Quarterly

Pakistan Forest Digest

Vol. 02, No. 01 ISSN: 2218-8045 April – June 2011

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Disclaimer!

Contents of Pakistan Forest Digest (PFD) are obtained from the English and Urdu newspapers and SDPI may not agree with the contents; and that apart from English news clippings, the Urdu news clippings are also translated in English and errors and omissions are expected.
Pakistan Forest Digest (PFD)

The Pakistan Forest Digest (PFD) is a quarterly series of digests focused on the forest related issues, government and non-government endeavors, community concerns and rights reported by the leading Pakistani newspapers and periodicals.

The Digest covers news and views on legislation, rights and disputes, conservation and rehabilitation projects, conferences, workshops and all other events and endeavors related to the forests. The digest also includes research articles by the experts and academia and the voices of the general public and stakeholders.


The PFD is supported by Partnership Action for Mitigation Syndrome (PAMS) project of Swiss NCCR (North-South).

Views and comments to improve the digest are appreciated.

Email: forestd@sdpi.org
**About SDPI**

**Brief History**

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) was founded in August 1992 on the recommendation of the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (NCS), also called Pakistan’s Agenda 21. SDPI is a policy-oriented research institute established to produce quality policy research and advocate democratic governance and pro-people initiatives. It is registered under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860.

**Mandate**

- To conduct policy advice, policy-oriented research and advocacy from a broad multi-disciplinary perspective.
- To promote the implementation of policies, programs, laws and regulations based on sustainable development.
- To strengthen civil society and facilitate civil society-government interaction through collaboration with other organizations and activist networks.
- To disseminate research findings and public education through the media, conferences, seminars, lectures, publications and curricula development, including the Citizens Report and State of the Environment Report.
- To contribute to building up national research capacity and infrastructure.

**Goals**

- To catalyze the transition towards sustainable and just development in Pakistan.
- To serve as a source of expertise and advisory services for the government, private sector, and non-governmental initiatives supporting the implementation of Pakistan’s environment and development agenda.
- To conduct policy-oriented research on sustainable development from a broad multi-disciplinary perspective.
- To provide policy advice on matters relating to the mission of the Institute.
- To contribute to strengthening the social and physical infrastructure for research in Pakistan including the construction and dissemination of databases and research indices and the improvement of library systems.
- To initiate, establish and participate in collaborative advocacy and other activities with like-minded organisations in and outside the country.

SDPI defines sustainable development as the enhancement of peace, social justice and well-being within and across generations. SDPI produces knowledge—knowledge that can enhance the capacity of government to make informed policy decisions and to engage civil society on issues of public interest.

The Institute acts as both a generator of original research on sustainable development issues and as an information resource for concerned individuals and institutions. SDPI’s function is thus two-fold: an advisory role fulfilled through research, policy advice and advocacy; and an enabling role realised through providing other individuals and organisations with resource materials (training) to undertake NCS related activities.
About NCCR (North South)

The National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) Pakistan Research Group is a partner of the Swiss National Center of Competence in Research North-South (NCCR N-S), financially supported by Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and Swiss universities.

NCCR North-South Objectives

1. **Capacity-building:** To strengthen development-oriented research capacities in the South and the North. In Pakistan, focus is on establishing research partnerships between SDPI and universities for Master and PhD students.

2. **Research:** To undertake theory-led, empirical research on issues relevant to development. In Pakistan, research concentrates on the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and focuses on four themes:
   - From vulnerability to resilience: gender, migration and social capital
   - Development disparities on natural resource management
   - Development policies and livelihood realities

3. **Policy dialogue:** To interact with policy makers and involved stakeholders on researched development issues. The Pakistan Research Group interacts with civil society, state agencies and donors.

Lead partner in Pakistan is the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad. Associated organizations are Agricultural University Faisalabad, and Agricultural University Peshawar. Main partner in Switzerland is the Development Study Group, Zurich University (DSGZ).

Research of NCCR on Forests of Pakistan

NCCR has commissioned various researches on Forest which are conducted by renowned researchers. Most recent Research on Forests of Pakistan is "Donor-driven" forest governance in northwest Pakistan - challenges and future outlook conducted by Urs Geiser, Babar Shahbaz, 2010. In this particular research Forests of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, a province of Pakistan, is matter of discussion.
Apart from this, following researches have been conducted by NCCR;

- Social Network Analysis of Stakeholders in the Context of Forest Related Development Interventions in NWFP conducted by Sadia Kiran, 2009
- Trust restores trees conducted by Urs Geiser, Babar Shahbaz, 2009
- Impact of participatory forest management on financial assets of rural communities in Northwest Pakistan conducted by Tanvir Ali, Munir Ahmad, Babar Shahbaz, Abid Qaiyum Suleri, 2007
- Analysis of myths and realities of deforestation in Pakistan conducted by Tanvir Ali, Babar Shahbaz, Abid Qaiyum Suleri, 2006

Most of the publications focus on the challenges and problems faced by forest in Pakistan. For detail please visit: [www.nccr-pakistan.org](http://www.nccr-pakistan.org)
Summary

The current issue of forest digest comprises eight chapters. It encompasses daily affairs of forest department, “Timber Mafia”, “Illegal Cutting of Trees”, “Timber Smuggling”, “Forests and Environment”, “Protection of Forests and Awareness” “National Parks and Gardens”, “Project NCCR (North South) activities and a miscellaneous chapter” “News”, “Columns” and “Pictures”.

Chapter 1: This chapter highlights the administrative affairs of forest department, corruption and the problems faced by the forest department officials during the cutting of trees and discharging their duties. The chapter also covers the kidnapping incidents of the forest officials who controlled the illegal tree cutting, and the deadly threats from the timber mafia. The involvement of forest officials with the smugglers in timber smuggling and setting on fire the forests to hide the corrupt practice of the forest functionaries are also covered in this chapter.

Chapter 2: The chapter reflects the malicious practice of timber mafia, the efforts of brave forest officials of Topi, ThaKot, and Luky Marwat to curb the smuggling of timber. The news about the demands by Grand Jirga of Forest department and the notables of Hazara Division. A report by a columnist, Abdullah Madni about the destruction of forests of Kamrat Valley which tarnished the beautiful face of the valley.

Chapter 3: This chapter consists of news items and pictures about the forests and environment. The news about unabated cutting of forests in Swat, pollution, impending dangers to the environment and the blatant stance of Ougi’s smugglers are given prominent space.

Chapter 4: This chapter deals with protection of forests and awareness. Besides, agreement between Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and a British company, Marlins Wood regarding the protection of forests is also described. The steps taken by the chief minister are also given proper place.

Chapter 5: This chapter covers plantation drive and the news regarding the issue. The inauguration of plantation event by famous columnist, Munnu Bhai by fixing a plant and students’ plantation drive in Peshawar University is given full coverage. Special attention is given to the discontinuation of plantation in Kohistan for the last even years, etc.

Chapter 6: This chapter elaborates the news about the dilapidated condition of National park and other gardens, the encroachment of Haripur’s recreational park by
the addicts and hooligans, news about the destruction of Khushi Muhammad Park of Rawalpindi, intention to cut a 200 year old tree in Peshawar and other activities.

Chapter 7: This chapter deals with the fire incidents of the forests, the steps to save the Margalla Hills forests, setting up the forest department check posts and village committees, and the activities like restoration of parks to increase and develop the forests.

Chapter 8: This chapter relates the activities of NCCR. The chapter tells about frontier people’s forestry assembly in Bahrain; Fazal Maula Zahid’s report about the meeting held to devise line of action to achieve the targets of food provision and the protection of environment. In addition to that news about the seminar with the slogan Save the forests in Batgram.

Chapter 9: This chapter covers variety of pictures and news items. A gory incident of murder of a man by his real brother is included. The deceased tried to dissuade the murderer from cutting the trees.


*Note from Editorial Board*

This digest is also uploaded on SDPI website and your comments to improve the contents and format of the digest would be welcome. Please send your feedback on forestd@sdpi.org.
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Chapter 01

FOREST DEPARTMENTS
New forest policy: Govt. urged to consult stakeholders

Dawn Islamabad, May 7, 2011

Bureau Report
PESHAWAR, May 6: The Sarhad Awami Forestry Ittehad (Safi) has called upon the provincial government to take into confidence all the stakeholders, including forest owners, before formulating the new forest policy.

The Safi, an umbrella organisation of the forest related stakeholders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stated that without consulting the dwellers of forest areas and owners the new policy would be of no use.

In a joint press statement issued here on Friday, the Safi representatives including its president Riaz Ahmad Khan, general secretary Jamshed Khan and information secretary Amir Mohammad Khan, stated that a few days ago the provincial minister for forest and environment, Wajid Ali Khan, while giving a policy statement in the provincial assembly stated that after passage of the 18th amendment, environment and forest had become provincial subjects and soon they would formulate a new policy in this regard.

They regretted that the successive government had never taken the stakeholders into confidence before taking any major decision.

They stated that on June 10, 2002, a controversial Forest Ordinance 2002 was promulgated by the then governor without consulting the stakeholders. Due to same reason every year Safi observes black day on Jun 10.

They stated that in the said law the rights of forest owners had not been specified. Moreover, they added that joint forest management committees (JFMC) constituted under the law were toothless bodies and could not play effective role in forest-related issues.

The Safi representatives stated that the government had failed in stopping deforestation. They added that if the government was sincere in checking deforestation it had to take into confidence the inhabitants of those areas. They added that honest and dedicated persons should be inducted in the JFMCs and it should be empowered to safeguard forests in their respective areas.
Proposals about new forest act
Dawn Islamabad, June 1, 2011

By Our Staff Correspondent
HYDERABAD, May 31: Retired and serving forest officials have said that the new proposed forest act must be service and result-oriented to ensure protection of forests in Sindh.

They said the three other provinces have already revised the law and only Sindh was lagging behind and still implementing Forest Act – enacted in 1927 which has failed to address issues of utmost importance in the province.

In their deliberations at a seminar on “Review, revision and updating of Forest Act 1927” organised at a local hotel on Tuesday by Sindh Forest Department, in collaboration with Indus for All Programme – WWF, they suggested numerous additions in the draft of Forest Act and proposed that it should be named as Sindh Forest Act 2011.

The seminar is a part of a project ‘reforming forestry governance in Sindh launched by the forest department. The participants came up with their following group discussions.

According to group leaders, special conservation courts should be considered under the Act to try cases of violation of the Act.

DCOs should also be given a role along with the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO). Issues of encroachments should be dealt with under the Anti Encroachment Law separately and cost of litigation involved should be recovered from encroachers.

All forestry-related laws should be worked after due consultation with stakeholders. The rangelands should be clearly defined.

There was a proposal that definition of wood Under Section 49 should be clearly defined and duty should be levied on transportation of all kinds of wood — be it from abroad or domestic ones — and through any mean of transportation.

The proposals include that penalty defined under law should be raised to Rs100, 000 from Rs10, 000.

The participants disagreed with term of offence ‘taking place before sunrise or after sunset’ and said that offence doesn’t have limitations of time and the same should be done away with. The habitual offenders must be required to pay double the penalty.

They sought to discourage proposal to officials as it would have adverse implications for serving officers.

According to a proposal, use of compounding of offence should be prohibited because it is excessively used and people are let off after they pay money for chopping of trees.

The same point was also opposed that livelihood of those living in katcha area are dependent on forestry and these people couldn’t be simply hanged.

The provision of assistance of police for action against influential violators should be kept intact in the law because in every case forest officer couldn’t act on his own against offender, they said.

The provision of reward should be kept for those who seize wood at check post or those local community fellows who provide information of such act that leads to seizure of property. But there should be some incentive for officials as well, they suggested.

The proposals also include that definition of word ‘forests’ must include rangelands while forest’s produce must include gas and carbon sink. The services of forest like tourism and flood protection should be part of the law. The forest settlement committees must comprise only district forest officer and district officer (revenue).

In his opening remarks, Chief Conservator Forests Sindh, Mir Nadir Ali Talpur, termed community participation in forest management essential and said that needs of local...
communities depending on forest should be addressed. Encroachment is major challenge and cases are pending in various courts, he said. “Due to weak legal support, department is losing them. Forest courts should be established to expedite cases.

Revision of Act would pave way for incorporating new concepts in forest management.”

Call for placing Forest Ordinance before PA
Dawn Islamabad, June 11, 2011

Bureau Report
PESHAWAR, June 10: Terming the Forest Ordinance, 2002, an oppressive law, the Sarhad Awami Forestry Ittehad (Safi) on Friday called upon the provincial government to place the ordinance before the provincial assembly for thorough discussion.

Safi, a representative body of the people belonging to remote areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stated that in the ordinance, instead of discouraging centralisation, the powers granted to the forest department under Forest Act 1927 had been further strengthened with different kinds of discretionary powers.

Addressing a press conference, Safi office-bearers including its president Riaz Mohammad Khan, finance secretary Amir Mohammad Khan and press secretary Gul Nawab said that the ordinance was promulgated by former governor Lt-Gen (retd) Iftikhar Hussain Shah on June 10, 2002, and it replaced the colonial era law of the Forest Act, 1927.

They said that they had been protesting against the law since 2002 as it was promulgated without taking all the stakeholders into confidence.

“Instead of improving the colonial era law, the government gave further powers to the forest department which itself was responsible for the decay of forests,” said Riaz Mohammad Khan.

He stated that at the time of creation of Pakistan forests were spread at over 8 per cent of the entire area in the country which had reduced to an alarming 2.5 per cent.

“The existing powers of the forest department have been enhanced in the ordinance and it has been empowered to establish an armed forest force which could even fire at individuals without a court order,” he said.

Although there was a positive provision in the ordinance for the formation of joint forest management committees, but, Riaz Mohammad pointed out, the divisional forest officer (DFO) had been empowered to establish and disband such committees. He added that the forest officers had been assigned sweeping powers including imposition of fines in cases of timber smuggling.

The Safi president pointed out that the punishments provided in the ordinance were same for offences committed for meeting domestic needs and those on commercial basis.

He added that through the said ordinance the forest owners in Malakand region had been declared as ‘concessionists’ instead of owners due to which there was a sense of deprivation among the people.

The office-bearers demanded that royalty should be enhanced from 60 to 80 per cent in the forest areas. Mir Mohammad Khan stated that when the Forest Development Corporation was established, it was stated that it would work for increasing forest cover by planting saplings, but it failed in fulfilling its responsibilities.

He pointed out that despite a judgment by the Supreme Court, the FDC failed to provide accurate amount of royalty to affected persons in six villages of Upper Dir.
Investment in forest capital stressed
Dawn Islamabad, June 17, 2011

Staff Reporter
LAHORE, June 16: In Pakistan, only three per cent of the landmass is under forests against the minimum benchmark of 25 per cent.

The situation is fast worsening due to illegal logging by timber mafia and cutting of trees for fuel purposes, Pakistan Engineering Congress President Engineer Husnain Ahmad said at a seminar on Thursday. The event titled ‘Forests – Nature at Your Service’ was held in connection with the Environment Day.

Ahmad said even mangrove forests that checked land erosion and immensely contributed to marine culture were not being spared. The land mafia had destroyed these forests for selling fuel wood, and reclaiming the land for commercial purposes. He said deforestation had resulted in degrading and unbalancing of biodiversity as well as snatching livelihood of coastal people, he added.

Counting their usefulness, he said forests held together the soil and prevented or minimised soil erosion. The biggest source of oxygen in the air, he said, forests and plankton in the sea absorbed carbon dioxide and released oxygen during photosynthesis. “It is for this reason that scientists fear that if forests are destroyed indiscriminately, there will be an increase in carbon dioxide and eventually the sun’s rays will become hotter, the polar caps will melt and the ocean level rise and submerge much of our lands,” he said.

“Forests also provide habitats to diverse animal species and form the source of livelihood for many human settlements.

Hundreds of industries also depend on forests, which include paper and plywood and sports goods industries, paint, varnish, rubber goods, match sticks and many others.

“It is an essentiality to look into the issue effectively. Not only we need to check all the activities which are detrimental to our existing forests but side by side our endeavors to sustain and improve our forest cover are much important.”

He said since Pakistan’s economy was an agrarian one, people should work to stop the losses of forests, as well as all what was associated such as “our waters, our dams, our agriculture, our economy, our climate, and thus the most desired one, i.e. our upright sustenance”. —
English Translation from Urdu News

**Decision to shut down Jahangira Timber Market**

- This market affects the business of timber merchants of Malakand Division, says Wajid Ali Khan

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, April 29, 2011

Peshawar (Aaj news) A meeting of FDC was held in the office of Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa Provincial Minister for forests and environment, Wajid Ali Khan. The issue of shutting down the Jahangira Timber market was discussed.

The minister informed the FDC administration about the meetings with several delegates. The minister said the people of Malakand Division were demanding for a long time to shut down the Jahangira Timber market. The residents were of the view that the forest production of Malakand division should be sold in the Malakand division, because the Jahangira Timber market was adversely affecting the business of Malakand Timber merchants. After considering the matter and keeping in view the demands of Malakand division residents, the minister ordered the FDC administration to shut down the Jahangira Timber market.

The environment minister said that he would meet the notables of the area opening a market in Chakdara.

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**Khanpur Forest Department officials foil an attempt to smuggle timber**

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 29, 2011

Khanpur (Staff reporter) The Sub division Officer, Khanpur Forest Department, Taimoor Ilyas, forester Babu Asif, Muhammad Younis and other officials had cordoned off the Hattar Road on the instructions of DFO Haripur. They stopped two trucks (GLT 3985 and GLT 8412) loaded with timber going from KP to Punjab. The vehicles were impounded and legal action was initiated.

The driver of truck GLT 3985, Muhammad Sajid resident of Alwali told the forest officials that timber loaded on truck belonged to Ahmed Nawaz Khan, a resident of Khalabut, Haripur.

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**The Forest Department Malakand failed an attempt to smuggle 30 maund Walnut bark dental scrubbers**

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, April 08, 2011

Batkhela (Aaj correspondent) The forest department, Malakand with the help of security forces seized a huge amount of dental scrubber and failed the attempt of smuggling. DFO Malakand, Shaukat Hayat and Range Officer Wasil Khan raided a place Pul Charkhi with the help of security forces and recovered 30 maund best quality dental scrubbers from a Datsun pickup. The culprit Zahid Iqbal s/o Shireenzada resident of Warri was arrested.
The forest department thwarted an attempt to smuggle timber worth millions of rupees

- A truck was stopped at Kozagali picket; on search 321 feet timber was recovered.
- The driver was arrested and a case was registered

*Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 04, 2011*

Chhanglagali (Special correspondent) Galiat forest department confiscated a large quantity of timber worth millions of rupees after a successful operation, and heavy amount was fined. The Forest Gulrez division got the tip that a huge quantity of precious timber would be smuggled to Rawalpindi on a truck. The Range Officer Sirdar Rysat Talotha along with a heavy contingent cordoned off the road Kozagali. A truck TKQ 665 coming from Abbottabad was stopped and searched. 321 feet timber of Byar was recovered. Driver Ajmal Khan s/o Pir Khan resident of Mirpur Abbottabad was arrested. The accused was fined rupees 390,000 under the Forest Act for smuggling of 321 feet timber.

According to forest department officials, that was the biggest cache ever seized in Galiat and the fine amount was the biggest in Galiat history. Previously the smugglers used to smuggle timber from Abbottabad to Rawalpindi through Haripur.

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Protect the forests from timber smugglers and the High-handedness of department officials

*Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 21, 2011*

According to a report, beautiful forests of Galiat are rapidly becoming treeless plain with the connivance of forest department officials. Precious and rare trees are first dried up with chemicals and then smuggled to Punjab in the dark of night. Right from forest guards to higher forest officials, everyone is involved in that vicious practice.

Trees are cut as a matter of routine in the ranges of Changlagali to Tajwal and Chambi Ayubia. That timber is then sent to Punjab via Lora. The forest employees of grade 5 and grade 6 have millions of rupee assets and luxury vehicles. The forest officials first make bargains of the trees, then dry up the tree under their supervision.

The sources reveal that the trees are first dried up by using chemicals and then sold after cutting. As a new development, now the forest officials collaborate with each other instead of using timber smugglers. The tourism has been destroyed in Galiat, the situation is very alarming. Strict and quick action is need of the hour.

The corrupt officials should be removed and stern action should be taken against them, moreover proper steps must be taken to protect the forests.
Timber mafia busy cutting the forests mercilessly with the abetment of forest officer and other functionaries

- The trees are first dried up by using chemicals then sent to Punjab via Lora, the committee to protect forests now comprises departments' touts

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 26, 2011

Abbottabad (Crime reporter)
Galiat forests are rapidly being converted into treeless plains with the patronage of higher officials of forest department. Precious and very expensive trees are dried up by using chemicals and then timber worth millions of rupees is dispatched to Punjab via Lora in the dark of night. Everyone including forest guards to senior officer is involved in that criminal practice.

The forest protection committees have the majority of touts as their members. Scenic beauty and the forests of Galiat have devastated by the forest department itself. A large number of trees are being cut in the forest range of Chhanglagali, Tajwal Chambi Ayubia and Galiat. Forests are fast becoming plains. The forest employees of grade 5 and grade 6 have millions of rupees assets and land cruiser vehicles. The forest officials first make bargains of the trees, then dry up the tree under their supervision.

The sources reveal that the trees are first dried up by using chemicals and then sold after cutting. The sources revealed the forest officials collaborate with each other instead of using timber smugglers. The tourism has been destroyed in Galiat, the situation is very alarming, and strict and quick action is the need of the hour. The corrupt officials should be suspended and stern action should be taken against them, honest and dedicated officers should be appointed, it’s worth mentioning that many a time smuggling vehicles belonging to forest officials were seized but through political pressure those had to be released and no action was taken against them.

3 forest officials kidnapped from Wana

- Range officer Hameedullah and forester Pir Dawood and forest guard Qismat Khan went to Galkachh to inspect the plantation.

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 01, 2011

Wana (Mashriq correspondent)
South Waziristan forest department officials were kidnapped and sent to unknown place. Range officer Hameedullah, Forester Pir Dawood Khan and forest guard Qismat Khan were inspecting different plantation spots, on Saturday they were inspecting a point in Galkachh, tehsil Toay Khela. Some unknown persons kidnapped them.

The kidnappers left their vehicles at the spot. The political administration has not taken any action. APA Wana, Muhammad Shoaib could not be contacted for further details.
Godowns raided by Battal police and forest department
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 05, 2011

Chhattar Plain, Konish valley (Shamal correspondent, Bureau Chief) After a joint operation of Battal and forest department on godowns of Chattar plain, illegal timber in large quantity was recovered. According to details, DFO Sern Ejaz Qadir and SHO Battal Police station Sirdar Ajmal on a tip of an informer raided the godowns of timber smugglers in Chattar Plain and recovered 192 sleepers.

The raiding party comprised DFO Sern Ejaz Qadir; SHO Battal Police station Sirdar Ajmal, IHC Muhammad Niaz, 5 range officers of forest department, Sultan Jadoon, Haji Masood and ASDFO Muhammad Niaz and local officials of the department. Heavy contingent was present at the spot to avoid any untoward incident. DFO Sern, Ejaz Qadir was showered with questions by the journalists. Ejaz Qadir said, “The forest are “green gold”, and save that precious asset is the collective responsibility of forest department and the people of the area.”

He said he was informed by an informer about the timber, he went and checked those godowns at night in his private car. He then raided those godowns with the help of police and recovered large quantity of timber. He said while discussing the illegal cutting of forests that they would soon control the situation.

A new timber market in Chakdara will open doors to the development of the area, says Islam Zeb

- The district administration has taken solid steps to solve the problems of the people of Dir Pain, said DCO while talking to journalists

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 10, 2011

Khal (Aaj correspondent) DCO Dir Islam Zeb has said with the construction of timber market in Chakdara, the area would progress and doors would open to the prosperity.

He was talking to the journalists yesterday; he said the district administration had taken revolutionary steps for the welfare of the people.

To solve the low voltage issue in the area, a heavy transformer costing 60 million rupees had been installed in Chakdara grid station, that step would solve the low voltage issue of district lower Dir on permanent basis, moreover, to solve the low voltage tripping problem in Talash, a new feeder had been recommended, laying of transmission lines would start in the coming week, he added.

He further said the floods had disrupted the communication links, the work to restore the links and the reconstruction work was going on high pace, the Odgram bridge had been opened for the traffic.
Deputy Speaker KP orders to sell off Precious Shisham trees

- Khushdil Advocate presided joint meeting of forest department and the irrigation department. The Dy Speaker directed to fix new plants on the banks of Gravity Canal and the Lift Canal

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 14, 2011

Peshawar (Aaj news) The deputy speaker Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa, Khushdil Khan Advocate has directed the irrigation department that shisham tree on the banks of Gravity Fall canal and Lift Canal to be sold out and the demarcation of state land on the sides of the canals should be ascertained.

He was addressing the joint meeting of forest department and the irrigation department. Conservator forest department, Afsarullah Wazir, Divisional Forest Officer Muhammad Farooq, executive engineer of irrigation department, Muhammad Sohail and other officials were also present in the meeting. Dy speaker said the trees on the sides of canals and roads were national assets, and to protect the national assets is our collective responsibility.

He further said that 64,000 square feet vacant land of Gundo Pump House should be used for plantation, the plantation not only creates healthy atmosphere but it generates revenue also.

APCA, Forest department protest for their demands

- In case the demands are not met, hunger strike will follow on May 26, and long march to Islamabad on May 28

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 20, 2011

Peshawar (Staff reporter) APCA, forest department demonstrated Thursday on Shami Road for their demands, the demonstration was led by President APCA, Adnan Adil shah, Masood Siddiqui and others. The demonstrators were holding placards and banners. The speakers at that occasion said 15 per cent increase in the employees’ salary by the government was unacceptable.

The forest department employees would take part in protest rally of co-ordination Council. Show of power would be staged in hunger strike camps and a long march to Islamabad.

