



## **NARC HAS BRIGHT CHANCE TO KEEP LAND MAFIA AT BAY**

Council's research helped Pakistan achieve self-sufficiency in wheat; Research outcomes valued at Rs5858b

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**Wednesday, July 22, 2015** - Islamabad—The move to axe National Agriculture Research Council which had generated revenue of 44 billion US dollars in 35 years is most likely to be abandoned as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has shown reluctance to convert National Agriculture Research Counsel into a housing society.

In a move which may send shocking waves among those who have been relentlessly working to transform NARC into housing society, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has shown reluctance to approve summary which CDA had moved to generate funds (Rs.150 billion) by converting the NARC into a housing society through a private developer.

“Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has shown reluctance to approve summary of transforming NARC's land into housing society”, said a source privy to developments. He added that the Premier believes in that institutions like NARC are vital for any country, hence, must be encouraged to keep on working.

It is worthy to note that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) had moved a summary for generating funds amounting to Rs.150 billion by converting the National Agriculture Research Council land into a housing society through a private developer.

CDA argued that with the passage of time, this area has become a hub of residential

and commercial activity and agriculture research does not appear to be the foremost appropriate activity on this site.

Capital Development Authority also proposed to the Prime Minister to form a committee to ensure smooth transition of land from Ministry of Food & Agriculture/NARC to CDA. Apart from that, CDA proposed to the Prime Minister to appoint a Project Director/ Chief Executive from the Private Sector preferably to supervise the project.

It also added that design and Build by third party developer where no upfront payments are involved by Government of Pakistan. The developer expends on the design, development, infrastructure and marketing of the project in lieu of plots rather than cash

Well placed sources told Pakistan Observer on Tuesday, that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is most likely to disapprove the summary which proposed transforming of land of National Agriculture Research Center into housing colony to generate only 150 billion rupees.

“Prime Minister is most likely to reject the summary which proposed transformation of NARC into housing society,” said a source.

According to research done by Pakistan Observer, NARC had generated revenue of 4385 billion rupees since 1980. While Capital development Authority is all set to damage NARC only to generate 150 billion rupees.

Pakistan observer’s research revealed that, at the time of partition, Pakistan didn’t inherit any agriculture research setup at federal level. It was felt that in line with Indian Agricultural Research Institute which was located in New Delhi, a similar agriculture research institution may also be established in Pakistan. This concept was realized in 1975 with the allotment of 1395.2 acres of land at Park Road, Islamabad by the then Prime Minister.

Over 40 years, with the generous financial and technical support of more than Rs. 100 billion by the international organizations i.e. USAID, USDA, JICA, CIDA, World Bank etc. and national donors, the Center has emerged as a world class institute of agriculture research. The Center has research infrastructure of more than 1.76 million Sq. Ft. including accredited labs. green houses, gene bank, animal sheds, library/documentation, auditorium, machinery & lab equipment repair workshops, seed stores, hostels, cafeteria and, audio visual studios.

Currently, PARC/NARC is coordinating with 114 countries and 32 international organizations among which it has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). The center is also collaborating with 81 national institutions and organizations and signed

MoUs with them. Moreover, NARC is the host of various international organizations i.e. FAO, CIMMYT, ICARDA, AVRDC, ILRI, IRRI and CIMOD etc. and these have established their country liaison offices at NARC through formal consent of Government of Pakistan.

The NARC has carried out landmark research in developing new disease resistant high yielding wheat varieties which generated immense return since 1980 and helped Pakistan achieving self-sufficiency in wheat. The benefit to the nation was worth Rs200 billion.

Farm machines developed and commercialized since 1985 were worth Rs230 billion.

NARC Introduced European bees along with improved production technology that enabled to produce honey in large quantities. It was worth Rs50 billion.

Other research achievements involved diagnosis and management of Banana Bunchy Top Virus since 1992 worth Rs.150 billion, diagnosis of cotton leaf curl virus for vector management in 1993 worth Rs.100 billion. identified resistant source & developed 2 chickpea blight resistant varieties since 1980 worth Rs 80 billion and introduction of Canola type mustard varieties since 1983 that helped in the development of canola oil industry worth Rs 1260 billion.