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PPP leaders express concern over CDA move to shift NARC

■ Ex PM Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and former Senate chairman say CDA's proposal to establish housing society at NARC land tantamount to pushing the country towards hunger and poverty

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and former Senate chairman Nayyar Hussain Bukhari have expressed serious concern over the move by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to transform the agricultural research land of National Agricultural Research Council (NARC) into a housing society.

Talking to the delegation of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), led by PARC Public Relations and Protocol Director Sardar Ghulam Mustafa, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leaders said that they will not tolerate transformation of the NARC land into a housing society as suggested by the Capital Development Authority in its recent summary sent to the prime minister.

The issue will be raised in both

the houses of the parliament with an aim to save this highly important national asset.

The national institutions like NARC are not easy to be developed within a short span of time, so the move by CDA to establish housing society at NARC land tantamounts to push the country towards hunger and poverty, politicians observed.

"The issue would be raised at the Senate as well as at the National Assembly to stop the move," they assured the delegation members.

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said that it has taken a long time to establish the state-of-the-art laboratories and mother orchards at the NARC, so PPP would not allowed demolishing of these assets at the cost of housing society as the centre has been playing pivotal role in the development of agriculture sector.

"This organisation has virtually

played an important role for the progress of agriculture and prosperity of farmers, so the PPP will continue to work for strengthening the institute," the former PM said.

He said that as the former prime minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhatto made the defence of Pakistan invincible through introduction of Dr Abdul Qadeer, similarly, he made the foundations of the agriculture sector strong by establishing the NARC.

The former PM said that country was self-sufficient in food and this has been ensured only through research and development, so this shows the importance of the NARC.

On the occasion, former Senate chairman Nayyar Hussain Bukhari said that PPP will not tolerate politics on national institutions like the NARC. He said that there is need to save national institutions,

which have helped establish food secure Pakistan.

He urged the prime minister to reject the summary forwarded by the CDA and issue directions to the CDA for issuance of new lease agreement so that scientists and other employees of the organisation could work with peace of mind.

He said that at a time when the country was passing through various crisis including load shedding, gas problems and law and order issues, the agriculture was the only sector that has been performing well and the credit, no doubt, goes to the scientists.

The importance of this institution could be realised from the fact that when all the institutions were shifted to provinces after 18th amendment in the constitution, this was the only institution kept with federation due to its national importance, he added.