



SDPI
Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Quarterly

Pakistan Forest Digest

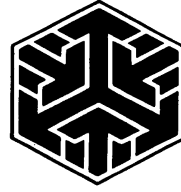
English-Urdu

ISSN: 2218-8045

Vol. 01, No. 01, April - June 2010



Sustainable Development Policy Institute



SDPI

Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Quarterly
**Pakistan Forest
Digest**

Vol. 01, No. 01

ISBN: 2218-8045

April – June 2010



A selection of clippings on Forest issues

Quarterly
**Pakistan Forest
Digest**

Vol. 01, No. 01

ISBN: 2218-8045

April – June 2010

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Sulehri
Executive Director
Sustainable Development Policy
Institute, Islamabad

Managing Editor

Dr. Babar Shahbaz
University of Agriculture,
Faisalabad
Sustainable Development Policy
Institute, Islamabad

Editorial Board

Dr. Urs Geiser
Zurich University, Switzerland

Dr. Mamoona Wali Muhammad
Pakistan Forest Institute,
Peshawar

Mr. Riaz Ahmad
SUNGI Development
Foundation, Islamabad

Miss Afshan Ahmed
Sustainable Development Policy
Institute, Islamabad

Technical Advisor

Mr. Ahmad Salim
Sustainable Development Policy
Institute, Islamabad

Layout & Design

Ali Aamer

Technical Assistants

Afsheen Naz & Zeeshan Ali
Sustainable Development Policy
Institute, Islamabad

Contents

	P. No
Introductions:	
Pakistan Forest Digest	v
About SDPI	vi
About NCCR (North South)	vii
Summary	viii
Contents of Newspaper Clippings	xi
Chapters:	
01- Timber Mafia: Illegal Cutting & Smuggling	01
02- Forest Department	20
03- Forest Fire	30
04- Forest Protection & Awareness	34
05- Forest & Environment	39
06- Orchards	42
07- Miscellaneous	46

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.

Quarterly

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.

It is a compilation of the selected news items and articles appearing in the local newspapers & periodicals. The monthly PFD covers The English dailies, The News Rawalpindi/Islamabad, The Nation Islamabad, Dawn Islamabad, Business Recorder Islamabad, - Urdu dailies Jang Rawalpindi, Nawa-Waqt Islamabad, Newspapers from Peshawar Aaj, Masharaq, Shamal from Abbot Abad and Aazadi from Swat.

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

Summery

The forest digest is a compilation of Urdu and English news items on state of forests in Pakistan is back and an attempt is being made to provide the readers objective information. Various news reports have been categorised in sub headings and sub topics so that readers can follow them up in subsequent issues of Pakistan Forest Digest.

Current issue covers the news items from April to June 2010. News items such as Capital Development Authority's statement in the Senate of Pakistan that it removed 14228 trees in Islamabad over last five years; or the report that sixty thousand hectare area under forest has been deforested since 1947 (almost 1000 hectare per year) reveal that forests are still being subjected to usual neglect and policy disconnect in Pakistan. The news items also reflect that forest department officials, timber contractors (read timber mafia), police, and ordinary citizens are all equally involved in illegal forest harvesting; no doubt many analysts believe that Pakistan's growing vulnerabilities to climate change is partly due to increased deforestation.

It is evident from news items in "Forest Department" section of this digest that 18.5 percent of forest area has been turned into non forest area so far. There are reports of pilferage of provincial forest department funds; there are reports that forest department is under huge influence of timber contractors; there are also reports that timber is being smuggled in connivance with forest department officials. On top of it there are reports that people are pleading for reforestation drive to regain area under forests.

Illegal timber harvesting is not the only cause of deforestation. Every year many precious trees are destroyed by incidental fire. During last quarter fire broke out in forests of Koh Sheikh Badin, Parrhana, Konish Valley, Koh Tinghlai, and Marghala hills leading to deforestation in vast areas. Traditionally human error was perceived to be the major cause of such fire. However, ongoing war on terror is also playing its role here. During June 2010, fire broke out in forests of Zoba due to five marter shells that hit this area.

Experts say that for environmental sustainability, a minimum of 25 percent area of a country should be under forests. However for Pakistan only 5.1 percent area is under forests. No wonder that Urdu as well as English media is univocal in warning that deforestation in Pakistan as slow Tsunami leading to rapid climate change.

Media reports in the section titled "Forest Conservation" not only emphasise on importance of forest conservation but also highlight the role that youth can play in environmental protection. In one of the articles it is mentioned that forest conservation is not possible without bringing an amendment in Forest Act of 1927. The loopholes in Forest Act 1927 are allegedly leading to increase in illegal timbre harvesting at the rate of 30 percent per annum.

This is just a brief introduction of Pakistan Forest Digest and its contents. In the months to come we are also planning to include key informant interviews and expert analysis in this digest. Please do provide your feedback on how to improve its quality and contents. We look forward to your valued opinion.

Contents of Newspaper Clippings

Chapter 01

Timber Mafia – Illegal Cutting & Smuggling

CDA cut 14,428 trees in five years, Senate told
Page 01

Forest land retrieved from encroachers
Page 01

Deforestation expands
Page 02

‘Pakistan has highest annual deforestation rate in Asia’
Page 03

Over 60,000 hectares of forests lost since
independence: report
Page 04

Illegal cutting of trees continues
Page 05

Killing of trees cuts deep into Islamabad’s green
character
Page 05

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Protest in Oghi against reckless cutting of trees and
smuggling of timber
Page 06

Stop cutting trees in Satellite Town: Residents
Page 06

Bid to smuggle timber worth a huge amount of money
foiled; Accused arrested
Page 06

Dhadar: Locals unite against reckless cutting of forests
Page 07

Protection of forests, plan of Dural Dam should be
modified: Malik Didar
Page 07

Ahal: forest department remains oblivious; forests are
being cut like vegetables
Page 07

Shinkirai: Mohammad Iqbal should be appointed
SDFO
Page 08

Nawazabad forest check post has become a
gold mine for corrupt forest official
Page 08

Haripur Forest Department fails to protect Shisham
trees
Page 08

Galiat: Timber smuggling is taking place every day
Page 08

Smuggling of valuable timber out of Haripur and
adjoining areas at its peak
Page 09

Timber smuggling at its peak as water flow from
Tarbela Lake increase
Page 09

Sher Garh forests turn into empty lands
Page 09

Closure of Timber Market in Chakdara will not be
allowed at any cost, APC
Page 10

Jabar, Commission mafia earns millions in
construction of forest guest house
Page 10

Shinkirai: Reckless cutting of forests continues
Page 10

Department’s collusion, deforestation continues
unabated in Mari
Page 11

Raid by Forest officials in Madyan, precious timber
recovered
Page 11

Attempt to smuggle precious timber foiled in Oghi
Page 11

Minister belonging to the other side of Attock struck a
deal of Hazara forests with big fish of timber mafia
Page 12

Pay attention to reckless cutting of forests: Tasleem
Khan
Page 12

Forests on hills in Galiyat should be protected
Page 12

Take action against timber smugglers in Haripur
Page 12

Dhadar: Officials at check post have given free hand to timber smugglers
Page 13

Cutting of trees in Konish valley should be stopped
Page 13

Sarai Naimat Khan: Truck loaded with timber slipped into gorge. 1 killed 4 seriously injured
Page 13

Three arrested for cutting down trees illegally
Page 14

Increase in water level in Tarbela Lake, Timber Mafia gets active
Page 14

Baldher: young man injured in a quarrel over cutting wood
Page 14

Cutting of trees is causing pollution, Mansoor Kundi
Page 14

Achhrian: Trees being cut recklessly under the pretext of permits; forests turning into empty land
Page 15

Mansehra: Cutting of trees continues at Koh Tanglai
Page 15

Aijaz Qadir appointed DFO, Timber smugglers go in hiding
Page 15

Saran valley: Forest management committees become inactive, forests are being destroyed
Page 16

Awami Forestry Ittehad meeting: protection of forests and planting of trees discussed
Page 16

Mansehra: Contractors find a novel way of smuggling timber
Page 16

Battal: valuable trees are being cut recklessly: Forest owners threaten to start protest
Page 17

Oghi: Forest department registers FIR against four timber smugglers
Page 17

Thandiani: Connivance of timber smugglers and forest department; forests turning into empty lands
Page 17

Saran Division: Precious forests handed over to timber smugglers in the name of departmental harvest
Page 17

Illegal cutting of forests in Shergarh:
Page 18

Influential timber mafia succeeded in smuggling out timber worth 2 million rupees
Page 18

Haripur: Police officials also involved in timber smuggling
Page 18

Timber smuggling across the lake: police officials start making money
Page 19

Tarbela Lake timber smugglers:
Page 19

Chapter 02 **Forest Department**

Neem becomes Sindh's official tree
Page 20

Annihilation of forests in Punjab (Letter to Editor)
Page 20

18.5% of forestland converted into non-forest uses
Page 21

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Domail: low quality material used in construction of forest guest house
Page 22

Millions of rupees are lost because of negligence in protecting trees
Page 23

One forest guard at every 200 acres of forest world over; one forest guard for every 3000 acres in Pakistan
Page 23

Government cannot protest national forests: Aijaz Ahmed
Page 23

Hazara Division: Forest being destroyed over vast area
Page 23

Ruthless cutting of trees continues with the connivance of officials of forest department
Page 24

Battal: forest department adopts effective strategy; timber smugglers go in hiding
Page 24

Galiyat: forest department sets new record by planting 300,000 plants
Page 24

Houses are being built in Khan Kalan forests
Page 25

Ghazi: Range officer taking bribe destroying forests, DFO also gets his share
Page 25

Kand Bate: Performance of forest officials is satisfactory—popular circles
Page 25

Forestry Ittehad demands increase in forest royalty to 80 percent
Page 25

FBR allows export of poplar trees to Afghanistan
Page 26

Janglan: Two vehicles loaded with timber caught; five people arrested
Page 26

Writ petition filed by provincial forest department dismissed; Forest Society Domail and Deolai restored
Page 27

Up gradation of scale was a longstanding demand of the employees of forest department
Page 27

Khairabad: Attempt to smuggle timber foiled
Page 27

Cutting of forests in Dir Bala will not be tolerated at any cost
Page 27

Timber smuggled via Tarbela Lake; FC carries out raid
Page 28

Saran, DFO is playing important role for protection of forests: people of the area
Page 28

Thousands of feet of marked timber might be lost in Hazara forests
Page 28

Shergarh: Reckless cutting of forests; Inquiry launched against five officials including forester
Page 28

Rawalpindi Administration should take measures to make the city green: Sanaullah Akhtar
Page 29

Ghazi, police allowed truck loaded with timber to pass without informing forest department
Page 29

Chapter 03 **Forest Fire**

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Fire breaks out in Shiekh Badin Hills
Page 30

Fire in Shiekh Badin forest under control after two days
Page 30

Fire engulfs Margalla hills; 16 firefighters fainted
Page 30

Darband: Police impounds two vehicles loaded with timber
Page 31

Shinkiari: Forests on fire, Wildlife faces destruction
Page 31

Dhok Gakhhar: Fire in forests under control
Page 31

Kundbait: Forest officials set forest on fire to hide their corruption
Page 32

Parhna: Fire in forests burning animals and birds
Page 32

Konish Valley: Forests on Tanglai hills catch fire
Page 32

Forest catches fire as mortars fired by NATO troops fall on Pakistani territory
Page 33

Chapter 04

Forest Protection & Awareness

Forest protection programme (Letter to Editor)
Page 34

Students help in sprucing up park
Page 34

Need to revamp forest resources
Page 35

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Increase in forest area is not possible without
amending the Forest Act
Page 36

Two killed in Salarzai on dispute over trees
Page 37

Mansehra: Forest guide injures labourer with an axe
Page 38

Dir forest association meets; demands facilities
Page 38

Chapter 05

Forest & Environment

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Deforestation in Chitral: An environmental tsunami
Page 39

Swat: do not cut more trees
Page 40

Mountains, Forests Glaciers and Rivers are valuable
assets of the province: Wajid Ali Khan
Page 40

Seminar and declamation contest held at forest institute
Page 41

Peach and plum orchard destroyed by mysterious
disease
Page 41

Chapter 06

Orchards

'No botanical survey ever done in country'
Page 42

English Translations of Urdu Clippings
Unidentified persons cut 1000 loquat trees
Page 43

Provincial government given notice to make
Peshawar city of gardens
Page 44

Orchards under threat of being washed away
Page 44

Chapter 07

Miscellaneous

'kachnar' augments beauty of twin city
Page 46

Trimming plants along Sharea Faisal (Letter to Editor)
Page 47

Trimming plants along Sharea Faisal (Letter to Editor)
Page 47

Woodland Carnival celebrated at City School
Page 47

World's forest covers shrinking: report
Page 48

Holy Trees
Page 49

BB road to have pine trees
Page 49

Problematic palm trees
Page 49

A walk through the jungle
Page 50

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Haripur: Hundreds of trees cut down during strikes
Page 52

Entry of Afghan shepherds should be banned in Jabar,
Deolai area
Page 52

Baffa, eyewitness say fuel wood on roadside caused
accident
Page 52

Cultivation of Chinese fruit plant "Hep Haffe" should
be promoted: Governor
Page 53

Trees, Taliban and the military
Page 53



Save me for a good future

Chapter 01

Timber Mafia – Illegal Cutting & Smuggling

CDA cut 14,428 trees in five years, Senate told

Daily Times Islamabad, April 02, 2010

- Minister says 6,942 trees in urban areas and 60,000 in slums of the federal capital will be removed in phases
- Water supply system being upgraded

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) cut down as many 14,428 trees causing pollen allergy in Islamabad during the last five years, Minister in charge of the Cabinet Division Nawabzada Ghazanfer Gul told the Senate on Thursday.

Responding to a question during the question hour session, he said despite the efforts of the Authority, still 6,942 trees in urban areas and 60,000 in the slums of the federal capital existed.

He said such trees in urban areas of Islamabad would be removed gradually in next three years, in

phased manner to avoid loss of green cover in Islamabad abruptly.

Responding to supplementary questions, he said these trees were gradually being replaced with other environment-friendly trees so that the greenery of the Federal Capital could not affect.

Houses: Replying to another question he said a total 1,791 houses of different category stand constructed by CDA for its employees.

He said 497 houses were constructed in Sector G-6, 446 in G-7, 93 in G-8, 417 in G-9, 130 in G-10, 108 in F-6, 15 in F-7, 79 in I-8, six in I-9 and six in G-6 Doctor Colony.

He said in deserving cases officers and officials were granted extension under Rule 29-A of AAR-2002. On completion of extension period the

accommodation will be got vacated and would be allotted to official requiring accommodation.

Water supply: Responding to another question, Gul said Islamabad water supply system was being upgraded, reconstructed and rehabilitated.

He said in order to meet water demand of the Federal Capital, CDA had made a proposal for execution of water supply from Indus River System at Tarbela Dam to the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi and upgrading water supply system.

Members from NWFP raised concerns over water supply from Tarbela Dam, however the Leader of the House Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari said the government was considering the proposal and no unjust would be done with any province. APP

Forest land retrieved from encroachers

Dawn Islamabad, May, 23, 2010

By **Abid Fazil Abbasi**, MURREE, May 22: The ongoing land

demarcation being carried out by the forest and revenue departments

on the directives of Lahore High Court in Murree has led to

retrieval of over 2,700 kanals of forest land from the encroachers.

Out of the retrieved land, about 2,300 kanals was under the alleged occupation of Bahria Town.

Conservator Forest Department Rawalpindi Dr Rafiq confirmed that 61 kanals of land was still under the illegal occupation of Bahria Town on which it had carried out development work for its Safari Bungalows at Golf City adjacent to Murree Expressway.

He said two cases had already been registered with the Murree police against the administration of the housing society for encroaching on the 61 kanals of forest land.

He said the boundary pillars of the forest department were relocated which, according to him, had been removed by the encroachers in connivance with some forest department officials.

Similarly, 373 kanals of 'developed' land has been marked as encroached by Oil & Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) Housing Scheme, the official added.

The locals said about 800 kanals forest land was still under encroachment of OGDC Town.

According to the revenue department record, the total land in Khasra No 181 is 960 kanals out of which 550 kanals was purchased by Judicial Town in 1986. But about 1,100 kanals from the same Khasra has been 'purchased' by OGDC from the local land mafia while 1,200 kanals is under the occupation of the locals. The official said how it could be possible without encroachment on the land.

According to the divisional forest officer Murree, the record submitted to the High Court by the

OGDC administration had been proved fake as no such transfers were registered with the revenue department. He said according to the official record, the total land in Khasra No 181 was 960 kanals against 3,400 kanals that is under illegal occupation.

The ongoing demarcation has also detected 75 kanals as encroached by Sanam Garden Housing Scheme on Rawalpindi-Murree-Kashmir Road (RMK) near Chhattar.

According to the DFO, about 20 kanals land has been shown as encroached by influential people at Neer Goli village on Burbhan road.

He vowed to continue the drive and vacate all the land encroached upon by the land mafia.

Deforestation expands

Dawn Islamabad, June 14, 2010

By Zain Daudpoto

UNDER the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Pakistan had agreed to raise forest cover to seven per cent of total land by 2015 from current less than four per cent.

But forests are depleting and their quality is also deteriorating. Among all types, the riverine forests are the hardest-hit in Sindh.

Agro Forest Policy 2004, implemented in 2005, proved counterproductive. Trees were cut down and the land was leased for agriculture purpose to the influential people. This policy was intended to improve forest cover on vanished forest land through an incentive, allowing cultivation of 75 per cent of agriculture crop area while planting trees on remaining 25 per cent area. In absence of an effective monitoring system, the "reforestation policy" proved "deforestation policy".

Just after policy notification in 2005, influential landlords started cutting the forests. After deforestation, the forest department declared the land

as "vanished land" and recommended to the chief minister to include it in lease schedule. The land was leased to the applicants for five years.

Under the agro forestry policy, the maximum lease area eligible for a single applicant was 40 acres, but after signing on lease agreement, the lessee deforested several times more area in adjacent forest or in the vicinity of his lease area. In some cases, the farmers grabbed whole forest area. The agro forestry policy did not only destroy the forest cover but badly affected the ecosystem, environment and livelihood of people in Riverine area of Sindh.

