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-HOW PAKISTAN'S FARMERS ARE CLEANING UP COTTON'

BRC

BIORESOURCE RESEARCH CENTRE

Pakistan Wildlife News

Issue V, Volume 3

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New Released Bear at Balkasar
Sanctuary

WSU & BRC working to preserve rare Himalayan animal



By Jim Hannah
5 May 2011

A rare Himalayan goat-like animal called the grey goral, threatened with extinction in Pakistan because of population and hunting pressures.

“There are probably no ramifications of losing the grey goral that are any worse than losing the Mona Lisa or demolishing the Louvre,” said Rooney. “It’s largely aesthetic. It’s something that enriches our world, enriches our culture.”

The goral is a small, rough-haired, cylindrical-horned animal that typically lives 14 to 15 years. Up to 4.5 feet in length and weighing up to 92 pounds, it has a gray or gray-brown coat with tan legs, lighter patches on its throat and a single dark stripe along its spine. Its backward-curving horns can grow up to 7 inches. Males have short manes.

There are fewer than 1,000 gorals left in Pakistan, according to Fakhar-i-Abbas counted the gorals.

The gorals are found in the forests of the Himalayas, with groups typically occupying a territory of roughly 100 acres at elevations of about 10,000 feet. They feed on leaves and grasses and usually rest on rock ledges through the day.

Their habitat is getting further and further compressed, and now that we have more people in the areas of goral, there is more hunting pressure.

The goral is very agile and can run quickly. And due to its coloration, it is very well camouflaged and difficult to see, especially since it spends much of the day lying still.

Using field data on goral birth and death rates, then factoring in changes in habitat availability to build a range of forecasts and assess the likelihood of extinction in a given time frame.

Abbas founded the Islamabad-based Bioresource Research Center, which now has about 55 employees. It is a conservation organization

that also serves as a wildlife service that does fieldwork for the Pakistan government.

One of BRC other project includes doing surveys aimed at **preserving Pakistan’s vultures.**

In the early 1990s, the number of vultures in Pakistan began to plummet dramatically

In five years, the population had declined by 99 percent for some species, resulting in what conservation groups called the Asian vulture crisis.

It turned out that a new anti-inflammatory drug being given to livestock to fatten them up was toxic to vultures, which were eating dead livestock. A more recent problem is that livestock previously left out for a vulture is now being sent to plants for processing as chicken feed.

Over the past 10 years, BRC has been doing surveys in which he counted dead wildlife that can be seen from a 1,000-mile stretch of major highway from Islamabad to Karachi.

Basically, all the dead livestock have completely disappeared from **the side of the road, What’s happened now is the traditional food source of vultures is now disappearing. If this problem isn’t addressed, you’re not going to be able to recover the population.** The vultures disappear altogether, it could give rise to packs of wild dogs. That could pose a threat to human health because the dogs can carry rabies and other diseases.

Vultures are also critical for a religious ceremony held by the Parsi tribal group. The Parsis believe the Earth should not be polluted by **human corpses, so they don’t bury their dead. Instead, they build mountaintop structures called Towers of Silence and let vultures consume the bodies.**

But now there are not enough vultures to eat the dead



Health experts caution the break of H1N1 or bird flu, which migratory birds pass on to humans.

H1N1 avian influenza: Bird flu hits in September but it's better to be safe than sorry, say experts

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

June 24, 2011

Workshop visitors wondered why bird flu awareness started so early in the year, since the influenza hits in September, when birds in Siberia spread their wings to migrate to the coastal areas of Pakistan. **Usually that's when health experts caution the break of H1N1 avian influenza or bird flu, which the birds pass on to humans.**

A programme was organised at Marriot Hotel for the prevention and control of the pandemic avian influenza H1N1 on Thursday. The Pakistan Government ministry of health and the Associations of Health Journalists of Pakistan organised the seminar in collaboration **with the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef).**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared bird flu a global pandemic (stage 6) in 2009 after evidence showed that it was spreading in the southern hemisphere. **"There is no chance the virus will come to Pakistan," dismissed Sindh Health Secretary Syed Hashim Raza Zaidi, adding, "But safety and preventive measures of all influenza viruses are important."**

The national cell received 2,000 samples for testing from 2009 to 2011 and 702 samples tested positive for H1N1, according to the

Ministry of Health, Islamabad National Programme for the Control and Prevention of Avian & Pandemic Influenza (NPCPAI) programme manager, Dr Salma Kausar Ali. So far this year, there have been 12 reported deaths due to the disease, while 37 cases have been confirmed.

Dr Ali said there are three categories of the influenza: A, B and C. Type A can infect people, birds, pigs, horses, seals, whales and other animals. Type B affects only humans, while type C causes a mild illness in humans.

"You can eat all the eggs and chicken you want," said NPCPAI's project director, Prof. Dr Muhammad Akram Munir. Despite fears and several reported cases of bird flu in Pakistan, it is not a serious threat, he assured

"This is because Pakistan's poultry industry is ranked above several others, including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Iran. There is a good number of poultry products exported from Pakistan," he said. Speaking about the NPCPAI, Dr Munir said the project started on July 1, 2007, and continued till June 30, 2010, and started with a total cost of nearly Rs1.18 billion. The purpose of the project was to improve and scale up the surveillance, reporting and diagnostics of the influenza to control the disease. Health EDO Dr Nasir Javed asked people to stay calm, even if they hear about the outbreak of bird flu because **it can be treated with medication. "Last year, the panic created about the outbreak resulted in a shortage of medicines since all the stocks were bought and later sold in black,"** he said. **In case a patient is tested positive with the flu, the patient, their family and treating doctors must get vaccinated.** The national cell provided 10,000 vaccines to immunize hospital paramedic staffers in 18 towns of the

Continued...

city, according to the identified priority list in terms of vulnerability.

Although a virology lab was constructed at Civil Hospital, Karachi in December, 2010 for flu detection, Dr Javed said his department needs a separate set-up to coordinate efforts across the city. He said a request has already been made with the national program in-charge to help create a set up within City District Government Karachi premises.

The medical superintendent at Sindh Government Hospital in Ibrahim Hyderi said there have not been any cases reported in the area so far.

“They only start coming up after September,” she said.

Dr Ali said that the imported vaccine for influenza is not checked as thoroughly as the polio vaccine but the medicine has details of its manufacture, expiry and efficacy.

The health secretary, Syed Hashim Raza Zaidi, said the provincial government plans to conduct mass awareness for health reporters.

Dr Salma Kausar Ali said that the federal health department is setting up disease response centres in different districts in Sindh on the same footing as the disease response centre in Islamabad. Regional activities for prevention and control include a influenza surveillance network, meetings to prepare national preparedness plans for pandemic influenza and inter-provincial meetings to be arranged every quarter.

Peak season: From September to November

Symptoms: Flu, inflammation, shortness of breath, chest pain, etc.

Preventive measures: **Injectable**

influenza vaccine is the best immunity for those under threat.

Preventive measures for those affected include coughing etiquette, social isolation, washing of hands, use of masks, rest and diet.

Best time to get vaccinated: October or November

Who should get vaccinated: People at high risk for complications from the flu such as poultry farmers, paramedics, children, pregnant women and people between the ages of 50 and 64

Treatment: There is a virology laboratory at Civil hospital for flu testing. The government has also arranged a 40-bed unit at Abbassi Shaheed Hospital with a five-bed ICU. The unit is equipped with all the required facilities, including monitors and ventilators, to treat bird flu and any other influenza flu, **said the hospital’s medical superintendent, Dr Nadeem Ahmed Rajput**

Help Stop Bear Baiting in Pakistan

4 June 2011
by Megan D.

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

Bear baiting is a terribly cruel and inhumane blood sport that for the most part still persists in the Punjab and Sindh regions of northern Pakistan. Even though it has been illegal in Pakistan since 1890 — through the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act — routine bear baiting events are still being held in the name of public entertainment. It is especially prevalent in the rural tribal regions.

At a typical bear baiting event, a bear is tethered to a post in the middle of a stadium. The rope or chain is between 2-5 meters long.

The bear’s claws have been blunted, his/her canine teeth removed and a nose ring inserted. At least two dogs are then let loose to attack the tethered bear. The dogs are removed when the bear submits; this is seen when the bear rolls on the ground to avoid further attack by the dogs. The bear is forced to do this up to as much as ten times per day.

The average life expectancy of a wild bear is 20 years. Bears used for bear baiting have significantly shortened lives, 5-7 years at best.

Bear Baiting: Blood Sport

Historically, bear baiting was popular in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, who was so fond of the sport she overruled Parliament when they attempted to ban bear baiting on Sundays. The practice was introduced to south Asian cultures by British colonizers in the mid-nineteenth century. While the sport is illegal in Pakistan, it persists to this day. Land owners, called landlords in Pakistan, arrange bear baiting at village fairs.

Bear cubs are taken from the wild and held in small cages in captivity. Without adequate care and sustenance, the bears live lives of misery. Of course, the fight is manipulated in favor of the dogs because the bears are tied to a post and have their sharpest (canine) teeth removed and claws filed down to prevent the bear from adequately defending him/her self against the dogs.

“The physical and mental trauma these bears have endured means they will never be able to experience life in the wild. We need to provide them with the space, care, treatment and nourishment that they will need for the rest of their lives,” said Jan Schmidt-Burbach, WSPA’s Wildlife Veterinary Programmes Manager.



Livestock sector: Punjab may launch a plan to revive industry



Hopes to generate Rs400b activity in livestock sector in the next ten years.

June 16, 2011

KOT MOMIN

The Punjab government hopes to generate activity worth Rs400 billion in the next ten years in the livestock sector and hopes to launch a plan to revive local cattle breeds, as well as introduce high-yielding crossbred animals.

The Punjab Livestock and Dairy Development Board (PLDDB), under new management has embarked on a project for maximum utilization of livestock resources with specific focus on the artificial insemination.

“We are striving to bring change at most critical level of breed improvement,” said PLDDB Chief Executive Officer Maj Gen (retd) Muhammad Ali Khan, while talking to reporters.

Despite being the third-largest milk producing country and ranked 19th in the world among meat producers Pakistan is not even fulfilling its own requirements for milk and meat, he said. Khan added that this was primarily due to improper exploitation of the genetic potential.

The government had also committed to give Rs500 million per annum for the next five years to fully exploit the potential of this vital sector.

Pakistan to form JPC on Climate Change



KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia): Deputy Chairman of Pakistan Senate Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali has said that he will propose constitution of a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Climate Change comprising elected members of all Political Parties from both Houses of Pakistan Parliament, to effectively tackle the menace of Climate Change and to address its impact on tourism.

Presenting a country report on **“Climate Change and Tourism”** at the **15th General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Parliamentarians’ Conference on Environment and Development (APPCED)** held here from June 7 to 9, he said that core functions to be performed by this proposed body would be to comprehensively define the contours and substance of a National Counter Climate Change Policy and ensure inter Provincial coordination on Climate Change and promotion of tourism.

The Deputy Chairman Senate said that Pakistan contributes only 0.43 **per cent of the world’s total Greenhouse Gases and is 135th in world’s** ranking, but it was 12th among the countries which were hardest hit by effects of climate change. He said that owing to enhanced global warming, glacier-fed rivers that flow through Pakistan cause landslides, flashfloods and glacial lakes and were not only constant threat to the lives and properties of the people of Northern region of Pakistan, but, also threatening the natural habitat of rare animals such as the Markhor, Ibex and Snow Leopard.

Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali said that Pakistan is a destination of special interest for travelers and tourists as it is endowed with valleys and mountains of breath taking beauty which were suitable for trekking, mountaineering, white water rafting, wild boar hunting, mountain and desert jeep, Camel and Yak safaris, but over the past few years, climate change had badly affected the inflow of tourists, particularly during the peak tourist season between June and September. He emphasized that parliamentarians can play a proactive role to forge coordination between public and private sectors to combat the menace of climate change and to mitigate its adverse affects on tourism. Deputy Chairman Senate hoped that the 15th Assembly of APPCED will come up with a resolve that the parliamentarians, would ensure that Climate Change and Tourism concerns were integrated in our respective policies, plans and programs to overcome the adverse effects of climate change and to promote tourism around the world. Earlier, the Pakistani delegation attended inaugural session wherein Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia,

Continued...

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malaysia delivered his opening and Keynote Address highlighted the aim and objectives of the APPCED session, said a message received from KL on Tuesday.

Jamali is heading a nine (9) member Pakistani delegation which include Senator, Ms Saeeda Iqbal, Senator Rehmatullah Kakar, Senator Abdur Rashid, Senator Ms Kalsoom Parveen, Hameedullah Khan Afridi, MNA and Naseer Bhutta, MNA. to represent Pakistan at the event.

Lohi Bher Wildlife Park: 687 acres of near lifelessness

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

By Obaid Abbasi
19 June 2011



A view of an artificial lake under construction (left), broken animal statues in the children's play area (right) at the Lohi Bher Wildlife Park. PHOTOS: MUHAMMAD JAVAID

Let's go on a safari to a wildlife park with nary an animal. Or almost, for what is a pair each of lions, zebras, deer and peacocks spread over 687 acres.

