

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

JANUARY TO JUNE 2017

## ENCROACHMENT & EVICTION



### Urban Resource Centre

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## **‘Illegal’ construction of shops threatens sealed temple in Malir**

The façade of a 100-year-old temple located in the city is going to be completely hidden from the public eye because of illegal construction to which the authorities are paying no attention, it emerged on Tuesday.

A recent protest by the Karachi Indigenous Rights Alliance brought the issue of the temple and a surrounding compound located a few kilometres ahead of Malir 15 to the limelight.

Known as the Malir City Compound, the conflict surrounding the structure centres on the ongoing construction of three shops outside the compound’s outer wall.

The construction on what is known as the Malir Mandir stop was obstructing the view of the compound.

Fareed Ahmed, a resident living inside the area for the past 45 years, said those constructing the shops are from Quetta. “They are not trying to build anything inside the compound, but outside it. However, this construction would weaken the supporting wall at the entrance which might fall if not taken care of,” added Ahmed.

Written in English on a small plaque on the right side of the main entrance is the history of the compound itself. The plaque states that it was built as a sanatorium on Dec 10, 1914, by “Dedhar Pragji, in the memory of Tekar Lakshmidass and Shivaji Kanji Pragji Somaya”. The same is stated on the left of the entrance in Hindi. A temple inside the sanatorium was built before that, added historian and writer Gul Hassan Kalmati, which was a Shiv Mandir.

Also associated with the Indigenous Alliance protesting the recent construction of the shops, Kalmati said: “Hindus never lived inside the sanatorium; they only visited the temple during religious ceremonies. Later, after the partition, a group of migrants were provided shelter in the sanatorium with the promise of being provided an alternative compound. But since that never happened, they ended up living here.”

Testifying to that, Ahmed said that his family moved in 40 years ago when he was just five. “We had nowhere to go at the time as our family had sold everything in India in order to move to Pakistan. We have a mosque and a temple inside the compound,” he added.

But the temple is sealed. This happened after the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992.

One of the residents, Mohammad Zohaib, says: “A group of men barged into the compound and attacked the mandir the day the mosque was attacked in India. Since then, the mandir is sealed and locked by the Auqaf department (which takes care of the shrines and mosques).”

Standing in the centre of the criss-crossing lanes of the compound, the temple is only visible through its elegant upper structure. The lower part is covered from all four sides by the surrounding two-room houses.

Kalmati believed that incidents like Ayodhya “provide best opportunities to the land grabbers in the city. For them, it is an opportunity to take over a heritage site and build something else in its place”.

Mohammad Zubair, one of the shopkeepers, said that he paid Rs400 rent for the shop, which will soon be a milk shop, on land he said was owned by the Auqaf department. “My father, Mohammad Nawaz, owns the place and we are building this shop legally,” is all that Zubair said when asked about the ownership of the shop. The residents say that the construction began in November and that, so far, no one from the Auqaf department came to stop the construction.

However, Kalmati questioned the claims of the residents and of those constructing the shops and said that the Auqaf department was probably not the right authority to speak on the issue. “The land might be under the ownership of the culture department or the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB). We are in

the process of approaching them and as soon as we get a response from them we'd know exactly how to stop the construction," he added.  
(By Saher Baloch Dawn 18, 04/01/2017)

### **In action: Anti-encroachment operations in three city centres**

Three bustling shopping areas — Jodia Bazaar in Old City, Bahadurabad and Liaquatabad — saw anti-encroachment operations on Thursday.

According to Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) anti-encroachment director Nazir Lakhani, there were hundreds of pushcarts and other forms of obstructions in Jodia Bazaar, which made it impossible to even enter the market. "In Khori Garden, there wasn't any space to walk," he claimed.

He pointed out that 15 feet of the area in front of the shops were under encroachments, which were then cleared during the operation.

Apart from the operation in Jodia Bazaar, similar operations were carried out in Bahadurabad and Liaquatabad.

In Bahadurabad, said Lakhani, they were planning to convert the roads into 'model roads' that are free of encroachments. He added that those shops that were blocking the roads were removed from Alamgir Road. "Shopkeepers have extended the size of footpaths and had illegally taken gas connections from under these footpaths," he said, adding that all such connections were removed.

As a result, the footpaths were broken during the operation. Once the operation is completed, said Lakhani, they will repair the footpaths and will also make sure that encroachments do not appear again. According to him, no resistance was shown during the anti-encroachment operation as the elected representatives of the respective union committees were on board with them along with the law enforcement agencies.

KMC's camps in all the operation-affected areas have been set up for a week to monitor re-emergence of encroachments. For the encroachments that take place during the night in Bahadurabad, he said that they will also initiate an operation in a day or two against illegal night sittings that will ease the flow of traffic.

A similar operation took place in Liaquatabad. Meanwhile, around 30 houses were demolished in the ongoing operation in Gujjar Nullah.  
(The Express Tribune 14, 13/01/2017)

### **Removal of encroachments from Mehmoodabad treatment plant ordered**

Judicial commission also orders LG secretary and KWSB MD to ensure Haroonabad and Hawkesbay treatment plants are functional within six weeks

The judicial commission investigating the non-provision of clean drinking water, sanitation facilities and a healthy environment to the people of Sindh directed the DIG East, the deputy commissioner and anti-encroachment police on Saturday to ensure that the encroached 40 acres of the Mehmoodabad treatment plant were reclaimed from land grabbers.



The judicial commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro observed that the state of affairs apparently not only pointed out the apathy and negligence on part of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board but also led to the conclusion that the its officials were hands in gloves with the encroachers in the entire scheme.

The deputy commissioner, the DIG and the SSP East appeared before the commission in connection with the encroachment of Mehmoodabad treatment plant land.

DIG East Arif Hanif submitted that the entire treatment plant area was more than 120 acres but the KWSB had entered into an agreement the defunct City District Government Karachi for the allotment of 50 acres for a housing scheme.

He submitted that after the allotment, people started encroaching upon the remaining land of the facility. Currently, 40 more acres were encroached upon.

He submitted that although the KWSB had an inbuilt security system to monitor and watch its installations, but so far its action was confined only to the issuance of some toothless and fruitless notices to wrongdoers without any follow-up.

The DIG East undertook that if any assistance was required by the KWSB for removing the encroachments and reclaiming the land to make the treatment plant functional, he police would be ready to do so.

KWSB sewerage and pumping chief engineer Azam Khan submitted that an FIR against the encroachments was lodged four years ago but he was unaware about what action was taken against land grabbers and currently how many people were illegally occupying the land.

He also admitted that no complaint or report was ever made to the secretary local government or other quarters against the encroachments.

The commission directed the deputy commissioner, the DIG, and the SSP East to immediately take measures to remove the encroachments from the Mehmoodabad treatment plant land and submit a report within a week.

Regarding the allotment of 50 acres land to the defunct CDGK for a housing scheme, the commission issued notices to the federal and provincial law officers to assist it in understanding as to under what law such an agreement could be executed.

The commission was informed that if proper security was provided to the KWSB staff, the treatment plants in Haroonabad and Hawkesbay behind the Mauripur truck stand could be made functional too also given that financial issue was also addressed as per the KWSB Act.

The local government secretary briefed the commission about the upgrading of the treatment plants. The commission observed that the exercise was being carried out since 2011 but nothing had been done yet.

The commission directed the local government secretary and the KWSB managing director to ensure that the Haroonabad and Hawkesbay treatment plants were made functional within six weeks.

On the Mehmoodabad treatment plant, the authorities of the local government and the KWSB submitted that the facility could be made functional within three months if proper security was provided to the staff.

The DIG and SSP East assured the commission that the KWSB staff would be provided protected in accordance with the law for running the facility.

