

FISHERFOLK

December 2020



**Construction of the city on islands:
the fake development**

Editorial

Federal government has again decided to construct a city over twin islands of Dingi and Bhundar near DHA Phase-8. In order to occupy this land, the presidential ordinance was issued to form Pakistan Islands Development Authority (PIDA), which is a violation of historical rights of the people that would be affected, mostly 800,000 fishermen of Karachi would suffer due to construction of the city over the twin islands.

Besides, this land is property of the people and the Sindh government is custodian to it. According to law, marine resources up to 12 nautical miles come under the jurisdiction of the provinces while 12 miles to 200 nautical miles is the controlled area by the federal government. Thus, both of these islands fall under 12 nautical miles, the federal government possesses no right to occupy these islands.

This is not the first time when the federal government has tried to occupy these islands. There were efforts during the government of General Pervez Musharraf in 2000 and 2006 while the Pakistan People Party had also tried to develop these islands in 2013 through a big builder. Pakistan Navy had opposed the development of the city on these islands, as they are also strategic points for the security. Due to opposition by the Navy and protests of the people, the all three attempts remained unsuccessful. However, this time the federal government and its ministers have been openly violating the law by narrating in the favour of the city development.

Earlier to this presidential ordinance, the Sindh government had given its conditional consent through a letter, which was conditional to the will and wellbeing of fishermen. Later, this letter was withdrawn by the Sindh government, as the federal ministers had started saying that the islands were the property of the federal government. Sindh Assembly also adopted a resolution against the federal ordinance, as people opposed to it.

Recording its voice against the construction of the city over the islands, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum was the first organization that highlighted the issue through a press conference and later on a consultative meeting. Its protest went larger and a boat rally was organized towards the twin islands. However, personnel of a security agency did not allow the participants of rally near to the Dingi island, who were later moved to the Bhundar island.

After the initiative taken by the PFF, all nationalists parties in Sindh also opposed the occupation of islands and organizes sit-ins and rallies in the province. Such protest by the people compelled the Pakistan Peoples Party to adopt resolution against the development of the city.

These islands are fishing grounds for fishermen and the route to go in the open sea. Mangroves available at thousands of acres on these islands protect the city of Karachi from cyclones and Tsunamis. If they are wiped away, this mega city would be vulnerable to natural calamities.

Occupying these islands would also violate the international treaties, as these islands are Ramsar sites under Ramsar convention. They fall in the Indus Delta, as they were part of the delta and formed by the Indus River. These islands have not emerged from the sea. Under the Ramsar Convention, these sites need to be protected in their original shape.



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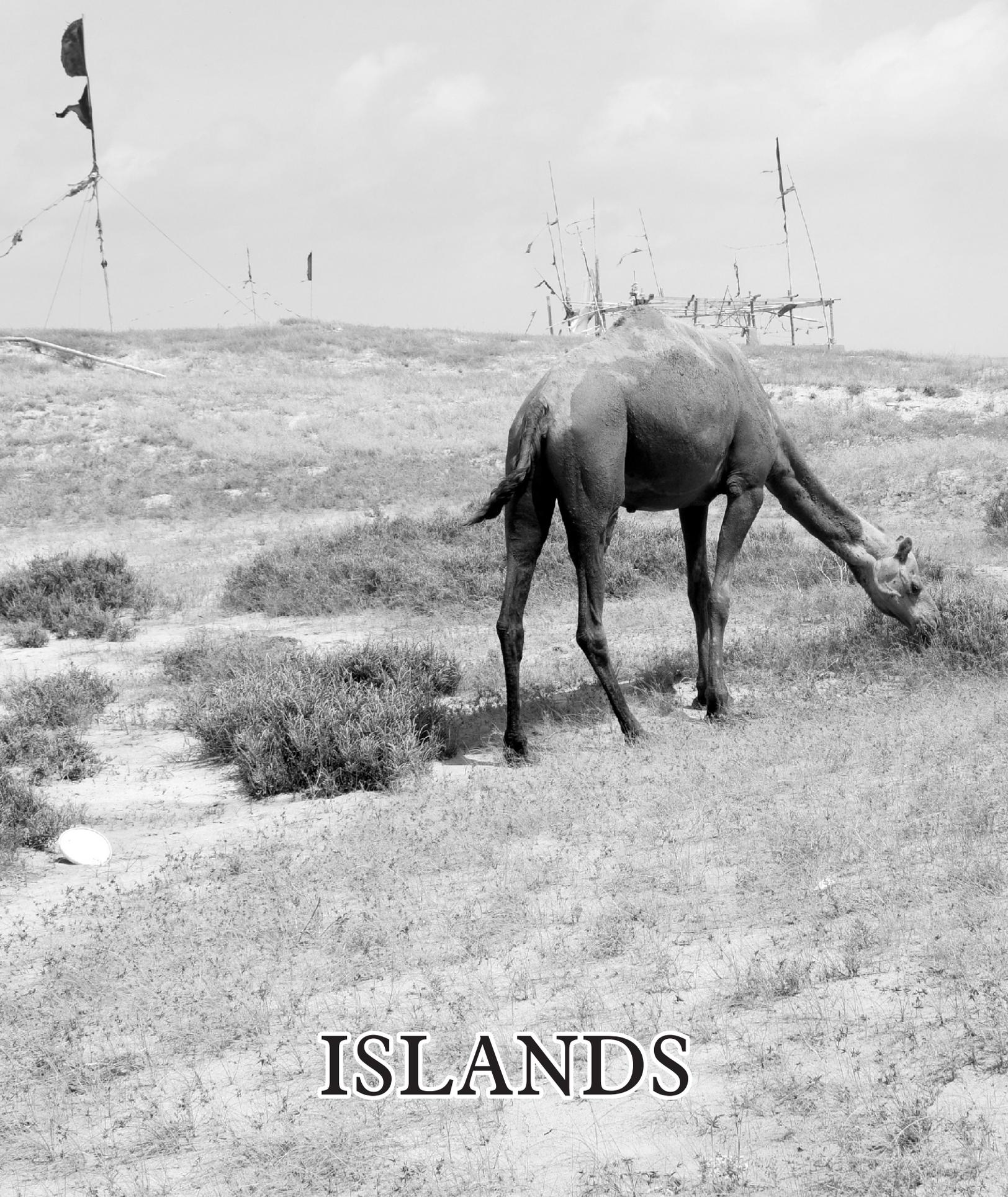
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ISLANDS

Construction of the city on islands: the fake development

Mohammad Ali Shah

Attractive names of development and investment are gaining momentum but increasing concerns of the poor people of this country, as they get displaced. All mega water projects are evidence.

Development of “Diamond Bar Island City” on Bundal (Bhunddar) and Buddo (Dingi) islands is howling the fisherfolk community. In order to bring the foreign direct investment (FDI), livelihood of the fishermen have been put on altar.

In the developed and democratic nations, representatives of the people never start any project, whatever its nature is, against the wishes, will and the consultation of their people.

Unfortunately, the people have never been consulted in Pakistan. The leaders of the country did not think how this development would affect the poor fishermen communities living near the islands. How many would lose their passage to fishing grounds to secure their

livelihood? Has any one bothered to consult those poor people of the fishing communities who would lose their meager source of survival as a result of such interventions? Has there been conducted any Environmental Impact Assessment (or any initial environmental survey) of the proposed project, which is a pre-requisite under Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997?

Almost all the state owned and supported projects violate this law and the nation is expected to respect the law of the land.

People of Sindh especially the fisherfolk community suffered the disastrous mega projects LBOD and RBOD (right bank outfall drain). Thousands of fishermen of Manchhar lake have been deprived of their catch, as the RBOD water turned fresh water of the lake into saline. Similarly, thousands of fishermen of Gizri, Karachi were displaced from their lands and their right to fish.





The much-preached sustainable development has just become a mere rhetoric in this country. The first attack of the project (development of the city) would be on marginalized and voiceless fishing communities of Karachi, who have paid the cost of whole development of Karachi reaping only the poverty in return. The islands are located closer to Korangi and Phitti creeks and are home to remaining few tracts of mangrove wetlands on Karachi coast. Thousands of poor fishermen do subsistence fishing and have their livelihood dependent on fishing grounds near the islands and creeks.

Along with other environmental concerns fishermen of Karachi have some serious concerns over the development of the new city. Firstly, thousands of fishermen fish in creeks, many of them rest on these Buddo and Bandal islands. They dry fish and clean their nets. These fishermen would not be allowed to rest and dry their catch on these islands if the city is constructed. Secondly, the area between reclaimed land of the defense housing authority (DHA) and the Buddo Island is a path for the fishermen to go in the open sea. The construction of the new city on these islands would deny their entry in the open sea. Thirdly, sea is already polluted with 300 MGD (million gallon daily) untreated waste of Karachi, which has threatened sea life. Construction of the new city would pollute the remaining clean waters, if any, which would result in complete destruction of the marine life and the environment. Fourthly, mangrove forests adjacent to these twin islands, which come under proposed 12,000 acres of land, would not sustain in the new city. They serve as breeding grounds for fish and shrimp. Systematic elimination of mangrove barrier will not only deprive poor fishermen from their livelihood but also nurture greater danger of exposing coastal areas to deadly cyclones. Removing mangrove shields is nothing but inviting the wrath of nature in the shape of tidal and cyclonic disasters. After the disastrous Tsunami that hit Asian coasts in 2004, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) compared the death toll from two villages in Sri Lanka hit by the devastating giant



waves. Two people died in the settlement with dense mangrove and scrub forest, while up to 6,000 people died in the village without similar vegetation. In these areas many forests in the past were felled to build prawn farms and tourist resorts. Research shows mangroves are able to absorb between 70-90% of the energy from a normal wave. Global Environment Centre in Malaysia conducted another study on five villages two on the coast and three behind mangroves. The villages on the coast were completely destroyed, whereas those behind the mangrove suffered no destruction even though other areas unshielded by vegetation at the same distance from the coast were damaged. The study concluded that the forested areas protected the villages from tsunami damage by reducing the energy of waves. Unfortunately, our development champions do not see the long-term impact of ecological disaster that is being set on the coastline of Karachi in the name of development. Climate change is a growing threat for coastal areas and calls for very cautious development strategies on islands.

