving the illegally allotted forestland. “Resultantly, the department was able to get the illegal allotment of 290 acres cancelled by the assistant commissioner of Kashmir in Afforestation Division Kandhkot,” he added.

Furthermore, the minister said, the Supreme Court had also taken serious notice of the illegal allotments and directed the provincial government to take immediate steps for the cancellation of such allotments.

Similarly, he added, the provincial cabinet on Jan 7, 2019 also directed the BoR to cancel all illegal allotment of forestland.

The minister said the provincial authorities now had the support of the apex court and the entire forestland would be retrieved.

He said earlier it was difficult to take action against the illegal allotment of forestland as the occupants moved the courts and obtained restraining orders against the authorities. “Now we have support of the judiciary as no more stay orders are being issued by the courts following the apex court's order against illegal allotment of state land,” he said and vowed to get all illegal allotments of forestland cancelled through due process.

He also informed the lawmakers that the illegally allotted forestland was shown as the land of the revenue department.

The minister was evasive when the lawmakers belonging to both the treasury and opposition benches asked him to tell the house the names of those who got the illegal allotment of forestland.

Deputy Speaker Rehana Leghari, who was presiding over the session, also asked the questioners to file a fresh written question in that regard.

Mr Shah, however, said that most of the illegal occupants of forestland in the province belonged either to the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf or the Grand Democratic Alliance.

In reply to another question, the minister said the project of Green Pakistan Programme was to be funded 50pc each by the federal and Sindh governments, but the project could not take off due to the non-release of a matching grant by the federal government.

Answering another question, he said Rs80 million was released to the Riverine and Inland Forest Department under the development scheme 'Enhancing cover on state forestlands in Sindh' during 2017-18. "Out of this released amount, Rs77.666m was spent by the subordinate offices to carry out afforestation in riverine and inland forests," he said.

Published in Dawn, July 2nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1491512/78444-acres-of-forestland-illegally-allotted-by-bor-minister-tells-pa>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 8TH TO JULY 14TH 2019

THE MYSTERY OF LAND RECORDS SHROUDED IN RED

By RazzakAbro Published: July 13, 2019

KARACHI: The colour red symbolises many things in popular imagination. Often, it is associated with danger and used to signify threat. Or at times, it is seen to represent passion and emotion, particularly love and rage. Many empires and kingdoms, the British among them, also saw the colour as a sign of royalty and used it to signify imperial might and projection.

In the context of bureaucracy, the colour red usually gets a bad rap, associated as it is with official lethargy. But there is another less reported significance to the hue: important official land records and documents are almost always shrouded in red cloth.

Although the practice of shrouding official documents, land records in particular, in red cloth dates back to the days of British rule in the Subcontinent, the origin of the colonial ritual is still unknown to many who continue to uphold it. The mysterious practice baffles almost everyone in the bureaucratic circles.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2012096/1-mystery-land-records-shrouded-red/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 15TH TO JULY 21ST 2019

OVER 6,600 KANALS OF FOREST LAND RECOVERED IN GALIYAT, PA TOLD

Bureau Report July 16, 2019

PESHAWAR: The PTI government on Monday informed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly that 6,693 kanals of land in reserved forests of Galiyat region in Abbottabad district had been retrieved from 196 illegal occupants.

During the question hour, minister for law and parliamentary affairs Sultan Mohammad Khan said 208 people illegally occupied 984.5 kanals in Galiyat's reserved forests and that they had built schools, mosques and shops there.

He said some cases had been filed with the court of law on the matter.

The minister said the government had acquired the services of the Survey of Pakistan in 2015-16 to identify the occupied land in Galiyat region's reserved forests.

He said some people had put up structures in reserved forests, which had been protected under the law.

Baber Saleem Swati from the panel of chairmen presided over the sitting in the absence of the speaker and deputy speaker.

According to the list, some people had occupied over 200 kanals of land in reserved forests of Galiyat.

The minister said the provincial government was going to sign an agreement with the Survey of Pakistan to remove ambiguities from the documents of land revenue.

Pakistan Peoples Party MPA Nighat Yasmin Orakzai, who moved the question, complained that an incomplete list of land grabbers had been submitted to the house.

She accused senior PTI leader Jahangir Khan Tareen of occupying land in Galiyat's reserved forests but complained that the government didn't include his name in the list.

PML-N's Sardar Aurangzeb Nalotha and Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's Inayatullah Khan expressed reservations about the list and termed it incomplete.

Mr Khan suggested the question be referred to the standing committee concerned for discussion.

After the treasury's opposition, the question was put for vote, which was defeated.

Minister Sultan said the lawmakers should avoid giving hypothetical statements on the floor of the house.

He requested the chair to expunge the name of Jahangir Tareen from the assembly's records. However, the chair ignored the minister's request.

Earlier, the lawmakers were informed that the provincial government had handed over 11 technical and vocational training centres to the Pakistan Air Force and had paid over Rs1.98 billion since 2015-16.

Replying to a question moved by PPP MPA Nighat Orakzai, the law minister said the Technical Education and Vocational Testing Authority had signed several agreements with PAF and that Tevta board had approved the release of funds to the PAF.

He said the law department identified some legal flaws in agreements with the PAF, which were removed afterward.

The minister said the demand of skilled workers would increase in the backdrop of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, so vocational training centres were handed over to the PAF.

The question regarding the occupation of Auqaf properties by several government departments was also referred to the house's committee concerned.

Replying to another question, Mr Sultan said the provincial government had prioritised the Rashakai Special Economic Zone under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

He said the agreement had been signed during the prime minister's visit to China, while work on \$128 million project was likely to begin by the end of July.

Responding to a point of order, minister for communication and works Akbar Ayub Khan said Pakistan Navy's divers had begun search operation in Tarbela Lake to retrieve the bodies of 26 missing people.

He said four bodies were retrieved when the boat capsized in the lake on July 3, while 26 people had gone missing.

The assembly passed three resolutions calling for the restoration of Internet and mobile service in merged tribal districts, establishment of a grid station in Barawal area of Upper Dir district, provision of facilities to persons with disabilities in health centres, educational institutions and other public places.

The government introduced the National Disaster Management (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1494321/over-6600-kanals-of-forest-land-recovered-in-galiyat-pa-told>

EMPLOYEES COMPLAIN OF ATROCITIES BY ENCROACHERS OF FOREST LANDS

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent July 16, 2019

HYDERABAD: Representatives of lower employees in the forest department along with office-bearers of a non-governmental organisation working in forestry on Monday urged the chief justice of the Sindh High Court to get forest land vacated from occupation of political leaders, including lawmakers, and police officers and personnel.

Speaking at a press conference at the local press club, they said that the vigilance committees formed under sessions judges be activated in this regard.

They said that civil society representatives and journalists should be provided protection. They stated that out of 850,000 acres of forest land, 90pc had been under unlawful occupation of elected representatives, political leaders, police authorities and other influential personalities.

They said that civil society representatives and media personnel who would highlight the issue of illegal occupation of forest lands often faced threats. They should be provided protection, they said.

They said that lower cadre employees of forest department and civil society representatives had been implicated in false cases and harassment for raising their voice against the unlawful activities.

They said that only recently, a tractor driver of the department, Rehmatullah Brohi, was picked up by police at the instance of a DIG who had occupied forest land. The driver was got released by forest department officers and civil society representatives after 24 hours. They condemned that representatives of Indus Development Organisation (IDO) Bashir, Ameer Bux Khoso and others were booked in other false cases for their efforts towards the cause of conservation of Khybrani forest and they also came under attack on four occasions.

They said that a guard of forest department, Dodo Gopang, was issued threats of dire consequences for not separating himself from the team working for protection of forest land. When he did not come to the oppressors' terms, he was attacked and critically injured. An FIR was lodged at the Saeedabad police station, they said.

They alleged that forest guard, Haji Junejo, was also booked at the behest of some persons occupying forest land in Khipro because he was part of a team that had taken action against the occupiers.

Similarly, they said, forest guard Gada Hussain Bhatti was implicated in a narcotics case by the Larkana police for being part of a team that had acted another occupier of forest land in Shikarpur.

Those who spoke at the press conference included IDO executive director Zain Daudpoto and Forest Workers Welfare Association president Mahmood Ghumro.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1494234/employees-complain-of-atrocities-by-encroachers-of-forest-lands>

PUNJAB TO ALLOT LAND TO LANDLESS FARMERS OF CHOLISTAN

Published on 21 Jul 2019 Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: The Punjab Cabinet has approved allotment of the state land to landless farmers of Cholistan and constituted a scrutiny committee to complete the process in a transparent manner.

In a meeting on Saturday, it approved the financial aid package for the farmers whose crops were damaged in recent rainstorms and hailstorms. As many as 55 villages of 27 districts have been declared calamity-hit and exempted from Malia and Aabiyana (water service charges).

Chief Minister Usman Buzdar directed the authorities to make estimates of the damage to crops caused by the floods in some parts of Jhelum.

The meeting approved amendment to the Government Land Disposal Policy and the leasing out of the government land in open auction. A decision has been made to give ownership rights of the land leased to the landless famers. The farmers, who would cultivate 80pc of the land, would get ownership rights.

The meeting decided to introduce the grading system in matriculation and intermediate exams in phases and the first phase of the implementation had been approved.

The CM said the grading system would be a vital measure towards the uniform education system besides ending cramming by the students. He said the new system would enable students to compete at international level.

“A committee has been constituted to review the implementation of the second and third phases of the grading system,” CM Buzdar added.

The Cabinet approved the Punjab Tourism Policy under which the government would introduce and enhance the existing degrees in the tourism, hotel and hospitality industry.

The government would encourage public-private partnership to develop the state land as a tourism resorts and spots across the province.

The chief minister said a special package would be prepared for the interest of tourists and special benefits would be given to private investors, who were interested in investing in tourism sector.

The Cabinet gave a go-ahead to restore the frozen daily allowance of Punjab Police at the rate of 2013. The Punjab Highway Patrol Police and traffic wardens would also be entitled to get the allowance with the same percentage.

It also accorded approval to the executive allowance for the civil officers appointed on the cadre post. The civil officers will get the executive allowance equal to 1.5 times of the basic salary. The special allowance equal to 1.5 times of the basic salary was also approved for BPS-1 to BPS-16 employees of the Punjab Cabinet secretariat on the instructions of the CM.

The meeting also approved giving land in the Cholistan area of Sadiqabad tehsil under the public-private partnership for oil exploration.

The Cabinet approved appointment of members of the board of directors (BoD) of the Parks and Horticulture Authority, Sialkot. It approved the audit report prepared by the Auditor General of Pakistan for the Punjab government accounts for the financial years of 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19. The audit report would be presented in the Punjab Assembly after the approval of the cabinet. The recommendations of the committee formed by the CM were also approved.

The meeting was attended by the provincial ministers, advisers, special advisers, chief secretary and administrative secretaries besides other senior officials concerned.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/punjab-allot-land-landless-farmers-cholistan>

LAND LEASE POLICY: 120,700 ACRES TO BE ALLOTTED TO FARMERS: MINISTER

RECORDER REPORT JUL 21ST, 2019 LAHORE

Provincial Information and Culture Minister Mian Aslam Iqbal has said that Punjab Cabinet has taken a landmark decision to allot one lac 20 thousand and seven hundred acres of land among the farmers in 30 districts of Punjab province under Land Lease Policy.

Provincial Minister expressed these views while addressing a press conference at DGPR office here Saturday.

He also said these uninhabited lands had been given to the farmers for farming purpose since a long period of time and farmers inhabited these lands by dint of putting their hard labour and now these lands will be allotted to them. Its mechanism has been framed and every District Collector has determined the value of land. Farmers will be allotted piece of land up to 12.5 acre. Comprehensive principle of state land disposal policy has also been approved. Now practice of allotment of land on the basis of likes and dislikes has also been abolished.

He said discretionary powers of any Minister or officer have also been abolished and transparent mechanism has also been formulated in this regard which will thereby end litigation process. Revenue Department used to irritate common man regarding giving land on lease. But now common man has been ridden of this menace of Revenue Department in the light of this policy. Policy has also been chalked out regarding temporary farming of land on lease basis and this policy was halted since 2016 and now it has been extended till 2020. Provincial Cabinet have also decided that the term of lease will be of three years instead of one year. Lease holders can get their lease extended on payments of their outstanding dues.

Provincial Minister said that provincial cabinet has granted approval of complete package in order to make up for the loss being incurred due to recent rains, storms and hail storms. 55 affected villages of 26 districts have been declared calamity-hit and Abiyana and Malia will also be exempted.

He further said that approval has been granted to restore frozen daily fix police allowance with the same percentage of year 2013. Punjab government while remaining confined to its limited resources has decided to enhance allowances of police keeping in view their sacrifices being laid down in the war against terrorism. For officials of police force from grade 1 to 11 comprising one lac 85 thousand 248, Rs 10 billion additional expenditure will be incurred annually on increasing their allowance. Rs 208 Billion will be spent on increasing allowances of 22,464 police officials ranging from grade 12 to grade 16. Rs 0.26 billion will be spent on increasing allowances of more than one thousand police officers ranging from grade 17 to grade 22.

Approval has also been accorded to enhance the allowances of Secretariat staff. Provincial cabinet has also granted approval of tourism policy under which special privileges will be granted to private investors and the concerned ministry will frame a policy in this regard. Approval has also been given for nomination of board members of PHA Sialkot.

Provincial Minister while responding to the queries of media persons said that clear verdict of Lahore High Court is available regarding holding a procession on the Mall Road. Rallies and processions cannot be held on the Mall Road according to clear judgement of Lahore High Court. The real aim of opposition to hold protest is to conceal their corruption and their loot and plunder has come to light before the general public.

In reply to another question, the Provincial Minister said that no one is above the law may he/she be rich or poor. All prisoners should be equally treated according to the jail manual. If someone gets facility in jail after committing a crime then the justice system cannot run properly. Common prisoners should be treated in the same way as the special prisoner is treated in the prison.

Aslam Iqbal while responding to another question said that issuing production order is the special privilege of Speaker and government has nothing to do in this regard.

He also said that government has decided to fix the price of bread at Rs 6 and Naan will be sold at Rs 12. 20 kg flour bag will be available in the market at Rs 770. If someone ever tried to enhance the

prices then law will come into action. He said that he will ensure the selling prices of essential items at fixed rates and notification regarding price of sugar will be issued in coming three to four days.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/07/20190721499132/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 22ND TO JULY 28TH 2019

CDA GIVES IMC LAND TO BUILD SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT

By Iftikhar Choudhry Published: July 24, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has handed over five acres area to Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (IMC) for the establishment of Sewage Treatment Plant (STP).

“CDA has handed over five acres of land near Korang Bridge so that water coming from Korang Nullah could be treated before entering the Rawal Dam,” said a statement on Tuesday.

The plant will help clean water flowing into the dam from nullahs during rainy season, said the CDA statement. The authority has also handed over site for developing wetlands to IMC.

During rains, sewage overflows from gutter lines and gets into natural streams which subsequently flow into water reservoirs. Rawal Dam is a major source of water for the twin cities and sewage contamination during rains pose serious health hazard causing diseases like typhoid and hepatitis.

The sites have been handed over to IMC for the construction of STP and wetlands to treat water coming to Rawal Dam from seasonal nullahs.

The wetlands will have trees and bushes which will naturally cleanse water coming from seasonal nullahs.

These sites include one each in Muslim Colony, Noor Pur Shahan and Mozah Lakhwal. Constructed wetlands treatment systems is an engineered system utilising natural processes involving wetland vegetation, soils, and their associated system for treatment of wastewater.

Construction of STP and wetlands will not only help check the fast growing pollution in the Lake but the risk posed by aquatic life would be significantly reduced in addition to the improvement of water quality being supplied through this reservoir.

CDA has reiterated that authority will continue its cooperation with the other departments to improve the overall environment of the Authority.

Capital Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICTA) in connection with on-going anti-encroachment operations demolished several illegal constructions and encroachments in Humak Town.

The enforcement removed several illegal fences, entrance gates, boundary walls, sheds and other encroachments protruding from plotline into state land.

Similarly, footpaths encroached by Dar-e-Arqam school Lehtrar Road and Commodore School Park were also opened and illegal installations were removed from the footpaths.

During another operation, two rooms and a cattle pen was also demolished in Shahzad Town while cattle pen near Rawal Dam nullah was also dismantled completely.

Similarly, a joint operation also conducted Mandi More and encroachments established on the green belt were removed. During this operation, four truckloads of encroachment material were also confiscated.

The Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has confiscated six truckloads of goods from different markets in its operation against encroachments. The operation on the instructions of Cantonment CEO Sibtain Raza has been intensified and efforts are being made to make RCB areas encroachment free, said RCB spokesperson.

The operation was being conducted on a daily basis. Permanent and temporary encroachments were being removed during the drive, he added. He said encroachments had been removed from Saddar, Gawalmandi, Tench Bhatta, Chungi no. 22 and People's Colony. The enforcement teams were conducting raids in two shifts.

He warned the shopkeepers against setting up encroachments on roadsides and keeping their goods inside the shops, otherwise strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against them. Illegal banners and posters had also been removed from different cantonment areas, he added.

The RCB under its ongoing campaign against water tax defaulters recovered over Rs4.2 million from the consumers during July.

According to the RCB spokesperson, the RCB CEO has launched a campaign to recover outstanding water taxes and also snapped 325 water connections in different areas.

The water branch conducted operations in Chor, Masrial Road, Naseerabad, Seham, Pirwadhai Mor, Peoples Colony, Chungi no. 22, Tench Bhatta and other areas.

He said that the water branch services were being improved to facilitate the consumers and all the record had been computerised. Now, more than 52,000 consumers of RCB were getting computerised water bills, he added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2019964/1-cda-gives-imc-land-build-sewage-treatment-plant/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 29TH TO AUGUST 4TH 2019

MORE THAN 160 LAND DEFENDERS MURDERED IN 2018: WATCHDOG

Date created : 31/07/2019 - 06:06

At least 164 land and environmental activists were murdered last year for defending their homes, lands and natural resources from exploitation by mining, food and logging firms, Global Witness said Tuesday.

The charity watchdog's annual land defenders report found "countless" more people were silenced through violence, intimidation and the use and misuse of anti-protest laws across the world.

By far the most dangerous place for activists and indigenous communities was the Philippines, which saw 30 murders in 2018, the report said.

Colombia and India saw 24 and 23 deaths linked to environmental activism in 2018, while Guatemala was the deadliest nation for land defenders per head of population with 16 confirmed killings.

