

VANISHING ALIBAG AND THE LUST FOR ECO-SENSITIVE ZONES FOR SEZs AND TOWNSHIPS

❖ ***STORY SO FAR*** - The curtains have not fallen on the epic devastation of village life and uprooting of lakhs of people as per the episodes of 'SEZ' acquisition of fertile and village lands. Singur or Khairlanji, the words are just media flash lines and not taken seriously by the politicians and bureaucrats whose purses are warmed by the so called SEZ investors even before they launch the SEZ project. The well greased government machinery including the judiciary is all along playing the godfather to these illegal happenings controlled by the Industrialists.



❖ ***THE POLITICIAN DON AND SEZ MAFIA*** - Having turned the economy into shambles and effectively corrupting the bureaucrats and shielding their own vested interests, these politicians have become power centres and hotbed of political activity with each one aligning with businessman as a partner and the businessman willingly allowing the politician and bureaucrat to become a stake holder and profit sharer in the venture.

ENTER the SEZ Mafioso and all the villagers displaced from their centuries old villages, their livelihood gone and the self sustaining economy vanishing into air. The very residents of these villages will then move into shanty houses from their old houses and self reliant lifestyle, and will move around these mammoth SEZs in search of their daily bread. More probably with the local politician manning the employment racquet with the SEZ raking in the moolah, the villager will be a mere spectator in his own town and heartland.

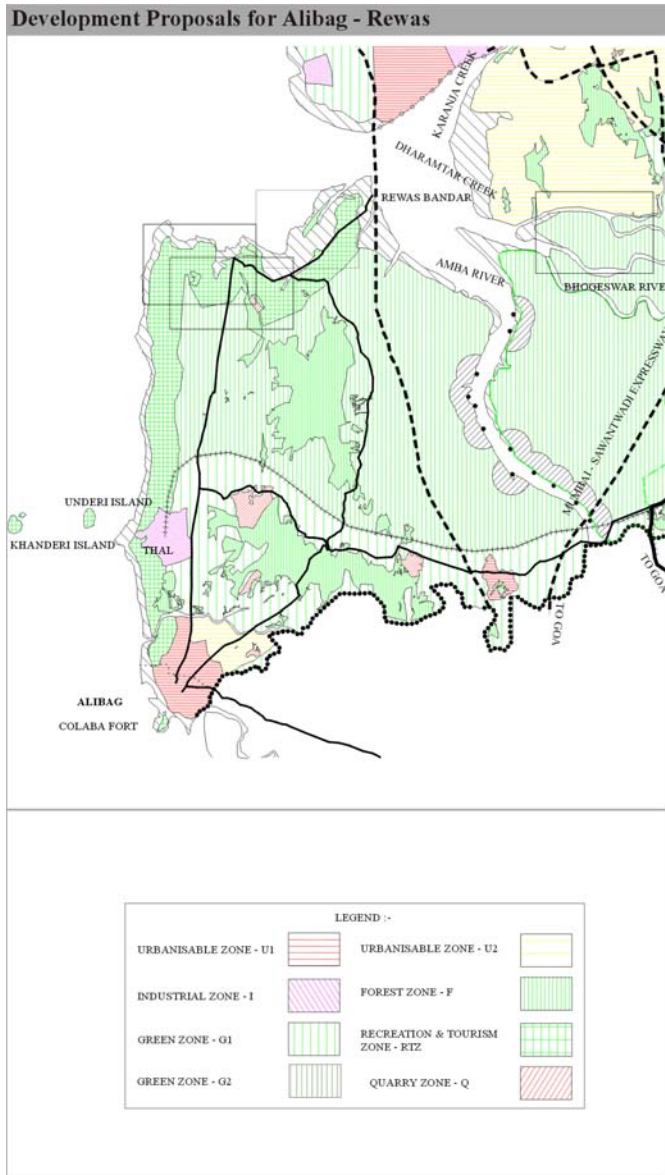
Many industrial zones flourished around Raigad and most of the populace had their young members and families settled in Thane and Mumbai. All of those who used to trek back on holidays and festivals like Diwali, Dusherra and Ganpati to

their home town and villages. The very mechanism which made mumbaikar a mere 15% in Mumbai and in regions where SEZ come in it would be an history repeated all over again with all the fallacies and nobody trying to learn from past mistakes.

❖ **ALIBAG – REWAS REGIONAL PLAN MISUSE**

- The MMRDA

Regional Plan highlights restricted development in the entire Raigad belt but



areas of beach, forests and other green areas continue to be vandalized by the industrialist, bureaucrat and politician beyond the scope of approved Regional Plan.

The dredging of Rewas Port and illegal land reclamation in the area will increase the haphazard tidal movement causing irreparable damages to fragile eco-system destroying fishing habitats, devouring the beautiful beaches of Alibag in the name of globalization.

Natural water courses are being altered and would lead to water logging of low lying areas and will cause seepage of brackish water

onto Farm lands destroying the famous supari, mango and coconut baug/orchards as well as reduce yields of agricultural produce. Untold misery is being purposefully brought upon by those seeking fame and money for their selfish use.