Finally, I must mention here for the record, this site is internationally protected. These islands are wetlands of the Indus River and a part of the Indus delta, the fifth largest delta in the world, comprising 97% total mangrove area in the country. Indus delta is declared a Ramsar site. Pakistan signed the treaty in 1976 and became a member of 138 signatories to the Ramsar Convention. The convention, formed in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for national and international cooperation for the conservation of Wetlands. These sites are of international importance and the signatories are bound to protect them. In 1976, the total covered area of wetlands in Pakistan was approximately 7,800 km and the number of important wetlands was eight, which grew to sixteen by 2003, out of which six are located in Sindh including Indus delta. Unfortunately, these protected and internationally important sites are under threat of the so-called development and the investment.



BOAT RALLY

Boat rally rejects construction of city over twin islands

A boat rally organized by Samoondi Bait Bachayo Tehreek (Save Sea Islands Movement) rejecting construction of city over twin islands of Dingi and Bhundar has demanded reversal of the Presidential Ordinance for formation of Pakistan Islands Development Authority.

Boat rally of over 25 boats was organized Thursday October 15, 2020 from Ibrahim Hyderi to the twin Islands, which was participated by hundreds of people including political and social activists, writers, journalists, lawyers and fishermen. A large number of women were also part of the rally.

The movement consists of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Indigenous Rights Alliance and Aurat Foundation. PFF hosted the boat rally.

Pak Navy's force Pak Marines stopped the rally from going to Dingi island by force. Later, the rally was moved to Bhundar island, where participants could not visit the island because of low tide. The leaders addressed the rally from a boat.

Convener of the movement and Chairman PFF Muhammad Ali Shah, Chairman Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party Dr Qadir Magsi, Leader of Sindh United Party Zain Shah, Jeay Sindh Mahaz Leader Abdul Khaliq Junejo, Khuda Dino Shah, Illahi Bux Bikak and Gul Hassan Kalmati addressed the rally while Pakistan Peoples Party's MNA Jam Abdul Karim, MPA Raja Razaq, MPA Mahmood Alam Jamot, Fishermen leaders Suhail Jamot, Jan Alam Jamot, Sindhiani Tehreek's leader Noor Nisa Palijo, Shaheed Fazil Rahu Yaadgar Committee's Shahnaz Rahu and others participated in the rally. Speakers said the Presidential Ordinance was against the constitution of Pakistan, which should be reversed immediately. They said that the islands were property of the fishermen and nobody would be allowed to construct city over there.



the federal government's decision to constitute Pakistan Islands Development Authority (PIDA) was unconstitutional and it was against the provincial sovereignty. It was also decided to construct the city on twin islands on Bhundar (Bundal) and Dingi without any consultation with the Sindh government despite the fact that area falls under the provincial jurisdiction. The islands are part of Indus Delta, which is a Ramsar site while construction of city would be violation of the international Ramsar Convention.



They said that fishermen were not alone. Sindh's political, social, student and other unions will stand by them.

They demanded of the provincial government to reject the occupation of islands in the parliament.

PFF Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah said the federal government's decision to constitute Pakistan Islands Development Authority (PIDA) was unconstitutional and it was against the provincial sovereignty. It was also decided to construct the city on twin islands on Bhundar (Bundal) and Dingi without any consultation with the Sindh government despite the fact that area falls under the provincial jurisdiction. The islands are part of Indus Delta, which is a Ramsar site while construction of city would be violation of the international Ramsar Convention.

Pakistan has a coastal belt of over 1050 kilometers and there are 300 small and big islands located in Sindh coastal belt that would be taken into control by the federal government.

He said that the former governments had also attempted to construct city on twin islands, but could not be successful. "We will not allow this

government to make its plan successful too," he said.

It is a fact that Sindh's islands are property of the people of Sindh, where fishermen have the customary rights over them while the provincial government is the custodian of the land and forests. According to the Constitution of Pakistan, provinces have ownership of marine waters starting from the coast to 12 nautical miles and all these islands fall under provincial boundary. Thus, they are property of the people of Sindh and Balochistan.

Along with Dingi and Bundal, these islands are home to thousands of hectares of mangrove forests. These forests are nurseries of fish and shrimps while these creeks from Karachi to Thatta are fishing grounds for the fishermen, he said.

With construction of a new city, fishermen's fishing grounds will come to an end along with their pathways. The development of islands and construction of any city would also harm the environment while livelihood of 800,000 fishermen would come to an end and they would face extreme poverty.



ISLAND CONSULTATIVE MEETING



Meeting decides resistance against construction of city over twin islands

Rejecting construction of city over twin islands of Dingi and Bhundar, Sindh's civil society and political parties have announced resistance against ordinance to constitute Pakistan Islands Development Authority.

In this regard, a joint consultative meeting was organized by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Indigenous Rights Alliance and Aurat Foundation at a local hotel on October 3, 2020. Chairman PFF Muhammad Ali Shah, Human Rights Advocate I.A. Rehman, PILER's Executive Director Karamat Ali and others addressed the meeting.

Highlighting the issue, PFF Chairman Muhammad Ali

Shah said the federal government has decided to constitute Pakistan Islands Development Authority (PIDA) and construct the city on twin islands on Bhundar (Bundal) and Dingi without any consultation with the Sindh government despite the fact that area falls under the provincial jurisdiction.

The Federal government's action is not only against the Constitution of Pakistan but it is also against international conventions and agreements, which provide social, economic and cultural sovereignty to the indigenous people, he said.

“The construction of the city and so-called development of islands would deprive around 800,000 fishermen of their livelihood and they would suffer extreme poverty,” he said.

Pakistan has a coastal belt of over 1050 kilometers



and there are 300 small and big islands located in Sindh coastal belt that would be taken into control by the federal government.

He said that the former government of General Pervez Musharraf had twice attempted in 2000 and 2006 to develop the twin islands but the project could not be successful because of various reasons. Later in 2013, the PPP government had also tried to develop the islands through Malik Riaz but the Supreme Court banned the construction.

It is a fact that Sindh's islands are property of the people of Sindh, where fishermen have the customary rights over them while the provincial government is the custodian of the land and forests. According to the Constitution of Pakistan, provinces have ownership of marine waters starting from the coast to 12 nautical miles and all these islands fall under provincial boundary. Thus, they are property of the people of Sindh and Balochistan.

Along with Dingi and Bundal, these islands are home to thousands of hectares of mangrove forests. These forests are nurseries of fish and shrimps while these creeks from Karachi to Thatta are fishing grounds for the fishermen.

With construction of a new city, fishermen's fishing grounds will come to an end along with their pathways. The development of islands and construction of any city would also harm the environment.

I.A. Rehman said they consider that development, which improves lives of people and that is not against them. "These islands are property of people. You cannot take them without their consultation," he said. He said any takeover of the islands will be against the country.



He said that mangroves and fishermen were assets of the country, which should be protected. It is the responsibility of the provincial government to save its islands.

Pakistan Peoples Party's senator Dr Karim Khuwaja said that the islands were provincial property but no NOC had been taken from the government of Sindh. "We are against construction of the city over islands," he said. "These mangroves save us from tsunamis and cyclones."

He said their legislators would take up the issue in the parliament.

Executive Director PILER Karamat Ali said that the project of constructing the city was not against the fishermen only it was also against the whole people of the province and the environment. It was against political, social and environmental rights, he said.

Sindh United Party's head Jalal Mehmood Shah, Jeay Sindh Mahaz's Abdul Khaliq Junejo and other political as well as civil society workers addressed the meeting.

The meeting also adopted resolution constituting a five person coordination committee under the chair of Muhammad Ali Shah, which would further decide about the movement.

It is a fact that Sindh's islands are property of the people of Sindh, where fishermen have the customary rights over them while the provincial government is the custodian of the land and forests. According to the Constitution of Pakistan, provinces have ownership of marine waters starting from the coast to 12 nautical miles and all these islands fall under provincial boundary. Thus, they are property of the people of Sindh and Balochistan.

KARACHI PRESS CLUB

**ISLANDS
PRESS CONFERENCE**

City on islands to deprive fishermen's livelihood

Rejecting any construction of a new city over twin islands of Dingi and Bundal on Karachi's coast, representatives of the civil society organizations have expressed fear that the construction would affect local people and deprive hundreds of thousands of the fishermen of their livelihood.

In this regard, Muhammad Ali Shah, Chairman, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum; Karamat Ali, Executive Director of Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) and other labour leaders addressed a joint press conference at Karachi Press Club on Tuesday, September 15, 2020.

They criticized the federal government's proposal to create Pakistan Islands Development Authority to develop the islands. There are around 300 small and big islands in Sindh's coastal belt that were made by the River Indus over the period with its silt.

Instead of providing demanded water in the Indus Delta, they said, islands made by the Indus River were being destroyed in the name of development and occupied illegally. This development is actual a destruction, they remarked.

Pakistan has a coastal belt of over 1050 kilometers and all islands located in that belt would be taken into control by the federal government. A Bill for establishment of an Authority is reportedly prepared, which would be presented in the Parliament for approval. But, the major reason behind establishment of this authority is to take control of the twin islands and construct a new city over them.

Representatives of the organizations said that the former government of General Pervez Musharraf had twice attempted in 2000 and 2006 to develop the twin islands but the project could not be successful because of various reasons. Later in 2013, the PPP government had also tried to develop the islands through Malik Riaz but the Supreme Court banned the construction.

Moreover, besides the twin islands, a city over 60,000 acres of coastal land in Hawks Bay area was also planned with the name of Waterfront Sugarland City and then City District Government's website had mentioned the such project with an estimated cost of Rs 68 billion.

