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# News Bulletin



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## Visit of Mr. Neil Hawkins, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan

His Excellency, Mr. Neil Hawkins, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan visited MNS Agricultural University, Multan. Introducing the university to the Australian High Commissioner and delegation, Prof. Dr. Shafqat Saeed, Acting Vice Chancellor expressed that Australia has been playing a strategic role for the development of agriculture in Pakistan. Prof. Dr. Irfan, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, foregrounded the progress status of MNSUAM's various ongoing projects with Australia, and briefed that MNSUAM is achieving success in research on Hybrid Wheat, Pulses Supervision, Water Regulation and Thor Color Land Management with the support of Australia. Accentuating the importance of water, His Excellency, Mr. Neil Hawkins, Australian High Commissioner pointed out that it has been emphasized upon numerous times in the Holy Quran as well. Climate change is a real time stumbling block that must be tackled by saving and retaining the water reservoirs which can only be achieved through incorporating positive changes in attitudes worldwide. Irrigation is the backbone of any country's development which when adapted to the modern trends, will not only lead to the increase in production per acre but also stabilize the farmer economically. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Kazmi articulated that agricultural experts, farmers and policy makers need to make strong efforts to equip themselves with the modern trends. Dr. Hamad Nadeem, Dr. Mubasher Mehdi, Dr. Tanvir-ul-Haq, Dr. Asif Raza, Dr. Nasir Nadeem, Dr. Ghaffar and Australian alumni of the university were also present in the meeting.



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“Climate change is a real time stumbling block that must be tackled by saving and retaining the water reservoirs which can only be achieved through incorporating positive changes in attitudes worldwide.”

Mr. Neil Hawkins



## Kashmir Camaraderie Walk-MNSUAM

Kashmir Camaraderie Walk was organized by MNSUAM on Kashmir Day to express solidarity with Kashmir. The walk commenced from Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan Library. Addressing the procession, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I), Vice Chancellor MNSUAM, expressed that the notion of today's peaceful world is just a simulation as Kashmiris are still victims of oppression, abuse and are still deprived of their basic right of freedom. The United Nations has an unfinished agenda in the form of sieged Kashmir. Realizing its responsibility, Pakistan continues to raise its voice at various forums of the United Nations. It is high time that all the countries and nations of the world raise a united voice against the violence, oppression and abuse that are being perpetrated in Kashmir. Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I), foregrounded that the love of Kashmiris for Pakistan is an open secret and the Sardar Tanveer Ilyas library in our university is a living embodiment of that love.



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“The notion of today's peaceful world is just a simulation as Kashmiris are still victims of oppression, abuse and are still deprived of their basic right of freedom. The United Nations has an unfinished agenda in the form of sieged Kashmir.”

Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I)





## Farmer's Field Day on Precision Agricultural Technologies-MNSUAM

A Farmer's Field Day on "Precision Agricultural Technologies" was jointly organized by MNS University of Agriculture, Multan, PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi (PMAS-UAAR), and Fatima Fertilizers (Pvt.) Ltd. on Thursday February 09, 2023, at the Sports Ground, MNSUAM. Mr. Hussain Jhanian Gardezi, Ex-Minister of Agriculture Punjab, aggrandized the event as the chief guest. Prof. Dr. Shafqat Saeed the Dean FVAS, on behalf of the Vice Chancellor MNSUAM, extended a warm welcome to all the participants, especially progressive growers, and the chief guest for sparing time out of their engrossing schedules for the event. He also accredited the Vice-Chancellor of PMAS Arid Agriculture University on consolidating this event, showcasing the research activities of both the universities for the farmers of South Punjab. He also highlighted the benefits of using precision agriculture technology such as the better utilization of pesticides, pest monitoring digitally via mobile phone, and proper water utilization. He foregrounded that the use of sprayer in tractor for watering or fertilizer distribution, equally distributes the spray according to the crop requirement that eventually not only saves the cost but also conserves water resources. The major aim of the Farmer's Field Day was to introduce the farmers of South Punjab with the state-of-the-art and modern precision agricultural technologies developed by the Center of Precision Agriculture, UAAR. On this occasion, the scientists and researchers from the department of Agricultural Engineering, MNSUAM and PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi displayed various precision agriculture machines and projected models at the event's gateway and physically demonstrated Drone Spray, Drone Mapping, Precision Orchard Spray and Auto Steering Tractor. A multitude of progressive growers, farmers, manufacturers, media representatives, faculty members, and students attended the Field Day.



