

# NEWSCLIPPINGS

*JULY TO DECEMBER 2025*

## ENCROACHMENT AND EVICTION



## Urban Resource Centre

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### KMC targets over 170 illegal plot allotments

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) has initiated the cancellation of over 170 irregularly leased and illegally converted plots in the Orangi Township Project.

This action follows the directives of Mayor Murtaza Wahab, in response to complaints regarding unauthorised allotments of amenity and other public plots during 2019 and 2020.

Wahab has directed a comprehensive review of all suspicious allotment cases within the project. As part of this directive, the process of cancellation has already commenced, with investigations underway to determine the extent of violations and misuse of authority.

Additionally, cases involving abuse of official powers have been referred to the Anti-Corruption Department for a thorough and transparent inquiry. This step underscores KMC's commitment to rooting out corruption and reclaiming public land from unlawful occupation.

The mayor has also directed that following the cancellation of these plots, legal action must be initiated to recover the government land and secure its fair market value for public benefit.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 15/07/2025)

### Ex-SBCA chief, 18 others acquitted in Nasla Tower encroachment case

The Special Anti-Corruption (Provincial) Court on Thursday acquitted for want of evidence former Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) director general Manzoor Qadir alias Kaka and others in the Nasla Tower case.

The 15-storey commercial-cum-residential building on Sharea Faisal was demolished on the directives of the Supreme Court for having been partially built on a portion of land meant for the service road.

The court exonerated all the accused of charges after hearing arguments from prosecution and defence sides.

Defence counsel Barrister Iftikhar Ahmed Shah told Dawn that the court has acquitted the all "19 accused person" as prosecution failed to established its case against them.

*The 15-storey building on Sharea Faisal was demolished on Supreme Court orders a couple of years ago*

The accused, including SBA officers and office-bearers of the Sindhi Muslim Cooperative Housing Society (SMCHS), were charged with offences under Sections 409 (Criminal breach of trust by public servant, or by banker, merchant or agent), 420 (Cheating and dishonestly Inducing delivery of property), 468 (Forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (Using as genuine a forged document) and 34 (Common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code read with Section 5 (2) (Criminal misconduct) of the Prevention of Corruption Act-II of 1947.

They were tried for their alleged involvement in encroaching upon a thoroughfare, where the now demolished Nasla Tower was illegally built a couple of years ago.

During the trial, Barrister Iftikhar argued that the extra land had been allotted to the SMCHS in 1957 by the commissioner of Karachi. He added that the land was regularised in the 1980s and the accused had no connection with either the alleged illegal allotment or the additional land allotment, as the land had been legally purchased by the SMCHS.

He further contended that the Supreme Court had ordered the demolition of Nasla Tower without considering this aspect of the case.

Barrister Iftikhar claimed that the evidence and documents produced by the prosecution did not indicate that any of the accused persons had committed an act of illegality.

Former DG SBCA Qadir, SMCHS officials, master plan department director and deputy director, their subordinates and those of other departments were booked for illegal construction of Nasla Tower by occupying 341 sq-yards of a service road along Sharea Faisal.

According to the indictment, the accused persons allegedly cheated the government by acting dishonestly and with mala fide intention.

They illegally approved an additional 341 sq-yards of land in respect of Nasla Tower, which was originally meant for an amenity/service road. The land had been subleased only for 780 square yards in favour of co-accused Muzaamil Amin Darzi (owner/attorney of Giga Builder).

The indictment stated that the accused fraudulently forwarded the matter to the Master Plan Department (MPGO) for conversion of the land from residential to commercial without submitting proper title documents of the plot. On the basis of such fraudulent approval, the KMC mukhtiarkar of Jamshed Town allegedly made a false entry in the record of rights.

It further alleged that the accused were also involved in illegally processing and approving commercialisation of the plot without conducting a proper survey or verifying title documents. They fraudulently issued a conversion order for 1,121 square yards in 2007, while the approved layout plan was limited to 780 square yards.

On the basis of this fraudulent commercialisation, the accused allegedly issued an illegal NOC in 2013 for 1,121 sq-yards in respect of the plot, despite the title being only for 780 sq-yards, without forwarding the letter and complete title documents to facilitate the builder.

(By Sumair Abdullah Dawn, 13, 22/08/2025)

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### **Encroachments choke city despite govt promises**

Encroachments choke the city's roads, markets, and neighbourhoods despite repeated promises by the Sindh government, the Karachi commissioner, and the city mayor. What were supposed to be sweeping anti-encroachment drives have turned into cosmetic operations leaving traffic chaos and civic misery as part of daily life for millions of peoples.

Sources told The Express Tribune that both the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's (KMC) anti-encroachment department and the 25 town administrations routinely conduct "showpiece" raids. Pushcarts and stalls are removed in front of the media, but soon return-allegedly after bribes are paid. Shopkeepers and street vendors claimed that officials from KMC, town administrations, and even traffic police collect "weekly, fortnightly, or monthly protection money" to allow them to continue occupying public space.

Major arteries remain clogged with permanent encroachments. University Road, already under stress due to the Red Line project, is riddled with obstructions at Old Sabzi Mandi, Hasan Square, and Safora Chowrangi. Similar conditions persist at Liaquatabad No 10, Karimabad, Teen Hatti, Gurumandir, Water Pump, and Landhi-Korangi corridors. In Saddar, encroachments occupy virtually every road, turning a few minutes' journey into hours during rush hours. Rashid Minhas Road, from Johar Mor to Johar Chowrangi, is so congested with illegal stalls and haphazard parking that even footpaths are unusable.

The Old City Area and dense neighbourhoods like Orangi Town and Baldia Town face even harsher conditions. Narrow lanes are blocked with pushcarts, leaving motorcyclists struggling to pass and car drivers virtually stranded. Citizens complain that in many towns, municipal staff openly sell the right to set up a pushcart or stall for up to Rs10,000.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah had announced that 15 major city roads would be cleared of encroachments in the first phase of a special campaign. Similarly, Commissioner Hasan Naqvi launched an anti-encroachment drive. Yet both initiatives have yielded little change on the ground.

For the residents, the result is unbearable - endless traffic jams, blocked footpaths, and a daily struggle to move around the city. Civic activists argue that unless institutional corruption and official patronage are dismantled, Karachi will remain trapped in what many describe as an "encroachment mafia."

(By Naeem Khanzada The Express Tribune, 05, 09/09/2025)

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### **Encroachments main cause of urban flooding: Murad**

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said on Wednesday that encroachments along rivers and storm-water drains were a major cause of urban flooding.

Talking to the media during his visit to various areas of the city, meant to review the post-rain situation, he said, while no government had ever authorised housing schemes along riverbeds, blocking natural waterways was against nature and had contributed to the crisis.