25 member armed gangsters play havoc in Manda Kachh forests

- The dacoits in Piracha forests are fully armed, they are devastating the forests, FC should be immediately appointed, says range officer Jaburri

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 11, 2011

Mansehra (City reporter) A gang of 25 dacoits have camped in Piracha forests in Manda Kachh. They are cutting the forests without any fear, forest officials are helpless. Range officer Jaburri Muhammad Ali said in press conference that 25 member fully armed dacoits had cut trees worth millions of rupees.

The trees included Dyar and other expensive trees. The
Forest official’s secret deals: One truck is fined and remaining timber is smuggled to Punjab

- Fine is imposed to show the performance, the forest officials have started patronage of the timber mafia

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 12, 2011

Haripur (Chief reporter) The truck impounded by forest department was allegedly to show the performance of the forest department to the officers. whereas dozens of vehicles loaded with timber are being smuggled to Punjab. One official of forest department on condition of anonymity told that the timber mafia had full support of SDFO Tariq Shah. Dozens of vehicles loaded with timber are being smuggled to Punjab with the cooperation of Tariq Shah. 3 days ago a truck Z 2216 was captured just to show the efficiency of the officials before senior officers. The fine was imposed but timber worth twice the amount of fine was allowed to be smuggled. Haripur is goldmine for the timber mafia, many groups in the district are involved in timber smuggling. Whenever there is pressure on the department, the officials catch one or two trucks to show their performance. SDFO and other officials have fixed the rates for different vehicles and they get the fixed amount.

The timber smuggling is booming with their cooperation. The residents of district Haripur have demanded the DPO Haripur, Muhammad Ali Gandapur DSP headquarter Raja Abdus Saboor that they besides other crime should control timber smuggling also.

Forest department gives a blind eye to the encroachment on Dadar Forest road

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 11, 2011

Janu Mandi (Shamal correspondent) Forest department’s disinterest encourages encroachment on Dadar Forest Road and old Sanatorium. The encroachment is causing hurdle to the vehicular traffic. According to details, the local people have encroached upon the Dadar forest road which causes problems for the transport vehicles. Private vehicles of the local people also face difficulty in passing through the roads. A social worker expressed his resentment before the correspondent of Daily Shamal. The social worker said the encroachment had created big problem for the locals, he demanded the higher officials to take notice of the situation.

SAFI demands to present Forest Ordinance 2002 in the assembly for amendments

- Royalty rate should be raised, promulgation of ordinance is undemocratic, says Riaz Muhammad

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 13, 2011

Peshawar (Staff reporter) SAFI (Frontier people’s forestry alliance) has declared the promulgation of Forest Ordinance 2002 undemocratic and stressed upon the government to put that in assembly to amend the ordinance according to the
principles of forest policy of 1999. Supreme court’s decision on Dir Kohistan and Swat Kohistan royalty case should be implemented, and royalty rate should be revised to 80 per cent from previous rate of 60 per cent.

President of the alliance, Riaz Muhammad and other office bearers, Ameer Muhammad and Gul Nawab said in a joint press conference that KP government devised a law for the protection of forest 9 years ago, the law was revised to be more effective.

Private forest owners of Sern demand inquiry against DFO by NAB

- Expensive trees are being auctioned, and timber of poor people is being captured to document the performance

Jaburri, Sern (Special correspondent, special reporter) The private forest owners have demanded that inquiry should be held against the DFO Sern Mansehra by NAB. They said their expensive trees were being cut by him and to show the efficiency, poor people’s timber is confiscated. The poor people will go to the court.

The residents said that if they apply for one tree, they had to visit the office for more than three months. Khurshid Khan of Sacha Kalan told Daily Shamal reporter that Forest department officials had become owners of our forests, and they distribute our trees to persons of their choice. My area has been littered with cut trees. I many a times visited forest department for those trees, but the y would not allow me to pick the tree of their choice.

Only God can save our forest, every night thousands of feet timber is dispatched to Mansehra and other cities. If no concern is showed, our forests would be wiped off, and DFO Sern will be responsible for that. Every junior or senior employee of forest department has built their own luxury houses in Abbottabad and Mansehra and other property in the name of their relatives. Therefore we demand immediate transfer of DFO Ejaz Qadir, he is inflicting huge losses to us.

The forest owners should be issued permits. Two hundred years old trees are being cut and nobody bothers. You cannot hide the truth by publishing flattering columns in the local newspapers, so inquiry should be conduct by no less than NAB.

SDFO, Shankiari Forest’s vacant post should be filled

Pakhal (Shamal correspondent) Shankiari forest officials should appoint SDFO on the vacant post. It is requested that forester Muhammad Iqbal should be appointed SDFO, he is honest, sincere and well mannered officer. He is the most suitable person to save the “Green Gold”. These were the views of Dr Javed Raja Tambah.
Novel practice of Forest department. Forest was set on fire to remove the tree trunk remains (evidence)

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 13, 2011

Pakhal (Shamal correspondent) Forest department employed a novel way to hide the evidence of their crime. They set on fire the whole forest to remove remains of tree trunks, but fire couldn’t be controlled and Tambah, Makria, Verial compartment 5, 6, and 7 were enveloped by fire.

The forest guard mercilessly set on fire the forests which burnt not only the tree but also the birds and other animals. DFO Ejaz Qadir is requested to take action against the concerned guard. Dr Javed Raja Tambah was talking to the journalist and said these lines.
Chapter 02

Timber Mafia:
Illegal cutting & Smuggling
Violence on forest workers: Govt. asked to act against timber mafia
Dawn Islamabad, April 30, 2011

By Correspondent
TIMERGARA, April 29: Condemning violence on forest department employees in Kaghan, the provincial president of the forest guards, foresters and deputy rangers’ association, Mohammad Zeb Khan, on Friday demanded of the government to take action against the mafia involved in the incident.

Talking to journalists at Chakdara press club he said several forest employees were injured by timber smugglers in Kaghan. He said the incident had spread unrest in forest workers and that they would not remain silent.

The workers’ leader said an emergency meeting of all the forest department employees had been convened at Kaghan on May 2 in which a future line of action would be announced. He said the government and its line departments should provide security to forest employees otherwise they would show no resistance to armed smugglers and timber mafia.

Signature campaign underway to preserve ecological balance in Tharparkar, stop people from cutting trees
The Express Tribune, Islamabad, May 21, 2011

By Sajid Bajeer
MITHI: SCOPE, a non-government organisation (NGO) dedicated to environmental issues, has launched a signature campaign in Tharparkar to preserve the wildlife and forests of the area.

The campaign is aimed at stopping people from cutting trees, excessive hunting, preparing a management plan for the Rann of Kutch wildlife sanctuary and to have the Karoonjhar hills of Nagarparkar declared a ‘national park’.

To obtain signatures from the public and raise awareness, the NGO has placed a sheet in front of the Mithi press club. Folk singer Sadik Faqir, Prof
Noor Ahmed Janjhi, Obhaja Junejo, environment activist Bare Mal Amrani, Ghulam Allah Jarwar, social activist Mama Vihan Thari, Shahab-ul-Din, human rights activist Pardeep Kalani and others signed it on the first day.

SCOPE district coordinator Bharumal Amrani said that Thar is among the five ecologically diverse regions of the country. However, unchecked deforestation and excess hunting of rare wildlife species is harming the ecological balance of the area and ruining the natural beauty of Thar. The indigenous people of Thar are also under threat as they are dependent on its natural resources for their survival.

The rate of environmental degradation can be ascertained from figures provided by IUCN, UNDP and the ministry of environment. In 1996, the IUCN declared 25 species of wildlife on the ‘red list’ of threatened animals. The number has now increased drastically.

Similarly, in 2010, the ministry of environment and UNDP declared seven arid zone plants as ‘rare species’, out of which five are native to Tharparkar.

The future of endangered species of plants and animals can be secured if the Karoonjhar hills in Nagarparkar are declared a national park. A 1997 survey by the wildlife department indicated that the area fulfils the criteria for a national park, but so far nothing has been done.

There are 154 rare species of plants, 26 species of rare mammals and 400 various types of flowers found in Karoonjhar.

Experts have said that there is considerable scope for further research as there are many species of flora and fauna that remain undiscovered. The area in and around Karoonjhar hills is also home to the Bodesar mosque, sacred Hindu sites and Jain temples.

A vast number of people visit the area, specially during the monsoon season. If the area is declared a national park, and thereby given the requisite funds and protection, there exists potential for tourism and sustainable development of the area.

The preparation of a management plan for the Rann of Kutch wildlife sanctuary has been pending since 2002, when the area was first declared a ‘Ramsar’ site. Bharumal Amrani demanded that a management plan should be implemented without any further delay to protect the endangered wildlife of the area. The forestry department has earmarked 239,000 acres as grazing land for animals and has also set up game sanctuaries and reserves.

However, there has been no change in the frequency of hunting activities, as both locals and foreigners come to trap falcons and hunt the endangered Houbara Bustard.

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**Felling of trees brings CDA and US embassy on confrontation path**

*The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 17, 2011*

By Mobarik A. Virk

**Islamabad:** Unauthorised felling of trees by the US embassy in Islamabad from the ‘green area’ to create a parking lot led the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to agitate the matter not only directly with the embassy, but also approach the Foreign Office on the issue.

The move by the US embassy, which allegedly cut down at
least 31 well grown trees came at a time when the CDA Chairman Imtiaz Inayat Elahi had been spending all his energies to restore the ‘green image’ of the city by carrying out extensive tree plantation campaigns in the urban as well as in the rural parts of the federal capital.

When contacted, the Member (Planning) of the CDA told ‘The News’ that some diplomatic missions, including the US embassy asked the CDA to provide a direct access from the Kashmir Highway into the Diplomatic Enclave.

“We considered their request favourably and allowed construction of an access into the ‘Diplomatic Enclave’ on the condition that all the cost of the project will be borne by these diplomatic missions at their own,” he added.

About the parking lot, the CDA chairman when contacted told ‘The News’ that the request for creating a small parking lot by the US embassy was also entertained positively on the condition that they will not cut any big trees and will not damage the environment.

“However, against the understanding reached on the issue of preserving trees and maintaining the green character, the US embassy cut down a number of trees, something which was obviously not acceptable to us. So, we took up the matter with US embassy and one of our board members even went to the embassy and had a meeting with the concerned officials in the US embassy last week. The whole issue was also conveyed to the Foreign Office too,” he added.

“However, the CDA chairman added, “After the issue was taken up with the US embassy, with due intimation to the Foreign Office, the concerned officials in the US embassy have extended assurance to us that they will take up all necessary steps to mend the damage and restore the green cover,” he held.

Meanwhile, sources in the CDA told ‘The News’ that an officer of the ‘Environment Wing’ of the CDA had issued a NOC (Non Objection Certificate) to the US embassy for felling of trees.

It was under the same NOC that the US embassy chopped down at least 31 trees including ‘Sheesham’ (Tallow) trees, which is well-known local species and very slow growing tree. The issue was eventually taken up by the CDA chairman, who directed the concerned officials to take appropriate action against the officer of the Environment Wing of the authority, that may even lead to suspension from the office till the time the matter is resolved as to how he issued the NOC for felling of trees.

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Timber godown gutted

Dawn Islamabad, April 20, 2011

By Correspondent

ATTOCK, April 19: A timber godown was reduced to ashes after fire broke out due to short circuit in Jand tehsil on Monday evening.

Fire erupted in the godown of a local timber trader Mohammad Akram near Sabzai Bazaar, Jand due to short circuit.

The shopkeepers and other people rushed to the scene and started making efforts to bring the fire under control but failed to do so.

As the TMA Jand had no fire brigade facility, a firefighting unit from an oil field was called but the godown had gutted by the time the fire tender reached the spot. The traders demanded of the government to provide fire-fighting unit at the TMA to handle such emergency situations. —
**PHC stays cutting of forest**
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 22, 2011

Bureau report
PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday stayed cutting of forest containing olive trees in Karak district and directed the director general Environment Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to protect the precious plants.

Zafar Iqbal and 56 others locals of Ashkari Alikhel area in Karak district had filed a writ petition in the high court, seeking protection of the olive trees containing forest spread over 6,000 kanals of land. When a PHC division bench comprising Justice Dost Muhammad Khan and Justice Mazhar Alam Miankhel took up the writ petition, petitioners’ lawyer Muhammad Esa Khan contended that the forest was declared grazing land in 1884 and no one was allowed to cut trees from the forest. In 1903, he said, Nawab Teri acquired the forest, but under the agreement he only getting olives oil and other benefits but was not allowed to cut trees.

The bench stayed cutting of the forest trees and directed DG Environment to take additional contingent of Frontier Constabulary and restrain cutting of trees from the forest. The bench also sought record of the forest from the Forest Department in the writ petition.

**Timber seized in Torghar forest raids**
Dawn Islamabad, June 30, 2011

By Our Correspondent
MANSEHRA, June 29: Forest guards in Torghar on Wednesday raided forests in their jurisdiction and seized a huge quantity of timber, which was illegally cut for smuggling to Haripur and other parts of country, officials said.

A team of the forest department, headed by Torghar forest range officer Alamgir Khan, raided the Nusrathkail forests and seized hundreds of feet timber, which was being smuggled to Haripur via Indus River.

Sources said that large-scale illegal cutting of trees was underway at the Sheirgar, Doga and Nusrathkail forests of the Torghar district. They said that besides the Indus River the hilly Chapar road was also being used for the smuggling.

The forest sources said that the timber smuggling, which was on its peak before the change of the tribal status of Torghar, was still going on.

They said that timber, which was illegally cut in the Torghar, Kohistan and Tanawal area of Mansehra and Battagram, was largely smuggled via Indus River, as the timber beams were thrown into the water and pulled out of the river before they reached the Tarbela reservoir.

The sources said that most of the bridges on the Indus River in Kohistan district were damaged after being hit by the heavy wooden beams.

FOREST MANAGEMENT: The forest owners in Balakot have demanded of the government to include their representatives in the joint forest management committees through elections.

“People who are selected by the forest department usually support them in their misdeeds while majority of the forest owners are deprived of having any role in the policy making,” said Munir Hussain while speaking at a press conference at Balakot on Wednesday.

Accompanied by some other forest owners, Mr. Hussain said that the basic purpose of these committees was to create liaison between the forest department and the owners.

Pakistan Forest Digest 16 Vol. 2, No. 1, April – June 2011
He demanded early elections so that true representatives of the owners could come in these committees. He said that if the government was sincere in the construction of the Shogran road it should pay the land owners.

**English Translation from Urdu News**

**Smuggling of expensive herbs booms, the concerned department is snoozing**

- The herbs are selling at trifling price; the forest department officials seem helpless

_Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 01, 2011_

Abbottabad (General reporter) The neighbourhood of Abbottabad and Galiat are witnessing unstoppable smuggling of precious herbs. The concerned officials are making hay as the state forests are becoming plains. According to details, the smugglers are collecting herbs from Galiat and adjoining areas of Abbottabad and sell those to their favourite ones at dirt cheap rate.

The concerned officials remain silent over those blatant acts.

They have provided rooms on rent to their agents in the city who provide them with herbs. It is interesting to note that the forest department functionaries sit idle at Thai and do nothing, they cannot see precious timber what to say about expensive herbs.

**Save the Kaghan Valley from plunderers**

_Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 06, 2011_

Mansehra (Reporter) The unabated cutting is going on in the forests of Kaghan, the timber is sent to the Forest officials in the city, sale is also going on at local level. The forest officials pose dutiful only when their palms are not greased. A few days back illegal timber of forest officer was caught by the local residents from machine saw; the routine is going on. The forest owners are relaxed that the forest officials are there to protect their forests, but forest officials are themselves involved in the crime.

The timber is sent to city where timber belonging to local residents is sold. This is the duty of forest officials to come out of their office and take action against the corrupt forest officials.

**Rupees 1.4 million charged as fine on five trucks loaded with illegal timber in Thana Kot Najibullah limits**

_Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 09, 2011_

Haripur (Reporter) The forest department impounded five trucks loaded with timber and charged 1.4 million from them as fine and deposited in the treasury. According to details, forest department Haripur raided in the police limits of police station Kot Najibullah on Jhari Kus, Hattar Road and caught five trucks loaded with timber.

The SDFO forest department Tariq Shah fined those five
Police is equally involved in the illegal cutting of forests of Sri Kot
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 11, 2011

Gadwalia (Shamal correspondent) The police is collaborating with the contractors in the illegal practice of forest cutting, because after cutting, the smugglers have to face police, and the police let them go after getting their share. All that is going on under the supervision of police. The forest of SriKot and Gandgar are almost finished. The residents of the area demanded the provincial minister to take immediate action against the culprits.

Smuggling attempt of precious timber foiled in Topi
Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 11, 2011

Topi (Mashriq correspondent) The police officials of Topi have recovered precious timber and registered case against the culprits. The police recovered 29 sleepers from a flying coach, timber from a pickup and 12 sleepers from two camels.

Grand Jirga of Forest department officials and the notables of the area. Ban is demanded on the cutting of the forests of Koh Tanglai
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 12, 2011

Battal (General reporter) A grand jirga was held to stop the cutting in the forests of Koh Tanglai, Hazara Division. The jirga was presided over by Maulana Nasir Mehmood, secretary general JUI Mansehra.

The jirga was attended by President LSO Konish Valley, Zaheer Khan, DFO Mansehra Ejaz Qadir, DSP Shankiari, Resul Shah, SHO Battal Sirdar Ajmal, Range officer Masood, former councilor, Ashiq Khan and a large number of respectable of the area. The speakers expressed their opinions to save the forests at that occasion. They said that people should come out to protect the national asset, in case the people face any difficulty, the senior officials of forest department were there to cooperate.

They said the timber smugglers would never be forgiven, in case any forest official was found involved in the smuggling, he would be strictly dealt. Maulana Nasir said while addressing the jirga that people fully cooperate with the forest department but some black sheep are bent upon to malign the forest department, those elements should be taken care of, without that cutting of forests was not possible.
The local residents of Koh Tanglai will work side by side with the forest department officials, in case of any illegal activity, immediate action will be taken with the help of police.

### Three members of timber mafia apprehended in Luki Marwat, expensive timber recovered

- Tariq, Syed Muhammad and Nematullah were busy in cutting wood in National Park, a raiding team grabbed them

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 13, 2011

Luki Marwat (Mashriq correspondent) A raiding team comprising Wild Life Department and Police raided Sheikh Badeen National Park situated in Koh Badeen and apprehended three members of timber mafia and recovered timber worth millions of rupees and case was registered against them under wild life act. According to sources, DFO Wildlife Muhammad Khan Niazi got information that some persons were busy cutting wood in the dark of night in a tourist resort, Sheikh Badeen Park, situate at junction of D I Khan and Luki Marwat. The said DFO formed a team comprising range officer Koh Badeen, Idrees Ghazi, Dera Pezo Police, and officials of wildlife department and forest department. Three culprits, Tariq s/o Ahmed Syed, Muhammad Khan s/o Abdul Manan and Nematullah Khan s/o Akram Khan residents of Dera Pezo were caught red-handed. 30 maunds of precious timber were recovered from their custody. A case was registered against them under Wildlife Act 1975, section 16. A total of eight thousand rupees were fined.

### An attempt to smuggle timber failed in Warri, two person arrested. 32 expensive sleepers recovered after barricading Sahibabad

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 15, 2011

Warri (Mashriq correspondent) Sahibabad police arrested two persons while failing the attempt to smuggle timber. Last night incharge police chowki, Muhammad Nazeer Khan cordoned off the area and stopped a vehicle PSW 1809 and thoroughly searched and recovered large quantity of timber including 32 expensive sleepers. Two persons, Muhammad Khan s/o Badshah Zameen and Sultan Zareen s/o Muhammad Ameen residents of Kadi Khel, cases were registered and timber was confiscated.

### Timber mafia given free hand in Haripur, Forest department involved

- Dozens of vehicles loaded with timber go to Punjab daily with the abetment of Forest department officials. The officers occasionally catch one or two vehicles to show their progress. The timber mafia is enjoying full freedom after the

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 18, 2011
The appointment of new DFO, during his tenure timber was caught under pressure of sensitive agencies, but the department is encashing that activity.

The important personalities of Haripur say that the DFO and SDO are involved timber mafia. Every night at 3:00 am, dozens of vehicles loaded with timber enter Haripur through Chappar Road and go to Punjab. The forest department has not taken any action against those smugglers because the forest officials and police officers are regularly getting their ‘share’. Likewise, after the appointment of present DFO, the timber mafia is given full freedom. His subordinates and other officials are involved in the practice.

The forest department officers know all about the stocks and other hidden places for the timber coming through Tarbella Lake, but instead of taking action, they are at ease and accept sweetener. The forest department officials have fixed the rates for kick back from trucks according to their weight. They are getting the amount regularly. After news in the papers, one or two vehicles are caught to show the efficiency, to compensate that the smugglers are given a free hand to smuggle a number of vehicles to Punjab.

The Haripur residents have demanded the DCO Haripur to take notice of the situation.

A jirga to save Koh Tanglai forests, timber smugglers are confused
Save the Forest Movement will be made a success, it will restore the beauty of the area: Forest department

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 22, 2011

Konish Valley (Bureau chief)
The successful jirga to save the forest of Koh Tanglai has deeply shocked the timber smugglers. In the jirga the forest owners of Koh Tanglai and DFO Sern, DSP Shankiari and the SHO Battal resolved to make the movement to save the forest a big success. The jirga was also attended by hundreds of people involved in the business of timber and firewood. They made a commitment to stop the cutting and save the forest.

The forest officials also showed their integrity and discouraged every kind of smuggling. This successful movement also inspired the people of Konish Valley. They controlled the illegal cutting in Konish Valley forests. The persons who were affected by the positive steps of the people are spreading false information and criticize the jirga and the DFO. Koh Tanglai forest was the most beautiful forest of Hazar Division, which now has become treeless plain. After the safety steps of jirga and concerned officers, the people involved in smuggling have sold their donkeys and mules to start a new business.

The children involved in forest labour have been admitted in the schools. The forest department officials say that they have become powerful with the help of local residents band will restore the beauty of Koh Tanglai.

Forest Department’s picket at Iter Shisha, two trucks loaded with precious wood impounded
Timber was recovered from hidden compartments of the truck; dental walnut scrub worth millions of rupees was also recovered.

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 22, 2011

Khawajgan, Shankiari, Mansehra (General reporter, News reporter, Chief reporter)

After a successful operation of Mansehra forest departments, two trucks loaded with expensive timber were caught. According to details, under the supervision of Circle Doctor...
Naseem Javed Khan, DFO Sern Division Ejaz Qadir, DFO Petrol Squad, Anayatullah Khan, SDFO Farhad Ali with heavy contingent cordoned off Iter Shisha and caught two trucks; NWFP p3014 and GLT 6728.

The timber worth millions of rupees was confiscated from the truck owners. Mansehra Forest Department, Conservator and DFO Ejaz Qadir, Inayatullah Khan and Farhad Ali said while talking to a press conference said that previous day Commissioner Hazara, DIG devised a comprehensive plan to eliminate timber smugglers. He said he challenged the timber smugglers to shun the smuggling and start a new business.

The conservator said while talking about the hidden compartments of the truck, those vehicles should be confiscated. In case those vehicles are released they would again be involved in that same dirty business. Moreover, DFO Ejaz Qadir on a tip off by an informer erected pickets near Dharpal Depot and caught a white Corolla 2.0 D, number AAM 918 with the culprits and dental walnut scrubber worth millions of rupees. Yesterday’s performance of forest department was widely praised by the people.

Muhammad Khan says he does not have any relation with timber mafia

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 20, 2011

Warri (Mashriq correspondent) Muhammad Khan a resident of Kadi Khel held a press conference. He said while addressing the press conference that he had absolutely no relation with the timber mafia. He belongs to respectable family. He clarified that he was bringing timber for the construction of houses destroyed by heavy rainfall. Police confiscated the timber and filed a case of timber smuggling.

Smuggling of timber in Khalabut: Penniless joined timber mafia and became millionaire

- Timber is being smuggled through Tarbella Lake and Chappar road with the help of forest department and police, the locals demand inquiry by investigation teams

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 23, 2011

Haripur (Qazi Nisar Ahmed) Khalabut township became timber mafia’s international market. The precious forests of Hazara have become treeless stretches with the connivance of forest department and police. If the illegal cutting of forest continues the remaining forest would be vanished. The provincial and federal government should take positive steps to save the forests.

According to a survey, the people of Haripur claim that the forests of Hazara and the surroundings have been destroyed with the cooperation of forest department and police. The people say that Tarbella Lake and Chappar road has become golden route for the timber smugglers. They further said Khalabut Township had become an international market for the timber mafia. The number of smugglers is increasing day by day. The people who used to do labour with timber mafia have become millionaire, they own expensive houses lands and motorcars. Their assets’ worth has crossed the limits of millions.

During a survey the people of the area demanded that the investigation agencies and NAB should conduct an inquiry against the culprits to save the forests.
The attempt to smuggle expensive timber foiled by Topi police, two smugglers arrested
Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 25, 2011

Topi (Mashriq correspondent) Topi police failed an attempt to smuggle timber worth millions and arrested two smugglers. SHO, Topi police station, Nazeer Khan and ASI Qamar Zaman Khan stopped a dumper RIG 887 at a picket and recovered sleepers worth millions of rupees and arrested two smugglers.

A botched attempt of smuggling in Kotli Bala, vehicle loaded with timber captured

- DFO Ejaz Qadir recovered 100 feet Dyar from a Datsun pickup and another heavy cache of timber from a Suzuki

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 27, 2011

Mansehra (Chief reporter) DFO Ejaz Qadir captured a heavy quantity of illegal Dyar and Pinewood from two vehicles. DFO Ejaz Qadir belonged to Mufti a resident of Kotli Bala and stopped a Datsun 6628 at Kotli Bala which recovered 100 feet Dyar, and through another operation captured Pinewood in large quantity from a Suzuki 8815 from Khan Dheri.

