

PU



NEWS

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NEWSLETTER OF UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, LAHORE - PAKISTAN (SINCE 1882)

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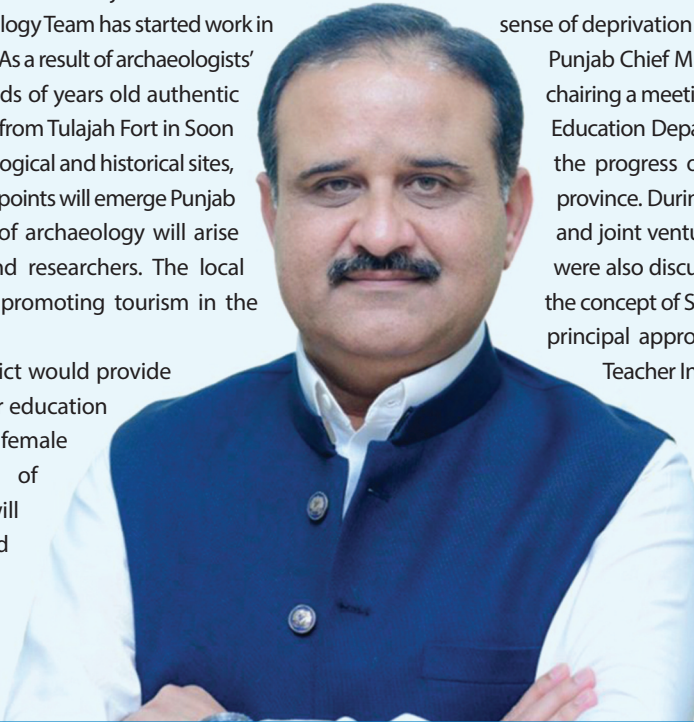
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PU Archaeology Team's work to attract foreign tourists

THE Punjab government has taken important step for the promotion of tourism in the province. Punjab University's Archaeology Team has started work in the outskirts of tehsil Nowshera. As a result of archaeologists' successful expedition, thousands of years old authentic artefacts have been discovered from Tulajah Fort in Soon Valley. The discovery of archaeological and historical sites, artefacts and developing tourist points will emerge Punjab a tourism hub. The discovery of archaeology will arise interest to foreign tourists and researchers. The local economy will be boosted by promoting tourism in the province.

One university in every district would provide better opportunities for higher education to the students especially the female students. The establishment of Indus University in Rajanpur will fulfil the long-standing demand of the people of the area. Universities will also be established in Muzaffargarh, Layyah, Bhakkar, Hafizabad,

SARDAR USMAN BUZDAR
Punjab Chief Minister



Bahawalnagar, Sheikhpura, Kasur, Attock, Gujranwala and other districts. University of Taunsa and Women University in DG Khan will remove the sense of deprivation among the people of the area.

Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar stated this while chairing a meeting to review the matters related to the Higher Education Department. The chief minister was briefed about the progress on setting up of 15 new universities in the province. During the meeting the public-private partnership and joint venture in establishing new universities in Punjab were also discussed. The meeting also decided to introduce the concept of Smart University in the province besides giving principal approval to make further recruitment of College Teacher Interns (CTIs) across the province.

All vacant posts of college principals must of filled as soon as possible and the merit should be ensured in the appointment of controllers and secretaries of education boards. A total 197 higher education projects would be completed with Rs15 billion across the province. The process of transfer of land for 21 new colleges out of 88 has been completed. ■

Dr. Niaz urges PU researchers for knowledge generation

PUNJAB University Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad has stressed the need to create new knowledge and build strengths of good character among students along with polishing their skills. He was addressing the annual meeting of the Alumni Association of Punjab University Institute of Islamic Studies at Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre. PU Dean Faculty of Islamic Studies Prof Dr Hammad Lakhvi, faculty members and students participated in the event.

Addressing the meeting, Prof Niaz Ahmad said that the grades of students could not work alone therefore they must carry high moral values. He said that students follow the lifestyle and behavior of teachers therefore teachers must be a role model for their students. He said that as a Muslim we must follow the teachings of Quran and Sunnat in our everyday life and deviation from Islamic teachings had put us in the problems that we were facing today. He said that forgiving others while having the power to take revenge was a great act of virtue. He said that employment must not be the only purpose of higher education but to become a civilized citizen. ■



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Editorial Note

AIR pollution is one of the major issues of Lahore as it is amongst the world's top 10 poor air quality cities. The increase in pollution level in the provincial metropolis during recent years have affected the life activities significantly. During the winter season, the increase in smog adds further woes to the problem. International travel advisors watch the smog level continuously and report Lahore negatively affecting the tourism potential of the metropolitan. Air pollution is also causing serious health problems.

Realizing the seriousness of the issue, Punjab University's Professor Dr. Zulfiqar has installed 10 gadgets in the city to monitor and measure the air quality and open up new vistas of

applied research to help understand and resolve this problem. The project has been implemented in collaboration with Cranfield University, England. This is a kind of unique project in Pakistan as for the first time air monitoring instruments have been installed in a city to perform high-resolution spatio-temporal measurements of air quality.

The project data will be used to measure air quality impact on human life, animal life, and environmental health. This study is part of a project titled: "Enabling mitigating the air quality challenges in Hindu Kush Himalaya" led by Dr. Zaheer Nasar, Professor Neil Harris, and Dr. Chris Walton from Cranfield University in collaboration with Dr. Zulfiqar Ali (Punjab University) and Dr. Iq Mead (Nepal). ■

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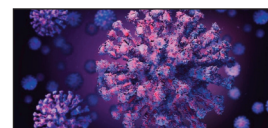
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PU Senate approves Rs 12.6 billion budget



PU archaeologists trace history Tulaja Fort Soon Valley



BY RABIA YOUSAF

IN pursuance of the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to develop heritage tourism in the country, Punjab University has always been playing an important role in providing better documentation and comprehension of our glorious heritage. Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad has assigned this task to the team of PU archaeologists.

A team of experts and archaeologists led by Dr Muhammad Hameed, Chairman Department of Archaeology, Punjab University is investigating the historic Tulaja Fort located on a huge rock outcropping with sheer cliffs overlooking the shrine of Kacchianwalla and the Punjab plains in the picturesque Soon Valley.

The team visited the site for four consecutive days and collected information for initial documentation and investigation. The history of the fort is enshrouded in mystery due to the lack of authentic written records in date of construction and period of settlement. The historical and archaeological narratives about the fort are still incomplete. Local traditions trace the fort's history to 5000 years ago. The place is also famous for having provided refuge to Jalaluddin Khwarizmi.

The purpose of the ongoing preliminary archaeological investigation is to provide initial documentation and prepare a feasibility

report for developing the site as one of the major tourist destinations in the valley. According to Dr Hameed and his team, surface study of the fort such as the method of construction, shape of houses, the size of stones used, and artifacts from the past, do not support the existing theory about the site as 5000 years old.

Dr Hameed said that theory of 5000 years old stand nowhere, for example, at

“
The site has rich
tourism potential and
can generate a huge
revenue for the country
”

DR MUHAMMAD HAMEED

the place which was used as water tank, binding material was used for strengthening brick courses. The thick layer of mortar, or use of mortar is a very late feature. It is one of the most interesting features that a large square tank made of the flat rectangular bricks, which may have supplied water so that the fort could withstand a siege. Moreover, presence of well laid out mosque rightly in the central part of the fort, showing similar building technology, is another significant evidence. Comparing this tank with those in other forts may help in assigning a relative date to its construction.

The entire

area is covered with the ruins of different sizes of houses and other structures made of large stone blocks. Although one structure has been identified as a mosque, it is very difficult to distinguish other religious, military or civil complexes. Above all, texture of the stone is very clear evidence of its late use.

In addition to architectural styles, evidence in the form of coins may help to indicate period of the fort. Extensive remains of a cemetery and other settlements can be seen below the fort. There are also supposed to be some remains on Tulaji across the valley from Talaja.

He further said the team collected quite a few such evidences and needless to say that it was certainly not an easy task and now will conduct further comparative and analytical research and all the pieces of evidence will be analyzed by the professionals in order to determine the date and the period of the Tulaja Fort.

The fort is a significant historical and archaeological site which if properly explored and developed will be considered as an important part of Pakistan's cultural heritage. The site has rich tourism potential and it can generate a huge revenue for the country. The development of the site will also provide more opportunities to explore and highlight the archaeological, historical, geological, environmental, and natural beauty of the Soon Valley. ■

PU, UK varsity set up air quality monitoring network

10 high-resolution spatio-temporal sensors installed in Lahore

INTERVIEW OF DR ZULFIQAR ALI

“7 Million people died due to air pollution in world”

INTERVIEW BY: RABIA YOUSAF & JAVAIRIA SHAFIQ

INCREASING levels of air pollution (indoors and outdoors) in Pakistan have significant environmental and human health consequences at regional and global levels. However, the country lacks the capabilities to manage air quality and major challenges are limited financial, human, and technical resources to improve and manage air quality.