Murad said that his government, along with elected representatives and civic agencies, was working around the clock to protect citizens from the challenges posed by heavy rains and rising river levels across the province.

The CM praised Mayor Murtaza Wahab and Deputy Mayor Salman Murad for their efforts, noting that they remained active throughout the night to assist residents. He added that provincial ministers and senior administrative officers were also on the ground to monitor the situation.

Expressing grief over the loss of four lives in Malir during the night, Murad said rescue teams had managed to save several people trapped near Korangi Causeway early in the morning. He urged citizens to strictly follow government advisories.

The CM commended elected representatives, the administration, PDMA, Rescue 1122 and other agencies for their coordinated and effective response.

Murad said heavy downpours were also recorded in Thatta, Jamshoro, Dadu, Hyderabad, Sujawal, Badin, and Tharparkar. He noted that small dams in Tharparkar had filled up, and relief is being provided to the local communities.

Although the provincial government had prepared for a super flood of up to 900,000 cusecs in the Indus, the flow at Guddu Barrage had so far reached 500,000 cusecs. Relief camps and health facilities had already been set up, and over 5,000 people had received treatment at medical camps.

Mobile hospitals of the provincial disaster management authority are also in the affected area to provide immediate medical facility to people, while vaccination of over one million livestock had been completed to protect rural livelihoods.

**Lessons learned from past floods**

Reviewing past experiences, the CM said his government had learned to cope with disasters during the floods of 2008, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2020 and 2022. "We have always stood by our people, and today, PPP workers, elected representatives and the administration are again in the field," he said. He welcomed healthy criticism but condemned negative politics during a crisis.

Highlighting the Malir Expressway project, Shah said it would serve as a protective embankment, urging critics to wait until its completion before passing negative comments.

During his visit to Qayyumabad and Korangi Causeway, the CM inspected drainage operations and noted that the causeway resembled a river. He directed that it should be cleared as soon as the Malir River's flow recedes.

Inspecting Shahrah-e-Bhutto and the Malir outfall, he was briefed by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah on overnight rescue efforts.

At Malir 15, the CM reviewed traffic management and drainage works, ordering acceleration of pumping operation. He stressed that all low-lying areas must be cleared of rainwater as soon as possible, while municipal administrations and the Solid Waste Management Board must ensure continuous cleaning.

Murad also visited Saadi Town via Malir Cantonment, where he was informed that overflow from Latt and Thado dams had entered the locality through the motorway. Meeting residents on the ground, he assured them of swift action and directed the Water Board, Rescue 1122 and the Cantonment Board to intensify dewatering.

Later, he inspected Jinnah Avenue, where machinery has been deployed for drainage, and proceeded to Lyari River to review its flow.

The CM noted that the river, which carries runoff from Manghopir and Gadap through Orangi, SITE, Nazimabad, Liaquatabad and Gulbahar to the harbour, was under pressure but remained in control.

Throughout his visit, Murad emphasised rapid relief work, strong coordination among civic bodies, and clear communication with citizens to minimise hardships during the monsoon rains.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 11/09/2025)

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**Murad links encroachments on drains to Karachi's urban flooding**

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday said that encroachments along rivers and storm-water drains were a major cause of urban flooding, criticising the obstruction of waterways as a violation of natural processes.

Speaking to the media during his visit to parts of the city, he said that no government had sanctioned permanent housing developments in riverbeds.

"No government has authorised the construction of permanent housing societies in riverbeds, but obstructing the natural flow of rivers goes against nature — and that is precisely what has happened here," he noted.

Mr Shah said the provincial government, along with elected representatives and civic institutions, was working around the clock to safeguard citizens as heavy rains and rising river levels posed fresh challenges across the province.

"At present, provincial ministers and senior officers of the administration are with me in the field," he said.

He expressed deep sorrow over the loss of four lives in Malir during the night, adding that rescue teams had saved several people trapped near the Korangi causeway earlier in the morning.

Highlighting the scale of rainfall, the chief minister stated that heavy showers had also been reported in Hyderabad, Thatta, Sujawal, Badin, Tharparkar, Jamshoro and Dadu.

He noted that small dams in Tharparkar had filled up, which brought relief to local communities.

Earlier, he conducted an extensive visit to the city to review the situation following heavy monsoon rains.

The chief minister first visited Qayyumabad and the Korangi causeway, where he inspected the dewatering operation.

He remarked that the Korangi causeway resembled a river and directed authorities to ensure its clearance once the flow of the Malir river subsided.

He later visited Shahrah-i-Bhutto and inspected the Malir river outfall, where Sindh Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah briefed him about overnight rescue operations. He noted that the release of water from the Malir river would help clear the Korangi causeway.

CM Shah also visited Saadi Town via Malir Cantonment, where he was informed that overflow from Lath and Thado dams had entered the town through the motorway.

Later, he visited Jinnah Avenue, where he inspected the drainage system connected to Mehran Nala and checked the machinery installed there. From Jinnah Avenue, he proceeded to the Lyari River to review the drainage situation.

(By Tahir Siddiqui Dawn, 13, 11/09/2025)

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### Land grabbers set eyes on govt school

A government primary school in Federal B Area, the historic Muniba Government Boys Primary School, is once again at the center of a controversial plot to hand it over to a private party. The owner of a popular nihari restaurant chain is allegedly making a fourth attempt to seize control of the school building, a saga that has reportedly been ongoing since 2012.

According to sources, a fraudulent application was submitted to the SP Gulberg under the guise of "concerned residents," citing the building's dilapidated condition as an excuse. However, the application lacks a proper residential address or mobile number, raising immediate suspicion.

Muniba School's Headmaster, Mudassirin Rizvi, stated that police officials visited the school on Tuesday for an inspection. He confirmed that the school is in good condition, with no signs of dilapidation. He also revealed that the primary section has a thriving student body of 140 students in the morning shift.

This is not the first time such an attempt has been made. Documents reveal that on July 25, the Sindh Education Department sought comments from the Director of School Education Primary regarding an application from a Javed Mian to vacate the school.

While the Education Department's new director, Bashir Abbasi, claims that such letters are "routine" and that the department has no intention of vacating the school, there are ongoing legal inquiries into claims that the building is the personal property of Javed Mian.

This shocking development has raised serious questions about the transparency and accountability of the Education Department and its commitment to safeguarding public educational institutions.

(By Safdar Rizvi, The Express Tribune, 04, 17/09/2025)

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### SHC orders inquiry into 'encroachment' on park land

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has directed the additional commissioner Karachi to conduct an inquiry into allegations of land grabbing at a park in Shah Faisal Colony and submit a report by October 8.

