

Civil society organizations and political parties opposes development of “Diamond Island City” on twin islands of Buddo and Bandal near Karachi

Privatising beachfront harmful for all

Sunday 22 October 2006, by [Dawn \(Pakistan\)](#), [PFF](#), [SHAH Shahid](#), [The News International](#) (Date first published: 22 October 2006).

Seven articles and a letter on the sale of the two islands and against the privatising of the beachfront.

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The idea of “New city of international standards”

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

October 2, 2006

Recently federal government has made a contract with UAE based construction firm regarding construction of a new city of international standard on the threshold of port Qasim. It is planned that the new city of international standards will be built on the twin islands of Bundar and Buddo, located close to the port Qasim and the design of the proposed city will be prepared on the pattern of that of Dubai. The estimated cost of the mega project has been put at \$.43 billion.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum strongly condemns this decision of construction the new city of the Karachi coast line. Opposing this devilish plan, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum is of the view that it would put colossal negative impact on the lives and livelihood of local fishing communities, that is, this project is totally anti-human and illegitimate in its essence. PFF has invariably rejected any development process which is done at the expense of live and livelihood of poor people.

The construction of the new city would result in poverty and hunger among 8 million fisherfolk

historically inhabitants of coast and traditionally earning their livelihood at Karachi coast.

Besides the destruction of basic and traditional source of livelihood of the poor fishing communities, it would render the entire marine ecological system terribly unsustainable. Hundreds of fishing grounds would be annihilated. The unemployment ratio among poor fisherfolk will dramatically increase. Mangroves forests, which are already being rapidly destroyed, will suffer more due construction of new city.

With the passage of time new and more investors will surge into the areas and will invest and earn at the cost of lives of poor people.

Ironically the federal government has done contract on its own without informing the Sindh government. This has recently been expressed by chief minister of Sindh Mr. Ghulam Arbab Rahim. He opined that neither he has been informed nor he has got any update about it.

PFF condemns this decision which is sheer violation of human rights and dignity and appeals national, international, media, social, human rights and development experts to immediately intervene into the matter and save the lives and livelihood of the poor people of these islands.

PFF has vowed to initiate an intense campaign against it in case government is still stick to it within considering its blatant losses.

PAKISTAN FISHERFOLK FORUM SCHEDULE OF STRUGGLE AGAINST ILLEGITIMATE ALLOTMENT OF TWIN ISLAND OF KARACHI

19 October 2006

Brief over the Issue

Recently federal government has made a contract with UAE based construction firm regarding construction of a new city of international standard on the threshold of port Qasim. It is planned that the new city of international standards will be built on the twin islands of Bundar and Buddo, located close to the port Qasim and the design of the proposed city will be prepared on the pattern of that of Dubai namely Diamond Bar Island City. The estimated cost of the mega project has been put at \$.43 billion.

The construction of the new city would result in poverty and hunger among 8 million Fisherfolk historically inhabitants of coast and traditionally earning their livelihood at Karachi coast.

Besides the destruction of basic and traditional source of livelihood of the poor fishing communities, it would render the entire marine ecological system terribly unsustainable. Hundreds of fishing grounds would be annihilated. The unemployment ratio among poor Fisherfolk will dramatically increase. Mangroves forests, which are already being rapidly destroyed, will suffer more due construction of new city. With the passage of time new and more investors will surge into the areas and will invest and earn at the cost of lives of poor people. Ironically the federal government has done contract on its own without informing the Sindh government.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum strongly condemns this decision of construction the new city of the Karachi coast line. Opposing this devilish plan, and is of the view that it would put colossal negative impact on the lives and livelihood of local fishing communities, that is, this project is totally anti-human and illegitimate in its essence. PFF has invariably rejected any development process which is done at the expense of live and livelihood of poor people. PFF appeals national, international, media, social, human rights and development experts to immediately intervene into the matter of sheer violation of human rights and dignity and save the lives and livelihood of the poor people of these islands.