"This is a phenomenon seen around the world: land and environmental defenders, a significant number of whom are indigenous peoples, are declared terrorists, thugs or criminals for defending their rights," said Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples.

"This violence is a human rights crisis but it is also a threat to everyone who depends on a stable climate."

The biggest single massacre documented by the group in 2018 occurred in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, with 13 people murdered after protesting the environmental impact of a copper mine.

At least eight land defenders involved in disputes with representatives of the soy industry were killed in 2018 in the Brazilian state of Para alone, the report said.

In the Philippines, which overtook Brazil as the deadliest place for land defenders, one incident saw a group of gunmen shoot dead nine sugarcane farmers including a number of woman and children on the island of Negros.

The lawyer representing families of the victims was shot dead days later, Global Witness said.

A week ahead of a landmark UN report expected to emphasise the vital role indigenous peoples play in protecting nature, the charity also highlighted what it said was a "worrying global trend" in the intimidation and jailing of defenders.

It said investors including development banks were fuelling the violence by financing abusive projects and sectors, and named a number of well-known companies accused of facilitating rights violations.

"It's not good enough for foreign multinationals that are connected to these land grabs to profess ignorance," the report said.

"They have a responsibility to proactively ensure that the land they are profiting from has been leased legally, with the consent of the communities who have lived on it for generations."

- Britain fracking protest 'precedent' -

In Britain, the charity documented the case of three anti-fracking activists who in September were sentenced to jail for protesting at a site run by the energy firm Cuadrilla.

They were freed in October but have still not had their convictions for the crime of "public nuisance" overturned.

One of the protesters, Simon Blevins, said their case set a worrying precedent for environmental activists in Britain.

"There has been a lot of scaremongering that even turning up with a placard can put you in trouble and stop you getting jobs, which of course has a deterrent effect on future protest."

The overall land defender death toll in 2018 fell from a peak of 207 in 2017, but Global Witness stressed the true number of deaths could be far higher and go unreported or occur in remote regions.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20190730-more-160-land-defenders-murdered-2018-watchdog>

NAB HANDS OVER RS382M LAND TO GOVT OF BALOCHISTAN

Saleem Shahid Updated August 02, 2019

QUETTA: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Balochistan, has handed over the agriculture land worth Rs382 million to the Balochistan government after the front man of the suspect of corruption scam in the finance department, Sohail Majeed Shah, failed to deposit the remaining amount of the plea bargain approved by the accountability court.

A NAB spokesman said here on Thursday that contractor Sohail Majeed Shah, the front man of former finance adviser Khalid Langov and Balochistan's former secretary of finance Mushtaq Raisani, had admitted to having committed corruption and sought a plea bargain of Rs960 million with NAB.

After approval of the plea bargain by the accountability court, he had deposited Rs460 million in the national exchequer and attached 388 acres of agriculture land worth Rs382 million in the Sobatpur district of Nasirabad division as a surety.

However, despite several reminders, the accused failed to deposit the remaining amount. Subsequently, NAB Balochistan seized the surety land and handed it over to the Balochistan government.

Likewise, an order was also issued to the deputy commissioner of Sobatpur to deposit the agriculture income of the confiscated land in the national kitty.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1497602/nab-hands-over-rs382m-land-to-govt-of-balochistan>

IN THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE PLANET, ITS DEFENDERS ARE BEING KILLED

03, Aug 2019

In an endangered world of dwindling resources, a line by Pogo, Walt Kelly's popular newspaper-comic hero of the last century, is worth recalling: "When you starve with a tiger, the tiger starves last."

It's worth keeping this maxim top of mind as one reads the latest [annual report](#) from Global Witness, an independent organization that tracks the murders of people around the world who try to resist mining, farming, logging and other powerful industries that savage ecosystems and drive people off their land.

In 2018, 164 defenders of the land and environment were killed, with the Philippines of the brutal President Rodrigo Duterte taking over from Brazil as the deadliest place to resist rapacious developers and governments. That was less than the [201 killed](#) in the previous year, but it was hardly an improvement.

Global Witness noted that the actual figure is probably far higher because reporting is iffy in the most vulnerable parts of the world. Governments and industries are also learning that there are other, nonlethal means of intimidating or eliminating activists who resist them. In addition to the violence of private security agents, state forces or contract killers, activists now also confront teams of aggressive lawyers.

Using, or misusing, laws and the courts, governments and industries intent on driving indigenous people or activists away criminalize resistance or proclaim them to be "terrorists," choking off their funding and tying them up in costly legal battles. The United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, was among 600 people the government of her home country, the Philippines, labeled terrorists.

Human Rights Watch [called](#) the action "a virtual government hit list" and noted that state security forces and pro-government militias in the Philippines had a long history of murdering people labeled terrorists or Communists.

Things are not looking much better for 2019. Though Brazil is no longer No. 1 in the number of people killed, the populist president installed in January, Jair Bolsonaro, has vowed to open previously protected indigenous lands to commercial development. The Times [reported on Sunday](#) that the destruction of the Amazon rain forest, which plays a crucial role in absorbing and storing carbon dioxide and thus slowing global warming, has dramatically accelerated under Mr. Bolsonaro, in large part because of deliberately lax enforcement of laws and regulations. Mr. Bolsonaro simply dismisses his own government's data on deforestation as lies.

Mr. Duterte and Mr. Bolsonaro were two of the new breed of populist leaders Global Witness identified as contributing to worsening the plight of those who defend the land, through their disdain for the environment and hostility to dissenters.

Predictably, President Trump and his "energy dominance" agenda came in for their share of opprobrium.

In this summer of oppressive heat waves, yet more bad news — there seems to be no other kind — on the environmental front risks adding to a sense of helplessness before the greed and willful contempt of the world's "tigers." Another nongovernmental organization, the Global Footprint Network, annually calculates the day on which humanity consumes more resources for the year than it can

regenerate. This year “[Earth Overshoot Day](#)” was last Monday, July 29. In 1993, it was Oct. 12; last year it was Aug. 1.

There are solutions, there are well-researched strategies, there are innumerable organizations and people anxious to rescue the Earth. Yet at every turn, they run up against destructive industries and callous politicians prepared to resort to any means to continue despoiling the planet.

“So far,” said the [Global Witness report](#), “governments have largely failed to listen or react, while big businesses are generally holding to the model that created the problem in the first place.”

Pogo aced that reality, too, in a saying environmentalist like to quote: “We have met the enemy, and he is us.” But the solution is also us, however dangerous or discouraging. There is no choice but to fight on for our planet, and to hammer home to the tigers that in the end, they too will starve unless they join the rest of us in saving the island.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/01/opinion/environmentalists-murdered.html>

SC TO TAKE UP ILLEGAL LAND USE CASES ON 6TH

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated August 04, 2019

KARACHI: The Supreme Court of Pakistan is set to take up the cases about illegal constructions, encroachments upon parks and conversion of amenity land for commercial and residential use for hearing on Aug 6.

A three-judge bench of the apex court headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed will hear a set of petitions at the Supreme Court's Karachi registry on Tuesday, including a petition of former city nazim Niamatullah Khan against encroachments upon public parks and conversion of amenity land for commercial and residential purposes.

Two petitions of Abdul Karim regarding unauthorised and illegal constructions in Lyari are also fixed before the bench on Tuesday.

Earlier, the apex court had imposed a complete ban on conversion of residential and amenity plots into commercial spaces in the city and directed the authorities concerned, including cantonment boards, to review all such conversions allowed by them in the provincial capital.

Besides seeking an original and an unamended master plan of the provincial capital from the provincial authorities, the apex court had also directed the Karachi Development Authority and others to immediately remove encroachments from parks and other public spaces and also asked the heads of the cantonments boards of Karachi to remove all commercial activities from their jurisdictions as well.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1497906>

AUGUST, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 05TH TO 11TH 2019

BAN ON LEASE, TRANSFER AND CONVERSION OF STATE LAND PARTIALLY LIFTED

Ishaq Tanoli Updated August 08, 2019

KARACHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday partially lifted a ban imposed earlier on the lease, transfer and conversion of state land in Sindh and directed the provincial authorities to consider the applications seeking lease where the land record had been computerised.

A three-judge bench headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed observed that the ban could only be lifted fully after the provincial authorities comply with the apex court's order, handed down in 2012 for computerisation of land record across the province, in letter and spirit.

While hearing dozens of petitions moved by various government organisations and private parties seeking clarification and relaxation of the apex court's Nov 28, 2012 judgement regarding a ban on mutation, allotment, transfer or conversion of any state land, the bench dismissed another request of the petitioners seeking extension in the 30-year leases on the ground that there was no law to grant extension.

The apex court had placed a ban on lease and transfer of state land in 2012 after the land records were torched in the aftermath of the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and ordered computerisation of the land record.

Over 60 petitioners, including the Election Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan Air Force, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, some government universities, K-Electric, private firms and others submitted that they had applied for lease of state land to set up wind power projects and for industrial, agriculture, operational and other purposes. However, it was not being processed owing to the restrictions imposed by the apex court, they added.

Some others submitted that they obtained land on a 30-year lease for poultry farms, farming and other purposes, but the authorities concerned were not granting them extension after the SC judgement.

Advocate General Salman Talibuddin submitted that the majority of the land record in the province had been computerised. A report of the Board of Revenue (BoR), Sindh, maintained that the land record of all the districts apart from Thatta had been digitised, he added.

The bench questioned as to why the land record of Thatta had not been computerised, adding that the ban could not be removed until the BoR complied with the order in letter and spirit.

Observing that there were a large number of applications seeking lease and transfer of land, the court directed the BoR to consider all such applications in accordance with the law if the record of land in question was computerised.

The bench further said that the matter regarding extension in the leases cannot be entertained since no law had been placed before it to grant the extension.

Conversion of graveyard lands

The Sindh High Court on Wednesday issued notices to the chief secretary, BoR, local government secretary and other respondents on a petition regarding conversion and use of amenity plots meant for graveyards for commercial and residential purposes.

A two-judge SHC bench headed by Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi put the respondents on notice with a direction to file comments till Sept 15.

The petition was filed by anchorperson Wajahat Saeed Khan, who submitted that the city was facing an acute shortage of burial grounds as most public graveyards in Karachi were being allegedly controlled by various private persons and land mafias and the common man was being exploited while the city administration remained least concerned.

Impleading the chief secretary, BoR, LG secretary, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, Sindh Building Control Authority, Pakistan Defence Officers Housing Authority and others as respondents, the lawyer for petitioner, Shahab Usto, argued that the local administration had imposed a ban on burials

in old cemeteries of the city for want of space while amenity plots meant for graveyards in the city were being converted into commercial and residential ones.

The petitioner requested the court to direct the respondents to ensure that all the amenity plots meant for graveyards must not be used for other purposes, all the structures built on such land may be demolished and cancellation of conversion of all such amenity plots.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1498658>

CULTIVATION ON GOVERNMENT LAND BANNED

RECORDER REPORT AUG 8TH, 2019 HYDERABAD

The Deputy Commissioner Tharparkar Dr Shahzad Tahir Thaheem in the view of notification of the Government of Sindh Home Department has been imposed ban under section 144 Cr.PC upon cultivation of Government /Gaucher Land in District Tharparkar for a period of ninety (90) days with immediate effect.

According to the notification, in pursuance of section 195(i)(a) Cr.PC, the SHOs of concerned Police Stations are authorized to register the complaints under Section 188 PPC in writing for the violation of Section 144 Cr.PC against the violators.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/08/20190808505134/>

1,000 ACRES ALLOTTED FOR LARALAI INDUSTRIAL ZONE

August 08,2019

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Minister for Commerce Muhammad Khan Toor Utmankhail on Tuesday said the provincial government is taking all-out measures to boost the industrial sector of the province with focus on providing jobs to young people.

Talking to APP, Utmankhail said the provincial government has allotted 1,000 acres of land for industrial zone in Laralai and the development works would be kicked off soon.

"Construction work has been under way to establish eight special economic zones to boost the economic activities in the province.

These zones would be set up at Qamar din Kareaz, Kakar Khurasan, Chaman, Loralai, Turbat, Chaghi, Gwadar and Bostan," he said.

He urged investors to enhance their investment in the industrial and technology sector of the province. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Jam Kamal the provincial government is taking amicable measures for the development and the results would appear in the recent future, he added.

The minister said considering the worst road infrastructure in the province, the government is planning to improve communication system for the welfare of the local people and improve connectivity.

He said the government has planned to build 12 small dams in every district of the province to solve the water scarcity issue. "I have been working day and night to provide clean drinking water to the residents of Loralai, he added.

He said the plan for setting up water filtration plants in Laralai is in the pipeline and a survey is being conducted to identify the possible sites in the area. He said the government has worked out a comprehensive programme for managing the recurring floods through small dams.

He said completion of these projects would help the irrigation system to improve the water scarcity situation in the province. The minister said Balochistan has huge agriculture potential, which is mostly ignored due to lack of latest methodologies and techniques.

"The province produces huge quantity of fruits and vegetables which get wasted due to lack of storage capacity across the province. We are working to establish cold storage.

"The government has been taking the initiative to encourage farmers for cultivating olive trees and has allocated Rs100 million for the development and uplift of olive farming in the province," he noted.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201908080099&EN_ID=11201908080042&EMID=11201908080015

SC COMES DOWN HARD ON NAB FOR FILING INCORRECT REPORT IN LAND ALLOTMENT CASE

Ishaq Tanoli August 10, 2019

KARACHI: The Supreme Court on Friday expressed resentment on National Accountability Bureau for recommending closure of an inquiry against the alleged illegal allotment of two acres land, said to be an amenity plot, adjacent to an amusement park on Rashid Minhas Road to a foreigner.

A three-judge SC bench headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed came down hard on the investigating officer of NAB for filing a fake report and directed the anti-graft watchdog to properly investigate the matter and come up with a detailed report.

In the last hearing, the apex court sought a report from NAB about the status of the plot after it was informed that a plaza was being built on an amenity plot adjacent to an amusement park.

On Friday, NAB IO Umesh Kumar Malani along with deputy prosecutor general (DPG) NAB Amjad Ali Shah appeared before the bench and submitted a report.

The report claimed that the inquiry was conducted by the combined investigating team (CIT) of NAB and recommended closure as the allegations could not be substantiated for want of incriminating evidence.

Justice Ahmed warned of sending the IO to jail for furnishing a fake report and observed that it was the violation of the apex court's 2012 judgment, adding that there were also a number of high court orders about such land.

The DPG NAB sought time to file a detailed report and requested to return the report in question.

While dictating the order, Justice Ahmed said that upon the perusal of the report, filed by NAB, it was found not acceptable as it was not in accordance with law and court orders, adding that it was not explained in the report that how the land was allotted to a UAE national.

The NAB report said that the inquiry was initiated in August 2016 on the complaint of Transparency International Pakistan that 15 acres of agricultural land was illegally allotted to Nasser Abdulla Lootah in the 1980s/90s in Gulistan-i-Jauhar, 30-year lease was granted for poultry, agriculture or

cattle farming, but illegally converted into 99-year for industrial purpose and two acres plot, which was cancelled in October 2015, was illegally restored by way of illegal exchange.

NAB contended in the report that the inquiry was conducted by CIT and as per the collected record, the allotment of two acres land was made in 1991 and it was not in exchange of 15 acres land and payment was also made by the allottee and maintained that it was a fresh allotment for residential/commercial purpose.

The report further said that a general order about cancelation of all exchange allotments was issued in 2015 by the land utilisation department for the entire province and therefore the allottee, being an aggrieved person, approached the secretary land utilisation department with an argument that the two acres land did not come under exchange allotments and asked for its restoration.

Thereafter, the land utilisation department had sent a summary to the then chief minister and after the approval, the two acres land's allotment was restored, it added.

The same bench also directed the National Engineering Services Pakistan (Nespak) and the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) to jointly inspect the Sea Breeze Plaza, located on M.A. Jinnah Road, and sought report about the status of the building in two months.

The S.B. Complex Owners Welfare Association moved the apex court requesting it to review its May 9 order regarding the demolition of the plaza.

The Karachi Cantonment Board and the technical committee of Sindh Building Control Authority placed reports before the bench on Friday and reports said that the building was examined on Aug 7, but it needed full and proper assessment.

The acting chairman of PEC informed the bench that a panel of experts will be provided to Nespak for coordination and assistance in the inspection.

The bench directed Nespak and the PEC to jointly carry out the inspection with latest equipment and come up with a report in two months whether the building was dangerous or sustainable. The court also directed the technical team of the SBCA to provide its input to the joint inspection team.

The bench adjourned a matter pertaining to revival of the Karachi Circular Railway, encroachments and sewerage issues of Karachi for two weeks.

Earlier, the apex court had sought compliance report from the provincial and federal authorities on its order about the KCR, improvement of the state of affairs of Karachi, including encroachments, sewerage system, illegal and unauthorised constructions.

On Friday, the officials of the federal and provincial authorities briefed the judges on these issues in the chamber.

Some of the participants told reporters outside the courtroom that the provincial officials informed the judges that revival of the KCR and tram service were not implementable and contended that other mega transport projects would be launched and requested the judges to revisit their order about revival of the KCR and tram services.

Besides the provincial authorities, the notices were also issued to the federal finance secretary, the secretary of planning and attorney general for next date.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1499063>

THE CASE OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN

Aziz Ali Dad August 11, 2019

For the last few years nationalists and increasingly Pakistan Peoples Party in Gilgit-Baltistan are clamouring for the restoration of State Subject Rule (SSR) in the region. However, the debate is obfuscated because of lack of proper contextual and historical knowledge about SSR in Gilgit-Baltistan.

For a proper understanding of the current legal imbroglio regarding definition of citizens, rights and laws, it is imperative to understand the changes brought about during the colonial and post-colonial times.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, the changes to deprive the local rulers of their remaining power and to empower administrative organs of the state at the expense of local people were introduced at the structural, and not constitutional level.

Historically, the region that is today Gilgit-Baltistan was a cluster of princely kingdoms. In these princely states the king was absolute authority. He was the sole legislator, judge and executive. Some of the regions, such as Chilas, Tangir and Darel were tribal kingdoms. In this system, there was no head of state. That is why they are termed acephalous states. The tribal states used to practise a code where local elders would take critical decisions.

The princely and tribal kingdoms of Gilgit-Baltistan managed their affairs, including issues related to settlers under customary laws. Because the customary laws were rooted in indigenous culture and social set-up, the states had no problems in managing intra-regional and inter-regional migration. The linguistic and ethnic diversity in several valleys bears testimony to its success. It also belies the thesis that local inhabitants were largely immobile because of difficult terrain, inaccessible geography and harsh climatic conditions.

