



AGRITECH Pg2

Poverty and rural development in Pakistan

Agriculture is the mainstay of economy of Pakistan as about 67 per cent of our population is associated directly and indirectly with this sector. Agriculture has a big share of 21.5 per cent in the GDP and this sector employs 45 per cent of



the country's labour force. It also contributes in the growth of other key sectors of economy. The development of this country is not possible by.....

AGRITECH Pgs

Increasing role of agribusiness in farm economics

Agriculture is considered the backbone of our national economy. Pakistan's agriculture contributes approximately 20.8 per cent of the country's gross domestic



product (GDP), provides a large scale employment and fulfills the food and nutritional requirements of the nation. It provides important raw materials for some major industries. Pakistani.....

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Wild edible fruits of Pakistan

From the very beginning, human beings are dependent on plants for food and shelter. Therefore, a great variety of non-cultivated plants have long formed a part of



diet of the humans. Fruits play a significant role in human nutrition. They are an important source of minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins, oils and other antioxidant compounds.....

HEALTHTECH Pgs

Modern world, tech and healthcare issue

Health has remained a major issue in the economic development of any country



as it plays a pivotal role in determining and increasing the human capital. It is the primary human right that is necessary for every individual's social well-being. It contributes towards the development and economic growth of a country. A country whose citizens.....

Extensive research on biosafety needed before opting for GE crops

STAFF REPORT IBD: In the wake of rising threats of food insecurity and declining trends of crop yields, due to multiple negative factors, Pakistan is vying to have an effective mechanism including a little progress in introduction of GM crops, which needs in-depth Biosafety research in addition to certified test trials of especially wheat, cotton and corn crops.

In Pakistan, a little investment has been made on technologies and research to support the development of indigenous genetically engineered (GE) plants. In addition, the government of Pakistan, in the wake of domestic and international obligations had promulgated a biosafety regulatory system in 2008. Though this system has achieved some progress in regulating the introduction of GE plants, particularly in allowing field trials under confined conditions, yet the implementation of all biosafety rules is still non-existing.

During the last couple of years, the country has been witnessing a vigorous campaign for the commercial introduction of genetically modified (GM) crops apparently to what the advocates argue, get comparative more production. In this connection, a couple of international firms, with Monsanto having a leading role, are active to promote this impression. However, this notion is still unable to gain ground despite repeated trials.

These companies are of the strong view that since chances of food insecurity are potentially rising in Pakistan amid high population growth rate, the introduction of GM crops in the country has become a must to boost farm yields. They argue that GM crops have already been introduced in several countries where they are presenting good results in terms of increased production and environ-



ment friendly. "We should focus on introducing GE crops as we need to jack up our national crop production as environment related negative changes like floods, water shortage and droughts expose the country to food insecurity," commented Dr. Zabta Khan from Quaid-e-Azam University. However, the scientist suggested that a proper homework must be done before opting for GE crops production.

Dr. Anwar Naseem, Secretary Pakistan Academy of Sciences, was of the view that since GE crops introduction in many other states are yielding positive results, Pakistan at least should do effective trials keeping in view the comparative studies.

However, on the other side, a large number of agriculture and environ-

mental experts, particularly Dr. Ijaz Rao, a renowned farm practitioner from Bahawalpur, strongly oppose the GE crops introduction in Pakistan citing a potential reason that no tangible homework has so far been done to ensure biosafety protection in the country. They say that the laws the regulatory authority has framed to ensure biosafety as well as environment protection have never been implemented.

In fact they oppose the GM crops altogether saying since the country is sufficiently meeting domestic food needs there is no need to introduce such mechanism of crops that has not been yet declared fit for our national environment, biosafety as well as human life, especially when high quantity of pesticides is used on these crops.

Scientists who are working to develop GE crops or who are engaged in evaluating the same are supposed to consider the information needed to assess potential adverse impacts to the environment in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

Biosafety regulation in Pakistan faces many daunting challenges, including broad social and political disruption, poorly funded agriculture research infrastructure, difficulty in enforcement of existing and related regulations and the conflation of biosafety with other agriculture and socio-political concerns. However, there is a pressing need for a functional biosafety system in order to allow the development of beneficial agricultural technologies to meet the countries long term agri development needs.

UNESCO organises open street school

STAFF REPORT IBD: UNESCO in collaboration with the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO has organized a goodwill event in a local street school operating with the initiative and dedication of Master Ayub Khan at Sector F-7, Hill Road, Islamabad.

The event was organized to show UNESCO's solidarity to the founder head of the school and the children studying there prior to the arrival of the holiday season and new year.

Country Director UNESCO Islamabad, Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata and Secretary General PNC UNESCO Amna Imran Khan along with other staff members visited the school.

They spent some time with the children and distributed them some sets of learning

resources, which included a game on disaster risk reduction popularly known as Disaster Master Game and pictorial books on numbers and alphabets.

The Disaster Master Game is a package of specialized game design and developed by UNESCO for the children of middle and high school with key messages to understand the phenomenon of natural disaster and preventive measures on coping with natural disaster besides promoting critical thinking among the children player.

On the occasion, Secretary General of PNCU Amna Imran said that both the National Commission and UNESCO work to promote education, science, culture and communication and information in Pakistan.

Firm hired for consultancy services for 3G auction

STAFF REPORT IBD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Value Partners Management Consulting Limited have signed a formal contract for the provision of consultancy services for the auction of next generation services spectrum.

After the completion of evaluation process for the selection of consultant of international repute, under the policy directive of the MoIT&T, Value Partners Management Consulting Limited was declared successful as consultant for the auction of next generation mobile services in Pakistan.

Value Partners is a consortium of consultants of USA, UK, Singapore and Spain.

The consultants would provide professional analysis, input, and advice/recommendations on the whole auction process as per PTA's RFP and ToRs, and for the successful completion of auction in a transparent manner, averting collusion, ensuring competition and complete transparency in the auction process.

It may be mentioned here that most of telecom operators world-wide have already embraced the next generation mobile services to offer diverse facilities.

Agreement signed to set up HPTI in Mangla

STAFF REPORT IBD: An agreement has been signed between government of Pakistan, France and French Development Agency (AFD) to provide funding for the establishment of Pakistan Hydropower Training Institute (HPTI) at Mangla.

This grant was delegated to the AFD by the European Union. It aims at completing the rehabilitation of the existing training centre of Mangla and its transformation into a "centre of excellence for hydropower" in order to increase the capacity of both public and private hydropower operators.

This centre will be, upon completion, the only centre in Pakistan, ensuring sound and skilled development of hydropower projects in the country, both at technical and engineering levels.

The HPTI will integrate the latest international stand-

ards by ensuring adaptation of large dam infrastructures to climate change and improving the resilience, safety and profitability of hydropower projects.