The commission was informed that 200 acres were allocated for a treatment plant in Korangi and that land too could be encroached upon if appropriate steps were not taken to make it functional.

The commission directed the KWSB managing director to produce the records of the Haroonabad, Mehmoodabad and Hawkesbay treatment plants including their functioning, fund allocation and consumption of budget.

The KWSB chief was also directed to inform the commission about initiatives taken by the board to revive these facilities including the details of staff deputed there, The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency director general, a Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (technical service) official, the local government secretary and the irrigation secretary also filed their statements.

(By Jamal Khurshid The News 13, 15/01/2017)

## **SC irked over illegal allotment of land**

The Supreme Court (SC) expressed on Friday its extreme displeasure over the illegal allotment of the Pakistan Railways Employees Cooperative Housing Society's land, where the builder had built a residential complex in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal neighbourhood.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar, who headed the two-judge bench, expressed dismay over the state of the relevant institutions that are themselves involved in illegal allotment of the land.



The top judge remarked that it was difficult to understand that which department should be assigned the responsibility of investigating the facts of the case.

The bench that also comprised Justice Amir Hani Muslim was hearing the matter relating to illegal allotment of the cooperative society's land to the builder, who had built the Moon Garden residential complex in violation of the relevant laws.

During the proceedings, the society's lawyer, Faisal Siddiqui, informed the judges that the society was allotted 63 acres of land but the revenue authorities had illegally cancelled allotment of four acres of such land without providing any reason.

He alleged that such land was illegally allotted to the private person, who had erected constructions in violation of the laws. Now, people are living there illegally, he added.

The bench members came down hard on the revenue officials over their failure to protect the government land, which had been encroached upon by individuals along the railway tracks within the city limits.

Justice Hani observed that hundreds of people were involved in land grabbing, adding that people were raising houses at the (state) lands, wherever those were found vacant.

He inquired from the revenue and railways officials that who was responsible for the construction of the thousands of houses on the land belonging to the railways on either side of the tracks.

The bench ordered the provincial Board of Revenue's senior member to submit the record relating to the allotment of the piece of the land in question to the court. The case was fixed at the SC's principal seat in Islamabad for further hearing.

Earlier, the apex court had, in November, 2015, suspended the operation of the Sindh High Court's order regarding demolition of the residential complex, Moon Garden, as it was found built illegally on land originally belonging to the cooperative housing society.

In September, 2015, an SHC bench had ordered the authorities to disconnect civic facilities to the building, which was also ordered to be vacated.

(The Express Tribune 13, 28/01/2017)

## **Environmental watchdog: Mayor to submit details of encroached land**

The judicial commission directed on Thursday the Karachi mayor and commissioner to submit details of water and sewerage treatment plant encroached land in the city.

Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court, headed the Supreme Court commission set-up to probe allegations of non-provision of potable water, deteriorating sanitation conditions and its impact on the environment in Sindh, also sought details of illegal water hydrants operating in the city under the umbrella of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB).

On Thursday, Karachi mayor Wasim Akhtar filed a report claiming that there was a serious shortage of potable water in Karachi. He said that since the distribution framework of water was working poorly, water was not reaching the areas at the tail-end.

### **Advertisement**

The mayor said that the construction of the high-rise and buildings had further aggravated problems.

He informed the commission that plans for constructing these buildings were being approved by the authorities without ensuring provision of water and sanitation facilities.

He also pointed out that the illegal water hydrants were still operating in the city, which was one of the main causes of the shortage of water. He said that sewerage system had also gone from bad to worse.

Akhtar claimed that the drains had also been encroached upon but no action was being taken. If any action was taken at all it was only against the poor, he added, citing the example of Habib University, which he claimed was built on encroached land of Nehr-e-Khayam.

He said that departments responsible for municipal services were working independent of each other and proposed that all such departments be given under central command to improve the situation, as then the mayor will be solely responsible.

At this juncture, the petitioner, Shahab Usto, pointed out that certain agreements were executed between the city district government and KWSB during the tenure of former city nazim Mustafa Kamal, as a result of which the land of the treatment plants were leased out illegally. The commission directed Akhtar to submit his reply on the matter. He undertook to submit his statement today.

Advocate Syed Hafeezuddin requested time to file a statement on the point that parallel to the KWSB another system, whereby water was being provided to the industries illegally, was also operating in the city under the umbrella of the KWSB.

To the commission's query regarding operation of the illegal water hydrants, DIG West and SSP West informed that such illegal water hydrants were running under the umbrella of the KWSB. The DIG said that although the police take action against the miscreants, the KWSB officials were reluctant to come forward to register FIRs against the operators of illegal hydrants.

Contesting his statement, KWSB's managing-director Misbahuddin Farid said although they report illegal hydrants to the police, the law enforcers do not take action.

Both the police officers gave an undertaking that, henceforth, the police will take action in accordance with the law if any illegal hydrant is found, without waiting for any complaint from the KWSB.

The DIG East also appeared and filed a statement against illegal hydrants, saying that the police in his area were taking action and three FIRs were registered in January.

He said that action was taken against people who illegally take gravel and sand from the Malir riverbed and 11 FIRs has been registered against such persons.

Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry's ex-president Zubair Motiwala said a combined effluent treatment plant was the only answer to all the problems regarding release of industrial effluent into the sea. He said it was not feasible and possible for each industry to have a pre-treatment plant inside its premises. Motiwala said there is a distinction between the factories that produce toxic effluent and others that do not.

(The Express Tribune 14, 03/02/2017)

### **Action against illegal parking irks showroom owners**

Action by the traffic police against haphazard parking of cars belonging to showrooms on Khalid Bin Walid Road has started yielding results.



Almost three weeks after the complaint was lodged, traffic movement is smooth and the cars are parked in a single line. Traffic police mobiles keep patrolling the road every now and then and commuters are satisfied with the action by traffic police on the chief minister's order. The association of showroom owners, however, is visibly irked.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah had ordered the removal of illegal parking specifically from Khalid Bin Walid Road at the start of January while he was visiting Tariq Road.

#### **Advertisement**

The two-kilometre long Khalid Bin Walid Road between PECHS blocks two and three is used by citizens to commute between Sharae Quaideen and Shaheed-e-Millat Road.

#### **Civic issues: Karachi needs more water, says PSP chief**

Expressing mixed views over the action, chairperson of the Automotive Traders and Importers Association Adil Khan told The Express Tribune that this is the first time that the car dealers have unanimously agreed to cooperate with the authorities.

He added that despite their cooperation and the removal of cars from the road, the traffic police are not allowing customers to park their cars, which is troublesome for them. He added that there are around 400 car showrooms on this road that pay billions of rupees in taxes and custom duties but even then their requests are not being entertained.

The last 15 days have been really difficult for the car dealers here, said Khan, adding that business has decreased to 10% since customers find it difficult to visit the showrooms if they are not allowed to park.

We went on a three-day strike and then the deputy commissioner had agreed to facilitate us with customer parking but even then the traffic police are lifting cars of customers and declaring them illegally parked vehicles.

Khan added that they are being dealt with like roadside vendors and lamented that the government has yet to realise their importance in terms of the hefty taxes they pay. He said that there are a total six major markets of car showrooms – Khalid Bin Walid Road, New MA Jinnah Road, University Road, Sohrab Goth, Jamshed Road, Defence and Clifton, which comprise around 800 showrooms.

He concluded that they will welcome such actions being taken for all the encroachments in the city and not just against showroom owners.

At least two to three traffic police cars were seen patrolling on the road in order to check encroachments. East traffic SSP Erum Awan told The Express Tribune that they will not tolerate any sort of parking here and the showroom association had convinced the deputy commissioner to grant them parking for the customers. She added that even high court had ordered them to take action against illegal parking but the showroom owners were not cooperating with them.