University of the Punjab, with the help of Cranfield University in the UK, has established, for the first time in Pakistan, an air quality monitoring network to perform high-resolution spatio-temporal measurements of air quality. The data will be used by researchers to assess air quality impact on human life, animal life and environmental health.

Four workshops were conducted by academics from the UK and Pakistan prior to establishing the air quality monitoring network. Students and researchers of Punjab University participated keenly to extend their knowledge on air quality challenges and their drivers in Pakistan and the

potential of low-cost air pollution sensors to investigate

and manage air quality. The University of the Punjab has successfully established a network of sensors throughout Lahore and, in the next phase, PU will extend this network to other areas of Pakistan including Hindu Kush and Himalaya.

Dr. Zulfiqar Ali from Institute of Zoology, University of the Punjab and Dr. Zaheer Ahmad Nasar from Cranfield University, UK have already established partnership programmes to develop the capacity for postgraduate teaching and research on air quality management in Pakistan and are participating in the project entitled 'High-resolution spatio-temporal measurements of air quality in Lahore'. This study is part of a project "Enabling mitigating the air quality challenges in Hindu Kush Himalaya" led by Dr. Zaheer Nasar, Professor Neil Harris and Dr





“A countrywide public awareness campaign, on the association of air pollution with ill health, followed by practical intervention would be an appropriate approach”

DR ZULFIQAR

Chris Walton from Cranfield University in collaboration with Dr. Zulfiqar Ali (Punjab University) and Dr. Iq Mead (Regional program manager – Atmosphere, ICIMOD, Nepal).

PU News: How do you define the air quality index?

Dr Zulfiqar: Air quality is measured with the Air Quality Index, or AQI. The AQI works sort of like a thermometer that runs from 0 to 500 degrees and it is a way of showing changes in the amount of pollution in the air. It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you.

Some individuals are much more sensitive to air pollution than others. Checking the AQI each day will help those people notice at what levels they begin to experience effects. The levels of health concern listed below are general guidelines to be used as a reference so that people can figure out their own sensitivity to air pollution.

- AQI value between 0-50, or code Green, considered “good” and “satisfactory”, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
- When the AQI value for particle pollution is between 51-100, or Code Yellow, air quality is considered “acceptable”.
- When the AQI value for particle pollution is between 101 and 150, or Code Orange, air quality is considered “unhealthy for sensitive groups”. In this range, members of sensitive groups may experience health effects.
- When the AQI value for particle pollution is between 151 and 200, or Code Red, air quality is considered “unhealthy”. In this range, everyone may begin to experience health effects.
- When the AQI value for particle pollution is between 201 and 300, or Code Purple, air quality is considered “very unhealthy”. In this

range, everyone may experience more serious health effects.

- When the AQI value for particle pollution is between 301 and 500, or Code Brown, air quality is considered “hazardous”. Health warnings of emergency conditions. In this range, the entire population is more likely to be affected.

PU News: How does air quality affect life on planet?

Dr Zulfiqar: Both short-term and long-term exposure to air pollutants can cause a variety of health problems. The health effects of air pollution are serious – one third of deaths from stroke, lung cancer and heart diseases are due to air pollution. Microscopic pollutants in the air can slip past our body's defenses, penetrating deep into our respiratory and circulatory system, damaging our lungs, heart and brain. Air pollution severely affects and increases the risks for the people who are already ill.

When particle pollution levels are elevated, patients with respiratory disease may not be able to breathe as deeply or as vigorously as normal and may experience coughing and chest discomfort, wheezing, shortness of breath, and unusual fatigue. For people with heart disease, exposure to high particle pollution levels can cause serious problems in a short period of time—even heart attacks—with no warning signs.

PU News: Which are the biggest contributors to air pollution in Pakistan?

Dr Zulfiqar: Air pollution in Pakistan is caused by a combination of vehicle and industrial emissions, smoke from brick kilns, the burning of crop residue and general waste, and dust from construction sites. Other factors of air pollution include large scale losses of trees to build new roads and buildings.

PU News: What are harmful pollutants in the air?

Dr Zulfiqar: There are six harmful pollutants in the air which are carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen oxides, ground-level ozone, particle pollution (often referred to as particulate matter), and sulfur oxides. These pollutants can harm human health, harm the environment, and cause property damage.

PU News: When Lahore's air pollution goes at its worst?

Dr Zulfiqar: Air quality in Lahore usually worsens during the winter season from end of October to mid-December when farmers in the wider Punjab province set light to the remnants of crops, producing smoke that adds to smog. At the same time, weather changes mean pollutants remain trapped in the air for longer.

PU News: How can air pollution in Pakistan be reduced?

Dr Zulfiqar: Real-time air quality data must first be made available to everyone with greater granularity. When people know how much pollution they are breathing, they can better take measures to protect themselves and be enabled to mobilise efforts around tackling air pollution. Reducing industrial and vehicular emissions is also critical to improving the air quality.

PU News: What does an air quality sensor detect?

Dr Zulfiqar: Air quality sensors are devices used to detect contaminants in the air and provide base-line data. This includes particulates, pollutants and noxious gases that may be harmful to human health.

PU News: Why and where did you install air quality sensors?

Dr Zulfiqar: In developing countries, asthma, cardiovascular diseases and infectious rate increases due to air pollution. With harmful air particles; when other bacteria and viruses attached then infection rate increased like in Covid-19, polluted particles when attached with

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accurate to monitor air pollution as satellite-based camera or sensor took an image of the whole world and that data is not strong enough for research. Effectively collecting and scientifically visualizing the air quality data through these sensors can better help us monitor the environment and address related issues.

PU News: What are the factors that should be considered in order to collect quality measurements from air sensor?

Dr Zulfiqar: The five basic steps to collecting useful data with air sensors are (1) ask a question, (2) develop an approach, (3) determine sensor location, (4) collect measurements, and (5) understand and communicate results.

PU News: Where did you make your measurements?

Dr Zulfiqar: We have experimented this equipment from Khunjab Pass to the coast line and on glaciers through portable devices and set up camps to monitor accuracy of data. If we install them in all major cities of Pakistan having different altitudes then it would be beneficial to all of us and real time data will be available.

PU News: What, if any, additional data can be collected? (e.g.; wind measurements etc.)?

Dr Zulfiqar: Yes, wind quality and visibility can be measured along with air quality but they are most costly for a research organization. But if government installs these sensors, then along with air quality measurement, other weather parameters can also be measured i.e., visibility, rain and wind quality etc.

PU News: How were you holding the sensor, or was it attached to a vehicle or stationary object?

Dr Zulfiqar: This high-tech equipment is portable, waterproof and uses low power. They require a low power charge and internet to check data online remotely and this is easily manageable. Even if internet is not available for some time, the device can still record and store data on Sd card, which can be used by the researchers later. If the government fix them at different places as the developed countries have done, then it would be a good initiative to monitor the quantity of air pollution.

PU News: How much time you consume on this project and how much the effort was?

Dr Zulfiqar: I have established a link with British Universities since 2004. We have collaborated and published more than 50 impact factor research articles and produced 20 PhDs, 150 MS and BS theses. After this much efforts we are now able to develop these very low-cost sensors which will provide real-time data and will have open access for the public,

students, researchers, institutions, policymakers and international agencies. The findings will be used to educate the public, and to help the government and lawmakers to curb pollution and control health hazards of pollutants.

PU News: What is the cost of these air quality sensors which you installed?

Dr Zulfiqar: Total cost of these ten sensors is not more than 1 million but we installed these sensors free of cost through British Council, our friendly links with British Universities and visits of our researchers and students there and it's a big achievement of Punjab University and we want that the government should show some interest to move forward this project at national level.

PU News: Is there any mobile phone app through which we can monitor data anywhere?

Dr Zulfiqar: Through Purpleair.com app, we can monitor the data of all installed air quality sensors and I advise all the people that they should download this app in their mobile phones or computers so that they can immediately find out that how much the pollution is in the air.

PU News: What measurements can be taken if air quality is at danger level?

Dr Zulfiqar: People can reduce their exposures simply by taking it easier when particle pollution levels are at unhealthy levels. They can reduce their exposure by reducing the time they spend being active outdoors, by reducing the intensity of outdoor activity, or by being active outdoors when air quality is better. Individuals can take precautionary steps in their daily life to reduce personal emissions by carpooling or taking public transport, actively switching to greener fuel alternatives, and more. People with asthma should carefully follow their asthma action plans when particle pollution levels are high.

