The Globalization Bulletin
Corporation

January 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 29TH TO FEBRUARY 4TH 2017

FFC REPORTS PROFIT OF RS11.5B, DOWN 4.3%

The Express Tribune, January 31st, 2018.

Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC) has posted a consolidated net profit of Rs11.5 billion for the year ended on December 31, 2017, down 4.3% compared with Rs12.02 billion in the previous year, according to a company notice sent to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Earnings per share (EPS) amounted to Rs9.04 compared with an EPS of Rs9.44 in 2016. The company announced a final cash dividend of Rs3 or 30% per share for the year, in addition to an interim dividend already paid at Rs4 or 40%.

FFC's share price closed at Rs87.69, up 2.36% on Tuesday on a day the KSE-100 index closed at 44,233, down 224 points or 0.50%.

Sources said 22% higher sales in the outgoing year was due to urea export (which clocked in at 76,000 tons compared with no export last year), higher retention prices on urea (averaged around Rs1,294 per bag) as inventory levels normalise and better diammonium phosphate (DAP) off-take which was up 12% to 176,000 tons.

Other expenses and financial charges in the fourth quarter of 2017 declined by 12% and 19% on year-on-year basis. Other income was down 44% in fourth quarter of 2017 mainly due to reduction of urea cash subsidy (Rs100 per bag compared with Rs156 per bag last year).

While pre-tax earnings were down 4% in the outgoing quarter, lower effective tax rate was down 3 percentage points to 27% which led to flat earnings.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1622361/2-ffc-reports-profit-rs11-5b-4-3/

MONSANTO PAKISTAN LAUNCHES 'FARMER AMBASSADOR' PROGRAMME

Business Recorder, 2 February 2018

LAHORE: Monsanto Pakistan launched its ambassador farmer programme, named Dekalb®Numberdaar, across all major corn growing districts of Punjab. The program recognizes prominent progressive farmers from each corn growing territory and encourages them to act as change agents for the proliferation of best farming practices amongst the broader farming community. Much of the agriculture landscape in the province consists of small-hold farmers with limited access to requisite agronomic knowledge, resulting in subsistence farming.

The Dekalb®Numberdaar program aims to harness the collective experience and influence of progressive farmers in each corn growing territory and transfer knowledge to the small-hold farmers within their respective communities. These ambassadors will utilize their positive influence amongst their peers and be instrumental in raising awareness around agriculture technology and disseminate the latest agronomic knowledge necessary to deliver a healthy and productive crop.

Sardar Javed Iqbal Wattoo, a progressive farmer from Basirpur, while speaking at the Dekalb®Numberdaar launch ceremony said, "My success is attributed to my thirst for latest agronomic knowledge and a willingness to embrace technology". He further added, "By participating in the Dekalb®Numberdaar program, I hope to be able to share some of my learning with fellow farmers and guide them towards achieving better yields and profitability."

Till date the program has been launched in 7 districts of Punjab, including Okara, Pakpattan, Sahiwal, Chiniot, Vehari, Kasur and Khanewal, nominating more than 500 progressive farmers as Dekalb®Numberdaars, with an expected outreach of 30,000 small-hold farmers across the target region.

Monsanto Pakistan's Dekalb®Numberdaar Program is part of a larger initiative to improve outreach to small-hold farmers across Pakistan, providing access to latest technology and agronomic knowledge. In a country where average farm size is estimated to be just over 6 acres, improving the productivity and yield of small-hold farmers can have a significant impact on the rural economy and drive sectoral growth.

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/02/02/13-page/697575-news.html
NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 22ND TO JANUARY 28 TH 2018
FAUJI FERTILIZER BIN QASIM'S PAT UP RS925.238M
Business Recorder, 27 January 2018

KARACHI: The profit after tax (consolidated) of Fauji Fertilizer Bin Qasim Limited has increased to Rs 925.238 million in the year ended December 31, 2017 as compared to Rs 228.644 million earned in the corresponding period in 2016.

The company's earning per share surged to Rs 2.03 in the period under review against Rs 1.00 in the same period a year back.

The board of directors of the company in its meeting held on Friday at Islamabad recommended final cash dividend for the period at Rs 0.75 per share i.e. 7.5 percent.

According to the financial results sent to Pakistan Stock Exchange, the company's net sales increased to Rs 64.388 billion in the year 2017 against Rs 49.222 billion in 2016. The cost of sales increased to Rs 54.810 billion in this period against Rs 48.175 billion. The company's profit before taxation increased to Rs 1,184.397 million in 2017 against Rs 184.023 million earned in 2016.

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/01/27/3-page/696380-news.html

February 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 5TH TO FEBRUARY 11TH 2018

ENGRO FERTILISERS PROFIT RISES 12PC
Dawn, February 9th, 2018
KARACHI: Engro Fertilisers Ltd posted a profit of Rs10.13 billion for the year ended Dec 31, 2017, up 12.2 per cent from Rs9.03bn in the last calendar year.
Engro Fertilisers CEO Ruhail Mohammed told Dawn on Thursday that the improved results were attributable to volume growth, including exports and the change from the previously charged ad hoc gas prices to firm allocation at industry gas prices.

Earnings per share also increased Rs7.66 compared to Rs6.78 the previous year.

The board declared a cash dividend of Rs3 per share, taking the full-year payout to Rs8.50 per share.

Both profit and payout were above the market expectations. The share price gained Rs1.07 to close at Rs69.72 with 9.5 million shares changing hands in trading on Thursday.

Sales of the company, however, declined 12pc to Rs68.18bn this year, compared to Rs77.32bn the year before. The improvement in gross margin was due to the replacement of Rs300 per bag cash subsidy on DAP (previously recorded in 'other operating income') with fixed Rs100 per bag sales tax recorded under the sales head in the latest year.—Equities Correspondent

https://www.dawn.com/news/1388199

BAYER, MONSANTO MUST NOT HURT COMPETITION IN DIGITAL FARMING
Dawn, February 11th, 2018

FRANKFURT: Bayer needs to ensure that a merger with rival Monsanto does not stifle competition in digital farming, the European Union's Competition Commissioner Margrethe Verstager told a German newspaper on Saturday.

Bayer's $63.5 billion takeover of US Monsanto, announced in 2016, is set to create the world's largest seeds and pesticides company.