### **In the limelight: Welcome to Karachi [again]!**

Awan said she is happy that people using this artery regularly stop by to thank police officials for taking this action.

Meanwhile, Raza Gardezi of Shehri – Citizens for a Better Environment said before starting such businesses, showroom owners should have thought about this issue, as, according to the building by-laws, it is their responsibility to provide parking spaces to their customers. The traffic police have the right to declare any artery as a no parking zone and no authority can interfere in that, he added.

Gardezi was of the view that the action was necessary, since the showroom owners were using two lanes for their car parking while their customers were using the remaining one and very little space was left for commuters.

(By SHEHARYAR ALI The Express Tribune 13, 07/02/2017)

### **Authorities' failure to remove encroachments irks SHC**

Block 6, Gulistan-e-Jauhar

The Sindh High Court on Wednesday directed the anti-encroachment department and the director land of the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) to ensure removal of encroachment in the Gulistan-e-Jauhar area.

The court was hearing the application of an allottee of land in Gulistan-e-Jauhar who submitted that the court had ordered removal of encroachment in Block 6 of the vicinity. However, he stated, the alleged contemnors, including the KDA director and the district east administrator, did not comply with the court's orders.

The court had observed that the land grabbers who caused hindrance in implementation of the court orders shall be brought to book. The court had also directed the SSP concerned to provide protection to the applicant during the construction on the land.

The applicant submitted that land grabbers were again setting up encroachments in Gulistan-e-Jauhar Block 6 under the garb of their villages and police was not taking any action to stop them.

The court was informed that illegal construction was being raised on unallocated land despite the court's direction for auctioning the unallocated land. It was submitted that superior courts had already ordered for handing over the possession of land to its real allottees; however, the encroachers had made permanent houses on their lands.

KDA Director Jameel Baloch said officials of the anti corruption department had taken record pertaining to the Scheme 36, barring the KDA from complying with the court's orders. The court summoned the director of the anti-corruption department who submitted that the land record had been returned after verification.

The court ordered the director anti-corruption to submit the record regarding encroachment of the land in Scheme 36. The court also directed the DIG east to provide protection to the KDA director for carrying out removal of encroachment in the land as well as applicants who were raising construction on their land.

The court said the KDA and the Sindh Building Authority had become money making machines and nobody was taking action against the land grabbers who were raising construction on encroached government land.

The court also directed police and the Rangers to make efforts for recovery of applicant's son, Siddique, who had gone missing from the airport area and submit a report.

(The News 19, 10/02/2017)



## **No compensation for illegal structures appearing after 2012**

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday came down hard on the district administration, police and Railways authorities for allegedly conniving with those occupying their land and raising illegal structures along the route of Karachi Circular Railway (KCR).

He declared that those found 'hand in glove' with the encroachment mafia would be held accountable.

While presiding over a meeting for the removal of encroachments from the KCR route to launch the project in September, the chief minister said the people settled on the government land before 2013 would be given compensation, while no compensation would be paid for the encroachments that appeared during or after 2013.

Mr Shah asked the provincial transport minister to issue a deadline to those illegally occupying government land to vacate the area voluntarily. After the expiry of the notice period, the operation to demolish the illegal structures should be conducted with the help of district police, Railways police, anti-encroachment force, civic utility agencies, other authorities such as KPT, NHA and LDA, the transport minister was told.

### **Advertisement**

The chief minister said the areas cleared during the anti-encroachment operation must be fenced immediately afterward to prevent re-emergence of encroachments and protect the KCR route.

"I am going to perform the ground-breaking of KCR in September or October and high officials of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will be invited to the ceremony," he declared.

Referring to a survey conducted by Pakistan Railways, Karachi Commissioner Aijaz Ali Khan said that 4,950 houses and shops had been illegally built on the KCR route. In Karachi South district, he said, there were 420 houses including four katcha and 416 concrete structures. But, he added, the railways had not surveyed some parts of the district where 300 more structures had appeared.

According to the survey, he said, there were 2,517 illegal structures in Karachi East district. In Karachi Central, he said, there were 720 illegal establishments. In Karachi West, he said, the survey identified 1,002 illegal structures.

Another survey conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency in 2013 showed that there were about 4,600 houses and shops on the KCR route. This could be taken as a policy decision to pay compensation purely on humanitarian grounds to the owners of houses or shops constructed till 2013 as mapped by JICA, while the encroachments that appeared afterwards would be razed after being served with notices, the chief minister said.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary (Development) M. Waseem, Additional IG Karachi Mushtaq Mahar, Transport Secretary Taha Farooqi, deputy superintendent of Pakistan Railways and all deputy commissioners.

### **Anti-corruption law proposed**

While presiding over another meeting, which was attended by Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) chairman and other officers, the chief minister said the provincial government had decided to introduce proposed 'Sindh Anti-Corruption Agency Act' and Rules.

The chief minister said: "NAB [National Accountability Bureau] was encroaching upon the powers of Anti-Corruption Establishment of the provincial government. Under the 18th Amendment, only the provincial government is competent enough to exercise anti-corruption powers."

The salient features of the proposed act included recovery of illegal gains through court; imposition of fine not less than illegal gains derived. On conviction, accused shall stand disqualified from being elected as

member of parliament/provincial assembly etc and shall not be eligible to hold any public office for a period of 10 years. The proposed rules will be sent to the law department for vetting.  
(By Habib Khan Ghori Dawn 17, 16/02/2016)

### **KDA official pays Rs5,000 as fine for failing to remove encroachment in Gulistan-e-Jauhar**

The Sindh High Court (SHC) imposed on Tuesday a fine of Rs5,000 on Karachi Development Authority (KDA) director-general Syed Nasir Abbas for not complying with its order pertaining to the removal of 55 houses built on a park's plot in Gulistan-e-Jauhar.

The SHC bench, headed by Justice Nadeem Akhtar, directed Abbas to deposit Rs5,000 from his personal account with the court for disobeying and failing to submit a compliance report, despite giving an undertaking.

Earlier, Abbas appeared in court at a hearing on January 25 and tendered an unconditional apology for failing to comply with a similar order passed earlier. He had assured that the encroachment will be removed by February 17.

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#### **Authorities look the other way at hospital's encroachment**

"Neither was the encroachment removed nor was the compliance report furnished within the stipulated time by KDA's chief despite his assurance and apology. Therefore, he should deposit Rs5,000 for breaching his own undertaking," the order read.

Meanwhile, the bench was informed by the respondent that KDA was willing to remove the encroachment from park's land on ST-41 and 42 in Gulistan-e-Jauhar but needed a proper force of police and Rangers to deal with the land grabbers.

The SHC, upon the request, directed the Rangers director-general, DIG East and SSP anti-encroachment to provide full and proper assistance of a force during the operation and maintain the law and order situation.

#### **Gulistan-e-Jauhar's block-6: SHC orders 'immediate' demarcation of plots**

The court also directed all utility agencies to cut off any connections given to the land grabbers. While adjourning the petition till April 5, the court directed the respondent to complete the entire exercise by March 31.

The petition in question was filed by a non-governmental organisation two years ago for removal of 55 houses which were illegally built on an amenity plot. It also cited compensation for those people who were fraudulently sold these houses.

(The Express Tribune 14, 01/03/2017)

### **Anti-encroachment drive delayed**

The Sindh government failed to conduct its anti-encroachment drive on Monday.

Chief Minister House had earlier announced that an operation against the land mafia would be conducted. According to the announcement, the operation was supposed to be conducted behind Aladin Amusement Park in Gulistan-e-Jauhar to clear the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) track but was postponed till Tuesday (today).