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“Employing precision agriculture Technology in our agricultural operations will lead not only to financial and production benefits such as the better utilization of pesticides, pest monitoring digitally via mobile phone but also to ecological ones such as economically administered water utilization.”

Prof. Dr. Shafqat Saeed



## Weekly Basketball February

A weekly basketball match between Multan Warriors and Muzaffargarh United was organized by the Office of the Hall Warden and the Directorate of Sports MNSUAM on February 09, 2023. Mirza Akhtar Ali, Iris Foundation Bahawalnagar and Vice President PMLN Bahawalnagar aggrandized the event as the Chief Guest. Mr. Asif Riaz, Qaswa Explorer and Mr. Riaz Thahim from Radio Pakistan also encouraged the students with their presence. After an hour of thrilling competition, Multan Warriors won the match by 12 points. Addressing the importance of extra-curricular activities for the students, the chief guest expressed that sports help us not only in remaining active but also keep us mentally and physically healthy. Spectators of both the teams watched the match with full enthusiasm and applauded the players wholeheartedly. The match was proceeded by a closing ceremony in which prizes were distributed among the players by the Chief Guest. Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Dr. Mirza Abdul Qayyum, Hall Warden, Dr. Muhammad Shehbaz, Superintendent Mulberry Courts, Riaz Ahmed Haraj, In-charge Public Relations and Publications, Dr. Ahmed Mahmood and Dr. Abdul Rehman, Assistant Superintendents were also present on the occasion along with a large number of spectators. The coaching duties were performed by Mr. Karim Nawaz. Mr. Nadeem Ahmed Bhutta and Mr. Hafiz Asim Minhas were the match organizers, referees and supervisors.



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“The weekly exercise of Sportsmanship spirit will instill the students with the skill of challenging the odds eventually leading to the development of a healthy and prosperous society.”  
Mirza Akhtar Ali



## Farmers Convention on Hybrid Wheat-MNSUAM

A Farmers Convention focusing on Hybrid Wheat was organized by MNSUAM and Fatima Fertilizer. The convention saw huge participation from farmers, personalities from different walks of life and national and international scientists. Speaking at the convention, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I), Vice Chancellor, MNSUAM, foregrounded the role of hybrid wheat in increasing wheat production. He expressed that hybrids had proved to be very popular and successful in maize, which give good yield to farmers every year. The challenges that are being faced by food security can be positively met through increasing yields from hybrid wheat. He articulated his delectation on the signed collaboration between MNSUAM and Fatima Group which will help in mass production of Hybrid Wheat, conveying that MNSUAM has always involved industry in agricultural research and promotion. Australian scientist, Dr. Richard Trethowan notified that Hybrid Wheat is being seen as an important crop not only in Australia but globally, stressing that wheat diseases can be significantly reduced with hybrid varieties. The Australian scientist congratulated the scientists of the University of Agriculture Multan and Fatima Fertilizer for achieving the productivity of hybrid wheat. He conveyed that bringing hybrid wheat to farmers is an important step that needs to be worked on. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashfaq highlighted that farmers can increase wheat production by reducing wheat rust, presenting multiple strategies for controlling wheat rust, one of which is the cultivation of Hybrid Wheat as it's highly beneficial for reducing wheat rust. Emphasizing the future and importance of Hybrid Wheat in food security, Naseerullah Khan from Fatima Group, accentuated that with Hybrid Wheat Pakistan can not only meet its own requirements but can also become capable of exporting it. Progressive farmers Syed Fakhr Imam and Khalid Khokhar, commended Agriculture University Multan and Fatima Fertilizer for organizing Hybrid Wheat Convention. Acquainting with the importance of hybrid wheat, Dr. Abid Mehmood, CEO, PARB conveyed that Hybrid Wheat is an important milestone in agriculture. The participants specially the farmers appreciated the services of the university and expressed positive thoughts regarding planting Hybrid Wheat in the future.