In this connection PFF initiating the struggle against this injustice

The activities of the Struggle

- Corner meetings in different areas of coastal Karachi (Continuing)
- Circulation and displacement of Endorsement Letters to the higher authorities (Continuing)
- A research study over the issue (Started)
- Preparation of documentary Film (Started)
- Protests rallies and hunger strikes at all district headquarters thought Sindh (from 2nd November)
- The International Fisherfolk Day a massive protest demonstration at Bhundar Island (On 21 November)
- Press conference in Islamabad (5th November)
- Seminar with SDPI in Islamabad (6th November)
- Protest demonstration with Peoples Rights Movement in front of Parliament house Islamabad (7th November)

- Printing and wide distribution of Pamphlets, Posters and Staggers (from 2nd November)
- Hunger Strike till death (1st December)

This struggle will continue unless the government changes its decision.

All the members of Civil Society are invited to join the campaign.

Muhammad Khan Jamali

Coordinator

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Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

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Island city project draws flak

From The News

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=27635

Politicians, nationalists, civil society groups see the project as wrecking the environment and depriving fishermen of their livelihood

By Shahid Shah

KARACHI: A large number of civil society organizations and political parties of Sindh have fiercely opposed development of "Diamond Island City" on twin islands of Buddo and Bandal near Karachi coast.

Leaders of Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, Awami Tehreek, Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz, Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party, Jeay Sindh Mahaz, and representatives of civil society organizations like Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) and Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) met at a consultative meeting organized by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) on Monday.

The meeting saw the new project as wrecking the environment and depriving fishermen of their livelihood. It demanded that the government tear up the agreement with the Dubai-based company.

A few Sindhi nationalist leaders termed the agreement a conspiracy to convert Sindhi people into a minority. The meeting announced a protest demonstration in front of Karachi Press Club on

Wednesday while World Fisher People's Day would be celebrated on Badal island along with 'Urs' of Syed Yusuf Shah after Eid.

MPA Sassui Palijo said the decision of selling Sindh's two islands shows "Sindh is a colony but an economic colony" of foreign donors. She said livelihood of around 1 to 1.5 million people would be affected directly with the construction of the new city.

She alleged that the military rulers were selling institutions in the name of privatization with one hand and purchasing the same with the other hand. "It was a violation of the constitution," she said.

Asadullah Bhutto said it was a matter of all people of Sindh. He said as head of MMA Sindh, "I demand that this agreement should be withheld." He said the MMA would raise this issue in assemblies and in the Senate.

Rasool Bux Palijo, President Awami Tehreek, said Pakistan had become an Anglo-American colony. The rulers of the country were getting advice from abroad, he said. He said when the rulers got telephone call from Washington demanding total allegiance, they bowed. But he warned that this barbarism would not continue in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He warned rulers that Pushtoons and Balochs were not happy with them so they should behave well with Sindhis. "Americans will not help you." He also warned allies of Sindh government to behave nicely with permanent residents of Sindh.

Taj Hyder of PPP said local people should have been considered before initiating the new project. Bashir Khan Qureshi, Chairman Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz, said Sindh had become a colony of the big province and they were treating us (people of Sindh) as slaves.

He said they wanted not only to occupy the resources but also the whole of Sindh. "This is a conspiracy to convert Sindhis into a minority." "We don't want that development," he said, "in whose name resources of Sindh are occupied."

Abdul Khaliq Junejo, Chairman Jeay Sindh Mahaz, pointed out that the previous city government of Karachi had also made an agreement with another company through Army Welfare Trust, but it could not proceed further. "Sindhis are the owners of Sindh's resources," he declared.

Mohammad Ali Shah, Chairman PFF, said the development of new clubs and hotels along the coast had affected the livelihood of fishermen who were denied the right to fish in the waters. He said the sea was already being polluted with a daily discharge of 300 million gallon of untreated waste of Karachi.