The directive came during the hearing of a petition against the alleged encroachment of Quaid-e-Azam Park in Shah Faisal Colony.

The petitioner's counsel, Advocate Usman Farooq, argued that unknown persons were attempting to occupy the park's land by raising boundary walls and carrying out illegal constructions, despite repeated complaints lodged with the director general parks, commissioner Karachi, and other authorities.

The lawyer contended that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) had handed over the park's control to the Town Municipal Corporation, but no action had been taken against the encroachments. He further submitted that under the Sindh Building Control Ordinance, welfare plots cannot be used for any other purpose, and the Supreme Court has also ruled against commercial use of such lands.

The court ordered the Additional Commissioner to conduct measurements of the park and any adjoining private plots, examine the records of KMC, KDA, TMC, and other relevant departments, and hold those responsible for illegal activities accountable.

Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro remarked that the inquiry must be conducted truthfully and stressed that the land should be handed to its rightful owner.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 17/09/2025)

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### SBCA moves against illegal constructions in Karachi

The Sindh Building Control Authority has launched a major operation against 540 most dangerous buildings and intensified action against illegal constructions across Karachi. The operation has commenced in coordination with the district administration and police.

SBCA Director General Muzammil Hussain Halepoto, acting on the directives of Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, has ordered immediate and strict measures against hazardous structures and unauthorised constructions across the province. He emphasised that the protection of human lives is the top priority, and negligence will not be tolerated.

The latest SBCA report identifies 540 dangerous buildings in Karachi, including 407 in District South, 70 in Central, 24 in Keamari, 14 in East, 18 in Korangi, five in Malir, and two in West. Several buildings have already been vacated and sealed, while efforts are underway to evacuate the remaining ones. Once vacated, the structures will be demolished in phases.

The DG has directed inspectors and field officers to personally survey areas in their jurisdictions, identify hazardous structures, halt illegal constructions, and submit reports to the Technical Committee on Dangerous Buildings (TCDB) for prompt action. Each officer is required to maintain a daily field book, obtain signatures from their seniors, and file a written assurance that no illegal construction exists in their area.

Additionally, officers must submit a comprehensive report by the 15th day of each month, detailing inspections, demolitions, court cases, complaints, and building plans. These reports will be reviewed by the Directorate of Vigilance and forwarded to the DG Secretariat.

The IT section has been tasked with maintaining daily records of dangerous buildings and demolitions, while the Administration section has been instructed to introduce a grading system for officers' performance. Strict action will be taken under E&D rules against officers who fail to submit reports or are found guilty of negligence.

Halepoto stressed that daily monitoring, timely inspections, and immediate action against illegal structures are fundamental responsibilities of field officers. He also appealed to citizens to report hazardous or illegal buildings through SBCA helplines (99232355, 99230393) or via the official website [www.sbca.gos.pk](http://www.sbca.gos.pk) to help prevent accidents and ensure public safety. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 01/10/2025)

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### **Police seek steps to protect land vacated by Afghans in Karachi's Sohrab Goth**

Apprehending that certain rogue elements might attempt to illegally occupy houses vacated by Afghan nationals in Afghan Camp in the Sohrab Goth area, a senior police officer has called for setting up a special committee to protect the premises, it emerged on Tuesday.

West-Zone DIG Irfan Ali Baloch has written a letter to the Karachi police chief, calling for the constitution of a special committee comprising representatives of relevant institutions to prevent encroachments at the Afghan Camp.

The land belongs to the Malir Development Authority (MDA). It comprises 3,117 houses, including those of 200 to 250 Pakistani families.

It has been pointed out that around 15,680 Afghan nationals were previously residing in the camp. Of them, 14,296 have returned to Afghanistan, while the remaining 1,384 are still living there and are being repatriated in phases.

"It has been reported that certain land mafia elements and illegal grabbers are making attempts to occupy and encroach upon portions of the said land," apprehended DIG Baloch.

In view of the sensitivity of the situation, the DIG Baloch has urged the city police chief to set up a special committee comprising representatives of the MDA, deputy commissioner and responsible police officers, in coordination with the Karachi commissioner, to take prompt preventive measures to safeguard the land from any prospective unlawful occupation or encroachment attempts in the future.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 15/10/2025)

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### **Demolition of Afghan Camp houses underway to prevent illegal occupation**

An operation to demolish hundreds of structures in Afghan Camp near Sohrab Goth was launched on Wednesday to prevent land grabbers and encroachers from illegally occupying the houses vacated by Afghan nationals.

Only on Tuesday, West-Zone DIG Irfan Baloch had raised the issue with authorities concerned, seeking formation of a committee to survey the land and take measures to stop potential land grabbing in the area.

Talking to Dawn on Wednesday, the DIG said that structures built on 20 acres were demolished and the operation would continue for the next three to four days.

Around 15,680 Afghan nationals were previously residing in the camp comprising 3,117 houses. Of them, 14,296 have returned to Afghanistan, while the remaining 1,384 are still living there and are being repatriated in phases.

DIG Baloch said: "The government-owned land was spread over 200 acres, with 3,000 houses built to accommodate Afghans. It was the biggest camp where once an estimated 30,000 Afghans lived."

"They were repatriated to their home country recently in three phases as per the policy of the federal government. However, 2,000 Afghans are still living there," he said.

The DIG said he talked with Karachi Commissioner Hasan Naqvi after the operation to demolish the houses was launched.

In a letter addressed to the Karachi police chief, the DIG had called for setting up a special committee comprising representatives of the Malir Development Authority, deputy commissioner and police, in coordination with the Karachi commissioner, to take prompt preventive measures to safeguard the land from any prospective unlawful occupation or encroachment attempts in the future.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 16/10/2025)

## Karachi's decades-old Afghan camp emptied as land mafias clash with police

As tensions between neighboring countries escalate, land grabbers swiftly moved in to occupy the homes and shops of Afghan nationals who had been repatriated from Karachi's Gulshan-e-Maymar Afghan Refugee Camp.

The families left on an emergency basis, triggering a large-scale anti-encroachment operation. The repatriation of Afghan refugees from the camp led to a confrontation when squatters, accompanied by women and children, began moving into the vacated houses.

The operation, launched by various civic and law enforcement agencies, turned violent when illegal occupants resisted and attacked police officers with stones. In response, authorities used baton charges and detained several suspects.

During the day-long operation, dozens of unoccupied houses were demolished. The operation was carried out jointly by the Malir Development Authority (MDA), Anti-Encroachment Department, Police, Rangers, Deputy Commissioner (West), and Revenue officials.

