

Forgotten Stories of Karachi

Compiled by Durriya Kazi

An Ancient History



- Karachi's ancient history is shrouded in mystery.
- It has prehistoric sites yet to be excavated.
- It has ancient temples, mazaars, and references from the time of Alexander, to the *Sur Ghatto* of Shah Abdul Latif.
- Its modern history began when it was established by traders in 1729
- Rampart Road marks the perimeter of the fortified old city.
- The East India Company annexed Karachi in 1843 under the Command of Sir Charles Napier.
- So began the transformation of Karachi into a city.

Karachi 1870s Creating a city in sand
- Frere Hall can be seen top right



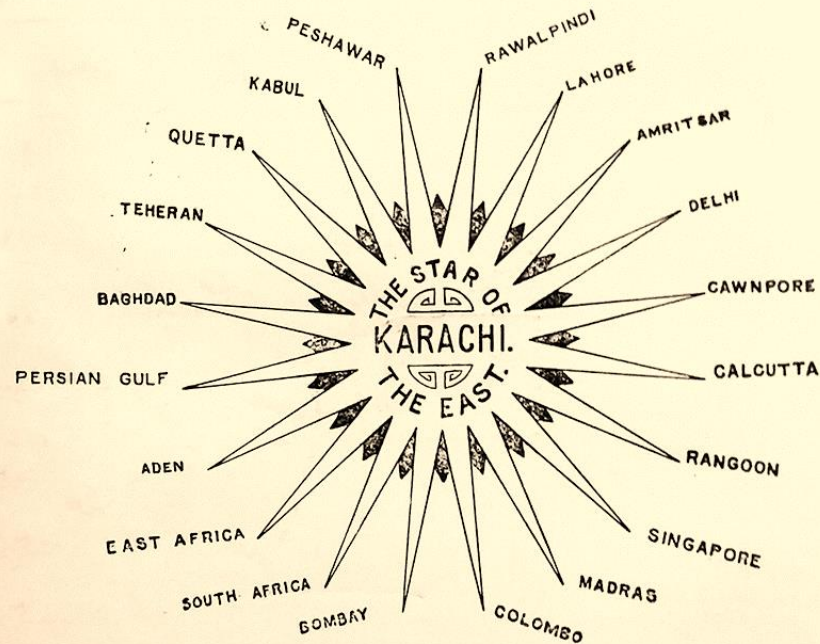
Karachi becomes a city

- In a few years Karachi became a city with a deep water port, and lighthouse water and sewerage systems, well made streets with kerosene street lights, houses, shops and offices for its growing population.
- Railway tracks were laid to increase port activity



Napier's dreams for Karachi

KARACHI, THE STAR OF THE EAST.

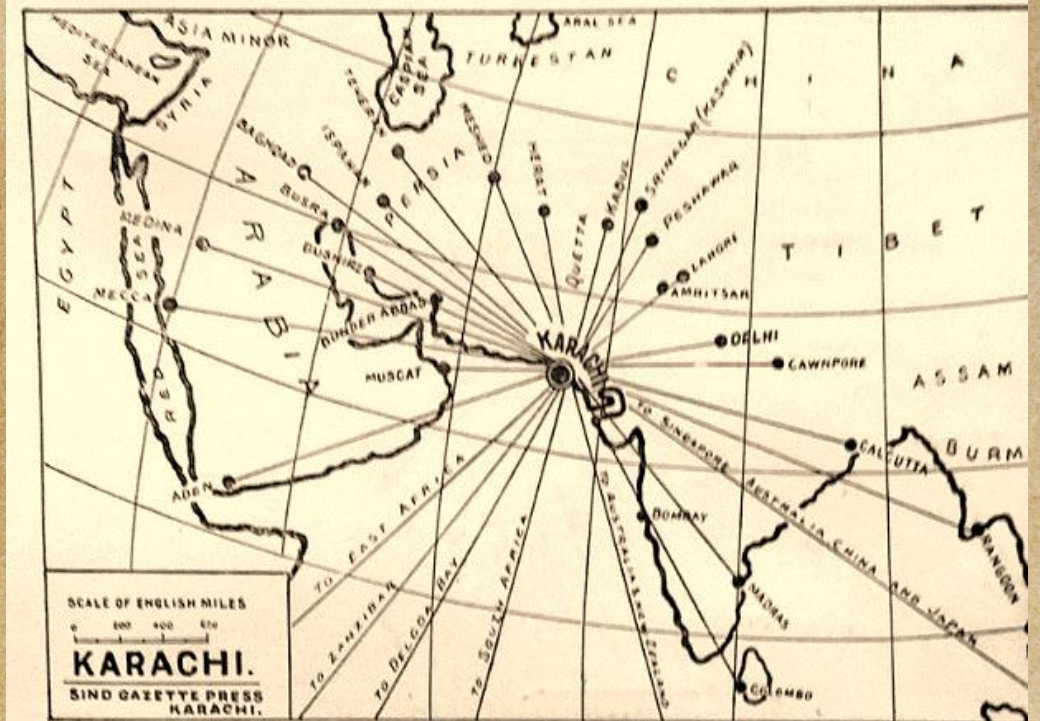


For explanation of this emblem, see map on next page.

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KARACHI. THE STAR OF THE EAST.