At the start of January, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah had directed Karachi commissioner Ejaz Ahmed Khan to hold a meeting with all the deputy commissioners and work out a plan to remove encroachments along the KCR route, however, no significant work has been done since then.

### **Anti-Encroachment: KCR to trample 4,000 houses**

The total area of the KCR is 360 acres and 67 of those acres have been encroached upon.

According to a letter shared by District East's assistant commissioner for Gulshan-e-Iqbal Muhammad Arif Kalwar, an anti-encroachment drive was scheduled from March 6 to March 16, where land measuring 53.63 acres and comprising 289 plots of varying sizes was to be cleared, however, on the first day of the encroachment drive, when 96 plots of 240 square-yards were to be cleared, the drive was unexpectedly called off.

The letter was addressed to wing commanders of the Rangers, the District East DIG, Anti-Encroachment Cell, Board of Revenue and District East SSP office, requesting security cover.

### **Crackdown Planned: 'Encroachments to be removed soon'**

Kalwar said there was a delay in the availability law enforcement personnel and heavy machinery, therefore the drive was postponed till Tuesday (today). He added that the drive will be carried out sooner or later as per the directives of the higher authorities.

On the other hand, District East deputy commissioner Nadeem Abro told The Express Tribune that there was also a polio drive being conducted in the city on Monday, therefore most security personnel had been deployed there, thus they were not able to provide adequate security to the anti-encroachment team. (By SHEHARYAR ALI The Express Tribune 15, 07/03/2017)

## **Sindh CM wants more constables, less encroachments around shrines**

To ensure security at shrines across the province, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah decided to recruit more constables and remove encroachments outside shrines.

During a meeting at CM House on Tuesday, Shah was told that a security team visited Data Darbar shrine in Lahore to observe its security arrangements and formulate Sindh's plans accordingly.

After the 2010 blast at Data Darbar shrine in Lahore, a security audit was carried out and the shrines were categorised into A, B, C, with 'A' being the most sensitive ones.

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### **Sindh CM orders security audit of 86 shrines**

The Punjab government placed 15 shrines in 'A' category and all encroachments around these shrines were removed, the chief minister was told.

The officials listed 14 most-sensitive shrines in Sindh, including Abdullah Shah Ghazi, Manghopir Baba, Dargah Hazrat Sakhi Abdul Wahab Shah Jilani in Hyderabad, Dargah Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Dargah Saeedi Moosani, Dargah Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Abdullah Shah Ashabi, Shah Aaqeeq, Sachal Sarmast, Gaji Shah in Dadu, Dargah-e-Aalia Hussainabad in Shahadadkot, Shah Inayat, Udero Lal and Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Shah decided that all these 14 shrines must be provided strict security.

He constituted a committee comprising the Special Branch (Convener) AIG, the Rapid Response Force DIG, the Auqaf chief administrator, the Hyderabad Division Superintendent Engineer and relevant local officers.

### **High alert: CPO orders police to ensure security at shrines**

This committee will visit each and every Dargah particularly, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Abdullah Shah Ghazi, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Shah Aqeeq and Manghopir Baba to conduct their security audit.

Then after, it will grade them and propose specific security plans, additional construction, removal of encroachments and better methods for searching visitors.

The chief minister directed the chief secretary to issue necessary instruction for all the shrines to move away beggars from their vicinity. They are also a security threat, he observed.

Shah also told the Sindh IG to appoint local male and female constables, give them special training on searching visitors, and then deploy them at their local shrine.

Shrines are most important in terms of inter-faith unity, said Shah, adding that people of different religions, sects and beliefs gather there by setting aside their respective beliefs and demonstrate a unique unity. "I want them completely secure and safe," he stressed.

### **A VVIP took security deputed at Lal Shahbaz Qalandar shrine half an hour before attack: Sindh CM**

He also ordered the construction or raise in compound walls where required and installation of closed-circuit television cameras at important shrines, along with a well-equipped command and control room for monitoring.

The chief minister directed the home department to notify the committee and their terms of reference so they start work from Thursday.

The meeting was attended by transport and Zakat minister Nasir Shah, chief secretary Rizwan Memon, Sindh IG Allah Dino Khowaja, Counter-Terrorism Department AIG Sanaullah Abbasi, home secretary Kazi Shahid Parvez, works secretary Aijaz Memon, Zakat and Auqaf secretary Riaz Hussain Soomro, and others.

(The Express Tribune 14, 08/03/2017)

### **Mob stops officials from conducting anti-encroachment drive in Karachi**

Despite the Sindh High Court's order, the Sindh government failed to conduct the anti-encroachment operation in Hussain Hazara Goth of Gulistan-e-Jauhar on the second consecutive day.



Chief Minister House had earlier announced that an operation against land mafia would be conducted.

According to the announcement, the operation was supposed to be conducted behind Aladdin Amusement Park in Gulistan-e-Jauhar, to clear the encroachments along the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) track.

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However, when the anti-encroachment team of Sindh's Board of Revenue reached the area on Tuesday evening on the request of East deputy commissioner Nadeem Abro, they were welcomed with stones and sticks by the residents of Hussain Hazara Goth.

### **Anti-encroachment drive delayed**

According to Abro, they failed to carry out the operation on the first day (Monday) due to insufficient security forces. On the second day, he said, their team failed to handle the mob and later the residents produced a stay order from the court, because of which the teams had to suspend its operation.

The operation, according to him, was to remove any encroachments along the KCR's track and to get Pakistan Railway housing society's land back from the encroachers.

According to a resident, Ismail, the KCR's tracks are located far from their locality. "There is a huge boundary wall and the KCR's railway tracks lie beyond it," he said. He added that their settlement was inhabited in 1996 and their locality is known as the 'model village' that comprises several small villages.

Another old-timer, Muhammad Fazal, said the residents of the village belong to Rajpur village in Punjab. "We have all the lease documents, for which we paid Rs0.2 million," he said, adding that the builder mafia now wants to vacate the place for KCR.

Meanwhile, Abro refused to comment on this, as the matter is before the court. During the beginning of January, chief minister Murad Ali Shah had already directed Karachi commissioner Ejaz Ahmed Khan to hold a meeting with all deputy commissioners and work out a plan to remove encroachments along the KCR route. However, no significant work has been done since then.  
(The Exeress Tribune 13, 08/03/2017)

### **Encroachments flourish on city roads amidst lack of seriousness at govt's end**

There is absolute chaos on Shahrah-i-Iraq, one of the busiest roads of the city, as the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) staff chase and rough up fruit vendors occupying a large portion of the road. The lucky ones amongst them disappear into the narrow lanes while the rest have to bear the wrath of the government officials.

"Most of us pay Rs50 to Rs150 daily to the police or the KMC staff, whoever comes and threatens us. But still they beat us whenever they feel like," says Sabir, who is among the many vendors pulling his cart away from the main road.

A few lose their commodities while pulling away their four-wheeled carts.

"They don't ask for money but take away the goods. I do business here because this passage is frequented by hundreds of people daily and offers a good opportunity to earn a livelihood," says Ashraf, another vendor, when asked why he has selected this place for business despite knowing it is risky.

As vendors look for refuge, a KMC official directs his staff to bring a truck to the spot, apparently to seize the vendors' goods.

When asked, a KMC official, part of the anti-encroachment drive, rejects allegations of bribery and explains that since the staff has no other means except wooden sticks to warn vendors, the truck is used as a threat to force vendors to leave the road.

None of their commodities would be seized, he claimed.

#### **'A big nuisance'**

"These businesses are a big nuisance as they seriously hamper traffic," says an official who identifies himself as Noman Ahmed, assistant director (south), KMC, regretting that the police offer no cooperation in the drive.

