

REMINDER-1

March 28, 2009

Dr. Ishrat-ul-Ibad Khan
Governor of Sindh

Mr. Agha Siraj Durrani
Minister for Local Govt, GoS.

Syed Mustafa Kamal
Nazim, CDGK

Mir Hussain Ali
Secretary for Environment, GoS

Syed Qaim Ali Shah
Chief Minister of Sindh

Mr. Askari Taqvi
Minister for Environment, GoS

Mr. Fazal-ur-Rehman
Chief Secretary of Sindh

Mr. Manzoor Qadir
CCOB, KBCA



Dear Well-wishers of Karachi,

Re: **Brazen Encroachments on Parks/Amenity Spaces in North Nazimabad**

- 1) Plot ST-5/2/E (Park, 2.03 acres), ST-5/4/E (Playground, 2 acres),
ST-5/1/E, (Hazoori Bagh, 1.35 acres)
- 2) Plot ST-4/D, (Bagh-e-Afroz, 3.5 acres)
- 3) Plot ST-1/I, (Bagh-e-Dilkusha, 2.75 acres)
- 4) Plot ST-9/A, Block-A, (Bagh-e-Babar)
- 5) Plot ST-5/K (Taj Mahal Bagh, 6 acres)

Why the deafening silence on our previous letter dated February 11, 2009 on the above subject?

Each one of you is sworn to uphold the law and safeguard the public interest. The following laws are being blatantly violated before your very eyes:

- ✓ *Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997* (incl. Reg. 4)
- ✓ *Sindh Local Government Ordinance, 2001* (incl. Regs. 67 - 70, Sixth Schedule)
- ✓ *Sindh Building Control Ordinance, 1979* (incl. Section 6.1)
- ✓ *Karachi Building & Town Planning Regulations, 2002* (incl. Reg. 18-4.1),

Such amenity plots cannot be allotted by CDGK for residential purposes, nor can building plans be approved by KBCA, nor can construction be undertaken without approval.

Attached are comparative satellite images, dated 2004 and 2009, which expose illegal construction on the above parks and playgrounds. This criminal activity is being sponsored by the local UC and Town Nazims.

We once again ask you to have this 'daylight robbery stopped' of spaces meant for public recreation and play. The matter is most urgent as construction is progressing rapidly.

Sincerely,

Amber Alibhai

Mrs. Amber Alibhai
General Secretary
Shehri-CBE

Encl: 5 comparative images
Ardeshir Cowasjee's column of 22-2-2009

c.c. Chairman, Standing Committee on Environment, Sindh Assembly
Chairman Standing Committee on Local Government, Sindh Assembly
Chairman Standing Committee on Housing & Works, Sindh Assembly

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**ST-5/4 (Playground), (2.00 Acre), ST 5/1 (Hazuri Bagh) (1.35 Acres)
ST 5/2 Park (2.03 Acres) Block E, North Nazimabad, Karachi**

