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-ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: THE 'POWERLESS' AND THE 'NEGLIGENT'

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Pakistan Wildlife News

Issue V, Volume 3

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SOUTH ASIAN EXPERTS URGE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

DAWNCOM

By Salim Sheikh

22 May, 2011

KATHMANDU: South Asian environmentalists, hydrologists, climatologists and scientists at a regional training workshop on Saturday said that climate change in conjunction with other drivers in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region would have a serious impact on water accessibility, people's vulnerability to water-fuelled hazards and socio-economics.

They underlined a need to close the knowledge gap on the cryosphere and the availability of water resources in time and space. Basin-wide water availability scenarios should be developed and linked to water demand and socio-economic uplift, they stated.

The three-day regional 'Climate Change Effects on Water and Agriculture from the Mountains to the Sea and Adaptation', organised by in Dhulikhel and Kathmandu by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in support with the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network, Asia Pacific Mountain Network, concluded here on May 20.

Director General of the ICIMOD, Dr Andreas Schild, said that the high Himalayan and inner Asian ranges have the largest areas covered by

the glaciers and permafrost outside the polar regions. The ice and snow covers an area of more than 112,000 square kilometers, providing important short long-term water storage.

The region and its water resources play an important role for biodiversity, agriculture and hydropower, serving more than 1.3 billion South Asian people in the downstream basin areas of ten large Asian rivers, which originate in the mountains. Besides, environmental services provided by the natural resources area the basis for a substantial part of the region's total GDP and have an unprecedented importance far beyond the region, he highlighted.

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Young-Woo Park in his key note address to the participants of the workshop said that climate change is projected to compound the pressures on natural resources and the environment associated with rapid urbanization, industrialisation and economic development.

It would potentially have deep and widespread implications on the availability of, and access to, water resources for South Asian people, particularly Pakistan and India, he warned.

The UNEP's regional director, however, said that by the 2050s, access to freshwater in Asia, particularly in the large river basins, is projected to decrease. Unless urgent measures are taken to mitigate the

Continued...

Cont: South Asian experts urge for climate change . . .

impacts of climate change, the economic advances in China, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan could be severely curtailed.

He said that in Asia, it is most likely that warming during this century will be significant in arid regions and the Himalayan highlands, including the Tibetan Plateau. Warming will affect the amount, timing and distribution of rainfalls, resulting in increased droughts and floods and cause increased glacial retreat, leading to loss of water storage capacity, destabilisation of slopes and glacial lake outburst floods, increased snowmelt and runoff, affecting river water supplies.

Dr. Schild suggested several strategies to cope with the climate

change challenges including such as: fostering generation and exchange of knowledge and practices on climate change adaptation, increasing adaptive capacities of the people, facilitating integration of knowledge into decision making processes and actions, bridging gap between knowledge providers and users and promoting partnerships for transformative actions among the regional countries.

Dr Ahmadul Hasan warned that in South Asian countries, crop yields could decrease up to 30 per cent by mid-21 century, if pre-emptive measures are not taken at the regional level. Otherwise, falling productivity of agriculture due to damaging effects of the climate change would further aggravate the food insecurity situation for the 1.6 billion people of the region.

Agreement to protect Murree Forests Division signed

Daily Times
Your right to know A new voice for a new Pakistan

May 2011

LAHORE: A crucial agreement for the mapping and monitoring of Murree Forests Division (MFD), highlighting encroachments on forest land, was signed between the Punjab Forest Department and World Wide Fund for Nature – Pakistan (WWF –Pakistan).

The ceremony took place at the Punjab Forest Secretariat at which **both sides were represented by Government of Punjab's Forestry, Wildlife, Fisheries and Tourism Department Secretary Babar Hassan Bharwana and WWF – Pakistan DG Ali Hasan Habib.** Through this agreement, mapping and monitoring of forests of MFD will be conducted. Encroached pockets in the forest area will also be highlighted so that the natural resources of the area can be managed efficiently. MFD is facing high encroachment pressures and considering the alarming encroachment rate, the Lahore High Court (LHC) took suo motu notice of the matter.

WWF - Pakistan became a party and helped the court by providing images and maps of the selective highly encroached forest sections. WWF – Pakistan, in consultation with Punjab Forest Department, Revenue Department and Survey of Pakistan, has already conducted a model study of selective forest sections of MFD.

Maps and results of the model study were presented to the LHC for reference and decision-making. Murree Steering Committee constituted by Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif also appreciated the study. Indus for All Programme of WWF - Pakistan is providing funds to extend cooperation to MFD. The recent degradation of forests in the country has been alarming. The floods of 2010 raised further concerns about the depletion of this great natural resource.

Since 2011 is also the international 'Year of the Forests', this agreement will add to the efforts being made by WWF – Pakistan and various government agencies to try and contain degradation of this precious natural resource.

Speaking at the occasion, Forest Secretary Babar Hassan Bharwana said, **"We appreciate the support extended by WWF – Pakistan in providing their support for the mapping of forest extent and illegal encroachments in MFD."** He said that under the model study, the comparison of satellite images and other maps of different dates helped identify the areas where forest degradation had taken place and also identified the areas where the forest boundary pillars had been removed by the land grabbers.

Ali Hasan Habib added, **"This agreement will help conduct joint geographic information system (GIS) studies of the MFD."** He further said that the agreement for extending the model study to collect and maintain the forest record on scientific basis was an important step and would lead to better management and monitoring of forests. The agreement signing also coincides with World Biodiversity Day, which was celebrated on May 22.

Pakistan's forests hold a wealth of biodiversity, animals, insects and plants, and monitoring them will further benefit all species dependant on them, apart from human beings.

The pros and cons of local farming

HotelierMiddleEast.com

18, May 2011

Farming in Pakistan could be a short-term solution to the organic question, believes El Accad.

Although local UAE farming might seem best practice, importing organic food can be better for the environment.

The first point to consider is “why do we want to farm locally in the UAE?” Is it to reduce our carbon footprint? Is it in order to retain more nutrients in our food? Is it to secure our food supply?

If it is any of these then I think we should harness the enthusiasm that is currently growing behind local farming and try to steer it in a more sustainable direction. Let me tell you about the situation now and how I think we can improve on it.

Water availability

Most farms are drawing well-water to irrigate their crops. International organic standards say that the water has to be drinkable. This is not so in the case of the UAE, so the water is treated by reverse osmosis on some farms. That not only costs money but it takes out the salts from the water, which then drain back into the ground.

The effect is that we reduce the level of ground water and at the same time increase its level of saltiness. Water is a very critical resource and using it up in this way means that in a few years there will be no usable water left, neither for vegetables nor in the case of a food security emergency.

The other water source I have seen on farms is desalinated water. This currently has a carbon footprint that surpasses that of vegetables being flown in from much further afield than places such as Egypt, where I import my vegetables from.

My hope for the future? If we can harness solar energy to desalinate water we could have a huge renewable source of water that does not have a large carbon footprint. At the very least water usage should be

better controlled with subterranean irrigation and more organic matter in the soil to increase the water holding capacity and to reduce water consumption.

Local conditions

Most local UAE farms are close to large cities where the soils are not the best, yet within a short drive there are the more fertile soils such as those in the eastern region of Fujairah, Dibba and Khorfakkan. Under the shade of date palms and close to the Indian ocean we could get really good quality crops high in nutritional values.

Another point in favour of this is that the plastic used to create green houses and tunnels all ends up as landfill after a few years, and yet they are commonplace on farms. With a more moderate climate or with natural tree cover, as traditionally done in farming areas with date trees, we would save that plastic in the land fills.

Composting should also be at the heart of every farm. It improves the quality of the soil and in turn that of the crop and also reduces the carbon footprint by trapping carbon in the soil and reducing the need for natural fertilisers, which have to be produced elsewhere and transported in.

Lastly, to date labour is largely imported to work on farms locally. This is not only a socially disrupting practice but on top of it the workers get flown home every year or two, which creates a carbon footprint that is not often accounted for.

Solution?

In the short term, building up farming locations that have natural resources that the UAE does not have, but are within close proximity, could work well. For example take Pakistan: we have historically had very good ties to Pakistan and it would seem there is a slim risk of politically falling out. There is plenty of labour at suitable wage rates to be conducive to farming and it would provide employment into Pakistan. There is enough good soil and, harnessed and managed well, the water supply is also ample in the country.

Longer term, the eastern region in the UAE already has dams and some farming and could be expanded. Given the right technology in solar desalination, the UAE could acquire the right water and soil resources. The labour will remain the only factor not available locally, but we could opt for higher capital intensive farming. The enthusiasm behind local farming is a good start, but considering these factors would do us good in the long term. Nils El Accad founded Organic Foods and Café with the goal of bringing good food to the Gulf in a sustainable way with the lowest ecological footprint.



Anti-litter drive: Civic body seeks citizens' help

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
 WITH THE International Herald Tribune

17 May, 2011

ISLAMABAD:

No municipality of the world can succeed to keep the city clean without the cooperation of the residents. "Therefore the proud residents of the beautiful capital of Pakistan should join hands to make it an exemplary city for cleanliness," said the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman, Imtiaz Inayat Elahi, in an open letter to the residents of the Islamabad on Monday. He is seeking their active participation in the



civic agency's anti-litter drive 2011.

He pleaded that clean environment is a sign of a healthy and civilised societies. "We can achieve this goal by taking special care of our houses, streets, sectors and surroundings," he added.

Conversion of wild olive trees stressed

The
Frontier Post
 Peshawar - Lahore - Islamabad - Karachi - Quetta
 Voice of the Federation

20 May, 2011

TIMERGARA: Pakistan spent Rs 2 billion annually on import of edible oil and this amount would be doubled in 2015 as the population and need of the people is rapidly increasing. We can save this huge amount only through converting wild olive trees (Arbequeeina) in Malakand region with modern grafting.

These views were shared by experts and agriculturists during a visit to an olive farm at Dherai Talash village the other day. The district coordination officer Dir Lower Islam Zeb, executive district officer agriculture extension wing Shafiqur Rahman and regional manager Pakistan Oil seeds Development Board (PODB) Fazal Mula Khan planted olive (Arbequeeina) trees imported from France.

