

# SAVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

*By*

*M.H. Panhwar*

There is systematic and continuous destruction of protected archaeological sites in Sindh, going unnoticed during the past 20 years, due to disinterest and negligence. Following are a few glaring examples:

The Thul Mir Rukan Stupa site is encroached upon by the village of the same name and houses have been built on the very edge of that monument. Villagers removed its bricks for construction of barns etc.

Kahu Daro land has been lost by Archaeological Department in a court case, to a local land - owner. He has already started levelling one of the finest Buddhist stupa in South Asia, excavated by Henry Cousens at the end of the last and beginning of this century. It was a fine example of art and local workmanship reported in most prestigious books, journals and reports.

Depar Changro Daro has been encroached by village Jhol and houses have been built on its structural remains.

Brahmanabad/Mansura was destroyed in the last century for use of bricks as ballast material for the North Western Railway tracks. Some 10 other sites around it are also lost due to cultivation.

Only last week I saw the Alore fort area being occupied by unauthorized houses in process of building on its high ground, by two Brohi stone material contractors. They are removing stones from Eocene Series of hills nearby for housing for themselves and their labour.

Two fine tombs called, Suhagan and Dhuhagan, of 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century near Alore are threatened due to dynamiting of surrounding hills by the above two Brohi contractors every day. With the exception of Jam Nizamuddin's tomb are Makli, no other Samma period tomb has beauty of these two tombs, having very fine decorative patterns in local bricks and probably Kufic scripts in brick designs. They still are in a sufficiently safe state to study their art, workmanship etc., if an early action is taken to save and protect them.

Dhamraho Daro is being excavated right in its centre to take out earth for mud houses of the local village of same name. An Italian team wanted to excavate this mound but was refused permission only three years back.

The land of Dhamraho Daro site is being brought under cultivation and some 75% of the mound area is already under agricultural crops.

The total area under Mohen-jo-Daro has not been mapped, but more than half is already under cultivation.

Ligan-jo-Daro is occupied by a village built after the establishment of Dadu sugar Mill in 1976. Khudabad city remains in Dadu Taluka are being converted into agricultural fields.

A 32-acre Middle Stone Age factory, near Rohri, found by Allchins in 1976 and reported in the Geographical Journal of Royal Geographical Society, London in being destroyed by contractors for supplying stone to the local cement factory.

The Archaeological Survey of India and also of the Western Circle (under which Sindh came), declared many archaeological sites as protected. This does not mean their legal ownership by the Archaeological department Pakistan. The land belongs to the Government of Sindh and through its Board of Revenue, it is sold, transferred or allotted to various users.

The Archaeological Department should get survey numbers of such sites from the Directors of Survey and Settlement at Hyderabad or Sukkur, apply to the Sindh Board of Revenue, which in turn will ask respective Revenue Officers at the three barrages at Hyderabad and Sukkur, apply to the Sindh Board of Revenue, which in turn will ask respective Revenue Officers of the three Barrages at Hyderabad and Sukkur, to allot the land to the Archaeological Department.

The Archaeological Department then has to have proper entries made in the Revenue Registers in various Mukhtiarkars offices. Once the ownership is established, the encroachments can legally be vacated. Mere letters to the Governor, Chief Minister and Commissioners cannot help.

This is an appeal to all concerned to save our national heritage and the past.

The new governments at the centre and in the province must look into this important matter and save the monuments/sites on a priority basis