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Pakistan Wildlife News

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Marghazar Zoo without lion and leopard

ISLAMABAD - A number of exotic animals such as lion, leopard and crocodile etc are missing in Marghazar Zoo. A large number of visitors visited Marghazar Zoo during the Eid holidays were disappointed to see that the facility lacked many wild animals.

Many people who visited the zoo at national capital to celebrate Eid with their children were found complaining against the administration about the recreational facility.



Visitors decry lack of exotic animals, apathy of Capital Development Authority

Talking to Pakistan Today, visitors said the administration had kept birds in the enclosures made for leopard and crocodile and a brown bear in the enclosure, which was fixed for lion. Lack of animals, which are considered feature attraction at any zoo, compelled families with children to turn to kiosks where the little ones enjoyed swings and other sports.

People criticized the development authority and demanded that forest department should pay attention to the miserable conditions of animals and develop the zoo on modern lines. It may be mentioned that the Capital Development Authority has illegally allowed the construction of a joy land within the zoo

premises. They said they had come to see animals such as lion and leopard but the zoo lacked those species.

A reliable CDA source told Pakistan Today that the authority had started the up-gradation of zoo was started in 2008 and planned to complete it by 2011 but the project is still in pending because of the lack of interest of high authorities. He said the animals were also suffering due to the delay in completion of the work. During the past few years a num-

ber of animals and birds died due to poor arrangements, he said. CDA had allocated Rs 50 million for Marghazar Zoo up-gradation project in the financial year 2011-2012 and that the total cost of the project was Rs 1407.8 million. The zoo had only one lion and **one leopard but they too died,** he added. He said the zoo lacked proper enclosures for big cats and the cabins, cages and huts built for animals were not up to prescribed standards.

He said according to a master plan for Marghazar Zoo approved in 2007, the facility was **expanded from 25 acres to 80 acres.** "It was also decided then that around 200 species of various animals would be housed in the zoo and that the animal would be provided **habitat where they could be comfortable,**" he said, adding that the project was nowhere near completion.

(Published in Pakistan Today on 3 September 2011)

Zoo visitors set new record

LAHORE – A record number of 172,000 visitors visited the Lahore Zoo during the three Eid days, breaking the five-year old record, and the Zoo administration said they generated over Rs2.1 million in revenue by selling tickets during the festival.

A large number of visitors enjoyed three Eid holidays in zoo with excellent arrangements made by Zoo authority. Visitors, including women and children, were witnessed enjoying their



visit of different sections of the Zoo. They included the wild exotic animal and bird cages. Peaceful atmosphere under the cover of foolproof security increase the excitement of children and their elders.

About 70 children, however, received minor injuries during their visits by felling and slipping from slides and while trying to jump over the barriers outside of the animal cages.

Praising his team, Zoo Director Zahid Iqbal told that they had ensured special security arrangements on the Eid days so that the visitors could enjoy their recreational activities during their visit of the Zoo with peace of mind. He said that special security cameras are installed for the continuous monitoring of suspicious persons as well as the activities of the naughty children and youngsters in particular so that they could not cross the security barriers and fences for teasing animals particularly near the cages of such dangerous animals like

lions, bears, leopards and others.

He said that the administration left no stone unturned for ensuring provision of all the essential facilities for the people, visiting the Zoo such as water coolers, security and parking facility as well. He said that due to the efficient performance of the staffers, not a single unpleasant incident occurred during three days of Eid within the premises of Zoo. Traffic flow was also kept smooth at outside of the both entry/exit gates, he added.

He further informed that the Zoo administration purchased two hundred new birds including 100 beautiful peacocks and 100 birds belonging to different species for the attraction of the visitors especially for the bird lovers. He said that the Zoo administration also is planning to buy more precious bird species from different countries and the development in this regard is underway for attracting people, generating more revenue and attracting the citizens.

“We were expecting more visitors on this Eid as compared to the previous festivals. That was why we increased the number of ticket booths at both the entry gates of the Zoo, with maximum parking facility

to the visitors,” Zahid Iqbal further said. He said the Zoo administration had generated enough revenue on this Eid. “Now we are expecting still more revenue on the days leading up to next Sunday.”

Iqbal said they had arranged wildlife guides who were deployed at various important points inside the Zoo, especially near the tiger and bear cages to provide necessary information to visitors about the beasts and birds, their natural habitats and habits, average lifespan, food, etc.

The cages of lion, tigers and monkeys remained the centre of attention for all visitors. Children showed their keen interest for riding on Suzi the elephant.

(Published in The Nation on September 03, 2011 By: Khalid Malik)

Woolly rhinos and many other large, shaggy prehistori

Woolly rhinos and many other large, shaggy prehistoric animals first evolved their cold tolerance in Tibet, which served as the evolutionary cradle for Ice Age mega plant-eaters, according to a new paper.

Wang and his colleagues identified Tibet as the mega herbivore cradle after discovering a new woolly rhino, *Coelodonta thibetana*, dating to 3.7 million years ago. As its name suggests, this animal was about as furry as a beast can be, and it had a head that functioned like a snow shovel.

"The extinct Tibetan woolly rhino had developed special adaptations for sweeping snow using its flattened, forward-



leaning horn to reveal vegetation, a useful behavior for survival in the harsh Tibetan climate," Wang explained.

He and his team suspect that the rhino evolved from *Stephanorhinus*, a genus of Eurasian-wide distribution. *C. thibetana* then lived during the Pliocene (5.3 to 2.6 million years ago) at a time, Wang said, "when global climate was much warmer and the northern continents were free of the massive ice sheets seen in the Ice Age later. The Tibetan rhino likely was thus able to accustom itself to cold conditions in high elevations and become pre-adapted for the future Ice Age climate."

Tibet also gave rise to other cold-adapted animals. While woolly mammoths and woolly rhinos bit the proverbial dust some time ago, other species with Tibetan ancestry survived to modern times.

The Tibetan wild yak, for example, is a sister species to European and North American bison. During the Pleistocene, the Tibetan wild ass expanded its population to northern Pakistan and possibly even to Alaska. Snow leopards and blue sheep are two other examples.

"Like the woolly rhino, blue sheep descended down from high Tibet during the Ice Age, presumably for the same reason as the rhinos, but somehow the blue sheep survived to the present day in the high plateau," Wang said.

The Tibetan antelope is now confined to the highest elevations of Tibet and adapted "by evolving one of the finest under furs," often used by local people to weave highly prized shawls.

The Tibetan antelope and virtually all other modern, cold-hardy species are now under threat due to climate change and over-hunting. According to Wang, "The polar bear is a poster child example" of such animals that are presently at risk.

The study helps explain why so many different species roamed North America, Europe and Asia during the last Ice Age beginning about 2.8 million years ago. They had previously adapted

to cold environments in the western Himalayas before later expanding to other regions.

Several were big with long hair.

"There is a general principle, called Bergmann's Rule, that suggests animals tend to increase their body size in colder environments," said Xiaoming Wang, co-author of the study which appeared in this week's *Science*. "Large-bodied animals have relatively smaller surface areas to lose heat and thus conserve heat better -- it's a matter of physics."

Animal experts largely agree that Tibet was indeed the birthplace for many species that later survived through the Ice Age and beyond.

(By JENNIFER VIEGAS, Discovery News Sept. 4, 2011)

Armageddon 2012: Will the world succumb to climate

I still remember clearly how me and my friends were laughing out loud at every scene of the movie 2012, back in 2010, when we sat together to watch it. We never thought that this natural chaos shown in that movie would ever happen to us until July of last year.

The print, electronic and social media began to anxiously shriek about the great floods in Pakistan in which around 1,985 people lost their lives, nearly 40 million people affected and a loss of \$43 billion had to be faced by the already sick economy. The floods were something that touched each and every one



Natural disasters caused \$109 billion in economic damage last year.

of us, as watching live pictures of our fellow country men stuck in floods from Khyber to Thatta was heart-breaking.

These images made me surprised, is it the beginning of the end? However, being one of those few hopeful individuals left in Pakistan, I get rid of this thought and took it as an absurd notion.

The beginning of the winter of last year however, had something else in store for me. My friend in London, who was planning to come to Pakistan, was stuck at the airport for days when no plane could take off because the snowfall in Europe had broken all previous records. Several train services had been delayed or cancelled across Europe leaving many travelers stranded. UK, France and Germany were amongst the

worst-hit countries.

What followed this were floods in three continents and drought in Africa. Climate change triggered the monsoon rains that heavy floods were recorded in Australia's Queensland state. The Queensland floods have killed 16 people, since the downpour started last month. They are inundating towns, crippling coal mines, and are swamping the state's main city of Brisbane.

Moving to Latin America, avalanches of mud and debris, triggered by flash flooding in Rio de Janeiro, buried entire towns and smashed roads and bridges in the region. The death toll in Brazil's worst landslides in decades is likely to hit 1,000 as authorities warned that hundreds were still missing. The waves of mud hit with such force that the geography of the region has been changed profoundly.

Coming back to Asia, soon after the flooding in Pakistan, Sri Lanka witnessed flooding which affected 1.25 million people. Over in Africa, severe drought caused increasing hunger affecting 10 million people in four countries. In Niger, the worst-affected country, 7.1 million are hungry, with nearly half considered highly food insecure because of the loss of livestock and crops coupled with a surge in prices.

That was it! I was compelled to research this surge in natural calamities, as I had begun to realize that it's time we mend our way, or else, our future prospects would seem dim, as best. My findings were shattering. The UN had declared the year 2010 to be one of the deadliest years for natural disasters in the past two decades. 373 disasters had been recorded last year, of which 22 were in China, 16 were in India, and 14 were in the Philippines. Moreover, natural disasters caused \$109 billion in economic damage last year, three times more than in 2009, with Chile and China bearing most of the cost.

I discovered that the emissions of carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas, scaled new peaks in 2009, and 2010 was on course for becoming one of the three warmest years on record. Moreover, the decade 2001-2010 was stated to be the hottest ever.

However, something which amazed me was what Christiana Figueres's (head of the U.N. climate secretariat) statement. He claimed that climate havoc will also lead to wars among

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countries, meaning that one could be at risk of danger from both, natural disasters and man-made calamities.

Even after the biggest disaster of 2011 i.e. the Japanese earthquake and tsunami which killed more than 12,000 and led to the worst nuclear crisis, where do we stand? What have we **done so far? The Kyoto Protocol's commitments run out at the end of 2012**, and Japan has bluntly refused calls to extend it tentatively. The treaty only requires wealthy nations to cut emissions, but the United States rejected it in 2001.

The much talked about Cancun conference produced nothing concrete, except to meet in Durban, South Africa in 2012. It was marred by protests by green peace, the failure of the Copenhagen conference, and internal rifts between developed and developing countries. There were no carbon dioxide emissions reduction targets to reach. However, each country could pledge its own target, and the UN could check to see if they are achieved.

The influx of 15,000 people attending the UN conference left a massive carbon footprint. The Mexican government puts the figure at 25,000 tonnes based on emissions caused by flying people across the world, busing them between conference venues, feeding them and providing electric power. This carbon footprint was equivalent to the output, over two weeks, from a small African nation of the type the UN wants to save.

It is in Durban, South Africa, where the rich and the poor have decided to meet again to decide your and my future. However, whatever the results are, for the sake of humanity and planet earth, I have already gone green. Those of you who want planet earth to survive beyond 2012, and prove the makers of the movie 2012 wrong, please change the way you live. Cut your carbon footprint, recycle as much as possible, reduce your use of water and electricity, reuse paper and plastic, use less heat and air conditioning, buy energy-efficient products, plant trees, encourage others to conserve, and do whatever you can to adopt a green life style.

(Published in Express Tribune "BLOGS" on September 5, 2011)

The environmental degradation is 'real'!

A society at war with itself is demolishing the very foundations that maintain it - The launching and accomplishment of all economic activity heavily imposes upon and the easy availability of basic resources such as suitable water and land. While the developing world's problems are summed up in the 'lack of skill and capital' argument, little attention is paid to the supporting and deteriorating rungs of nature which may limit economic activity in this region even if ideal standards of skill and capital are attained.

Thus, although environmental economics is a comparatively unexplored discipline in case of Pakistan, it may evolve be one of the primary deterrents of labor productivity after all other economy and skill related factors are taken into account. What remains unidentified is the sustainable level of water, air and land degradation which nature can cure on its own. The absence of an environmental lobby is comprehensible given that so many headline infrastructure issues, physical as well as judicial, are not attended to. But the facts stand; 40 per cent of reported deaths and 25-30 per cent of hospital admissions ascribe to a single source, water-borne disease.

Exploring water usage, pollution and its determinants in detail, about 69 per cent of the water is consumed by the agriculture sector, 23 per cent by industry and the remaining eight per cent is used for domestic purposes. In Punjab specifically, ground water extraction has resulted in increased water logging and salinity, adversely affecting arable land and subsequent yields. As a result, in Pakistan overall, about 11 million hectares of arable land, out of 23 million, is suffering from problems of water logging and about three million from salinity.

Further, industrial usage of water also involves disposal of untreated waste into rivers and canals the primary victim of which is River Ravi. Moreover, untreated water seeping in to the ground has resulted in contamination of ground water of more than 700 feet in Lahore, deeming it unfit for human consumption. Excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture has a similar impact.

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Water and land degradation is also linked on other levels. The devastating floods of 2010, very-oft attributed to an increase in global warming, resulted in a manifold increase in deforestation, which as of a decade ago stood three times higher than the rest of South Asia, resulting in the country losing more than three per cent of its forest cover every year.

The future does not bode well for 'environment' either. The ongoing energy crisis and shortage of gas will make the government revert to increased usage of thermal power while diverting more resources to the exploitation of coal. This will imply an increase in sulphuric and carbon emissions detrimental to all forms of life. Currently, brick kilns are the more significant consumers of coal, where the latter has registered about 19 per cent increase over the last decade. Delving further in to the aspect of air pollution puts the auto industry in the limelight. According to the economic survey, emissions from motorcycles and rickshaws are extremely detrimental for lung and respiratory health. To 'complement' this fact are statistics that enlist a 143 per cent increase in the number of motorcycles and a 24 per cent increase in rickshaws over the last decade. It thus stands out as a depressing fact that while the society is at large consciously warring with each other, it is also destroying the very foundations that sustain it. A sword for the brother and another for himself...one would now figure why the suicide bomber considers himself to be a true representative.

(Published in Pakistan Today By: Sakina Husain September 5th, 2011)

CDA fails to ban BTS installation on buildings

ISLAMABAD - The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has failed to enforce a complete ban on the installation of Based Transceiver Stations (BTS) on building rooftops in the federal capital and to move the already installed equipments. **"The civic body had imposed a ban on the installation of BTSs on the rooftops of buildings after the earthquake in 2005, but various cellular companies, violating the CDA directives, had installed 143 BTSs over rooftops across the city, said an official CDA source while talking to Pakistan Today. He said that the high ups of the CDA had also decided that the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) would not only impose the ban on the installation of BTS on rooftops but also review the old policy. Under the old policy, installation of BTSs was allowed everywhere in the city, he said. The official said that according to the old policy the CDA charged Rs 50,000 to cellular companies for BTS installation on rooftops and Rs 15,000 on green belts. So far only 80 BTSs are installed legally in the city, he said. The insider said according to the reviewed policy the CDA would charge all cellular companies violating the ban. The CDA would also provide land to all the companies who installed BTSs illegally and these companies would shift their equipment to the ground within three months, he said. The source also said the DMA at CDA had reconsidered the old policy, but the management of these cellular companies had continued breaking rules and regulations with the connivance of the CDA high-ups. "The related directorate has informed the CDA board about this but they have so far not allowed the DMA to take effective action against the companies", he said. The official said the Ministry of Environment had also raised the issue of the health hazard posed by BTSs and requested the concerned authorities to explore the facts hidden within the matter. The investigation conducted by the authorities revealed that the booster and antennas erected by the telecommunication companies emit radio frequency fields, which are non-ionizing and a health hazard, he said. The official said according to the rules and regulation the companies are bound to take environmental approval from the relevant department.**

(Published in Pakistan Today by Fazal Sher 5 Sep 2011)

Profiling Islamabad: Taking the first step towards environmental bliss

The city authorities are awakening to the issue of environmental degradation in the capital. Haphazard growth, **industrial activity and “concrete replacing the green cover”** have for long threatened the beauty and sustainability of the city and taking a step in the right direction the Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) are now looking to address the problem.

The agency is all set to prepare an environmental profile of **Islamabad to gauge and improve the city’s environment.**

The profiling will be conducted via thermal imaging and a **database will be compiled of the city’s hot spots, water**



sources, green cover and all pollution sources affecting quality of air and water in the city. The survey will also measure indoor air quality of schools, offices, hospitals and public places to improve the environment of the capital.

Pak-EPA Director General Asif Shuja Khan said that developing an Environmental Profile of Islamabad (EPI) is the first step **towards improving the city’s environment.** “Our efforts will be to completely monitor Islamabad and take cognisance of **violators of environmental law,”** said Khan. He added that the data (primary and secondary) collected for the EPI will also be

used in formulating an Environmental Action Plan 2020 with clear targets and implementation mechanisms.

Pak-EPA’s Director Legal Fahim Riaz Khan said that the agency aims to launch different environmental initiatives in the city in consultation and participation of citizens, industrialists and administration to promote sustainable development so as to **keep Islamabad’s air, water and soil clean.** He said that the environmental profile will be an excellent source of information for taking appropriate actions for pollution control and retarding environmental degradation.

At present, around 800 industrial units are operating in the capital city in three different localities. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) had earlier planned to shift the industrial units to sector I-17, near Motorway Chowk, but the plan was later dropped. A group of industrialists told *The Express Tribune* that they were ready to shift the industries

outside the city “but CDA was not keen on implementing the plan”.

However, in an interview with *The Express Tribune*, Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Imtiaz Inayat Elahi vowed to make Islamabad one of the most beautiful capital cities of the world. He said that he would leave **“no stone unturned” in beautifying the city and improving its environment.** “We have a beautiful capital gifted with rich heritage and great location that are too appealing to be ignored.” He said he does not plan to launch any new mega project in the city and existing infrastructure will be improved to facilitate masses. **“Over expenditure on gigantic projects has drained the authority,”** he said.

Highlighting the future plannings of CDA, he said that the authority will replace streetlights

across the city with light emitting diode (LED) system to ensure energy conservation. He said that the authority is also working on a proposal to implement a scientific waste disposal system across the city. CDA is working towards sustainable urban development, conservation of natural resources and **restoration of the city’s natural ecosystems, while minimizing** the use of non-renewable resources, he added.