Regional heads of other related government departments, representatives of international NGOs, farmers and notables of the area were also present on the occasion. The visiting team examined the farm and appreciated the effort of PODB and Agro Development CCB Dherai Talash for developing olive farming and its production. Later addressing a function held at the hujra of Noor Muhammad, the DCO asked

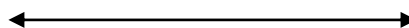
farmers to convert their natural wild olive trees through grafting for which the district administration would provide technical support. He said olive oil was far better than other edible oil used daily in the kitchens. "If we are sufficient in olive oil and its other production we can save a lot of our money," the DCO said.

He said he himself had been interested in developing the sector of agriculture from which according to him we could get food, medicines and pleasant environment.

The PODB project manager Fazal Mula Khan informed the participants that Pakistan imported edible oil (palm and soybean oil) from America and Indonesia and it was costing Rs 2 billion annually. He said that this edible oil could be replaced by olive oil.

"The olive trees are not only providing us with a pleasant environment by its ever greenness but they are also food and medicines as well," he said, adding that olive had multiple utilization. He said the Malakand region was rich in wild olive trees. "We have round about 50 million wild olive trees in the region.

They are found in abundance in Dir Lower, Dir Upper, Swat, Shangla, Bunir, Malakand agency and Bajaur agency," he said, adding that so far 200,000 wild olive trees had been converted into good productive olive through European type grafting.



International Day for Biological Diversity today



May, 2011

Islamabad—The International Day for Biological Diversity to be observed on Sunday across the world including Pakistan to increase the global understanding and awareness of issues and challenges around biodiversity. “The International Year of Forests and Forest Biodiversity” is the theme for this year’s International Day of Biodiversity (IDB). On May 22, 1992, the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted by the United Nations at a conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Since 2001, the International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated each year on this date.

In 1992 state and government leaders agreed on a strategy for sustain-

able development at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as “The Earth Summit”, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Sustainable development is a way to meet the needs of people all over the world and ensuring that planet earth remains healthy and viable for future generations. One of the most important agreements reached during the Earth Summit was the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Convention on Biological Diversity came into force on December 29, 1993, and each anniversary of this date was designated the International Day for Biological Diversity. From 2001 onwards the date of this celebration was moved to May 22 due to the number of holidays that fell in late December.

On this date in 1992, the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at a United Nations at a conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Each year, the International Day for Biodiversity focuses on a particular theme.

World’s largest pre-college scientific competition: Pakistani students shine at international event



By Omaid Zeeshan / Saleha Riaz

15 May, 2011

KARACHI: Two Pakistani students have won third position after competing with more than 1,500 students from 52 nations at the world’s largest pre-college scientific research event.

The two teenage girls, Mehwish Ghafoor and Ambreen Bibi, study biology at the Federal Government College for Women, Islamabad. They won third place in the field of environmental sciences at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair which concluded in Los Angeles on Thursday.

The research project titled “Degradation of Environment Pollutant with Nano-composites” talks about a method to make polluted water drinkable. The girls also got a \$1,000 reward for developing the technique.

“This is something we will never forget,” said the two girls while talk-



ing to *The Express Tribune*. Ghafoor termed it “the best week of her life” because she learnt to appreciate science in a new way while Bibi said that she is extremely happy to make her parents proud.

“It feels good to have won especially given the stiff competition,” said Ghafoor. Ghafoor is hoping that her project will be funded so that it can be made commercially viable.

Continued...

Cont: World's largest pre-college scientific competition....

"We are hoping that there are people who will take interest in our project and sponsor it to spread all over the country," she said, adding that Pakistan was a country where people were looking for viable solutions to resolve their water problems.

The two girls came up with the idea for this project because they were concerned about Pakistan's growing water problems and the need for clean drinkable water.

"Discharging untreated sewage and chemical wastes directly into rivers,

lakes and drains has become a traditional habit. Water bodies can no longer cope with the increasing pollution load. To rectify this, we came up with this idea," said Bibi.

"We hold the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair because we believe that mathematics and science are imperative for innovation," said Intel Pakistan Country Manager Naveed Siraj.

"This global competition features youth trying to solve the world's most pressing challenges through science," he added.

The smoggy kilns: The zig-zag solution to pollution

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

By Azam Khan
22 May, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) has asked the brick kiln owners to install 'zig-zag' technology to reduce the environmental pollution "these smoke-emitting units" cause. The environmental watch dog in a meeting with Brick Kilns Association office-bearers on Friday asked the owners to follow the set procedure.

"We would not spare any one who defies the court's orders," Assadullah Faiz, Director-General, Pak-EPA told The Express Tribune on Friday. He said that under Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the environmental body, the capital city would be made pollution free. "However, we will not withdraw cases registered against brick kiln owners because these were referred to environmental tribunal on merit," he said.

A detailed discussion was held with the association of brick kilns on adoption of zig-zag technology which will help reduce pollution. The owners will also be able to sell their carbon credits to foreign investors and earn foreign exchange. The owners agreed to work with government departments on a pilot project, Faiz said.

Responding to a question, he said that at present no kiln is operational in the vicinity of Benazir Bhutto International Airport. The Pak-EPA in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment is taking initiatives to avail carbon credit facility for all the brick kiln owners after getting the red-zone cleared, he added. The red-zone near the airport was earlier under scrutiny due to presence of several brick kilns over there.

Pak-EPA chief said that the environment ministry is in the process of initiating a pilot project for availing carbon credits facility in the country



to bring foreign investors and latest technologies in order to reduce carbon levels.

He was of the view that this facility will definitely prove helpful in keeping the environment safe and clean. Other countries of our region are already availing this facility and earning huge amounts of foreign exchange because of it, Faiz said.

Minister of Environment Samina Khalid Ghurki recently informed the lower house of the parliament during the question hour that out of the 12 brick kilns very close to the airport, five brick kilns have now stopped operation, while cases of the remaining seven were referred to an environmental tribunal for trial. Construction of a model brick kiln unit based on Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln technology is underway with the assistance of Swiss authorities, the minister added.

"Brick Kiln Association is keen to switch over to the new technology once it is successfully demonstrated for operation in Pakistan," she

Continued...

Cont: The smoggy kilns: The zig-zag solution to pollution

said. Responding to a question, the minister said the environment ministry has worked out a three-phase programme to relocate brick kilns from Islamabad.

In the first phase, Zone IV and V and brick kilns located in the red zone (very close to the airport) will be shifted. About 43 brick kilns fall in this category and 27 brick kilns have already been dismantled. In the second phase, about 20 brick kilns located between red zone and outer periphery of Islamabad Capital Territory, away from the airport,

will be asked to move. According to Environmental Protection Tribunal orders, brick kilns located within a radius of 12 kilometres around the airport will have to be shifted elsewhere, while those located outside the 12km radius but within 20km of the airport will have to install a smoke control device. The entire process is to be completed within three months.

In the third phase, Zone II and III brick kilns on the outer periphery of ICT will be shifted. About 50 brick kilns fall in this category.

IEW: Development is not about trees

Daily Times
Your right to know A new voice for a new Pakistan

May, 2011

Pakistan is a country that has yet to implement its laws and policy on environment effectively. Of course some will state that these are not the only laws that we need to worry about, let me point out my friend that if the terrorists and the suicide bombers do not kill us, the environmental pollution in this country will, so let us salvage that for our future at least. What is environment? For now, it should suffice to say that it includes both natural and built or manmade environment.

Coming back to our point of discussion, the importance of these laws, policies and the environmental instruments created to implement them is lost on department officials that have to ensure its implementation. Take the case of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report. Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997 Section 12 explicitly lays down the law that projects will carry out an initial environmental examination (IEE) and subsequently an EIA if required. Regulatory framework for implementation of this law exists, yet the government departments/agencies themselves try to execute projects without conducting an EIA.

The EIA is treated as a hurdle that hinders development, whereas, if applied, it would steer us towards developing a vision for the new millennium — a vision resulting in sustainable development projects and sustainable cities. The EIA has to be undertaken at the planning **stage to identify the project's affects. Its aim is to assess the impacts of the project for rational decision making in the overall project planning.** EIA in Pakistan is the most misunderstood management tool despite its extreme importance in developmental planning. The gov-

ernment itself is oblivious to the importance of the EIA in its decision making process.

Take, for instance, the issue of traffic congestion facing many of our cities. No holistic planning is undertaken to address the issue. Each road corridor is taken in isolation of the overall road transport planning. A good example is traffic congestion in Lahore on two roads — Kalma Chowk and Canal Road — that have seen the government pushing forward to execute these projects, although congestion on these roads stems from the lack of development on other secondary and tertiary road networks. Strangely, congestion in other parts of the city is considered less crucial. The EIA conducted for these projects (undertaken after the decisions to execute the projects) failed to acknowledge these blatantly obvious issues. Despite this, the basic EIA report reveals the shortcomings of the projects and this is why its importance as a sustainability tool cannot be undermined.

The objective of introducing EIA into developmental planning was to develop a tool for sustainable development. The new paradigm shift of understanding the negative affects of past development and mismanagement came not only due to high levels of pollutants in the air, water, soil poisoning our natural resources but also due to land use changes. The ill planned land use resulted in the loss of the eco-services, i.e. the natural systems that protected the earth.

The first criteria indicators of environmental degradation that will impact our lives are the natural elements around us. These indicators **directly show a decline of the earth's natural conditions required for human survival. The unchecked depletion and pollution of the earth's natural resources and factors such as colossal population growth, increasing production and consumption patterns with consequential waste generation have shown disastrous consequences.** Therefore, it is important to understand that environmental protection is not needed for the survival of the earth; we need this for our own survival.

The importance of the ecological services for human wellbeing **came**

Continued...

Cont: IEW: Development is not about trees

into play when the loss of these services started directly affecting social and economic well being of mankind. Therefore, setting new paradigms for development for the survival of the human race is imperative. How does one change the development paradigm? One has to change the way one plans and executes projects — the way we think about the benefits of a project. The important factor is to integrate multiple benefits within the project design to achieve a project that will be sustainable. EIA as a tool looks at all aspects of the project — economic, social and environmental — the triple bottom line as it is called. These are the three main criteria for assessing development today.