"Digitalisation is radically changing farming. We need to beware that through the merger, competition in the area of digital farming and research is not impaired," Verstager told Germany's Rheinische Post.

A Danish politician who is serving as Europe's top anti-trust watchdog, Verstager told the paper the European Commission's role was not to block mergers, but to ensure they are structured in a way which does not hinder competition. "It is our task to ensure that farmers still have a choice over seeds, pesticides, fungicides and insecticides even after the merger," Verstager told the paper, adding that the Commission plans to publish its antitrust verdict by April 5.

Verstager said that Bayer was being cooperative with the competition watchdogs, a factor that would help the Commission keep to the April 5 deadline.

Reuters on Thursday reported that Bayer plans to sell its global vegetable seeds business and allow rival BASF access its digital farming data to address EU antitrust concerns, citing people close to the matter.

https://www.dawn.com/news/1388641/bayer-monsanto-must-not-hurt-competition-in-digital-farming

March 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 26TH TO MARCH 31ST 2018

ENGRO TO INJECT A MINIMUM RS3.03 BILLION INTO CHEMICAL SUBSIDIARY

The Express Tribune, March 30th, 2018.

Engro Corporation – a leading group of companies in Pakistan – has announced to invest a fresh Rs3.03 billion into its subsidiary Engro Polymer and Chemicals Limited (EPCL) as it looks to expand its chemical production plants by 2020.

The conglomerate said it would make the new investment into its subsidiary through subscribing to its (EPCL) right shares at a maximum price of Rs30 per share, according to a notice sent to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday.

In addition to this, the parent company may invest another Rs1.81 billion in EPCL's right shares in case other shareholders decide not to subscribe to the right shares offered to them in proportion to their current shareholding.

EPCL's share price hit the upper limit of 5%, or increased Rs1.63, and closed at Rs34.33 with 28.26 million shares changing hands at the PSX.

Engro Corporation's share price surged 0.40%, or Rs1.25, to Rs310.74 with 792,300 shares changing hands.

Engro Corporation Company Secretary Faiz Chapra said in the notice sent to the PSX that "the board of directors approved an investment of up to an amount of Rs3.034 billion in Engro Polymer and Chemicals Limited by subscribing to the company's (Engro Corp's) entitlement to ordinary shares of EPCL during the proposed EPCL Rights Issue process (as and when announced by the board of directors of EPCL), at a maximum price of upto Rs30 per ordinary share."

In the event other shareholders renouncing their entitlement to the proposed EPCL Rights Issue, Engro Corporation is authorised to invest additional Rs1.81 billion to also subscribe to the renounced rights issues, he added.

Earlier, EPCL announced expanding production capacity of PVC chemical, which is used to make numerous plastic products of everyday use, including credit cards, toys and construction material like water and sewerage pipes.

EPCL, which remains the industry leader in the plastics product sector with 73% market share in Pakistan, disclosed plans of adding a new production line of PVC following significant increase in demand of the chemical due to boom in construction activities.

The firm announced investing over Rs10 billion for expansion of other plants as well including those producing VCM (raw material for PVC) and caustic soda and for upgrading its captive (gas-fired) power plant having an installed capacity of 59 megawatts.

The company, which is a part of Engro Corporation and Dawood Hercules, said its board of directors has approved investment of Rs10.3 billion for expansion and debottlenecking at various production lines. The firm would add a new PVC plant with a capacity of 100,000 tons (taking total capacity to 295,000 ton per annum) and increase production of VCM (the raw material) by 50,000 tons through debottlenecking of the existing plant by third quarter of 2020.

Out of a total capital expenditure of Rs10.3 billion, the company would spend Rs7.6 billion on addition and debottlenecking of PVC and VCM chemical plants that would be arranged through issuance of right shares of approximately Rs5.4 billion and Rs2.2 billion through debt.

"Other capital expenditure of Rs2.7 billion, funded through internally generated cash and debt, would be spent on a new production line for caustic flaker with installed capacity of 20,000 tons per annum.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1672765/2-engro-inject-minimum-rs3-03-billion-chemical-subsidiary/

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 19TH TO MARCH 25TH 2018

BAYER WINS EU APPROVAL FOR $62.5BN MONSANTO BUY
Business Recorder, 22 March 2018
BRUSSELS: German conglomerate Bayer won EU antitrust approval on Wednesday for its $62.5 billion buy of US peer Monsanto, the latest in a trio of mega mergers that will reshape the agrochemicals industry.

The tie-up is set to create a company with control of more than a quarter of the world's seed and pesticides market.

Driven by shifting weather patterns, competition in grain exports and a faltering global farm economy, Dow and Dupont, and ChemChina and Syngenta had earlier led a wave of consolidation in the sector.

Both deals secured EU approval only after the companies offered substantial asset sales to boost rivals.

Environmental and farming groups have opposed all three deals, worried about their power and their advantage in digital farming data, which can tell farmers how and when to till, sow, spray, fertilise and pick crops based on algorithms.

The European Commission said Bayer addressed its concerns with its offer to sell a swathe of assets to boost rival BASF, confirming a Reuters story on Feb. 28.

"Our decision ensures that there will be effective competition and innovation in seeds, pesticides and digital agriculture markets also after this merger," European Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said in a statement.

"In particular, we have made sure that the number of global players actively competing in these markets stays the same."

Vestager said the Commission, which received more than a million petitions concerning the deal, had been thorough by examining more than 2,000 different product markets and 2.7 million internal documents to produce a 1,285-page ruling.

The US Justice Department, which is also reviewing the merger, said in a statement on its website that it would press on with its review and that the market in the two regions was quite different. "While genetically modified seeds are largely prohibited in Europe, they are widely used throughout the United States," the department noted. "The Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice continues to examine the effects of the proposed transaction on American farmers and consumers." China has given conditional approval to the Bayer and Monsanto deal, which has won a green light in Brazil. It is currently being reviewed by Russian antitrust authorities too.—Reuters

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/22/9-page/706252-news.html

MONSANTO BACKS NEW COMPANY FOCUSED ON GENE EDITING, NOT GMOS
Business Recorder, 25 March 2018

CHICAGO: Monsanto Co will fund a new US company that aims to develop crops using technology known as gene editing, rather than the genetic modification that helped it become the world's biggest seed seller.