DFO raids, two trucks loaded with expensive timber confiscated and heavy amount of fine imposed

- Timber smuggler Mufti Khan was trying to smuggle hundreds of feet timber to Punjab, but was caught at a picket

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 28, 2011

Mansehra (Staff reporter) DFO Sern raids and captures two trucks loaded with timber and arrested the culprits A notorious smuggler of Konish Valley, Mufti Khan was trying to smuggling two trucks of timber to Punjab, but was arrested a picket in Saddar area.

The general secretary, Forest Sern, Qazi Ishtiaq Ahmed asked the authorities to promote that staff and awarded certificates of excellence, which would enhance their morale and will curb the smuggling. Many politicians and other personalities tried their best to save that smuggler but in vain.

Two persons arrested while trying to smuggle timber from Shankiari in the dark of night

- Sultan Jadoon caught Muhammad Saleem and Imtiaz with timber in their possession and handed over to Police Station Baffa

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 28, 2011

Mansehra (Chief reporter) Sultan Jadoon arrested timber smugglers red-handed. Range officer Shankiari arrested the smuggler responsible for illegal cutting of forest. Muhammad Saleem s/o Sher Bahadur and Imtiaz resident of Banda Peeran were arrested while they were loading pinewood on the mules. They were handed over to Baffa police station and a case
of illegal cutting was registered. They were produced in the court of the local magistrate who sent those enemies of green gold to judicial lockup. The culprits had been nominated in previous thirty reports.

Forest guards and timber mafia join hands, forests of Koh Tanglai are being devastated

- False accusation on Golra clan to save their crimes of illegal cutting of forests after taking sweetener

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 29, 2011

Konish Valley (Muhammad Safeer Khan) The perpetrators of destruction of beautiful forests of Koh Tanglai have been exposed. The guards have joined the enemies of forests. They have conspired against the local Golra clan and blamed them for the destruction of forests. The forests of Koh Tanglai are being cut by forest officers, forest guards and range officers, which are then smuggled to different destinations. The journalists visited the Koh Tanglai area and collected the proofs. According to details, a few days back, DFO Sern division held an open Court at Hearan.

The court was attended by DSP circle Shankiari, Shah Resul, SHO Battal police station, Sirdar Ajmal and political and other dignitaries of the area. At that occasion, hundreds of people of Golra clan openly said in the presence of DSP Sern and DSP Shankiari that protectors of forests were destroying forests despite getting millions of rupees from them. Golra Clan is not the only community which cut the trees, but there are many other who cut the trees and get away after giving a suitable amount of money to the forest department officials. The Golra clan announced at that occasion in the presence of hundreds of people that neither they would trade in timber nor they would allow anyone to do business of timber. After open court, the Golra clan many times apprehended the timber smugglers red handed.

The Golra community decided to patrol the forest. When local people were going to Koh Tanglai, the forest guard vanished in the mid way and informed the people busy in cutting the forest to flee the scene. The culprits caught the patrolling person, Saddam s/o Mehfooz Khan and tied him. When they were leaving after loading timber on the mules, Saddam fled away, the timber smugglers fired at him, but he made good his escape.

The range officer was informed but he took no action and did not go to the spot. On the second day, journalists of Konish Valley visited Koh Tanglai and invited the forest department officials to join them, but the officials refused fearing the presence of smugglers and also tried to dissuade the journalists. When Konish valley journalists reached the forests, they found hundreds of remains of freshly cut trees and sleepers in the nullahs. The journalists also witnessed many people fleeing the forest. When the range officer and other officials sensed the fear of getting exposed by the journalists, they started imploring and tried to persuade them with lucrative offers. The honourable residents of Konish Valley have decided to save the forests at any cost.
Smuggling of expensive timber from Balakot to Mansehra failed, smugglers escape

- Scuffle between timber smugglers and the forest department officials, three officials hurt

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 29, 2011

Balakot (Mashriq correspondent) Officials of the forest department, Balakot caught expensive timber being smuggled to Mansehra from Kaghan Valley. There was scuffle between forest officials and the timber smugglers, three officials were hurt. A report lodged forest officials in the Balakot police station revealed that timber smugglers were smuggling 80 feet illegal timber from Kaghan Valley by a Coaster no. CRG 2680. They were chased from Balakot barrier and finally the vehicle was caught at Shohal ground.

The smugglers tried to overpower the forest officials. As a result, Sirdar Mehmood Sultan shah, forester and driver Rifaqat Hussain got hurt and timber smugglers managed to escape.

Forests are safe in Galiat, no illegal cutting is seen

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 29, 2011

Nethiagali (Special correspondent) Different effective steps have taken in Galiat forests, therefore no illegal cutting is going on. People of the area have complete trust in the steps taken by the department to curb the illegal activities.

The forest department Gulnair Division strongly rejected the news item published in a local newspaper regarding the illegal cutting and smuggling of timber. The spokesman for the forest department condemned the false news and said that for the last three years, all the officials including the range officer were performing their duties very honestly. Nobody could prove illegal cutting in the area and the timber mafia was forced to leave the area due to strictness of the forest department. At times the forest department had heavily fined the timber smugglers and confiscated the timber.

The officer generated a large amount of money under the head of fines. A very effective system of watch and ward was implemented in the area, the vehicles are thoroughly checked. The department is doing well with the help of locals of the area. The business of timber mafia has been destroyed and they are busy maligning the department without any solid evidence.

Patronage of timber mafia should be curbed

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 01, 2011

Notwithstanding the corruption, mismanagement and negligence of forest department and the administration, the 80 percent area of total forests of the country belong to Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. As a matter of fact if the forest department officials do not seriously try to eliminate the timber mafia, and some resourceful officials continue to support the timber smuggler, the forests which are left safe would be finished.

The provincial minister’s claim about the operation against the timber mafia is fine, but the real situation is entirely different. The legislatures belonging to Kohistan, Mansehra, Dir Bala and other adjoining areas are blatantly admitting that the hardened criminals belonging to timber mafia are the main cause for
The beautiful face of Kamrat Valley is tarnished due to negligence

- The area lacks the basic amenities like education, health and transport system. The business of illegal cutting and timber smuggling is flourishing. There is no concept of education for the females, the tourists dread the law and order situation of the area.

By Abdullah Madni

The Dir valley is the blessed one; it is endowed with innumerable treasures of nature. The valley has a prominent position due to its ancient forts, antiquities, archaeological remains and the lakes. The tourist attractions of the valley are Lirram Top, Maidan, Miskini, Shahi banshahi, Thal Kohistan, Jandol and Talash Valley etc. There is one area which can be certainly called crown of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, and that area is called Kamrat Valley. The governments’ negligence, broken roads and other factors have put this valley to oblivion. Unless the repulsing factors are not removed, the tourism industry will not recover.

Kamrat Valley is about 60 KM from Dir Khas, but due to bad road link the distance is covered in six hours. On way to Kamrat from Dir, there are some beautiful points, like Patrak, Sheringle, Thal and Kalkot etc. There is famous mosque at thal. The prominent feature of that mosque is that the whole structure is made of Dyar wood. The mosque made in similarity to Kaaba; from there onward Kamrat Valley starts. The scenic beauty of valleys, lakes, water falls and wooden house hold special attraction for the tourists. The trouts of Kamrat are real attraction fro the tourists. In summer one has to wear winter clothing and in winter temperature drops to -14 C. The locals of the area are famous for their hospitality, they consider that a duty to serve and protect the tourists. The grassy plains, snow leopards, lakes and trout fish make the area truly the queen of the mountains.

One can observe ghandhara art traces on the houses, mosques and other buildings. The biggest blessing for these people is their forests which are spread to end of sight. Due to lack of governments’ assistance timber worth millions of rupees is being wasted. The unabated cutting, smuggling is posing a real threat to the forests there. Dyar and Shisham trees are very common here. The issue is that the government should immediately impose ban on the cutting of trees and the revenue generated by the legal disposal of wood should be spent on the welfare of the people. The best furniture can be produced by this wood.
Dry fruit, herbs of medicinal value and honey is abundantly available, but this area is deprived of all basic necessities even in 21st century. The people have erected small power generation plants on self help basis. There is only power house constructed by the government which supplies 5 mega watt just to meet the requirements of Thal. Health facilities are virtually absent; there is an urgent need of hospitals and dispensaries. Education is a big issue, the scarcity of schools, governments’ apathy and local traditions are big hurdle in getting education. Malakand Division and especially the people of Dir districts are eternally unlucky that despite the fact they have proper representation in provincial and federal government, the long overdue issue and problems could not be solved. Literacy rate is very low, the schools are a few, the girl education is almost nil. There is no concept of girls’ education beyond the primary level. No government has seriously worked to enhance the tourism, the forests worth billions of rupees nearing the disaster due to the negligence of the government and abetment of forest department with the smugglers. If the forests are properly looked after and the investors from abroad and within the country are encouraged, the area can become heaven with days. The people of the area are hardworking and respect the traditions. They normally resolve the disputes and other issues in the jirga instead going to the process of country’s law. The government should develop the infra structure. The construction of hotels, ban on tree cutting can help the tourism industry flourish.

The forest department fails an attempt to smuggle timber worth millions of rupees

- A truck was stopped in Kooza Gali at a picket, after through search 321 feet timber was revered, driver was arrested and a case was also registered.

**Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 04, 2011**

Chhangla Gali (Special correspondent) In a big operation by the forest department of Galiat timber worth millions of rupees was confiscated and was fined heavily. The forest Gulnaiz division got the information that a huge cache of timber would be smuggled to Rawalpindi on a truck.

The range officer Sirdar Ryasat Talotha along with heavy contingent cordoned off a point at Kooza Gali. A truck TKQ 665 coming from Abbottabad was stopped and was searched, 321 feet Byar wood was recovered, and during the operation the driver Ajmal Khan s/o of Pir Khan resident of Mirpur Abbottabad was arrested. The driver was fined rupees 390,000 under the Forest Act.

According to forest department the confiscated timber cache was the biggest in Galiat history. The smugglers used to smuggle timber through Haripur to Rawalpindi.

The DFO raids on different Godowns, hundreds of feet timber recovered

- DFO Ejaz Qadir says the forest department officials have close links with the timber smugglers; the operation was kept very confidential

**Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 05, 2011**

Chhatar Plain (Shamal correspondent, Bureau chief) The destruction of green gold in Konish valley simply due to bad management of forest department. Untill and unless the illegal cutting of trees is not stopped the devastation will continue. Yesterday the timber which was captured from the godowns was not dropped from skies to the godowns.
Where do the forest officials go when illegal cutting continues on full swing. It is alleged that the forest officials appointed in some areas get rupees 500 to rupee 1,000 from the smugglers and are becoming rich. Unless these black sheep are not removed from the department, no progress can be witnessed in the protection of the forests. There is another aspect to the dishonesty; the forest officials come to the forests once a month and get their share of bribe from their appointed functionaries, rest of the month they wander around the market. There is an interesting thing to note that the private forest owners are also involved in the nefarious practice, they cut the forest illegally at night. Police raided different godowns and recovered hundreds of feet illegal timber.

DFO Sern, Ejaz Qadir and SHO Sirdar Ajmal raided on different godowns of smugglers belonging to Chattar plain on a tip of an informer and recovered 192 different sized sleepers in about hundreds of feet quantity.

Timber smugglers fire at the raiding party in Kalabagh, one forest guard and another official injured, vehicle damaged

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 06, 2011

Abbottabad (City reporter) The timber smugglers fired at the raiding party in Donga Gali when the officials signaled to stop the smugglers’ vehicle.

Two forest officials got hurt. One smuggler was arrested whereas three escaped.

The arrested culprit revealed the names of his other three fellow accomplices. According to details, on the midnight of Wednesday, smugglers were passing through Donga Gali on Datsun pickup fully loaded with timber, they were intercepted at Donga Gali, but instead of stopping on the signal, the smugglers fired at the party and sped away. Two officials were hurt whereas one accused a resident of Cheerrh, Gulab s/o Dilawar was caught. According to arrested accused, Khalid and Rashid sons of Aslam and Arshad s/o Anwar were with him at the time of smuggling and firing at the party. Police have registered a case and started searching about the accused.

The private forest owners should play their role to stop the illegal cutting, says Ibrar Khan

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 09, 2011

Chhattar Plain (Shamal correspondent) The private forest owners should strive to stop the cutting of forests. The forest owners not only stop the cutting themselves but also do not cooperated with the forest department and the fair minded people of the area who work to control the cutting. The president ‘Protect the forests committee’, Ibrar Ahmed Khan expressed his views in a press conference in Chhattar plain.

He said the forests are national assets so very practicable steps are needed to save the forests. He blamed some of the private owners of forests that they were having close links with the smugglers and whenever the forest department laid
hands on the smugglers, their friends work as shield between police and the smugglers.

**In the dark of night, Forests are being cut with the abetment of forest department**

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 10, 2011

Shankiari (News reporter) The cutting spree of forests is on the rise with the collaboration of forest department officials. The people demand immediate operation against the corrupt officials.

As the details say, in Shankiari range, three trees were cut with the cooperation of forest officials. The trees are afterwards sold at the machine saw, and the practice booms.

**The quantity of illegal timber caught from Chhattar Plain godowns shrinks by 200 feet as it reach Mansehra**

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 10, 2011

Mansehra (Chief reporter) The illegal timber caught from Chhattar plain was around 1000 feet but its quantity was reduced to 800 feet as it reached Mansehra. The forest department, 5 days back recovered 1000 feet Byar and Partal from Chhattar Plain’s illegal godowns, but it was 800 feet when it reached Mansehra Central Timber Depot.

**The timber worth millions of rupees recovered from timber mafia disposed of by the Police**

Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Islamabad, May 21, 2011

Kotli Satian (Correspondent) Timber worth millions of rupees extracted from timber mafia and dumped in Kotli Satian police station and its related police chowkis in Lehrtrar and Karor was embezzled. Police had recovered that expensive timber from timber mafia and had registered case against the smugglers.

The timber was in form of beams and sleepers were put in the said places. Some of the smugglers were sentenced and put in the jail. Some others’ cases are also under trial. The confiscated timber is no more there in the storage places. It shows that the officials appointed there had committed fraud. Rotten and unusable woods remain at the points instead of hundreds of feet of expensive timber. According to details, the largest quantity was removed in the tenure of current SHO, Ch Aslam.

The locals of the area have demanded the chief minister, CPO Rawalpindi and DCO Rawalpindi to take notice of the situation.

**Save the forests from powerful timber to avert its extinction**

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 11, 2011

According headlines of local newspaper of Abbottabad, the powerful timber mafia have thrown the forests to verge of extinction. After the locals lost the hope to resolve that issue by the concerned department, people contacted MNA, Murtaza Javed Abassi while he was attending a
marriage party and demanded that the forests of Galiat be saved from extinction. Some provincial minister were also present at the occasion, the people accused one member that he was patronising the timber mafia.

He used his influence to put one grade 7 employees on the seat of grade 18 and using that person to smuggle about 25 vehicle load of timber to Punjab. That large scale cutting cannot be hidden from the public eyes. The people which have been pointed out should be checked by the assembly members. If the government were sincere it would be very easy to expose that person who was plundering the forests. In the past also member assembly were put responsible for the illegal cutting. The forests of Galiat are becoming plains with the collaboration of the corrupt forest officials, very expensive and rare tree are first dried by chemicals then the tree are smuggled to Punjab in the dark of night. All the officers are getting their shares — right from forest guard to senior officers.

The tree in large number are cut daily from Changla Gali, Tajwal, Chami, Aubia and Galiat and then sent to Punjab through Lora. The gravity of the matter can be felt by the situation that now the forest officials are not relying on timber mafia, instead they are doing that dirt business on the partnership basis. The large scale cutting of forests is affecting the tourism industry. If the ongoing practice of forest cutting is not stopped, the green gold will be finished one day. The proper steps have not been taken to replenish the water level in the dams or for the enhancement of water capacity, that ultimately caused power crisis in the country.

The cutting of forests will increase the silt level in the dams just to worsen the power crisis in the country. The cutting of forests will blemish the beauty of the area and environmental change. The provincial government claims to take steps to save the forests, but when the forest officials are involved in the cutting of trees, the loss cannot be averted. Last week the chief minister signed an agreement with a British firm to save grow the forests, but considering the presence of corrupt officer we cannot predict any luck for the forests.

The provincial government should find that person who jumped from grade 7 to grade 18. The local MPAs and MNAs should show the moral courage to point out the people involved in patronage of timber smugglers so that the people should do justice in the coming election. The journalists of Galiat should not write articles in favour of forest officials; the officials’ point of view should be given proper space in the paper but they should also write about the illegal cutting of forests in the paper, therefore it is necessary to report on the basis of truth and facts. Many pictures are published regarding the illegal cutting of forests.

This is improper to call the forest department officials as angels; their big assets betray the reality. The powerful timber smugglers need to be effectively dealt. The need of the hour is to replace the corrupt and politically installed officer to save the forests from timber smugglers.

District Haripur becomes goldmine for the timber smugglers

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 13, 2011

Haripur (Chief reporter) Haripur becomes goldmine for the timber smugglers, timber worth millions of rupees with the connivance of forest officials and the law is only practiced on the poor. The responsible citizens of Hazara have demanded the new commissioner to save the forests from total destruction. They also demanded strict action against. DPO Haripur, Muhammad Ali Gandapur who was famous for taking strict action against the criminals have some corrupt officials in his staff who align with the timber smugglers. The smuggling of timber is the rise on Chappar Road and other routes. The forests of Hazara are being plundered with the collaboration of forest officials.
Sher Garrh police and timber smugglers trade firing, 4 culprits apprehended

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 03, 2011

Mansehra (District crime reporter) Elite Force and timber mafia traded fire in Sher Garrh Range, four accused arrested. According to details, Yesterday in Sher Garrh Range, Sern Division, and Mansehra Elite Force raided the timber smugglers den.

The timber smugglers opened fire, the Elite Force retaliated and encircled the smugglers and arrested four accused Ali Rehman, Imran sons/o Maskeen Yaqub and Anwar Zeb residents of Ghazi Kot and recovered timber and mules, it was learnt that the accused had also injured Rafaqat, a young officer of Elite Force.

FC should be appointed in Sern Valley to protect the forests.

- The uncontrolled cutting of forests is going on

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 12, 2011

Jaboori (Special correspondent) Range Officer Jaboori Range, Muhammad Ali Khan was talking to the Daily Shamal representative, he said FC should be appointed in the Sern Valley to protect the forests. He said he had many times requested the authorities to post FC but his suggestions were never heeded. The trees in the forests are being indiscriminately cut.

Those trees are about two hundred years old. The forest department has failed to protect the forests, so we need FC personnel to fight the smugglers. He said the forest department officials were less in number than the criminals.

“If the Sern Valley forests are to be saved, I appeal the authorities to give us FC, because Police has been proved ineffective. If the cutting continues on that pace, soon the forests will be no more, the loss will enormous; if we get FC in time we can control the situation,” he added.

The gangs involved in cutting of the forests should be busted

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 12, 2011

According to press conference of Range Officer Jaboori, Muhammad Ali 25 member gang of dacoits have camped in Manda Kachh Piracha forests, they are equipped with latest weapons. They have already cut tree worth millions of rupees. The forest department officials are helpless. FC should be immediately posted in the forest to stop the illegal cutting.

The range officer further said that the concerned department had been informed.

The cutting by fully armed gang is a reason to ponder. The words by the range officer clearly hint at the scary situation in the forests. The law and order situation is challenge to the writ of state. The law enforcement agencies must initiate action against the gang and arrest the criminals to uphold the writ of law. Nobody is allowed to destroy the forest, whatever is the status of criminal the agencies should fulfil their duty to apprehend those culprits.
DFO Sern install barricades and the officials save the timber smugglers
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 19, 2011

Konish Valley (Crime reporter)
The forest department did wonders; DFO Sern cordoned off the road to catch the smugglers, but the officials secretly informed the timber smugglers and facilitated their safe escape to their destination. They failed the attempt of DFO Sern to apprehend the looters. The forest owners have accused the functionaries of forest department Battal range that they had started loot sale of the trees and blatantly getting bribes.

Block officer, Muhammad Yousaf is openly getting bribes under the patronage of range officer. The forest owners said that dozens of vehicles loaded with expensive timber belonging to timber smugglers cross areas of Chattar Plain, Bali Mang and Khator in the darkness of night and cross the barriers of Battal and reach Mansehra. The timber mafia’s movement is facilitated by Battal range officers against heavy amount of sweetener.

The mafia is given real protocol. The nefarious practice is going on for months and nobody is there to counter them. The forest owners have demanded DFO Sern and the forest minister to prohibit the vehicles of the timber mafia to enter the area and immediate action should be taken against the block officer Muhammad Yousaf.

The court orders to immediately stop the cutting of forests in Karak
Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 22, 2011

Peshawar (Courts reporter)
Peshawar High court has ordered to immediately stop the cutting of forests of Olive trees and other trees on six thousand kanals. The court has ordered the forest department KPK and federal secretary, environment and regional director environment KPK to submit the explanation.

The divisional bench comprising Mr Justice Dost Muhammad Khan and Mr Justice Mazhar Aslam Miankhel began the hearing of petition filed by Zafar Iqbal and other 57 people. The court was informed that six thousand kanal area of Karak which collection of 1884 is full of Olive and other trees. However the department has transferred that to different people. Now the Olive and other trees are being cut, therefore the practice should be stopped. The honourable court issued notice to forest department, federal secretary and regional director environment department to submit the explanation within two months and ordered the concerned department to stop the cutting in Karal under the supervision of police and FC.

Timber smugglers succeed to smuggle timber after breaking the barrier in Ougi, forest guard manhandled
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 19, 2011

Konish Valley (Crime reporter)
Timber smugglers manhandled the forest guard and got away with four vehicles loaded with expensive timber after breaking barrier in Ougi, Jalalabad. According to detail’s, timber smugglers loaded four vehicles with expensive timber from different forests. When the vehicles reached Jalalabad barrier, the forest guard came near the vehicles and stopped the vehicle according to prescribed procedure.
The timber mafia tried to make a deal to get away with timber worth millions of rupees, but on refusal they severely beat the forest guard and broke the barrier and fled away. Liaquat, the forest guard filed a complaint against Shafique and others in Ougi police station. Police registered a case and started investigation.
Chapter 03

Forest & Environment
Chapter 03

Forest & Environment

Flame of the Forest’ adds to the beauty of city
The News Islamabad, Rawalpindi, April 02, 2011

By Ishrat Hyatt

Rawalpindi: The beautiful ‘gulmohar’ trees had an early blooming this year due to the sudden warm weather that was more like summer than spring. There are some magnificent ones in Rawalpindi some in private gardens and some along the roads that have not been widened sacrificing trees growing along each side. While single trees are lovely too they make the most impact when they grow in bunches or rows, one after another, living up to their more romantic name, ‘Flame of the Forest.’ They stand tall; are majestic and beautiful and must make the view from the windows of the offices and homes more pleasant when they are in bloom — that is if anyone takes the time to look and admire the beauty of nature.

Information on the tree reveals that ‘Gulmohar’ (Delonix regia) or ‘Flame of the Forest,’ is a species of flowering plant from the ‘Fabaceae’ family, noted for its fern-like leaves and flamboyant display of flowers. Often grown as an ornamental tree and given the name ‘Royal Poinciana’ or ‘Flamboyant,’ it is also known as ‘Krishnachura’ (West Bengal and Bangladesh), ‘Peacock Flower,’ ‘Malinche’ and ‘Tabachine’ in different parts of the world. The species was named after Phillippe de Longvilliers de Poincy, who is credited with introducing the plant to the Americas.

The tree’s vivid red flowers and bright green foliage make it an exceptionally striking sight. In addition to its ornamental value, it is also a useful tree in tropical conditions, because it usually grows to a modest height but spreads widely and its dense foliage provides full shade. In areas with a marked dry season, it sheds its leaves during the drought, but in other areas it is virtually evergreen. The flowers are large, with four spreading scarlet or orange-red petals up to 8 cm long and a fifth upright petal called the standard, which is slightly larger and spotted with yellow and white. The compound leaves have a feathery appearance and are a characteristic light, bright green.

The ‘Gulmohar’ requires a tropical or near-tropical climate but can tolerate drought and salty conditions. It is very widely grown in the Caribbean, Hong Kong, the Canary Islands, Taiwan and southern China throughout southern Brazil.
Flowers add beauty to environment: Nayyer
Pakistan Observer Islamabad, April 02, 2011

By Sharafat Kazmi
Islamabad—Leader of the House in Senate, Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari on Friday appreciated the CDA’s Flower exhibition and said flowers are the part and parcel of our life as they add beauty and fragrance to our gardens, our homes as well our lives. Inaugurating the three-day Spring Flowers and Vegetable Show 2011 here at Rose and Jasmine Garden, he said apart from beautification, flowers and roses are great source of recreation and entertainment for the residents and such exhibitions encourage people for plantation of flowers at their homes.

“This flowers and birds show would help promoting Pakistan’s soft image abroad as many foreign diplomats will also visit this exhibition,” he added.

Apprising the chief guest and media the acting Chairman CDA, Mian Waheed-ud-Din said the show would continue for three days and prizes would be distributed among the winners.

Many government, semi-government and private organizations and individuals are participating in the 29th flowers show.

He informed that a large variety of flowers are being exhibited in the flowers show.

The organizations are participating in this show including Capital Development Authority, Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), Pak PWD, Islamabad Club, Indonesian Embassy, Pakistan Air Force Hospital, National Highway Authority and Pakistan Motorway and Traffic Police and others.

The Chairman CDA said this year we have expanded this show by adding different varieties of flowers and species of birds being exhibited in the flowers and birds show and he assured to expand it further in the coming years by including other varieties of flowers and species of birds in the annual event.