Rough Sketch Map to explain the emblem on the opposite page,—
showing how KARACHI is destined by geography to be one of the hubs of the
commerce of Asia from which many main routes of trade and
travel necessarily radiate.

ARCHIVE150

QUETTA LONDON BAGHDAD
BOMBAY

DISTANCES BY AIR

LONDON	4683 MILES
BAGHDAD	1486 "
BOMBAY	553 "
QUETTA	382 "
DELHI	691 "

1930

← NEW YORK 9792 MILES.

11875 " SAN FRANCISCO →

← WARSAW 3083 "

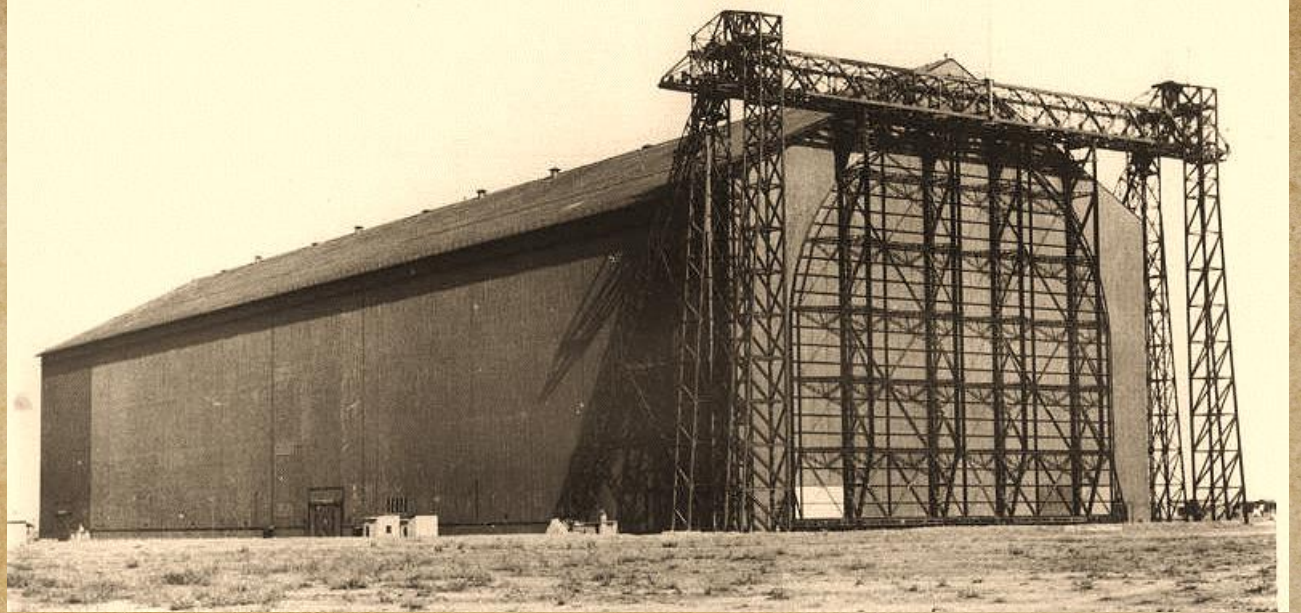
Kate Oliver

Milestones were
proudly placed all
over Karachi

The first telegraph connection between London and India was established in Karachi in 1864 after 16 years of planning