After the conquest of Baltistan and Gilgit by the Dogras of Kashmir in the 1860s, the power dynamics underwent a drastic change as the Dogra Raj introduced new laws to consolidate its grip on the region. The Maharaja of Kashmir introduced the Hereditary State Subject Order in 1927. This rule defined and categorised people as state and non-state subjects. The rule granted the right to government office, land use and ownership to only state subjects in Jammu and Kashmir. Non-state subjects were excluded from these rights. Later, India adopted the same definition of state subjects in Article 35-A of the Indian Constitution.

Since Gilgit-Baltistan was under the rule of Maharaja of Kashmir, SSR was said to be extended to this region. However, no documents or official record related to its promulgation in Gilgit-Baltistan is available with the law department of Gilgit-Baltistan. Therefore, it is safe to assume that SSR lingered in administrative procedures in post-colonial period as colonial hangover.

Pakistan informally scrapped it in Gilgit-Baltistan in the 1970s. This coincided with the abolition of princely states in the region. The dissolution of princely states and their laws, and scrapping of SSR created a legal vacuum. It allowed outsiders to purchase property, get employment in public services and settle in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Recently, local people have started protesting. They fear drastic changes in the demography of the region and takeover of their land and natural resources by outsiders.

SSR can be an effective instrument for maintaining demographic composition in Jammu and Kashmir but it was essentially a colonial tool without roots and perceived legitimacy among the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Those who are supporting the move to restore SSR in its original form in Gilgit-Baltistan are ignoring historical facts to hide a failure of imagination to propose new legal arrangements and a fresh social contract for the inhabitants of Gilgit-Baltistan.

After the completion of Dogra and British conquests in Gilgit-Baltistan in the later part of the nineteenth century, the Dogras brought mercenaries and minions from Kashmir and the then NWFP and allowed them to settle in Gilgit-Baltistan. Foremost among the settlers were the Pathan soldiers who participated in the brutal military campaign of Manduri Fort in Yasin. Because there was no rule

for Dogras in their military campaigns in Baltistan and Gilgit, they committed genocide with impunity. After the conquest of Manduri Fort in the Yasin region, they put every man and male child to the sword, and abducted the girls.

A large number of naturalised Kashmiris now live in major towns and villages in Gilgit-Baltistan. The movement of local people from different valleys and princely states was restricted by the Dogra rule. For example, people from Hunza and some parts of Gilgit-Baltistan were allowed to enter the capital of Gilgit only during the day. They were not allowed to stay in the city at night.

Reviving such practices through the restoration of SSR would lead to unrest and further alienate people from one another. The process of restricting local movements and allowing outsiders to settle continued till 1947 when Dogras were expelled from the region in the war of independence of Gilgit-Baltistan.

People in Gilgit-Baltistan did not approve of SSR. While demanding restoration of the SSR, nationalist forces in Gilgit-Baltistan ignore the fact that local people agitated against it in the early 1970s under the banner of *Tanzeem-e-Millat* led by Advocate Jouhar Ali. It is reported that the objective of the organisation was “to eliminate State Subject Rule and get constitutional status”. With the region’s connectivity with the outside world and power of administrative set up increasing, Gilgit-Baltistan has witnessed steady influx of people from other parts of Pakistan as well.

After the sectarian tension of 1988, the migration and settlers’ issue took a sectarian turn as each sect encouraged their co-religionists to migrate to Gilgit-Baltistan so that they should outnumber other sects. Due to sectarianisation of politics and citizenry, people’s positions on political issues, constitutional status and definition of residents have also become coloured. The question is important to Pakistan’s stance regarding Jammu and Kashmir and Indian actions there.

At the time of writing this article, it has been reported that India’s government has scrapped Article 370 of the Constitution that granted special status for Jammu and Kashmir, along Article 35-A, which allowed the Jammu and Kashmir state’s legislature to define permanent residents of the state and provide special rights and privileges to those permanent residents. This move coincides with a major clampdown on separatists in the Indian held Kashmir.

Pakistan is protesting India’s move to assimilate Jammu and Kashmir into India, but its policy towards Gilgit-Baltistan weakens its case as the region has neither a special status in Pakistan nor constitutional cover.

Considering when Pakistan has not granted special status to one of its components, its objection to the abolition of special status for Indian Occupied Kashmir appears odd.

The point is not lost on policymakers in Pakistan. On August 2, 2019, Kashmir Committee Chairman, Syed Fakhar Imam asked the government of Pakistan to consider restoring the State Subject Rule in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The status of Gilgit-Baltistan is increasingly a cause of concern for the populace. Voices for the rights to land and resources and protests against settlers are getting louder. Resolution of the complex issue does not lie in the restoration of SSR which was enacted in a different power arrangement and social set-up. Any attempt to restore SSR in its original form will prove a non-starter given that the diversity and social dynamics have undergone a sea change.

Instead of reviving the colonial instrument of control, there is a dire need to promulgate new laws by taking local stakeholders into confidence Pakistan needs to introduce a special bill of rights in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The bill of rights should clearly define residents of Gilgit-Baltistan and safeguard their rights against encroachment and usurpation of their lands, jobs, resources and social and political rights. Without

such safeguards the people will continue to fear colonisation of their fields, mountains, ice, water and forests by big money.

<http://tns.thenews.com.pk/case-gilgit-baltistan/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 19TH TO 25TH 2019

QAT PROTESTS ISSUANCE OF EVICTION NOTICES TO RIVERBANK DWELLERS

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent August 22, 2019

HYDERABAD: Activists of the Qaumi Awami Tehreek (QAT) held a demonstration here on Wednesday in protest against issuance of notices by the civil administration and irrigation department to people living near Indus River, declaring their abodes as encroachments.

The activists also staged a march from Qasimabad which culminated outside the local press club.

Addressing the protesters, QAT president Ayaz Latif Palijo said that instead of providing relief to people, the Sindh government was snatching their right to live. On one hand the government promised shelter to people while on the other, they were being evicted from their abodes.

He said that many localities and colonies were established along the Indus in Qasimabad area and their residents were now being evicted from there by the civil administration in collusion with builder mafia. He said the civil administration was giving a legal colour to that problem. He promised that his party was with the affected people and would always support them.

Mr Palijo said the QAT would not let their settlements be demolished and every legal and political path would be taken.

Speaking on the occasion, residents of Qasimabad Phase-2 and other areas said that they were living there for a long time. They said the Sindh government had not taken notice of it; they would not leave their settlements and they would resist any operation for their displacement.

They alleged that corrupt officials wanted to occupy land in collusion with builder mafia. They demanded of the Sindh government to take notice of their problem and withdraw notices for their eviction.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500874/qat-protests-issuance-of-eviction-notices-to-riverbank-dwellers>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 26TH TO Sep 1ST 2019

CM MURAD ASKS FOR SCIENTIFIC INVENTORY OF STATE FORESTS IN SINDH

By Our Correspondent Published: August 28, 2019

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah directed the forest department on Tuesday to make a scientific inventory of state forests in Sindh to ascertain the land under forest cover, including riverine and irrigated forests. The decision was taken during a meeting at the CM House,

which was attended by CM's Adviser on Climate Change Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Principal Secretary Sajid Jamal Abro, Forest Secretary Raheem Soomro and officers of the planning and development department.

The CM was informed that the first inventory of state forests in Sindh was conducted with the assistance of the Asian Bank in 1994. The inventory indicated that 21 per cent area or 43,000 hectares were riverine forests and 17 per cent or 13,000 hectares were of irrigated plantation which was under cover of commercial tree species while the remaining forest area was degraded and occupied by non-commercial woody vegetation. In 2007, an in-house study of the forest department found that the state land covered by forests was 2.5 per cent of the total area. Sindh spans over 34.84 million acres, of which eight per cent or 2,789, 875 acres are designated as state forest lands and range lands.

The chief minister attributed the decline in forest cover to multiple factors such as poor governance, weak law enforcement capacity of the forest department, the decline in river flow and low priority given to the forestry sector while allocating financial resources. According to him, other factors include demographic and hydrological changes, market forces and lack of alternatives to forest products.

The CM said that forestry and forest management globally have undergone a paradigm shift. Forests are now principally conserved for the provision of environmental science such as climate regulation, soil and water conservation, biodiversity conservation, pollution control and protection against natural disasters. "Providing timber, fuel wood and fodder is no longer considered the key objective of managing forests," he said.

Forest Secretary Raheem Soomro told the CM that his department had presented the 'Sindh Sustainable Forest Management Policy 2019' in the last cabinet meeting and the cabinet has constituted a committee under Forest Minister Nasir Shah to give recommendations for the implementation of the said policy.

The main objectives of the proposed forest policy include the governance of forests, climate change mitigation and ecosystem service and riverine forests and irrigation plantation under which investment in environmental forestry areas would be encouraged. Mangrove forests and range lands enhancement, demarcation and re-notification of state forest lands, social forestry- this forestry would be made on private, community and municipal lands – were included in the policy as well.

The CM said that the most important objective of the forest policy should be 'Forestry Research and Education'. He said that scientific research and education in forestry of non-timber forestry produce and wildlife must be promoted for pragmatic conservation planning and to generate career opportunities for graduate students and researchers. The CM was told that the new forest policy was aimed at raising a 100 per cent plantation area under forest in a phased-approach to be opted by local planting partners through a transparent process. During the next 15 years, Riverine and Irrigated plantations would be restored by 100 percent.

Under the new policy, assets of the forest department such as forest land in reserve forest areas of riverine and irrigated plantation areas would be made available after a transparent process to develop forests with local investment and expertise. Advertisements would be published in local newspapers for maximum competition and strict enforcement of policy provisions

The bidding process would be managed at the division office level and the highest bidder would choose the afforestation plan (one to five year afforestation options with maximum reward for early afforestation option) and the planting partner would be paying the land rent or tariff as well as a security deposit.

The CM directed the forest department to prepare a plan to build a scientific inventory of state forests and get his approval to start the work. The new forest policy would be implemented when the sub-committee of the cabinet submits its recommendations.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2043759/1-cm-murad-asks-scientific-inventory-state-forests-sindh/>

CM SUSPENDS LAND UTILISATION SECY FOR ILLEGAL REGULARISATION OF 159 ACRES

Our Correspondent September 1, 2019

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah with immediate effect has placed the services of the secretary of the Board of Revenue's (BoR) Land Utilisation Department and the additional director general of the Malir Development Authority (MDA) under suspension for illegally issuing a challan for the regularisation of 159 acres of cancelled land in District West.

The chief minister, taking serious notice of the issuance of the challan in favour of a private party for the regularisation of the allotment of 159-acre cancelled industrial land in District West by Secretary Danish Saeed, BPS-20, has ordered suspension of his services with immediate effect.

On inquiry, after the chief minister was told that Additional DG MDA Sohail Khan, BPS-19, had also a role in the regularisation allotment of the land in District West, he also suspended his services immediately.

The chief minister said that how Land Utilisation Department could issue a challan without calling a report from the DC West and approval of the competent authority. He said that the land in question was a cancelled case not only by the department but through an ordinance in 2000.

“I am quite surprised that the officers without considering all the legal factors issue orders,” he said and ordered Chief Secretary Mumtaz Shah to transfer the entire staff of the Land Utilisation Department and post other staff in their place. “I want to purge the LU department from the officers working there in such a state of affairs,” he said.

The chief minister directed Chairman Anti-Corruption Mohammad Waseem to conduct an inquiry into the matter and submit a report to him within two days. Meanwhile, the ACE conducted a raid on the office of the secretary of the Land Utilisation Department, Board of Revenue, and seized the record.

The statement issued by the ACE department says, “Chief Ministers, Sindh has taken serious notice of illegal regularisation of 159 acres cancelled land K-28, Phase-II, Trans Lyari Quarters, Hawksbay Road, West-Karachi, and has directed for constitution of an enquiry committee in Enquiries & Anticorruption Establishment and submission of enquiry report within two days without fail. Besides, the Chief Minister has also ordered for placement of services of Mr.

Danish Saeed, Member (Land Utilization) Board of Revenue and Mr. Mohammad Sohail Khan, Additional Director General, Malir Development Authority and all other offices/ officials who are involved in the instant matter under suspension. Moreover, all the officers/official have been directed to remain at their head quarter during the investigation. Major reshuffle shall be made in Land Utilization Department.

“Minister for Enquiries & Anticorruption Establishment, Sindh has also emphasized for quick implementation of orders of the Chief Minister, Sindh in this letter and spirit. Besides, raid has been conducted on the office of Secretary Land Utilisation Board of Revenue by the Anti-Corruption team. Office record has been seized and officers are being interrogated. Additionally, site office of Builder and land in question at Hawksbay has also been sealed.”

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/520193-cm-suspends-land-utilisation-secy-for-illegal-regularisation-of-159-acres>

SEPTEMBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 2ND TO 8TH 2019

SINDH GOVT SET TO OFFER LAND TO PRIVATE ENTITIES FOR ‘GREEN SPACES’

Hasan Mansoor Updated September 04, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh government has invited individuals and organisations to make ‘green spaces’ — an area of grass, trees, or other vegetation set apart for recreational or aesthetic purposes — across the province by utilising lands available with the public health and rural development department, officials said on Tuesday.

“We have lands available at our schemes in almost every district of Sindh where we have planned to invite interested individuals and organisations to create green spaces there,” Public Health Engineering Secretary Roshan Ali Shaikh told Dawn.

He said there were thousands of such spaces available with the department that could offer the public to have green places in their areas, which were already very scarce in the province.

“This scheme could help our people to have gardens in their midst as well as improve our overall environment,” he said.

He added the organisations included non-governmental and village development organisations, philanthropists, and local and multinational companies. “We intend to convert the bigger sites into beautifully planned gardens or picnic spots for the communities with education and awareness facilities on environment, plantation and water conservation.”

Project Director Raja Tariq Chandio said the department had more than 5,000 such sites where such green spaces could be developed.

He said the water supply schemes of the department, which included the reverse-osmosis (RO) plants, ultra-filtration (UF) plants and drainage installations, etc, were being run by them and they had ample spaces offering for developing green spaces.

“Thousands of such spaces are available with us ranging from 200 yards to as large as up to 100 acres,” said Mr Chandio.

He said individuals with reputation and history of working in environmental activities and organisations showing the same desire to make Sindh green would be handed those spaces for planting of trees and curating soothing gardens.

“These organisations and individuals will do all this without capitalising on it commercially with the precondition that they would have no ownership of the pieces of land given to them for greening areas,” he added.

Officials said the department had made it clear that those spaces would be handed to the interested parties initially for three years with no permission for using them for commercial purposes i.e. fixing

entry fees for general public or allowing any companies to erect their advertisement hoardings, etc, in and around it.

“These areas will remain public places where entertainment-starved people could arrive with their families and enjoy with the nature free of charges,” said Mr Shaikh.

Another official said influential individuals would not be encouraged to get those places. Instead, “we will first check the credentials of those applying and could only consider them if they have worked in this field before”.

Besides, the places would be handed over for three years and the department could get them back as per conditions in the memoranda of understanding and would manage it either by itself or hand it to other parties.

Officials said apart from the land, the department would provide a watchman and water supply to the interested parties. However, those individuals or organisations would have to invest in designing those places and provision of seeds and plants by their own means.

And, they added, the department would, by no means, reimburse anything to the lessee once the time of contract lapsed or any of the two parties cancelled the agreement.

Officials said the PHE department had such pieces of land in 25 out of 29 districts of Sindh.

In Karachi, they added, the department had schemes in the rural fringes of the city in its West and Malir districts where those green spaces would be developed.

Besides, they said, the PHE department had schemes in the rest of 23 districts of Sindh.

They added that the forest department had also been requested to provide technical assistance to the PHE department to make the scheme success.

Published in Dawn, September 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1503339/sindh-govt-set-to-offer-land-to-private-entities-for-green-spaces>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 9TH TO 15TH 2019

ABAD, CDC INK MOU FOR DIGITALISATION OF LAND RECORDS

RECORDER REPORT SEP 13TH, 2019 KARACHI

Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan (ABAD) and Central Depository Company (CDC), on Thursday, signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the digitalisation of land records through Land Repository System, which will be the first ever system of Pakistan and it will cater the need of Electronic Registration of Land and Land Titles.

The signing ceremony was held at ABAD House here on Thursday. Vice Chairman ABAD Abdul Kareem Adhia and Badiuddin Akber CEO of CDC signed the MoU witnessed by Chairman ABAD Muhammad Hassan Bakshi, Chairman CDC Moin M Fudda, Senior Vice Chairman ABAD Anwar Dawood, Chairman Southern Region Ibrahim Habib, senior officials of CDC and members of ABAD were also present on this occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, Moin M Fudda congratulated ABAD for initiating such a gigantic work. He said that electronic registration of land documents will help abolish possibilities of fraud and corruption. He said that this system will help not only the purchaser of property but will also help grow national economy as it will abolish corruption being witnessed in offices of Registrars at present. He said that almost 60 percent of all cases in various courts are of fraud in lands. He pointed out that every third person in Sindh is a victim of land fraud and the new Electronic Registration System: Land Repository System will help remove any fraud.

Chairman ABAD Muhammad Hassan Bakshi said that ABAD is working for the legal and bona fide construction activities in Pakistan and some people are accusing that builders are cheating people but 98 percent of ABAD members are doing their legitimate business.

He lamented that ABAD members are wrongly accused of illegal construction activities as more than 5,000 buildings are being constructed illegally and without any approval of competent authority while all members of ABAD are getting approvals before starting construction of their buildings. He said that Advisor to Sindh Chief Minister Murtaza Wahab has promised to land full support for the legislation of this new system.

Addressing the ceremony CEO CDC highlighted main points of Land Repository System. Zaigham Rizvi, Chairman Prime Minister's Task Force for Housing also spoke on this occasion. Vice Chairman ABAD Abdul Kareem Adhia thanked all guests.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/09/20190913517066/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 16TH TO 22ND 2019

‘LAND GRABBERS’ IN 150 CASES FREED FOR LACK OF PROOF IN SEVEN YEARS, PA TOLD

Tahir Siddiqui September 21, 2019

KARACHI: The accused persons in 150 out of 196 land-grabbing cases registered during the past seven years were either acquitted or released for lack of evidence, it emerged on Friday.