He said that the civic body is endeavouring to plant environment friendly new indigenous varieties of flowers and trees on the highways, roads, bridges and green areas.

Kachnar trees a double joy
Dawn Islamabad, April 07, 2011

By Kalbe Ali
ISLAMABAD, April 6: Standing alone and filled with lush white and light purple flowers are the Kachnar trees found all over Islamabad, adding to the beauty of the area in spring.

It is also one of the very few trees that grow naturally in the region providing seasonal delicacy and extra pocket money to those who pluck its buds and sell them in the markets.

“The buds are tasty when cooked either with potatoes or minced meat,” said a housewife Asmat Zehra, a resident of Islamabad. “My children who also play around Kachnar trees often collect sizeable quantity of buds,” she added.

Taking advantage of school holidays hundreds of local...
children, residents of villages around Islamabad and low income localities in the city can be seen climbing Kachnar trees daily to collect buds.

“We eat this flower daily and I collect one plastic bag from these trees on the green belt,” said a young resident of katchiabadi behind Zero Point.

However, it is more than that for the villagers around the city who are less fond of eating Kachnar but more interested in selling the sprouts to local vegetable sellers.

These boys collect the buds mainly in the remote areas, as the trees are easily identified by its light purple or white flowers blooming in vast numbers dominating the surrounding.

Whereas many daily wagers can be seen collecting Kachnar buds in F-6 sector mainly around the Super Market, and at the green belt in H-Sectors, to sell their harvest between Rs30 and Rs40 per kg to the vegetable sellers.

On their part the retailers sell the same up to Rs100 per kg, and even say the commodity is in short supply.

“This is very costly at the wholesale fruit and vegetable market due to high demand,” said a retailer at G-10 Markaz and added that buds are brought to Islamabad city from far-flung villages because the local produce do not have good quality mainly due to pollution in the city.

Similarly, another retailer in F-sector said that the short supply was due to cutting of trees in the Islamabad area.

“These buds are brought from Haripur and Tarbela area,” he said.

However, there is no uniform Kachnar rate in the twin cities, the average rate of kachnar in Rawalpindi is Rs60 per kg, but it is comparatively more costly in upper-middle class localities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad due to high demand.

Kachnar buds cost between Rs80 and Rs100 per kg in Commercial Market, Aabpara, G-10 and F-6, while it was less in local markets in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Kachnar is a local name in the subcontinent for a variety of medium size trees of Bauhinia plant family.

Though ignored in the past, the Capital Development Authority has made it a policy to plant indigenous and fruit trees at the annual plantation drive.

“This year we planted more than 100,000 fruit trees in spring and the same number will be planted in the second phase of plantation drive,” said Ramzan Sajid CDA spokesman.

He said that the policy had been adopted in view of serious troubles being faced by the residents of the capital and even the authority due to the allergy causing varieties that were alien to the land.

Letter to Editor

Trees’ relocation: modern technology

- TREES not only provide us beautiful landscapes but they are also a big source of oxygen. They prevent soil erosion and maintain ecosystem.

Dawn Islamabad, April 19, 2011

Throughout the country, a network of roads is being extended under communication development projects. Unfortunately, while extending the width of roads beautiful and old trees are cut down by the authorities. To fill the gap, new plants are grown on the extended sides of roads, which take almost years to become fully grown and also provide shadow. A lot of human and financial resources are employed to grow these trees.

Instead, there is another option available. I have visited a lot of websites that provide technology of relocating trees from one place to another.

In limited time, hundreds of trees can be moved without harming their shape and roots. The method is cost effective and time-saving as compared
Threat to trees?

Dawn Islamabad, April 19, 2011

A NEW phenomenon in the flood-affected parts of Sindh merits the authorities’ attention. On April 8, this newspaper published a photograph taken in a still-inundated part of Khairpur Nathan Shah, depicting trees cocooned in what appears to be a dense, cloud-like film resembling a spider web. Their appearance led local people to conjecture that spiders, displaced by floodwater, had taken refuge in the trees. No effort has been made to call in experts and determine what organism is responsible.

This exercise must be undertaken, however, for the infestation may involve a hardy parasite. A senior botanist has pointed out that this phenomenon is more likely to be the work of spider mites, which are entirely different from spiders. Spider mites damage and kill plant cells; the web is there to protect their colonies against predators, not to capture insects. A single mature female spider mite can spawn a million-strong colony in less than a month. Their rapid reproductive cycle allows the species to adapt and become resistant to pesticides. Consequently, an infestation can lead to the large-scale death of trees.

Worryingly, most of the trees thus affected in Sindh are of the Acacia Nilotica species, referred to as the golden tree of Sindh due to its environmental suitability. High-density plantations of the species, which is considered a very productive forest system, have been cultivated along the plains of the River Indus. It bodes ill for the environmental health of the area if they are in danger. While spider mites are not unknown in Pakistan, it is possible that the effect of the floods was to concentrate and restrict their colonies to certain areas where Acacia Nilotica trees became easy prey. The Sindh Forest Department must ensure that steps are taken to counteract any danger.

Faith keeps banyan trees thriving

Dawn Islamabad, May 15, 2011

By Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD, May 14: Old habits die hard – and this is truer when it comes to faith. People are generally ready to compromise on necessities rather than breaking their centuries-old traditions; this is visible in the federal capital too, as the locals despite a dire need for wood have hardly volunteered to cut down the banyan trees.

Among all the species, the banyan trees are the only ones that have survived for centuries at various spots in and around the federal capital, and there are more than 176 centuries-old banyan trees in Islamabad. More can be seen on G.T. Road providing shade to old ponds.

“Barh-Bodr or bargad are the most prominent local names of banyan and one reason that the tree is respected by Muslims is that a large number of the faithful are the converts who planted these trees around the sitting place of Sufi saints,” said a social scientist who did not wish to be named as he considered the issue to be a sensitive one.

“People still have emotional attachments with this tree and one can see Muslims burning oil-lit earthen lamps under the old banyan especially on Thursday evenings.”
The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has also decided to preserve these trees – numbering 176 – which are part of the cultural tradition of the area.

The idea has been initiated by Chairman CDA Imtiaz Inayat Elahi, who once also headed the environment wing of the civic body, and has interests in preserving local natural habitat, which is the first victim of urbanisation and commercialisation.

“People are interested to know the historic values of the surrounding,” the CDA chairman said with the launch of the Rs5 million project to develop the site of each banyan tree.

The project includes making an enclosure-like surrounding around each tree, creating a sit-out but with a minimum civil works to preserve the natural environment and placing an informative ‘signage plaque,’ about the tree with whatever information is available.

The largest number of banyan trees in Islamabad – 64 and 47 respectively – are in the Saidpur and Golra villages, while there are 29 in Bhara Kahu and 10 around Bari Imam Shrine. Besides, there are also some very old banyan trees around Loya Dandi cave on the hills overlooking the shrine of Sufi saint Shah Abdul Latif Kazmi (Bari Imam).

More trees are surviving in these areas as they still have rural status and the vast majority of residents are local who do not cut the banyan trees.

Holy to the Buddhists and the Hindus, the banyan was planted at the temples of these religions but the tree has also remained respectable to the Muslims of the region and can be seen at almost all the shrines.

The Buddhists believe that Gautam Buddha achieved enlightenment in Bodhgaya, India, while meditating under a banyan tree.

For Hindus too, there is a strong reference to the tree in Bhagawat Gita. “During Mahabharat, the Lord Krishna gave a sermon to Arjun to stand for the right and fight those even if one’s relative are on the wrong side,” said Jagmohan Kumar Arora, leader of the Hindu community in the region.

Most of the ancient saints and hermits used to sit under the banyan trees. This was usually planted at the wells and public ponds.

“But apart from the religious sentiments, the banyan tree has unmatched utilities,” Mr. Arora said: “Its shade has a soothing effect, especially considering the times when there was no electricity or even cold water.”

According to available British history, the word ‘banyan’ was given to the bargad tree as the Hindu merchants, mainly the money lenders, used to conduct business under this tree as it provided dense shade and cool breeze.

As these money lenders were among the first group of locals to have business ventures with the British traders, the Englishmen eventually named the tree after these ‘Banyas’.

Besides the religious places, a large number of ponds fed by rainwater were also developed on both sides of the G.T. Road when it was being built by Sher Shah Suri.

As bargad trees remain green all the year round and consume less water for having aerial roots, these were the best choice for plantation around ponds on the highway.

“The indigenous practice was followed along the G.T. Road as trees not only provided dense shade for travellers or local shepherds but their large shadow also reduced evaporation from the ponds,” said Mr Arora.
Better late than never, the civic authorities have realised the fact that imported and alien species like the paper mulberry have more negative impact on human health than the benefits it provide to environment. Therefore, the CDA has in principle decided to plant and promote only the local and native trees like bargad, peepal etc.

### Amaltaas the most beautiful of all flowering trees

**Dawn Islamabad, June 28, 2011**

**By Kalbe Ali**

ISLAMABAD, June 27: There are only a handful of plants and trees that bloom during these hot and humid days that sizzle around 40 degrees Celsius.

While most of the places give a dusty and barren look, Islamabad is among the very few ones in the country which is still greener in sweltering heat because of vast variety of trees and well maintained grassy grounds.

But even in ‘Islamabad the Green’ a very limited number of trees bear flowers in summer and among all these the most notable is (cassia fistula) amaltaas, one of the most beautiful of all flowering trees in the region.

Almost all the varieties of flowers fade off by June, the flowering of amaltaas continue to increase from the second week of the month when the summer is at its peak, but the delicate looking beautiful flowers are sturdy enough to stand the violent summer storms.

Though one can find attractive varieties of bogenvelia, China rose and Crape myrtle at numerous spots in the federal capital blooming with pink, red and purple flowers, but the eyes cannot ignore the bright and golden flowers hanging like bunch of grapes from the amaltaas trees.

These flowers accompanied by long tube like buds containing seeds have medicinal value too, but that is not being harnessed to its potentials.

The enchanting beauty of amaltaas has not gone unnoticed by the city managers and as policy it has been decided by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) that the future plantations in the city would focus on local varieties.

The decision has been made to gradually replace paper mulberry which is the main source of pollen allergy in city.

Besides being native ornamental tree, the extended branches of amaltaas are also a source of firewood for the local villagers.

“The villagers collect broken twigs and cut some shoots and branches which is healthy for the tree and the surroundings,” said an official of the CDA.

Having strong reddish wood which is hard and heavy, the amaltaas tree can grow up to 40 feet, making it more attractive in the summer, shining with bright yellow flowers that give soft fragrance among the lush green of Islamabad.
To give the city a look of more natural beauty, the CDA has decided to plant trees with different flowering cycles, as the mix of large and small, deciduous and evergreen, flowering trees will create a beautiful scene in all the seasons, the Chairman CDA, Imtiaz Inayat Ilahi said.

“We are proud of our selection of flowering trees and happy to help the residents of the capital to plant trees in their private properties and start the journey towards a more beautiful personal environment,” said Mr Ilahi while Talking to Dawn. He said, “To implement the slogan ‘Islamabad the Green’ we need to make the imagination happen.”

He said that the CDA experts will choose the trees that are best for local climate and surroundings and “Work to bring your vision to life.”

To make Islamabad greener, the CDA has set the target of planting one million saplings annually, focusing on planting the indigenous species, especially fruit and flowering trees including pine varieties, kachnar, amaltaas, neem, jacaranda, olive and jaman, etc.

Due to the strict monitoring of the authorities and their consistent efforts the success rate in Islamabad is quite high, as more than 50 per cent planted sapling grow to become trees in Islamabad and the plans are underway to improve this survival rate in future plantation drives.

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**Urdu Translation of Urdu News**

**Floods ravaged the area due to the absence of forests, says Ahmed Jameel**

- Strict action will be taken against the person involved in illegal cutting of forests

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 11, 2011

Dir Bala (Mashriq correspondent) District Forest officer Dir Bala says, had there been no large scale cutting of the forest, the floods would not have devastated the area. Forests are not only present beautiful face of the country but also they save us from the floods. Forests cover 139,000 acres area of Dir Bala. This is our collective responsibility to protect those forests; strict action will be taken against the ones responsible of illegal cutting. Dozens of check post have been installed to curb timber smuggling. He further said that to plant a tree is a never-ending welfare; everyone should take part in plantation.

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**Unabated illegal cutting of forests in swat, a sharp rise in environmental pollution is feared**

- Scarcity of trees cannot protect us from floods, shortage should be alleviated

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, April 12, 2011

Brikot (Aaj correspondent) The uninterrupted cutting of forests in Swat has caused a sharp decrease in forests. The size of forests today is almost 50 per cent in comparison to the size in 1980. For the last three years, there is further decrease in forest size. The scenic beauty has been adversely affected and as a result tourism may get a blow. Global warming is another issue which has to be countered. Coordinator SDPI, Talemend Khan, Fida
Muhammad, president Qaumi Jirga Tehsil Brikot, former PPP candidate of Provincial Assembly, Afzal Shah Bacha, member SRSP board of directors, Ehsan Dervesh Khan, Afzal Wadood Bacha, Muhammad Akram Advocate and others expressed their views while addressing the participants of Community awareness Programme for Global Warming. The speakers said that global warming had become international, national and regional issue which posed severs repercussions for the mankind. The developing countries are the worst target of this effect, to prevent the damage, we should stress upon plantation more and more.
Chapter 04

Forest Conservation & Protection
Karachi: The 12th meeting of Sub-Committee of the Indus Eco-Region Steering Committee [SCIESC] was held under the Chairmanship of Mushtaque Ali Memon, Secretary Forests and Wildlife Department, Sindh.

A Sub-Committee of Committee was constituted on July 13, 2007, to guide and review the implementation process of the Indus for All Programme on a more frequent basis and recommend any actions to be taken by Indus Eco-region Steering Committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary, Planning & Development Department.

Ms Khadija Zaheer, Manager, Policy, Indus for All Programme, briefed the participants on the progress of the decisions taken at the 11th meeting of Sub-Committee of the IESC held on 10th August 2010.

Nasir Ali Panhwar, Programme Coordinator, Indus for All Programme, while briefing on the progress said that implementation of natural resource management plan and livelihood development plan was going on at four sites, including Keti Bunder, Keenjhar Lake, Chotiari Wetlands Complex, and Pai forest. He said that a hog deer sanctuary and observatory hut at Pai Forest have been established, where one pair would be kept for breeding and habitat study. He said that in Keti Bunder, a community based shrimp and crab culture ponds had been established. In Keenjhar and Chotiairi, information and conservation centres have been established to raise awareness among the visitors about the two significant eco-systems. He highlighted different programme activities, including the institutional support to CBOs, awareness-raising activities, partnership fund and flood relief activities in Thatta and Dadu.

Altatf Sheikh, Policy Analyst, Indus for All Programme, gave a briefing about the issues of special concern including deforestation & waterlogging at the Chotiari Wetlands Complex.

The meeting was attended by Fazal Nizamani, Senior Chief Water & Drainage Planning & Development Department, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Maher, Director-General, Fisheries, Mr. Saeed Baloch, Conservator, Sindh Wildlife Department,
Letter to Editor

Deforestation
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, April 18, 2011

If deforestation and smuggling of timber continue to happen with the present pace, very soon the valley of Chitral will present a dreary picture. It is requested to higher authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders to take steps to protect the forests present in the area. As the first step, supply of timber out of District Chitral should be banned immediately.

Nasir Mehmood
Chitral

‘Fences to be erected around mangrove forests’
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, April 28, 2011

By our correspondent
Karachi: While talking to the media following the fourth meeting of the National Coordinating Body (NCB) for ‘Mangroves for the Future’ (MFF) held at a local hotel on Wednesday, Sindh Secretary Forests and Wildlife Mushtaq Ali Memon revealed that the Forest Department planned to erect fences around mangrove habitats spread across the coastal areas of Sindh; to protect these sensitive ecosystems from the perils of destruction and encroachment.

He also proposed the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) and remote sensing technology to map out the boundaries of the existing mangrove forests, for the purpose of accurate data that will help protect this threatened natural environment.

Memon claimed that First Information Reports (FIRs) had been lodged by his department against culprits that were unlawfully cutting down mangroves, adding that it was actually the responsibility of the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) to police mangrove habitats since they own the land occupied by these forests.

It was decided during the meeting that under the Small Grants Facility (SGF), grants up to US$ 10,000 would be provided to the concerned Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) for small demonstration projects, The News learnt.

On the occasion, Inspector General Forest Syed Mahmood Nasir expressed his deep regret that Pakistan was lagging behind other countries in terms of implementing REDD Plus mechanism (an international programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries).
PAC concerned over non-implementation of forest policy
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, April 28, 2011

By Imtiaz Ali
Karachi: The Sindh Assembly’s Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday expressed its serious concern over the non-implementation of forest policy.

The government has recently announced that it would be mandatory for state land allottees to reserve at least 25pc of the land for forest but no one was implementing it, observed PAC Chairman Sardar Jam Tamachi Unnar.

While reviewing audit of Forest Department for the years 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09, the PAC chief observed that for the last 15 to 20 years, deforestation has assumed an alarming proportion in Sindh. He underscored the need for increasing forest cover to meet climate changes. The PAC also directed Secretary Forest Mushtaq Memon to dismiss the forest officials who did not pay the government dues.

A senior forest official said that under the new forest policy, their staff would ensure reserving 25pc of granted land for forest. Admitting non-implementation of this policy, the official said that in order to encourage the allottees they have decided to give 50pc share of trees to each allottee. Jam Tamachi opposed this policy by saying that providing official land to landless Haris was sufficient incentive.

The PAC also directed that at least Rs 5,000 should be charged as lease fee for one acre of forest land.

The MPAs were informed that the prospects of around 58,000 acres forest land in Katcha areas have been improved owing to recent floods, besides the release of water to Indus Delta would also prove good for mangroves. The official also claimed that they have got control of mangroves near KPT under Forest Act.

Earlier, the scrutiny proceedings of Forest Department audit began in a rather chaotic note when Secretary Forest Mushtaq Memon protested over the non-settlement of the para despite submitting original copies of relevant documents. Memon protested over the attitude of the audit body by not settling the para mainly because photocopies of original documents were not attested. The secretary said that under the concerned rules any official above Grade-16 was entitled to attest the photocopies.

To the surprise of the PAC meeting participants, the Secretary Forest stood up and straightly went to the DG Audit, asking him to hand over the copies of the documents so that he could sign/attest the same there.

The PAC chairman, however, pacified the situation by asking the secretary in a light mood to “calm down, as we all happen to be friends”.

When Jam Tamachi asked as to why he (Mushtaq Memon) appeared to be emotional, the Secretary Forest said his anger was justified as they had provided original copies to the audit body and unattested copies could have been attested.

When MPA Amir Moin Pirzada asked as to why the PAC’s time was wasted when documents of expenditure of Rs7.075 million were available, the secretary said perhaps Audit made para for the sake of para.

To which, the DG Audit Najam-ul-Saqib said that the record was presented after a gap of four years. Amir Pirzada said that the PAC would not settle the para till the Secretary Forest orders an inquiry to ascertain as to who was at fault.

When the secretary said that they could not deduct 50 pc of salary of forest officials to recover government dues amounting Rs 6.372 million, the PAC chairman said that the forest officers did not happen to be poor as they were
allegedly involved in cutting forests. Tamachi directed the secretary to dismiss the forest officials if they did not pay the dues in order to set a precedent.

Director Audit Samoon later told media that there was a total of 34 paras of the Forest Department for the said three years, of which 28 have been settled. The department was supposed to recover Rs44 million government dues but so far it has recovered only Rs16 million.

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**Depleting mangroves**

*Dawn Islamabad, May 16, 2011*

**By Zubeda Birwani**

MANY communities suffer from enormous deforestation brought about by the country’s fast and quick development whose benefits are not shared by them. An average 41,100 hectares of forest are lost per year. This amounts to an average annual deforestation rate of 1.63 per cent and requires serious efforts to stop it promptly.

While the government is a signatory to many international conventions, its approach towards conservation of natural resources is very different.

In Sindh, the continental shelf is vast and broad, extending to a distance of 110 km from the coast which is indented by a number of creeks and the Indus Delta. The river forms unique delta ecosystem along the coast, but is now fast losing its original state.

Indus Delta is the sixth largest in the world. This fan-shaped delta, spread over about 600,000 hectares, lies in the southern part of Pakistan bordering India in the east and the Arabian Sea in the south. The WWF has placed the Indus Delta among the ecologically significant Global 200 Eco-regions. It provides fuel (wood) to approximately 120,000 people, fodder to 16,000 cattle, and other products to 28,570 households.

There has been a significant reduction in mangroves cover, from around 263,000 ha in 1978 to around 158,500 ha in 1990 and more recently to only 80,000 ha according to a study by WWF-Pakistan.

The significant mangrove forest, covered from east to west coast of Karachi, provides the fishing community of Sindh its source of livelihood, while serving as a protecting shield against natural disasters. This community is the key stakeholder to protect the resources.

Neither the Sindh Forest Department, nor any other single agency has jurisdiction over the mangrove forest in Karachi.

The part of the area behind the PAF Korangi base falls under the administrative control of Defence Housing Agency (DHA), the area behind Baba Bhit Island and Hawks Bay is under the Karachi Port Trust, while the area in front of Ibrahim Hydri (Bodu and Bundle Island), Rehri Goth and Lat Basti is under the jurisdiction of Port Qasim Authority.

Nobody is ready to take responsibility for the protection of the mangroves, rather every one is contributing towards its elimination.

The mangrove forests are being destroyed by land grabbers. The key institutions such as KPT and DHA are also responsible for this. They are occupying lands of coastal belt of Karachi by removing the mangroves.

On one side of Mai Kolachi Bypass mangroves have been cleared to set up the controversial KPT officers’ colony. The other side of the mangrove swamp, which borders the NLC depot and a katchi abadi, is also being occupied by land grabbers. The DHA has reclaimed the sea and is establishing residential schemes. It has already destroyed wide area of mangrove forest and developed commercial and residential areas on the city’s coast.
Meanwhile, a new culprit has emerged – the local influential – which is cutting the mangroves and filling the sea for grabbing land. Unfortunately it is also a powerful segment of fishing community (landlord) and has earned a lot of money by selling coastal land and now it is grabbing land at the cost of mangroves forest.

On the other hand, the practice of using mangroves wood has been increasing particularly for burners of factories of Korangi industrial area. Around 10 to 12 donkey carts loaded with mangroves wood are reportedly sold daily to factories which are used for making different low-cost wooden materials and also as fuel.

The existing mangrove forest, a precious resource of nature, has been created over centuries by the Indus River. Relevant authorities like forest department and Environment Protection Agency (EPA) are not playing any meaningful role to avert the deteriorating situation. Is there any strategy to observe 2011 as international forest year, or will it pass like 2010 international year of biodiversity?

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**Steps for protection of forests proposed**

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**Dawn Islamabad, May 19, 2011**

**Bureau Report**

PESHAWAR, May 18: Sarhad Awami Forestry Ittehad (Safi) has asked the government to take steps for protection of forests and provide alternative energy sources to people at cheaper rates so that they will stop cutting trees.

These views were expressed during a conference here on Wednesday and those who spoke on the occasion included MPA Jaffar Shah, Ameer Mohammad, Riaz Mohammad, Jamshid Khan and Javaid Akhtar.

The representatives of civil society organizations, including Safi, Sungi and SDPI, also attended the conference and gave proposals for preservation of the forests and solution to owners’ problems.

The participants discussed issues such as increase in royalty, protection of forests, ownership and new forest marketing policy. They demanded that forest owners’ representatives should be taken on board for any legislation about forests, and the Forest Ordinance 2002 be amended by repacing the words beneficiaries as forest owners.

They stressed that people living near forests should be given jobs so that they would not cut trees for earning purposes. They called for opening branches of Pakistan Forest Institute in the areas where forests existed.

The stakeholders suggested that the procedure of marketing ought to be made easy and transparent and the development processes needed to be linked with protection of forests in the particular areas.

They also demanded increase in the forest royalty from 60 to 80 per cent and added that community forestry should be given priority in the new forest policy. They said that all the agreements regarding forest should be made public to remove misunderstandings among forest owners.

MPA Jaffar Shah assured the forest owners that he would pursue their case in the assembly and try to solve their problems.
‘Preserve Islamabad’s green character’
Dawn Islamabad, June 05, 2011

By Our Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD, June 4: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking concrete measures in collaboration with the partner organisations to increase green cover and to preserve the rich biodiversity in the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP).

The targets for planting the saplings has been increased from 0.8 million to 1 million a year.

The CDA Chairman Imtiaz Inayat Elahi talking to media on Saturday during a ceremony in connection with the World Environment Day 2011 being celebrated across the globe on Sunday said that the Theme of the World Environment Day this year was ‘Forest: Nature at your service.’

Imtiaz Inayat Elahi said the CDA had planted 500,000 saplings in the Spring Tree Plantation Campaign 2011.

“They have been planted in continuation of “Clean and Green Islamabad” Campaign launched in Monsoon 2008 and 2.4 million trees were to be planted in three years under this campaign,” he said.

The CDA chairman said that Islamabad was the only planned city of Pakistan and its green character distinguished it from other cities of the country.

He said, “Today’s Green Islamabad is the outcome of laborious and consistent efforts of CDA employees, which they made during the last 50 years in planting, protecting and nourishing the trees in the capital.”

He said that more than 50 per cent plants out of total sapling had grown due to strict monitoring and further measures would be taken to improve survival rate of the saplings.

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Deforestation: who cares?
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 05, 2011

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

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

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

I do not know if the experience of making the most naughty boy as proctor in a class worked in the Ministry of Environment but what I experienced is that this ministry remained a forum for holding or attending conferences, foreign visits of the bureaucrats sometimes including spouses also and depending upon NGOs for input. Whether it is UN Conference on Environment
and Development in Rio De Janeiro in 1992 or Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in 200, the minister, the secretary and the aides availed the opportunity to see new cities.