Riverine area of Sindh was producing milk, meat, fish, local honey, herbals and other food items, but now many people lost their livelihood.

Lessees and land grabbers destroyed natural water network which recharges thousands of natural small lakes even in low flooding water in Riverine areas, which was the livelihood of local fish catchers.



Wild life of Riverine area including Hog deer, vulture, peacock, and other precious animals and birds has been badly hit. Riverine area of Indus recharges the sweet water stores all over Sindh. After installation of thousands of tube wells in Riverine area for agriculture purpose especially when Indus is getting less water the natural network system is not recharging in required quantity.

The present government immediately imposed ban on lease on forest lands. But it did not follow up its decision with environment-friendly and pro-poor forest policy.

The newspaper advertisements in April 2010 by the Sindh forests minister giving deadline for voluntarily vacating the forests lands did not bring any results. Big landlords have started collecting CNICs from the widows and helpless people to get lease in their

names and have submitted applications for lease. The forest officials have identified lands on these applications. These lands are supposedly in the names of poor people.

The Samas of Sekhat who are cultivating crops on the forest land have also given applications to the forest minister for leasing out land in Khebrani Forest in the names of widows and poor people.

To ensure positive outcome, policy should be prepared in consultation with all the stakeholders including civil society and experts from environment, forestry, agriculture, irrigation, fisheries, economics etc. An autonomous board with representation of all stakeholders should review and discuss the proposed policy document for finalisation, approval and implementation.

Green courts or environmental tribunals should be set up at district level to take up the cases regarding cutting of trees or deliberate fire in the forests.

Vigilance committees should be set up at district level headed by the session judge of the district to monitor the implementation of the leased out lands and provide support to the forest protection committees.

All the remaining forest cover area should be declared as protected areas and should be recorded through GIS mapping system. The preservation of forest should be ensured by continuous monitoring.

‘Pakistan has highest annual deforestation rate in Asia’

Dawn Islamabad, June 25, 2010

By Bhagwandas

Karachi, June 24: While forests currently cover only 2.5 per cent of the country’s land, Pakistan has the highest annual deforestation rate in Asia, according to the latest findings of the World Wide Fund for Nature.

The WWF report, which is being launched on Friday, warns that if the current deforestation rate of 2.1 per cent and trend of land conversion from forest to other uses is not checked, the country will not be able to meet its

international commitments under the Millennium Development Goals to increase its forest cover from 2.5 per cent to six per cent by 2015.

The report says that more than 61,000 hectares (approx. over 151,500 acres) of forest land have been converted to non-forest use in the country since its inception.

The urgent measures recommended to the relevant authorities to curb the negative trend are immediate placement of

a ban on forest land conversions, commercial harvesting and allotments; spread of awareness among lawmakers for proper legislation to restrict land conversions; and recovery of forest land from encroachers and its subsequent reforestation.

In extremely important cases where conversion of forest lands becomes unavoidable, necessary provisions in the law must be made for compensatory forestation on twice the land being converted / allotted, the report recommends.

Mangroves depletion on the top

Over 4.242 million hectares in the country were forest land in 1992. However, it declined to 3.44 million hectares by 2001, the report says.

The highest rate of deforestation has been found in the Indus delta mangroves, which has depleted at a rate of around 2.3 per cent, while the coniferous forest depleted at 1.99 per cent and ravine forests at 0.23 per cent.

The WWF report says that over 99,711 acres of forest land in Punjab and 27,874-acre forests in Sindh have been converted to non-forest uses. In this regard, it says, the beneficiaries remain some government departments, politicians and other influential people having close contact with respective governments.

A province-wise breakdown of forest land converted to other uses shows that Punjab tops the list with conversion of 99,711 acres, followed by Sindh with 27,874 acres, Balochistan with 13,693 acres, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 9,692 acres, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir with only 577 acres. This

way the WWF tally of forest land conversion becomes 151,548 acres.

Beneficiaries

While forest lands have been given to various government departments, some civilians and non-government/commercial organisations also have got the forest land allotted in their name in an exchange.

Some of the beneficiaries in Sindh include Pir Syed Shah Mardan Shah, Pir S. Sibghatullah Rashdi, Pir Syed Nadir Ali Shah, Abdullah Fakir, Kamat Fakir, Syed Mohammad Qaim Shah, Ghulam Nabi, Ghulam Rasool and Abdullah Sanjarani, Chaudhry Mohammad Ashraf and Ghulam Haider Ghalio.

The government and private organisations having got the forest land in and around Karachi include the Defence Housing Authority, which has been provided with the largest chunk of over 11,500 acres, the city district government of Karachi for garbage dump, Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, Barrette Hodgson Education Institution, Dawood

College of Engineering and Technology, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Aga Khan University, Sindh Madressah, and Indus Valley School of Arts and Architecture.

In Punjab, the people and organisations having obtained the forest land include H. Syed Mohammad Ishaq, Malik Khalid for chairlift in Bansra Gali, Brig Mohammad Aslam Khan for Shangrila Hotel in Murree, Pearl Continental Hotel in Bhurban, Redco for hotel in Bhurban, Youths Hostel in Bhurban, Zafar Iqbal for houses in Murree, for chairlift in Patriata, InstaPhone, Journalists Housing Colony, and Punjab Government Servants Housing Foundation.

In Balochistan, a CNG company and SOS children's village have been given forest land in Quetta.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, beneficiaries include Mohammad Pervaiz Khan and PMA hut in Naran; Pakistan Youth Hostel in Sharan, Hotel Pine Park Complex in Shogran.

Over 60,000 hectares of forests lost since independence: report

Dawn Islamabad, June 26, 2010

By A Reporter

ISLAMABAD, June 25: More than 61,000 hectares of forests have been converted into non-forest land since independence of the country and the decrease in forest area continues due to various factors including weak regulatory enforcements, the WWF-Pakistan has said.

The recent report, launched by the World Wide Fund for Nature – Pakistan chapter, said: "It was

shocking to observe that Pakistan has only 2.5 per cent area covered with forest and the rate of deforestation is alarming."

The report titled, 'Conversion of Forests to Non-Forest Uses in Pakistan' said Punjab took the lead for conversion of forests into other uses compared to the remaining provinces in the country.

The report was presented by Chairman of the Scientific

Committee of WWF-Pakistan Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik at the National Press Club here on Friday.

Dr Malik said Pakistan had the highest rate of deforestation in Asia and the rapid deforestation continued at the rate of 2.1 per cent annually.

Other panelists present on the occasion were Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of

Environment, Syed Mehmood Nasir, former inspector general of forests Dr Basher Ahmad Wani, WWF-Pakistan Director-General Ali Hassan Habib and environmental scientist Dr Abdul Aleem Chaudhry.

Dr Wani said the largest conversion of forest land into non-forest use had been done in Punjab where 99,711 acres had been

converted while 27,874 acres were converted to non-forest land in Sindh.

The speakers said the government had set a target to cover six per cent of the country's land with forests by 2015, however little progress had been made in this regard. They said forests were important in fight against

greenhouse gases, which were impacting climate change.

Dr Malik said forests absorbed water and the filtered waters were made available for consumption in the water bodies and also improved ground water level.

Illegal cutting of trees continues

The Nation Islamabad, June 28, 2010

ISLAMABAD (Online) The illegal cutting of trees continues in the Islamabad by different ways, which has affected natural look of the capital.

The citizens have underlined that

besides cutting trees, the trees have been dried on Jinnah Avenue, Margalla Road and Agha Shai Avenue due to inattention of authorities concerned.

They said that the less number of

trees is causing environmental pollution and causing inconvenience to people. It is also noted that the increasing number of vehicles and smoke emitting factories have already increased the ratio of pollution in the capital.

Killing of trees cuts deep into Islamabad's green character

Daily Times Islamabad, June 29, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The illegal cutting of trees across the federal capital is spoiling its green character. It is also harming city's natural environment already facing threats owing to immense development activities.

Individuals as well as the timber mafia are actively engaged in chopping of trees both from urban area of the federal capital or Margalla Hills National Park.

In this spring season, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has planted 400,000 saplings across the federal capital as part of ongoing 50-year celebrations of Islamabad.

Almost 275,000 saplings were planted in regional areas, including Margallah Hills and Simly Catchments. Around 150,000 trees

were planted in Margallah Hills National Park and 125,000 saplings in Simly Dam's catchments.

Under three-year 'Clean and Green Islamabad Campaign', which started in Monsoon-2008, the CDA has so far planted 1,164,000 plants in three seasons against a target of 2,400,000 plants.

According to environmentalists, hundreds of saplings can never be a substitute to a grown tree. The CDA has failed to develop any mechanism to ensure the growth of these saplings and their protection as most of them are either uprooted or die due to extreme weather conditions.

In Maragalla Hills, hundreds of trees are gutted in summer fires,

which are mostly ignited because of some commercial or individual gains.

Deputy Director General Environment Malik Auliya told this news agency that the Authority has deployed sufficient workforce in hilly as well as urban areas, including security guards and foresters who act against the choppers in the light of Landscape Ordinance.

He said the penalties are imposed on the choppers according to the size of the wood carried by the person.

Malik Auliya said the Authority has also formed a special team to conduct surprise raids and act on complaints registered by the people. APP

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Protest in Oghi against reckless cutting of trees and smuggling of timber

- **Officials of Forest Department are also involved in illegal cutting;**
- **Timber mafia has been given a free hand.**
- **Committees have been formed to protect forests. Action will be taken: Speakers address the meeting**

Daily Jang, Rawalpindi, April 15, 2010

Oghi – People of Upper Tanawal strongly protested against the reckless cutting of trees and unchecked smuggling of timber from the government-owned forests of Doga Jampial, Karori, and Jalo Gali. A protest rally was held at Karori which was addressed by former chairman Lala Qalandar Khan, President of Forest Committee Malik Yunus, Mohammad Javed, Sirajuddin,

Mohammad Miskeen and other participants. The speakers said that the forests are being cut ruthlessly with the collusion of the officials of the Forest Department and timber is being smuggled out openly using Datsun trucks and mules. The Forest Department has given a free hand to the timber mafia. If this amount of cutting of trees continues the forests will very soon turn into bare lands.

This will cause excess silting in Tarbela Dam reservoir. The speakers said that this was a question of future and survival of our coming generations. Committees for the protection of forests were formed during the public meeting. Our foremost target would be the people who provide support to the timber mafia at the local level, the participants of the rally said.

Stop cutting trees in Satellite Town: Residents

Instead of cutting the trees new trees should be planted: residents demand

Daily Jang, Rawalpindi, April 24, 2010

Rawalpindi (Lady Reporter) Office-bearers of social organizations and activists of the civil society have condemned the cutting of trees along roadsides and in grounds in various areas of Satellite Town, Rawalpindi. They have demanded that mass slaughter of trees should

immediately be stopped and new trees should be planted. On Tuesday the Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) cut numerous trees in Chandni Chowk, Saidpur Road and other areas. The justification given by the administration was that the trees can cause accidents. On this

occasion women residents of the area Zenab Bibi, Samina Shaikh, Noreen Saeed and Noshaba Gul condemned the cutting of trees by the TMA. Meanwhile, students and teachers of the schools located in these areas have also criticized the cutting of trees.

Bid to smuggle timber worth a huge amount of money foiled; Accused arrested

Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, Islamabad, April 25, 2010

Kallar Saiydan (Our Correspondent) Punjab Highway Patrolling Police during its patrol foiled an attempt to

smuggle timber worth a huge amount of money to Bhakkar and arrested one of the accused. According to

the details Umair Abbas the sub-inspector of Highway Patrolling in Shah Khaki area was on routine patrol on Chowra road. He stopped a suspicious pickup truck for search and recovered 17 logs of Chir Pine worth 45,000 rupees. He arrested the driver of the truck, Waheed son of Ayub resident of Changa Mira village

of Bhagsana area. The accused was trying to smuggle this costly wood to Bhakkar. On the application from inspector Umair Abbas Kallar Saiydan Police has registered a case and launched investigation.

Dhadar: Locals unite against reckless cutting of forests

Committee formed for protection of forests;

Abrar Hussain nominated president; incompetence of officials criticized

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 01, 2010

Dhadar (Shamal Correspondent) Residents of Dhadar held a meeting on the importance of forests and reckless cutting of trees. Residents of Dhadar enthusiastically attended the meeting which discussed issues related with cutting of trees and

inefficiency of forest officials. Expressing concern over the situation notables of the area said that all forests in the area will vanish if cutting of forests continues at the current pace. Residents of Dhadar formed a committee for the protection of

forests and elected its members. Abrar Hussain was elected president, Mian Ghulan Nabi vice president, Mohammad Jan secretary general, and Khalilur Rehman was elected treasure of the committee.

Protection of forests, plan of Dural Dam should be modified: Malik Didar

Forests will be destroyed if the dam is built according to the previous plan

Daily Azadi, Swat, May 05, 2010

Bahrain (Special Correspondent) Addressing a Jirga (meeting of tribal council) former provincial minister Malik Didar demanded that the plan of Dural Dam should be modified. Forests will be

destroyed if the dam is built according to the previous plan. It will also damage the irrigation system. If the dam is built under a new plan the environment will be saved from being devastated. A

handful of people want to build the dam according to the old plan. This is their personal opinion. The community is of the view that the dam should be built according to the new plan and design.

Ahal: forest department remains oblivious; forests are being cut like vegetables

Timber Mafia agents get a free hand; devastation of Green Gold at its peak

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 09, 2010

Konish Valley (Special Correspondent) Due to criminal neglect and corruption of the Forest Department officials valuable trees of Ahal Compart are being cut like vegetables. Green Gold is being severely devastated. Thick forests are turning into

barren lands. People of the area strongly protested against the reckless cutting of trees. They complained that the agents of timber mafia have gone out of control. Forest is depleting due to reckless cutting of trees in Ahal Compart of Tanglai Hill. The

officials of the Forest Department are acting like silent spectators after receiving bribes. These views were expressed by Dr Zaheer, a prominent social and political activist of Ahal village.

Shinkirai: Mohammad Iqbal should be appointed SDFO

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 06, 2010

Mansehra (Special Correspondent) senior forester Mohammad Iqbal should immediately be appointed SDFO Shinkirai if the department wants to protect the Green Gold. This was said by members of forest protection committee in a

crowded press conference under the leadership of Nauroz Khan, Abdul Hameed Khan, Abdul Latif Khan. Water resources will also increase if forests are protected. At the moment senior forester Muhammad Iqbal is the only

person who can take the responsibility of protecting the forests as he is the one who brought profit of hundreds of thousands of rupees from the forests during his appointment in Saran Valley.

Nawazabad forest check post has become a gold mine for corrupt forest official

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 07, 2010

Dhadar (Special Correspondent) Nawazabad check post has become a gold mine for forest officials. The officials allow vehicles loaded with timber pass in

the darkness of night. According to the details the forest check post at Nawazabad-Domail has become a gold mine for the forest officials. They allow vehicles loaded with

timber pass during the night under their own protection. Community circles have urged the DFO to check the state of affairs so that forests could be protected.

Haripur Forest Department fails to protect Shisham trees Precious trees have been left at the mercy of timber mafia;

Silk route loses its beauty

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 11, 2010

Lora Chowk (Our Correspondent) Forest Department has utterly failed to protect the shisham trees planted along the Silk Route. These precious trees have been left at the mercy of timber mafia. Forest department officials have closed their eyes. At the strike call given by Hazara Province Movement hundreds of big trees were cut down from Jhari Kas to Kholian Bala but the forest department failed to take action against any of the violators.

Officials of Haripur Forest Department have become a burden on the national exchequer. DCO Haripur should take disciplinary action against the forest officials so that the public discontent could be eased. The Silk Road has lost its beauty due to the negligence of the forest department officials. Cutting of trees along the roadside has caused severe pollution in the area. However, for unknown reason, the forest department not only did not plant trees along the

roadside but also prepared no strategy to protect the trees already planted. This gave the timber mafia an opportunity to cut trees fearlessly and make money. Even at this moment precious wood is lying at saw mills but the forest department is keeping silent after receiving bribe. Timber mafia is taking full advantage of the situation and is continuing its evil activities.

Galiat: Timber smuggling is taking place every day

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 11, 2010

Abbottabad (Special Correspondent) Thousands of

cubic feet of timber is being smuggled out of Galiat area of

Abbottabad but the DFO and the forest officer are silent. Forests

are a national asset and because of the forests tourists from all over the country visit Galiat. But unfortunately these forests have been handed over to the forest

officials who are taking political advantage of their position. The high officials of the forest department should adopt the right ways and protect this national

wealth. Otherwise the people of Galiat will have no option but to take to the streets.

Smuggling of valuable timber out of Haripur and adjoining areas at its peak

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 11, 2010

Pind Kamal (Special Correspondent) Timber smuggling is at its peak. The officials of the Forest Department have failed in curbing the smuggling. It has been

disclosed that Precious timber is being smuggled from Haripur and adjoining areas. Timber is being smuggled using different clever methods of cutting it into pieces so

that it can pass through check posts easily. This is severely damaging the scenic beauty of Maung.

Timber smuggling at its peak as water flow from Tarbela Lake increases

Dozens of launches smuggle timber every day in connivance with the forest department. DFO is busy in collecting bribe

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 15, 2010

Gadwalian (Shamal Correspondent) Timber smuggling via Tarbela Lake is at its peak. DFO Haripur has raised his bribery rate as the smuggling has increased. Precious forests of Hazara district are turning into bare land. As the water flow in

Tarbela Lake increases the smuggling by timber mafia also grows. Dozens of launches loaded with timber arrive at the bank of the lake near Bel Garan and Nara. Timber is loaded in trucks and sent to various cities of Punjab. Timber smuggling has increased

many folds ever since the present DFO has been posted in Haripur. The DFO counts his money earned from timber smuggling sitting in an air conditioned room. People of the area have asked the commissioner to control smuggling of timber.

Sher Garh forests turn into empty lands

Timber smuggling through vehicles and mules is continuing openly

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, May 16, 2010

Oghi (Shamal Correspondent) Forests of Sher Garh range in Jalu Gali, Chamial, Dogar, Bandi Shangli, are turning into empty lands. Forests are a gold mine for timber mafia. Expensive timber is being smuggled out using Datsun trucks and mules. The smuggling is going on openly and the range office and his staff is busy in making money. The forest

department sells standing trees. Even at this moment there are several chopped off trees in these areas. The forest officials set these on fire. Loot sale of trees is continuing in connivance with the forest officials. Degradation of forests is a threat to Tarbela Dam which is one of the largest dams in the world. Yunus Khan president of forest management committee,

Aijaz, the president of reforms committee and Haji Qalandar, former chairman and their supporters have urged the secretary forest department and other high officials to take immediate action against the people responsible for the destruction of forests and also take measures to save the remaining forests.

