

NEWSCLIPPINGS

JULY TO DECEMBER 2017

ENCROACHMENT & EVICTION



Urban Resource Centre

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Unauthorised shops on amenity spaces in Karachi to be removed

The Supreme Court (SC) ordered on Thursday the Karachi commissioner to ensure removal of unauthorised and illegal shops and cabins from public parks, grounds and other amenity spaces across the city.

A two-judge bench, comprising justices Gulzar Ahmed and Maqbool Baqar, gave the commissioner a week's time to comply with the court's order and submit a report on its implementation.

The order came on a petition filed by Shukar Din, who had taken the South District Municipal Corporation high-ups to the apex court for allegedly unlawfully cancelling allotment of a cabin in Lea Market.

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During the hearing, the judges wondered how the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and district municipal corporation authorities could set-up the shops and cabins on amenity spaces, such as public parks and grounds, and allot them for commercial purposes.

Supreme Court set to indict Nehal on July 10

Justice Ahmed, the head of the bench, observed that there was no legal provision that could permit the establishment of shops and cabins on amenity spaces and further allot them to the private individuals in order to use them for commercial purposes.

"The whole city has been turned into carts and cabins," remarked the bench, coming down hard on the Karachi commissioner over the manner in which the amenity spaces were being misused for commercial gains in clear violation of the laws and judgments rendered by the apex judiciary.

Justice Baqar, the other bench member, told the Karachi commissioner to stop his officers from making the amenity spaces a source of income.

The bench directed the commissioner to ensure that all such shops and cabins, set-up in an illegal and unauthorised manner in the public parks, grounds and other amenity spaces were removed within one week.

Nehal Hashmi indicted for contempt of court

It further directed him to ensure a full-fledged operation was launched across the city. The commissioner will personally supervise the operation and will ensure all the district municipal corporations implement the apex court's directives in letter and spirit.

Tanker terminal

The same bench, meanwhile, directed the Sindh government and KMC to provide all the facilities to the Zulfiqarabad Oil Tanker Terminal within a week and submit a compliance report.

While hearing a suo motu case regarding illegal parking of oil tankers in Shireen Jinnah Colony, the judges said facilities such as fire-fighting equipment and others should be made available at the new terminal in order to cope with any untoward situation.

Filing their reports, the home secretary and commissioner informed that the terminal had been made functional in compliance with the court's orders passed last week.

Court issues arrest warrants against college principal

Justice Baqar observed that the authorities lacked the capacity to meet any untoward incident such as the incident in Ahmedpur Sharqia where 216 people were burnt alive in a fire that involved an oil tanker.

"Unfortunately, no lesson has been learnt even from the death of 216 people," he remarked and questioned what will happen if any untoward incident will take place at the new terminal where 2,800 oil tankers will be parked.

The home secretary replied that some people had vested interests in allowing parking of the large oil tankers within the city.

However, Justice Ahmed told the officer that the state should assert its writ, as 'no one is more powerful than the state'. He asked the officer why officers on senior posts await the court's orders to do what they themselves were supposed to do.

The bench members noted it was very shameful that the court's orders had not been completely acted upon despite the lapse of one week's time.

Forced conversion case: SHC orders police to bring Ravita before court

The commissioner said a case regarding theft of pole-mounted transformers and electric wires from the new terminal had been lodged. He added the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital management was being contacted for provision of medical facilities in case of emergencies.

The home secretary said the government will provide Rs157 million to the KMC for the terminal.
(The Express Tribune 13, 14/07/2017)

Illegal constructions in Sindh irk apex court

The Supreme Court (SC) summoned on Friday the provincial chief secretary over failure of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) to act against the construction of high-rise buildings without any check in the city.

A two-judge bench, comprising justices Gulzar Ahmed and Maqbool Baqar, also issued notices to the SBCA officials over the demolition of unauthorised upper floors of a building belonging to the Evacuee Trust Property Board in Lyari. The case was heard at the SC's Karachi Registry Branch.

No more high-rise buildings: Karachi's construction industry to bear the brunt of SBCA's ban

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The bench members came down hard on the SBCA authorities for failing to check the increasing illegal and unauthorised constructions in the metropolis.



Justice Baqar noted that the growing number of high-rise buildings has destroyed the city. Unchecked growth of high-rises is sheer cruelty to the city, which must be stopped now, he said.

Justice Ahmed observed that illegal constructions had become a common phenomenon all over the city, where anyone constructs a building without any checks or balances.

School demolition case: SHC seeks comments from Sindh govt, SBCA

The bench inquired from the provincial law officer what the Sindh government was doing about the matter. They told the SBCA officers to pay a visit to localities such as Delhi Colony, Baloch Colony and Khalid Bin Waleed Road to get an idea of the situation.

The apex court's bench observed that the SBCA had destroyed the whole city. It further observed that SBCA had been redundant and failed to perform its functions.

The Lyari SP said that there were a number of high-rise buildings that had been built illegally in the Lyari neighbourhood.

The judges told the provincial law officer that if the government wanted the regulatory body for buildings to function, it needed to be completely overhauled.

No more high-rise buildings, says judicial commission

Justice Ahmed noted that the SBCA officers turned a blind eye when buildings were being constructed illegally and made money instead.

The bench issued a notice to the authority's concerned officers to provide an explanation of how unauthorised upper floors were allowed to be built on the property of the Evacuee Trust Property Board and under what law the floors were later demolished.

Meanwhile, the judges also issued a notice to the provincial chief secretary to appear in court and explain the inaction on the part of the SBCA authorities against the growing number of unauthorised and illegal buildings, including high-rises. The secretary will also submit a report in this regard by the next date of hearing.

(The Express Tribune 15, 15/07/2017)

SC seeks report on measures being taken to remove encroachers

The Supreme Court (SC) sought on Tuesday a report from the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing-director on measures being taken to remove encroachers from Mehmoodabad treatment plant's land and provide them with an alternative land.

While hearing a case regarding marine and air pollution at the SC's Karachi Registry, a three-judge bench, headed by Justice Mushir Alam, also sought progress report on repairing and renovation of the dysfunctional treatment plants in the metropolis. Earlier, the KWSB managing-director informed the court that up to 80 per cent renovation and repair work on the Treatment Plant-I and Treatment Plant-II (TP-I and TP-II) had been completed in compliance with the court's directives.

Remove encroachments or face action, traders warned

He pointed out that 92 acres of the land belonging to TP-II in Mehmoodabad was under encroachment. The KWSB managing-director said that the treatment plant could be made functional within shortest possible period of time on a temporary basis, even if 42 acres of the land was made available. He informed the court that the process of retrieving the remaining 50 acres of land from the illegal occupants and providing them with an alternative space will take time.