How do we even begin to understand why a society and a government that is willing to dole out charity to its masses, is not willing to plan and develop the country for the teeming millions that we so regularly give out charity to. Giving out charity is not the role of the government, but providing structured development to achieve social and economic sustainability with a vision is.

Pakistan is faced with extreme environmental stress. Even the current **energy catastrophe is a direct result of Pakistan's poor development planning**. Our cities that could supplement their energy needs from waste-to-energy technique await some miracles that the federal government will perform to remove this shortage. A city like Geneva, which has far less waste generation than us, produces 16 percent of its energy

needs from its solid waste, so why can we not generate electricity to supplement the energy needs of each city with our waste, ridding our streets, drains, waters courses and open dumps of garbage. Lahore alone produces over 6,000 tons of solid waste, Karachi more than 10,000 tons. This amounts to energy just being thrown away instead of being utilised. This is causing pollution, when it could be turned into an alternative energy source. This is all due to lack of planning, lack of understanding how simple sustainable development can be. It is in here that the laws of EIA can be expanded and applied not only on project-to-project basis but in a more strategic manner through Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), addressing our developmental problems in a holistic manner.

A review of our developmental objectives at both micro and macro level shows the imperative need to reassess public development projects and ensure implementation of environmental assessments. **The sustainability of a country's developmental objectives correlate directly to its ability to the success of its policies.**

When we talk of governmental responsibility we cannot forget our own responsibility as citizens, as business and industrial entities. We need to participate in improving and working towards sustainable development objectives. We need to decrease the burden we are placing on our land. This is the earth we need to protect for ourselves and our future generations.

Pakistan's climate change policy up for cabinet nod

<http://www.environmental-expert.com>

16 May, 2011

Pakistan's environment ministry has cleared the draft of its first national climate change policy (NCCP) that emphasises increased investments in research on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Pakistan's federal environment minister, Samina Khalid Ghurki, approved the draft NCCP last month (26 April) after endorsement by the country's five provinces.

Qamar uz Zaman Chaudhry, an advisor on climate affairs at Pakistan's meteorological department and a key architect of the NCCP draft, said final approval by the country's cabinet would take about two months. In November 2010 the government had announced initiating a draft climate change strategy following extensive damage by floods.

The NCCP contains some 120 policy measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Its recommendations include setting up a national climate change commission to coordinate climate change activities and

developing monitoring, reporting and verification systems to assess emissions of polluting gases and changes in land use.

Other measures include improving the capacity of national universities and institutes working on climate change and developing climate change curricula with focus on disaster risk reduction.

Chaudhry told SciDev.Net: 'Increased investment in research for climate change mitigation and adaptation is a major thrust of NCCP. Other main areas of the research are: water conservancy for water, food and energy security; reduction of risks emanating from rise in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, afforestation and wastewater treatment and reuse.'

Under NCCP scientists would evolve digital simulation models to study climate change impacts on different facets of agricultural production systems, Ishfaq Ahmad, advisor to Pakistan's ministry of science, and chair of the national task force on climate change, said.

The task force was set up on 13 October 2008 to assess climate

Continued...

Cont: Pakistan's climate change policy up for cabinet nod

change impacts on key socio-economic sectors; evolve guidelines for climate change mitigation and adaptation; and evaluate institutional weaknesses.

Other objectives included mainstreaming climate change into national and sectoral policies and offering technical and financial guidance for projects under the 'clean development mechanism' — a flexible mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol that allows countries to quantify their reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as 'carbon credits'.

'Separate research plans have been recommended in NCCP for development of new high-yielding, heat-resistant and drought-tolerant crop seed varieties; introduction of better, drought-resistant breeds of live-stock and promotion of environment-friendly land management practices,' Ahmad said.

Shakil Ahmad Ramay, scientist at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, an Islamabad-based think tank, said, however, that the NCCP 'does not address the threat posed by climate change to the country's socio-economic security'.

Pakistan likely to lose membership of 14 pacts, funding

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

By Noor Aftab
09 May, 2011

Islamabad: Pakistan may lose membership of 14 global environmental agreements and funding worth millions of dollars as no environmental wing would be available at the federal level to facilitate necessary legislation in the parliament and deal with these affairs after devolution of the environment ministry, sources told this scribe here on Sunday.

Sources said the foreign donors have already categorically conveyed to the federal government that there must be a wing or institution at the federal level that can help facilitate interaction and talks with provincial institutions for provision of funds and technical assistance.

Sources pointed out that functions related only to ecology and environmental pollution have been devolved in favour of the provinces and it is still responsibility of the federal government to deal with affairs regarding international environmental protocols.

There is also a question that who would represent Pakistan at the international and global forums because provinces and states are usually not asked to send their representatives and only federal focal persons represent their respective countries at these forums, the sources said.

The official data showed that Pakistan has so far signed various Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including Kyoto Protocol, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (NFCCC),

Agreement for the Establishment of a Commission (LOCUST), Agreement on Aquaculture Centres in Asia, Basel Convention, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, Convention on Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris 1972, International Plant Convention, Montreal-Protocol 1987, The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Vienna Convention for Protection of Ozone Layer 1985.

It is pertinent to mention here that the government also faced embarrassing situation in the Senate on Friday when senators, both from treasury and opposition, opposed a bill to put into effect United Nations Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and said that no legislation about environment can be done in the parliament as it has become a provincial subject after devolution of the environment ministry.

One of the senior officials of the environment ministry told this correspondent that the foreign donor agencies clearly stated that there should be an institution at the federal level otherwise they are not interested to separately deal with provincial institutions.

He said they have already given a proposal to the Implementation Commission to constitute a commission at the federal level to deal with international agreements and protocols and provide impetus for necessary legislation in the parliament. I think the Implementation Commission would take necessary steps and pave the way for constitution of a commission after devolution of the environment ministry to avoid any hurdle in international financial assistance, he said.

Raja Muhammad Asad Khan, chairman of the NA Standing Committee on Environment, told this correspondent that bill regarding United Nations Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora was passed in the National Assembly and it is

Continued...

Cont: Pakistan likely to lose membership of 14 pacts, funding

also necessary to get it passed in the Senate as Pakistan is signatory to this important agreement.

He said being a signatory country of international environmental agreements Pakistan is bound to carry out necessary legislation otherwise we

MINFA gets Rs 2.46bn for projects against allocation of Rs 5.67bn

Daily Times
Your right to know. A new voice for a new Pakistan.

By Ijaz Kakakhel
May, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The government released only Rs 2.464 billion for 59 development schemes for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MINFA) in the first nine months (July - March 2011) against the 12-month allocation of Rs 5.675 billion, sources told Daily Times here on Friday.

Agriculture, which is considered as backbone of the economy, was ignored or given less importance while releasing development funds under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2010-11.

Actual allocation to MINFA was Rs 10.873 billion in the annual budget 2010-11. After critical financial situation of the country, the government curtailed the PSDP allocation to every ministry/department and allocation for MINFA reduced to Rs 5.675 billion from actual allocation of Rs 10.873 billion for the ongoing fiscal year.

Among the total 59 development projects, 15 projects have got zero releases in the last nine months (July-March). These projects are; Land and Water Resources Development Programme for Poverty Reduction in Pakistan, Promotion of Paddy Harvests and Dryer for Saving Post Harvest Losses under public-private partnership, Improving Conventional Farming Practices through Provision of Farm Machinery to Farmers/Service Providers, National Programme to Strengthen Transgenic Cotton R&D System in Pakistan, National Commercial Seed Production Programme, Promotion of Horticulture through Quality Improvement and Value-Addition, Agriculture Research Institute, Muzaffarabad, Agriculture Teaching Research Institute at Dera Allayar Balochistan, Integrated Agriculture Marketing and Storage Infrastructure Project.

Other zero releases projects are; Establishment of Nurseries of Multi-

have been kept away from efforts and projects aimed at coping with environmental challenges. I am surprised that the Implementation Commission has made no mechanism to deal with such issues after devolution of the environment ministry. There is an urgent need to set up an environment commission or wing either under the foreign ministry or the Cabinet Division to avoid any embarrassing situation at the international level, he said.

Purpose Trees and Shrubs in different economic zones for Large-Scale Production of Planting Stock, Evaluation of Production Performance of Saanen Goats under Pakistan Environment, Establishment of Mobile Unit Facility for Agriculture Research, National Project for Enhancing Existing Capacity of Grain Storage and others.

The sources further told this scribe that Rs 1.531 billion was released for projects of national importance - '**National Programme for Improvement of Watercourses in Pakistan**'. Other releases in nine months are: Rs 164.450 million for Water Conservation and Productivity Enhancement through High Efficiency Irrigation System, Rs 147.160 million for Special Programme for Food Security and Productivity Enhancement of Small Farmers in 1,012 villages, Rs 84.825 million released to Research for Agriculture Development Programme (PARC and its institutions), and others.

The MINFA has initiated a number of projects of national importance, which are directly related to food security in the country but such projects failed to get a single penny from the government in the **last nine months. One such important project was the 'National Project for Enhancing Existing Capacity of Grain Storage Rs 27.345 billion' but the Planning Commission failed to release a single rupee for this project, the sources claimed.**

On one side the government released very less amount to the ministry and on the other MINFA failed to hold Kharif Season 2011-12, **which might affect the country's planning about future targets and production estimates and it would affect the government planning about different food availability in the country.** The ministry has to set sowing and production target for cotton but in absence of Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) meeting, now the provinces itself have to decide about its sowing and production target.

As per schedule, the ministry has to hold FCA meeting, a high power committee in first week of April for Kharif season and set targets for cotton, sugarcane, rice, maize, moong, mash, chillies and others. The meeting also reviewed Rabi season crops estimates including wheat, gram, lentil, potato, onion, rapeseed, mustard and non-conventional oilseeds and other minor crops, fruits, fodder and medicinal herbs. However, due to the devolution plan, the ministry failed to conduct the FCA meeting. Earlier, the ministry decided to hold the meeting early in April, then delayed and later on postponed it and could not give the next date.