(Published in The Express Tribune, September 6th, 2011)

Vulture-killing drug still for sale, finds survey

- Drug ban helps vulture recovery
- Poisoning drives vulture decline

India vulture births are hailed

A toxic drug that threatens India's critically endangered vultures is still widely available, a survey has found in India by



RSPB.

Diclofenac was banned for use by vets and farmers in 2006 because of its effect on vultures that feed on livestock carcasses but it is reported after survey that it is available in 36% of the pharmacies in some form.

Despite advances in captive breeding, conservationists warn the birds' future in the wild cannot be guaranteed.

Three species have suffered a lot since 1990s which are: the Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*), slender-billed vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*) and white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*). These species are and facing danger of complete extinction.

Numbers of the latter species, also known as oriental white-backed vultures, are estimated to have dropped by 99.9% in the past decade.

Populations of Indian and slender-billed vultures have declined by 97% over the same period.

The ban is still quite easy to avoid because human formulations **are still freely for sale**" said by **Dr Richard Cuthbert RSPB.**

In 2004 scientists identified diclofenac-poisoning as the primary cause of the declines.

The vultures ingested the drug when feeding on the carcasses of livestock that had been treated shortly before their death.

For religious reasons (as they considered them holy), dying cattle are not killed to relieve their suffering in India so anti-inflammatory drugs are commonly used to reduce pain and swelling in injured and diseased animals.

Diclofenac was banned in India, Nepal and Pakistan in 2006 with further restrictions on its manufacture introduced in India in 2008.

But a survey published in the journal *Oryx* has confirmed conservationists' concerns that pharmacies are flouting the ban.

Investigating more than 250 veterinary and general pharmacies, researchers found that just over a third still sold the anti-inflammatory drug in some form.

Vultures' opportunistic diets make them vulnerable to poisoning

Nine brands of different types were discovered which are manufactured illegally- tablets for veterinary use.

Lead author and principal conservation scientist at the RSPB Dr Richard Cuthbert also identified that some pharmacies were avoiding the ban with injectable drugs manufactured for human use.

"The ban is still quite easy to avoid because human formu-



lations are still freely for sale in large vials which are convenient for use on large animals like cattle and clearly not suitable for human use," he said.

Co-author of the study Dr Vibhu Prakash, of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), called for "firm action at government level" to enforce the law relating to the manufacture and sale of the drug.

Continue.....

Until diclofenac stops being produced and sold for veterinary use **we cannot guarantee these birds have any future in the wild”**

Chris Bowden Head of vulture programme, RSPB

Researchers found the vulture-safe alternative drug meloxicam available in 70% of pharmacies when they tried to discover some



Indian vulture chicks give some hope

hopeful measures of life saving for vultures.

In findings published earlier this year, scientists suggested the ban and availability of non-toxic substitutes had improved the situation for vultures.

They identified that 40% fewer cattle carcasses were 'contaminated' with diclofenac between 2006-2008.

Conservationists working to safeguard the future of the species have also made positive reports from captive breeding programmes.

The number of chicks fledging at the BNHS centers has doubled this year to a total of 18.

Working with the support of the RSPB and the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (Save) consortium, 271 vultures have now housed in three breeding centers across India.

(Published in BBC Nature News By Ella Davies Reporter on 6 September 2011)

A department in ruin, a history forgotten

Punjab's department of archaeology, recently devolved from the federation under the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, has had no operational legislation since April 8, 2011. As a result, no law to arrest any person caught scribbling, drawing or causing harm to a monument of historical importance exists.

Similar is the case with the environment protection department. Field officers and inspectors issuing notices, sealing and fining owners of pollution-causing units, have reverted to Punjab Local Government Ordinance (PLGO) of 2001.

The Antiquities Act 1975 and the Environment Pakistan Protection Act 1997 are both redundant. Officers of both departments have drafted legislation to replace the federal laws. These drafts lie with the Punjab Assembly and await approval.

“Lack of legislation has made the department spineless. We illegally issue notice to violators, as there is no choice,” a senior officer in the archaeology department, said in reference to a case of a house being built next to Iqbal Museum, the poet's former residence in Lahore. An environment protection department field inspector said although the PLGO gives more authority to officers of below Grade 16 to issue notices without referral to their bosses, the effort goes in vain when the



A vision of Buddha's Paradise, Mohammed Nagri, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

case is finally handed over to the tribunal. Despite pressure, the Punjab Assembly has had not reviewed and passed the drafts as acts.

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During Ramazan, the government officials strictly abide by 1pm time for closing offices. By ignoring the approval of legislations, already late by months, the parliamentarians are unashamedly feeding the department officials an excuse to not work.

These officials occupy substantial space, expend on public funds for air-conditioned offices and leave work 3pm sharp despite of having worked or not. And it has not been so for a week or two, but for months now.

Do they deserve to sit idle over just an excuse of having no law to work by?

Our lazy parliamentarians can answer the question, and time has well passed before they all should publicly be held accountable, not only for inefficiency, but also for seeing to their vested interests over the public.

(Published in Express Tribune Blogs by Sonia Malik on September 6, 2011)

Key steps proposed to boost Pak-Iran bilateral trade

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan embassy in Iran has planned some effective measures to promote bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran including resolution of banking problems, placing ban on export of live animals, availing buyers credit risk coverage facility offered by Iran, according to a set of proposals sent by Commercial Section of Pakistan Embassy Iran for 18th Joint Economic Commission meeting started here on Wednesday.

Resolution of banking problems: In modern era, international trade cannot progress without the support of banking system. Therefore, State Bank of Pakistan has to devise a strategy wherein we can safeguard our interests without violating any UN or US law / sanctions. In this regard, it may be added that India, which is also member of Asian Clearing Union (ACU), has allowed its banking sector to do business with Iranian banks in Euro via ACU system and thus Indian exporters of rice, tea & other products have full support of their government / central bank, when they export their products to Iran. Unless SBP extends full support to all exporters across the board for doing business with Iranian importers, the increase in exports to Iran will be a difficult task.

Banking relations: Both sides emphasized the important role of credit lines in the advancement of trade and commerce and agreed on the settlement of transactions between the two countries in line with international banking rules and practices.

Asian Clearing Union Framework: Both countries agreed to promote their business communities and financial institutions to develop the trade through commercial banks of the two countries within Asian Clearing Union framework.

Buyers credit risk coverage: Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) expressed its readiness to cover the nonpayment risk of short and medium term credits to be granted to Pakistani buyers against irrevocable L/Cs opened or bank guarantees issued **by EGFI's acceptable banks and long-term** credits against a sovereign guarantee. Moreover, non-payment risk of the credits to be granted to Pakistani firms on open account basis will be coverable after the buyers have been assessed as credit worthy.

Ban on export/smuggling of live animals: A large number of live animals are smuggled to Iran via Baluchistan. Iranian businessmen have established two slaughter houses at Zabol & Sarbaz cities near Pak-Iran border for slaughtering / processing these animals. Moreover, by exporting / smuggling live animals, Pakistan loses the opportunity of value addition. TDAP may take up the issue with concerned authorities in the Baluchistan and apprise them of the opportunities if meat is exported to Iran. Furthermore, the option of establishing a slaughter house at Quetta or near the border can also be explored, which will not only provide jobs to the local community but the country will also get additional foreign exchange by exporting value-added projects.

Discouragement of smuggling: Pakistan and Iran need to make efforts to divert the informal trade to legal channels by keeping strict check on smuggling and revision of the trade policies and reduction of tariff and non - tariff barriers. Unless the tariff in both countries is brought at par with the cost of smuggling, the informal trade will continue to flourish.

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Export of textile products: The import duty on various textile items ranges from 70-100% ad.valorem, thus making the legal imports very expensive. Therefore, most of the textile products available in the market are brought through informal routes. Main sources are Turkey and Dubai. Textile products are also smuggled from Pakistan to Iran via Turbat & Panjgur border areas. Therefore great demand for quality products in Iran and therefore, many brands from Turkey, Spain & China are popular in the Iranian Market. Our leading producers of bed sheets / bedspreads such as Chen One & Gul Ahmad also have bright chances of success if they can enter Iranian market. Following steps can be taken in this regard:

Export via Free Economic Zones (FEZ): Iran have many FEZ where goods can be imported without paying the regular duty / taxes. Of these, Kish, Qeshm & Chababhar—all located along Persian Gulf are very famous. A large number of democratic tourists visit these places and bring imported goods on their return. For example, there are about 20-25 large shopping malls in Kish, where the number of shops ranges from about 50-200 and all of them sell the imported stuff at about 30%-50% lower prices as compared to Tehran. Our leading exporters can appoint dealers or open their own outlets. Later on, they can expand their business to Tehran once their brands are established. It may be added most of the leading brands from Europe and Far-east have their outlets at Kish.

Establishment of international border crossing point at Reemdan-Gabd: Iranian side suggested that the border market of Reemdan / Gabd (Mile 250) should be upgraded to international border crossing point. Pakistani side requested for a formal request in this regard for consideration in consultation with other stakeholders.

Pakistan economy can be boost by trade promotion with its neighboring countries like Iran and China. Government should take serious steps in this regard for trade promotion.

(Published in Daily Times By Sajid Chaudhry on 8 Sep 2011)

Securing Islamabad's past: In fight with greed, heritage wins first round

The ancient caves of Shah Allah Ditta in the suburbs of Islamabad are among the most precious archaeological heritage of the capital that give a past to a city just more than a half century old. However, the site faced threats from land developers had the Capital Development Authority not woken to the danger in time. The site of the caves had been leased for commercial development but fortunately the civic authorities were alerted in time by the citizens group, media and Evacuee Trust Property Board to cancel the lease agreement for the preservation of the heritage site.

Dr Suleman Sheikh, Director General Environment Wing of CDA said that after the decentralization of culture ministry and its affiliate Federal Archeological Department to the provinces under the 18th Constitutional Amendment it was the civic agency's desire to ensure the preservation of these archeological sites.

"The response of Evacuee Trust was positive and the modalities of the plan to hand over the site to CDA will be finalized on Thursday, he added.

Located at the gateway to Gandhara civilization and the foothills of the might Himalayas, the capital is home to several archaeological sites, which not only provide a peek into the past but are a treasure for the researchers to uncover facts about this region. The caves in the suburbs of Islamabad are one such place and according to recent studies there might be more of such sites in the area.

Earlier, members of the Capital Citizens Committee had raised alarm about the danger the site has been facing and informed CDA Chairperson Imtiaz Inayat Elahi after noticing suspicious activities near the heritage site. They noticed that a restaurant was being planned on the hill above the 2,400-year-old caves and the cluster of Banyan trees at their entrance.

The committee warned the Department of Archaeology and Museums to protect the caves from private land developers in the area.

"It will be a crime if any harm comes to them," said Fauzia Minalah, a writer, painter, who campaigns for the preservation of heritage sites and also authored a book documenting these sites

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Help from the court of law

On the other hand help from the court of law was also **demanding to stall “destruction of such sites”**. The Lahore High Court Rawalpindi Bench on December 15, 2010 put on halt the construction of a picnic spot near a heritage site in the Margalla Hills on the outskirts of the city.

Justice Ijaz Ahmed stayed the construction activities. A petitioner, Absarul Haq Satti, in his petition filed with the court had argued that the caves were archaeological sites and national assets. The government, he maintained, had decided to protect the caves. But CDA approved a plan to build restaurants and a picnic spot at the heritage site, the petition said.

“The concerns shown by citizens were correct and CDA wants to address such problems on priority basis,” Dr Sheikh said, adding, “We want to develop a park near the caves to facilitate visitors.”

Stakeholders unite for preservation

The city authorities, according to him, are also working to preserve the old trees near Margalla National Park area.

Moreover, Deputy DG Environment of CDA Malik Aulya Khan said that it was decided at a meeting on Wednesday that for the preservation of the caves and other such sites, all stakeholders would remain in close contact with each other in future.

The meeting was attended by the officials of the CDA, Evacuee Trust Property Board, Archaeological Department and Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, Quaid-i-Azam University.

“There are many such sites in the territory of the capital city that needs attention,” said Khan. A research of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization is also underway to find ways to explore more sites. The civic agency is coordinating with the institute for identifying and conserving such places, he informed.

Researchers at the Archaeology Department recently have discovered two more ancient sites in the vicinity of Shah Allah Ditta caves, he said. As per their estimation, Dr Sheikh said, people used to live in those caves some two millions years ago.

Facts about Shah Allah Ditta Village

Buddhist caves are located on the route leading towards Khanpur next to the shrine of Shah Allah Ditta. Shah Allah Ditta Village is believed to be more than 700 years old and was used as route from Kabul to Gandharan city of Taxila by Sher Shah Suri and other Mughal rulers emperors.

About 6,000 kanals land have been purchased by the private housing societies of sectors D-13, E-13 and C-13.

The federal government has only 30 kanals of land in and around Shah Allah Ditta.

CDA plans to preserve the Buddha caves as well as the **adjacent garden known as ‘Sadhu ka Bagh’**.

Japanese embassy has reportedly offered to provide funds for the preservation of Shah Allah Ditta caves.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the caves and the platform-like formations surrounding the area were first used for meditation by Buddhist monks and later by Hindu sadhus before Muslim ascetics took over during the Mughal period.

The road next to the caves that leads to the top of the mountain is said to be built on the exact path followed by Mughal Emperor Sher Shah Suri .

Leftovers of the Buddhist era dating back to the 8th century can be found here along with burnt diyas and trees with amulets tied to them.

(Published in The Express Tribune, By Azam Khan on 8 September 2011)

Dolphin in trouble... Wildlife Dept to the rescue

KARACHI - Sindh Wildlife Department officials saved an Indus blind dolphin trapped in the Rohri Canal on Wednesday and released it back into the Indus River. The rescued dolphin was a male dolphin - six feet long, 16 years old and weighing 55 kilograms – stuck in the main Rohri Canal due to the reduced water level.

Wildlife officials and experts after a checkup released into the river along Satiyun Jo Aastan, near Sadh Belo in Sukkur. Dolphin expert and wildlife official, Hussain Buksh Bhaagat told Pakistan



Today that he and his team including Wildlife Sukkur Deputy Conservator Taj Mohammad Shaikh, Sukkur Wildlife

Game Inspector Anwar Ali Bhatti, World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) officials, journalists and common citizens successfully rescued the stranded dolphin.

Bhaagat said that during the last two years, more than 60 dolphins have died after getting caught in fishing nets and also **slipping into different canals. "Dolphins are still dying and on an average, one or two dead dolphins are reported every week between Guddu Barrage and Sukkur barrages, where about 200 fishing licenses are issued by the Fisheries Department on Benazir Shaheed Cards," said Bhaagat.**

Indus blind dolphin or Planista minor is an inhabitant of the Indus River for centuries but due to an increase in industrial effluent release into the river from the industrial zones of Punjab, construction of barrages, issuance of fishing licences and pouring of poison in the river for fishing, this endangered species of river dolphins is under serious threat.

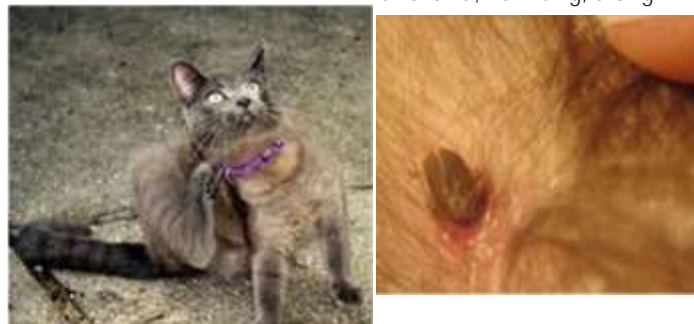
Presently, out of about 1,300 blind dolphins, 800 are surviving between Guddu and Sukkur barrages.

Following the ongoing monsoon rains, the Irrigation Department ordered the closure of link canals, due to which the dolphins get stranded in them.

(Published in Pakistan Today by AMAR GURIRO Thursday, 8 Sep 2011)

Control ticks in time and save your cat's life

BABESIOSIS; a tick borne disease, found in dogs and cats. Even though it is considered to be a tropical disease, it is known to be spreading to other regions of the world due to an increase in temperature. Countries such as Pakistan are now seeing an increased number of cases for Babesiosis. Symptoms such as anorexia, vomiting, along



with changes in the blood parameters can be indicative of the disease.

It is also known for the symptoms to appear between one to six **weeks of ticks' bite. A study was carried out at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan over a period of three years, it was observed a total of 5,183 cats to mark out any trends or patterns which can help in finding the best curative measures to help prevent the disease. In order to carry out the tests, they used blood tests which were examined to help obtain a more precise diagnosis. The findings of the study showed an overall prevalence of Babesia over the three years. The study also showed a strong relationship between the different seasons and the occurrence of Babesiosis in cats. The incidence rate of the disease was found to be higher during the summer and autumn seasons compared to winter. Babesiosis in cats was found to be specifically more predominant in humid season such as the monsoon –'July to August.**

Another observation showed a greater population of ticks', lice's and fleas during the hot and humid seasons and therefore suggesting a control in population of these ticks', lice and fleas can help limit the disease along with other complications.

Routine grooming of pets is a very effective way to avoid the ticks and hence the disease. Use of certain drugs on ground and walls will prevent infestation of fleas, ticks and other pests. And since the highest incidence of Babesiosis was observed during the summer (rainy season) in Pakistan, its control should be made before the start of that season.

(Published in Daily Times Friday, September 09, 2011)

Rare bird species sighted in Tinsukia district

CDA decides to preserve archaeological, heritage sites

DIBRUGARH, Sept 9 – Two bird lovers sighted and photographed a Golden Crested Myna, a rare bird species on the side of NH-153 near Tinkupani reserve forest in Tinsukia district. This glossy black bird having golden crest, crown and throat was sighted by Sanjay Das and Dilip Panging, while they were on their usual bird documentation drive.

The bird lovers took nearly a week to identify the photographed species after browsing through several books and websites. They first sighted a group of six birds on August 25 but again travelled to the site after four days for better photograph. The bird lovers claimed that the species was recorded for the first time in The Handbook of India and Pakistan (Compact Edition), published in 1983 by Dr Salima Ali and S



Dillon Riple. The book mentions that the rare bird was found only in NC Hills and Manipur within the country. Since then, the

bird has never been sighted anywhere in India and The Birds of Assam, a book written by Dr Anwaruddin Chaudhury in 1992 has also testified the fact.