PU News: What should be the role of government and legislators to combat the air pollution?

Dr Zulfiqar: Despite the mounting evidence of an association between air pollution and ill health, policy makers have paid little attention to it. In order to arrest the increasing levels of air pollution, there is a dire need to recognize it as a major health hazard and formulate a national policy to combat it. An integrated effort, with involvement of all stakeholders, could yield promising results. A countrywide public awareness campaign, on the association of air pollution with ill health, followed by practical intervention would be an appropriate approach. However, the potential of biogas as a fuel should be explored further, and modern fuels (natural gas and

LPG) need to be accessible and economical. If the government, for example, spends Rs 50 billion on health budget per year then that budget would be half if we control over the air pollution.

PU News: What are the limitations of these sensors?

Dr Zulfiqar: Device charging and internet connection is required to observe the air pollution of that area from any corner of the world. Air quality sensors cannot show data without power. To cope with this hurdle, if we install solar panel system along with them, then they can work consistently.

PU News: What about the expansion of this project?

Dr Zulfiqar: We will officially inaugurate this project soon. Then if the government cooperates with us, we can install these air quality sensors in different major cities of Pakistan. In the next phase, we will install SIM in them then it will provide data automatically and for uninterrupted monitoring of data, there would be monthly SIM recharge for these devices to work just like mobile SIM cards. ■



PU Research Associates Javairia Shafiq and Rabia Yousaf with Dr Zulfiqar Ali after his interview at Institute of Zoology, PU. - Photo Credit: Rida Ahmad

PU researchers design drug to block Corona ability to enter human cells


IN hopes of developing therapeutics for Covid-19, a research team lead by Prof Dr Shafiq ur Rehman from Institute of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics, Punjab University has designed a potential therapeutic drug (short peptides), that may block coronaviruses' ability to enter human cells. The designed protein peptides mimic a protein found on the surface of human cells (ACE2) and theoretical study have shown that these peptides can block almost all of the binding regions of Spike protein of coronavirus more effectively, thus the virus may unable to interact with human cells.

The researchers have shown in their recently published article

(<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphar.2021.731828>) in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* (world's 2nd most-cited open-access journal in its field with impact factor of 5.8), that their newly designed peptides can bind to the viral protein that coronaviruses use to enter human cells, potentially disarming it.

The group reported its initial proposed therapeutic drug (tACE2) in *Journal of Biomolecular structure and dynamics*, (10.1080/07391102.2020.1768150) on May 2020, which was cited >37 articles published in international journals. The current study is extension of their previously proposed therapeutic peptide.


Dr. Basit, a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Prof. Shafiq lab and his co-authors designed peptides based on their previously reported tACE2, performed computational simulations and revealed that the peptides can possibly block the location of the receptor binding domain, required for attachment to the human ACE2 receptor —hence block its entry to the human cells. Currently, the researchers are working on experimental validation of these proposed therapeutic peptides to test their role in neutralizing virus effect in human cell line in vitro and then in animal models of Covid-19 infection. ■



Respiratory Pharmacology


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


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ORIGINAL RESEARCH article
Front. Pharmacol., 27 August 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2021.731828>


Designing Short Peptides to Block the Interaction of SARS-CoV-2 and Human ACE2 for COVID-19 Therapeutics

^{1†}, ^{2†}, ³, ³, ⁴, ⁵, ^{1*} and ^{1*}



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<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/176>

Punjab University in battle with the Apocalyptic Pandemic

BY RABIA YOUSAF

IN the face of challenging social, economic and technological disruptions, PU is embracing the change. Covid-19 wreaked havoc since its emergence and clearly swayed almost all the realms of the society throughout the globe. One of its highly impacted sectors was the field of education. Along with other countries, Pakistan also faced the challenge of how the academic activities could be continued under the prevailing situation of pandemic. It was an uphill task for higher education institutions in Pakistan to continue academic activities and avoid the possible academic loss of students caused by the lockdown due to Covid 19.

In the following, it'll learn about just some of the many ways Punjab University showed up in a year that has been like no other! Most notably, here at PU, the administration has utilized its mission of research, teaching, and patient care to confront the challenges brought forth by Covid-19. Another important milestone was the acknowledgement of PU's performance during Covid-19 pandemic. The QS ranking data stated that the university has performed "very well" even during Covid-19.

Although this past fiscal year had many challenges, and we are proud that — even despite those challenges — our Punjab University community continued to show up. In these arduous circumstances, University of Punjab took the lead and set a number of examples and procedures for others to follow and to continue the process of education in order to safeguard the academic year of the students. Hence, prominent and leading efforts can be witnessed through the measures adopted by the PU.

Under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad, various steps were taken to ensure the smooth functioning of educational bodies which is praise-worthy. Teachers were trained rigorously to adapt to the online

system of education in order to ensure the consistency with regards to the education sector. Moreover, the varsity not only confronted the issue of the continuation of academic year, but also fulfilled the social responsibility efficiently by creating awareness among general masses regarding Covid-19 protocols.

Initially, the country suffered an excess shortage of Covid-19 diagnostic kits. This led to over-pricing in diagnostic tests of suspected/infected patients. Keeping in view, the price hike of diagnostic kits, PU scientists trained themselves in a short period of time to develop a cheaper and reliable diagnostic kit for the detection of SARS-COV-II. This has been a breakthrough since hundreds and thousands of people who couldn't afford the expensive tests were facilitated by none other than the prestigious University of the Punjab. To add to

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this, when there was an enormous hike in the Covid positivity ratio in Pakistan, PU VC Prof Niaz Ahmad, on an emergency basis, dedicated one of the most advanced labs in Centre of Excellence in Molecular Biology and Centre for Applied Molecular Biology.

Not only that, University of the Punjab started conducting Covid-19 diagnostic tests at no profit no loss basis. This helped the impoverished people to get their samples tested at a lower cost from highly qualified scientists of the university.

Moving further, the PU VC commanded the establishment and development of BSL-3 laboratory so that a fully thriving and


secure environment could be provided to scientists to do research on SARS-COV-II. This not only manifests the devotion and hard work of the university, but also an effort to pivot the role of government during hard times. The lab was provided with the best technical support and medical equipment with a vision to strive in the realm of research for a positive outcome.

Engineering controllers of this university also played a vital role in designing systems that helped scientists in the finest research of this deadly virus and many other viruses of this genre such as polio. PU VC, time and again, articulated the intention behind setting a lab like BSL-3, which would serve as a leading centre for the rigorous training of new scientists due to its state of the art medical and technical equipment. This would provide a gateway to the future research to combat any deadly virus.

Consequently, University of the Punjab under the leadership of VC Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad tried its best to help people and educate them through a campaign to make cheapest and reliable hand sanitizers at home. This task was taken up by the Punjab University to curtail price hike in the purchase of hand sanitizers. This all was done in the best interest of the general public so that hoarding and inflation in the purchase of hand sanitizers can be curbed.

To move further, University of the Punjab under the leadership of Prof Niaz Ahmad deserves appreciation for establishing a telemedicine centre at the PU Health Centre. The need to help patients was largely felt during the days of blanket lockdown. It was realized that many patients couldn't afford to visit doctors personally, therefore; to cope with situation telemedicine centre helped the healthcare professionals to evaluate, diagnose and treat patients online. It proved to be a game changer and university endorsed and educated people about it via media wing.

It is significant to note that blanket lockdown affected people adversely. It not only impacted



the physical health, but also mental health. This was realized by the varsity, and Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad directed Institute of Applied Psychology to conduct free online counselling sessions. It is important to mention that Institute of Applied Psychology still provides free medical and cognitive counselling to deal with anxiety, stress, clinical depression, rage, academic burden and all other issues that people faced during Covid-19 and lockdown. One minute video series was also released every day to make the people learn about how they can live a happy life while dealing with all the prevailing issues.

To cope with the challenge of continuation of academic activities, Prof Niaz Ahmad immediately instructed the teaching units to start online classes in order to engage students so that their studies and careers were not compromised. Accordingly, teaching schedules were amended to facilitate the students during the worst days of the pandemic.

In order to provide a platform to engage people in healthy activities at home, on the instructions of PU VC Prof Niaz Ahmad, Institute of Agricultural Sciences also started a video series to guide people on how to grow vegetables at their homes and keep them busy.

Similarly, university administration besides human beings, took good care of other habitats living on PU's campuses. During a complete lockdown, academic activities as well as hostels and other activities remained suspended for almost a year, so Punjab University management did its best to provide food to all the habitats especially those of birds during the pandemic.

