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Govt committed to develop agri sector of Balochistan: minister

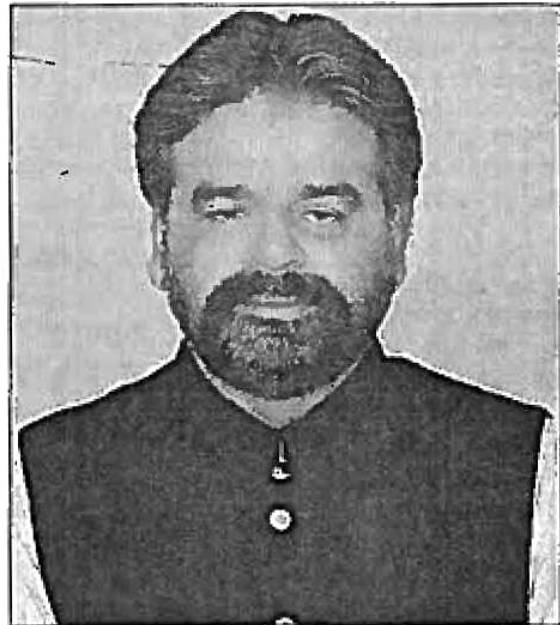
ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan said that the federal government had initiated several development projects in the province of Balochistan to uplift agriculture sector and raise income of farmers. He said the government was aware of the problems of farmers in in province and was formulating programmes and projects to address their issues.

Bosan said this while addressing a two-day "Balochistan Kisan Mela" which was organized by Food and Agriculture Organization in collaboration with government of Balochistan and Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC). The Mela (Festival) featured several other programmes including a conference on Agriculture Development of Balochistan. The minister also announced that the federal government would provide agriculture training to 1,000 farmers from Balochistan at the National Agriculture Research Center (NARC), Islamabad. He informed the participants that government approved the Seed Act and now it was responsibility the provincial governments to implement the Act at provincial level.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Abdul Malik speaking on the occasion urged the federal government to help exploit agricultural resources of the province for betterment of the farmers. He said that the provincial government would extend support for all the projects launched for the development of the province.

On the occasion, the FAO country representative, Patrick T. Evans said that his organization was currently implementing two programmes in 14 districts of Balochistan to help increase incomes of the poor in rural areas through build-



ing capacities of farmers to benefit from increased crop and livestock production and improved marketing and organization.

He said FAO was supporting the provincial government in the formulating the Balochistan Agriculture Policy and Strategy adding that It would also be providing support for implementation of this policy.

Meanwhile, Chairman PARC, Dr. Ifikhar Ahmed in his message to the participants of the mela said that his organization had been working for the development of agriculture sector in Balochistan. He assured the participants that PARC would keep on working and developing new technologies and crop varieties to facilitate Balochistan's farmers. -APP