Environmental concerns: The 'powerless' and the 'negligent'

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

By Azam Khan
May, 2011

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Environment has been under fire for its failure to check the operations of polluting industries and brick kilns in the residential areas of Islamabad. Minister for Environment, Samina Khalid Ghurki, during the question hour in the National Assembly on Thursday, conceded to this problem.

She said that it is a fact that the steel mills and brick kilns established in the residential areas of the capital and its suburbs are causing environmental pollution in the area.

Apart from inaction by the ministry, Capital Development Authority (CDA) has also shelved its plan to relocate hundreds of industries and brick kilns presently functioning in the residential areas and around the red zone of Benazir Bhutto International Airport.

Blaming the civic body, Ghurki said that CDA, in violation of the Supreme Court's verdict on July 5 last year, did not take action against industries that were causing pollution in residential sectors of I-9 and I-10.

The civic body had earlier proposed that the industrial zone be shifted to sector I-17. But CDA board members, keeping parliamentary committees, superior courts and the people in darkness, voted against the proposal. Around 800 industries are working in three different residential sectors of the city. Of these, 500 industries are function in the I sectors of the city. The minister said that there are nine steel furnaces causing pollution in Sector I-9 and I-10.

She said, "Despite strict monitoring and threats of legal action, the fur-

naces are not controlling their emissions adequately." The ministry also asked CDA to identify an alternate site to shift the steel furnaces to, she said, adding that the authority is yet to respond. But the ministry has not failed on all counts. Ghurki said that a Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency monitoring team visited Al-Hadeed Industries in Islamabad on June 23 last year and found that the anti-pollution equipment installed there was not working properly.

The owner gave an undertaking to shut down operations till the plant is repaired and upgraded, she added. Moreover, the minister said that an environment protection tribunal has fined two steel mills Rs50, 000 each.

Brick kilns

Out of the 12 brick kilns very close to the airport, five brick kilns have now stopped operation, while cases of seven kilns were referred to an environmental tribunal for trial, the minister said. Construction of a model brick kiln unit based on Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln technology is underway with the assistance of Swiss authorities, she added.

The minister said, "Brick Kiln Association is keen to switch over to the new technology once it is successfully demonstrated for operation in Pakistan."

Responding to a question, Ghurki said the environment ministry has worked out a three-phase programme to relocate brick kilns from Islamabad. In the first phase, Zone IV and V and brick kilns located in the red zone (very close to the airport) will be shifted. About 43 brick kilns fall in this category and 27 brick

kilns have already been dismantled.

In the second phase, about 20 brick kilns located between red zone and outer periphery of Islamabad Capital Territory, away from the airport, will be asked to move.

According to Environmental Protection Tribunal orders, brick kilns located within a radius of 12 kilometres around the airport will have to be shifted elsewhere, while those located outside the 12km radius but within 20 km of the airport will have to install a smoke control device. The entire process is to be completed within three months.

In the third phase, Zone II and III brick kilns on the outer periphery of ICT will be shifted. About 50 brick kilns fall in this category.



As people bathe in filth, officials call meeting

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
WITH THE **International Herald Tribune**

By *Sonia Malik*
05 May, 2011

LAHORE: Untreated sewage from 12 places including housing societies, slums and a water amusement park is being dumped into the Canal, raising major public health concerns, particularly among the thousands of people who bathe in it during the summer.

Lahore's civic authorities and other stakeholders are to meet today (Thursday) to discuss the dumping, though the process for stopping such pollution is often complicated by bureaucratic inertia and pressure from politicians facing angry constituents inundated with sewage. **And environmentalists say the usual 'solution' – to divert the waste into the Ravi – is not sustainable either.**

The 12 sewage inlets into the Canal come from three approved housing societies, eight squatter settlements and slums, and the Sozo Water Park. All but one of these places is located northeast of Baghbanpura.

One of the housing societies is Rizwan Gardens, which has about 100 houses. Developer Naseer Hassan said that the Wagha TMO had approved the colony's development plan. **He said the TMO had told him that it was the developer's responsibility to lay pipes for the disposal of sewage from people's houses, but did not say that the sewage couldn't be disposed of in the Canal.**

Afzal Rehan, the Wahga Town TMO, said he had sought a report from tehsil officers for infrastructure and planning about alternatives to dumping sewage in the Canal.

Environmental Protection Department (EPD) Secretary Sajjad Saleem Hotiana said he had issued notices to the managing directors of the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) and the Lahore Waste Management Company, the district coordination officer, the district officer (environment), the Lahore Development Authority director general, the irrigation secretary, and the town municipal officers (TMOs) of Allama Iqbal Town, Wagha Town and Aziz Bhatti Town to attend the meeting on Thursday to discuss the issue.

He said the matter was urgent because in the summer, many people bathe in the Canal, exposing themselves to various water-borne ill-



nesses. He said the EPD is a regulatory authority. It can issue notices and push the authorities concerned, but cannot take action directly, he said.

According to Section 16 of the Pakistan Environment Protection Act 1997, the EPD can issue an Environment Protection Order to the authority concerned allowing it 30 days to take preventive measures to stop a violation. In case of no compliance, the EPD forms a tribunal, which examines reports and samples before taking a decision which the authority has to comply with.

The EPD says that in this way, it has managed to reduce the number of **inlets dumping waste into the Canal from 44 in 2007 to 12 now.** **"By issuing notices and repeatedly calling meetings, we persuaded Wasa to lay a sewage line along the Canal from Harbanspura Bridge to the Shalimar flyover," said an EPD inspector for the Canal, on condition of anonymity.**

He said the 12 inlets could be closed if another sewer trunk line is laid along the Canal from Sozo Water Park to the Shalimar flyover.

Irrigation Secretary Rab Nawaz said his department often came under political pressure from area MPAs to re-open inlets dumping waste into the Canal. He said his officials in December closed inlets from Tajpura disposing sewage into the canal. But two days later, over two feet of sewage had inundated a housing colony.

He said Wasa and the city government should devise a long-term plan for the disposal of sewage, as building a sewer trunk line that would end up discharging waste into the Ravi was not a sustainable solution.

Rafay Alam, the founder of the Pakistan Environmental Lawyers' Association, said the government should build proper waste disposal sites and waste treatment facilities northeast of Baghbanpura.

The Wasa MD and the owner of Sozo Water Park were unavailable for comment.

Chemical inflows poisoning Karachi coastal waters

Daily Times
Your right to know A new voice for a new Pakistan

May, 2011

KARACHI: Karachi is the largest city of Pakistan and a hub of industrial activity. However, its coastal zone is extended up to 135 kilometres that is exposed to heavy pollution load of both domestic and industrial origin, says a report of the Society for Human Rights & Environment Protection (SHEP) on chemical water pollution.

The report says discharges of sewage and industrial effluent into aquatic and marine ecosystem are also on the rise. The organic load of sewage depletes oxygen levels in water and indirectly reduces the diversity of animals and plants life.

Most of the coastal pollution is concentrated in Karachi harbour where an estimated 90,000 tonnes of oil products from vessels and port terminals are dumped every year. Extremely high levels of toxic heavy metals such as mercury have been documented, especially in the coastal waters and sea near Karachi. These are likely to have both acute and chronic toxic impacts on human beings, marine biodiversity and fish-eating birds.

The impacts of these pollutants on commercial finfish and shrimp fisheries are unknown, but are likely to be significant, the report says.

Rehri creek is one of the neighbourhoods of Bin Qasim Port and support a large community of fisherman. It stretches to 21.7 kilometres in the south east of Karachi coast. Its microenvironment comprises of the coastal area of Bin Qasim district, which includes the union council of Rehri Goth and Ibrahim Hydri besides the two settlements of Chashma Goth and Laath Basti.

Rehri creek is the heavily polluted area of Karachi coast, where the effluents from Korangi, Landhi, Karachi Export Processing Zone, Bin Qasim Industrial Area and Pakistan Steel Mills are directly discharged into the sea. In addition to these, untreated waste water from metropolis of

Karachi and domestic effluents from smaller coastal settlements is also released into the coastal water. The consequent contamination of fisheries and other fauna poses serious and potential health hazards.

The creeks area is dominated by mangroves that serve as a spawning and nursery ground for a number of commercially important marine fauna.

The toxic pollutants from the Rehri creek area reach to the mangrove areas. In addition, pollution from domestic, industrial effluents and Cattle Colony waste causes eutrophication and increases biomass in the form of algal bloom, which affects not only economically important marine fauna, but also affects mangrove seedlings.

These algal blooms grow profusely and inhibit the growth of mangrove seedlings that results in mortality of mangroves on a large scale.

Serious steps on behalf of all the stakeholders are required to end the pollution of coastal areas of Karachi.

Minister lauds transport policy

Daily Times
Your right to know A new voice for a new Pakistan

KARACHI: Sindh Environment and Alternative Energy Minister Sheikh Muhammad Afzal has lauded the provincial transport policy and said that the step for banning two stroke rickshaws in the whole province after June 30, 2011 is commendable.

He said many toxic gases in the smoke being emitted from the two stroke rickshaws are not only polluting the environment but also are directly hazardous for the humans who respire in polluted environment. The minister said policy making at high level does not only curtail causes of pollution but also eradicate such elements at the first

stage, which decrease the possibilities of environmental deterioration at low level. He said such sources of pollution have been banned in many countries through rules and regulations, adding, that the practice has now been started in Pakistan which is a good omen.

Afzal said that the department of Environment and Alternative Energy Sindh is working on war footing basis to control the smoke and noise of vehicles and decreasing other sources of environmental pollution.

He said that his department's Vehicular Emission Control Programme (VECP) has checked about 11,836 vehicles since 2007, including trucks, buses, wagons, pick ups, cars, taxis, rickshaws and dumpers, and of them only 60 percent met the criteria set for fit vehicles whereas others were issued tickets. He said the condition of NOC from environment department must be made mandatory for every vehicle prior to the issuance of fitness certificate in order to minimise noise and smoke.