Sanjay Das and Dilip Panging have been working for the preservation and documentation of birds in their individual capacity. The duo while addressing mediapersons here said they have added several new species of birds in the list of Dibru Saikhowa reserve forest in Tinsukia district and also in the list of Assam. The habitat of Golden Crested Myna is normally open woodlands within forested mountains, lowland evergreen forest and mixed woodland. It feeds mainly on fruits but sometimes also takes some insects. The bird forages in pairs or small groups in canopy.

(Published in The Assam Tribune, September 9, 2011)

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to safeguard the centuries old archaeological sites of the federal capital as the historical sites and heritage all over the country have been disappearing and affecting day by day.

In this connection, CDA Chairman Imtiaz Inayat Elahi presided over a meeting in which CDA's Member Environment Mian Waheedud Din gave a detailed presentation on the ongoing efforts of the environment wing for preservation of valuable heritage.

The newly formed committee would be headed by CDA Director General Environment and would comprise DG Archaeological Department of Pakistan, Director Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization of Quaid-e-Azam University Dr Ashraf Qazi, DDG-I Environment, Director Regional Planning, Wahab Gul of Evacuee Property Trust, Chief Landscape Architect CDA, Director Environment (Regional) and representative of Capital Citizen Committee Fauzia Minallah. To accomplish the task, a nine-member committee consisting of members from CDA and other concerned departments for technical input and cooperation has also been constituted.

The committee would extend technical cooperation to the CDA for preservation of 'Sadhu ka Baagh', 'Shah Allah Ditta caves' and other archaeological sites.

The civic body has also devised a strategy to preserve the centuries old trees located in both rural and urban areas of the federal capital at a cost of millions of rupees.

Under the plan, the civic agency would preserve and develop 2,400-year-old 'Sadhu ka Baagh' located at Shah Allah Ditta, measuring two acres with the cost of Rs19 million and Shah Allah Ditta caves.

Besides, centuries old trees of different species including Date Palm, Kau, Phulai, Banyan, Mango and Peepul would also be protected under the same project.

The project initiated in the vicinity of Shah Allah Ditta would cost Rs 26 million in total out of which Rs 19 million would be spent on the preservation of 'Saadhu Ka Baagh'

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It was also decided in the meeting that in addition to the development of 'Saadhu Ka Baagh', CDA would also preserve the old historical sites adjacent to that like 'Shah Allah Ditta Caves', Stupa, old mosque, 'Boally' and a pond at 'Bun Faqiraan' to attract the visitors.

In total, CDA would preserve 150 historical/ archaeological sites within ICT jurisdiction that also include 13 sites where hundreds years old Bunyan trees exist. Moreover, the CDA has already started preservation work of the Rock Shelter commonly known as Lizard Rock or tongue of Islamabad located on Shahrah-e-Kashmir in Sector G-13. Under the project, the CDA has identified two acres for the project Sadhu ka Bagh near caves where a park, sit-out areas and information counters would be developed where information material containing historical account of the site would be available. Moreover, informative signage has been erected highlighting the history of



the tree and species. According to a survey conducted by the CDA, Islamabad is rich of 32 Date Palm trees, 126 Kau trees, 86 Phulai, 176 Banyan, 54 Mango, 12 Peepul,

57 Badh and 135 trees of other species. The CDA has got designed the plaques from Taxila which have been displayed on each tree for the information of visitors since many people are not aware of this precious heritage.

Talking on the occasion CDA Chairman Imtiaz Inayat Elahi said the basic objective of the project is to protect the rich cultural heritage of Islamabad and CDA would never carry out development in the federal capital at the cost of our heritage.

He said the project is part of the CDA's efforts to protect the environment and promote tourism in Islamabad for which Tourism Division has already been created under the aegis of Environment Wing. He said that these sites, once completed, would be a great attraction for the local as well as foreign visitors.

(Published in Daily Times on Friday, September 10, 2011)

Environmental aspect may push India, Pakistan to find solution to Siachen issue

Growing threat of environmental disaster in magnificent Siachen Glacier region is believed to have caught attention of high-ups of Pakistan and India and concerned officials are working to weigh proposals for establishing a peace park in world highest battlefield for the sake of natural ecological settings, the sources said here on Wednesday.

The sources claimed that the Italian government first facilitated the proposal in 2004 for establishing the peace park at the Siachen Glacier that was ultimately submitted to Pakistan and India but it failed to make any immediate headway. The first initiative was taken in 2008 when top glaciologists of Pakistan and India held a meeting for the first time and discussed over a detailed plan about how to move forward to establish the peace park in the Siachen region, they said.

They said bilateral talks between Pakistan and India held on May 31 this year were said to have failed in developing any



consensus on proposals for resolution of Siachen dispute but insiders were of the view that now the

environmental aspect of the issue may push both the governments to find out a solution to demilitarise the Siachen region.

According to Mountain Research and Development the pollution and degradation of the environment, resulting from thousands of men living in Siachen Glacier, is appalling. The cans, drums, fuel containers, oil and lubricants, tetra packs for fruit juice, aluminium packaging, chemicals, and medical waste can neither be burned nor destroyed, nor can any of them be removed.

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It said, Human waste amounts to 1000kg a day on the Indian side alone. It is packed in metal drums and dropped into crevasses at the rate of up to 4,000 drums a year. Then there is the war material: guns, arms, millions of rounds for small arms, ammunition, shells. As a senior Indian army officer remarked, It is all flown in but nothing will ever be flown back. The satellite images of the Siachen Glacier in January 2010 have already revealed an alarming account of its shrinking; it is said to be retreating at the rate of 110 metres per year, resultantly its size over the last 20 years has shrunk by 35 per cent. The snow cover has considerably thinned, so much so that not only the features of the terrain underneath are clearly visible from the sky, at places the snow has melted completely creating a number of ponds and lakes.

A research report by Saleem H. Ali, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, University of Vermont, said the peace parks are transboundary conservation areas that seek to mitigate conflict through environmental cooperation between neighbouring countries. The idea can be traced back to the time-tested tradition of post-war memorials aimed at healing wounds between adversaries.

The report said most existing peace parks, however, are located between parties that are not actually fighting; one example is the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park between the United States and Canada. A more ambitious project in the Cordillera del Condor region was key to resolving the decades-long dispute between Ecuador and Peru; the 2004 treaty between the two nations explicitly used environmental conservation as a conflict resolution strategy by establishing a jointly managed protected area between the two countries. Despite repeated attempts by this scribe Foreign Office Spokesperson was not available for comments. However, Pakistan's stated position on the Siachen issue is that it wants to make the dialogue process with India uninterrupted and uninterruptible and also intends to create conducive environment in which the two countries could talk about core issues and move towards their resolution.

(Published in The News by Noor Aftab, Saturday, September 10, 2011)

Promoting environment: Pakistan Forest Institute to be made a separate department

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Government decided to broaden the role and scope of Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) by giving it the status of a separate department in order to promote forestry, range-management, bio-diversity wildlife education and training facilities to students.

The country's primary forest institute, which has students from across the country as well as Azad Jammu Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, is still under the administrative control of the Environment Department.

It was decided at the meeting that the status of PFI be developed as a separate department, under the administration of the Environment Department.

The overall affairs and problems of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), along with the Environment, Wildlife and Fisheries departments were discussed at the meeting which was by K-P Environment Minister, Environment Additional Secretary and Implementation Committee on 18th Amendment Member.

After a thorough review of the National Environment Council, the federal government has been requested to include one member from every province in the council to combat the challenges of climate change, global warming and desertification.

A proposal for the establishment of a research and survey branch in the Environment Department on the pattern of



the Geological Survey of Pakistan was also presented at the meeting. Even though 95 per cent

of PFI employees belong to other provinces, they have been provided with all services and job protection by the K-P Government.

(Published in The Express Tribune, September 12 2011)

WWF Eco Internship Plan 2011

Islamabad—The World Wide Fund for Nature – Pakistan (WWF–Pakistan) hosted the Eco-Internship Programme 2011 Certificate Distribution Ceremony on Monday, September 12th, 2011 at Trail-5, Dara Jungla, Margalla Hills National Park, Islamabad from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00p.m.

More than 600 students from schools, colleges and universities attended the sessions from the Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Wah Cantt, Abbotabad, Mirpur and Peshawar, which was held during the summer vacations from 20th June to 31st July 2011.

The Inspector General Forest (IGF) Syed Mehmood Nasir was the chief guest of the event.

While addressing, the IGF stated that procuring environmental education at a young age is very important and should be given importance as such.

He also appreciated the efforts by WWF for the promotion of **such campaigns which will ensure positive change in society's** attitude towards the environment and will help lessen environmental degradation and help raise awareness regarding environment.

At the end, the students were given completion certificates. And the students who performed exceptionally well were given appreciation letters along with World Wide Fund WWF souvenirs.

The Partner Schools were also appreciated for their participation and support throughout the campaign. Their respective heads were given appreciation shields by the World Wide Fund for Nature – Pakistan (WWF–Pakistan).

(Published in Pakistan Observer - 12 Sep 2011)

Govt-private cowork for forests stressed

HYDERABAD: Sindh Secretary for Forest and Livestock, Aijaz Ahmed Nizamani informed here on Monday that a summary to preserve and develop the forest under public-private partnership is in process and its implementation would yield good result not only to raise the forestry but also to maintain the eco system in the province.

Addressing a day-long seminar titled 'Development of National response strategy to combat impacts of climate changes on forest of Pakistan' at a local hotel, he said that this strategy would be based on livelihood, private companies and corporate land partnerships under which poor people will be facili-



tated to grow more forests.

He said that the credit goes to present government who has passed a bill for the public-private partnership and this strategy was being adopted in forest department for the safety, preservation and development of the forests.

He said that present climate change was posing great threat to world community and Pakistan was no exception. The climate change has global impacts and every department of social life was receiving its worst effects, he said and added that the last year's flood and the present torrential monsoon rains are the evidences of changing environment and weather patterns having devastating consequences.

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Earlier, Director General Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) Peshawar Syed Said Badshah Bukhari briefed the participants about salient findings of the study conducted by (PFI) Peshawar with the collaboration of FAO.

He said that study conducted by PFI indicated that Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change risks is likely to increase in future as projected temperature rise is significantly higher (1.1 C and 6.4 C) compared to 20th century (0.6 C).

(Published in The News International - 12 Sep 2011)

Vet offers a hand in Africa

A RETIRED vet has flown to Africa to help famine stricken people keep their animals alive.

Stuart Easby, who founded Battle Flatts Veterinary Clinic in Stamford Bridge, is visiting refugee camps in several African countries, including Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, during his animal rescue mission.

His trip began in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, and is expected to last between three to six weeks.

Mr Easby, who lives near Bugthorpe, is supporting Islamic Relief, an international aid and development charity, while he is there.

The 62-year-old sees the trip as a chance to make a difference by helping starving and dehydrated animals who are vitally important to the livelihood of their owners.

He said: "I think it is amazing I have an opportunity to do it. If I can make a difference to one animal, one family it is an achievement.

"The other thing is I am going because I can. It is my way of giving something back for my years of experience.

Mr Easby said he was unsure what to expect before he set off on his journey and where exactly he would be going.

"I'm going wherever I can be of some use. It all depends on people on the ground," he said.

"Some people who arrive in refugee camps arrive with animals. The question is, what can I do for these animals?"

"I would imagine the animals are in a real bad state. People don't have food or water.

"I have no idea what facilities I will have. I will be taking ad-

ministration and rehydration equipment.

"It is very much going into the unknown. But 40 years of being a vet has prepared me for going into the unknown."

Mr Easby has been involved in a number of international mercy



A RETIRED vet has flown to Africa to help famine stricken people keep their animals alive.

missions since he retired in 2004. Last year he spent 10 weeks in Pakistan, where he helped farmers keep their livestock alive following devastating floods.

The father of four, who runs an advice line called One Call Advice Direct Vet, has also made trips to the Middle East to work with a charity aiming to improve the plight of injured donkeys in Israel and Palestine.

Earlier this year he travelled to Japan to help animals suffering in the country after the devastating earthquake and tsunami.

(Published in Pocklington Post Published on Monday)

Consultation session: Emerging challenges in sustainable development

Speakers at a workshop called for sensible use of decreasing natural resources, control on population and renewed political commitment as prerequisites for sustainable development, said a press released issued by the organizers here on Monday. The consultation workshop was held in preparation for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)/Rio+20 June 2012. The session was jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its capacity as co-chair of the One UN Joint Programme on Environment and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

“Moving towards sustainable development is not a matter of choice but essential for Pakistan,” said UNDP Country Director Toshihiro Tanaka. He said that rapid population increase calls for wise decisions on the use of available resources as more and more people are becoming dependent for their lives and livelihoods on already reducing natural resources.

Former Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, UNDESA Consultant for **Pakistan’s Preparations for UNCSD**, stated that the objective of the consultation was to secure renewed political commitment towards sustainable development based on the progress in implementation of previous summits on sustainable development and the new and old emerging challenges.

He pointed out that Rio +20 Summit will discuss and make recommendations on green economy and institutional framework for sustainable development at global, regional and national level.

The Rio +20 process has global significance as its outcome will influence and direct the sustainable development agenda in the post-2015 period. It provides the opportunity to bring inclusiveness for human-focused, low-emission, climate-resilient growth, he added.

Advisor on Climate Change and Development Dr Ishfaq Ahmed emphasized that intensification of implementation capacity on the ground is critical and the government and multilateral

agencies can play a pivotal role in this regard.

Former VC Quaid-i-Azam University and Member SDPI Board of Governors, Prof. Dr Qasim Jan, said that SDPI has contributed to



the work of the Planning Commission’s Task Force on Climate Change and the formulation of the National Environment Policy in recent years. It is represented on the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Development. He added that the substantive and logistic support extended by SDPI, in collaboration with the UNDP, is perfectly in line with the mandate and goals of SDPI. After the Rio summit, SDPI will join the government and other key stakeholders in ensuring the effective implementation of the outcomes of the conference.

Vice Chancellor Lahore University of Management Sciences Dr Adil Najam highlighted different aspects of sustainable development while emphasizing the importance of integrity of **economy, environment and social justice**. **“Rio is an opportunity to redefine sustainable development across the globe and in Pakistan. We need to bring sustainability and efficiency checks while greening our policies,”** he stated. **Presenters and stake holders** of various sectors were involved in the discussion including government, private sector, NGOs, think- tank and civil society.

(Published in The Express Tribune, September 13th, 2011)

Action plan discussed to conserve Baluchistan's Juniper Forests

UNESCO, Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH) experts in a meeting here on Tuesday discussed action plan to conserve Juniper Forests of Balochistan under UNESCO's "Man and Biosphere" programme. PSF Chairman Prof. Dr Manzoor H. Soomro presided over the meeting attended by PSF Member Science Dr. Khalil Ahmed Ibupoto, PMNH Director General Dr. Syed Azhar Hasan, UNESCO Islamabad Programme Specialist Arsalan Syed and other officers concerned from PSF and PMNH. The UNESCO programme specialist briefed the participants of meeting about the programme "Man And Biosphere" (MAB), said a press release issued here Tuesday.

He said the Juniper forests of Balochistan were an ecological and cultural treasure of the country. These rare and centuries old forests are located in Ziarat and Zargoan areas of Balochistan, he said, adding, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is already working on a project "Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into the Juniper Forest Ecosystem Production Landscape" and the data for preparing of the dossier regarding declaring the "Junipers of Balochistan" as Biosphere Reserve can be obtained from that project.

After the discussion, the meeting decided that UNESCO Islamabad would provide the proceedings of UNESCO Convention on "Man and Biosphere" to PSF for preparations and doing groundwork on MAB.

UNESCO and PSF will liaise with each other to streamline the mechanism of working together on the MAB Programme. The National Committee on "Man and Biosphere" may be re-constituted having appropriate number of subject experts and technical experts.

Provincial committees on MAB will also be formulated having the secretary of the provincial ministry concerned as head and some subject experts as members.

In addition, Technical Committee (s) may also be formulated for necessary input and recommendation for sustainability of the programme of MAB.

Balochistan's Junipers are one of the biggest blocks in the world. These are the second largest Juniper forests in the world after the Junipers of California. Junipers are one of the

slowest growing trees in the world and are therefore often called "living fossils".

The hills around Ziarat are covered with juniper trees, thickest on the north, south and east sides.

The juniper tracts along with its range lands, cover an area of approximately 700,000 acres of which 230,000 acres are the State forest.

Average age of the extremely slow growing juniper trees is 300 years. Juniper berries are used as flavor. Oil is also extracted from these trees, which has a number of uses.

Medical herbs like Ephedra, Artemisia and mint etc are also produced. Fragrant lavender hushes cover almost the entire landscape from July to October.

(On September 13, 2011)

US, Pakistan to combat foot, mouth disease

ISLAMABAD- The United States and Pakistan are working together to fight against foot and mouth disease, which is estimated to cause \$82 million in economic damage to rural Pakistani families every year.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Government of Pakistan, is supporting this effort with a comprehensive \$9 million programme to provide training and equipment to researchers, veterinarians and epidemiologists throughout Pakistan. "Foot and mouth disease causes significant damage to the Pakistani livestock population and to the farmers who depend on them for their livelihood," said David Wolf, Senior Agriculture Attach at the US Embassy in Islamabad on Tuesday.

"This training will allow Pakistani scientists to use the latest technologies and treatments to fight against this disease all around the country. The USDA is proud to be their partner in that effort."

The inaugural session this week at the National Veterinary Laboratories in Islamabad brought together 45 Pakistani scientists and veterinarians from federal and provincial agencies and universities.

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Over the course of four days, scientists from the USDA and the University of California at Davis will hold seminars on epidemiology, new diagnosis methods, response to outbreaks and disease control measures.

This programmes will continue over the coming years as trainees of the programme will partner with provincial governments, universities and farmers to develop and deploy vaccines to inoculate livestock.

Foot and mouth disease is one of the most contagious and economically devastating viral diseases in the world. It causes a high rate of sickness in cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats. Most affected animals recover, but the disease leaves them debilitated and causes severe loss in the production of meat and milk.

It is estimated that there are 66 million cattle and buffalo in Pakistan and one out of four families depend on livestock for their livelihood.

(Published in The Nation, by APP, September 14, 2011)

US committed to helping Pakistan

FAISALABAD - The US is committed to establishing ROZs in Pakistan and a high level delegation of trade representatives is visiting Pakistan next week to have talks on Free Trade Agreement and market access to promote bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries, said Jimmy Mauldin, Economic Officer, US Embassy Islamabad while addressing leading textile exporters here at Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) here.