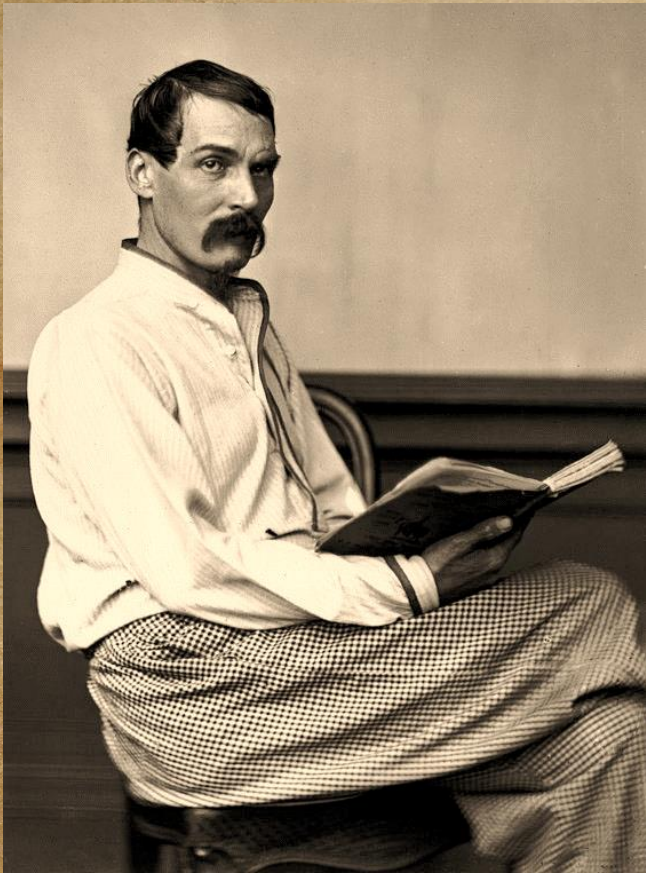


The First airport of India

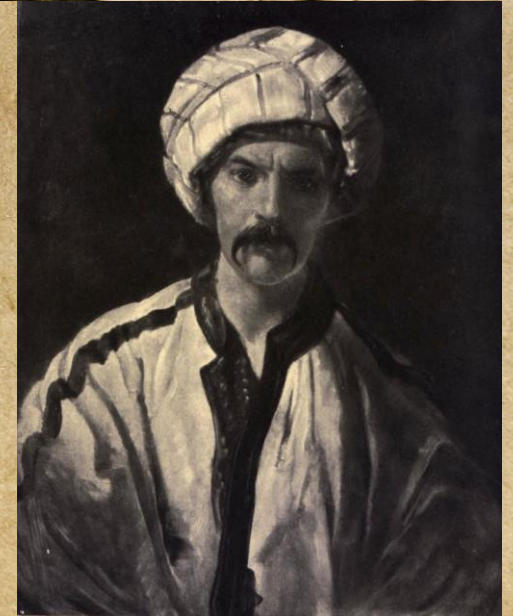


- Three large hangars were constructed in the world to house the world's largest aircraft and one of those was in Karachi which became known as Kala Chapra to the locals.
- The airship set off from England for Karachi in October 1930 but caught fire and crashed in France.
- The Kala Chapra was used by local soldiers for sports.
- in the late 1930's Imperial Airways took over the building.
- During World War II the shed was used by both the RAF and the US Army.

Captain Richard Francis Burton



- British spy, and master of disguises
- Better known for his translation of a Thousand and One Nights
- He was appointed by Sir Charles Napier in 1840 to find an alternative to Hyderabad as capital of Sindh, as he found Hyderabad too hot. Burton reported Karachi was ideal.
- Spoke many languages including Sindhi
- Published 40 books
- Performed Hajj



T. E. Lawrence escapes from the public eye



- T.E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia changed his name to T E Shaw and asked to be posted to Miranshah, the remotest part of the Empire to escape his reputation as the hero of the Arab Revolt
- In Karachi he was posted from 1927-28 at Royal Airforce Depot, Drigh Road, today called the Faisal base on Sharae Faisal.
- Here he began his translation of Homer's Odyssey and wrote several book reviews. A local Goan, Mr Menzies met him at a bookshop on Elphinstone street and they became friends.



Johnny Stores postcards 1930 and 1947



- Johnny Stores was a stall on Elphinstone Street that sold small items such as sweets, pencils batteries and postcards.
- The owner was Jankidas, commonly known as Janki.
- British soldiers called him "Johnny."



- KMC building under construction. It was designed by Scottish architect James S.C. Wynnes.



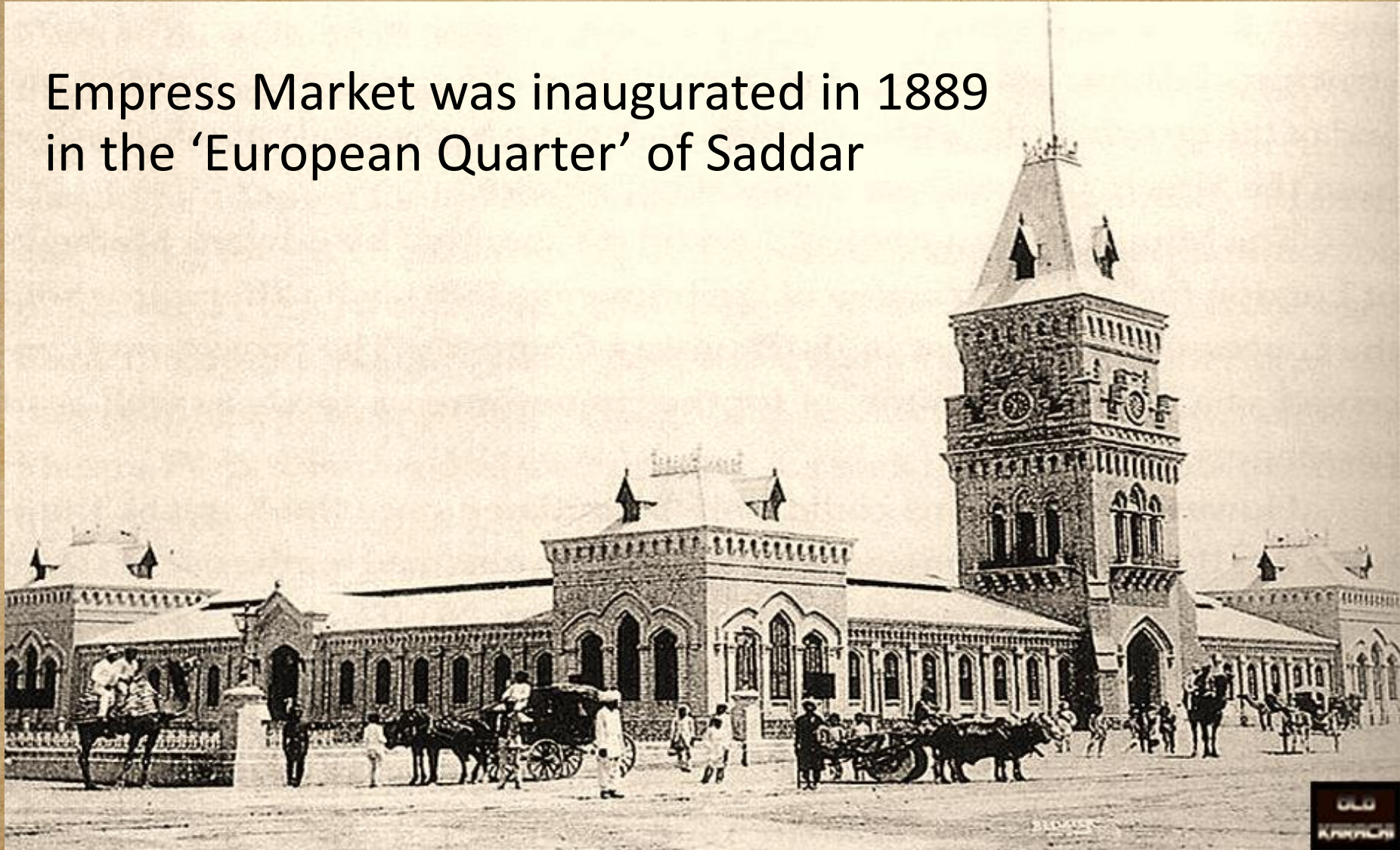
The construction was completed in 1932.
The elders of Karachi decided the municipality would be headed in turn by men from the three main communities - the Muslims, Hindus and Parsis. In 1945, a Christian Mayor was elected in place of a Parsi.