Monsanto's vice president of global biotechnology, Tom Adams, will leave the seed giant to become chief executive of the new firm, called Pairwise Plants, the companies told Reuters. He steps into the new role on April 1. The collaboration accelerates a race among agricultural scientists and companies worldwide to develop new seeds for crops using gene editing, a process they say can produce non-GMO farm products that do not contain foreign DNA from a different species.

Unlike traditional GMOs, in which a gene is added from another organism, gene-editing works like the find-and-replace function on a word processor. It finds a gene and then makes changes by amending or deleting it. Using "molecular scissors" to cut DNA means scientists can edit genomes more precisely and rapidly than ever before, and altered agricultural products could get to market more quickly and cheaply.

Monsanto, famous for engineering soybeans to resist the weed killer Roundup, will pay Pairwise $100 million over the next five years to finance research on gene editing tools, Adams said in an interview.

Pairwise will also research how to use the tools to alter commodity crops, including corn, soy, wheat, cotton and canola, exclusively for Monsanto, according to the companies. The deal allows Monsanto, which is being acquired by Bayer AG, to commercialize products from the partnership.

"The collaboration really will help accelerate the development of the technology," said Robb Fraley, Monsanto's chief technology officer.

Separately, Monsanto's venture capital arm, along with investment firm Deerfield Management, each committed $12.5 million to form Pairwise as part of a Series A financing round, according to Pairwise.

Among Pairwise's founders is David Liu, a Harvard University professor who pioneered a new form of gene editing that the company said allows scientists to make more precise changes to plant genomes.

Pairwise aims to hire up to 100 people in its first two years, said Haven Baker, who will be chief business officer. Baker formerly worked for McDonald's Corp potato supplier J.R. Simplot Company on the development of a biotech potato.

Beyond commodity crops, Pairwise intends to use gene editing for research on other plants, possibly including fruit.—Reuters

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/25/15-page/706884-news.html

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 12TH TO MARCH 18TH 2018

US FARMERS SEEK APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT

Dawn, March 14th, 2018

US farmers suing Syngenta AG over its decision to commercialise a genetically modified (GMO) strain of corn before China approved importing it sought court approval on Monday of a record $1.51 billion settlement with the Swiss seed company.

The deal covers US corn producers, grain handling facilities and ethanol plants nationwide that sold corn priced after Sept 15, 2013, according to a filing in Kansas federal court. Lawyers for the plaintiffs said in a statement that they believed the deal to be the largest agricultural class action settlement in US history.—Reuters

https://www.dawn.com/news/1395152

MONSANTO UNFAZED BY LEGAL WRANGLES, KEEPS BRAZIL DICAMBA-TOLERANT SEED LAUNCH
Business Recorder, 18 March 2018

US agricultural biotech firm monsanto co plans to push ahead with its launch schedule for soy seeds genetically modified to resist dicamba weed killer in brazil, despite a pending patent dispute related to an older version of the technology, two executives told reuters.

Monsanto will launch the product after it obtains regulatory approvals for it in china and the european union.

“we do not let the process of patent challenges slow down our plans,” said scott partridge, the company’s vice president of global strategy. He said monsanto is on track to obtain all approvals ahead of the launch.

The company also needs a brazilian patent for the new biotechnology, the executives said. Farm trials are scheduled for the 2019/2020 crop season and the full commercial launch in 2021.

The intacta2 xtend product is engineered to resist weed killers containing dicamba, building on resistances to glyphosate and certain species of parasitic spodoptera caterpillars featured in the older version, intacta rr2 pro.

But a looming patent battle could signal a repeat of troubles encountered in the launch of that previous-generation product.

Last year, a group of brazilian farmers asked a federal court to cancel monsanto’s intacta rr2 pro patent rights on the basis that it made no real technological innovation. The patent office told the court that, after re-examining the issue, the patent should be declared void.

Maria luiza nachreiner, who heads monsanto’s soy business in south america, said the company “is confident” the courts will uphold its intellectual property rights, adding that a formal challenge to the patent office opinion will be filed this month.

Intacta rr2 pro’s patent protection currently extends through october 2022.

Monsanto is no stranger to legal battles.

By 2013, it had stopped collecting royalties linked to its first-generation roundup ready soy seed technology after farmers claimed in brazilian court that the patent had expired.

Monsanto settled the issue by giving some farmers a discount if they switched to the then-new intacta rr2 pro seed.

Partridge declined to speculate on the outcome of the pending intacta-related patent dispute. He said that significant time and costs go into bringing a new trait to market and defended “a method to achieve a recovery of that cost.” In the fields, monsanto expects brazilian farmers to adopt the new seed as quickly as their counterparts in the united states. Monsanto estimates that in the united states about 40 million acres (16 hectares) will be planted with dicamba-resistant soy seeds in 2018, twice as much as last year.—reuters

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/18/15-page/705627-news.html

April 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 16TH TO APRIL 22ND 2018

PARENT COMPANY OF ENGRO FOODS INKS MOU WITH TETRA PAK
Business Recorder, 17 April 2018

LAHORE: With the rise of concerns about global environmental changes, responsible corporate entities like Royal FrieslandCampina (RFC) parent company of Engro Foods Ltd commits to contribute towards a cleaner environment in partnership with Tetra Pak.

The agreement is titled Panther—Partnership and New Technology for Evaporators. Under this agreement, both the organizations will ensure that all future falling film evaporators will be installed by Tetra Pak. This will include all the operating companies of Royal FrieslandCampina, in 32 countries globally.

The partnership calls for a cross functional and cross business team dynamic. The process will be monitored, from start to finish by the teams dedicated to the respective projects.

A standardized process will be identified by the team, and will then be executed step by step, this will ensure a first time right project execution. With the structure defined, the installation will be transparent in terms of cost and designing of the specifications of each installation.

This partnership allows for RFC to spend time on opening tenders on individual projects, which were time consuming and would spend several months on finalizing the right partner. In light of this new partnership, the overall value will increase for Royal FrieslandCampina.

With Panther, Royal FrieslandCampina will save on costs incurred during operations. Naveed Saeed, Chief Corporate & Regulatory Affairs Director, Engro Foods Limited said, “Engro Foods is proud to be a part of the Royal FrieslandCampina family. Under the partnership between Royal FrieslandCampina and TetraPak, we will be able to reduce the energy consumption by 10%. This will result in a reduction of the carbon emission significantly. Engro Foods Limited remains committed as a socially responsible organisation.”

