

SECMC wins key litigation protecting Thar Coal project

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The Sindh High Court recently dismissed a petition challenging the legality of a groundwater reservoir for Thar coal mining. RIAA Barker Gillette successfully represented SECMC, protecting a key CPEC energy project.

The Sindh High Court recently dismissed a constitutional petition filed by local residents challenging the establishment of a reservoir to store groundwater extracted from sub-surface aquifers to enable open-pit coal mining in Tharparkar. This judgment protects a key component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) priority Thar lignite mining and power generation project.

We acted for Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC), a joint venture between the Government of Sindh, Engro Corporation, and other leading Pakistani companies. The USD 2 billion project, the first of its kind in Pakistan to achieve financial close, involves mining one of the world's largest lignite deposits and establishing coal power stations.

The petitioners argued that the establishment of the reservoir would damage the environment and wildlife and contravene land acquisition laws. As SECMC's counsel, we successfully resisted an interim injunction that could have delayed the project.

During the case, the High Court constituted a committee that confirmed that the reservoir would not have an adverse environmental impact on the ambient area and groundwater. SECMC also demonstrated rigorous site selection and that alternate reservoir sites would violate Pakistan's Ramsar Convention obligations on wetland conservation.

The Court recognised SECMC's extensive development work for displaced locals, including healthcare, education, and employment initiatives. It was satisfied by studies showing that water quality in the reservoir was similar to nearby drinking wells.

After examining all reports, the Court upheld the legality of the land acquisition and dismissed unproven claims of environmental damage. This judgment upholds the legality and environmental sustainability of a project vital for Pakistan's energy security," said Mayhar Kazi, Partner at RIAA Barker Gillette.

Our team that secured this significant victory was led by [Mayhar Kazi](#) (Partner – Pakistan) and included [Danish Nayyer](#) (Senior Associate) and [Abdul Haseeb Qazi](#) (Associate). This judgment enables SECMC to continue its essential work powering Pakistan's growth. We are proud to support the project's success.

RIAA Barker Gillette is Pakistan's premier law firm, with an on-the-ground presence in four major cities in Pakistan: Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar, and affiliated offices in Dubai (DIFC) and London.

The firm practices in all areas of corporate, commercial, and dispute resolution law. Leading international legal directories consistently recognize the firm as a top-tier law firm in Pakistan. RIAA Barker Gillette is the exclusive member firm in Pakistan for Lex Mundi, the world's leading network of independent law firms with in-depth experience in over 125 countries worldwide.

Should you require our assistance with a complex commercial dispute, please contact [Mayhar Kazi](#).

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Note: This article is not legal advice; it provides information of general interest about current legal issues.