1940s anti-apartheid sign by Karachi Municipality



Empress Market – a symbol of British Rule

Empress Market was inaugurated in 1889
in the 'European Quarter' of Saddar



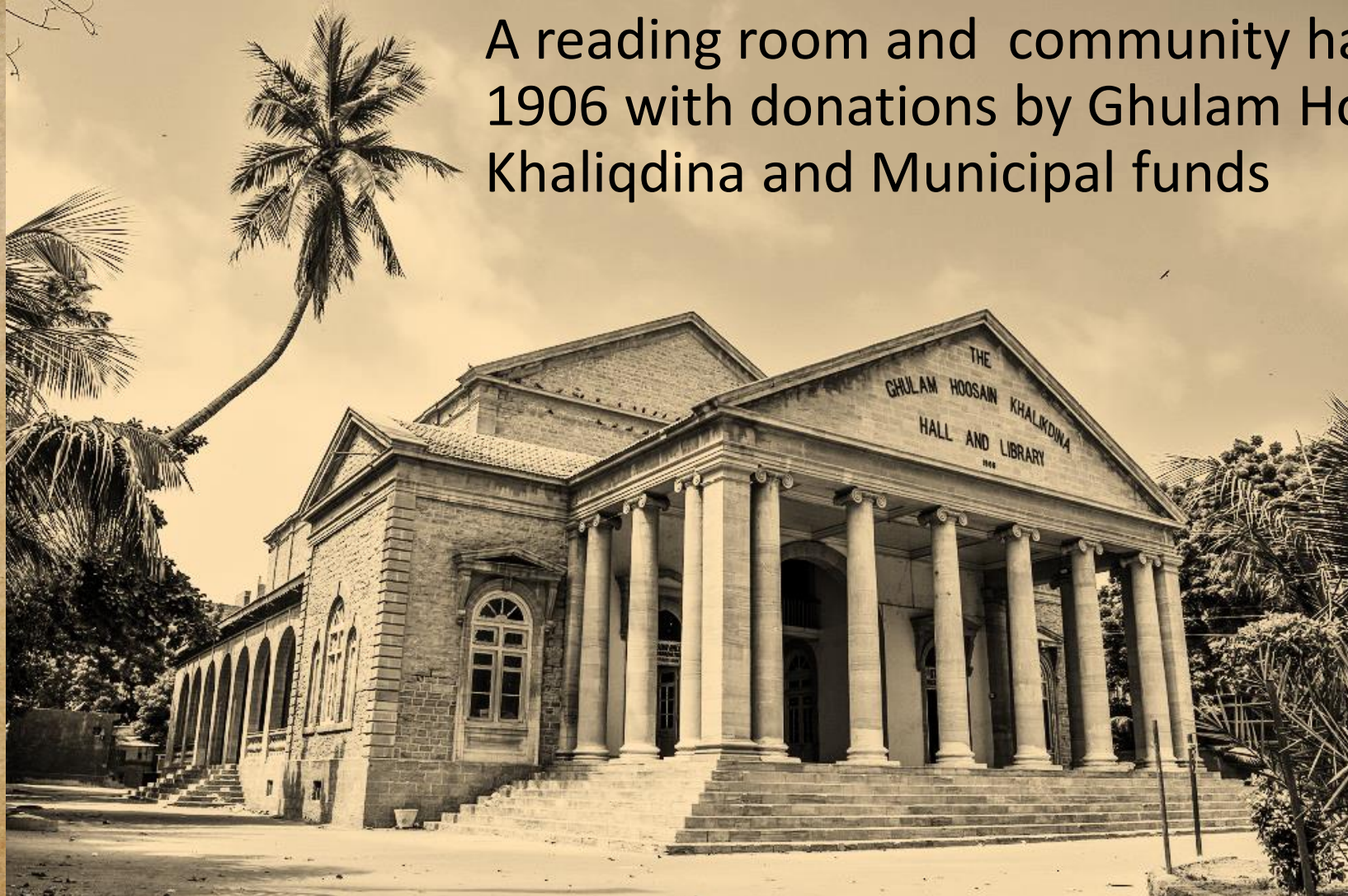
- This is the location where freedom fighters of the 1857 War of Independence were blown from the mouths of cannons by British colonials.
- 25 were sent to the Kala Pani prison in the Andaman islands
- Some were hunted down, hanged and cut into pieces, then thrown in a drain to prevent funeral rights and make the soul suffer for eternity .
- Locals would spread red rose petals on the site to honour the blood spilt for freedom
- To prevent it becoming a shrine to the martyrs, Empress Market was built over the site



