



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

SHEHRI

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Karachi's Coastal Environment: Facing Extinction?

As 205 acres of ecologically rich and sensitive land in the Eastern Backwater area is earmarked for development of a residential colony, *Shehri* in this *Special Report* follows the murky trail of events and identifies the role played by various actors, highlighting the urgency of saving our precious coastal environment.

The principles and development of the coastal zone environment is based on certain sound principles which can be best understood by explaining the word "environment" which has been interpreted in various different ways. A broad definition of environment could be the area that surrounds humans, and that environment would include not only the natural environment, but also structures and systems created by humans to prevent disasters and enhance convenience.

Coastal zones contain unique, irreplaceable ecosystems. At the same time, coastal zones are subject to intense use



(L) A satellite image of the Indus Delta, showing the extensive creek system
(R) Chinna Creek: Part of the Eastern Backwaters in Karachi

by humans for transportation activities, resources and energy procurement, industrial uses and recreation. Furthermore coastal zones are the first lines of Defence against inland disasters, in short, there are three functional aspects - provision of ecological services, disaster prevention and human utilization - which are part of the human relationship to coastal zones. Each of these aspect is intricately linked. Consequently, humans must monitor and manage these three facts of the coastal zones in an integrated manner to ensure that the human relationship to coastal zones remains harmonious.

Creeks of the Indus Delta

Kajhar Creek

Sir Creek (it marks the coastal border between Pakistan & India)

Wari Creek

Dabbo Creek

Waddi Khuddi Creek

Korangi Creek

Chinna Creek

Clifton Creek

Ghizri Creek

Nango Creek

Ghoro Creek

Khudi Creek

Khudi Creek

Yaki Bunder Khuddi Creek

Char Creek

Motni Creek

Sisa Creek



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EDITORIAL

Let Karachi's interests come first, for a change!

As the newly elected local government representatives settle in to deliver upon their promise to the people, there exists an urgent need to develop and nurture meaningful participatory mechanisms between them and the civil society so that mutually beneficial strategies and partnerships for achieving commonly shared goals and objectives can be formulated and strengthened.

If we take the case of Karachi city, then the initial signs indicate a promising potential for growth in this direction. The elected officials, realizing the need of soliciting continued support and assistance of civil society groups for gaining greater acceptability of their plans and projects, have responded positively to the offer of assistance by local NGO's/CBO's and other citizen groups. The citizen groups also seem to comprehend the enormity of the task faced by the elected officials and are willing to give them the time needed to get their act together.

This spirit of harmony and understanding of each others legitimate needs and limita-

tions bodes well for the future. However, there are many challenges that need to be overcome and countless hurdles that have to be crossed if this good beginning is to lead to concrete, tangible, visible and sustainable development and progress of this megacity. Much needed finances have to be generated, qualified people, capable of delivering upon the tasks in hand have to be encouraged and facilitated to contribute, the evils of corruption and mismanagement have to be overcome. These are only a few of the long list of challenges that need to be tackled head on.

Success can only be achieved with sincerity of purpose and a willingness to accept and adopt good ideas and proposals, from wherever they may originate. Lets for once put the interests of this city, which provides shelter, employment and enjoyment to us all, above personal and group interests. This principle should hold for both public officials and civil society groups alike. Pray not let go to waste this promising opportunity for positive change. Lets all pull, for once, in the same direction! □



Unfortunately, coastal areas are staggering under an onslaught of human activity. Throughout much of the world, coastal zones are overcrowded, overdeveloped, and over exploited.

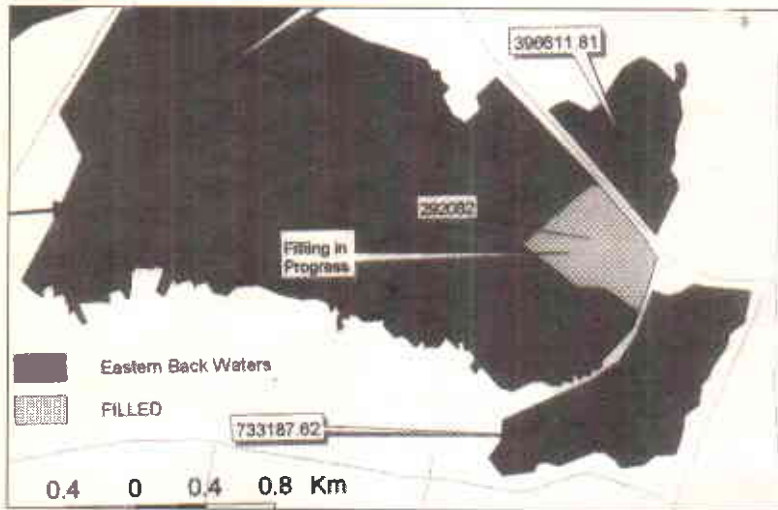
Coastal wetlands are highly productive ecosystem. Hectare for hectare, wetlands produce more

small animals; their canopies harbor hundreds of species of birds; and their estuaries shelter marine mammals. All told, some 80 species of salt-tolerant mangrove trees and shrubs cover roughly 24 million hectares throughout the world.