OROP PK takes initiative to clean up environment

Daily Times
Your right to know A new voice for a new Pakistan

12 May, 2011

LAHORE: In today's world where environmental protection has become a serious issue, people are least bothered to take care of their environment.

The same scenario occurs in Pakistan, where factories engaged in toxic chemical disposals are not at all answerable to the inefficient public sector, and due to the non-regulation of rules by the weak law making bodies, the citizens are least concerned about their civic ethics to avoid polluting their country. Disposal of trash to spitting and exploiting the natural beauty of public parks, are some of the regular actions by the public in Pakistan.

In order to overcome these challenges, various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), both on a large and small scale along with student groups, are taking small steps to protect the environment.

In Karachi, a small team of dynamic teenagers led by young environmentalist M Talha Qureshi, has opened the Pakistani chapter of the One Right One People (OROP) project. OROP is an internationally run project under the consortium of the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) and a registered NGO in Ghana, Africa. The OROP Project is a project designed for students in schools and universities around the world, to learn, share, investigate and find solutions to global issues affecting them. In Pakistan, this group has chosen to work on environmental protection, which is currently a global hot topic, unfortunately receiving very little attention.

The team has completed one successful season under the mentorship of a famous Pakistani environmentalist named Taufiq Pasha Mooraj. The team started its action by meeting him at a local flower show, **which took place in Sea view, Karachi, in March 2011.** "The encouragement of Mooraj towards the group of young students with creative ideas only and no strong support at the back, was something totally **admirable,**" said Sonia Chagani, the communication in charge of the Pakistan OROP team. A few days after the brainstorming session, the team went for their first beach cleanup at Hawks Bay. "By getting involved in such projects, I realised how easy it is to come, enjoy the picnic and dirty the beach, however, cleaning it is the toughest part," said Hussain Najam. "If every family just take their trash back home, our beaches can look as exotic as of any of those in foreign locations." This initiative of beach clean up did not stay limited to the OROP vol-

unteers, but several other teenagers also joined in, showing the empowerment and motivation of the future generation of Pakistan.

On March 26, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) organised 'The Earth Hour' across Pakistan and requested individual teams, groups and families to participate in it through 'The Earth Hour Story' contest. OROP PK organised and observed this hour in a local community of Block no 1, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi, with children between the ages of 3 to 12 years. The team volunteered by supplying 40 candles and organised a pledge taking ceremony for switching off extra lights along with a small **art competition, where young winners were awarded candies.** "It was a great learning lesson to know that by switching off extra lights for just **an hour, how much water we can save for tomorrow,**" said Zeba, a 10-year-old project participant. All the artwork made by young artists was **displayed the very next day at the 'Pasha Farm' to visitors, where it was** thoroughly appreciated by the visitors.

OROP PK has also partnered with Habib Girls School to carry out environment protection workshops for middle school students. At the Global Youth Service Day, which is observed around the world to celebrate the spirit of volunteerism, the OROP PK team cleaned up Sea View located in Clifton, Karachi. On April 17, 15 volunteers gathered at **the location opposite to the "Cineplex" movie theatre.** "The spirit of volunteerism could be seen at the GYSD, when we teenagers cleaned the beach on a Sunday morning, when most of our friends were fast asleep," said Sadaf Khan, a member of OROP PK. The beach cleanup started at 9:30am sharp and Mooraj also joined in the clean-up effort of the youth. His presence became a great source of support for the volunteers, as he guided them to collect material like plastic, which cannot be decomposed and avoid paper, corn and other decomposable material. During the clean up, several visiting families also joined the team for some time, which provided further motivation to the volunteers. The OROP PK team cleaned up a small part of Sea View for six consecutive hours with two fifteen-minute breaks.

The OROP PK team is under the process of organising a daylong environment protection workshop and a mangrove plantation activity for one hundred under privileged students at the WWF wetland centre in Karachi. The event is expected to take place in July. For that, the participants are having consecutive meetings at the 'Pasha Farm' where Mooraj is providing them support for sponsors, media contacts, celebrity invitations etc.

The One Right One People team in Pakistan continues to take actions in order to make their country a beautiful and environment friendly place in the world.

Minister for efforts to protect wildlife



19 May, 2011

ISLAMABAD - Federal Minister for Environment Samina Khalid Ghurki has directed the quarters concerned to take immediate initiatives for capacity building and research in wildlife sector. National Council for Conservation of Wildlife (NCCW) should play its pro-active role to manage the issues of wildlife throughout the country by implementing the related laws and policies. She expressed these views while chairing the NCCW meeting here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Environment Khawaja Muhammad Naeem, Inspector General (Forest) Syed Mehmood Nasir, DIG (Forest) Abdul Nunaf Qaimkhani, members of the council including representatives of the federal ministries, all provinces, Capital Development Authority, non governmental organisations and non-official members of the council.

The meeting reviewed the conservation status of the wildlife in the country and took important decisions on different issues. It was decided that Ministry of Foreign Affairs will allow temporary import/export of falcons, two to three weeks before the arrival of visiting Arab dignitaries to avoid any misuse for unauthorised export of falcons and illegal hunting of Hourbara bustard. It was observed that Federal Cabinet in 1999 decided to continue ban on commercial export of wild mammals and reptiles. Afterward, it was also decided that WWF-Pakistan and IUCN in collaboration with NCCW, would draft a comprehensive policy regarding their conservation, census, captive breeding and trade.

Tuberculosis in animals and humans



By Muhammad Yasin Tipu
03 May, 2011

According to an estimate, Pakistan has a population of about 34.3 million cattle and 30.8 million buffaloes. Among the diverse bovine pathogens, mycobacteria are highly significant, especially among farm animals. Apart from mortality, it is estimated that the animals affected with tuberculosis lose 10 to 25 percent of their productive efficiency.

Bovine tuberculosis is not only a threat to animals, but it is also a zoonotic and public health problem. Mycobacterium bovis, the cause of bovine tuberculosis, and mycobacterium tuberculosis, the cause of classical human tuberculosis, are genetically and antigenically very similar and cause identical clinical disease in humans. The disease is a major problem and causes more casualties worldwide than Malaria and HIV.

Tuberculosis is present worldwide with an extremely high prevalence in Asian countries, where 60 to 80 percent of the children below the age of 14 years are infected. The largest number of cases occurs in the Southeast Asian region, which accounts for about 33 percent of the cases globally. The bovine type may cause as high as 25.8 percent of tuberculosis in human beings.

In Europe, according to reports, mycobacterium bovis is the cause for almost 50 percent of cervical lymph adenitis cases in children. In addition, it is the major cause of human gastrointestinal tuberculosis in the developing countries, where bovine milk is not pasteurised before use. In Pakistan, however, tuberculosis is prevalent at epidemic proportions in both human beings and animals. Unfortunately, there are various aspects of this disease that still need to be analysed.

It is hypothesised that bovine tuberculosis may be prevalent in Pakistan due to the use poorly pasteurised milk. Certainly, the existing situation calls for a comprehensive programme to address this problem in order to save the livestock, and particularly the human population at risk.

The key factors that can control tuberculosis are rapid detection, adequate therapy and contact tracing to arrest further transmission. Bovine tuberculosis infection in cattle is usually diagnosed in the animal on the basis of delayed hypersensitivity reactions. But after the animal dies, it is diagnosed through a post-mortem examination, and histopathological and bacteriological techniques.

Bacteriological examinations may comprise the demonstration of acid-fast bacilli by microscopic examination (provides presumptive confirmation), and the isolation of mycobacteria on selective culture media and their subsequent identification by cultural and biochemical tests. Culture is gold standard, but a lot of time is required for this slow-growing organism. Serodiagnosis of tuberculosis also has many limitations.

The rise of Pakistan in the global meat trade

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
 WITH THE International Herald Tribune

By Farooq Tirmizi
 09 May, 2011

Pakistan has begun taking the tentative first steps towards becoming a major international player in an industry in which the country has a strong competitive advantage: the global red meat trade.

At a time when Pakistani businessmen have a hard time selling even high-quality products to foreign customers due to Pakistan's negative country brand, meat processing companies report customers practically begging for Pakistani red meat to be exported to countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

While Pakistan has extraordinary natural strengths, the country also faces massive infrastructure shortcomings which handicap the ability of many Pakistani businesses to effectively compete against firms from Australia, Brazil or even India.

Yet over the last few years, a new breed of Pakistani companies seems to be emerging, one that confronts the unique challenges of agribusiness in the country and seems to be determined to take on its global competitors.

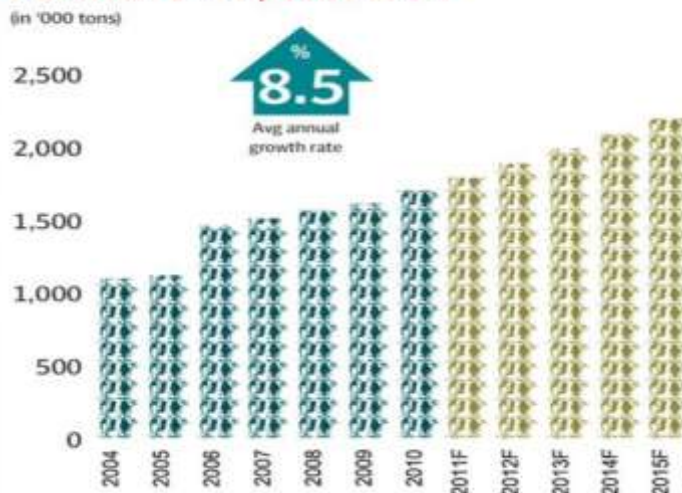
"If we can't compete in agriculture, then we should really just give up trying to do anything," says Kazim Namazi, a partner at ASI Partners, a Karachi-based consulting firm that advises agribusinesses.

Size of the opportunity

The halal food market, at just over \$640 billion a year worldwide, is one of the largest opportunities in the food and agribusiness sector. It is also one that plays to the unique advantages of being based out of Pakistan. Halal meat is also one of the fastest growing segments within the global food trade. Between 2001 and 2009, the global beef trade grew at an average of 10.4 per cent to reach just over \$30 billion, according to data available from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). However, the market for halal beef imports in the Middle East and South-east Asia alone grew by over 18.2 per cent to reach just under \$2 billion a year during that same period.