BEFORE

Image taken 2004



AFTER

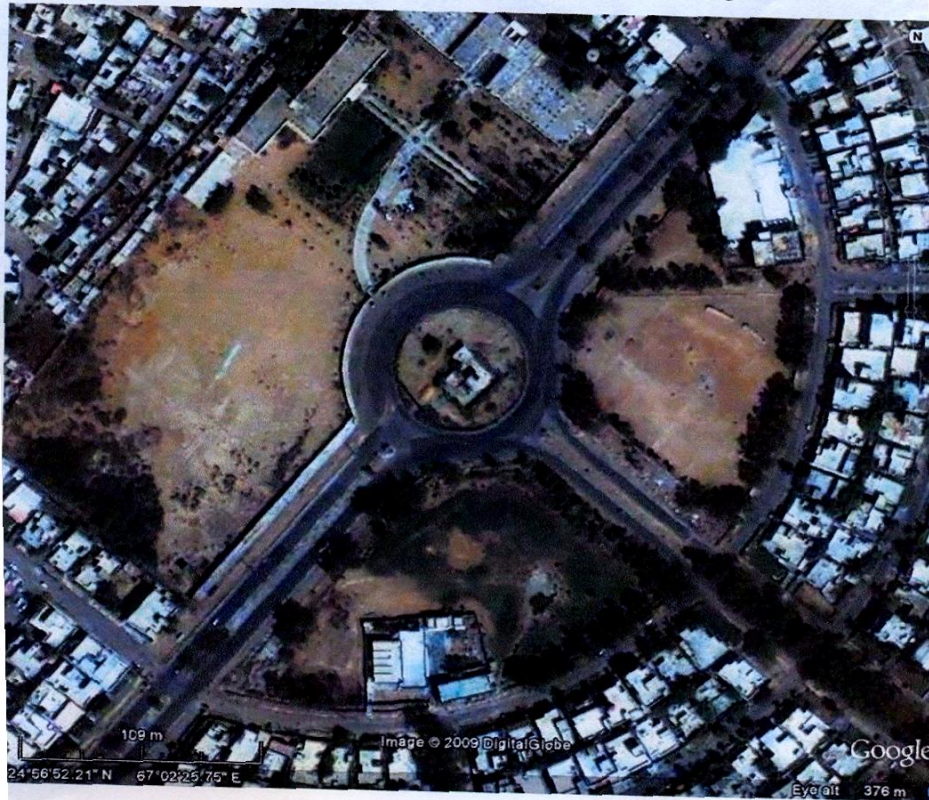
Same image taken February 27th 2009



SI-4 (Bagh-e-Dil Afroz: 3.5 acres), Block D,
ST-1 (Bagh e Dil Kusha: 2.75 Acres) Block-I, North Nazimabad

BEFORE

Image taken in 200



AFTER

Same image taken February 27th 2009



ST-9, Block-A (Bagh e Babar), North Nazimabad, Karachi

BEFORE

Google image 2004



AFTER

Image taken February 27th 2009



ST 5, Park (Taj Mahal Bagh: 6 Acres)

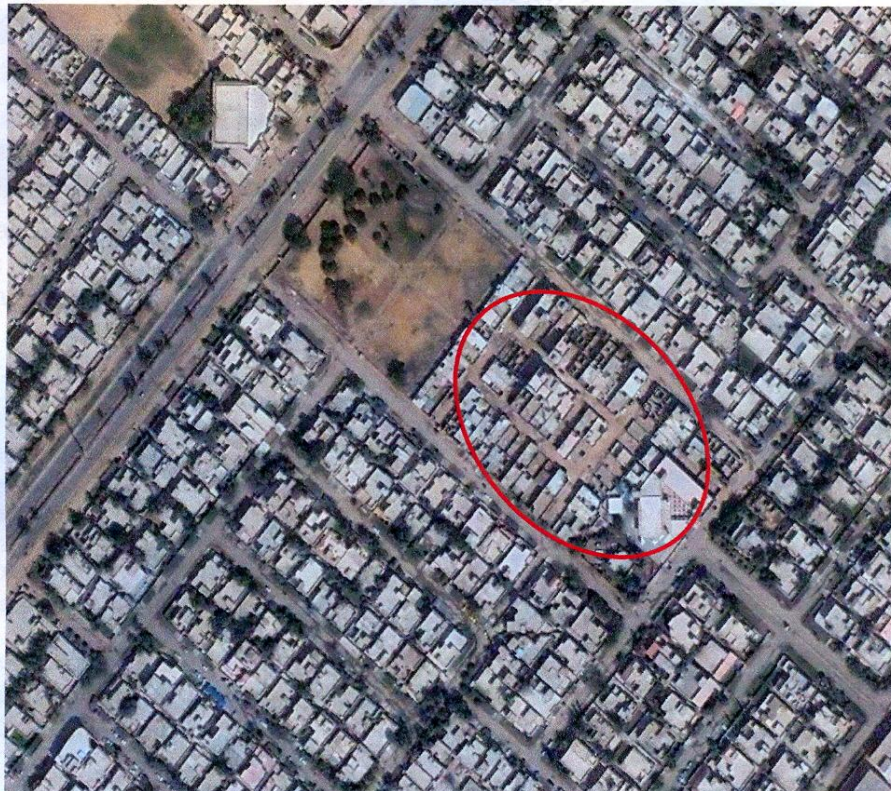
BEFORE

Image taken 2004



AFTER

Same image taken on 27th February 2009



'I Own Karachi' — and can sell it!

By Ardeshir Cowasjee

KARACHI, this increasingly ravaged city, has a dire history of the conversion of amenity plots to commercial and residential use.

Virtually every 'ruler' or administrator has left his mark on the exploding metropolis by giving away what was not his to give — public spaces and civic-use plots that were planned by experts for the common good.