Pakistan is blessed with a coast-

minor creeks, mud flats and fringing mangroves. The Indus Delta Mangroves are unique in being the largest area of arid climate mangroves in the world.

However, one such area of significant environmental and economic importance. i.e. the Eastern Backwaters (including Chin-



The rot sets in as the illegal filling up of the eastern backwaters of Karachi is initiated

wildlife, both in numbers and variety, and more primary plant growth than any other habitat on earth. They filter sediment and pollutants washed off the land, trap valuable nutrients, and serve as protective buffers between land and sea. In addition, they provide vital spawning, nursery, and feeding grounds for thousands of species of fish and shellfish.

Biologists consider mangrove forests to be one of the most productive and biologically diverse wetlands on Earth, supplying habitats for more than 2,000 species of fish, shellfish, invertebrate, and epiphytic plants. Their root zones provide sanctuary for sponges, crested worms, crustacean, and mollusks, as well as algae; their inertial zones create habitats for a variety of crabs and

line of approx 1050 kilometers in length, of which 700 kilometers is in Baluchistan, the rest in Sindh. Nearly 2 million fishermen earn their living along this stretch. The coastline of Sindh forms part of the Indus Delta. It is a typical fan-shaped delta built up by the discharge of large quantities of silt washed down the Indus River from the Kara Koram and Himalaya mountain ranges. The present Delta covers an area of about 600,000 hectares and is characterized by 17 major creeks, innumerable

Pakistan is blessed with a coastline of approx 1050 kilometers in length, of which 700 kilometers is in Baluchistan, the rest in Sindh. Nearly 2 million fishermen earn their living along this stretch. The coastline of Sindh forms part of the Indus Delta.

na Creek and the Mai Kolachi region) which is part of the Karachi coastal zone, sustaining precious wetland resources is now threatened with destruction. Read below the trail of events as land best left undisturbed is being built upon. and the role played by the parties involved:

Karachi Port Trust (KPT) is the authority to manage and maintain Karachi harbour, which is the principle port of Pakistan handling 90% of the imports and exports of the coun-



try. The port is also the base for Pakistan Navy. It is also the main centre for all fish exports out of Pakistan. KPT has in its management control a large area of the Mangrove wetland i.e. the eastern and western backwaters which form part of the larger Indus delta. KPT has many responsibilities/interests, besides port activity within port limit. The mixed nature of the activities within its limits have combined to create unacceptable pollution levels.

The limits of Karachi Port were notified in 1875, 1887 then in 1940 and finally on 5th October 1991 by SRO 307 (KE)/91.

The Eastern Backwaters lagoon measures approximately 3000 acres and is virtually enclosed by built-up urban areas. The district of Keamari lies at its southwest corner, the East Wharf area of Karachi Port forms the western boundry, the city center of Karachi itself forms the northern boundry and the district of Clifton lies to the southeast. This backwater lagoon is founded on muddy sand and is stablized by the Mangrove Avicennia Marina. This water body, is an integral part of the harbor and forms part of a significant group of wet-

Around the same time, KPT began to orchestrate their own corrupt and malafide actions to benefit the members of its own KPTOCHS, they illegally allotted 130 acres to KPTOCHS.

This was all done without any EIA, without surveying the land or examining the economic and environmental impact, this would have on the harour and its hydraulic regime and the delicate mangrove eco-system.

lands showing diverse habitats. These wetlands are very important as nursery grounds for commercial fish and shrimp stocks, as well as for mangrove communities, migratory birds (especially waders) and nesting turtles. In Pakistan, government officials and politicians have over a period of time, created a culture-whereby land belonging to the citizens of Pakistan is sold for political bribe for the benefit of a few, laws are bent and the fundamental rights of the citizens are trampled upon. These actions have lead to economic loss, disappearance of amenity plots, open spaces, and have greatly contributed in deteriorating the urban and coastal environment of the city in general, including putting Karachi Port and Port Qasim in danger of silting up and therefore checking the economic life of the country to say nothing of damaging the coastal fishing industry on which 2 million people depend for their livelihood.

