

## Obituary

### Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad

(1<sup>st</sup> April, 1952 – 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016)

*Former Chairman of PARC*



Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad former Chairman of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), a highly accomplished, eminent and decorated scientist, departed this world in the early hours of Friday 03 June, 2016 in Islamabad due to severe heart attack. His sad and sudden demise is an irreparable loss for the entire scientific community of Pakistan and particularly for PARC who has lost a great icon in the agriculture research and development sector. Scientific and farming community across Pakistan has been shocked over the news of Dr. Ahmad's sudden demise and expressed their deep sorrow and grief on this national loss. May Almighty God bless his soul with eternal peace in heaven and give patience and courage to his family to bear this irreparable loss, Ameen!

Iftikhar Ahmad was born in Lahore, Pakistan on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1952. He had a brilliant academic career, winning numerous honours, awards and merit scholarship as a student from school up to Ph.D. He did his B.Sc. (Hons) and M.Sc. (Hons) in Agriculture with specialization in Plant Pathology in 1976 from University of Agriculture Faisalabad- Pakistan. Same year, he began his long professional career as lecturer of Plant Pathology at his alma mater; from where, he went for Ph.D. After earning doctorate from the University of Wales at Bangor, UK in 1982, he joined Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) as Senior Scientific Officer in 1983 and was elevated as Principal Scientific Officer, Chief Scientific Officer, Deputy Director General, Director General at NARC, and Member (Crop Sciences/Natural Resources) of PARC. In August 2011, Dr. Ahmad was appointed as Chairman of PARC; which he continued till his retirement 31 March 2012. He was again appointed as Chairman PARC for three years (Sept 2012–Sept 2015). Afterwards, he served as Advisor (Programme) to the FAO Representative in Pakistan, till his demise. He served as a Professor, Department of Plant & Environmental Protection at PARC Institute of Advance Studies in Agriculture (PIASA) (Nov 2008–Sept 2012); later he also became the Rector of PIASA (Feb 2011–March 2012). He was Patron-in-Chief and Founder Member of Society for Facilitators and Trainers (SOFT) from July 2009 till the end of his life.

Dr. Ahmad spent a year as a post-doctoral fellow of European Commission at the University of Cambridge, UK (1989-90); where he became a member of Cambridge Philosophical Society. He was a Member of the Institute of Biology (MI.Biol.) and many other scientific bodies including; American Phytopathological Society, British Society for Plant Pathology, Society of Biology UK, Pakistan Botanical Society, World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan, Pakistan Phytopathological Society, Mycophytopathological Society of Pakistan, Pakistan Nematological Society and Society of Facilitators and Trainers of Pakistan (SOFT).

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed, together with co-founders Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Poswal and Dr. Manzoor H. Soomro, founded the National Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme in Pakistan. They established and implemented the IPM Programme through an innovative farm level research and farmer education approach known as *Farmer Field Schools (FFS)*, mainly focusing on the farmer's skills in healthy crop management and decision making. This programme was a great success and won many laurels from local and international stakeholders. He also played a key role in the development of high yielding disease resistant wheat varieties by adoption of resource conservation technologies and through a

tripartite arrangement between the National Breeders, National Coordinated Wheat Programme and Crop Diseases Research Programme. He introduced Organizational Performance and Assessment System (OPAS) for evaluating the performance of research institutes through a participatory approach at the National level. In recognition of his excellent contributions in agricultural sciences, he was honored with numerous medals and awards, including; a Gold Medal-1999 by Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS), Scientist of the Year Award-1999 by PARC; PARC Scientists Association Award in 1995, Plant Pathology Award-1999 by Pakistan Phytopathological Society, Norman Borlaug Award-2006 by Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Government of Pakistan & FAO Representation and PARC Silver Jubilee Award 2006 at PARC Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

Dr. Ahmad, a dynamic researcher and an excellent teacher, will always be remembered for his outstanding contributions to the agriculture research & development and in particular, the disciplines of Plant Pathology, Plant Protection and Plant Nematology. Apart from his scientific research, Dr. Ahmad possessed a pleasing personality as a colleague, supervisor and a great team leader. His demise is a great loss to agriculture sector of Pakistan. He is survived by over 400 scientific publications, his two wives, two very intelligent sons and a daughter. May God bless the departed soul and bestow His courage on the aggrieved family to cope with the situation-Aameen!

**Manzoor H. Soomro**

## Obituary

### **Prof. Dr. Bilqees Fatima Mujeeb**

**(10<sup>th</sup> February, 1936 – 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2016)**

*Former Vice President (South)*

*Zoological Society of Pakistan*



Prof. Dr. Bilqees Fatima Mujeeb, Mother of Parasitology in Pakistan and ex-Chairperson, Department of Zoology, University of Karachi, departed this world for the eternal abode on Sunday, February 7, 2016 after spending more than 50 years in teaching and research in Parasitology.

Born on February 10, 1936, Prof. Mujeeb obtained her Ph.D. degree in Parasitology from University of Toronto, Canada in 1966, Sc.D. from USA and D.Sc. from University of Karachi, Pakistan in 1979. She was also a diploma holder of World Cultural Council, Germany. She did her specialization in Parasitology.

Professor Mujeeb was a celebrated Parasitologist with numerous awards and honours. She was given the Life Time Achievement Award by The Zoological Society of Pakistan, honoured with the Nishan-e-Azmat-e-Ilm award by the University of Karachi, Gold Medal by Pakistan Academy of Sciences and “Women Scientist Award” from President of Pakistan.

She greatly contributed to science by identifying and describing over 1000 new species of parasitic worms, and 40 new species were named in her honor by local and foreign scientists. She supervised doctoral research programs in various universities including University of Karachi, Jinnah University for Women, Federal Urdu University, Karachi, University of Balochistan, Quetta and Sindh University, Jamshoro. She had keen interest in clinical studies and published a number of papers on helminthes and protozoan infection. She published around 500 research papers and wrote over 75 popular scientific articles in Urdu language for the public awareness. She was sole author of 10 books, including Dictionary of Parasitology. She was member of various academic and professional societies; such as The Zoological Society of Pakistan, Helminthological Society of Washington, Third World Organization for Women in Science Trieste-Italy.

Dr. Bilqees Mujeeb was a very kind hearted person, who was ready to extend sincere advice and intellectual help to her students. Throughout her life, she remained very active in her field and participated virtually in all scientific events in the field of Parasitology.

Dr. Mujeeb is survived by her two daughters, a daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Prof. Bilqees F. Mujeeb shall be solely missed by her innumerable students in Pakistan and her fellow scientists around the world. May Almighty Allah rest her soul in peace, Aameen.

**Abdullah Arijo**