Closure of Timber Market in Chakdara will not be allowed at any cost, APC

Taking timber to another area for auction is economic murder of the people of the area: Bedar Bakht

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 17, 2010

Chakdara (Aaj Correspondent) All conspiracies to fail Chakdara timber market will be foiled. Taking timber extracted from Dir and Chitral forest areas to any other place for sale is an economic slaughter of the local people. We will make the lives of those people miserable who try to snatch our living.

These views were expressed by Bedar Bakht the secretary general of People's Party Sherpao, district

president Mohammad Umar, Hussain Shah Yusufzai of ANP, Saltanat Yar advocate of Jamaat e Islami, Madad Khan, secretary general of JUI Adinzai, Zar Nasib Khan, Maulana Gul Rahim, Ikram Ghani Khan, Fakhruzzaman advocate, Ali Badshah of traders association of Chakdara and others while addressing an all parties conference. The speakers said that provincial minister for forests Wajid Ali Khan's statement was encouraging that Chakdara timber

market will not be shut down but the minister has gone back on his promise made during a meeting with the representatives of the area saying that the issue discussed with him was not the closure of Chakdara market but shifting of timber to Jahangira for auction. The minister did not clarify his statement. The speakers said that timber was not being brought to Chakdara under a conspiracy to close down the market there.

Jabar, Commission mafia earns millions in construction of forest guest house

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 20, 2010

Jabar (Shamal Correspondent) Substandard material was used in construction of forest guest house in Domail. Commission mafia has earned millions. Two NESPAK engineers are also fully involved in this corruption. The construction company is also notorious in this regard.

According to the details commission mafia has earned millions in the construction of Domail forest guest

house in connivance with the NESPAK officials. Surprisingly the department awarded the contract to a little known company who had spoiled several construction plans in the past by using substandard material. People have urged the DFO Saran area to take corrective measures in this regard otherwise they will start protests against him.

Shinkiari: Reckless cutting of forests continues

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, 17 May 2010

Dhudiyal (Correspondent) Cutting of forests continues in Saran Division, particularly Shinkiari range and the green gold is depleting day by day.

Sources told Shamal correspondent that trees are being

cut in connivance with the officials of the forest department. Timber smugglers are using horses and mules to transport timber to illegal saw mills at night. Then this expensive wood is transported to cities. The forest officials sell the

trees and then to hide the evidence they set the markets on fire. Sources claim to have video evidence of this activity.

Department's collusion, deforestation continues unabated in Mari

Smuggling of trees from the area is at its peak

Daily Shamal, May 20, 2010

Nagri Totial (Special Correspondent) Chinal and Mari forests are turning into empty lands. Officials of the forest department have resorted to a new method of loot and plunder. First the sale receipt of standing trees is prepared and then the timber mafia smuggles those trees. When the smugglers are questioned they show the receipt. According to the sources after the disclosure of the reports and MPA Barrister Javed Abbasi's strong notice of it cutting of trees had halted.

But the forest officials and the timber mafia have again joined hands for cutting trees. About two months ago the police had caught timber worth hundreds of thousands of rupees after which timber smugglers had stopped their activities. Sources have also disclosed that the forest officials have hired a guard who collects extortion money from those people who cut grass or graze their cattle in the forest.

Raid by Forest officials in Madyan, precious timber recovered

Daily Azadi Swat, May 20, 2010

Madyan (Tehsil Reporter) Forest officials raided and recovered sleepers worth millions of rupees. The accused persons have gone in hiding. A case has been registered and investigation has been launched.

According to the details forest officials got information yesterday that forests are being ruthlessly cut in Banda Dabar. Taking immediate action range officer Saramad Khan instructed forester Mohammad Aayz,

forest guard Yar Mohammadzada, forest guard Abdul Wahab and Habib Ahmed to raid the area. Elders of the area had formed a committee headed by Aqilzada Mian to join the raid. The committee seized 134 sleepers and has initiated investigations against the accused Shabbir Ahmed son of Sikandar of Banda Chel, Hazrat Deedar resident of Chel, Khan Sher of Shinko, Abdul Baqi of Shinko, Pir Madar of Shinko, Shah Zamin of Shinko, Bakht Gul of Kalagey.

Attempt to smuggle precious timber foiled in Oghi

Workers of timber mafia were busy in cutting trees and started firing gunshots upon seeing the police

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 20, 2010

Oghi (Correspondent) Officials of forest department Elite Force, after an exchange of fire, foiled an attempt to smuggle timber worth millions of rupees in Sher Garh. Forester Mohammad Yusuf was on a patrol in compartment no. 1 of Jalu Gali forest along with the member

of Elite Force that they encountered about 35 accomplices of the timber mafia who were trying to smuggle timber. The accomplices of timber mafia started firing gunshot upon seeing the police and forest department officials. Police retaliated with

gunfire. After a prolonged exchange of fire the timber mafia workers fled away leaving the timber behind. Police has registered a case in Darband police station against the accused persons Badri, Mana, Fazal, Hanif, and Gulzar.

Minister belonging to the other side of Attock struck a deal of Hazara forests with big fish of timber mafia

Daily Shamal, May 21, 2010

Mansehra (Courts Reporter) Provincial Minister Abdul Wajid Khan has struck a bargain with timber thieves for illegally

extracted timber from Kaghan, Aalai and Kohistan forests. The people of Hazara have demanded that the forests of the area should

be protected from those who come from the other side of Attock and illegally sell Hazara's timber.

Pay attention to reckless cutting of forests: Tasleem Khan

Daily Azadi, Swat. May 30, 2010

Mansehra (correspondent) In the beautiful land of Hazara trees are being cut down recklessly. There are different elements involved in this activity. If every one pledges to plant ten saplings during the plantation season and takes care of those plants the target of 25 percent forest cover can easily be achieved. Trees are covering of the earth and a source of continuing virtue. Wild animals can survive only in thick forests. These views were expressed by ACO Mansehra Tasleem Khan

while addressing a ceremony in Nisar Bagh in connection with the plantation campaign. He said that the reason for low rainfall in Hazara is that trees have been cut down and new plants have not been planted.

He said that according to the experts 25 percent of the total area of a country should be under forest cover. Tasleem Khan said that in Mansehra district deforestation is turning the forests into bare lands. He said the community should

play its role for achieving the targets of plantation. Addressing the ceremony EDO Mansehra Riyaz Ahmad Shah said that forests are very important for sustaining human life. Trees help in keeping the environment clean, he said and added that trees provide timber for construction of buildings, save land and habitat for wild animals. Riyaz Shah said that forests increase fertility of land and bring rains.

Forests on hills in Galiyat should be protected

Daily Shamal, May 21, 2010

Editorial: Cutting down of forests in continuing unabatedly in Galiyat area. Forest officials are conniving with the timber smugglers just to earn a meager amount of money and are destroying forest in Galiyat. The forest officials are playing their role only for receiving bribes. Galiyat is a beautiful area only because of its trees. Local and foreign tourists visit this area. But the enemies of the area are clearing out the forests and causing loss to the national exchequer. At the same time this is causing loss to the tourism to the area. The high officials of the department are requested to take immediate action against the timber smugglers.

Take action against timber smugglers in Haripur

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 23, 2010

Editorial: Lush green forests of Haripur are turning into empty fields. With the connivance of forest officials timber mafia is busy in timber smuggling via Tarbela Lake. Every day dozens of vehicles loaded with timber leave Chhappar Road near Tarbela Lake and go towards Punjab. The timber smugglers enjoy full support of the DFO. The reason is bribery. As the water level has

risen in Tarbela Lake it has become an easy route for timber smugglers. The present DFO has been transferred but through connection among high ups he has been able to avert his posting. People of the area are angry over the timber smuggling. The high officials of the forest department should take immediate action to stop waste of this national wealth and the routes used for smuggling should be checked strictly. Action should be taken against the DFO and other officials of the department.

Dhadar: Officials at check post have given free hand to timber smugglers

Officials are busy in pocketing money; forests are turning into barren lands
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 23, 2010

Pakhal, (Shamal Correspondent) Dhadar check post has turned into a gold mine for the officials of forest department. Reckless cutting of forests is continuing in Dhadar and adjoining areas.

Dhadar check post is just there in name. Timber smugglers have been given a free hand. The officials stop small amount of timber or items made of wood carried by common people but

timber smugglers are able to pass truckloads of timber. The staff posted at the check post is filling its own pocket. Officials must pay attention to this situation.

Cutting of trees in Konish valley should be stopped

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 26, 2010

Editorial: According to a report cutting of trees in Konish valley is continuing unabatedly. Hundreds of trees are being cut every day in the presence of the forest guard. Secret sources have revealed that forest guards give free hand to the smugglers for a small amount of money and the owners are helpless in this situation. The political representatives appoint a new DFO every month but the staff members who have been destroying the forests remain unchanged for years. Political representatives give no importance to the staff but they appear to be most active in destroying the forests. Forest guards even help the timber smugglers in cutting the trees. The people of the area are of the view that protection of forests is not possible unless the lower staff of the forest department is replaced and stringent action is taken against them. It is the forest guards who protect the forests but on receiving bribe they report to the higher officials that everything was fine. The high officials of the forest department must take immediate action against these elements. Immediate action should be taken against those staff members who collaborate with smugglers in cutting of trees. If the same activity continues then forests will soon turn into empty fields. Waste of national wealth is continuing. Officials of the forest department must pay attention to this situation immediately.

Sarai Naimat Khan: Truck loaded with timber slipped into gorge. 1 killed 4 seriously injured

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad May 30, 2010

Sarai Naimat Khan (Special Reporter) One person was killed and four others were seriously injured as a truck loaded with timber tipped at Kakotari road. Mohammad Siddiq was buried in

his ancestral village Manglor Colony. According to the details a truck carrying timber from Bhabsar to Haripur fell in a deep gorge. As a result Mohammad Siddiq who was sitting on the truck was thrown

several feet away and suffered serious injuries. He was taken to the AMC Abbottabad but he could not survive. The truck driver and other three people have been admitted in the AMC Abbottabad.

Toxic smoke from factories is polluting the air and the waste disposed in the open is increasing the pollution level which is very dangerous for our future generations. He said on this day

we should pledge that we would do something for improving the environment. The director of environment protection agency Ashraf Khan, Abdul Haleem Khan of Wildlife Department gave

detailed briefings on protecting the environment.

Achhrian: Trees being cut recklessly under the pretext of permits; forests turning into empty land

Hundreds of square feet of wood is being openly brought to saw mills in connivance with the forest guards

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad June 10, 2010

Achhrian (Our Correspondent) The local forest guard is bent upon turning the Achhrian Ziarat block forests into empty lands. Though this is the season when all kinds of permits are banned the guard is misguiding the people in the name of permit and sending hundreds of square feet of wood to saw mills every day. Shamal correspondent took pictures of the wood dumped at Kund Tarla Bridge where it was brought only a day

ago. When we asked the guard about the wood he responded that it was being cut under a permit. Later it was said that the timber is for a mosque. Even later when the DFO was contacted he could not give a satisfactory answer. He said it is possible that the timber being unloaded was cut before 16 May when the permits were valid.

Mansehra: Cutting of trees continues at Koh Tanglai

Thousands of square feet of timber is being smuggled every day.

Sakhi Sultan and Babu Iqbal are responsible for it.

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 11, 2010

Mansehra (Courts Reporter) Forests in Koh Tanglai are being cut ruthlessly. Thousands of sq feet of timber is smuggled out of Bara Ziarat using Datsun trucks. Babu Iqbal of Saran Shinkari and forest guard Sakhi Sultan are

responsible for this smuggling. Abid Hussain Shah the secretary General of Green Konish Valley Development Organization while talking to media persons in Mansehra Press Club said that he would go to the anti-corruption

department with all the evidence if DFO Aijaz Qadir fails to take notice of the activity. He said that forests are being destroyed in Compart and they have informed the conservator of Hazara Range about it.

Aijaz Qadir appointed DFO, Timber smugglers go in hiding

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 11, 2010

Dhudiyaal (Our Correspondent) Forest officials are tightening the noose around timber smugglers in Kund area. Posting of Aijaz Qadir

as DFO has led to halt in cutting of forests. Timber smugglers have launched baseless propaganda against the efficient officers.

These views were expressed by the owners of guzara forests in Kund Sayyadan UC of Achhrian.

Saran valley: Forest management committees become inactive, forests are being destroyed

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 12, 2010

Bhugar Mung (Special Correspondent) Due to inefficiency of joint forest management committees in Saran Valley forests worth millions of rupees have been destroyed.

Owners suffer loss of millions of rupees due to these committees. Presidents and secretaries of these committees enjoy all freedom to cut trees. These committees should be dissolved and more

powers should be given to the department. Otherwise we will be bankrupt. These views were expressed by the owners of forests in Saran valley while talking to the journalists in a special meeting.

Awami Forestry Ittehad meeting: protection of forests and planting of trees discussed

Protection of forests is necessary for restoration of natural beauty of Swat

Daily Azadi Swat, June 18, 2010

Swat (PR) Sarhad Awami Forestry Ittehad held an emergency meeting in Bahrain chaired by secretary general Jamshed Khan. Present situation, protection of forests and planting of trees were discussed as the forests in Swat have been severely damaged during the past two years. A unanimous resolution was passed in the meeting that immediate attention must be paid to the protection of forests to restore beauty of Swat. The resolution said that the people of Swat are thankful to the officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army for their role in restoration of peace in Swat. They have not

only played a role for restoration of peace but also for restoration of forests. SAFI paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for protecting the forests and tightening the noose around timber smugglers. SAFI will stand by the Army in this good deed as SAFI's objective is to protect forests, planting trees, protecting people's rights, and ensuring a pollution free environment. The meeting was also attended by Mohammad Khan president Malakand Division, secretary information Gul Nawab, and press secretary Irfanuddin.

Mansehra:

Contractors find a novel way of smuggling timber

Some of the contractors pick timber brush it with mobil oil and then smuggle it out. An inquiry has been launched

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 19, 2010

Mansehra (Bureau Report) A novel way of smuggling timber has been adopted by some of the contractors in Baffa and Mansehra. The contractors who have signed contracts for government buildings instead of transporting used wood from the buildings are smuggling out fresh timber after brushing it

with mobil oil. Inquiry has been launched against the contractors. According to the details some of the contractors in Mansehra have adopted a novel way of smuggling timber. These contractors get contracts for disposal of discarded items from the offices but they smuggle out fresh wood after

brushing it with burnt engine oil. This is causing loss of millions of rupees to the government. Inquiry has been started against three contractors of Mansehra and Baffa and cases are likely to be registered against them very soon.

Battal: valuable trees are being cut recklessly: Forest owners threaten to start protest

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 13, 2010

Battal: (General Reporter) Hashim Ali Khan and other forest owners came to Shamal office at Battal Doraha and handed a written statement. It has been said in the statement that under the

pretext of construction of road hundreds of trees have been cut down from Battal Dab to Jar Gali area. These trees are being sold immediately. The owners of forests should be given

compensation for the loss of trees and those who are destroying forests should be punished. Otherwise the owners will start protest.

Oghi: Forest department registers FIR against four timber smugglers

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 19, 2010

Oghi (Shamal Correspondent) Forest department in Oghi has registered FIR against four smugglers who tried to speed away in three Datsun trucks loaded with timber. In the report filed in Oghi police station forester Mohammad Sharif said that last night he was on a routine patrol at Oghi check post when three Datsun trucks

loaded with timber reached there. The forester said that he signaled the trucks to stop but they sped away. The police have registered a case against Tanvir, Israr and Nadeem on a complaint by the forester. Meanwhile, in Darband area members of timber mafia were trying to smuggle timber in Datsun trucks but the forest

department officials stopped them at the Darband barrier. The smugglers dismantled the barrier and took it away with them. However Darband police chased them and caught two vehicles loaded with timber. The police registered a case against six persons. The court has given two days remand.

Thandiani: Connivance of timber smugglers and forest department; forests turning into empty lands

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 19, 2010

Abbottabad (Crime Reporter) Forests in Thandiani range are being cut like vegetables. Range officers are equally involved in this activity. Wood is cut in the darkness of night and brought to saw mills. Most of the timber is brought in the presence of forest officials and is brought in

government vehicles. Timber smugglers and forest officials both have made under hand deals with the police. Timber is easily transported to saw mills from where it is transported to other areas. Timber smugglers and forest officials are destroying the forests by bribing all the officials.

If the investigative agencies probe into the assets of forest officials of Thandiani range they will find out that these officials have made assets worth millions of rupees. Serious action must be taken to protect forests in the area.

Saran Division: Precious forests handed over to timber smugglers in the name of departmental harvest

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 28, 2010

Mansehra (City Reporter) Forest department has handed over the

Honah reserve forests of Saran valley to timber smugglers under

the pretext of departmental harvest. The forest is being cut

ruthlessly. Large amount of timber is being smuggled using mules, horses and donkeys. A large amount of Diyar wood is lying at Bunil Sayyadan and search for its buyers is on. At

Basu also an illegal depot has been set up for sale of timber. The forest officials are taking full advantage of weak administration of conservator of Hazara Division. According to sources if the

situation remains unchanged Honah reserve forests will become empty land very soon.

Illegal cutting of forests in Shergarh:

Inquiry launched against the accused persons; statements of officials recorded
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 27, 2010

Oghi (Shamal Correspondent) DFO Oghi Range Manzoor Ahmed has been appointed inquiry officers for the investigation of corruption and damage to forests in Shergarh range. Questioning of the accused persons and forest officials continued yesterday. The

inquiry into losses will be made public. Evidence will be brought forth and action will be taken against the forest guard who was allegedly involved in reckless cutting of forests in Shergarh range three years ago.

Influential timber mafia succeeded in smuggling out timber worth 2 million rupees

Timber mafia concealed its container after bribing forest officials
Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 29, 2010

Ghazi (Crime Reporter) Influential timber mafia is flouting the law and has brazenly smuggled timber worth 2 million rupees to Lahore. The forest officials received bribe and deprived the provincial government of the money collected in the form of fine. According to the details two days ago container number P 8884, that

was allowed to go after taking bribe, was caught again on the instruction of DPO Haripur and impounded at the police station in the presence of media representatives.