### Land mafia seizes vacant homes

Witnesses reported that as Afghan families prepared to return to their homeland, organised land mafia groups and miscreants began claiming the vacated homes.

These groups spray-painted ownership marks on walls and moved in with household items. In some areas, groups—including women and children—set up barriers to block police entry, even setting fires to deter demolition teams.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Afghan families continued loading their belongings onto trucks bound for Afghanistan. Others were seen selling household goods at very low prices, attracting large crowds of local buyers. Labourers were also seen extracting steel rods and materials from demolished structures.

### Joint operation to clear state land

Authorities launched an operation early Wednesday morning, using heavy machinery to remove illegal constructions from more than 200 acres of government-owned land. This land contains around 3,000 housing units. Officials stated that the operation will continue until all unauthorized structures are razed.

MDA Director of State and Enforcement Mohammad Farooq Bugti explained that the operation was part of a broader government policy linked to the Afghan repatriation.

"The Afghan camp was established in 1984 after the war. Now, under federal policy, Afghan nationals are being repatriated. Over 50% of the 3,000 houses have already been vacated, and the remaining will be cleared soon," he said.

He emphasised that the land belongs to the state and must be returned to government control. "There were some clashes between police and land grabbers who tried to create law and order problems, but the joint forces acted swiftly to restore control," he added.

### Law enforcement response

West SSP Tariq Elahi Mastoi stated that the operation was in line with national policy. "For over five decades, Pakistan has hosted our Afghan brothers, sharing our homes, land, and food," he said. "Now, in accordance with the new policy, they are being repatriated with dignity."

Mastoi also mentioned that of the approximately 15,000 registered Afghan refugees who once lived in the camp, more than 8,000 have already returned to Afghanistan.

"The vacated houses are being demolished as they were illegally constructed on state land. No major protests have been reported, as the residents were informed about the policy," he added.

West Anti-Encroachment SHO Shayan Anjum explained that once Afghan families began leaving, land mafia groups tried to take over. "They spray-painted the walls and attempted to claim ownership. We received complaints on Tuesday night, and by 6 am Wednesday, the operation was underway," he said.

He confirmed that over 250 houses and permanent structures had been demolished so far. "Around 1,300 Afghan residents remain, pending verification or short-term extensions," he added. The land, part of MDA's Taiser Town ballot sector, cannot be privately occupied.

"The situation was chaotic, with several groups dividing plots among themselves. However, the operation has restored control, and more demolitions will follow," Anjum concluded.

As the state enforces its repatriation policy and reclaims public land, Karachi's decades-old Afghan refugee settlement is rapidly emptying. Although about 1,300 Afghans remain in the area, officials expect the camp to be completely vacated soon. This will mark the end of one of the city's largest and longest-running refugee communities.

(By Sajid Rauf The Express Tribune, 04, 16/10/2025)

## Demolition of empty Afghan refugee homes continues at Karachi's Northern Bypass

The demolition of vacated houses at the Northern Bypass Afghan Refugee Camp continued smoothly on Thursday, following the repatriation of Afghan refugees from the area. Under the supervision of the Malir Development Authority's Anti-Encroachment Department and with the presence of heavy police contingents, more than 200 empty houses were demolished during the day.

Officials said the operation is proceeding without resistance, and structures identified for demolition will be cleared by Friday. They added that viral videos on social media - showing encroachers marking and occupying empty homes in the settlement - prompted swift action from authorities. In the past two days alone, over 400 illegal structures have been razed with the help of heavy machinery.

Police officers at the site confirmed that the process of reclaiming state land is progressing in an orderly manner and that the situation is now under control, with no likelihood of unrest.

Meanwhile, several Afghan families remain in the settlement, packing up their belongings as they prepare to leave. Many have been seen selling scrap materials such as iron rods, doors, and window frames from their homes to local dealers, while taking household goods with them for their journey back to Afghanistan.

Fifty-year-old Abdul Samad, one of the long-time residents, shared his mixed emotions: "We came here as children and are now leaving in old age. Pakistan has been our home, and leaving it brings both sadness and hope."  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 17/10/2025)

## Zoos only torment animals: SHC

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has ordered authorities to submit a fresh report on the state of animals at the Karachi Zoo, including the ongoing issue surrounding the transfer of a bear, Rano, to a natural habitat.

The court ordered that the matter should be examined on a broader scale, underscoring its concerns over the ethical implications of maintaining zoos in the 21st century.

A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, questioned the morality and practicality of confining animals in cages, particularly in light of modern standards. "Zoos should be shut down; they serve no purpose other than tormenting animals.

We are addressing this case on a larger scale. First, let Rano be transferred, and then we will discuss the future of zoos in our country," Justice Kalhoro remarked.

The bench remarked that the zoo could be shifted to Nooriabad or Kirthar where animals can be kept close to natural habitat outside the cages.

The bench was hearing a petition concerning the transfer of Rano, a bear residing at the Karachi Zoo, to an environment that more closely mirrors her natural habitat. The zoo's senior director presented a detailed report outlining the steps being taken to facilitate the bear's transfer, which is expected to occur after November 15.

The report confirmed that contacts had been made with the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, the international animal welfare organization Four Paws, and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to arrange the necessary logistics.

According to the report, PIA has already issued the required instructions for Rano's safe transfer, and discussions are underway regarding the provision of an appropriate air travel cage, Civil Aviation clearance, and other related protocols.

Four Paws, which is assisting with the transfer, suggested that their technical team, currently occupied with commitments in Argentina, will be available to finalise Rano's relocation after mid-November. A suitable enclosure is also being prepared in Islamabad for her new home.

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) has expressed full support for the international transfer plan, with all relevant stakeholders collaborating to ensure Rano's safe and humane relocation. Meanwhile, Rano will remain under the care of the Karachi Zoo and the Sindh Wildlife Department until the transfer is completed.

During the hearing, Justice Kalhoro sharply criticised the overall conditions at the zoo. Reflecting on his own childhood visits to the zoo, he remarked, "When I was young, I used to visit the zoo, and even then, all the animals appeared to be injured. What kind of practice is this, to keep animals locked in small cages? People take better care of their pets. Zoos are nothing but places of cruelty to animals, and they should be closed down."

The bench also questioned the adequacy of veterinary care at the Karachi Zoo, expressing astonishment upon learning that the facility employs only one veterinarian. The KMC lawyer explained that a ban on new recruitments has hindered the hiring of additional staff.

In response, Justice Kalhoro expressed dismay: "How is it possible that Karachi's largest zoo has just one veterinary doctor to care for the animals?" He further remarked that while zoos may be common globally, the standard of care in Karachi Zoo is far below international norms.