Having established university's and Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad's efforts during the pandemic, it is of utmost importance to shed light on the aspect of curricular and co-curricular activities online for the students to maintain their physical and mental health. So, different competitions of English, Urdu essay writing, speech, debate

competitions and singing of national songs were held in which students from all over Pakistan participated and showed their talents. Prof Niaz Ahmad also advised College of Art and Design to provide free online courses so that the students of any age could learn calligraphy, painting and many other art forms at home and thus would be able to consume their cognitions wisely. Competitions of calligraphy and paintings were also held and Punjab University received entries from the whole country for these competitions. And the rewards of huge amount were also given to the winning participants of these competitions. Punjab University College of Information Technology also started online lecture series to equip people with technical knowledge of various fields of computer sciences. Those online lectures were also helpful for the people to start small businesses and win their bread at home.

During the pandemic, one segment of the society was completely ignored by all and sundry. However, due to the visionary leadership of the Vice Chancellor, steps were taken for the education and entertainment of special children, who are already being ignored in the society. On his instructions, a YouTube channel was established in which videos relating to the education of special children were uploaded and also the children were taught many skills so that in the future they could live in this society respectfully. PU's Child Welfare Centre did its best to provide basic education to the special people through online lectures and taught several skills as well. The teachers were making the students learn about several skills at homes such as number concept, self-helping skills, music, book-binding, making shopping bags etc.

The PU VC took another amazing initiative by completely waiving off the fee of hostel, library, sports and transport during the period of online classes. Only tuition fees were collected. This student-oriented decision was hailed worldwide as people recognized that this institution is taking care of themselves at the time when everyone was trying to make money. During the pandemic, it is one of the toughest tasks for any university to hold examinations for the students. Punjab University also dealt with it wisely and online proctor-based exams were held for the first time in the history of Pakistan. Proctor-based exam is another important success story in Pakistan.

However, by keeping the difficulties of students in view, the rules were relaxed to facilitate them. Candidates were provided with the most facilities and they started preferring the online examinations. Due to the immense hike in the Covid cases, Punjab University held the exams of B.A, BSc online and modern technology was used in this regard. It adapted the policies that helped in facilitating the students.

In addition, the varsity continues to act with integrity and professionalism and uphold the highest ethical standards in Covid crises. It is committed to transparency and accountability. The decisions ensure responsible stewardship of the University's resources, reputation and values. PU ensured the safety and wellbeing of its people and created an inclusive and supportive university community in which achievements are celebrated and rewarded.

Through PU's strategic direction, the administration wants to provide a learning experience at a pace and depth that will give students the intellectual capacity and critical skills to engage in modern society. PU is committed to continue innovation in program design and delivery, and to enable its staffers and students to achieve their best by setting high standards. This is a re-energizing phase of Punjab University in which hitherto scattered resources were harnessed to serve humane and national ends. Uncanny farsightedness and depth of vision are required to synergize apparently unaligned forces to achieve human-centric goals. Luckily, both the characteristics are being optimally utilized by the incumbent Vice Chancellor of the University. ■

“PU under the leadership of Prof Niaz Ahmad deserves appreciation for taking a number of historic initiatives to cope with Covid 19, provide relief to students and people at large, and engage the whole nation in positive activities”

12 | Campus Life



Prof Dr Muhammad Kamran, Director Web Television Ms. Seemab Far Bukhari and Dr Saleha Javed along with students pose for a photo after a talk show on "Role of teachers in developing peaceful and safer campuses" arranged by School of Communication Studies, PU in collaboration with FM104.6 and Media Training Research Centre (MTRC).



PU VC Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad and PU PVC Prof Dr Saleem M Raja Yasir Hummayun as chief guest of National Conference of University Institute of Education and Research.



PU VC Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad along with Prof Dr Rafaqat Ali Akbar perform earth breaking for the construction of eight faculty apartments for Institute of Education & Research. Prof Dr Abid Hussain Ch., Prof Dr Abdul Qayyum Chaudhry, Chief Engineer Faiz-ul-Hassan Sipra and others are also present.



PU VC Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad and Prof Dr Rafaqat Ali Akbar along with other PU employees pose for a photo after inauguration of tree plantation campaign 2021 at Faculty of Education.



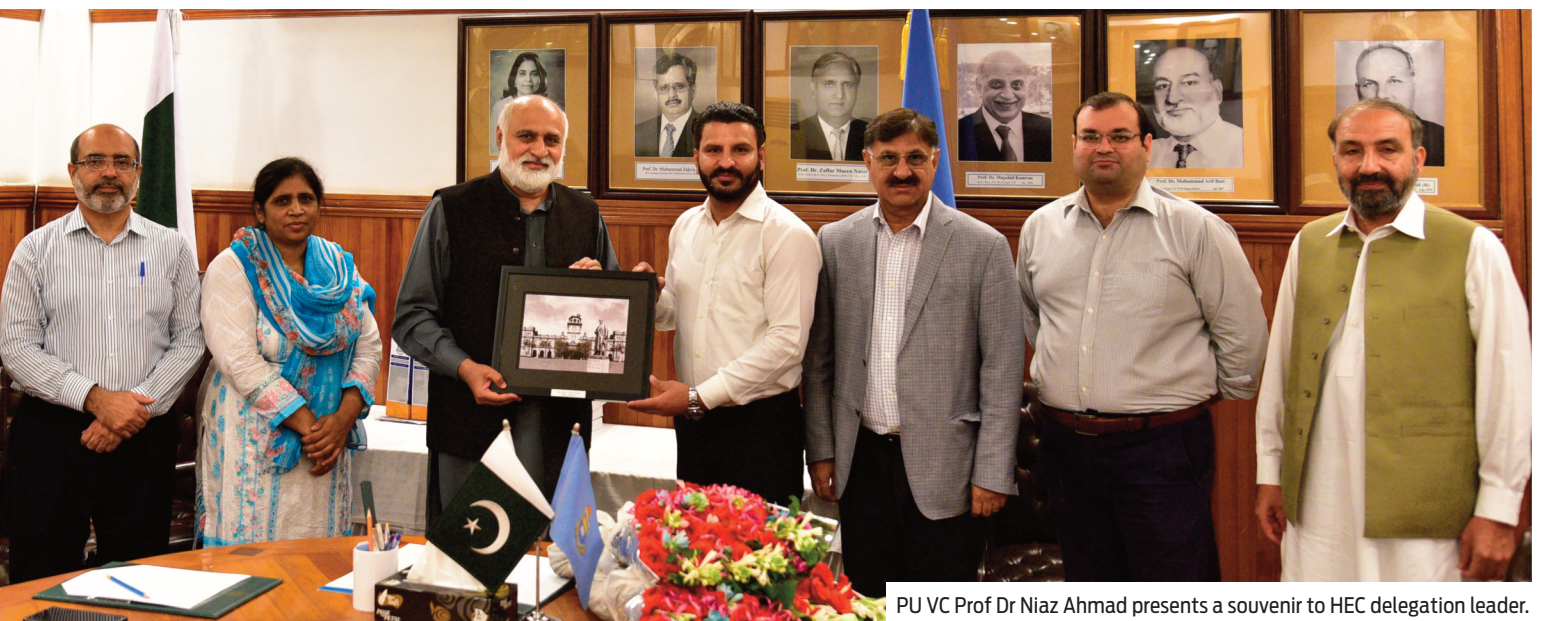
Director Prof Dr M. Shafiq listens to the issue of Kachehri in committee room, VC office. Open from 12:30pm to 1:30pm and the sole purpose is to listen to the issues of students and resolve them as soon as possible.



Mazhar welcome Punjab Minister for Higher Education
ence on Research in Education organized by Punjab



PU SCS Director Prof Dr Noshina Saleem shares her insights in the panel discussion on "Role of teachers in developing critical thinking skills in educational institutions" organized by Institute of Applied Psychology, PU in collaboration with Media Training and Research Center (MTRC) and Inter University Consortium for promotion of Social Sciences (IUCPSS).



PU VC Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad presents a souvenir to HEC delegation leader.



ues and complaints of students in Open
en Kachehri is held every working day
ose of this Kachehri is to listen the issues
ossible.



A PU worker sprays on plants during Anti Dengue Mosquito Fumigation Campaign in PU hostels.

Two-Day International Conference

Pakistan – Eurasian heartland connectivity: Towards socio-economic, academic, and legal cooperation

TWO-DAY International Conference “Pakistan – Eurasian heartland connectivity: Towards socio-economic, academic, and legal cooperation” has been organized with collaboration of four universities; University of Peshawar, University of the Punjab, University of the Sialkot, Centre for Global and Strategic Studies (CGSS) and was held at Area Study Center (Russia, China & Central Asia), University of Peshawar, Peshawar.