- **Empress Market was built for the families of the British administrators and soldiers of Karachi.**
- **The shops inside sold meat, vegetable, fruit and household goods and was surrounded by cafes, bars, and restaurants.**
- **Locals needed permission to enter the Market.**
- **Empress Market was designed by James Strachan, a railway engineer who also designed Merewether Tower, D.J. Science College, and Boulton Market.**

Khaliqdina Hall

A reading room and community hall built in 1906 with donations by Ghulam Hoosain Khaliqdina and Municipal funds





- It became famous as the site of the trial of Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Swami Shankar Acharya, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni, Pir Ghulam Mujaddidi Sirhindi and Maulana Nisar Ahmad Kanpuri who came to be known as the Karachi Seven.

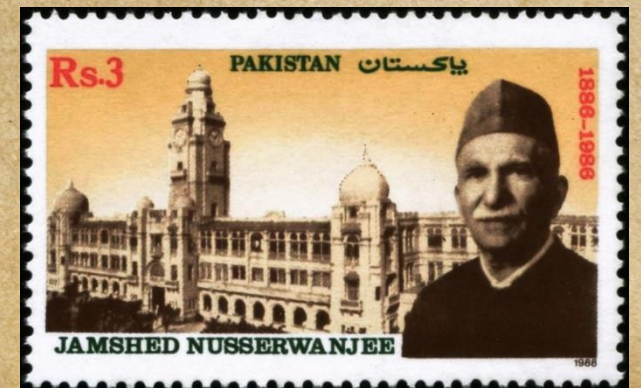
- Maulana Muhammad Ali was accused of sedition of the armed forces when he proposed at Kakri Bagheecha, Lyari, that Muslims must not serve in the army or police against their own people. The others were charged with abetment.
- It was held at the Khaliqdina Hall due to the large crowds that would gather everyday.
- Gandhi said the importance of the trial was "the beginning of the end of the present system".

Nusserwanji Tiles – Swadeshi Movement



Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta

- Served in the Municipality from 1918-1934
- As Mayor, transformed Karachi into the cleanest city in Asia
- Replaced Minton tiles imported from England with a locally manufactured tile, Bharat tiles, with Pheroza Sheth in Bombay and a second factory in Karachi – their contribution to swadeshi or home rule and economic independence.
- Soon every important building and house used these tiles.



- **Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah took oath as Governor general of Pakistan on 14 August 1947 .**
- **The building was designed by the renowned architect R.T. Russel and completed in 1939. It was built on the site of the old Government House of Sir Charles Napier**



- Lord Mountbatten suggested Quaid e Azam should cancel the State drive through Karachi to the Government House as there was information a bomb would be thrown at the carriage . Mr Jinnah refused.
- Lord Mountbatten then suggested they travel in a closed car. Again the Quaid refused.
- All along the route crowds cheered.
- It was said to be a fabricated threat to shake the confidence of the Quaid e Azam