Such is the state of Lohi Bher Wildlife Park. Established in 1992, it is the third safari park in Punjab, allowing visitors to view a variety of imported and local animals living in their natural breeding environments. However, the park's deteriorating condition is a cause for concern for visitors and residents of the twin cities. Those visiting complain that there are few birds and animals at the park. They also complained of lack of proper transport and the dilapidated condition of the road leading to the wildlife park. Zeshaan Ali, a visitor and a wildlife enthusiast, told *The Express Tribune* that the park has been neglected by every ruling party since its establishment nearly two decades ago. He alleged that most of the animals died due to the hot weather and negligence of park officials.

The park was established during the first tenure of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). In 2008, the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party government decided to redesign the park and populate it with a wider variety of animals, such as those found in international safari parks. A budget worth Rs311 million was allocated, but nothing happened on the ground. Another visitor said, "The twin cities already lack public parks; I don't understand why the government is delaying development of the park."

When contacted, Lohi Bher Park Assistant Director Raja Javed said that the Punjab government's project to bring the park in-line with international safari parks is "in process and will be completed by 2012". He said that the Rs311 million allocated for the project will be used to procure an additional 100 acres for the park, construction of two water lakes spread over two acres and a pheasant reserve spread over two acres. He added they will also procure leopards, chimpanzees, bears and more lions for the park.

Javed said the main road leading to the park will be re-carpeted and a dedicated transport service will be launched to facilitate the visitors.

"Around 95 per cent of development work at the safari park has been completed and it will open to visitors very soon," he added.

Festival organised to unite people for nature conservation

26 June 2011

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Chotiari Conservation Forum organized a nature festival the other day in Keti Bunder, Keenjhar Lake and Pai Forest areas to raise awareness among the local communities to conserve natural resources, grazing fields, wildlife and forests. The event attracted a large number of herdsmen, fishermen and farmers living near the Chotiari Reservoir and adjacent lakes.

The event started with the swimming competition in Baqar Lake, which now is named Chotiari Reservoir and is spread over an area of 18,000 hectares. As the event started, people from all walks of life came with their children to entertain themselves with colourful activities. Boat race, local indigenous games, theatre for awareness, tableaux performed by local school children and Sufi singers were the major activities, besides presenting awards to journalists for their contribution to promote nature conservation.

Continued...

A WWF conservation officer Moula Bakhsh Mallah said that it was the first event of its kind which was aimed to unite the community people on one platform for sustainable development and nature conservation.

He said that it was the area where traditional people had developed wildlife conservation zones long ago. There were deer, hog deer, hare, migratory birds and partridges of both species brown partridge and black partridge 20 years back. The area was considered natural habitats for threatened crocodiles and otters. There were 60 fish species in the lakes, some of which have come under the reservoir area. But now, due to water shortage, many local fish species here have become extinct.

Coordinator Indus for All Programmes WWF Pakistan Nasir Panhwar said that the area people attended the festival in large numbers because there was a big vacuum of entertainment and they were facing acute poverty and destruction of natural resources.

He also appreciated the theatre groups and school children, who during their presentation portrayed the issues, ignorance by the government authorities and community itself and urged the need to own these resources and protect the same for their future generations. The residents of these areas used to live a

prosperous life 40—50 years back. There were thick forests, natural grazing fields, fresh water, cultivation and the communities like herdsmen, farmers and fishermen had been living peacefully, enjoying the wealth of nature. Each family had herds of livestock. Each tribe had its separate state in terms of their herds grazing, cultivation and fishing.

Nobody from outside was allowed to hunt a bird or any animal. But now these people themselves are living in danger because of the changing approach of feudal lords and influential people, who want to destroy the natural beauty by chopping off trees, which was home to several wildlife species. President Hur Historical Society, Mir Mohammed Nizamani said that the area where Chotiari Reservoir had been formed was the Makhi Forest,

the centre from where the Hur Movement was launched against the British rule. The British destroyed villages of the local people, thinking they might be supporting the Hur insurgents and brought warrior tribes from other parts and settled them in this area to counter the Hur Movement. Hur insurgents devised a strategy and cut the major Nara Canal in 1942, which inundated the entire area and compelled enemies to migrate to other areas. The artificial flood formed several small ponds and lakes, which were still popular with different names. He criticized that there was no documentation of these historical truths.



Justifying his claim, Nizamani said that there were beautifully built buildings — natural resorts — at islands of the Baqar Lake established by local feudal lords, which were now looking like ghost palaces, because they were inside the water. The people used to invite friends and officials for enjoying hunting in the area, the natural habitats of birds and animals, like partridges and deer..

Cabinet not in favour of live animals' export

June 27, 2011



Karachi—Chairman Trade Development Authority Tariq Iqbal Puri has said that they had raised the issue of export of live animals in the cabinet as due to export of live animals leather industry was facing problems. He was addressing the press conference along with Director General TDAP Lahore Irfan Tarrar. Puri said that Pakistan has the huge potential of exports of meat. We should focus on the export of meat rather than exporting live animals. He also said that we have no dearth of animals in the country adding that we should take steps to control the smuggling of live animals from our country. About giving the status of Most Favourite Nation (MFN) to India Puri said that India had given us the MFN status but they had imposed Non-Tariff Barriers on Pakistani exports. He said that in the second round of talks with India,

Continued...

which will be held soon we will raise the issue of NTF with them and told them that we will not consider them of giving MFN status unless they **will remove NTF's for Pakistani exporters**. Puri said that by the end of this current fiscal year 2010-2011 our export could reach 25 billion dollars and import will be around 36 billion dollars and our trade deficit will be around 10 billion dollars adding that our trade deficit is decreasing. Other than increase in value, there have been major increase in terms of quantity of products if we compare it with the period of July-April FY 2010-2011. He briefed the press that preparation for holding 6th expo-exhibition at Karachi from 20-23 October 2011 is in full swing and this year a special pavilion will be allotted for Chinese products especially, Chinese engineering products, which will be helpful in the value-added sector of our country. TDAP has declared China as the focus country for its trade initiatives in 2011-2012 and plans to participate in more than 20 fairs in China as part of Pakistan-China 60 years of establishment of diplomatic relations and recently held at first successful business forum in Kunming, China. The Japanese government has recently lifted ban on the import of Pakistani mangoes and TDAP is encouraging consultants for setting up of VHT plants at Karachi and Multan to take full advantage of market access opportunities made available due to the lifting of ban. However, a trial shipment is being processed through a pilot VHT plant, which has already been established near the Karachi Airport which is expected to be functional in the next month, which has the capacity of processing 60kg mangoes per day. On Web portal, he informed that TDAP is facilitating all communities including the domestic and international users via its interactive Web-portal by providing an online platform for queries and registration. TDAP strongly recommends every exporter to get register with TDAP on its online platform of web-portal so they can get access to the International Trade Leads and special inclusion in the prominent list for international dissemination system of TDAP for up coming events like Expo Pakistan 2011 and other related information.

Vultures vanishing from Sindh

Jan Khaskheli

16 June 2011



Vultures are often the least favorite of all birds, but people often forget that they play a crucial role in the balance of nature, which is why their current path to extinction in Sindh has conservationists worried as they believe the population decline is having a negative impact on the environment as well as local culture, The News has learnt.

There are nine vulture species found in South Asia, two of which are native to Sindh, the white-backed vulture and the long-billed vultures. Both birds have been declared endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and a small population lives in **Tharpakar district's Nagar Parkar area, which is considered their only natural habitat.**

According to wildlife conservationists the number of vultures in Sindh has declined by 99 percent in ten years and despite efforts to breed and protect their remaining population in Nagar Parkar, the white-backed vulture and the long-billed vulture are still under threat to be wiped out from Pakistan. Worryingly, Sindh Wildlife department officials are allegedly unaware about the local on international endangerment of these vulture species or any projects in place that work for their protection.

The vulture is an extraordinary bird which patrols the skies as **nature's scavenger, cleaning the environment of rotting carcasses** that aid the spreading of dangerous diseases. In Sindh it is not uncommon for herdsmen, who are unaware of the health risks, to toss dead animals out in the open.

Thanks to a common painkiller administered to livestock by the name of Diclofenac, these carcasses are not only hazardous to humans but to the vultures themselves, as the drug has resulted in the **massive decline in the scavenger's population worldwide.**

Although there is a global ban on the sale of Diclofenac, wildlife conservationists say that the drug is being sold openly in rural areas. Thus, these vultures that were commonly found in Sindh, are in danger of being wiped out completely.

Conservationists maintain that there should be a comprehensive **strategy for the protection of Sindh's vultures through initiatives such** as community mobilization and creating advocacy amongst policy makers to ensure the ban on deadly drugs is upheld across the country. In 2009 the United Nation Development Project (UNDP) Green Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Program (SGP) initiated a project in partnership with the local Dhartee Development **Society, which set up a 'vulture restaurant' in an effort to provide** safe food for highly endangered vultures in Nagar Parkar.

Unfortunately, the project could not be sustained Vulture restaurants had shown some success in Nepal and India which inspired wildlife conservationists who hoped to increase the vulture population in

Pakistan. The project also aimed to educate the local community about the perils of using Diclofenac and the importance of protecting vultures, especially their nests.

Continued...

Local communities residing near their natural habitats remain optimistic, as they claim that the vultures were safe in nests perched atop scattered tall trees as well as hilly bushes. However reports paint a different picture, indicating that the vulture species was dying in the desert zone where livestock holders continued to use banned Diclofenac injections. Since vultures residing in Pakistan migrate over the border and inhabit areas in India, wildlife conservationists there have complained that the birds flying to the Thar region were falling prey to poisonous animals carcasses, thus affecting vulture populations in India. There were around 40 million vultures found in India during the early eighties. However, according to a 2007 survey conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society only 11,000 white-backed vultures, 1000 slender-billed vultures and 44,000 long-billed vultures remain in the country. UNDP GEF SGP National Coordinator Masood Lohar conservation project for the betterment of South Asian vultures. Lohar added that the UNDP **was searching for a 'committed partner' in order to re-launch** the project in the same area.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) launched a project in Punjab's Changa Manga forest a few years ago in collaboration with the government, through which they introduced white-backed vulture chicks in the area for the purpose of breeding them in captivity. Head of the WWF project, Uzma Khan, told The News that according to recent data regarding the population of white-backed vultures in the wild, 25 birds were found in Sindh while only four in Punjab. She emphasised the need to protect this endangered species and rejected the notion that vultures could not be bred in captivity. Threatened and endangered vultures are successfully being bred in captivity all over the world, she claimed. Khan **proudly revealed that their project's hatchlings had matured now** and she hopes that by next year the project would have successfully increased their number in captivity.

Swiss Zoo Reveals New Endangered Additions: Snow Leopard Triplets

21 June /2011
B: Elizabeth Barris



Rare snow leopard cubs made their first public appearance at Basel Zoo in Switzerland. Born eight weeks ago to mother Mayhan and father Pator, the feisty triplets were a treat for visitors. The cubs are still suckling, but have already developed their primary teeth, and according to Basel officials, have taken to shredding dead chickens. The zoo plans for the leopards to travel as ambassadors for their endangered species when they reach age three.

Brought together in 2009, Mayhan and Pator were selected for conservation breeding by the European Endangered Species (EEP) program of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). The EEP provides intensive population management for EAZA zoos. Every year recommendations are made for which animals should breed or not breed. Along with a species committee, the EEP is responsible for managing these recommendations, as well as carrying out demographic and genetic analysis, producing a studbook, and planning future species management. The EEP currently manages over 180 species and subspecies, not including those managed by their separate studbook program (ESB).

Native to the mountains of Central Asia, snow leopard populations are currently estimated to be between 4,000 and 6,000 cats. China accounts for 60% of the snow leopard population. In the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, the estimated snow leopard population is

between 1000 and 1500, and it is reported that 20 – 30 snow leopards **are poached each year. The biggest threat to the snow leopard's survival** is humans. Poachers kill them for their pelts, which can sell for \$500 -- \$2,000. Snow leopard bones are also sold to practitioners of **traditional Chinese medicine ("TCM") as a replacement for using tiger bones**, which were used to treat rheumatism and arthritis. The use of tiger bones was removed from TCM pharmacopoeia in 1993, when China introduced a ban on tiger trade, although this does not account for those who still use the bones illegally. The meat of snow leopards has also been reportedly used in TCM as an aphrodisiac. In Tibetan Medicine the meat is believed to cure Bad-kan kidney problems. In a report from September 2000, a restaurant in Chengdu allegedly served snow leopard meals at 128 Yuan per dish.

Snow Leopards have also butted heads with herders, who will often trap, poison, or shoot them to protect their livestock. As humans push further into the mountains with livestock, they infringe upon the grazing territories of wild goats and sheep, which are a staple prey of the snow leopard. Because their own hunting grounds become fragmented and degraded, livestock become prey to the snow leopards. Snow leopards are solitary animals, with a range that covers Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This used to include Mongolia, but the leopards have been eliminated there. The huge, 2 million square kilometer range of the cats makes it difficult for them to be effectively protected; most protected areas are too small to protect the range of even a single snow leopard, and many countries are unable to finance rangers.

About 600 snow leopards live in zoos today. While conservation/ education efforts are being made by organizations such as World Wildlife Fund and Snow Leopard Trust, it may be up to programs like EEP to ensure their survival.

Nurturing forests through conservation

By Azam Khan
28 June 2011



The provision of livelihood opportunities, alternate energy and removal of a ban on harvesting trees are necessary for sustainable forest management. This was said at a conference on 'Sustainable Forest Management', organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Monday.