Addressing the meeting, the US representative said that there were a lot of opportunities in this economic environment. Pakistan has vast potential in textiles and we have traditional trade and economic relations between the two countries. Business-to-business ties between the US and Pakistan are very **important,” he pointed out. Jimmy Mauldin said that the role of Pakistan in the war against terror was excellent and his country was highly appreciated the efforts of Pakistan.** He expressed the hope that the US would not only compensate but also actively economically support Pakistan for the

losses it has suffered in this war so far.

Robert Hawkins, Economic Officer, US Consulate General Lahore said that the main object of their visit was to know the challenges hindering the promotion of textile exports to the US and how overcome these challenges.

Answering a question, Jimmy said the US was not taking Pakistan as **“problematic” country rather an honorable tested friend** for our support with a lot of opportunities for tomorrow.

He said that US understands that Pakistan has suffered a lot and world community must give it a helping hand to overcome its economic problems.

Welcoming the guests, PTEA Chairman Wasim Latif said that Pakistan and the US have been enjoying close friendly relations since the independence of the former in all spheres of life. It is therefore natural that the US is the major trade partner of Pakistan. Share of exports to US is 20% of our total exports.

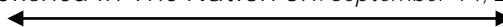
Exports of home textiles to the US market is around \$1.5 billion plus and over the last five years home textile exports to the US have declined from \$1.6 billion in 2006-07 to \$1.39 billion in 2010-11, he said. He said that the home textile exports from Pakistan to the US could not be increased due to various challenges in the bilateral trade.

Highlighting the challenges, he said that foremost of the challenges is high custom tariff on Pakistani textiles in the US. Pakistani textiles are subjected to more than 10% custom duty. Our exports are unable to compete in the face of zero percent duty on Bangladeshi and less than 10% tariff on Sri Lankan & Indian export. Delays due to extraordinary examination and clearance of our consignments at the US ports are another challenge for Pakistani textile exports, he said.

He also mention the important role of Pakistan in combating terrorism which has proved the country as the time-tested and true supporter of the US for establishing and promoting peace in the world. It is unfortunate that this devoted contribution of Pakistan has not been materialized in terms of increased **economic cooperation,” he lamented.**

He asked the visiting US dignitaries to press their government offer Pakistani textiles exports zero tariff concession to help revive the war-ravaged and calamity-stricken economy of the country which would also result in sustaining the huge cost of war on terror. He suggested that free market access to Pakistani exports would provide an opportunity to strengthen economic base. Later, the PTEA chairman honored the distinguish guests with shields.

(Published in The Nation on: September 14, 2011)



Torrential rains cripple Karachi, over 50 killed

KARACHI: Torrential rains and floods wreaked havoc in Sindh, including Karachi, during the last 24 hours, killing over 50 people in separate incidents till our going to press late on Tuesday night.

A number of business centres, banks, public and private offices and educational institutions in the city could not function at all as people could not reach their workplaces due to the absence of public transport.

Apart from people working for emergency and essential services, it was a virtual public holiday for the rest of Karachiites. A few could enjoy the rainfall at their homes while a majority of them suffered prolonged breakdowns of electricity as the system of the Karachi Electric Supply Company collapsed in a majority of areas.

The main business district in the southern part of the metropolis presented a look of a natural calamity as all its roads and streets could not be accessed due to the rainwater mixed with overflowing sewage.

Throughout the day, news channels kept on airing updates about the situation on the roads, storm water drains and low-lying areas in the city as spells of rain continued intermittently throughout the day.

The major event of the day, the Supreme Court's hearing of a suo moto case of target killings in the city, was also marred by heavy rains after a flood-like situation emerged in the area around the SC's Registry in Karachi.

At sunset, the only silver lining for the disaster-hit people of Karachi was that intermittent spells of rain stopped in most parts of the city. Although spells of light rain continued throughout Monday night, a spell of rain on Tuesday morning badly affected the sewerage and drainage systems of the city. Afterwards, spells of drizzle and light showers continued, causing problems for civic agencies to drain out the accumulated rainwater.

Meteorological Department did not issue any fresh weather advisory or warning for the lower Sindh region.

The entire drainage and sewerage systems of the city — whether under the control of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board or other land controlling authorities — were virtually in a shambles and failed to drain out the rainwater from a number of major roads, streets and low-lying areas.

Wasa failed completely to drain out the accumulated rainwater from their respective localities after the passage of 15 hours.

Meanwhile, four patients who had been under treatment at the Neurosurgery Department of the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) died on Tuesday after prolonged power outage at the hospital forced the ventilators they were on to shut down, hospital sources said.

The Pakistan Army and Navy were busy in relief and rescue operations however that too was insufficient.

The team leader of the United Nations' Emergency Flood Response Dr Salman Safdar has informed that the UN had mobilised 4,000 volunteers from its humanitarian affairs sections for rescue and relief work in Sindh, specially in Badin.

District Government Badin has demanded of the UN and the government to provide Rs 400 million for relief and rescue operations, 200,000 tents, ration bags for 200,000 families for three months, 500 decanting pumps for draining stagnant water from the cities, villages, 150 boats, mechanised, supply of drinking water in canals and ASV/ARV medical cover.

The focal person for relief and rescue Agha Wasif demanded early help to save human lives. Meanwhile, EDO Finance and Planning Mohammad Saleem Rajput briefed the NGOs and the international community representatives for extending help. He asked the NGOs to register with the NDMA.

Wing Commander Thar Ranger, Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Rasool and sector Commander Hyderabad Col Saeed Ahmed visited the rain affected areas of Badin, Kadhan, Khoski, Shadi Large and Shaheed Fazil Raho. They inspected relief and rescue work carried out by Rangers. Also,



Also, Sindh Minister for Livestock Abid Hussain Jatoi on Tuesday said that 12,299 cattle-heads have died and millions of displaced by the prevailing monsoon rains.

He said that such a large scale displacement of animals has not occurred in the last 100 years.

Talking to official media here, the Livestock minister said that his department had prepared a contingency plan to meet the situation, under which as many as 269 veterinary relief camps and 45 mobile veterinary relief camps had been set up. He said that some 1,554,671 animals had been provided treatment in 23 districts till September 11.

(Published in Pak tribune, September 14, 2011)

Can Lightning Predict Hurricanes?

Radar and satellites can track the path of storms, but Earth Networks, a company that operates networks of environmental sensors, says it can predict their intensity.

Earth Networks Sensors detect the location of electromagnetic activity and send the data to supercomputers.

The company has come up with a system that detects and geographically pinpoints electrical activity that is, lightning, in storms. It then runs this information along with other meteorological data on temperature, pressure and wind speed through supercomputers to predict whether a storm will peter out as it hits land or wreak even greater havoc.

“We measure every spark in the cloud,” says the company’s chief executive, Bob Marshall. “Radar is great at forecasting the track of a storm, but intensity is more of a mystery. Predicting intensity is not much better than it was a decade or two ago.”



There’s no denying the weather has become more extreme. Years of drought in Australia have been followed by devastating floods. Weather events causing more than \$10 billion in damage, from floods and wildfires to an East Coast snopocalypse, have hit the United States this year. In Pakistan, large swaths of land sit under floodwaters.

Munich Re, the large reinsurance company, has estimated that natural disasters caused \$265 billion in damage in the first six months of the year, five times more than the

average losses for that period over the last decade.

Investors and entrepreneurs have begun to inch into the market for weather technology. WeatherBill, an insurer that has received \$42 million from sources like the venture capital firm NEA, Google Ventures and others, harnesses data analysis to underwrite climate insurance policies for farmers. Liquid Robotics is meanwhile creating a flotilla of robotic ships that will monitor the high seas.

Lightning produces a brief electromagnetic pulse that is de-

tected by the company’s lightning sensors, essentially large antennas connected to computers. By analyzing the times that various sensors detect pulses, Earth Networks can triangulate the location and path of electrical activity. Think of it as a speed trap for lightning.

By studying lightning activity in Hurricane Irene, the company predicted on Aug. 24, when the Atlantic Seaboard was still on high alert, that it would not be as severe as initially anticipated because the electrical activity had already moved from the center to the edge of the storm.

And the company asserts that its lightning networks could have given residents of Springfield, Mass., a 50-minute warning in advance of a tornado that struck on June 1. Instead, residents were only warned a few minutes ahead of time.

Ultimately, Earth Networks wants to devise other sensors and new ways of mining weather data to possibly provide longer-range forecasts — flood warnings 30 days in advance, for example, or predictions on the severity of heat waves. Lightning science remains a relatively new field. Mr. Marshall says that early lightning data can’t precisely predict what will occur but that enough of a correlation exists to give emergency services groups and government agencies some advance warning.

(Published in The New York Times September 14, 2011)

Can large reservoirs prevent floods?

Heavy downpour and flood have caused havoc in Sindh and 20 out of 22 districts have been hit. Close to 300 people have died and the number keeps on increasing with the passage of time. Reportedly, in Khairpur 6,000 villages have been flooded and over one million acres of farmland has been destroyed, while several feet of floodwater has accumulated in Faiz Ganj, Nara, Umer Kot and Kot DG, triggering epidemic diseases in the affected areas. Likewise, the flood victims, who took refuge on the roadside, are suffering from malaria and gastro diseases, while snake-biting incidents were also reported. A number of families have migrated from the flood hit areas, yet thousands are still waiting for help. The army has been summoned to Faiz Ganj, but the communication with quite a few areas remains cut off. Therefore, it is necessary to mention that the water flowing from upstream could have been controlled, had a water reservoir been built at Kalabagh. The river flow that is now

Continue.....

contributing to increasing the misery of the people could have been checked, to a considerable extent.

It is, indeed, unfortunate that three Provincial Assemblies **had passed resolutions against the dam's construction**, which could at least absorb the rainwater and flood occurring in the northern part of the country. The Sindhi leaders argued that KBD would hinder the flow of water to the sea, and mangroves would be destroyed. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leaders said that it would create hazard for Nowshera and adjacent areas. Balochistan, however, passed the **resolutions to express 'solidarity' with the other smaller provinces**. Regrettably, as the whole world is focusing finding ways to store water, the four provinces in Pakistan have yet to reach consensus on building dams. However, according to experts, the argument about the release of water downstream of Kotri was absurd, while the issue of sea intrusion is being exaggerated.

Anyhow, today the people all over the country are suffering because of their flawed perceptions and intransigence. The floods battering the Sindh province may not be, as yet, as **devastating as was the last year's catastrophic deluge**. However, the people are dying, and in scores, in roof collapses and in stormy floodwaters. Animals and cattle are being killed or swept away; homes are being wiped out; and roads and communication systems are being smashed. Yet, the **government learnt nothing from the last year's floods**.

Last year, the worst floods since 1929 had devastated the lives of more than four million people, who had lost their homes, livestock and standing crops. The disaster killed more than 2,500 people and left thousands injured. The post-flood scenario was threatening because there was a shortage of food, meat and other products, which further increased the prices of essential items of daily use. Whereas the federal and provincial governments are not geared up to

grapple such natural calamities, the Pakistani army jawans remained busy in the rescue and relief operations and saved the people, who were stuck in the floods. It is undoubtedly impossible to stop or avert natural calamities, but its impact can be reduced substantially by judicious planning.

In Pakistan, the government has made no visible plans for disaster management. After a lot of debate, there was almost consensus on the construction of Diamir-Bhasha Dam. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) decided to go ahead with practical work on 4,500MW dam starting from mid-2009, and foreign financial advisor was appointed to manage the financial resources. But the moot question is: Whether the funding has been lined up to finance the project? Since mere appointment of a financial advisor would not solve the matter, as many agencies are involved in the project.

It is rather strange that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh are opposing the construction of KBD because of their reservations, specifically as they do not trust Punjab. But they do not utter a word on water theft, rather water terrorism, by India. In 2008, Pakistan suffered a loss exceeding Rs5 billion in paddy crop production only in the wake of water shortage after New Delhi stopped Chenab water to fill its Baglihar Dam during the month of September 2008. India is violating the Indus Waters Treaty with the objective of drying up Pakistan. The reason is that it wants to stop Pakistan to press for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Also, the Indian administration believes that Pakistan is a major obstacle to its hegemonic designs in the South Asian region. The Indians have been working on river diversion plans with a view to creating acute water shortage in Pakistan, which could lead to shortage of wheat and other crops, and stoke inter-provincial conflicts over the distribution of water.

(Published in The Nation By Mohammad Jamil | Published: September 14, 2011)

Floods caused ecosystem imbalance

Speaking at the inaugural session of a two-day international conference on latest techniques for conservation of animal genetic resource in Pakistan on Wednesday, US Agriculture Counselor Richard Todd Drennan said that biodiversity was a big challenge faced by the ecosystems globally. He said that the protection of biodiversity through environmental restoration and production of rare species to save them from extinction were needed. The international moot was organised by the Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) in collaboration with the Pakistan Wildlife Foundation and sponsored by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The conference was attended by Malaysian, Swedish, Sudanese and Bengali scientists.

Drennan said that Pakistan was still facing biodiversity issues and that flood and natural calamities occur due to the imbalance of ecosystems and rapid growth in human population. The US agriculture counselor said that most countries had to face environmental problems and global warming caused by the floods which affected Pakistan last year. He stressed upon the need of balancing ecosystems in conservation of the national breed and in the improvement of the national economy. Drennan said that the US government allocated \$9 million for the control of foot and mouth disease in Pakistan and that the **US had been collaborating with Pakistan's officials in this regard**. Earlier, UVAS Vice-Chancellor Dr Nawaz said that the government should pay attention to the revival of endangered species for the conservation of genetic resources in Pakistan. UVAS Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology Director Dr Masroor Elahi Baber said that the conference highlighted the importance of the conservation of ecosystem. It also focused on training the participants for the use of various techniques involved in molecular biology for animal conservation and livestock welfare, he added.

(Published in Pakistan today, Wednesday, 14 Sep 2011)

Pakistan's flood victims save what they can

Pakistani soldiers in inflatable rescue boats peered across kilometers of flooded farmland and spotted a man wading through waist-deep water desperate to move his goat to high ground. For the past two weeks, Kaywall has spent 12 hours a day moving his family's livestock from his inundated village to the small town of Pingrio in Sindh province in the south.

The goats are the only thing he has managed to save from raging waters which swept away his house and belongings.

Pakistan's civilian leaders were slow to respond, leaving the far more decisive military to take charge of rescue and relief efforts, along with international aid agencies.

This year, floods have destroyed or damaged 1.2 million houses and flooded 4.5 million acres (1.8 million hectares) since late last month, officials and Western aid groups say.

More than 300,000 people were made homeless. Frustrations with the government are running high. On Wednesday, 80 men blocked the main road to Hyderabad, the biggest city near the flooded areas. They are demanding help from the authorities.

Victims of Pakistan's flood are at growing risk of potentially fatal diseases, aid groups warned. The director-general of the Sindh Health Department, Hafeez Memon, said there were 2,000 confirmed cases of malaria and the number was likely to rise.

The government is heavily reliant on foreign aid and an \$11 billion International Monetary Fund loan to keep the economy afloat.

In a vast expanse of water that swallowed up houses and farmland in one area, only part of a blue and white tent was visible. Some people were able to reach the one road that leads to Pingrio, which is flooded in some sections and is surrounded by water on several sides.

Some 900 people have taken shelter there in tents run by an Islamic charity which also provided relief in last year's floods. Analysts say the government will lose even more credibility if charities tied to Islamist groups are seen as more helpful than the state.

(Additional reporting by Hamid Shaikh in Tando Allah Yar and Qasim Nauman in Islamabad.)

(By Michael Georgy, 14 Sep 2011)

CDA report on Rawal Lake contamination fails to impress EPA

Environment Protection Agency slams delay in installation of treatment plants g Says civic authority report missed some very important aspects

ISLAMABAD - An inspection report on Rawal Lake contamination issue produced by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has failed to satisfy the Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (EPA), which can cause more delay in the installment of treatment plants in catchment areas to stop the increasing level of lake pollution. CDA planned to install treatment plants in the catchment areas to treat sewage water contaminating the Rawal Lake after the Supreme Court had taken a sou moto notice of the case last year. However, due to some ownership complications, the CDA took several months to complete its report. Meanwhile, the EPA has also called an emergency meeting with the CDA and ICT to look into the matter. EPA Director General Asif Shujah told that the CDA was not serious in tackling the lake contamination issue citing the delay in completion of a survey that he said could have taken only 15 days.

He said the CDA's inspection report had missed some very important things which would be discussed in the upcoming meeting. Presently, the pollution level of the lake is low because of recent heavy rains but with the end of the rainy season it can shoot up manifold, Shuja feared. CDA Environment Director Sajjad Ali Shah, when contacted, said the authority had taken several steps to contain the lake contamination such as construction of separate tanks and instructing resi-

dents to build their in-house tanks. He said the CDA had formed local committees to curb dumping of solid waste in those tanks. Last year, the Supreme Court of Pakistan took a sou moto notice of the Rawal Lake contamination issue and ordered the CDA, EPA and other departments concerned to take immediate measures

to stopping sewage water flow into the Rawal Lake. All the waste material and sewage water coming in drains from the villages near the lake such as Bhara Kahu,



Malpur, Bani Gala and Noorpur Shahan are continuously contaminating the lake. The waste also includes untreated sewerage and solid waste and there are approximately 170 poultry farms **with about 360 poultry sheds situated in the lake's catchment areas.** Meanwhile, the picnickers and visitors are also a source of contamination as recreational spots Chattar and Salgran parks are situated near the lake. Asif Shujah said they had asked the Punjab government to take notice of the issue since some of the areas fell under its jurisdiction such as Murree. He said that after the devolution, EPA could no longer monitor the environmental issues of the entire country.

(Published in Pakistan Today on September 15, 2011)

Environment threats: Green policies sought to avoid natural disasters

He said the floods wreaking havoc across Pakistan were also linked to issues like unsustainable use of natural resources and rapid population growth.

The increasing frequency of floods and disastrous rains is linked to unchecked degradation of environment, United States Agriculture Consullar Richard Todde Drennan said on Wednesday.

Drennan was speaking at an international conference on lat-



est techniques for conservation of animal genetic resource in Pakistan at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology.

Drennan said protection of biodiversity was currently the biggest challenge for all countries of the world. He said the floods wreaking havoc across Pakistan were also linked to issues like unsustainable use of natural resources and rapid population growth.

He said striking a balance between the environment and the economy was in the interest of present as well as future generations.