He invited environmental NGOs to come forward and join hands to save the islands. Haji Shafi Mohammad Jamote, director Fishermen Cooperative Society (FCS) and a representative of coastal fishermen, debunked claims of the government that the new project would generate employment.

He asked what about those youth who were wandering in search of job having degrees in hands. He said people of Gizri provided land for DHA but got nothing in return. He said when ports and steel mills were developed local people got nothing but displacement.

He said livelihood of 1.5 million fishermen should be saved instead of constructing the new city. Ali Hassan Chandio, vice president Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party, Sharafat Ali of PILER, Amir Bhanmbhro, Chairman Sindh National Party, Nasir Mansoor, Pakistan Labour Party, Anwer Rashid, OPP, Qamar Bhatti, Chairman Jeay Sindh Qaumparast Party, Nazir Memon of Sindh Democratic Forum, Rafiq Ahmed, President Sindh Labour Federation, Khalil-ul-Rehman, President Pakistan Workers'

Confederation Sindh, Manzoor Razi, President Railway Workers Federation in their speeches showed their solidarity and support to the PFF in order to save the environment and livelihood of the fishermen.

Cancel allotment of Bhandal and Bhudo'

From Daily Times, 10 Oct. 2006

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006\10\10\story_10-10-2006_pg12_2

KARACHI: Political, religious, nationalist, fishermen, trade union organizations and parties have decided to launch a joint campaign against the federal government's decision to allot two islands near the city to a UAE-based company. It was announced at a consultative meeting Monday.

The participants of the meeting demanded the government to cancel allotment of these islands.

The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) organized the meeting, which was attended by the representatives of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, Awami Tehreek, Jeay Sindh Mehaz and Sindh National Party.

The participants of the meeting decided to hold protest rallies, hunger strike and seminars against the allotment of the Bhandal and Bhudo islands. The protest would be held in different cities of the country. They also decided to register their protest in front of the National Assembly, Islamabad.

"The federal government has no right to allot the Sindh government's lands to any private party and it is a sheer violation of the basic laws of the country," PFF Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah said.

He said that the authorities have suppressed poor people, who have been deprived of their historical, traditional and legitimate rights. He said that fishermen would not allow any one to grab their lands. "Fishermen are real owners of these islands," he added.

The fishermen have been treated as second-class citizens since Independence by the successive governments. The injustices are countless and varied," Shah added. Their rights have disappeared in the form of policies and practices for so-called development intervention in the country, they said. Mega projects have always been injudicious, illegitimate and cruel, he said. The participants said that these development projects would benefit just a few rich people at the cost of thousands of lives. An estimated three million fishermen have suffered due to 'development' projects, he added.

staff report

Sale of two islands in Sindh opposed

From PakRealEstate.com

http://www.pakrealestate.com/news/viewdetail.aspx?News_ID=658

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a discussion on Monday urged the government to revoke the deal for sale of ecologically significant islands near DHA, Karachi, under the control of Port Qasim Authority to a UAE based real estate giant.

The discussion, organised by Sungi, in collaboration with Pakistan Mahigeer Tehrik, was on privatization of two islands on the Karachi coast. The participants said the dubious deal had no legal footing as the Port Qasim Authority had got the land on lease from the provincial government for port activities and the same could not be sold out for commercial activity.

They said the two Islands of Sindh, Buddo (Dingi) and Bundal (Bundaar), have been sold out under calendestine deal to construct a new city and claimed that even the Sindh Chief Minister had not been consulted and nobody in Sindh government knew about the deal.

They said the Sindh government had surrendered to the decision of the Federal Government and Sindh Cabinet supported the project on October 3.