Speakers demanded the revision of forest laws, addressing land ownership and judicious distribution of royalty in forest communities. Dr Babar Shahbaz, a professor at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, expressed that sustainable forest governance is only possible if it is rooted in collective local action. He expressed that there is no easy way to overcome the multidimensional problems involved in forest management, as managing natural resource conflicts is an integral part of natural resource governance. SDPI Senior Research Associate Shakeel Ahmad Ramay said Pakistan is vulnerable to a multitude of negative implications of climate change, including droughts, the impact of rising sea level, melting glaciers and changing weather patterns. He added that experts predict that these factors would adversely affect agricultural production and may decrease yields by as much as 30 per cent over the next 20 years. He said that depleting water resources and the productivity scenario are in stark contrast with the enormous increase in population and that they combine to present a very gloomy picture. He cited a recent SDPI study which showed that 48.7 per cent of Pakistanis are food insecure and urged the need to take immediate measures to cope with the situation.

Kanwar Iqbal of SDPI explained the background of the United Nations' REDD+ mechanism, carbon credits generated by projects and current developments on national level in Pakistan. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development.

Iqbal said though it is a late, Pakistan has formally entered the

UN-REDD Programme. He also discussed challenges arising from the devolution the Ministry of Environment, specifically because REDD+ demands the immediate formation of national level policies. Social Activist Tahira Abdullah expressed concern over the rapidly diminishing forest cover in Pakistan, which has fallen to 2.5 per



cent of total area. She said that the use of wood as fuel and its commercial use in general should be discouraged by imposing taxes. She also highlighted the need for a rigorous campaign to strictly enforce policies to protect forests and the promotion of sustainable forest management policies. Forest community representatives Riaz Muhammad Khan and Amir Muhammad Khan said that illegal logging, which is carried out with the complicity of forest officials, is behind the massive deforestation and presents a major hindrance in sustainable forest management. They were of the view that those involved in illegal logging sabotage joint forest management committees, and are also responsible for all the hardships being faced by forest communities

Pakistani forest covers to rise 6% to 2015 under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

its forest cover from an existing 5.2% to 6% till 2015, Abid Mehmood, deputy secretary of the environment ministry, told participants at an event held in Islamabad to mark World Environment Day. Resident representative of the UN Development Programme Timo Pakkala said that this year's theme "Forests: Nature at Your Service" highlights the critical importance of forest ecosystems in people's lives, including providing a source of livelihood, reducing risks from natural disasters, refuge for many species and clean water and air for all.

Wasting wood: Lawmakers demand permission for timber sale

By Shabbir Mir
June 24, 2011



GILGIT: In view of sacrifices being made by residents of Diamer Valley for the proposed Diamer-Bhasha Dam, lawmakers have requested the government to lift the existing ban on sale of timber for local consumption. Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI-F) member Haji Gulbar, and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) members Janbaz Khan

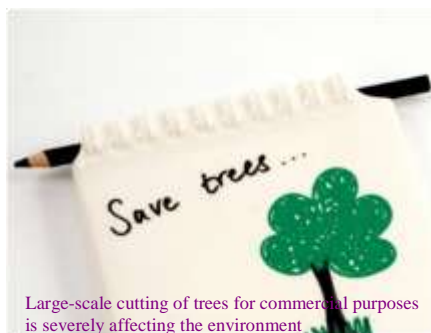
and Rehmat Khaliq said vast quantities of timber are lying in the valley since a decade. This timber could be sold or used for domestic consumption, they said.

The government should allow timber consumption to the local people, given that they have rendered countless sacrifices for construction of the dam, they remarked. They added that the timber, rotting due to heat and moisture, belongs to the people of Chilas, as they had signed a treaty with the government. **Gilgit's Diamer Valley has been one of the largest reserves of Pakistan's**

Continued...

natural forests. However large-scale cutting of trees for commercial purposes is severely affecting the environment.

The government therefore imposed a ban on timber sale to protect the environment and discourage unnecessary cutting of forests in the area. Since then, huge quantities of timber has been lying unattended along Karakoram Highway. Khan said the government had prepared a 10-year working plan to dispose off the rotting timber, but abandoned it soon without giving a reason “The wood has been there for years without any protection. Isn't it an injustice against people of Chilas?” Khan remarked. He urged the government to lift the ban on sale of timber for one year so that people could earn their livelihoods. The lawmakers also criticised the committee formed by Minister for



Large-scale cutting of trees for commercial purposes is severely affecting the environment

Kashmir Affairs Mian Manzoor Wattoo to deal with the issue, saying that the prime objective of the committee members is to fill their own pockets. This matter should be resolved by the Gilgit-Baltistan

government and not by Manzoor Wattoo, the lawmakers said in a joint statement.

Climate change a threat to human security'



21 June 2011

Islamabad: Comprehensive policies and concerted efforts are necessary to deal with the complex and devastating effects of climate change, which is now a serious threat to human for Pakistan. Experts stated this at a seminar on “Looming dangers of climate change on national and human security”, organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Monday.

SDPI Climate Change Study Centre Senior Research Associate Shakeel Ahmad Ramay said that Pakistan simultaneously faces many problems, such as financial and food challenges, amid the worsening issue of climate change. He said that the biggest manifestation of climate change in Pakistan was the 2010 floods, which caused over US\$10 billion in damages and increased the percentage of population facing food insecurity from 48.7 to 58.7 per cent. Ramay said that as a result of climate change, the country particularly faces agricultural and water challenges along with degradation of natural resources. All of **Pakistan's regions except Gilgit-Baltistan** are highly vulnerable to the affects of climate change with regard to agricultural production, he added. He said the country has no national agricultural policy or food security policy, except in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The construction of the controversial Baglihar Dam by India and rapid melting of Siachen glacier due to the military presence there will have damaging effects for the people of both India and Pakistan in the short and long run. National Defense University (NDU), Peace and Conflict Studies **Department Head Dr Noman Sattar, called climate change “a threat multiplier to national and human security and a complex challenge for the global community, especially for resource-starved developing countries.”**



Speakers say country facing agricultural, water challenges and degradation of natural resources

“Declining ecosystem services, the threat of climate change, and HIV/AIDS related problems combine to create or exacerbate political instability and economic hardship for millions in Africa, clearly explaining why 90 per cent of current conflicts are found in 30 per cent of the poorest countries,” he added.

Global Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC) Islamabad Executive Director Arshad Muhammad Khan was of the view that anthropogenic influences since the industrial revolution, spiralling population, the high pace of industrialisation, increased use of fossil oils in industry and transportation, and deforestation for agriculture and urbanisation have fuelled climate change. The impacts, he said, are apparent in the shape of uncertainty in water availability, decreasing crop yields, loss of biodiversity, increased health risks, and newer perspectives for sources of energy. Climate change, he explained, includes global warming, increased precipitation and its uneven distribution, melting of glaciers and snow, sea level rise, increase in frequency and sensitivity of extreme weather events.

National Symposium on Biodiversity concludes



Islamabad—The three day National Symposium on Biodiversity of Pakistan 2011 concluded here on Thursday.



Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH), Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) organized the symposium with the support of WWF, Snow Leopard Trust and COMSATS to discuss the biodiversity issues and mark the International Biodiversity Decade as declared by the United Nations to create awareness on the importance of biodiversity upon which the survival of future generations depends. Federal Minister for Science and Technology Mir Changez Khan Jamali inaugurated the symposium on June 7.

During three day proceedings of the symposium, the biologists

from across the country in different technical sessions headed by experts presented their research papers and discussed

various biodiversity issues, threats and their remedies. Dr. Shahzad A. Mufti, Advisor COMSATS, was the chief guest at the concluding session of the symposium. Addressing the participants, he underlined the need to make concerted efforts and adopt a holistic approach for addressing the biodiversity issues.

He discussed different threats to the biological resources of the country and urged the biologists and all the stakeholders to join hands for protection of biodiversity. He also called upon the relevant departments to launch effective awareness campaigns to

disseminate information on importance of the biodiversity. In the final session on Thursday the participants of the symposium presented their recommendations which **would be included in the book "Biodiversity of Pakistan" Volume-II**, said PMNH Director General Syed Azhar Hasan.

He said these recommendations would help make action plan to protect the biodiversity for our future generations. The DG said being focal organization of biodiversity research, PMNH with the support of PSF.

Dead expert still member of Global Change Impact Studies Centre



By: Khalid Mustafa
18 June 2011

Islamabad: it is really unbelievable that noted economist Dr. A R Kemal who had died long ago, is still shown as a member of the advisory committee of Global Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC-Pakistan), Islamabad. The official website of the centre (<http://www.gcisc.org.pk/advc.aspx>) still mentions Dr. Kemal, who died four years ago, as member of its advisory council.

Other members of the committee, Dr. Muhammad Akram Kahlowan and Dr. Asad Ali Shah, former head of Pakistan Meteorological Department and former chairman Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources and member Planning Commission were in fact ex officio members only by virtue of holding their offices, which they left three years ago.

What is even more shocking is that the centre during its 9-year existence has delivered nothing and did not even raise the issue of fast receding of **the country's glaciers, which are melting because of the Indian troops** occupation and their movements.

Arshad Abbasi of SDPI (Sustainable Development Policy Institute) who has worked extensively on the environment issues said the winter fog, which causes considerable financial and environmental damage to Pakistan, is purely due to the coal power plants of India but Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad and his centre has never highlighted this serious environmental issue. **"The Global Change Impact Studies Centre has also been quiet** over the fast depleting of Siachen Glacier, the water tank of Pakistan that guarantees the water flows in the Indus River, the lifeline of 180 million Pakistanis," he said.

Mr Abbasi said that said that Siachen glacier, which is melting at unprecedented rate, also falls in catchment areas of Indus River. The presence of the Indian Army there and the establishment of permanent cantonments for troops is the fundamental cause of its melting at unprecedented rate. In order to facilitate the troops, glacial ice has been cut and melted; cutting and melting of glacial ice through application of chemicals have made it the fastest melting glacier. In earlier articles, the author has highlighted how dumping chemicals, metals, organic and human waste, daily leakages from 2000 gallons of kerosene oil flowing through the 250 km plastic pipeline laid by India throughout the glacier is accelerating its melting process. To strengthen their position, the Indian army has taken various new development initiatives that include setting up of another state-of-the-art cantonment in the midst of

glacier. After development of this new cantonment, giant cracks have appeared throughout the glacier, visible in new high-resolution satellite images available with the SDPI. This is serious environmental disaster badly affecting the health of the glacier and consequently the climate of the region. Last year, there was cloud burst and severe floods in downstream areas, including Pakistan. The Indian Army is trying its best to associate the cause of melting with the global warming, which is undoubtedly baseless and merely a case of evasion of responsibility. The adjoining Baltoro glacier is not only stable but is also growing as compared with glacial mass measured in 1904.

"Unfortunately Dr Ishfaq and his team has failed to register any complaint on the international forum against the Indian aggression **on climate change," Abbasi said and added there is need for** professional accountability of this organisation.

The chief of GCISC, Dr Ishfaq Ahmad, said he is sorry that Dr A. R. Kemal is still being shown as member of the advisory committee of Global Change Impact Studies Centre GCISC-Pakistan, Islamabad.

He admitted that his organisation has not done enough on Pakistan's glaciers, but claimed the Centre has been discussing the eastern and western glaciers of the region in internal meetings.

"Our climate modules are global not regional which is why GCISC could not focus both on glaciers' melting and increasing fog in Pakistan during winter because of coal-based power plants in India. He admitted that the glacier is melting and receding and has threatened water availability and its sustainability. He said the population is also increasing at alarming pace, which needs to be controlled keeping in view the diminishing water inflows in Pakistan. Dr Ishfaq said the Centre started functioning in May 2002. Later, it received support from the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Environment. In January 2005 a high-level committee called the **Prime Minister's Committee on Climate Change was established and** the GCISC was designated as its secretariat.

The committee comprises the prime minister, ministers for water & power, food & agriculture and science & technology, minister of state for environment, deputy chairman, Planning Commission and special advisor to the prime minister.

The objectives of GCISC are to monitor the current and the likely future global trends in areas such as climate, water, food, agriculture, environment, biodiversity, health and energy etc., and scientifically determine their impacts on Pakistan.

Experts warn of desertification

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

M. Waqar Bhatti
Friday, June 17, 2011

Desertification is on the rise in Pakistan due to growing a population that is putting immense pressure on cultivatable lands, resulting in lessening the fertility of the soil while other factors such as soil erosion, water logging and salinity as well as crop productivity are adding to the process. This was stated by experts ahead of the World Day to Combat Desertification.

The environmentalists and biodiversity experts said this while addressing a press briefing organised by IUCN Pakistan in collaboration with Baahn Beli and FPCCI (Environment and CSR) at its Country Program Office on Thursday.

Environmentalists and experts through their presentations highlighted drylands and threats faced by them. They called for joint efforts by the government and civil society to prevent the destruction of dry and wetlands.

It is worth mentioning here that over 110 countries in the world have drylands that are potentially threatened by desertification, of which Africa, Asia and Latin America could be gravely affected.

Global IUCN Vice President and Asia Regional Councilor Javed Jabbar said on the occasion that the World Day to Combat Desertification is observed every year on June 17 all over the world.

“The aim of the United Nations in designating this day of observance is to sensitise the public and media to the increasing dangers of desertification, land degradation and drought” he said. Jabbar added that this being the International Year on Forests, the World Day to Combat Desertification for 2011 will focus specifically on the forests in the drylands of the world, guided by the motto: ‘Forests keep drylands working.’