On 15th May 1989, the then Chief Minister of Sindh, Qaim Ali Shah wrote to the then Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto to instruct KPT to transfer 75 acres of land in Mai Kolachi to Government of Sindh (GoS) to overcome housing

shortage and to create (300 plots of 400/500 sq. yrds.) and beautify city, thus triggering a process of massive corruption and continuing land scams in the area.

Around the same time, KPT began to orchestrate their own corrupt and malafide actions to benefit the members of its own Karachi Port Trust Co-operative Housing Society (KPTOCHS). They illegally allotted 130 acres to KPTOCHS. This was all done without any EIA, without surveying the land or examining the economic and environmental impact, this would have on the harbour and its hydraulic regime and the delicate mangrove ecosystem.

These 130 acres were leased to the KPTOCHS for a term of 25 yrs u/s 18(ii) of KPT Act 1886. This lease was further granted renewal for a period of 99 years in contravention of spirit and intent of the law without taking into consideration the adverse economic / environmental consequence contenting to articles 9 of the Constitution. In addition the adverse effect of silting of Karachi Port was also ignored.

Throughout this period from 1989 - 2001 i.e. 12 years, the newsprint media has printed many concerned articles about this grave economic and environmental issue.

It is unfortunate that throughout this period the federal and the Sindh environmental protection agencies whose statuary duty it is to take action and monitor any activity which will result in environmental disaster has failed to investigate this environmental catastrophe taking place. It is



Map courtesy Karachi Sheraton Hotel & Towers



Chinna Creek

The eastern and western backwaters lagoons form an integral part of Karachi Harbour since its construction in 1843. The Chinna Creek which is the main channel of Karachi harbour is a natural creek and part of the 17 creeks of the Indus Delta. The natural dredging of the harbour is based on the hydraulic regime and the eastern backwaters lagoon plays a decisive role in it and these aspects of the harbour have not changed to date. □

ironic that KPT's initiated EIA study done at a great cost to the country, dated 25 - 1 - 1996 recommended that the unplanned dredging and reclamation should be stopped immediately in the eastern backwaters.

It is felt that this unlawful and illegal allotment of the eastern backwaters will have a devastating adverse economic and environmental impact upon Karachi harbour. The activities of Pakistan Navy could also be hindered as a result of this collusion between KPT and Sindh government.

Public functionaries cannot relax rules and regulations in such a manner and KPT and Sindh government have therefore taken malafide and illegal action by showing undue favor to a few individuals as against the greater public interest.

In addition, they continue to misuse the legal system by filing frivolous suits and petitions to gain time for reclaim-

Some Hard Facts!

- The KPTOCHS scheme violates the town planning rules and regulations.
- Extension of the lease of 99 years is contrary to KPT Act Section 18(ii).
- The illegal and clandestine manner in which these backwaters are being reclaimed amounts to an infringement of the fundamental rights of the citizens of Karachi, guaranteed by Article 9, 14, 23 and 25 read with Articles 37 and 38 of the Constitution which is enforceable by the courts in exercise of their constitutional jurisdiction.

ing, dredging and completely destroying the sub system of the eastern backwaters and the hydraulic regime of the Karachi harbour.

It is therefore urgently required that the eastern and western backwaters should be declared an integral part of the Karachi harbour and they should not be used, sold or reclaimed for the benefit of private individuals and instead should only be used for the benefit of the citizens of the city and port relative activities.

The backwaters should also be declared as a protected area and all those encroachments, which have recently been put in place should be removed and backwaters should be brought to their original condition by planting mangroves and other related steps should be initiated to revitalize the damaged lagoon. □

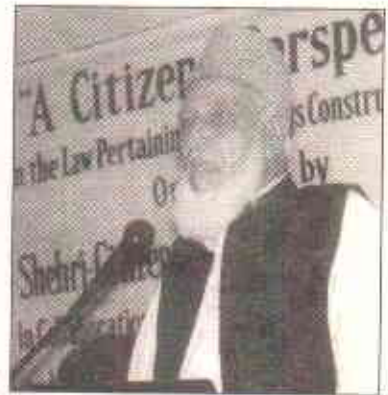


SHEHRI ACTIVITIES

Shehri Seminar: A Citizens Perspective on the law pertaining to buildings constructed in Karachi (Saturday, 20th October 2001, Hotel Avari Towers, Karachi)