At the Corporate Summit on Climate Change held in Karachi last Thursday, the city nazim Mustafa Kamal told a gathering of some 200 businessmen, industrialists, environmentalists, academics and NGOs that he had learnt that day for the first time of the importance of the environment. He admitted to being unfamiliar with the Environment Protection Act 1997 and with the effects of climate change.

He welcomed an offer from LEAD (Leadership for Environment & Development Pakistan) to assist him in evaluating his development strategy and his proposed solutions to the city's problems, including mass transportation, treatment of 400 million gallons per day of raw sewage presently being dumped into the sea, and the management of 10,000 tons of garbage generated daily.

Coincidentally, whilst the nazim was speaking at the DHA Golf Club, members of the MQM were passing a City Council resolution at the KMC Hall, barely eight miles away, converting over 40 acres of amenity space at Sewage Treatment Plant-2 in Mehmoodabad (located at N24o51'6", E67o04'27" on Google-Earth) into a housing colony. This was done despite the protests of opposition members who foresaw "horrible devasta-

tion" if land assigned for a treatment plant expansion was swallowed up. They explained that many previous attempts to misuse and convert amenity spaces had been struck down by the courts.

In July 2008, a similar illegal conversion ('commercialisation') of a 2.5-acre space on the Clifton beach was attempted by the City Council treasury benches (over the objections of the opposition members) for use as a five-star hotel-cum-shopping complex. Earlier this month, a blitz of ads in the press announced the auction of the beach plot for a reserved price of Rs119 crores.

With seven others, I filed a case in the high court of Sindh. It was explained to Justice Gulzar Ahmed that Clifton was the only beach promenade in the city, and was protected under law as an amenity space to be used for public recreation. On recognising the merit in the argument the good judge suspended the auction that was to be held on Feb 17, and issued notice to the city government. Now, residents of the area, especially those with beach-front apartments, must join the fray to protect the environment and the beach.

Over the past three years, our City Council under the slogan "I Own Karachi!" has passed a number of resolutions converting the status of parks, playgrounds, public building plots and amenity spaces to residential and commercial use. Auctions or encroachment/conversion of such spaces are the order of the day. I have attempted on several occasions to bring these flagranties of the law to the notice of Nazim Mustafa Kamal.

In some instances, individuals and community groups in affected areas have filed petitions in

the high court and have obtained ad-interim stays. Herewith a partial list of amenity spaces in the city under attack by various mafias.

Kashmir Road — China Ground (five acres); Kashmir Road — KMC Sports Complex (2.5 acres); 148/1 Tunisia Lines — Webb Ground (five acres); ST-1 North Nazimabad (two acres); North Nazimabad — Green Belt (1.5 acres); K-28/108 — Gutter Baghicha (480 acres); KDA Scheme No.32 — Kidney Hill Park (62 acres); Mehmoodabad — TP-2 (40 acres); ST-10, ST-9/1, ST-9/16 Gulistan-i-Jauhar (one acre); ST-9 Block-A North Nazimabad — Bagh-i-Baber (three acres); ST-5/1 Block-E North Nazimabad — Hazoori Bagh (1.35 acres); ST-5/2 Block-E North Nazimabad (2.03 acres); ST-5/4 Block-E North Nazimabad (two acres); ST-4 Block-D North Nazimabad — Bagh-i-Dilafroz (three acres); ST-1 Block-1 North Nazimabad — Bagh-i-Dilkhusa (three acres); Block-L Sector 11 Orangi Township — Al-Mehran Ground; ST-3/B Block-6 Federal 'B' Area (one acre); ST-5 Block-14 Gulshan-i-Iqbal — DC (East) Office (8.3 acres); ST-36 Block-3 Clifton — Clifton Beach Promenade (2.5 acres); ST-13 Sector-6/F Block-6-F Korangi — Mehran Town (2.27 acres); ST-14 Sector-5 Block-6 Korangi — Mehran Town (2.26 acres); ST-15 Sector-5 Block 6-F Korangi (0.87 acres); ST-17 Sector-5 Block 6-F Korangi (0.41 acres); ST-18 Sector-5 Block 6-F Korangi (0.41 acres); ST-20 Sector-5 Block 6-F Korangi (one acre); ST-21 Sector-5 Block 6-F Korangi (0.95 acres).

To repeat, as has been repeated time and again, amenity plots and spaces are established for the public welfare and common good of all citizens. They

cannot be converted or used for other purposes.