While furnishing a statement and replies to the lawmakers’ verbal and written queries during the Question Hour session in Sindh Assembly, Reve-nue and Relief Minister Makhdoom Mehboob Zaman said that different groups and individuals were involved in illegal occupation of state land.

However, he did not disclose any name of land grabbers’ groups or individuals despite repeated demands by opposition members.

Giving details, he said 196 cases were registered against land grabbers during the past seven years. He said that the accused persons in 77 cases were acquitted by the special trial court, while 45 cases were declared ‘A’ class by the trial court due to the non-availability of names and proper bio-data of the accused persons.

The minister further informed that 27 cases against land grabbers were declared ‘C’ class by the trial court due to lack of evidence and one case was declared ‘B’ class by the trial court due to false allegations made by complainants.

He said that as many as 30 cases were still pending disposal in the trial court.

Responding to a question asked by Grand Democratic Alliance’s member Nusrat Saher Abbasi, the minister said that as many as 33,160 acres of illegally occupied state land in Sukkur and 5,536 acres in Larkana were retrieved by the anti-encroachment wing of the revenue department.

Replying to a verbal question, he said that the revenue department had its anti-encroachment force, which also conducted joint operations with police and Rangers against encroachers.

Responding to a question, the minister said that the funds and relief goods received from the provincial government were distributed to the drought and accidental fire victims and most deserving persons in Tharparkar from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2018.

Sharing details with lawmakers, the minister said that 574,615 wheat bags, each containing 100kg, were distributed among as many affected families free of cost during the same period.

Besides, he said that 50,973 wheat bags of 50kg were distributed to female beneficiaries holding Benazir Income Support Programme cards from May 18, 2018 to June 30, 2018.

Replying to another question, he said that there were 138 tapas in district Dadu, while the sanctioned strength of tapedars was 162.

He said that at present the working strength of tapedars was 150, while 16 posts of tapedars were lying vacant.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1506387/land-grabbers-in-150-cases-freed-for-lack-of-proof-in-seven-years-pa-told>

DASU LANDOWNERS REFUSE TO END SIT-IN

A Correspondent September 22, 2019

MANSEHRA: The residents of Dasu area have warned that they will end sit-in to allow work on a local hydropower project only after they're paid dues and the market rate for their land acquired for the initiative.

"The suspension of work on the 4,300-megawatt Dasu hydropower project is costing the federal government around Rs750 million daily but it is reluctant to meet our demands, which were accepted in 2016 by the then government," a member of the committee representing landowners, Fazlur Rehman, told reporters in Barsian area on Saturday.

The other committee members also showed up on the occasion.

Mr Rehman said the families affected by the project had got the work on the project suspended last week by staging a sit-in to force the government to accept their demands.

"We'll never allow Wapda to execute the hydropower initiative if the price of our land acquired by it is not increased by 10 percent," he said.

Another committee member, Raja Arif said Wapda had acquired land and even houses for the project through the district administration but the landowners had yet to be paid for it.

"We won't allow Wapda to resume work until our dues after 10 percent hike are paid," he warned.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1506563>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 23RD TO 29TH 2019

A JK MINISTER DISQUALIFIED FOR ENCROACHING UPON STATE LAND

By Tariq Naqash | 9/26/2019 12:00:00 AM

MUZAFFARABAD: In a rare decision, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Supreme Court on Wednesday disqualified a sitting minister from being the member of the Legislative Assembly for the next five years for `deliberately encroaching upon state land and thus committing contempt of a court judgement`.

Minister for Sports, Youth and Culture Chaudhry Mohammad Saeed, who was elected from Mirpur city in 2016 polls as a PML-N nominee, was convicted and punished with imprisonment till the rising of the court in Mirpur circuit only a day after his constituency and adjoining areas were hit by a devastating earthquake.

Mr Saeed had defeated apparently formidable PTI regional president Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry notwithstanding being a novice in electoral politics.

On October 5, last year, one Haji Javed Akram, a resident of Mirpur, had filed an application in Mirpur circuit of the apex court, alleging that Mr Saeed had been `unlawfully occupying more than one kanal and eight marla crown land` along with his house `in an act that amounted to infringement of an apex court judgement titled Azeem Dutt and others versus Raja Khadim Hussain and others`.

Ever since, the minister was being tried by a division bench comprising Chief Justice Chaudhry Mohammad Ibrahim Zia and senior judge Raja Saeed Akram Khan.

Mr Saeed had placed himself at the mercy of the court from day one by tendering an unconditional apology.

During the course of hearing, his counsel had maintained that his client had not intentionally committed contempt of the court and that he had already demolished the boundary erected around the said piece of land.

However, the bench had rejected the plea as untenable because `the occupant was not an ordinary citizen but a minister and he had also admitted unlawful occupation`. The bench had also refused to entertain a plea that since the applicant was a member of a rival political party, his application should be dismissed.

In its decision, authored by the senior judge and agreed upon by the CJ through an additional note, the bench observed that the contempt proceedings were initiated to maintain and strengthen the confidence of the general public and litigants in the court and to vindicate the honour and dignity of the court.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=26_09_2019_004_004

90% LAND ACQUIRED FOR P-I OF LDA CITY

By Our Correspondent Published: September 29, 2019

LAHORE: The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) has announced that over 90% of the requisite land for LDA City (Phase 1) has been acquired.

During a progress review meeting on Saturday, LDA Director-General Muhammad Usman Moazzam highlighted that the authority has acquired 12,311 kanals of land out of the total 13,000 kanals offered to the city developer.

Addressing the meeting, he directed officials concerned to expedite the land acquisition process for the remaining 689 kanals. He asked to specially depute revenue staff and officials from the sub-registrar's office at the LDA head office to speed up mutation of land in the authority's name.

He also ordered earmarking of land for the construction of access roads for the scheme and to prepare an estimate of the costs to be incurred for this purpose.

During the meeting, it was stated that computerised balloting, for allocating plot numbers against exempted files of LDA City, will be held on November 30 through a system developed by the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB).

The schedule for finalising arrangements for this purpose has already been approved by the authority.

The DG highlighted that the last date to receive exemption letters/transfer of files has been decided as November 16. Proceedings for issuing exemption/transfer letters will be completed by November 26.

All data of exemption/transfer letters will be uploaded on the authority's official website by November 28 and computerised balloting will be held on November 30.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) ordered to constitute a committee to ensure the provision of land or monetary compensation to LDA City file holders.

The court had issued this direction during a suo motu hearing held at the Lahore registry.

Former chief justice of Pakistan, Mian Saqib Nisar, had warned that if the LDA City case did not involve widows and orphans, then all bureaucrats involved in the housing project, as well as the owners of the development companies, would have been in jail.

LDA City project's counsel, Advocate Ahsan Bhawan, informed the court that development companies would provide land for the mega housing project within the next two to three years. He recommended that this time should be reduced.

To this, Nisar directed the companies to provide the land within the next year and ordered to cancel their contracts if they failed to do so.

He maintained that the land acquisition process should be expedited and allotted to the victims.

The counsel added that the land acquired so far had been transferred to LDA City's name. He said that the companies had sold an excess of 9,000 registration files and that 20,000 kanals was required to allocate it to those affected.

At the time, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, the other member of the bench hearing the case, said: "Why doesn't LDA complete the project on its own? It is such a big company. It should complete the project itself." To this, LDA's counsel responded by saying that the company "does not have the funds required to do so".

Published in The Express Tribune, September 29th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2067676/1-90-land-acquired-p-lda-city/>

OCTOBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 30TH TO OCT 6TH 2019

ACTION LAUNCHED AGAINST LAND GRABBERS

By APP Published: October 2, 2019

LAHORE: Vigorous action is being taken against land grabbers across the province, on the directions of Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Director General Muhammad Gohar Nafees. According to an ACE spokesperson, all ACE Regional Directors have been issued directions to compile data of all current housing societies and other government lands so that illegal occupants of state lands could be identified, in this regard. On receiving source report Rawalpindi ACE has formally initiated an inquiry regarding land transfer deed made between Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and Top City Housing Society. It surfaced during initial inquiry that large scale irregularities occurred between RDA and Top City Housing Society in transfer deeds and loss of national exchequer amounting to billions of rupees has been caused due to their mutual connivance. The RDA granted 703 kanals of land to the housing society and received 280 kanals of land in return. The land given to RDA by the housing society was sold at a very low price. Similarly, initial investigation revealed that no permission had been obtained from any authority concerned regarding the transfer deed. Rawalpindi ACE Regional Director Arif Rahim appointed Rawalpindi Circle Officer Zahid Mahmood as inquiry officer in order to thoroughly investigate the matter.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2070074/1-action-launched-land-grabbers-2/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 7TH TO 13TH 2019

LAND WORTH RS10.66BN RECOVERED, RETURNED TO PSM

FAZAL SHER October 09, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Tuesday informed the Accountability Court hearing the multibillion rupees fake bank accounts case, involving former president Asif Ali Zardari, that it has recovered land valuing Rs 10.66 billion from seven accused and returned it to Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM).

The NAB Rawalpindi submitted its report before Accountability Court Judge Muhammad Bashir. According to the NAB's report, the Bureau has returned 263 acres of land worth Rs 10.66 billion to the PSM. The seven accused of fake bank accounts case had expressed willingness to return the land under plea bargain, the NAB report said.

As per the NAB's report, accused Hammad Shahid returned 34 acres of land, Abdul Ghani, 37 acres of land, Tariq Baig, 33 acres of land, Muhammad Iqbal, 32 acres of land, Muhammad Yousuf, 37 acres of land, Aamir, 40 acres of land, and Siraj Shahid returned 50 acres of land to the PSM.

Meanwhile, the Accountability Court extended physical remand of a director of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) till October 15 in the Park Lane reference filed against Zardari and others.

The NAB officials produced former director SECP Javed Hussain in the court on expiry of his remand term. The NAB prosecutor requested Accountability Court Judge Muhammad Bashir to extend physical remand of the accused as investigators want to conduct further investigation from him.

Objecting to the NAB's request, the defense counsel requested the court to reject the NAB's application.

The court after hearing the arguments of both the defense and prosecution sides remanded the accused into the NAB custody till October 15. The judge also asked the NAB officials to complete investigation from the suspect during this remand as next time he will not extend the physical remand.

The prosecutor told the court that the accused by misusing his authority benefited Zardari. The accused facilitated the resignation of Zardari from two companies in 2009 in back dates.

The prosecutor further argued before the court that the accused was working as registrar ROC Islamabad in 2009 and received the record of Park Lane Company.

It was in the knowledge of the accused that Zardari owned Park Lane Company, he said, adding that the accused had allegedly hidden information from his subordinates.

The same court also extended the judicial remand of Dr Dinshaw Anklesaria, an accountant of Park Lane Estate Company allegedly owned by Zardari, till October 21.

The officials of NAB produced Dr Dinshaw Anklesaria before Accountability Court Judge Muhammad Bashir on expiry of his remand term from Adiala Jail.

The court extended judicial remand of Anklesaria till October 21. Anklesaria is facing charges of obtaining a loan on forged documents. He is also said to be involved in benefiting Park Lane Company through fake bank accounts.

According to the joint investigation team (JIT), Park Lane Estate Company, a Karachi-based firm was incorporated on October 18, 1979. In 1989, Zardari acquired the company along with his 'front man' Iqbal Memon. In 2009, Zardari, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Iqbal Memon and others became shareholders of the company.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/10/09/20-page/804761-news.html>

PUNJAB TO CONDUCT AUDIT OF STATE LANDS

Staff Reporter October 10, 2019

LAHORE: The Punjab government has decided to conduct detailed audit of all state lands in the province and has set up a committee headed by Punjab law minister Basharat Raja for the purpose.

The revenue minister will serve as a co-convenor and member colonies will act as secretary to the committee.

Senior member Board of Revenue (SMBR), law secretary and the Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) director general are members of the committee.

The committee shall collect data on agricultural, residential, commercial, allotted, leased, un-utilised and encroached land in each district, while collecting the data of annual income and arrears from those lands.

Punjab law minister says the committee is beginning the audit work immediately and submit a consolidated report covering all aspects, along with its recommendations, to the chief minister within a month.

He says the committee will conduct a special audit of housing schemes created in the province, especially the fake ones so that legal action may be taken against such schemes.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1509952>

RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY MIRANI DAM STILL NOT COMPENSATED

By Our Correspondent Published: October 11, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources on Thursday discussed the issue of the non-payment of compensation money to the residents affected by the construction of the Mirani Dam in Balochistan.

The committee, which met with Senator Shamim Afridi in the chair, also expressed its displeasure over the absence of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) chairman and the planning Commission secretary from its meeting and decided to issue show-cause notices to them.

Senator Mir Kabeer said the Balochistan government had to release a sum of Rs1 billion for the residents affected by the construction of the dam but not a single penny had been handed over to them so far.

Balochistan Implementation Secretary Zafar Bukhari told the Senate panel that the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) had linked the payment with third-party evaluation.

The committee recommended that Ecneec should withdraw the condition of third party evaluation so the amount could be disbursed among the affected residents.

The committee also directed the provincial government to submit a proposal to Ecneec for this purpose.

Senator Sassui Palijo noted that Sindh was not properly being represented in the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), adding that the province should have two members in the body.

She alleged that the province was being kept in the dark about the construction of Sindh Barrage. She noted that the Wapda chairman had not attended the meeting. Federal Minister for Water Resources

Faisal Vawda told the committee that the Wapda chairman was absent because he had undergone knee surgery.

The committee postponed the briefing on Sindh Barrage until the Wapda chairman's participation in its next huddle.

The participants of the meeting also discussed the land lost due to sea intrusion in coastal areas, the Yatabad Spate Irrigation Scheme in Dukki district and the feasibility of irrigation of Zhob division through Indus River.

Senators Agha Shahzaib Durrani, Ahmad Khan, Mir Muhammad Yousaf Badini, the Water Resources secretary, the Irsa chairman, and other senior officials were also present in the meeting.

A day earlier, Vawda said the appointment of an additional member from Sindh to Irsa was not covered under the IRSA Act, 1992 as each province could only nominate one member.

He added that the Chief Executive Order of 2000, granting Sindh the favour of nominating a federal member in addition to the one already appointed by it, was unauthorised and illegal as the Irsa Act was not accordingly amended in the light of Martial Law era executive order.

"The order has already been suspended by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, which allowed the federal government to nominate its own member on Irsa to ensure neutrality and credibility of the regulatory authority," he maintained.

Taking strong exception of the statement of the Sindh chief minister on the issue of nominating an additional member to Irsa, the minister said Punjab had strong reservations over the presence of two members from Sindh at Irsa, while none represented the Federation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2077058/1-residents-affected-mirani-dam-still-not-compensated/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 14TH TO 20TH 2019

NA PANEL TO APPROACH PM FOR RETRIEVING PAKISTAN POST'S LAND

By SARDAR SIKANDER SHAHEEN on October 19, 2019

The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Postal Services Friday decided to approach Prime Minister Imran Khan for the retrieval of Pakistan Post's land allegedly grabbed by the land mafia in different parts of the country.

In this backdrop, the committee also sought from Pakistan Post a detailed record of its properties located across the country including the land encroached by the land grabbers.

The committee met in the chair of Imtiaz Chaudhry from the ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

“There are reports that Pakistan Post's land has been illegally occupied by certain elements in different parts of the country. This is a very disturbing development. This land is the property of the state that must be retrieved at any cost come what may," the committee's chairman said.

The committee also sought from the Pakistan Post the details of all its properties being used for commercial purposes and recommended the formulation of a comprehensive policy for the utilisation of the commercial properties.

Briefing the committee on steps taken by the federal government for the digitisation of Pakistan Post, Director General Pakistan Post Akhlaque Rana said a system is being updated using the latest technology including mobile applications to facilitate the pensioners and other customers.

The committee members said digitisation in Pakistan Post is the need of the hour since private courier services are using latest technology to ensure speedy delivery of letters, parcels, related consignments and goods to the customers. The committee also recommended to replace outdated practices at Pakistan Post carried out manually with speedy online services.

The NA committee considered Pakistan Postal Services Management Board (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and deferred it till next meeting due to absence of mover of the bill.

Meanwhile, a day earlier on Thursday, a meeting of Senate's Standing Committee on Postal Services saw high drama after the Senate's Media Directorate made public, through a press release, the details of the committee meeting that was supposed to be ‘in camera.’

In an apparently strange turn of events, shortly before the meeting began, the journalists who had reached the Parliament House to cover the Senate committee's proceedings, were informed by the Senate staff that the meeting would be in camera or confidential, implying that media coverage of the meeting would not be allowed keeping in view that it was an in camera session despite that the meeting's agenda had already been publicly issued.

Interestingly, a press release issued by Senate's Media Directorate after the committee's meeting went on to read, “The Senate Standing Committee on Postal Services convened an in camera meeting on Thursday, to determine the committee's further course of action in conjunction with members. In addition to this the committee deliberated over work carried out by the committee since 2018 and current activities of the standing committee.”

A source in the Senate Secretariat termed it a ‘blunder’ on part of the Senate's media officials. “An in camera meeting means that the proceedings of the meeting are supposed to be off the record and to be kept secret from public and press. How, in the first place, details can be issued of something that was in camera? This is a huge blunder of Senate's Media Directorate," the source told Business Recorder.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/19/532558/na-panel-to-approach-pm-for-retrieving-pakistan-posts-land/>

***NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 2ST TO 27TH
2019***

ACTION AGAINST LAND GRABBERS DISCUSSED

OCTOBER 22,2019

LAHORE: Punjab chief Secretary Yousaf Naseem Khokar and Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Chairman Dr Aamer Ahmad met at Civil Secretariat on Monday.

Matters pertaining to retrieving land belonging to ETPB from encroachers and other issues were also discussed. Speaking on the occasion, the chief secretary said that the Punjab government would extend all kind of support to retrieve land from squatters and directions for doing so would be issued to divisional commissioners in this regard.

The ETPB chairman thanked the Punjab government for their support.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201910220194&EN_ID=11201910220060&EMID=11201910220026

ANOTHER LAND ALLOTMENT SCAM HITS CDA

Kashif Abbasi Updated October 24, 2019

ISLAMABAD: A month after the scam of backdated plot allotment hit the Capital Development Authority (CDA), another scandal involving allotment of 59 residential plots in D-13 has surfaced.

According to sources, Member Estate Khushal Khan had directed the land directorate on Sept 17 to allot plots to the affected people, whose land had been acquired in D-13, through balloting.

However, despite his orders, the land directorate allotted the plots without conducting balloting.