Earlier, UVAS Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Nawaz urged the government to take measures to protect endangered species of animals as well as plants. UVAS Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology director Prof Dr Masroor Elahi Baber gave a briefing on conservation of ecosystem.

The international moot has been sponsored by the Higher Education Commission and organized by the UVAS in collaboration with the Pakistan Wildlife Foundation.

Delegates from Malaysia, Sweden, Sudan and Bangladesh are attending the event.

(Published in The Express Tribune, September 15th, 2011)

Supreme Court preserves verdict over Karachi suo moto case

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has preserved its decision over **Chief Justice's suo moto case on unrest in Karachi.**

A five-member larger bench led by the Chief Justice Iftikhar Mu-



hammad Chaudhry resumed hearing of the case in Supreme **Court's Karachi registry on Thursday.**

The court warned during hearing that if this fire burning in Karachi will not be curbed soon then it would become extremely difficult to control the situation; just to get skins of sacrificed animals in Karachi people receive slips with threats that give us the hide of the animal or we will peel off your skin. The situation in Karachi is turning bad to worse with every passing day but no unconstitutional step will be tolerated in this regard.

(Published in The Nation Thursday, September 15, 2011)

CADD sitting on EMS salaries

Environment Ministry's devolution causes various problems;

Industrial pollution on the rise in the absence of monitoring body

ISLAMABAD - The government has given a free hand to polluters to damage the environment of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, as the Environment Monitoring System (EMS) staff awaits salaries after the devolution of the Environment Ministry.

The staffs of EMS and the National Bio-safety Centre, two sub-bodies of the Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), have not received monthly salaries since July 1st, when the Environment Ministry was dissolved.

Capital Administration and Development Division (CADD), which is now heading the EPA, refused to issue the salaries of the two mentioned bodies, while demanding the EPA prove that these bodies were essential for the EPA. An EPA official said the environment of Islamabad and Rawalpindi was being damaged as polluters had a free hand now-a-days.

He said CADD had asked them to prove the utility of these bodies and they had prepared a summery which would be presented to CADD after the Eid holidays.

He said, "A dozen marble factories in B/17 sector are continuously violating the EPA's order. However, we do not have a monitoring force to keep a check on them." He said they were facing numerous problems as the Punjab Environment Tribunal which was responsible for handling cases of the twin cities had been not functioning due to the absence of a chairman. "In the absence of the monitoring force and environment tribunal, we have become disabled and can not do anything to stop environmental degradation," he said.

(Published in Pakistan Today, Thursday, 15 Sep 2011)

Pakistan will not compromise on its stance on the FMCT: expert

Pakistan will not compromise on its stance on the FMCT (Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty), at least in the near future, said Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal here on Wednesday.

He was addressing a roundtable titled FMCT: Pakistan's Stand and Implications, organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). With the issue of FMCT being discussed during the ongoing session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the roundtable brought forth some key issues concerning Pakistani position on FMCT in a timely manner, says a press release.

Dr. Jaspal, who was the main speaker of the event, argued that while Pakistan was being accused in the western media as the only obstructionist country in the way of the initiation of negotiations on FMCT, other countries also had concealed reservations about the treaty, but that they were happy to remain under the shadow of Pakistan. Further explaining Pakistan's principled position on FMCT, Dr. Jaspal argued that Pakistan did not view FMCT or arms-control for that matter in isolation of disarmament, which actually was the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Dr. Jaspal disagreed with the notion that nuclear weapons are only a deterrent and unusable in an actual war situation. He called nuclear weapons an extension of the conventional weapons and, therefore, argued that any arms-control effort aimed at neutralizing nuclear weapons should also take into account the existing conventional military balance as well. In this context, he maintained that FMCT had not taken into account the strategic environment of South Asia, which was characterised by both nuclear and conventional strategic asymmetries between India and Pakistan, and worried that FMCT might only serve to preserve the strategically imbalanced status quo between the two countries.

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Dr. Jaspal pointed out that because this renewed enthusiasm about FMCT was a result of the personal initiative of President Obama highlighted in his famous Prague speech of April 2009 enthusiasm about it could die down once his term would end in November 2012. Amb. Khalid Mahmood was of the opinion that acceptance of being part of the negotiations leading to FMCT would not necessarily bind Pakistan to be part of the treaty as well.

Some other participants of the discussion disagreed. FMCT was criticized as Pakistan-specific and impossible for Pakistan to accept by some participants of the discussion.

Most of the strategic experts participating in the roundtable agreed that for Pakistan to accept the negotiation process leading to FMCT, it will have to include all the four issues covered by the Conference on Disarmament: Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), Negative Security Assurances (NSAs), and Nuclear Disarmament.

(Published in The News Thursday, 15 Sep 2011)

Floods caused ecosystem imbalance

LAHORE - Speaking at the inaugural session of a two-day international conference on latest techniques for conservation of animal genetic resource in Pakistan on Wednesday, US Agriculture Counselor Richard Todd Drennan said that biodiversity was a big challenge faced by the ecosystems globally. He said that the protection of biodiversity through environmental restoration and production of rare species to save them from extinction were needed. The international moot was organised by the Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) in collaboration with the Pakistan Wildlife Foundation and sponsored by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The conference was attended by Malaysian, Swedish, Sudanese and Bengali scientists.

Drennan said that Pakistan was still facing biodiversity issues and that flood and natural calamities occur due to the imbalance of ecosystems and rapid growth in human population. The US agriculture counselor said that most countries had to face environmental problems and global warming caused by the floods which affected Pakistan last year. He stressed upon

the need of balancing ecosystems in conservation of the national breed and in the improvement of the national economy. Biodiversity was aiming at the preservation of the natural heritage, the diversity of species and domestic breeds, he added. Drennan said that the US government allocated \$9 million for the control of foot and mouth disease in Pakistan and that the US had been **collaborating with Pakistan's officials in this regard.** Earlier, UVAS Vice-Chancellor Dr Nawaz said that the government should pay attention to the revival of endangered species for the conservation of genetic resources in Pakistan.

UVAS Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology Director Dr Masroor Elahi Baber said that the conference highlighted the importance of the conservation of ecosystem. It also focused on training the participants for the use of various techniques involved in molecular biology for animal conservation and livestock welfare, he added.

ISLAMABAD - The power transformers installed at the Environment Directorate

(Published in Pakistan Today Thursday, 15 Sep 2011)

CDA's Environment Directorate without electricity

of the Capital Development Authority Directorate has been out of order for more than a week. Sources privy to the matter told Pakistan Today that the problem had caused great inconvenience for the staff.

The sources seeking said the transformer had broken down days before the start of the Eid holidays suspending power supply to the directorate.

He said around four months ago the authority had



bought a new power transformer with Rs 0.25 million from the IESCO but during the recent rainy season, it developed some fault and since then the directorate had been without electricity. He said the IESCO had said they would give another power transformer once the latter paid them.

The sources said the high-ups were reluctant to come to office because of power suspension and that on Monday most of the officers left for their homes early. He said the work at the director had come to stand still because of this problem.

(Published in Pakistan Today Thursday, 15 Sep 2011)

KP government discusses devolved environmental department

PESHAWAR - In order to discuss the post 18th constitutional amendment affairs and problems of the environmental department, a meeting of the oversight committee on implementation of 18th constitutional amendment was held with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister Information and Cultural Mian Iftikhar Hussain in the chair at Peshawar.

According to an official hand out issued on Sunday, beside its members Minister for Education Sardar Hussain Babak, Environment Minister Wajid Ali Khan, Adnan Wazir MPA, Secretaries of Administration and Inter Provincial Coordination Departments and Additional Secretary Environment attended the meeting. Senator Afrasiab Khattak member of the implementation commission attended the meeting on special invitation.

The participants have discussed in depth affairs of the Wildlife, Fisheries departments and Environmental Protection Agency. In particular, the meeting discussed on affairs of Pakistan Forest Institute and decided that it would continue to work as attached department of the Environment Department to ensure its enhanced role and provision of better services to the entire country in future.

The meeting was informed that 95% staff of PFI belonged to other provinces, but the provincial government did not disturb them to ensure their job security. Similarly, the meeting after thorough deliberation stressed the federal government to share the composition, powers and functions of the national environmental council with all the provincial governments and include representatives one each from the provinces in it. The meeting also discussed the challenge of the climate change and the role of environment department in detail. The meeting also proposed a research and survey branch in environment department on the pattern of geological survey of Pakistan. Briefly speaking on the occasion, Chairman of the Oversight Committee Mian Iftikhar Hussain maintained that the proposal of holding a separate meeting with the department were meant to discuss to review the post 18th Constitutional Amendment role and remove bottlenecks if any. He asked the heads of the department to take into confidence political leadership as well as the general public on issues of common interest.

(Published in Pakistan Today Thursday, 15 Sep 2011)

Thousands rescued from Pakistan floods by military

Pakistani soldiers have evacuated more than 250,000 residents from the worst affected areas.

The Pakistan military have used inflatable boats to ferry people and animals to higher and safer ground.

So far over 300,000 people have been made homeless by the floods which have also destroyed 4.5 million acres of farmland. Entire villages have been submerged and only the tops of trees are visible.

Major Waheed Bukhari, from the army rescue operation in Badin said: "In the Badin district, we have rescued more than 3000 people from the Shadi Laj area, and more than 10,000 people from the Pingrio region. The rescue operation is going on and more people are being rescued."

Laro, a farmer, and his family were rescued from their submerged village by soldiers.

Related Content

Pakistan floods affect 14 million people

"Our houses and crops have been totally destroyed. I am taking my children to Thar because that is a raised area and my family will be safer there," Laro said.

Aid groups have warned that the flood victims are at increasing risk of fatal diseases.

The 2010 Pakistan floods killed 2,000 people and made 11 million homeless.

(The Telegraph 15 Sep 2011)

Mountaineering: Porters' skills enhanced through training

The nine-day training course for mountaineering porters at Rakaposhi Base Camp concluded here on Thursday, with participants terming the course as a milestone for climbers in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B).

The course, attended by 16 participants, was arranged by Alpine Club of Pakistan in collaboration with EV-K2-CNR, an Italian funded project.

The training was conducted by internationally acclaimed Italian climbers Maurizio Gallo and Michele Gucchi.

"This was one of the best training courses I ever attended," Faiz Ali, a participant, told *The Express Tribune*.

G-B Forests Secretary Abdul Hameed, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony, distributed certificates among the participants.

Gallo said that the course was meant for porters assisting



climbers in their expeditions, which would help them improve their climbing skills. Rescue, evaluation and emergency communication were also taught during the course, he added. EV-K2-CNR Technical Representative Arif Hussain said that the course was organised in the framework of Social Economic and Environmental Development, a project funded by the government of Italy and Pakistan. It was implemented through a partnership between the EV-K2-CNR committee and Karakoram International University. Hameed thanked the Italian climbers for arranging the course and urged them to hold more training programmes in the region, which have some of the world's highest mountains.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 16th, 2011.

Consultation: 'Conservation, biodiversity strategies vital to protect genetic resources

National conservation and biodiversity strategies are vital in finding out ways and means to protect Pakistan's indigenous wealth of genetic resources. This was stated by Intellectual Property Organisation (IPO) Chairperson Hameedullah Jan Afridi during



Two-day workshop on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing organised.

the concluding session of a two-day consultative workshop on **"Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Law,"** said a press release issued by IPO in Islamabad on Thursday. Afridi stressed for expediting the process of promulgation of Biodiversity Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (Act/ABS) law. This, he said, would help resolve the complex issues of access to genetic resources.

Pakistan's biological resources need to be preserved, he said, and issues relating to the subject were raised during the Conference of Parties of Convention on Biological Diversity at Nagoya last year.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Islamabad Manager Mahmood Akhtar Cheema said that brain storming sessions were held in the presence of experts and effective proposals had been presented to make the ABS draft more representative.

Forests Inspector General (IG) Mehmood Nasir said that inclusion of certain clauses of ABS law in IPO regularity affairs can help the protected use of natural resources. Dr Aftab Saeed talked about the regulation of derivatives.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 16th, 2011.

Mubarak takes over as Chief Conservator Wildlife

Peshawar—Syed Mubarak Ali Shah, after assuming the charge of the post of Chief Conservator Wildlife, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has formally started work in his office. A welcoming ceremony was held in this connection on Thursday in Peshawar. On this occasion beside others Provincial Minister for Environment, Wajid Ali Khan, Additional Secretary Environment, and Arshad Majeed, outgoing Chief Conservator Saeed uz Zaman, Chief Conservator Forest, Haider Ali Khan, Managing Director FDC Nazir Khan, DG Pakistan Forest Institute, Syed Badshah and Conservators and DFOs of Wildlife Department were also present.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Environment, Wajid Ali Khan presented shields and flower bouquets to the outgoing Chief Conservator Saeed uz Zaman on behalf of the officials of Wildlife Department. Addressing the function on the occasion Wajid Ali Khan congratulated the incoming Chief Conservator and hoped that he would put the department on road to progress by utilizing all his capabilities and energies in a best way and work like a team for the protection and development of wildlife.

Pakistan Observer - 16 Sep 2011

Energy crisis: Hydropower in isolation not enough to address issue

Pakistan needs to invest in hydropower if it wants to address the rising concerns for food security and unemployment.

This was suggested by the Planning Commission of Pakistan Chief (Water Resources) Naseer Ahmed Gillani at a seminar organised by Pakistan-Norway Association (PANA) here on Thursday.

However, some speakers while advocating for their respective solutions, maintained that hydropower development in isolation was not the only solution. Pakistan needed to develop a mix of sources to fulfil its energy requirements.

The bio-gas project is well within the scope of the idea of green economy, as it involves the use of natural fertiliser, such as cow dung or animal wastes, as fuel. Carbon dioxide

emission is instantly decreased leading to less green house gas production and global warming.

It only requires a 12-feet deep and five-feet wide well, fitted with a small apparatus and pipelines. So the costs are not very high. It substitutes the use of non-renewable fossil fuels, firewood and dung cakes. So our forests may once again thrive, she said.



Speakers at a seminar stress investment in a mix of energy

“Only two to three animals like cows or buffalos are required at a farm [employing a bio-gas project]. A small amount is sufficient to produce six to seven hours of continuous supply of gas and the pressure is much better than the natural gas,” said Saeed.

Prof. Emerita Iftikhar N Hassan from Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi agreed with Saeed and said that Pakistan needs a mix of hydropower, solar, nuclear and thermal energy sources to address the energy crisis.

Gillani, in his presentation, revealed that share of coal in overall energy production in Pakistan had declined from 68 per cent in 1948 to 7.6 per cent at present. This is despite the fact that Pakistan has one of the biggest coal resources in the world.

Arve Tvede, an engineer and environmentalist specialist from Norway, currently working with Friends of Democratic Pakistan, and Hanna Mollan, social scientist and political activist from Norway, currently working with UNICEF in Sukkur, shared Norway’s experience in hydropower development.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 17th, 2011

AT&T Innovators Contest: Pakistani application wins second prize

Animal 101 has just won the contest and is posted on the OVI store, It has sold about 50 copies of the app in Pakistan.

PHOTO: NOKIA

A Pakistani application has won 2nd prize in the Nokia & AT&T Innovators 2011 Contest'. The Animal 101 application was submitted by TenPearls, a global application development company owned and run by a Pakistani developer. Animal 101 is a learning based application that aims to teach children [ages 3 to 8] to learn about animals by engaging them in interactive games. Animal 101's most accomplished feature is its usability by children who cannot read. It engages children with an entertaining educational experience using pictorial representations and fun facts about the animal world and is aimed at children who have not even started school. Animal 101 has just won the contest and is posted on the OVI store, It has sold about 50 copies of the app in Pakistan. And



according to the Nokia, given the level of apps purchased in this region and the phones that are supported by this app, this is an impressive number. That's not all, the application went on to be a big hit internationally as well, with over 2000 copies of the app sold around the world and being

translated into four languages (English, Chinese, Indonesian and Spanish).

It took a team of 5 people to create the App in three months and with its success, the country's people can believe that we can also produce world class apps, said Rabia Azfar, Business Development Manager EDX, NOKIA Near East.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 17th, 2011.

Survey: Documenting G-B's flora and fauna

An ongoing two-week long survey in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) aims to document key characteristics of the flora and fauna in the region's wetlands. The survey was started by the World Wide Fund (WWF) under the Saving Wetlands Sky High Programme (SWSH) on September 9 and will continue till September 22. Six wetlands will be covered in the survey.

The survey will cover mammals, birds, reptiles and terrestrial vegetation found on and around the lakes, officials said on Saturday.

According to High altitude Wetlands Conservation Officer Farasat Ali, the survey team comprises a dozen experts, who will collect primary data on wetland biodiversity to explore their status, distribution, population, threats and alliance of the selected high altitude wetlands.

"We have sent teams of experts to the high altitude wetlands, selecting Ghursay Lake (Kharmang), Karfaq Lake(Ganche), Jarbasso Lake (Shigar), Birgal Lake (Ishkoman) Gahkuch MarshLand (Gahkuch) and Shandoor wetlands complex (Shandoor) for the study," Ali told The Express Tribune on Saturday.

The findings of the survey will soon be disseminated through reports, journals and other publications, Ali added. These will also be available in the Gilgit Conservation and Information Centre.

"It will be very beneficial for the researchers and students," he said, adding that a new distribution of rodents, passerines, non-passerine birds, reptiles, amphibians and large mammals have so far been identified in the survey. Passerines are bird of the order



Passeriformes, which includes more than half of all bird species. They are also known as perching birds or less accurately as song-

birds; they form one of the most diverse terrestrial vertebrate order. Ali said that the survey team consisted of experts from the WWF's Saving Wetlands Sky High Programme, Pakistan Wetlands Programme, Wildlife Foundation of Pakistan, National Agricultural Research Council of Pakistan and the Karakorum International University, Thlone University of the region.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 17th, 2011.

Revisit of draft Biodiversity Act urged

The speakers and experts here at a Consultative workshop stressed the need for revisiting of draft Biodiversity act and develop an Access benefit sharing law in the context of the Nagoya Protocol, for benefit of the country.

The Inspector General Forests (IGF), Planning and Development Department Division, Government of Pakistan, and International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), jointly organized the workshop "Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Law for Pakistan".

The two-day discussions focused on the regulation of derivatives, certification of compliance, regulation of Traditional Knowledge related to genetic resources and on the development of an institutional framework for ABS in Pakistan. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Ishfaque Ahmad, Advisor on Climate Change and Sustainable Development who emphasized that the diversity of Pakistan's biological resources needed to be preserved. He commended the efforts of the IGF and IUCN in facilitating the finalization of the draft law and reiterated that the matter had been placed at priority at government level.