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“The future of hybrid wheat holds accentuated importance in meeting with the challenges of food security, as it is with the use of Hybrid Wheat that Pakistan can meet not only its own wheat requirements but can also become capable of exporting it.”  
Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I)



## International Conference on Horticulture-MNSUAM

A two-day international conference was conducted at MNS Agricultural University in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture Multan and Pakistan Society of Horticulture Science. The conference was aggrandized by Prof. Dr. Amanullah Malik as the chief guest. More than 250 research papers were presented in the conference by researchers from ten countries. On this occasion, Dr. Amanullah enlightened the farmers comprehensively about modern technologies in agriculture such as drone spraying, use of mobile application, use of weather forecasting tools. Addressing the event, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I), Vice-Chancellor, MNSUAM articulated that in future only such fertilizers should be used which have minimum post-harvest toxic substances. It is a rule especially in horticulture to use disease-resistant plants and seeds because the better the nursery seed, the better a plant will grow. Also, if such fruit crops are dried and sold to the market, the farmer can get better income. He further stressed the need of using local seeds and plants because their immunity is more than foreign seeds. He supplemented that it is possible to increase the production of fruits and vegetables only through modern research in horticulture. Mr. Ghaffar Grewal, Director Mango Research Institute, professed that during mango nursery transplanting, the scion should be taken from a healthy plant as it is the foundation of nursery gardens. He added that if the nursery is damaged, the plant will not be able to grow properly, which increases the risk of disease. Prof. Dr. Ghulam Markhand vocalized that high quality dates are found in Sindh and Pakistan is the sixth largest producer of dates in the world. But unfortunately compared to our production our export is very low. If the government provides the facility of post-harvest posting of the fruit to our date palm growers, the economy can be strengthened not only domestically but also internationally. Kashif Islam, a prominent progressive farmer, stressed the need of developing integrated business models and focused marketing systems with special emphasis on value addition, for the timely and proper access of fruits and vegetables to the consumers. Dr. Tanveer Ahmad, Chairman Department of Horticulture, concluded the conference with extending his note of appreciation for all the participants.



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“One of Horticulture’s special rule is to use disease-resistant plants and seeds because the better the nursery seed, the better a plant will grow, so use of local seeds and plants be promoted because of their better immunity than foreign seeds.”  
Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I)





## Seminar on Medicinal Plants for Better Human Health-MNSUAM

A seminar titled Medicinal Plants for Better Human Health was organized by Plant for Life Society and Department of Welfare-MNSUAM. The event was presided over by Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I), Vice Chancellor, MNSUAM. On this occasion, Professor Dr. Shazia Anjum, Islamia University Bahawalpur offered detailed information to the participants about the scientific basis of cultivation of medicinal plants and preparation of basic medicines. Highlighting the benefits of medicinal plants, she further elaborated that how Pakistan's medicinal plants can be exported globally and can assist in stabilizing the State's foreign currency reservoirs. Dr. Tauseef Sultan, Chairman, Department of Human Nutrition, Bahauddin Zakariya University, informed about the results of the project, Restoration of Medicinal Plants in Thal Area. Dr. Jameel Anwar Ghorri and Rana Muhammad Abbas briefed about a project related to mass cultivation of medicinal plants on modern scientific basis and their their use in industry. Professor Dr. Shafqat Saeed, articulated the significance that is imparted to research of medicinal plants in MNSUAM. Moreover progressive recommendations on domestic use of medicinal plants in daily modern life were proposed. In his culminating remarks, Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I), Vice Chancellor, MNSUAM stressed that the profitable cultivation of medicinal plants will only be possible through value chain.



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“Through the value chain we should promote the profitable cultivation of medicinal plants, as beside the obvious medicinal benefits, Pakistan's medicinal plants can be exported globally and can assist in stabilizing the State's foreign currency reservoirs.”



## Digital Agribusiness Marketing In Pakistan: Challenges And Opportunities For Pulses Growers

A Workshop entitled “Digital Agribusiness Marketing in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities for Pulses Growers”, jointly organized by MNS University of Agriculture (MNS-UAM), NARC and UAF under ACIAR funded project entitled Digital Value Chain Solutions for Smallholders Pulses Farmers in Pakistan was held on February 10, 2023 at Social Sciences Research Institute, National Agricultural Research Center (NARC), Islamabad at the eve of World Pulses Day. The ACIAR funded project entitled Digital Value Chain Solutions for Smallholders Pulses Farmers in Pakistan is being run by MNSUAM. Approximately 50 participants joined the workshop, out of which more than 25 were pulse growers from Punjab and KPK, academicians from MNSUAM, UAF, UAP, CUI, researchers from SSRI (PARC) and our industrial partners from Concave Agri. Dr. Burhan Ahmad shared his experiences during the Pulses Value chain Project with the participants stressing upon the need of digital marketing tools for direct access of farmers to consumers. Prof. Dr. Mubashir Mehdi shared the results of consumer research regarding online purchase of agricultural products especially pulses’ products, concluding that there is a lot of potential in the digital world to get benefited. Mr. Ali Iqbal, CEO, Concave Agri. shared details about their online advisory platform to farmers, which assists in market information, purchase of inputs, sale of outputs and how farmers can link-up these platforms. The farmers showed willingness to join this venture with high quality produce for getting better returns. Cognizing the importance of digital marketing and its benefits for farming community, farmers vehemently agreed to take part in this project. Concave Agri. agreed to provide necessary training to farmers regarding digital platform. It was decided that an MoU will be signed between farmers and industrial partners in near future.