Besides, the grant of 2.5 million euros provided to the government of Pakistan, France, through the AFD, contributes to address the current national energy crisis and emerges as a major contributor, in line with the pledge made by the French government at the Tokyo Conference in April 2009.

To reduce the power demand and improve energy efficiency, the AFD is also co-financing with the Asian Development Bank a programme on energy efficiency in the domestic and industrial sectors. In addition, the AFD is supporting the development of renewable energies in order to improve the power supply in Pakistan.

France ranks 3rd in energy transition performance

STAFF REPORT IBD: France ranks 3rd in the Global Energy Architecture Performance Index Report 2014, which rates performance with respect to the energy transition, reveals the World Economic Forum (WEF).

France ranks in third place behind Norway and New Zealand, and ranks first in Europe, it said.

This ranking includes 124 countries and takes 3 major categories of factors into account - economic development, environmental protection, and access to energy. France, therefore, leads the way in terms of energy sustainability. France even ranks second in the world in terms of sustainable development, behind Sweden.

COMSATS projects emerging role of nano-tech, nano-biotech

STAFF REPORT IBD: Underscoring the potential of nanotechnology and nano-biotechnology in nuclear science, agriculture, food security, medicine and environment, experts at a two-day symposium stressed the need for more vigorous research activities and innovative initiatives in these relevant fields, in addition to ensuring capacity building.

The symposium titled "Nano-technology and Nano-biotechnology Innovative Applications for Sustainable Green Economy and Climate Change Mitigation (ISN-2013)" was organized by COMSATS in collaboration with ISESCO, and the National Nuclear Energy Agency (BATAN) of Indonesia, says a press note released by the COMSATS Headquarters,

Islamabad. Around 30 subject experts from Australia, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia delivered invited lectures during the six technical sessions of the symposium.

Prof. Dr. Djarot S. Wisnubroto, Head of BATAN, inaugurated the event. Chairperson of the symposium, Prof. Dr. Evvy Kartini and Dr. Ismael Abdulhamed, Expert at the Science Directorate, ISESCO, also spoke on the occasion.

In his message, ED COMSATS, Dr. Imtihan Elahi Qureshi, said that as a part of such capacity building activities, COMSATS co-organized four events on various aspects of nano-technology during the past two years.

Need stressed for dedicated leadership to promote S&T

STAFF REPORT IBD: The Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) is working for a better future of science and technology in the country and to promote science at grass-root levels by organising different activities to create young leaders among scientists for socio-economic development and prosperity.

"It is his firm belief that talent, skills, positivity and honesty of a person make any a good leader as he strives for positive change in his surroundings," said PSF Chairman Dr Khalil Iqbalpoto while addressing at a lecture titled 'Challenging Scenario in S&T and Need of Committed Leadership'.

Perishable plastic bags can stop environ degradation

STAFF REPORT IBD: Almost 55 billion bags are manufactured and used in Pakistan annually which are one of the potential causes of environment degradation especially in urban

areas, according to estimates by the PEPA. The average consumption of plastic bags is estimated at 397 bags per person, which is roughly one bag per head each day. Since plastic does not biodegrade

the remnants of used plastic remain forever.

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EdTweet

Lacking approach on S&T promotion

The repeated achievements of young and budding Pakistani brains at renowned international contests in the field of environment-friendly technology speaks volumes about the rich potential and talent existing in the country. The recent history is witness to the fact that outstanding Pakistani students have participated in the world competitions like science & technology, environment, robots, fuel-efficient car race, mathematics, information technology, etc. and brought laurels for their homeland. But despite this remarkable achievement, a big question rises – what is the reason that brain-drain from Pakistan still goes unabated? Why the relevant authorities are unable to convince the students, through its practical steps, to utilize their talent and potential for the betterment of their homeland? The answer is quite clear which is the official disinterest or lack of government patronage of especially science and technology research activities in the country. The Shell Ecomarathon is one such example which challenges students from across the world including Pakistan to design, build and drive the most energy-efficient cars. How the students of other states manage their visits to United States, the venue of this world marathon, is of no concern but the selected students from Pakistan have to manage their participation in this world contest at their own. Sometimes there are able to show excellent performance with their prototypes at the marathon defeating other contestants. However, their indigenously developed prototypes fail to get any response from the official quarters. The government is reiterating its commitment to promote and introduce technology and innovations culture especially among the young skilled manpower. However, no initiative has ever been taken to put their world prize-winning fuel efficient cars into commercial production, thus provoking the ongoing brain-drain from the country. What should be the point of major concern is that if these fuel efficient and environment-friendly cars are patronized and students are encouraged to refine their prototypes, it would significantly lead to minimizing environment change impacts on human health, biodiversity, diminishing forests and wildlife. According to a World Bank report, environment degradation is costing the Pakistan's economy 6 per cent of the GDP or 365 billion rupees per annum — with greater likelihoods the figure has increased since then. Pathetically, a number of organizations like Pakistan Engineering Council, Pakistan Science Council, PakEPA, etc. regularly claim to be the harbingers of science and technology promotion and environment protection, however, their response regarding patronizing the young talent is too much little. The government can do a lot in this connection, but only when it wants to.



EdMail

The opinion and views expressed in these letters are purely of the public and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the newspaper.

editorial@technologytimes.pk

Award for Pakistani students
STUDENTS of various educational institutes of Pakistan participated in international conferences and contests this year. They were able to maintain the trend of excellence.

Two students, Shahbaz Khattak and Moez Lodhi of the Pak-Turk School, Islamabad, proved themselves to be outstanding in the recently held international computer projects competition in Romania. They earned a silver medal with their presentation of an automatic meter reader (AMR). If utilised in Pakistan, it can relieve the state from its energy crisis to a great extent. AMR facilitates the billing procedure as it collects an accurate consumption data of electricity, gas and water meters without involving meter readers.

Once accurate information is provided to the central database company, it saves the public from paying predicted and estimated bills. It reduces labour because the need to check meters door to door no more remains.

The meter can detect faults which can then be resolved easily. It is a good solution to energy theft.

Along with improving energy management, it can also detect illegal connections, tampering and wastage of energy. It can save about Rs250bn annually lost on energy theft.

The designers of the project claimed that their meter could switch off airconditioners and other home appliances which consume too much energy.

Currently, the country is facing severe energy crisis. About 5,000 MW of energy is consumed by air-conditioners during summers. So the meter will enable the energy control department to reduce the use of such costly devices when the country cannot afford these.

The government should ap-

preciate such educational institutes, in general, and designers of such projects, in particular. Urgent measures should be taken to put the project in practice to curb energy theft and its wastage.