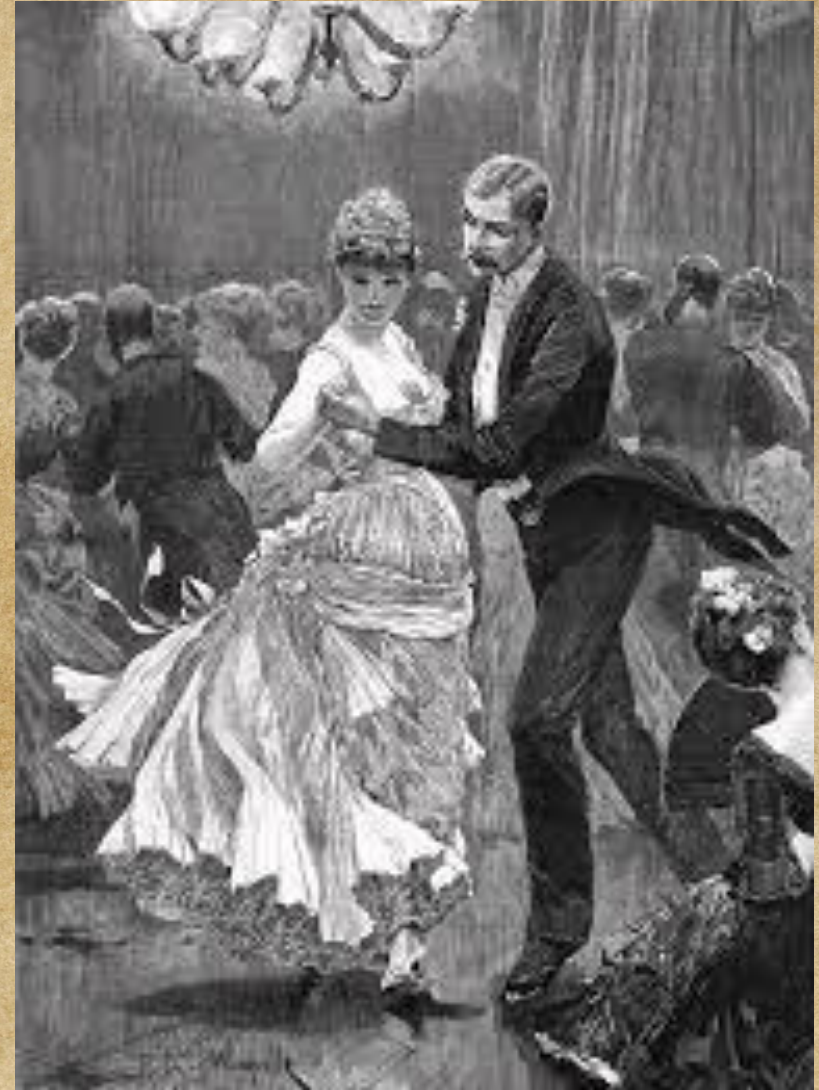
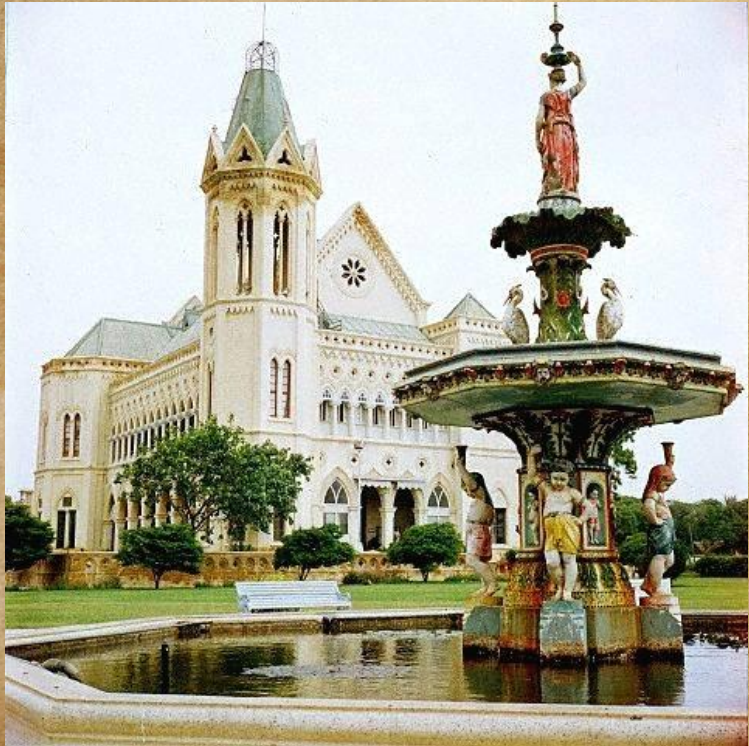
Federal Government offices in Karachi 1947



- Thousands of government employees migrated to Karachi, the capital of the new Pakistan.
- Their 'offices' were tents. They had no office furniture or typewriters.
- They used thorns as staples and worked without a salary.
- Even Cabinet ministers had seats and desks made of white washed crates.