"Zoos worldwide are not like the ones here. Animals should be kept in open spaces, like national parks. We should not imprison animals in cages, whether they are monkeys or any other species," the judge further remarked.

The court summoned a detailed report on the ban on new recruitments within the KMC, along with a fresh assessment of the number and condition of the animals at the Karachi Zoo. The matter will be revisited following the transfer of Rano. (By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 18/10/2025)

### 1,200 houses in Afghan Camp in Karachi's Sohrab Goth demolished over five days

Authorities, in coordination with the city police, demolished over 1,000 houses vacated by Afghans in the United Nations-designated Afghan Camp in Sohrab Goth during the last five days, police said on Sunday.

SSP-West Tariq Illahi Mastoi told *Dawn* that since the start of an operation from Oct 15, around 1,200 houses, out of over 3,000, had been demolished. He recalled that over 14,000 Afghans had already left the UN-designated camp.

He said the operation also continued on Sunday, which was expected to be completed within some days. He said that on the very first day, the law enforcers had faced minor resistance from the alleged land mafia, but later on, the action was being conducted smoothly with no obstruction from any quarter.

SSP Mastoi said the operation was started as per the policy of the federal government because certain elements were trying to illegally occupy land, which triggered fears of the breach of peace.

The land belongs to the Malir Development Authority.

According to officials, around 15,680 Afghans were previously living in the camp. Out of them, 14,296 had returned to their home country, Afghanistan, while the remaining 1,384 are still living there and are being repatriated in phases.

The operation was launched in the light of a letter written by West-Zone DIG Irfan Ali Baloch to the Addl. IGP Karachi and other concerned authorities, drawing their attention towards the land mafia that attempted to illegally occupy the land.

The DIG had also called for setting up a special committee, comprising representatives of the city administration, police and other relevant institutions, to prevent illegal occupation of the vacated government land.

The Afghan Camp was stated to be the biggest facility for displaced persons where an estimated 30,000 people used to live in the past.

(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 20/10/2025)

### KBT demands 'justice' for affectees of nullahs demolition

The Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT) on Saturday said that thousands of families displaced by demolitions around Gujjar, Orangi, and Mehmoodabad nullahs have still not received their due rights, despite clear orders from the Supreme Court. The civil society group called upon the apex court to take urgent notice of "government negligence, bureaucratic corruption, and the ongoing denial of justice."



Speaking at a joint press conference at the Karachi Press Club, KBT leaders Khurram Nayyar, Arif Shah, Erum Yasmeen, and Raza Bukhari said that following the devastating rains and floods of 2020, the resulting damage in Karachi was blamed on informal settlements, which were already among the most marginalised communities in the metropolis.

However, they said the city's flooding again in 2025 confirms that such disasters are caused by systemic government incompetence and corruption, rather than the mere presence of poor communities. The leaders alleged that the demolition of homes around the nullahs was driven by profiteering motives rather than public welfare.

In 2021, thousands of houses around the Gujjar, Orangi, and Mehmoodabad nullahs were razed, displacing over 50,000 people and destroying more than 9,000 homes. The KBT leaders said that both federal and provincial governments were complicit in rendering the affected families homeless.

The leaders recalled that the Supreme Court's final order in the matter had directed that each affected family be allotted an 80-square-yard plot, along with construction funds to rebuild their homes. Despite this, the Sindh government has failed to comply.

During a major protest staged by the movement in January, only a minimal amount of construction aid was released — insufficient even to build a single room. The government has reportedly indicated that plots will not be allotted before 2027.

The KBT leaders said that the affectees of Gujjar nullah belong to the working class, and in the current inflationary climate, survival has become extremely difficult. Reports show a rising incidence of suicides within these communities. The leaders said the Sindh government should be held accountable for this neglect.

The KBT leaders demanded that each affected family be provided with Rs30,000 per month as temporary rent support until plots are allotted and construction becomes feasible. They also called for Rs3 million per family to enable the construction of a home.

The leaders further demanded that the government issue a clear schedule for the allotment of plots within 90 days, and provide alternative land where necessary. If these demands are not met within seven days, the KBT will launch a forceful public protest, including sit-ins and street demonstrations.

(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 02/11/2025)

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### **Victims of demolition drives along Karachi nullahs decry neglect, demand promised resettlement**

Victims of the demolition drives along the Gujjar, Orangi and Mehmoodabad nullahs have spoken out about the harsh and uncertain conditions they have been forced to live in since their homes were razed in 2021 and lamented that despite repeated promises by the authorities, no practical steps have been taken for their rehabilitation.

Speaking at a press conference organised by the Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT) at the Karachi Press Club on Saturday, the affectees and the KBT members accused the Sindh government and relevant authorities of "corruption and deliberate neglect" and having no intention of resettling the thousands of displaced families.

Muhamad Saleem, an elderly resident of the city, pointed towards the pile of property papers and official documents that he had been carrying with him. He said that he had made countless visits to the offices of assistant commissioners, the deputy commissioner, the commissioner as well as those of the local government officials. "But despite these visits and repeated assurances by the officials, I got nothing," he said.

He shared that he had built his house, which was razed during the demolition drive along the Mehmoodabad nullah, with the money that he had earned from abroad after working hard for many years. "Now I'm struggling to meet the expenses of my family. For God's sake, have some mercy on us," he said with a trembling voice.

Other affected individuals, including women, narrated a similar ordeal and highlighted that they are living under an uncertain future for themselves and their children. They requested the provincial authorities, especially the judiciary, to take up the matter and provide them with what they had been promised.

Speaking on the occasion, Convenor KBT Khurram Ali shared the details of the issue. He said the urban flooding that struck Karachi in 2020 was "wrongly blamed on katchi abadis" (informal settlements), as a result of which, around 9,000 homes were demolished, leaving over 50,000 people homeless.

Then, after protests by the affected families, the Supreme Court announced that the affected families would be provided with plots and construction costs and that until their rehabilitation, every family would be given cheques for paying rent where they lived.

However, he said that the cheques were issued only until Dec 2023 and that too because the KBT lawyer had filed a contempt of court case in which the court had summoned the provincial authorities and found them guilty. But for the last year and a half, the case has not been heard and because of that the rent amount has not been released since then, he added.

Moreover, he said, the court had ordered that each family be allotted an 80 square yard plot and construction funds but the Sindh government is delaying implementation. "Only a small amount for construction was released earlier this year, which is not even enough to build one room," he said, adding that plots are now promised only after 2027.

The court had also appointed Additional Commissioner II Zunira Jalil as a focal person to register complaints of the affected families. But after her transfer, which was done "deliberately", thousands of verified complaints were dismissed without verification, he said. "If these complaints were false, why are no officers being held responsible for verifying them?" he asked.