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

It had two lofty trees one of which seemed died long ago. I took a photograph, showed it to some friends later on and mourned over the dedication of the guardians of our trees who stand for protecting the environment and vow to wage a jehad against deforestation. I think there is no need to evaluate their efficiency on other environment-related issues.

A few days there was a seminar in Institute of Strategic Studies on Climate Change where I expressed my dismay that despite a passage of over a year, no one in that structure moved to replace this tree with at least one sapling (or may be a tree of 7 or 8 feet for which transplant technology is now available). I reported this fact in The News also. Even this did not work. Now it was almost two week that I again went there and took some photographs of the deceased a symbol exposing our environmental consciousness. Choon kufr ba Ka aba barkhizad; Kuja bowad Musalmani!

The dead tree was still there with dry branches reminding me an Urdu verse: Dast-e-dua shakhon ne utha-ay. It seemed like two hands praying to God who will arrange their respectable burial. I don t know what is needed to awake these custodians of our environment, who cannot see even under their nose, what will be the state of affairs in the rest of the country.

Apart from bureaucratic lethargy, its enforcement organs are also toothless. It could not even tackle CDA which did havoc with ecology with projects without carrying out Environment Impact Assessment. So many avenues have been carved out, the Shakarparyan is fast moving towards deforestation with buildings sprouting everywhere.

Last but not the least, is its Pakistan Environment Protection Agency which people humorously started calling PEPA, even PEPA Company.

Realising its sarcastic connotations in Punjabi, PEPA was later reverted to Pak-EPA. Except issuing statements, it could not do anything.

God bless my trees and environment.

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**Zardari urges protection of forests for prosperous future**

*The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 05, 2011*

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has urged upon the environmentalists and the civil society to make concerted efforts to protect existing forests and turn the country green by planting more trees to arrest the negative impacts of environmental degradation for a prosperous future.

In a message on the World Environment Day, he congratulated the United Nations Environment Programme for adopting the right theme for the year 2011 -- 'Forests Nature at your Service' that underscores the intrinsic link between the quality of life and the health of forests and forest ecosystems.

The president said the World Environment Day is a wake up call for the world community to realise that the land and water resources are under acute threat of degradation and badly impacting the life of all
living creatures, including human beings.

He said climate change is posing a major threat to the country’s economy and existence, and this is largely owed to carbon emissions in industrialised countries. He said undoubtedly forests are at the heart of possible solutions to all the environmental problems. Their functions to absorb atmospheric carbon make them lungs of the world and the key players in climate change mitigation, protection of land, water and wildlife resources.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said the government attaches high priority to environment protection and has promulgated several laws, worked out policies and implemented programmes to achieve this objective.

In a message on the World Environment Day, the prime minister said Pakistan was blessed with numerous natural resources and eye-catching aesthetic landscapes.

He mentioned that the country’s precious lands - from the snow-covered peaks to the beaches, provide livelihood and shelter to nation of 180 million.

“We are a growing economy with high dependence on natural resources for energy, agricultural, industry, transport and domestic sectors,” he said.

The prime minister said this economic development process was affecting the environment by degrading land, water and biological resources as necessary safeguards had not been adopted. He said besides global environmental problems like global warming, glacier melting, droughts and floods, forest conservation has become one of the most serious challenges because it had become one of the most stressed sectors under the increasing demands for timber, fuel wood and other products.

Gilani said the United Nations recognised this lapse and declared the year 2011 as International Year of Forests to invoke participation of all segments of the society in the noble task of forest protection and development. He said with reference to IYF 2011, all international programmes and days are attributed to forests and the World Environment Day on June 5 is a reminder of responsibility in this regard. He said although federal and provincial governments had made tremendous efforts in forest conservation, yet there was need to maintain forest cover just at 5 percent of the country’s land area.

Pakistan has highest deforestation rate in Asia

By Sajid Bashir

Lahore: Commemorated every year on June 5, since 1972, the World Environment Day is a principal vehicle through which the awareness of the environment is stimulated across the world.

It was started by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 and is hosted every year by different countries with a different theme. It was the first occasion on which the political, social and economic problems of the global environment were discussed at an intergovernmental forum with a view to actually taking corrective action.

The World Environment Day is an opportunity for us all to be involved in something which is critical for our shared future and work in a coordinated manner to empower us all to play an active role in protecting our environment.

The theme of the World Environment Day 2011, in support of the UN International Year of Forests (IYF), is “Forests: Nature at Your Service” a theme
that encompasses the issues of deforestation and need to protect green spaces. It also underscores the variety of life-sustaining services that forests provide and calls for action to protect these resources and move towards a green economy.

The environment day is observed every year to highlight troubles and issues pertaining the environment, and how issues like poverty, economy and health are essentially linked to environmental degradation. This year’s theme, forests, harbours the world’s most precious natural resources and communities. These resources are utilised in food, agriculture, medicine, clothing and much more, hence making them a critically important link in the environmental chain.

Pakistan has only 2.5 percent of forest cover with an alarming rate of deforestation. The annual rate of deforestation in Pakistan is -2.1 percent, no Asian country has a forest degradation rate higher than this.

The largest conversions of forest land have taken place in Punjab and Sindh, corresponding to 99,711 acres and 27,874 acres respectively and this is distressing as the government continues with deforestation.

Forests are important in the fight against greenhouse gasses which are impacting climate change. They absorb water and ensure that it is filtered, sustained, and gradually available for consumption. Their degradation does not only impact forest cover ratio of a country, it also leads to real life problems such as soil erosion, damaged watershed areas, leading to pollution in water bodies and endangering water availability in the long term.

A senior lawyer and president of ECO Green Society, Akhtar H Awan, said that he believed that environmental development was one of the key pillars that would achieve sustainability for future generations. He said that the need of the hour was to formulate policies and strategies aiming at sustainable forestry development by adopting holistic and integrated approach to manage forests’ resources.

Forests cover one third of the earth’s land mass, performing vital functions and services around the world which make our planet alive with possibilities. In fact, 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods.

Pakistan being in a region of mountains and glaciatic landscape is more susceptible to climatic changes, obvious examples regarding the fact are the intermittent flash floods and harsh weather conditions, to which forests are the keys to cope with these issues.

In Pakistan, judicial activism is very much evident that we are keen to protect trees, vegetation and forests. The Supreme Court of Pakistan took a serious view against environmental degradation because of deforestation and loss of vegetation.

The apex court in its suo moto cases delivered judgments which had far reaching effects in the protection and conservation of forest and trees.

A cleaning activity and awareness walk organized by Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) was held at Gulshan-e-Ravi drain on the World Environment Day. LWMC staff, students from various institutes, and LWMC officials and sanitary workers participated in the activity.

After cleaning up the drain, the participants arranged an awareness walk and distributed pamphlets for mass awareness about managing solid waste.

**Significance of forest ecosystems**

_Dawn Islamabad, June 6, 2011_

**ISLAMABAD, June 5:** The theme of World Environment Day, ‘Forests: Nature at Your Service’, reminds us of critical importance of forest ecosystems in our lives as these provide a source of livelihood, reduce risks from natural disasters, serve as refuge for...
many species and provide clean water and air for all.

This was stated by Timo Pakkala, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, while addressing as chief guest in a ceremony organised by Ministry of Environment on World Environment Day on Sunday.

He said that deforestation and forest degradation account for green house gas emissions that can be avoided if the forests are managed properly and protected from degradation.

He said that the forests are crucial for the well-being of humanity. The role of forests in local and national economies has become even more important especially for the developing countries like Pakistan.

The forests not only act as barrier to the cyclones and sea storms but these are also essential habitat for the exportable shrimps and fish stocks, he added.

He pointed out that the forests play an important role to stabilise socio-ecosystems for a country. He called for increasing forest areas with the involvement of all the segments of society to meet the challenges of climate change and global warming.

Collective efforts are the need of time to save this earth for the better future of this world, he added. He said that the UN would continue its collaboration and coordination with the Ministry of Environment.

Earlier, Abid Mehmood, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Environment, said every year world environment day is celebrated around the globe to focus on environmental issues.

He said forests cover one third of the earth’s land mass performing vital functions and services around the world which make the planet alive with possibilities. He said 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihood.

On the occasion, message of Environment Minister Samina Khalid Ghurki was also read out. “This year World Environment Day’s Theme, ‘Forests: Nature at Your Service,’ underscores the variety of life sustaining services that forests provide and demands that all should take action to protect these resources and move towards a greener economy”.

Dr Shahzad Jehangir, DIG (Forest) gave a detailed presentation on the forestry sector.

Dr. Ejaz Ahmad of World Wide Fund-Pakistan also gave presentation on the subject.

Mehmood Akhter Cheema, Head IUCN, Islamabad briefed about a video on ‘Impact of Climate Change’ prepared in collaboration with IUCN and PTV. Representatives of UN, Officials of Ministry of Environment and the people from different walks of life were present on this occasion.

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Dryland forests can help mitigate climate change impacts
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 18, 2011

By Our correspondent
Islamabad: In order to create awareness among general public about the increasing dangers of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD), the World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD) was observed around the world on Friday with theme ‘Forests Keep Drylands Working.’

According to experts, the importance of this day has become more crucial for Pakistan because of the looming threats of climate change impacts, which are likely to affect food and economic security of the vulnerable population in arid and semi-arid regions of the country.

This year’s theme of the WDCD is in consonance with 2011-
International Year on Forests. The purpose is to bring invaluable dryland forests to the forefront of the global and national agenda because of their diverse and wide-ranging environmental and socio-economic benefits, including their role to serve as carbon sink and mitigate climate change impacts.

According to information, dryland forests in Pakistan perform diverse functions and services, including timber, firewood, fodder, gum and other Non-Timber Forest Products. These forests also protect watersheds, stabilise land, regulate hydrological cycle, and help in maintaining ecological balance. However, despite their role in supporting livelihoods of majority of dryland people in Pakistan, the dryland forests are often overlooked due to lack of awareness and limited knowledge on their significance on local environment.

Pakistan observed the WDCD by organising special events such as ‘Peelu Day’ in Layyah-Bhakkar, Punjab and ‘Guggal Day’ in Tharparkar, Sindh to highlight the importance of these dryland forest species under the GEF-UNDP and GoP funded Sustainable Land Management Programme of the Ministry of Environment.

In addition, special posters, brochures, newspaper articles and messages on electronic media are being issued on this day.

While shared his views on the importance of dryland forests in Pakistan, Khawaja Mohammad Naeem, secretary of the Ministry of Environment, said: “Dryland forests are in fact the nature’s green assets that provide innumerable services to people of Pakistan by maintaining ecological integrity, land productivity, reducing vulnerabilities of poor dryland communities against natural disasters like flash floods and drought.

“Time has come that we stand firmly for the protection of our dryland plant species against onslaught of many anthropogenic, socio-economic and climate change threats and promote large-scale propagation of these green assets for the survival of our dryland people and conserving these forests for our future generations,” he said.

He informed that the Government of Pakistan is making efforts to promote protection of dryland forests and address major threats faced by tree species growing in the drylands through the Sustainable Land Management Programme of the Ministry of Environment jointly funded by the GEF-UNDP and GoP.

This project is helping dryland communities to protect their precious tree resources using water conservation, dry-afforestation techniques and raising of nurseries of the most threatened plant species which are not grown in traditional forest nurseries. Such species include ‘Kandi’, ‘Katha’, ‘Lahura’, ‘Peelu’, ‘Neem’, ‘Siris’, ‘Phulai’, ‘Tamarix’, ‘Ber’, ‘Guggal’, ‘Phog’ etc. These plants if protected from over-exploitation are able to survive extreme dry climatic conditions, he said.

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**English Translation of Urdu News**

**Protection of Forests**

*Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 06, 2011*

A ceremony was held to sign a memorandum of understanding between the provincial government and the British company Marlins Wood. Chief Minister Ameer Haider Khan Hoti said while addressing the ceremony that the provincial government of Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa was striving hard to protect and grow the forests to prevent land erosion. For that matter, agreement with British company Marlins Wood,
under private public partnership will lead to progressive steps.

The province of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa has been endowed with the wealth of lush green forests, but the marriage of vicious groups has played havoc with the forest area. According to the experts of international stature, in the course of forest cutting, only the mature trees should be cut, and 16 plants should be affixed in place of one tree. In old days, at school level, an awareness programme used to be launched by the forest department twice a year, during that period, the procurement of plants was ascertained, and the students were asked to take part in plantation. Now that kind of activity is barely seen, whereas in contrast, in the forest areas, timber mafias have been created with the alleged patronage of government officials. Timber mafia members are cutting trees in large numbers at night and to conceal their crime they set the forest on fire, which causes more damage to the forests and the wild life and also cause land erosion. A negative impact on environment takes place, the low rate of rainfall cause water shortage. The land erosion cannot control the floods.

The unrelenting cutting of forests is the main cause of high temperature which in turn melts the snow on the mountains creating more chances of floods. In that situation we do not consider the agreement with the British firm a viable option, and we can protect the forests of Swat, Batgram and Mansehra and other areas, and rehabilitate the lands of devastated forests, and work for the development and plantation in that areas. Though the memorandum of understanding with the British firm Marlins Wood is an auspicious act, but the basic issue is to debar the forest looters who are under the protection of government officials, they are busy in plundering the precious forests, and gambling with the future of the whole province. Therefore, while we are taking steps to protect the forests and striving to grow the forests, we should also fight with the factors responsible for the destruction of forests which are conducive to protect the nature. It is
hoped that the government will seriously ponder this point.

### Poplar trees should be immediately destroyed

**Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 13, 2011**

Abbottabad residents are facing a very serious problem. The pollen allergy has become a serious problem; people are suffering from aesthema, breathing problems and other bronchial ailments. The wool like fibres released by those trees is spreading all over the city. Last year there was poplar tree cutting drive to prevent the spread of allergy, but all the trees were not finished, the remaining trees are big torture for the residents. The administration should immediately do some thing to relieve the residents from that agony.

### Investment is essential for the protection of forests and wildlife in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, says Wajid Ali

- The provincial government has devised a policy to save the forests from erosion; a large amount of money has been allocated to end the environmental pollution
- A 40 years long project has been initiated with the cooperation of British organization, says provincial minister while addressing Hazara University students

**Daily Aaj, Peshawar, June 23, 2011**

Mansehra (PR) Weather change is causing environmental pollution and other problematic issues for the whole world. Industrially developed countries should cooperate with non industrialized countries provide them financial and technical assistance. Because through the industrial development and economic progress, these countries have caused environmental issues for the under developed and backward countries. KP government is working on various projects to develop forests and safety of wildlife. In budget 2011-12, a huge amount has been allocated for the development of forests and the environmental issues. In the current years, more than 8,000 acres area will be used for plantation. 500 Km roads will get plants on both the sides.

Provincial Minister forests and the environment, Wajid Ali Khan expressed his views while addressing a three day workshop on the topic of ‘Environmental issues in Mansehra,’ ‘Planning and the role of media’ in Hazara University. He said that performance of his province regarding forest development was better than of other provinces of the country. He said they have developed policy to protect the forest and save the forests from erosion, in addition to that they had an approved Act for that. Environmental tribunal is working to control environmental pollution. He said the floods caused by heavy rainfall and melting of glaciers not only affects their province but also Punjab, Sind and Balochistan are not spared. “Other provinces are benefited by our forests and the wild life, so the governments of other provinces should also invest in provinces’ forests and the wildlife,” He said. He said the
watershed project which was
the project of national level,
due to that project trees were
planted on the area of more
than 5000 acres. Now that
project has been closed by the
federal government, the
provincial government despite
its meager resources, has
adopted that and also
upgraded its workers as
regular and deserving of
pension.

He said a 40 year long project
had been initiated with the
collaboration a British
organization. At initial stage
that project would be for three
districts of the province
(Mansehra, Batgram
and Swat). Its main
feature is to protect
forests and wildlife
and the provision of
alternate employment
to the people attached with the
forests.
Chapter 05

Tree Plantation
‘Mission Green Sindh’
Mass campaign to plant 1.5 million trees from today


KARACHI: Sindh Environment and Alternate Energy Department will launch a mass campaign under ‘Mission Green Sindh’ to plant 1.5 million trees all over the province from May 30 to June 5.

This was stated by Environment and Alternate Energy Minister Shaikh Mohammad Afzal in an interview here Friday. He said that this campaign would also include sanitation drive to clean the cities, towns and villages to improve the environment.

“We wanted to start mission green Sindh in August or September last year, but it was delayed due to unprecedented floods. Now we will begin it from May 30 along with our campaign to create mass awareness about the importance of trees in our lives”, he added.

He pointed out that the increase of carbon dioxide is the major reason for global warming and trees can control this heating and can also clean the environment of CO2.

Afzal said that from this year, environment protection would be introduce as a subject in syllabus at primary, secondary, intermediary and universities level. Provincial Education Minister Pir Mazharul Haq has agreed to our request, he added. He said one question will be compulsory to be answered in the examination paper of environment from seven or eight questions.

Talking of alternate energy uses, he said the work on a project to run all pumping...
stations in Mirpurkhas on solar energy will begin this year at a cost of Rs 100 million. Similarly, pumping stations in other small towns and villages in Sindh will also be run on solar energy under another project, he added. We are also working on a project to generate 50 megawatts from solar thermal plant in northern part of Sindh including Sukkur and Ghotki areas where sunlight is available round the year, he opined.

The minister said that his department has sent two summaries for creation of renewable energy board in Sindh to promote and encourage use of this environment friendly natural energy resource.

Referring to devolution plan, he said that it will be in the interest of the province to have decision making and implementation in accordance to the needs.

“The major benefit of the devolution will be acquisition of Quaid’s Mausoleum to us. This will be the honour for us. He is the founder of Pakistan and we will add to its splendour give a grandeur look to his mausoleum in a magnificent style, he noted.

Responding to a question about traffic pollution, he said that transport department has agreed in principle to hand over issuance of no objection certificate regarding the emission of smoke to environment department. The modalities are being finalised in this regard.

He said “the only solution to traffic pollution is to convert all public transport on CNG. I invite all interested parties to run CNG buses and my department will provide them all possible facility and help, he vowed.”

To another question about industrial pollution, he said that notices have been issued to industries that are polluting environment.

More than 100 have been closed for non-compliance of environment laws while dozens of cases are being pursued in Environment Tribunal. Over 200 industrial units have rectified their processes and adopted environment friendly production practices, he added.

Talking of the issue of polythene plastic shopping bags, the minister said that a bill to increase the weight of plastic shopping bag to 100 micron is ready to be tabled in Sindh Assembly. The plastic bags menace has created severe problems to environment.

He said the available plastic shopping bags are less than 30 microns and they are illegally manufactured. It is difficult to find out their place of production and therefore it is also difficult to stop them. Now, we have a bill, which will restrict the manufacture of light-weight plastic bags, he observed. APP

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**KP project for olive plantation**

*Dawn Economic & Business Review Islamabad, June 27, 2011*

**By Tahir Ali Khan**

A Rs60 million project for planting olive trees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been proposed in the provincial development strategy.

“The project is based on public-private partnership. The agriculture department will provide certified olive saplings, technology and guidance to farmers while the orchard owners would provide land and labour. We have signed MOUs under which farmers would give a certain portion of their olive plants to the government for extension purposes,” said Ahmad Said, the chief planning officer in the provincial agriculture department.

The project is for lands on which major food crops are not grown. Olive is a strong plant that needs little water and fertilizer and can be grown anywhere, even in mountainous areas,” he added.

Ahmad says around 60 per cent area of KP was suitable for olive cultivation. If we could utilise even 20 per cent of it by planting new olive plants, it will reduce oil import bill besides increasing the incomes.
of millions of farmers and providing them with healthy oil for domestic consumption.

“We are trying to standardise the olive production technology as has been done in Italy which is growing millions of olive plants in a very short time. We have proposed another project for tissue culture technology through which plants can be grown in shortest possible time. The existing mechanism of fruit cultivation and fructification takes years. The tissue technology can produce millions of plants and ensure fruit-bearing sooner than usually possible,” he informed.

“While the public sector is trying its best to provide maximum certified olive plants to growers, we are facilitating and registering plant nurseries in the private sector. These nurseries will be regularly monitored to ensure quality of production of the fruit plantlets. We hope this way the use of non-fruit bearing olive plants would be minimised,” he added.

With only Rs10 million out of the total earmarked sum of Rs60 million have been allocated for the project in the next year’s ADP, it may take another five to six years for the project to be completed unless fund allocations are enhanced later.

Pakistan faces a widening gap between edible oil requirements and domestic production which is bridged by huge imports of edible oil and oilseeds.

Over 60 per cent of the tribal belt has wild olive trees that can be converted into fruit-bearing species.

According to an Italian expert Raffaele Del Cima, the province has over 444,574 hectares of cultivable wasteland which is suitable for olive cultivation. According to another estimate, well over 880,000 hectares could be used for olive cultivation.

There are an estimated 31 million wild olive trees in KP and tribal belt that bear no or a seed-sized fruit. Converting them into European type fruit bearing olive through budding/grafting procedure in the next few years should be the foremost priority of the government as it will help produce an estimated 75,000 tons of olive oil. The Pakistan Oilseeds Development Board has recently converted some wild olive plants in KP into fruit bearing trees. Italy, the world’s biggest olive producer with 1.2 million hectares under olive cultivation, has helped Pakistan to convert its wild olive plants into fruit-bearers, and also with new olive plantations.

The government and private sector need to cooperate for improving cultivation and harvest techniques in olive production, species selection, nursery management, oil analysis and the operation of oil extraction units.

By providing quality seed, modern training and marketing mechanism to the farmers, olive cultivation and yield could be considerably increased. The government may also encourage farmers to set up olive oil extraction units in different parts of the province.

**English translation from Urdu News**

**Plantation drive begins at Peshawar University**

**Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 12, 2011**

Peshawar (Campus reporter) Under the aegis of Peshawar University Provost office, the student societies have started the plantation drive. Plants will be fixed in all the departments of the University. The plantation drive was formally started by Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Azmat Hayat, on that occasion, Registrar Afzal Hadi, other administrative officers and heads of different departments were present. During the campaign all the department chairmen, department heads, deans and
Munno Bhai will fix a plant in “Yad Bagh”

Lahore (APP) Renowned playwright, columnist and intellectual, Munno Bhai will fill a plant in Lahore’s historical garden “Yad Bagh” today on Wednesday, April 13, 2011. A brief ceremony is arranged on that occasion which will be attended by Ali Tanha from Islamabad Controller Home and Station Director Khalid Waqar from Lahore and other producers.

Unabated cutting of Kohistan forests, no plantation for the last 7 years

Peshawar (Shahzad Anjum) Distric Qazi Kohistan has taken strong notice of illegal cutting of trees in the district and suspension of plantation in the district Kohistan for the last 7 years. He has direct the NAB to hold an inquiry and investigate about the involvement of forest department officials in illegal cutting of forests and their ownership of assets worth million of rupees. The honourable Qazi has dispatched the copies of the decision to chief secretary KP, secretary forests, Chief conservator and director general National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Environment Department announces A project “Green Swat”

- Hundreds of thousands plants will be fixed in Swat with the cooperation of Rotary Club, says Wajid Ali Khan

Peshawar (Aaj news) The environment department KP will start a new project namely “Green Swat” with the cooperation of Rotary Club. Under that project hundreds of thousand plants will be fixed in Swat. Environment clubs in schools, fish farms and wildlife parks will be developed. A meeting was held in this connection in Civil Secretariat Peshawar presided by Provincial Minister Environment, Wajid Ali Khan.
Chapter 06

NATIONAL PARKS
& ORCHARDS
New authority to look after parks: Gardeners worried about job future

Dawn Islamabad, June 11, 2011

By Aamir Yasin & Inamullah Khattak
RAWALPINDI, June 10: Around 200 employees of the garden branch of Rawal Town Municipal Administration (RTMA) feel they face an uncertain job future after a Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) has been established in the city.

The Punjab government has set up the PHA Rawalpindi to improve parks and greenbelts in the city. Like Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa), the authority will be a subordinate organisation of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA). With the establishment of PHA, all public parks in the city have been transferred to the authority as well as the staff deputed for looking after them. But the authority will not take over the parks under the control of military.

In a meeting with Town Municipal Officer (TMO) Shahzad Haider on Friday, the representatives of CBA, workers union of RTMA, gave a three-day deadline to announce a policy about the future of garden branch employees. They also called for resolving the problems of pensioners who had not been paid for last three months. They threatened to go on strike from Tuesday.

Raja Ijaz Raza, TMA workers union secretary general, told Dawn that whenever a new authority is set up, the workers face problems in promotions and getting other benefits.

Explaining, he said 600 employees of water branch of defunct Rawalpindi Municipal Corporation (RMC) were shifted to Wasa in 1998. “But till today those 600 employees are still facing problems when it comes to getting promotion or pensions after retirement.” He said the government should announce a “policy for secure future” of the garden branch employees before merging it in PHA.

He also regretted that the City District Government Rawalpindi (CDGR) was not paying pensions to its retired employees for the last three months.

Rawalpindi has 30 small and big parks, including Nawaz Sharif Park, managed by RTMA, Liaquat...
Bagh, managed by RDA, Race Course Park and Jinnah Park under the control of Pakistan Army, and Ayub National Park, which is managed by the Army Heritage Foundation. The remaining parks are looked after by RTMA.

“Our primary aim is to make Rawalpindi city greener and upgrade public parks that are currently in shambles,” Mushtaq Malik, the managing director of PHA, told Dawn. “We have already done massive plantation along road medians.”

He said Rs30 million would be spent on the beautification of the city while additional funds were in pipeline for rehabilitation of parks. He adding that over 32 abandoned parks would be improved soon.

District Coordination Officer (DCO) Saqib Zafar said the rationale for creating the PHA was to make Rawalpindi “clean and beautiful like Islamabad”. He said the terms and conditions for the employees of the newly established PHA would be announced soon. “The government will ensure job security of the garden branch employees.”