Music and entertainment

- British families held dances, concerts and plays at Frere Hall



Kothari Parade & Lady Lloyd Pier, Karachi



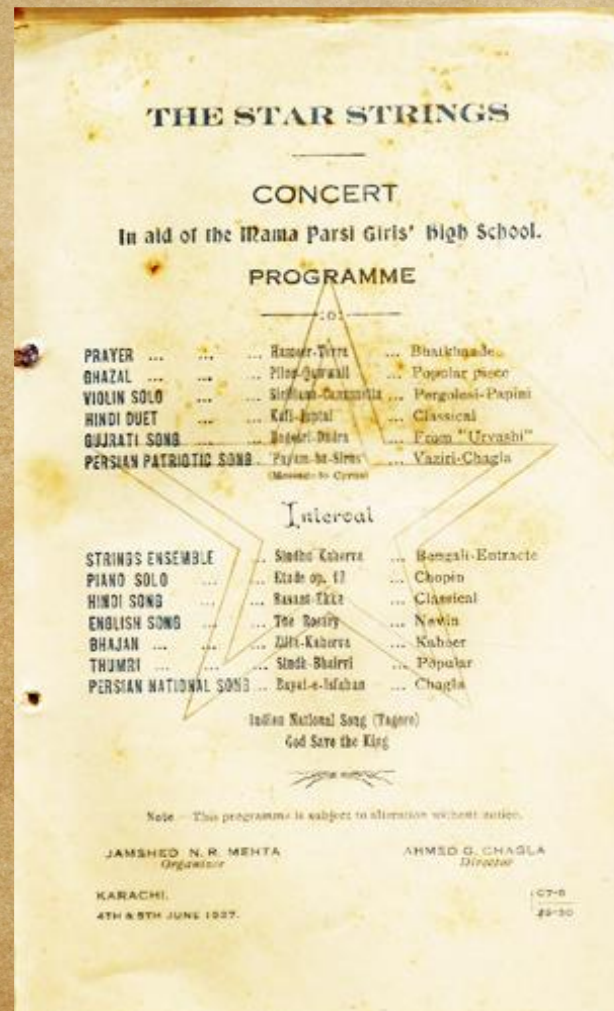
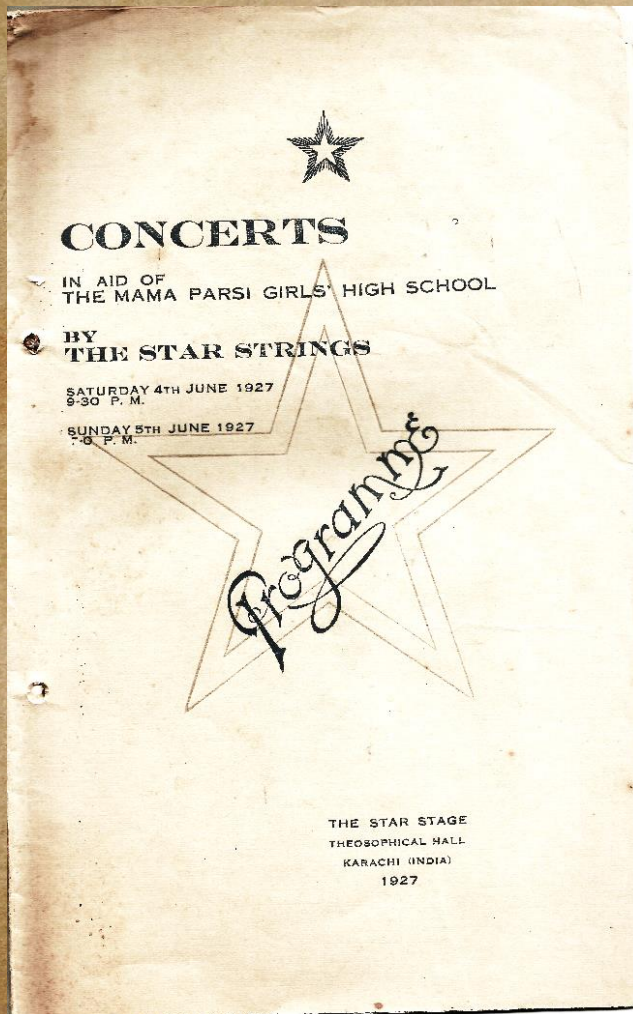
Jehangir Hormasji Kothari demolished his house on Clifton Hill in 1907, and built a magnificent pavilion, parade and pier, for the people of Karachi. Kavasji Hormusji Katrak added a bandstand in 1921 designed by Arch Mr E. B. Hoare





The people of Karachi enjoyed the sea breeze. Renowned scholar Ali Muhammad Rashidi wrote that as a young lad he and his friend would dress up and go at 6 pm when a lady in a red sari would take her constitutional down the pier in the hope she would look in their direction. She never did.

Local Entertainment



- The Star Stage of the Theosophical Hall
- Music concert
- Participants of all religions and cultures
- Directed by A.G Chagla , the composer of the National Anthem of Pakistan
- Images courtesy A K Chagla



CONCERTS

IN AID OF
THE MAMA PARSİ GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

BY
THE STAR STRINGS

SATURDAY 4TH JUNE 1927
9-30 P. M.

SUNDAY 5TH JUNE 1927
7-9 P. M.

Programme

THE STAR STAGE
THEOSOPHICAL HALL
KARACHI (INDIA)
1927

IMPORTANT

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE ARE COURTEOUSLY
REQUESTED NOT TO LEAVE THE HALL DURING THE PER-
FORMANCE EXCEPT DURING INTERVALS BETWEEN THE
ACTS, TO AVOID DISTRACTION TO THE ARTISTS AND
DISTURBANCE TO OTHERS.

THE STAR PLAYERS

PRESENT

SIDDARTHA—THE BUDDHA

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

ARRANGED BY
A. G. CHAGLA

DIRECTED BY
H. B. ADVANI

INCIDENTAL MUSIC
GIVEN BY
THE STAR STRINGS
ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

SCENIC ARTIST
A. AZIM

GENERAL MANAGER
N. D. MALLIK

*Jamshed H. R. Mehta
S. H. Gakhale*

ORGANIZERS.

KARACHI

17TH NOVEMBER 1928.

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- Play arranged by A.G Chagla , the composer of the National Anthem of Pakistan

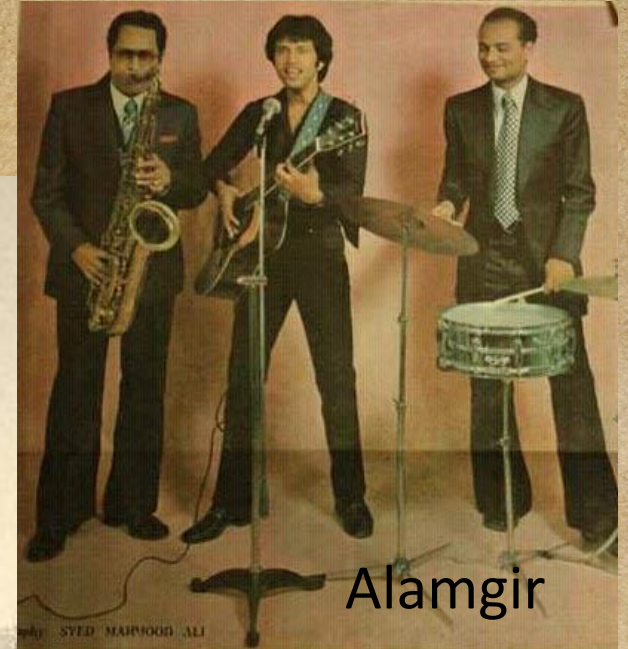
The fountain that played sitar music reflected the love of music in Karachi