Last night the container was unloaded in the presence of media persons at the sensitive police

station of Tarbela Cantt. As nothing illegal was found in the container it is believed that the car that was said to be escorting the container had already done its work. It is worth mentioning here that the timber mafia had obtained a permit for transporting timber. Number of logs loaded on the container was 239.

Haripur: Police officials also involved in timber smuggling

Timber smuggling should be curbed and stringent action should be taken against the officials involved: public circles

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 29, 2010

Haripur (Special Correspondent) A few of the police officials in Haripur are also involved in timber smuggling. A few officials of the police stations, specially one Moharrir (report writer) is

involved in this business. According to the details, sources say that a few of the police officials in Haripur are fully involved in timber smuggling. Sources have informed that the

police officials keep the timber smuggled through Bair and Tarbela Lake in their own houses. This wood is then sold at high rates. People of Haripur have lodged strong protest against this

activity and have demanded that SP and forest officer of Haripur

should take strict action against the

police officials involved in this business.

Timber smuggling across the lake: police officials start making money

Police post Budhora and Gandaf is collecting 300 rupees from each Datsun pickup

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 30, 2010

Khalabutt (Our Correspondent) Timber smuggling across the lake is at its peak. Police posts at Budhora and Gandaf are collecting 300 rupees as bribe. According to the details, Datsun trucks coming from the Lassan area across the

lake are paying 300 rupees in bribe to the police at Budhora and Gandaf and reach Swabi Mera. A full-fledged network works to bring the timber to launches and transport it to Haripur. From there it is smuggled to various secret

storage sites. The administrators are silently watching these green forests turning into empty grounds. Public circles have demanded the high officials to take immediate action against the timber mafia and the corrupt officials.

Tarbela Lake timber smugglers:

Confiscated vehicles charged 1.2 million rupees fine; five trucks and one container loaded with timber were caught on Monday at 2.30 a.m.

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad 30 June 2010

Khalabutt (Shamal Correspondent) Five trucks carrying smuggled timber at the bank of Tarbela lake were caught and fined 1.2 million rupees. SHO of Khalabutt police station, Babar Khan Tanoli, told journalists that police team led by ASP Haripur Najibur Rehman caught five trucks loaded with timber. The fine levied on the wood was 1.2 million rupees, he said.





Forest Department

Neem becomes Sindh's official tree

Daily Times Islamabad, April 14, 2010

KARACHI: A long struggle by environmentalists and nature conservationists paid dividends on Tuesday when the Sindh government declared Neem, a tree with medicinal properties, as the official tree of the province.

The decision was announced through a notification issued by the Sindh chief secretary.

Environmentalists have welcomed the decision and urged the Sindh government to take steps for mass-scale plantation of this tree in the province.

The officials of the Indus for All Programme of the WWF-Pakistan had selected four indigenous trees for this status and submitted their names to different universities, government departments, independent researchers and environmentalists. After long discussions, Neem and Babool trees were selected for the official status.

It was expected that the Sindh government would also select a bird, animal and flower for the official status.

“The country has a national bird, animal and tree, but most of them belong to mountainous ranges, therefore, we decided to start a struggle for giving official status to an indigenous tree, bird, animal and flower, so that the province may also take interest in their conservation,” said regional director of the WWF-Pakistan's Indus for All Programme, Dr Ghulam Akbar.

Nasir Ali Panhwar of the Indus for All Programme welcomed the decision and said the initiative signifies the provincial government's commitment towards the conservation of the natural forests of Sindh. In Pakistan, Neem is found in Sindh and some parts of southern Punjab. It is also found in India, Bangladesh and some parts of China and Malaysia.

According to the official data of the Sindh Forest Department, the Neem trees in Umerkot, Hyderabad and Karachi districts are the oldest in the province. During the British rule, Neem was planted at railways stations and the embankments of canals to maintain a healthy environment. Amar Guriro

Letter to Editor

Annihilation of forests in Punjab

Dawn Islamabad, June 09, 2010

INSTEAD of preserving the fast-depleting forests, it is the Government of Punjab which is playing the part of a predator by leasing out 30,000 acres of forest land for agricultural purposes as timely reported in Dawn, “Punjab government to axe forest area by

30,000 acres” (June 2). The anti-forests' decision has been taken by the cabinet notwithstanding serious reservations of the provincial forest department.

The plan was envisaged by the chief minister to provide

livelihood to the unemployed youth of the province.

According to the plan, the provincial government will lease out 25 acres of the forest land to each unemployed person holding a master's degree in forestry or

agriculture with a loan of nearly Rs900, 000 from the Punjab Rural Support Programme with a 13-percent interest rate.

The issue fundamentally is the scheme of converting forests into agricultural land.

In Punjab, the British government during colonisation established 50 to 100 acres of land near every village to establish forests. Needless to say that even after the introduction of local governments in 2001, in view of the importance of forests in the overall environment, the ecology created during the British era was not tampered with.

I would like to request the Chief Minister Punjab to promote the

significance of trees for the survival and well-being of humanity. Trees not only keep the atmosphere clean and healthy, but old trees also add to the local humidity through transpiration.

Forests, therefore, play a vital role in regulating regional climate by providing the base for continuity of water cycles. They also play a critical role in climate regulation by absorbing carbon dioxide, a gas believed to be partially responsible for global warming. Thus forests are considered so vital for human existence that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) forbade cutting of a tree even during wars.

Trees do not grow overnight but take decades to mature. Thus, instead of converting forests into

agricultural land for whatever reason, the Punjab government must protect its forests to save the province in particular and the country in general from perilous loss of green cover.

It is hoped that the Chief Minister Punjab in order to accommodate 1,200 unemployed youth should either lease them government agricultural lands or offer them jobs in forestry or agro-forestry so as to protect the already-dwindling forests from further destruction.

SYED SHAHNAWAZ SHAH
Tando Adam

WWF-PAKISTAN REPORT

18.5% of forestland converted into non-forest uses

The News Rawalpindi/Islamabad, June 26, 2010

By Aftab Kaken

Islamabad -- The federal government should not only block any future land transfers from forest department to any department but also take back the previously transferred land back into a protected forest, said a report launched by the WWF-Pakistan here on Friday.

The study has been commissioned by the scientific committee of WWF-Pakistan to identify all forest areas in the country that were transferred from the various provincial forest departments for other land uses.

It is shocking that an over 61,000 hectares (151548 acres), which is 18.5% of the forestland, has been converted to non-forest uses, revealed Dr Kauser Abdullah Malik, chairman of the scientific committee of the WWF-Pakistan at National Press Club.

Dr Bashir Ahmed Wani, ex-IG forest in his presentation also shared that the last largest conversion of forestland has taken in Punjab, which is 66% of the total deforestation while Sindh is second and termed it distressing as government continues to convert more forestland.

In their recommendations, the WWF-Pakistan proposed the Ministry of Environment to move a summary to the prime minister for imposing restrictions on the transfer of forestlands for non-forestry uses as done in the case of ban on commercial harvesting of forests.

It also recommends the withdrawal of powers of de-notification under Forest Act 1927 and any other provincial law under existing legislation is amended and issue direction to the provincial

governments for restricting provincial board of revenue to transfer land to any agency.

An advisory board will be constituted at the federal level with representation from the provinces and Board of Revenue (BoR) to lay down procedure for the award of forestlands for non-forestry uses in case such transfers are unavoidable and alternate land is not available, it added.

The recent FAO report on the state of World Forests 2009 mentions that the annual rate of deforestation in Pakistan is 2.1% the highest among all the countries in Asia.

It is hoped that this report will help block all future transfers of precious forestland for other uses, and that as much as possible, lands that have been previously

transferred are also gradually restored as forestland.

The Government of Pakistan has given a commitment to global community under Millennium Development Goals to increase the forest cover in the country to 6% by the year 2015, but not enough corresponding action has been taken to disaggregate this target down to the provinces, districts and tehsils.

As outlined in this report, the largest conservations of forestland have taken place in Punjab and Sindh corresponding to 99,711 acres and 27,874 acres respectively.

The Sindh government has made 140 land transfers covering an area of 271,875 acres since 1947 to different users agencies. Of this, 11,911 acres to Pak Army in Sukkur, Ghotki, Thatta, and Pano Akil, 177,122 acres to Port Qasim and Pakistan Steel Mills, 16,935 acres to Revenue Dept in Karachi, 12,040 acres to Defence Housing Authority, 5,924 acres was transferred for agriculture purposes in Ghotki and 1,090 acres was also transferred in Karachi to educational institutions, Sindh High Court, Sir Syed University, BIZTEK, Sindh

Madrassa, Dawood College of Engineering, SZABIST, SIUT, Agha Khan University and Sindh Police, 3,000 acres to KMC and 300 acres to Sindh Police for central jail.

Similarly Punjab had made 106 land transfers covering an area of 99,711 acres since 1947 to various government departments that include Parks & Horticulture Authority, wildlife, tourism development cooperation, Pakistan Army, construction of hospitals, schools, fisheries dept, civil aviation, universities, PTCL, Wapda, Highways, sericulture, Great Thal Canal System, Microwave towers, Housing scheme, Army dog centre, MMDA, police justice dept, CDA, district jail and specific purpose.

Some of the major forest land transfers include 14000 acres to PTCL in Kabirwala, 44,019 acres to Pak Army in Jallo Park, Pirowal, Miranpur, Muzaffargarh, Kalla Chitta, Sambli and Jehlum, 11,870 acres to CDA, 200 acres to Journalist Housing Colony in Lohi Bher, 572 acres to Punjab Employee Housing Foundation and 116 acres to Arid Zone Research Institute in Bhakkar.

However, the transfer of 4,111 acres to New Murree Development Authority has been stopped due to Supreme Courts suo moto while in some cases, forestland has been leased to private people including a piece of forest to Royal Navy Oman.

Balochistan government has made 18 land transfers covering an area of 13,693 acres forest land to other departments that include 400 acres to agriculture dept, 10 acres to Balochistan University, 24 acres to labour dept, 1200 acres to PAF, 1,200 acres for Industrial estates, 54 acres for prison dept, 0.68 acres for CNG Company and 5 acres for SOS village.

The KPK government has made 20 land transfers covering an area of 9,692 acres to other departments that include 20 acres to PTDC, 0.76 acres to Muhammad Pervaiz Khan, 0.63 acres to FC, 0.38 acres to PMA hut, 0.25 acres to fisheries dept, 0.5 acres to BHU, 0.13 acres to wildlife dept, 0.88 acres to district council, Mansehra, 0.5 acres to Pak Youth Hostel, 11.75 acres for potato research centre, 2 acres for Hotel Pine Park, 9133 acres to Pak Army in D I Khan and 520 acres to PERRA in Siran.

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Domail: low quality material used in construction of forest guest house

Contractor is destroying the project to grab millions of rupees

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 07, 2010

Dhadar (Special Reporter) The contractor building the forest guest house in Domail is trying to embezzle millions of rupees and destroying the plan. The guest

house is being built in cooperation with ERRA. The material being used for the building is extremely low quality. This activity is continuing in collaboration with

the forest department. People of the area have protested against the use of low quality material.

Millions of rupees are lost because of negligence in protecting trees

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 11, 2010

Shinkhari (News reporter) Millions of rupees are spent on planting of trees during the plantation campaign every year but due to negligence in protecting these

trees the money spent on plantation goes waste. Particularly no positive results have been achieved by plantation of Chir and other trees by the forest

department. Not only trees planted in forests but along the roadsides are also lost.

One forest guard at every 200 acres of forest world over; one forest guard for every 3000 acres in Pakistan

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, May 13, 2010

Peshawar (News Reporter) All over the world one forest guard is deployed for every 200 acres of forest but in Pakistan there is one

forest guard for every 3000 acres of forest. Provincial minister for forests Wajid Ali Khan said this while talking to Aaj. He said the

forest department is facing acute shortage of workforce yet the department is performing very well.

Government cannot protect national forests: Aijaz Ahmed

We will not desist from protesting in order to protect forests from timber mafia

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 17, 2010

Oghi (Our Correspondent) The reform commit members in Khun Tanawal area have strongly protested over the cutting of forests in Doga Jalu Gali Champiyal. They have urged chief justice Iftikhar Chuadhry to take notice of cutting of forests. Talking to the media President

Aijaz Ahmed, general secretary Sher Mohammad, Dr Abdur Rashid and others said that government forests are at the mercy of timber mafia. If the government cannot protect national wealth it should hand it over to the people. They said that they had informed the high

officials of the forest department time and again but nothing has been corrected. If immediate action is not taken the people of Khun will hold protest demonstration in front of the provincial assembly and the national parliament.

Hazara Division: Forest being destroyed over vast area

People of Hazara demand immediate transfer of conservator of Hazara and appointment of responsible officers

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, May 18, 2010

Mansehra (Courts Reporter) forests in Hazara Division are being destroyed in vast areas. Conservator of Hazara range Khurshid Anwar has become a

silent spectator. Sources said that the forests in Hazara are being destroyed but instead of making efforts to stop this destruction DFOs are being transferred to

cover up the issue. Sources also said that provincial minister for forests is equally responsible for this destruction along with the conservator of Hazara range. In

Saran valley in a period of 9 months 16 DFOs have been transferred. Public circles have

demanded immediate transfer of the conservator saying that

efficient officers should be appointed here.

Ruthless cutting of trees continues with the connivance of officials of forest department

Corrupt officials should be removed to save precious forests

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, May 27, 2010

Jabori (Special Correspondent) In Saran valley large number of trees are being cut every day. Particularly the guzara forests in Todandi and government-owned forests in Sarbun are being cut ruthlessly. People of Jabori said that one official has been posted

here since long and when we try to talk to him he does not pay attention to us. No action has been taken against the corrupt officials. Residents of Jabori expressed these views while talking to Shamal correspondent. They said that these corrupt officials should

be transferred from here immediately and an inquiry must be initiated if we have to save the forests. They said if this is not done the forest will soon become an empty ground and the forest officials will be responsible for this destruction.

Battal: forest department adopts effective strategy; timber smugglers go in hiding

Timber smugglers are blackmailing forest officials using the newspapers

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, May 29, 2010

Shinkari (News Reporter) Due to an effective strategy adopted by the forest department the timber smugglers have gone in hiding. However timber smugglers are using their agents to blackmail dutiful officials of the forest department through newspapers. Residents of Konish valley have expressed full confidence in the performance of the range officer and other staff in Battal. Elders of the area held an important meeting chaired by former councilor Imtiaz Ahmed of Bai

Tarpi. Around 60 elders attended this meeting. Addressing the meeting these people declared that the reports being published in the newspapers against the Battal range officer and other staff are baseless. They also said that the timber smugglers used to roam around the forests carrying latest weapons. The forest officials putting their lives in danger continue to perform their duty of protecting the forests. Due to their action timber smugglers have gone in hiding.

Galiyat: forest department sets new record by planting 300,000 plants

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, May 17, 2010

Changla Gali (Special Correspondent) Forest department has planted over 300,000 plants in Galiyat area during 2009-10 plantation campaign. Briefing the journalists in Koza Gali forest

house range officer Galiyat Division Sardar Riyasat Nalotha said that during the current year the forest department has planted 85,000 kikar trees, 130,500 bir trees, 10,000 Bankhor trees and

53,000 Chir trees. He said this was a joint project of ERR and the forest department for plantation of trees in earthquake affected areas. The target has been achieved in the first phase.

Houses are being built in Khan Kalan forests

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 01, 2010

Nathiagali (Special Correspondent) In Khan Kalan Retri UC Bakot area houses are being built under the patronage of Gul Zaman son of Abdur Rahman on the land owned by the forest department. On one hand this is an attempt to grab government

land while on the other trees are being cut down for the construction of buildings. People of the area have appealed to the range officer and DFO Galiyat division that they should stop construction of houses in this area otherwise the villagers will also

start building their houses on government land. This will cause serious losses to the forest department. Therefore the high officials of the forest department should stop this construction immediately.

Ghazi: Range officer taking bribe destroying forests, DFO also gets his share

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 02, 2010

Gadwalian (Shamal Correspondent) Range officer of Ghazi is extorting money. Phalahi trees are being cut in Ghazi and Barikot area. A permit from the department is required for this cutting but the range officer of Ghazi area has allowed cutting of

trees without a permit. He has fixed a per vehicle bribe amount which is causing huge loss to the government exchequer. Some people say that the range officer gives a share on this collected bribe money to the DFO of Haripur. Ever since the present

DFO Haripur has been appointed the timber mafia is having a free hand. All the staff is also receiving share in bribe money. This is causing huge loss to the government and the forests are fast turning into empty fields.

Kand Bate: Performance of forest officials is satisfactory—popular circles

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 13, 2010

Dhudial (Our Correspondent) Forest owners say that the performance of forest officials is satisfactory. The timber mafia is trying to blackmail the officials.

Owners of guzara forests in Achhrian Kund Saiyadan have said in a joint statement that timber smugglers have made their lives miserable while the forest

officials are performing their duties efficiently. The timber mafia is busy in negative propaganda against the officials.

Forestry Ittehad demands increase in forest royalty to 80 percent Discretionary powers of forest officers should be withdrawn.

Press conference by Dost Muhammad

Daily Aaj, Peshawar, June 11, 2010

Peshawar (Staff Reporter) Sarhad Awami Forestry Ittehad (SAFI) has demanded that the government should increase forest royalty from 60 percent to 80 percent. This was said in a press conference by the president of SAFI, Dost

Muhammad Khan in Peshawar Press Club. He said that the pollution can be controlled only by growing more trees in the country. He said that the forest owners, organizations for protection of forests and also the civil society is

violating the rights of the people. He said a new legislation is needed for keeping the environment clean and protecting the rights of the people over forests so that the people could also look after the forests. He asked the government

to bring the forest ordinance in the provincial assembly for approval and said that the controversial provisions of this ordinance should be removed and a notification should be issued to fix forest royalty as 80 percent in Swat Kohistan and Dir Kohistan. He

also demanded that the ban on green marking should be lifted and the period should be extended to five years from the existing three years. Forest plantation should be expedited. Discretionary powers of the forest officers should be withdrawn and presence of JFMC

should be declared mandatory at the time of signing agreement with the FDC and royalty installments should be paid regularly.