He said the city government would pay pensioners soon. The DCO said the city government had Rs40 million which were fixed with the National Savings Organisation (NSO) in 2001. After 10 years, he said when the CDGR was trying to draw its amount, the NSO sought 11.5 per cent withholding tax.

He said the city government’s finance department had written a letter to the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) to exempt the money for pensioners from the tax.

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**Fate of Zoo, Safari Park up in the air**

*The Nation Islamabad, June 14, 2011*

**By Our Staff Reporter**

MULTAN - A number of important projects of Multan have once again been neglected by the Punjab government in recent budget as nothing is earmarked for them, budget document reveals.

The PC-1 of most of the projects like Multan Zoo, Safari Park, laboratory for boosting fish production, model veterinary hospital, mobile dispensaries was already sent to the government but nothing is allocated for launching these projects. All of the above mentioned projects were approved many years back but they could not be executed due to non-availability of funds.

According to detail, the city district government had acquired vast lands at a cost of Rs500 million for Multan Zoo and Safari Park in Mauza Balail. Sources said that the PC-1 of this project was sent to the Wild Life Department about three years back but the project is neglected in the budgets of previous and current years.

Similarly, the Fisheries Department had sent PC-1 for establishment of a diagnostic laboratory on Bosan Road for boosting fish production in this region. The laboratory was to give health clearance of fish being sold in the market as Multan is the largest fish market of South Punjab. However, nothing is allocated to bring the project out of papers and materialize it.

The projects of livestock department are also totally neglected in the budget. The department had planned to turn its veterinary hospitals into model ones besides setting up mobile laboratories to support livestock sector. Although, Multan is the largest cattle market of this region, the projects are neglected.

Since the food department is running short of wheat reservoirs, a project was evolved to construct new godowns but the project is shelved as no budget is allocated for this purpose.
Too many artificial ponds do not appeal
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 17, 2011

By Our correspondent
Islamabad: The Fatima Jinnah Park in Islamabad is one of the largest parks in the country — it is claimed that it is the largest in Southeast Asia — and has been turned into an attraction for the residents of the capital by the Capital Development Authority (CDA). Walking trails have been developed and a few statues are dotted around the area. Here and there are some small pergolas with a ‘Mughal architecture’ look. There are play areas for children with swings and modern, activity based structures — though some park enthusiasts are not in favour of these, saying a park should remain a park and not have commercial outlets of this kind.

Most of those who visit the park consider it as a healthy place to indulge in a brisk walk or jog, either early in the morning just after dawn or in the evening before dusk when the weather is pleasant. Some parts of the park are well developed and others are being developed, something not everyone is happy with. “I wish they had left it in its natural state, but kept it maintained,” said an Italian lady, while a lady from Britain said she liked the ‘development’, which included the walkways etc but both agreed that there are too many artificial ponds.

And this is what this piece is about. Some of those who walk regularly in the park have complained about these ponds and want their voice to be heard. While they look attractive and add to the overall beauty of the park, ponds that remain stagnant are breeding spots for mosquitoes. With all the scary stories one reads about the different breeds of mosquitoes that are to be found in the country and the diseases you can get from their bite or sting, it is a bit unnerving to see these ponds in a public spot frequented by men, women and children. So along with the good there is the ‘bad,’ so to say, and it would be a welcome step if the CDA takes notice of these mosquito-breeding spots and does something about them — maybe put in a few fishes to gobble up the pests? Or change some of the ponds into spots showcasing a profuse growth of flowers? I am sure any step to control the breeding of mosquitoes will be welcomed by the regular visitors.

CDA needs to focus on proper management of parks
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 20, 2011

By Myra Imran
Islamabad: It is indeed creditable that every city administration in the capital has specially focused on developing new parks yet managing these facilities and ensuring they remain free of encroachments and unwanted elements is an aspect that has not been adequately tackled.

Beautifully developed, many of these parks and play areas today have been virtually taken over by scavengers, drug addicts and in some cases senior seminary students thereby keeping children, women and others well away.

Taxi drivers also put these facilities to ‘good’ use by washing their cabs there and later taking a nap under the shade of trees while for the drug addicts they serve as a safe haven. It is a situation that the CDA needs to focus upon and handle effectively.

Background discussions with come Capital Development Authority (CDA) officials revealed that being public facilities, the CDA could not prevent any one from visiting the parks, but their abuse was as much a matter of concern for the civic managers, as it was for people in residential sectors.

The residents of F-6/4 have a strong case in point where a play area developed specifically on their request is always seen occupied by students of a nearby seminary. Every evening many of them sporting long beards are seen swinging wildly on swings and...
using the slides meant for little children.

Similarly, a park recently developed in an adjacent sector is always found crowded with taxi drivers and strangers that, according to the claims of nearby residents, look like drug addicts. Located in front of a commercial area, the park entrance is almost always blocked by the taxis whereas the drivers rest in the park meant for families.

“For my children it was a case of being so near yet so far,” said Noreen Shah who lives in the vicinity and could not allow her kids to go play there because of the unwanted presence of cabbies and others. “Even I and my husband have stopped going to the park for a walk because of the presence of these people,” she said.

Though the CDA has put up a fence to keep cabs from entering, a move that has been welcomed by the people living in the area, it has not helped much to improve the environment of the facility that has been designed for family entertainment. “The walking track is really good, but it is of no use for us,” said Amna Ali, a resident of the area.

“Wherever a park is built encroachment begins to rear its ugly head and this creates problems for the people where the facility is established,” a CDA official said.

There are around 200 small and big parks in the city that is the highest figure in the country, but special measures are needed to improve the environment of these parks especially those located in residential areas so that families can be encouraged to use these facilities.

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**Flowers and parks: Painting Pindi with colours**

By Mudassir Raja

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi was never known for its lush parks. Green lawns dotted with colourful flowers with shade provided by huge trees are not a common sight in the congested metropolis. However, with the formation of Parks and Horticulture Agency (PHA) there is hope that things might move in the right direction.

As many as 50 big and small parks of Rawalpindi will be handed over to the newly-established PHA by the end of this month.

About 300 staff presently working with the garden branch of Rawal Town Administration (RTA) would work under PHA from the next fiscal year; the grievances of the staff have been addressed by the district government in a recent meeting, said Captain (retd) Mushtaq Ahmed, the managing director (MD) of PHA.

Around 42 parks are presently being looked after by the RTA, six parks are being controlled by Potohar Town Management and two big parks are being taken care of by the Rawalpindi Development Authority.

The PHA has started preparing a report about the deteriorating condition of some of the parks in the city and will start repair work after the agency has obtained finances from the provincial budget and after being handed over the trained staff, said Ahmed.

The PHA, which was established under the big cities’ package, aims at improving the green areas of the city, including parks and the green belts along the main roads, he added.

Speaking about the income of the agency in Rawalpindi, Ahmed said the summary for
establishing a body in the city had been approved by the provincial cabinet and it would be functional only after the law was passed by the assembly.

After the establishment of the authority, the revenue presently collected by the district government through billboards and parks would be transferred to PHA, the MD said.

As long as the PHA functions as an agency, its expenditures both for development and non-development purposes will be obtained from the provincial authorities.

The MD added that PHA has recently completed the beautification of a railway bridge on Benazir Bhutto Road at Marreer Chowk. The bridge was more than 100 years old.

The agency has also started building Azadi (Freedom) Wall outside the historic Liaqat Bagh on Benazir Bhutto Road where the history of the struggle for freedom of Pakistan would be painted at a cost of Rs20 million, Ahmed said.

PHA also plans to install a huge clock near Rialto Chowk at Benazir Bhutto Road, to add to the beauty of the city. The project will be funded by private sector and the sponsors will be compensated through advertisements of their products.

Moreover, about the future of the staff to be shifted from RTA, Ahmed said the employees had been ensured by the district government that they would be paid by the PHA as their services would be utilised by the agency.

Sub-standard, poor work of parks construction:

**Punjab chief minister takes serious notice**

Business Recorder Islamabad, June 27, 2011

By Recorder Report

Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has taken strict notice of sub-standard and poor construction work of parks in Murree and issued instructions for conducting an inquiry.

He has also formed a committee headed by Director General Parks and Horticulture Authority Punjab, Abdul Jabbar Shaheen for this purpose which will submit its report within seven days.

The Chief Minister after visiting Resource Centre and Bagh-e-Shaheedan in Murree expressed his dissatisfaction over the improvement and construction work of parks.

He also ordered suspension of SHO Murree for failure to arrest and take prompt action against the contractor of PIA Park Murree despite registration of FIR.

The Chief Minister said that his instructions for not stopping traffic during VVIP movement in Murree are very clear which should be implemented strictly and the flow of traffic should be maintained to save tourists from problems.

He directed administration and police officers to evolve a comprehensive security and traffic plan so that the visitors to Murree should not face any inconvenience during the season.

The Chief Minister also issued instructions to municipal administration Murree to ensure cleanliness in the hill town besides disposal of wastewater and solid waste.

Khunjerab National Park: a failed project

The Express Tribune Islamabad, June 27, 2011

By Shabbir Mir

GILGIT: The establishment of Khunjerab National Park (KNP) is one of the many examples of how authorities have overlooked local wisdom to impose their own convoluted plans and decisions on people, depriving them of their resources, land and ultimately of their rights.

It was in 1975 that then Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto through an ordinance established the
park in Khunjerab valley but later it was extended to the Shimshal valley situated at the Sino-
Pakistan border. The purpose of establishing the park was to protect the endangered species especially the Marco Polo Sheep.

George Schaller, a zoologist, was the person who, after a brief survey, had recommended the establishment of the park under the IUCN Category II, prohibiting all human intervention within the park area, including livestock grazing and hunting. The park boundaries included parts of Shimshal’s 2,700 square kilometres of traditional pastures.

The inclusion of major chunk of Shimshal valley in the park came as a shock to the people as they were not consulted in the matter which meant the local people would have to give up their rights on 90 per cent of their land which had been their source of livelihood for centuries.

Meanwhile a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) backed the government in devising a ‘suitable’ management plan to ‘conserve’ the park’s fauna and flora and generate income for the communities.

The plan failed to meet its objective. Illegal hunting of Marco Polo sheep by civil and military bureaucracy and ‘influential’ people increased in Khunjerab area. It resulted in greatly decreasing the population of Marco Polo sheep in their natural habitat. “The number of the sheep went down from 800 to merely a few dozens during 1975 to 1993,” said an official of SNT (Shimshal Nature Trust), an organization of Shimshali people formed in 1997 to counter the plan and prepare a parallel management plan based on the centuries-old wisdom of the local people and preserve endangered species.

The SNT is an umbrella organization and works for the interests of the valley here and abroad. According to the former SNT chairman Ghulam Amin, the establishment of the park has not only perturbed the routine life of the people but also affected the wildlife. “The population of blue sheep has grown out of proportion due to ban on hunting,” the incumbent chairman of the trust, Muzafaruddin said, adding that over the years it has resulted in the outbreak of diseases in the area among livestock and the wildlife, leaving hundreds of the precious animal dead.

Based on their collective wisdom, the locals believe that the population of the sheep has increased to 30,000 since hunting was stopped.

They believe that if the natural level of hunting had been allowed, the large scale casualties among the wildlife wouldn’t have happened.

The Shimshalis stuck to their position on the controversy through peaceful means. They called for lowering the status of the park to a category where conservation and development could go hand in hand. “Our inclusion in the park is only possible if the category of the park is lowered and we are allowed both the conservation and development in our land,” said the SNT chairman.

The Shimshal community of nearly 2,000 inhabitants depends entirely on farming and livestock for their sustenance, inhabiting the valley for nearly six centuries. Having remained cut off from the rest of the world for centuries, the valley was finally linked
with the outside world through a narrow road that was constructed in 2003. Before that it was a three-day trek from the Karakoram Highway near Passu to the valley which lies at an altitude of 3,500 meters above sea level.

“Our culture, which is nearly 600 years old, is comparatively still in a pristine form because of Shimshal’s isolation,” said the chairman.

Under SNT, the Shimshalis have undertaken a number of activities to prove the community’s worth. “We have gradually enforced a ban on hunting in different zones and are willing to extend it to the entire area, except for the seasonal herders who are stranded beyond the Shimshal Pass for six months,” the chairman said, adding that some other initiatives that they have been conducting under SNT are Self Help Village Development Programme, Shimshal Culture Programme, Visitors Programme and Mountaineering School etc.

As plans are afoot to establish another park — Central Karakoram National Park (CKNP) — Shimshalis hope the parties involved must have learned from the experience of KNP and decided to adopt a community-based planning and management procedure. They are of the firm belief that their culture and natural surroundings are best served by a proactive nature stewardship programme in Shimshal’s context, whose design is entirely indigenous.

Although Shimshalis have so far resisted KNP management, they fear continued external pressure can jeopardise their centuries-old culture and the wildlife. The evidence that endangered wildlife is more plentiful in Shimshal territory than in areas currently under park management vindicates the community’s stance against government’s policies.

The recently passed 18th amendment too has failed to impress the authorities as KNP continues to be a major stumbling block in devolution of power to the local grassroots institutions such as Shimshal Nature Trust (SNT).

The government has setup a full-fledge department for KNP with a director spearheading it. But what is surprising is that contrary to their mandate and lofty claims of participatory approach, influential NGOs like World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), World Conservation Society (WCS) have so far toed the government policies, tightening noose around the Shimshalis to have them accept the status of park.

“If there is any issue between the Shimshalis and KNP management, that will be resolved as we are in contact with each other,” said Wilayat Noor, who has recently joined KNP as director. He talked of the benefits of the establishment of the KNP saying that one hunt of a trophy size animal is allowed in the Shimshal.

The official however has no knowledge of the epidemic that left several blue sheep dead some eight years ago nor was he aware of any foreigner’s assistance to find root cause of the epidemic.

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Fuss over transfer of parks, gardeners
Dawn Islamabad, June 29, 2011

By Aamir Yasin
RAWALPINDI, June 28: The Rawal Town Municipal Administration (RTMA) has linked transfer of parks, machinery and over 200 employees of its garden branch to newly established Parks and Horticulture Agency (PHA) with the orders of Punjab secretary local government.
The Punjab government has established PHA Rawalpindi to improve parks and greenbelts in the city. District Coordination Officer (DCO) Saqib Zafar has directed the Rawal and Potohar towns to transfer more than 34 parks, machinery and employees of the garden branches to the new agency by June 30.

But RTMA Administrator Saif Anwar Jappa wrote a letter to Commissioner Zahid Saeed on Tuesday, maintaining the City District Government Rawalpindi (CDGR) had no authority to order transfer of the employees and property without the approval of secretary local government.

According to the Local Government Ordinance 2001, the towns work directly under the provincial local government department.

In the letter, Mr Jappa said the town administration would transfer its property worth billions of rupees and employees if the secretary local government directed it to do so. He also informed the commissioner that this decision has created unrest among employees of the garden branch.

The administrator also protested against the city government’s demand that the RTMA pay the salaries of the garden branch employees.

He said the employees were confused, not knowing they belong to RTMA or PHA or both.

He maintained that paying the salaries of the transferred employees would be a financial burden on RTMA.

Sources told Dawn that two months ago Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) advised the RTMA to transfer its employees of garden branch but continue paying their salaries.

Only after RTMA’s refusal, the DCO issued directives of handing them over to the horticulture agency by June 30.

Mr Jappa told Dawn that the RTMA did not refuse but linked the transfer of its property and employees with the orders of secretary local government.

Commissioner Zahid Saeed said the PHA was established by the provincial government and its directive would be implemented. “All employees of garden branches of Rawal and Potohar towns and RDA will be transferred to PHA within stipulated timeframe.”

About the salaries of these employees, he explained that the provincial government would provide the required funds to the new department soon.

In the meantime, the towns’ administrations and the RDA would pay salaries of the employees who will be transferred to PHA.

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**‘Green Swat’ project**

_Dawn Islamabad, June 30, 2011_

PESHAWAR, June 29: The Khyber Pakthunkhwa government has decided to launch ‘Green Swat’ project with the assistance of Rotary Club.

Environmental clubs in schools, fish farms in water streams and wildlife parks will also be set up in Swat to provide recreational facilities to the militancy-affected Swatis. This was decided at a meeting here the other day with the provincial environment minister in the chair.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that saplings of different species would be sown in arid and semi arid areas of the valley during monsoon tree plantation campaign. The Rotary Club also announced on the occasion to make the provincial minister for forest its member. — APP
Graft charges: 
**Probe into Ayubia chairlift repair project, allotment of shops ordered**

The Express Tribune Islamabad, June 30, 2011

**By Our Correspondent**

ABBOTTABAD: An inquiry into the alleged embezzlement of funds for the repair of Ayubia Chairlift project and allotment of shops in Nathiagali was ordered on Tuesday.

The probe order was issued by the Hazara Commissioner, Khalid Khan Umerzai, while taking exception to the public complaints about the alleged corruption in the Rs9 million chairlift repair project and illegal allotment of plots and kiosks in Nathiagali bazaar.

He was chairing a high level meeting of the heads of district and local government departments, including Galyat Development Authority, Frontier Highway Authority, Forest, Wapda, road communication and revenue. District Coordination Officer (DCO) Zaheerul Islam and District Police Officer (DPO) Karim Khan were also present on the occasion.

He also took notice of the collection of outstanding lease amount from the lessees and unchecked encroachments that have narrowed the road, creating trouble for the picnickers and tourists.

The commissioner also questioned the performance of the forest department, which has failed to check illegal logging, threats to the environment because of the unavailability of public latrines for tourists, horse dung accumulation and car parking problem.

He also ordered immediate steps for the provision of water to the residents of Changla Gali and Murree, besides the installation of new streetlights in Nathiagali.

The commissioner also directed DCO Islam to resolve the dispute over outstanding electricity bills between Wapda and GDA and submit a complete report to him within a couple of days.

The GDA’s representative attributed the encroachment and delays in collecting rent from shopkeepers to shortage of staff.

The commissioner assured the GDA of taking up the staff shortage problem with the provincial government.

He also directed the participants to ensure maximum facilities to tourists coming to Nathiagali, Ayubia and other picnic spots in the Galyat area.

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**English Translation from Urdu News**

**The only recreational park of Haripur becomes den of addicts and rabbles**

- Higher officials are requested to take notice

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 16, 2011

Haripur (Special crime reporter) The only ladies’ park which has its name also “Ladies’ Park”, but women have never been seen there. The only reason of ladies’ aversion is the heaps of filth and presence of loafers and drug addicts. According to details, on the back side of Women and Children hospital, a park was build for women and children’s recreation, but the park now gives horrendous look. There are some shabby, broken swings, unkempt grass and filthy stretches presenting a repugnant look.
The absence of gardener and the guards encourages loafers and hovering rogues to stay all day long in the park. The officials in the administration are well aware of the condition of that park, but they don’t heed the issue. People of Haripur have demanded the TMO to arrange the restoration of Ladies’ Park to give them recreation.

**Government is taking steps to grow gardens on larger area, says Dr Nazeer**

- The farmers of Charsadda can earn more by growing grapes and almonds etc

**Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 16, 2011**

Charsadda (Mashriq correspondent) Director General Agricultural research, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr Nazeer Hussain Shah and Director General Turnab Farm, Dr Abdus Samad has said the government was taking practicable steps to grow fruits on a larger area. They were addressing the concluding ceremony of three day training programme initiated under the project for the development of gardens in Nawab Khan Kali Meerah Umerzai.

A large number of farmers attended the ceremony. They stressed upon the farmers to grow good quality gardens and consult the experts in case of plants disease. They said that Charsadda was an agricultural area, therefore the farmers should grow grapes, almonds etc on maximum area.

**Khushi Muhammad Park in ruinous condition, boundary wall is broken**

- Boundary wall is used as filth depot, broken swings and benches and peeled off plaster of walls give a gloomy picture
- 1,000 decorative plants were planted in Spring, but no plant appears in the park, it is shown only in the documents, Nawa-e-Waqt survey

**Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Islamabad, April 20, 2011**

Rawalpindi (Raja Abid Pervez) Khushi Muhammad park gives a deserted looks due to the negligence and lack of attention on the part of Satellite Town administration. The boundary wall is broken at various points, trash and filth is dumped alongside the wall, swings and benches are broken and unusable. 1,000 decorative plants were fixed in beginning of Spring, but none of them is seen, if there is any it’s only in the documents.

Spring reflects the beauty of parks, flowers are seen everywhere, this unfortunate park does not have a single flower. There are six gardeners appointed for the park but one cannot see trimmed plants are mowed down grass lawns. There are small puddles of water owing to uneven soil patches. According to Nawa-e-Waqt survey, one side of the park has 200 feet long stretch of road covered with filth, whereas at one side the residents have crossed one more step ahead and started throwing trash inside the park as though the park was abandoned. The stinking filth has made the life of residents miserable, every kind of insects and mosquitoes breed in the heaps of refuse.
The park, if it were otherwise useable, is occupied by addicts and drug peddlers. Lawns are used for cricket; large stone are used for the wickets. According to one gardener, Muhammad Azam, TMA had ordered at least one tanker of water for sprinkling on the plants, but according to Nawa-e-Waqt sources, that tanker is sold by the functionaries on the way to park thus depriving the plants.

**The essential flower of Mughal Gardens, ‘Gul-e-Lala’ (Tulip) comes back to Lahore after 400 years**

- Tulip brought from Afghanistan adored the gardens of Dehli, it was planted in Holland 150 years ago

*Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 24, 2011*

At present we don’t have enough to be proud of, but we even don’t know much about our magnificent past, had we known, the Tulip wouldn’t have waited for 400 long years in coming back to our homeland. Do you know the National Flower of Holland, — Tulip has its roots in Afghanistan. The Mughal Emperior Baber brought that flower to sub-continent. This flower is in every Mughal period paintings and gardens like Shalamar Bagh and others. Tulip was considered essential elements of Mughal gardens.

The Mughals had great interest in gardens and it is conspicuously shown in the remains of the gardens. There was a common perception the Tulip flower belonged to cold weather areas, but a lady has grown a Tulip garden in Lahore. To grow Tulip again in hot climates of Lahore is no less than a wonder, and that reflects the appreciation of flowers of Lahorites. We are far behind in that sense of taste, we have uprooted Mughal era gardens in Peshawar, — gardens like Wazeer Bagh, Shahi Bagh and many others. We have encroached upon those gardens and have erected illegal structures.

Peshawar was once known as city of flowers, air was filled with fragrance, now the foul smell has replaced that fragrance. The men at helm of affairs are insensitive and blindfolded with their desires, if by any chance a lady like lady of Lahore could resolve to grow Tulip and other flowers; the city would give an enchanting look, but if there is no one with a good taste how come the flowers would appear.

**Details of funds allocated for the rehabilitation of Peshawar’s historical gardens required by Peshawar High court**

- The provincial government has developed business centres after ending the historical status of the gardens, the ‘petitioner’

*Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, April 27, 2011*

Peshawar (Court reporter) Peshawar high court has ordered that the details of funds allocated by USAID for the rehabilitation of Peshawar’s historical gardens be produced in the court. The divisional bench comprising Chief Justice Ejaz Afzal and Justice Mazher Alam began the hearing of a petition filed by Shakeel Waheedullah for the restoration of the old status of the historical gardens.

The petitioner’s advocate said the provincial government had ended the historical status of
historical gardens and erected illegal business centre there, therefore orders be kindly issued to restore the previous historical status of the gardens.

The administrative officer told the court about a heavy grant allocated by USAID for the development of gardens, on that the court ordered him to produce the details of those foreign funds and projects in the next hearing.

Conspiracy to ‘kill’ a 200 years old Banyan tree of Peshawar

- A government department has misused its authority and auctioned the expensive tree against a meagre amount
- The decision to deprive the city of historical heritage was just to benefit a plaza owner, the citizens aroused from slumber

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 02, 2011

Peshawar (Court reporter) A town administration has allegedly auctioned a 200 years old tree grown in Government Middle School Peshawar, Jogiwara against miniscule sum of money just to enhance the market value of the property belonging to some influential figures, but the city residents realising their responsibility have took to the streets to protest against such high handedness.

The imminent danger to the ancient heritage for a time being was stalled. A banyan tree in Dhoni Chand area is in the jurisdiction of Town I, but another department crossed its limits and auctioned that tree at a very nominal price. Yesterday the agents of the buyers reached at the spot and started cutting the tree, on seeing that the local resident came out of the houses overloaded those people and stopped them from cutting the tree and complained against them in the police station, the culprits had already cut many branches of the trees. Those men told that their employer had bought that tree from Auqaf department, but according to some people the tree was auctioned by Evacuee Trust department, though the said department had no right to do that because it was on the alongside a road. People say the tree was 200 years old and it did not affect anyone.

The hacking of the tree was just to enhance the market value of the property belonging to some influential person. The locals say that tree was in the limits of Town I and its worth was in millions but that was auctioned against a very small amount by another department. The auction served duel purpose, one, it was sold at a very cheap amount and two, it was just to serve an influential person. The residents will go to court for that matter. The people of the area say that Hindu community used to worship under that tree before partition.

A historical tree in Haripur has been hacked

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 08, 2011

Haripur (Divisional reporter) A historical tree in Government High School No 2, Haripur has been illegally cut and sold to an important officer — a ‘Subject specialist’. As a matter of routine if any tree in a government building has to be cut, the permission has to be taken from ED of the department and the forest department, but such procedure was not adopted.

Moreover, if a tree has to be sold, first the PTC council is involved and then tree’s price has to be estimated from the forest department, but all the rules and regulations were ignored and the ancient and
A historical tree worth thousands of rupees was sold to a Subject Specialist against a very nominal sum of rupees. According to sources, to conceal the illegal cutting of the tree, the cutting was done at night. It seems that the principal has in some very urgent need of money, he collects money on different pretexts. Sometimes he collects money in the name of extension and sometimes he sells government property.

The principal must be stopped practicing such things and the government’s expensive timber be recovered.