The bench directed the managing-director to submit a report showing progress on repair or renovation of the non-functional treatment plants, in addition to the measures being taken to retrieve the encroached 92 acres land of TP-II and re-settlement of the occupants.

(By Our Correspondent, Tribune, 14, 26/07/2017)

SC orders DHA to demolish 39 illegal shops in Gizri

The Supreme Court (SC) directed on Wednesday the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) administrator to ensure immediate demolition of as many as 39 shops that were illegally built in the basement of a commercial plaza in Gizri neighbourhood that was earmarked for a parking lot.

A two-judge bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed, also directed the administrator to furnish complete details as to how many of the amenity plots were illegally converted into residential or commercial properties in the upscale locality, in the alleged violation of land rules and regulations.

Furthermore, the judges also asked the administrator to explain what action had been initiated by the DHA officials against those involved in the illegal conversion of the amenity spaces for residential or commercial use in the locality.

Remove encroachments or face action, traders warned

The bench passed this direction while hearing a petition filed by the Defence Officers Housing Authority, which had challenged the Sindh High Court's order that had ruled in the favour of the M/s Grace Builders Private Limited.

The two judges noted that the basement of the commercial plaza was originally earmarked for the purpose of parking as per the approved building plan. They wondered how the space could illegally be used for commercial purposes other than using it for what it was originally approved for.

Justice Ahmed observed that this was just one case that had been brought before the court. The judge observed there might be many other such cases where the space, which was actually approved in the building approval plans for amenity purposes, might have been illegal converted into commercial or residential ones and are being used for commercial purposes.

Anti-encroachment drive: Traders, locals protest on Murree Road

Therefore, the bench directed the DHA administrator to ensure action was taken against the illegal shops immediately in accordance with the relevant rules and laws. The bench further directed the administrator to submit a report within two weeks, containing complete details as to how many such amenity plots had been converted and used for commercial or residential purposes in violation of the rules and regulations.

Furthermore, the administrator will explain what action had been initiated against the DHA officials involved in such conversions of the land in violation of the rules and regulations.

(By Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, 13, 03/08/2017)

Former SBCA head encroached on amenity land: NAB

A former director-general of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) and other officials connived with a private builder to encroach upon and illegally construct on amenity land belonging to the city's oldest drain, Neher-e-Khayyam, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) disclosed before the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday.

A special prosecutor for the national anti-graft watchdog disclosed this in comments filed on bail applications of Riaz Abdul Razzak, Mumtaz Haider and others.

Mehmoodabad treatment plant: SC seeks report on measures being taken to remove encroachers

They had obtained interim pre-arrest bail from the high court anticipating their arrest by NAB.

The NAB prosecutor alleged that builder Razzak had illegally and unlawfully encroached upon drain's amenity land. He stated that the builder had occupied and illegally constructed on the amenity land in connivance with former SBCA DG Manzoor Qadir alias Kaka and other officials.

Admin speeds up clearing encroachment along Nullah Leh

It claimed that the accused persons had caused losses worth billions of rupees to the national exchequer through illegal encroachment of state land. Therefore, the anti-graft watchdog has filed a reference with the accountability court concerned against the builder, the former SBCA DG and other officials.

The prosecutor opposed the bail applications of the accused persons and pleaded to the court to dismiss the same.

Law enforcers, land mafia 'encroach' on land allotted by court in Gulshan-e-Iqbal

After going through the report, SHC Chief Justice Ahmed Ali M Sheikh, who headed the bench, said, "It seems as if everyone makes hay while the sun shines". The lawyers representing the petitioners were not present. The bench directed the petitioners' lawyers to appear and make arguments on the bail plea within two weeks. It warned that the bail granted to the petitioners may be revoked if the lawyers failed to do so. The hearing was adjourned till a date that would be notified by the office.

(By Our Correspondent, The Express Tribune, 14, 11/08/2017)

SBCA drive to demolish illegal 'portions' on residential plots in full swing

As a complete ban on construction of buildings beyond ground plus two floors has already been in place, the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) has launched a new drive to demolish unauthorised 'portions' constructed on residential plots in the city, it emerged on Tuesday.

The ban on construction of more than two-storey buildings was imposed on the directives of the Supreme Court on May 25. However, the latest drive was initiated on the directives of the SBCA chief, who chaired a meeting on Aug 6 and directed his subordinates to take action against the "builder mafia involved in construction of portions".

Agha Maqsood Abbas, the director general of the SBCA, told Dawn that the "builder mafia" adopted normal procedure to get passed the building plan of a residential plot to construct a house.

Legal action would be initiated for violation of building plan

But, they violated the approved building plan by constructing between four and 10 separate portions and illegally sold them to different people, he added.

He said that the SBCA launched the demolition campaign a few days ago and so far over 60 illegal constructions had been demolished in different areas of the metropolis — Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Liaquatnagar, Nazimabad, PECHS, Jamshed Town are among those areas where such constructions are rampant.

The authority would initiate legal action against the builders for construction of illegal 'portions', he said, adding that the campaign would continue till the demolition of all such illegal constructions in the city.

The SBCA chief said that utility agencies, including the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, K-Electric, Sui Southern Gas Company, etc, were also asked to not give more than one water/electricity/gas connection on a residential plot. The civic agencies were also told to ensure that the completion certificate had been issued by the SBCA.

Similarly, he said, sub-registrars had also been asked to not issue sub-lease of the illegally constructed portions.

On Tuesday, the SBCA teams demolished illegal constructions in Lyari Town, Agra Taj Colony, Saddar Town, Gulshan-i-Faisal, Jamshed Town, Garden East, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, North Nazimabad, Gulberg Town and Federal B Area, said Mr Abbas.

Public cautioned against investing in 'portions'

Mr Abbas warned the people not to purchase/invest in such illegally constructed portions as these would eventually be demolished and they would lose their hard-earn money.

He also urged the people that before investing in any project they should approach the SBCA (the director of the town concerned, or director of the design section) to ask as to what was being constructed on the said plot and whether the SBCA approved the building plan.

He said that this information was being provided to the people as a service so that they would not lose their investment when, in case of illegal construction, the building/floor was demolished.