The very concept of establishing a housing colony on an amenity park plot is an anathema, especially in a situation where there is a severe paucity of open spaces, parks and playgrounds for the burgeoning population of this city.

When Enrique Penalosa, the well-known and well-regarded former mayor of Bogota, Colombia, visited Karachi some weeks ago he rightly asked what our future generations of congested city residents will be able to do when they find that we have greedily occupied and converted most of our parks, playgrounds and open spaces. What will they think of us, their forebears? That we were uncaring, selfish and rapacious, our greed for money never slaked? He pointed out the obvious fact that wealth and other assets can be created in future, but eaten-up open spaces and parks once meant for the beneficial use of citizens can never be recreated.

If the city government needs money to run its functions, it must be raised through taxes or other legitimate means, not through the illegal sale of land notified for amenity and public purposes.

My team and I are tired of battling increasing gangs of marauders determined to lay waste to Karachi — as millions of citizen bystanders, who should know better, look on silently. Perhaps the superior courts will take suo moto notice of this rape of the city and ask why the applicable laws are being brazenly flouted. Perhaps the 'silent majority' will become ashamed of their apathy and act.

Is our city, and its open spaces, not worth saving? ■
arfc@cyber.net.pk

February 11, 2009



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Governor of Sindh
Karachi

Syed Qaim Ali Shah
Chief Minister of Sindh
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Mr. Agha Siraj Durrani
Sindh Minister for Local Govt.
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Mir Hussain Ali
Sindh Secretary Environment
Karachi

Syed Mustafa Kamal
Nazim, CDGK
Karachi

Mr. Manzoor Qadir
CCOB, KBCA
Karachi

Re: Encroachments on Parks/Amenity Spaces

- 1. Plot No.ST-5/2, Block-E, North Nazimabad**
- 2. Plot No.ST-4, Block-D, North Nazimabad**
- 3. ST-1, Block -I, North Nazimabad**
- 4. ST-3, Block-A, North Nazimabad**
- 5. Green Belt encroached by Pizza Hutt near Matric Board**

Dear Sirs

We received an email titled 'Vanishing Parks of Nazimabad' (copy attached). We personally went to inspect the areas mentioned, and then tallied them with CDGK plans of the areas concerned and found that all the accusations are correct and need to be dealt with. We have attached pictures taken of the various locations in various phases of (illegal) development, along with images of the CDGK plans, and satellite images of the areas.

Construction and development on the above mentioned plots is well underway, and in some cases very close to completion. The amenity plots which are huge public spaces have been covered into private residencies with newly built houses, and all the space has been sold to buyers illegally. The above developments are clearly not necessary, since they do not cater to those desperately in need of a roof above their heads. They are nothing but money making schemes contracted by corrupt developers. It is shameful that the amenity spaces of Nazimabad, the best planned area of Karachi city in terms of park and open space

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are being encroached upon with such impunity. It is high time the government stopped behaving like spectators to all the corruption in this city, and stepped in and exerted their authority where it needs to be exerted – against these illegal activities. The scale of the above mentioned activities makes one wonder where illegal contractors stop and regulations officers begin; because clearly none or little action is being taken to stop this blatant, physically obvious violation of the law. **These spaces have always been park spaces and are designed and located strategically for this purpose.** After all this work and planning has gone behind them it would be a shame to lose them at this point. The government should do something to halt the above projects immediately and restore them as parks and open spaces and take the developers involved to task since official plans of the city clearly identify all the above mentioned spaces as **amenity plots.**

Please take lawful action and as soon as possible.

Thanking you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Amber Alibhai
General Secretary
Shehri-CBE

Encl. Complaint
Photographs

c.c. Chairman Standing Committee on Environment
Chairman Standing Committee on Public Accounts
Chairman Standing Committee on Housing & Works

Subject: Vanishing Parks of North Nazimabad

Dear Sir,

I am a humble admirer of your objective analysis especially your effective efforts in safe guarding public interest against encroachment and manipulations backed by influential people.

There is major manipulation of public property well under progress in North Nazimabad Area. Huge park areas have been encroached upon in the name of restaurants and housing schemes. There is one green belt area that formerly hosted a mini golf course near Board office and 4 public parks/ play ground on Shahrah e Noor Jehan that have been converted into unnamed housing schemes. This massive manipulation cannot be done without high level backing, political or other wise. I have attached a birds eye view of the areas pinpointing the encroached sections.