Engineer Naseer Memon from Karachi, in his presentation said a model city spread over 12,000 acres comprising 15,000 housing units along with a number of commercial plazas, leisure points, industrial parks, free trade zone and port terminals would be built, besides a 1.5 km long bridge to connect new city with Defence Phase-8 costing a hefty sum of US\$ 50 million. He said the islands had been included in High Priority Areas of Pakistan by IUCN. He said the sale of islands would deprive local fishermen of their livelihood, directly and indirectly, affecting some half a million people as local small fishermen would lose their vital passages to open sea through Korangi and Phitti creeks. Naseer Memon said the islands were located at the western end of the Sindh Coastal Zone bordered by Korangi, Phitti and Jhari creeks.

Bundal Island was one of the biggest and highest of all the islands along the Sindh coast, with a length of about 8-km. The width of the island varies - it is about 4 km wide in the north and 1 km in the south.

The Island was the breeding ground of green turtles. The sandy beaches—the east coast of Karachi—of these islands are the only areas where the endangered green turtles visit for breeding purposes. The area lies along the Indus Flyway and as such serves as an important breeding, roosting and feeding ground for migratory and resident bird species.

The migratory birds include pelicans, flamingos, cranes and resident species comprise herons, waders, terns, egrets, kites etc.

Bundal Island is experiencing constant wave erosion due to frontage of sea. The frequency of waves approaching the island is 10 to 14 per minute resulting in extensive erosion.

He said the deal will potentially restrict the movement of more than 4,000 fishing boats of Thatta and Karachi coast into deep sea thus losing the remaining fishing grounds located near mangroves along the islands.

Karachi coast would be deprived of rich mangroves nurseries and cyclone barriers in the shape of sand dunes and mangrove forests. Poor fishermen of the area would lose their sojourn places. Local fishermen would also lose a place of cultural importance i.e. shrine of Yousif Shah, located on Bundaar.

Discussants were of the view that a country-wide campaign should be launched to prevent the deal which they stressed was against the interests of the country. "What was being done in the name of development must be opposed with full force". One of the discussants pointed out that provincial autonomy was one of the seven-point agenda spelt out by President General Pervez Musharraf after coming into power. He, however, said the deal was in negation of the promise. The Emaar Group which has purchased the islands would invest about \$43 billion (about Rs2,600 billion) over next 13 to 16 years.

The group having presence in about 20 countries including Saudi Arabia, UAE, India, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Syria, Pakistan and Tunisia earned net profit of Rs75 billion during first nine months of 2006.

Courtesy Dawn

No to island cities

From The News, 10 Oct. 2006

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=27832

What does one say when a country as underdeveloped and backward as Pakistan wishes to develop supposedly state-of-the-art cities in two uninhabited islands off its coastline and even hands them over to a foreign development firm? Should one be delighted at this, given that this means that foreign investment will come into the country, that jobs will be created when the project gets underway and that once completed it will provide the country with cities just like that pearl across the Gulf, Dubai? The recent announcement that the two islands have been handed over to a reputed UAE-based developer by the Port Qasim Authority (PQA) has already become controversial — but that was only to be expected given the scope and nature of the project and the secretive manner in which the deal has been completed. Not all the opposition has come from NGOs, environmental groups, concerned citizens and fisherfolk groups and communities. In the days following the announcement, the Sindh chief minister himself told reporters that he was not too sure whether a federal government body could give the islands — situated off Karachi's coast — to a foreign firm for development. However, a couple of days later he was quoted in the press as saying that there should be no problem with the project. But then other officials of the Sindh government raised issue over the project saying that the islands in question did not belong to the PQA and that their ownership needed to be ascertained since in all likelihood it could well lie with the provincial government.

In any case, these are procedural objections. Various NGOs, environmental groups and especially the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum have more basic and well-grounded objections to the project and these should have been considered before deciding to hand over the islands to a foreign developer. For instance, it has been rightly pointed out that the development on the islands may well have a very adverse impact on the local fishermen

communities because of the construction activity that will take place. Also, once the project is in place it is bound to pollute the area around the islands and it is likely that the pollution will spread far beyond the islands affecting the marine life in the area and the potential catch for local fishermen. Another argument that goes against such development is that it does nothing for the ordinary person who lives along the city's coastline and is geared for providing entertainment and leisure activities to the very affluent. Besides, of all places why choose two uninhabited islands off the city's coast for setting up such cities? Could a better site not have been chosen, one that would have lesser environmental impact and not threaten the livelihoods of thousands of fishermen and their families?

