

# Pakistan Fisherflok Forum Seminar Disrupted

Friday 30 December 2005, by [Daily Times \(Pakistan\)](#), [PFF](#) (Date first published: 29 December 2005).

**We are posting below two documents: a message forwarded from People's Rights Movement and a staff report from the Daily Times (Lahore).**

## Contents

- [Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum](#)
  - [Demo After KBD Moot Cancelled](#)
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## Message forwarded from People's Rights Movement

### Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum Seminar Disrupted

· A seminar on 'Below Kotri water flows' was planned by the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and Action Aid Pakistan in the Dreamland Motel on December 28<sup>th</sup>, the arrangements for which had been made many weeks in advance.

· On arrival in Islamabad, dozens of activists of the PFF arrived at Dreamland Motel on the evening of December 27<sup>th</sup> as planned. They were told that there were insufficient rooms for them and that they could not stay in the motel as planned. While this severe inconvenience was dealt with by the organisers, they could not have foreseen what was to transpire next.

· On the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>, the hotel management locked the rooms to the hall in which the seminar was supposed to be held and told the organisers that the intelligence agencies had prohibited the hotel from hosting the event.

· A demonstration was subsequently held outside the hotel to protest this arbitrary disruption. The protestors were addressed by PFF chairperson Mohammad Ali Shah, Dr. Qadir Magsi, Hameed Asghar Shaheen, Aziz Narejo, Khadim Hussain, Mushtaq Gadi, Aasim Sajjad, and numerous other activists.

· This action demonstrates the government's complete lack of tolerance for democratic debate - papers were to be presented at the seminar in

which technical, social, economic, political and cultural perspectives were expected to be raised.

- We firmly believe that this action is a reflection of the dictatorial manner in which the government has bulldozed Water Vision 2025 on the people of Pakistan.

- In this regard, we invite you to be part of a protest demonstration to be held tomorrow (Thursday, 29 December) at 12pm in front of the offices of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank to demand withdrawal of funds for mega water projects that are imposed upon the country by diktat.

- We believe that similar repressive measures may be employed by the government during tomorrow's demonstration. Therefore it is imperative that the demonstration be attended and supported by as wide a cross-section of people as possible, particularly because dozens of fisherfolk will be present and they are likely to be subject to severe harassment and intimidation.

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**Daily Times (Lahore)**  
**December 29, 2005**

### **Demo After KBD Moot Cancelled**

#### Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: A demonstration was held outside a local hotel to protest the hotel administration's decision to cancel a seminar on Kalabagh Dam arranged by the ActionAid, Pakistan, and Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) to hold a seminar on Kalabagh Dam.

Fishermen from the Indus delta in Sindh, water rights activists, people from the Siraiki belt, NWFP and Balochistan, and political activists from across the country attended the demonstration. The hotel administration cited pressure from the authorities as the reason for its decision. The protesters held banners and flags and shouted slogans flaying state repression and the government's water policy.

Muhammad Ali Shah, the PFF chairperson, said that the people of Sindh and other oppressed people in Pakistan had been resisting the "dictatorial policies of the state for decades and would continue to do so despite efforts to suppress their voices".

He said that the people of Sindh would never allow the Kalabagh Dam and any other mega water project that denied them their "historic right to the water of the Indus River". He said that the PFF, ActionAid-Pakistan

and other supporters would organise another protest demonstration on Thursday in front of the offices of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to demand the withdrawal of funds for the Water Vision 2025.

Taj Haider, the information secretary of the Pakistan People's Party, said that by refusing to allow a peaceful seminar, the state had proved that it had no tolerance for democratic dissent. He said that the state was unwilling to concede that the rationale for projects such as the Kalabagh Dam and the Greater Thal Canal was "completely nonsensical".

Dr Qadir Magsi, chairman of the Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party, said that state functionaries had based their entire case for building mega water projects on "lies and the Sindhi nation has rejected these lies".

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**P.S.**

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