FBR allows export of poplar trees to Afghanistan

Taking notice of smuggling of trees to Afghanistan the FBR imposed a nominal tax which has legalized the smuggling. NGOs in Kabul are buying poplar trees at the rate of 1000 to 1400 rupees per tree and giving it away to the Afghan people free of charge. Local industrialists who purchase trees at the rate of 60 to 100 rupees per tree express concern; ask government to cancel the notification

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 12, 2010

Peshawar (News Reporter) Export of poplar trees to Afghanistan has increased after FBR's notification permitting the export. This export has brought prosperity to the farmers. However the owners of match stick factories have expressed concern over the export.

According to a survey the FBR imposed a nominal tax and legalized the export of poplar trees to Afghanistan in view of the smuggling of the trees. According to sources the tree which match factory owners did not buy from

the farmers for a hundred rupees is now being bought by certain Afghan NGOs for 1000 to 1400 rupees. These NGOs are distributing this wood among Afghan people to build their homes. This has led to an increase in export of poplar trees to Afghanistan but has also caused concern among the match factory owners in the province. Match factories in Hayatabad Industrial Estate are at the brink of bankruptcy due to closure of the industry.

Match factory owners are holding meetings with the officials of CBR and the provincial government to get the notification allowing export of poplar to Afghanistan cancelled. Meanwhile the leader of poplar traders Haji Raheel and other farmers are of the view that the match factory owners were paying only 60 to 100 rupees for a poplar tree. Now that they are getting a better price the industrialists are trying to harm their interest.

Janglan: Two vehicles loaded with timber caught; five people arrested

Police released the vehicles and the people on receiving a letter from the government

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 15, 2010

Lohar Banda (Our Correspondent) Police caught two vehicles loaded with smuggled timber and arrested five people in the area under Saddar police station's

jurisdiction. According to the details police raided on two vehicles carrying illegal timber and impounded them. However within 15 minutes of the raid the

Saddar police station received a letter that the vehicles and the five accused people should be released. The alleged smugglers then drove the vehicles to Havelian.

Writ petition filed by provincial forest department dismissed; Forest Society Domail and Deolai restored

Supreme Court restored forest society and permitted movement of thousands of feet of timber

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 19, 2010

Mansehra (Court Reporter) Supreme Court of Pakistan on Friday dismissed the petition filed by the provincial government and restored Mansehra Domail Deolai

Cooperative Forest Society. According to sources Supreme Court Bench consisting Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday and

Justice Rabbani restored Domail Deolai Forest Cooperative Society and allowed harvest of thousands of feet of timber.

Up gradation of scale was a longstanding demand of the employees of forest department

Approval of their demand brought a wave of joy among the employees; joint statement

Daily Mashriq Peshawar, June 21, 2010

Dargai (Mashriq Correspondent) Haji Mohammad Zeb Khan, advocate, president of forest guards, foresters and deputy

rangers association and Haji Shah Mohammad Khattak, president of Malakand forest division has termed the up gradation of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa forest employee's pay scales a result of their honest efforts.

Khairabad: Attempt to smuggle timber foiled

Container loaded with timber worth millions of rupees handed over to forest department

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 21, 2010

Nowshera (Mashriq Correspondent) A container loaded with timber worth millions of rupees was confiscated at Khairabad and handed over to forest department. The timber was being taken to Jacobabad in Sindh province. Owners of the timber, driver and conductor of the vehicle fled the scene. The container number LSB 638 owned by timber mafia was caught

two days ago. According to sources the documents that were presented to the forest department at the check post were doubtful. When Mashriq correspondent contacted range officer Aqil Khan he said that this was not his area but investigation is being made.

Cutting of forests in Dir Bala will not be tolerated at any cost

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 22, 2010

Dir Bala (Mashriq Correspondent) We will not allow cutting of forests at any cost. The forest department should fulfill its responsibility of protecting forests and should play its role for averting tension in the area. These

views were expressed by Bakht Zaman Khan, Fain Mohammad, Khaista Mian, Umaruddin, and Sultan Bakht in a statement. They said that some elements are bent upon turning the green forests of Asheergai and Daragor Kohi into

empty fields. The officials of the forest department have been informed about it several times but their continuous silence is meaningful. They said that they will be forced to take action if the officials do not fulfill their duty.

Timber smuggled via Tarbela Lake; FC carries out raid

**Police at Swabi Mera police station deceived FC
Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 22, 2010**

Swabi Mera (Shamal Correspondent) FC raided right at the time when timber was being smuggled through Tarbela Lake. However the police at Swabi Mera police station deceived FC and the smugglers managed to smuggle the timber. According to sources FC cordoned off the area near Tarbela Lake to catch timber smuggler gang and launched a raid but a few black sheep in the police informed the smugglers before time and the smugglers slipped out of FC's hands. The FC continued its operation in the area all

night but all its efforts remained futile. The fact that the smugglers were able to transport timber in the presence of FC personnel shows that the smugglers already had information about the cordon. The smugglers passed through the area under the jurisdiction of Swabi Mera police station. People of the area have demanded that a grand operation should be launched against the timber mafia. They demanded that the police officials who collaborate with the smugglers should also be held accountable.

Saran, DFO is playing important role for protection of forests: people of the area

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 24, 2010

Jabori (Shamal Correspondent) DFO Saran has proved his honesty and efficiency by controlling timber smugglers and collecting 750,000 rupees in fine. These

views were expressed by the people of Saran Valley while speaking at the Press Club in Jabori. They said that after the appointment of DFO Saran

Mohammad Aijaz Qadir forests are being protected and timber smugglers have gone in hiding.

Thousands of feet of marked timber might be lost in Hazara forests

**Forests are suffering losses worth millions of rupees due to negligence of forest conservator
Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 28, 2010**

Gurmang Bala (Shamal Correspondent) Due to negligence of the forest conservator in Hazara it is feared that millions of rupees will be lost. Thousands of feet of dry wood and marked trees are likely to be wasted. According to

the details thousands of feet of dry wood and windfall timber is lying in Hazara forests. In a number of forests it has already been marked. For example in Jabori documents are long awaiting approval from the conservator. The people of the

area have demanded that the present conservator should be posted out and the senior-most official Sardar Sultan Ahmad should be appointed conservator in Hazara area.

Shergarh: Reckless cutting of forests; Inquiry launched against five officials including forester

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, June 28, 2010

Oghi (Shamal Correspondent) Departmental inquiry has been initiated against five forest

officials including a forester in Shergharh range on charges of reckless cutting of forests and

smuggling of wood. ADFO Range in-charge Manzoor Ahmed has

been made responsible for the inquiry.

Three years ago forests were recklessly cut in Sher Garh range. It appeared that the forests were

cut due to negligence of the forest officials. Manzoor Ahmed has initiated inquiry against five officials. Forest guard Mohammad Sher Bahadur and Riyaz Mohammad have been

questioned and their statements have been recorded.

Rawalpindi Administration should take measures to make the city green: Sanaullah Akhtar

Daily Jang Rawalpindi, June 28, 2010

Rawalpindi (Jang News) President of Al-Akhuwwat, a welfare organization, Sanaullah Akhtar has said that the Rawalpindi administration should beautify the city and plant trees to make it green. He demanded this in a meeting of his organization.

Mohammad Tariq Ali, Nisar Chaudhry, T M Jan, Shafqat Rana, Zafar Iqbal, Abu Aziz, Mahmood Akhtar Malik, Arif Saeed Butt, Tahir Pervez Khaksar and Dr Akmal Niaz attended the meeting. They demanded that the administration should plant trees

along the highways like Murree Road. They also said that trees should be planted in government buildings, schools, and hospitals.

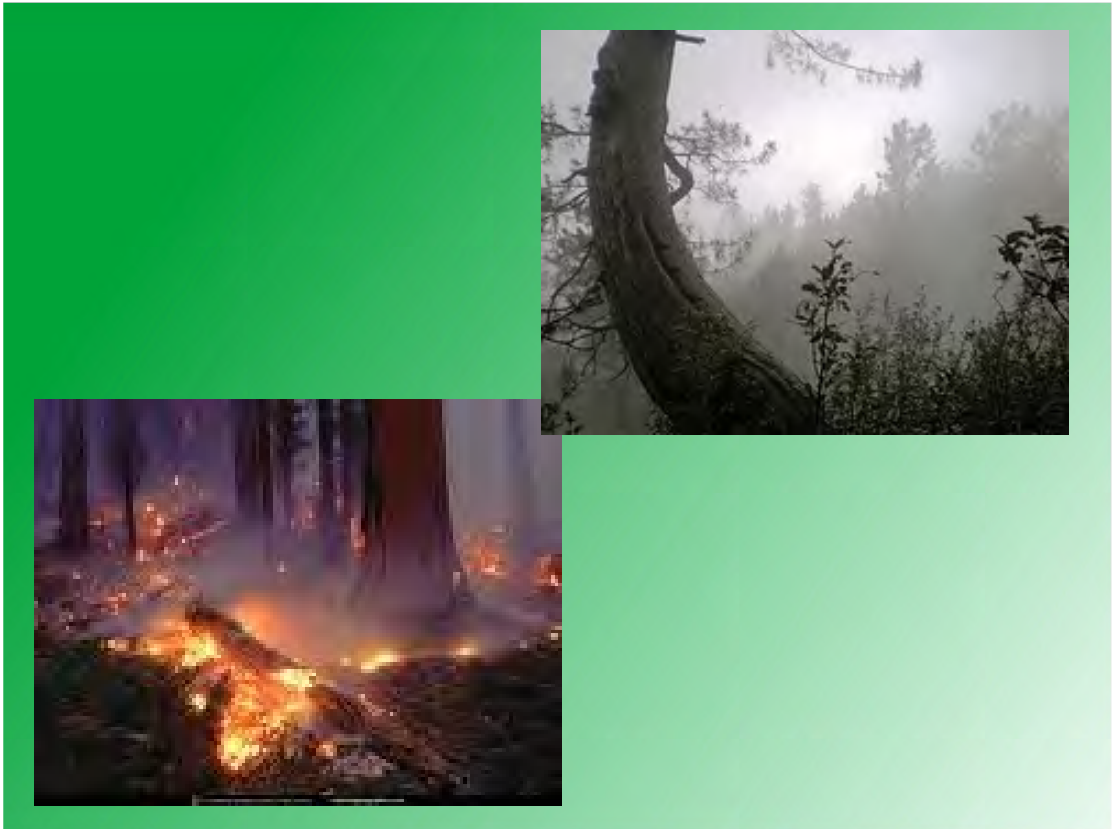
Ghazi, police allowed truck loaded with timber to pass without informing forest department

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 28, 2010

Ghazi (Mashriq Correspondent) The police allowed a container loaded with timber to go without information to the forest department. The container was caught two days ago. The container was loaded with timber

worth millions of rupees. On a tip off from the media Police had impounded container number P884 in Ghazi and it was said that the container was carrying illegal timber. When the container was opened high value timber was

found in it which was being smuggled to Punjab via Ghazi. Later the timber was shifted to other vehicles and the smugglers managed to smuggle it.



Chapter 03

Forest Fire

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Fire breaks out in Shiekh Badin Hills

Valuable trees burn to ashes, flames could be seen far and wide

Daily Aaj Peshawar, May 24, 2010

Paniala (Aaj Correspondent) Forests spread over thousands of kanals area north of Shiekh Badin hills caught fire on Saturday and precious trees worth millions of

rupees were burnt to ashes. According to the details smoke was seen rising from the northern part of Shiekh Badin hills. By the sunset there were flames all

around. The fire continued all night. The forest had olive, palosa and pine trees. No forest official was available for comment.

Fire in Shiekh Badin forest under control after two days

Cause of fire could not be ascertained, case registered in Yark police station

Daily Mashriq Peshawar, May 25, 2010

Lakki Marwat (Mashriq Correspondent) The fire at Shiekh Badin hills adjacent to Lakki Marwat and Dera Ismail Khan has been put out. The fire has destroyed the beautiful resort in the forest. According to the reports some unidentified miscreants set the forest on fire. According to sources the fire that continued for two days has destroyed forests spread over 4,000 to 5,000 acres of land. The wildlife department had to cut down trees in Paniala area of Dera Ismail Khan to save other areas from fire. The sources said that a

team of forest officials led by district forest officer wildlife, Abdul Halim Marwat inspected the area the other day. Range officer Idrees Marwat said that the cause of fire could not be ascertained. However it appears that the people visiting the forest for picnic were cooking something and the forest caught fire. He confirmed the reports that four forest officials have been injured and two fainted in this incident. The forest department has filed a report in Yark police station.

Fire engulfs Margalla hills; 16 firefighters fainted

Daily Mashriq Peshawar, May 27, 2010

Islamabad (Online) Margalla Hills near Islamabad caught fire due to rise in temperature. During the operation to put out fire 16

firefighters fainted due to extreme heat. Fire suddenly broke out in Kashmir valley adjacent to E-9 sector of Islamabad which

engulfed the whole valley in no time. Deputy Director of environment wing of CDA, Malik Aulia, told Online that the report

about fire was received at 11:30 on Wednesday and teams were immediately sent out to put out the fire. He said that 140 firemen took part in this operation. However the firefighters are facing problems due to the difficult access routes. He also said that

helicopters were not available because of the rescue operation continuing on Hunza Lake. It was much easier to control fire using helicopters. According to very reliable CDA sources 16 firefighters fainted due to extreme heat and lack of modern

equipment. However, CDA spokesman Ramzan Sajid denied reports of any such incident with firefighters.

Darband: Police impounds two vehicles loaded with timber

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 27, 2010

Oghi (Shamal Correspondent) Darband police got the information that workers of timber mafia were smuggling timber via Darband. The police set up a check point near Balwai.

Meanwhile, two Datsun trucks coming from Oghi which were loaded with timber were caught. The vehicles and drivers were locked up in Darband police station. President of the forest

management committee Mohammad Yunus and president of the reforms committee Lala Qalandar Khan lauded the Darband police for their timely action.

Shinkiari: Forests on fire,

Wildlife faces destruction

Daily Mashriq Peshawar, May 27, 2010

Shinkiari (General Reporter) The beautiful forests of Shinkiari are on fire. It is said that every year during summer season before the onset of monsoon season two types of people set forests on fire. One, the farmers who need grass for their cattle and secondly the forest officials who want to

remove evidence of the trees cut illegally. This destroys wildlife as well as newly planted trees. It also leads to high level of pollution in environment. It was also reported that the forest department hires a number of people before monsoon for putting out fires but due to negligence of the department all

these measures remain ineffective. On the contrary people set forests on fire to serve their personal interest. If the forest department pays proper attention there is no reason that the forests would not be safe from fire.

Dhok Gakhhar:

Fire in forests under control

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 09, 2010

Tarnawa (Special Correspondent) talking to journalists the notables of Upper Khanpur have said that the fire that broke out in Dhok Gakhhar a few days ago was put

out immediately. This helped save the lives of birds. They said if the forest department takes such swift action against fire all forests of Upper Khanpur area will remain

safe. The timber from the forests and the rare species of birds are national assets. The forest department should remain alert for saving these from fire.

Kundbait: Forest officials set forest on fire to hide their corruption

Legal action must be taken against the weak and corrupt officials:

Al-Falah Organization

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 10, 2010

Dhadar (Crime Report) Forest guard and forester in Kundbait area set the forest of entire area on fire. The fire severely damaged the saplings and the wildlife. Members of the community-based organization reached the site and managed to put out fire. Still there are hundreds of logs and burnt wood lying in the area and sawing is also continuing here. High officials of

the forest department are requested to take legal action against the weak and the corrupt officials. Otherwise the owners of guzara forests and residents of Kund Tarla will be forced to take direct action. These views were expressed by the secretary Al-falah organization and owner of guzara forest Abid Ali Shah Kazmi in a written statement issued to the press.

Parhna:

Fire in forests burning animals and birds

Every year miscreants set forests on fire which burns thousands of trees

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 13, 2010

Parhna (Shamal Correspondent) Frequent fires in Parhna forests are causing damage to birds and animals. Miscreants set forests in Parhna on fire every year which

burn trees over thousands of acres of land. An inquiry should be launched against these miscreants. They should be given due punishment so that no one dares

taking such actions in future. These views were expressed by Master Sabir Tanoli, Malik Sarfraz, and Nadeem Tanoli while talking to Shamal.

Konish Valley:

Forests on Tanglai hills catch fire

Many factors might have caused the fire

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, June 23, 2010

Konish valley (Bureau Chief) Forests in Tanglai hills area are on fire. The view of these forests at night is beautiful but many factors could be responsible for this fire. According to a report the forest was being cut like vegetable. Over that the owners of forests and the media raised much hue and cry. But corrupt people were appointed for protection of these forests. Officers were replaced one after another but cutting of forests continued. Officers followed the policy of pleasing the political influential. People kept lamenting but no such official was appointed who could take action against timber smugglers or corrupt officials of the forest department. Whenever an honest official was posted the political elements sent him back with much disgrace. One such example is former DFO who took strict action against the timber smugglers and imposed heavy fines on them. A few of the smugglers were put

behind bars. He had given strict instruction that the forest officials should regularly patrol the forests. People were happy with him but a few influential people did not like his honesty and efficiency. So he was posted out. Now the entire forest department is keeping its eyes closed and smuggling of timber is at its peak. Now that the media and community organizations have decided to take action for protection of forests the department is quite perturbed. Media and community organizations decided to survey the forests in Tanglai and invited the forest officials to join the survey. On hearing the news of a plan for survey the forest was set on fire to hide the evidence of cutting of trees. At present the entire Tanglai forest is on fire and no forest official or political influential has ordered any inquiry of the fire. People miss former DFO Sardar Sultan who was an honest officer.

Forest catches fire as mortars fired by NATO troops fall on Pakistani territory

Daily Mashriq Peshawar June 27, 2010

Wana (Mashriq Correspondent)
Local militants attacked a NATO post at Machadad kot in Birmal Shikin area of Paktika province of Afghanistan with rockets and mortars. NATO retaliated the attack. Five mortars fell in Zoba area in Pakistani territory leading to a fire breakout in forest. The

tribesmen have said that mortars fired from Afghanistan side hit their area almost every day causing serious panic in the area. The tribesmen said that local militants attack NATO troops every day and in response NATO forces fire mortars indiscriminately. These mortars

land in Pakistani area and the tribes face losses. They said that the United Nations has so far not taken notice of this situation. They said that Pakistan should take notice of these fires. Tribes living in the border area are suffering heavy losses due to these firing incidents.