The main goal of the international conference was to enhance closer cooperation and connectivity within Eurasian countries. The objective was to deliberate upon the ways and means for enhancing trade, economic, cultural, educational, and industrial links between Pakistan and the Eurasian heartland for shared growth and prosperity. The theme of the first session was “Pakistan- Eurasian connectivity: Analyzing opportunities and challenges”.

The session was commenced with the key note address by Director Area Study Center (Russia, China, Central Asia) University of Peshawar Prof Dr Shabir Ahmed Khan and he welcomed all the participants, speakers and worthy Ambassadors. He highlighted the significance of Eurasian region and enlightened the audience about regional connectivity and associated benefits for integration because of regionalism. He shed light on important multilateral regional arrangement programs, i.e.,



Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuaev expresses his views on Pakistan – Eurasian heartland connectivity while Prof Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin, Former Advocate-General Islamabad & Prosecutor-General of Pakistan Mr. Mian Abdul Rauf and Chairman Islamabad Stock Exchange Mr. Zahid Latif Khan sit on stage during an international conference.

CAREC, BRI, ECO, CPEC, Mizar-e-Shareef-Kabul-Peshawar, etc. While concluding his speech, he stated that joint efforts are required to enhance research & academic cooperation between Pakistan and Eurasia.

PU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar stated that universities are the driving force for integration and academic learning. He enlightened the audience about the Regional Integration Center (RIC), University of the Punjab, Lahore and its initiatives for joint collaboration among regions. He stated that if universities strive towards enhancing research dynamics via students and faculty exchanges, it will enhance people-to-people contacts, prosperity, and cooperation.

Executive Director Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS) Islamabad Mr. Khalid Taimur Akram welcomed all participants and

Ambassadors. He explained the concept of regional connectivity and also establishment of regional integration center at various universities. He stated that the aim is to have joint efforts to enhance academic cooperation, fellowship programs and research initiatives. He also highlighted the significance of Eurasian Industrial Research Center that is to establish market links between Pakistan and Central Asian SMEs sector. He enlightened the participants about Eurasian Legal Center, facilitating regulatory regimes and laws with other regional countries.

Ambassador of the Republic Uzbekistan to Pakistan Aybek Arif Usmanov, addressed the audience online. He expressed his gratitude to all worthy speakers and Ambassadors. He highlighted the legacy of Zaheer-ur-din Babur, Allama Iqbal and Rehman Baba in contributing

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Promotion of research through faculty and students exchange will enhance people-to-people contact, prosperity and cooperation

PROF DR SALEEM MAZHAR



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Contribution of Zaheer-ur-din Babur, Allama Iqbal and Rehman Baba to peace, co-operation, and friendly regional ties are praiseworthy

AYBEK ARIF USMANOV



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Pakistan is a golden gate for Kazakhstan as it provides a great way to reach warm waters

YERZHAN KISTAFIN



to peace, cooperation, and friendly regional ties. He shed light on the significant initiatives taken by His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Uzbekistan for regional connectivity. He talked about the mega development projects between Central Asia and Pakistan for enhanced cooperation. He also discussed Pakistan-Uzbekistan cordial relationship in terms of trade development.

UOS Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nadeem Ahmed Chaudhry expressed his views on regional connectivity between Eurasian region and Pakistan. He stated that academic institutions play a vital role in enhancing regional integration and socioeconomic indicators. He highlighted the importance of Eurasian Industrial Research Center established at the University of Sialkot. He stated that through joint academic and industrial research, Pakistan can develop new mode of market collaboration and technological transformation.

Second session was commenced with the speech by the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin. He enlightened the audience about Kazakhstan and Pakistan bilateral relations. He stated that Pakistan is a golden gate for Kazakhstan as it provides a great way to reach warm waters. Likewise, Kazakhstan is a golden gate for Pakistan to access Eurasian Economic Union. He stated that this is the time to revive brotherly relations between Central and South Asia for regional connectivity and unity. He stated that People-to-people dimension is significant to strengthen relations between regional countries.

Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuiaev expressed his views on Pakistan and Central Asian countries. He highlighted investment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan. He explained that there are many



UoS PVC Prof Dr Nadeem Ahmed Chaudhry presents a souvenir to PU PVC Prof Dr Saleem Mazhar.

investment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan for enhanced regional cooperation. He also shed light on the initiative of direct flight commencement between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan. He stated that South Asian countries can invest in many domains because Kyrgyzstan has potential in diverse fields.

Chairman Islamabad Stock Exchange Mr. Zahid Latif Khan gave speech on Trade and Transport Connectivity for enhanced Regional Economic Growth. He stated that for regional cooperation, comparative advantage is important and we need to understand its relevance. He suggested that energy cooperation is necessary between Central and South Asia. However, infrastructure development is a hindrance. Therefore, it must be resolved via mutual accords and agreements by regional countries.

Former Advocate-General Islamabad & Prosecutor-General of Pakistan under the Protection of Pakistan Act Mr. Mian Abdul Rauf, gave speech on understanding Legal Landscape, Legal Barriers to Regional Connectivity between Pakistan and Eurasia. He stated that modern infrastructure, information technology, legal regimes, and advanced

transport system are the barriers for connectivity. He suggested that dispute resolution mechanisms and legal frameworks are required to resolve common issues.

Prof Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal shared his views on regional connectivity imperative for shared prosperity. He stated that without regional connectivity, countries are unable to build economic cooperation. This implies huge shared responsibility on all regional states. He stated that Central and South Asia have many similarities, i.e., culture, religious, historical, spiritual etc. Thereby, role of academic institutions is pivotal to rejuvenate the historical relations between Pakistan and Eurasian region. While concluding his speech, he stated that in the 21st century, we all must move ahead for shared future and prosperity.

The sessions were moderated by Director Regional Integration Center (RIC) University of the Punjab Lahore Dr Fouzia Hadi Ali. It is noteworthy that the conference was well attended by students and renowned scholars, experts, academicians, and policy makers of Pakistan. ■

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South Asian countries can invest in many domains because Kyrgyzstan has potential in diverse fields

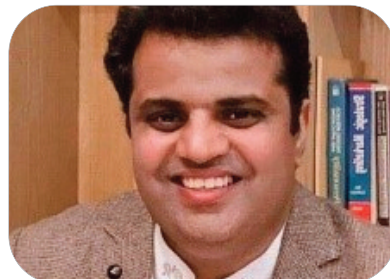
ULANBEK TOTUIAEV



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Pakistan can develop new mode of market collaboration and technological transformation through joint academic & industrial research

PROF DR NADEEM AHMED CHAUDHRY



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Dispute resolution mechanisms and legal frameworks are required to resolve common issues

MR MIAN ABDUL RAUF



Minister for promotion of free-thinking culture

PUNJAB Minister for Higher Education Raja Yasir Hummayun has called upon the need to promote the culture of free thinking among students as free thinking leads to find truth and truth leads to Islam. He was addressing



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Feeding the hungry and providing basic facilities to the citizens like education and health are the responsibility of an Islamic state

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MINISTER RAJA YASIR HUMMAYUN

the first National Conference on Research in Education organized by Punjab University Institute of Education and Research.

PU's former Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zafar Moeen Nasar, University of Okara Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zakria Zakar, PU Pro Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Saleem Mazhar, University of Baltistan Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Naeem Khan, Dean Faculty of Education Prof Dr Abid Hussain Chaudhry, IER Director Prof Dr Rifaqat Ali Akbar, Sheikhul Hadees Jamia Nusrat ul Aloom Maulana Zahid ur Rashidi, Conference Secretary Prof Dr Shahid Farooq and eminent scholars from various parts of the country participated in the event.

Minister Raja Yasir Hummayun, while addressing the ceremony, said that we must inculcate high moral values among the new generation. He said that we must educate students to apply logic on issues and students must not be forced to adopt specific fields of knowledge or ideas. He said that feeding the hungry and providing basic facilities to the citizens like education and health are the responsibility of an Islamic state. He said that the concept of welfare state was first implemented in Madina by Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW). He said that



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Without promotion of the culture of tolerance, peace & harmony through knowledge, we could not achieve the purpose of establishment of the state of Madina

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FORMER PU VC PROF DR ZAFAR MOEEN



Punjab Minister for Higher Education Raja Yasir Hummayun along with other participants pose for a photo after a national conference organized by Punjab University Institute of Education and Research.

Islam taught us to take care of minorities. He said that we have a comprehensive document to live life in the form of the Holy Quran and we must take guidance from the Holy Quran in every sphere of life.