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“Linkages between food industry and academia pave ways for effective applied work related education, improves graduate employment and skills, student learning and motivation along with promoting the exchange of resources for many other mutual benefits.”

Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz



## Long-term weather forecast and management interventions for wheat crop

A webinar themed “Long-term weather forecast and management interventions for wheat crop” was successfully organized by Department of Agronomy with the collaboration of Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Islamabad-Pakistan. The objective of the webinar is to provide long-term weather forecasts to wheat growers and to facilitate decision making about agronomic management for wheat crop particularly in South Punjab. Three main talks were delivered along with productive discussion sessions between the speakers and the wheat growers. More than 85 participants from extension, research, South Punjab agriculture forum, academics and wheat growers from various universities of Punjab actively attended the webinar. Dr. Dildar Hussain Kazmi, Meteorologist, PMD, presented the long term weather forecast ranging from February to April, about temperature, heat, rainfall patterns, and drought scenarios particularly in South Punjab. The second session entitled “Agronomic wheat management under prevailing weather conditions” was delivered by Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghaffar, Chairman, Department of Agronomy and Dr. Muhammad Habib-ur-Rahman. Possible adaptations to rising temperature in March were discussed and suggestions were proposed, like the provision of ensured light irrigation was recommended at the critical grain formation and other developmental phases. Prof. Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed from University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) also contributed in the discussion and provided agronomic recommendations for wheat growers.



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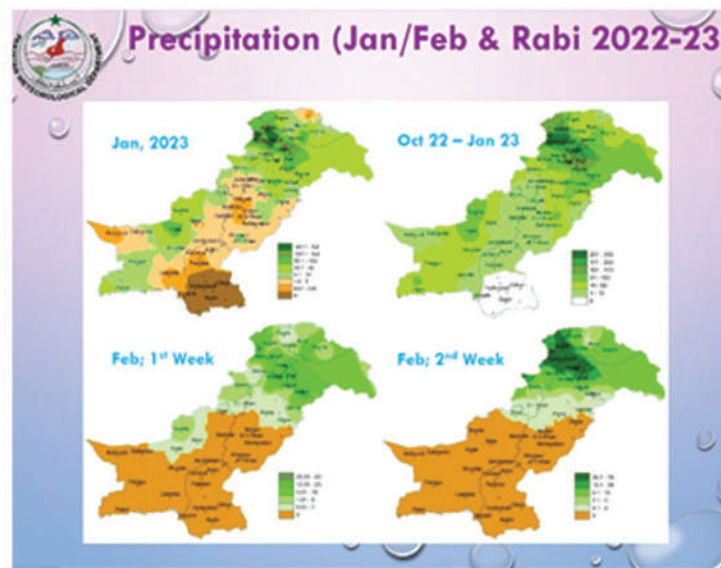
“A possible adaptation to the rising temperatures in March, is to ensure the provision of light irrigation at the critical grain formation and other developmental phases.”

Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghaffar



## Long-term weather forecast and management interventions for wheat crop

The concluding session entitled “Disease management of wheat crop under prevailing weather conditions” was delivered by Dr. Muhammad Arslan in which he discussed the possible solutions of current challenges related to plant protection. Other than this, the queries of the participants and especially the wheat growers were addressed and a fruitful discussion was held for short and long term crop adaptation according to wheat forecast. Dean faculty of Agriculture, Prof. Dr. Shafqat Saeed, concluded the webinar by extending his vote of thanks along with highlighting the significance of forecast for mango as currently its critical fruit developmental stages are in progress and this forecast will be very helpful in managing the mango crop according to the weather forecast in this region.