CDA's 2017 standard operating procedure (SOP) prepared by the then chairman of the civic authority, clearly stated: "After principle approval of case from member estate, plots will be allotted through manual open balloting in the presence of two members of CDA board. Date of balloting will be advertised in at least three leading newspapers." However, in the case of D-13, the land directorate skipped the balloting process.

SOP not followed while allotting 59 plots to affected people in D-13

Sources said most of the corner plots and plots located at best places in the sector were allotted. Copies of some allotment letters issued on October 21 are available with Dawn.

According to the documents, Member Estate Khushal Khan, in his noting mentioned on the file of said plots, stated: "Subject to fulfillment of all formalities and affidavit from landowners that there is no Built Up Property (BuP) on the land we have acquired land."

Meanwhile, in [Para 200], the member categorically stated that all the plots be allotted through transparent balloting.

The sources said no advertisement was made, no balloting was held and in glare violation of the SOP and directive of the member, the land directorate allotted 59 plots in D-13.

D-13 is a land-sharing sector where CDA is supposed to provide one kanal developed plot to each of the affected persons against four kanals.

Talking to Dawn, an official of the land directorate confirmed that the plots had been allotted in the last few days. He, however, claimed that the allottees had provisional letters with plot numbers, and in light of the provisional letters, confirmed allotment letters were issued.

“Since we issued the confirmation letters in light of the provisional letters, there was no need of balloting,” he said.

Meanwhile, a source in the revenue directorate said usually a provisional letter did not bear the plot number. It only means that the CDA had acquired the land and the allottee is supposed to get the plot after due procedure.

“If the provisional letter carries the plot number then what makes it different from the confirmation letter,” he said, casting doubt on the land directorate’s claim that provisional letters carried allotment numbers.

“First of all, I don’t believe that provisional letters are issued with allotment numbers, but even if they are, this matter also warrants inquiry,” he said.

CDA officials told Dawn that it was the responsibility of the civic agency to start the process of plot allotment in a transparent manner in the sector as people had been waiting for years for their plots. They said the CDA had acquired the land in the sector in 2008, but had failed to allot the plots to the affected people, let alone develop the sector.

Last month, a scandal of backdated allotment of plots in various sectors such as I-11, I-10, Margalla Town and I-14 surfaced and on the directive of the CDA chairman, a fact-finding inquiry was held.

Sources said in the fact-finding report it transpired that a large number of plots in the sectors were allotted dubiously with chances of backdated allotment of plots.

They said the fact-finding report called for a proper inquiry into the scam. However, the high-ups of the authority have yet to pass an order for a full-fledged inquiry.

In this scam, CDA officials alleged that in light of the SOP, it was decided that all plots would be allotted through balloting.

“The fact-finding report has pointed out serious irregularities and recommended a formal inquiry into the backdated allotment of plots, so we are looking towards the high-ups to order constitution of an inquiry committee,” said an official of the Human Resource Department of the civic agency.

When contacted, Member Estate Khushal Khan said disciplinary proceedings would be initiated against those officials who, despite his written directive, allotted plots in D-13 without conducting balloting.

“I am surprised, how could the land directorate allot plots without following the SOP. I will take action against all those involved in the allotment without balloting in D-13,” he said.

“Such provisional letters have no worth. Our policy and my standing directive is very clear that no plot can be allotted without balloting,” he said.

Meanwhile, in a late night development, member estate and the CDA chairman Amer Ali Ahmed suspended director land Fariduddin for his alleged involvement in allotment of plots without balloting in D-13.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1512560>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 28TH TO Nov 03RD 2019

GOVERNMENT LAND: SHC ORDERS CM TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL ALLOTMENT

By RECORDER REPORT on October 30, 2019

Sindh High Court (SHC) on Tuesday ordered Sindh Chief Minister and Chief Secretary to take strict action against the elements involved in illegal allotment of government land in the province. A division bench of the SHC also directed both the chief minister and chief secretary to look into the illegal allotment of land personally while hearing the case pertaining to allegedly illegal allotment of government land to a private builder in Gultistan-e-Jauhar Scheme 33.

The court expressing the annoyance over the illegal allotment of government land remarked that what is being done in Sindh and observed that it is apparently failure of the system. The court came hard on Additional Prosecutor General National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for not concluding the inquiry the private builder for years. "Don't drag the feet and tell the court whether you want to conclude the inquiry or not", the court asked NAB attorney.

Additional prosecutor general submitted that illegal allotment of the land has been stayed by the court after private builder moved it. The court, however, said that inquiries in the cases dearer to NAB are concluded quickly. It ordered NAB to submit the report by completing the inquiry against the private builder.

The petitioner for the builder told the court that ten acres of land was allotted to in Gultistan-e-Jauhar and got the stay order against the cancellation of allotment in 2014.

Meanwhile, a division bench of the SHC was dissolved after Justice Zauliqar Sarangi refused to hear the petition of Ijaz Jakhrani, Advisor Prison Sindh against NAB inquiry and removal of his name from ECL.

The case was transferred to division bench comprised of Justice K.K. Agha and Zaulfiqar Sarangi under the orders of Chief Justice of Pakistan.

However, Justice Sarangi refused to hear the case, leaving it to Chief Justice to constitute to new bench.

Counsel of Ijaz Jakhrani in the petition said that Jakhrani wanted to move abroad for treatment of his illness and cited the cases of Pervez Musharraf, Shahbaz Sharif and others as precedents for removal of his name from ECL. According to NAB Prosecutor, investigations against Jakhrani in two cases, one in Sukkur and one in Islamabad are underway.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/30/539308/government-land-shc-orders-cm-to-take-action-against-people-involved-in-illegal-allotment/>

REVENUE DEPT TOLD TO DIGITALISE LAND RECORD

By Mohammad Zafar Published: October 30, 2019

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal on Tuesday urged the revenue department to digitalise its land record system. He was chairing a meeting to review the land allotments and record management in the province.

“People of Balochistan are being pestered by the lack of record keeping system in the revenue department due to which many cases are under hearing in the courts. The time has come to digitalise land data system in Balochistan,” said Kamal in the meeting.

Provincial Minister for Revenue Saleem Khosa, Chief Secretary Balochistan Capt (ret'd) Fazeel Asghar, Senior member Board of Revenue Qamar Masood and government officials were present on the occasion.

The CM Balochistan also emphasised the need to address land issues in mountainous areas of the province and added that through profiling records, land in Balochistan could be preserved. He urged good governance in all disciplines.

Jam Kamal further directed the revenue department to review all directions and suggestions presented in the meeting and submit its report to the Chief Minister Secretariat.

Kamal said the province has a vast capacity to generate electricity through wind and solar means, which would be beneficial for fulfilling its energy needs.

“Solar, wind and biogas are vital energy sources of Balochistan and can provide vast economic opportunities in the province,” the chief minister said, while chairing the “Renewable Energy Policy 2019” meeting, which focused on Balochistan’s alternative power sources.

The meeting briefed Kamal regarding the province’s renewable energy policy 2019 and power opportunities through alternative sources. He said effective power supply could end the energy crisis in the province and the economy could be uplifted through alternative sources of energy.

“The government has included energy projects in the fiscal budget by keeping in mind the coastal strip of the province,” he added. Parliamentary Secretary for Energy Mubeen Khan Khilji, Special Assistant to CM Ejaz Sanjrani, Additional Chief Secretary for P&D Abdul Rehman Buzdar, Energy Secretary Shaheryar Taj and other government officials attended the session.

Lauding Balochistan Chief Minister’s efforts for the progress and prosperity of the province, Balochistan government spokesperson Mir Liaquat Shahwani has said the provincial government is taking effective measures to complete development projects in Balochistan to provide quick relief to the people.

“Kamal has pushed the province on the path to development. His vision for Balochistan will yield results hence the provincial government is taking all measures to complete development schemes in the given time frame,” said Shahwani while addressing a news conference accompanied by Balochistan Awami Party BAP’s leader Agha Umar Ahmedzai here in Chief Minister Secretariat.

“Under available resources, the Balochistan government is focusing on new and continued development projects that would also provide quick relief to the people,” Shahwani added.

Sharing views on Quetta Development Package (QDP), the spokesman said the progress on the initiative has been intensified which would restore the beauty of the provincial capital.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 30th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2089671/1-revenue-dept-told-digitalise-land-record/>

LAND ACQUISITION BEGINS FOR DASU POWER PROJECT

A Correspondent Updated November 01, 2019

MANSEHRA: Deputy commissioner of Upper Kohistan district Arif Khan Yousafzai on Thursday said the administration had begun the acquisition of over 9,000 acres of land for Dasu hydropower project.

Mr Yousafzai told reporters on Thursday that Upper Kohistan district, where the project was being executed, was an unsettled area as far as the land was concerned, so after assuming the office almost a month ago, he had ensured the settlement of all land issues with the help of the local jirga.

He said the administration had acquired 730 acres of land leading to the start of work.

The deputy commissioner said the Dasu project would improve the socioeconomic conditions of the residents and help address power shortage in the country.

REPAIR OF FIRE TENDERS: Assistant commissioner of Oghi tehsil Mohammad Shojeen Wistro has ordered the tehsil municipal administration to repair fire tenders without delay and ensure they are in working order to control fires.

During a meeting, which reviewed the recent fire incident and faulty fire tenders, the AC said the administration won't accept any excuse for fire engines being not in working condition in future and would take action against the relevant officials.

He said a mock exercise would be held soon to check the performance of fire tenders and build the capacity of firefighters.

Meanwhile, barbers in Oghi tehsil have announced that they will no more close shops on Mondays and will work all through the week to meet growing expenses.

The announcement was made by the barber association's leader, Ashfaq Khan, after a meeting. Mr Ashfaq said the barbers in Mansehra city had already stopping taking a day off every week.

Published in Dawn, November 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1514120>

NOVEMBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 04TH TO 10TH 2019

OPERATION LAUNCHED IN MATIARI TO RETRIEVE FOREST AREA FROM LAND-GRABBERS

Staff Correspondent November 04, 2019

HYDERABAD: A massive anti-encroachment operation was launched in riverian area of Matiari district on Sunday to remove crop sown on forest land in violation of apex court's orders.

The operation supervised by forest secretary Abdul Rahim Soomro, chief of anti-encroachment cell Tariq Dharejo, Matiari deputy commissioner, SSP Asif Bughio and others began in the morning and continued for several hours.

Sindh Minister for Forest Nasir Shah who paid a brief visit to the area to inspect the operation said that the operation had been started because Sindh government was soon going to approve a new forest policy to replace the Musharraf's era policy.

"We need to ensure that no tree felling took place and no cultivation of crops started on the land and if anyone does so it will be tackled in the same manner," he told Dawn over phone on Sunday.

Around 200 personnel, including policemen, anti encroachment cell staff, revenue and forest departments' staff with the help of tractors and other machinery participated in the operation.

The occupiers of the forest land had fled away apparently after someone in the department alerted them about the action.

According to forest secretary Rahim Soomro, cases would also be lodged against the occupiers who had grown crops in violation of Supreme Court's directives. "The operation is carried out from time to time across Sindh because people tend to cultivate crops whenever they find land vacant after floods in the riverian area," he said.

He disclosed that around 5,000 acres had been reclaimed out of 25,000 forest land that had been under illegal occupation. "Properties like tractors and other items will be confiscated. Today's operation was carried out only in Khabrani and Mureed forests in Matiari district," he said.

Sindh's three barrages have been witnessing low to medium level floods this monsoon season. Whenever there is flood in Indus it causes inundation of the riverian area but once floodwaters recede the riverian area dwellers tend to grow crops on residual soil's moisture.

Recently Sindh government drafted Sindh Sustainable Forest Policy 2019 after revoking the previous one. Under the new policy forestation is to be promoted on forest land including the riverian area, which had been brought under cultivation after chopping down trees over the past several years causing environmental degradation.

A four-member ministerial committee headed by Syed Nasir Shah had gone through the policy which was to be approved by cabinet now.

The secretary said that around 2.7 million acres of forest land was located in the riverian area, rangeland and irrigated forests. Of it, a huge portion was in riverian area where powerful tribes cultivated the forest land, he said, adding that 2004 forest land lease policy was revoked last year under Supreme Court's directives.

He said that under the new policy there was no room for agriculture on forest land. "Private persons can be encouraged for forestation and once forests are ripe those can be harvested and its proceeds will be shared. But that private party will have to re-grow forest," he said.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah had presented figures in Sindh Assembly in November last year about encroachments on forest land, informing that around 149,235 acres had been illegally occupied by influential persons over the past five years.

Published in Dawn, November 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1514680/operation-launched-in-matiari-to-retrieve-forest-area-from-land-grabbers>

GOVT ORDERS DIGITAL LAND DATA COLLECTION

Bureau Report Updated November 08, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has directed all deputy commissioners to digitally compile the data of state land in all districts through the Geographic Information System and draw geo-coordinates of that land to remove illegal occupation.

The directions were issued during a high-level meeting chaired by chief secretary Dr Kazim Niaz here.

Senior officials of the departments concerned attended the meeting, which was Mr Kazim's first extensive one with the officialdom for reinvigorating the reform agenda and helping speed up service delivery with timeframe.

A senior government official said the Performance Management and Reforms Unit had started compiling data of the actions being taken in light of the fresh directives to evaluate the performance of officers at the district and divisional level.

The official documents shared with Dawn revealed that all DCs had been asked to carry out an extensive exercise with the help of GIS specialists of the planning and development department to identify state land across the province.

The DCs will complete the task within 45 days, while the Performance Management and Reforms Unit will extend necessary technological support to them for it.

DCs were also told to draw geo-coordinates of state land and its vacation from illegal occupation.

The meeting issued directives to different service delivery departments.

The secretaries of forests and minerals departments and relevant DCs were asked to launch special campaign against 'timber mafia' and illegal mining with the support of line departments, while authorities were asked to immediately restart drive against encroachments on state lands, right of way, public roads and pathways across the province.

The meeting also issued directives for the registration of criminal cases against people involved in illegal harvesting for forests and mining. The commissioners will supervise the campaign and would submit reports within two months.

The meeting discussed mechanism for controlling prices of essential commodities in the market. All DCs will carry out regulatory inspection of bazaars, godowns for controlling prices, adulteration and hoarding of wheat, flour and other essential commodities. District administrations would take prompt action against hoarders.

Divisional commissioners were directed to establish one shelter at the divisional level within available resources for homeless persons in two months. Every DC would conceive one innovative idea to improve service delivery and governance in one particular area. They would share their ideas with PMRU within 15 for implementation.

The meeting approved the 'open door policy' with the DCs ensuring accessibility to public and adoption of the compulsory minimum three hours open door policy on a daily basis to address the people's grievances. The DCs were directed to follow SOPs for Khuli Kachehri. The officials would ensure interaction with public in Khuli Kachehri at least twice a month and give priority to remote areas.

The development of low cost tourism was also discussed in the meeting and every district will identify potential sites of local tourism, including trekking, hiking, waterfall, picnic spots and adventurous sports.

Every district will develop own intelligence network for obtaining firsthand information of events and general law and order situation for timely and effective strategy and establishing writ of the state. The DCs in consultation with relief department will develop and update contingency plan for every district within one month.

The transport and communication and works departments will improve cleanliness and renovation at transport stands, parks, public washrooms, butcher shops and other public places. The Green and Clean Campaign in all government departments will be carried out.

Every district will identify one face-lifting scheme at the district level having maximum cost of Rs10 million.

The DCs were tasked to carry out inspection of basic health units, schools and other educational institutions.

The meeting decided that the revenue case management system would be introduced in all districts in which settlement has been carried out, while the authorities would ensure 100 per cent completion of pending 'jamma bandis' by holding meeting with the revenue staff.

Published in Dawn, November 8th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1515542/govt-orders-digital-land-data-collection>

PAF ASKED TO HAND OVER 76 KANALS OF LAND TO CAA

By ABDUL RASHEED AZAD on November 8, 2019

A parliamentary panel Thursday directed Pakistan Air Force to hand over the possession of 76 kanals of land situated in Lahore, which was converted into a housing society by the PAF, to Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

The sub-committee of Public Accounts Committee (PAC) met here under the chairpersonship of Member of National Assembly Munazza Hassan. While discussing and reviewing audit paras of the CAA for the year 2012-13, the panel said that the matter pointed out by national auditors will be considered settled if PAF gives possession of land to CAA.

The committee on the request of secretary aviation directed PAF to return 76 kanals of land to CAA and settled the para.

Secretary Aviation Shah Rukh Nusrat apprised the committee that no land of CAA was forcibly occupied by the PAF. He said the land for housing society was legally purchased but later it was noted in demarcation that 76 kanals of land of CAA was mistakenly in possession of PAF and the matter was amicably settled.

The PAC members expressed surprise that the land had been converted into a housing scheme in 2006-07 and since then no action has been taken against the officials responsible for causing loss to national exchequer. The report said that in 2006 PAF had got possession of 19.21 acres of land of CAA at Walton Aerodrome for specific installations but later the land was converted into a housing society.

According to an audit report on the Aviation Division by Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), it was revealed that Pakistan Air Force (PAF) converted the land acquired for "national security" into a housing scheme, causing a loss of Rs 1.92 billion to the national exchequer.

The report submitted to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) stated: "During audit it was found out that Civil Aviation Authority (GM Walton Aerodrome Lahore) could not get CAA land vacated at Walton Aerodrome measuring 19.21 acres from PAF that "forcibly" occupied the land in 2006-07 on the pretext of national security and for setting up radar. However, the same land was sold out to members of Pak Falcon Society for which every member had paid the cost of land and development charges. This resulted in unjustified/unauthorized occupation of CAA land valuing Rs1.921 billion."

It further added that the departmental accounts committee (DAC) had referred the audit para to the PAC in December 2012 and also directed the CAA to provide original title of allotment of land to the PAF for setting up radar.

In a meeting held on January 18, 2019, the CAA informed the DAC that the issue of land between the authority and PAF was under process for settlement through proper adjustments. However, it said, the issue was being taken up with the PAF for return of the unilaterally occupied land or carrying out necessary adjustment/compensation with mutual consent.

The DAC, however, was not convinced with the CAA reply and submitted the audit para to the PAC for discussion and decision. The audit report suggested that "PAC may like to take appropriate action for unauthorized occupation and utilization of CAA land."

The CAA officials informed the PAC that the area in question is already out of bounds for civilians and, therefore, the land could not be used for residential or commercial purpose.