Chapter 04

Forest Protection & Awareness

Letter to Editor

Forest protection programme

Dawn Islamabad, April 01, 2010

This is apropos of a news report (March 17) that the minister for environment and forestry has launched a programme in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan to check deforestation.

The programme is a step in the right direction to stall the rapid elimination of forests we have experienced during last 50 or so years for want of a such legislation.

This continued obliteration of forests has reduced the forest cover substantially, representing 2.5 per cent of the land area of Pakistan under forests according to the latest UN statistics.

This puts us in the category of

countries with a forest cover of less than 10 per cent. This is an alarming situation and needs to be stalled forthwith, warranting efforts aimed at improving this forest cover.

If we sum up the government's publicized planting targets and the survival of their transplants during the last 60 years, the forest cover area would have exceeded 10 per cent of the total geographical area of Pakistan.

Surprisingly, no one ever bothered to check the veracity of these claims, so much so that now we have a forest cover less than what we had in 1947, while hill forest are almost finished.

Forest on either side of the Indus have disappeared, riverine forests too are under threat as the police are burning them on the pretext of flushing out robbers.

Our total geographical cover of forest is much less than the international standard. Efforts are under way to increase the forest cover from the present claim of 5 per cent to 6 per cent by 2015.

For this, emphasis should laid on reducing the alarming rate of mortality of tree saplings by taking post-planting care and routine maintenance.

Zafar Sheikh
Via email

Students help in sprucing up park

The News Rawalpindi/Islamabad, April 17, 2010

Rasheed Khalid

Islalmabad: - Students of normal and special education schools were awarded certificates for participating in an exercise to improve the park adjacent to the

National Library and Resource Centre.

Despite their small age, including those with relatively limited ability, keenly worked in the

garden for three days to develop a lawn into a small garden.

The ceremony was organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in collaboration

with the US Embassy at the Helen Keller Community Friendship Centre here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Julia Fend Rick, assistant cultural attaché at the US embassy, said the Earth Day started when the dirty River Cuyahoga in Ohio caught fire due to oily pollutants on June 22, 1969, and Senator Gaylord Nelson next year called all and sundry to observe Earth Day and also participate in cleaning the river. Since then, April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day in the world. She said that environment movement is a story of citizens coming together and demanding their respective governments to

provide health food, water and clean environment and punish the polluters.

She said it is the responsibility of all of us to work for improving the environment. She appreciated that by implanting flowers and trees, the students converted the area into beautiful place. She thanked volunteers from schools to universities for supporting this innovation. She asked the students to repeat the exercise at some other place on the next Earth Day.

Dr Arshad Ovais Qazi, director of the Directorate-General of Special Education, apprised the audience about his centre established in

1995. He specifically mentioned books, computer lab and electronic journals. He said that the centre is fully functional for the special children, visually impaired in particular. He lauded the services of the US embassy in this respect, which included books and furniture.

A slide show depicting the children working in the park was also screened on the occasion.

Shakil Ramay, director of the SDPI's Pakistan Youth Climate Network, thanked the participants.

Need to revamp forest resources

The Nation Islamabad, Money plus, April 26, 2010

By Babar Hussain

Forests are the blood of the ecosystem. The importance of forest in the modern day world can not be underestimated. The art and science of growing the forests is called forestry. Forestry plays a pivotal role in the economy of Pakistan. It is also essential to improve the quality of life of citizens through sustainable development maintaining sustained supply of wood and wood products.

Pakistan is a land of great diversity, which has yielded a variety of vegetation; however, only 5.3 percent of the total land area is under forest ranking it under Low Forest Covered Countries.

In Pakistan forests include State-owned forests, communal forests and privately owned forest. It is incredibly difficult to sum up the importance of forests in few words. Forest products are used in our daily lives. All these and many more activities directly or indirectly involve forest. Some are easy to figure out such as fruits, paper and wood from trees, and some by-products that go into the manufacture of other everyday items like medicines, detergents, etc.

Forests also provide habitat for biodiversity and livelihood for humans.

They offer watershed protection, timber and non-timber products, and various recreational options. They prevent soil erosion, help in maintaining the water cycle, check global warming by using carbon dioxide

in photosynthesis.

Keeping in view the importance of forests, government declared the year 2009 as "national year of Environment" to bring a visible improvement in the quality of air, water, land, and ecosystem through mitigating the effects of environmental degradation visible on biological diversity, agriculture productivity, water availability, food security and human health. In this regard, a series of activities have been planned for engaging all stakeholders for their participation in the improvement of the Environment. But Government failed to meet the desired results due to certain reasons. During the year 2008-2009 forests have contributed 83 thousand cubic meters of timber and 205 thousand cubic meters of firewood as compared to 94 thousand cubic meters timber and 267 thousand cubic meters firewood in 2007+08. Different types of forest grown are: Tropical rainforests, Sub-tropical forests; Mediterranean forests, temperate forests, Coniferous forests and Montane forests.

The major threat to forest in Pakistan and in World is generally deforestation. Deforestation is the process whereby natural forests are cleared through logging and/or burning, either to use the timber or to replace the area for alternative uses. From temperate forests to tropical rainforests, deforestation continues to be an urgent environmental issue that jeopardizes people's livelihoods, threatens animals, and intensifies global warming. It is very alarming that about 10-12 million

hectares of forests are lost every year in the world. There are many side effects of deforestation such as the release of greenhouse gas emissions, reduced biodiversity, disrupted water cycles increase soil erosion and disrupted livelihoods.

In order to enhance tree cover in the country, tree planting campaigns, all the Government Departments, Private Organizations, Defense Organizations and NGOs are involved in planting activities. Awareness

through electronic and print media should be created among the masses about the importance and safety of forests. Those who are involved in tree cutting should be given exemplary punishments to reduce deforestation.

(The Author is lecturer at PMAS-Arid Agriculture University)

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Increase in forest area is not possible without amending the Forest Act

Daily Jang, Rawalpindi, April 01, 2010

Shehzad Maqbool Maral – Multan

Pakistan is located in such a region of the world which has diverse seasons and land. This country is rich in natural resources. Governments make plans for development of various sectors keeping the importance of those sectors in view but desired results are not achieved as the plans are not implemented fully. This is not only causing loss of resources but is also creating more problems. The government of Pakistan has declared 2009 the year of environment. A record number of trees were planted all over the country. Tree plantation was carried out in all four seasons with the cooperation of the provincial governments. Millions of saplings were planted. Besides the forest department several government and private institutions took part in this plantation campaign. The entire nation planted more than 10 million plants throughout the country. Had the plantation continued all year round during 2009 we could have run out of room for more plantation this year. But unfortunately proper care was not taken of the saplings that were planted so most plants died.

In Multan the spring 2010 plantation campaign was inaugurated by Commissioner of Multan Mohammad Ali Gardezi. On this occasion many other officials including the RPO, DCO, and CPO also planted large number of trees in Circuit House Multan. Every year the plantation campaign is launched in the same manner but the Circuit House in Multan is still without any trees. Every year a plant is planted at the same spot where a sapling was planted last year. The

officials inaugurating the campaign fail to recall that they plant a sapling at the same spot every year. They never ask the officials what happened to the plant that they had planted six months ago.

According to the forestry experts every country must have at least 25 percent of its land covered with forests. At the moment 13062.90 billion hectare of land is covered with forests. Total area of Asia is 3084.76 billion hectare. Out of this 547.79 billion hectare is covered by forests, which is 17.8 percent of the total land in Asia. Pakistan's total area is 77.09 billion hectares and the area covered by forests is 3.93 billion hectares. That means total forest covered area in Pakistan is 5.1 percent of its total area. So as per experts' opinion Pakistan needs to grow forests on another 20 percent of its area.

In Azad Kashmir 27 percent of its total area, in Northern Areas 13.8 percent of its total area and in Sindh province only 4.8 percent of the total area is covered by forests. Punjab has a total area of 20.63 billion hectares but the area under forests is only 0.64 billion hectares which is only 3.1 percent of the total area. In view of these figures Pakistan urgently needs to grow more forests. The forest department provides millions of saplings and plants to government and non-governmental organizations twice a year.

Trees are planted in Northern Areas in June and July, in upper Punjab in August September, in southern Punjab in October and November and from January to April. In Sindh trees are planted from May to

December and in Baluchistan from August to March. Besides the forest department the defense, education, communications, health, police, canals, food, fisheries, and wildlife departments and several private organizations and farmers were also involved in the plantation campaign this year. On the advice of the provincial minister for agriculture departments of forests and livestock and the Cooperative Punjab Bank are observing Farmers Day in every union council. The officials of forest department raise awareness among the farmers about these three sectors. This program was first launched in Punjab. Farmers are provided information about all three departments in one meeting. All the three departments are about farmers and landowners.

It is important to note that the forest department provides thousands of plants to the defense, education and health departments free of cost. There would not have been any shortage of forests in the country had these plants been given to farmers. Trees worth millions of rupees are wasted due to lack of care for trees in the government organizations. During the current season farmers are being provided plants from the nurseries in Multan Division but each nursery has fixed its own rates for plants. Some are selling a plant for 2 rupees while some others are selling the same plant at 1.50 rupees. Secondly, no record is being kept as to how many plants have been sold so far and how much revenue the department has earned so. Similarly large number of trees are being cut down and stolen from the forests. That is why the forest cover is depleting.

Government forests are still there because of the efforts of the forest department but the situation is not encouraging. In 1947 canal-fed forest area was 39244 avenue kilometers but according to 2008 figures this area is now 157355 avenue kilometers. The situation is far better regarding forests along canals. In 1947

along the highways 1780 avenue kilometers forest was there but according to 2008 record the forests along highways are 56000 avenue kilometers though the length of highways have increased considerably. Shortage of water along highways is the reason for loss of trees. Due to shortage of canal water forests are dying. Water shortage is affecting not only new plantation but also the old trees.

According to 1947 figures there were 3 trees on each acre of agricultural land while in 2008 the number of trees per acre agricultural land was 8. The forest cover has not increased significantly since the creation of Pakistan. Only the number of trees on lands owned by farmers has shown an increase. However, the increase in number of trees in government forests is disappointing.

According to the experts if one percent of area in Punjab has to be brought under forest cover it would require 200,000 hectare of land. This would require allocation of 7.22 billion rupees. It would need 6,000 cusecs water supply every day. Despite financial difficulties the forest department is being given 210 million rupees annually but the department has failed to increase forest cover. Forest officials remain confined to their offices. The officials are still getting 30 – 40 maunds (nearly 40 kilograms) of dry fuel wood annually as provided by the laws in effect in 1947. This wood is then sold in timber market. Similarly the fines and punishments for timber theft are very low. Timber theft cases are processed under Forest Act 1927. The rate of theft from forests is increasing by 30 percent annually. In Multan Division there are only two or three nurseries which can produce 200 to 300 thousand plants a year. Forest cover cannot be increased with only two nurseries in a district with an area of 1.2 million acres.

Two killed in Salarzai on dispute over trees

A woman among those killed, three injured

Daily Azadi Swat, May 16, 2010

Khar, Bajaur Agency (Special Correspondent) A gunfight erupted between two brothers in Salarzai Tehsil of Bajaur Agency on a dispute over trees. A woman and a man were killed by gunshots while three people were seriously injured. Salarzai quami lashkar took immediate action and set

ablaze the house of the person who had resorted to shooting. For further action a jirga will be held today.

According to sources in Salarzai tehsil of Bajaur agency two brothers resorted to gunfight on a dispute over ownership of trees. The fight killed a woman and a

man while three others were seriously injured. The injured have been shifted to Agency Headquarter Hospital in Khar. The quami lashkar of Salarzai set on fire the house of the person involved in firing. Meanwhile the quami lashkar has called a grand jirga today for further action. The

political administration has started investigating the incident. Meanwhile, heavy rains have destroyed standing crops in Khar

tehsil. Three children died due to heavy rain. People of Khar have demanded that the government should declare Bajaur Agency a

calamity-hit area and loans should be written off.

Mansehra: Forest guide injures labourer with an axe

Report filed in Khaki police station, accused flees the area

Daily Shamal Abbottabad, May 23, 2010

Mansehra (Staff Reporter) Forest guide attacked a labourer with an axe and smashed his teeth. A case has been registered against the

accused. The alleged attacker fled the area. According to the report registered in Khaki police station Gul Nawaz resident of Tatar Bala

was attacked by forest guide Dilbar Shah when Nawaz was collecting wood from the forest.

Dir forest association meets; demands facilities

Daily Mashriq Peshawar, June 28, 2010

Khal (Mashriq Correspondent) Dir Forest Association held its meeting. The meeting was chaired by Nisar Ahmed. A large number of employees of the forest department attended the meeting. The participants expressed full confidence in the leadership of

provincial president Haji Mohammad Zeb and lauded his efforts which resulted in the up gradation of the employees. A resolution was passed in the meeting demanding that the government should give scales and other benefits to the employees of

forest department in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa like the scales and benefits given to the employees in Punjab.



Chapter 05

Forest & Environment

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Deforestation in Chitral: An environmental tsunami

Daily Mashriq Peshawar, May 03, 2010

Article by Sardar Ali Aman

Scientists say that trees are like lungs for human beings. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and provide oxygen which is necessary for humans and animals. Now it is a known fact that plants are also living beings and like living beings they also breathe, acquire food, grow and are affected by external factors. This was first revealed in chapter Yasin in the Holy Quran. Trees affect the climate. Some trees provide food and medicines. If trees are not there the climate will not be cool. There will be nothing to clean the contamination of carbon dioxide. We get fuel and building material from trees. So tree is man's best friend.

The total area of Chitral is 14850 sq kilometers. Only 1.2 percent of the area is under agricultural use. The rest is mountains. Out of this only 1.8 percent area is under forests now. There are Chir, deodar, Partal trees growing in these forests. These forests are located in the southern part of Chitral. In ancient times pine forests grew in the north of Chitral. These forests have become almost extinct due to reckless cutting of forests. Now pine trees can be seen only at some point on the mountain tops.

According to an estimate in 1893 twenty percent of Citra's area was under forests. It has decreased to 1.8 percent now. The reason is reckless cutting of forests. Cutting of forests for commercial purposes began in 1939. Timber was transported through Chitral River. This was a very small scale business. At that time timber was not allowed to be extracted from Chitral

forests without the permission of Mehta of Chitral. However the cutting of trees increased manifolds in 1969 when Chitral was merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and declared a district. This opened up an opportunity for the forest department. Forests were being mindlessly cut down by timber mafia with the collaboration of the forest department. Millions of sq feet timber was sold to timber contractors. In 1984 Forest Development Corporation joined this lucrative business. So from 1984 to 1993 this "gang of three" further speeded up the cutting of forests.

In 1993 under Prime Minister Moin Qureshi's government a ban was imposed on cutting of forests. But the cutting and smuggling of timber continued as usual. The remaining 1.8 per cent of forest will also be lost if cutting of forest continues. It is sad that the forest department does not believe in replacing plants and trees. Reckless cutting of trees has led to increased pollution in Chitral. This pollution is the result of increasing number of vehicles, use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, particularly spraying of low quality and expired pesticides, presence of heaps of solid waste. Climatic changes have occurred due to increased amount of carbon dioxide, carbon mono oxide, nitrogen dioxide and other poisonous gases. Chitral is now caught in a difficult climatic cycle. Temperature is increasing, snowfall takes place at odd times, rainfall is low so several streams have dried up. Heart diseases and cancer is becoming common due to

air pollution. It is said that 60 percent of Pakistani children fall ill due to water pollution.

At present there are about 400 glaciers in Chitral which provide clean water to 500 villages of Chitral for drinking, agriculture and farming. The glaciers in Chitral are located at the altitude of 15,000 to 20,000 feet. Due to rise in temperature the glaciers are undergoing rapid changes. Due to quick melting of snow deep ponds have been formed at the base of many of the glaciers. Scientists are of the view that if melting continues at the current rate the ponds will spill any time. This might lead to destruction of many villages. A few years ago a village called Sanoghar was hit by severe flood due to spilling over of a lake. Large boulders came down towards the village and a large part of the village was destroyed. Because of big boulders the land of the village was no more cultivable. More incidents of this kind may occur if temperature continues to rise due to air pollution. Out of season snowfall has been observed these days. This damages crops.

A few years ago heavy snowfall occurred in the month of October which destroyed fruit and trees and the paddy crop. People suffered from flu due to sudden decrease in temperature. About 40 percent of Chitral is facing acute drought due to low rainfall. There is a shortage of water for drinking and for agriculture.

Due to air pollution and increase in temperature fruit, vegetables and flowers have been adversely affected. Apricot and apples rot on the trees. Various pretty flowers do not grow. Polluted water from fields and orchards flows into canals. There is no proper sewerage system in villages.

In Chitral water from glacier is very clean and is good for drinking. We should try to save water and air from pollution. Cutting of trees should be banned and new trees should be planted so that Chitral could be saved from environmental disaster.

Swat: do not cut more trees

Daily Azadi, Swat, May 08, 2010

Editorial: Many trees have been cut down in Kabal, Matta and other areas due to security reasons. Orchards and fields along roadsides are also being destroyed. This has caused concern among the people. It is said that the security forces have now decided to cut down more trees in these areas so that the militants cannot carry out their activities from behind these trees. Military authorities might be aware of the pros and cons of this decision but the beauty of Swat valley is dependent on its river and its lush green trees. It is because of these trees that Swat has such a pleasant climate. During the recent militancy in Swat forests have been completely cut down. If the remaining trees are cut in the name of security it will not only have an adverse effect on the weather and climate of Swat but will destroy the beauty of the valley. Trees are part of natural beauty. Some people consider cutting of trees a murder. We hope that the military authorities will pay attention to this and more trees will not be cut down.