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/04/17/13-page/711159-news.html

June 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 4th TO JUN 10th 2018
LCCI for making IPRs must for businesses
RECORDER REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called to make Intellectual Property Rights an essential part of the businesses saying that IPRs are the most valuable asset for businesses in West but here in Pakistan a lot of work is yet to be done.

LCCI President Malik Tahir Javaid said the scope and importance of IPRs cannot be underestimated particularly with reference to safeguarding the interest and future prospects of business community. He said there can be no second opinion to this fact that the Intellectual Property Rights are critical for competitive economy in the backdrop of ongoing globalization. The new concept of IPRs-based nation is gaining ground because it is Intellectual Property Rights that enables technology creation and technology transfer by providing the necessary enabling environment.

Malik Tahir Javaid urged the private sector of Pakistan not to neglect Intellectual Property Rights at any cost because these set their businesses apart from competitors, provide an important revenue stream, offer customers something new and different and form an essential part of their marketing or branding.

He said the government should protect and vigorously enforce Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) besides providing a congenial and protected environment to improve the image of Pakistan as a responsible and intellectual property compliant nation.
The LCCI President said that massive public awareness campaign should be undertaken for sensitizing the consumers about their legitimate rights to opt for genuine and branded products and services. He said the government should also make efforts to curb counterfeiting and piracy with the support of enforcement agencies – police, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Pakistan Customs. He said the manufacturers of counterfeit products were not only depriving the government of much needed revenue but also denting the reputation of genuine manufacturers because of fake products.

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/06/08/8-page/721476-news.html

Bayer-Monsanto merger creates agrichemical juggernaut
7 JUN 2018

German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer will seal a $63-billion merger with US-based Monsanto Thursday, creating an agrichemical behemoth with lofty ambitions to feed the world but lambasted by environmentalists.

“Feeding a growing world population is a long-term trend, and we want to contribute to its solution,” Bayer chief executive Werner Baumann told business newspaper Handelsblatt in an interview Tuesday.

Executives are betting big on projections that around 10 billion people will live on Earth by 2050, meaning more food must grow on the same amount of arable land.

They say that can best be achieved with technologies rejected by green organisations and politicians, including genetically-modified (GM) seeds designed to resist strong pesticides.

Modified crops and digital tools to help farmers adapt to the weather and monitor the health of their fields could also help swell harvests threatened by climate change.

“We will help our customers to grow more with less,” Baumann told journalists Monday — while promising “we will apply the same rigour in achieving our sustainability targets as we do to our financial targets.”
“The decisive question will be whether Bayer is strong enough to do the splits,” Handelsblatt predicted.

"On the one side is the business necessity to make as much money as possible with plant protection chemicals and seeds as investors demand. On the other, Bayer must earn trust among a public that's increasingly sceptical about industrial agriculture."

– Money where your mouth is –

Following Dow and DuPont's 2017 merger and ChemChina's acquisition of Swiss firm Syngenta, the Bayer-Monsanto tie-up is the latest in a string of mega-mergers in the chemical industry that have created mammoths in Europe, the US and Asia.

"Fewer and fewer firms are sharing out power over farming and groceries… determining what arrives on our plates at what price," the Heinrich Boell Foundation, close to Germany's Greens party, warned last year.

Launched in 2016, the Bayer-Monsanto marriage will create a global giant with 115,000 employees and annual revenues of 45 billion euros ($53 billion).

Competition authorities forced Bayer to sell chunks of its existing seeds and agrichemical business, with revenues of around 2.2 billion euros per year, to rival BASF before allowing the deal.

Even taking that into account, Bayer and Monsanto's agriculture arms boasted combined sales of 19.7 billion euros last year, far outstripping DowDuPont and ChemChina.

The combination completes the firm's transition from a chemicals and pharmaceuticals maker to what it calls a "life science" business.

In its new form Bayer will earn around half its revenue from prescription and over-the-counter medications and half from agriculture.
While they hailed a "sound strategic rationale" for the deal and "robust long-term fundamentals" in the agrichemical sector, ratings agency Moody's downgraded Bayer's debt earlier this week.

Bayer will have to demonstrate "timely delivery of the merger synergies" executives hope will add $1.2 billion per year to operating profits as well as expanding other business areas to escape a "negative" outlook for its debt, Moody's said.

– What's in a name? –

Bayer is as keen to ease pressure from environmentalists and politicians as it is to satisfy investors.

A worldwide backlash against "industrial agriculture" and Monsanto in particular prompted executives to announce this week that the name will be abandoned.

"Monsanto conducted its business according to standards like the ones we have at Bayer. But we do some things differently," chief executive Baumann told Handelsblatt.

Campaigners have battled for decades against the St Louis-based firm and its products, including controversial herbicides like glyphosate, suspected of causing cancer and the subject of a huge political row in the European Union.

Meanwhile Monsanto's GM seeds have met fierce resistance in Europe and elsewhere around the world, pushing Bayer into a 2016 promise not to introduce modified crops on the Old Continent.

"We will listen to our critics and work together where we find common ground," Baumann said.

But "agriculture is too important to allow ideological differences to bring progress to a standstill," he added.

Monsanto products like glyphosate-containing Roundup or seed brands like Dekalb and De Ruiter will remain unchanged following the merger.

"The model of development that underpins Bayer's purchase of Monsanto is diametrically opposed to the transition from our production-driven model to a more sustainable one that respects the environment, as citizens are hoping for," Eric Andrieu, agriculture spokesman for the Socialist group in the European Parliament tweeted Thursday.

Shares in Bayer slightly underperformed the DAX index of blue-chip German shares in morning trading Thursday, adding 0.2 percent to reach 99.56 euros against a market up 0.3 percent.

https://www.afp.com/en/news/826/bayer-monsanto-merger-creates-agrichemical-juggernaut-doc-15n8a12

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 28th TO JUN 3rd 2018
Bayer, Monsanto on cusp of marriage after US green light

30Th MAY 2018

Nearly two years after unveiling their proposed merger, German chemicals firm Bayer and US agricultural giant Monsanto are on the cusp of finalizing the deal following conditional US government approval.

The Justice Department's antitrust division Tuesday announced it was ready to approve the massive transaction once the two companies break off key units where they overlap. The government said the $9 billion in divestitures was necessary to address competition concerns.

