

KPT to finance Sewage Treatment Plant V, judicial commission told

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The Karachi Port Trust and the Sindh government on Monday agreed to give up their stand on the possession of 150 acres of land in the larger interest of public for the installation of Sewage Treatment Plant V.

The chief secretary and the KPT chairman brought this to the knowledge of the Supreme Court-backed judicial commission looking into the authorities' failure to provide clean drinking water, better sanitation and a healthy environment to the people of the province.

The commission, headed by Justice (retd) Amir Hani Muslim, appreciated the approach of the KPT chairman and the chief secretary and directed them to formulate a plan by which the land which was to be identified on papers through representatives of the Board of Revenue, the KPT and others concerned for the installation of the plant to be funded by the KPT.

It was informed that the area required for the treatment plant and its reservoirs in which mangroves would also be protected was around 150 acres. The KPT official submitted that they did not have any intention to utilise the area for any purpose other than the treatment plant and associated infrastructure inclusive of mangroves which would be there for the breeding of shrimps; however, the identified land was under litigation.

It was stated that it would have a healthy effect on marine life and minimise the damage that had been caused on account of untreated water being discharged into the sea. The commission observed that the once the land in question was identified, this issue could be examined irrespective of the dispute of the KPT with the Sindh government on the title of the land. It also observed that the treatment plant shall be constructed and made operational which shall be financed by the KPT; besides, it shall also include a reservoir for mangroves and healthy marine life.

The commission directed member task force Syed Asif Haider Shah to interact with the KPT and the Sindh government and come forward with a joint statement after the determination of the land for the treatment plant after the Eid holidays.

Regarding re-alignment of the K-IV project, the representative of the consultant informed the commission that the project director was the client and the consultant was bound to accept the dictates of the project director.

The commission directed the consultant to submit the terms on which consultancy was awarded to him. It expressed dissatisfaction over the statement filed by the consultant with regard to the utilisation of the land for the K-IV project, and directed the

consultant to submit each and every detail with regard to the proposed land which the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board was to acquire.

The commission observed that it was also unclear how the consultant could evaluate these lands at Rs3 billion as it was not their subject and it was the revenue department that could have provided details of the valuation of the proposed private lands.

It further said that no substantial material had been provided yet by the consultant as to why realignment was done for 22 times for the K-IV project. It gave the last chance to the consultant to submit an explanation, observing that if a clear picture was not provided the commission may consider whether it was a fit case for reference to the National Accountability Bureau or not.

The commission took exception to the working of the Pak-Oasis on sewerage plant III. It observed that in the treatment plant I they were far behind the work plan, whereas in the treatment plant III they were substantially behind the work plan for which no plausible explanation had been offered either by the consultant or by the contractor.

It observed that if the work plan was not brought in conformity with the pace within 15 days from today, the project director may award the work, which was behind the work plan, to any other person at the risk and cost of the contractor.

Regarding the installation of treatment plants in DHA Phase I and Phase VIII, the representatives of DHA and the cantonment board sought time on the issue for the installation of a treatment plant, including an equitable supply of drinking water as well.

The commission directed the member task force to submit a work plan pertaining to improvement in the drinking water supply as well as the proposed installation of the sewage treatment plant.