

NATIONAL

Forests form bulwark against sea intrusion: workshop

By Our Correspondent

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THATTA, Sept 5: Speakers at a workshop has said that large scale deforestation has not only disturbed the coastal area's ecology but also affected its agriculture because forests acted as a main bulwark against intrusion of seawater.

The workshop was jointly organised by the Sindh Radiant Organisation and Badin Development and Research Organisation.

The programme coordinator of the Indus for All Programme-WWF, Nasir Ali Panhwar, said that shortage of water in the Indus River, poverty and shortage of firewood and fodder had compelled people to cut down trees on a large scale to get firewood for their homes and sell it to earn livelihood.

He said that Indus for All Programme-WWF in collaboration with Badin Development and Research Organisation was working on a project to rehabilitate the Booharki Forest by addressing issues related to deforestation and shortage of water.

He said that the project was aimed at rehabilitating 100 acres of the 17,500-acre devastated forest land by supplying plentiful water and planting trees.

He said that the most significant aspect of the project was partnership of the organisations with the Sindh Forest Department and hoped the project would serve as a model of community-based forestry in Sindh.

About 20,000 trees would be planted and existing watercourse would be lined to supply water to 200 acres of forest land, he said.

He said the organisation had initially prepared 100 acres of land, planted 55,000 plants (50,000 acacia seed, 5,000 plants Cano corpus, arjun, casolinia) and revived three-kilometre long forest minor fed by Raj wah canal.

The communities living in and around the forests had also been engaged in various activities through five community-based organisations, he said.

Throwing light on history of forests in the province, Mr Panhwar said that Sindh had been covered in forests before the World War-II but this rich resource exhausted over a time by excessive chopping of trees for getting wood for defence installations and railways.

At present, trees were being chopped down on a large scale, mainly for monetary gains. Various initiatives were being undertaken by the governmental and non-governmental organisations to protect and enhance forest area in the province, he said.

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