Mountains, Forests Glaciers and Rivers are valuable assets of the province: Wajid Ali Khan

All citizens should be motivated to stop illegal cutting of trees

Daily Aaj, Abbottabad, June 06, 2010

Peshawar (Aaj News) Provincial minister for environment Wajid Ali Khan has said that mountains, forests, rivers and glaciers are valuable assets of the province. Life of all the countrymen is dependent on these natural

resources. Other provinces should also invest here and help us in conserving these resources. He expressed these views in his address as the chief guest at a function organized to celebrate international environment day. He

said that the present government has taken several measures for protection of the environment. These include establishment of offices in three cities and setting up of environmental tribunal in Abbottabad. He said that climatic

changes world over are a challenge for the whole world. He said for keeping the environment clean we need to stop illegal cutting of trees, arrange proper disposal of wastes

and grow more and more trees. The minister gave “green journalist” awards to the journalists who wrote best articles on environment. First award was

given to Adil Saeed, second to Mohammad Fayyaz, and the third to Mohammad Ali.

Seminar and declamation contest held at forest institute

Students made speeches in Urdu and English on environment issues

Daily Mashriq Peshawar, June 06, 2010

Peshawar (Campus Reporter) Pakistan Forest Institute, University campus maintained its tradition of holding seminar and declamation contest on the occasion of World Environment Day. Students of PFI institutes from all over the country participated in this seminar. Conservator forest Dr Aayaz

Khattak was the chief guest. Director of the institute Asif Jah, assistant professor Memoona and many students attended the function. Senior forest officer Tanvir Ahmed presided over the seminar. Students delivered speeches in Urdu and English while students of PFI Model Schools presented a tableau. In

Urdu declamation contest student Sudhir Ahmed Mughal stood first, Awais Ahmed and Farrukh Nadeem from Azad Kashmir stood second and third respectively. In English declamation contest Sadaf Rafiq from Sindh stood first while Rizwan Khan and Gohar Rehman from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stood second and third.

Peach and plum orchard destroyed by mysterious disease

Farmers suffer huge losses; Prime Minister’s package fails to provide relief to farmers; During the MMA government loans were being given at low mark up rate. Present government has stopped that scheme; Press conference by Khan Sahib

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, June 09, 2010

Peshawar (correspondent) Haji Khan Sahib a resident of Armar area of Peshawar has said in a press conference that only big land owners are benefiting from the prime minister’s package. Small farmers did not get any relief. During the past two years peach and plum have been attacked by a mysterious disease destroying fruit worth millions of rupees.

Addressing a press conference in Peshawar Press Club he said that Malakand Division has suffered serious losses due to the ongoing wave of terrorism and now the military operation has destroyed our agriculture. He said that the MMA government has launched a scheme to give loans to farmers at a very low mark up. But the new government has dumped the

scheme. He demanded that relief should be provided to small farmers under the prime minister’s package. He also demanded that the cause of strange disease in peach and plum fruit orchards should be investigated. He threatened to launch a protest movement if his demands were not fulfilled.



Chapter 06

Orchards

‘No botanical survey ever done in country’

Dawn Islamabad, June 18, 2010

By Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI, June 17: Pakistan is losing its flora at an alarming rate. It has the second highest rate of deforestation in the world, and studies suggest it would lose all naturally grown trees within 15 years if no mass-scale conservation efforts were put in place.

The awareness of plant significance in government circles may be gauged from the fact that there is no department in the country that works for plant protection. Hence, no botanical survey has ever been carried out in the country’s history.

An authentic red data book on plants has never been produced and no importance has ever been attached to plant conservation while declaring an area protected.

These were some of the important points highlighted by noted botanist Prof Dr Mohammad Qaiser at a seminar on conservation of biodiversity held in the arts auditorium of Karachi University on Thursday.

Dr Qaiser is the vice-chancellor of the Federal Urdu University for Arts, Science and Technology and also the co-editor of Flora of Pakistan. The book carrying

scientific details of all the indigenous flowering plant species of the country is the first comprehensive work on the subject.

Giving his presentation on floral diversity of Pakistan, Dr Qaiser said the country blessed with some of the highest peaks in the world, glaciers and a 1,050-kilometre-long coastline was a land of contrasts in many respects. This diversity in geographical conditions had given birth to a huge variety in flora and fauna.

A numerical analysis of Pakistan’s flora, he said, had shown that there were 221 flowering families and 5,700 flowering species. Of them, 65 per cent families were represented by fewer than 10 per cent species and about 405 species were endemic.

“The country could be divided into four regions according to the geographic distribution of plant species of which the most rich in terms of floral biodiversity is the Irano-Turanian region that include Gilgit-Baltistan, parts of Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. It has the bulk of floral species, that is, 45.6 per cent of the total floral species,” he said.

Referring to deforestation, he said Pakistan had the second highest rate of deforestation after Brazil in the world and it was annually losing four to six per cent of woody biomass.

“It is claimed that 4.5 to 4.7 per cent of the total land mass in the country is covered by forests. But there is no ground survey to support that claim. Studies, however, suggest that Pakistan with this current rate of forest depletion would lose all its naturally grown trees in 10 to 15 years,” he said.

Regarding strategies for plant conservation, he said there was a dire need to carry out a botanical survey of the whole country to determine the actual status of all plant species.

“Priority should be given to endemic species in conservation. Researches have shown that a majority of the over 50 endemic species found in the northern areas and Sindh are critically endangered. There is a dire need to protect these plants and carry out monitoring of vegetation,” he said.

No conservation effort, however, could be successful if local communities were not involved and a sustainable solution to their

financial problems was not found, he added.

Speaking on the impact of climate change, Dr Moazzam Ali Khan of the Institute of Environmental Studies said the impact of the phenomenon would be severe in coming years on Pakistan, already facing a number of challenges.

Giving some statistics on Sindh, he said: "The 1996-2000 data has shown that the average rainfall has declined 10 to 15 per cent and the frequency of draught has increased. The underground and surface water resources are depleting fast with the increasing pollution.

There has been 50 per cent reduction in crop yield over the

years in Sindh and farmers have been forced to change crop pattern. About 5,670,000 hectares have been lost to sea. The 17 major creeks have virtually turned into saline creeks as there has been drastic decline in freshwater release over the years.

The freshwater flow downstream the Kotri barrage has decreased from 150 million acres feet in 1955 to less than 2MAF."

These conditions, he said, would get severe in coming years.

"The poor are facing numerous hardships, many of whom have been forced to migrate to urban areas. Studies have shown that wheat consumption has gone down in Pakistan as people earlier taking

three meals a day are now surviving on two meals."

Prof Pirzada Qasim Raza Siddiqui, the KU vice-chancellor; Prof Shahana Urooj Kazmi, pro-vice-chancellor; Dr Pirzada Jamal Siddiqui and Dr Anjum Perveen also spoke.

The Centre for Plant Conservation, the Centre of Excellence in Marine Biology, the Institute of Environmental Studies, the Institute of Marine Sciences and the departments of marine sciences, microbiology and zoology had jointly organised the event.

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Unidentified persons cut 1000 loquat trees

Daily Azadi, Swat, May 07, 2010

Takht Bhai (Special Correspondent) Unidentified persons have cut down 1000 loquat trees from an orchard. Owner of the orchard Sameenullah son of

Inamullah has registered a report in Mardan police station.

Gardens are historical assets; action must be taken again those destroying gardens: Aijaz Afzal;

There were 28 gardens in Peshawar but only 8 remain there; gardens have been destroyed by land grabbers; petitioners; Chief justice Peshawar High Court orders archeology department to present records

Daily Mashriq, Peshawar, May 13, 2010

Peshawar (Courts Reporter) On a writ petition filed against the destruction of historical gardens of Mughal period Peshawar High Court has sought pictures and records of the gardens. In the

petition filed by Shakil Wahidullah it has been said that out of 28 gardens in Peshawar only 8 are still intact.

Even these remaining gardens have been occupied by the land mafia. Wazir Bagh and Shahi Bagh are part of historical heritage but football grounds, schools, colleges and fun land have been

built on that land. This has destroyed the gardens. The historical gardens have been turned into housing colonies. Chief Justice Aijaz Afzal has said that these gardens are part of national

heritage and action should be taken against those responsible for destroying the garden. The petitioner has been asked to present old and new pictures of these gardens. The court has

directed the department of archeology to present record of the gardens on the next hearing.

Provincial government given notice to make Peshawar city of gardens

Most of the gardens in Peshawar have been occupied by land mafia; petitioner
Daily Aaj, Abbottabad, May 13, 2010

Peshawar (News Reporter) Peshawar High Court has directed the department of archeology, local government and culture to present record. On a petition filed by Shakil Waheedullah Chief justice of High Court Aijaz Afzal Khan and Justice Sajjad Hussain

Shah have given the opinion that the petitioner is a resident of Peshawar and that Peshawar was known as city of gardens but the land mafia has ruined all that gardens. Wazir Bagh used to be a vast garden spread over hundreds of acres of land but it has been

ruined. Similarly the Shahi Bagh was spread over several acres of land over which now Government College, Municipal Inter College, Niaz Stadium and football ground have been built. Other gardens of the city have also been ruined and buildings have been built on those.

Agriculture is the livelihood of residents of Hunza Valley

Orchards under threat of being washed away

Daily Aaj, Abbottabad, May 20, 2010

Livelihood of the residents of Hunza valley depends on agriculture. Fruit like apricot, grapes, apples, peaches, pear, pomegranate, and cherries grown in the pollution free environment are perfect in quality. However, due to the formation of an artificial lake at Attabad the district administration of Hunza-Nagar has directed the people to leave the area. The formation of lake at Attabad started in January 2010. Due to the earthquakes in 2002 and 2005 cracks had appeared in mountains. Gradually these cracks grew wider. As the livelihood of the local people is dependent on agriculture they continued their usual life without paying much attention to these cracks. These cracks kept growing so much so that an NGO working in area, Karakoram Area Development Organization and the Geological Survey of Pakistan conducted a detailed survey of the area. The Geological Survey of Pakistan conducted the survey on the request of National Disaster Management Authority so that the government organizations could prepare themselves for coping with disaster. Unfortunately the recommendations of this report have not been implemented.

On 4 January 2010 an incident took place which killed 19 people. Bodies of 13 people were recovered immediately while three others were found later. Three bodies are still missing. This loss of life has activated the government institutions. Compensation was paid to the families of the dead within a week of the incident and the survivors were shifted to safer sites. All government institutions came to work but the delay had already caused some irreparable damage. After talking to the people of the area the following issues came forth: 1. the government is giving figures about the length, breadth and depth of the Attabad lake but is not saying how much damage will be inflicted if the lake spills over. 2. majority of the people of Hunza are not prepared for coping with any emergency because there is no civil defense system in place. The common people are unaware of basic needs from storing grain and fuel to first aid. 3. the media is not playing its role properly. People are skeptic about the possible devastation due to the lake. Reporting is not based on factual conditions but on sentiments. Most of the people who are covering Attabad lake issue are not from Gilgit-Baltistan. They are unaware of the local language and culture. They are also unaware of the

development process in the area. This is the reason that they are unable to present a realistic picture. It seems as if the truth has been buried underneath the rubble that has blocked water of Hunza River and it will be revealed only when all standing crops get submerged and all cattle is swept away. The lake formed on 4 January submerged three villages Aainabad, Shashkat and Gulmat. Government department had not made any forecast about the inundation of these villages. Government departments are claiming that dam break will not cause any damage. Common people are not ready to trust that. Fear is quite obvious not only among the people living in the low lying areas of Hunza valley but also among those who are living on the hills. People are asking many questions while those answering the questions give weak arguments and advise people to trust in God. 5. No arrangements were made to move out the cattle from the low lying villages of Hunza valley which the government had forced the people to evacuate. If these areas are inundated then the loss of cattle would be much higher than any other losses. 6. Attabad lake is a clear example inefficiency and negligence of government departments. We should have learned lessons from the past. 7. In a statement on 14 May China has offered all possible help to the affected people. The government should appeal to the international community for support. The entire Hunza valley should be declared a calamity-hit area. Volunteers all over the country should be put on alert

to handle any emergency. 8. political parties are not happy with the government policy about Attabad lake. Officials of the NGOs criticize the government policy off the record while the political leaders keep saying openly that the government should prepare for the emergency situation. Disaster management should be taught in educational institutions. Newspapers and other media sources should be used for dissemination of information. Establishing FM radio stations can be of help in these areas. 9. Member of Gilgit-Baltistan assembly Maulana Shahab has said that the lake has taken the shape of a water bomb and the government is ill-prepared to meet this challenge. Muslim League-Q has said that the government has failed to release water from the lake in a timely manner. Local organization of the MQM has also expressed dissatisfaction over the rescue and rehabilitation efforts of the government. Imam of Jamia Masjid Gilgit Syed Rahat Hussaini has said that political parties should stop criticizing each other and should chalk out a strategy to meet this challenge. 10. The local government has started removing wooden bridges. This will cut off communication between various villages. Majority of people living in the localities on hills have moved out of the area and youth organizations have been organized for the look after of cattle.



Chapter 07

Miscellaneous

Springtime

'kachnar' augments beauty of twin city

The News Rawalpindi/Islamabad, April 02, 2010

By Ishrat Hayatt

Rawalpindi: - These days the 'kachnar' tree is in full bloom all over the sister cities and what a pretty sight it is, but you might have missed it because there are many trees in bloom these days, with flowers in similar hues catching the eye. But remember, the 'Kachnar' is recognizable because it towers above other trees growing by its side.

'Kachnar' is the local name for a variety of medium size deciduous trees of the Bauhinieae plant family and its natural habitat is from Burma across the subcontinent almost up to Afghanistan. It is an ornamental tree with drooping branches and in spring it produces a rich harvest of pink/mauve and white blossoms- there are also pure white 'Kachnar'-which, if examined from up close, you will see they resemble orchids-in fact it is sometimes called the 'Orchid tree.' While orchids are considered 'exotic' these flowers are not as appreciated as much as they should be because they are 'common.' (Does this sound familiar in context to other such anomalies of how we perceive things around us?) Anyway, these

plants are easily recognized by their leaves, each constituting of two identical halves, folded in the middle and when opened they assume a kind of heart shaped look. It bears pod like fruit during early summer and these becomes red on ripening by the beginning of autumn, when seed can be collected for planting. The 'kachnar' tree has nearly half an inch thick bark, dark brown in color with vertical cracks. When given a cut it dispels a gum having limited medicinal value, rich in proteins, but it has not been exploited commercially.

And did I say 'ornamental?' yes, but the 'Kachnar' is actually a very useful tree to have around. Besides its beautiful flowering period when no leaves are visible, the young flower buds can be picked for a variety of tasty food items by serving as a vegetable on its own or with meat and mince, while some people also make pickles from the buds. Try it out but don't forget to lightly fry them first so they do not become soggy and break up.

Other information available says the leaves from a very potent fodder after being chopped,



economically and systematically for milch cattle. 'Kachnar' wood is red in colour, with red and or black streaks near the core and is fairly hard in texture so it is generally used for agricultural implements, in addition to firewood. The 'Kachnar' is a good species for planting in open wastes as well as around agricultural land, so people interested in covering their fallow land, having rich fodder for their dairy cattle; beautifying their drive-ways and landscape or otherwise enriching the environment, should grow this species.

Photo by Naveed Akram.

Letter to Editor

Trimming plants along Sharea Faisal

Dawn Islamabad, April 09, 2010

PLANTS were planted on both sides of Sharea Faisal, as well as on the separating portion between the one-way traffic, about two years ago. This was a good move.

But these required proper trimming of the branches. This will create a good effect on trees and will also improve the beautification of roadsides.

There are also a number of signals such as at Nursery, Mehran Hotel and Awami Markaz which are hidden by tree branches and are not visible from a distance.

I would like to draw the attention of authorities concerned to take up the matter seriously and arrange them in such a way that these plants should be helpful instead of being a hindrance.

NAVEED KAMRAN, Karachi

Letter to Editor

Trimming plants along Sharea Faisal

Dawn Islamabad, April 21, 2010

THIS is apropos of a letter by Naveed Kamran (April 9) who has appreciated the efforts of the City District Government Karachi for making the environment of the metropolis greener.

However, he has suggested that it ensure proper trimming of the densely growing trees on the median strip and on both sides of Sharea Faisal which obstructs drivers' view.

It may be relevant to point out here that the massive planting of toxic mangrove trees (Conocarpus) like paper mulberry used for greening Islamabad in the early sixties has turned into a permanent nuisance

for the area residents as they keep growing and growing.

The capital's city officials also opted for its quick growing feature alone against the professional advice of botanists, horticulturists and ecologists of national repute who had clearly outlined its nuisance value.

Likewise Conocarpus erectus is a toxic alien invasive species which causes asthma and respiratory disorders. It has been excessively used all along major arteries, road islands, green belts and parks and gardens all across the city.

Even the vicinity by the sea shore and coastal areas of East and

South Karachi have not been spared. It is apprehended that with the passage of time these plants are going to become a bigger nuisance in terms of hurting the environment, making it unfriendly at the cost of public health.

They need to be trimmed regularly as they grow real fast, which will consume valuable time and energy and cost heavily to the Civic Agency concerned. In other words, it will be a waste of time, money and energy.

SARA ZAFAR
Karachi

Woodland Carnival celebrated at City School

The News Rawalpindi/Islamabad, May 02, 2010

By Afshan S. Khan

Rawalpindi: - A spectacular display of talent and creativity was witnessed at the Woodland Carnival 2010 held at The City School, Nursery Branch, Harley Street.

The parents were spellbound to see the creativity and projects made by young students. All projects based on designated themes were displayed outside whereas classrooms were transformed into

different themes with the help of recycled material, fancy gears and costumes and usable items.

Talking to 'The News.' Head mistress Sumaira Shafiq said that the children prepared things with their own imagination of course

with the guidance of their teachers. "The students love to indulge in creative activities, which is good for them," she added.

The chief guests on the occasion were MNA Anjum Aqeel and Air Commodore (r) Skindar Shah, who were quite impressed by the performance of students. They also praised the hard work and dedication of teachers.

When parents entered each classroom the children greeted them with a loud 'good morning' and then introduced their work, which they had done in the class. "The confidence with which the children are presenting their work is remarkable," one of the parents remarked.

The first class was play group, which was given the theme of sea animals. The sea animals were hanged from the ceiling and

created the right ambiance of underwater. Children had prepared stuffed animals and their faces on paper plates and photo frames. Octopuses, fish, sea horses, dolphins, sharks and many others were painted on the walls. The children in this class were 2 ½ to 3 years old.

The nursery class was given the theme of farm animals. Horses, cows and goat were made with hand stuffed with wool. The children were wearing headgears and costumes of farm animals. The village scene was also created in the classroom.