JAYDEV SOOTHAR
Petaro.

Unwanted calls and SMSs
AT 75 I am not in much need of a mobile phone. Still I maintain one to keep contact with my daughters. Apart from the very few calls and SMSs from my near and dear ones, I have been receiving SMSs for quite some time containing advertisements of the mobile company.

Of late, however, not only their number has increased but unwanted calls are also being received.

One can learn to live with unwanted SMSs because there is no urgency to open them, but when the bell rings for an unwanted call, one jumps to receive it.

This is especially irksome if you are lying on the bed, and the set is on the table.

These unwanted calls and SMSs offer phone packages, Internet facility, live commentary on cricket matches, breaking news and Sundry household services ranging from pest control to washing your water tank.

As if all this were not enough, there is also news about an aphrodisiac drug.

Obviously, such calls and SMSs cannot be circulated without the permission or knowledge of the mobile phone networks.

I request the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority and the mobile networks to please have pity on the poor nerves of people like me by disallowing the transmission of all unwanted calls and messages.

M. AKBAR
Lahore.

AGRITECH

Diversification in agriculture, need of the hour

AGRICULTURE is the backbone of our country, with 22 per cent share in GDP directly coming from agriculture sector. Agriculture is a precarious occupation because it deals with risky issues for instance weather and market situations. This insecurity can culminate in inconsistent revenues (farm income) to the assessments that farmers make in a certain season. Hence, farm income unpredictability is a big hurdle which the farming community has to deal with. Innovativeness diversification is one such technique to control farm revenue unpredictability.

Diversification shows a change in business activities established on the malleable and distinguished reaction to altering chances produced by new production technology or market signals. More precisely, diversification is defined as "change in product (or innovativeness) choice and input use decisions based on market forces and the principles of profit maximization."

The concept of diversification conveys a different meaning to different people at different levels. For example, at the national level, it generally conveys a movement of resources, especially labour, out of agriculture to industry and services, a sort of structural transformation. Within agriculture, however, diversification is considered a shift of resources from one crop (or livestock) to a larger mix of crops and livestock, keeping in view the varying nature of risks and expected returns from each crop/livestock activity, and adjusting it in such a way that it leads to optimum portfolio of income.

There are two kinds of diversification at farm level: horizontal diversification and vertical diversification. Horizontal diversification refers to the growing of different kind of crops i.e. minor crops, vegetables and fruits along with conventional major crops at farm level by farmers. Vertical diversification occurs when farmers engage them in different value added activities at farm level or adopt some other enterprises i.e. livestock, poultry farming and fish farming along with grow-

ing of crops at farm level.

At the farm level, diversification represents a change in the underlying characteristics of the farm system such that farm practices and products are more aligned with the social, environmental, and economic contexts, as well as the constraints and opportunities that exist. At the community level, diversification implies establishing a dynamic optimal mixture of farm production alternatives capitalizing on between-farm heterogeneity in terms of resource availability and qualities.

Diversification is a frequently used risk management strategy that involves participating in more than one activity. It has the added advantage of mitigating price risk as well as fluctuations in outputs. The advantage of engaging in different production systems at the farm level depends upon the level of within-farm heterogeneity in soil and land resources, as well as biological and economic factors, such as the possibility of interruption in insect and diseases cycle, the extent of the sustainability effects, and the gains in fuller utilization of resources in the diversified compared to the monocrop production system. Such diversification may be constrained by the skill requirement to manage diverse entrepreneurs. Situations in which rational decision making under an unbiased public policy scenario for different crops and enterprises, taking into account various constraints and opportunities, leads to specialization in certain crops or processing activities at the farm level fall within our conceptual definition of diversification. However, diversification at the community level is likely to result in the diversity of enterprise due to within-community heterogeneity regarding resource distribution and synergies from complementary coexistence of multiple agricultural enterprises, including crop, livestock, fisheries, farm forestry, and horticulture.

Diversification of agricultural production frequently has been urged as a means of increasing agricultural income and thereby improving agricultural conditions. Many

farmers secure relief in times of agricultural distress by turning to the production of new products or by increasing their production of products that previously were relatively unimportant in their farming operations. Most probably the products the production of which is increased are those, which are relatively high in price or are those, which will fit into a particular farm organization with little additional cash expense.

Diversification smoothen

a relatively smooth flow of income. There is limited evidence to suggest that households at higher income levels will be less likely to pursue ex-ante risk reducing strategies.

The advantages of diversification to the individual farmer are numerous and are such as to recommend such a policy to most farmers; however the extent of these advantages is conditioned by the number of farmers attempting to secure them. Obviously, if any considerable portion of the

tion of those products that are relatively high in price and which offer satisfactory margins above the cost of production.

By reducing the cost of producing all products of the farm by distributing fixed costs over a larger quantity of products without materially increasing variable costs.

By securing more of the living of the farmer and his family from the farm by producing for home use, those products that are not of major

ment and certain other price related supports also induce crop shift. Often low volume high-value crops like spices and medicinal herbs also aid in crop diversification. Higher profitability and stability in production also induce crop diversification, for example sugarcane replacing rice and wheat.

In Bangladesh, the Agricultural Research Council and other institutions including the Jute Research Institute have worked for efficient use of land and diversification of the farm sector. Cultivation of secondary crops has been proved very helpful in reducing the risk factor for the farmers in major crops. It is reported that secondary crops like maize, millets, potatoes, sweet potatoes, oil seeds, pulses, bananas, ginger and other vegetable crops as profitable dry season crops. These crops can be produced in 90 days and be harvested for ultimate sale in local markets. The per acre yield of such crops is quite high and would be profitable.

Agricultural performance in the country is improving over time. Besides continuing role of high-yielding rice and wheat varieties in Pakistan, the agricultural growth is also attributed to diversification in favor of high-value commodities. The emerging WTO regime has many wide-ranging and pervasive implications for the agricultural sector. Agricultural diversification can save Pakistan from the onslaught of WTO and we have to search new avenues and crops in this respect. It is expected that implementation of the provisions of WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) will facilitate increased market access to Pakistan's agricultural exports by restricting the agricultural subsidies given by the governments of industrialized countries.

Therefore, there is a need of agricultural diversification in order to enhance agricultural exports of non-traditional commodities. Pakistan is diverse in climate, soils and other agro-ecological features. This diversity permits the farmers to cultivate variety of crops, off-season vegetables, cut flowers and rear different species of livestock.