Pakistan's market share within this rapidly growing market is a paltry 2.9 per cent. However, Pakistani exporters seem to be determined to

Pakistan beef production



make up for lost time. In the six years ending in 2009, Pakistani red meat exports have risen by an average of 68.6 per cent a year, though admittedly from a very low base.

Yet with the advent of more and more new players, and with surprisingly robust support from the government, Pakistan is on the verge of becoming one of the largest players in the meat trade, at least within the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Market dynamics

Perhaps the single biggest advantage that Pakistan has is proximity. The country is closer to the Middle East than any of its biggest rivals in the market. The three countries with the largest market shares are Australia, Brazil and India, each of which has considerably higher shipping costs to these export markets compared to Pakistan.

Brazil is particularly dominant in beef, accounting for as much as 39 per cent of the region's beef imports. It absolutely dominates the meat market in Iran, with a share of 99 per cent in 2009. Yet, as Namazi points out, there is virtually no difference between Brazilian meat and Pakistani meat.

"The Brazilian animal is exactly the same as most of our breeds of cattle. The quality of meat is also the same. The only difference is their ability to market their meat better than us," said Namazi. He argues that Pakistan can easily displace Brazil as the Middle East's leading meat supplier.

Iran, in particular, seems to be keen for Pakistani beef. The Iranian government has invested 50 per cent of the capital in the Lahore Meat Company, a dedicated abattoir that will export meat to Iran.

Continued...

Cont: The rise of Pakistan in the global meat trade

Australian beef, with a powerful branding effort and a larger source animal, has a specific niche market that industry experts believe will be difficult for Pakistan to compete with in the medium term.

India, the one country that could completely destroy Pakistan's potential in the meat trade, has placed itself outside the global beef market after a 2005 Indian Supreme Court ruling that upheld a ban on cow slaughter as constitutional.

Indian exporters only sell carabeef – meat from buffalo – which is considered inferior and commands lower prices and margins. Nevertheless, Indian exporters dominate the market in Malaysia for the lower end of beef, while Australians command the higher end.

“Malaysia is ripe for a middle-market meat supplier from Pakistan,” said another expert in the meat business. Malaysia has had a free-trade agreement with Pakistan since 2007.

Pakistanis in the business

Several companies from Pakistan have entered the red meat export business and even more are in the process of entering the market. The oldest and one of the most successful of these is PK Livestock, a Karachi-based abattoir which has been exporting red meat to the Middle East for over two decades.

Zenith, a Lahore-based exporter, became the first Pakistani company to sell beef to Malaysia, after the Malaysian government relaxed its regulatory requirements for Pakistani exporters.

Others, such as OMC and the Al Shaheer Corporation, have also suc-

cessfully begun exporting to the Middle East and are aggressively seeking regulatory approvals for markets further afield in Southeast Asia.

Pakistan's total meat exports may come close to \$100 million in 2011 and could surpass the \$500 million mark in about five years, according to projections by ASI Partners.

The challenges

Yet for all their successes, Pakistani meat exporters are severely handicapped compared to their Brazilian, Australian and even Indian competitors. Despite having the eighth largest herd of cattle and the third largest herd of goats in the world, **Pakistan's animal population is very scattered**, which makes procurement of the animals for the abattoir expensive.

But perhaps the single biggest challenge is regulatory: meat importing nations have strict health codes for the safety of the meat, including a requirement to be able to trace the meat of any diseased animal down to the exact location that it came from, so that the entire herd it was a part of can be slaughtered. This traceability is something that Pakistani herds lack, because the government has not yet invested in tracking and **cataloguing the country's animal population.**

To their credit, the provincial governments of Punjab and Sindh have been actively promoting the livestock sector. Given the fact that the **sector employs 17 per cent of the country's workforce, an effort to improve the productivity and marketability of the industry's products is a welcome attempt to help improve the incomes of some of the most vulnerable Pakistanis.**

2000 MW wind power generation MoU signed



23 May, 2011

Karachi —In a major breakthrough in the renewable energy, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah witnessed the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), with KOSPO (Korea Southern Power Company).

The MoU was signed by Secretary Investment Sindh Muhammad Younis Dagher and the Chief Executive Officer of KOSPO, said a statement issued here. In consequence of the MOU, 2000 MW wind power projects will be established in the Gharo- Keti Bandar Wind Corridor. KOSPO is one of the Six Public Sector Power generating company in KOREA who have earlier visited Jhimpir for initial survey for the wind corridor.

Their presence in Pakistan and development of Wind Power projects is a testimony of the investment friendly policy of the present Government.

Later, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah held a meeting with Chairman and President of Lotte Group for enhancing investment in Pakistan. Lotte Group has invested about dollar 200 million in PTA Plant at Port Qasim and after profitable operation with in the last 2 years, are looking forward to diversify their investment portfolio by acquiring Kolson Food Industries. Chairman Lotte informed that he believes that Pakistan has a promising economic future. The Chairman assured the Chief Minister Sindh that since Lotte has been in profit due to enabling business environment and intend to expand their present plant capacity by injecting another 500 million dollars.

They also showed interest in developing Kenjhar Lake Resort and other infrastructure projects.



PUNJAB FLOOD REPORT PUT UNDER WRAPS

DAWNCOM

By Intikhab Hanif
11 May, 2011

LAHORE: The report of the judicial inquiry into last year's devastating floods, titled "A Rude Awakening", has been concealed by the Punjab government reportedly to keep its "unfavourable contents" away from the public eye.

The government had ordered the judicial inquiry while boasting about its determination to punish all those found guilty of not coming up to the monumental challenge of two rare spates of flood in the Indus River during the last monsoon, causing devastation right from the mountainous region to the Arabian Sea.

The tribunal, headed by Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, had handed over its report to the provincial home secretary at a ceremony held in the Lahore High Court on April 11.

The judge unsealed the report and handed it over to the home secretary in the presence of journalists, but the latter took it with him. Since then, the report has been under wraps.

Officials in the home department say they know nothing about the report, but do admit that it might contain something which is preventing the Punjab government from making it public.

According to information gathered by Dawn, the report runs into 475 pages and is supported by 91 appendices spread over 30,594 pages.

The tribunal, comprising Mr Abdul Sattar Shakir and Mr Shafiqat Masood (Member), commenced its proceedings on Sept 14 last year.

The area under inquiry was the entire portion of the River Indus within Punjab, starting from Jinnah Barrage down to upstream Guddu Barrage and breaches that were required to be investigated, including the Left Guide Bund (LGB) at Jinnah Barrage, Right Marginal Bund (RMB) at Taunsa Barrage, Jampur Bund and Fakhar Flood Bund in district Rajanpur.

In order to hear grievances of the people affected by floods, the tribunal held hearings in affected districts and the areas under inquiry.

Public notices were published in national, local and regional newspapers, giving a detailed programme of the tribunal and its visit to affected districts with additional facility of registering grievances of the people with civil judges concerned.

District and sessions judges concerned were directed to nominate civil judges of the districts of Mianwali, Bhakkar, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur for receiving complaints on behalf of the tribunal.

The tribunal held hearings in Mianwali, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur districts. The tribunal also travelled through these districts inspecting bunds, examining departmental representatives and granting hearings to complainants.

It examined officers from Irrigation and Power Department, Federal Flood Commission, Pakistan Metrological Department, Flood Relief Commissioner, Home Department, Planning and Development Department, Planning Commission, Health Department, National Disaster Management Authority, (NDMA), 1122 Emergency Service, Environment Protection Department, Pakistan Railways, C & W Department, Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Housing Urban Development and Public Health Engineering Department and Industries Department.

All not lost for fishermen

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

By Jan Khaskheli

18 May, 2011

Karachi: With the recent murder of fishermen leader Abdul Ghani, his community-based organisation's recent tourism project suffered a harsh blow from the land mafia, but all may not be lost; as a helping hand has been extended by the fishermen community's benefactor in this regard, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Under the leadership of the late Ghani and through a partnership with UNDP programmes in the region, the Fisherfolk Development Organisation launched its eco-tourism project in 2009 in Hawkesbay's Kakapir Village. Thanks to their efforts, citizens were able to travel by boat to a watch tower and take in the scenic environment as well as enjoy a meal at a floating restaurant that was built inside a mangrove forest.

Unfortunately, many of these amenities were destroyed or burned after the gunning down of Ghani and fellow PFF leader Haji Abu Bakar, to send a chilling message to the community. The two murdered leaders stood up against the ruthless land mafia for slowly chipping away at the coast's precious mangrove forests; and were ultimately killed for it.

Bashir Ahmed, an active member of the community who was also looking after the project, told The News that they did not anticipate what would become of their efforts following the murders of Ghani and Bakar. Upon visiting the site after some time had passed, they were horrified to discover that one boat had been reduced to ashes, while two others were severely crippled. Miscreants had also destroyed the jetty that was a waiting area for tourists who wanted to take the boats out to various attractions. These boats were also hired by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to take tourists out to catch a glimpse of native dolphins.

Ahmed said that picnickers would throng to the jetty in hopes of taking a boat ride to places like the watch tower to indulge in some bird-watching.

An attempt was made to lodge a First Investigation Report (PIR) for the damage of property, but police refused to register the case against the notorious land grabbers who were believed to be responsible.



Despite these set backs, the tourism project may still be salvaged and taken forward. The National Coordinator for UNDP's GEF Small Grants Programme, Masood Lohar said that the organization will help rebuild the damage done to these tourist amenities as well as inject additional funds to the program to boost coastal tourism, The News has learnt.

Lohar added that UNDP representatives had visited the affected community and assured them that the organisation would do whatever it could to continue with the project's objectives.

The coastal areas surrounding the Kakapir village is rich in bio-diversity and natural resources, including mangrove forests, schools of fish, marine turtles and other wildlife. This strip forms a unique part of Karachi's extensive coastline, as its natural environments are unmatched anywhere else.