Nadeem Mirbahar, Coordinator Lasebela, IUCN said that Pakistan is predominantly an arid country, with 80 percent of its land falling in arid or semi arid climates. He added that the country been deeply affected by land degradation and desertification in recent years.

He highlighted several factors contributing to it, including soil erosion, water logging and salinity, loss of soil fertility and crop productivity and added that the fast growing of population is one of the major **reasons for degradation. “Soil degradation and desertification has put immense pressure on the cultivable land, destroying its fertility and starting the process of desertification.” Mirbahar said, adding land degradation has increased poverty and hunger.**

Kella Lekhray, Provincial Coordinator SLMP said that due to desertification, the estimated annual global loss has come to US\$ 42 billion and has increased the threat to the livelihood of one billion people in over 100 countries.

He said Unsustainable Land Management Practices are a contributing factor to the loss of vegetative cover.

Destroying the guggul trees and other plant species is causing one of the greatest losses to the ecology of dryland areas, he added and recommended sustainable harvesting of guggul gum through community awareness and capacity building.

MK Marri, President Baahn Beli gave an overview of the **organisation’s Sustainable Land Management Project to combat desertification** in Pakistan.

He mentioned that during the project cultivation of Zeera, castor and Jatropa plants, which is also known as Diesel, was undertaken on over 200 acres, which has helped in promoting agro-forestry in the region.

Deforestation: who cares?



By: *Rasheed Khalid*
05 June 2011

Islamabad

Realising that degradation of environment is going to become a big question mark before human survival, a statesperson like Shaheed Benazir Bhutto first created an Environment Division and later upgraded it to a Federal Ministry.

That was a period when environmental consciousness was slowly dawning on the people the world over in the wake of reports of ozone layer depletion, global warming and climate change which now have become important disciplines and topics for academic research and political debate.

I remember a conference on environment in Karachi in September 1989 which was inaugurated by Shaheed Mohtarma herself. In her address in a lighter vein, she referred to this awareness while referring to minister for environment Syed Qasim Shah, who had asked her what this makholiat is when he was assigned the portfolio. Somebody had volunteered to translate it for him as maholiat which he mistook it for makholiat. Referring to the address of welcome in which Qasim Shah spoke a few times extempore also, Benazir appreciated his acquiring knowledge of environment in few months.

I do not know if the experience of making the most naughty boy as proctor in a class worked in the Ministry of Environment but what I experienced is that this ministry remained a forum for holding or attending conferences, foreign visits of the bureaucrats sometimes including spouses also and depending upon NGOs for input. Whether it is UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio De Janeiro in 1992 or Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in 2000, the minister, the secretary and the aides availed the opportunity to see

new cities. When the powerful of the ministry were in the Danish capital to attend Cop-15, I chose to see the ministry. Behind the mighty building of State Bank is the beautiful building with glasses of greenish blue tinge which houses our environment wizards. But I was shocked to see the commitment and consciousness of the environment baboos right in front of the building.

It had two lofty trees one of which seemed died long ago. I took a photograph, showed it to some friends later on and mourned over the dedication of the guardians of our trees who stand for protecting the environment and vow to wage a jihad against deforestation. I think there is no need to evaluate their efficiency on other environment-related issues. A few days there was a seminar in Institute of Strategic Studies on Climate Change where I expressed my dismay that despite a passage of over a year, no one in that structure moved to replace this tree with at least one sapling (or may be a tree of 7 or 8 feet for which transplant technology is now available). I reported this fact in The News also. Even this did not work. Now it was almost two week that I again went there and took some photographs of the deceased a symbol exposing our environmental consciousness. Choon kufr ba Ka aba barkhizad; Kuja bowad Musalmani! The dead tree was still there with dry branches reminding me an Urdu verse: Dast-e-dua shakhon ne utha-ay. It seemed like two hands praying to God who will arrange their respectable burial. I don't know what is needed to awake these custodians of our environment, who cannot see even under their nose, what will be the state of affairs in the rest of the country. Apart from bureaucratic lethargy, its enforcement organs are also toothless. It could not even tackle CDA which did havoc with ecology with projects without carrying out Environment Impact Assessment. So many avenues have been carved out, the Shakarparian is fast moving towards deforestation with buildings sprouting everywhere. Last but not the least, is its Pakistan Environment Protection Agency which people humorously started calling PEPA, even PEPA Company. Realising its sarcastic connotations in Punjabi, PEPA was later reverted to Pak-EPA. Except issuing statements, it could not do anything. God bless my trees and environment.

Fehmida calls for protection of biodiversity



4 June 2011

ISLAMABAD, Jun 4 (APP): Climate change impacts the dynamics, functioning and structure of ecosystems and reduces their productivity and has adverse effects on water availability, food security, human health and well-being. Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Fehmida Mirza said this in her message on the occasion of World Environment Day being commemorated

through out the world on June 5. She said that in order to preserve biodiversity and to rein in rapidly deteriorating environment in the country, it is imperative to preserve the ecology and curtail use of hydrocarbon. She also called upon the environ-

ment protection agencies and the environmentalists to gear up their efforts to improve the pervasive environment degradation.

She further said that global recognition of the environment degradation throughout the world, has provided an opportunity to focus global attention on critical environment issues.

She said “by reducing the carbon emission we will be able to provide sustainability to our ecosystem besides saving energy, which can be utilized for the industrial sector enhancing its

productivity”.

She also called upon the public to look their life through a carbon neutral lens which will help them in other ways increasing the efficiency of resource use, avoiding and reducing waste and ultimately improving overall performance.

Dr. Fehmida Mirza appreciated the efforts of the international agencies collaborating with the Government of Pakistan for environmental protection.

She said, “let us recognize the need to slow the momentum of the dramatic environmental changes and pledge to do our best to mitigate the impacts of climate change”.

She also called upon the governmental environmental



protection agencies to take strict action against the violators of the environmental laws enacted by the legislature. She said that strict compliance of the university recognized environmental standards would ensure sustainable health environment and biodi-

versity for the coming generation.

The Speaker emphasized that media was the most important source of information.

She asked the media to play its due role to create awareness among the masses about the advantages of healthy environment. She also urged for more plantation to save the environment of the planet.

Highest Glacier Monitoring Station established in the country

June 24, 2011

By: Muhammad Omair

DAWNCOM

ISLAMABAD:

Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has established the highest Glacier Monitoring Station in the country, at an elevation of 4500 meters above the sea level, to study weather conditions in the glacier environment.

“The station established on Passu Glacier in Hunza Basin would help in measuring snowfall, solar radiation intensity, humidity precipitation, wind speeds, wind directions and the sub-zero temperatures in that zone,” Chief Metereologist of PMD, Dr. Ghulam Rasul said.

Talking to APP here he said Passu Glacier is a valley type 26 km long glacier,

covering an area of 63 square

kilometre and

its estimated

ice volume is

about 10.89

cubic

kilometre.PMD

started

studying the

Passu Glacier

last year by

establishing a

Glacier Moni-

toring Station

at an elevation of 3200

meters above sea level, through financial assistance of International

Centre of Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), he

added.PMD had installed a station at the lake, formed due to the

melting of the Passu Glacier at its lower end, he said. This helped in

monitoring the snow and ice melt process in the ‘ablation zone,’ the

lower area of the glacier which is melting fast due to global warming.

It was envisaged at the time that a monitoring station must be

established in the ‘accumulation zone,’ the upper area of the glacier

where snow continues to accumulate and converts into ice to understand the glacial dynamics, Dr. Ghulam Rasul said. **“Now these two monitoring stations together will help in computing the gradient flow of glacier mass, surface velocity and the rate at which glacier accumulates and loses its mass,”** he said Such monitoring mechanism will be replicated in other glaciated valleys of the Hunza Basin, he said. **“This is a step forward for the systematic assessment of the impact of the global warming on glaciers of Pakistan and resultantly assessment of the potential hydrological resources from glaciers of Pakistan.”**

PMD took glacier monitoring initiative in 2006, and since then glaciers such as Hinarchie Galcier in Bagrot Valley, Baltoro and Biafo Glacier in Shigar Valley, Batura, Gulmit and Gulkin glaciers of Hunza Valley are thoroughly studied, Dr. Ghulam Rasul said.

In continuation of such strives, Director General of PMD, Arif Mehmood has formed a team of young scientists under the leadership of Dr. Ghulam Rasul to install an Automatic Weather Station (AWS) in the ‘accumulation zone’ of the Passu Glacier. The



The monitoring station established on Passu Glacier in Hunza

team’s mem-

bers include

Muhammad

Atif Wazir,

Furrukh Bashir,

Adnan Shafiq

Rana, Syed

Kamaludin,

Habibullah

Barohi, Waqar

Ali and Shahir

Ali.

He said the

AWS would also

help the weather scientists understand how much water the Passu glacier will generate due to global warming, because the glacier melting may form invisible lakes under the ice covered surfaces. And **when the water flows from one lake to the other it causes ‘glacier lake outbursts floods’,** which affect the people living in the downstream areas, Dr. Ghulam Rasul said. The study of melting rate of the ice can help in avoiding such outburst disasters, he added. PMD is determined to extend its research activities to the other glacier located in the Basin, the chief metereologist said.

Ginners to be provided security: RPO

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS



MULTAN: Regional Police Officer Mubarak Ali Athar Friday said that the cotton ginners would be provided complete security and environment to

Talking to a delegation of Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) led by acting chairman Nawab Shehzad Ali Khan. The delegation apprised the RPO about different incidents of dacoities.

Nawab Shehzad informed the RPO that the mode of all the dacoities is same as the dacoits made hostage the staff deputed at the factories and then looted precious items.

The Regional Police Officer Mubarak Athar assured the delegation that they would be provided complete security and an ideal environment to help them flourish their business activities.

He said that there would be extensive patrolling to maintain security.

Climate change: Time to step up efforts against global warming

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

24 June 2011

ISLAMBAD:

Over the last ten years,

Pakistan faced ten big natural disasters, which cost a loss of \$14.21 billion. And potentially risking 50 per cent population, said Ministry of Environment Director General Javed Ali Khan. He was addressing

the participants of a seminar titled, 'Climate Change and Future Development' organised by Pakistan-Norway Association here on Thursday.

Khan said the damage cost of these disasters is going up with the top three disasters occurring in the past three years, amounting to a total of \$11.55 billion.

"Climate Change is a direct threat to security of food, energy and water and it is a serious challenge for the country," he said.

These threats owe to the rapid melting of Hindukush-Himalayan glaciers, increased variability of monsoon and risk of floods and droughts, upstream intrusion of sea water into Indus delta due to Sea Level Rise, reduced productivity in crops and fertility of livestock due to heat-stress. Moreover, they are also responsible for causing health risks such as heat strokes, malaria and other waterborne diseases.

Khan further said that Pakistan is not yet a power player in the carbon market. Speaking on the occasion Prof. Iftikharunnisa Hassan, from Karakoram International University, Gilgit said the negative impact of climate change has become so apparent that there is no need to talk about it. However, the surprise to the common person is the severity **of its impact. "The recent floods, the untimely rain schedule and related factors affecting the crop cycle, farming and cattles are fast turning Pakistan from a country known as a bread basket of Asia in to a food-scarce country," she said. Hassan criticised the rulers and government machineries for not sharing the information with civil society, even on matters that are directly affecting their lives. "Ultimately people get caught unaware and no one can help as**

Continued...

they are uninformed and ignorant about the disaster management measures. The government machineries are inadequate to meet the **situation,” she said She further said that women from rural and remote mountain areas serve as a king pin of agriculture and need to be enlightened on what is happening around them and how to tackle**



Speakers dub natural disasters, deforestation and combustion as some of the root causes.

the situation head-on. Hassan said it is a misconception that rural women are illiterate. Their wisdom is more advanced than their male counterparts and what is missing is

continuous up gradation of their knowledge and skills.

Trust For Voluntary Organisation Deputy CEO Farooq Khan, while sharing a case study with the participants, said it is too unfortunate that the village Kali Delli, just a two-hour drive away from Islamabad is deprived of electricity and access to portable water. People there are using kerosene oil to light the lamps, which costs around Rs800 per household. Moreover, the carbon dioxide produced in the process is hazardous to health. One can find heaps of firewood in their houses, being collected by women, which is contributing to deforestation and risking their livelihoods.

“It is though just one example but Pakistan is facing huge shortage of energy which no doubt would double in near future,” he Added United Nations Development Fund for Women Country Programs Director Alice Harding said Pakistan is a negligible contributor to the global carbon emission that is contributing 0.4 per cent to the total and yet the fifth on the climate Change vulnerability index. She termed the National Climate Change Policy of Pakistan as ‘Gender Blind’, as it does not address the threat posed by the climate change in the country’s socio-economic security

Social responsibility: ‘Only ‘green’ bags allowed now’

By Rana Yasif

6 June 2011

LAHORE:

“We realise the impact environment degradation is having on developing countries like Pakistan. We introduced a reusable bags made of non-woven fabric last year and have now launched recyclable paper bags to raise awareness about the issue,” said METRO Cash and Carry managing director David Boner.