IGF, Syed Mahmood Nasir in his address of welcome emphasized that the conservation of biological resources was mandatory for Pakistan which is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The audience provided its views and inputs on the draft and raised questions relating to enforcement, capacity building, information sharing, regulation of commercial commodities and mechanisms for benefit sharing.

Legal expert on intellectual property Zulfiqar Khan, led the discussions related to the protection of traditional knowledge.

Hamdard University, Faculty of Eastern Medicine, Dr. Aftab Saeed, addressed the topic of regulation of derivatives.

The next steps and way forward were discussed by the IGF. The Chief Guest for the closing ceremony was Chairman IPO Pakistan, former federal Minister Environment, Hamidullah Jan Afridi, who commended the efforts made during the workshop to move forward the process of regulating ABS in Pakistan.

(Published in Pakistan Observer 17 September 2011)

South Asian countries urged not to let their beaches be used as dumping grounds

South Asian countries must not allow the use of their beaches as **dumping grounds for the west's chemically contaminated and extremely hazardous ships**. This was the crux of a seminar organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Islamabad, said a press release on Friday.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Advocate Supreme Court of Bangladesh and Programs Director, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) said that ship-breaking yards should be closed in the region as they are not environmentally safe, economically beneficial and socially productive.

She said that 107 ships were dismantled this year in Pakistan, as compared to seven ships last year.

The participants maintained that the ship-breaking yards must not be allowed to operate without proper environmental protection and sound management of asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls, ozone-depleting substances, and a range of heavy metals. They said the workers have to work in extremely unsafe, unhygienic and exploitative environment; they stressed upon the need to ensure welfare and provision of Personal Protective Equipment for the workers.

Dr Aurangzaib Khan of the Planning Commission of Pakistan said



social and environmental aspects of ship-breaking industry require serious considerations at policy level.

Hasan said that although ship-breaking industry provides 25% of

iron core along with livelihood to 18,000 workers, its environmental and social costs are unprecedented for Bangladesh.

She informed that coastal fishing in Chitagong is almost gone, 14 species of fish have gone extinct, thousand of acres of mangrove forest have been chopped off and the entire area has become chemically polluted with un-reparable damage to human health.

A documentary "Iron Eaters" was also screened. Then Kanwar Iqbal, SDPI Research Associate, gave a presentation on the ship breaking industry, its issues and possible solutions.

(Published in The Express Tribune, September 17th, 2011)

First phase of Wildlife Park at QAU launched

Former federal minister for textile Rana Farooq Saeed Khan launched the first phase of the Wildlife Park, an extended project of Botanic Garden (BG), Quaid-i-Azam University, by releasing four pairs of geese into a small artificial lake here on Thursday afternoon.

Others participating in the ceremony included Dr Abdul Hameed, Dean Biological Sciences and head of the Technical Committee, BG, Rana Shafiq-ur-Rehman, President of Green Circle Organisation helping QAU in setting up the Botanic Garden and its extension, S Shahid Raza, CEO of Leonz, who donated these birds, S Israr Ali, Vice-Principal of Islamabad College for Boys.

The geese, which included an Australian pair also, were released near Housing Colony of the New Campus, QAU, near Shahdara Road, in a pond created as part of water harvesting arrangement. The pond will not only house marine birds and animals but would also serve as back-up reservoir of water during dry seasons.

Talking to this scribe, Rana Farooq Saeed hoped that Botanic Garden and its extension project will attract residents of the twin-cities and tourists visiting Murree Hills and Galiyat using the nearby Murree Road.

The birds will later be shifted to the Wildlife Park to be located on the eastern boundary-line of QAU. It will be part of a herbal tea hut and would include a lake and enclosures for animals and birds to attract tourists.

The work on Botanic Garden started in the middle of January this year and more than 60-hectare of land was leveled for the BG and its extended project. The BG itself, an HEC funded project, is spread on 25 acres and includes water storage, tissue-culture lab and offices to be set up in near future.

The extended project aims at putting the unattended university land into useful utilization and also gets the land vacated from qabza groups in the process.

The BG also got pigeons, rabbits and dogs donated by individuals, organizations and firms. Many more species are in the pipeline and will be introduced after the requisite infrastructure is established.

In a parallel development, a Kitchen Gardening Club has also started working at QAU. It aims at motivating, guiding and helping Campus Community.

The QAU staff will be offered to use university land for growing vegetables and fruits for their households each having some marlas of land for the purpose.

(Published in The News by Rasheed Khalid, Sunday, September 18, 2011)

Pakistan flood aid relief hurt by CIA's Osama bin Laden vaccination programme

Flood relief efforts in Pakistan have been jeopardized because the country's security services fear aid agencies are riddled with spies, it was claimed on Monday.

It is taking longer for aid workers to get visas for Pakistan – and some are being refused completely, according to agency staff. When they get there they then face new restrictions on their movement.

The deterioration in relations between Pakistani officials and aid agencies is said to have followed the CIA's fake vaccination campaign earlier this year aimed at obtaining DNA samples from relations of Osama bin Laden.

It reportedly involved a complicated plan in which a Pakistani doctor was recruited to offer hepatitis B vaccinations to locals. A nurse working for the programme was then admitted to the compound to give vaccinations to the children there. The CIA hoped to obtain DNA from the children and match it to that of **bin Laden's sister, who had died at a hospital in Boston last year.**

Although it was not known if the ruse was successful, Pakistani intelligence services subsequently arrested the doctor. Benoit de Gryse, the Pakistan representative for Médecine Sans Frontières, said: "In terms of the fake CIA vaccination programme, we are worried that abuse of medical identity harms the capacity for aid agencies to provide aid in Pakistan.

A Western aid worker who did not want to be named said the CIA vaccination programme and subsequent bin Laden raid had **made relief efforts far more challenging than last year's floods.**

Continue.....

"Many aid workers are not getting visas and there is a major problem in getting access to certain areas."

Another aid manager reportedly said that since the fake vaccination campaign "the secret services consider us to be spies".

Damage caused by the latest floods, which have wiped out thousands of villages in the province of Sindh, has been made worse by the deteriorating relationship. Despite warnings from agencies such as Oxfam that canals and flood barriers were urgently required near schools and hospitals, little has been done.

Payments have been delayed as aid agencies are no longer considered neutral, with reports that the government wants to be paid money directly and undertake reconstruction programmes itself. Aid donors are also holding back.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) yesterday issued an emergency appeal for \$135 million to increase food deliveries to areas in Sindh and Baluchistan.

(Published in The telegraph By Justin Stares 19 Sep 2011)

Kausar releases 5-Saker Falcons

Peshawar—Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Barrister Masood Kausar on Monday released 5-Saker Falcons at a simple ceremony held at Governor House here and urged the authorities to gear up their efforts for the protection of wildlife.

These Falcons were seized while being smuggled at Torkham border a week ago by the anti-smuggling political staff of Khyber Agency. Conservator Wildlife while briefing the Governor on different species of Falcons said that Saker Falcon was a very large in the family of Falcons that breeds from Eastern Europe eastwards across Asia to Manchuria. Being a migratory bird it was wintering in Ethiopia, the Arabian Peninsula, Northern Pakistan and Western China. He said that the govt. of Pakistan had imposed ban on it and the department was **monitoring the ban effectively. It's worth mentioning that the Governor Masood Kausar has also issued special instructions to all the political administrations in FATA to effectively curb the smuggling in their respective jurisdiction. Seizure of Falcon was an immediate response to the Governor's fresh directives.** It was told on the occasion that Falcons were being smuggled from across the border at Torkham, hidden in a handcart.

The Governor stressed the need for taking extra preventive measure for the protection of wildlife and sought for a detailed presentation on the measures taken in this regard. He said that smuggling should be effectively curbed and urged the political administrations to take extra measure in this regard. He appreciated the political authorities of Khyber Agency in this particular **case of Falcon's smuggling.**

(Published in Pakistan Observer, 19 Sep 2011)

14,000 cattle killed in Sindh due to floods

According to Food and Agriculture Origination (FAO), as many as 14,000 cattle have been killed in Sindh due to recent floods, while the remaining need vaccination and fodder for survival.

Talking to a private news channel, FAO spokesman Ali Khan said



that FAO has decided to start its rapid response for the surviving livestock in the province. The or-

ganisation would provide fodder and start vaccination of the surviving animals to avoid further loss of livestock in the province, he said.

Ali said that livestock was the main component of the rural economy, major source of livelihood of thousands of families, and a source of their daily food as well.

Besides, crops including cotton, sugarcane, chillies and vegetables standing over 2 million acre were also destroyed in the flood, he added.

The cotton crop in the flood-affected districts of the province was 100 percent destroyed and the sugarcane crop faced partial damage, he added.

The FAO would also provide seeds and fertilisers to the farmers for the upcoming Rabbi season to help ensure food security, he said.

(Published in Business Recorder Tuesday, 20 September 2011)

Whale with missing body parts washes up on Clifton beach

The battered body of a whale with some of its parts missing washed up on the Seaview beach on Tuesday morning. Dozens of people went to the beach just to catch a glimpse of the giant mammal, at least 69 feet long, believed to be a blue whale or humpback whale.

Experts agreed that it was a baleen whale species, which is characterised by baleen plates used to filter food from water, but had different opinions about the exact family of the whale.

“The size of the marine mammal might be bigger as the body is not intact,” said Dr Babar Hus-sain of the World Wildlife Fund-Pakistan. **“Its upper jaw and a portion of**

lower jaw are missing, while a detached part of lower jaw measuring 17.8 feet has been found lying near the body.” Its large size caused his team of experts to assume that it was a blue whale, he said.

“The body is in poor shape. Perhaps the whale died two to three weeks ago,” he said, citing natural causes behind the death.

Seconding his findings, Prof Dr Pirzada Jamal Siddiqui, heading a team of experts from Karachi University’s Centre of Excellence in Marine Biology, said that the whale had certain identification marks, including its flippers and size, which were specific to the blue whale.

We have taken samples for a DNA analysis,” he said.

The sailing ships, he added, posed a major threat to the sur-

vival of cetacean species as they come out of the water to breathe.

Sharing his observation, Mansoor Ali Shah representing the Sindh Wildlife Department team said that he believed that it was **a humpback whale. “The black strip on the dorsal side of the whale makes it appear more like a humpback whale.”**

He said discussions were under way to decide about the mam-mal’s burial.

Near-shore and off-shore water surveys have showed that bot-tlenose dolphin, humpback dolphin, spinner dolphin, Risso’s dol-phin and killer whale (which is scientifically categorised as a dol-phin) have been found in moderate numbers in Pakistani waters,



as does the finless porpoise. Besides, a number of whales, includ-ing Bryde’s whale, Cuvier’s beaked whale, fin whale, sperm whale, humpback whale and blue whale, have also been sighted in the seas.

“I believe that we must carry out research, explore the factors that pose a threat to their existence and make a serious effort to conserve these beautiful marine creatures playing an important role in the marine ecosystem,” said Dr Siddiqui.

(Published in DAWN, By Faiza Ilyas, September 21, 2011)

Pakistan flood poses serious challenge to food security: UN

The Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations feared that major losses the heavy rains have caused to cash crops.

FAO has conducted a rapid needs assessment in flood-hit Sindh to prevent further losses of livestock and help agriculture resumption. More than 70 percent or 1.6 million acres of standing crops have been destroyed and nearly 14,000 farm animals lost in the disaster.

The cotton crop has already been affected the most, and now the standing water is posing a serious threat to sugarcane and



rice fields. Damage to fish and poultry farming are another setback to food security as initial count shows 1,000 fish farms and 800 poultry farms have been severely affected. The UN body says the season to plant Rabi crops is due to begin in five weeks but there is limited scope for extending help to ensure sowing in order to provide food for early 2012. The international aid agency warned yesterday that as the number of affected people continues to rise, deaths could increase and future of millions of people could be destroyed if funding remains slow.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and its partners in the cluster of aid agencies providing emergency shelter have also appealed to international donors for \$67 million to help at least 274,000 vulnerable families.

(Published in Peninsula On-line - 20 Sep 2011)

About 14,000 animals killed in Sindh due to floods: FAO

Islamabad—As many as 14,000 animals killed in Sindh Province due to recent flash floods while remaining are immediately required vaccination and fodder for their survival. Spokesman of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Ali Khan told reporter here on Monday that FAO has decided to start its rapid response for the surviving livestock in the province. The organization would provide fodder and immotility starting vaccinations of the surviving animals to avoid further livestock losses in the province, he added.

Ali further informed that livestock was the main component of rural economy and major source of livelihood of thousands of families besides a source of their daily food as well. Besides, crops including cotton, sugarcane, chillies and vegetables standing over 2 million acre were also destroyed, he added.

The cotton crop in the flood affected districts of the province was 100 percent destroyed as the sugarcane crop faced partial damage, he added. The FAO would also provide seeds and fertilizers to the farmers for the Rabi season which will about to start in the province to develop food security.

In this regard, he said that rapid assessment was under way which would help for identifying the areas where sowing would be possible during current rabbi season. He informed that the according to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and other international agencies, the intensity of recent flash **floods were worse then last year's floods in the country.**

Ali Khan further elaborated that last year the organization has provided emergency support for 900,000 families besides providing livestock support for about 300,000 families and restored about 1000 water irrigation channels by spending US \$ 98 million. It may be recalled that United Nations called for US\$ 357 million to help the Government of Pakistan provide life-saving assistance to more than 5 million people.

An estimated 5.4 million people have been affected by flooding in Sindh and Balochistan; nearly 1 million homes have been destroyed and 72 per cent of crops have been lost in the worst affected areas.

(Published in Pakistan Today Wednesday, September 21, 2011)

Dengue mosquito's enemy missing in act

- WWF Pakistan experts believe that dengue outbreak can be related to a frog decline, which has occurred due to rising water pollution. Had there been enough frogs, dengue would have been less severe.

LAHORE - The disappearance of around 90 percent of frogs, reckoned to be natural enemies of mosquitoes, is a vital cause **behind the dengue outbreak,"** revealed World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Pakistan. WWF Pakistan disclosed that frogs acted as predator against all species of mosquitoes including dengue and kept the number of mosquitoes in balance according to the ecosystem. As frogs were on a catastrophic decline, dengue-like mosquitoes were on the loose.

WWF Pakistan Senior Director Dr Ghulam Akbra told Pakistan Today that frogs were a part of the ecosystem and were **abundant in ponds, which the city possessed.** "Frogs have died as a result of local human activity, while the epidemic



has also reached remote areas. Major causes of frog decline are habitat destruction, chemical pollution, climate change, **epidemics and human activity,"** he said.

Like dengue mosquitoes, frogs too lived in clean water and ate mosquito eggs and larva, checking outbreak of dengue mosquitoes. However, he said that since the water table was getting polluted due to massive spray of pesticides on crops, release of toxic water by industries into land and sewerage of houses, natural habitats of frog had been so poisoned that frogs were near to extinction.

He said that flying-dragons, bats and fish were also natural killer of mosquitoes and a national policy was needed to protect such harmless mosquito-killers as a biological solution to eradicate dengue and other species of mosquitoes.

Punjab Environment Protection Department Deputy Director (EIA) Naseemur Rehman Shah said that frogs like species swallowed not only the eggs but also adult mosquitoes. He revealed that government in consultation with experts had started planning to protect the anti-mosquito species as a long term strategy. During the seminar conducted by EPA at Punjabi Complex, speakers focused on the issue, he said and hoped that soon government would chalk out integrated strategy to end the epidemic.

(Published in Pakistan Today - 22 Sep 2011)

Pre-Eid jitters: Should you be worried about the Congo virus?

Unless you live in Zhob, Balochistan you do not run a direct risk of contracting the Congo virus, says Professor of Haematology at the National Institute of Blood Diseases, Dr Tahir Shamsi. Explaining the origin of the cases in Pakistan, the doctor stresses **there is no cause for alarm.** "People in Zhob infected by Congo hemorrhagic fever are often moved to Quetta for treatment," he says. "Healthcare providers who do not adequately protect themselves while treating the patient, end up contracting the virus from them." As a result, the infected healthcare providers are sent to Karachi for treatment. More often than not, those



who catch the virus in the early stages, receive treatment and are stabilised. The average number of cases from Zhob each year ranges from 50 to 100, not enough to call it an epidemic, Shamsi says.

Healthcare providers treating infected patients need to be very careful. In fact, Dr Shamsi recommends more precautions than when treating patients with HIV. Avoid very invasive procedures unless necessary. If such procedures need to be performed, proper measures must be taken for protection.

(Published in The Express Tribune, September 22nd, 2011)

Two million sick from Pakistan floods

ISLAMABAD — Two million Pakistanis have fallen ill from diseases since monsoon rains left the southern region under several feet of water, the country's disaster authority said Thursday.

More than 350 people have been killed and over eight million people have been affected this year by floods that officials say are worse in parts of Sindh province than last year, when the country saw its worst ever disaster.

Malaria, diarrhoea, skin disease and snake bites were among the health problems facing two million people across 23 Sindh districts, said Irshad Bhatti, spokesman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

"In some areas, diseases also spread out because of dead animals but there is no major break-out of any epidemic," Bhatti added, calling for the donation of mosquito nets and medicines to help the aid effort.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said there is a desperate shortage of clean drinking water in the south which has also triggered outbreaks of acute diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases.

The UN's children agency has pledged to distribute 200,000 litres (50,000 gallons) of water to 40,000 people daily and deploy 40 more water tankers soon, to avert further disease. Parts of Sindh are under several feet of water and Pakistan's meteorological department says the worst-affected districts of Badin, Mirpurkhas and Thar seeing have seen eight times the usual levels of rainwater.

The government is trying to fend off criticism of an inadequate response to the floods one year after it was castigated for failing to respond quickly enough to its worst ever floods that affected a total of 21 million people.

For months, aid groups had warned the government to invest in adequate prevention measures to mitigate against seasonal rains, avoid a repeat of last year's \$10 billion losses, and protect those left vulnerable two years running.

Calling on the international community to step in to help once more, the UN and Islamabad on Sunday jointly issued an emergency funding appeal for \$357 million for emergency rescue and relief efforts.

So far only the Japanese government has declared a pledge, of 10 million dollars, the UN said.

"We appeal to international community and other donor countries to come forward and help the the people devas-

tated by the floods in Pakistan," said UN spokeswoman Ishrat Rizvi.