Tourism forms an integral part of the community's livelihoods, as 90 percent of earnings are generated through fishing and fishery-related activities, and during the four months that fall out of the fishing season .i.e. May to August; people depend on small-scale fishing in backwater channels as well as tourist activities along the beach and mangrove forests.

Due to the vested interest of Kakapir villagers in the wellbeing of the area's natural environments, the community has remained committed to its protection and has extensive experience in field of mangrove conservation.

Another benefactor of the community is the World Wildlife Fund in Pakistan.

While the Fisherfolk Development Organisation was working in the area, it had also established a community-based girls' school with the support of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Pakistan; in which 119 girls were enrolled and 100 local women were given vocational training for three months.

Continued...

Cont: All not lost for fishermen

Manager Conservation WWF Pakistan Subhash told The News that the fund, through the community-based organization, was supporting the locals in exploring sustainable sources of livelihoods apart from fishing.

He said that the organization appointed guards to monitor turtles in their natural habitat. It also set up seafood stalls in the areas to help villagers attract visitors.

The community had also planted 23, 000 mangrove samplings in the

area, which is testament to their commitment to eco-tourism, he added. Subhash further mentioned that locals were also well aware of the perils of pollution, which is why they participate in beach-leaving activities every year.

Traditionally good swimmers, arrangements were made to train the **area's youth as lifeguards so as to create a source of earning for them** in the summer season when the ocean is very rough.

The Fishefolk Development Organisation is also working to save turtles **that frequent the area's beaches; in collaboration with WWF Pakistan**

Wildlife: Armed and dangerous

DAWNCOM

By Zahrah Nasir

14 May, 2011

The belief that porcupines can actually fire their lethal quills at selected targets when attacked is, like many other animal related fables, completely untrue but this is not to say that porcupines do not use their quills in self-defence as this they most certainly do!

Porcupines (*Hystrix Indica*) are found in most parts of Pakistan and are one of the largest rodents in the country with adult males often reaching over 11 kilos in weight and specimens weighing in at a massive 18 kilos and measuring 89 centimetres in length were reportedly dug out of their burrows back in 1931!

Porcupines are nocturnal, usually coming out of their underground burrows around sunset or shortly afterwards and returning there to sleep as the sun begins to rise in the morning. Their short but very powerful legs are excellent for digging and, surprisingly enough, also for running and they can actually run faster than an ordinary man. So in the unlikely event of one deciding to chase you, it is best to climb up a tree or just get out of its way.

Best known for their splendid array of very sharp black and white quills that they ferociously slam into any animal — unwise enough to attack them — porcupines make a very distinctive rustling sound as

they walk along in the dark in search of food.

This noise is due to their quills dragging on the ground but they also rattle them on purpose if agitated or threatened in any way.

They have very strong and powerful teeth with which they are able to tear off and eat the bark of their favourite trees, such as mango and mulberry trees. Largely vegetarian, porcupines use their sharp claws to dig up and eat many kinds of bulbs and tubers and have a particular liking for potatoes, radish, onions and turnips. They also enjoy feasting on ripe tomatoes, melons, pumpkins, corn, carrots and beetroot, plus adore fresh fruit. They are a major nuisance in orchards and a real pest in sugarcane plantations.

The burrows in which they live — after industriously excavating them in a carefully selected spot — can be as long as 20 metres with two to four-side tunnels all leading to a central chamber where an entire family of porcupines, possibly eight to 10 of them, reside. They may live in the same burrow for many years, all depending on how safe they feel it is.

The female porcupine often digs herself a separate burrow in which to have her two to four young which are born with their eyes open and are immediately ready to run around although they stay with their mother for approximately five months before striking out on their own. Young are born twice a year, in spring and early autumn and the porcupine population is currently, to the dismay of farmers, very large.



'Less than 1,000 turtles left on Pakistan's shores'

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
 WITH THE International Herald Tribune

By Samia Saleem

23 May, 2011

KARACHI: It was an example of successful lawmaking. The number of turtles along Pakistan's coastline increased from a few hundreds to nearly 1,000 after the Sindh government passed a law in 1979 to protect the endangered species.

The government's intention was to protect the Green and Olive Ridley turtles, which have been usually found along the Sindh and Balochistan coastline since 1972. The Sindh Wildlife Department started working on conservation and campaigns in 1979 and according to its records, the number of turtles along the Karachi coast is slowly increasing. Good news indeed and just in time for World Turtles Day, which is observed on May 23 (today).

"The number of turtles increased after over 0.7 million turtles were released in the sea in the last three decades," said deputy conserva-

tor Fehmida Firdous. "The number of female turtles that come to the sandy shores to lay eggs has considerably increased so we know the conservation efforts are paying off," said Firdous, adding that commercial trade and sea development hinder conservation efforts. But by far, increasing coastal development is the biggest threat. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Pakistan Sindh Wetlands Centre has been trying to protect their habitat. "Our centre has been closely monitoring the Sandspit and Hawkes Bay beaches and released 2,250 hatchlings in the sea in 2001," said the centre's Dr Babar Hussain. "However, we were only successful after we worked to protect the turtles' habitat." Dr Firdous believes that 1,000 is still not a sustainable figure. "We need at least 2,000 turtles on the shore to allow any sort of trade or hunting," she said, pointing out that turtle trade is a lucrative business.

Tahir Qureshi, a marine scientist at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Pakistan, added that catching turtles in fishing nets also stunts the growth of their population. "The IUCN is now working to introduce the turtle excluder devices (TED) in Pakistan." TED is a device inserted into shrimp trawl nets to reduce the chance of accidentally catching turtles. The projects mostly apply to the green turtle specie since Olive Ridley turtles have not been seen on the beaches since 2005, said Dr Hussain. The wildlife department has already started a new project, 'Protection and Conservation of Marine Turtles at Karachi and Keti Bunder', over the last year. They are extending their search to other beaches, besides Hawkes Bay and Sandspit, for nesting turtles, especially the endangered Olive Ridley specie.

Concerted efforts to conserve natural resources

Daily Times
 Your right to know A new voice for a new Pakistan

11 May, 2011

ISLAMABAD: Conservation of biodiversity is the duty of all of us so that our future generations could enjoy the beauty and benefits of nature, said Pakistan Science Foundation's Acting Chairman and Pakistan Museum of Natural History's (PMNH) Director General Dr Syed Azhar Hasan on Tuesday.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a two-day workshop titled "Training of Trainers to Conserve Nature" organised by PMNH on its premises. Over 100 female teachers from public and private sector educational institutions of Rawalpindi and Islamabad are participating in the workshop arranged to celebrate 2011 as National Women Year and International Biodiversity Decade from May 10-11. Pakistan Science Foundation's (PSF) Member Science Dr Khalil Ahmad and Member Finance Riazul Islam were also present on this occasion. Dr Hasan said concerted efforts were needed to save life on earth to pre-



serve this planet for the good of coming generations.

He said the current rate of extinction of various species was estimated at over 1,000 times higher than the natural rate of extinction. We might be entering a new era of sixth global mass extinction of species and the first to be generated by human beings, he added. The PSF Member Science also addressed the inaugural ceremony and urged the teachers to fully utilise this opportunity for the benefit of students.

PMNH, an affiliate of Pakistan Science Foundation, Ministry of Science and Technology, has arranged the workshop as a part of its educational programmes. The workshop is aimed at praising motherhood and teachers' role as mothers who are the catalyst of change in society. The teachers will be imparted training in preservation and conservation of biodiversity that is facing serious threats in order to enhance their teaching skills and update them on biodiversity issues so that they could play their role effectively to save the biodiversity on which the future of coming generations depend.

The workshop comprises four technical sessions focusing on biodiversity significance and conservation techniques. The participants of workshop will be awarded certificates in the closing ceremony to be held today (Wednesday) at 3pm.

Approval to commercially sow GM crops on the cards

THE EXPRESS
TRIBUNE
 WITH THE *International Herald Tribune*

By Munawar Hasan

16 May, 2011

LAHORE: In a major policy shift, Pakistan is considering approval for commercial planting of genetically modified (GM) corn, which is a staple food as well as a delicacy for many people.

Unfortunately, sources say, with virtually no scientific debate, Pakistan has allowed various stages of trials in a bid to allow commercial planting of GM corn. **"No one with the slightest idea about genetically modified crops and agricultural biotechnology denies that there are potential risks associated with planting GM maize/corn, such as the unknown consequences of implanted genes spreading to native varieties coupled with its other adverse affects. This serious concern was also raised in Mexico, land of domesticated corn, after a field trial of GM maize was authorised.**

Pakistan's locally developed varieties are at stake even with permission for conducting regulatory trials, sources warned saying bio safety laws need to be implemented in letter and spirit if we want to grow GM crops, and this is where Pakistan is not doing too well. "Our regulatory bodies do not have the capacity yet to properly assess the benefits and dangers of genetically modified crops," sources said.

Maize or corn is not a major crop but is highly important as it is part of human consumption as well as animal feed. In fact, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, the white maize/corn varieties are purely for human consumption. While in countryside, Makai ki Roti or corn flour bread is a popular delicacy, which is part and parcel of the rich local culture.

So far, the companies seeking approval of GM maize have completed regulatory trials and repeat large-scale trials have not been held to get scientific data in local conditions. Without the large-scale trials and the hurry in getting GM maize/corn approved shows how effective public relation and lobbying can be in our country, sources say.

In fact, while Ministry of Environment is on the verge of giving approval to GM maize/corn, no national insect resistance management plan exists. It is just like trying to drive a car without learning how to drive it. No precautionary measure is being recommended to avoid cross pollination that could practically disfigure local maize breeds. Maize or corn can cross pollinate very easily through wind. Thus

farmers who plant GM maize will unwittingly be polluting the maize/corn fields, which do not grow the GM maize and thus literally ruining the current crop varieties. The regulatory bodies including the Ministry of Environment have no clue how to create separate zones for GM and Non-GM corn/maize, sources claimed. A minimum distance of 200-300 meters must be maintained between fields to prevent GM maize from polluting the non-GM ones. And by not ensuring crop zoning, Pakistan faces the danger of biodiversity loss. Bt corn/maize can easily contaminate non-GM crops through wind related cross pollination. In Pakistan, where crops stand side by side, hardly having one or two feet gap. There is no way to enforce distances between crops to stop GM/Bt maize or corn from polluting the non-GM corn/maize.