He was speaking at the launching ceremony of the paper bags on **World Environment Day on Sunday. “Only paper and fabric bags will now be allowed at Metro,” he said. “The paper bag is made of rice husk, can carry up to 5 kg and is recyclable,” he said. The store would charge Rs5 per one paper bag. He said the fabric bag could carry up to 10 kg and was porous so water could easily pass through**

it. **“Even if these bags are dumped, they won’t clog drains like the plastic bags do,” he said.**Talking to The Express Tribune, customers present at the ceremony said plastic bags should be banned at other places as well. They said that if the government could not do anything, businesses should come together and devise a strategy in this regard. However, they raised concerns about the price of the bags. They said that at Rs50 per bag, the fabric bag was expensive. The environment ministry is working on a plan to ban plastic bags in the country, said Federal Minister for Environment Samina Khalid Ghurki. Addressing the gathering, Ghurki said black polythene bags were already banned and that provincial governments were regulating the thickness of other bags so that the damage they caused to the environment could be limited.Ghurki said that the government was also working on promoting awareness about development and **preservation of forests, this year’s World Environment Day theme.**

Continued...

She said forests were central to maintaining a balance between the natural and the built environment. She said forest development could be understood from a business point of view as well. “It yields high returns in the form the positive impact it has on natural resources and the economy,” she said.

She said that after the passage of the 18th constitutional amendment, forests conservation and development had become a provincial subject. “It is provinces’ responsibility now to allocate sufficient resources for the sector,” she said.

United Bank Limited district manager Mudassir Nawaz, Metro Corporate Affairs director and company secretary Pervaiz Akhtar, Metro Offer Management Director Dirk Essmann were also present at the occasion.

Postcards from Pakistan: Karakoram and beyond

By: Syafiqah Omar

22 June 2011

DAWNCOM

Far from the busy bazaars of Rawalpindi, the grand mosques of Lahore and the hustle and bustle of southern port city Karachi which altogether, under the sweltering summer heat results in a maelstrom of life and buzz that characterize Pakistan, lies a different world.

Here, a 45-min flight away or some 18 hours by road from administrative capital Islamabad, up in the Northern Areas, another kind of cacophony exists.

It is the sound of the Indus River gushing down at fast speeds, the roar of a distant avalanche, the athaan bouncing off mountain surfaces and the silent footsteps of the snow leopard. This harmony is more natural than man-made, except for the rumble of jeeps and buses trudging their way along the Karakoram Highway that threads the mountains.

The road, built by both Pakistan and China in 1986, was once the passageway undertaken by trading caravans on the ancient Silk route. It now forms the lifeline that runs for more than 8,000 miles, connecting rural Pakistan to the rest of the country.

Owing to its high elevation and dangerous conditions, it is often referred to as the Ninth Wonder of the world.

Decades later, the road continues to be a treacherous one. Landslides are a common occurrence along the gravel-lined and narrow road that snakes the mountains, disrupting the already slow-moving traffic. Stones with markings to warn drivers of impending dangers dot the journey.

But for the many thousands of travelers before and now, the daunting road is one that is worth the trip.

Here, towering, snow-capped mountains converge resulting in dramatic backdrops flanking every side you set your eyes on.



Along the Karakoram Highway.

After more than half a day of travelling in a Mashabrum bus which we boarded from the Rawalpindi bus station, we finally reached Raikot Serai. (Not before our bus suffered a mini collision with a car.)

From there, we rode in a jeep for about 40 minutes, which moved precariously along the unpaved road where any slight wrong turn could bring us off the edge of the cliff.

This was then followed by another three hours of trekking guided by speedy porters twice our age, in mud-coloured *shalwar kameez* and trainers. Our untrained physique showed from our short breaths and intermittent breaks but when we finally arrived in Fairy Meadows, a camping site popular with adventure travellers, all thoughts of fatigue dissolved as we soaked in the raw nature around us.

Continued...

Marco Polo sheep and goats graze on green pastures encircled by dense alpine forest.

Dusk was beginning to befall and our porters turned into hosts, skipping off hurriedly to prepare us dinner.

In our 6-metre by 6-metre wooden hut, we then sat around the fireplace that stood in the centre, a cup of hot *kahwah* (green tea) in our hands. Vegetable soup and noodles were brought in, food obviously

accustomed to foreigners like us, as their diet would normally be comprised of dal chawal and occasionally, meat.

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Nanga Parbat is reflected in a lake at Fairy Meadows

The next morning, I woke up to a clear view of Nanga Parbat's northern face, its snow-tipped peak glistening with yellow streaks. Sublime soon took over; and continued to be my state of mind for the days after.

Nicknamed 'The Killer Mountain' because of the high rate of deaths that afflicts climbers, it is the ninth highest mountain in the world, standing at more than 8,000 meters. Every few hours, an avalanche is first heard, and then seen, as slabs of snow-covered rocks slide down the mountain surface.

Local children run around freely and when I approached them, they smiled sheepishly at first, before breaking into laughter and mild chatter as they posed for my camera. Fair-skinned and blue-eyed, they appeared more *Gora* than Sindhi.

Bemused that a female foreigner had taken a strong liking to them, they led me by the hand and brought me to their school, which



The people of Fairy Meadows

stood atop a hill surrounded by tall fir trees. Their school, attended by some 50 boys, is made out of wooden planks and had only two classrooms where they are taught Urdu, Math, as well as Islamic studies. In the evening, they accompanied me to see their mothers who greeted me warmly with freshly-made lassi while gently pushing my cameras into my bags.

Conversations with the older teenagers later revealed that 18-year-old *Keramat*, handsome and curly-haired, studies biology in Karachi while the slightly younger and well-built *Islam* is a skilled polo player. (His skills were clearly evident as I watched him mount his horse, in the way you only see in movies set in 19th century background.) The girls on the other hand, attend school in Chilas, a town two hours away.

In this part of the world, it appears that education is given top priority and a brighter future down south seems more attractive. The environment where they grew up in then becomes a summer retreat.

At night though, surrealism rather than myth envelops the area.

Out on the field, the crackle of wood burning cuts through the silence of the night. We huddled around the bonfire, its fiery flame sending orange sparks into the sky already scattered with stars in myriad constellations.

Days later, I left Raikot Serai and made my way to the town of Gilgit, some three hours away.

In this busy town, street life is evident, shops open till late plying their trade and eateries; kebabs and momo dumplings are abundant. Shopkeepers beckon people in, their harsh Brushaski tongue slipping out from their naswah-chewing teeth. (Naswah is a cheaper substitute for tobacco.)

The town's vigor also stems from it being the central point from which buses depart to other places like Skardu and Chitral with routes running every half an hour.

Chinese men in large groups are also regularly seen about town, mostly for construction work on the Karakoram Highway.

Indeed, the road – which took 27 years in the making – is a constant

Continued...



En route to Chitral via the 15,000 feet high Shandur Pass

work in progress. Also known as the “Friendship Highway”, it is a hallmark of Pakistan and China’s burgeoning relationship.

At the centre of the town, surrounded by a bustling market, stands a modest single-storey building, bordered by 2-foot high cement walls.

A sign ‘Medina Guesthouse’ hangs above its entrance.

Inside, travellers from all over are to be found. I shared a dormitory, costing just 250 rupees a night with Jean from France along with two others, Fiona and Tim from Hong Kong. Among others that I met there included Mac from Ireland and Marc from Spain. Most of them have just spent months around India before crossing overland while a good number of them are serious trekkers as well as cyclists who traversed the road on their mountain bikes.

Over the next few days, we sat around in *darbars* (teahouses) drinking salty *chai*, exchanging stories and planning our next route. At that time, they were some 15 of us foreigners up north, and our paths crossed often so much so that everyone knew or has heard of the other. When our bus made stops at ubiquitous checkpoints made out of make-shift tents along the Highway, we would recognize names in the books where we had to register, thus allowing us to track one another.

We thought ourselves to be disenfranchised wayfarers, avoiding hassle-free tour packages and traveling with only the clothes in our backpacks whilst collecting tales of rugged journeys. More than ever, we found ourselves united in dispelling rumours of a rogue Pakistan, of which the Western media has often perpetrated. As it appears to be, the half-expected gunfire was unheard and the truckloads of mujahideens with Kalashnikovs slung around their arms were non-existent, **except for a few sightings of “Down with USA”** scribbled on walls.

After days of doing pretty much nothing in Gilgit, I met up with friends from Karachi who had just returned from a trip to Deosai Plain and Astor Lake near Skardu where thick blankets of snow had

surround them. We continued on the road, this time in our rented jeep. The landscape proved again to be dramatic, if not more. Here, the Hindu Kush Range comes together to produce a stunning backdrop of overlapping mountains. Our journey took us off the Karakoram, but on narrower roads that brought us onto higher elevation.



Passing by wide lakes along Shandur Pass.

After a short stopover at Naltar Lake to fish for trouts amongst grazing sheep and Yaks, we were soon on route to Chitral via the 15,000 feet high Shandur Pass, passing by the grounds of the Shandur Polo Festival which attracts a lively crowd every July.

Finally after 13 hours on the road and a night spent in a motel managed by the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) at Phundar Lake, we reached Chitral. As a treat for ourselves, we checked into the luxurious Hindukush Heights which sits on a hill and counts Robert De Niro as among its guests.

Owned by the Prince of Chitral himself, the rooms are tastefully decorated with hand-woven rugs, and open up to a balcony that overlooks the town with Terich Mir, the highest peak of the Hindu Kush, forming the background.

The next day, we set out to Bumboret Valley, 40 km away, to visit the Kalash tribe. Armed policemen greeted us, and insisted on accompanying us throughout the whole journey.

Security it seems is an issue here. We were three hours away from Afghanistan and cases of kidnappings are supposedly rampant. But the increased security only serves to highlight the importance of the valley.

Here in the valleys of Rumbur, Birir and Bumboret, the indigenous Kalash people, numbering around 3,000 live and practice their own form religion. Said to be the descendants of Alexander the Great whose army arrived here some 2,000 years ago, they appear distinct from the rest of the Muslim-majority population in their worship of ancestral gods and deities.



Land management: Agricultural policy in need of change

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE 28 June 2011
 WITH THE International Herald Tribune

ISLAMABAD:

Participants of a workshop on Monday stressed the need for modifying agricultural policy in accordance with climate change.



68% of population relies on agriculture for livelihood'

They claimed that about 58 million hectares of land in the country was affected by wind and water erosion, which is the main cause of desertification, land degradation and drought. Speaking at a

workshop reviewing national agricultural policy documents on Monday, Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Chairman Dr Muhammad Afzal said that emerging global climate change impact was likely to speed up the process of desertification, land degradation and drought — particularly affecting livelihoods of dry land communities.

Afzal said that 68% of Pakistan's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood – the sector contributes 24% to gross domestic product, 70% to foreign exchange earnings and employs 48% of labour force.

Workshop participants recommended that there should be an approved agriculture, water, forest and land use policy in Pakistan.

The workshop recommendations related to agricultural policy will be sent to the Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture and provinces for incorporating them into national and provincial policies.

Meagre Rs350m for environment

The Nation on Web
The Nation

June 11, 2011

LAHORE – The Punjab government has proposed meagre allocation of Rs 350 million for one of the most important sectors, environment for the fiscal year 2011-12.

The original allocation for environment last fiscal year was Rs 335 million which was revised to Rs 138 million. As such the allocation this fiscal year is Rs 153.62 million which is more than the previous year's. **Ever deteriorating environment is posing serious threat to the human lives but the provincial dispensation has not allocated sufficient amount to reduce the menace of pollution.**

To overcome the environmental issues, the government is focusing to implement Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997 and National Environmental Quality Standards and to create awareness among the masses. The promotion of research and development in pollution prevention and environmental improvement and moni-

toring the quality of industrial effluents and municipal waste are the other main features of the government objectives.

The government also aims to review IEE/EIA and issue environmental approvals and to collaborate with NGOs/CPOs for undertaking environmental related projects and in this regard the provincial dispensation will also coordinate with the federal government and other provinces on environmental policies and laws. The strategic interventions include regulatory control on environmental pollution through capacity building of EPA Punjab, to promote environmental sustainability through capacity building of provincial departments in environmental management.



Steps demanded to meet environmental challenges



23 June 2011

MANSEHRA: The scientists and environmental experts on Wednesday asked the government to take effective measures to meet environmental challenges.

The call was made by the experts while speaking at an open forum titled 'Environment Policy in Pakistan,' at the Hazara University. The programme was organised by the Hazara University in collaboration with the Internews in connection with three-day media workshop on the reporting on the environmental issue.

Wajid Ali Khan, provincial minister for environment, **Shamsur Rehman, chief analysts' of Environmental Protection Agency**, Dr Abdullah Khan, head of the Department of the Environmental Sciences of Hazara University, head of the Journalism and Mass Communication Department, Professor Syed Shaukat Ali and others spoke on the occasion.

Wajid Ali Khan said the cooperation of the people was a must to overcome environmental problems. The minister said that KP was the pioneer in the constitution of the environmental policy.

"Our government gives due importance to the reporting on the environmental issues and announces green award for the top three journalists who reported regularly on the issue every year," he added. The experts called for creating awareness among the masses about global warming and other environmental issues. They said though the federal government had constituted the environmental policy in 2008, it had failed to implement it thus far.

creasing reliance: More civil nuclear plants to be built



28 June 2011

ISLAMABAD:

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday said that more civil nuclear plants would be built to address the severe energy deficit. Addressing participants of the International Nathiagali Summer College on Physics and Contemporary Needs, Gilani said the country required more electrical energy and may have to rely on more nuclear plants in the future to meet energy demand.