Former PU VC Prof Dr Zafar Moeen Nasar said that without promotion of the culture of tolerance, peace and harmony through knowledge, we could not achieve the purpose of establishment of the state of Madina. He said that there was a need to adopt a firm resolve as we achieved the goal of becoming a nuclear power only due to strong determination. He said that we had forgotten the slogan on which our homeland was established. He said that the country can make progress if every citizen realized and performed its responsibility.

PU Pro VC Prof Dr Saleem Mazhar said that the knowledge which is obtained to gain worldly benefits proved to be a snake. He said that we must obtain knowledge for the purification of the soul.

Dr Naeem Khan said that the state of Madina gave special attention to knowledge. He said that we must



“ Knowledge which is obtained to gain worldly benefits proves to be a snake ”

PU PVC PROF DR SALEEM MAZHAR

advance in the fields of science and technology. He said that the universities must produce graduates with open minds.

Dean Dr Abid Hussain Chaudhry said that we could not achieve the goals of a single national curriculum unless we refined the whole system.

Prof Dr Rifaqat Ali Akbar said that the dream to practice the principles of Islam was seen before the establishment of Pakistan in this region. However, he said, the incumbent government had moved one step ahead with the announcement to establish a state like Madina in Pakistan. He said that the Institute of Education and Research would give guidelines to the government to implement a great education system in the country as per its vision. Prof Dr Shahid Farooq were also lauded by the speakers.

Other speakers also highlighted various educational issues being faced in the country. ■

Dr. Niaz urges PU researchers for **knowledge generation**

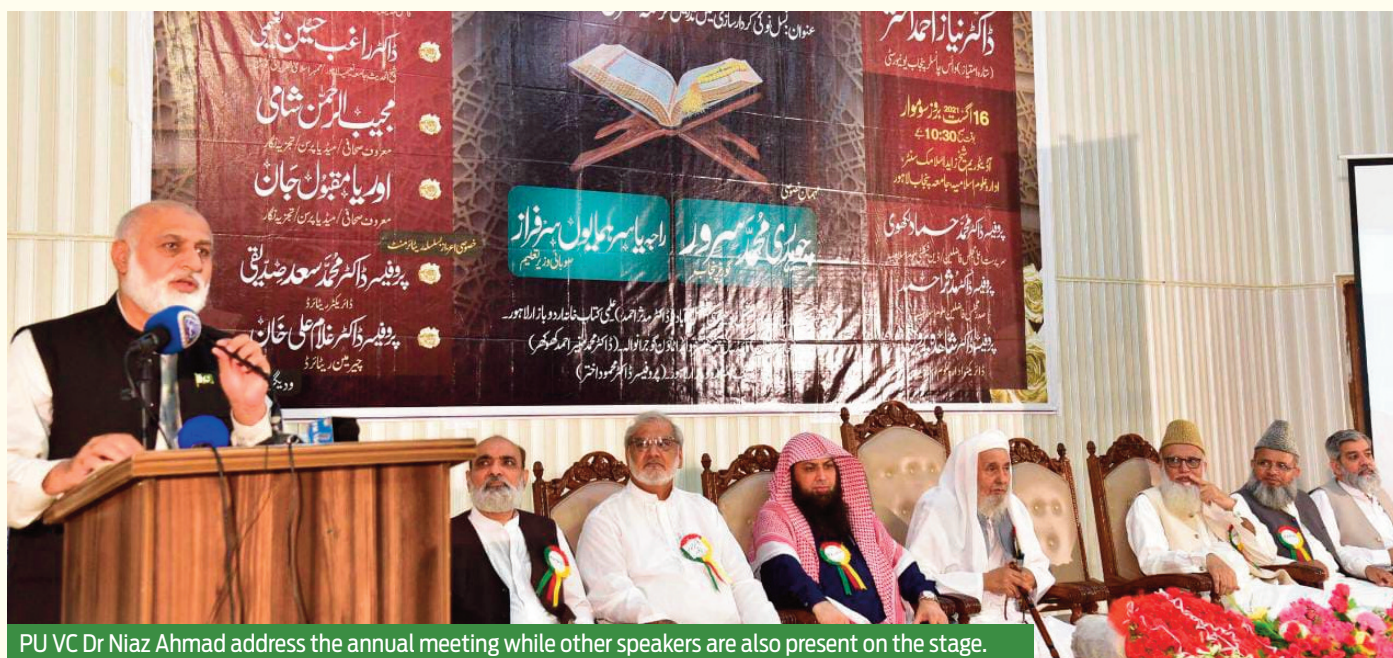
PUNJAB University Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad has stressed the need to create new knowledge and build strengths of good character among students along with polishing their skills. He was addressing the annual meeting of the Alumni Association of Punjab University Institute of Islamic Studies at Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre. PU Dean Faculty of Islamic Studies Prof Dr Hammad Lakhvi, faculty members and students participated in

the event.

Addressing the meeting, Prof Niaz Ahmad said that the grades of students could not work alone therefore they must carry high moral values. He said that students follow the lifestyle and behavior of teachers therefore teachers must be a role model for their students. He said that as a Muslim we must follow the teachings of Quran and Sunnat in our everyday life and deviation from Islamic teachings had put us in the problems that we were facing today. He

said that forgiving others while having the power to take revenge was a great act of virtue. He said that employment must not be the only purpose of higher education but to become a civilized citizen.

Eminent religious scholars including Maulana Dr Raghieb Hussain Naeemi, Maulana Fazal Raheem, Qari Sohaib Ahmad Mir Muhammadi, Prof Dr Mudassar Ahmad, Prof Dr Muhammad Hammad Lakhvi, Dr Shahida Parveen and others also spoke on the occasion. ■



PU VC Dr Niaz Ahmad address the annual meeting while other speakers are also present on the stage.

PU CAD organizes seminar on art and science

Collaborative research culture between multi-disciplines stressed

PUNJAB University Postgraduate Research Centre of Creative Arts (PRCCA) has organized a seminar on Art & Science in Research Paradigm for postgraduate research students with a vision to inculcate collaborative research culture between multi-disciplines in order to introduce students with new domains of research venues and to explore contemporary research ideas. The seminar was organized by PRCCA Director Prof Dr Ahmad Bilal in collaboration Dr Khalid Mehmood, Co-Principal Investigator of newly build National Lab of Remote Climatic Research.

Zia ul Haq principal investigator of the lab, in his welcome note said that art and science have much more in common than one might think. He explained some of the common research approaches and methods that could be helpful in achieving research grants.

Prof Dr Ahmad Bilal describes the importance of collaboration in different fields as it would help evolve new knowledge that is the main aim of any research. He talked about various possibilities of connecting art with technology and science, as in modern times it's the technology that provide

a new space to art to explore a new form of expression, and in response art wants to expand that new space. He said for the expansion of that space technology needs science to explore a few more theorems and formulas. He said indeed, art, technology and science attempt to



Art, technology and science attempt to describe and understand the world, and even the universe around us