Meanwhile, the SBCA on Tuesday declared the Al Manzar Garden VIP project located on Superhighway in Gadap Town as illegal as it had not completed the SBCA's required formalities. It asked the people not to book flats, shops, etc, or invest in the project. The authority also cancelled the licence (No. BL 241) of "M/s Standard Builders and Developers" for violating rules and laws. (By Bhagwandas, Dawn News, 17, 16/08/2017)

SBCA asks ASF to stop 'illegal' construction, follow rules

The Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) has advised the Airport Security Force to stop 'illegal' construction, follow the rules and regulations while the ASF maintains that it is under the federal government and does not come under the SBCA, Dawn has learnt. According to sources, the tug of war began between the SBCA and the ASF started when the SBCA directed the force to get building plans approved, follow the rules and stop booking and construction of its housing project. The force maintains that its project does not come under the authority's rules and laws.

The sources said that the issue started in July when the SBCA wrote a letter to the ASF Foundation on the subject of "illegal sale/booking on project ASF Arabian Vista near 4K Chowrangi North Karachi" pointing out that 'illegal' campaign to sell/book the project was being carried out without any permission/approval of the competent authority as required under Section 12 of the Sindh Building Control Ordinance 1979 (amended up to date) and other relevant laws/rules.

"You are directed to stop all illegal sale, booking and advertisement activities at once and reply to this office within three days and why action shall not be taken against you including sealing of booking head office and publication in newspapers," adds the letter written by SBCA official Farhan Qaiser.

ASF claims that as it is a federal body, SBCA rules do not apply to it

The sources said that in his response to SBCA director general Agha Maqsood Abbas, ASF deputy director general Brig Imran-ul-Haq said that ASF was a federal security body operating under the Pakistan Army Act and housing projects were launched under the ASF Foundation with approval of the Pakistan government vide cabinet secretariat notification SRO 15KE/2014 Islamabad dated April 17, 2014, therefore, legally it does not fall under the SBCA.

"Your notice and intended publication against ASF is regretful and uncalled for as federal force you should have reached us before initiating such outrageous notices.

"We hereby strictly call upon you to immediately restrain yourself from making any such publication that damages and harm reputation of prestigious ASF Housing project."

The SBCA in its latest letter sent to the ASF's Deputy DG Brig Imran-ul-Haq in second week of August said that the ASF's response had been examined under the Karachi Building and Town Planning Regulations and the Sindh Building Control Ordinance (copy enclosed) and was not found in accordance with said regulations.

The SBCA letter says, "The publicity of project AFS Arabian Vista through all means proves that it is a public sale project being offered for sale to general public under the name of ASF and it may not be taken as a project of national security declared by the federal government hence you are required to obtain (1) approval of building plan and (2) NOC for sale and advertisement as per Section 12 of SBCO 1979-82.

"For exemption under regulation 1-1.3 of KB&TPR 2002 you are requested to furnish the copy of the SRO issued vide No: 15KE/2014 Islamabad dated April 17, 2014.

"You are further advised to stop (1) all sort of publicity/booking of project among general public and (2) construction at site until the fulfilment of rules and regulation referred above," adds the latest letter issued by a deputy director of the SBCA to ASF's Brig Imran-ul-Haq. (By Bhagwandas, Dawn, 18, 10/09/2017)

Land grabbers convicted in only five cases since 2010

While an anti-encroachment court and a special force were established in the metropolis in 2010 for the speedy trial of land grabbers besides retrieving public property by razing illegal structures, the purpose of the entire exercise has largely remained fruitless with merely 10 per cent conviction rate so far.

During the past seven years, the Anti-Encroachment Force registered 185 cases and sent 110 of them for trial. Of these cases less than half (50) were decided with land grabbers being convicted in only five cases.

So far this year merely 10 cases have been registered against land encroachment in Karachi.

The provincial assembly had passed Sindh Public Property (Removal of Encroachment) Act in September 2010 to provide measures for the removal of encroachment from public property and to retrieve possession. The same year an anti-encroachment court, headed by a district and sessions judge, was established under Section 25 of the Act for the purpose of providing speedy trial of offences committed under this Act.

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Anti-Encroachment Force registered 185 cases and sent 110 of them for trial

To prevent encroachment on public property, retrieve land possession from encroachers and trespassers and to enforce the provisions of the Act, the Sindh government established a special force (anti-encroachment force) headed by a senior superintendent of police under Section 17 of the Act. The legislation was made after the rising complaints against encroachment upon public property, including amenity plots, and their conversion into private residential and commercial estate. Encroachment of parks, playgrounds, footpaths, drainage, roads, government buildings, illegal katchi abadis and other public spaces had become one of the major problems in the metropolis.

But the force since its establishment has registered 185 cases and filed charge-sheet in just 110 cases.

Strangely enough, 74 cases have not been sent for trial at all. Of the 74 cases, the anti-encroachment force remained clueless about accused persons in 50 cases and filed A-class report. Seventeen cases were cancelled under C-class, six cases were quashed while one case was found bogus and disposed of under B-class.

Of the 110 cases in which suspected land grabbers were charge-sheeted, the court acquitted accused persons in 45 cases and convicted the land grabbers in only five cases. As many as 32 cases have been kept dormant since the accused had absconded while 28 other cases are pending trial before the court.

The anti-encroachment force had registered 37 cases in 2010, 56 in 2011, 45 in 2012, three in 2013, 15 in 2014, five the following year, 14 last year and 10 so far this year. Of the 37 cases registered in the year 2010, 20 cases were sent for trial. The following year charge-sheet was filed in 22 of the 56 cases. Suspects in 28 of the 45 cases were charge-sheeted in 2012. All the cases registered the next year and those in 2015 were sent sent for trial. However, charge-sheet in 13 of the 15 cases registered in 2014 were filed in court.

Five of the six FIRs registered last year were sent to court for trial and all the 10 cases registered so far this year have been sent to the court for trial.

(By Ishaq Tanoli, 15, 11/09/2017)

Land grabbers eyeing Edhi centres in Larkana, other parts of Sindh

The land mafia is 'encroaching' on the centres of the Edhi Foundation, forcing the charity to scale down its services in rural Sindh.



"The land mafia and district administration – including police – are stopping the Edhi Foundation from delivering humanitarian services in several districts of the province," said Faisal Edhi, the son of the late philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi.

Faisal was speaking at a news conference in Karachi on Wednesday where his mother and widow of Edhi, Bilqees Edhi, was also present.

The Edhi Welfare Centre in Thatta has been occupied by the land mafia and police, Faisal claimed, adding that the district administration has closed the centre to cover up the land grab.

He called upon Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to take notice of the situation.

"The Thatta Centre was set up in 1985 on a piece of land provided by the National Highway Authority and we have the allotment letter," said Faisal.

Faisal Edhi to soon start flying aircraft to rescue patients

"Some people have come up with documents forged in 1994, after the Edhi Centre plot was included in a land survey following the expansion of the city," he explained.