He said building and operating nuclear power plants was vital to the **country's interest due to the severe energy deficiency. The PM recalled** inaugurating C-2, the second unit at Chashma nuclear power complex, which increased production of electricity to 625 megawatts from nuclear sources.

Gilani said the future of countries today is determined by their economic competitiveness and stressed the need for understanding and appreciating the implications of competition in the global market-driven economy.

According to him, keeping in mind the pivotal role science plays, the government had allocated appropriate funds for the development of trained and qualified human resource personnel. He said support



Gilani says nuclear power vital to reduce energy deficit

would be provided for establishing research laboratories in order to provide employment.

The gov-

ernment was fully supportive of such activities and was looking to collaborate with the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, for innovative research resulting in major scientific breakthroughs, he claimed.

Gilani appreciated the efforts of the country's scientists in the field of agriculture, biotechnology, industry and health, stressing the need for using science as an intellectual pursuit to general progress. Industrial nations must actively assist the less-developed nations in this regard, he added.



17 June 2011

LAHORE Environment Protection department of the CDGL has completed the survey of industrial units operating near Hudiarra drain. Talking to APP, deputy district officer Environment Younis Zahid said that in line with the instructions of secretary Environment Punjab Sajjad Saleem Hotiana, this survey was carried out to ascertain the level of pollution caused by untreated waste thrown into Hudiarra drain. "The untreated effluents contain different chemicals, organic waste and heavy metals", he added. As many as 300 units of textiles, stitching, weaving, leather and engineering are operating in the area from Baidian to Mohalanwal. The official stated that action would be taken against polluters under Pakistan Environment Protection Order.



How Pakistan's farmers are cleaning up cotton

27 Jun 2011

By Sally Williams

In April last year, a young farmer in Pakistan got on his motorbike and drove four miles to the nearest town to buy cotton seeds.

He was broke, but the manager of the seed shop proposed a deal: he would allow the farmer to borrow 100,000 rupees (about £720) from him to buy all the seed, pesticides and fertiliser he needed, on the condition that he paid back the money when he sold his cotton, plus 10 per cent interest. After a bit of haggling Abdul Wahi went ahead. After all, he borrows money every year, and every year his cotton flowers, he feeds his family and he repays the money, plus the interest.

He never earns enough to reverse his fortunes. But last year he had promised his wife a fridge. Then, in July, in the worst monsoon for 80 years, the Indus burst its banks and Pakistan was hit by devastating floods. Wahi's five acres were turned into plains of absolute desolation.

'He is not able to return the loan,' the translator explains, when I meet Wahi under a mango tree in his village, an hour outside Sukkur town in the province of Sindh.

Related Articles Prices are jumping and the cotton is low 07 Feb

2011 Price of clothes set to rise as cotton hits 15-year high

21 Sep 2010 'Panic' as cotton hits almost 150-year high

04 Feb 2011 Wahi has two children, aged seven and six. What will



Pakistan's cotton farmers are threatened by climate change and exposure to harmful pesticides

you do, I ask him. He looks into the tree above, and 10 minutes later we establish that he is quite looking forward to being in prison. 'He wants a break from the tension,' the translator says. 'He is very scared.' Wahi says that last week a motorbike crunched on to the earth outside the village. It was the 'middle man' – a thug in a peaked cap, barking orders. Next time he will come with the police.

Later, as the heat dazzles through the branches and the ants line up to sip my tea, I talk with 30 or so other cotton farmers, gathered in a courtyard. Is anyone here not in debt, I ask. There is huge laughter. Eighty per cent have loans; 90 per cent of their cotton crop was destroyed in the flood. One was forced to sell his buffalo at a knockdown price.

Continued...

They shrug. Their existence depends on cotton – the everyday stuff we take for granted.

Pakistan is the fourth largest producer of cotton, after China, the US and India.

'The problem is that people have forgotten Pakistan produces **anything very much,**' Anatol Lieven, the author of *Pakistan: A Hard Country*, comments.

He says Pakistan is not, in fact, the 'hopeless economic and administrative basket case that it is so often made out to be.'

There are pools of success, and cotton is one example. Pakistan produces about 12 million 170kg bales of cotton a year, mainly from Sindh and Punjab. And now the government has launched Cotton Vision 2015: a drive to boost production to 20 million bales in the next four years.

'**They desperately need to earn more foreign currency from export,**' Lieven explains. 'They dream of developing their markets in China, because at present the Pakistani relationship with China is **overwhelmingly strategic, but trade is remarkably low.**'

Cotton cultivation is inextricably tied to geography, and most **advanced industrial economies simply don't have the weather to coax** the white, fluffy cotton bolls out of the ground.

More than 90 per cent of cotton growers live in developing countries on farms of less than five acres. In America, a single farmer can produce enough cotton to make more than a million T-shirts; the wide open cotton plains around Lubbock, Texas, are so vast they look like sea. But a tiny five acres in Sindh can feel like a lot when you have nothing.

Pakistan's cotton edict is good news for its farmers, because cotton is 'white gold'. They may live on one meal a day, and have no mobile phones or television, but cotton gives them a route to global markets. Ikea, for example, uses 100,000 tons of cotton a year, much of it from Pakistan.

But the growth of the cotton industry is bad news for soil fertility and the water table. Cotton accounts for 16 per cent of global chemical pesticide use, more than any other single crop. In 2008 170,000 tons **of chemicals were used on Ikea's cotton** – and to think many of us are instinctively drawn to cotton for its wholesome, pure qualities.

Growing cotton in Pakistan also uses a lot of water, partly because of **wasteful irrigation. It took 2,890 billion litres to grow Ikea's 2008 cotton harvest** – equivalent to the volume of drinking water consumed in Sweden over 176 years, according to Guido Verijke, the man responsible for Ikea's global cotton operations. **And Pakistan is a very parched country, completely dependent on one river system – the Indus.**

Were it not for gravity-fed irrigation in hand-dug ditches (instigated by British colonialism and vastly expanded in the 1950s), a large part of the country would still be weed-infested desert. Without irrigation from the Indus there would be no cultivation in Sindh. Pakistan is already running out of water. Increased cotton production will surely

only make this worse.

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), a small, not-for-profit membership association based in Geneva, has other ideas. Its ambition is to 'enable millions of farmers around the world to grow cotton in a way that is healthier for the farming communities and the environment, and more **economical**'. In other words, it is concerned not only with how cotton is grown, but also cotton quality, working conditions and providing access to finance – a way to swerve the middle men.

There is something familiar in the BCI's statement of intent. The Organic Trade Association has campaigned loudly about growing cotton without the use of toxic chemicals. Fairtrade Cotton, certified in 2005, protects farmers by making sure they are paid a good price. It also has standards that restrict dangerous agrochemicals.

But only 0.8 per cent of world cotton production is organic, and just over 1.2 per cent is fairtrade. Enormous benefits have come from these marginal projects, the BCI says, but they are still in the wings. The stage, the association argues, is set for a different scene, something more mainstream. What if you allow chemical pesticides, but on more stringent terms, and greatly reduce the use of water – in effect, grow cotton that is purer and safer, on a universal level, for a market that is worth £25 billion a year.

The inaugural BCI meeting was held in Zurich in July 2009, and the founding members were not only those who might be seen as already converted – environmental groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which sponsored our trip to Pakistan, and the Pesticide Action Network UK – but also representatives from Adidas, Ikea, Gap and H&M. **Marks & Spencer and Levi's joined soon after, and Tesco and Asda signed up last year.**

'The huge strength of the BCI is you have some major players who are **big cotton users,**' Keith Tyrell, the director of Pesticide Action Network UK, says, 'and if they can switch their production to cotton that uses **less in the way of pesticides, then that is a big, big change.**'

The way it works is that farmers are encouraged to use greener techniques: eco-sprays such as bitter melon; digging ditches rather than flooding the land – the irrigation method of choice in Pakistan, which is incredibly inefficient because so much water evaporates; more strategic use of pesticides – at the right time in the season, for example, **when the pests are more vulnerable; and working with pests' natural predators** – such as ladybirds – as opposed to indiscriminately killing all insects. Meanwhile, companies commit to getting more Better Cotton **into the supply chain. So why should farmers do it? They don't make more money by growing Better Cotton, but the argument is that they save money by spending less on pesticides and synthetic fertiliser. And in a drive to get a firm lock on the mass market, the public don't have to pay more to buy it.** (Although Better Cotton is tracked and monitored from the farmer to the mill, BCI is not a certification system like

Continued...

Fairtrade. You won't be able to buy a BCI-stamped bedsheet, for example, because the hope is that one day all sheets will be made this way. Until then, 'We want to encourage blending with other fibres – conventional cotton, fairtrade, organic or whatever,' Lena Staafgard of the BCI says, 'and that is not consistent with a label.' It can't be achieved in one season, but last year, the BCI was pioneered in Pakistan, India, Brazil and Mali; 2010-2012 is 'first stage implementation' getting systems and settings in place; 2013 onwards will be 'robust conversion'.

Pakistan was chosen partly because of its appalling record. Environmentalists have been worried for some time about the Indus. In the decade leading up to 2010 it had stopped flowing into its delta for much of the year and the sea had crept in to replace it (and salt, as any gardener knows, is bad news for soil and plants). Climate change and overuse have combined to stretch this vital resource; with Pakistan's population of up to 200 million predicted to grow to 335 million by 2050, demand will be ever greater. In addition, Lieven says, 'There have been very high levels of leakage in the [irrigation] canals. They need to be relined to stop them leaking.'

This isn't all. While I was in Pakistan, I picked up a copy of the Nation newspaper, and on page nine, next to out-of-focus photos and florid headlines, was a report on how 1,849 people had been caught stealing water from irrigation channels over six months in one district alone. The losers are the 'tail-enders', the poorest farmers cheated of their water before it can reach them. The phenomenon is years old and there is not much anyone can do to challenge it since the culprits include influential government officials.

Last year's floods reversed the water shortage – the knock-on effect was a boosted water table and many predict a bumper crop this year – but the benefit is only short-term. 'The dependence on the Indus is the greatest source of danger to Pakistan,' Lieven writes. 'Over the next century, the possible long-term combination of climate change, acute water shortages, poor water infrastructure and steep population growth has the potential to wreck Pakistan.'

'Water management is really, really bad,' Guido Verijke confirms. 'We thought, if we can manage to grow BCI cotton in Pakistan we can manage it anywhere in the world.'

One hot morning in August 2008, Bahram Shambani, 28, stirred a vat of pesticide in his cotton field in a village near Saleh Pat, Sindh. He put on his manual sprayer – a piece of equipment that looks a bit like a backpack with a pump and a spray-wand attached – and then tried to pour the pesticide into the tank while it was on his back. He was dressed in a thin cotton shalwar kameez and had kicked off his flip-flops because it had been raining and it was muddy. He slipped. The pesticide spilt all over his back.

He went home immediately and sat in the village well, which is where people take a bath because they don't have to pay for the water. Shambani sat there for two and a half hours. But the burning

didn't go away. It was followed, a few days later, by a feeling of breathlessness.

Two and a half years on, Shambani has heard we are in the village; we wait for him in the darkness of the school hut. 'He says he can only walk a few paces before he starts feeling weak and dizzy,' the translator says. Shambani looks pale and thin and ill. His life plan was to grow cotton and look after his four daughters.

Someone hands me his records from the medical college in Sukkur, a thick file of ultra-sound scans, charts, prescriptions, an HIV test and a cancer test. Findings inconclusive. Cost so far: 900,000 rupees (about £6,400), shouldered mainly by Shambani's brother, a teacher.

His brother also rents the car that is needed to drive the several miles to hospital – Shambani can no longer ride on a motorbike because the rushing air hurts his lungs. What, I wonder, would happen to Shambani if he didn't have a brother who says, 'I love him. He is more valuable than my possessions.'

As far as the future goes, Shambani is resigned, the translator reports. 'He says, "My days are numbered. I will go."'

Pesticides were virtually unknown in Pakistan 30 years ago. Since then they have gone from obscurity to hype to ubiquity. Embraced as a way to grow more cotton, pesticides have a market in Pakistan worth £150 million. Towns have become filled with shops selling chemical pesticides, GM seeds and synthetic fertiliser. Rohri, a market town with a population of 50,000, has 25 such shops.

To understand why, you need to know the many risks that a cotton boll faces before it can become a cotton sheet. It is susceptible to too much water and too little; it is too delicate to survive heavy wind and rain.

There are a variety of pests that can completely destroy it: 'chewing' pests (principally bollworms, which aren't worms but moth caterpillars) and 'sucking' pests (which include greenfly). Every cotton farmer in the world knows these risks. But those in Pakistan have the additional worry of their entire income being dependent on that crop. If things go wrong, they go horribly wrong. And unlike American cotton farmers, say, they are not embedded in a system that looks after them. In the past 10 years, cotton farmers in the US have received \$24 billion in government subsidies. And they are compensated for losses caused by natural disasters or adverse weather. In Pakistan there is no support or subsidy. Government 'extension services' – agricultural experts who help farmers – were cut back in the 1970s and 80s. After last year's floods, the government offered no specific compensation for affected cotton farmers. It is not surprising that farmers want to bring as many random elements as possible under their control. So they turn to technology, pesticides, synthetic fertiliser, pest-resistant GM seeds – but at a price. According to a World Health Organisation (WHO) report, 20,000 deaths occur each year from pesticide poisoning in developing countries. But this figure is misleading. It refers to a WHO informal consultation on prevention of pesticide poisoning in 1986. 'WHO does not have

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figures on deaths associated with unintentional pesticide exposure,' a WHO spokesman says. Another much-repeated figure, 300,000 pesticide poisoning deaths a year in the Asia-Pacific region, turns out to be an estimate based largely on suicide cases in Sri Lanka, where one of the methods of choice is drinking pesticides.