However, the same land of CAA was sold to members of Pak Falcon Society with each member paying the cost of land and development charges, it added. The audit said that the CAA failed to get vacated their land worth Rs. 1.9 billion.

It was also mentioned that the CAA board in its meeting took note of the issue and directed that concerned airport manager be held responsible.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/08/542616/paf-asked-to-hand-over-76-kanals-of-land-to-caa/>

PM IMRAN FOR UTILISING GOVT LANDS FOR THE WELFARE OF MASSES

By Rizwan Ghilzai Published: November 8, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said the present government is firm on its policy of utilising state-owned properties for the welfare and betterment of the masses and using their income to boost the pace of economic development and creating job opportunities.

“The present government, which came to power in the hardest economic conditions, has taken difficult decisions to stabilise the economy,” said the prime minister while presiding over a meeting on the utilisation of government lands in Punjab for public welfare purposes, particularly, the assets under the control of Punjab Cooperative Board for Liquidation (PCBL) on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by Law Minister Dr Muhammad Farogh Naseem, Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, Punjab Minister for Cooperatives Mehr Muhammad Aslam Bharwana, Punjab Law Minister Muhammad Basharat Raja, Punjab Chief Secretary Yusuf Naseem Khokhar and other senior officers.

Prime Minister Imran regretted that in a country where major chunk of economy and resources was used for repaying foreign debt, non-utilisation of government assets in the past in an effective manner, was a criminal negligence.

He directed the PCBL administration as well as the Punjab law minister to speed up the efforts for early completion of the court cases regarding government assets and take all necessary measures in that respect.

The prime minister said in order to provide relief to masses and speeding up the economic process, especially for creating job opportunities for youth, there was a need to further pace up the efforts.

PCBL Chairperson Bushra Aman gave a briefing to the prime minister. She said the PCBL had a total of 293 assets under its control, of which 98 assets consisting of agricultural, commercial and residential properties were immediately available for auction.

The worth of those properties was in hundreds of billions of rupees, while cases regarding the rest of the assets were pending in different courts, she added.

The PM was informed that the new PCBL administration had regained billions of rupees' assets from illegal occupation during the last six months.

Separately, the prime minister chaired a meeting on the availability of essential items in abundance and reduction in the prices.

Imran directed to give final touches to the proposals for providing essential items at the utility stores at a lower price so that relief could be provided to the people, saying it was the prime responsibility of the government to ensure, not only availability of essential items in abundance but also checking their prices.

“It is the responsibility of the state to ensure that no person goes to bed hungry,” said Imran, adding that the government was making all possible efforts to fulfill this responsibility.

Various proposals were presented in the meeting about the abundant availability of daily-use essential items like flour, ghee, sugar, pulses, and rice as well as to bring down their prices.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar presented various proposals regarding the provision of essential items to low-income and downtrodden people under the Ehsaas Programme.

Utility Stores Corporation Chairman Zulkarnain presented proposals about the network of utility stores in the country and bringing a reduction in prices of essential items.

He said, “The utility stores have 4,000 outlets throughout the country which can play a vital role in availability of essential items in abundance and bringing down their prices.”

Minister for Communications Murad Saeed proposed that besides 4,000 outlets of utility stores, officers of the Pakistan Post in far-flung areas of the country could also be utilised for the purpose.

The meeting was attended by Saeed, Nishtar, secretary finance, secretary industries, secretaries communication, USC chairman, NITB CEO Syed Shahadat Ali Shah and senior officials.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2095684/1-pm-imran-utilising-govt-lands-welfare-masses/>

EXTRACTION OF GRANITE FROM KAROONJHAR HILLS SPARKS PROTEST IN NAGARPARKAR

A Correspondent November 09, 2019

Nagarparkar residents hold a protest demonstration on Friday against unbridled extraction of granite from their area by unauthorised traders.—Dawn

MITHI: A large number of people from various walks of life in the hilly town of Nagarparkar on Friday took to the streets to register their protest against the ongoing extraction of precious granite from Karoonjhar hills.

After marching on different roads and streets, the protesters staged a demonstration on Kabso Road in the heart of the town for over two hours led by Allah Rak-hio Khoso, Lala Qambar, Maghno Kolhi, Bheerulal, Ramesh Parkari and others.

The leaders came down hard on those who were causing “colossal damage” to the beautiful Karoon-jhar hills for the past many months without any check.

They alleged that local influential figures were fully supporting contractors to damage the hills by extracting stones for building dams, roads and other infrastructure despite the fact that none of them had the legal documents of lease.

They said the elected lawmakers from the region and local government officials were silent over illegal extraction and transportation of granite by using heavy machinery.

Greed to extract china clay from the hilltop of Karoonjhar had already caused massive damage to the natural beauty of the region and deep ditches dug for extracting the clay had claimed the lives of a number of local residents, they alleged.

“Corporations and politicians are slowly depriving the people of this land of their source of life and are brutally trampling upon the sacred ground,” they added.

They demanded stern action against those involved in the illegal practice and a declaration to preserve the hilly region, old temples, mosques and also flora and fauna of the region.

They threatened to widen the scope of their protest in other towns of Tharparkar and the rest of the province if quick remedial measures were not taken.

Meanwhile, a drive has been launched by activists on social media against the questionable acts of greedy contractors and their supporters who were playing havoc with the natural beauty of the hills.

Talking to Dawn, they demanded the high-ups of both the federal and Sindh governments take strong notice of the massive devastation being caused to the area.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1515792/extraction-of-granite-from-karoonjhar-hills-sparks-protest-in-nagarparkar>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 11 TO 17, 2019

VILLAGERS PROTEST ILLEGAL SALE OF FORESTLAND

Staff Correspondent November 13, 2019

HYDERABAD: Residents of different villages in Matiari staged a demonstration on Tuesday in protest against sale of forest department land and demanded restoration of forests.

At the protest organised by a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Indus Development Organisation, the protesters claimed that despite directives of Supreme Court (SC), forcible occupation of forest land continued.

They accused a PPP legislator of conspiring to occupy the forest land with the help of different landlords. He (the legislator) had got introduced a one-year policy scheme in 2010 under which forestland was sold to different landowners and forests were chopped down, they added.

They vowed to foil such conspiracies and make sure that forestland should remain intact.

Under the SC orders, only trees were to be planted, they said, calling for constituting committees comprising local people for the protection of forestland and its ownership.

They said the local community should be given its due share in forests because forests were the source of livelihood for them and their livestock. If forests were cut, it would endanger the livestock of Sindh, they said.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1516293>

ARMY WANTS ITS LAND ON WHICH MONAL RESTAURANT IS BUILT: CDA OFFICIAL

Jamal Shahid November 14, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Monal Restaurant is built on military land in the Margalla Hills that it now wants back, Capital Development Authority (CDA) Member Planning Dr Shahid Mahmood told a parliamentary committee on Wednesday.

He told the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change that 15 years ago the CDA “did not know it was building Monal Restaurant on military grasslands until the army started claiming it.”

The committee was told that the 22,000 acres of land that now constitute the Margalla Hills National Park were actually owned by the Punjab government.

Around 5,500 acres of this land was allocated to the army, he said, although the exact year this allocation was made was not stated. The CDA now owns 16,500 acres.

The latest survey conducted by the authority revealed that the land allotted to the army is right in the centre of the national park, and Monal has been built on it.

Member planning tells NA body that 5,500 acres allocated to army in Margalla Hills were found to be site where the restaurant has been built

Monal Restaurant was built in 2005 and was CDA property. Operation of the restaurant was leased for a 10 year period, Dr Mahmood told the committee.

CDA officials told the committee the space is now being vacated and handed over to the army.

However, committee chair MNA Munaza Hassan was more interested in finding out who had permitted the construction of a large restaurant inside the national park, which is protected by the law to conserve its natural environment and wildlife.

Dr Mahmood said the CDA board at the time had permitted the restaurant’s construction, offering to share the board decision with the committee.

He said several inquiries were undertaken to hold officials accountable for allowing the restaurant to be built, but none have been successful.

The committee chair demanded the CDA share information regarding the construction of Monal Restaurant on protected land.

Climate Change Joint Secretary Suleman Warraich said the government was unable to implement environment protection laws due to confusion over the demarcation of state land overlapping with private property. He said the Margalla Hills National Park was last mapped in the 1960s.

The new Islamabad Wildlife Management Board will be constituted in a month, Climate Change Secretary Nasir Jami told the committee.

“Its recruitment rules will be ready within three months after the board comes into existence,” he said.

The assurance came after MNA Ali Awan and the current IWMB Chairman Dr Anis Rehman told the committee chair that constitution of the board has been pending for three years.

Dr Rehman urged the committee to strengthen the board, which is mandated to protect the national park in Islamabad and its wildlife.

He also drew the committee’s attention to several violations of environmental laws. He said national parks are threatened by institutional encroachment as much as they are by villagers nearby.

“Hundreds of square kilometers have been cleared by institutions in Shakarparian, which is also a protected area. A parade ground, an even bigger area cleared for parking besides the 77, 000 cubic feet of earth removed from it, the Islamabad Club and the Sports Complex are also institutional encroachments,” he told committee members.

He said the IWMB has been trying to preserve the national parks. The board has seen the return of the Khaleej pheasant and the common leopard in the Margalla Hills National Park.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1516640>

GOVT TO DECIDE COST OF LAND ALLOTTED TO INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Kashif Abbasi November 16, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Friday decided to seek federal government’s input to determine the cost of land allotted to an intelligence agency.

Sources in the CDA said in 2009 the civic agency had allotted 45 acres to the agency in Zone IV subject to approval of the prime minister.

The prime minister granted the approval in 2018 and now the CDA is deliberating whether to charge the rate of 2009 for the land or it should be disposed of at the rate of 2018.

The sources said the federal government was supposed to pay to the CDA at the official rate as the land was being purchased for the purpose of official residences.

The CDA board, which met with its Chairman Amer Ali Ahmed in the chair, discussed the matter. The sources said all the members were of the view that the rate of 2009 should be charged for the land.

In 2009, CDA allotted the 45 acres in Zone IV which was approved by prime minister last year

They said for a formal decision the CDA board would refer the case to the federal government for its input regarding the rate of the land and duration of the payment installments.

The sources said in 2009 the rate of land was around Rs2,200 per square yard while last year when the prime minister approved the summary the rate fixed in 2014 was in place which was Rs7,200 per square yard.

“It’s a government-to-government deal. The land is being purchased by the government for a government agency for official purposes, so it’s our duty to accommodate them,” said an official of the CDA. He said the price of land existing in 2009 should be charged as the land was allotted that year.

Meanwhile, the CDA board also approved a site in 1-11/2 for a grid station to resolve the electricity issues of the residents.

“The establishment of the grid station would provide new electricity connections besides reducing the load on other grid stations,” said an official.

The board also decided to reschedule payment for those who have been allotted plots in Park Enclave-II- a CDA’s housing scheme on Park Road. The CDA sold out more than 300 plots in the Park Enclave extension in Jan 2016 and was supposed to develop the area within a year. People allotted plots were also to deposit their payments in installments by that time.

However, the plots owners stopped depositing their installments after the CDA failed to start developing the land. So far, the CDA has even not taken possession of the land.

The CDA had auctioned one kanal plot for Rs20.5 million but failed to start development.

When asked about the 45 acres allotted to the intelligence agency, a CDA spokesperson said the federal government would decide the case. About the Park Enclave-II, he said the board had approved an extension for depositing the installments.

Published in Dawn, November 16th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1516985>

KP GOVT DENIES TAKEOVER OF MINES IN TRIBAL DISTRICTS

Bureau Report Updated November 16, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Friday tried to stem a raging controversy over the reports of its taking over mines in merged districts by declaring them propaganda.

Addressing a joint news conference, mines and mineral minister Dr Amjad Ali Khan, law minister Sultan Mohammad Khan and adviser to the chief minister Ajmal Wazir said a negative impression was being created against the KP Mineral Sector Governance (Amendment) Act, 2019, which the provincial assembly passed in the Nov 13 session.

They claimed that the residents retained the ownership of mines and minerals in their respective tribal districts under the new legislation.

Section 6(2A) of the law, which declares, “notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other law, or in any order or decree of Court or other authority, or in any rule of custom or usage, or in any contract, instrument, deed or other document, all mines and minerals shall be and shall always be deemed to have been the property of Government, and Government shall have all powers necessary for the proper enjoyment of its right thereto,” has sparked a backlash as both opposition parties and general public have likened it with takeover of merged district’s mineral resources, which are in tribes ownership.

Mr Wazir said the amended act had a special schedule, VIII, to safeguard the rights of the people of merged districts to the local mines and minerals.

He said under the amended legislation, the government had given the ownership of mines and minerals to the local population promising development and employment to the residents of the war-ravaged region.

The adviser said under the new law, priority for the grant of mineral title would be with the local community, which owned and possessed the land having mineral resources.

He said with the consent of the local community through an open auction, any of its members could obtain the mineral title for the area owned by it.

Mr Wazir said the due share of the local community in the mineral-bearing area as promised in the local customs would be identified by the district administration through an open auction followed by the registration of the deed with the registrar concerned.

He said the minerals all over the country were owned by the state on whose basis, the mineral titles or licences were issued.

The adviser said the same had laid out in the article 172(2) of the constitution. He said that under this constitutional provision, mines and minerals have been declared government ownership in the Regulation of Mines and Oilfields and Mineral Development Act 1948 and Land Revenue Act 1967 and the same section has been inserted in the KP Mineral Sector Governance (Amendment) Act 2019.

He said under the same provisions, mineral titles had been issued in the erstwhile Fata in the past. However, the legislation states that the special provisions mentioned in Schedule VIII of pertaining to mineral resources in the merged districts shall be valid for the maximum period of 10 years giving the ownership of mines and minerals to the local residents.

Law minister Sultan Mohammad Khan said the government’s positive initiative regarding mines and minerals was being maligned through propaganda.

He said the mine definition mentioned in the law was in vogue in rest of the country.

The minister said the government won’t allow anything, which went against the interest of tribesmen.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1517000>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 18 TO 24, 2019

POLICE PREPARE LISTS OF LAND GRABBERS, DRUG PEDDLERS

Bureau Report November 19, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have prepared lists of 1,116 individuals involved in cases of land grabbing, peddling methamphetamine and usury across the province.

The figures have been compiled on the directives of police chief Dr Mohammad Naeem issued in September.

The data shows that of 1,116, 368 individuals are said to be involved in land grabbing, 401 in peddling meth and 347 were extorting general public through usury. During the period from Sept 16 to Oct 31, police in all districts identified 1,483 accused involved in the mentioned crimes, and prepared personal files of 1,116 individuals.

As per the data, a list of 293 people had been prepared to be targeted in preventive action, while the authorities had by Oct 31 taken preventive action against 247 people across the province.

Breakdown of district-wise registration of cases and pending investigations shows that thus far a total of 168 land grabbers have either been arrested or booked. Provincial capital tops the list where a total of 53 land grabbers have either been arrested or booked.

During the action against meth, 258 people have either been arrested or booked. Mardan district tops the list of anti-meth dealers' campaign where 92 persons have been arrested and 89 fresh cases registered. Seven cases were registered against meth paddlers in the provincial capital.

Breakdown of district-wise usury cases shows that Mardan district topped the list where action was taken against the loan sharks.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1517514/police-prepare-lists-of-land-grabbers-drug-peddlers>

APEX COURT BARS GOVT FROM SELLING STEEL MILLS LAND

Nasir Iqbal November 19, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday barred the federal government from selling the lands of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) with an observation that it belongs to people.

The direction came during the hearing of petitions relating to provident funds of PSM employees taken up by a two-judge Supreme Court bench consisting of Justice Gulzar Ahmed and Justice Maqbool Baqar.

During the hearing, Justice Ahmed ordered the federal government not to sell the PSM land when it was told that the land was being sold to pay salaries of PSM employees as well as to clear their provident funds.

The court was very upset about the performance of the steel mills.

Two-judge bench observes that land belongs to the people

Justice Ahmed recalled how the steel mills used to be a big entity when a number of industries were using steel produced by it.

The loss-making PSM had always been in the news in view of its dismal production record that has cost the state almost a whopping Rs400 billion so far.

In June 2006, a nine-judge Supreme Court bench headed by then chief justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry had reversed the sale of PSM to a three-party consortium.

The court had held the privatisation process for \$362 million transaction with Russian-Saudi-Pakistani investors null and void, observing that it was done in indecent haste.

The judgement had come on a petition moved by Barrister Zafarullah Khan of the Watan Party who had challenged the sale of 75 per cent stakes of PSM and handing over of its management control to the said consortium comprising Russian Magnitogorsk, Saudi Al Tuwariqi and Arif Habib Securities.

The judgement had also held that the Privatisation Commission Ordinance, 2000, was not against the constitution, but the process of PSM's privatisation stood vitiated by acts of omissions and commissions on part of certain state functionaries reflecting violation of mandatory provisions of the law and the rules. But the judgement had conceded that the approval for PSM's privatisation by the Council of Common Interests in May 29, 1997 continued to hold the field.

Later in 2010 the Supreme Court held through a judgement on the allegations of corruption in the steel mills that corruption in a civilised society was a disease like cancer which if not detected in time was sure to malign the polity of the country leading to disastrous consequences.

Subsequently, the court ordered to hand over the Federal Investigation Agency's investigations into the affairs of the steel mills to the National Accountability Bureau.

The judgement had come on a suo motu notice taken in September 2009 by former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry over consistent losses the PSM was making as well as discriminatory sale policy that was only benefiting a few industries.

The Supreme Court is seized with a number of petitions relating to the function of PSM, one of which is a restoration application on behalf of Arif Habib Securities with a plea that if the judgement was not reversed, the petitioner will suffer ultimately.

Published in Dawn, November 19th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1517590/apex-court-bars-govt-from-selling-steel-mills-land>

FARMERS PROTEST EVICTION

Bureau Report November 20, 2019

PESHAWAR: A group of farmers belonging to various rural localities of the provincial capital have expressed serious concern over their forced eviction from the area for the construction of Peshawar Northern Bypass and demanded of the government to compensate them.

Addressing a protest demonstration outside Peshawar Press Club on Monday, farmers' representatives Nabi Jan, Ismail Khan, Sikandar Khan and others said they were tilling the land for the last 80 years which was their only source of livelihood, saying the government was taking possession of the land for construction of Peshawar Northern Bypass without paying its price or providing alternate agriculture land to the people.

The demonstrators said the government was not only snatching their livelihood but also depriving them of their houses and was reluctant to compensate them.