The federal government has decided to construct the city on twin islands without any consultation with the Sindh government, as the area falls under the provincial jurisdiction. Federal government's action is not only against the Constitution of Pakistan but it is also against international Conventions and agreements, which provide social, economic and cultural sovereignty to the indigenous people.

It is fact that Sindh's islands are property of people of Sindh, where fishermen have the traditional rights over them while provincial government is the custodian of the land and forests. According to the Constitution of Pakistan, provinces have ownership of marine waters starting from the coast to 12 nautical miles and all these islands fall under provincial boundary. Thus, they are property of Sindh and Balochistan governments.

Along with Dingi and Bundal, these islands are home to thousands of hectares of mangrove forests. These forests are nurseries of fish and shrimps while these creeks from Karachi to Thatta are fishing grounds for the fishermen. With construction of a new city, fishermen's fishing grounds will come to an end along with their pathways. The development of islands and construction of any city would also harm the environment.

They said that with construction of the city and so-called development of islands would deprive around 800,000 fishermen of their livelihood and they would suffer extreme poverty.



STORY ON ISLANDS

Fishermen say a development on two islands could destroy their livelihoods

Zofeen T. Ebrahim

In the quarrel over building a gleaming "new Dubai" on two small islands off Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast, the voices of the fishermen who have plied these waters for centuries often go unheard.

Steering his boat out of the Jamote jetty in the village of Ebrahim Haideri, 25-year-old fisherman Shakil said the islands around which he catches fish, crab and shrimp are now patrolled by armed guards.

"We have been fishing in these waters for centuries," said Shakil, who did not want to give his full name. But when he tried to go near the island of Dingi recently he was apprehended by military guards and ordered to get into the "murgha" stress position, he said.

"If we did not do it they said they would hit us with batons," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

A month ago, the twin islands of Bundal and Dingi at the mouth of Korangi Creek in the port city of Karachi in Pakistan's Sindh province were taken over by the federal government through an overnight presidential ordinance.

With an investment of about \$50 billion, the government aims to develop a city that will "surpass Dubai" and create 150,000 jobs, Sindh Governor Imran Ismail said at a news conference in the capital Islamabad earlier this month.

But fisherfolk say the development on the islands - spread over 12,000 acres (49 square kms) - could destroy their livelihoods and that they have not been consulted.

"We continue to remain invisible to both the (Sindh and federal) governments," Mohammad Ali Shah, founder of the Pakistan Fisherfolk

Forum (PFF) that aims to protect the rights of fishermen and fishing communities, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Nasir Hussain Shah, the Sindh government's information minister, rejected the central government's takeover of the islands and said Islamabad had not shared its development plans. Pakistan's Minister for Maritime Affairs, Ali Haider Zaidi, did not respond to a request for comment.

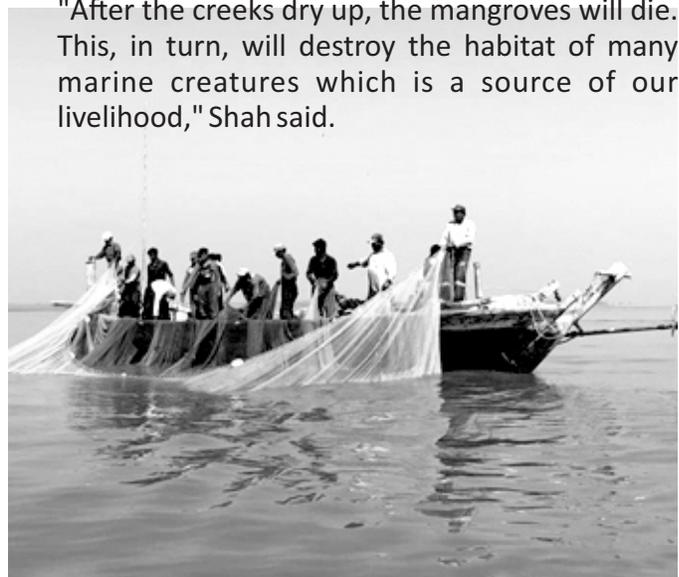
The PFF is leading a protest campaign against the island development, arguing the fishermen are "the rightful owners" of the territory. It has called upon the provincial government to protect the rights of Sindh's fishermen.

"Do not think of these islands as mere tracts of land," said Shah. "We are inextricably linked to them by culture, custom and heritage."

He said thousands of fisherfolk and their families gather for traditional festivals on these islands every year.

But more importantly, the fishing communities are concerned about the impact of construction - and the diversion and pollution of water - on the islands' fragile ecosystem.

"After the creeks dry up, the mangroves will die. This, in turn, will destroy the habitat of many marine creatures which is a source of our livelihood," Shah said.





LIVELIHOODS

Fishing provides employment to [600,000 people in Sindh province](#), according to Sindh Fisheries Department's director, Aslam Jarwar.

"Seventy-one percent of Pakistan's fish comes from the province through the Arabian Sea, estuaries, canals and inland lakes," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The coastal waters are the habitat for 40 species of fish and shellfish and 15 species of shrimp, which make up 60% of Pakistan's fisheries exports.

For fisherman Kamal Shah, the development will spell disaster: "They might as well kill us; we exist because of these islands, if they occupy them, it will be a death blow to our livelihoods," he said.

Although no one lives permanently on the islands, lawyer Shuhab Usto said the fisherfolk had customary rights to use the land. He said it is clear the islands have been used as "transit stations" and "easement" by the fishermen for centuries.

"Suddenly dislodging them and depriving them of their right to earn a living is not legally tenable," as it contravenes Articles 9 and 18 of Pakistan's constitution, he said.

And the takeover of the islands has caused legal confusion for the fisherfolk, he said.

"Which high court do the complainants (fishermen) take their petition to? If the islands are the federal government's property, these are beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the Sindh High Court," he said, while the high court in Islamabad would not have jurisdiction over the territory.

PROMISED EMPLOYMENT

The government has promised employment for the fisherfolk once construction work gets started although no details have been shared. Kamal Shah is sceptical.

"In the last over two decades the fishermen had been ousted from three prime fishing spots. Not only that, no villager has been employed either," Kamal Shah said, adding that not only have fish stocks dwindled, but the areas in which the fishermen can cast their nets has shrunk due to development.

"Our people ... used to fish where you now see the Marina Club and that string of restaurants," he said, pointing in the direction of the private club reserved for the wealthy to moor their boats. "We are shooed away from there," he said.

A nearby Pakistan Air Force base and the Port Qasim Authority, controlled by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, are high security zones and security patrols prevent fishermen from entering the surrounding waters.

"The same will happen when developers come on these islands; we will be told we are trespassing," said Shah.

The father of eight does not want his children to join his profession. "All my kids are studying," he said with pride. "It is best they keep away from this."

It is not the first time the islands have been eyed for development. In 2006, the government signed the multi-billion-dollar Diamond Bar City project with a Dubai-based real estate firm to develop the islands.

And in 2013, Pakistani real estate tycoon Malik Riaz signed an agreement with a U.S. investor to build the "world's tallest building" on the island city. Nothing materialised from either deal.

Mohammad Ali Shah, the PFF's leader, said he was hopeful the latest development plans would also be quashed.

"We want the governments, for once and for all, to make a policy that these islands will remain their natural self," he said. (Courtesy: Thomas Reuters Foundation)



SECURE WOMEN'S
LAND AND WATER
RESOURCES
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

کسان بہائی کی مورتن کے
ہائی سہائی سمندر و خوراک کے
پاکستان فشر فوک فورم

PAKISTAN
FISHERFOLK
FORUM

زمین، سمندر و خوراک کے دیگر ذرائع
پر عورتوں کو برابری کا حق دیا جائے
پاکستان فشر فوک فورم

PFF STRUGGLE

Story of islands and PFF struggle

Shahid Shah

Issue

President of Pakistan through an ordinance on September 2, 2020 has constituted Pakistan Islands Development Authority to develop islands of Sindh and Balochistan and initially construct city over twin islands of Buddo (Dingi) and Bundal (Bhundar). The twin islands are situated near Karachi's Defense Phase 8. According to an estimate, these two islands are spread over 12,000 acres.

According to the law, sea waters from the shore to 12 nautical miles fall under provincial property, while beyond that it is property of the federal government. These islands fall under 12 nautical miles.

There are around 300 small and big islands in the Sindh coastal belt, made by the Indus River, which are historical property of the fishermen while Sindh government is custodian of these islands.

Background

The previous governments have also tried to construct city over the twin islands. In 2006, Development of "Diamond Bar Island City" on Bundal (Bhundar) and Buddo (Dingi) islands was howling the fisherfolk community. In order to bring the foreign direct investment (FDI), livelihood of the fishermen was put on altar. Unfortunately, the people have never been consulted in Pakistan.



Along with other environmental concerns, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum has some serious concerns over the development of the new city. Firstly, thousands of fishermen fish in creeks, many of them rest on these Buddo and Bundal islands. They dry fish and clean their nets. These fishermen would not be allowed to rest and dry their catch on these islands if the city is constructed. Secondly, the area between reclaimed land of the defense housing authority (DHA) and the Buddo Island is a path for the fishermen to go in the open sea. The construction of the new city on these islands would deny their entry in the open sea. Thirdly, sea is already polluted with 300 MGD (million gallon daily) untreated waste of Karachi, which has threatened sea life. Construction of the new city would pollute the remaining clean waters, if any, which would result in complete destruction of the marine life and the environment. Fourthly, mangrove forests adjacent to these twin islands, which come under proposed construction, would not sustain in the new city. They serve as breeding grounds for fish and shrimp.

Ramsar Convention

These islands are wetlands of the Indus River and a part of the Indus delta, which is declared a Ramsar site. Pakistan signed the treaty in 1976. Unfortunately, these protected and internationally important sites are under threat of the so-called development and the investment.

PFF struggle

Press Conference (September 15, 2020)

A press conference was conducted on September 15 at Karachi Press Club on island issue. Participants from Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Aurat Foundation and other organisations participated. They vowed to continue their struggle till the decision of construction of the city is reversed.