Qazi Faez Isa, Member, Managing Committee, Shehri, in his introductory speech welcomed the City Chief Nazim, Mr. Naimatullah Khan to the seminar. Mr. Isa appreciated the introduction of elected government at the local level. He however said that the new local govt. should not just act as an "elected government" rather it should function as a "participatory government". Mr. Isa reminded the seminar participants that in the past we have had such experiences where elected officials after getting the vote from the people never bothered to consult them in the affairs of the government, with the result that they got alienated from the common man and the governments could not be sustained. He hoped that such would not be the case this time. He also suggested that the elected officials should reduce their dependence on the bureaucracy and depend more on the advice and

*Naimatullah Khan,
Chief Nazim,
Karachi City District*



Mr. Isa lauded the initiative of the city District Government of initiating tree plantation drive in Karachi and offered the help of Shehri in this regard.

Mr. Nooruddin Ahmed, representative of the Pakistan Engineering Council, in his speech said that city laws were divorced from actions taking place on ground. Population is increasing at a phenomenal pace, which cannot be stopped with the result that the urban infrastructure has collapsed. He said that presently there is only 30% "legalized" construction in the city.

Mr. Nooruddin pointed out that the city has no functioning "Master Plan". Both the 1974 and the 1992 Master Plans, he said, had not been notified. He requested the City Chief Nazim to update the Master Plan 2000, notify it and constitute a separate body for its implementation. He said that "Urban Renewal Plans", should be developed for all the newly constituted 18 Town Councils in the city. Mr. Nooruddin expressed confidence that local expertise for undertaking such an exercise is available and hiring of expensive foreign consultants would not be needed.

Mr. Nooruddin proposed that the "Downtown Area" including the areas of M. A. Jinnah Road,

*Qazi Faez Isa,
Member,
Managing Committee,
Shehri-CBE*



concerns of the people of Karachi.

With regards the issue of land use and zoning laws in Karachi city, Mr. Isa said that it was a simple issue of implementing "approved" plans on ground which was not happening. He said that Shehri opposed the proposed policy of regularization of illegal buildings in the city.



Nooruddin Ahmed,
Representative,
Pakistan Engineering
Council

Mansfield Street, Inveriarity Road and Preedy Street, be declared "Traffic Free Zones", designated for tourism, business and recreation related activities.

Mr. Syed Kalimuddin, Chairman PCATP, said that if the proposed Ordinance (*Sindh Building Control Amendment Ordinance 2001*) is implemented in its entirety than it will open the flood gates of irregular activities in the city. He however said that there is nothing wrong in reviewing the laws as town planning bodies all over the world keep reviewing their rules/regulations normally at intervals of every ten years.

He said that there are reasons for the irregular constructions taking place in the city. Socio-economic conditions have worsened over the years, family sizes are growing and people cannot afford to buy new houses. There is both "social" destruction of the city and "physical" destruction of the city taking place.

Mr. Kalimuddin supported the decision to regularize the illegal buildings. He however said that the issue of great importance is the matter of imposing the right kind of penalties and proper disbursement of the money collected in the process. The money should go directly to the affected citizens and communities. He pointed out that in the proposed ordinance, the penalties suggested are very meagre and would therefore fail to act as a deterrent.

Mr. Naimatullah Khan, the City Chief Nazim in his speech said that it is very important to understand the "context" within which the deviations from law are taking place. There is lack of justice in society. Plans are not unified. He cited the issue of the Cantonment administered areas in the city where a separate set of building rules apply which have no relevance with what is happening in the rest of the city. He felt that it was impossible to implement any kind of a rational Master Plan within this context.

Mr. Khan was of the opinion that there is no harm in starting anew provided the past mistakes are not repeated in the future. He also asked all the citizen groups to point out the problems in the city in a timely manner and appreciated the work of Shehri in this regard.



Syed Kalimuddin,
Chairman, PCATP

The speeches were followed by an interactive discussion at the end of which, Mr. Khatib Ahmed, Chairperson, Shehri-CBE, concluded the seminar with a vote of thanks to all the participants. □



Seminar Participants



Shehri Seminar: Interaction between citizens and local government representatives (I)

(Saturday, 3rd November, 2001, Hotel Marriott, Karachi)

Shehri-CBE, has started a series of interactive seminars to develop a sustainable and people friendly partnership between elected officials of the local administration in Karachi and citizen groups

Mr. Khatib Ahmed, Chairperson, Shehri-CBE in his introductory speech, said that the constitution of Pakistan has given the people of Pakistan authority to manage the affairs of the state and exert their influence. However, the people seldom make use of these powers and do not question the works of the elected officials and administration. This has resulted in a situation where the elected officials and the bureaucracy make full use of their powers and in fact abuse them while the common man remains a silent spectator.