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**Two million rupees embezzled in the name of restoration work in a Park with the abetment of TMA, Mansehra**

*Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 09, 2011*

Mansehra (Correspondent)

Two million rupees has been embezzled with the collaboration of TMA on the false claim of restoration work in a park in Mansehra New Circuit House. Only three terraces were installed and grass was grown on a small stretch of land, and visitors’ needs were overlooked. Mansehra city presently has no recreational spot. If the funds were appropriately spent, the residents would get some recreation in the evening.

The denizens have demanded that the whole matter be investigated to ensure some recreation for the residents.

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**Announcement for office holders of ‘Movement for the rehabilitation of Historical gardens and sites’**

*Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 14, 2011*

Peshawar (Mashriq news)

A meeting of ‘Movement for the rehabilitation of Historical Gardens and Sites’ Peshawar was held yesterday, it was presided over by Chairman Muhammad Humayyun Khakikhel. The meeting was attended by a large number of people of Town One limits.

The manifesto and aims of the movement were reviewed in detail. The following office bearers were elected with unanimous approval. Umer Raja as general secretary, Attaullah as office secretary and Abdul Ghafoor as information secretary.

Khan Khakikhel as chairman, Nisar Hussain as senior vice chairman, Saeed Khan as junior vice chairman, Muhammad Raja as general secretary, Attaullah as office secretary and Abdul Ghafoor as information secretary.

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**Jinnah Park should be made an attractive place for visitors and the tourists, says Bashir Bilaur**

- An aquarium will be built with the cost of 25 million, fish will be visible from all the sides

*Daily Aaj, Peshawar, June 18, 2011*

Peshawar (Aaj news)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s senior minister and parliamentary leader of ANP, Bashir Ahmed Bilaur has directed the PDA to construct an aquarium in Jinnah Park for study and recreational purpose on the pattern of Lahore and Karachi.
That was an age-old demand of people of Peshawar. Fish would be seen swimming from all the four sides. The minister has put the responsibility to arrange 25 million rupees on Peshawar District Government and all the four towns. Therefore the towns would provide 5 million each to contribute in the project. It’s worth mentioning that on the direction of the senior minister, work is already in progress on the construction of digital musical fountains and installation of Pakistani flag higher than Minar-e-Pakistan. It’s hoped that all the three projects will be complete within months and the Jinnah Park will attract the visitors and the tourists alike.

Shahbaz Sharif takes notice of sub standard material for the construction of parks in Murree, a committee is formed

- Contractor couldn’t be arrested, SHO suspended
- The directions regarding smooth traffic flow during the movement of VVIPs should be strictly followed
- A comprehensive programme should be devised for traffic and security to avoid inconvenience for the tourists, police and the administration is briefed

Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Islamabad, June 27, 2011

Lahore (Press release) Chief Minister Punjab, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has taken the notice of sub standard and faulty construction of parks in Murree and ordered for inquiry into the matter. A committee has been formed under the supervision of Director general Parks and Horticulture Authority, Punjab, Abdul Jabbar Shaheen. The committee will give the report within seven days. The CM while visiting Resource Centre and Bagh-e-Shaheedan in Murree inspected the construction work and declared the restoration work of Murree parks as substandard and faulty, he informed the concerned department about that. The CM gave suspension order for the SHO Murree as he delayed the action against the contractor of PIA Park.

FIR had been already lodged against the contractor but he could not be arrested. The CM further said that the directions about not to stop the traffic during the movement of VVIPs were very clear and should be followed strictly. The traffic flow should be made easy to save the tourists from any inconvenience. The chief minister directed the police officers and administration to devise a comprehensive security and traffic plan so that the tourism in the season would not be affected. The chief minister also directed the Murree municipal administration work for the cleanliness of Hill Town and the disposal of waste and drainage. The CM also directed the concerned officials to make plans for maintaining the natural beauty of Murree, landscaping and reconstruction of parks etc.
CDA fails to know who, what cause Margalla Hills bushfire
Dawn Islamabad, April 14, 2011

By Imran Ali Teepu
ISLAMABAD, April 13: The Capital Development Authority has failed to draw a proper plan to prevent bushfire in Margalla Hills that erupts every summer.

“No solid strategy has been devised during the last several years to control Margallah Hills National Park bush fires,” said an official of the authority.

Besides, the authority does not have record of areas burnt by fire every year or any record of animals killed especially in the last year’s bushfire, which was one of the severest that took several days to put out.

The official who spoke on condition of anonymity added: “The authority employs obsolete methods to contain bush fires, although it has most modern fire engines working under the emergency and disaster management wing.”

He said that last year the authority hired Prime Minister Secretariat’s helicopters to contain the bushfire.

“The authority always swings into action after Margalla Hills bushes catch fire,” he said. The official said the authority could not get to the bottom as what caused the fire at Margalla Hills every year in summer. “Every official of the environment wing offers different explanation for the bushfire,” he said.

The official quoted several instances in which bush fires were linked by the environment wing officials to natural incidents or human errors.

“The fire at Margallah Hills was because of severe heat,” the official said quoting one of the routine reports submitted to member environment.

He said the officials of the wing said the visitors to the park threw burning cigarettes which also causes fire.

A fire expert said that countries like United States and Australia had strict rules to limit the bushfire impact as it destroys natural habitat.

“It’s not just the visitors who are warned to act sensibly during the visits to hilly areas, a better fire prevention network is also in place alongside such hills to meet any untoward incident,” he observed.

Meanwhile, when approached the spokesman of the CDA Ramzan Sajid, he claimed: “We have complete data of fauna and flora and the authority is working in collaboration with several local and international non-governmental bodies to preserve the natural habitat at the Margalla National Park.”

He said that the bushfires were extinguished with the help of PM Secretariat’s helicopters.

“As we are part of the Cabinet Division so we can utilize the helicopters,” he said. The official said that chairman CDA Intiaz Inayat Elahi was very much concerned about the routine summer bushfire and he had already gave directions for formulating a strategy to containing it.

“On the directions of the chairman we have established several check posts for containing the environmental violations at the Margallah Hills,” he claimed.
Plan to protect Margallas from fire incident
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, April 20, 2011

Our crime correspondent
Islamabad: The Islamabad administration has chalked out a comprehensive plan to protect Margalla Hills from fire incidents during the hot weather, the DC Office said.

A vast range patrolling would start during the fire eruption days of the coming summer, deputy commissioner Islamabad Amer Ali Ahmad told this correspondent when contacted. He said that the patrolling teams would comprise police, CDA and fire brigade personnel, adding that the teams would be equipped with latest tools relating to control the sudden fire.

Meanwhile, a spokesman of the Islamabad administration said that in a meeting Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Amer Ali Ahmed said that the ICT administration and capital police will also provide full-fledged assistance and support to the environmental staff of Capital Development Authority to prevent any forest fire incidence in the Margalla Hills during the current summer season and assistant commissioners, magistrates and concerned SHOs will carry out patrolling in the forests along with CDA forest teams.

He said a joint meeting of the ICT administration, capital police and CDA environment officials was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Amer Ali Ahmed here on Tuesday.

The meeting reviewed in details the arrangements made by the CDA to prevent and control any forest fire incidence in the Margalla Hills during the summer season.

Deputy Director General (Environment) CDA Malik Aulya Khan informed the meeting that the Environment Directorate of CDA has made elaborate arrangements to prevent and control any fire incidence in the Margalla Hills during the current summer season and all preventive and precautionary measures are in place.

He said the CDA directorate has set up 30 pickets in the Margalla Hills and deployed 180 staff of CDA including the forest guards there who are patrolling the forest area to prevent any fire incidence.

He said the CDA has constituted 22 village committees comprising notables of the area falling in the Margalla Hills who are also assisting the forest guards and CDA environmental staff for ensuring the protection of environment and forests and the villagers are being educated about the preventive and precautionary measures against the forest fires.

He said that a fire control room has also been established by the CDA and the public has been asked to immediately inform about any fire incidence at phone No 2855513 or Rescue 15 for necessary help.

He informed that the environment staffs, as part of precautionary measures have also cleared fire line in the forest area covering 200 kilometres and water vehicles are also stationed at different sites in the area.

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Fire engulfs forest in Mansehra
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 12, 2011

Our correspondent
MANSEHRA: A fire that broke out at the reserved forest in Balakot Friday evening could not be put out on Saturday.

Sources said the fire was apparently the handiwork of the black sheep in the Forest Department wanting to hide the illegal cutting of trees.

They said the black sheep, in connivance with timber smugglers, were active in the area and cutting forests for the last many years and now they set ablaze a portion of the forest to save their skins.
When contacted, District Forest Officer Akhtarzeb Khan denied the allegation and said it was the handiwork of the shepherds.

He said the fire was spreading rapidly in the area and 22 guards and volunteers were busy trying to extinguish it. He said an investigation would be launched to bring the perpetrators to justice.

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Over 2040-acre forest burnt in 309 fire incidents

The Nation Islamabad, June 13, 2011

Syed Danish Hussain

ISLAMABAD - Though 'special arrangements' are made every year to overcome fire incidents in the Margalla Hills National Park area but the data compiled by the directorate of the authority says otherwise, as 2040.25 acres of forest area burnt in 309 fire incidents during past the 10 years.

The figure speaks itself about the gravity of the losses occurred to wildlife and indigenous trees.

However, the same report depicts that large-scale fire incidents that burnt forests spread over an area of 2040.25 acres astonishingly caused damage to only ‘57 dead pine trees’ along with bushes and grass.

According to the data, during the year 2000, Margalla Hills witnessed 20 small and large scale fire incidents in which 88-acre area was burnt, damaging seven dead pine trees along grass and bushes.

During years 2001-05, wild fire hit Margalla Hills 220 times and an area of 1442 acres was burnt, causing damage to only 34 dead pine trees along grass and bushes.

During years 2006-10, excluding year 2009, 590.25-acre of Margalla Hills National Park area was burnt in 80 fire incidents, in which 20 dead pine trees were burnt along with bushes and grass.

Among last ten years, year 2002 witnessed 62 fire incidents in which a record 548-acre of land was burnt.

This data itself shows that there is something wrong behind these incidents of fire. As 2040.25 acres of forest area were charred but the record shows that only 57 dead pine trees were burnt in the incidents during the last ten years.

The authority’s own record strengthens the doubts that the timber mafia after chopping precious trees might set the forest on fire to remove all possible traces of their crime. While, officials concerned all the time hold visitors and villagers as responsible.

An official of CDA Environment Directorate, speaking on condition of anonymity, called for a comprehensive investigation into the fire incidents to fix the responsibility of the incidents.

A meeting in this regard was held here to review the arrangements for the fire season, presided by the Chairman CDA, Imitiaz Inayat Elahi, and participated by Member Environment, Mian Waheed-ud-Din and senior officers of the Environment Wing.

A deployment plan of the emergency staff has been chalked out distributing the MHNP into four ranges, which are Golra, Saidpur, Noorpur and Bara Khu range.

He said that 30 fire pickets have been established in the park area as part of the arrangements for prevention, detection and control of forest fire, Member Environment informed the meeting.

He said that under the Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) for the fire season, 225 kilometers fireline and 196 kilometers trial-path have been cleared.
30 Check posts and 22 village committees formed to save the Margalla Hills from fire

- The staff comprising forest guards and 180 persons will perform their patrolling duty day and night in shifts, decides DC in a meeting
- 200 KM area is cleared from fire line, water vehicles stationed at different points of the forests

Daily Nawa-e-Waqt, Islamabad, April 20, 2011

Islamabad (Correspondent)
Capital Development Authority (CDA) has formed 30 checkposts and 22 village committees to control the instances of fire on the hills. The Staff comprising forest guards, and 180 other people has been posted on the hills will perform its patrolling duties day and night in two shifts. The 200 KM area has been cleared from fire line. The DC, Islamabad Aamir Ali Ahmed on Tuesday held a joint meeting of police and CDA. The arrangements to control and avoid the instances of fire in summer season were revisited, different decisions were taken.

Dy Director General Environment CDA Malik Aulia Khan said in the meeting that to avoid the fire instances, the department had taken effective measures. 30 checkposts and 22 village committees have been formed, a staff comprising 180 persons including CDA staff and forest guards. The staff would patrol day and night in two shifts. The villagers are being informed about safety of environment and protection of forests from fire and the safety measures. He said CDA had also made a fire control centre. The people of the area have been asked to call 2855513 or call rescue 15 in case of fire. He said forest guards have cleared the 200 kilometer area fro fire as a precautionary measures. Water vehicles have been stationed at different points.

All the arrangements are foolproof. The DC Islamabad, Aamir Ali Ahmed told the participants that Islamabad police, magistrates and administration have allocated different duties to patrol along with CDA teams; moreover they will extend assistance to the CDA teams in summer season to counter the instances of fire and control that. He directed that banners should be hung in Daman-e-Kohl and Pir Sohava and effective movement should be initiated to create awareness about the environment.
Chapter 08

NCCR PAMS (North South) Project Activities
"Roundtable Conference on Sustainable Forest Management"
Event Date: June 27, 2011

Forest cover has reduced to 2.5 per cent of total area
The News Islamabad/Rawalpindi, June 28, 2011

By Our correspondent
Islamabad: Sustainable forest governance is only possible if it is rooted from a collective local action, said Professor Babar Shahbaz of University of Agriculture, Faisalabad while addressing a roundtable conference on “Sustainable forest management” organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute here on Monday.

Dr Shahbaz said that there is no easy way to overcome the multidimensional problems involved in forest management, as managing natural resource conflict is an integral part of natural resource governance. He said that a mediated policy dialogue is a good way to bring the actors in a natural resource conflict together.

Activist Tahira Abdullah said that forest cover in the country reduced to 2.5 % of total area of Pakistan. She said that use of wood as fuel and its commercial use should be discouraged by imposing taxes. She also highlighted the need of rigorous campaign for strict enforcement of policies to protect forests and promote sustainable forest management policies.

SDPI’s Talimand Khan of SDPI detailing findings and recommendation of district forest assembly and people roundtables held in Hazara and Malakand division criticised forest management policy that puts responsibility to protect forest on communities without imparting any authority to them. He termed these laws as arbitrary, inhumane giving powers of police to forest officials who can even fire and shoot anybody they think suspicious.

SDPI’s Senior Research Associate of Climate Change Study Centre, Shakeel Ahmed, Ramay, said Pakistan is vulnerable to various negative implications of climate change such as droughts, rise in sea level, melting of glaciers and changing weather patterns. He said that according to experts, agricultural production may decrease up to 30% in next 20 years.

Forest community representatives Riaz Muhammad Khan and Amir Muhammad Khan said that timber mafia in compliance with forest officials is behind massive deforestation and basic
hindrance in sustainable forest management. They were of the view that both not only sabotage joint forest management committees, but are also responsible for all the hardships being faced by forest communities.

Shah Wazir Khan, Deputy Chief Conservator Forest, KPK, Riaz Muhammad, Sarhad Awami Forest Ittehad and Ameer Muhammad from Sarhad Awami Forest Ittehad (SAFI) and Kanwar Iqbal from SDPI also spoke on the occasion.

Need to grow and preserve forests
Pakistan Observer Islamabad, June 28, 2011

By Staff Reporter
Islamabad—Speakers at a SDPI round table conference here stressed the need for preservation of forests.

Dr Babar Shahbaz, Professor, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, Senior Research Associate, Climate Change Study Centre, SDPI, Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Coordinator, PCI, SDPI, Talimand Khan, PAMS Coordinator, SDPI, Shah Wazir Khan, Deputy Chief Conservator Forest, KPK, Riaz Muhammad, Sarhad Awami Forest Ittehad (SAFI), Ameer Muhammad, Sarhad Awami Forest Ittehad (SAFI) and Tahira Abdullah, renowned social activist spoke at the event.

Dr. Shahbaz expressed that sustainable forest governance is only possible if it is rooted from the collective local action. He expressed that there is no easy way to overcome the multidimensional problems involved in forest management as managing natural resource conflict is an integral part of natural resource governance. He urged that a mediated policy dialogue using a neutral facilitator is a good way to bring the actors in a natural resource conflict together. Dialogue mediated by neutral facilitators helps build and strengthen trust, enhance communication, promote engagement, and open attitudes, he added.

Talimand Khan shared SDPI’s findings and recommendation based on district forest assembly and people roundtables held in Hazara and Malakand division of KPK, with local stakeholders regarding forest governance issues. He criticized existing forest management policy that puts responsibility to protect forest on communities without imparting any authority to them. Talimand lamented that these laws are arbitrary, inhumane and gives powers of police to forest officials who can even fire and shoot anybody they think suspicious. He urged removal of ban on harvesting as it has backfired and instead of slowing down deforestation, has multiplied manifold.

He called for integrated land use planning and coordination among stakeholders for sustainable forest management and put forth many recommendations such as review of Joint Forest Management Committees’ system (JFMCs), transparent disbursement of royalty, implementation of forests reform agenda, Resolution of ownership issues, shift to fruit orchards in wastelands, innovative approaches to correspond to climate change and incentives reforestation compatible with climate change.

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay said Pakistan is vulnerable to various negative implications of climate change such as droughts, rise in sea level, melting of glaciers and changing weather patterns. He said that experts have predicted that these affects would adversely affect agricultural production and may decrease it up to 30% in next 20 years. He said that this depleting water resources and productivity scenario in contrast with enormous increase in population presents a very gloomy picture. He cited recent SDPI study which shows 48.7% food insecurity in Pakistan and urged upon taking immediate measures to cope with situation.

Kanwar Iqbal explained background of REDD+ mechanism, carbon credits generated by projects and current developments on national level in Pakistan. He
informed the conference that though it’s a bit late, but Pakistan has formally entered in UNREDD Programme. He also discussed challenges aroused after devolution of Environment Ministry, as the REDD+ demands immediate formation of national level policies. Kanwar presented a post 18th amendment model for that includes development of national level REDD+ strategy / action plan with establishment of provincial REDD+ Cell, addressing the need for both compliance and voluntary market.

Prominent social activist Tahira Abdullah showed concerns over rapidly diminishing forest cover in Pakistan which has been reduced to 2.5 % of total area of Pakistan. She said that use of wood as fuel and its commercial use should be discouraged by imposing taxes. She also highlighted the need of rigorous campaign for strict enforcement of policies to protect forests and promote sustainable forest management.

Forest community representatives Riaz Muhammad Khan and Amir Muhammad Khan said that timber mafia in league with forest officials, is behind massive deforestation and basic hindrance in sustainable forest management.

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Nurturing forests through conservation
The Express Tribune Islamabad, June 28, 2011

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

Speakers demanded the revision of forest laws, addressing land ownership and judicious distribution of royalty in forest communities. Dr Babar Shahbaz, a professor at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, expressed that sustainable forest governance is only possible if it is rooted in collective local action. He expressed that there is no easy way to overcome the multidimensional problems involved in forest management, as managing natural resource conflicts is an integral part of natural resource governance.

SDPI Senior Research Associate Shakeel Ahmad Ramay said Pakistan is vulnerable to a multitude of negative implications of climate change, including droughts, the impact of rising sea level, melting glaciers and changing weather patterns. He added that experts predict that these factors would adversely affect agricultural production and may decrease yields by as much as 30 per cent over the next 20 years.

He said that depleting water resources and the productivity scenario are in stark contrast with the enormous increase in population and that they combine to present a very gloomy picture. He cited a recent SDPI study which showed that 48.7 per cent of Pakistanis are food insecure and urged the need to take immediate measures to cope with the situation.

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

Iqbal said though it is a late, Pakistan has formally entered the UN-REDD Programme. He also discussed challenges arising from the devolution the Ministry of Environment, specifically because REDD+ demands the immediate formation of national level policies.

Social Activist Tahira Abdullah expressed concern over the rapidly diminishing forest cover in Pakistan, which has fallen to 2.5 per cent of total area. She said that the use of wood as fuel and its commercial use in general should be discouraged by imposing taxes. She also highlighted the need for a rigorous campaign to strictly enforce policies to protect forests and the promotion of sustainable forest management policies.

Forest community representatives Riaz Mohammad Khan and Amir Muhammad Khan said that illegal logging, which is carried out with the complicity of forest officials, is behind the massive deforestation and presents a major hindrance in sustainable forest management. They were of the view that those involved in illegal logging sabotage joint forest management committees, and are also responsible for all the hardships being faced by forest communities.

Govt. asked to promote alternative fuels
Dawn Islamabad, June 28, 2011

By A Reporter
ISLAMABAD, June 27: Experts at a roundtable here on Monday said the government should promote alternative fuels in rural areas and formulate new laws for effective forest management so that the communities continue to benefit from the resources and contribute towards its regeneration.

They also demanded revision of forest laws, addressing landownership and judicious distribution of royalty among forest communities which would help in controlling the activities of timber mafia and encroachment of forest for commercialisation.

The roundtable on ‘Sustainable forest management’ was organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute. The speakers expressed concerns over rapidly declining forest cover in Pakistan which has reduced to 2.5 per cent of the total area of the country.

Dr Babar Shahbaz from the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, said sustainable forest governance was only possible if it came from the collective local action.

“It is not easy to overcome the multidimensional problems involved in forest management as managing natural resource conflict is an integral part of natural resource governance,” Dr Shahbaz said, adding mediated policy dialogue using a neutral facilitator could bring the stakeholders in natural resource conflict together.

The speakers criticised existing forest management policy that puts responsibility to protect forest on the communities without imparting any authority to them.

Forest community representatives Riaz Mohammad Khan and Amir Mohammad Khan said timber mafia in collusion with the forest officials was behind massive deforestation and basic hindrance in sustainable forest management. “They not only sabotage joint forest management committees but are also responsible for the hardships being faced by forest communities,” they added.

They said the ban on harvesting trees in forests should be lifted for local communities.

The participants were informed that the current laws provided policing powers to officials of the forest department who can even shoot anybody they feel suspicious of cutting or moving wood out of the forest.

The experts said integrated land use planning and coordination among stakeholders for sustainable forest management was need of
Speakers at a moot on Monday were of the view to increase area under forest along with coordinated efforts for its sustainable management, shunning traditional approach and adopting innovative methods and technologies to meet the goal.

This was stated at a roundtable moot on "Sustainable Forest Management," which was organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

Leading experts including Dr Babar Shahbaz, Professor, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, senior Research Associate, Climate Change Study Centre, Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Talimand Khan, Shah Wazir Khan, Riaz Muhammad, Ameer Muhammad and Tahira Abdullah spoke on the occasion.

Speakers also called for coordination among various departments for sustainable forest management that can help overcome the challenge of climate change. They stressed for provision of livelihood opportunities, alternate energy sources and removal of ban on cutting trees necessary for sustainable forest management.

They also demanded revision of forest laws addressing land ownership and judicious distribution of royalty in forest communities.

Dr Shahbaz emphasised upon collective local action, which, he said was vital for sustainable forest governance.

He said that there is no easy way out to overcome the multidimensional problems involved in forest management.

Criticising the existing forest management policy, Talimand Khan said it puts responsibility to protect forest communities without imparting any authority to them.

He lamented that these laws are arbitrary, inhumane and give powers of police to forest officials who can even fire and shoot anybody they think suspicious.

He called upon the National Assembly to hold debate on Forest Ordinance 2002, what he observed can be helpful for sustainable forest management.

He stressed upon integrated landuse planning and co-ordination among stakeholders for sustainable forest management and put forth many recommendations such as review of Joint Forest Management Committees’ system (JFMCs), transparent disbursement of royalty, implementation of forests reform agenda, Resolution of ownership issues, shift to fruit orchards in wastelands, innovative approaches to correspond to climate change and incentives for reforestation compatible with climate change.

Another expert, Shakeel Ahmad Ramay said Pakistan is vulnerable to various negative implications of climate change such as droughts, rise in sea level, melting of glaciers and changing weather patterns.

He said that experts have predicted that these affects would adversely affect agricultural production and may decrease it up to 30 percent in next 20 years.

He said that this depleting water resources and productivity scenario in contrast with enormous increase in population presents a very gloomy picture.

He cited recent SDPI study which shows 48.7 percent food insecurity in Pakistan and...
urged upon taking immediate measures to cope with situation.

Expressing her concern over the diminishing forest cover in Pakistan, Tahira Abdullah said that use of wood as fuel and its commercial use should be discouraged by imposing taxes. She urged to launch a rigorous campaign for strict enforcement of policies to protect forests and promote sustainable forest management policies.

Riaz Muhammad Khan and Amir Muhammad Khan said that timber mafia in compliance with forest officials, is behind massive deforestation and basic hindrance in sustainable forest management.

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**Speakers demand revision of forest laws**

*Daily Pakistan Observer Islamabad, June 29, 2011*

Islamabad—Speakers on a seminar demanded revision of forest laws addressing landownership and judicious distribution of royalty in forest communities. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here organized, “A Roundtable Conference on Sustainable Forest Management”. Prof. Dr. Babar Shahbaz University of Agriculture Faisalabad, said provision of livelihood opportunities, alternate energy sources and removal of ban on harvesting of trees necessary for sustainable forest management.

Dr. Shahbaz expressed that sustainable forest governance is only possible if it is rooted from the collective local action. He expressed that there is no easy way to overcome the multidimensional problems involved in forest management as managing natural resource conflict is an integral part of natural resource governance. He urged that a mediated policy dialogue using a neutral facilitator is a good way to bring the actors in a natural resource conflict together. Dialogue mediated by neutral facilitators helps build and strengthen trust, enhance communication, promote engagement, and open attitudes, he added.

PAMS Coordinator Talimand Khan shared SDPI’s findings and recommendation based upon district forest assembly and people roundtables held in Hazara and Malakand divisions of KPK, with local stakeholders regarding forest governance issues. He criticized existing forest management policy that puts responsibility to protect forest on communities without imparting any authority to them. He stressed upon integrated land use planning and coordination among stakeholders for sustainable forest management and put forth many recommendations such as review of Joint Forest Management Committees’ system (JFMCs), transparent disbursement of royalty, implementation of forests reform agenda, resolution of ownership issues, shift to fruit orchards in wastelands, innovative approaches to correspond to climate change and incentives reforestation compatible with climate change.

