

## **Biotechnology can bring paradigm shift to overcome the food shortage in Pakistan**

The renowned biotechnologist and the patron of Pakistan Biotechnology Information Center (PABIC), Dr. Anwer Nasim (Adviser Science at COMSTECH) said that the food shortage can be successfully overcome by the effective and proper utilization of biotechnology. He was delivering a talk entitled, “Evolution of Biotechnology in Pakistan”, on the second day of the 12th International Symposium on Natural Product Chemistry, in a session sponsored by the PABIC (Pakistan Biotechnology Information Center), which is being held at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), Karachi University (KU). Over 470 researchers and scientists from 35 countries have participated in this symposium, which is considered to one of the most prestigious international events in the Pakistan. Adviser Science Dr. Nasim urged the scientists to take benefits from biotechnological innovations which help producing genetically modified (GM) crops to achieve biotechnological innovations and food security for the nation. He appreciated the efforts of PABIC and said that with the efforts of PABIC, biotechnology has got wider recognition in the country. The most recent achievement of the PABIC is help in the establishment of new Biotechnology Information Centers in five OIC member countries ((Iran, Turkey, Kazakistan, Qatar and Uganda). He added that biotechnology is a tool that can be effectively utilized in all facets of national development including health, industry and environment.



**Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Director PABIC, highlighting the PABIC and ISAAA activities**



**Prof. Dr. Liaquat Ali (chair) and Prof. Irena Kostova (Co-Chair) of the session**

The session was also addressed by the Director, PABIC, Prof. M. Iqbal Choudhary (Director, ICCBS, University of Karachi). He said that the current food crises in the country are largely due to mismanagement and primitive agriculture sector. The increasing population has created a situation of food insecurity and one of the highest inflammation rate in the world. In this situation only biotechnological innovation can solve food security problem.

Dr. Saifullah Khan of ICCBS has discussed on Plant biotechnology, and said that plants provide an inexpensive and convenient system for large-scale production of valuable recombinant proteins and propose the idea of the use of the crops as biological factories to generate drugs which are difficult or expensive to produce in any other way. Malaria is one of major public health problems in the world, which is caused by parasites of the genes *Plasmodim*. Pro-vice Chancellor of Karachi University Dr Shahana Urooj Kazmi (most senior microbiologist of Pakistan) talked about the antimicrobial substances from the indigenous plants of Pakistan.

The Session was chaired by Prof. Dr. Liaquat Ali (Department of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, Bangladesh Inst. Of Health Sci., and Coordinator of Biomedical Research Group, Dhaka, Bangladesh), and the Co-Chairperson was Prof. Irena Kostova (Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, Medical University, Bulgaria).



**Prof. Dr. Anwar Nasim delivering the lecture**



**Dr. Shahana Urooj Kazmi delivering the lecture**