

## **The amenity plots illicitly grabbed by builders' mafia**

**Karachi:** The Sindh government has unsuccessfully stopped land mafia from clutching and intruding public plots that allotted to various NGOs for welfare works. Some powerful people from the ruling alliance, workers of coalition partners and land grabbers for housing and commercial purposes occupy most of the plots. Official sources at Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA) said, the government had decided lease to area residents for welfare works at amenity plots but some powerful people encroached these plots and constructed buildings and commercial plazas. They said, "Around 25 amenity plots are currently occupied by builders mafia in Sultanabad, Generalabad and Gulshan-e-Iqbal that allotted to various NGOs and noble persons for welfare activities, but the land could not be utilized accordingly." Further added, "Builders' mafia had occupied these vacant plots and warned the owners of dire consequences for demanding land." They said the authority had allotted some amenity plots to ministers, secretaries and advisers in the past to utilize the land for the establishment of schools, hospitals and mosques but they could not ensure utilization of land accordingly and built commercial plazas and residential buildings on vacant plots." They added, "The authority had informed these influential people about the policy but they violated the rules and regulations after completing service tenure."

The sources said amenity plots worth billion of rupees, recently intruded by builders' mafia in Gulshan-e-Iqbal, situated at prime lands, but in spite of several attempts, the authority could not get these plots vacated due to political pressure. The field officers when visited the sites of these occupied plots for an investigation, private guards pointed gun towards them and asked them to leave. They said amenity plots of Sultanabad and Generalabad engaged by some local leaders of political parties along with obligations by central leaders of these political parties concerning elimination of land grabbers from amenity plots. On the other hand, their workers remained busy in locating government land for occupation, they added. "If the government and the coalition partners warn their workers for vacating all amenity plots, the authority can straighten up its record." They said keeping in view the current situation regarding occupation of amenity plots, the authority had decided to take a strict action against land grabbers and builders mafia by its own if the provincial government declined helping SKAA. They said. "The authority would hold its meeting with Sindh Minister for Katchi Abadis and Spatial Development to finalize an action plan against land mafia."