Diversification is a frequently used risk management strategy that involves participation in more than one activity. It has the added advantage of mitigating price risk as well as fluctuations in outputs. The advantage of engaging in different production systems at the farm level depends upon the level of within-farm heterogeneity in soil and land resources, as well as biological and economic factors, such as the possibility of interruption in insect and diseases cycle

the flow of income to the household by reducing both predictable and unpredictable fluctuations. Predictable seasonal fluctuations in income can be smoothed by combining enterprises and activities that generate returns during different times of year. Unpredictable fluctuations, those which create an unexpected loss in income can be reduced by a diversified portfolio of economic activities with variances that are not perfectly correlated. In the absence of contingency markets, peasants household diversify by pursuing multiple economic activities in order to maintain

total number of farmers made similar changes, the price advantage of the particular product would quickly disappear as result of an increased supply of that product. Consequently, greater diversification practiced by a few farmers presents opportunities for them, but greater diversification practiced by all or even a majority of all farmers is an entirely different matter.

Diversification of production considered from the stand point of the individual farm, is intended to increase farm income in one or more of the following ways:
By increasing the produc-

importance in the agriculture of the region but which can be satisfactorily produced in limited quantities.

Crop diversification is intended to give a wider choice in the production of a variety of crops in a given area so as to expand production related activities on various crops and also to lessen risk. Crop diversification is generally viewed as a shift from traditionally grown less remunerative crops to more remunerative crops. The diversification also takes place due to governmental policies and thrust on some crops over a given time. Market infrastructure develop-

ment process that started with the birth of the country, has had much success, but has been limited in scope. Almost all efforts have failed in achieving the distributive justice for the lowest rungs of the society. As noted earlier, envisaged benefits of planned changes through different rural development efforts have not percolated downwards to the poor. The basic reasons are vertical linearity in planning and in the execution of rural development efforts. Moreover, attention has not been given to horizontal spread of programs through active and concerted participation of rural masses, which are at the lowest rung of illiteracy and poverty. Amongst others, these are some important factors which make all schemes of rural uplift efforts in the country ineffective.

Rural folk must be involved in the political system by decentralizing power in an appropriate manner at the local levels. The fate of the masses should not be left at the mercy of dynastic political leaders and an administration of narrowly selected civil service. It would be rather impossible to create and sustain powerful constituencies/institutions for change without the courageous leadership from within the masses. The political leadership and elite of the society should seriously think and plan for introducing desired reforms for social and economic changes at the local level.

By Muhammad Junaid Iqbal and Ghazanfar Ali Khan

AGRITECH

Poverty and rural development in Pakistan

AGRICULTURE is the mainstay of economy of Pakistan as about 67 per cent of our population is associated directly and indirectly with this sector. Agriculture has a big share of 21.5 per cent in the GDP and this sector employs 45 per cent of the country's labour force. It also contributes in the growth of other key sectors of economy. The development of this country is not possible by ignoring the development of its rural areas. Rural development can be defined as the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. There are so many hurdles and dilemmas of rural development in our country. Transportation issues, unavailability of recent technology in agriculture, undefined and scattered structure of local governing bodies come also emerge as the bottlenecks of rural development.

In some countries like India, China and Bangladesh lies voluntary poverty. This type of poverty covers those people who want to upgrade themselves as spiritual personalities. Studies show that 20.16 per cent of our population earns only \$1.25 a day, while 60.19 per cent of our population earns \$2 a day. The population that lives under the poverty line is 22.3 per cent which is a huge portion of the population. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan (2013), the per capita income is \$1254. This report was presented by the government, but it was challenged by the World Bank

and United Nations Development Programme. These independent organizations assessed that the percentage of population living under the poverty line ranges from 25-28 per cent. But these organizations claim that Pakistan is far better than India and Bangladesh. So there is a hope and a great potential for development in our economy. The human development index of Pakistan is 0.549 which is far better than these countries. Ten per cent of the population is earning 27.4 per cent and the lower 10 per cent is earning only 4.3 per cent of income. Such discrimination and inequality of resources distribution is causing problems in smooth development of economic regimes especially in rural areas.

Economic aspects of poverty focus on material needs, typically including the necessities of daily life such as food, clothing, shelter, or safe drinking water. Poverty in this sense may be understood as a condition in which a person or community is lacking in the basic needs for a minimum standard of well-being and life, particularly as a result of a persistent lack of income. Analysis of social aspects of poverty links conditions of scarcity to aspects of the distribution of resources and power in a society and recognizes that poverty may be a function of the diminished "capability" of people to live the kinds of lives they value. The social aspects of poverty may include lack of access to information, education, health care, or political power.

According to the United

Nations Human Development Report, Pakistan's human development indicators fall significantly below of those of countries with comparable levels of per-capita income. Pakistan also has a high infant mortality rate (88 per 1000). The unemployment rate is much higher in Pakistan as compared to that of other developing countries. According to the census of 1998, the percentage of unemployed population was 19.68 per cent, which is much



higher than the previous census report and surely it has risen furiously in preceding years. Maximum unemployment is being seen in Baluchistan i.e. 33.48 per cent of its total population.

The main reasons for poverty in Pakistan are feudalism, inequality, natural disasters, illiteracy, political influences, and militancy up to some extent. Pakistan is the home to large landholding feudalists, as they have very much influence in the local governing bodies. They might have a thought that these people are born only to serve them as their fore-fathers were doing. The poor are bound to serve

these feudalists as their tenants and used to lend money from their landlords on different occasions like marriage and funerals. The feudals are also responsible in diverting the public funds to their private uses. So, the money which was allocated for public welfare is now being used by these big fishes. These also involve in bursting the embankments of the canals and rivers in order to give harm to those people who tried to stand before them.

Poverty has dire consequences troubling the society. A large number of deaths are due to higher poverty rate in Pakistan as well as in the whole world. One thirds of the world population dies due to poverty. Basic health facilities in our country are not available to the poor. Education is also affected by higher poverty rates in our country. The rural areas of our country do not have schools for girls and even for boys in some areas. Education discrimination is very common in the rural areas, which also cause hurdle in development of rural areas.

According to Federal & Provincial ministries for education the literacy rate of Pakistan is 57.8 per cent and the total number of enrolments in school is 37,462,900, which seems not very satisfactory. Pakistanis in the age group 55-64 had a literacy rate of almost 38 per cent, those ages 45-54 had a literacy rate of nearly 46 per cent, those 25-34 had a literacy rate of 57 per cent, and those ages 15-24 had a literacy rate of 72 per cent (according to education ministries). The government should engage all the available resources for the maturity of these rural areas. It also should take responsibility for the proper allocation of declared funds of this sector.