Consultative meeting (October 3, 2020)

A consultative meeting of political, civil society organizations, lawyers, academia was organized to formulate plan against the construction of city over twin islands. Around 60 organisations and individuals participated in the meeting. They also adopted resolutions that rejected the construction and empowered PFF Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah to head the coalition against such motive of the federal government. Representatives of Pakistan Peoples Party, Awami Tehreek, Sindh United Party, Jeay Sindh Mahaz and others participated.

Samoondi Bait Bachayo Tehreek (Save Sea Islands Movement) formed (October 7, 2020)

Five civil society organisations that organized consultative meeting on October 3, met again and formed “Samoondi Bait Bachayo Tehreek” (Save Sea Islands Movement). Organisations included Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Indigenous Rights Alliance and Aurat Foundation. PFF Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah was assigned task of the convener. The Tehreek

has held several meetings since its formation.

Boat rally to twin islands (October 15, 2020)

PFF hosted boat rally of the newly formed movement. It was a massive and unique rally of its kind, which was participated by more than 20 fishing boats with hundreds of participants including representatives of political parties, civil society organisations, academia, writers, poets, lawyers, students, media and fishermen. Lawmakers of Pakistan Peoples Party from Malir district also participated in it.

The participants of rally were restricted from visiting Dingi island by a law enforcement agency of Pak Navy. Later they moved to Bhundar island but could not anchor the boats due to low tide. The rally was addressed from a boat by the leadership.

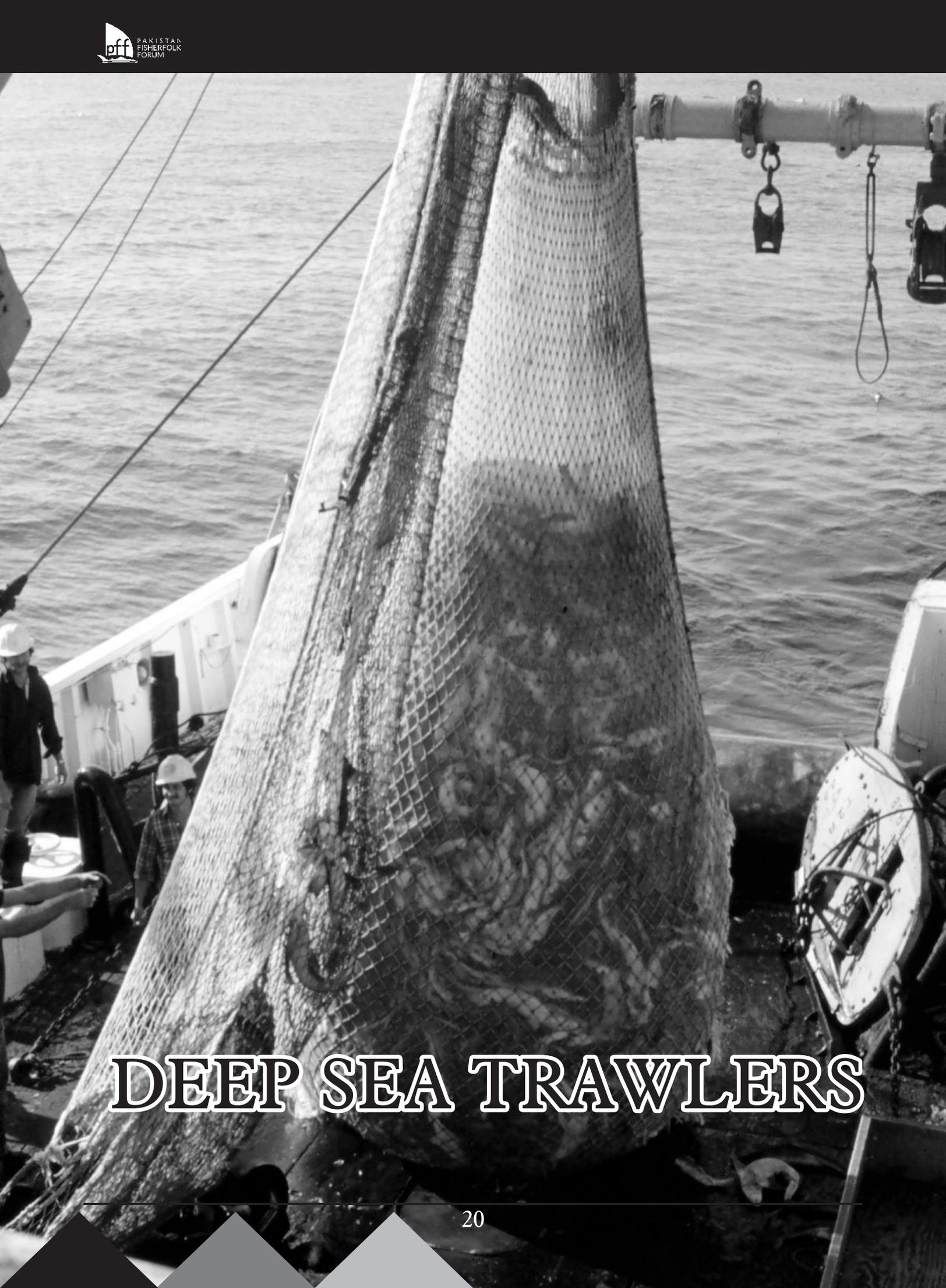
Success Story

Sindh Assembly Resolution (October 21, 2020)

The movement received first step of success on October 21, when majority legislatures of Provincial Assembly of Sindh adopted a resolution against construction of city over the twin islands and demanded the federal government to reverse the Presidential Ordinance for constitution of Pakistan Islands Development Authority. The resolution was submitted by Mahmood Alam Jamot, a leader of the fisherfolk community of Ibrahim Hyderi. He was also a part of the boat rally on October 15. Sindh's other political parties also followed PFF and protested against the ordinance throughout the province.

Way Forward

Though the struggle received its first success with Sindh Assembly adopted the resolution against the presidential ordinance. Yet, it has not been reversed. Thus, PFF along with other member organisations of the movement vows to continue the struggle until the ordinance is reversed and occupation of the islands is over. It must be mentioned that a security agency has occupied Dindi island since last one year.



DEEP SEA TRAWLERS

Fishermen hold protest rally against 'deep sea fishing trawlers'

Rejecting federal government's decision to provide licenses to deep sea fishing trawlers, fishermen of the Sindh coastal belt have announced campaign against such decision.

In this regards, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and Pakistan Bonafide Fishermen Forum organized a protest rally from Arts Council to Karachi Press Club here on Wednesday. The rally was attended by a large number of women also. Participants of the rally carried banners and placards, which mentioned slogans against the deep sea fishing trawlers. They also chanted slogans.

Chairman PFF Muhammad Ali Shah, President Pakistan Bonafide Fishermen Forum Muhammad Hussain and Fatima Majeed addressed the rally while General Secretary PFF Saeed Baloch, Majeed Motani, Syed Ali Asghar Shah, Zahid Bhatti and other leadership of the organizations was also present in the rally.

Muhammad Ali Shah said that the federal government has once again begun to process licenses for deep sea vessels under a policy to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around 20 miles off the coast in Sindh and Balochistan.

“Around a dozen trawlers are parked around the Karachi Port,” he said.

He said there were around 4.6 million small, medium and large boats in the world. Out of which, less than one percent or 35,000 deep sea fishing trawlers existed. However, they exploit 52 percent of the marine resources. Their fishing nets are spread over several kilometres and they damage the marine ecology. “They dredge and damage marine life. They catch only target fish while through back around 90 percent dead fish back and pollute the sea,” he said.

He demanded that since the deep sea fishing policy has not been approved, inquiry should be conducted to find out the responsible who had allowed the deep sea trawlers stay in Pakistani waters.

Muhammad Ali Shah said that the expansion of fishing into the deep sea was a grave threat to livelihood of small fishers and marine ecology. Hence, it is a violation of national laws and international commitments. If the provincial assemblies have not approved the policy then it is also a violation of the Constitution.



He said since the ecology of territorial waters and livelihoods in provinces would be harmed deeply, it was indeed the constitutional privilege of provinces to reject the policy as illegitimate exercise of federal jurisdiction over the EEZ.

“Our grave objection to this action is two-fold,” he said. “It threatens the livelihoods of small fishers by depriving them of catch today, and in future by ecologically destructive practices of these vessels.”

Shah informed that Food and Agricultural Organisation's latest fish stock assessment conducted with the support of the federal government had already painted a very dismal picture of the country's marine fish stock. According to the assessment report, more than 72 per cent of the fish stock in coastal areas of Pakistan has declined.

The federal governments might have the authority to regulate deep-sea fishing, i.e. beyond 12 nautical miles from the baseline to the

exclusive economic zone stretching over 200 nautical miles across the coastline; however, fishing is a provincial subject and the provinces have thus now authority to regulate fisheries in sea or in freshwater bodies.

Muhammad Hussain said they were quite puzzled at the renewal of the process after many years of rejection by previous governments. It is imperative that this process of licenses be terminated immediately without discrimination between domestic and foreign applicants, he said.

If deep sea fishing policy is announced and trawlers are provided licenses under it, it would be violation of Pakistan's commitment of the UN Convention on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, as it would deprive fishermen from Right to Food.

He said that they would continue their peaceful protest until licences of deep sea fishing trawlers are cancelled.





PFF vows to initiate campaign against deep sea fishing trawlers

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum has vowed to initiate a campaign against deep sea fishing trawlers, which have been spotted near Karachi Port Trust.

PFF held a high level meeting in Ibrahim Hyderi on Friday, August 21, 2020, which was attended by all central and districts leadership including Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah, Vice Chairman Mustafa Mirani, General Secretary Saeed Baloch and others.

Meeting was informed that the federal government has once again begun to process licenses for deep sea vessels under a policy to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around 20 miles off the coast in Sindh and Balochistan.