According to him, a drive to remove vendors encroaching upon roads is in progress in the whole of Saddar Town and efforts are on to remove hindrances in the smooth flow of traffic.

Contrary to the disorder on Shahrah-i-Iraq, there is no sign of fear in the nearby bazaar set up on a road leading to Preedy Street in Saddar. Commonly referred to as Landa Bazaar, the makeshift market has been a popular place dealing in second-hand products for decades.

Abdullah and Amanullah, both aged between 14 and 16 years, are here far away from their hometowns in Balochistan to support their families. "We buy these toys from Shershah and sell them here at a price as low as Rs10 apiece. We have heard that the KMC staff has come but we are not afraid. They will take

some of our goods for free and leave,” says Amanullah, who had to discontinue education after class three and came to Karachi where his relatives were already engaged in the same trade.

Fazal, another vendor, however, is furious over government drives against road encroachers. “We are not thieves but struggle hard the whole day to earn Rizq-i-Halal. I have been here for 35 years but couldn’t save money enough to build a shop. In fact, the amount is hardly sufficient for bare survival,” he says.

Back on Shahrah-i-Iraq, matters take only 20 minutes to normalise. The KMC staff has gone and vendors resume their business with a peace that seems to have never eluded them.

### **Faulty planning**

Although the issue of road encroachment, particularly by vendors, has a human face to it, too, experts say encroachment is a big problem in Karachi and is directly linked to traffic congestion.

“Ironically, this problem is not recognised and given the attention it deserves. If one or two lanes of a road are occupied, which is the case at all major thoroughfares of the city, not only the speed of the vehicle will slacken, there will be a major reduction in the vehicle-carrying capacity of the road,” says Ashar Hashmat Lodi, an expert on transport engineering and also part of NED University’s visiting faculty.

Pointing out the roads affected by encroachment, he says the government lacks the understanding that road extension or making flyovers is no solution to improving traffic flow as the problem exists elsewhere.

Citing the example of Sharea Faisal, he says widening the road will not solve its congestion problem unless the government reduces its access points and improves alternative routes. “Since parallel routes are in a poor shape that includes lots of encroachments acting as bottlenecks and Sharea Faisal has too many access points from service roads, it gets choked frequently,” he says.

According to him, all this requires expert planning and taking bold decisions.

“If someone asks me, I will reduce the width of Sharea Faisal and limit its access points; that will automatically improve traffic flow.”

Construction and success of any mass transit project, he says, requires removal of all kinds of encroachments.

“Nobody wants to render vendors jobless. It’s the government’s responsibility to designate places for parking and running businesses,” he says.

Farhan Anwar, an urban planner and educator, says: “Encroachments have increased over the years because of two reasons: first, there are just more cars/motorcycles running on the streets and, second, there is an increased commercial and residential growth.

“It is basically the responsibility of the traffic police and also the land-owning agencies to act against encroachments, develop proper parking places and implement them strictly.”

### **City’s ‘choke points’**

According to the traffic police, there are 26 ‘choke points’ in the city where encroachments have made traffic management almost impossible. They include portions of Sharea Faisal, M.R. Kiyani Road, Chand Bibi Rd, Yaqoob Khan Rd, Agha Khan III Rd, Dr Daudpota Rd, Abdullah Haroon Rd, Mansfield Street, Preedy St, M.A. Jinnah Rd, Nawab Siddiq Ali Khan Rd, Business Recorder Rd and S.M. Taufeeq Rd.

“We have tried many times to clear these points but failed. This is so because it’s beyond our powers to remove encroachments.

The authorities responsible for solution include the area police, KMC, Defence Housing Authority, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, Sindh Building Control Authority, cantonment boards, provincial transport department and the commissioner’s office,” a senior traffic police official said.

Some experts say that encroachments have turned into a big mafia generating billions of illicit rupees annually, the actual reason for inaction. "How will anyone want to remove an encroachment when he is benefiting from it?" says a traffic engineer.  
(By Faiza Ilyas Dawn 17, 12/03/2017)

### **Anti-encroachment drive sparks violent protest**

Police on Wednesday resorted to baton charge and fired into the air to disperse a group of people protesting against an anti-encroachment drive in Mohammadi Colony, better known as Machhar Colony. The protesters set two vehicles of the AntiEncroachment Cell on fire and injured five AEC personnel, officials and witnesses said.

As the AEC and the District West administration backed by the district police started demolishing homes in Machhar Colony, area residents came out in protest. They threw stones at the AEC and police personnel in the congested lanes. The police resorted to baton charge and fired into the air, forcing them to retreat.

In the meantime, the angry mob spotted the mobile van of the AEC in which women police officials were travelling. They got hold of the vehicle, compelling the women officials to abandon it. They set the vehicle on fire, which was badly burnt, said City SSP Adeel Hussain Chandio.

The angry mob also set a power shovel being used to demolish the houses on fire.

A fire brigade official told Dawn that after receiving information about the arson acts, they sent fire tenders but the police prevented them from moving further than the ICI bridge saying that a violent protest was under way ahead. Therefore, the firemen returned to their station. Later on, scores of people came out on Mauripur Road and burnt old tyres to block traffic.

The traffic jams witnessed on main Mauripur Road spread up to Shershah and Mai Kolachi Road. People on the roads remained stuck in traffic jams for a long time.

The protesters dispersed when the antiencroachment drive was stopped.

Witnesses said that five personnel of the AEC were injured when the mob pelted them with stones. However, SSP Chandio said that they had no report of injuries caused to any person.

Protestersbookedunderterrorcharges Later in the evening, the Docks police registered a case against 200 to 250 unknown protesters under Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997, said an officer, Abid.

The protesters were also booked on charges of rioting, resorting to firing, torching official vehicle and damaging government property, added the officer.

The FIR was registered on a complaint of Harbour mulchtiarkar Mohammed Wasim.

SHC declines to stay drive The Sindh High Court on Wednesday turned down a request of residents of Machhar Colony, a densely populated shantytown off Mauripur Road, seeking a restraining order against the ongoing anti-encroachment drive to vacate the Circular Railway land, adds Tahir Siddiqui.

A division bench headed by Justice Mohammad Junaid Ghaffar also directed the respondent provincial and civic authorities to file their respective comments on the matter.

The bench issued a notice to the provincial law officer and put off the matter to April 19.

The petitioner residents had moved the SHC through a constitutional petition against the anti-encroachment drive in the area to vacate the land.

They asked the court to restrain the respondent authorities from demolishing their homes and issue a stay order against the drive.

The bench, however, rejected their request observing that it could not issue any stay order against the anti-encroachment operation as the land on which the houses of the petitioners were built belonged to the Pakistan Railways.

(Dawn 17, 06/04/2017)

## **Officials run for life as encroachers turn violent in Machar Colony**

Campaign suspended as angry residents torch AEC mobile and excavator, block Mauripur Road



The municipal authorities had to suspend a campaign to remove encroachments from the Lyari River bed in Machar Colony on Wednesday after residents turned violent and forced officials of the Anti-Encroachment Cell (AEC) to run for their lives.

Protesters set an AEC mobile and an excavator on fire, pelted officials with stones and blocked Mauripur Road against the demolition of their illegal houses which they had built recently.

A day earlier, 30 houses recently built in Kohat Mohalla of Machar Colony had been razed. As the drive resumed on Wednesday to bring down another 35 houses on the directives of the deputy commissioner (DC) of the West district, Muhammad Asif Jameel, residents pelted the AEC staffers with stones and set ablaze a mobile van.