He alleged that "corrupt officials and "party representatives" were demanding bribes in exchange for releasing construction money and rent cheques. "In Orangi Town, some groups demanded Rs200,000 from each family for their files to move. When the issue came to light, payments were stopped, and the so-called investigation only gave officials more time to extort money," he claimed and said that no inquiry reports have been made public so far.

#### **Demands**

The KBT and the affectees demanded that the government immediately release Rs30,000 for each family per month as rent until resettlement, including all pending payments from the past months.

As for construction money, each affected family should be provided with Rs3 million so that they can rebuild their homes in line with current building costs. The over 2,000 dismissed complaints be registered again under a transparent process.

They further demanded that an independent and impartial committee, including civil society representatives, affected individuals and human rights organisations, be appointed to oversee the registration and resettlement process. The government must issue a clear and unchangeable schedule under which all plots are allotted within 90 days and alternative land is provided without delay.

#### **Warning of protest**

They warned that if their demands are not met within seven days, they will begin strong protests and sit-ins outside the CM House and the Supreme Court Registry in the city.

(By Waqas Ali Ranjha Dawn, 14, 02/11/2025)

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## Nullah victims protest

Affected residents of the Gujjar, Mehmoodabad, and Orangi Nullah operations staged a protest outside the Supreme Court Karachi Registry over the government's failure to provide promised alternative housing. They demanded "house for house" compensation as assured by the Supreme Court and the Sindh govt.

Protesters said thousands of homes were demolished during the nullah reconstruction drives.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 05/11/2025)

## Karachi tea sellers, fast food vendors protest against anti-encroachment drive

The All Sindh Hotel and Restaurant Grand Association on Wednesday staged a protest against the Karachi Commissioner's campaign of sealing chai dhabas (tea stalls), fast food and BBQ outlets across the city during a crackdown on encroachments.



Most of the city's dhabas and restaurants remained closed, causing inconvenience to citizens, particularly in the early hours, as many struggled to find their morning caffeine dose places.

Members of the association staged a protest outside the Karachi Press Club, where a large number of hotel owners and employees participated. The demonstrators carried placards highlighting their demands and condemning the ongoing operations against restaurants and cafes.

Later speaking at a press conference, Association Chairman Haji Noor-ul-Haq, President Jafar Shah, and representatives Haji Ramzan and Wali Khan said that there are more than 14,000 chai dhabas in Karachi, each employing over 10 workers.

They alleged that under the Karachi Commissioner's orders, deputy and assistant commissioners have sealed around 400 outlets in an anti-encroachment operation. "These hotels only sell chai and paratha. Many have been closed for over a week - this is economic murder," the leaders said.

They added that encroachments are not limited to restaurants and cafes alone, and while anti-encroachment actions are positive in principle, targeting small outlets hurts the poor and middle class who rely on them. The association claimed that authorities not only sealed cafes and restaurants but also confiscated their furniture, electrical appliances and other equipment.

The association pointed out that they place the chairs and tables outside the shops in the late hours when the traffic is thin. Moreover, there has been no public complaint or petition in the court against these hangouts which provide a gathering point to people to unwind after stressful day.

With the rising number of anxiety and depression patients in the city plagued with water, power, and gas outages, broken roads and collapsed law and order, these dhabas provide mental relief to citizens, they said.

The association appealed to the CM, chief secretary, and the commissioner to halt the operation and resolve the issue through negotiations. A meeting with the Karachi Commissioner is scheduled for today (Thursday), which the association hopes will lead to a resolution. "If the issue remains unresolved," the leaders warned, "We will launch a nationwide protest."  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 06/11/2025)

## Demolition drive victims continue protest outside Supreme Court Registry in Karachi

The displaced residents of Gujjar, Orangi and Mehmoodabad Nullahs staged a protest outside the Karachi Registry of the Supreme Court on Friday to demand the rental payments and housing compensation promised to them after their homes were demolished more than four years ago.

The demonstrators have been protesting for the fourth consecutive day from the platform of the civil society group called Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT).

The KBT said that around 9,000 homes were demolished in the said year near the Gujjar, Orangi and Mehmoodabad Nullahs, leaving more than 50,000 people homeless. But despite court rulings in favour of compensation and resettlement, "official delays and corruption have obstructed relief," it maintained.

It said that the affected families have not received rent since Dec 2023. The Sindh government has "deliberately" delayed payments and housing allotments, leaving thousands without shelter. The KBT described the situation as a "long-drawn-out miscarriage of justice," and demanded that the Supreme Court take immediate notice of the government's negligence and corruption.

*Affectees demand rental payments, housing compensation promised to them*

It said that thousands of homes were razed to build 25-foot-wide roads not included in Karachi's Master Plan. "All this benefited a few construction companies while the poor were left homeless," the statement added.

Over 2,000 verified complaints by affected residents remain unresolved, the statement said, adding that “many families claim that government officials and intermediaries demanded bribes to release rent or construction funds, and that no investigation into these allegations has been completed.”

The KBT criticised the Sindh government and PPP leadership for “celebrating election victories abroad” while Karachi’s working-class citizens continue to suffer.

“Instead of celebrating, they should answer why the affectees are still waiting for the roofs promised to them,” the group said.

Families at the protest site described their hardships: old men on crutches, women who lost their husbands, and children missing school to demand shelter.

Furthermore, criticising former Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed’s verdict that allowed the demolitions along Gujjar, Orangi and Mehmoodabad Nullahs to proceed, the KBT termed it an “anti-working class” decision.

The group said that a tribunal and the high court had earlier declared the residents’ leases valid and ordered a halt to demolitions, but Justice Gulzar, during court vacations, overturned those decisions without reviewing the presented documents.

It questioned why, if all leases in Karachi were invalid as the then CJP claimed, no action was taken against officials of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, Karachi Development Authority, Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority and the city district government whose own leases existed in the same areas.

The KBT urged the Supreme Court to enforce its previous orders that guaranteed each displaced family an 80-sq-yard plot and construction funds.

It called for the immediate release of rent arrears and housing compensation, transparent registration of all pending complaints, and the appointment of an independent monitoring committee that includes civil society and representatives of the affected communities.

It warned that if their demands are not met, the protest will escalate to sit-ins and street demonstrations.  
(By Waqas Ali Ranjha Dawn, 14, 08/11/2025)

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### **Deadly constructions**

Multiple localities in Karachi are home to multi-storey buildings erected on a small patch of land, usually housing an upward of ten people per floor. While poverty and the ever-increasing inability of underprivileged families to invest in housing force people to flock to such abodes, sometimes six to twelve stories tall, their helplessness becomes an inevitable calamity not only for themselves but for entire neighbourhoods.