Mehdi Hasan



Richie D'Souza



Alamgir

Asia's first Drive In cinema 1962 an initiative of Azizullah Jung



Funland, Clifton - 1970s



The Casino that never was - 1970s



Lady Nanette Constantine



- The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), was established in Karachi in 1878 by a group of animal lovers who convened a public meeting at the Frere Hall gardens.
- Lady Nanette Constantine, a Swiss resident of Karachi, was the society's president for decades until her death in 1990

1961 locust attack



VOLCANIC ERUPTION NEAR KARACHI COAST

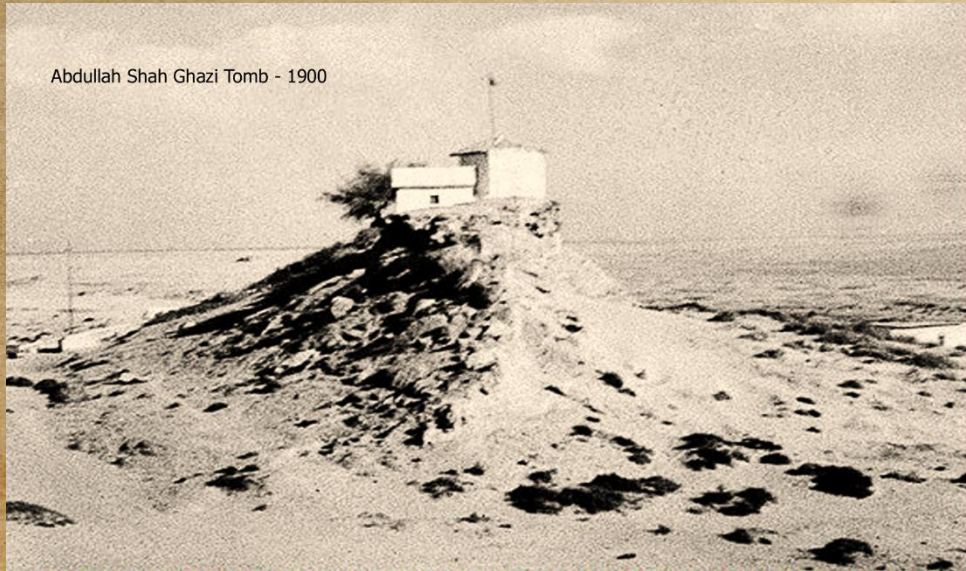
Cause of the 40-Foot Tidal Wave

KARACHI, Dec. 5.—The earthquake shock and the disastrous tidal wave that occurred in the early hours of November 28 was the result of a volcanic eruption that devastated the west coast of Karachi, writes the special correspondent of the Associated Press of India, who travelled in an Indian naval vessel H.M.I.S. "Hindustan," visiting the scenes of the disaster.

Two eruptive rocks of granite colour have appeared in the

- 1945: Tsunami strikes Karachi coast.
- When the tidal wave struck, thousands of pebbles shot up into the air like volleys of bullets

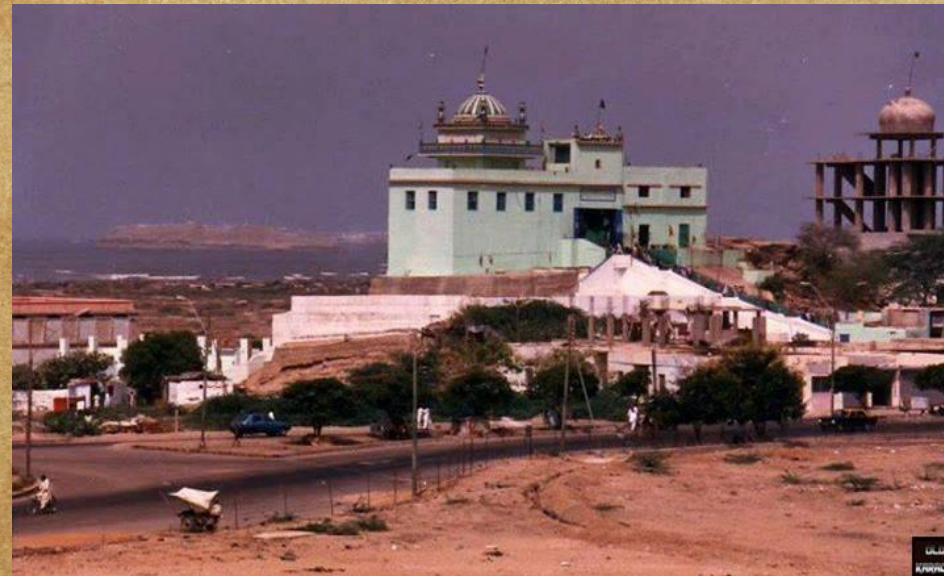
A city protected by an 8th century sufi saint – Abdullah Shah Ghazi



1900s



1960s



1980s