Around a dozen trawlers are parked around the Karachi Port.

Since, deep sea fishing policy has not been approved, an inquiry should be conducted to find out who had allowed the deep sea trawlers to stay in Pakistani waters, the meeting demanded. They questioned when fish stocks are so much depleted, around 72 percent, why there was a deep sea fishing policy in the making.

Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah said that the expansion of fishing into the deep sea was a grave threat to livelihood of small fishers and marine ecology. Hence, it is a violation of national laws and international commitments. If the provincial assemblies have not approved the policy then it is also a violation of the Constitution.

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If deep sea fishing policy is announced and trawlers are provided licenses under it, it would be a violation of Pakistan's commitment of the UN Convention on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, as it would deprive fishermen from Right to Food.

Fisherfolk leaders said that they would write letters to authorities demanding termination of licenses in the first phase and mobilize thousands of fishermen against such policy in the coming phase.

sit-in against COAL POWER PLANTS





Islamkot Rally and sit-in against Coal Power Plants

Thar coal companies have continued atrocities against local people that include violations of agreements, environmental pollution, dispossession of people, inclusion of outsiders, mismanagement in land compensation and ignoring local people in the employment.

Protesting against such atrocities, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum along with other political and social organizations as well as local people held a historical rally and sit-in in Islamkot on October 31, 2020, which forced the district administration to come on the table and have dialogue with the protesters.

People of Thar, affected from Thar coal block#1, block#2, Gorano Dam and Vejhiar Dam protested against the atrocities of the management of coal power plant companies.

Protesters started a rally from Islamkot Press Club to Bypass where they held sit-in for four hours.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah, Awami Tehreek's advocate Vasand Thari, Obhayo Junejo, Pakistan Peoples Party's Muhammad Khan Loond, Bheemraj and Arab Mehranpoto led the protest.

Hundreds of people from Khario Ghulam Shah, Tilwayo, Varwai, Ahsan Shah's Tar, Thario Halepoto, Gorano and other villages participated in rally and sit-in. Traders of Islamkot, in solidarity with the protesters, closed their shops for few hours and participated in the protest.

The protesters also burned tyres while several vehicles were jammed for around four hours. A large number of police also gathered at the sit-in place, where situation became tense.

Assistant commissioner Nuhaid Ahmed reached in the protest and wanted the protest to be ended but the protester refused then ADC-1 Mithi Kabir Shah arrived but protesters wanted to talk to DC or CEO's of the two coal companies. On his assurance to have a meeting with DC Tharparkar on Nov 3, the protesters were disbursed peacefully.

Earlier, protesters said that the coal companies had continued atrocities with the local people, who were ignored in the employment. Outsiders were employed on projects. Besides, the local people were not paid the proper compensation of their land. There was also environmental pollution and land degradation caused by the coal mining.



Charter of demand

- 1- Coal mining and fossil fuel burning has damaged Tharis socially, economically and environmentally, which has also affected natural beauty of Thar. Our lives have become vulnerable. Agreements with the locals in the two projects have not been fulfilled. Thus, mining in other blocks should not be started.
- 2- Policy should be developed after survey and meeting with the local people in every block.
- 3- Instead of forcefully buying land for Thar Coal projects and dams, it should be taken on a yearly lease basis. The purchased land should be returned and leased. The paid amount should be deducted in lease instalments.
- 4- For every project, a committee should be constituted under the deputy commissioner, which should include the local people in it. Issues of the blocks should be resolved with the consultation of such committees.
- 5- Local peoples, who are being neglected, should be given priority in employment in Thar Coal projects rather than outsiders.
 - Provide list of employees working in the Thar coal projects and highlight number of local people working in these projects.
 - Provide copies of HR policy, conflict of interest policy and procurement policy.
 - Provide copies of agreements with various departments.
- 6- Royalty of Thar coal projects should be spent on Thar. Provide details of income generated by the companies and Thar's share in it.
- 7- Provide complete details of the work conducted by Thar Foundation.
- 8- Thar canal should be constructed to fulfil the water shortage, which is a result of Thar Coal projects.
- 9- Thari people have the first right over electricity generated on Thar Coal. Thus, free electricity should be provided to Tharis.
- 10- Complete record of outsider people working in Thar coal projects should be maintained with the area SHO.
- 11- Local people should be given right of property over various types of lands in Thar.
- 12- Tapedar's should keep names of peasants along with land owners in the field book. Peasants also suffer when such land come in the Thar Coal projects. They should also be compensated along with the land owners.
- 13- Thar Development Authority should be constituted and the affected people be included as its members.
- 14- CSR organizations in all blocks should include affected villagers as their members.
- 15- Resettlement policy should be revised on equity basis and ownership rights should be provided to the people in the model village.
- 16- Companies should close canteens and general stores of outsider people at mining and power plant sites while locals should be provided livelihood opportunity over there.
- 17- Companies should stop fencing and dumping of the paths of villagers leading to their graveyards.
- 18- Cases registered against local people by the companies should be withdrawn.
- 19- Illegal occupation and encroachments of the companies should be ended. Companies should provide small contracts; like general items of daily use, water supply etc. to the local people.



Meeting with DC Tharparkar

In a meeting with the protesters on November 3, 2020, Deputy Commissioner Tharparkar sought 10 days period to fulfil several demands including providing minutes of the meeting, details of the funds of the foundation, list of employees hired by the companies and giving priority to the local people in employment. He assured to forward other issues to the Sindh government for the solution while its copy would be provided to the committee. In the meeting, DC said that Thar's elected representative should also take efforts to resolve the issues. After meeting with the DC Tharparkar, a meeting was held with the representatives of all blocks that decided to constitute a six-member committee for the dialogue with the district administration. The committee includes Muhammad Ali Shah, Muhammad Khan Lund, Vasand Thari, Bheemraj, Obhayo Junejo and Bhooral Shah. The committee was empowered by the participants to conduct dialogue with the administration after taking the affected people in the confidence. This is just start of the campaign, which would be continued along with dialogue with the authorities while awareness would be created among the people in every affected village of Thar.

Fishermen demand end to illegal encroachment of public water bodies

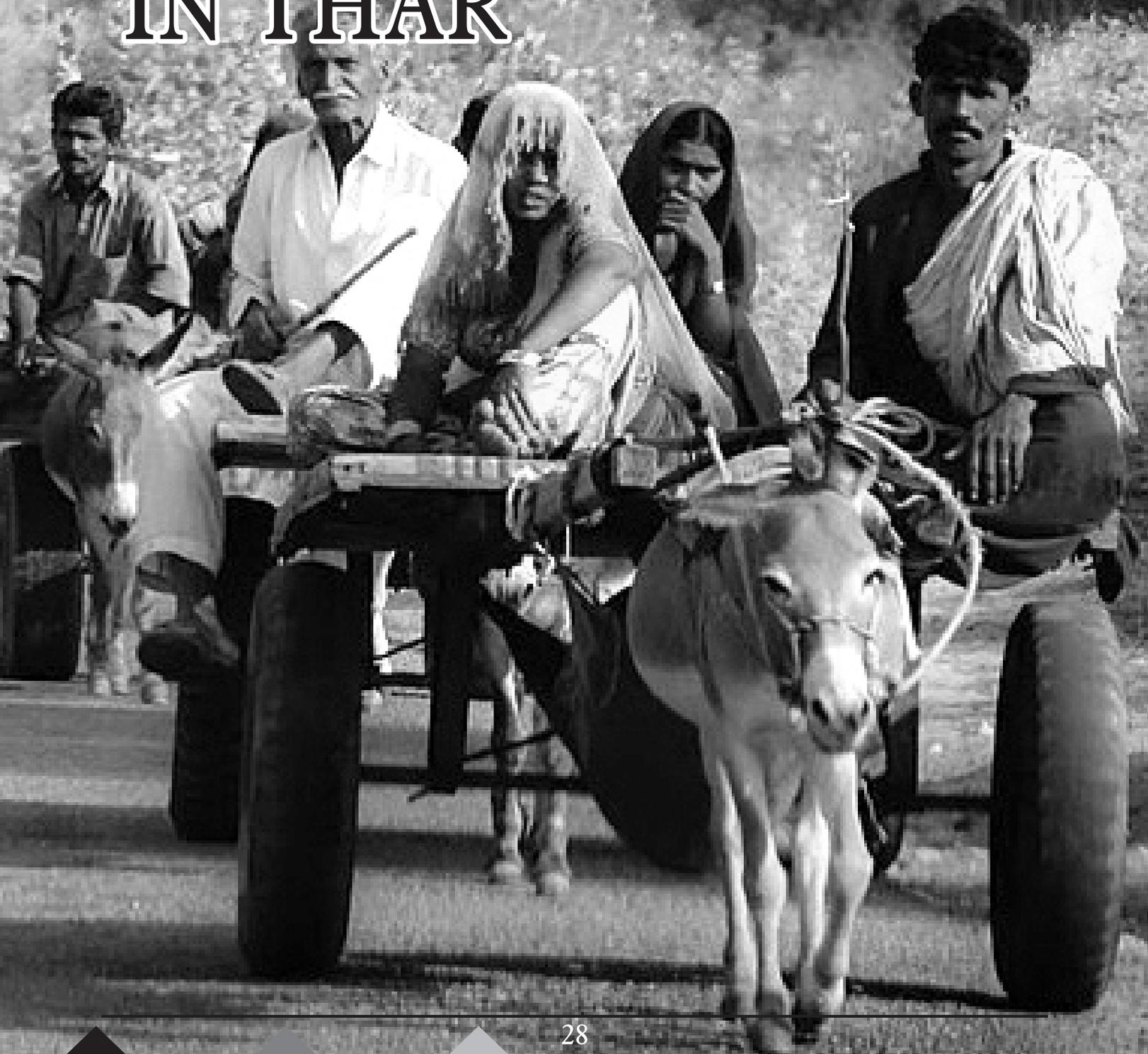
A peoples' dialogue on illegal encroached water bodies has noted that despite abolition of the contract system, approximately 600 fresh water bodies were illegally occupied by the influential persons backed by political elite and local administration in Sindh.