Fresh efforts to eliminate such buildings have been underway since the start of this year, with 1,622 dangerous and illegal buildings already demolished. Lately, Advocate Saifuddin, the Leader of the Opposition in the City Council, has called upon the Director General of Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) to cease such constructions and help enact a building control law to regulate future incidents.

The history of worn-out and neglected multi-storey buildings in this city is tragic. Throughout the years, numerous carelessly architected buildings have collapsed due to various reasons. Sometimes, the problem is an unstable foundation. Other times, the problem is substandard construction material. But whatever cause may be captured in the moment, the central reason is always the erection of a building without proper safety regulations. These illegal buildings have buried over 40 people solely in the last five years.

Earlier this year, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon reminded reporters that the government has no legal obligation to provide housing to those displaced as a result of evacuating and demolishing illegal buildings — but that efforts will be made to accommodate those with no other option. This touches the root of the issue: the housing crisis. If the government aims to permanently solve the crisis of illegal constructions, it must also solve the crisis of poor people having no place to live. Both of these issues go hand in hand, and the already-high death toll from building collapses has marked this as an urgent matter.  
(By Newspaper’s Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 14, 15/11/2025)

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### **Clifton residents protest against ‘encroachments’ in public parks**

Residents of Clifton staged a demonstration in front of Bagh Ibne Qasim in protest over encroachments and commercialisation of public parks.

Carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans against the city mayor and operations of padel courts in public parks, the protesters, including women and children, were also joined by local Jamaat-i-Islami leadership.

Speaking on the occasion, JI-Karachi chief Monem Zafar said that Karachiites would not tolerate encroachment on any park, including Bagh Ibne Qasim.

“We stand firmly with the residents. We will resist, struggle and also approach the courts to ensure Karachi’s parks remain protected from land mafias,” he said.

Leader of the Opposition in City Council Advocate Saifuddin said the city's expensive land has become a prime target for mafias, and Clifton's parks are under direct threat.

He noted that conspiracies were being hatched against Bagh Ibne Qasim as the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) had demolished its boundary wall. He also criticised the mayor's justification that the park's walls were demolished to reveal the "beautiful view" inside.

He insisted that the walls had already been designed to allow visibility, making their demolition unnecessary and suspicious. "This clearly strengthens concerns about an attempted land grab," he said.

Later, the residents and JI leaders staged a rally Bagh Ibn-e-Qasim to the main gate of the Beach View Park.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 17/11/2025)

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### **'Matter of life and death': citizens protest commercial use of parks**

Civil society members on Tuesday sounded the alarm on the rapid conversion of public parks into commercial ventures and its impacts on the environment and the ecosystem.

Speaking at a press conference from the platform of the Karachi Residents' Committee at the Karachi Press Club, city residents, representatives of the civil society and well-known environment activists said as many as 13 parks in Clifton, PECHS and adjacent areas had already been converted into padel courts, commercial sports facilities and other profit-driven activities.

They said more parks were being handed over to private operators, which threatened to deprive residents, especially women, children and the elderly of essential green spaces critical for their physical activity, mental health and social interaction.

The 13 parks are: the ST-15 park and the ST-19 park, Clifton Block 1, the ST-13 Umer Sharif Park, ST-14 park and the ST-4 Park in Clifton Block 2, the ST-13 park and the Bagh Ibn-i-Qasim in Clifton Block 3, the Triangle Family Park in Clifton Block 4, the ST-30 Hosh Muhammad Sheedi Park, the ST-12 and the Bhagwan Das Park (where work is in progress) in Clifton Block 5, the Jheel Park and Hill Park in Block 6 PECHS and the KMC Sports Complex on Kashmir Road.

*Karachi Residents' Committee urges Sindh govt, mayor to stop conversion of green spaces in Clifton, PECHS, other areas into padel courts*

The residents appealed to the Sindh government and Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab and other authorities to immediately halt the conversion of public parks into commercial ventures, citing severe impacts on the city's environment, public health and community well-being.

They said that the commercialisation of parks not only violates urban planning principles but also exacerbates environmental degradation, increases pollution and undermines the city's climate resilience.

Many complained about being disturbed by padel court sounds and traffic sounds and flood lights all night.

They also pointed out the lack of maintenance of parks and open spaces where without the protection of residents or senior citizens' life none of these commercial developments are meaningful.

Architect and environment activist Marvi Mazhar spoke of the public-private partnership that has turned into "public pays and private gains".

She said that the public is told by private companies while taking over their space that they are coming in to take care of their spaces.

She explained that it was explained to her by an advocate that there are two basic kinds of parks. One is the city-level park, which is designed to have zones, a sports section, a children's section and a town hall section, and it is used by the city. The other is the neighbourhood-level park, which the neighbourhood uses and the state maintains.

"But here the residents are complaining that they are continuously being disturbed by the noise in their neighbourhood parks, which also lack maintenance," she said.

She added that the Sindh government is only interested in capitalistic pursuits and is not interested in the benefit of residents here. "Does our mayor love Karachi?" She asked. "If Karachi is that important to him then he should hold a roundtable meeting, be part of the discussion and take grassroots partnership rather than commercial partnership," she concluded.

Rasha Tarek, a residents' representative, said that Karachi's last remaining green spaces were being taken away from the public and handed to private operators while the citizens suffer.

"We live in a city with one of the lowest green covers in the region. Karachi has only one to three square metres of green space per person, while the World Health Organisation recommends at least nine square metres per person," she said, adding that Clifton has become a playground for the elite of DHA while depriving residents of their own spaces.

"Only those who can afford Rs7,000 to 8,000 per hour can play. And let us be very clear that this is not just happening in Clifton, it is happening all over Karachi. From Saddar to PECHS, from Nazimabad to Gulshan-i-Iqbal, parks across the city are being

threatened, commercialised and slowly taken away from the public. This is not development. It is the displacement of people, of greenery and of public rights," she said.

Journalist, filmmaker and athlete Madeeha Syed, a resident of Gulberg Town, said that as a filmmaker who documented Karachi's 2015 heatwave in which 1,200 people died in just three days, it's devastating to see history repeat itself, with more than "500 deaths last year".

"In a city where only seven per cent of land is green and nearly 10 per cent of residents suffer from asthma, myself included, our parks are not luxuries, they are life-saving infrastructure. They protect the city from the urban heat island effect and clean the air of pollutants," she said.

"Replacing them with private, profit-driven sports facilities strips away the shade, clean air and community spaces we depend on. As an athlete and as a filmmaker who has seen these consequences first-hand, I cannot support any project that comes at the cost of our public green spaces," she added.

Member of the City Council Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, Taimoor Ahmed, while criticising the mayor said, instead of standing with the citizens he chooses the land occupier's side.