"This comprehensive structural solution to significant horizontal and vertical competition concerns — the largest merger divestiture ever required by the United States — preserves competition in the sale of these critical agricultural products and protects American farmers and consumers," assistant attorney general Makan Delrahim said.

The mandated asset sales cover areas of overlap between the two companies including Bayer's cotton, canola, soybean and vegetable seed business and a Bayer herbicide that competes with Monsanto's Roundup product.

The companies also must sell key intellectual property and research programs to address competitiveness worries.

"Without the agreed-to divestitures, the proposed merger would likely result in higher prices, lower quality, and fewer choices across a wide array of seed and crop protection product," the US agency said.

"Under the terms of the proposed settlement, Bayer must divest those Bayer businesses that compete with Monsanto today."

The German company, which has been chasing approval from antitrust regulators on both sides of the Atlantic ever since it launched the bid in September 2016, cheered the announcement.

“Receipt of the DOJ’s approval brings us close to our goal of creating a leading company in agriculture,” Bayer CEO Werner Baumann said in a statement.

Monsanto, contacted by AFP, sent Bayer’s statement.

The settlement still must win approval from a US court. The agreement also is subject to public comment under US government administrative procedures.

– BASF deal approved –

The EU approved the buyout, which is to create the world’s biggest integrated pesticide and seeds company, in March.

Bayer was previously told by competition authorities, including the European Commission, to sacrifice existing activities in seeds and pesticides worth 7.6 billion euros ($8.8 billion) to homegrown rival BASF in exchange for approval of the Monsanto deal.

That means there will be less overlap and fewer savings when Bayer assumes the US firm’s product range of genetically-modified seeds and compatible pesticides.

The EU Commission said separately on Tuesday that it approved BASF as a suitable buyer for the assets.

Environmentalists are unhappy with the deal, fearing it will give too much power to the world’s leading manufacturers of GMOs and the controversial weedkiller glyphosate.

When launching the bid, Bayer said it would not introduce genetically modified crops in Europe. The deal was part of a wave of consolidation in agriculture that included combinations between Dow Chemical and DuPont and ChemChina and Syngenta.

Prior to the US announcement, Bayer had received approval from numerous other regulators, including in China and Brazil.

Shares of Monsanto rose 0.7 percent to $127.38, a rare gainer in a down day for global stocks.

https://www.afp.com/en/news/23/bayer-monsanto-cusp-marriage-after-us-green-light-doc-15g5uf2

August 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 20TH TO SEPTEMBER 2TH 2018

Monsanto Roundup appeal has uphill climb on ‘junk science’ grounds

NEW YORK: Bayer AG unit Monsanto faces long odds on an appeal blaming an “inflamed” jury and “junk science” for a verdict of $289 million in damages to a man who said the company’s Roundup weed killer caused his cancer, according to some legal experts.

Last week's verdict ended the first trial over whether glyphosate, the main ingredient in Roundup, causes cancer. Monsanto, which says decades of scientific studies have shown Roundup and glyphosate are safe, is facing about 5,000 similar lawsuits nationwide.

Bayer stock fell sharply on Monday following Friday's verdict in San Francisco Superior Court.

Monsanto said on Monday it planned to challenge the verdict on the grounds that the judge should have barred scientific evidence presented by California school groundskeeper

Dewayne Johnson's lawyers as insufficient.

"Plaintiffs are putting forward junk science that is not based upon the 40 years of safe glyphosate use and studies," Scott Partridge, Monsanto's vice president of global strategy, told Reuters. "They attempted to color science with very emotional arguments designed to inflame jurors."

The company also said statements by Johnson's lawyers, designed to paint the company in a malevolent light, inappropriately influenced the jurors.

Monsanto could have difficulty getting the verdict thrown out on those grounds, according to some legal experts who said the judge carefully considered whether to allow Johnson's scientific evidence under California law and reached a defensible conclusion that the jury should hear it.

"This is one of those difficult questions at the margins of science and the judge found the evidence simply wasn't inadmissible," said Lars Noah, a law professor at the University of Florida.

Johnson, 46, said in his lawsuit filed in 2016 that frequent use of Roundup caused him to develop lymphatic cancer.

Expert testimony is highly influential in product liability cases, and evidentiary standards exist to prevent juries from making decisions based on theories unsupported by science.

The US Environmental Protection Agency in September 2017 concluded a decades-long assessment of glyphosate risks and found the chemical not likely carcinogenic to humans. However, the cancer unit of the World Health Organization in 2015 classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans."

Monsanto said the plaintiff's experts should have been excluded because although they mainly cited respected, peer-reviewed studies, they inappropriately cherry-picked results and used unreliable methods to support the position that glysophate causes cancer in humans.

But Alexandra Lahav, a law professor at the University of Connecticut, said it was common for experts to rely on the same studies and reach different conclusions to present to a jury during trial. Legal experts said a federal judge overseeing other Roundup cases has allowed the same experts to go forward with testimony, even though the standard in federal courts is generally thought to be higher than in state courts.

The evidence rulings might draw the attention of higher courts, both in California and the US Supreme Court, to use the Roundup cases as a way to clarify expert admissibility standards, other legal experts said.

A major question for appellate courts could be whether it is enough for an expert to simply analyze widely accepted peer-reviewed studies to support his own opinion, or whether the expert's analysis must also be reviewed or otherwise subject to stronger scrutiny, said two California-based defense lawyers, who requested anonymity citing potential conflicts of interest.

Monsanto also took issue with statements by Johnson's lawyer, Brent Wisner, and some expert witnesses comparing Roundup to tobacco. Wisner told jurors the company would "pop champagne corks" if the verdict was too low.

He also said in court that a Monsanto unit made so-called Agent Orange, a highly toxic herbicide mixture used by the US military 50 years ago in the Vietnam War. The harmful impact included cancers and birth defects.

Wisner on Monday rejected Monsanto's claims that the jury made its decision on emotional grounds. "This was a considerate, thoughtful and well-educated jury that looked at the science to conclude glyphosate causes cancer," Wisner said.

Monsanto's arguments that remarks by witnesses and lawyers inflamed and prejudiced the jury would likely fall flat, some legal experts said.