Mr. Ahmed appreciated the intro-



Farhan Anwar,
Executive Member,
Shehri-CBE

duction of elected local governments in the city and assured the elected representatives present in the seminar of Shehri's fullest cooperation in their work.

Mr. Farhan Anwar, Executive Member, Shehri-CBE, spoke on the issue of privatization of the solid waste management system in the city. He said that earlier in 1998, the then DMC Central had privatized some segments of the solid waste management system in sections of F. B. Area and North Karachi, however the experiment had failed. So

now, as the newly established District Government was embarking on another such exercise, lessons learned from the past misadventure need to be taken into account.

Mr. Anwar said that in the previous project, the experiment was carried out on a very big scale instead of first running a pilot scale project which caused problems. No effort was made to properly document and update the data on the project area. While DMC central put out a figure of 1327 tons/day for the garbage generated in the project area, the private contractor claimed that he lifted about 1800 tons/day from just one block of F. B. Area!

Mr. Anwar said that the public was not involved in the process in a meaningful way. They could have been educated on ways to reduce the garbage levels generated at source. No effort was made to give the private contractor the option of recycling the waste, which could have added to the efficiency and greater interest in the project. No regulatory frameworks were formulated and no performance standards were prepared.

Mr. Anwar stressed that these mistakes would have to be avoided now if the district government



Khatib Ahmed,
Chairperson,
Shehri-CBE

wanted to succeed in their efforts.

Ms. Sarah Siddiqui of KAWWS talked about her experience of working with the local government while trying to improve the conditions of her neighborhood. She said that presently due to the establishment of the new system, a lot of relocation of the staff was taking place which was causing problems. There is also some confusion with regards the jurisdiction of properties and services to be shared by the new town and union councils.

Ms. Siddiqui lamented the fact that in the newly established town/union council offices, the elected officials are normally absent with the result that citizens have to discuss their problems



Sarah Siddiqui,
Member,
KAWWS



Noman Ahmad,
Chairman,
Department of
Architecture &
Town Planning,
NED Engineering
University,
Karachi



with the administration officials and the red tape is very much in place. Ms. Siddiqui stressed the importance of giving financial autonomy to the new local governments so that they could effectively solve the problems of the citizens.

Prof. Noman Ahmed, Chairman, Department of Architecture & Town Planning, NED Engineering University, spoke on the issue of the water and sewerage sector in Karachi. He said that presently, there was a shortfall of 150 mgd in the water supply in Karachi going by official figures. In actual case it could be more. He said that KW&SB was presently burdened

Muhammad Nauman, Department of Electronics, NED Engineering University, Karachi.



under a debt of Rs. 46 billion. Recovery is inefficient and there is massive over staffing (about 4500 going by 1996 figures). This is mostly due to political appointments. Much of the city population is buying potable water at a cost of about Rs. 7/gallon - Rs. 80/gallon.

Mr. Noman informed the participants that only 20% of the sewage generated in the city is treated prior to disposal. Most of sewage is carried not by the constructed

sewer networks but by the 13 natural nallahs of the city.

He said that efforts to privatize KW&SB failed as the KW&SB officials, the people, the builders and developers, political/religious parties were all against the strategy for privatization.

Prof. Noman also highlighted the issue of cross connections as water supply and sewerage line get mixed causing pollution of drinking water. This problem is most prevalent in Karachi West/Lyari. Areas which are not covered by KW&SB are also billed. Even if land is leased by someone, he or she would have to clear bills for services not provided. Prof. Noman urged for the development of a transitory framework, carrying out new projects first on pilot scales and proper documentation of the status of urban facilities /utilities.

Prof. Muhammad Nauman, Department of Electronics, NED Engineering University, talked about issues related with the administration and management of local govt. affairs. He said that a lot of problems are faced in

coordination between the various agencies operating in the city, some local some provincial and some federal including Cantons. These different tiers of governance have different interests which often clash.

Previously, the local govt. was generating about Rs. 500 crore from octroi.