## Fish Feed Formulation

MNS-University of Agriculture Multan, along with the collaboration of ACIAR-ASSIB organized a capacity building session for farmers of Project Bright Spot-2 Dera Habbat regarding fish feed formulation for improved FCR. The session provided hands on training regarding calculation of protein contents of various feed ingredients and preparation of cheap high quality fish feed for 20 participants. The training session was specifically designed with the aim of reducing feed cost and improving water quality of fish pond. This training enabled the participants to understand the basic formula for fish feed preparation. Mr. Syed Ali, member SOFT team said that this training will enable the local fish farmers to prepare cost effective fish feed having high FCR that will lead to improved fish growth without deteriorating water quality.



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“The basic goal of the training is enabling the local fish farmers to prepare cost effective fish feed having high FCR that will lead to improved fish growth and will eventually profit not only the farmers but will also make possible the provision of healthy fish for customers.”

Mr. Syed Ali



## Food Safety Awareness Session for Food Handlers in Malik Food Industries

A Food Safety Awareness Training Session was organized by Department of Food Science and Technology, MNSUAM at Malik Food industries. A team from Department of Food Science and Technology consisting of Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz, Associate Professor, Dr. Nida Firdous, Assistant professor and Mr. Muhammad Usman, Lecturer facilitated the training session at Malik Food industries. The training focused on food safety protocols during handling, preparation, storage and transportation of food products. After completing the training session, questions from food business operators and handlers about technical issues were addressed with technical solutions to problems. The training session addressed the grievances and challenges of business operators and guided them about alternative advanced techniques and safety protocols being used and how to manage skilled human resource in the industry. Team from FST MNSUAM visited the food plant and addressed loopholes in processing as well. Total 15 participants took part in the training session belonging to different departments of industry. Department of Food Science and Technology, MNSUAM is planning to conduct such training sessions regularly to maintain mutual linkages with food industry.



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“Linkages between food industry and academia pave ways for effective applied work related education, improves graduate employment and skills, student learning and motivation along with promoting the exchange of resources for many other mutual benefits.”

Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz



## Spring Flower Festival 2023-MNSUAM

Department of Horticulture, MNS University of agriculture Multan organized Spring Flower Festival on 23-25 th February 2023. Spring flower festival was inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I), Vice Chancellor, MNS University of Agriculture Multan, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ramzan, Vice Chancellor, Emerson University Multan and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Asif Raza, Dean of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, MNS University of Agriculture Multan. Different institutions, private organizations and gardeners from Cantonment Board Multan, Emerson University Multan, Department of Horticulture, BZU, Multan, Floriculture Research Institute Multan, The City School, Multan, Beacon House School, Multan, Multan Junior School, Department of Estate Management, MNSUAM and Department of Horticulture, MNSUAM participated and presented their stalls in the festival. The distinguished guests enjoyed the flamboyant flower walk and appreciated the wonderful stalls presented by different organizations. The festival continued till 25 th February 2023 in which people from different walks of life visited.



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“Every single flower is a soul blossoming in Nature and when Nature recommences her exquisiteness the human society is apt to resuscitate as well.”  
Prof. Dr. Asif Ali (T.I)



## Training Workshop on Weeds Management-MNSUAM

A hands on training workshop on weed management was organized on February 27, 2023 by Department of Agronomy-MNSUAM. The event covered informative expositions by subject experts followed by interactive discussion, Q&A session on said topic, and a field demonstration. The participants underwent intensive interactions and learning experiences. About 50 participants were trained about innovative weed management practices with special reference to sustainable weed management in a changing climate. Various aspects of weed management like weed related issues in cotton-wheat cropping system, non-chemical weed management, need and action plan for integrated weed management, herbicide resistance and its detection, identification of weed plants and seeds, selection of herbicides considering crops, weeds and soil structure, spray machine calibration and determination of herbicide dose, comparative assessment of costs and benefits of various weed control methods, safe use of pesticides and control of invasive weeds like parthenium were discussed. Dr. Amar Matloob and Dr. Khurram Mubeen imparted practical training to the participants. Afterwards, a question-answer session was held, in which experts briefly answered the questions of farmers and students. The participants also visited Experimental Farm of MNSUAM and witnessed innovative weed management practices and satisfactory weed control leading to healthy crop stands.



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The aim of the workshop is to create awareness about the economic and ecological significance of weeds and the usefulness of effective weeds and timely weed management in field crops.

Dr. Amar Matloob