Pakistan is not poor in manpower, talent, planning expertise and institutions of research and development. However, sustained and directed research and a strong political will are some of the pre-requisites to achieving the desired goals. The devel-

opment process that started with the birth of the country, has had much success, but has been limited in scope. Almost all efforts have failed in achieving the distributive justice for the lowest rungs of the society. As noted earlier, envisaged benefits of planned changes through different rural development efforts have not percolated downwards to the poor. The basic reasons are vertical linearity in planning and in the execution of rural development efforts. Moreover, attention has not been given to horizontal spread of programs through active and concerted participation of rural masses, which are at the lowest rung of illiteracy and poverty. Amongst others, these are some important factors which make all schemes of rural uplift efforts in the country ineffective.

Rural folk must be involved in the political system by decentralizing power in an appropriate manner at the local levels. The fate of the masses should not be left at the mercy of dynastic political leaders and an administration of narrowly selected civil service. It would be rather impossible to create and sustain powerful constituencies/institutions for change without the courageous leadership from within the masses. The political leadership and elite of the society should seriously think and plan for introducing desired reforms for social and economic changes at the local level.

The writers are associated with the Institute of Agri. Extension and Rural Development University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.



By Agha Muhammad Ajmal

AGRITECH

Increasing role of agribusiness in farm economics



Agha Muhammad Ajmal

AGRICULTURE is considered the backbone of our national economy. Pakistan's agriculture contributes approximately 20.8 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), provides a large scale employment and fulfills the food and nutritional requirements of the nation. It provides important raw materials for some major industries. Pakistani agriculture faces numerous challenges with a rapidly changing business environment, pace of technological globalization, competitive environment and changing role of government.

Today, agriculture has achieved commercial importance and has changed from subsistence farming, import commercial farming, import oriented to export oriented, supply driven technology to demand driven technology etc. New inputs and new technologies are hitting market every day. The market for processed and packaged food products is increasing day by day and therefore there is a vital need of trained man-

power in this business. Only 9 per cent of total food products are being fresh processed in Pakistan and 2 percent for value addition, whereas 40 per cent food is wasted during packaging and transportation. Many businesses started building up in and around agriculture. This resulted in growth of agribusiness.

Demand for traditional agricultural economics is diminishing; there is a growing need for the economics and management of the food sector and the environment. Departments of agricultural economics have shown great flexibility in including agribusiness in their Bachelor's and Master's teaching programmes. Ph.D. and research programmes appear to adjust more slowly to changing demand. Although agricultural economics programmes are providing a variety of service course offerings, opportunities for joint programs with biological, physical, and natural sciences, particularly resource management, are not being exploited. If business schools decide to compete for agribusiness students in the future, missed opportunities with other departments and schools may become very costly. If this profession is to remain viable in the long run, it must continue to evolve, developing opportunities

with biological, physical, and natural disciplines, in order to meet the demands of a changing market.

Agri-business management is becoming a popular career choice for agriculture students and there is great need to develop the professional agribusiness managers who can not only fill the management requirements of the changing agriculture scenario but also prove to be a great support to the farmers. Agri-business education is a qualification that helps mould the personnel into good managers having managerial expertise.

Agri-business includes all business enterprises that buy from or sell to farmers. The transaction may involve either a product, a commodity or a service and encompasses items such as (a) productive resources e.g. feed, seed, fertilizers equipment, energy, machinery etc. (b) agricultural commodities e.g. food and fibre etc. (c) facilitative services e.g. credit, insurance marketing, storage, processing, transportation, packing, distribution etc. Agri-business can also be defined as science and practice of activities with backward and forward linkage related to production, processing, marketing and trade, distribution of raw and processed food, feed, fiber including supply of inputs and

service for these activities.

In a developing country like Pakistan, agri-business

agricultural production, agricultural processing-manufacturing or agro processing,"

the success of each sector depends, to a large extent, on the proper functioning of

related sectors.

Agri-business management is nothing but, the application of management principles for agriculture.

Keeping in view the importance of Agribusiness sector Government of Pakistan has launched "Agribusiness Development and Diversification Project (ADDP)" a joint initiative of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and the Asian Development Bank. Launched in 2005, the Project aims at enhancing economic growth and fostering employment generation through development of a competitive and sustainable agribusiness sector.

For effective coordination with provincial governments and private sector, interventions are carried out through project implementation offices in all the provinces and special areas of the country. Initially focusing on horticulture and livestock and dairy sub-sectors, Project interventions would result in increased productivity, improved product quality, and value addition by addressing constraints throughout the product value chain from production to markets.

The project strategies are comprehensive and systemic and based on international best practices, designed to minimize market and institu-

tional failures and rigidities.

Under the umbrella of ADDP, the Agribusiness Support Fund (ASF) was established to provide funds on matching grant basis (non-returnable) for Business Development Services, to individuals & firms engaged in agri-related businesses, enabling them to employ modern techniques & practices and build within themselves the different skills, know-how, expertise and market understanding required by a fast-changing economic environment and to improve their productivity, profitability, competitiveness and creditworthiness.

ASF aims to support employment generation and economic growth by developing a competitive and sustainable agribusiness sector in Pakistan and specifically focuses on the areas like Horticulture, Floriculture, Livestock (Excluding poultry and fishery) and dairy.

The overall focus of the ASF is to strengthen and support demand driven private sector service delivery mechanisms throughout the agribusiness value chain including supply inputs, production, processing, and market access for domestic and export markets. The specific focus is on horticulture and hortibusiness and livestock and dairy business.



Agri-business management is becoming a popular career choice for agriculture students and there is a major need to develop the professional agribusiness managers who can not only meet the management requirements of the changing agriculture scenario but also prove to be a great support to the farmers. Agri-business education is a qualification that helps mould the personnel into good managers having managerial expertise

system with forward and backward linkages consists of following four major sectors such as agricultural input,

and agricultural marketing-distribution sector. These four sectors act as interrelated parts of a system in which

the other sectors. Thus, agribusiness is all about how to conduct successful business in the food and agriculture

AGRITECH

By Faizan Wazir (Ph.D.)

Wild edible fruits of Pakistan

FROM the very beginning, human beings are dependent on plants for food and shelter. Therefore, a great variety of non-cultivated plants have long formed a part of diet of the humans. Fruits play a significant role in human nutrition. They are an important source of minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins, oils and other antioxidant compounds. The Holy Quran has described date, grape, fig, olive and pomegranate as heavenly fruits. They have cleansing effect on the blood and improve digestion. Taking fruits in daily diet reduces the risk of heart attack, cancer, stroke and other chronic diseases.

God has blessed Pakistan with diverse climatic conditions having greater floral biodiversity. Pakistan possesses the world's best canal system and fertile land. It is home to

ally rich and can supplement nutritional requirements, especially vitamins and micro-nutrients. Some wild fruits have been identified to have better nutritional value than cultivated fruits.