❖ **COLLECTOR AND FOREST OFFICE LAXITY AND OTHER INTERESTS** -

NOW the fertile agriculture plots and those near the sea have been taken over and purchased by the industrialist and political heavy weights through fraud and deceit. It is the law of the land that an agriculture plot can be purchased by only an Agriculturist/Farmer.



The BHOODAN Movement by Acharya Vinobha Bhave and the coveted Haijan, common man and farmer as voiced by the Mahatma Gandhi have been lost upon the present day political dons.

But authorities and land brokers have produced fabricated documents and the law circumvented to blindly accepted these fraudulent documents under the folds of laundered money. The verdant taluka of ALIBAG, the eco-sensitive and tourist destination has borne the brunt of wanton tree felling and illegal conversion of agriculture and diversion of virgin forest land into non-conforming uses for the past 30 years.

The Office of the Collector and the Town Planning Authority have allowed construction of hotels and bungalows of the high and mighty along coastal stretches in violation of Coastal Regulation Zone regulations and Environment Protection Act prescribed by Central Government.

The Villages of Alibag from Mandva, to Kihim on the North and up to Murud have been vandalised by these so called land investors and neo-rich encroaching on beach, intruding into the sea by illegal reclamation and devouring forests through ingenious means and ways, and in utter disregard to Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, Forests Act and Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act.

❖ **THE QUESTIONS AND WHO WILL ANSWER THEM** - The discerning questions remain to be answered:

1. Is it verified from the revenue records as to how these entities have purchased and got the agriculture land transferred into their name without following due process of law?
2. Is it verified from the revenue records whether these entities are holding land in excess of land holding limitation as set out under the law?
3. Is it verified from the actual survey as to the change of use of such transferred agricultural land to other non-confirming uses?
4. Is it verified from the revenue records the loss of agrarian produce and loss of forest land through these illegal conversions?
5. Are the names of such defaulters available and perpetrators ever been penalized and brought to book or only stray cases highlighted?



❖ **5 YEAR PLANS AND BACKWARD REGIONS** - The haphazard planning during the pancvarshik programs and the yearly carnival of budget sessions played to the tune of power brokers and industrialist lobbies have wrecked untold misery upon the common man. The sufferings of the project affected families from the Sardar Sarovar Dam and other areas have not been addressed, their compensation a distant dream but their plight and cause have only drawn a sigh. The fate of the common man had been more comfortable and living conditions more affordable during the British era. The same is chronicled by the media and is underlined by our very Prime Minister, Hon'ble Shri.Manmohan Singh.

The regions close to the earlier pre-independence commercial and trade centres

have developed due to efforts of local entrepreneurs and local capitalists. The other regions continue to lag behind due to inefficient infrastructure and lack of roads, railways, telecommunications, water and electric supply. Basic educational facilities and technical centres are not provided over the past 60 years of independence. These regions churn out the best of corrupt and insensitive politicians whose entire tenure and interest is to support the ruling governments and coterie of politicians at centre and state level. These regions are basically THE BACKWARD REGIONS kept so by the politicians for their own benefit.

- ❖ **RAIGAD AND ALIBAG ANTI-COLONIZATION PLAN** - The government should cancel all permissions for industrial projects and townships along the coastal stretches of Alibag and render the area as an ECO SENSITIVE ZONE.

So what should be the alternative and in which direction should DEVELOPMENT head?

1. All industrial melas and so called SEZs and Townships in excess of 100 Acres already approved and/or proposed in Raigad, Pune and Thane should be made to compulsory shift to BACKWARD REGIONS and DISTRICTS of Dhule, Nandurbar, Sindhudurg, Beed, Parbhani, Osmanabad, Yavatmal, Gondia, Gadchiroli, Chandrapur and Bhandardara, where there is an urgent need for development of local economy.
2. The so called SEZ entrepreneurs may be given sops in the land acquisition process, and other benefits if they shift to the backward regions of above districts.
3. The above SEZ destinations would be meaningful and would avoid translocation of employment seekers to already congested towns and mega cities.
4. Local populace would welcome these investments in the region and as the same would give them a chance to alleviate their poverty and move up in life.
5. Newer and better infrastructure will be created to benefit the local people.
6. Referendum should be taken among land owners in the entire district where the project is located and not only affected villagers area to seek

their approval before proceeding further.

7. Acquisition of land where large parcels of government or municipal land in excess of 1 acre is to be acquired should be advertised in local and national dailies (among 2 Nos. largest circulating newspapers) and an open bid/offer be invited from parties and general public for purchase of such land so that the state/government is not a loser in terms of monetary compensation.

ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT AS PER THE MANIFESTO OF ALL POLITICAL
PARTIES WILL BECOME A REALITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

MOST OF ALL RURAL AND BACKWARD INDIA
WILL BE PART OF THE MAINSTREAM.