David Rosenberg, a professor at Harvard Law School, said editorializing by lawyers in a courtroom needed to be truly egregious for a judge to even consider throwing out a verdict.—Reuters

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/08/31/31-page/736295-news.html

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 20TH TO AUGUST 26TH 2018
CORPORATE WATCH
Reuters August 21, 2018

UNILEVER FOODS PROFIT GROWS 14.1PC
KARACHI: Unilever Pakistan Foods declared 1HCY18 PAT at Rs864m and EPS Rs138.38, up 14.1pc, over Rs757m profit and Rs122.12 (reinstated) EPS last year.

The board declared interim dividend at Rs44 per share. Sales grew 11.9pc to Rs6.23bn, from Rs5.58bn, attributable to strong brand, innovations and sustained investments in advertisement.—Equities Correspondent

https://www.dawn.com/news/1428304/corporate-watch

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 13TH TO AUGUST 19TH 2018
MONSANTO OWNERS CALL WEED KILLER 'SAFE' AFTER JURY ORDERS BIG PAYOUT
August 12, 2018

Berlin: Monsanto´s German owners insisted Saturday that the weed killer Roundup was "safe", rejecting a California jury´s decision to order the chemical giant to pay nearly $290 million for failing to warn a dying groundskeeper that the product might cause cancer.

While observers predicted thousands of potential future claims against the company in the wake of Monsanto´s defeat, Bayer — which recently acquired the US giant — said the California ruling went against scientific evidence.

"On the basis of scientific conclusions, the views of worldwide regulatory authorities and the decades-long practical experience with glyphosate use, Bayer is convinced that glyphosate is safe and does not cause cancer," the company said in a statement.

It said other court proceedings with other juries might "arrive at different conclusions" than the jury which ruled in the California lawsuit, the first to accuse glyphosate of causing cancer.

Jurors unanimously found that Monsanto — which vowed to appeal — acted with "malice" and that its weed killers Roundup and the professional grade version RangerPro contributed "substantially" to Dewayne Johnson´s terminal illness. Johnson, diagnosed in 2014 with non-Hodgkin´s lymphoma — a cancer that affects white blood cells — says he repeatedly used a professional form of Roundup while working at a school in Benicia, California. "The cause is way bigger than me. Hopefully this thing will get the attention it needs," Johnson, 46, said after the verdict. Johnson wept openly, as did some jurors, when he met with the panel later.

The lawsuit built on 2015 findings by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, part of the UN World Health Organization, which classified Roundup´s main ingredient glyphosate as a probable carcinogen, causing the state of California to follow suit.

"We are sympathetic to Mr Johnson and his family," Monsanto said in a statement, but promised to "continue to vigorously defend this product".

"The jury got it wrong," Monsanto vice president Scott Partridge told reporters.

But Johnson´s attorney Brent Wisner said the verdict "shows the evidence is overwhelming" that the product poses danger.

"When you are right, it is really easy to win," he said.

Wisner called the ruling the "tip of the spear" of litigation likely to come.

"The jury sent a message to the Monsanto boardroom that they have to change the way they do business," said Robert F. Kennedy Jr — an environmental lawyer, son of the late US senator and a member of Johnson´s legal team. "You not only see many people injured, you see the corruption of public officials, the capture of agencies that are supposed to protect us from pollution and the falsification of science," he said.

Partridge, meanwhile, announced that Monsanto had no intention of settling the slew of similar cases in the legal queue. "It is the most widely used and most widely studied herbicide in the world," Partridge said.

https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/353907-monsanto-owners-call-weed-killer-safe-after-jury-orders-big-payout

ENGRO PROFITS UP 65PC
Our Equities Correspondent August 17, 2018

KARACHI: Engro Corporation posted a consolidated profit-after-tax (PAT) at Rs11 billion for 1HCY18, up 65 per cent, from Rs6.7bn in the similar period last year.

PAT attributable to the shareholders increased from Rs3.8bnto Rs6.1bn. Revenue grew 37pc to Rs71.7bn, from Rs52.2bn. “Increase was primarily driven by improved fertilisers and petrochemicals performance,” the company said in a statement.

On a standalone basis, Engro recorded PAT at Rs3.8bn against Rs4.1bn, translating into earnings per share (EPS) of Rs7.20 against 7.84 (higher PAT in the previous period was due to the one-off super dividend from Engro Foods). The company announced interim cash dividend at Rs7 per share for the quarter, taking the cumulative payout to Rs12 per share.

Nestle PAT dips 20pc

Nestle Pakistan declared 1HCY18 PAT at Rs6.3bn and EPS at Rs138.03, down 20.2pc, from Rs7.9bn and Rs175, respectively. Sales grew to Rs64.6bn from Rs61.9bn while the board announced an interim cash dividend at Rs110 per share. For 2Q2018, EPS shrank by 25pc to Rs63.30. Lower gross margins and increased financial charges dragged down the company’s earnings.

Shell profits drop to Rs1.6bn

Shell Pakistan posted half yearly profit at Rs1.6bn (EPS: Rs14.98), down from PAT at Rs2.3bn (EPS: Rs21.85). A cash dividend at Rs7 per share was also announced. Net revenue decreased to Rs106.9bn, from Rs117.9bn. In 2QCY18, EPS was declared at Rs2.31, lower by 74pc year-on-year from the same quarter last year. The decline was attributed by analysts to a drop of 30pc in volume.

Philip Morris earnings rebound

The tobacco company declared 1HCY18 earnings at Rs72m and EPS at Rs4.62, representing turnaround from a loss of Rs46m and loss per share at Rs7.53 in the same period last year. The top line grew to Rs7.65bn, from Rs4.19bn. For the 2QCY18, gross margins went higher by three page percentage points to 41pc and financial charges were down 87pc, contributing positively to the company’s performance.

BAHL earns Rs4.2bn

Bank Al Habib Ltd (BAHL) recorded half yearly profits at Rs4.2bn, going down from Rs4.41bn in the corresponding period last year, translating into EPS at RS3.78.

Published in Dawn, August 17th, 2018

https://www.dawn.com/news/1427482/engro-profits-up-65pc

CORPORATE WATCH
The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter August 17, 2018

Bayer starts Monsanto integration

FRANKFURT: German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer said Thursday that it would begin integrating seeds and pesticides maker Monsanto after a mega-merger, but its stock price was battered by the US firm’s legal woes.

