



Policemen take their positions as armed villagers of Shah Allah Ditta opened fire on the authorities.

The clash between villagers and the police last month in villages near Islamabad raise questions about CDA's policies for acquiring land. The authority needs to adopt a more effective compensation policy

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*Houses & Housing*

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*city planning*

**F**or many in Islamabad, the July 29 clash between police and villagers, which resulted in the death of two and injuries to 57 people, was not a surprise. It was being feared that the dispute could boil over into a heated battle.

The site of the incident was the Sri Saral and Pind Sangrial villages located at the foot of Margala hills on the western fringes of the capital. The crisis erupted when a Capital Development Authority (CDA) team demolished the houses to clear the way for a road.

According to the district administration, two 'miscreants' were killed and eight sustained injuries when around 450 people gathered and attacked the police and CDA staff with automatic weapons, bricks, stones and sticks at the site of (the still to be developed) residential sector D-12.

The official view is that the resistance from the villagers was uncalled for. The affectees of Pind Sangrial and Siri Siral, have been paid Rs. 267 million in cash in compensation against the land acquired by the state to develop a new residential sector. In addition, they have also been given 1200 residential plots and six agricultural farms each of 2.5 acres, worth Rs 450 million.

The compensation award was announced in 1985. According to CDA, the scale of compensation is unprecedented if compared to previous cases where village land was acquired for the federal capital.

The villagers, on the other hand, claim that they have either been underpaid or not compensated at all. Instead the land mafia has made millions by submitting fake claims in collaboration with CDA officials.

A judicial inquiry has been ordered into the incident, but its scope can be limited. It is stated to focus on the causes of the July 29 clash.

cost of developing 612 acres has escalated to three times the original estimate mentioned in the original PC1 prepared in 1988. The estimated cost then was Rs. 788.9 million. The CDA is charging Rs 650 per square yard in three installments as development charges.

NEWS This was the second incidence in which the standoff between CDA and the villagers turned vio-

lent. The first incident occurred in June 1993 in eastern Bani Gala village, which resulted in the death of three villagers. The CDA tried to demolish 45 houses but the action backfired. Later the court judged that the Bani Gala construction was legal. There is now a sprawling residential area on the banks of Rawal Dam.

Under the Martial Law Regulation 82 of 1960, CDA is

# housing

Muhammad Shakeel, 19, a milkman from Siri Saral tells TNS that in many cases they were paid Rs 70 per kanal, while the price charged for the same area in the new sector is between Rs 2-3 million.

Abdul Sattar, another young man in his 20s, claims that the village Siri Saral is not located in sector D-12 but is in the fringes of sector D-13. "The entire operation was unnecessary."

Almost half the village houses now stand empty. There is only one roadside hotel and a few shops in Siri Saral. Many standing structures only have outer walls with no rooms inside and there have been allegations that the construction was undertaken to get hefty compensation from CDA.

This is not the first time that CDA has announced an award for acquiring land but failed to take possession. It was in 1987 that the government of Muhammad Khan Junejo allotted plots in residential sector series of 11 and 12 through open ballot. In the D-12 sector, 2,000 plots were allotted to the public. Another 1,445 plots were given to government employees. Fifteen years later the 3,445 allottees are still not sure when they will be able to build a home on the plot that they bought. Indeed, saying they were themselves the affectees of a job not properly done, many among them ask if the day will ever come.

Construction work started in the 11 series of Islamabad in the mid-90s and continues till present. On July 17, Moinuddin Haider, the federal interior minister, inaugurated the development work in D-12. It is to be completed within three years at a cost of Rs 2.067 billion.

It is ironic that the





# The D-day

72,073 acres of land, including 187 villages and issued 237 directives, making over 500 land acquisition awards. Till 1968 CDA acquired land for the first 10 series of Islamabad. In exchange of every four kanal plot in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 100 kanals of land were given in colony districts like Multan, Sahiwal, Jhang, Gudu Barrage etc.

In 1970s the formula was changed — land was acquired against the rates fixed by the public works department. Under this if the calculated price of a piece of land in the ICT was Rs 3,000, the owner got a plot, 30x50 ft or 25x40 ft, in a developed sector. During this period, Darmia, Koka, Thata Gojara, Korak, Sihala, and Mudrassa villages were acquired

for development.

In the early 1990s land was to be acquired for the Khanpur Dam project but again a dispute between the villagers and CDA over the rate of compensation delayed the project. The water course is to run through the villages of Sung Jani, Sarai Kharbooza, Jorghi and Shah Allah Ditta. The reservoir will supply an additional 17 million gallons of water to the city.

A different formula was followed for awarding the residents of Shah Allah Ditta village in 1996. Some owners were paid Rs 30,000 per kanal, while others were given plots in the agriculture-zone or a 200 sq yard plot against four kanals.

The market price of the land

was to be fixed on the average worked out on the basis of sales of land in the area over the previous one year.

After the July 29 incident, the CDA has come up with a new formula. Laiq Shah, CDA Chairman, announced that under the amended policy the affectees will be compensated according to the prevailing market rates.

The 1960 law has been amended and apply retrospectively from 1996, he said and added, "From now on, nobody will be compensated by being offered plots elsewhere."

The problem is, as put by the CDA chairman, the affectees from Sri Saral and Pind Sangrial will not benefit from the new policy.

empowered to ensure that: "No person is allowed to construct or cause to be constructed any building or alter or enlarge any existing building except with the prior permission of the authority and similarly, no person is allowed to convert any land being used for the purposes of agriculture." CDA acquires land from old residents to develop the city under this law.

To date CDA has acquired over