"Most Edhi Centres in rural Sindh are being encroached upon by the land mafia and the local administration is conniving with them by issuing them forged documents," he claimed.

He said these tactics were forcing the foundation to limit its services in the areas where their centres are being encroached upon or forcefully shut down.

Faisal said the ambulance service was still operational in Thatta but they were unable to contact their employees after the closure of the centre, which is spread over 1,000 square yards.

Edhi Foundation Spokesperson Anwar Kazmi told The Express Tribune that Thatta was the first city after Karachi where Edhi had expanded the foundation's services to in 1980.

The Thatta centre is not the only one facing encroachments. Faisal said the Edhi Welfare Centre Moro has also been encroached upon by the land mafia and a market has been constructed on its 3,000 square yards plot, whereas the Edhi Welfare Centres in Qazi Ahmed and Hala have been illegally occupied and shops set up on their land.

Faisal added that the Edhi Welfare Centre in Sehwan has also been occupied by land grabbers, whereas in Larkana, the land mafia has locked the centre.

The Edhi Centre in Hyderabad's Latifabad area has also been occupied by the land mafia, he claimed.

"The Edhi Foundation is committed to continuing its services in makeshift tents if the administration doesn't take action against the land grabbers," he said, refuting claims in the electronic media of the centres being shut down and services suspended. (THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 26/10/2017)

CM orders IGP to remove encroachments along main roads

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has taken serious notice of encroachments along some main roads by car showroom owners and directed the inspector general of police to immediately take action against them.



The encroachments, which had been removed a couple of weeks ago on the directives of the CM, have re-emerged on Tariq Road, Khalid bin Walid Road, Jamshed Road, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Clifton, Nazimabad, etc.

This upset the CM to the extent that he phoned IGP A.D. Khowaja on Monday and asked him to take action against those policemen who allowed the showroom owners to encroach upon the roads again.

The CM said he had directed the DIG Traffic to remove all the encroachments made by showroom managements from all thoroughfares, as main roads were not part of their showrooms.

"The encroachments were removed from the roads but again the encroachments re-emerged on Tariq Road, Khalid bin Walid Road, Jamshed Road, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Clifton and in the areas of Nazimabad which [appears] as if it has been done in connivance with the officers and policemen concerned," the CM told the IGP.

"I would take strict action against officers involved," he warned.

The CM reminded the police chief that he was "working hard to make this city free of encroachments" but the menace returned again and again. "This is unacceptable."

Mr Shah said that he would start visiting the city from next week and would take strict action against the issues of encroachments, filth and garbage and absence of staff in government offices and police stations.

The IGP assured the chief minister that he would personally monitor removal of encroachments on the roads, particularly by the showroom owners.

(Dawn 17, 07/11/2017)

Top court irked by DHA's failure to comply with 5-year-old orders to demolish illegal shops

The Supreme Court (SC) expressed its displeasure on Monday over the Defence Housing Authority's (DHA) failure to comply with its 2012 orders to demolish illegal shops at a multi-storied commercial plaza in Defence Phase-V, Karachi.



The shops are built in the parking area of Grace Centre, located along Khayaban-e-Hafiz.

The apex court ordered the DHA and District Municipal Corporation (DMC) South to seal the 39 shops and have them demolished immediately.

A two-judge bench, comprising Justices Gulzar Ahmed and Sajjad Ali Shah, also directed the Karachi commissioner to personally supervise the demolition.

The directives came on a petition filed by the Defence Officers Housing Authority against the Grace Builders Private Limited with the top court's Karachi Registry.

The orders to remove the illegal shops were issued on September 2, 2012.

On August 3, the apex court again directed the DHA and DMC South to have the illegal structures removed from the basement, which was originally reserved for the parking.

DHA razes outdoor seating at chai dhabas in Karachi

During Monday's proceedings, after three months, the judges inquired about the implementation of the court's earlier orders. However, an additional advocate general informed the bench that the DHA management was requested to provide the machinery to demolish the shops, but it had failed to do so.

The judges admonished the DHA for failing to comply with the court's directives issued on August 3 as well as in the past. The judges had reminded DHA officials that the orders for removing the shops were issued in 2012, but they had failed to implement them.

The judges observed in their earlier verdict that the DHA had no authority to condone illegal constructions in a parking space as such powers vested with the cantonment board under Sections 184 and 185 of the Cantonments Act.

They also asked the DHA officials as to how they had allowed the conversion of the land reserved for amenity purposes and not complied with the court's orders issued five years ago.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 14/11/2017)

SC orders removal of all encroachments from public parks, plots

The Supreme Court (SC) came down hard on the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) authorities concerned on Wednesday and directed them to remove all encroachments and cabin shops from public parks and other amenity plots across the city.



The apex court's two-judge bench, headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed, also directed them to submit a compliance report by the next date of the hearing. The bench was hearing an application filed by Shakar Din against the removal of a cabin shop from the Lea Market locality at the SC's Karachi Registry.

The applicant had taken the metropolitan corporation authorities to the apex court for removing his stall from Lea Market and pleaded to the court to direct them to provide him alternative space.

However, the SC had taken serious exception to the practice of renting out spaces in public parks and on roads by the KMC authorities.

In July, the judges had directed the KMC to ensure all encroachments and cabins were removed from the public parks and amenity spaces in the city.

Top court irked by DHA's failure to comply with 5-year-old orders to demolish illegal shops

The court had observed that the metropolitan corporation had no authority to allot cabins or stalls in playgrounds and public parks. It had clearly told the KMC commissioner not to use the space of public parks for commercial purposes.

Therefore, the apex court had also directed the commissioner to personally supervise the anti-encroachment campaign and submit a compliance report to show that these directives had been complied with.

On Wednesday, the judges took up the matter to see what progress had been made in light of its earlier directives to the KMC regarding clearing the public parks and amenity spaces of encroachments and cabins.

The officials maintained that the unauthorized constructions and cabins had been removed across the city in compliance with the court's orders.

Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, a bench member, observed that the whole Saddar locality and its adjoining areas were full of encroachments, but the officials were claiming to have removed them all under the guise of removing a few push-carts.

Faryal Talpur's 'illegal' occupation of land in Thatta challenged

"The police stations are running on the money received from such push-cart vendors," the top court's judge remarked. "The station house officers earn from these carts' vendors," the judges further observed.

Justice Ahmed observed that the KMC officials had even rented out public parks and allowed the footpaths to be used to run electricity generators outside the shops.

He asked the metropolitan corporation officials whether they give this money to the government or fill their own pockets with it. The officials failed to give satisfactory answer, irking the bench head.