The dialogue was organized by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum at Badin Gymkhana on Thursday. Chairman PFF Muhammad Ali Shah, Mithal Mallah, Umer Mallah, members from fishermen community and civil society activists participated in the dialogue.

Participants said that such state of affairs results in violation of various economic, social and cultural rights and fundamental human rights ensured in the international and national legal framework. Rather, it deprives marginalized fishermen from their right to subsistence that is non-derogable in any way. Participants demanded an end to illegal encroachment of water bodies and vowed to initiate struggle against it.

Approximately 2.5 million fishermen depend on freshwater fisheries in Sindh. There are 1219 public fresh water bodies /lakes/Sim Nallahs/ across Sindh. These fresh water areas are officially declared as public water bodies by Sindh Fisheries Department.

PEOPLES' DISPLACEMENT IN THAR



Peoples' displacement in Thar

Shahid Shah

In order to develop coal mines and develop coal power plants in Thar, the coal mining companies with the collaboration of the government have been engaged in displacing the local people from their homes and lands.

Crop damages and arrest of villagers of Thario Halepoto and Pabohar

Engro Coal Mining Company is mining coal in Thar and generating power on it. It has acquired thousands of acres of land in Thar Block-2 while it is acquiring more land to provide grazing land to the affected people of Thar Coal Block-2 on the



cost of other villages.

In order to provide grazing land to Senhri Dars Model Village, Islamkot police on instigation of Engro company along with private people destroyed crops at more than 150-acre land of Village Thario Halepoto and Pabohar through removing them with bulldozers.

Several peaceful villagers, who gathered at their lands and argued with officials for not damaging the crops, were also arrested. The police had started harassing the villagers since few days while arrested the villagers on morning of August 12, 2020.

Village Thario Halepoto and Pabohar comes in Union Council Seengario, Taluka Islamkot, whose population is based on around 450 houses. According to villagers they also possess documents of land but despite that crops were damaged and this action has been taken to provide the grazing land to Senhri Dars Model Village.

Thar Coal Block-2's affected people of Senhri Dars, who are staying in the model village, had demanded grazing land and vowed to move to the old village if grazing land was not provided. Some land of Thario Halepoto and Pabohar has already come under Thar Coal Block-2 while some villagers have not been compensated yet.

According to villagers, the police have forcefully got signatures and thumb impressions of some villagers on documents telling that they hand over their land. However, these villagers have not been compensated either. They are not willing to handover their lands to the company or police.



On the other hand, Mukhtiar Kar Islamkot registered a case on villagers for duty hindrances and retaliation with axes and sticks. The poor villagers did not possess any surety.

Initially, police said it has arrested only one person while it refused to show arrest of other villagers. Later, on efforts taken by villagers and their lawyer, the police showed arrest of eight other people on August 14th, which was a holiday and bail could not be done. A case was registered against a total of 10 people of which nine were arrested.

Protesting the police action against villagers, leaders of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum including Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah, Vice Chairman Mustafa Mirani and Muhammad Mallah addressed a press conference at Hyderabad Press Club on Saturday, August 15, demanding release of the arrested villagers.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum submitted sureties of bail for 10 villagers including nine arrested and one bail before arrest. All the villagers received bail. However, lands of the villages are still under

control of the police.

Villagers are not ready to leave their land. They have appealed to Sindh Chief Minister and other authorities to stop such action against villagers of Thario Halepoto and Pabohar, they should be provided safety and justice and be compensated for the damage to their crops.

People at Thario Halepoto said that company in an alleged association with the Revenue Department was paying 25 percent amount to the land owners and 25 percent to Revenue Department. Thus, it saved 50 percent amount.

Displacement of Khario Gulam Shah, UC

There are eight villages in the UC Khario Gulam Shah; Jam Ji Wandh, Boli Tarai, Talwai and others, where grazing land of around 20,000 animals has been affected due to iron fence around the Thar Coal Block#1 mining field.

Tilwayo village and other areas came inside the fence. Compensation was given to only survey lands, no compensation of trees and grazing land was provided. Rs0.25 million per acre compensation was provided. Nearly 1,600 acre land of Tilwai came under the fence of coal mining site, whole of Warwahi came under it.

The current village of Tilwayo also comes under coalfield and villagers have been asked to vacate the village. They have been offered Rs4.25 million per house for the evacuation. Around 33 percent of the CNICs are not registered in the compensation list. The villagers were not given jobs by the coal mining administration. Along with the houses, they will also be displaced from 1,600 acres grazing land. There are around 1,000 houses in Tilwai alone.

Fence is not so strong and livestock, especially goats find out way to go inside, where stray dogs kill the goats. Initially, villagers had access to two gets to the field to enter inside and save their goats. Now, both of these gets have been closed and villagers have to reach to the main gate around three kilometers away from the village. The administration had promised to include names of villagers in the list who can go inside the field but their names were not included.

When goats try to run away from stray dogs and force themselves out of the fence, they injure their breasts. Injured goat fetches around Rs5,000, whose price was around Rs20,000 before the injury.

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According to the villagers few people of Tilwai have agreed to get compensation but not all of them have been compensated.

Compensation will be in two installments. Initially, 50 percent will be provided before the evacuation while 50 percent remaining amount would be paid after the evacuation. Livestock and land are the main source of income. Trees and birds including peacocks will die in after the evacuation.

New Senhri Dars Model Village

Villagers said old village was better than the current model village. There is no more liberty in the model village. Only compensation of the survey land has been given. Here is no grazing land. There was 800 acres of the grazing land in the old village. They promised to provide grazing land this year, but promise has not been fulfilled. They gave Rs10,000 per month instead of Rs12,000 per month, which they had pledged. No payment has been made this year. None of the residents possess documents of their new houses. However, solar system is working. There are 96 houses in the village.





A People's Tribunal on Coal

A People's Tribunal on Coal

The Thar Coal Rajouni Kath

As Pakistan draws up its energy future coal finds itself central to that picture. The impact of this future is being felt by the communities of Thar whose everyday lives are being transformed beyond recognition. The litany of this devastation is vast from death, illnesses, the loss of lands, to an erasure of a cultural and material livelihood - the creation of a dead zone. It is this devastation that forms the background to the call for the People's Tribunal on Coal. A call to do the work of law where the

Many times the original violence is compounded by the secondary violation within the judgement of denial that the Law pronounces. Tribunals challenged this law-constructed-public-memory.

Taking the **power to do law** is to step away from the reliance on state law. Critically acting as a claim of taking the power to 'do-law', that is to **control, author, judge and act**. As such People's Tribunals premise themselves on usurping the role of public judgement by creating an

People's Tribunals have a long and rich history from across the world, from the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on Vietnam, the World Tribunal on Iraq, to the numerous tribunals (forty-six) organised by the Permanent People's Tribunal - on fracking and climate change, on migration, on Canadian mining internationally, on workers rights etc.

Law has abdicated its responsibility to judge. An act to claim the power of doing law.

We name this law-doing the Thar Coal Rajouni Kath. The Rajouni Kath is the way of our lands and its people, it is our history, in which we come together and speak to conflict - to judge. In building this bridge to our pasts and our futures we reclaim the Rajouni from those of power, to and for, the people and the collective.

Introduction and History:

Typically People's Tribunals have been used by communities in struggle when the sense that formal/dominant legal processes have failed, and will continue to fail.

The **failure of Law** comes in many forms: that the forum does not recognise the original violation as violence or that the forum fails to provide redressal, and that the forum denies of access through cost, delays and by legal processes which have strict evidentiary and causal tests.

institution and process of legality that does not abide by the scriptures, strictures and disciplines of dominant law.

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Of course each tribunal takes a shape, form, process, and modalities all its own - ranging from very localised acts of people's law doing (such as the Chashma People's Tribunal) to more public engagements aiming towards building relationships, engagements and solidarities with communities and people nationally and internationally (such as the World Tribunal on Iraq).

It is with these histories in mind that we propose to organise a Peoples Tribunal on Coal (PTC), the Thar Coal Rajouni Kath, in Pakistan. By establishing a People's Tribunal process in Pakistan it is envisaged that the full range of activities on coal can be brought into

health impact of coal; environmental activist communities working to highlight the impacts of coal on the environment, in contexts of global warming; lawyers working to provide stronger reviews upon the coal sector and enhanced environmental protections; the renewable industries struggling to make inroads into the energy sector biased towards fossil fuels; wider civil society, journalists and academics engaged in understanding fossil fuels in Pakistan. These and other groups often work in isolation without any co-ordinating process or framework. The Thar Coal Rajouni Kath aims to fulfil this role.

Pedagogies of Tribunaling:



Tribunals take their form with the specificities of context, concerns and formulations. As such the Rajouni Kath aims to **initiate** its deliberations in Thar where communities-in-struggle have been resisting the creation of toxic and dead zones on their lands. In local vernacular an *indictment* will be

conversation with each other under its auspices. The diverse work in opposition to coal activities in Pakistan requires integration and a nexus which allows it to be **generative of public memory and public judgement**.