Zafar Qadir, chairman of the NDMA, said that more than 550,000 people had been made homeless in the south of the country and called for urgent donations of tents.

"Over five million people are in camps and we need an immediate supply of tents to accommodate all of them. We are facing a severe shortage of tents," he told a news conference.

He said that Japan has sent 3,500 tents so far.

23 September, 2011

Concern voiced at proposed housing scheme on fertile lands

PESHAWAR: The Citizens for Clean Environment (CCE) has expressed concern over the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) s proposed housing scheme at Urmar village in Peshawar district.

The CCE, which comprises the Peshawar chapter of the Institute of Architects of Pakistan, Frontier Heritage Trust, De Laas Gul, Sarhad Conservation Network and the Gandhara Hindko Board, has termed the proposed scheme against the UN convention on Sustainable Development (Rio Declaration) where communities are stakeholders in all development projects.

In a press release on Thursday, the CCE said the PDA scheme was shocking as it would affect the population residing on approximately 14,000 acres of fertile vegetable-producing land in Urmar village adjacent to Peshawar. It said not only has the mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) been ignored, residents of various villages have publicly demonstrated against the scheme.

The CCE said Peshawar was already bursting with the disastrous consequences of rural to urban migration and any trouble in far-flung regions like Chitral shall force conflict-related migrations into the capital city, dispossessing the owners of fertile agricultural land.

The widening of Grand Trunk Road and the Khyber Road and flyovers projects have been rightly rejected by stakeholders

Continue

owing to total circumvention of the citizens and expert viewpoint during the early planning stage, besides, not fulfilling the legal obligation of submitting an EIA which is mandatory under the Section 12 of the Pakistan Environment Protection Act 1997.

The Peshawar High Court Environmental Tribunal KP was made dysfunctional by posting out its chairperson. Equally revealing is the role of the bureaucracy becoming a silent spectator in contravention of the legal obligation of mandatory EIA, said the press release.

The CCE deplored that petition filed by it in the PHC against these projects had not received due attention. This reflects the callousness of the educated sections of society towards the disastrous impact of environment on the health and livelihood of affected population, it added.

The CCE urged the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Environment Protection Agency and UN Conference on Sustainable Development (REDD), Islamabad to rescue the vulnerable communities of the KP being ruthlessly exploited by the ongoing conflicts as well as the government officials.

(Published in The News, Friday, September 23, 2011)

PTA demands ban on live animals export

KARACHI - Pakistan Tanners Association (PTA) on Thursday demanded of the government to impose ban on the export of live animals and keeps an eye on smuggling of livestock.

Chairman PTA, Aziz Ahmed asked the government to exercise immediate check on smuggling of animals, especially to Iran and Afghanistan.

This was stated in a press conference held at Karachi Press Club.

Aziz informed that "It is feared that there will be acute shortage of hides and skins in the coming years as million of domestic animals were taken away by devastating floods and millions of saved animals are suffering from starvation in flood-affected areas.

He said if the government failed to impose ban on export of live animals, the leather sector would suffer further losses as currently the export of leather and leather products was already on decline.

He added that over 24 million animals were smuggled to other countries, especially to Iran and Afghanistan.

Chairman Pakistan Leather Garments Danish Khan elaborate that the shortage of skins and hides and high cost of doing business have bad impact on export of leather products.

Due to lack of product diversification, Pakistan has lost its market share while India, Bangladesh and China have benefited from this.

(Published in The Nation, September 23, 2011)

IFAW Feeds Starving Animals in Pakistan and India

The heavy monsoon rains that have battered South Asia for weeks has caused widespread flooding and left millions of people and animals displaced. In response to the disaster, the International Fund for Animal Welfare initiated relief operations in southern Pakistan and eastern India, two areas that have borne the brunt of the incessant rains of recent weeks.

"Thousands of animals have been left out in the open under the rain or in the scorching sun with no help at all," said Dr. Dick Green IFAW Manager for Disasters. "Our main goal right now is to get food into the hardest-hit areas as quickly as possible."

In Pakistan, the rains have caused widespread flooding primarily in the southern province of Sindh affecting over 5 million people.

The Government of Pakistan announced that 64,000 animals had perished during the bad weather; however, media reports indicate that over half a million animals including cattle, water buffaloes, horses, donkeys, goats and sheep may have already died and countless more remain vulnerable to starvation and disease outbreaks. Millions of flood victims are entirely dependent on the upcoming harvest season and animals play a vital role by plowing the fields.

(By:: Market Watch Sept. 23, 2011)

Animals smuggling cause protein deficiency

Karachi—Aziz Ahmed, Chairman Pakistan Tanners' Association (PTA) - South Zone, has said that most Pakistanis were suffering from high protein deficiency as meat prices rose due to unbridled smuggling of over 2.4 million live animals to Iran and Afghanistan. Comparing the price of meat he said that the cost of one kg. beef was Rs. 120/kg (& Rs. 230/kg goat) in 2006 while it was Rs. 350-400/kg (beef) and Rs. 600/kg (goat) in the current year. He was addressing a Press Conference here at Karachi Press Club.

He said that due to export and smuggling of live animals some 800 tanneries operating in Pakistan were facing shortage of hides. Reiterating that tanneries were contributing 5% in **country's manufacturing GDP and 5.4% of export earnings**, Chairman PTA lamented that as a result of various factors, including unavailability of raw material, gas suspension and heavy load-shedding, the export declined 30% in three years (from US \$ 1.220 billion in 2007-8 to US \$ 867 million in 2009-10). Consequently, 200,000 people lost their jobs as the **leather industry's direct workforce reduced from 700,000 in 2007 to 500,000 this year.**

Demanding complete ban on export of live animals, Aziz Ahmed accused that smugglers when caught covered-up their actions by producing export permits granted by the government. **"If one is allowed to export a thousand heads, he can smuggle many times that number by merely paying a fixed kickback of Rs. 2000/- for a goat and Rs. 3000/- for a cow".**

Chairman PTA maintained that due to rise in prices caused by the shortage of animals lesser people were sacrificing animals at Eid-ul-Azha. Giving a comparative view of annual hide collection on Eid-ul-Azha he informed that it declined from 16 million pieces of hides collected in 2006 to 6 million pieces in 2010. He said the same trend was witnessed in the procurement of raw hides from regular slaughtering through out the year - seven million hides were procured in the year 2010 against twenty-one million during 2006.

Aziz Ahmed also drew attention to the fact that besides devastating floods, war (on terror) too destroyed livestock in

Swat and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. Indicating towards other factors causing the tanneries to reduce production by 20% despite imports of raw material, he pointed towards 17.69% decline in **unit price, increase in chemicals' cost internationally, 63% increase in electricity rates** (from Rs. 4.25 to Rs. 11.50 per unit), 100% increase in electricity unit from diesel generation, increase in gas and utility cost up to 70%, increase in labor cost from Rs. 4500/m to Rs. 7000/m, 17% sales tax and 5% custom duty on import of machinery and equipment.

(Published in Pakistan Observer September 24, 2011)

Pakistan. Sindh suffers livestock losses worth Rs 1.4 billion

The people of Sindh have suffered huge losses of livestock worth Rs 1.4 billion due to recent floods, says a report compiled by the Sindh Livestock and Fisheries Department. According to the report, the recent rains from August 12 to September 21, 2011 have badly affected the livestock of Tharparkar, Shaheed Benazirabad, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas and Badin.

The rain-affected people of Shaheed Benazirabad suffered a loss of livestock of Rs 3700 million, Tharparkar 3300 million, Umerkot Rs 3800 million, Mirpurkhas Rs 2200 million and Badin Rs 800 million, the report said. The livestock of other 15 districts including Thatta, Dadu, Jamshoro, Hyderabad, Matiari, Tando Mohammad Khan, Larkana, Qamabar-Shahdadkot, Kashmor-Kandhkot, Naushehroferoze, Khairpur Mir's, Ghotki, Shaikarpur, Tandoallahyar and Sanghar were also affected by the recent heavy rains, said the report. However, the livestock of Sukkur, Jacobabad and Karachi districts remained safe, the report added. A large number of buffaloes, goats, sheep and cows were among dead or washed away livestock. While, camels, horses and other types of livestock have also died during recent monsoon rains. It is believed that losses of livestock are higher than estimated by the Sindh government.

(Published in UkrAgroConsult - 23 Sep 2011)

MOL, SRSP sign MoU on environmental improvement

PESHAWAR: The MOL Pakistan and Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to achieve the objectives of environmental improvement and landscape enhancement in operational area of Tal Block.

Managing Director of MOL Pakistan Ern Lipták and Chief Executive Officer of SRSP Masoodul Mulk signed the agreement at a ceremony participated by relevant officials from both sides. The project covers \$31,000 investment in environmental re-cultivation activities.

MOL Pakistan is a socially responsible corporate entity and is committed to sustaining and improving the environment and biodiversity in its operational areas. The process of such sustainable improvements in regards with socio-economic conditions of the locals will further be strengthened through similar projects. We hope this will serve as a model for demonstration, Ern? Lipták said in his speech on the occasion.

Dr Usman Ghani, manager natural resource management (NRM) of SRSP, said that initially plantation campaign would be organised in all the three districts of Tal Block including Karak, Kohat and Hangu. Plantation will be made at government institutes besides state communal and individual lands as well as in and around the drilling and production sites of MOL Pakistan.

After successful implementation, the project will be replicated in other parts of MOL Pakistan operational areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he added.

(Published in The News Sunday, September 25, 2011)

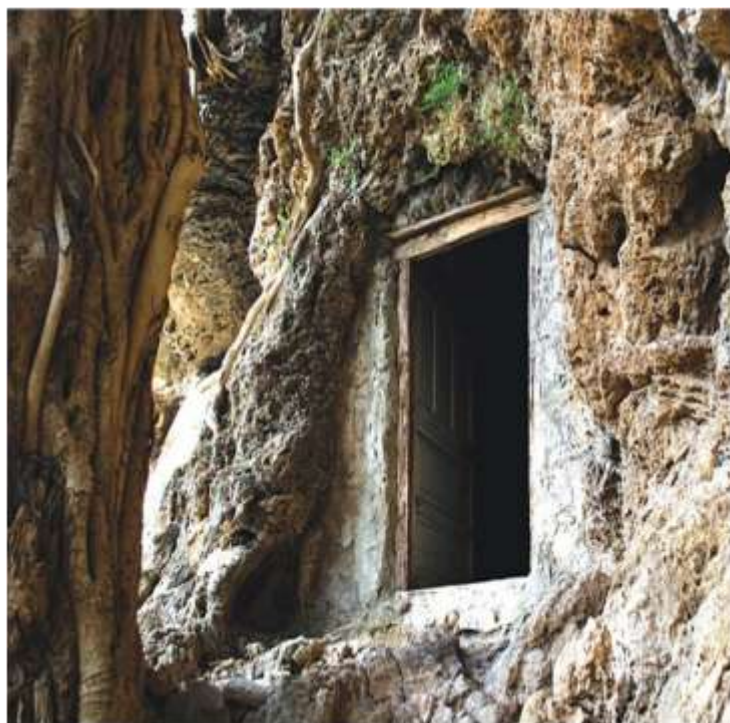
Meddling with past: 'Contempt of heritage' earns contempt of court

The historical Buddha caves at Shah Allah Ditta have put the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in trouble again. Officials of the civic agency were issued contempt of court notices on Friday for violating court orders banning construction near the heritage site in the Margalla Hills.

Justice Riaz Ahmed Khan of Islamabad High Court (IHC) issued notices to CDA Chairperson Imtiaz Inayat Elahi, Deputy Commissioner Amir Ali Ahmed, Federal Archaeology Department Director-General Fazal Dad Kakar, and Director-General Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) Asif Shujha, seeking their comments on accusations of violating court orders.

The petitioner, Raja Saimul Haq Satti, moved the court saying that despite the stay order granted by the Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench, construction of a restaurant is continuing near the caves.

He told the court that the LHC had stayed the construction activity on December 15, 2010. The case was later transferred to the IHC and the respondents were served notices. However, despite the legal action, work for constructing a picnic spot and a restaurant is still going on at the 2,400-year-old Buddhist site.



A view of the ancient Shah Allah Ditta caves.

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The legal notice comes a fortnight after the civic authorities and other organisations joined hands to conserve the remnants of ancient Gandhara civilisation, which included the Shah Allah Ditta caves. Representatives of civic agencies and cultural bodies, at a meeting on September 8, identified 150 **such sites for preservation. The civic agency's Environment Director-General Dr Suleman Sheikh was appointed as head of the committee with CDA members and officials of other departments as its member.**

Dr Suleman Sheikh, Director General (DG) Environment Wing of CDA, told that he was unaware of the petition filed in IHC. **"I think this lawyer has vested interests, I don't know why he has filed this petition."**

"We are [working on preserving] the sites," he said. While giving out the detail of the conservation project, Dr Sheikh said that it would cost Rs26 million out of which Rs19 million would be spent on the preservation of Sadhu Ka Bagh which is adjacent to the caves. However, due to financial constraint the work could not be started yet.

DG PAK-EPA Asif Shuja was also unaware of the development. **"This issue has never come to my notice however my lawyer will defend me in the court," he said.**

Shah Allah Ditta village is believed to be more than 700 years old and was used as the route from Kabul to the Gandharan city of Taxila by Sher Shah Suri and other Mughal rulers. The Buddhist caves are located on the route leading towards Khanpur, next to the shrine of Shah Allah Ditta.

According to an official, the federal government controls 30 kanals in and around Shah Allah Ditta and is in discussions **with the private companies to get more land vacated. "The civic agency plans to preserve the Buddhist caves as well as the adjacent garden known as 'Sadhu ka Bagh'," he added.** The Japanese embassy has reportedly offered to provide funds for the preservation project.

(Published in The Express Tribune, September 25th, 2011)

Carbon credits to be claimed on 34 projects

Pakistan is preparing to claim carbon credits on 34 hydropower projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The mechanism is an alternative source of funding amid the current financial crunch and shrinking Public Sector Development Programme, an official said.

Six major projects for which consideration forms were uploaded on the UNFCCC website in December last year are 1,100MW Kohala hydropower project; 7,100MW Bunji project; 2,700MW Dasu project; 740MW Munda project, 4,500MW Diامر Bhasha Dam project and 969MW Neelum Jhelum project.



Medium-sized projects with their capacities ranging between 75MW and 130MW posted on the website are Golen Gol, Allai Khawar, Khan Khwar, Duber Khwar, Jinnah hydropower project, Kurram Tangi Dam, Phander hydro, Keyal Khwar and Gomal Zam Dam.

Contracts for 17 other small dams and power projects will soon be signed with consultants.

In 2008, India earned carbon credits on two projects Pakistan has been disputing under the Indus Waters Treaty.

Since then, the government has set up a Designated National Authority in the Planning Commission in accordance with a UNFCCC.

(Published in Dawn, By Khaleeq Kiani on September 25, 2011)

DA approves work plan for improvement and up-gradation of the environment

ISLAMABAD, (SANA): Capital Development Authority (CDA) has approved the work plan for improvement and up-gradation of the environment of the federal capital to be carried out at a cost of Rs. 800.00 million

Chairman, CDA, Imtiaz Inayat Elahi approved the plan consisting of around 200 small projects including both hard and soft landscaping of Class-III shopping centers, improvement of side slops of main avenues, interchanges, improvement of lawns and medium strips, cleansing of nullah, improvement at Zoo, construction of sit out areas, development of parks and establishment of Nurseries at different places.

As per work plan Rs. 434 million would be spent on the on going projects whereas Rs. 366 million would be spent on the new schemes.

The Chairman said that the national park makes the city unique as the national park is abundant with of 616 plant species, 250 of birds, 38 of mammals and 13 species of reptiles. Collective efforts would help preserve the rich fauna and flora of the area as there are very few capital cities in the world that are blessed with such close proximity to nature as Islamabad.

CDA is taking concrete measures not only to protect the species inhabited the area but providing educational and recreational facilities to the residents of the twin cities and those visiting the federal capital. The CDA has devised a strategy to preserve the centuries old trees located in both rural and urban areas of the federal capital at a cost of millions of rupees. Under the plan, the civic agency would preserve 2,400-year-old Sadhu ka Bagh and Shah Allah Ditta caves.

Besides, centuries old trees of different species including Date Palm, Kau, Phulai, Banyan, Mango and Peepul would also be protected under the same project.

The project initiated in the vicinity of Shah Allah Ditta would cost Rs 26 million in total out of which Rs 19 million would be spent on the preservation of Saadhu Ka Baagh.

The same site also consists of Stupa, old mosque and a Boally and a pond at Bun Faqiraan and the CDA has decided to preserve all of these sites to attract the visitors.

In total, CDA would preserve 150 sites that also include 13 sites where hundreds years old Bunyan Trees exist.

(South Asian News Agency (SANA) · September 26, 2011)

Birds to promote friendship between India, Pak

CHANDIGARH: Punjab will promote friendship with Pakistan through birds.

This will be through an exchange programme of birds between the zoos of Lahore and Punjab to create awareness about common natural wealth and jointly protect them as people of the two countries did before Partition.

"Pakistan has sent out a message that it can send white peacocks to Punjab, which has only a couple of them," forests and wildlife minister Arunesh Shakir told The Times of India.

"We also have a large number of birds and animals which can be sent to Pakistan," he said.

The minister said the exchange programme between the two states had not been progressing at the required pace for many years. There was therefore need to bring it back on rail so that young generations on both sides of the divide can understand how not only the people of the two countries appear similar, but even birds and animals look alike.

An official delegation of forest and wild life protection department will soon visit zoos in Pakistan to assess the needs of the two countries for the exchange programme, he said.

(Published in Times of India Sep 26, 2011)

High prices & smuggling

THE skyrocketing prices of chicken, mutton and beef are mainly because of smuggling of animals to other countries. People involved in smuggling get the double amount of money by selling their animals to traders. These traders then smuggle these animals to other countries like Iran where they are packed in tins and supplied to different countries.

Sadly, the citizens of Pakistan are deprived of beef, mutton and chicken which are rich in protein. Unbearable astronomical prices of mutton (more than Rs500), beef (more than Rs300) and chicken have compelled people to become vegetarians.

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Furthermore, illegal fishing trawlers in Gwadar are busy catching and sending fish to different countries. This has also increased the price of fish in the local market and throughout Pakistan. Despite having top class sea food, Pakistanis cannot buy fish and other sea food because of exorbitant prices in the local market.