Two months after the $63 billion deal – the biggest ever foreign takeover by a German company – Bayer completed the sale of a final tranche of crop science businesses worth 5.9bn euros ($6.7bn) to rival BASF under concessions imposed by cartel watchdogs.

With competition authorities' conditions met, "the integration of Monsanto into the Bayer Group can begin," the Leverkusen-based company said in a statement.—AFP

Published in Dawn, August 17th, 2018

https://www.dawn.com/news/1427486/corporate-watch

US SEED SELLERS PUSH FOR LIMITS ON MONSANTO, BASF WEED KILLER
REUTERS

August 19, 2018

CHICAGO: America's two biggest independent seed sellers, Beck's Hybrids and Stine Seed, told Reuters they are pushing U.S. environmental regulators to bar farmers from spraying dicamba weed killer during upcoming summers in a potential blow to Bayer AG's Monsanto Co.

Limiting spraying of the chemical to the spring season, before crops are planted, would prevent farmers from using the herbicide on dicamba-resistant soybeans that Monsanto engineered. The seeds are sold by companies including Beck's and Stine.

Last summer, after farmers planted Monsanto's dicamba-resistant soy seeds en masse, the herbicide drifted onto nearby farms and damaged an estimated 3.6 million acres of non-resistant soybeans, or 4 percent of all U.S. plantings.

Problems have not gone away. As of July 15, the University of Missouri estimated that more than a million acres of non-resistant soybeans were hurt by dicamba. Homeowners who live near farms have also complained of damage to their trees and flowers.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is now weighing such complaints as part of a high-stakes decision on the herbicide's future.

Bayer bought Monsanto and its portfolio of dicamba-resistant Xtend brand soy seeds for $63 billion this year in a deal that created the world's largest seed and pesticides maker.

St. Louis-based Monsanto sells dicamba herbicide, along with rivals BASF SE and DowDuPont Inc. Monsanto and BASF said farmers need dicamba to kill tough weeds and that the chemical can be used safely. DowDuPont declined to comment. Monsanto is banking on Xtend soybean seeds to dominate soy production in the United States, the world's biggest producer. They are seen as a replacement for the company's Roundup Ready line of seeds, engineered to tolerate the weed killer glyphosate, which has lost effectiveness as weeds develop their own tolerance to the chemical.

EPA approval for dicamba to be sprayed on resistant crops expires this autumn. The agency could extend its approval, with or without new restrictions on use, or take dicamba off the market. Seed companies expect a decision in the coming weeks.

Most complaints about dicamba drifting would stop if the EPA restricted its use to killing weeds in fields before crops are planted, Beck’s Hybrids told the agency in a July 27 letter seen by Reuters.

“Anybody that sprays it, you have issues with the volatilization,” CEO Sonny Beck said in an interview on Wednesday, referring to the chemical vaporizing and drifting.

Though his company profited from selling more than a million bags of Xtend soybean seeds this year, Beck said he worried that continued problems with the chemical could give the agriculture sector a bad reputation among consumers.

Restricting use would also help prevent weeds from developing resistance to dicamba, he said.

New limits would be another headache for Bayer, following its acquisition of Monsanto.

Last week a California jury ruled Monsanto must pay $289 million in damages in the first U.S. lawsuit over alleged links between glyphosate and cancer. Monsanto denies glyphosate causes cancer.

Earlier this month, a Brazilian judge suspended the use of products containing glyphosate.

Monsanto has blamed U.S. field damage from dicamba largely on improper applications by farmers and says mandatory training helped this year.

Inquiries to the company about dicamba problems dropped to about nine per million acres of dicamba-resistant crops planted, down from about 40 inquiries per million acres last year, said Ryan Rubischko, who heads the company’s dicamba portfolio. He said Monsanto expects the EPA to extend its approval for dicamba.

In a sign the company is concerned, however, Monsanto has asked seed sellers to contact the agency to express support for the product, according to an email the company sent this week that was seen by Reuters. The email noted others had encouraged the EPA to add restrictions on dicamba or prevent sales.

Monsanto likened those efforts to an “uninformed vocal minority” in the email. Rubischko confirmed the company had asked dicamba users to give positive feedback to regulators.

The EPA did not respond to requests for comment.

The agency has held weekly phone calls with agriculture officials in farm states this summer to assess dicamba damage. Agency officials also visited farms in Tennessee, Missouri and Arkansas to see damaged crops first-hand, according to tour participants.

Farther north, Monsanto funded a study by University of Wisconsin researchers that showed dicamba hurt non-resistant soybeans that were covered with plastic when the chemical was sprayed on nearby Xtend soybeans after planting.

Stine Seed has told the EPA in writing and conversations that dicamba should not be sprayed on top of growing soybeans to control weeds, CEO Harry Stine said in an interview on Tuesday. The herbicide has damaged fields of Stine soy seeds by drifting, he said.

Stine Seed is preparing to launch products that will compete with Xtend soy and also works with Monsanto on seed technology.

https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/357029-us-seed-sellers-push-for-limits-on-monsanto-basf-weed-killer

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 6TH TO AUGUST 12TH 2018
DYING GROUNDSKEEPER BATTLES CHEMICAL GIANT MONSANTO
RECORDER REPORT | AUG 11TH, 2018 | SAN FRANCISCO

Cancer-stricken Dewayne Johnson vowed to fight to his death in a David versus Goliath court battle against agrochemical giant Monsanto, whose weed killer he blames for robbing him of his future. “I will fight until my last breath,” Johnson, a 46-year-old former school groundskeeper, said while testifying at a potentially history-making civil trial.
Jurors began deliberating on Wednesday after a month of hearing testimony in a San Francisco, California state court. Despite terminal cancer and bouts of chemotherapy, Johnson – known to friends as “Lee” – managed to smile at times as he told jurors of his life and his struggle to hold Monsanto accountable.He moved and spoke slowly, appearing older than his years, but his voice was strong while testifying during the last week of July. His bearing defied the fact he has been told he has only a couple more years to live.

“It’s very hard,” said Johnson, his head shaved but a slight goatee on his face. Photos shared in court showed Johnson with lesions over much of his body. Jurors were told of his open sores, some even on Johnson’s eyelid causing pain every time he blinked. “I’ve been through a lot of pain,” Johnson testified. He told of people staring at him in public, and of avoiding sunlight due to his skin being too sensitive.