Keith Tyrell believes the reality is much worse. 'Pesticide poisoning incidents tend to go unreported because the symptoms of pesticide poisoning are so vague.' **These can be anything from headaches and dizziness to neurological damage. 'Also deaths can occur quite a few days or weeks after the acute poisoning incident, and we're only talking about acute poisoning here. When you're talking about chronic exposure to many of these substances, which are neurotoxins, endocrine disruptors, carcinogens and so on, then you start seeing the picture is much, much worse than that.'**

What is clear is that the smell of insecticides is inescapable in Saleh Pat during the cotton growing season, and that during this period, Khuda Bux, a doctor in the health clinic, sees a spike in patients – 50-60 a year – complaining of nausea, rashes, diarrhoea and shortness of breath. These cases have increased since pesticides were first introduced in the area 10-15 years ago.

Upcountry, Zareena, 40, a cotton picker for more than 20 years, tells me that she has to make frequent visits to the dispensary during the picking season because she gets rashes and headaches. She doesn't wear gloves to pick cotton because they slow her down. She is paid by the weight, not the hour: the more she picks, the more she gets. In the case of Bahram Shambani there is no doubt: his troubles date back to the day two years ago when he accidentally spilt Syngenta's Polo pesticide on his skin.

'What do you recommend we do?' asks Andrew Coker, the head of corporate affairs UK at Syngenta, one of the world's most successful agribusinesses, when I recount Shambani's story. 'Our heart goes out to that poor man and his family, but what more can we do? If we have told the grower how to use it [the pesticide] effectively and he has not followed our instructions, what else can we do?' Syngenta insists that it is not exploiting farmers. 'It's often said, you guys make your money out of the poorest people in the world,' says Richard Brown, Syngenta's global head of product stewardship and sustainable agriculture. 'Well, that is a really dumb business model. We make most of our money out of quite wealthy American, Brazilian and European farmers because for a small investment there you get a huge payback. But we are trying to find ways to responsibly access the smallholder market and that is what we are doing.'

The challenge, of course, is how to integrate a rich-country model into a culture where just being poor changes your set of opportunities. For example, most farmers in Sindh can't spray their pesticides by tractor, as they do in the States. They can't afford tractors, and in any case they wouldn't be practical in such small areas. They have no choice but to spray the pesticides by hand. Marketing is a big pres-

sure on farmers. 'But not from multinationals – they are quite responsible and mostly their pesticides are safe ones,' Liaqat Ali Khan, a Better Cotton project coordinator for WWF-Pakistan, says. A softly spoken man with the dark skin of someone who spends a lot of time in the fields, Ali Khan is a cotton farmer and scholar – he is trained in rural sociology – intent on bringing rigour and compassion to the world of cotton farming. 'But the branded ones are expensive. So farmers end up using cheaper local brands. And their marketing system is very strong.' Pramit Chanda, Ikea's global Better Cotton leader, puts it more forcefully: 'I find it extremely frustrating that they really take advantage of people who don't know any better.'

I drop in on Target Zarai Markaz, a pesticide shop in Rohri, and an outlet of Ali Akbar Enterprises Pakistan. Outside is fierce sun, camel dung and a sea of a hundred faces staring at us through the doorway.

Inside is the manager: Darshan Lal, a chubby man in his late twenties, turns over 10 million rupees a season (about £70,000; per capita income is about £672). Lal says his business is superior because he provides an excellent team of field officers. Field officer, of course, is a euphemism for salesman on commission. Lal points to Mohammad Nawaz, a wiry man, sitting nearby. **Nawaz can't assist every farmer, but that's all right** because the instructions are on the bottle: use by trained people; keep away from the food chain; keep in a cool, dry place; cover your mouth when spraying; don't spray during sunshine, only in the morning and late evening. **Except most farmers can't read.**

Then there is the black market. Here farmers can buy illegal seeds and the sort of highly toxic mix where incorrect application results in more than dead bollworms. DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloro-ethane), for example, belongs to one of the most hazardous groups of chemicals called persistent organic pollutants (aka 'The Dirty Dozen'). They don't degrade easily and so have an enduring toxic effect. The US ban on DDT in 1972 was seen by many as a leading factor in saving the bald eagle from extinction. The manufacturing and use of DDT, plus 21 other pesticides, was finally banned in Pakistan in 1994, 22 years after the US, 10 years after Britain. But it is still sold on the black market.

Guido Verijke is a colourful, charismatic man, a born leader, who has worked at Ikea for 26 years. He says cotton first surfaced as a worry for the company in 2004. He commissioned Anna Bexell, a project manager at Ikea, to investigate. What she discovered – 'overuse of pesticides, social issues, water wasting...' – profoundly changed Ikea's cotton philosophy. In 2005 Ikea launched phase one of its Pakistan Sustainable Cotton Initiative. Working with WWF-Pakistan, it started with a trial of 450 farmers in Bahawalpur, Punjab.

'After one year we had water usage down by 38 per cent, pesticides down by 47 per cent, synthetic fertiliser usage down by 39 per cent, and farmers were earning more money,' Verijke says. The figures acted as a tipping point for Ikea's management. The template was copied in 14 areas in Pakistan and India.

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At around the same time, Ikea was discussing the foundation of the BCI with Pesticide Action Network UK, WWF and other founding members. Now that the BCI is launched, Ikea is converting its cotton projects to Better Cotton.

Last year, WWF sent more than 100 experts to thousands of farmers, which is a something a bit different, Ali Khan says, because they were **n't selling anything, simply 'imparting knowledge', advice such as check before you spray, and two sprays isn't better than one. 'There is the inherent belief that if I apply more of a good thing I will get greater benefit,' Primit Chanda says.**

Last August, during the floods, the farmers were forced into emergency measures instead, pumping out water from the drowned crops. More than 11 inches of rain fell in four days and the right bank of the Indus was breached. Some 15,000 acres of Better Cotton were lost. This year, Pakistan is on track to produce 590,000 acres of Better Cotton.

Back in the fields, Abdul Ghani, 52, a charming, upbeat cotton farmer, contemplates a new method he has learnt: to let insects eat the pests. Would you have killed the insects before, I ask. 'There was no distinction,' he says, miming wild squirting. 'Now the ladybirds and dragonfly are still alive.' And with that he breaks into a broad grin.

CDA gets ready to deal with floods

Mobarik A. Virk
28 June 2011



Islamabad

In the wake of the 'early warning' issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department, which has predicted early monsoon rains in upper parts of the country, including Islamabad, from today (Monday-Tuesday), the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to take steps to prevent any catastrophic situation occurring in the federal capital.

In a meeting here on Monday, CDA Member (Environment) Mian Waheed-ud-Din, who is acting as chairman in the absence of Imtiaz Inayat Elahi, directed the concerned officials to remove people from **'katchi abadis' (shanty settlements), who have built their homes too close to 'nullahs'-streams and at places have even infringed upon watercourses.**

The acting chairman directed the concerned formations of the CDA **to immediately launch cleaning of beds of natural 'nullahs'-streams running down from Margallas and crisscrossing the city and remove all blockages to pave the way for uninterrupted flow of water in case of heavy rains.**

The Meteorological Office, in its 'Weather Advisory' issued on Monday afternoon, has warned of moderate to heavy downpour in upper

parts of the country, including Islamabad, which might start late Monday night or today (Tuesday). The Meteorological Office has said that the onset spell, which was starting about four days ahead of the actual monsoon season, might last for at least 4 to 5 days with different parts receiving intermittent light to heavy rains and even thunderstorms at times.

The acting CDA chairman, in Monday's meeting, directed the Enforcement Directorate to constitute special teams to shift or remove all 'katchi abadis' along banks of 'nullahs'-streams which are considered to be high-risk zones to minimise the threats of loss of life and property as a result of flooding caused by heavy monsoon rains, the first spell of which eventually came down at around 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

The spokesman for the CDA, Director (Public Relations) Asim Khichi, said that the acting chairman reviewed the state of preparedness of Flood Relief Cell (FR Cell) established on the eve of monsoon rains at the Directorate of Emergency & Disaster Management, Fire Headquarters, Sector G-7/1.

"The purpose of the Flood Relief Cell is to provide flood relief services to the citizens of the federal capital in case of any emergency during the monsoon season," Khichi said.

Director General (Civic Management) Rawal Khan Maitla has been deputed as the chief coordinator of the Flood Relief Cell, while the cell will work under the administrative control of Director Emergency & Disaster Management Mansur Ahmad Khan, who will be the in-charge of the cell. **"Mian Waheed-ud-Din has asked all concerned directorates, including the Directorates of Maintenance, Environment, Enforcement, Municipal Administration, Planning, E&M Maintenance, Directorate of Machinery Pool Organisation (MPO) and Capital Hospital to efficiently coordinate and extend all-out assistance to the Flood Relief Cell in case of any emergency," Khichi said.**

Director (Municipal Administration) Mansoor Ahmed Khan, who also holds the charge of the office of Director Emergency & Disasters Management (E&DM), while briefing participants of the meeting informed that the Flood Relief Cell will function round-the-clock. It would be equipped with latest relief devices, including 20 large and small dewatering pumps, vehicles, including pickups, shovels, front-end loaders and dumpers. He said that the Flood Relief Cell will ensure that all flushing units with operational staff are available round-the-clock for quick and prompt response at enquiry offices. The meeting was also informed that the authority has requested the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for provision of boats to rescue people in case of high flood, which has been agreed by the NDMA. The CDA has also arranged for tents to provide relief to the affected people in case of flood in the city.

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Mian Waheed-ud-Din also directed the concerned formations that a comprehensive deployment plan should be prepared and vigilance teams be constituted to have a constant liaison with Meteorological Department and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration. He also directed the E&DM director to keep a constant liaison with the NDMA and get all necessary help from it, if needed. Director (PR) Asim Khichi said that the acting chairman has directed the concerned officials to share the water level situation in Simly Dam with the general public, especially those living downstream of Soan River, through media on daily basis and also with the ICT Administration so that in case excess water is released from the Simly Dam, people living downstream Soan River should be warned in advance and evacuated to safer places.

Khichi also said that the acting chairman has directed to ensure that Capital Hospital and all dispensaries of the CDA be kept in ready position to meet any emergency and for the provision of first-aid. He also directed the CDA Health Services director to ensure proper spray and fumigation in the city on regular basis.

The meeting was also attended by Member (Administration) Shaukat Mohmand and Member (Engineering) Syed Abrar Shah.

The acting chairman appealed to the residents of the federal capital to coordinate with the Flood Relief Cell in case of any emergency through Director (D&EM) Mansur Ahmad Khan on telephone number 051-9253197, mobile phone number 0300-555536, the Capital Hospital (Medical Care Centre)-1122, the Fire & Rescue Service of CDA (telephone number 16) and the CDA Sanitation Directorate on helpline 1334.

Current decade a great threat to climate change

June 26, 2011



Islamabad

The current decade (2010-2020) is very crucial and a great threat to climate change as the emission of Green House Gases (GHG) from industries and fossil fuel is increasing dangerously and will result in extreme changes in global weather which will be irreversible if not controlled, said Dr Ishfaq Ahmad, Advisor Planning Commission.

He said this while addressing the inaugural session of National Workshop on Stocktaking of Green House Gasses (GHG) Inventory Development in Pakistan, organised by Global Change Impact Study Centre here on Saturday.

Dr Ishfaq said that surge in global temperature can be controlled by

controlling the industrial GHG emission. He said the irreversible extreme threats would be rise in sea level along the coastal areas, extreme heat wave, and rapid melt down of glaciers which result in flooding. The global temperature in last few years have been raised .4 Celsius and would keep on surging to 1.6 Celsius to 6 Celsius in this century, the environmentalist assume. But it is being tried by developed and developing countries to keep the temperature surge between 1-2 Celsius as this band will not create extreme threats to global weather.

The purpose of holding this workshop is to analyse the GHG behaviour in current scenario in different fields like agriculture and forestry and is start to prepare 2nd national communication for Pakistan as assigned by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), said Dr Jawed Ali Khan, DG Ministry of Environment.

Pakistan is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which aims to limit the adverse impacts of climate change, both at global and regional levels, so that those do not threaten the food, water, and energy security — and thereby socio-economic progress — of human populations, esp. in the developing countries.

One of the obligations of signatory countries is to develop, periodically update and publish National Communications, which also serve as the basis for concrete future actions for adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts in a sustainable manner. These Communications are expected to contain inter alia an Inventory of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) * emitted during the course of various industrial, agricultural and other activities in the country.

Pakistan submitted its Initial National Communication (INC) in 2003, which presented the GHG Inventory for 1994. Since then, no major national-level effort was undertaken to update that Inventory until the Applied Systems Analysis Division of PAEC prepared a Draft GHG nventory in 2009. Since Pakistan's Second National Communication (SNC) is now due, it is important to start working towards the evolution of a nationally owned GHG Inventory.

The National Workshop on "Stocktaking of GHG Inventory Development in Pakistan" organised by Global Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC), Ministry of Environment. It is aimed at an overall stocktaking of efforts done so far, a review of the 2009 Inventory, identification of gaps, suggestions on measures for improvement, possible institutional arrangements etc.