There grows a vast majority of wild plants having edible fruits in both tropical and temperate forests of Pakistan. However, these wild edible fruits have not been still explored for their nutritional and medicinal purposes. According to literature survey, more than 90 different wild fruits can be found in Pakistan which is highly nutritious and medicinal. Some of the commonly growing wild plants producing edible fruits are given below.

Wild Olive (Olea ferruginea): This plant species grows in sub tropical, dry temperate and moist temperate forests of Pakistan. It is commonly

anticarcinogenic and anticoagulant properties.

Jharber (Ziziphus nummularia): This is a common hardy plant in southeastern Pakistan. Its fruits are a good source of vitamin-B, sugars and exhibit laxative properties. The fruit is either eaten fresh, dried or made into confectionery.

Toothache Tree (Zanthoxylum armatum): This plant species is distributed in Himalays commonly found in Swat. This plant has several uses such as it is carminative, stomachic, also used in cure of fever, toothache and expelling of round worms. The fruit of the plant is reported as good source of alkaloids, flavonoids, sterols, terpenoids and minerals.

Gurgura or Gwargurah (Monotheca buxifolia): In Pakistan it is commonly found in Waziristan, Zhob, Gorakh

HEALTH has remained a major issue in the economic development of any country as it plays a pivotal role in determining and increasing the



human capital. It is the primary human right that is necessary for every individual's social well-being. It contributes towards the development and economic growth of a country. A country whose citizens would be healthier will prosper in a more befitting manner.

Healthcare reforms have acquired severe attention in developed countries from diagnosis to clinical practices. Pakistan being a developing country is facing many reforms in healthcare industry. It is interfacing extreme tribulations in healthcare delivery, that its results are observed at district level to provincial and federal.

The healthcare sector of Pakistan has been fragmented from the primary situations to the personalized era of medicine which has resulted in poorly coordinated patient care. Thus, quality healthcare has remained a hostage to the lives of common people in general and the poor ones particularly.

Healthcare sector in Pakistan revolves on the threshold of state-policies. Less than one per cent of GDP is spent for healthcare sector in the country which is one of the lowest ratios in the world. Pakistan's infant mortality rate is pretty high, and majority of the patients lose their lives by Pneumonia, Diarrhea, complications in pregnancy, and other complex diseases.

Nearly, 70 per cent of Pakistan's population lives in rural areas, where standard facilities are not available. Due to the lack of facilities and scarcity of resources peo-

ple live a life below than the poverty line. Another, leading cause is that most of the private health-care centers are located in the urban and met-

Durable technological framework is needed to bridge the gap between advanced health-care facilities and the patient-care delivery.

Pakistan's healthcare system needs a firm, universal, affordable and economic

action plan that should be implemented by the state throughout the country in order to make the facilities able to reach at the doorstep of every individual patient. It is the only way that can lead the country to compete in a

globalised world.

The writer is Chairman Biomedical Association of Students for Excellence (BASE), B.E (Biomedical Engineering), Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan.

HEALTHTECH

By Asad Ali Syal

Modern world, tech and healthcare issue

There grows a vast majority of wild plants having edible fruits in both tropical and temperate forests of Pakistan. However, these wild edible fruits have not been still explored for their nutritional and medicinal purposes. According to literature survey, more than 90 different wild fruits can be found in Pakistan which is highly nutritious and medicinal. Some of the commonly growing wild plants producing edible fruits are given below

more than 8000 plant species among which 600 plants are highly medicinal. In spite of such diverse floral biodiversity, 24 per cent population of Pakistan is undernourished. According to United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 37.5 million people in Pakistan are not receiving proper food and nourishment. The main cause of malnutrition is poverty and that the people have limited access to good quality foods.

The food which is obtained from wild resources like wild growing plants is called as "wild food". Many wild edibles are nutrition-

found in western hills of Baluchistan, Dir, Chitral, Waziristan, Swat, Salt range, Murree hills and lower hills of Azad Kashmir. Its fruits are a good source of antioxidants and minerals. Fresh fruits are collected in summer, dried and recommended to diabetic patient in winter season for reducing blood glucose level.

Indian Barberry (Berberis lycium): Indigenous plant of the Kashmir and North-East of Pakistan. The fruits of this plant are good source of minerals, carotenes, ascorbic acid and crude fibers. The fruits are reported for their Hypoglycemic, anti-inflammatory,

Hills, Loralai, Kohat, Karak, Drosch Chitral, Attock District and Kala Chitta Hills. Its fruits are good source of natural antioxidants, phenolics, minerals and vitamins.

Public awareness regarding nutritional value of the wild fruits will be helpful in reducing the malnutritional problems in far flung rural areas of Pakistan. The implication of biotechnological tools will further improve the nutritional quality of these wild fruits. Propagation, preservation and conservation practices will be helpful in marketing wild fruits throughout the country.

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IIUI seminar focuses on poultry industry potential

STAFF REPORT IBD: A one-day seminar titled "Poultry Industry in Pakistan" organized by the Department of Bioinformatic and Biotechnology (Female) International Islamic Uni-



versity Islamabad, discussed the various aspects about the poultry industry, breeding and farming in Pakistan.

Dr. Gulraiz Ahmad, Head, Sadiq Feeds Ltd, Dr. Safdar

Anjum Dean Veterinary and Animal Department, Arid Agricultural University Rawalpindi were the guest speakers.

On the occasion, they delivered brief lectures on the subject and cleared the misconceptions about poultry feeds regarding issues and Ostrich Biotechnology and modern trends in poultry farming.

Dean Faculty of Basic & Applied Sciences IIUI Dr. Muhammad Sher, Head Department of Bioinformatics & Biotechnology (Male) Dr. Jabar Zaman Khattak, Chairperson Department of Bioinformatics & Biotechnology (Female) Dr. Naveeda Riaz including female faculty members and large number of female students also attended the lecture.

Dr. Bushra Uzair was the coordinator of the seminar.

A science quiz competition was also arranged on this occasion, which was won by BSBT-6 students.

PARC expands horticulture research

STAFF REPORT IBD: The Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) is committed to strengthen the coordination system for research and development of horticultural and other field crops at national level.

Member (Plant Sciences) PARC, Dr. Munir Goraya, said this while presiding over a recently held day-long meeting on "National Coordination in Horticultural Crops" with senior scientists of federal and provincial coordinated units and institutions at here.

He said that the PARC will extend all possible coordination to NARS for the improvement of horticultural crops and other major crops in the country. The coordination would be extended through germplasm acquisition and distribution, holding annual planning meetings and capacity building of the NARS partners.

SAP workshop at NUST pulls large students

STAFF REPORT IBD: The NUST Science Society (NSS) has recently organized an SAP (Structural Analysis Programme) Training Workshop at the School of Chemical and Materials Engineering (SCME), NUST H-12. The two-day workshop had invited



students from all over NUST.