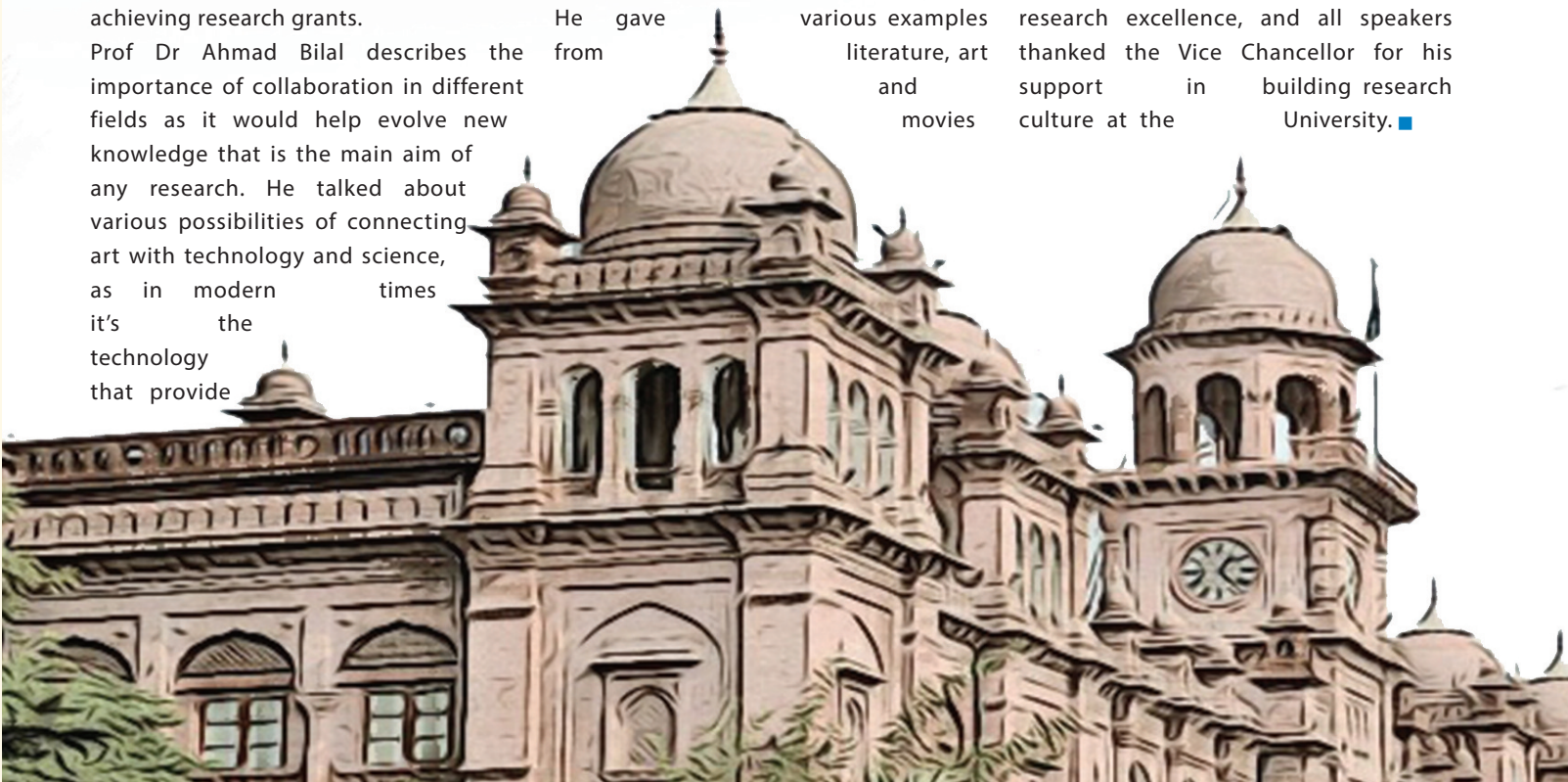
PROF DR AHMAD BILAL

describe and understand the world, and even the universe around us. He gave various examples from literature, art and movies

where technology have shown hidden worlds. He said Star Wars is one of the key examples of art work setting the roadmap for technology to evolve.

Dr Khalid Mehmood says that he wanted his research papers to be displayed on wall like a painting or to be viewed like a film on screen, but for that his research should transform into some art form. Indeed, he said, art is the form that could visually connect any research to the public, and in response science can provide the artist with some theories that can help them evolve their art.

In the last part of the students asked questions and shared their research interests. This seminar is part of PRCCA Director's visionary steps towards the induction of applied research in art and design. This kind of activities are in support of the revolutionary steps of University of the Punjab to achieve research excellence, and all speakers thanked the Vice Chancellor for his support in building research culture at the University. ■



Role of teachers in developing critical thinking stressed



INSTITUTE of Applied Psychology (IAP), University of the Punjab in collaboration with Media Training and Research Center (MTRC) and Inter University Consortium for promotion of Social Sciences (IUCPSS) organized a Panel Discussion on "Role of teachers in developing critical thinking skills in educational institutions" at the Undergraduate Block in the University of the Punjab, Lahore.

The panelists included the luminary faculty

members of various departments of the University of the Punjab including Director IAP Prof Dr Rafia Rafique, Institute of Urdu & Director Urdu Translation Center Prof Dr Muhammad Kamran, Director School of Communication Studies Prof Dr Noshina Saleem, Director Web Television Seemab Far Bukhari and Lecturer College of Earth and Environmental Sciences Dr Muhammad Awais.

The discussion was commenced by the talk of Prof Dr Rafia Rafique who exquisitely laid down

the components of Critical Thinking starting off with the definition, the challenges that educational institutes face in promotion of critical thinking, the factors and how can it be polished among students, faculty members, campus and society on the whole. She highlighted the ways in development of critical thinking such as productive membership, open-mindedness, making a connection between an idea and facts, looking through a bird's eye view, thinking out of the box and inculcating 'why' questions. She emphasized on the importance of being a critical thinker as the quality of thought would incorporate positive emotions that would result in positive behaviours.

Other noble speakers also shared their insight on critical thinking and addressed the audience as the change audience in this matter. The attendees were made aware of the Student Counselling and Assessment Services (SCAS), student counselling service provided in the University of the Punjab, and how it can play its chief role in promotion of peaceful and safer campuses.

The training was concluded by the question answer session, closing remarks by Dr Saleha Javed and certificate distribution ceremony by the notable panelists. ■



Director IAP Prof Dr Rafia Rafique, Institute of Urdu & Director Urdu Translation Center Prof Dr Muhammad Kamran, Director SCS Prof Dr Noshina Saleem, Director Web Television Seemab Far Bukhari, Dr Muhammad Awais and Dr Saleha Javed pose for a photo after the panel discussion.

Collaboration for joint research in Remote Sensing and Geospatial Applications



PU VC Prof Dr Niaz Ahmad and UMT Rector Prof Dr Muhammad Aslam exchange documents after signing MoU to promote collaboration between the two organizations.

AN MoU is signed between Remote Sensing, GIS and Climatic Research Lab (RSGCRL), National Center of GIS and Space Applications, University of the Punjab and Department of Economics and Statistics (DoES), University of Management and Technology (UMT), Lahore.

In this regard, a ceremony was organized at Vice Chancellor's office in which PU Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad, UMT Rector Prof Dr Muhammad Aslam, Director External Linkages Dr Sobia Khurram and others

participated in the ceremony.

The focal persons of the MoU were Dr Salman Tariq from RSGCRL and Dr. Saira Sharif from DoES. The two institutes will collaborate in developing joint research proposals and data sharing, organization of conferences, seminars and workshops, providing mentorship and learning opportunities to the students and young professionals and their involvement through internships and research theses in the fields of Remote Sensing & Geospatial Applications for atmospheric constituents

modelling, socioeconomics of climate change, applications of remote sensing data and sustainable development of Pakistan.

The signature target of the MoU is to develop institutional linkages that will serve as a continuous and consistent support in the execution of all other activities. Director/Principal Investigator RSGCRL Dr Zia ul Haq and Dean School of Business and Economics (SBE) Prof Dr Naveed Yazdani signed the MoU and endorsed by PU VC Niaz Ahmad and Dr Muhammad Aslam. ■

PU SoE joins hand with RSGCRL for research

PUNJAB University's School of Economics (SoE) has joined hands with Remote Sensing, GIS and Climatic Research Lab (RSGCRL) under Centre for Remote Sensing, Punjab University for research collaboration including joint research projects, research supervisions, joint publications and organisation of seminars.

The MoU was signed by Head SoE Prof Dr Mumtaz Anwar Chaudhry, Director/PI RSGCRL Dr Zia ul Haq and Director External Linkages PU Dr Sobia Khurram in the presence of all relevant stakeholders. ■



PU SoE Prof Dr Mumtaz Anwar Chaudhry and Director/PI RSGCRL Dr Zia ul Haq sign an MoU. Director External Linkages PU Dr Sobia Khurram and other stakeholders are also present.

PU Syndicate recommends Rs 12.6 billion budget

Rs 215m for student scholarships, Rs 263m research grant approved

PUNJAB University Syndicate's 1743rd meeting, presided over by Lahore High Court Chief Justice Ameer Bhatti and chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad, recommended Rs 12.6 billion budgets for the approval of Senate for the year 2021-2022. Despite facing serious financial pressure amid COVID 19, PU Syndicate decided to continue providing scholarships and subsidies to the students so that burden on the pockets of students and their parents could be reduced.

On the directions of the vice chancellor for increase in PU's international ranking further and socio-economic impact research, the PU Syndicate allocated Rs 263 million as it was the policy of the administration to promote research culture. PU would also continue overseas scholarship scheme for teachers. The university has allocated Rs 68

million for participation in national and international conferences. The university faces a deficit of Rs 585 million which would be managed by reducing expenditures and adopting austerity measures. On this occasion,

PU has allocated Rs 1.3 billion for development projects

the Syndicate members appreciated the austerity measures taken by the university.