The KG class displayed pet animals and made various things like coin boxes, various animal faces with used balls. A big dollhouse was also placed in the centre of the class that housed various pet animals. The KG students also presented world of

dinosaurs in which they had prepared various kinds of dinosaurs.

The Junior II-C presented insects and the whole class was filled with creepy crawlers. Spiders, bee and ants were everywhere, which admired the parents.

The junior I-C presented carnivore, omnivore and herbivore animals whereas junior I-T presented wildlife. The students greeted the parents with the typical 'hoo haa' as the jungle people do in the wild.

The junior II-C presented birds in which students had prepared ostriches and beautiful penguins.

The Nursery-T presented garden animals in which butterflies, parrots and ladybirds were shown.

World's forest cover shrinking: report

Business Recorder Islamabad, May 03, 2010

WASHINGTON: The world's forest cover shrunk by 3.1 percent between 2000 and 2005, according to satellite observations detailed in a study. Hardest-hit were boreal forests - the world's far northern sub-arctic forests - which account for about one-third of this loss, said the report, published in the April 26-30 issue of the Annals of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

There are several causes of forest destruction, including human cutting and natural phenomena such as fires ignited by lightning, the report said.

Data on changes in the world's forest cover are needed to estimate the impact of carbon dioxide emissions, one of the main

greenhouse gases, and to set parameters for "global-scale biogeochemical, hydrological, biodiversity and climate models," read the report.

The total forest loss between 2000 and 2005 was estimated to be 1,011,000 square kilometers, the researchers said. Boreal forests, which account for 26.7 percent of the world's forest cover, showed the greatest shrinkage over this period, losing 4 percent, or 34.7 percent of the total forest loss during the study period. The report's authors, from South Dakota State University and the State University of New York, attributed two-thirds of the loss in boreal forest cover to fires.

Tropical humid forests, which cover 11.5 million square kilometers and represent the world's largest forested surface, lost 2.4 percent of their cover during the research period, or 27 percent of the overall loss. Tropical forests in dry regions - 7.13 million square kilometers, or 21.8 percent of the world's forest surface - shrunk 2.9 percent between 2000 and 2005, representing 20.2 percent of total forest loss.

Geographically, North America, which had a 5.8 million square kilometer forest cover in 2000, suffered the biggest loss during the study period, losing 5.1 percent or 295,000 square kilometers, representing 29.2 percent of the overall loss. - AFP

Holy Trees

Dawn Islamabad, May 14, 2010

ONE has heard of holy men, holy places and even holy cows but of 'holy cows'. However, we have these in Pakistan now.

The government has brought palm trees from Saudi Arabia and planted these on the motorways. They did not survive for than a

few days. When they die they are replaced by a new consignment and this process has been repeated a number of times at considerable cost.

The palm tree is not indigenous to this part of the country, nor is it particularly attractive to look at.

Pine trees or the 'chinar' would have been much more appropriate but these do not grow in the 'holy land'

M. Asghar Khan
Islamabad

BB road to have pine trees

The Nation Islamabad, June 16, 2010

By Israr Ahmed

Rawalpindi: - Hundreds of pine trees are being planted from Chandni Chowk to 6th Road in a bid to give a beautiful green look to city's busiest Benazir Bhutto Road (BBR). In the next phase, pine trees would be planted from 6th Road to Faizabad.

"Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) is making all out efforts for giving a beautiful and green look to the city and also trying to change the micro climate of Rawalpindi," said Parks and

horticulture Agency (PHA) Assistant Director (AD) Sheikh Teri while talking to The Nation here on Tuesday.

He said that in first phase more than two hundred pine trees would be planted from Chandni Chowk to 6th Road. At least 120 pine trees have been planted so far while remaining work would be completed soon, he added. He said that RDA and PHA were also contemplating to expand this project till Faizabad

He said that another project has been started to keep the jewelers market beautiful saying plantation pottery would be placed in front of the jeweler shops with the cooperation of Jewellery Association. It would be the first joint venture project of PHA and Jewellers Association, Murree Road, Rawalpindi. Jewellers Association is taking keen interest in beautifying the city, he added

Nature talk:

Problematic palm trees

Dawn Islamabad, June 20, 2010

Text & Photographs By Zahrah Nasir

Q: There are three palm trees, planted about five years ago in our garden and they have grown to an average height of nine feet. For the last 3-4 weeks one of the trees looks like it is dying. All the leaves have turned pale brown except for one shoot of new leaves which is green but still to open up. What can we do? According to one mali this happened due to the long foggy spell we had in Lahore last December and January. Someone else said that it is due to the termite we have in our lawn. If this is so, then why is only one palm affected?



A: Unfortunately, you omitted to tell me the species of palm tree you are having problems with but I will still do the best I can. The fog is unlikely to be the culprit as very dry air/wind affects palm trees far more than foggy conditions. Is this one tree perhaps more exposed to a cold wind than the others? If so, then this could be the problem and you will need to provide some kind of shelter from the prevailing breeze. If not, then yes, termite could be responsible seeing that you already have them in your lawn. Termite is more liable to attack one tree at a time than go for them all at once. I suggest that you take care of the termite problem on an emergency basis before you lose any more trees. Give your sick palm tree a heavy feed of liquid seaweed-based organic fertiliser with a high potash content, do this once a month and pray that it recovers in time. The fact that it is trying to make new growth is a good sign.

Q: I live near the sea in Karachi and planted four coconut palms about 18 months ago. They were doing fine but suddenly one of them has started to die. Its leaves have turned brown and brittle and the tree is becoming thinner. Someone mentioned that the root may have termite so I put termite medicine but it hasn't helped. What should I do now?

A: Please refer to the previous answer.

Q: I have a coconut palm in my garden in PECHS, Karachi, and it used to bear big coconuts through the year. Recently though, the size of the nuts has reduced and some of the buds dry up without blossoming. What should I do to resolve both these problems?

A: Sounds like your tree needs feeding. You haven't mentioned any visible pests and I am presuming that you irrigate on a reasonably regular basis. Use the liquid organic fertiliser mentioned in the answer to the first question. If this doesn't solve the problems, please get back to me and I will make alternative suggestions.

Q: I have a two year old orange tree but it doesn't fruit. What shall I do about this? Also, there are lots of butterfly larvae on it. How can I get rid of them?

A: Patience my gardening friend! Orange trees don't begin fruiting until they are at least four to five years old, some take even longer. Feed and irrigate your tree regularly to keep it in tip-top health. As for the larvae, these are probably moths not butterflies and can badly damage your tree. If there are not too many pick them off by hand, otherwise spray them with a mixture of one tablespoon liquid soap, two tablespoons cooking oil, one tablespoon baking soda made up to one gallon with warm water. This should suffocate them nicely! Repeat at two week intervals if the bugs do not disappear at first try.

Q: My four date palms are now one year old but they only have four leaves. How can I speed up their growth?

A: You can't! Date palms grow very slowly indeed. Ensuring that they have adequate, organic nourishment in the form of old, well rotted manure, will help them to retain their strength but will not speed up their natural growing process.

Q: I reside in Sukkur and would like to know if citrus fruit can be grown in large pots.

A: Yes. Citrus fruits can be cultivated, very successfully, in large clay pots and other suitable containers. Lemons, particularly Chinese ones, do well in pots as do both grapefruit and small to medium size orange trees. If you can find kumquat trees then these thrive exceptionally well in pots. Good luck!

Please continue sending your gardening queries to zahrahnasir@hotmail.com. Remember to include your location. Answers to selected questions will appear in a future issue of the magazine. This takes time. The writer will not respond directly by e-mail. E-mails with attachments will not be opened.

The writer's garden is private property; no trespassing please.

A walk through the jungle

For those who have a flair for a serene walk through woods, Thandiani-Nathia

Gali track is an attractive option in the summers

The News on Sunday, June 20, 2010

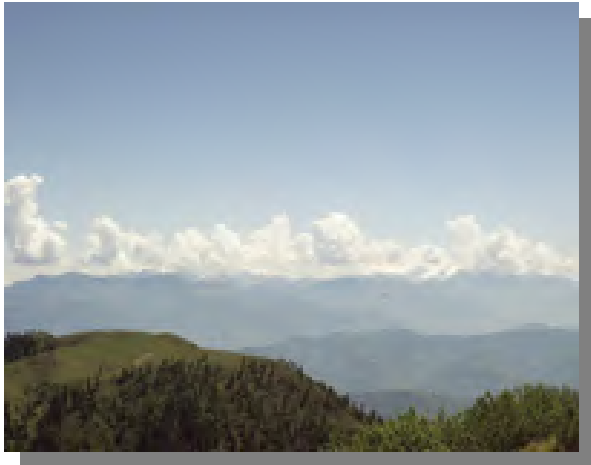
By Irfan Ahmad

IT had become very dark in the Dagri jungle, said to be the home of leopards. The three of us were quite tired, having started rather late from Thandiani. A slight

error in time management and we ended up in the dark forest, still an hour's walk from our destination -- the Dagri Forest Rest House. We cursed our guide who

left us and perhaps had already reached the camping site with his dumb pack mule.

We should have pitched our camps by now. But there we were, lost in the dark, quiet forest without any idea as to how far we were from our destination. A flashlight in the daypack carried by one of us became our saviour in that thickening darkness. We kept moving on the uneven and twisted track with light focused just around our feet for another hour when we



saw signs of a passage on our right with a tiny board affixed on a log that read 'Dagri Forest Rest House'; a heartening relief to the rundown trekkers.

It was a star-studded night as we reached the open lawns of the rest house. It had taken us 8 hours from Thandiani but we were relaxed, looking at the widespread illumination of Abbottabad far away in the depth, knowing that we shall have a fresh start in the morning for Nathia Gali via Miranjani, the highest peak in Galiat region.

Thandiani-Nathia Gali track, with a length of 26 kilometres, passes along Bairan Gali and Dagri villages while winding through the pine jungle on slopes of Galiat Mountains. It was an old dream to walk on this much heard of and treaded on passage said to have enchanting vistas with scenic view of snow-capped Himalayas, whispering sound of wind passing through pines, flower-studded meadows, fluttering butterflies, luring melody of twittering birds and few singing springs of water.

It was late sunny morning as we started from Thandiani, a scenic hill station around 34 kilometres away from Abbottabad with a panoramic view of sprawling towns of Abbottabad and Mansehra. Guides with luggage carrying mule are conveniently available for up to Rs7000 for Nathia Gali with one night stay at Dagri where the Forest Department's rest house sits in

a shabby condition since 2005 earthquake. However, it offers good opportunity for camping with a beautiful and vast view of Abbottabad towards its lawns. Apart from a couple of water springs between Bairan Gali and Dagri, water is not available on this track; hence at least drinking water should be carried along.

Starting this track from Nathia Gali is not advisable, as it starts with a steep hike in the very beginning towards Miranjani. This could be demoralising as it had been for a group of trekkers whom we met at Dagri. We pitched camp, took our meal and sat around a big fire in the cold and windy night; we had a magically beautiful view of flickering flames, twinkling stars and distant constellation of electricity-lit Abbottabad as the night became deeper, colder and more mysterious.

Cold and bright morning greeted us as we packed up and moved on towards Nathia Gali via Miranjani top. Sunshine penetrating through the tall pine, juniper and deodar trees was adding to the beauty of the track mostly covered with colours of fallen leaves. Ladybugs and butterflies were frolicking around the colourful flowers along the track. Air was full of peculiar jungle aroma and carried pleasant vibration originating from fresh breeze passing through woods creating a beautiful ambiance of a captivating spring holiday. We were amused and were absorbing the cherished sensation of that atmosphere.

It had been a largely straight way up till the point from where trekkers have two options of reaching Nathia Gali; a shorter way through Miranjani top with a conveniently steep way up along its expanded ridge; or a longer way evading the hike to the top. It was a bright day with clear sky so we opted for the hike to have a scenic view of the entire Galiat vales and snow-capped northern Himalayas. Soon after the start of ascent along the mountain ridge, we came above the tree line. It was nice to see the clear sky with its peculiar blue tinge which is seen only at the mountains. Bright afternoon offered a beautiful view of the entire surrounding but took its toll. We were sweating and had to stop now and then to sooth our breath but it was nice to have a gradually more encompassing and wider view of Galiat Mountains. Mukshpuri Top, which has a convenient hike of around 90 minutes from Dunga Gali, was appearing starkly attractive with its cluster of trees cantered in the vast meadows.

Top of Miranjani offered a fascinating view of the cities of Abbottabad and Mansehra, a river snaking through the valley, misty and blurred view of Tarbella Dam's lake and snow covered tops of upper Himalayas from Kashmir in the East to Karakorum Highway on

the West. We could also see Thandiani Mountains, where we had started our track from last morning, at a fairly long distance across the green thickness of jungle in the valleys beneath. As we were enjoying the scenery and taking some rest at the top, an infuriated swarm of bees attacked us, making us rush downhill. Luckily, they did not find us interesting enough to pursue. We had reached Nathia Gali in 5 hours, since our start from Dagri, and descended on the road near Governor's House where our driver was waiting for us.

With a two days weekend, this fabulous and easy track is an attractive option in the summers, preferably

before the monsoon period, for those who have a flair for a good, long and serene walk through woods. It provides an opportunity to be in the wilderness even with availability of communication through cellular phone, while not being away from the urban area.

The writer is a banker by profession.

He can be reached at:

erfanahmed@hotmail.com

English Translations of Urdu Clippings

Haripur: Hundreds of trees cut down during strikes

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 03, 2010

Panian (Shamal Correspondent)
During the recurring strikes in Haripur hundreds of trees were cut down. Forest department has

confiscated timber worth millions of rupees. During the movement rejecting the new name of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa numerous trees were

cut down from Dingi tubewell to Darwesh area.

Entry of Afghan shepherds should be banned in Jabar, Deolai area

Cattle owned by Afghans finish seasonal pastures which causes starvation among local cattle.

Daily Shamal, Abbottabad, May 10, 2010

Jabar (Shamal Correspondent)
Entry of Afghans should be banned in Jabar Deolai. Their entry is creating many problems for the local people. The Afghans

own large number of sheep and horses. These animals eat all the seasonal pastures. When local people go there with their animals the animals find nothing to eat.

We will not tolerate presence of Afghans in the area, the local residents said.

Baffa, eyewitness say fuel wood on roadside caused accident

Daily Aaj, Abbottabad, May 11, 2010

Baffa (Crime Reporter)
Eyewitnesses said that the fuel wood lying along the roadside

caused the accident near Eidgah on Khawajgan road. The residents had brought this to the notice of

the administration several time but the negligence of the administration led to the accident.

Cultivation of Chinese fruit plant ‘Hep Haffe’ should be promoted: Governor

Awais Ghani briefed about Chinese fruit; Hep Haffe is used for juice
and as remedy for jaundice

Daily Aaj, Abbottabad, May 12, 2010

Peshawar (Aaj News) Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Dr Zafar Altaf met governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Peshawar and briefed him about the cultivation of Chinese fruit tree ‘hep heffe’ He asked the governor to support the cultivation of the tree on commercial level. Vice Chancellor of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa agriculture university Dr Khan Bahadur Marwat was also present in the meeting. The plant has already been introduced in the Malakand University.

This plant has medicinal properties. It is not only used for juices but is also a remedy for

jaundice and high blood pressure. The governor agreed to the proposal that cultivation of this plant can bring improvement in the climate and life of the people. He lauded the agricultural university for its plan to cultivate this fruit on 40 acres of land.

Trees, Taliban and the military

Daily Azadi Swat 27 May 2010

Dr Sultan-e-Rome (Swat)

Trees are a blessing and a gift of God. Life of humans and animals depends on trees. Whether it is food or shelter, whether it is small huts or huge mansions, whether it is fuel for cooking meals or for keeping the homes warm in winter somehow or the other we need trees. Trees are beauty of the earth and also ensure survival of living beings. Swat valley which is famous for its natural beauty since ancient times has a variety of trees.

Though trees were being cut down mercilessly at one time but the ruler of Swat Mian

Abdul Wadood aka Bacha Sahib and Miangul Jahanzeb known as wali sahib took such measures that new trees were planted in the area and cutting of trees was stopped. There was a time when no one could prune the trees in his house without the official permission. Anyone doing this without permission had to pay heavy fines. Later this law was slightly relaxed and in 1960 an order was issued that the owners can cut down the

trees within the boundaries of their houses or orchards. The owners have a right to cut down fruit trees but shady trees cannot be cut down unless a replacement tree is planted on the side two or three years ahead of cutting a tree.

Besides that there were certain rules and limitations on pruning of trees and anyone violating those rules was fined. Anyone who happened to cut the trees which were not allowed by the authorities had to pay the fine and also return the wood to the government. The situation totally changed after the decision by the government of Pakistan to merge Swat into its province. Laws were not followed and due to the violation of laws forests vanished in Swat very rapidly. However the people of Swat started planting more trees on their lands. That is why while the mountains in Swat are without trees the plains are full of trees.

Unfortunately such activities were started in Swat during the past few years that the people of the area faced many hardships. Trees and

forests of the valley were also affected by the situation.

Swat and the people of Swat bore the brunt of this dangerous game. It was in the presence of the military that the humans and trees of Swat were being slaughtered by the Taliban. The hardship continued for these elements even after the removal of the Taliban from the scene because the military officials ordered cutting down of trees off and on. Either the residents of the area were asked to cut the trees or the soldiers used to cut those mercilessly. The military officials were taking these steps in violation of the Islamic rules of war and also in violation of the protection of environment act 1997.

The trees which were planted and grown by the people of Swat are not only an asset but contribute a great deal to the environment. It is hard to understand why this valuable asset is disliked by the military authorities. Why trees are being slaughtered. This was being done by the Taliban but now it has

spread even wider. However there is clear difference between the two. The Taliban used to cut down those trees and orchards whose owners were their enemies or were supporters of the government in their view. Later when they realized their insensitivity to the trees they made announcements about ban on cutting trees through their broadcasts. On the other hand

military officials do whatever they want. They simply issue verbal orders without thinking about its effects and results. The announcements of cutting down or pruning of trees under the pretext of security are made with the approval of the high military officials or the military official at post uses his own discretion.

If the military is present in Swat not for the safety of the people and their assets but to protect themselves only and everything else is security risk for them then this attitude is giving rise to many questions and doubts.