Moreover, each and everything being produced in our country is being smuggled to other countries which is one of the major causes of inflation. I request the authorities concerned to stop smuggling of food items, eatables and commodities to control high prices and to give relief to the common man.

(Published in Dawn, September 26th, 2011)

Criminal negligence' and starvation behind lion cubs death

KARACHI, Sept 26: Suggesting major penalties against zoo officials whose **"wilful negligence" caused the death of three lion cubs** at the Karachi Zoological Gardens more than a month ago, the officer investigating the case with the assistance of a technical team has recommended that the **"whereabouts of the fourth missing cub needs to be ascertained with the help of local police"** as no evidence was



found suggesting that the lioness had eaten her baby. These remarks are part of the much-awaited inquiry report that has been submitted to the DCO by Ghanwer Khan Leghari, executive district officer (EDO), revenue, city district government, last week after a gap of 45 days. The inquiry was supposed to be completed within 15 days.

The inquiry report states: "The death was due to the wilful

negligence on the part of zoo staff. The birth of cubs and their rearing was taken too casually, as it was caring for pye-dogs. There was no 24-hour monitoring of cubs to ascertain the behaviour of captive lioness towards her cubs. There was no effort to bottlefeed the cubs or take care of them.

Two pairs of lions were confiscated at Karachi airport by customs authorities last year as the animals were being imported on an expired permit. The big cats were handed over to the Sindh wildlife department which shifted them to the zoo, saying the department did not have any facility to keep wild animals.

While the matter is still pending in court, a lioness gave birth to four cubs last month. The cubs could hardly survive for five days — three of them were found dead while another was found missing the same day on Aug 12. Reacting to the news, the minister for local government suspended the zoo chief.

Findings of lab tests

According to the findings of the chemical examiner, no traces of chemicals/poison were found in the samples.

The report says that veterinary experts believed that "starvation, lack of mismanagement and negligence" caused the babies' death.

Recommendations

Though minor penalties against the zoo keepers have been recommended, the report also points out that "the lower staff did whatever they could" and it was only because of a lack of foresight and focused attitude of the superiors that the cubs died.

The report also suggests action against Sindh wildlife department officials as they "made no attempt to inquire about the welfare of lions after their confiscation".

The report recommends that the zoo needs an independent body and not a subservient one to a non-technical department like the community development department.

It suggests the creation of an environment closer to animals' natural habitat at

the zoo, appointment of trained staff, initiation of ventures like animal adoption through public-private partnership, proper record keeping and formation of zoo committees comprising members of the wildlife and livestock departments as well as the public.

(Published in Dawn, By Faiza Ilyas | September 27, 2011)

Ketoprofen a safe and effective drug

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) are commonly used in humans and animals for the treatment of mild to moderate pain in conditions like arthritis, osteoarthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and acute musculo-skeletal disorders. In 2006, a very popular and commonly used NSAID, diclofenac sodium was banned for veterinary use in Pakistan because of its reported toxicity in South Asian vultures.

After the ban on diclofenac use in veterinary practice, search for newer and safer NSAIDs was made. We started the present research work at the department of pharmacology and toxicology, University of Veterinary and Animal sciences, (UVAS), Lahore, with the objective to find another effective and safe NSAID. For this purpose, toxicological screening and efficacy trials of different NSAIDs were carried out. The results of these experiments had indicated that the drug Ketoprofen is a safe and effective NSAID.

Ketoprofen (KTP), is a powerful novel Non-Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drug (NSAID), approved for human and veterinary use in more than 70 countries including Pakistan. After the ban on the use of diclofenac sodium in veterinary practice, Ketoprofen has become a popular anti pyretic, analgesic and anti inflammatory drug. Ketoprofen has wide therapeutic index, wider safety margin, lower toxicity potential and less incidence of adverse events than Aspirin, Phenylbutazone and Flunixin Meglumine. Favorable pharmacokinetic profile of Ketoprofen in humans, made it a suitable and effective NSAID for veterinary use.

(Published in The Nation, September 27, 2011)

Asia's growing protected areas promote biodiversity

There are now almost 5,000 protected areas in Asia covering more than 1.8 million square kilometers that have been dedicated to the maintenance and protection of biological diversity, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

“In the past twenty years, East Asia has seen an increase of 25 percent in its total area of land and sea being protected by national regulations.”

In a statement issued on Monday, the IUCN stated that the recently released report titled ‘Protected Areas in East Asia’ reveals that while East Asia covers a combined land area of almost 12 million square kilometers, at least 15 percent of the region is



now successfully dedicated to the conservation of biological diversity.

IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme Director Trevor Sandwith that all countries in Asia are meeting the global targets for terrestrial protected areas and this is great news for the region.

“But looking ahead, the challenge is to improve the coverage in under-represented ecosystems, including marine and coastal areas and to achieve real quality in management effectiveness and equitable governance.”

Protected areas provide critical habitat for threatened species and are helping the recovery of some of the region's most iconic animals such as the Giant Panda in China and the Amur Tiger in Russia.

Similarly, the Dhodial Pheasantry near Abbottabad in Pakistan is the largest of its kind. The sanctuary covers an area of 21 acres and houses 34 of the 52 species of pheasants found in the world.

(Published in Pakistan Today Tuesday, 27 Sep 2011)

MC, WWF Pakistan launch environmental programme

KARACHI: Indus Motor Company (IMC) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Pakistan are committed to create awareness regarding environmental conservation among the youth of Pakistan and practically mobilise them to safeguard the rapidly-polluting environment of the country so that the upcoming generations can breathe in the safe environment and fresh air.

This was stated by chief executive officer (CEO) IMC, Parvez Ghias, while inaugurating the second annual 'Toyota School Environment Programme' at a local hotel here on Monday. The purpose of the 'Toyota School Environment Programme' is to engage school students and teachers in a structured awareness programme to foster a sense of individual responsibility and accountability in future generations towards nature conservation.

Parvez Ghias and Deputy Director General WWF Pakistan, Dr Ejaz Ahmed, formally launched the programme by signing the partnership documents and vowed to support Pakistan through continuous industrial development and sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, while making continuous progress towards social development and environment preservation. staff report

(Published in Daily Times Tuesday, September 27, 2011)

CDA yet to drain out ponds at Fatima Jinnah Park

ISLAMABAD - The different hospitals of the capital city have received at least 28 patients with dengue system but the Capital Development Authority (CDA) seems unmoved since it has yet to drain out water from the big and small ponds in the Fatima Jinnah Park which is daily visited by hundreds of people.

It is ironic that the government-run awareness campaign urges people to drain out stagnant water in their neighborhoods while one of its departments is turning a deaf ear to that. The pond which is yet to be drained out by the CDA is

located near the main jogging track which belies the CDA's claim that it has made effective measures to protect the residents from dengue threat.

It is very apathetic of the CDA for not draining out water ponds in the public parks and particularly the Fatima Jinnah Park. By doing so the authority is negligently putting many lives at risk since these ponds serve as the breeding grounds for dengue mosquitoes. The CDA's failure to maintain cleanliness in the city's less developed sectors also belies their claims that their sanitation



(Published in "Pakistan Today" by Fazal Sher Tuesday, 27 Sep 2011)

staff is spreading lime at various sites and small water ditches to eliminate dengue mosquitoes and house flies. An official of CDA said that poor coordination among different wings of CDA was one of the reasons for the cleanliness problems in the city as well as at the said park.

CDA spokesman Ramazan Sajid said the CDA had launched effective campaign against dengue virus. "The CDA has closed all fountains at public parks and conducted an effective fumigation drive in different parts of the city including drains, slums, greenbelts, garbage sites, parks, ponds, fountains and zoo area. When asked about ponds located in Fatima Jinnah, he said the authority's directorate concerned had drained those ponds but promised he would look into the matter.

(Published in "Pakistan Today" by Fazal Sher Tuesday, 27 Sep 2011)

1.4 bn at rabies risk in Southeast Asia: WHO

New Delhi: Over 1.4 billion people in the Southeast Asian region are at a potential risk of rabies due to large human and dog concentrations in congested habitable areas, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said in a statement here Tuesday.



"Children aged 5-15 years represent 40 percent of people exposed to dog-bites in rabies-endemic areas.

Southeast Asia region has more deaths due to rabies than in any other part of the world," the statement said ahead of the World Rabies Day Wednesday.

In Southeast Asian region, WHO includes India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, among many other countries.

The WHO defines rabies as a disease caused by a virus transmitted to humans from animals. It infects domestic and wild animals, and is spreads to people through close contact with infected saliva via bites or scratches.

She also urged countries to ensure access to modern tissue-culture rabies vaccine, a cheaper and safer mode of vaccination for animals.

Some of the other important steps listed are promoting cost-effective intradermal vaccination and controlling rabies at the source through mass dog vaccination and animal birth control.

In the Southeast Asian region, rabies kill 21,000-24,000 people every year -- nearly 45 percent of global deaths due to the disease.

Anti-rabies vaccination and birth control of dogs have also been carried out by animal welfare organisations and NGOs. WILFUL negligence, starvation of zoo lions and other acts of

(Published in Health on Tuesday, September 27, 2011)

Zoo negligence

slackness of duty, it has been reported, are behind the deaths of three cubs and the mysterious disappearance of a fourth born about a month ago. Though delayed, serious investigation into negligence at the Karachi zoo is a welcome development.

At the same time, similar fact-finding ought to be on the table where other zoos across the country are concerned. The fact is that animals are treated with cruelty in this country, be it a feral **dog or an 'exhibit' at a zoo. Why that is so is beyond comprehension.** Perhaps a sense of superiority over other species comes into it. Or a lack of any consideration for the future.

Deplorable stories about decrepit conditions in Pakistani zoos are nothing new. Any person with a conscience, and a love for animals, needs to ask himself some pertinent questions. First and foremost, are zoos the way forward in a country where the relevant authorities are not interested in the preservation, and possible release into the wild, of endangered species? Zoos in parts of Europe and the US try their utmost to keep animals in habitats that might resemble their natural living environments. We keep them in cages with concrete floors and feed them whatever can be spared, going so far as to provide the wrong diet.

They are also deprived of a sense of social connectivity that is vital to mental well-being. Under these circumstances, animal rights activists are fully justified in asking whether zoos have a place in Pakistan. Mistreatment is the norm here, not care. Animals in zoos have died with alarming frequency in Sindh and Punjab. If we cannot run zoos as they should be, then shutting them down might be an idea.

(Published in Dawn, 28 September, 2011)

IMC, WWF join hands

LAHORE - Indus Motor Company (IMC) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Pakistan are committed to create awareness regarding environmental conservation among the youth of Pakistan and practically mobilize them to safeguard the rapidly-polluting environment of the country so that the upcoming generations can breathe in the safe environment and fresh air.

This was stated by CEO IMC, Parvez Ghias, while inaugurating the second annual 'Toyota School Environment Program' at a local hotel here today.

The purpose of the 'Toyota School Environment Program' is to engage school students and teachers in a structured awareness program to foster a sense of individual responsibility and accountability in future generations towards nature conservation.

(Published in The Nation: September 28, 2011)

Pakistan sets up panel to deal with water issues with India

Pakistan has set up a new agency to look into construction of dams and other water sector projects by countries like India and Afghanistan. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani established Pakistan Transborder Water Organization (PTWO) to



tackle issues arising from construction of dams and water sector projects by upper riparian countries,

India and Afghanistan, report said. The new panel will coordinate steps to protect the country's water rights on rivers flowing from the neighbouring countries. The water and power ministry was taken aback by the announcement as it had neither made such a proposal nor was it consulted by the Prime Minister's secretariat. The authority will be under the Prime Minister's special assistant on agriculture and water resources, Kemal Majidullah.

(Published in The Nation, Wednesday, September 28, 2011)

Toyota School Environment Programme launched

Islamabad—Indus Motor Company (IMC) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) on Saturday launched 'Toyota School Environment Program 2011-12' to create awareness regarding environment conservation among the youth of the country. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) IMC, Pervez Ghias and Deputy Director General WWF Dr Ejaz Ahmad formally launched the program here by signing the partnership documents and vowed to support the country through continuous industrial development and sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs while making continuous progress towards social development and environment preservation.

"IMC and WWF Pakistan are committed to create awareness regarding environmental conservation among the youth of Pakistan and practically mobilize them to safeguard the rapidly-polluting environment of the country so that the upcoming generations can breathe in the safe environment and fresh air", Pervez Ghias said while addressing the launching ceremony here at a local hotel.

The CEO IMC said that the purpose of the program was to engage school students and teachers in a structured awareness program to foster a sense of individual responsibility and accountability in future generations towards nature conservation. Commending the collaboration of WWF Pakistan to launch the program, he said that the collaboration would be a part of both parties' mandates and of mutual benefits to their environmental endeavors. "It will contribute to the awareness level of future generations of the nation". Indus Motor Company has launched several social projects and initiatives regarding road safety, education, environment, health, community development and response to natural calamities besides being a car manufacturer as it feels its responsibility to social development. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Ejaz Ahmad said that WWF Pakistan aims to further enhance public awareness by engaging the youth in environmental education activities. He said that The School Outreach Program along with other activities of WWF Pakistan have succeeded in stimulating the imagination of children, encouraged participation and promoted public outreach among peers and parents.

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The IMC CEO said that its company donates one per cent of its total profit to CSRs and in this connection the IMC devoted RS. 58 million to such projects. He said that the current program would cost Rs. 5 million. **“We are also assisting the flood affected people in Sindh and in this regard we donated Rs. 2 million last week and we will continue assisting them”.**

(Published in Pakistan Observer Wednesday, 28 September

Country can become hub of Halal products

Lahore—Chief Executive Officer Punjab Agriculture and Meat Company (Pamco) Dr Hamid Jalil has said Pakistan has the potential to become a hub of Halal products.

Speaking at a training session organized by the company, Dr Jalil said that around 5-6 million live animals were being exported annually. The country could earn precious foreign exchange if exports Halal meat, he added.

During the last few years such a situation had emerged that a large number of countries are interested in buying Halal products and Pakistan due to its geographical situation could play a pivotal role in the market. He said that the Pamco was taking revolutionary steps to enable Pakistani livestock and dairy sector to play its role in Halal market.

He said that the training is divided into six modules, which would be arranged at different timings. He said trained staff would conduct the international certifications of farms and products to meet the international criteria, which would improve the demand of Pakistani products in international market.

He disclosed that Turkey, Malaysia, Syria, Jordan, China and Iran were ready to buy Halal Meat from Pakistan. Thailand also intended to buy raw material from Pakistan to produce gelatin.

Responding to a question, he said that the company had registered some 150 farms under its ‘save the calf project’ and the farms meeting international criteria would be helped in getting Global GAP certification which would enable them to export Halal meat.

Pamco Project Director Asif Salman Sahi said that international market of Halal meat was around \$ 440 billion and Pakistan’s last year share remained only around \$ 114 million.

(Published in Pakistan Observer, September 28, 2011)

World Rabies Day observed

LAHORE: The World Rabies Day was observed across the city on Wednesday, with the aim of creating awareness among people about human and animal rabies and to emphasize on its prevention techniques.

The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS), in collaboration with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and Sadat International, organized a seminar in this regard.

UVAS Acting Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Athar Khan, while addressing the seminar, said that around 95 percent of human cases caused by bites from infected dogs occurred in Pakistan. **20,000 rabies deaths take place in India annually, he informed. “Deaths from rabies could be reduced to zero by conducting dog vaccination programmes, creating awareness regarding the disease among public and by using effective human vaccines available,”** he added.

Addressing the seminar, Pet Centre In-charge Asim Khalid said that rabies was a fatal disease and there was a dire need of launching a comprehensive campaign to educate the general public in this regard.

Earlier, the faculty members and students staged a walk within the university to mark the World Rabies Day, aiming to sensitize the public about the disease and its prevention methods.

According to a report issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), over 1.4 billion people in the Southeast Asia were at a potential risk of rabies due to large human and dog concentrations in congested habitable areas.

(Published in Daily Times, Thursday, September 29, 2011)

Flooding and drought will become the norm

Scientists now agree that greenhouse gas emissions are warming the planet and expect this will lead in future to more evaporation of water, moister air and heavier rainfall. "If we look at the frequency and the trend of the extreme weather events impacting Pakistan then it is easy to find its linkage with climate change," says Dr Qamar uz Zaman Chaudhry, the former head of Pakistan's Meteorological Office and currently Advisor to the Ministry of Defence on Climate Change (since the federal Ministry of Environment has now been devolved). He added that the pattern of recent extreme weather events in Pakistan show clear indication of the increased frequency and intensity of such events, which is in line with international climate change projections.



Dr Qamar, who was the lead author of the National Climate Change Strategy, which is yet to be approved by the cabinet, said the rains in Sindh are the highest ever recorded monsoon rains during the four weeks period. Before the start of these rains, Sindh was actually facing severe drought conditions.

A Task Force on Climate Change was set up by the government back in 2009 to advise them on the impacts of climate change in the country. The Task Force finalised their report and handed it over to the government in February 2010, long before last year's flooding. In the section on 'Past and ex-

pected future climate changes over Pakistan' the report says: "It is projected that climate change will increase the variability of the monsoon rains and enhance the frequency and severity of extreme events such as floods and droughts". The report formed the basis of the National Climate Change Strategy, which has now been put on hold since the Ministry of Environment has been disbanded and it still unclear as to who will do the implementing of the strategy. Experts say the real work has to be done at the provincial level, but the planning must be done at the federal level. Many of the functions of the Ministry of Environment have now been transferred to the Planning Division. All these delays have meant that to date Pakistan has no action plan ready. In the mean time, neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, India and Nepal have all come up with climate change action plans that are being implemented.

According to Shafqat Kakakhel, "We can see how the monsoon is becoming more chaotic, erratic and unpredictable. Either it is coming too late or too soon or there is too much rain. What the country really needs are standard operating procedures for disaster risk reduction."

In his view this year's flooding in Sindh was not as bad as the "big floods" that hit Pakistan last year. **These were flash floods, but because of the lack of infrastructure, the impacts were as bad as a big flood.** The impacts could have been reduced if the government had taken the right steps." The National Disaster Management Authority had in fact prepared an elaborate strategy with the help of the UN agencies to prepare for flooding, but unfortunately the strategy was just not implemented. "It just remained a strategy. There was

an absence of political commitment - and a lack of financial resources, poor governance, serious resource constraints etc". What the country desperately needed was a detailed adaptation plan after last year's floods, which should have been implemented months before this year's monsoon rains. But as Shafqat Kakakhel points out, "This is a dysfunctional state - nothing seems to be working".

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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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