The farmers said that they had approached the relevant provincial government officials but no one bothered to listen to their grievances. They said the land was shamilat (community land) which had been converted into cultivatable land by their elders about 80 years ago and their forced eviction was sheer injustice.

The farmers' leaders demanded of the government to stop harassing the people, withdraw cases against them and provide alternative land for agriculture and housing and ensure payment of compensation.

Published in Dawn, November 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1517811/farmers-protest- eviction>

EX-LAWMAKERS FACE NAB CASE FOR ILLEGALLY SELLING STATE LAND

Saleem Shahid November 22, 2019

QUETTA: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has filed a reference against former lawmakers, an owner of a shopping centre and six others for illegally leasing out state land at throwaway prices.

Balochistan NAB officials claimed on Thursday that Abdul Qahar Wadan, former MNA and Nazim of Zarghoon town, Quetta, had illegally leased out the state land to a relative and later received money in the bank account of his brother.

Later, former member of the Balochistan Assembly and mayor of Quetta Dr Kaleemullah by misusing his authority gave extension of the same state land and illegally leased it out to Dr Haroon, owner of a shopping centre.

Published in Dawn, November 22nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1518169/ex-lawmakers-face-nab-case-for-illegally-selling-state-land>

LAND ACQUISITION COST FOR DASU PROJECT DOUBLES TO RS37BN

Staff Reporter Updated November 22, 2019

ISLAMABAD: A Senate Panel on Thursday expressed concern over the slow pace of progress to acquire land for Rs510 billion Dasu Hydropower Project and sought an explanation from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources led by Senator Shamim Afridi was informed that only 7.5 per cent, of total 9,875 acres of land required for the project, had so far been acquired.

It was reported that the cost of land acquisition had also increased by around 95pc from Rs19bn to Rs37bn.

The committee was informed by Water and Power Development Authority Member (Wapda) member that the total capacity of Dasu project was 4,320MW and it will be completed in two phases.

The project will have 12 units of 360MW each. In the first phase, 2,160MW electricity will be generated by 2023. The work on the first phase of the project was launched in June 2017 whereas the development under the second phase will begin in 2023.

On the issue of land acquisition, it was informed that Senior Member Revenue Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had promised that the district administration will acquire 1,247 acres of land in priority area within six months and the remaining land within in one year of revised land acquisition plan.

However, of the total, only 740 acres had so far been acquired. The meeting was informed that 866 acres were required for main civil works, 1,121 acres for preparatory work and 7,888 acres for reservoir area.

The Wapda member water told the committee that Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) had approved the land acquisition rates in 2015 but those were rejected by the land owners. The KP government had then constituted a steering committee and through negotiations with the locals fixed new rates to purchase the land.

As per the revised plan, cost of acquisition of land increased from Rs19bn to Rs37bn. The increase in the cost of land (Rs18bn) will be borne by Wapda from its equity and local commercial financing. The new prices had been approved by both Ecnec and Federal Cabinet, he informed. The jump in land prices jacked up the total cost of Dasu project from Rs486bn to Rs510bn.

The committee was informed that they are facing problems in purchasing land as for civil and preparatory. Committee chairman said for the resolution of land acquisition issue, chief secretary should be convened to the next meeting; otherwise the land rates will further go up.

Regarding Greater Thal Canal, the committee was informed that the PC-I of the project was approved in 2002 with an estimated cost of Rs30bn. The committee was told that Khushab, Layyah, Bhakkar, Jhang and Muzafargarh would be the main beneficiaries of the project. The committee was told that Munkira branch of the project was completed in 2008 and 30pc of land was irrigated during past decade. Moreover, work on the Chobara branch of the project will start next year.

The committee showed concern that despite the construction of canal; the land was not developed for agriculture. The committee also summoned chief secretary Punjab, irrigation secretary and secretary agriculture to the next meeting.

On Naulong dam, the committee was informed that the Planning Commission had imposed ban on further expenditure of the dam.

It was told that Rs2bn were earmarked for the project but work has not been started on the project. The project was supposed to be completed in four years but so far less than 20pc funds have been released.

Published in Dawn, November 22nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1518192>

‘ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTIONS’ ALLOWED TO ENCROACH UPON THE CITY’S LAND YET AGAIN

By Our Correspondent Published: November 23, 2019

KARACHI: Karachi has long been plagued by the menace of encroachments and illegal constructions. Recently though, Supreme Court Justice Gulzar Ahmed took notice of the matter and several illegal constructions were rapidly razed by the relevant authorities. It did not take long, however, for errant government officials to collude with the builder mafia and allow illegal constructions began encroaching upon the city’s land yet again. The city’s water and sewerage woes will only worsen if the matter goes unnoticed.

A group of senior officials of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) knowingly look the other way as the builder mafia initiates yet another series of illegal constructions in the city without officially approved construction plans. Construction on sites which are first sealed off is later allowed after bribes are collected by errant officers and the process is then manipulated to portray the constructions as ‘legal’.

Sources reveal that senior SBCA officials have leased out coveted areas of the city and the authority’s Director-General Zafar Ahsan appears to be helpless in front of the corrupt officials. They allege that one such official of the SCBA, Mushtaq Soomro, has enabled the builder mafia to construct unapproved floors in buildings in exchange of millions of rupees – around Rs4m toRs 8m they claim. According to the sources, other officials connive with Soomro on the matter while the Sindh government also seems to turn a blind eye. It appears that Soomro is the one actually heading the authority as appointments and transfers of SBCA officials are made on his directives.

Other senior officials of the authority have reportedly appealed to the National Accountability Bureau and the anti-corruption department to take notice of the matter.

Areas which are allegedly being affected by illegal constructions of the builder mafia include Surjani Town, Jamshed Town, Scheme 33, Saddar, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gulberg, North Karachi, Nazimabad and others.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 23rd, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2104926/1-illegal-constructions-allowed-encroach-upon-citys-land-yet/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 25 TO DEC 01, 2019

SINDH CABINET APPROVES LAND ALLOTMENT TO 10 FIRMS FOR SETTING UP POWER PLANTS

Staff Reporter Updated November 27, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh cabinet has approved the allotment of 5,801 acres of land to 10 private firms and the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) on a 30-year lease to install renewable power plants and national grid station, which would fetch Rs9.13 billion for the provincial exchequer.

It also allowed the local government department to set up special courts for the Sindh Building Control Authority under the Sindh Building Control Ordinance 1979 to hear cases related to illegal constructions.

The cabinet also formed a three-member committee to review a Board of Revenue (BoR) proposal regarding the valuation table of urban properties of Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur.

The cabinet meeting, which was presided over by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at the New Sindh Secretariat on Tuesday, also approved an amendment in the Sindh Higher Education Commission Employees (Recruitment) Rules 2014 under which all posts, including the post of secretary/executive director, was to be made open to civil servants as well as people from academic background.

Plan to set up special courts to deal with illegal construction cases also accepted

After the meeting, Information Minister Saeed Ghani and LG Minister Syed Nasir Husain Shah briefed the media about the decisions, including the cabinet approval of another tranche of Rs2bn to inject in the Sindh Bank to boost its financial strength to meet its capital adequacy ratio.

Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh informed the cabinet that 10 renewable power companies — wind and solar — and the NTDC had applied for allotment of land, measuring 5,801 acres, for the installation of power projects in Thatta, Dadu and Jamshoro.

The deputy commissioners concerned had suggested the annual lease amount at the rate of Rs3,000, Rs5,000 and Rs8,000 per acre per annum for different categories of land.

Senior Member of the BoR Kazi Shahid Parvez told the cabinet that the land could be allotted as per the guidance of the Supreme Court.

The cabinet approved the allotment of land and directed the authorities to make necessary arrangements.

Sindh Bank facing capital shortfall Finance Secretary Hassan Naqvi told the cabinet that the Sindh Bank faced a substantial shortfall in capital and the capital adequacy ratio (CAR).

The cabinet, which had earlier decided to inject Rs14.7bn in the bank and had injected Rs9.7bn, approved another tranche of Rs2bn and merged the Sindh Leasing Company into the bank which has cash of Rs3bn in its accounts.

Sindh Bank President Imran Samad told the cabinet that the bank's account had improved from Rs14.5bn to Rs18bn. According to the State Bank's requirement, the CAR should be at least 11.90 per cent and now the Sindh Bank's CAR had reached to 16.65pc, he added.

The cabinet also approved a proposal under which all departments of the Sindh government, subordinate organisations and institutions would open their accounts, including salary accounts in the Sindh Bank. All grants to the public or private institutions would be given on the condition that they would maintain an account in Sindh Bank.

The universities and boards department presented an amendment in the Sindh Higher Education Commission Employees (Recruitment) Rules 2014 under which all posts, including the post of secretary/executive director, was to be made open to civil servants as well as people from academic background.

The cabinet approved the amendment in rules but simultaneously directed the secretary to work out detailed salary packages, pay scales and other benefits of the employees to be posted in the SHEC.

The cabinet also noted that the public sector universities, under the control of the provincial government, were raising a hue and cry for shortage of funds but they were making appointments continuously.

It decided that the universities would be directed to stop recruitment till their financial strength was improved. However, necessary recruitments could be made.

The cabinet was informed that the SBCA was engaged in a continuous drive against illegal constructions. The FIRs registered with the SBCA police station were disposed of by judicial magistrates.

It was told that special SBCA courts may be established to deal with the prosecution of such cases.

The cabinet directed the LG department to start setting up such courts where necessary.

The cabinet approved the draft bill for establishing the Sir Cowasjee Jahangir Institute of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences by converting the 150-year-old mental hospital at deh Gidoo, Hyderabad, for approval of the assembly.

The BoR presented two proposals regarding variation in the valuation table of urban properties in Sindh. In the first instance, the valuation of Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur may be brought at par with the FBR valuation table. A comprehensive survey of all cities may be conducted to rationally determine the number of categories with clear demarcation of the area falling in each category in the cities (metropolitan/municipal corporations and committee).

In the first phase, the survey may be conducted within the municipal area through deputy commissioners, the cabinet decided.

The cabinet constituted a three-minister committee comprising Makhdoom Mehboob, Nasir Shah and Imtiaz Shaikh to review the proposal and submit their report in the next cabinet meeting.

The cabinet discussed and approved the rules of the Sindhi Language Authority. The cabinet directed the culture department to prepare packages and salary structure of the employees and include them in the rules.

Published in Dawn, November 27th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1518997/sindh-cabinet-approves-land-allotment-to-10-firms-for-setting-up-power-plants>

DECEMBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 02 TO 08, 2019

FOREST LAND RETRIEVED FROM GRABBERS

A Correspondent December 03, 2019

SHANGLA: The forest department has vacated its land from illegal occupiers in Basi area of Alpuri.

This was claimed by divisional forest officer, Shangla, Adnan Ali while talking to reporters here on Monday. He said the raid was conducted jointly by the district administration and forest department officials led by assistant commissioner, Alpuri, Fida-ul-Karim.

Mr Ali said about 44 cases had been registered against the land grabbers across the district during the special drive initiated by the administration to reclaim the state land from the grabbers.

He said about eight kanals of land had so far been retrieved.

The forest officer said in the next phase operation would be launched throughout the district against those who had occupied state land on one pretext or the other. The DFO urged the people to voluntarily vacate the forest land otherwise they would be dealt with according to the law.

Meanwhile, the Alpuri tehsil administration officials removed illegal encroachments in Matta Aghwan area.

The action was taken by assistant commissioner Fida-ul-Karim on the directives of deputy commissioner.

Published in Dawn, December 3rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1520185/forest-land-retrieved-from-grabbers>

PUBLIC SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: 'GOVERNMENT DECIDES NOT TO INCLUDE ANY UNAPPROVED PROJECT UNLESS LAND PROCURED'

By ABDUL RASHEED AZAD on December 6, 2019

The government has decided not to include any unapproved project in next Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) unless the land is procured for the project.

This was stated by the Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform, Asad Umar while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Planning and Development which met with Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani in the chair here on Thursday.

In future no project will be included in the PSDP till the land is purchased for it, Umar informed the panel which took up various issues related to Nae Gaj Dam, ML-I, and toll tax on Motorway and GT Road.

In addition to new projects, he stressed the need for maintenance of GT Road. The need to improve fencing on motorways and increase in surveillance was also emphasized. Issues which were taken up include designing and upgrading of ML-1 and establishment of a dry port near Havelian. A detailed briefing on increase in toll tax was also given.

Umar said that in future it will be made clear in advance whether the project will be funded by the federal government or the concerned province. "We have seen the fate of Karachi Green Line and other projects," he added.

The meeting was attended by Senator Dr Asad Ashraf, Senator Gianchand and senior officers from the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform and Ministry of Communications along with all the concerned. The representatives of the National Highway Authority (NHA), Higher Education Commission (HEC), Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and Pakistan Railways also attended the meeting. Minister for Planning Development and Reform Asad Umar was present.

While discussing compliance on various recommendations, progress on Nai Gaj Dam came under discussion. It was revealed that action had been taken by WAPDA and a reminder had been sent for compliance. The committee decided that an exclusive meeting would be held on this issue and that a response from the Department of Irrigation, government of Sindh, must be sought within a week.

While taking up the issue of 300 scholarships in less-developed areas for female students, the committee was informed that a proposal had been made. However, a programme in conjunction with the Ehsas Programme is being launched that is planning to award 50,000 scholarships, this is way more than the previously suggested quantum.

The HEC recommended that the committee should wait until this programme is launched and once a report is submitted, if it fails to convince the members, 300 scholarships, mentioned earlier, will be added as per committee recommendations. The committee was informed that 25,000 scholarships have been allocated for less-developed areas.

Discussing the issue of special seats for students of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan, the committee was informed that Pakistan Medical Council would be able to address this query in a better way.

Umar assured the committee that he will take up the issue with Advisor Health Dr Zafar Mirza. He said that this matter could be taken up with the Council of Common Interests (CCI) as well. The matter will be referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Less Developed Areas.

Discussing design, drawings and upgrade of Main Line (ML-1) and establishment of dry port near Havelian, the committee was informed that this project will generate jobs and revenue. It will also increase line speed and capacity and freight volume. The committee directed that traffic count of M1, M2 and M9 must be submitted to the committee within a week. Keeping account of traffic congestion, it was recommended that a traffic strategy must be formulated as well.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/06/550903/public-sector-development-programme-government-decides-not-to-include-any-unapproved-project-unless-land-procured/>

TOP COURT ORDERS RECOVERY OF OCCUPIED LAND

By Aqeel Afzal Published: December 7, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court on Friday ordered to recover illegally occupied land and take action against unauthorised construction in Islamabad.

The court order asked: “when will the illegal construction and occupation end? Is Islamabad’s land used in accordance with the master plan?”

This was directed by a three-member bench led by Justice Gulzar Ahmed while hearing the Centaurus Mall encroachment case. Capital Development Authority (CDA) and National Highway Authority (NHA) chairmen, replying to summons, were present in court.

The court further ordered that authorities can use Google Maps to identify land being used in violation of Islamabad’s master plan. The order also directed to lodge civil and criminal cases against all those CDA officers who are found guilty of misconduct. Embezzled funds should be recovered from officers responsible for causing financial damages to the CDA and a detailed report should be submitted to the court along with relevant documents within six weeks, it added.

The bench observed that the mayor, by his own admission, is powerless to do anything in the city despite having 11,000 employees at his disposal. The court inquired, “what is the purpose of the Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (IMC) then?” All the development works should be done with the approval of the IMC and the interior ministry secretary should find an administrative solution for Islamabad, the bench said.

CDA Chairman and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration Chief Commissioner Amer Ali Ahmed contented that the interior ministry has issued a notification for constituting the new board of the civic authority. He added that the CDA has managed to weather a financial crisis during his tenure and now CDA has more than Rs11 billion available in its kitty.

Justice Ahmed, who is set to become chief justice of Pakistan on December 21, remarked that what is the benefit of having all this money when the authority could not resolve the problems of residents.

During the hearing, Justice Ahmed lashed out against the capital’s authorities for “ruining Islamabad” and regretted that the construction of high-rise buildings have approved on directions of politicians. “Don’t earthquakes affect this city?” he inquired.

He further said that billboards have been erected on the Kashmir Highway in violation of the rules and regulations. Moreover, there are no streetlights from the Islamabad International Airport to the urban limits of the federal capital.

Replying to the questions raised regarding the mall, the CDA chairman said that they had finalised building regulations last week. These regulations will cover all aspects which were overlooked in the past.

As for the billboards and streetlights, Ahmed said the responsibility lies with the IMC. For the beautification of the federal capital, he said that the CDA was planting 100,000 plants along the Kashmir Highway.

Responding to accusations of misconduct by the authority's officers, the CDA chief told the apex court that they were taking action against the officers responsible for encroachment.

Justice Ahmed remarked that the area around the mall looks like fish market in the evening due to haphazard parking and chaotic traffic.

He reminded that the responsibility of making parking arrangements lies with management of shopping malls.

At this, the CDA chairman said that on being pointed out by the top court, that relevant area adjacent to the mall has been sealed again.

The management of the mall had created a parking lot for motorbikes on the government land by breaching a wire fence. Justice Ahmed asked the CDA to convert the empty lot into a place that can be used by the public in the shape of a parking lot or park.

He further noted that all over the world, plazas arrange for car parking themselves. However, in this instance, the Islamabad mayor cannot escape his responsibility as he has manpower and the budget to provide a solution.

IMC Mayor Ansar Aziz, however, argued that he was powerless. Such was the apathy in the corporation that the interior ministry was ordering transfers and postings at will, he lamented.

"The IMC was not given its due share in the budget." Aziz said, adding that despite what was on paper, it was the CDA who was running the show in IMC.

Justice Ahmed stated that the CDA should not have any concerns in the sale and purchase of lands while development work should lie with the elected representatives.

He expressed resentment over the cleanliness situation in Islamabad and observed that there are heaps of garbage across the city.

"Is there anyone to clean the garbage? What is the use of keeping an army of 11,000 employees." He pointed out that the objective of deploying officers in CDA was to allow them to work not just to give them a job. He regretted that no comprehensive public transport service in the federal capital could be built since 1960.

"There is one shaking Metro running [in Islamabad]. There is no rickshaw in sight," he observed. "Bring in rickshaws, show the people your culture."

The judge also expressed annoyance at overseas Pakistanis' "refusal to work in the country".

"Overseas Pakistanis are running the transport system in London. Our best town planners have gone to America and Canada. They say that they cannot work in a jungle. Their refusal [to work in Pakistan] is a slap on their and the country's face."