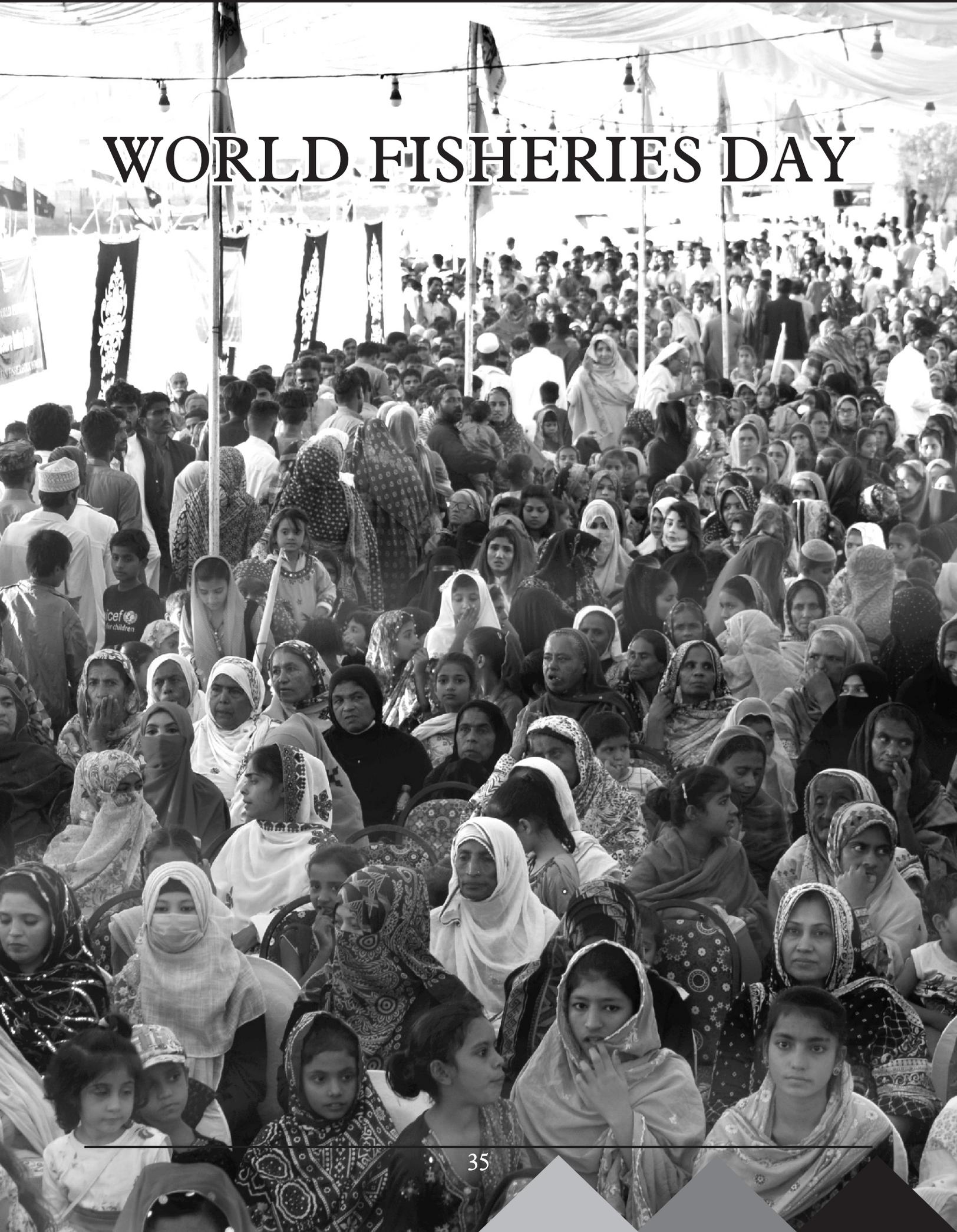
Objectives:

The goal of the PTC would be to provide a processual framework for the range of disparate work taking place in opposition to the ever increasing role of coal in Pakistan's energy sector.

Driven by the communities-of-struggle in Thar it aims to bring together the numerous communities opposing coal: from those living in the shadows of coal power plants and coal importation facilities; communities who have opposed coal for its impact on global climate; the public health community who are witness to the

drafted identifying the core concerns, providing witness and testimony, and evidence of the meaning of coal. Regional and Provincial sessions of the PTC will follow, bringing together wider political communities, activists, lawyers, academics, researchers, doctors and other concerned communities. We envisage sessions on environment and water, law, energy and provincial politics, public health. As **evidentiary** sessions drawing on experts in each field, the experientiality of coal in Thar will be brought into wider conversation. Conclusions from each evidentiary session will be presented in a **final** session of the PTC with with a jury comprised of people from Thar, and international and national experts. As each session adds to public memory on coal, the final session aims to pass a public judgement on coal in Thar specifically and coal power more generally.

WORLD FISHERIES DAY





Fisherfolks celebrate World Fisheries Day vowing to protect their rights

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum has vowed to guard rights of the indigenous fishermen and reject any construction over the sea islands.

This was announced by the PFF leadership during celebration of World Fisheries Day, November 21, in Ibrahim Hyderi on Saturday with theme “Fisher people's sovereignty on all marine islands” and “guard rights of the fisher people.” Hundreds of Fishermen and women as well as civil society workers had gathered at Mir Jamot Jetty. Fishermen from Thatta, Sujawal, Badin, Jamshoro, Hyderabad and other districts also participated in the celebration.

During the celebration, a colourful cultural programme was also held, which included songs and tableaus where youth highlighted issues of the fishing people. The central program was held after one-week activities from November 16-21 throughout the province.

Chairman PFF, Muhammad Ali Shah, said that the PFF would guard the rights of the fisher people and would not tolerate any decision against

indigenous fisher folks.

He said the World Fisheries Day is celebrated every year on November 21 throughout the world by the fisher folk communities. From its inception in 1998, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum has been celebrating and observing this event every year.

He said around 3.0 million fishermen in Sindh and Balochistan depend on marine fishing, mostly in creeks while the government has decided to develop islands and construct cities that would close paths of fishermen and deprive them of livelihood.

He said the federal government has constituted Pakistan Islands Development Authority (PIDA) to construct the city on twin islands of Bhundar (Bundal) and Dingi without any consultation with the Sindh government, as the area falls under the provincial jurisdiction.

“Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum is protesting against such decision and is celebrating this World Fisheries Day by protesting the construction of cities over islands, as they are places for fishing and mangrove forests,” he said.

“Federal government's such action is not only against the Constitution of Pakistan but it is also against international conventions and agreements, which provide social, economic and cultural sovereignty to the indigenous people.”

He said Pakistan has a coastal belt of over 1,050 kilometers and there are 300 small and big islands located in Sindh coast only that would be taken into control by the federal government. Along with Dingi and Bundal, these islands are home to thousands of hectares of mangrove forests, which are nurseries of fish and shrimps while these creeks from Karachi to Thatta are fishing grounds for the fishermen.

Talking on other issues of the fishermen, Shah said a recent United Nations study reported that more than two-thirds of the world's fisheries have been overfished or are fully harvested and more than one third are in a state of decline because of factors such as the loss of essential fish habitats, pollution, and global warming.

The fishermen have been suffering series of problems. Ghastly increasing marine pollution, unconventional and untraditional fishing practices including destructive nets and deep-sea trawlers have not only over fished and ruined the ecosystem but have been drastically affecting livelihood of fishermen.

Pakistan Peoples Party's Sindh Assembly Member Mahmood Alam Jamot said that Pakistan has coast of 1,050 kilometres, of which Balochistan coast was spread over 700 kilometres and Sindh coast was spread over 350 kilometres. However, Sindh's 2.5

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million fishermen who directly or indirectly depended over marine and fresh water fisheries were economically depressed and lacked basis facilities.

He said that use of banned nets damaged the fish stocks, so they should neither use those nets themselves nor allow others to use.

Participants demanded that islands were property of the fishermen of Balochistan and Sindh. Thus, no construction should be made over them and the presidential ordinance should be withdrawn. Foreign deep-sea trawlers, who are waiting near Karachi coast, should not be issued licenses, as they damage fish stocks and are a threat to livelihood of fisherfolks.

In order to reduce marine pollution, no industrial as well as residential waste be discharged in to the sea without treatment. They also demanded that at least 35 maf water should be released downstream Kotri to provide life to the Indus Delta.



Researcher and historian Gul Hassan Kalmati said that they needed to initiate joint struggle to save their assets. He said that PPP who is in majority in senate of Pakistan, should take up the issue over there.

Civil society representatives Usman Baloch, Fatima Majeed, President Awami Workers Party Sindh Bakhshal Thalho, fisherfolk leader Jan Alam Jamot, Abdul Khaliq Junejo and HRCP Sindh Co-Chairman Asad Butt also addressed the gathering.

Fishermen demand protection of their rights

Fishermen of Karachi have demanded access to basic rights and free access to the fishing along with imposition of ban on deep sea trawlers.

Leaders of the fishermen community said this during a 'fishermen convention' held at Baba Island on Thursday, January 21, 2021. The convention was attended by thousands of fishermen and jointly organized by Pakistan Bonafide Fishermen Forum and Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum.

PFF Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah, Bonafide Fishermen's leader Zahid Bhatti, Muhammad Hussain and Haji Ali addressed the convention.

They said that fishermen were founders of Karachi but they were neglected by the policy makers. Thus, they were living a miserable life without basic facilities in their areas. They are deprived of water, education, health, electricity, gas, roads, livelihood and other basic necessities of life.

The ill planning and controversial policies of the policy makers had affected the livelihood of fishermen while some federal and provincial security institutions were harassing them in the name of security while they go on fishing in the sea. They are being deprived of their livelihood like they were fishermen on another country.

They said that the sea was source of their livelihood and they wanted their access to their right without and hindrances and international and Pakistani laws. They considered any hindrance in their livelihood as



injustice.

Presenting their charter of demand, fishermen demanded that in the name of security, fishermen should not be harassed, deep sea trawlers be banned. Marine pollution could become dangerous, thus, domestic and industrial waste should not be thrown into the sea.

Usage of harmful nets should be banned and in order to protect mangrove forests, their cutting should be stopped.

They demanded that children of fishermen should be provided jobs in Pakistan Navy, Maritime Security Agency, KPT, Port Qasim, Sindh Fisheries Department and Karachi Fish Harbour Authority.

They said that rates of consumable goods were increasing on daily basis, but prices of fish and shrimp were fixed in 1982, which continued in the market. Prices of inputs like diesel, ration, net etc had also increased but traders and owners of the factories were offering them lower rates. Thus, prices of fish and shrimp should be revised.