The judges dismissed Din's application seeking alternative space to set up and run his stall. In the meantime, they told the KMC's anti-encroachment department to ensure all encroachments and cabins were removed from the public parks and amenity spaces. They were further told to submit a compliance report by the next date of hearing.

(By Naeem Sahoutara THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 13, 16/11/2017)

Bhains Colony residents want encroachments removed

Residents of Bhains Colony urged on Sunday the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) to launch an anti-encroachment drive in the area soon, as the issue had been worsening with every passing day and resultantly causing a nuisance for motorists and pedestrians. These views were expressed during the general meeting of the Bhains Colony Reforms Committee by its members.



The president of the committee's steering group, Muhammad Rizwan, said the KMC anti-encroachment department had been asked time and time again to take across the board action against encroachers but it did not pay any heed to the issue.

CDA cracks down on encroachment in Blue Area

He said that, according to a survey conducted by his team, it was discovered that there were certain elements in the KMC who were sheltering encroachers in order to make money. He said this time, if the KMC did not perform its duty, the committee along with likeminded people would stage a sit-in in front of the Malir deputy commissioner's office in the near future.

Ghulam Murtaza, a member of the survey team, said a government employee of the national flag carrier, Haji Abdul Rasheed, had illegally set up a weighbridge on road No 4 of the colony. The land where the weighbridge had been built belonged to the KMC. Either the anti-encroachment department was asleep or taking bribes as the owner claims so publically, he added.

Murtaza said the weighbridge had narrowed the road by almost half and made it uneven, which was causing severe difficulties for the road users.

He said during the most recent rain spell that hit the city, a couple of trucks carrying straw and grass had collapsed due to the bumpy road, as the platform had been built too high. Another encroacher, Abdul Rasheed, had almost built five shops on the nullah by dismantling the drainage system along the illegal weighbridge, Murtaza added.

SC orders removal of all encroachments from public parks, plots

The offices of several transporters were located on the same road, such as Warraich Goods Transport, Allah Tawakal Goods Transport and Bismillah Goods Transport, and their heavy vehicles were parked on the road, leaving little space for motorists, he said. Summing up the survey's findings, Murtaza said this was the pathetic situation of a single road, adding that the next phase of the survey would start soon and unveil more irregularities continuing in Bhains Colony. APP
(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 14, 27/11/2017)

KDA ordered to remove encroachments from all amenity plots within two days

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) to remove encroachments from all amenity plots in the city within two days.

A two-judge SC bench headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed was hearing an application of a woman seeking contempt proceedings against officials concerned for allotting her plot to another party in violation of a court order.

In a previous hearing, the court had also issued notices to the then KDA director general Nasir Abbas, assistant director Syed Muzzafar Ali and other officials.

When the application came up for hearing on Monday, KDA's deputy director-land Sagheer Ahmed submitted a report in court stating that a plot in North Karachi's Sector 11-E had been allotted to the applicant in lieu of her plot. However, he conceded that the piece of land in question was an amenity plot.

His reply irked the judges to an extent that at one stage they called the police for his arrest and subsequent shifting to prison.

Justice Ahmed observed that the officials concerned sold green belts and amenity plots. The court deplored that playgrounds had been converted into marriage halls.

SHC calls for probe against Rao Anwar

The judges remarked that public spaces at Kashmir Road, University Road, North Karachi and other parts of the city had been either encroached upon or illegally allotted.

The court directed the deputy director to clear encroachments from all the amenity plots in the provincial metropolis. He was also directed to file a compliance report in court on Nov 29.

The court also ordered the director-land of the KDA to ensure his presence on the next date of hearing.

The applicant, Sabiha Parveen, submitted that she fulfilled all the legal requirements to get a plot, but the KDA officials in connivance with private persons had allotted it to another party.

She further submitted that this act on part of KDA officials amounted to contempt of court and requested the court to initiate contempt proceedings against them.

IGP told to launch probe against Rao Anwar

The Sindh High Court on Monday directed the inspector general of police to hold an inquiry against SSP-Malir Rao Anwar and others for allegedly harassing citizens.

A division bench headed by Justice Niamatullah Phulphoto asked the IGP to conduct an investigation against the SSP and other officials into the allegations levelled in a petition filed by three citizens — Shakir Awan, Sabir Awan and Malik Asad.

Impleading the SSP and other police officials as respondents, the petitioners submitted that policemen of Malir City, Sharafi Goth and other police stations of Malir district were allegedly harassing them.

The petitioners maintained that police were demanding bribes after framing them in forged cases and threatening to kill them in staged encounters.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn 17, 28/11/2017)

SC gives two days to clear amenity plots in Karachi

The Supreme Court (SC) ordered on Monday the Karachi Development Authority's (KDA) director-general to remove illegally set up wedding halls and other encroachments from all amenity plots across the city within two days.



A two-judge bench, comprising justices Gulzar Ahmed and Sajjad Ali Shah, also directed the authority to ensure compliance with this order and submit a report.

The apex court bench issued these directives at its Karachi Registry while hearing an application seeking contempt of the court's order against former KDA director-general Syed Nasir Abbas over alleged non-compliance with the court's order.

The plea was filed by Sabiha Parveen, who had pleaded to the court to initiate proceedings for contempt of the court's order against Abbas, Assistant KDA Director Syed Zafar Ali and others. The court had issued notices of the contempt of the court order application to the KDA officers as well as the anti-encroachment cell's director, Abdul Qadeer Mengal, executive engineer, Mohsin Raza and others.

Support pours in as Faisal Edhi accuses land mafia of encroaching centres

The applicant, who appeared in person, told the judges that the KDA had provided her a plot in North Karachi in lieu of another piece of land that became disputed.

Parveen complained that all the legal requirements for allotment of the alternative land, which was ordered to be provided to her by the court, were completed. But, that piece of land was later fraudulently and illegally transferred to a third party. She alleged that it was done in collusion with the KDA officials.

The court was told that the act of transferring the land allotted to one person to another without any intimation and providing her an amenity plot as alternative was a violation of the relevant laws as well as the court's orders. Therefore, the applicant pleaded to the court to initiate contempt of court proceedings against the KDA and anti-encroachment cell officials for allegedly wilfully and deliberately not complying with the court order.

During Monday's proceedings, the apex court's judges came down hard on the KDA deputy director for allotting an amenity plot to the applicant and many others across the city where wedding halls and other commercial activities were being run instead of the public activities, for which the plots were originally earmarked.

SC orders removal of all encroachments from public parks, plots

Taking serious exception to the attitude of the deputy director, the irate bench members said the police should be called in and the erring officer be taken to jail for his conduct and non-compliance with the court's order.