The event was coordinated by NSS Executive Danish Pirzada and the resource person was Engineer Mohammad Bilal, a Civil Engineer who brought a diverse experience in construction, measurement engineering, quality

analysis and site engineering from various multi nationals.

The main focus of the workshop was to introduce students to SAP 2000, a programme which is a popular tool today, serving architects, civil, mechanical and design engineers by testing the strength and durability of the structures that they conceive.

Virtual models of the structure were constructed in the programme and then virtual earthquakes, tidal waves, high winds, etc. were generated to test whether the structure could stand against them or fall over.

The workshop proved to be a popular event as a large number of students turned up to the venue. In the light of the high demand many students requested another such workshop to be held soon. The two-day programme was sealed with a certificate distribution ceremony for participants and a shield was presented to the trainer.

Telenor Youth Summit

STAFF REPORT IBD: Two representatives from all Telenor business units across Asia and Europe took part in the Telenor Youth Summit recently held in Oslo, Norway,



to demonstrate their innovative ideas of social change through technology. Picture shows Saad Hamid and Awaiz Imran, the representatives from Pakistan, posing at the event. The event was aimed at helping young leaders realize the true potential of mobile communication technology in bringing socio-economic betterment.

Pakistan, India need to join hands on climate change

STAFF REPORT IBD: Since Pakistan and India common issues like climate change and food reserves, which may increase next year, they need to develop research agenda & adapt a unique approach of national disaster management. They work out a financing capacity that can deliver rapid humanitarian responses to vulnerable populations threatened by climate change.

Speakers expressed these views at a seminar titled "India-Pakistan Dialogue on Climate Change and Energy", organised by SDPI in collaboration with Heinrich Boll Stiftung (HBS) in Islamabad.

Ram Kishan, Regional Emergency Manager South Asia, said that unfortunately, climate change increased migration and in the result, displacement of agricultural producers has implications for national food security. In this regard, an international mechanism is needed to address

loss and damage and slow onset impacts on agriculture.

Pervaiz Amir, Senior Economist, ASIANICS, discussed the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity and energy security in Pakistan. He said that both countries are lacking institutional structures with poor ministerial links. However, civil society organizations, government institutions and policy makers should act decisively on the climate crisis.

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, while talking about the integrated gender in food security, said that Pakistan has cultural taboos where women are more inclined towards mal-nutrition. In her concluding remarks, Britta Peterson, Country Director, Heinrich Boll Stiftung thanked the participants. Further she anticipated to have concrete actions in the coming year and improve collaboration between the two countries.

Climate changes pose risks to mountain heritage

STAFF REPORT IBD: Speakers at a seminar organised at the NUST shared their concerns regarding climatic changes posing immense risk to the mountain heritage of Pakistan, threatening the biodiversity of the prized mountain region and its people.



Speakers urged for an integrated and inclusive governance of the eco-system services for the mountains sustainability that would lead to sustainable future of Pakistan.

The seminar titled 'Climate Challenges for Pakistan Mountains' also highlighted deforestation and solid waste management as two major challenges for the country's high lands that could be mitigated through political will and engaging the communi-

ties in to the efficient management of natural resources.

The seminar, by DEVCOM-Pakistan and IESE of NUST in connection with the 3rd Pakistan Mountain Festival, an annual advocacy event of the DEVCOM-Paki-

stan to mainstream the challenges of mountains. Speaking on the occasion, Javid Malik said that climate changes pose immense risks to our mountains that are also suffering intense loss of biodiversity and other natural resource that has increased the pace of glaciers melt, hence enhancing the risks of more and intense disasters.

Dr Tariq Mahmood appreciated the effort to engage the NUST students in the meaningful activities of the Pakistan Mountain Festival.

IT minister for speedy work on 3G auction

STAFF REPORT IBD: Minister of State for Information Technology Anusha Rehman has stressed the need for a speedy completion of the auction process for the introduction of Next Generation Mobile Services in the country, through a transparent, competitive and efficient process.

The minister said this while talking to the team of Value Partners Consultants Limited, who called on her in Islamabad. The meeting was attended by the Secretary IT, Chairman PTA and officials of Ministry and PTA.

While highlighting the government's perspective on the upcoming spectrum auction, the Minister reiterated that the auction process should be designed to ensure best interest of the Country. Furthermore, it was highlighted that several new international players have also shown keen interest to participate in the spectrum auction.

The next generation mobile services are essentially focused on providing data services over mobile broadband.

Viper targets schools with Z Series Android Tablets

STAFF REPORT IBD: Beginning a smart new wave and making education all the more a "touch, feel and learn" experience, Viper has introduced new education-centered tablets with bundled applications including Kno



Textbooks, and Intellisense's Camera App that works with a snap-on magnification lens.

This feature helps in converting the tab into a microscope and science app that recreates a science lab just by hooking it to a thermal probe and other sensors.

While this amazing feature won't stir much envy among high schools requiring physical science labs, these Viper tabs for schools may be the perfect science lab solution for more technology-conscious

schools.

Viper ZSeries smart Tablets comes in 10-inch and 7-inch display screen versions, running on Intel processors with low-energy combustion. Hence, there is more battery backup (up to 8hours), with-

out the bother of having to recharge quite often. It doesn't matter if these smart Tablets run on either an Android 4.0 or 4.1 operating system, because the hardware should just about cope with the superb performance.

Viper's Director and CEO Faisal Sheikh said, "this device has been designed to play a very critical role in transforming the very way children learn as it gives their learning a very soft, acceptable and easy-to-understand face of education."

Yahya named financial services chief in Telenor

STAFF REPORT IBD: Yahya Khan has been appointed as Chief Financial Services Officer in Telenor Pakistan. He will be joining the company from January 20, 2014. Roar Bjaerum will be moving to Bangkok, Thailand, as Head of Financial Services Asia for Telenor Group.

Yahya has over 18 years of banking, supply chain management and financial consultancy experience in various industries that include companies like ICL, Engro, Unilever, PwC and AXA Life Insurance. He is currently working with J.P. Morgan in London as ED.

Yahya is a qualified chartered accountant from PwC London and a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales. He also has a Master's degree in Operations Management from Cranfield University, UK wherein he focused on B2B, B2C connectivity and supply chain management techniques.

Speakers stress modernising flood forecasting system

STAFF REPORT LHR: Flood had been the major problem in Pakistan from disaster perspective and that the country had witnessed significant floods consecutively in the last four years which needed an urgent attention



and focus to upgrade the flood forecasting and early warning system in Pakistan in order to save population affected by flood.