One has to say that the whole rather hurried manner in which this project has been undertaken and awarded to a foreign developer smacks of a complete lack of transparency as well as insensitivity to the needs of all stakeholders concerned. Most regrettably, this is the way most infrastructure and development projects are being planned in this country: by bureaucrats or ministry officials sitting behind closed doors handing over vast tracts of land to foreign or local developers without conducting the legally-mandated environmental impact assessments and without taking into consideration the views of ordinary people who would be directly affected by the project's construction. This lack of transparency in decision-making and formulation of policies, and the generally opaque manner of implementing these policies, especially with regard to development, needs to change or else the balance of power within the country — heavily stacked currently in favour of the elites — will become even more imbalanced and tilted in favour of the powerful.

Privatising beachfront harmful for all, says Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

Date: 14-10-2006

From The News, 14 Oct. 2006

<http://www.icsf.net/jsp/english/externalnews/newsDetails.jsp?id=30809>

Muhammad Ali Shah, Chairman of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, has said that the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) has no right to privatise the 14-kilometre stretch of the Karachi city beach, which is a recreation place for the general public and a means of earning livelihood for fishermen.

While talking to The News, he said that the Waterfront Project of DHA would have a negative impact on the marine environment as well. Muhammad Ali Shah said this project would only cater to the elite class and the general public would be deprived of easy access to the beach.

"How many people can afford to visit five star hotels, fast food joints and things like that which DHA has planned to construct on the beach?" he questioned.

The project, according to Shah, has been in progress since the last one year with construction taking place up to 3-kilometres inside the sea. He said the construction work on Crescent Bay at the beach alone would cover 75 acres of sea land and that at this point earth-filling and reclamation is in progress south of the McDonald's restaurant at Sea View. As a result, fishermen now can't go for fishing at Crescent Bay anymore, he said.

Shah pointed out that there is a law in neighbouring India that one can only construct a building 500 metres away from the beach. He said construction at the beach or inside the sea is unlawful in India. He further commented on the damaging impact that constructions on the beach and inside the sea would have on the marine environment.

This side of the beach was used as fishing grounds by a large number of fishermen who, he lamented, would be rendered jobless as a result of this project. "Two years back, the DHA banned fishing at this point and the fishermen had to protest against this decision as they were of the view that this sea is not the property of DHA but it is owned by all those who catch fish from it. Ultimately, the DHA has to take back its decision in this regard, ' he said.

He believed that under the Environment Protection Act, construction at the beaches is a violation of the law. He stressed on the need to create awareness among people of the negative effect that such projects would have on their lives.

Study over the negative impacts of Islands

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

Dear All,

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) has started a study over the negative impacts of proposed construction of the new project " Diamond Bar Island City " on Buddo (Dingi) and Bundal (Bhuddar) islands.

Federal government's agreement with the Dubai based construction company Emaar has threatened livelihood of hundreds of thousand fishermen, environment and marine life. It is also a threat to the national security.

The proposed study includes environmental and socio-economic impacts of the new city . Historical background of the land and people living on these wetlands, depletion of the fish resources, legal position of Sindh, role of media and struggle of the PFF would also be a part of the study.

The construction of the new city would not only threaten the livelihood of the fishermen in creeks, but would also close their ways in to the deep-sea. It would endanger the environment in general and mangrove forests and wetlands in particular.

PFF would welcome suggestions and information of human rights activist and environmentalists in study.

Don't hesitate to send your feedback at fisherfolk@cyber.net.pk

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