

- Front Page
- National
- International
- Local
- Business
- Stocks
- Forex & Gold
- Sport
- Editorial
- Opinion

Previous



Next

05 August 2002

Monday

25 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1423

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- Letters
- Features
- Cartoon
- PTV 2 Guide

- Cowasjee
- Ayaz Amir
- Mazdak

**Magazines**

- The Review
- The Magazine
- Young World
- Images

- Books
- Education
- Encounter
- Folio
- Gallery
- Health
- Science



## Agriculture scientist honoured

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI, Aug 4: A leading agriculture scientist, Mohammad Hussain Panhwar, who has developed and introduced many new crops and fruits in the province, was awarded a life-time achievement award by a non-governmental organization here on Sunday evening.

Various speakers paid tribute to the services of the septuagenarian scientist at the function organized by the NGO, Revivers, and said that achievements of such people should be acknowledged to encourage the younger generation in their respective fields.

Mr Panhwar said he had developed and introduced over 25 different fruits and had been trying to approach various organizations and landlords so that they could also grow these varieties to earn more, but nobody seemed to be interested.

He said the freezing of crop prizes and the increasing rates of agricultural inputs have crippled the economy of the farmers. He also cited an example that the prices of wheat had not been increased during the past couple of years while the rates of fertilizers and pesticides had gone up. He said it had made the farmers poorer so they were not ready to experiment new varieties.

He also regretted that the reading habit among the people has declined and even teachers and students of the agricultural university did not use the library. Many of them, he added, even could not read, write or speak in English language, which is one of the most important languages for advanced learning as most of the international research papers and reading materials are in English.

Former speaker of the National Assembly, Illahi Bukhsh Soomro, said Mr Panhwar

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and he were fired from government service by the military rulers over 35 years back and it had come as a blessing in disguise as both of them had enough time to pursue their careers in other professions - he in politics and Mr Panhwar in research.

He said Mr Panhwar's library comprised thousands of books on different subjects, including agriculture, history of Sindh, and thousands of ancient maps. Mr Panhwar has also written more than ten books, and hundreds of research papers mostly on the subject of agriculture, he added.

Himself an agriculturist, federal agriculture minister Khair Mohammad Junejo said Mr Panhwar is a pioneer in mechanized farming in the province and has been instrumental in introducing non-traditional fruits and crops. He said usually the artists etc., are given awards and this probably is the first time that an NGO had recognized the services of an agriculture scientist.

The Revivers' chief, Imtiaz Shaikh, who also heads the Sindh Democratic Alliance, said this was the first function organized by the recently-established NGO, which, he said, is committed to revive socio-economic condition of the downtrodden communities in the province.

He said the NGO planned to set up ten centres by December where indoor game facilities would be provided and vocational centres for the literate, semi-literate and uneducated young women in different slums would also be set up.

Other speakers said the agriculture scientist had also introduced two varieties of grape fruits which are seedless and have red coloured pulp and contain red juice, which reduce cholesterol level and blood pressure. A variety of mangoes was also put on display. Each specimen of mangoes weighed around two kilograms.

They urged other organizations to come forward and recognize the services of numerous talented people that, so far, had remained unknown as they were quietly doing their work without making any statements and speeches. They said exposure of such talented people would encourage the young people to go for the research work, without which a society could not progress.

Veteran Muslim League leader, Yusuf A. Haroon, Sindh finance minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Rasool Bakhsh Palejo, Hamida Khuhro, Yusuf Jamal and others also spoke. The programme was conducted by Rasheed Channa. Sooraj Palijo and Naseem Palijo recited Shah Abdul Lateef Bhittai's poetry.

Later, Mr Soomro presented a gold medal to Mr Panhwar. The function concluded with a performance by a group of folk musicians and singers who enthralled the audience.

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