In his remarks, Chairman NDMA Maj. Gen. Saeed Al-eem said that floods need an

urgent attention and focus to upgrade the flood forecasting and early warning system timely and accurately. UNESCO in close cooperation with the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) launched the seminar on Reliable Flood Forecasting in Lahore.

purpose of the seminar was to bring together the scientists, hydrological modelers, meteorologists, planners and decision makers to develop mechanism to meet the challenges for data, model

and focus to upgrade the flood forecasting and early warning system timely and accurately.

The Japan govt is assisting in the induction of latest technologies and trainings at the flood forecasting system in Pakistan to overcome the natural calamities in the country, mostly happening due to flood. Takao Akutsu, Manager at Disaster Management Support System Office at JAXA, said this project is a step forward for cooperation with other agencies.

PTCL rolls out 'Taleemi Cloud' for AIOU

STAFF REPORT IBD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has rolled out Cloud Computing Service 'Taleemi Cloud' to the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) during a product launch ceremony recently held at the university campus in Islamabad.

PTCL is providing Web Space, AIOU Personalized E-mail, E-Collaboration Services bundled with EVO access for the students, teachers and management of AIOU as part of Taleemi Cloud.

The 'Taleemi Cloud' is a unique product which provides end-to-end data and solution integration coupled with wireless access for remote learning. The service is geared towards filling the void in this underserved segment, and shall provide increased educational opportunities in Pakistan.

The ceremony was attended by Dr. Nazir A Sangi, Vice Chancellor AIOU and

senior officials of PTCL and AIOU including Samer Ajajawi, Advisory Team Member Business Development Etilalat; Zahid Mahmood, PTCL GM Corporate Sales North and Muhammad Nauman Ashraf Khan, GM Corporate Services & Business Devel-



opment PTCL. Muddassar Shafique, Manager Corporate Solutions (North) PTCL explained the key features of the service and the benefits to AIOU in the opening presentation. The service will benefit more than 1.3 million students of AIOU, enrolled in various courses from across Pakistan. AIOU enrolls over 600,000 students every six months and an equal number passes out each semester.

Warid arranges NCA colours drive for peace

STAFF REPORT LHR: Students of National College of Arts Lahore, while developing pieces of art, during 'glow graffiti contest' on the theme of 'Dosti ke Rung - United Youth of Pakistan' - the youngsters being together for a progressive Pakistan - promoting peace, friendship, patience and harmony.

According to details, there are over 400 youngsters from top hundred universities and colleges across Pakistan who are colouring the same message, covering 800 canvases and 400 walls all together.

It's the largest demonstration of youth activity in the country which is supported by the Pakistan's top cellular youth brand GLOW by Warid.

After Lahore this graffiti & mural art contest will reach other parts of the country.

French embassy offers 200 need-based edu scholarships

STAFF REPORT IBD: The government of France through its Embassy in Pakistan has announced the grant of Rs 40 million to support a scholarships programme for 200 needy university students at undergraduate and graduate level.

This is the second phase of the programme as it has already been financed in 2012. In close collaboration with the Higher Education Commission and 10 Pakistani universities, these scholarships will be granted to the meritorious but unprivileged students.

A particular attention will be given to gender balance, in order to facilitate women's access to high education.

French Ambassador Philippe Thiébaud organised the launching of the 2013 needs based scholarship programme at the

French Embassy in Islamabad in presence of the HEC Chairperson, the VCs of the participating universities, selected students of previous program funded by the French government.

These scholarships will be offered in the fields of social and basic sciences, architecture, information technology, telecom and business administration. The participating universities are QAU, Islamabad, COMSATS Institute of Technology, Islamabad, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, F.C College, Lahore, Institute of Business Administration, IBA-Karachi, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Institute of Business and Management, Karachi, University of Haripur, Haripur Hazara, Frontier Women University, Peshawar, and Qaraquram International University, Gilgat-Baltistan.

Raast Islamic Banking attracts Rs14b deposits

STAFF REPORT KHI: The Bank of Khyber Raast Islamic Banking was started in 2003 and now it is enjoying the confidence of masses by having more than Rs. 14 billion deposits in its Branches and has also awarded financial facilities amounting to more

than Rs. 8 billion and due to general public confidence our Islamic Banking Group assets are more than Rs. 23 billion.

"Our Raast Islamic Banking Branch profit for the period of January-November 2013 is Rs. 378 million which

will increase in branches network in near future," said Imran Samad, Managing Director BoK, on the occasion of inauguration of Raast Islamic Banking.

Siraj-ul-Haq, Senior Minister for Finance KPK, inaugurated the banking service.

Telenor completes BVS at all sale points

STAFF REPORT IBD: Telenor has successfully completed the installation of Biometric Verification System (BVS) for activation of SIMs at all of its Sales & Service Centers and Franchises across Pakistan. It has installed BVS at 328 sale points, ensuring that all of its Sales & Service Centers and Franchises in the country are BVS compliant.

Telenor's staff was trained on the new system to ensure seamless transition to meet customer demands. Moreover, in order to facilitate consumers, special SIM sale counters for BVS have been set up alongside placement of informative posters, standees and handing out of brochures.

"We have completed the installation of Biometric Verification Systems at all our Sales & Service Centers and Franchises in the country to ensure higher accuracy of subscriber data," said Aslam Hayat, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Telenor Pakistan, while commenting on this development. He appreciated the role of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, Ministry of IT, NADRA and the Ministry of Interior in facilitating this process.

Governor SBP, Yaseen Anwar, in his recent visit to a Telenor's Sales & Service Center congratulated the company for the success.

Experts stress tackling food, environment issues

STAFF REPORT FSD: The world population has increased 15 per cent more than available land and natural resources per person while Pakistan's population has increased three times and is deteriorating the environment and causing new challenges of food and water security amid climate changes.

Speakers said this at an international seminar on Integrated Flood Management was arranged by Water Management Research Centre in the city.

UAF Vice Chancellor Dr. Iqbal Ahmad, who chaired the seminar, said that 43 per cent popula-

tion of world was living in urban areas whereas the urbanization in Asia is also increasing. "We have to take measures to provide water facilities for the people. Masses should be educated about the rational use of water. The country is just above the water scarcity limit of 1,000 cubic meters per capita and the next few decades can raise the alarm of further sharp decline if steps are not taken," he said.

UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Science Bureau Deputy Director Dr. Shahbaz Khan stressed a need for putting water on top priority. It is prerequisite for de-

veloping and implementing the trans-boundary ground-water mechanism.

He said that the water security was one of the major issues for the world. "The glaciers are melting because of the climate changes. The temperature across the globe is going up, resulting it reduction in the glaciers and causing the floods."

Dr. Tadashige Yoshida from Japan and Dr. Kazauki Yoshida from Paris said that IWRM promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximize economic and social welfare in an equitable manner.

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