The judges also came down hard on the secretary of the land department for not take notice of such illegal practices of allowing encroachments on amenity spaces by the KDA.

An irate bench member questioned whether the secretary felt ashamed for not taking any action and failing to perform his duties.

Justice Ahmed observed that no amenity plot was left in the city, as all the amenity spaces, greenbelts and playgrounds had been destroyed by officials. He further observed that localities like Kashmir Road, University Road, North Karachi and North Nazimabad had been destroyed.

The apex court's bench, while restraining itself from taking any action against the KDA deputy director for the time being, told the official to immediately take action against wedding halls and other encroachments set up on amenity plots across the city.

Thousands of acres of forest land under encroachment, govt admits

The judges warned that the authority's director-general and other senior officers concerned will be proceeded against sternly and the DG may be sent to the jail in case they failed to remove encroachments from the amenity spaces across within two days.

Justice Ahmed told the KDA officer that it was becoming difficult for people to even breathe due to shrinking amenity spaces, but he was allowing allotment of amenity plots to anyone as if he considered the Karachi his own inherited property.

The top court's judge observed that the city had been stripped of its green cover and even the few amenity spaces it had were being sold.

The judges inquired from the officials whether the city was made to run wedding halls only, but received no answer from the shamefaced officials.

They went on to remark that there was not a single playground left along University Road where young children once played. The bench directed the officials to also demolish boundary walls that had illegally been built around playgrounds along University Road.

The court also summoned the director-general and deputy director of KDA's land department to appear in person on tomorrow (Wednesday) along with a report regarding compliance with the court's orders.
(By Naeem Sahoutara THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 13, 28/11/2017)

Illegal marriage halls razed in Jauhar, North Karachi

The anti-encroachment staffers of the Karachi Development Authority carried out operations in Gulistan-i-Jauhar and North Karachi and razed to the ground illegally constructed marriage halls and furniture markets on Tuesday.

The KDA staffers carried out the operation against encroachments and demolished the marriage halls that had been illegally constructed on amenity plots No. ST-4/1; ST-1; ST-23 in Blocks 1, 2 and 15 of Gulistan-i-Jauhar.

Illegal stalls were also removed by the staffers from plot No. ST-1 in Block 3-A and those located in Block 12 and Block 14 in Gulistan-i-Jauhar and the illegally occupied land belonging to the KDA was recovered.

In another operation, the KDA estate and enforcement department staffers, using heavy machinery and equipment, demolished eight marriage halls that had been constructed illegally in North Karachi.

Ten other illegally constructed buildings/houses/shops in North Karachi's Sector 5-H and 5-B were also demolished, says a statement.
(Dawn 18, 29/11/2017)

Operation started against encroachments on amenity plots

In compliance with the Supreme Court (SC) orders, the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) started on Tuesday an operation against the misuse of amenity plots in the city.



The apex court had given a two-day-ultimatum to KDA on Monday to remove wedding halls and other encroachments illegally set up on all the amenity plots across the city.

Complying with the order, eight wedding halls and 10 residential and commercial structures in North Karachi and New Karachi areas were demolished by KDA. Similarly eight wedding halls and one furniture market were demolished in Gulistan-e-Jauhar.

CM seeks report on Edhi Centre encroachments

The operation against the illegal occupation of amenity plots would also continue today, said KDA Director-General (DG) Sami Siddiqui while talking to *The Express Tribune*. "We will compile a report [to submit to the SC] as soon as our teams return," he said.

"The operation will continue against the encroachers until all the plots are cleared," said the KDA DG. He added that a task force will be formed to continuously monitor and protect the amenity plots from land mafia.

KDA State and Enforcement Director Raza Muhammad Qaimkhani, who is conducting the anti-encroachment operation, said it was impossible to clear all the encroachments within two days as directed by the apex court. "We have tried our best to remove the encroachments on the first day and this would continue until all the amenity plots are cleared as directed by the court," he said, adding that there were more than a hundred amenity plots reserved for green belts, parks, play grounds, hospitals and schools that had been illegally converted into marriage halls or residential or commercial infrastructure in the last 15 to 20 years.

Thousands of acres of forest land under encroachment, govt admits

Qaimkhani added that two teams had been deputed for two zones for the operation against the encroachers. The operation would be conducted on a rapid pace if the provincial government provided support to the KDA, he said.
(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 29/11/2017)

SC gives two months to clear 35,000 amenity spaces

In a major step towards saving the city's green cover and open spaces, the Supreme Court (SC) ordered the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) and Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) authorities on Wednesday to clear as many 35,000 amenity spaces from encroachments within two months.



The apex court ordered the KDA DG and KMC officials to cancel illegal allotments in respect to all the amenity spaces across the city. It further told them to remove encroachments from these amenity spaces, including the 35,000 plots disclosed by the KDA.

The judges also told them to ensure that those plots that had been illegally sold through China-cutting are retrieved from the encroachers at any cost. The court also sought a report in respect to a wall built in front of the city's iconic Mohatta Palace.

The court told the KDA and KMC chiefs to complete this exercise within two months and submit their reports regarding compliance with the above orders.

KDA jumps into action following court order

The apex court's two-judge bench, comprising justices Gulzar Ahmed and Sajjad Ali Shah, passed these orders after heated proceedings on a contempt of court order application filed by Sabina Parveen who was allotted an amenity plot in North Karachi in lieu of a piece of residential land. The petitioner alleged that she was allotted a residential plot in the Surjani Town, which was illegally allotted to a third party by the KDA or KMC officials. Instead the officials allotted her an amenity plot in North Karachi's Sector 11-E.

Taking serious notice of such practices, the apex court had directed the KDA director-general and deputy director to clear all the amenity spaces in the city of encroachments two days ago.

At the outset of the hearing, the judges took serious exception to absence of KDA Director-General Samiuddin Siddiqui, despite clear directives to appear in court. KDA officials said that the DG was ill and could not appear in court.

Briefly putting aside the matter, the bench members remarked that DG will immediately appear if the court will issue warrants for his arrest. Later, DG Siddiqui appeared in the court.

KDA's director for the master plan disclosed that the as many as 35,000 amenity plots had illegally been occupied, carved into small plots and sold.

SC orders removal of all encroachments from public parks, plots

Justice Ahmed, the bench's head, remarked that whole city had been destroyed as lands had been illegally occupied and sold through China-cutting – a term used for illegal occupation and carving of land into plots and its subsequent sale.

The top court's judge observed that the last operation against encroachments in the city was carried out during the martial law imposed of General (ret'd) Ayub Khan which left Karachi resembling a European city.

Coming down hard on the KDA officials, the judge told them to leave their offices and start working in the field. He told them that cabins had been installed in Gulshan-e-Iqbal and the situation beyond Disco Bakery was the worst.