The university expects a total grant of Rs 3.3 billion from Higher Education Commission, 27.9 percent of the total budget while PU would generate the rest of 72.1 percent from own sources. According to other

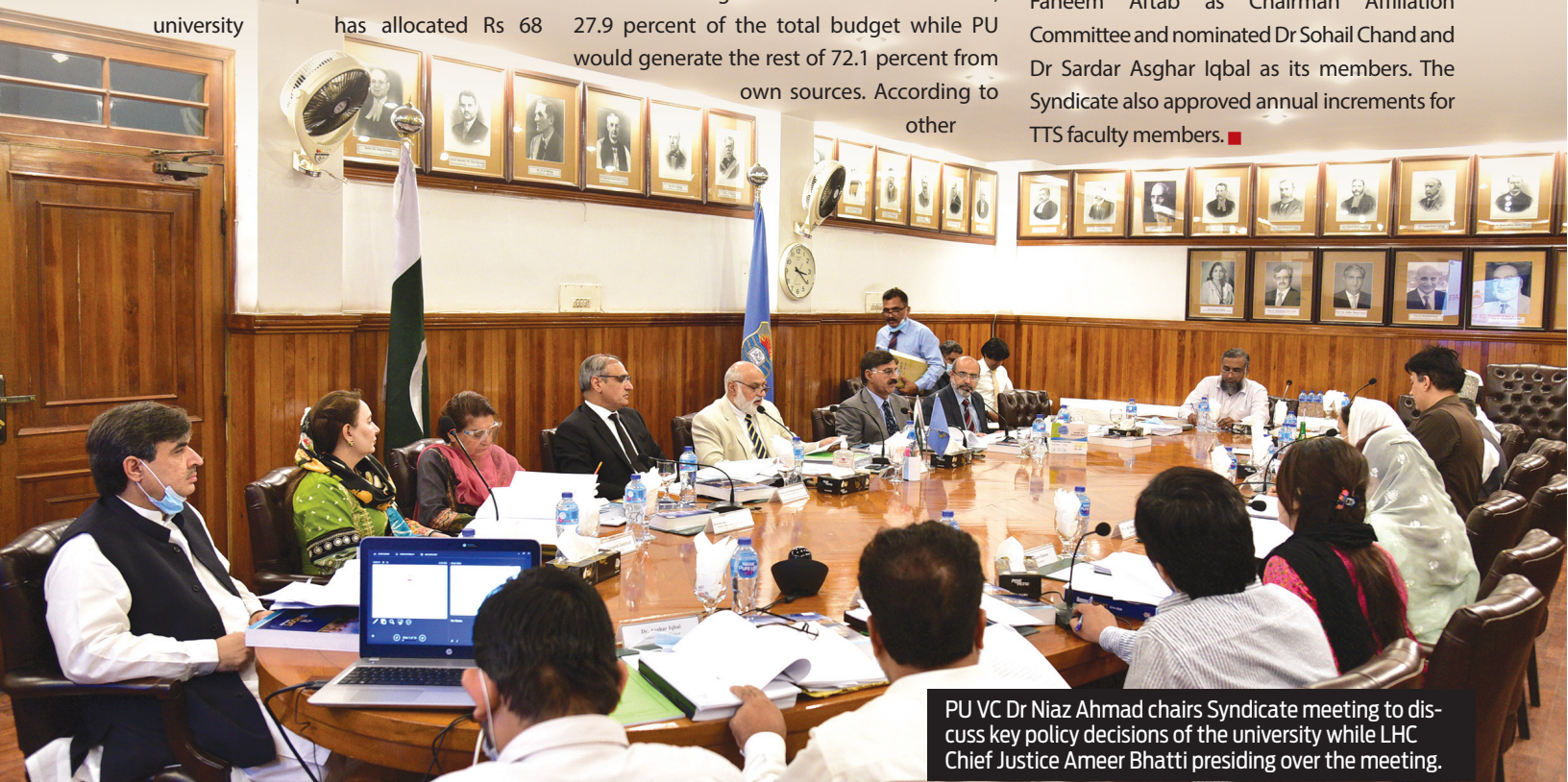


Special students and admissions based on sports will be provided with free education



salient features of the budget, special students will also be provided with free education along with boarding facilities while students taking admission on sports basis will be provided with free education. The university will continue to waive off tuition fee of Hafiz-e-Quran. Punjab University will provide Rs 215 million scholarships to the students.

Moreover, HEC scholarships worth 136 million rupees and PEEF scholarships will also be provided to students. In the budget, Punjab University would continue to provide subsidy of millions of rupees to the students in hostel, transport and internet heads and in addition to the above, subsidy on electricity bills in teaching departments is also being provided. PU has allocated Rs 1.3 billion for development projects. PU has also approved to purchase additional land for Khanaspur campus for Rs 38 million. The syndicate endorsed the appointment of Prof Dr Faheem Aftab as Chairman Affiliation Committee and nominated Dr Sohail Chand and Dr Sardar Asghar Iqbal as its members. The Syndicate also approved annual increments for TTS faculty members. ■



PU VC Dr Niaz Ahmad chairs Syndicate meeting to discuss key policy decisions of the university while LHC Chief Justice Ameer Bhatti presiding over the meeting.

PU Senate approves Rs 12.6 billion budget



Governor Punjab/ Chancellor Punjab University Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar presides the 357th meeting of PU Senate.

PUNJAB University Senate's 357th meeting approved Rs 12.6 billion budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 and annual report of Punjab University. The meeting was conducted online which was presided over by Governor Punjab/Chancellor Punjab University Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar. PU Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmad, Pro Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Saleem Mazhar and more than 150 members of the Senate participated in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar said that instructions has been given to the Finance Department to give exemption to the universities with reference to 25 percent disparity allowance. He said that the universities who could afford to pay disparity allowance to their employees through their own sources would be autonomous to make decisions in this regard. The governor lauded the efforts of Prof Niaz Ahmad for improvement in international ranking of Punjab University.

Briefing the Senate, Prof Niaz Ahmad highlighted the salient features of the budget and said that the amount of scholarships given to the students was greater than the tuition fees the university took from them. He said that during COVID 19, the administration waived off fee of the students and for some other reasons, the income sources have shrunk. However, he said, the university was coping with the budget deficit by controlling expenditures and adopting austerity measures.

Due to the efforts of the Chancellor, the



Governor Punjab approves PU VC's proposal to award honorarium to the teachers

Government of Pakistan has promised to increase funding from 2.8 billion to Rs 3.3 billion. He said that on behalf of all the universities across Punjab, he was thankful to the governor for issuing orders to the Finance Department (FD) regarding exemption of universities from the earlier notification of FD with reference to disparity allowance, thus enabling universities to take their own decisions in this regard.

The Vice Chancellor requested the Governor to approve honorarium for PU teachers as a token of acknowledgement of their good performance for continuation of the process of education during COVID 19. The governor, on

the request of the vice chancellor, gave approval to the proposal of awarding honorarium to the teachers. Presenting annual report, the VC said that the university has improved its international ranking by 16 percent. He said that for the first time, PU's 13 subjects has been ranked internationally and PU's Chemical and Petroleum Engineering Department has been ranked among top 100-150 institutions in the world by the QS.

Prof Niaz Ahmad said that PU has also improved its Asian ranking and it stands on 178th position, making a considerable jump of 54 points in just two years. He said that The Nature Publishing Group, a world-class publisher of high impact scientific and medical information in print and online founded in 1869, has also ranked Punjab University No 1 in terms of research publications in the field of natural sciences amongst all Pakistani universities. The governor lauded PU VC Prof Niaz Ahmad and his team for achieving these milestones at international level. ■

Pak-China research corridor

Pak-China collaboration on rice research project worth **30.89 million**



A collaborative research project titled “Heat tolerance genes identification and physiological mechanism analysis from Honglian type hybrid rice source and new hybrid rice variety creations” between the University of the Punjab, Lahore and Wuhan University, China has been approved. for a period of three years under International Science and Technology Innovation Cooperation Projects Between China and Pakistan Governments. Total worth of the project is Rs.30,893,200/-.

From Pakistan side PU Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Ashfaq is associated with this project to complete and achieve the fruitful results within this tenure that would play a role for the betterment of the society and economy of the country. From China side WHU Associate Professor Dr. Xianting Wu is in charge of this project to achieve the maximum results as designed in the proposal with full devotions. Collaborations in such types of research projects

on Honglian type hybrid rice and establishment of the Wuhan University-University of the Punjab Joint Research Center of Honglian Type Hybrid Rice would further strengthen the cooperation between two friendly countries on long term basis. Exchange visits will be planned between the scientists

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**China-Pakistan cooperation
on Honglian type hybrid
rice will promote food
safety in Pakistan**
”

of both countries for the promotions and advancing the research culture of Honglian type hybrid rice breeding program in Pakistan and will impart trainings to the farmers and researchers with this new emerging technology.

Furthermore, adaptability trials and DUS trials are being conducted by the government under the supervision of National Coordinator Rice and Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department, respectively. It is promising that China-Pakistan cooperation on Honglian type

hybrid rice will promote food safety in Pakistan and increase Pakistan's rice export to other countries, therefore, improving both countries' food supply is mutually beneficial and worthy of trials for the future. ■