Talking to The News, Keamari SP Arif Aziz, who served as AEC SSP in the recent past, said the deputy commissioner had issued a letter to the AEC to get the government land vacated for a project. "The AEC and the area residents had been in a head-on collision for the last 15 days over the vacation of the government land."

SP Aziz said: "Keeping the growing tension in the area in view, many occupants left their houses built on the PR land, but many others refused to leave their houses for the West DC project.

"The AEC started its drive on Tuesday and razed 30 houses out of a total 65, and they arrived in the area today to accomplish the task. The drive was going on peacefully when a man with a head injury appeared in front of a mob and complained that AEC staff had hurt him with a stone."

The police officer said: "The mob turned angry and started pelting AEC staffers present there with stones, forcing them to leave the area to save their lives." He added that the mob tried to set an excavator on fire.

Following the intervention of police, the protesters moved towards Mauripur Road and blocked both tracks for traffic at Ghulaman-e-Abbas School by setting fire to tyres.

They chanted slogans against the AEC and demanded immediate suspension of the anti-encroachment drive in the area, saying that they would not end their protest if their demand was not met.

They claimed that the AEC staffers started demolishing their houses without serving them with notices for evacuation. They said the officials destroyed their houses, causing them financial losses of millions of rupees.

The road blockade caused a traffic mess in Agra Taj Colony and Shershah. That led to traffic congestion and snarl-ups in other areas in the afternoon.



A heavy contingent of police reached the spot and tried to disperse the crowd. City SSP Adeel Chandio also arrived at Mauripur Road and persuaded the protesters to disperse on the assurance that the drive would be suspended for some time.

Talking to The News, SSP Chandio said residents had filed a petition in the Sindh High Court (SHC) for a stay of the anti-encroachment campaign, but the court refused to issue a stay order. "The police would assist the AEC when they restart the drive," he said, adding that people who set the AEC mobile on fire would be taken to task.

When DC Muhammad Asif Jameel was approached for comments on the issue, he said a survey had been carried out for the revival of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) in 2008 and surveyed the land again in 2013.

"After the new survey, some people made fresh encroachments on the Lyari River's bed, and this operation was started to remove encroachments," he claimed. "The drive was started to facilitate the KCR project."

When the DC was questioned about ownership of the piece of land, he said that it was a government land.

(By Aamir Majeed The News 13, 06/04/2017)

### **Nowhere to go: Residents protest against demolition of 40 houses in Karachi**

Mauripur Road witnessed a scuffle as police and enraged residents came face to face following an anti-encroachment drive Wednesday afternoon.

The people set a vehicle on fire and pelted stones at moving vehicles with stones, which caused severe traffic mess in the area. The tension began when an anti-encroachment operation started in Kohat Mohallah, demolishing 40 illegal houses built on circular railway tracks.



"We have taken action against the encroachers who have built more than 85 houses," Faizan Memon, an official in the encroachment department, said. Instead of leaving the house, the people attacked the anti-encroachment team, he added.

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#### **Anti-Encroachment: KCR to trample 4,000 houses**

"The government has already served notices to the people of the area to leave this place but all in vain," said Memon.

Meanwhile, the residents were of the view that they had been living in the area for years and would not allow the government to render them homeless. "No one has served notices to us," an elderly woman told The Express Tribune, adding that they would not leave the place until the government provides them an alternative place.

During the riots, a few people sustained minor injuries. However, the situation was brought under control and the road was opened for traffic.

(The Express Tribune 15, 06/04/2017)

### **China cutting**

I WASN'T aware of this term's existence till a couple of years ago, and I bet our Chinese friends aren't happy with being associated with it, if only by name.

Basically, 'China cutting' refers to the practice pioneered by the MQM of slicing plots from parks and land earmarked for public amenities, and converting them into residential and commercial property that is sold

off for huge profits. Several MQM leaders are alleged to have made fortunes from this daylight robbery when they were in power.

So I found it somewhat ironic for Karachi's mayor, Waseem Akhtar of the MQM, to thunder that "Karachi was nobody's personal property". This was in response to the Sindh government's recent decision (stayed by the court) to hand over Clifton's Bin Qasim Park to the real estate tycoon, Malik Riaz, for 10 years.

The idea was for him to spend his own money to restore the dilapidated park after years of neglect under the city and provincial governments. It once had an amusement park, and a lovely little aquarium paid for by the Japanese, who also supplied the fish and organised their display. Now, the park is a wasteland of scrub, sand dunes and blowing shopping bags.

The media jumped on the bandwagon, screaming about yet another scandalous land grab. Now I'm no fan of Malik Riaz, but the fact is that he has a strong motive to restore the park, as it is clearly visible from his huge high-rise project, and has the deep pockets to clean it up.

But this isn't the only contentious proposal relating to land. Recall the huge wave of indignation that roiled our political waters when it emerged that the former army chief, Raheel Sharif, had been given 90 acres (36.4 hectares) of prime agricultural land as a farewell present. This caused the general's many admirers to wring their hands in despair, despite the fact that all army chiefs are similarly favoured upon retirement.

Pakistan is dotted with defence societies where land acquired from provincial governments is parcelled and sold to serving and retired officers. They then usually flog their plots at a substantial mark-up to civilians.

I am not suggesting any illegality here. Nevertheless, this massive real estate operation is seen as being facilitated by the resources and clout available to the military. And while I certainly would not like to see retired officers living in poverty, no other military I know of is as generous as ours when it comes to the officer corps.

According to the rules formulated by our long-gone colonial masters, state land could be transferred to the military for specific purposes. However, the land is supposed to revert to the state once it was no longer being put to its designated use. But the latter part of the rule was overlooked, and the military wanted more and more land as cities grew and surrounded army cantonments.

So if a firing range, say, could no longer be used without endangering civilians, there was a strong case for asking for more land further away. But instead of surrendering the existing firing range to the provincial government, it would be converted into yet another 'defence society', developed and allotted to officers who paid the charges in instalments. The land's prime location would fetch a large profit to its new owners.

No notable city in Pakistan is without its own defence society. Agricultural land, too, has been militarised on the pretext of adding to the country's defences. Thus, it has been pointed out that thousands of acres along Punjab's border with India were parcelled into farms and sold to retired officers at nominal prices, or allotted to recipients of military honours. The justification was that the presence of armed retired officers and their staff would somehow provide us with a layer of security against an Indian attack.

But the security establishment has always been past master of the game, and has put the likes of the MQM and Malik Riaz to shame. And the best thing about its real estate operation is that it's all entirely legal.

But then what about all the land being allocated for infrastructure projects and industrial zones under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor? Under what terms are the Chinese acquiring it? Some reports have mentioned a 99-year lease. But how much annual rent, if any, would be paid? Will the trucks and trains carrying goods to and from China pay a toll?

This aspect of CPEC remains opaque, as do others. Until greater clarity is provided, it must remain in the category of China cutting.

The question to be asked — as Pervez Hoodbhoy did recently on these pages — is what happens when we run out of land? This moment will come in the near future at the rate at which we are multiplying.

**irfan.husain@gmail.com**

(By Irfan Husain Dawn 09, 15/04/2017)

## **Karachi mayor promises to rid park of encroachments**

During a visit to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Park on Wednesday, Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhtar said they will remove all kinds of encroachments from the park.

### **Frere Hall park left in dismal condition post-Karachi Eat**

The park was taken over by the Sindh government from the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) in December last year. A sailing club in the park, being used for commercial purpose, was operational in the park and was separated through a wall. The wall was also razed to the ground in the presence of the mayor and the media. According to KMC's spokesperson, it is not allowed to construct walls inside the parks because it is for the public.



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The management of the sailing club, according to the KMC's official, was also encroaching upon further land of the park by increasing their constructions.

