



Economy Watch

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Pakistan
OBSERVER

PKI warns of nationwide strike over NARC land dispute

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (PKI) has warned the government of nation-wide protest strike if it does not turn down the summary moved by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) for converting the agriculture research land of National Agriculture Research Center (NARC) into housing society. "We will wait until July end, and if the government does not reject the CDA summary, the Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (PKI) will launch nationwide protest strike and hold demonstrations in front of Prime Minister house and in all the provincial assemblies in the first week of August," President PKI, Khalid Mehmood Khokhar announced during a press conference here.

He said that PKI will protect the interests of agriculture sector for the larger interests of the nation and would come on the streets and roads throughout the country to defend the NARC against land mafia. "We will sacrifice our lives and shed our blood to defend national institutions like NARC," he said and warned the government not to push the farming community against the wall, which would have catastrophic consequences. For the

larger national interest, the Ittehad would not let the government to destroy this important asset as the destruction of NARC means destruction of agriculture and thereby the economy, he maintained.

He said that the moves like converting research land into housing society could only be expected from the enemies of the country as this is the only sector of the economy which not only feeds increasing population of the country but contributes a considerable share in the national GDP. On the occasion, President PARC Scientists Association, Dr. Sher Altaf said that although population of the country has increased from 35 million to 200 million, there is no food crisis in the country owing to agriculture research.

He said that the research conducted at the center saved billions of rupees of the national exchequer by introducing high-yielding and disease free varieties of crops and fruits, increasing milk and meat production besides developing and commercializing farm machinery. It is due to NARC research, Pakistan became honey-exporting country. The center introduced canola and rid the country of bird-flu which resulted in lifting of ban on exports.