On behalf of the residents, environmental researcher and climate activist Ahmad Shabbar appealed to the Sindh Local Government Department to cancel all commercial leases and permissions granted for public parks.

He asked the mayor, Murtaza Wahab, to prioritise public interest and halt all commercial activities in parks and the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency to conduct environmental impact assessments for all affected parks.

He also asked the Commissioner of Karachi, Division and Deputy Commissioner (South) to ensure that public parks are protected for residents and accessible to all citizens.  
(By Shazia Hasan Dawn, 13, 26/11/2025)

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### **Citizens protest public parks' commercial takeover**

Civil society activists, environmental experts and residents from District East, South and Central on Tuesday raised serious concerns over what they termed the rapid conversion of Karachi's public parks into commercial facilities, warning that the trend is stripping neighbourhoods of essential green spaces and worsening the city's environmental decline.

Speaking at a press conference organised by the Karachi Residents' Committee, participants urged the Sindh government, Mayor Murtaza Wahab and civic authorities to immediately halt all ongoing commercialisation of parks. They said at least 13 public parks-mostly in Clifton and PECHS-have already been handed over to private operators for padel courts, sports arenas and other revenue-generating ventures.

According to the residents, parks already converted or undergoing conversion include ST-15 Park, Umer Sharif Park, Bagh Ibn-e-Qasim, Jheel Park, Hill Park and the KMC Sports Complex, among others.

Environmental researcher Ahmad Shabbar said the conversion of parks violated basic urban planning principles and was accelerating the loss of Karachi's already limited green cover. "These parks are the lungs of the city. Replacing them with commercial projects will worsen pollution, increase carbon emissions and undermine Karachi's climate resilience," he said.

Speakers, including architect Marvi Mazhar, journalist Madeeha Syed and environmentalist Masood Lohar, argued that the disappearance of community parks was particularly harmful for women, children and the elderly, who depended on local green spaces for recreation and social interaction. Residents living near recently commercialised parks complained of late-night noise, security disturbances and the loss of open spaces that once served as neighbourhood gathering points.

"This is a systematic takeover of public land," said community representative Asad Ali Sheikh. "Authorities are leasing out parks under public-private partnerships in the name of development, but the beneficiaries are private operators-while citizens lose their only accessible places for fresh air."

The residents' committee demanded that the Sindh Local Government Department cancel all commercial permissions issued for public parks, and called on the Mayor to prioritise public welfare over private profit.  
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 26/11/2025)

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### **Govt officials allegedly involved in illegal occupation of Katchi Abadis in Sindh**

Following the recovery of a huge cache of narcotics from the residence of an Excise and Taxation Department official just days ago, a new scandal has surfaced, implicating personnel from another government department in the illegal occupation of land in the metropolis.

In a public notice issued by the regional director of the Sindh Human Settlement Department (formerly known as Katchi Abadis), it transpired that police officers and Anti-Encroachment Force personnel are involved in the unlawful sale and purchase of land in various katchi abadis (slums) across the metropolitan city. The notice, which was issued in connection with a socio-economic survey of 36 katchi abadis in Karachi, named more than a dozen people allegedly involved in these illegal activities.

The document specifically pointed out that all the katchi abadis under scrutiny belong to the Sindh Human Settlement Department, and mutation orders for the residents have been issued based on NOCs. However, land grabbers, in collaboration with corrupt officials from the local police and Anti-Encroachment Force, have been found to be illegally trading in plots, houses, and even farmhouses within these settlements.

The notice included a stern warning to both land grabbers and government officials involved in these illegal transactions. The Sindh Human Settlement Department vowed to take legal action against those continuing to engage in the unlawful sale and purchase of properties in these katchi abadis. The settlements in question are located in District West, District East, and District Keamari.

The settlements in District West include Al Shahbaz Goth, Allah Bakhsh Goth, Aarib Goth, Bilawal Goth, Dost Muhammad Goth, and Ghareebabad, among others. Meanwhile, settlements in District East include Noor Muhammad Model Town, Zakri Goth, and Allah Bakhsh Brohi Goth, and those in Keamari include Kachilo Goth and Azeem Nagar. The public notice highlighted that the illegal activities of land grabbers and corrupt officials have badly undermined the rule of law and are contributing to the growing encroachment problems in these areas.

(By Razzak Abro The Express Tribune, 05, 04/12/2025)

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### Property disputes

THE intention appears to have been noble enough, but the manner in which the Punjab government set about trying to address the problem was bound to invite legal challenges. And this is precisely what happened, with the Lahore High Court suspending the Punjab Protection of Ownership of Immovable Property Act, 2025, earlier last week, and later overturning decisions taken under that law.

For context, the Punjab government had, in late October, introduced a new legal framework to combat land grabbing and expedite the resolution of property disputes. The framework, initially introduced as an ordinance, was reportedly designed to provide relief to citizens suffering from prolonged litigation in land disputes by fixing a 90-day time frame for case resolution. Several District Dispute Resolution Committees were established for this purpose, which were headed by a district commissioner and district police officer.

Subsequently, the Punjab government launched a crackdown against land grabbers, promising to restore ownership to rightful claimants within 24 hours of each DDRC decision. The government claimed more than 1,000 cases were settled within days, and the ordinance was later replaced by an act of the Punjab Assembly.

However, within days of the act coming into effect, the LHC issued an interim order suspending it, with the chief justice of the court criticising it as “dismantling the civil setup, civil rights and judicial supremacy”. It appears that the Punjab government had not considered the legal implications of having revenue officers decide the possession of properties which were also being contested in civil courts. It also transpired that the tribunals meant to act as a check on the DDRCs were never functional.

The Punjab chief minister was understandably displeased by the LHC’s decision, arguing that it would “benefit encroachment and land-grabbing mafias”. Her defiance triggered a sharp response from the legal community, with various lawyers’ associations publicly endorsing the court’s decision, terming the legislation “unconstitutional and unlawful”, and counter-accusing the provincial government of seeking to “appease” land mafias.

This has now turned into an unnecessary dispute. Unending property-related disputes have been a cause of untold misery for countless individuals and families, and it is commendable that the Punjab government sought to deliver a solution that could ensure prompt resolution. Granted, there were flaws in its approach, but the law can be amended and made stronger by removing the objections raised by the LHC.

There is, without a question, a dire need all over the country for a working mechanism to deliver quicker decisions in property-related cases. If Punjab can model a successful solution, it would become an example for other jurisdictions to follow. Therefore, instead of battling the legal community, the Punjab government must think about how it can still accomplish what it set out to achieve. Many would be grateful for it.

(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 29/12/2025)