In his report, Siddiqui informed the court that during the two-day operation illegal constructions including wedding halls built on amenity plots had been demolished, adding that encroachments from greenbelts were also removed.

The master plan director said that there were six different master plans for the city, which had been amended in 2000, 1985, 1974, 1965 and 1953. The director disclosed that the illegal allotments of amenity spaces had started after the relevant laws were amended in 1992.

Justice Ahmed reminded the officers that the court had passed an order to retrieve the city's amenity plots from encroachments back in 2011 and remarked that things will improve if all the officers were sent to jail.

Bhains Colony residents want encroachments removed

Briefly adjourning the matter, the bench told the KDA DG to come up with a solution.

Later, the KMC land director also appealed that the amenity plots and open spaces had been illegally occupied and sold through China-cutting.

The officer's reply annoyed the judges, who remarked that illegal encroachments always increase after the anti-encroachment cell's staff carried out an operation in any area.

Justice Ahmed asked them to take the example of Saddar, where the roads had shrunk to hardly 10 feet in width. (By Naeem Sahoutara THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 13, 30/11/2017)

SC wants 35,000 amenity plots in city cleared of encroachments within two months

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) to remove encroachments from around 35,000 amenity plots in the city within two months.

Expressing dissatisfaction with a compliance report filed by the KDA director general on an earlier court order, a two-judge bench of the SC headed by Justice Gulzar Ahmed also directed the KDA officials to immediately cancel the illegal allotments of such plots.

On Nov 27, the bench had directed KDA DG Samiuddin Siddiqui to remove encroachments from all the amenity plots in the city within two days after a KDA official conceded during the hearing of an application filed by a woman that they had allotted an amenity plot to the applicant in lieu of her plot.

KDA officials told to immediately cancel allotments of such plots

At the outset, the judges took exception to the absence of the KDA chief despite clear directives asking him to appear in court. The KDA officials informed the court that the DG was ill and could not appear in court.

The bench members remarked that the DG would immediately appear if the court issued warrants for his arrest. Later, the KDA chief turned up.

Mr Siddiqui in a compliance report contended that they had demolished marriage halls built on amenity plots and green belts at 27 places in the city during the two-day drive.

However, the bench expressed dissatisfaction on the report and asked the KDA officials to inform it about the number of encroached or illegally allotted amenity plots as per the city's master plan.

Mr Siddiqui disclosed that around 35,000 amenity plots were encroached upon through 'china-cutting', a term used for illegal occupation and carving of the land into plots and their sale.

The master plan director informed the bench that there were six different master plans for the city and the illegal allotments of amenity spaces had started after the relevant laws were amended in 1992.

Coming down hard on the KDA chief and his subordinates, the apex court told them to leave their offices and start work in the field. They observed that the last operation against encroachments in the city was carried out during the martial law of Gen Ayub Khan after which Karachi resembled any European city and people preferred Karachi to London.

The judges further remarked that the KDA officials helped the people get amenity plots allotted and they were also reluctant to clear the encroachments.

Justice Ahmed reminded the KDA officers that the court had passed an order for retrieving the city's amenity plots from encroachments back in 2011, but the KDA officials did nothing.

They also pointed out that several buildings, including private universities, were built on public spaces, but no action was taken.

The bench directed the KDA chief to instantly cancel the illegal allotments and remove all encroachments from the around 35,000 amenity plots and sought a compliance report within two months.

The judges further told the KDA officials to ensure that the plots illegally sold through china-cutting must be retrieved from the encroachers at any cost and also sought a report in respect of a wall built in front of the city's iconic historical site, Mohatta Palace. The applicant, Sabiha Parveen, submitted that she fulfilled all the legal requirements to get a plot in North Karachi, but the KDA officials allotted it to another party.

She further submitted that this act on part of the KDA officials amounted to contempt of court and requested the court to initiate contempt proceedings against them.

The KDA officials also informed the bench on Wednesday that a plot was being allotted to the applicant in Surjani Town. However, the applicant objected to it and said there was a big difference in the market value of North Karachi and Surjani Town.

Subsequently, the bench directed the KDA officials to allot her a plot in North Karachi within two weeks.
(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn 17, 30/11/2017)

Karachi Development Authority shows leniency in anti-encroachment drive

Following the Supreme Court's (SC) orders, the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) has started a drive to reclaim illegally occupied government land that is being used for commercial projects, such as marriage halls. However, restraint is being observed in clearing structures constructed on illegally occupied amenity plots.



The anti-encroachment cell of KDA has demolished 73 marriage halls so far. However, leniency is shown towards marriage halls belonging to influential people. Sources told *Express News* that a marriage hall located at NIPA Chowrangi demolished earlier was illegally converted into an educational institute. Its land is reportedly an amenity plot but due to the influence of the occupants, KDA has shown restraint in demolishing it. The plot was allotted for commercial purpose by some senior officials of the KDA.

SC gives two months to clear 35,000 amenity spaces

Another amenity plot, located at Gulshan Chowrangi, has been turned into a marriage hall and a private school. However, no action has been taken against the occupiers.

Sources told *Express News* that KDA authorities are not taking action against all encroached structures. Action has not been taken against land occupied in several blocks of Gulistan-e-Jauhar, where amenity plots reserved for parks and playgrounds have been converted into marriage halls. These plots are reportedly being used by influential people, which is why KDA authorities are refraining from taking any action.

Several other marriage halls in North Karachi and Surjani Town have been constructed on government land but cannot be demolished due to the influence of the land mafia.

SC gives two days to clear amenity plots in Karachi

Leniency is also being shown in the way the structures are being demolished. A marriage hall located at 4K Chowrangi was only partially dismantled, while only the wall of another hall located at Powerhouse Chowrangi was bulldozed.

KDA has either spared or partially dismantled these halls as they belong to people of considerable influence. This has given a clean chit to occupants to resume commercial activities once the operation is over.

The operation parameters of KDA also seems to be ignoring a vast number of amenity plots in Korangi where unapproved lands have been converted into marriage halls, gymnasiums and private educational institutes.

KDA jumps into action following court order

"KDA's drive is to hoodwink the SC," sources within KDA claimed, adding that if an impartial operation is undertaken, extremely valuable land can be recovered.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 01/12/2017)

Vanishing amenity plots

KARACHI'S gradual metamorphosis into a concrete jungle is the outcome of several factors: lack of urban planning, unchecked corruption and a callous disregard for people's quality of life. The Supreme Court has now acted in the matter: on Wednesday a two-judge bench ordered KDA to cancel all illegal allotments of amenity plots and remove encroachments from around 35,000 amenity plots in the city within two months. The issue of such encroachments had come to the fore a few days earlier during the hearing of an application filed by a woman alleging that KDA had allotted her an amenity plot in lieu of her own plot. Land officials came in for harsh criticism by the apex court which pointed out that they had ignored a similar order it had issued back in 2011.