"I was receiving many complaints regarding the park, which is why I arranged this visit," Akhtar said, adding that the park is being encroached upon with proper planning. "Last year, the Sindh government took control of the park, which was itself an illegal act," he claimed.

### **Disney-esque theme park planned near Lahore**

The mayor said he is not aware who exactly is encroaching upon the park but its condition under the Sindh government's control is in front of all. With the powers and funds that the KMC has, they can only perform the function of security guards, he said. "We don't even have the funds to construct a road," he said.

### **FIR registered**

Later on Wednesday in the evening, Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro took notice of the demolished walls inside the park and filed an FIR against the KMC Parks Director-General Afaq Mirza and Liaquat Qaimkhani.

According to Shoro, the park is under the ownership of the Sindh government and they are already busy in its beautification. Action will be taken against those officers found involved in damaging the government's property, he said.

(The Express Tribune 14, 04/05/2017)

## **Senate body calls for halting eviction of federal employees from govt quarters**

The Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works has urged the federal government to refrain from evicting the families of retired federal employees from houses in colonies that fall under the control of the federal ministry of housing and works.

The Senate's standing committee passed on these directives as it met on Wednesday with Senator Maulana Tanveerul Haq Thanvi at the Sindh chief secretary's office.

The chairman of the standing committee, Maulana Tanveerul Haq Thanvi, said families of retired federal employees should not be evicted from their houses in Federal Capital Area, Pakistan Quarters, Martin Quarters, Jahangir Road, Bath Island, and other such areas.

Federal Housing and Works Minister Akram Khan Durrani briefed the committee that the federal government had no plan to evict from their houses some 3,500 retired federal employees living on an area spread over 241 acres. He said the federal government instead had a plan to improve their living standard.

The federal minister said it was his suggestion that issue of residence of these retired federal employees could be resolved if they were included the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Housing Scheme.

Durrani said he would make a request to the PM to this effect and his ministry would also look for other options if the proposal was not included in the proposed PM's housing scheme.

Senator Shahi Syed suggested that the federal ministry of housing and works should build residential flats for resolving housing problems of these retired employees.  
(The News 20, 04/05/2017)

### **Major encroachments removed from main city roads, mayor tells SHC**

Mayor Wasim Akhtar on Saturday informed the Sindh High Court that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation in compliance with the court's order had removed major encroachments at different main arteries and streets in Karachi's six districts for smooth flow of traffic.

The director anti-encroachment of the KMC filed a compliance report before a two-judge bench of the high court on behalf of the mayor who was directed by the court on April 22 to assist the court in resolving the issue of traffic congestion in parts of the city.

Faisal Bangali and other concerned citizens had moved the SHC through a constitutional petition against the relevant authorities for failing to enforce the ban on the movement of heavy traffic on roads during daytime.

They asked the court to issue directives for the authorities to improve public transport and introduce other alternatives to help commuters and reduce the burden on the existing transport.

The court was further asked to order the authorities to strictly conduct fitness tests of vehicles running on city roads.

The petitioners submitted that they were perturbed by the present situation of traffic in the city, which was deteriorating day by day.

They stated that the apex court had passed an order directing the DIG Traffic and the municipal authorities to immediately stop heavy vehicles from plying on roads in the daytime to maintain smooth flow of traffic. Subsequently, the Karachi commissioner also banned the movement of heavy traffic from 6am to 11pm for three months.

Nevertheless, they complained, heavy traffic was still freely plying on roads during the specific timings, taking a toll on smooth flow of traffic and posing an imminent threat to the lives of people.

The petitioners said the respondent authorities were bound to enforce the court orders for the improvement of traffic and safety of the public, but they had miserably failed to discharge their duties and implement the orders.

The bench had put the secretaries of the transport and local government departments, KMC, Karachi Development Authority, Defence Housing Authority, Clifton Cantonment Board and the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency on notice directing them to file their comments on the petition.

The transport secretary and DIG Traffic had earlier submitted a compliance report, which included a proposal for amending the law to regulate the number of passenger buses on a particular route within a specified time.

The report also proposed criteria for the issuance of route permits.

According to the interim report submitted by transport authorities, there are 446 classified routes in Karachi. Only 165 are operational on which 6,176 public vehicles are operating (which includes buses, minibuses and coaches), whereas the remaining 269 routes are non-operational.

The DIG Traffic stated that 8,000 challans were imposed against heavy traffic, 266 vehicles were detained, Rs3.8 million in fines was imposed and 38 cases were registered against heavy vehicles from March 31 to April 21.

He said that 41 traffic police personnel were sacked for gross misconduct and negligence, three DSPs were issued show-cause notices for misconduct, while action was taken against various traffic violations.

The deputy commissioner (West) also submitted a compliance report on the removal of encroachments from SITE, Orangi Town, Baldia, Manghopir, Mauripur and the harbour areas.  
(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn 17, 07/05/2017)

### **All encroachments on natural drains removed, PA told**

All encroachments set up on natural drains had been removed so that the inundation people experienced in 2010/2011 floods/rains did not reoccur, said Sindh Parliamentary Affairs Minister Nisar Khuhro.

He was responding to queries raised by legislators during the Question Hour that pertained to the Sindh irrigation department in the Sindh Assembly's Tuesday session.

Mr Khuhro was responding on behalf of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who holds the portfolio of irrigation. The chief minister was not in the assembly during Question Hour to face the legislators' questions.

Responding to a question raised by Muttahida Qaumi Movement legislator Zafar Kamali that vast areas around Mirpurkhas were submerged during the 2010/2011 rains/floods as most of the natural drains had been encroached upon and a large number of people had faced great hardships due to inundation, the minister said that following these disasters encroachments from natural waterways and rain-fed drains had been removed, but if the legislator could point out the areas where the encroachments still existed, these would be removed immediately.

#### **Advertisement**

Responding to a question asked by Pakistan Muslim League-Functional legislator Rafique Banbhan that almost 75 per cent of the agricultural fields around Faiz Ganj had turned barren owing to scarcity of irrigation water and why these agriculturists were being discriminated against, the minister said that there generally was water shortage in Sindh as less water was being released in the Indus owing to upstream 'manipulations', while sometimes the water was released by the federal government-controlled organisations when it was not required so it was wasted.

He urged the legislator to ask his party, which was an ally of the federal government, to raise this issue there and also support the Sindh government when it raised the issue with the federal government.

Responding to another question regarding de-silting of Veeho Wah (canal) in Faiz Ganj taluka, the minister said that the canal had been excavated/de-silted and excavation and de-silting had been carried out to ensure irrigation supply to the tail-end growers and agriculturists.

Responding to a query raised by MQM legislator Hargundas Ahuja regarding the condition/status of the Aqil bund and other bunds (embankments), etc, the minister said that the Moria bund had been affected by erosion and a scheme had been prepared to strengthen/repair/rehabilitate it and the work on it would begin soon.

Replying to another question regarding irrigation network, the minister said that the network comprised three barrages, 14 canals, 92 branches, 355 distributaries and 903 minors.

Responding to a question asked by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf legislator Khurram Sherzaman why 13 out of the 65 gates of Sukkur Barrage had become dysfunctional, the minister said that soon after commissioning of the barrage in 1932 problem of excessive silting in right-bank canals arose. Testing to resolve the issue was carried out in pre-partition days at the Irrigation Research Institute Poona (now Pune), which recommended that 10 gates be closed down.

The gates — No 6 to No 14 and No 23 — were shut down permanently and an approach channel was constructed with a submerged weir at the starting point to eliminate entry of silt in the Dadu Canal, Rice Canal and N.W. Canal.

The minister, however, did not respond to the legislator's question that as Poona (Pune) was in India, why hadn't any irrigation research institute been set up in Sindh to maintain the irrigation network and solve any problems that might develop.