When genetically modified maize or cotton crops are allowed in other parts of globe, the regulators ensured that a refugia be implemented. Refugia is a portion of land in which non-GM crops are planted so that **insects' resistance to GM crops can be delayed. It is about 5-10 per cent of the total area of a farmer's crop.**

In Pakistan, nobody seems bothered about implementing this. That can mean a severe effect of natural bio-diversity. These potential problems will be created by not taking a proper look at these issues, the sources said. Unfortunately, the big multinational seed companies have so far given no clue about how Bt corn/maize contamination can be prevented in the country.

Sources added that the important questions related to this are: Why thereof a need for GM/Bt corn/maize in Pakistan? Is there a market demand, is there an export market waiting to be explored by Pakistan. Whether GM crops benefit all farmers depends on how the technology is used.

Sources were of the view that national agricultural policies need to take into account the interests and priorities of farmers to ensure that GM crops meet locally defined needs. They added that in case of food crops, regulatory trials could result in cross pollination with local varieties if precautionary measures pertaining to bio safety guidelines are not adopted.

It is time for the public and farmers to enter this debate, sources stressed. We should have the right to decide whether we need GM corn/maize in Pakistan. Remember, its something you may end up eating. So be sure what you are getting, sources warned. They added that even neighbouring India stopped trail process on GM corn mainly due to such valid concerns.

Continued...

Cont: Approval to commercially sow GM crops on the cards

The big challenge ahead for those engaged in the GM crops approval process in the country is not how to promote or stop the technology but rather to find ways to ensure that GM crops benefit the country and farmers, not just the multinational corporations who always look at Pakistan as a big Agriculture profit opportunity, sources emphasized.

Meanwhile, when contacted, Khawaja Muhammad Naeem, Federal Secretary Environment, who is also Chairman National Bio safety Committee, said keeping in view developments in the field of geneti-

cally modified crops, it is essential to be prepared for accepting such new technologies. However, he said, this process is very lengthy and involved scientists and other persons concerned. He added that initially lab trials were allowed for GM corn in Pakistan. It takes years to conduct such trials and after evaluation of its conclusion, comprising huge documents, trials of GM corn are allowed in restricted area with a view to preparing scientific report on its outcome.

To a question, he said, there is nothing wrong in conducting such trials in controlled environment. However, he added, we should not allow commercial cultivation of these crops as there is no food security concern here in our country.

1.3 billion hectares worldwide to be lost by 2050

APP

10 May, 2011

ISLAMABAD: It is expected that an area of 1.3 billion hectares worldwide will completely lose its original biodiversity level by 2050 due to current rate of extinction of species which is 1,000 times higher than the natural rate of extinction. Director General Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH) Dr. Syed Azhar Hasan disclosed this while addressing the inaugural session of two-day workshop arranged for the female teachers by PMNH, here today. He further mentioned that this unprecedented loss of biodiversity is being compounded by climate change and more than 30 % of all known species may disappear before the end of this century owing to climate change.

“This unprecedented loss of biodiversity will reduce drastically the ability of our planet to continue providing free of charge services worth trillions dollars every year”. These services include clean water, pure air, pollination, soil formation and protection, crop pest control and the provision of food, fuel, fibers and drugs, he went on to add.

DG PMNH said it is unfortunate that these services are not widely recognized, nor are they properly valued in economic or

even social terms. It is for this reason that the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 as the international year of biodiversity and this decade as international decade of biodiversity. While addressing the participants, member Finance Pakistan Science Foundation Riaz-ul-Islam said **“We must all accept joint responsibility as concerted effort of all of us are needed to save life on earth. We can only preserve the planet for the good of our children if we think beyond our own lifetime”**. It is a question of safeguarding the essential foundations of life, he maintained. It is pertinent to mention here that PMNH is engaged in natural history research and it is imparting informal education on biodiversity and natural resources of Pakistan through different means.

This two-day workshop titled **“Training of teachers to conserve nature”** is part of the museum’s educational programmes to celebrate 2011 as national year of women and international biodiversity decade. More than 70 female teachers from public and private sector educational institutions of Rawalpindi and Islamabad participated in this workshop, which is aimed at praising motherhood and teachers’s role as mothers who are the catalyst of change in any society. It is hoped that the workshop will update the teachers on biodiversity issues and conservation techniques so that they could play their role effectively to save the biodiversity on which the future of coming generations depend.

Water storage capacity to be raised by 20MAF

DAWNCOM

By Khaleeq Kiani

19 May, 2011

ISLAMABAD: With Pakistan increasingly becoming water deficient, Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has drawn up plans for creating capacity to store an additional 20 million acre feet (MAF) of water on ‘war footing’ to keep the economy floating.

Continued...

Cont: Water storage capacity to be raised by 20MAF

The Irsa finalised recommendations in this regard with input from all its members after a former chairman of the authority, Fatehullah Khan Gandapur, set off alarm bells by declaring that Indus Water Treaty (IWT) of 1960 was almost dead because of excessive losses in storage capacity.

Mr Gandapur wrote letters to the president and prime minister in which he said: **“The IWT ceases to function as Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs have lost 6.6MAF of replacement storage due to silting.”**

He criticised the team of bureaucrats currently engaged in negotiating the country’s water rights with India and said the officials were simply incapable of handling **“an issue of national survival”**.

“Blatant violations of the treaty by India by building dozens of low and high dams on all the six rivers and tributaries has exceeded the allowable storage limit of 4.19MAF fixed in the treaty,” he said. So far, the dams have created 10MAF of dead storage and 25-30MAF of live storage, depriving Pakistan of its water rights for Rabi and Kharif crops.

More high dams are under construction.

Sources told Dawn that on the directives of the president and prime minister, the government’s adviser on water and the Irsa members had a marathon briefing session with the former Irsa chairman early this week and finalised recommendations for creation of additional storage capacity. The recommendations would be submitted to the prime minister for approval.

The report on the recommendations says the situation will become **worse in the next couple of years. That’s why it is imperative that an additional capacity of 20MAF be created on war footing to protect the agricultural economy.**

The Irsa also warned the government about the proposed construction of around a dozen dams by Afghanistan on Kabul river and suggested that talks be initiated immediately with the Afghans for finalising



ing an agreement to protect Pakistan’s water rights.

The Irsa seconded Mr Gandapur’s proposal for construction of the 37MAF Katzarah Dam near Skardu because it was non-controversial and could enhance the expected life of the downstream dams and barrages, including Tarbela and Diamer-Bhasha.

The authority was also in agreement with Mr Gandapur’s suggestion that the multipurpose 8.5MAF Guroh Dop dam on river Panjkora near Chitral should be built for storing every year about 7-8MAF of water that ultimately falls into Kabul river.

This would stop water from Panjkora from going into Afghan territory. It said a water treaty with Afghanistan was important because Panjkora or Chitral river contributed more than 50 per cent of the Kabul flows.

Mr Gandapur also reminded the government of a report prepared recently by US Senator John Kerry cautioning about a water war in South Asia, saying India had 33 projects at various stages of completion on the rivers that affected the region. He warned that as a consequence of the continued violations of the IWT by India Chenab and Jhelum rivers would turn ‘seasonal’ and Pakistan would not be able to grow Rabi crop and early Kharif crop.

He alleged that the Pakistani authorities had ignored the construction of Uri-II project by India in occupied Kashmir which was an essential part of Kishenganga project. **“Pakistani negligence will help India win the controversial Kishenganga case,”** he said.



Threatened rock carvings of Pakistan

DAWNCOM

By Suhail Yusuf
18 May, 2011

Pakistan is going to lose one of the most precious rock art carvings due to construction of the Diamer-Basha Dam. The proposed site of the dam hosts some 30,000 ancient art carvings and inscriptions which may vanish forever due to the construction of this reservoir.

The northern area of Pakistan is a mountainous region which lies between the western Himalayas, the Korakoram in the east and the Hindukush in the west. Here, the junction of the ancient routes made the upper Indus a cradle and crossroads of different civilizations.

The junction of the ancient routes made the upper Indus a cradle and crossroads of different civilizations.

Travelers, invaders, merchants, pilgrims and artisans from different ages and cultures used the legendary silk route and its branches to enter in the region. Many of them left their cultural and religious signs on the rocks, boulders and cliffs.

The sun-tanned smooth rocks attracted more visitors and settlers to carve their own signs, symbols, inscriptions and artworks on the same locations. And hence, gradually a rock art archive accumulated in the area and eventually became a wonderland of some 50,000 rock carvings and 5,000 inscriptions from different civilizations ranging from the eighth millennium BC to the coming of Islam (since the 16th century AD) in the region.

The diversity of the rock carvings in the region turned the area into one of the most important rendezvous of petroglyphs in the world.

The history of discoveries

In 1884, a Hungarian traveler, Karl Eugen discovered a Buddhist carving in present Baltistan. In 1907, a veteran explorer, Ghulam Muhammad unveiled another Buddhist petroglyph from the Diamer district.

When the 750 km long, Karakorum Highway (the modern Silk Road) inaugurated in 1978, thousands of more engravings came to view which inspires a German scholar, Karl Jettmar to further explore the



rock art wealth.

In 1980, Karl Jettmar and Pakistan's father of archaeology, Ahmed Hassan Dani launched a Pak-German study group to systematically investigate the ancient rock art in the region.

This area is also famous for the amazing story of mysterious gold-digging ants. Greek historian, Herodotus (in fifth century BC) wrote (Historia III, 102-105) about the land of Dardai, where gold-digging ants – “bigger than fox, though not so big as a dog were used to collect gold particles.” Another research project entitled “Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway” was initiated in 1983. The Heidelberg Academy of Humanities and Sciences and the Department of Archaeology of Gilgit were responsible for the study group. Professor Harald Hauptmann has been the head of the project since 1989 as a successor of Jettmar.





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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