Amenity plots are often eyed avariciously by influential elements of society, whether they wield their influence through the barrel of a gun or by virtue of their political/institutional clout. In Karachi, it is often a mix of both that has resulted in thousands of such spaces being utilised for commercial or residential purposes, often through the process known as 'china cutting'. The term refers to the carving out of plots from land earmarked for playgrounds, green belts and other public services that are then sold off. Sometimes,

amenity plots are illegally taken over wholesale by educational institutions and madressahs/mosques, or rented out for marriages and various private functions. These shenanigans take place in collusion with a corrupt bureaucracy that facilitates the land grabbers by issuing permits and approvals in brazen violation of the law. Reiterated by a Sindh High Court decision in 2003, the law states that no amenity plot can be converted to, or utilised for, any other purpose than originally intended. The so-called custodians

of Karachi's assets, who set such little store by the residents' needs, must no longer be allowed to get away with shamelessly using public land to enrich themselves.
(Dawn 08, 03/12/2017)

SC extends stay on handing over Go Aish Adventure Park

The Supreme Court (SC) extended on Monday its earlier stay order against handing over the premises of the city's only adventure park, Go Aish Adventure Park, to its private management till further orders.



A two-judge bench, comprising justices Faisal Arab and Sajjad Ali Shah, also issued notices to the management of Go Aish Karachi to file a written reply on the petition filed by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) against the Sindh High Court's (SHC) order to open the recreational facility.

The KMC had approached the apex court against the high court's order to reopen the adventure park, which was sealed by the authorities over non-payment of outstanding dues in April this year.

The KMC official informed the judges that the KMC had granted permission to the private management to set up the recreational facility in 2006 under a five-year contract. The metropolitan corporation had granted permission to run the facility against a payment of Rs2 million, the official added.

The apex court was told that the management of Go Aish had not paid the outstanding dues, therefore the KMC had closed down the facility for over a year.

Government fails to satisfy Supreme Court on treatment plants issue

It was informed that its management obtained an order from the SHC to reopen the park on March 1. But, later it was found that the park was being used for illegal activities, the official alleged.

The bench was informed that days after reopening the park, the Rangers had recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition, reportedly stashed in the ticket counter of the park. The paramilitary force had alleged that the same belonged to Muttahida Qaumi Movement – London leader Inbisat Malik, who is also the son-in-law of another party leader, Mohammad Anwar.

Therefore, the court was pleaded to set aside the SHC's order handing over possession of the park to the management of Go Aish Adventure Park, arguing that the public place could not be handed over to them to run alleged illegal activities.

Previously, the SC had granted a stay against the SHC order.

On Monday, the judges further extended the earlier stay order, directing that the possession of the public park's premises will remain with the KMC until further orders.

In the meantime, it issued notices to the management of Go Aish Adventure Park to file its written reply in this regard by the next date of hearing.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 14, 12/12/2017)

China-cutting: Houses constructed on school ground trouble students

As amenity plots continue to be the target of the land mafia for illegal occupation and construction, the grounds of public schools are no longer safe. As the government and education department remain oblivious to the conditions of schools, land grabbers have encroached upon land of schools in Korangi, resorting to China-cutting to sell it to the general public after illegally building houses and shops.



Four government schools constructed within the same boundary wall in Korangi No 3 have lost their vast ground to the land mafia. The four schools separately cater to boys and girls of primary and secondary levels. The schools were already dilapidated and without basic facilities including proper furniture. However, the woes of students have increased multifold after illegal buildings have been constructed in the ground whose residents have demolished the boundary wall to ease their commute. With no proper boundary wall, the schools' administration and students are worried about their future. Around 60 to 70 homes have been constructed within the premises of the school.

According to school officials, a few months ago, the boundary wall was constructed by the works and services department but residents residing in the illegally constructed houses demolished it to pave the way for their movements. Owing to this reason, the department abandoned the construction. The construction of the wall is not possible unless the encroachments are not removed.

SC orders removal of all encroachments from public parks, plots

As residents and passers-by continue to linger at the schools' surroundings, female students are troubled by the lack of privacy and security. There is no furniture in the classrooms, due to which they have to pursue their education while sitting on the floor.

It is worth mentioning that a year back, the building of the primary school was renovated. However, the school is still without furniture, forcing students to sit on the floor even in the winter.

The school administration claims that it requested the officers concerned to provide furniture many times but their request was never followed up on.



The students revealed that due to the absence of a boundary wall, unauthorised persons, including drug dealers, have been accessing the school. The residents living on the school land regard the ground as their own property and their children are often found playing in the school ground making it impossible for the students to either play or go outside during break time.

Land grabbers eyeing Edhi centres in Larkana, other parts of Sindh

The students also claimed that their movements are restricted, as outsiders routinely engage in unethical behavior and address them with indecent language. The female students have requested the Sindh government and education department to remove the illegal houses constructed on the school's land and erect walls surrounding the school building.

Residents have their say

Hundreds of people have been residing in the illegally constructed homes within the remits of the four schools in Korangi No 3. These residents claim to have paid millions of rupees to obtain the land. Their houses have utility connections and they are paying electricity, water and gas bills. Some of them have also opened up shops. Looking at the place today, one feels that the schools were wrongfully built in residential areas, not the other way round.

One resident said he has been living in this area for the past 20 years. He claims to have paid hundreds of thousands of rupees to buy the plot and that he has all the relevant documents to prove his claim. He revealed that when he started living here, there were no walls around the school and he did not know that it was not legitimate land to build a house on.



He admitted that after some time he found out that the plot had been illegally carved out from the school's ground. However, he did not abandon the place because he had paid money to buy the land. "Why was the legitimacy of the land not brought up when these residents were coming to settle here?" he questioned, adding that at that time no one stopped them or asked them to vacate the area. "Now, all of a sudden, everyone realises that we are living on illegal land."

Illegal occupation of lakes in Sindh to be stopped

A female resident of the area told Express News that she had come to this place a few years ago. "This is my only place of living which I will never vacate," she said. She also maintained it was not the fault of the residents that unauthorised persons were entering the schools. "The administrations should arrange for their own security and should not blame us for the destroyed wall of the school."

Education Minister Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar and the school education secretary were not available for comments despite several attempts.

(By Saba Naz THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 18/12/2017)