Replying to another question whether Sukkur Barrage was being operated without proper compliance with crucial de-silting procedures and standards, the minister said de-silting of right side pocket of the barrage had been carried out between Jan 5 and Jan 25 in 2017.

He said that a comprehensive scheme for rehabilitation and modernisation of the Sukkur Barrage had been streamlined at a cost of Rs16 billion with assistance of the World Bank, which entailed river training works and clearance of river approach from silt, which was in process of approval and shall be implemented subsequently.

Responding to a question raised by MQM legislator Zubair Khan whether the bunds had been raised after the floods as a lot of people had died during the 2010 deluge, the minister said that the bunds had been raised by six feet since the floods, but if the people residing in katcha areas did not relocate themselves during floods, they would still be affected.

Earlier at the start of Question Hour, legislators — Ms Abbasi, Mr Sherzaman, Mr Banbhan and others — protested at the fact that today the questions being responded to had been filed many years ago, in around 2013, and why so much time was being taken.

Minister Khuhro explained that earlier more questions (sometimes around 30 to 40) were put on the order of the day, but only a few could be responded to during Question Hour, so the legislators protested that they were not given opportunity to ask supplementary questions. Hence it was decided by the assembly that only around five questions would be on the order of the day and only five supplementary questions would be asked for each question.

Deputy Speaker Ms Raza asked the minister to sit down with the opposition members and formulate a strategy so that grievances of legislators who worked very hard to prepare questions could be solved.

(By Bhagwandas Dawn 19, 10/05/2017)

## 118 'illegal' shops on MA Jinnah Road demolished

As many as 118 illegal shops were demolished on orders of the Supreme Court during an anti-encroachment drive conducted in Bhora Pir area. The shops were built on the land of Mir Muhammad Baloch Park.



The officials of the anti-encroachment department started demolishing the shops with heavy machinery in the morning and the drive continued till the afternoon.

The shop owners had vacated their shops, as they had received a notice that their shops will be demolished on Tuesday, said Akmal Dar, an official of the District Municipal Corporation South's anti-encroachment cell. According to him, the drive will continue today.

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### **SBCA bylaws prohibit future building plans at demolished Jufelhurst School structure**

The owners of the shops, which were mostly of spare parts of bikes, had filed a petition in the court, but it ruled against them and ordered demolition of the shops illegally built on the land of the park.

Later on, the police was also called to maintain the law and order situation in the area because a protest against the demolition was started. One of the shop owners told The Express Tribune that they pay rent to the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and hence, the demolition is illegal.

According to City SP Shehla Qureshi, the drive has been conducted after serving the occupants a three-month notice to vacate the shops, as 72 shops have already been demolished in the same vicinity.

### **Inquiry into Karachi school demolition initiated amid public outcry**

The market was built in 1992 and the shop owners were said to have been paying rent to KMC. However, when contacted, KMC officials said they have no authority to comment on the issue since it was the order of the apex court to demolish the shops.

(By Mudaser Kazi The Express Tribune 14, 07/06/2017)

## Anti-encroachment drive launched in District Central

An anti-encroachment drive to clear the Ziauddin-Karimabad road has been initiated by the District Central Deputy Commissioner (DC) Captain (retd) Fariduddin Mustafa for the expansion of the road on each side.



Up till the second day of the campaign, 180 structures on the 3.5 kilometre-long road were demolished during the anti-encroachment drive that started on Tuesday.

According to the DC, the campaign will continue until the entire road is cleared of illegal structures. "A 1.2km patch of the Ziauddin Road has been cleared, whereas the entire road will be cleared in coming the few weeks," he added.

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### **Anti-encroachment drive delayed**

The anti-encroachment personnel of the Board of Revenue are also involved in the anti-encroachment drive, while the help of the police is also being sought to avoid any untoward incidents. Encroachments on the road include grocery shops, furniture shops, car painters and other shops.

The structures that have been demolished include a three-storey building, shops and offices. Most of these structures encroached upon 12 to 15 feet from the plotline of a Karachi Development Authority plan from the 1970s, the DC said.

“Encroachment on public places and amenities, such as roads, nullahs and green areas, is illegal and any such structures will be demolished without offering the encroachers any compensation,” the DC vowed, while speaking to The Express Tribune. According to Captain Mustafa, similar anti-encroachment drives will be extended throughout the entire District Central.

### **Anti-Encroachment: KCR to trample 4,000 houses**

“The leases given by Karachi Metropolitan Corporation to the encroachers on public places are void,” he said. The DC added that the encroachments will be cleared in the interest of the residents of the area and motorists who had to face traffic congestion on a daily basis.

“We have been facing resistance since this major anti-encroachment campaign is the first of its kind in the past 30 years.” the DC claimed. However, he said, they will carry on the campaign even though they have been facing pressure and make District Central encroachment-free.

Earlier, he said, the Gujjar Nullah had been cleared from all sorts of the encroachments, which started in July last year and lasted till April this year. According to him, 14,000 structures on the Gujjar Nullah were demolished without any compensation or rehabilitation package to the encroachers because they had built the structures illegally.

Captain Mustafa added that a rehabilitation package of around Rs12 billion for the encroachers was approved in 2007 and had been revised to Rs24 billion, whereas the campaign conducted to clear the nullah was without any compensation by the government.

(The Express Tribune 13, 19/06/2017)

### **Residents of 354 unsafe buildings in Karachi given eviction notices**

Soon after the beginning of the monsoon spell in Karachi, the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) issued on Thursday eviction notices to the residents of over 354 unsafe buildings across the city, informing them of the danger of living in those decaying structures during the rain.



According to the SBCA, a total of 354 buildings were declared ‘not liveable’ by its technical committee, which comprises of construction experts and engineers, during an inspection campaign. Of these, around 250 are in the old city area alone. The structures of these buildings have lost their strength to bear the load and can collapse anytime.

After formally approaching the residents of the dangerous buildings with eviction notices, the authority was seeking the help of the district municipal corporations (DMCs) to forcibly evacuate the buildings, SBCA Technical Director Askhar Dawar told The Express Tribune.

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“We are employing two methods of getting the buildings vacated. The first is joining hands with the DMCs and the other regards convincing residents to vacate the structures voluntarily because it is for their own good,” Dawar explained.

### **Skies open up as Karachi experiences first monsoon shower**

Unfortunately, he lamented, not a single resident was ready to leave the buildings, despite being apprised of its hazardousness in detail. “They have seen the dangers of living in such structures themselves. Most of them have narrowly escaped or survived the mishaps. Still they are adamant to stay.”

In the dangerous-declared buildings, a considerable portion is composed of evacuee properties that migrants from India were allotted to live in during Partition. Most of these buildings are situated on MA Jinnah Road and its surrounding areas.



Dawar said the authority was also working on a proposal with the Association of Builders and Developers to demolish these hazardous buildings and construct new structures on their lots and lease them to the residents for a stipulated time period.

“This is still in the pipeline because the residents haven’t agreed to this mechanism either. They have apprehensions that they might lose their houses as most of them have obtained these residences illegally,” he commented.

### **Returning revellers clog capital’s highways**

Meanwhile, Dawar ruled out the impression that the SBCA only swings into action during emergencies. He clarified that teams specifically tasked with the dangerous buildings issue were active throughout the year but residents never cooperated.

“If things remained the same, the use of power to vacate these buildings will be inevitable. Still, we are first considering other options like arranging substitute residences for the over 1,000 families living in those buildings,” he told.

A statement issued by the SBCA reads that an emergency was imposed and dedicated teams to deal with the issue of these buildings were active in three shifts all towns across the city.  
(The Express Tribune 13, 30/06/2017)