Justice Ahmed pointed out the deteriorating situation of roads in the federal capital.

"One fears of running into a footpath while driving on the Kashmir Highway."

He also pointed out the deteriorating situation of the Karachi-Hyderabad motorway and inquired: “Is this what we call a motorway! Its condition is worse than a regular road.”

He also pointed out the Chitral-Gilgit road project was only on the paper and there is no sign of a road there.

Justice Ahmed said that in all traffic accidents on the highways, the NHA chairman should be included because the police maintains that accidents occur due to the deteriorating condition of the road. Make highway authority responsible, Justice Ahmed stated. He reprimanded the NHA chairman for failing to understand the law as the law might lead to the “death sentence as well”.

NHA chairman sought more time to implement court orders.

The NHA chairman was told submit a report on the action taken.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 7th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2113262/1-top-court-orders-recovery-occupied-land/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 09 TO 15, 2019

SINDH TO MOVE SC AGAIN FOR LAND SETTLEMENT FUND

Ishaq Tanoli Updated December 10, 2019

KARACHI: On a directive of the Sindh cabinet, the province’s top law officer is set to file an application in the Supreme Court with a request to fix for hearing a pending application of the province seeking the funds being deposited by the Bahria Town Limited for settlement of cases about its project in Karachi.

The federal and provincial governments had filed identical applications in the apex court in August claiming the money.

The Sindh government through Advocate General (AG) Salman Talibuddin had moved the apex court in August, seeking a directive for transfer of the amount of down payment deposited by Bahria Town as well as all future payments to the provincial government account.

On Monday, Sindh Minister for Labour Saeed Ghani said after a cabinet meeting that the government directed the AG to file an application in the SC requiring them to transfer the money submitted by Bahria Town for the land in Sindh to the provincial government and according to cabinet’s decision, the provincial government would utilise that money for the improvement of water sector in the province.

Cabinet decides to spend money deposited by Bahria Town on development projects

The AG said the application he had already filed in the apex court seeking the transfer of funds had not been taken up for hearing so far. As the cabinet directed him to make efforts to expedite the process, Mr Talibuddin said, he would approach the Supreme Court again with an urgency plea.

The move to accelerate the procedure on part of the provincial authorities is apparently made after the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) recovered 190 million pounds [Rs39 billion] from the family of Malik Riaz, chairman of Bahria Town, and transferred the money to Supreme Court's account.

In August, the Sindh government approached the apex court around a week after the federal government had moved an identical application seeking funds being deposited by the Bahria Town Limited.

In the application, the provincial law officer contended that the top court, in its March 21 order, had directed the Bahria Town to make down payment to the Sindh government in respect of the rights to be acquired by it from the provincial government for land measuring 16,896 acres in Karachi.

He maintained that since the federal government faced a severe fiscal crunch due to shortfall in the federal tax collection in the financial year 2018-19, the Sindh government against the budget estimate of Rs605.6 billion had received Rs439bn by June 30, reflecting a shortfall of Rs112bn and a deficit of Rs74.99bn against revised estimates of Rs508bn against the federal revenue assignment from the divisible pool.

Similarly, he said, the Sindh government received only Rs9.9bn out of the total allocation of Rs14.266bn under the Public Sector Development Programme 2018-19. The AG argued that this shortfall in the provincial revenue jeopardised not only the projects, which were at various stages of preparation, but also those on which work had already been initiated.

Thus, the law officer said, the court should direct the relevant offices to transfer not only the amount of the down payment, which the Bahria Town had deposited in SC account, to the provincial government account but also all future payments in this regard.

He submitted the Sindh government undertook that all money received from Bahria Town in the light of Supreme Court order, would be used by the provincial government for its development projects in a transparent manner under the supervision of a dedicated committee to be constituted by the chief minister.

On March 21, a three-judge SC bench had accepted the Rs460bn offer by the Bahria Town to implement the court's May 4, 2018 judgement which held that the grant of land to the Malir Development Authority (MDA) by the Sindh government, its exchange with the private land of the developer and anything done under the provisions of the Colonisation of Government Land Act, 1912, by the provincial government were illegal and of no legal existence. The land was granted for an incremental housing scheme, but the MDA exchanged it with the land of Bahria Town to launch a scheme of its own, the bench in its verdict had regretted.

Published in Dawn, December 10th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1521432>

IN 7 DISTRICTS OF KP: COMPUTERISATION OF LAND RECORD BY JUNE 2020

By RECORDER REPORT on December 12, 2019

Special Assistant to KP CM on Information Technology and Science Technology (IT&ST) Kamran Bangash said that land records of seven districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be computerized by June 2020 to facilitate people in the settlement of their cases relating to land mutation and transfer etc.

Police portal has been launched in Malakand division and all the records of police stations have been computerized.

He was briefing media regarding the achievement of the Information and Science Technology Department here on Wednesday.

The special assistant said billion dollar Project 'Peshawar Digital Complex' is being established for digitizing the provincial economy besides undertaking measures to revamp the working of the government departments through computerization.

The land has been procured for the first-ever Peshawar Digital Complex. He said this during a press briefing here at civil secretariat called to highlight the one-year performance of the Science and Information Technology Department.

Similarly, IT industry on the pattern of Digital Complex Peshawar is also being established in Abbottabad. He disclosed that an IT University will be setup in Peshawar on the directives of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The Special Assistant referred to scores of his achievement his department made during last one year including computerization of land record and putting policing on computerization as well.

He said that 17000 school children have been trained under 'Early Age Programming' and in the first phase and 1000 would be trained in second phase. Cyber Emergency Response Center has been raised to impart training to the government officials in matters dealing with cyber security.

Referring to recruitment based on merit, the Special Assistant on IT said that computer based Testing Service has been prepared to conduct exams for government jobs in a fair and transparent manner.

Business Process Outsourcing App has been created for the promotion of industrial sector which is the first attempt of its kind in the whole of Pakistan. In the first phase, 700 young people will be trained on Business Process Outsourcing.

He said that State-of-the-art training will be given to 6,000 youth by 2023. Creative Fest event is being arranged in January 2020 that will highlight and showcase the KP achievements in the field of IT.

Air pollution measuring equipment has been installed at eight places in Peshawar district.

About 25 degree colleges, Shalimar Bagh, University of Peshawar and General Bus Stand are providing free Wi-Fi facility under the KP Connect Programme. Shalman School of Technology in district Khyber is in final stage. Free Wi-Fi service at Peshawar Press Club is also completed.

The Special Assistant said that laws are being made to improve the performance of the KP IT board. The Directorate of Science and Information Technology will be upgraded to the level of Directorate General.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/12/552521/in-7-districts-of-kp-computerisation-of-land-record-by-june-2020/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 16 TO 22, 2019

RECLAIMING WATERLOGGED AND SALINE LAND IN SINDH

Mohammad Hussain Khan December 16, 2019

AFTER having reclaimed his small piece of salt-affected agriculture land, elderly farmer Murad Ali Shar is quite excited about cultivating the wheat crop.

Until now, he has not been able to cultivate wheat because of waterlogging and salinity. However, Eucalyptus tree provided by NGO Research and Development Foundation (RDF) came to his rescue and he succeeded in reclaiming his land, located in Sanghar district's Khipro taluka.

"I was unaware of this species of tree that helps reclaim farmland," he says, adding that he planted 800 trees on 2.5 acres and it helped improve 12 acres. Later, he grew another 2,000 trees in 2018.

Salinity and waterlogging adversely affect soil fertility. Ultimately, growers have to leave such lands unattended, losing major crops. Salinity is noticeable in many parts of Sindh, especially in the coastal strip owing to fast and unending sea intrusion in the absence of freshwater flows downstream Kotri barrage. Freshwater flows help repulse sea in Sindh's deltaic region.

Most parts of Sindh have brackish groundwater reserves. These are used for watering fields by farmers due to interprovincial water issues and mismanagement within Sindh. For sweet water flows, farmers depend on water supplied through 14 major canals of three barrages in the province.

Multiple issues lead to salinity in Sindh, including parent soil material, low rains, the rising underground water table, the absence of an efficient drainage system and increasing temperatures

In another intervention, the RDF supported the plantation of acacia tree (called hurri plantation in local parlance) to help farmers reclaim salt-affected land in the same area. Farmer Qaim Deen Leghari says he has successfully reclaimed 12 acres of salt-affected soil by planting acacia tree. "Ever since I grew acacia tree on my land, I found signs of salinity disappearing. The tree has also benefited the adjacent area of around 20 acres where I have now grown mustard seed," he says.

Mr Leghari's land in Sanghar was hit by waterlogging and salinity after torrential rains of 2011 which led to flooding. Since the Left Bank Outfall Drain didn't perform in the area for various reasons, it made his land unproductive.

The RDF is implementing a Climate Resilient Livelihood Program in Sanghar district's Khipro taluka with the help of German NGO Kindernothilfe (KNH) and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Hurri plantation is all about block plantation method of *Acacia nilotica*, an indigenous species. Plantation is an old agro-forestry practice to combat land degradation and reclaim soil fertility in Sindh. Being one of the oldest species, acacia is widely grown in Sindh's riverine belt — or katcha area — and is primarily meant for forests.

Sindh's cabinet has recently approved a new forest policy after having done away with the previous one, which allowed the use of forestland for agriculture purposes along with forests.

Updated statistics are not available regarding the actual number of acreages hit by waterlogging and salinity. Quoting figures from 1998, Dr Inayat Rajpar, chairman of the Department of Soil Sciences at the Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) of Tandojam, says that 41pc of Sindh's agriculture land is salt affected.

"Of Pakistan's 6.3m hectares of salt-affected land, 2.1m hectares are located in Sindh," he says, adding that the SAU promotes bio-saline agriculture among farmers because it is the best way to combat salinity and waterlogging.

Experts say multiple issues lead to salinity in Sindh, including parent soil material, low rains, rising underground water table, the absence of an efficient drainage system and increasing temperatures.

Dr Rajpar says the SAU strongly recommends the cultivation of species of plants and crops that are salt tolerant in such pieces of land instead of wasting time on reclaiming it. One of his PhD students has screened 28 different varieties of guar having salt content for cultivation in Tharparkar.

"Our farmers should opt for fodder cultivation or crops like barley which are salt tolerant. With this approach, we can overcome our economic losses running into millions," he says. Eucalyptus tree helps control waterlogging if the level of underground is below 10 feet from the surface coupled with the usage of freshwater to flush out salts.

Sindh's agriculture department is executing two separate schemes for reclaiming salt-affected soil in several districts of Sindh. Initially, a scheme to reclaim saline soil was launched in 2016-17 in Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Kashmore, Khairpur, Mirpurkhas, Thatta, Badin, Ghotki and Larkana districts where land was reclaimed through the use of gypsum, sulphuric acid and ammonium sulphate on growers' applications.

Out of the targeted 12,000 acres, around 9,600 acres were reclaimed. The land is now cultivable, according to Nabi Bux Jamro, an agriculture chemist at the Quaid-i-Avam Agriculture Research Institute.

Another such scheme was launched in 2017-18 and is still being executed in districts of Qambar Shahdadkot, Sukkur, Benazirabad, Dadu, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Thatta and Sujawal, focusing 7,620 acres. Under this scheme, 840 acres of land has been improved, 2,340 acres are under improvement and another 3,360 acres would be reclaimed if the funding continues.

Published in Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, December 16th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1522402>

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT FOR RECLAIMING OF WATER-LOGGING HIT LAND

By RECORDER REPORT on December 16, 2019

The Agriculture department said that special attention has focused on reclamation of water-logging and salinity hit land in different district of the Punjab.

Sources in Agriculture department told Business Recorder on Sunday that the reclamation is the process of changing land that rendered unfit for farming and the reclamation programme would be supportive in making water-logging and salinity hit land cultivable in across the Province. The government was making adequate arrangements for making the programme successful for attaining yielding results sources added. The Agriculture department was trying its utmost to introduce new modes of irrigation to save the water through modern irrigation system.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/16/553515/agriculture-department-for-reclaiming-of-water-logging-hit-land/>

DRIVE TO RETRIEVE FOREST LAND SET TO BE INTENSIFIED

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent December 17, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Jamshoro deputy commissioner on Monday chaired a meeting of forest officials and asked them to continue the ongoing operation without any discrimination to retrieve forest land from illegal occupants.

The meeting was also attended by police officials.

The DC said that directives of the apex court be implemented in letter and spirit while dealing with 'qabza mafia' with an iron hand.

He asked assistant commissioners of Sehwan and Manjhand to verify their revenue records and submit reports in order to do away with any ambiguity regarding state-owned land. He told forest department to accelerate the pace of the operation and seek assistance of Rangers personnel in case of resistance.

A forest officer informed the meeting that 8,710 acres of forest land was being retrieved in the operation. He said that crops in three reaches of Jamshoro division were destroyed.

He disclosed that in Rajri range illegal occupants used women and children to protect their crops cultivated on forest land. He said that operation would continue with the help of Rangers.

Published in Dawn, December 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1522623/drive-to-retrieve-forest-land-set-to-be-intensified>

SINDH'S COMMENTS ON PLEA FOR LAND SETTLEMENT SOUGHT

Nasir Iqbal Updated December 18, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Sindh government to explain its position on a federal government application seeking the land settlement funds being deposited by Bahria Town (Pvt) Ltd in the apex court.

A three-judge Supreme Court bench, headed by Justice Faisal Arab, issued a notice to the provincial government when Attorney General Anwar Mansoor invited the court's attention to the application that he had moved on behalf of the federal government on Aug 22.

"Why we have ordered the money to be deposited in the Supreme Court, because we need to look at where the money has to go," remarked Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan, another member of the bench that also comprised Justice Muneeb Akhtar.

Justice Ahsan observed that a lot of claimants had come up to claim the money even before it had been deposited. After the federal government's plea, another application was moved by the Sindh government pleading for transfer of the funds to the account of the provincial government.

When the judge asked what the urgency was, the AG on a lighter note replied, "money".

'We need to look at where the money has to go,' remarks Justice Ahsan

On March 21, a three-judge SC bench headed by then Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed had approved Rs460 billion offer made by Bahria Town to implement the apex court's May 4, 2018 decision.

The court had in its order held that the grant of the land to the Malir Development Authority (MDA) by the Sindh government, its exchange with the land of Bahria Town and anything done under the provisions of Colonisation of Government Land Act, 1912 by the Sindh government were illegal and of no legal existence.

The land was granted for launching an incremental housing scheme, but instead of launching the scheme, the MDA exchanged it with Bahria Town to launch a scheme of its own, the SC judgement had regretted.

The settlement concerns only the Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) project spreading over 16,896 acres along the Superhighway; independent of other projects such as 5,472 kanals in Rawalpindi's Takht Pari Rakh and 4,542 kanals in Sulkhatar and Manga Land, Murree.

The apex court had granted a period of seven years commencing from Sept 1, 2019 to Aug 31, 2026 for the payment of the entire amount to be deposited in the Supreme Court account.

In a two-page application, the federal government later pleaded that the money was liable to be credited to the public account of the federation. It said Bahria Town had already furnished a payment of Rs25bn and after the firstly installment of Rs2.5bn, the balance payment was required to be made in 36 equal monthly installments, with a four per cent mark-up charged annually.

The application said that considering the fact that money had been deposited or was liable to be deposited in the SC, the said amount was liable to be credited to the public account of the federation notwithstanding what purpose the money was obtained or deposited for. It referred to Article 78 of the Constitution in this regard. As per provision of Article 78(2)(b) of the Constitution, any money received by or deposited in the Supreme Court was liable to be credited to the "public account of the federation", the application explained.

Article 78(1) says that all the revenues received by the federal government, all loans raised by that government and all moneys received by it in repayment of any loan, shall form part of a consolidated fund, to be known as the federal Consolidated Fund, whereas Article 78(2) of the Constitution

suggests that all other money received by or on behalf of the federal government or (b) received by or deposited with the Supreme Court or any other court established under the authority of the federation.

Similarly, the Sindh government through the chief secretary also filed a similar application seeking an order that the money in the account, established by the apex court where the down payment had already been deposited by Bahria Town Karachi, be transferred to the provincial account No1 of the Sindh government.

The provincial government requested the court to take up the case urgently as any unnecessary delay in the hearing of its application could cause serious injury and irreparable financial loss to the applicant and the people of Sindh.

The provincial government stated that the future payments, including the shortfall in the down payment, to be made by Bahria Town Karachi should be transferred to the Sindh government account.

The application mentioned that against the budgetary estimates of Rs605.6bn, the Sindh government had received Rs493bn by June 30, 2019, reflecting a shortfall of Rs112bn. Besides, the Sindh government is also facing a shortfall of Rs74.99bn against the revised estimates of Rs508bn against the federal revenue assignment from the divisible pool.

It explained that against the allocation of Rs14.266bn under the Public Sector Development Programme 2018-19, the Sindh government had received only Rs9.9bn from the federal government. This shortfall in the provincial revenue jeopardised development projects that had already been initiated as well as those which were at various stages of preparation, the application said.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1522844>

THAR VILLAGERS GET RS4.2M FOR VACATING LAND

A Correspondent December 19, 2019

MITHI: Villagers living in Varvai within Block-1 of Thar Coalfield and executives of three mining firms have reached an agreement under which the villagers will vacate their dwellings within next three months in return for a hefty compensation amount of Rs4.25 million and two jobs per household in mega-power producing project.

The villagers' representatives Suhrab Rahimoon and Waryam Lunjo held lengthy meetings with officials of the firms and finally agreed on the compensation.

The villagers told journalists that all the 380 families had agreed to get the compensation for their structures. The officials had assured them that besides the cash amount and jobs the displaced villagers would get other facilities as well wherever they migrated, they said.

They said that they would be allowed to take debris of their houses and other structures. The officials had assured them that they would not make any construction in their ancestral graveyard in the village, they said.

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1523020/thar-villagers-get-rs42m-for-vacating-land>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 23 TO 29, 2019

PUNJAB GOVERNMENT TO ACQUIRE LAND FOR INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

By RECORDER REPORT on December 26, 2019

The Punjab government has decided to acquire land for setting up industrial estates and has extended an assent to the industries department to draft a new policy. The department had written to the government that non-availability of land in the industrial estates is causing problems for allocation of land to new industrialists. Therefore, a new policy is the need of the hour, which would serve the purpose and create new job opportunities.

According to sources, Chief Minister Punjab has agreed to include the summary in the standing committee on the finance bill to facilitate investors.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/26/556398/punjab-government-to-acquire-land-for-industrial-estates/>