India to monitor water pollutants coming from Pakistan

By: Chetan Chauhan
25 June 2011

hindustantimes

For the first time, India will be monitoring water pollutants coming from Pakistan to end diplomatic row over highly polluted drains that flow between the two countries.

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The bone of contention is transboundary Hudiara canal, which zig-zags between India and Pakistan. It originates from Batala in Gurdaspur district of Punjab and enters Pakistan at Ladoo, before re-entering India and finally submerging into river Ravi after traveling for 63 kms in Pakistan.

Pakistan has been repeatedly accused over 100 industries on the banks of the canal in India for polluting the water used there for irrigation and thereby, causing human health problems. India on its part has been blaming industries in Pakistan for polluting it.

The water in Hudiara canal in Pakistan was labeled as unfit for human consumption in late 2000 whereas in India, its monitoring has been very poor. Industrial pollutants such as cadmium, chromium and copper had been found in the canal water and have lead to production of over vegetables.

“We will be setting up 139 hydrological stations on the drain to monitor its water quality on regular basis,” said chairman of the Central Pollution Control Board S P Gautam. The stations will be set up at short intervals to study deterioration of water quality as it flows in India.

“The stations will also be set up at the point the drain enters India and its exit,” he said.

The monitoring for the first time will provide conclusive evidence to the government on the culprit behind high pollution of the drain. The World Wide Fund for Nature in Pakistan has put up some monitoring stations on the drain in Pakistan under the United Nations projects.

The Indian initiative being funded by World Bank is part of diplomatic confidence building mechanism between Indo-Pak. While the first step is monitoring, environment ministry officials are confident that the second step would be efforts to clean up the drain in a joint effort with Pakistan government.

Ministry officials said the World Bank had approved the project in principle and was in process of finalizing the model of hydrological stations to be set up.

“The cost of setting up the stations will be worked out once the World Bank decides what type of stations they want,” a ministry official said.

Apart from Hudiara, the government is also looking at brining other transboundary drains under the progamme.

yesterday amid serious challenges of degradation and pollution of land, water and air while industrial pollution may get worse unless economic activity is underpinned with sustainable development. Air pollution is endemic because of a surge in automobiles, insufficient emission

standards, and absence of effective enforcement. All major cities face haphazard, unplanned expansion leading to increase in pollution. This unchecked growth has led to creation of slum areas around city

peripheries and low lying areas. Elsewhere mining, erosion and de forestation are major causes of land degradation.

Asia must invest in renewable energy

The Nation on Web
The Nation June 23, 2011

ISLAMABAD (APP) – With an energy crisis looming, Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Haruhiko Kuroda on Wednesday called on Asian nations to **“take radical steps” to increase energy efficiency and invest in renewable energy.**

Asia and the Pacific’s strong economic growth and its increasing population are generating the world’s fastest growing demand for energy. It is estimated that energy requirements in the region will double by 2030. If left unchecked, the lack of energy security may reverse the region’s hard-won gains in poverty reduction, said a press statement issued here. Continued reliance on fossil fuels will also increase the threat of climate change, thus affecting millions of Asia’s poor and vulnerable through increased natural disasters and shortages in food “Asians have more to lose from climate change than any other people. The climate fight will be won or lost by decisions made in this region,” said Mr. Kuroda in an introduction to the 6th Asia Clean Energy Forum (ACEF) in Manila. “An important key to lowering energy intensity is the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies and transition to renewable energy. Asia must also

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take radical steps to increase energy efficiency.” To meet the rising demand for energy and improve the lives of 800 million people in Asia with no access to electricity, a significant push is needed to fast track new business models and policies for clean energy development. With over 500 participants from 60 countries in attendance, the Asia Clean Energy Forum is being co-organized by the United States Agency for International Development, the World Resources Institute, and Asian Development Bank to promote dialogue on scaling up clean energy efforts in Asia and the Pacific.

It's indiscriminate, dangerous and legal

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE *International Herald Tribune*

By Sonia Malik

4 June 2011

LAHORE:

Sajid Nazir, a security guard outside a law office opposite the Punjab Assembly, carries an air-filter face mask in his pocket. The traffic congestion on The Mall is not what bothers him. It is the smell of sulphur from burning tyres.

“It’s suffocating,” says Nazir. “Sometimes, if I inhale the smoke, I end up coughing blood.” The face mask comes in handy at his office, which is located near Lahore’s most popular protest location, and hence regularly exposed to emissions from scrap tyres set on fire.

He tries to stay inside the building to avoid toxic fumes, but his job is mostly about helping people park cars outside, so that suffocating feeling from breathing in the black acrid smoke is often unavoidable.

Burning tyres emit gases extremely hazardous to human health, especially for people like Sajid, who are frequently exposed to the emissions. But there are no environmental laws stopping protestors from burning tyres and little awareness of its hazards. What emissions are produced by burning tyres depends on a variety of factors, such as the composition of the tyre and the rate of burning. But most tyres are packed with toxic chemicals including volatile organic compounds such as benzene, a carcinogen; metals such as lead, which is harmful to the kidney, liver and nervous system, particularly in children; and synthetic rubber components such as butadiene and styrene, which are also carcinogenic.

Burning tyres also emit sulphur dioxide, which irritates the nerve endings in the nasal passage. It narrows the airways, especially in those suffering asthma, and frequent exposure increases the risk of respiratory diseases. Additionally, the chlorine content in tyres leads to creation of dioxins and furans, which are extremely toxic chemicals.

There are protests featuring burning tyres outside the Punjab Assembly or the nearby Lahore Press Club at least once a week, according to Abid Nawaz, a photographer with the *The Express Tribune* who covers such demonstrations regularly.

Student groups such as the Imamia Student Organisation and small political parties often use burning tyres at their protests, he said. “The tyres are a symbol of anger. We set them on fire to block roads and to call attention to our cause,” said ISO spokesman Aftab Hashmi. “But we only do so for bigger protests, where more people are required to participate.”



Burning tyres also emit sulphur dioxide, which irritates the nerve endings in the nasal passage.

Scrap tyres are easily available from several tyre shops on Bund Road or from workshops at petrol stations. But despite their widespread use and toxic emissions, government has expressed no interest in stopping it. In fact, they

said it was not even illegal.

Zahid Younas, the deputy district officer for environment, says no law in the Pakistan Environment Protection Act 1997 deals with burning tyres during protests. He said no one had even been penalised for burning a tyre at a protest, but the city government took regular action against factories that used tyres as a fuel.

Lawyer Muhammad Shoaib said the only legal action that could be taken against those burning tyres during a protest would be under Article 9 of the Constitution for disturbing the peace.

CDG charges on polluters of main drains

June 23, 2011

By: Iqtidar Gilani



LAHORE – Following a fresh survey of factories and housing schemes discharging untreated wastewater at various points in Hadyara and Charrar drains, City District Government Environment Department has served notices on 359 polluting units with the directions to install treatment plants, TheNation has learnt.

Director Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Punjab Shahid Hassan has started hearing view point of the polluting industries and housing schemes. After completing the requirement of personal hearing, Environmental Protection Orders (EPOs) will be issued to the industries for installation of treatment plants and stopping drainage of untreated industrial or sewerage waste in the storm water drains. Around 303 industries are discharging untreated wastewater in Hadyara while 56 units are using Charrar drain for the disposal of toxic water, thus posing serious environmental hazards. Besides that, 18 housing schemes are discharging untreated waste water in Hadyara and Charrar drains. “The CDG Environment Department has started proceedings against the polluting industries and housing schemes along Hadyara and Charrar drains. Notices have been served on these units and schemes. Drainage of untreated industrial and sewerage waste has made water in both the drains highly toxic. These units and schemes need to discharge wastewater after treatment. Implementation on the notices will be **ensured to reduce pollution level in Hadyara and Charrar drains**”, said District Officer Environment Tariq Zaman Khan, adding around 24 factories had already installed plants but these were not functioning. Hadyara drain exists before partition as a storm water drain and originates in the proximity of Kahnuwala Chumb / Batala Gurdaspur District Amritsar (India). The Drain receives the sewage and industrial waste water from Kahnuwala Chumb / Batala Gurdaspur, Amritsar City and Noshera from India and enters into Pakistan near Padhana / Lallu Villages. It runs 55 km (India to Mohlanwal / River Ravi) in Pakistan, 45-km in India. Discharge at Indian border is 65 cusec while at River Ravi it increases to 195 cusec. Major tributaries are Padhana Village Drain, Dera Chahal Drain, Bedian Road Drain, Thetre Village Drain, excessive water of BRB Canal (exceeding 4,500 cusec), Charrar Drain, Nishter Colony / Ferozpur Road Drain, Gajumata / Khana Drain, Sattokatla Drain, Jublee Town Drain and several Industrial inlets.

Animal-waste burning: Market dynamics trump regulation



By Sonia Malik

June 18, 2011 LAHORE:

Around three dozen businesses using animal waste for fuel are running beside the slaughter house at Bakar Mandi despite several warnings and fines imposed by the Environment Protection Department (EPD). Cases against some of these are pending for hearing before an Environment Tribunal (ET).

Residents of the nearby Sabzazar and Kot Kamboh housing colonies have lodged complaints about the stench from the burning of fat and other waste.

EPD Field Inspector Javed Iqbal said the department raided the market eight times and sealed at least 30 businesses under the Pakistan Local



Residents of the nearby Sabzazar and Kot Kamboh housing colonies have lodged complaints about the stench from the burning of fat and other waste.

Government Ordinance in two years. He said several EPOs had been **issued directing businesses to relocate**. “Even where some have moved out, a relative or friend has taken over **the unit**,” he said. He said fines of Rs100,000 and more have been imposed and several cases referred to the ET for non-compliance.

Deputy district officer (environment) Younas Zahid said the raids could have been more effective had the town municipal authority (TMA) and the Food Department cooperated with the EPD.

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D Block of Sabzazaar housing colony located next to the market is worst affected by the pollution. Parveen, a D-Block resident, said the sewer at the back of her house remained clogged most of the time because of the dumping of animal waste. Also, she said the air was filled with smoke clouds caused by the burning activity.

These businesses use animal fat, hides, bones and blood dumped by the slaughter house to manufacture grease, poultry feed, leather sheets and artificial hair. The grease produced by these units is mostly used for making soap dishes.

He said the city district government was at fault. "They should have realised that the area was not suitable for a housing colony," he said.

Some of the businesses, however, have relocated the fat burning activity to places such as Gulshan-i-Ravi after the EPD imposed heavy fines and sealed their units.

Munir, one of these, said he had relocated the burning unit to Gulshan-i-Ravi but had kept his office at Bakar Mandi. He told The Express Tribune large quantities of animal fat were stored in go downs at **Bakar Mandi. The fat, he said, was 'cooked' for up to four hours on fire** fuelled generally by coal or rubber tyres. Besides grease, he said leftovers from the slaughter house were used to make poultry feeds, leather sheets and artificial hair.

Munir said the only practical way to move the activity was to relocate the slaughter house. The district government is already working to set up a slaughter house over 700 kanal in Shahpur Kanjran. The facility is expected to be complete in two years.



Steps should be taken to review and set in place proper drainage systems, and efforts made to reclaim land lost to water logging and salinity.

particular have been mismanaged in the country. We need to ensure that we use the correct methods for agriculture, such as not overusing the land and soil, rotating crops frequently, irrigating land wisely and using the appropriate, preferably organic, fertilisers. True, the nation has other extremely pressing problems as well, but at the end of the day, the land we live in and fight for must be tended to.

Under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Pakistan has committed to increasing its forest cover from an existing 5.2 per cent to six per cent by 2015. But efforts must be taken to make sure that tangible steps, such as breaking the hold of the timber mafia, are taken. It is time that the environment was made a priority and not the slightest deterioration was tolerated. Steps should be taken to review and set in place proper drainage systems, and efforts made to reclaim land lost to water logging and salinity, or, in some areas, to reduce the impact of the salts. Steps should also be taken to control population growth in the country and planners should take care not to extend cities to arable Land.

Desertification in Pakistan

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE *International Herald Tribune*

June 20, 2011

A recent report has revealed that as much as 80 per cent of **Pakistan's land is arid. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** defines the term desertification as land degradation in dry lands. This news is troubling, given that the country is largely dependent on agriculture and reduction in the area of arable land may lead to food insecurity. The irony here, however, is that intensification of agriculture is actually one of the reasons behind desertification. Others include population pressure, water logging and salinity — the latter two of which have the capacity to rapidly destroy agriculture in the country. Here, too, it must be considered that an increase in population — which translates into an increase in the demand for foodstuffs — leads to an expansion of settlements and other urban infrastructure into arable land.

Going by the results quoted in this report, it would be safe to assume that the environment in general and the agriculture sector in



BRC aims at emerging as a base of generating high-quality, research-based data on existing bio-resources of Pakistan, and its adjacent tracts: knowing their present status, exploitation patterns and future possible trends, along with monitoring changes in their status over the period of time. Centre aims to target all possible sectors of bio-resources, including, water, air, agriculture, forests, fisheries and wildlife resources, exploiting modern gadgets, like, remote sensing, Geographic Information System and molecular technique. Centre wants to properly study environmental problems in order to increase understanding the system controlling natural resources to develop a wiser management of such resources for the long term benefit of human race.

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