The fact that is killing me the most is total silence on this issue on any media whatsoever and the ease with which this is being done under broad daylight. I have written letters in some newspapers but none was published. Although, in consideration of the prevailing degradation of our society I am hopeless of getting this practice checked but request you to use your position in highlighting the matter in appropriate manner for the matter of record and historical reference in case this nations decides to uphold law of the land.

Regards,

Muhammad Zafar Iqbal
North Nazimabad Karachi

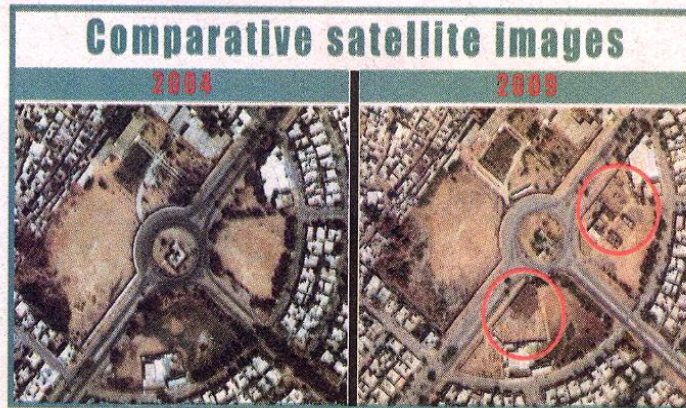
North Nazimabad residents fast losing their parks

Staff Report

KARACHI: The Shehri-CBE, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), has approached higher authorities, expressing its concern about the encroachment of certain parks within the precincts of North Nazimabad Town.

The Shehri-CBE has sent letters to selective heads of authorities, containing complaints of the citizens residing in the vicinity of the encroached parks. The Shehri-CBE has also dispatched a reminder on March 28, titled 'Brazen Encroachments on Parks/Amenity Spaces in North Nazimabad', which contains the names and locations of the encroached parks. The parks include Plot ST-5/2/E (Park, 2.03 acres), ST-5/4/E (Playground, 2 acres), ST-5/1/E, (Hazoori Bagh, 1.35 acres), Plot ST-4/D, (Bagh-e-Afroz, 3.5 acres), Plot ST-1/I, (Bagh-e-Dilkusha, 2.75 acres), Plot ST-9/A, Block-A, (Bagh-e-Babar) and Plot ST-5/K (Taj Mahal Bagh, 6 acres).

In the reminder, the Shehri-CBE questioned the silence of the authorities over the previous letter and reminded them of their responsibility to uphold the law and safe-



guard public interests.

According to the NGO, the laws being blatantly violated include the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 (incl. Reg. 4), Sindh Local Government Ordinance, 2001 (incl. Regs. 67 - 70, Sixth Schedule), Sindh Building Control Ordinance, 1979 (incl. Section 6.1) and Karachi Building & Town Planning Regulations, 2002 (incl. Reg. 18-4.1).

The Shehri-CBE claimed that such amenity plots cannot be allotted for residential purposes, building plans cannot be approved and construction cannot be undertaken without approval.

The NGO has also attached

comparative satellite images with the letters, dated 2004 and 2009, which expose illegal constructions on the above mentioned parks and playgrounds. Shehri-CBE has alleged that local union councils and town nazims are sponsoring this criminal activity.

In the letter dated February 11, which was sent to the Sindh Governor, Chief Minister, Local Government Minister, Environment Minister, Chief Secretary, Environment Secretary, City Nazim and KBCA Chief Controller, the Shehri-CBE wrote that construction and development on the above-mentioned plots was well underway and in some cases was close to

completion. The amenity plots, which are huge public spaces, have been converted into private residencies with newly built houses and all the space has been sold to buyers illegally.

The letter said that these spaces were originally allotted for parks and are designed and located strategically for this purpose. The government should do something to stop the illegal projects immediately and restore the plots as parks and open spaces and take the developers involved to task since official plans of the city clearly identify all the above-mentioned spaces as amenity plots.

The Shehri-CBE had received a number of complaints by citizens of North Nazimabad Town. One such complaint from a citizen mentioned that there is a green belt area that formerly hosted a mini golf course near the Board of Secondary Education Karachi office and four public parks and playgrounds on Shahra-e-Noor Jahan that have been converted into unnamed housing schemes. This massive manipulation cannot be done without high level backing, political or otherwise, the complainant added.

Land-grabbers occupying North Nazimabad parks

DAWN SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2009



SATELLITE images taken in 2004 (left) and 2009 (right) of one of the parks in North Nazimabad show that new structures have come up on the empty spaces present in the older image.