This option of revenue generation is now gone, with no alternative financing mechanism in sight. In the past, the Administrator of KMC had the personal discretion of spending about Rs. 40 lac. This facility is also not available now. There is too much dependence on the federal govt. which is hindering work. Worker moral is down and they are not willing to work



L-R: Dr. Pervaz Mehmood (Nazim, Liaquatabad Town), Khatib Ahmed, Farooq Naimatullah (Nazim, Gulberg Town)

anymore. Too many mafia type controls exist.

The speeches by citizen representatives were followed by a general discussion **Mr. Farooq Naimatullah, Nazim Gulberg Town Council** and **Dr. Pervaz Mehmood, Nazim, Liaquatabad Town Council** participated in the discussion and said that they were determined to serve the people of this city to the best of their abilities and were presently targeting on reducing corruption levels in the local govt. system. They appreciated the role of organizations like Shehri and expressed their willingness to work with the citizen groups of the city.

Mr. Khatib Ahmed concluded the seminar with a vote of thanks to all the participants. □



Seminar Participants



Shehri Seminar: Interaction between citizens and local government representatives (II)

(Saturday, 16th November, 2001, Hotel Marriott, Karachi)

Navaid Husain, Executive Member, Shehri-CBE, in his introductory speech said that Pakistan was facing severe economic difficulties, and was under the burden of billions of dollars worth of local and foreign debt. He said that compared with us, India and China had protected and developed their industries and financial systems with the result that they now represent much more stable economies than ours. Malaysia which was economically very much like us about 25 years ago is now producing five different types of motor vehicles (*Proton Cars*).

Mr. Hussain said that Rs. 20 lacs each have been given to the 18 Town Councils in Karachi. He posed the question; How can any

laws are a major cause of system defects in the urban public utility system. He demanded a complete ban on illegal buildings and praised the efforts of Shehri in this regard. He said that completed schemes are handed over to KW&SB for maintenance. It is impossible for KW&SB to provide the services when there is no provision in their plans and budgets for such work. Similarly in Katchi Abadies, no system is built but the blame falls on KW&SB. Mr. Chandio informed the seminar participants that KW&SB is now part of the City Government and its functions will further be devolved into the Town.

Ahmed Qasim Parekh, Nazim, Jamshed Town, Karachi



meaningful development work be carried out within such a budget? He demanded that half the income tax paid by the people should come back to the people in terms of enhanced social and development sector work.

Mr. Suleman Chandio, Chief Engineer Sewerage, KW&SB, in his presentation said that landuse

tion has taken place in Pakistan which has now brought the country to a very sorry state of affairs. He said that in the period between 1970-87, Rs. 2 lac per day were written off by the banks, while in the period between 1996-99, the figure rose to Rs. 2 crore 40 lac!

He said that in 1948, the GNP of Pakistan and Japan was the same

Navaid Husain, Member, Managing Committee, Shehri-CBE



i.e. \$112. Now, while Japan's GNP has grown to a whopping \$ 34000, ours is a paltry \$360. Mr. Parekh expressed his resolve to work for the betterment of the city and demanded from the citizens, a greater involvement in city affairs.

Mr. Khalid Iqbal, Incharge, Distribution & Works, KESC, in his presentation said that presently 1800 MW electricity is being produced in the city, by KESC, KANUPP and the private power plants of Gul Ahmed and Tapal. He said that there is about 6% - 7% increase in power demand every year.

He said that theft, in addition to system losses are a major concern. He said that 38% electricity is lost due to these reasons, (18% technical losses, 20% theft) costing about Rs. 10 billion annually. Mr. Ahmed said that 105 MW power is consumed by Kunda connections causing a loss of Rs. 130 million per month!

Mr. Ahmed said that power theft takes place not only in low income areas but in localities like KDA Scheme # 1 and P.E.C.H.S. He said that presently there is no meaningful consultation between the



**Suleman Chandio,
Chief Engineer,
Sewerage,
KW&SB**



**Khalid Iqbal, Incharge,
Distribution &
Works, KESC**

various utility agencies in the city which seriously complicates matters. In this regard, he recommended the establishment of a "Utility Board". He said that KESC has undertaken Poverty Alleviation Programmes in the low income areas, to reduce the possibilities of power theft. He informed that out of about 4 lac Kunda connections, 1 1/2 lac have been regularized.



Seminar Participants

The speeches were followed by a lively question and answer session

after which, Mr. Navaid Husain concluded the seminar with a vote

of thanks to the speakers and the participants. □

Season's Greetings

*Shehri Staff and Management
extend to its members*

Eid Mubarak

& Merry Christmas

and best wishes for a

Happy New Year