Senior Research Associate, Climate Change Study Centre, SDPI, Shakeel Ahmad Ramay said Pakistan is vulnerable to various negative implications of climate change such as droughts, rise in sea level, melting of glaciers and changing weather patterns. He said that experts have predicted that these affects would adversely affect agricultural production and may decrease it upto 30% in next 20 years. He said this depleting water resources and productivity scenario in contrast with enormous increase in population presents a very gloomy picture. He cited recent SDPI study which shows 48.7% food insecurity in Pakistan and urged upon taking immediate measures to cope with situation.—APP
The president of union should be added in the forest policy formation

- The system should be implemented in a way that the rights of people are protected

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, April 13, 2011

Box The environmental variation has directly affected the agriculture sector and therefore the food resources are in danger. Floods and drought like situation has triggered price hike and poverty

The natural calamities have done great damage, the worst floods of the history have washed away everything, trees and fertile soil etc. The timber
mafia took the advantage of the emergency situation and started smuggling of timber. There is an urgent need to launch a movement to create awareness about illegal activities among the masses, development institutions, public sector policymakers and the donors, so that people belonging to every section of the society should unite to play their role for better environment and an action plan should be formed.

An organization for environmental development, SDPI arranged a joint meeting of Rotory Club of Swat, Global Peace Council, Sarhad Rural Support Programme and Malakand development Organisation in a village of Brikot, Nijigram, Swat. Various recommendations regarding awareness of the environment were decided in that meeting. The meeting was attended by civil society, representatives of farmers, workers of NGOs, experts related to environment, agriculture and forests and the notables of the area. The speakers addressed the meeting, they said the Beauty of Swat and environmental balance is due to forests, water sources and the glaciers. The snowfall on the mountains maintains the water flow in the river throughout the year.

If the global warming, cutting of forests and other unfavourable factors cause early and quick melting of snow, the environmental balance will be affected, water needed for agriculture will not be available, low lying areas will again be inundated. The ugly scenes of eight months back disaster have not been erased from the minds. The illegal cutting of forests should be immediately stopped, plantation drive and the protection of forests should be given priority. If there are no trees on the mountains, the rainwater will cause flood in the rivers, where as it will also cause water scarcity in the areas. Water springs will be dried up, the land erosion will speed up on larger area, the precious medicinal herbs will be uprooted, the meadows will be finished, and dams will be filled with silt which will arouse issues like power shortage and scarcity of food.

To maintain life activities on the earth, it is very important to create an environment of peace and prosperity which is not possible with the protection and development of forests. The point is we have laws, rules and regulations for the usage of land, but the laws are not implemented. Law is not enforced equally on everyone. The politically influential persons consider it their prerogative to break the law, that’s the reason the precious agricultural land is being converted in to residential colonies just to earn more and more profit. Ironically there are state institutions which are also condemning the practice. There is nobody to stop those powerful people. If there is no agricultural land, how the food security could be possible.

If there are no forests, then how the temperature can be maintained. This is the duty of state institutions to effectively plan about the food and residential requirements, if additional laws are needed they should turn to legislating bodies. The forests in Pakistan are less than 5 per cent of the total area. In 1945, Poland had the forests on 39 per cent of the total area of the country, after World War II, the forest area was reduced to 20 per cent due to many factors. The Poland government seriously started working on joint agricultural strategies and the forest area reached to 29 per cent, the state is still working to increase the further.

In Lebanon, the usage of plain land for residential purpose is prohibited, so houses and colonies are built on the feet of mountains and the adjoining areas. Similarly, we also need that kind of laws and strategies, because without progressing towards environment protection and giving importance to agriculture, there is no concept of peace, sustainable development, poverty alleviation and elimination of price hike.

At the end of meeting a function called “Kisan Hujra” (Farmer’s chamber) was arranged. The speakers while addressing the occasion gave various valuable suggestions for the protection of forests which protect the forests in their area and work for the plantation. The cultivable land which is void of forests, should be allotted to
the local people on special conditions.

The trees should be grown which use relatively less water, eg. Olive and Walnut etc. Fruit trees should be grown instead of wild plants, that would stop the illegal cutting of the trees and economic activities will hold the pace. Employment, education and health opportunities will be created. Swat is fruit centre of Pakistan. A Horticulture institute should be formed to develop the gardens in swat. The institute should develop specific fruit plants nurseries and should grow plants on all the vacant lands. In this drive, local residents of the area, youth, and teachers of schools, children and businessmen may be included as volunteers. The fruit trees on Swat River banks can enhance the beauty of the area, study and recreational trips can be arranged for those spots to enhance the importance of environmental change. A plantation drive should be initiated at Swat’s famous resort “Malam Jabba.” During last four years, a large number of trees were cut from Malam Jabba. To expose the importance of forests, different seminars should be held at union council level. The mobile seminars will be of additional importance.

A new strategy should be employed to grow and develop the forests, for instance the persons giving outstanding performance should be given prizes and other incentives. To get the attention of policy makers and donors, a national level conference is needed to be held. Gas cylinders should be supplied in the selected area to meet the fuel requirements of that area. In addition to gas cylinders, monthly fund should be offered because the people of the hilly area are not well of and need money. In return to government’s assistance those people will act as guard for the forests. The minds of corrupt officials of the forest department should be purged.

The areas where timber smuggling and illegal cutting is rampant, the officials appointed there should be immediately terminated. Those few officials are damaging the environment just for small monetary benefit. The joint ownership rights of trees should be abolished. The trees which belong to government, should be distributed among masses so the protect the trees as those are their own. The soil management should not be delayed; maximum area should be allocated for agriculture and lesser for the residential purpose. The legislation is needed allocation of land for cultivation or residential purpose. The law violators should be dealt without considering their social or political status.

Are we friends of environment? Are we rendering service, collectively or individually to protect the environment for bright, sustainable, peaceful and safe future, and for maintain the natural balance.

Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa is the target of environmental degradation, Government institutions and people should play their role to protect the environment.

Swat being the focal point of militant’s activities and peace making operations has lost 13 per cent forests, whereas in four years time, 20 per cent forests have been completely wiped off.

Unrelenting illegal timber cutting in Swat threatens to eliminate the forests

- 50 per cent decrease in forests poses danger to human life, global warming enhance the risk of floods and weather change

Daily Express, Islamabad, April 11, 2011

Breekot (Express representative) Since 1980, district Swat ahs witnessed 50 per cent decrease in the forest density and due to floods and other unfavourable factors, another 13 per cent decrease in the span of three years is seen. The area has lost its scenic beauty; the area relied on the tourists for its development. The area used to be a great
tourist attraction. Global warming is another threat which has to be countered. If the scarcity of forests is not attended and more trees are not planted, the effects will not only be environmental but economic loss is also inevitable.

The coming generation will never forgive us. Those views were expressed by Coordinator, SDPI, Islamabad, Talemand Khan, former PPP leader Afzal Shah Bacha, President Qaumi Jirga Tehsil Breekot, Fida Muhammad Khan, member board of director SRSP, Ehsan, Derwaish Khan, Fazal Wadood Bacha, Muhammad Karam Advocate and others on the occasion of a combined workshop organized by Rotary Club, Swat, Global Peace Council and Malakand development Organisation and SDPI. The speakers said that global warming has become national and international issue. The actual reason of global warming is industrial development. Currently the US is contributing 35 percent to the world industrial development and other European countries are causing global warming.

The worst target of global warming are the under developed countries, floods and weather changes are the result of that effect. We should work for the development of forests on large scale to avert the danger of looming global warming.

The unabated cutting in the forests will stamp very harmful effects on the environment, says Ehsan Khan

- The slogans like “Save the forests, save your life” should be made practical to confront the global warming, say Talemand Khan and other at the ceremony

Daily Aazadi, Swat, April 11, 2011

Breekot (Khalilur Rehman Bacha and Dr Zakir Muhammad) The protection of forests results in healthy and better society. Forests play a key role in maintaining quality life. The verbal slogans like “save the forests, save the life” should be made practical to counter the effects of global warming. Trees produce oxygen and consume Carbon Dioxide. The decrease in the forest concentration is posing very bad effects on the environment.

The ever-increasing global warming will create unfavourable effects on the life on earth. The growth of forest will not only enhance the beauty of the area, but it will helpful for the poverty stricken people. The increase in temperature as a result of diminish forests is dangerous for human body. These views were expressed by Divisional Director, SRSP, Ehsan Khan, Coordinator, SDPI, Islamabad, Talemand Khan, Fazal Maula Khan, Haji Zahid Khan, PPP leader Afzal Shah Bacha, District President, ANP, Derwaish Khan, Fayyaz Muhammad Khan, President Qaumi Jirga Tehsil Breekot, Fida Muhammad Khan, Chairman Rotary Club, Swat, Dr Wajid Khan, Fazal Wadood Bacha,

Agriculture Officer Kishwar Khan and others on the occasion of a combined workshop organized by Rotary Club, Swat, Global Peace Council and Malakand development Organization.

The workshop was attended by political leaders, social workers and the people of the district. The speakers said the State of Swat in its independent status always protected the forests, but now due to the negligence of forest department the forest have reached at the brink of disaster. According to one survey, 13 per cent of forests have been finished, which is very harmful for the environment, the mountains give a balding look.

The diminishing forest pose greater thereat to the area; temperature rises, floods become imminent, according to one survey 75 per cent districts solely depend on others for their food. Haji Zahid Khan recalled the history and said that Alexander stayed in
Breekot, the ancient name of Breekot was Bazeerah. The archaeological monuments will enhance the beauty of the area, but sadly those pieces are now in the custody Lahore Museum. The speakers said that to counter the effects of global warming, and the protection and development of forests is need of hour.

The speakers revealed that the forests of Hazara are safer than the forests of Swat, the reason is the people of Hazara are united. The speakers demanded that the government should equally divide the resources of swat among the people. Natural Gas should be supplied to all the area to protect the forests. Provincial government, forest department and other communities should collectively work for the protection of forests. Afzal Shah Bacha thanked all the participants and concluded the ceremony.

Timber mafia plundered the forests and marred the beautiful face of Swat

- Swat’s beauty is the real attraction for the tourists; the degradation of forests is affecting tourism
- A 50 per cent decrease is recorded from the year 1980 to 2007, whereas there was further 13 per cent decrease in the forest density in the last three years.

Comment Qaumi Jirga Breekot

Daily Awaz, Swat, April 11, 2011

Breekot (Bakhat Rawan) Swat forests suffered 50 per cent decrease since the year 1980 due to uncontrolled hacking and another 13 per cent decrease due to natural calamities like floods, that marred the beautiful face of Swat, and eventually Swat which was the tourists’ heaven, lost its tourist industry which has supported its economy.

Global warming is another issue, which is posing dangers to the security of human life, if the cutting is not stopped in time and the shortage is not fulfilled by growing more trees, there will be irremediable loss economically and regarding environmental degradation. Those views were expressed by Coordinator, SDPI, Islamabad, Talemand Khan, former PPP leader Afzal Shah Bacha, President Qaumi Jirga Tehsil Breekot, Fida Muhammad Khan, member board of director SRSP, Ehsan, Derwaish Khan, Fazal Wadood Bacha, Muhammad Karam Advocate and others on the occasion of a combined workshop organized by Rotary Club, Swat, Global Peace Council and Malakand development Organisation and SDPI.

The speakers said that global warming has become national and international issue. The actual reason of global warming is industrial development. Currently the US is contributing 35 percent to the world industrial development and other European countries are causing global warming. The worst target of global warming are the under developed countries, floods and weather changes are the result of that effect. We should work for the development of forests on large scale to avert the danger of looming global warming. They said UN had declared year 2011 as the year of forests and the slogan is: Forests for the People. The awareness about the forests is much needed now, as according international standard, forest area should be 18 per cent of the total area, but we have only 4 per cent area for the forests.

He added further that currently government spends 5,000 per plant. If the forest land is distributed among the forest owners, the cost per plant will be far less and the personal interest and inspection will result in real progress and development of the forests.
A seminar in Batgram with the slogan of save the forests, save the forests

- Seminar was conducted by Sungi and SDPI

Daily Pine, Swat, April 15, 2011

Batgram (Qari Ehsan) A seminar of forester alliance with the slogan of save the forests, save the forests was conducted jointly by Sungi and SDPI in a local hotel. The seminar was attended by the delegations from three districts, Dir Kohistan, Dir Swat and Batgram. The aim of that seminar was to enhance the image of the movement, Save the forests. Different opinions and suggestion surfaced in the seminar. The safety of green gold is not possible without the participation of masses.

An in charge of journalists organization, Riaz Muhammad Khan and the General secretary Jamshed Khan said while addressing the seminar that as a whole only Malakand Division and Hazara Division are endowed with the wealth of green gold, but unfortunately due to the apathy of forest department that wealth is nearing extinction. All the tall claims of governments have been proved wrong. The forest owners from Allai revealed that the forest department employees were collaborating with the timber mafia.

The forest functionaries smuggle the timber themselves. The buy precious trees from the forest owners at dirt cheap rates and then sell them to timber mafia at very high rates, an inquiry is demanded.
Chapter 09

Miscellaneous
Depleting agro-biodiversity a risk to food security
Dawn Business & Finance Review Islamabad, April 4-10, 2011

By Fahim Nawaz

The replacement of indigenous varieties of crops, fruits, vegetables and livestock species by high-yield crop varieties and improved breeds of animals, in the past few decades, has depleted agro-biodiversity.

Indigenous varieties and livestock species have lost their significance due to intensification of farming and separation of local communities from indigenous biological resources.

Agro-biodiversity has a major role in providing food and promoting food security for the future. Agro-biodiversity for food and agriculture comprises various biological diversity components like crops, fish, livestock, pests, interacting species of pollinators, predators and competitors among others. About 20,000 species of plants, fungi and animals have been identified for their medicinal importance; and pharmaceutical industry is based on these biological resources and related local knowledge. Plants are the potential food resource for both humans and animals. It is interesting to know that about 30,000 plants species have edible parts but only 7,000 plants have been collected or grown as food throughout the history, of which only 20 species provide 90 per cent of the world’s food. Wheat, rice and maize supply 60 per cent of the world food requirements.

The food security is threatened by rapid decline of biodiversity through introduction of exotic species, loss of gene pool, neglected/underutilised species, monocultures and bio-fuels. The introduction of uniform, high-yielding varieties has resulted in the loss of 75 per cent of plant genetic diversity as farmers have worldwide replaced their multiple local varieties and landraces with these varieties. These varieties led to the deterioration of the environment as they required more water, high input of chemical fertilisers and pesticides which increased salinity, waterlogging and also resulted in depletion of nutrients.

The well adapted old cultivars have been replaced by few genetically modified varieties and breeds. New species are ranked second to habitat destruction in threatening the biodiversity as they exclude native species by competing with native flora/fauna for resources. Some plants like
Mesquite have made cultivated lands vulnerable to cultivation while others like eucalyptus and parthenium retard seed germination and plant growth of native plants by releasing allelopathic chemicals. It has also resulted in the introduction of new pests like mealy bug.

Livestock is so severely affected that about 30 per cent of its breeds are at risk of extinction and six breed, worldwide, are lost each month. Domestic animals are decreasing at the rate of five per cent and tropical forests at the rate of one per cent. About 70 per cent of marine species are fully exploited and nearly 60 per cent of the earth’s coral reefs are threatened by humans. According to estimates 34,000 species of plants or 12.5 per cent of the world’s flora are facing extinction. The diminishing biological resources will diminish food sources of the communities and this will lead to food insecurity.

The introduction of bio-fuels in the last few decades has helped solve the problem of energy insecurity and climate change but the increased conversion of agricultural commodities to biofuels resulted in an increase of international food prices.

According to the World Bank, about 70-75 per cent of the increase in food commodity prices from 2002 to 2008 was mainly due to biofuels. The use of biofuels has decisively contributed to a rising demand for sugar, maize, wheat, oilseeds, and palm oil and this food/fuel competition could be observed as global wheat and maize stocks are declining considerably.

Agriculture intensification has reduced crop diversity to few varieties in Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan. Buck wheat was grown on wide scale earlier but now it is rarely seen in the fields of the region because farmers are keen to grow potatoes and high-yielding wheat varieties which have made their fields susceptible to pests and diseases. The infestation of the pests like codling moth and wooly aphids in apples, Botrytis leaf virus in onions, crown gall disease in cherries and nematodes in potatoes are the effects of agriculture intensification. The market oriented agriculture practices, during the last few decades in the region, have replaced traditional self-sustaining agriculture systems.

Support to farmers is required as they play a key role in the protection of precious resources. It should be provided as a means of meeting the survival needs of ever increasing population. They should be given subsidy to encourage them to grow old, neglected and underutilised crop species like pearl millet, finger millet and sorghum etc. Biopiracy and patents on living organisms should be prohibited as well as the prohibition of the development of sterile varieties through genetic engineering processes. The government should redesign policies and take serious efforts for the conservation of biodiversity in the country. The establishment of gene bank at regional levels and promotion of research related to evaluation of national germplasm would help in this regard.

English Translation from Urdu News

Magical character of Wali Bagh in the regional politics

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, April 06, 2011

Gul-o-Khar: By Unwanuddin Kakakhel

Family and hereditary politics has a long history in sub-continent; it is rather a tradition, now it has spread to Far East as well. In parliamentary politics this is considered as compulsory thing, and that continues in the 21st century. In America and western world the political scene is altogether changed, recently I had a chance to see that political structure.

Well, I was talking about the politics of this region. The charismatic character of Shahi Bagh, currently Wali Bagh in the politics was
introduced by Bacha Khan of Shahi Bagh. He was borne in 1890 in Hasht Nagar in Khan Behram Khan’s house. He, in his early days of life was full of nationalist sentiments. After completing his education, he came to the conclusion that basis of all the ills of society is lack of education, so panacea for every ill is the education, therefore he resolved to educate the nation. He gradually made a network of madrassas in the area with the help of Haji Sahib Tarakzai.

In the beginning the madrassas of historical village Gadrasay of district Mardan gave free education. The British sensed the friendship of Bacha Khan and Haji Sahib as a danger for them, so they raided to arrest Haji Sahib Tarakzai, Haji Sahib went to Bonir, and then resided permanently in Mohmind tribes region. He started holy war against the British government. Bacha Khan was arrested. Bach Khan was released after a few months. Bach Khan continued his mission with the help of his friends. Muslims decided to migrate to Afghanistan after the end of Khilafat in Turkey. Bacha Khan also migrated to Afghanistan with his friends, but the experiment flopped; he came back and formed an organization, “Anjuman-e-Islah-e-Afghana (Organisation to reform the Afghans) to rid the Afghans from social evils. He set off a revolution in the Afghan community. In 1927, he made another organization with the name of Afghan Jirga. With the help of that Afghan Jirga, he, besides reforming Afghan society, he strived to end the centuries old enmity within the tribes.

He taught Pakhtoons unity and friendship and ended the traditional enmity of generations and changed that into friendship. He was sowing a seed of tolerance and amity in the region which was something new for that area. He attended annual meeting of Indian National Congress in Lahore. He was so impressed by the Congress that in 1929, he started a movement with the name of “Khudai Khidmatgar,” That movement was the combined continuation of all the previous organizations. In a short span of time the members of that movement were more than 200,000. This was a volunteer organization, the members were well trained and worn red uniform. The British administration called that movement as “Surkhposh Tehrik” (Movement of red dressed). The British did their level best through torture, imprisonment, fines, confiscation of the properties and atrocious afflictions to crush that movement, but the fellows of the man of strong character, Bacha Khan confronted every oppression but did not falter. His speeches were full of emotions and had fiery effect on the workers. He became charismatic personality and was called Bacha Khan. He spent major part of his life in prisons, after 1947, when Pakistan came into being; he took oath of allegiance with Pakistan in legislative assembly.

He was again dumped into the prisons. The ruling party in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, ANP is another name of that party NAP. The long discussion was just to explain that politics of ANP is generation into generation and the politics of family. This party struggled continuously for generations. The politics of this party is the reflection of the people’s life there. When we look through the life of Bacha Khan, we see his contribution towards free education, reforms of society, austerity, love and peace, unity, end of enmity between different tribes and clans, end of discrimination in politics, to strive for the rights of women in society, to use the principal of tolerance in fighting the outlandish forces, bear the imprisonment and stand up as a model person. Bach Khan was seen as a model and charismatic personality for this region. When his son Abdul Wali Khan came into politics, he followed his father’s footsteps. No movement of Pakistani politics was complete without him.

He was well trained and mature politician. He had keen observation of national politics. When he left politics, this was the only political party which was led by a prominent personality, Ajmal Khattak. The provincial presidency was at times within the family and at times out of the family, but as a whole he had his reflection on the party decision. The amendment was made for the third time presidentship of his son. This was the democratic temperament of the party that Bashir Ahmed Bilaur, while giving amendment, he referred Wali Bagh. In fact another big party of the province JUI (F) has also the impression of Maulana Mufti Mehmood. Now it’s a chance that during this period of economic instability and political upheavals, the family and political disciples are there, now the time will tell who will succeed.
**Forest department officials abducted from Wana, the facilities of Salman Khel tribe revoked**

- Range officer Hameedullah and forester Pir Dawood and Qismat Khan went to inspect plantation in tehsil Toi Khulla, they were abducted from Gul Kachh area.

Wana (Mashriq representative)
Political administration has immediately revoked all the facilities of Salman khel tribes and ordered to end all the class IV jobs. APA Wana Muhammad Shoaib said that until the release of abducted employees of the forest department all the facilities of Salman Khel tribes will ineffective. He said the Range officer Hameedullah, forester Pir Dawood and Qismat Khan were abducted when they were visiting Gali Kachh to inspect the plantation.

APA said the said officials were abducted from Salman Khel area. Under the laws of FCR and Collective responsibilities all the facilities of Salman Khel tribes were revoked. He stressed upon the tribes that they return the abducted officials safe and sound. He said a jirga was held with Dotani which was a success. They assured the safe return of the officials. He said within two three days operation will be initiated against Salman Khel tribe.

**Devastation of crops and gardens, the affected persons should not be ignored**

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 08, 2011

There was a thunder storm in provincial capital Peshawar on Thursday, the crops and gardens on hundreds of acres were severely damaged. The farmers connected with those crops and gardens had to bear severe economic damage. The natural calamities are always there, but if the government does not support those families, then the economic disaster is not only for those families but it creates food scarcity in area.

The suburbs of Peshawar are already lacking agricultural land, so to leave alone the farmers devastated by natural calamities and wait for the agricultural self dependence is a dream. Now it’s the government’s responsibility to financially support the affected farmer after evaluating their losses, so that the farmer should work hard to support the province for its food requirements. It is hoped that the agriculture department will soon develop the plan to help out the farmers.

**The forests of Mansehra, Kohistan are the properties of the masses**

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 03, 2011

Mansehra (Tehsil reporter) The forests of District Kohistan are the properties of the people of the area. They are paying an already decided share to the government under some agreement. If the government intends to enforce any restriction on the forests of kohistani people, then they would never accept that.
The persons who manhandled the forest guard three days back could not be arrested

- People and the government servants are apprehensive due to inefficiency of the police

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 23, 2011

Darband (Crime reporter) The timber smugglers who broke the barrier and manhandled the forest guard and fled with vehicles loaded with timber worth millions of rupees could not be arrested. According to details, when timber mafia’s men looted timber from Buland Kot, Kala Dhaka and other areas and loaded in three Datsun and reached range quarter, they were stopped by forest guard Liaquat Ali. The timber mafia to avoid the legal fine, manhandled the guard and fled away after breaking the barrier.

The forest officials say that despite the fact the FIR has been registered against the timber mafia, police does not arrest the culprits, instead the police is patronizing them. The timber mafia’s now boldly behave with the forest officials and do not abstain to threaten them and at times manhandle them. People and the government servants are scared when the criminals are not arrested. There is a big question mark on the efficiency of police department. People of the area have demanded the strict action against the negligent police officials.

Safaida Timber Association announced its cabinet,

- Barrister Husain Shah elected as chairman

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 27, 2011

Peshawar (Mashriq news) United Popular Safaida Association, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa has announced its cabinet. According the president of the association, Haji Lal Muhammad Piracha, Barrister Syed Hussain Shah is chairman, Syed Alam Shinwari, Senior Vice President, Raji Muhammad Afridi, Vice President, Darvesh Shinwari, General Secretary, Israr Afridi, Joint Secretary, Laal Mir, Finance Secretary, Wajid Ali Press secretary, and Ziaur Rehman Afridi Office Secretary.

Similarly, members of executive body will be Noor Wali Khan Contractor, Haji Taj Muhammad Afridi, Idrees Afridi, Riaz Shinwari, Azeemullah Shinwari, Arfat Shinwari, Waqas Piracha, Bilal Piracha and Malik Abdus Sattar Afridi.
Real brother fires at the man busy in cutting trees, the injured succumbed to death on his way to hospital

- Iqbal was cutting tree when Sultan opened fire. DHQ referred him to Abbottabad hospital, but he could not survive

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 29, 2011

Haripur (Crime reporter) The real brother opened fire at his own brother on the issue of tree cutting. The injured man could not survive and succumbed to death before reaching Ayub Medical Complex. Haripur doctors allegedly continue to refer the serious patents to Abbottabad Hospitals despite having all the facilities. The injured Iqbal s/o Dawood resident of Jamia filed report in injured condition that he and his son were cutting the trees. His brother reached the scene and opened fire and severely injured Iqbal. He was immediately brought to Haripur Hospital, where the doctors referred him to Ayub Medical Complex, but Iqbal died on his way to the hospital.

The accused fled from the scene, police have registered the case against him under section 302 and started search to arrest him.
Views and comments to improve the digest are appreciated.

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