By Bhagwandas

KARACHI, April 4: Encroachers, reportedly patronised by the land mafia and influential groups in the city, have launched a well-planned assault on the open public spaces — parks, playgrounds, etc — in North Nazimabad, and the illegal structures are being raised at break-neck speed, Dawn has learnt.

The city district government Karachi, while accepting that the land is being occupied, has expressed its inability to stop the violation of the rules, which are otherwise so strict that even a plot reserved for one type of amenity can-

not be used for another.

The illegal structures being raised are of residential as well as commercial nature and billions of rupees are reportedly being pocketed by those behind the encroachments at the cost of the common people and area residents.

The sources said that these parks and playgrounds are located along Shahrah-i-Noor Jahan in Taimuria. North Nazimabad (KDA Scheme No 2). This is said to be one of the best planned schemes in the city and was offered by the government to the people of the city with ample open areas.

The open areas that have been encroached upon are: Plot No ST 5/2 Block E (a park having an area of 2.03 acres); ST 5/4 Block E (playground, two acres); ST 5/1 Block E (Hazoori Bagh, area 1.35 acres); ST 4 Block D (Bagh-i-Afroze,

area 3.5 acres); ST 1 Block I (Bagh-i-Dilkusha, area 2.75 acres); ST 9 Block A (Bagh-i-Babar) and ST 5 Block K (Taj Mahal Bagh having an area of six acres).

Responding to Dawn's queries, the CDGK's anti-encroachment chief Matanat Ali Khan took the details and said that he would look into the issue and would respond soon.

When he did respond, Mr Khan conceded that the structures were being raised on amenity spaces, but refused to give any further comment or to launch any anti-encroachment drive.

Responding to Dawn's queries, the CDGK's Master Plan executive district officer Ateeq Baig said that under the law an amenity plot — park, playground etc — cannot be used for any other purpose, nor could its status be changed.

He said that the status of the amenity spaces in North Nazimabad along

Shahrah-i-Noor Jahan had not been changed, nor is there any such proposal in the process.

Talking to Dawn a member of Shehri — a non-governmental organisation which has been raising civic issues — said that it had approached various government officials as well as politicians on the issue, but none of them had responded. He said that letters with all the relevant information had been sent to Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ibad, Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Chief Secretary Fazal-ur-Rehman, Local Government Minister Agha Siraj Durrani, City Nazim Syed Mustafa Kamal, Environment Minister Askari Taqvi, Environment Secretary Mir Hussain Ali and Karachi Building Control Authority chief Manzoor Qadir many times, but none of them had responded.

The NGO's representative said that the laws being violated included the Sindh Local Government Ordinance 2001 (incl. Regs. 67-70, Sixth Schedule); Karachi Building & Town Planning Regulations 2002 (incl. 1804.1); Sindh Building Control Ordinance 1979 (incl. 6.1); and the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997 (incl. 4).

Shehri said that such amenity spaces cannot be allotted by the CDGK for residential purposes, nor can building plans be approved by the KBCA, while the construction also cannot be undertaken without the approval of the plan.

It said that though the Sindh government as well as the CDGK had not taken any steps to stop the illegal constructions, the organisation would continue to raise the issue till someone in the corridors of power moved to protect public interests.

Parks in N. Nazimabad disappearing...

2004

2009

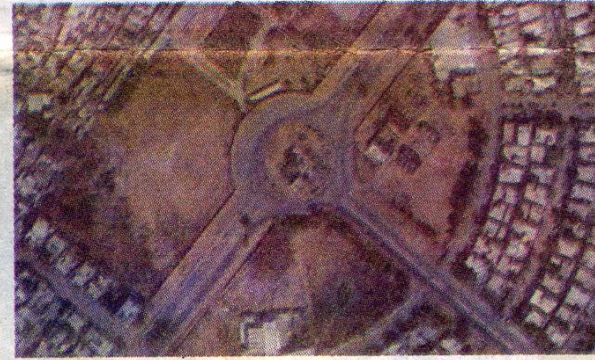
Bagh-e-Babar Park ST-9 Block A



Playground ST-5/A, ST-5/1, ST-5/2 Block E



Bagh-e-Dil Afroz, Block D, Bagh-e-Dil Kusha, Block I



Taj Mahal Bagh, ST-5



Photo courtesy Shehri-CBE