The charter of demands said that in the sake of sustainable development, fishermen should be provided loans at lower markups. They should be provided right of worker and be given social security and other incentives. They should be provided training for the processing and packing of the seafood according to the international standards. They said that during ban on fishing in June and July, each and every fisherman should be provided Rs20,000 per month allowance by the government and their lives be insured, their rights be protected and Sindh Sustainable Policy should be formulated.

They announced to united all the fishermen and initiate struggle for the achievement of their rights.



Badin, Thatta and Sanghar activity report

Mobilization Meetings

Six mobilization meetings were held at village Pir Aalam Shah, Village Mohammad Hassan Mallah in district Badin, village Jadopur, village Natho Khan Mallah in district Sanghar. Simultaneously two meetings were held in Karachi in this regard. The level of awareness of fishing community was increased regarding issues faced the community particularly illegal occupation on water bodies and importance of license and its renewal. The meetings were participated by majority of people, male & female, from fishing community.



However a meeting was held with Sindh Fisheries Department district Badin regarding illegal occupation and atrocities borne out by the fishing community of 'Hungry Dhar Nero Dhoru' which is occupied by local influential that had been reported to the concerned authorities repeatedly as the lake is public water body that falls jurisdiction of Sindh Fisheries Department district Badin administratively. Although the concerned authorities assured to the delegation of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and representatives of communities; the action had not yet been taken properly to secure the livelihood of poor small scale fishermen. A meeting was also held with Sindh Fisheries Department district Sanghar regarding the issuance of/renewal of fishing licenses and removal of illegal of encroachment of all occupied water bodies. Deputy Director Fisheries Department district Sanghar reassured Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (Pff) team that the illegal encroachments over all water bodies in district Sanghar would be elevated in accordance with the injunctions of Sindh High Court.

Theatre Performance

A theatre was organized in village Tayab Mallah. The performance theme had been subdivided in three sub-themes namely prosperous days of Indus Delta, connectivity with other water bodies, cyclones and current situation & impact of livelihood of coastal communities fishing as well as agriculture in the coastal belt irrespective of administrative division. The performance was delivered by the theatre group of Pakistan Fishfork Forum (Pff) district Badin. The programme was attended by more than 200 participants including male, female and children belonging to villages Shaikh Kerhio Bhandari, Haji Hajjam Mallah, Kathiario Mallah, Ali Mohammad Mallah, Gaji Mallah, Khamu Mallah and Chanessar Mallah.

Successive disasters devastated the entire ecosystem of the deltaic region rather pushed the communities into abyssal socioeconomically. A first set of the play focused on a household who seemed happy and content on the catch and flow of water in the mighty Indus River which was flowing to the brim this frame indicated how the people of delta were happy and well-off when the river was flowing in full swing and there was no obstacle. All living around were quite happy and there was abundance of natural things including domestic traditional vegetables, cheese, butter, its bye-products and honey. No any single person in the delta was anxious about their livelihood security. Food production was abundance everywhere in the locality and around. Second frame



(prelude) frightens the happy families living in jubilant village by sharing information that a cyclone has been striking with their areas. To begin with, Mr. Mohammad Umar Mallah, general secretary Pff, spoke briefly about the struggle of fisherfolk Forum (Pff) and what it has so far taken up the major achievements. Later on, Mr. Mohammad Mithan, president Pff, emphasized the need to take control of water bodies that was possible only if they had licenses that legitimize the ownership.

In the end Mr. Fida Soomro address audience briefly. He highlighted the very purpose of organizing the theatre particularly in that was a strategic point where catch from part of Shaikhani Ghari was collected there and people from different areas gathered there. The theatre was just a medium to conceive and disseminate message of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum to other areas of Sindh province regarding challenges which were manageable if proper approach was made by all of them. Later on, he thanked all the participants for devoting their time out of hectic moments to receive essential message through performance and the focal persons of different units vowed to be responsible for convincing fishermen from their areas to take lead in that regard.

District Dialogue District Badin

A district dialogue was arranged at Gymkhana district Badin on illegal encroachment on water bodies by influential persons. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Mohammad Ali Shah who addressed the session. The participants were informed that there were 1219 public water bodies in Sindh province which provided livelihood to more than 2.5 million fishermen. Fresh water bodies were auctioned till 2007; PFF struggled continuously regarding this injustice raised voice against it at different forums. Fishing community was behaved discriminatorily historically despite of the face that they were custodian and owners of those waters bodies since centuries.

In 2011 Sindh Assembly amended Sindh Fisheries



Ordinance 1980, which inter alia, included deletion of word lease abolishing contract system and establishing license system in Sindh. Sindh High Court in an order on September 28, 2017 had directed to the district administrations to ensure no encroachment near the fishing ponds be made by anyone. It also directed the fisheries department to make sure that the licenses was issued to the fishermen would be without any discrimination. Currently, they were barred from influential and powerful actors despite the fact that they were holding licenses issued under Sindh Fisheries (Amendment Act) and rule 3 of Sindh Fisheries Rules 1983. The situation was very critical when decisions of courts were openly dishonored and basic human rights were violated so sturdily. It casts adverse impact on the livelihood of local fishermen. Such a situation warrants an early action, he said.

The session was also addressed by Mr. Taj Mohammad Mallah (MPA), Mr. Mohammad Iftikhar Brohi Assistant Director Fisheries Department, Mr. Mustafa Jamali Press Club, Muslim Hand representative, Mr. Tanveer Arain (Media), Mr. Allah Rakhio Mallah, Civil Society representatives, Mr. Mohammad Siddique SRSO, Mr. Shoukat Memon General Secretary Press Club, Ms. Mehwish PFF, Ms. Noorjehan Global, Ms. Samina LHDP, Ms. Humera Arain Soormi Development Organization, Mr. Yousif Manzoor Press Club, Mr. Shahbaz Sindhi student, Mr. Mohammad Moosa Mallah Nero Dhoro, Mr. Khuda Bux Mallah Nero Dhoro, Mr. Mithan Mallah, Mr. Umar Mallah, representatives/focal persons of fishing community. Participants said that illegal encroachment was gross violation of fundamental human rights; it deprived small scale fishermen from right to subsistence that is

non-derogable in any way. Mr. Taj Mohammad Mallah (PMA) expressed anger over fisheries department which issued fishing licenses to irrelevant persons and asked them to explain under whose pressurizes those licenses were issues either it was political or other so that it might be dealt with accordingly.

He commended Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum for arranging a splendid programme and catching attention towards seriousness of encroachment issues which was encountered by fishing community since years. He assured further that whatever demands/legislative agenda about fisheries was shared with him certainly would be raised at Sindh Assembly Floor. Participants demanded an end to illegal encroachment of water bodies and vowed to initiate struggle against it.

District Dialogue District Thatta

District Dialogue on “acknowledged and protection of personhood rights of Indus Delta” was arranged at Gymkhana in district Thatta. The Indus Delta was one of the distinguishing locations of the worldwide due to its uniqueness of ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources. The Indus Delta had been victimized, since last couple of decades by the inhuman attitude through constructing large scale structures and networks diverting flow of water (blood) and enriching silt to keep delta alive.

Indus Delta covers an area of about 600,000 hectares is said to be the seventh largest ecology in the World. The Indus delta is situated on the borders between Pakistan and India. It has 17 major creeks and innumerable minor creeks, mud flats and fringing mangroves. Fishing is one of the important economic sectors in Pakistan Coastal fisheries sector in Pakistan

provides employment to about 300,000 fishermen directly. Additionally, another 400,000 people are employed in ancillary industries. Majority of those fishermen depend for their livelihoods on the deltaic region. Indus Delta ecosystem has been rich in nutrients that provide a nursery and an early feeding ground for many varieties of Shrimp and fish. According to the independent experts, 'the reduction of fresh water flows from Indus River has badly hit the ecosystem of Indus Delta situated in the coastal zone of Sindh province'. One of the main parts of this ecosystem i.e. Mangrove forests' which have proved to be the breeding grounds for the juvenile fish and shrimps, have also been badly affected. Mangroves depend upon a steady supply of fresh water to keep the salinity levels within certain limits.

Addressing to the dialogue Mr. Mohammad Ali Shah emphasized that there was a need of time to stand together and act upon together at every forum/front whether it was provincial, national or international as the issue was not merely a local rather it was a global one in scope. Further he expressed views that Indus and its Delta must be granted all fundamental human rights particularly right to live, to survive and to "smile". He said that Pff strongly believed, 'deltaic people had power to protect these vital lifelines but only if they were connected together to stand up and speak out with the power of collective action. PFF We demanded provincial government to grant personhood rights to the Indus River immediately in the best interests of people of the province Sindh.





Youth Meetings

Introductory meetings were held with youth groups in target districts namely Badin, Sanghar, Tharparkar and Karachi. The meetings were held at central place of villages convenient to participate by all people particularly youth group (male & female). The youth was oriented about the situation of their ancestral areas with mounting pressure on existing resource and future scenario of traditional livelihoods in these areas in the context of climate variability. They were also explained the purpose and importance of taking lead by youth in this situation for the betterment of their areas, communities and sources of livelihoods

Youth formation Meeting

A first meeting of youth group formation was held in district Tharparkar followed by Karachi district. The participants were oriented about the struggle of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) and trail of substantial achievements. They were further informed that PFF had plays always been the voice of marginal and vulnerable people irrespective of caste, creed and

boundaries. After general discussion on Pff, its struggle and major achievement, the importance of formation of youth group to lead resolution of their issues related to their lives and livelihood were discussed enthusiastically. The participants were informed how the degradation of environment and existing resources was ravaged which was to be protected through raising mass awareness and coalition building with like-minded community and stakeholders. Activation of youth group provided strong assurance to sustainable solution of those challenges.

A session of responding to queries of participants was held in which different queries of participants were addressed and different views and ideas were exchanged. Thus, the meeting was concluded with exchange of vote to & fro. The meeting was participated by more than 160 youth in respective districts as per schedule.