Johnson looked strong despite his ordeal. He walked carefully in and out of court, politely holding the door for others at times and softly exchanging pleasantries. The father of two boys, ages 10 and 13, spoke of enjoying writing and making music before he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma in 2014. The incurable cancer affects white blood cells.

After being promoted in 2012 to groundskeeper in a Benicia, California school district, Johnson’s job came to include spraying Roundup, and more often a professional version from Monsanto called RangerPro. The active ingredient in both products is glyphosate, which has been at the center of a debate regarding whether it poses a cancer risk. Monsanto, recently acquired by Germany-based Bayer in a deal valued at about $62 billion, has held firm that there’s no link between the weed killer and cancer – especially not the kind suffered by Johnson.

Johnson’s job included vanquishing rodents, weeds or other non-human schoolyard pests in Benicia, a small city near San Francisco. He underwent training as a “pesticide professional” to safely handle chemicals used to do the job, according to testimony in court. “I liked my job a lot,” Johnson testified. “I took my job very seriously.”

He proudly explained that he learned most of his work skills on the job, prompting smiles in the courtroom as he told of doing away with “30 skunks; 25 raccoons, and one squirrel.” Johnson also killed weeds, and for that he was armed with Roundup or RangerPro. As per instructions, he diluted the solutions with water before spraying.

He was adamant that had he known the chemicals might cause cancer, he “would never have sprayed” it anywhere. Johnson decided to file a lawsuit against Monsanto two years ago, backed by lawyers from the Miller Firm, which specializes in these kinds of cases. Johnson said he had no idea about the controversy around glyphosate until rashes set his skin fiercely itching and he took to the internet in search of answers.

Johnson said he took meticulous care at work, following product label instructions and wearing protective gear while spraying weed-killer. There is nothing on Roundup or RangerPro labels warning of a cancer risk, something that the lawsuit charges was so negligent it amounted to Monsanto putting profit over people’s health.

Johnson twice was drenched with RangerPro when spraying gear malfunctioned. Attorney Brent Wisner argued in court that chemicals in the mix enabled glyphosate to penetrate Johnson's protective suit and soak his skin, causing or exacerbating the cancer.

Johnson said he "panicked" after getting soaked the second time with RangerPro and a rash broke out on his skin.

"I was in denial until this case," Johnson said. "But, now it's pretty scary. I am not getting better."

Johnson's wife, Araceli, testified that her husband's job meant everything to him, and that he was "sexy" and happy before his illness.

The couple took walks, went out to dinner. Johnson kept the house organized. But now, all that has changed.

Johnson is no longer able to work. To support the family and pay medical bills, his wife works two jobs – one in a school and another in a retirement home. Johnson told of cancer treatments so painful they made him weep. Jurors are being asked not only to side with Johnson against Monsanto, they have been urged by his attorney to award him more than $400 million in a verdict that would punish the giant.

The case is the first alleging a cancer link from Roundup, one of the world's most widely used herbicides, to reach trial. A Monsanto loss could open the floodgates for hundreds more similar cases in the pipeline.

https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/08/20180811398670/
MONSANTO KNOWN FOR CONTROVERSIAL CHEMICALS
AFP Updated August 12, 2018
SAN FRANCISCO: Founded in 1901 in St. Louis, Missouri, Monsanto early on made the artificial sweetener saccharin. The company began producing agrochemicals in the 1940s.
Monsanto was one of the companies which produced a defoliant dubbed "Agent Orange," which has been linked to cancer and other diseases, for use by US forces in Vietnam but denies responsibility for how the military used it. The company also made insecticide DDT.

After it was introduced in the United States as Roundup in the mid-1970s, the use of the glyphosate — which is sprayed on food crops but also widely used outside of agriculture, such as on public lawns and in forestry — soared across the globe. The company began genetically modifying plants, making some resistant to Roundup.

There was a dramatic jump after the introduction in 1996 of genetically engineered "Roundup Ready" crops, such as soybean and maize, that survive glyphosate while it kills weeds.

Glyphosate is the most widely used herbicide in the world, produced by an array of companies since Monsanto's exclusive patent expired in the year 2000.

It is the subject of conflicting scientific studies as to whether it causes cancer.

The herbicide has been accused of damaging the environment, contributing to the disappearance of bees and being an endocrine disruptor.

The chemical has also been used as a pesticide for decades, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency website.

German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer acquired Monsanto in June for $63 billion. And it said it would get rid of the Monsanto company name following the merger, while brand names on products would remain.

The San Francisco trial of Roundup and its possible carcinogenic effects was the first litigation of its kind against the company to make it to trial.

In 2012, Monsanto negotiated a $93 million settlement to settle a case with the West Virginia town of Nitro, where a plant making a main Agent Orange ingredient once operated.

The municipality accused the plant of being behind health problems faced by people in the community.

A French court in 2012 found Monsanto to be liable in the case of a farmer who said he suffered neurological problems after inhaling the company's Lasso weed killer.

Monsanto has appealed the finding on points of law.

Meanwhile, Monsanto's genetically modified seeds have triggered concerns and legal challenges in Europe and the United States.

Last year, a citizen court consisting of a panel of professional judges in The Hague (Netherlands) found Monsanto guilty at a mock trial of human rights violations for harm caused by chemicals.

What became referred to as the "Monsanto Tribunal," in a purely advisory opinion, called for stronger laws protecting people and the environment from corporations, and a prosecutable crime of "ecocide."

Published in Dawn, August 12th, 2018

https://www.dawn.com/news/1426540/monsanto-known-for-controversial-chemicals

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 30TH TO AUGUST 5TH 2018
AL GHAZI TRACTORS' EARNINGS UP 6.5%
By Our Correspondent

Published: August 2, 2018

KARACHI: Al-Ghazi Tractors Limited's (AGTL) profit improved 6.5% to Rs718.32 million in the second quarter ended June 30, 2018 owing to increased volumetric sales and rupee devaluation, according to a notice sent to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday.

The firm registered a profit of Rs674.64 million in the same quarter last year.

Accordingly, earnings per share enhanced to Rs12.39 compared to Rs11.64 last year.

Car sales fall 15% as curbs on non-filers come into force

Board of directors recommended an interim cash dividend of Rs30 per share. The entitlement will be paid to the shareholders whose names will appear in the register of members on August 21, 2018. Its share price increased 0.43%, or Rs3, to close at Rs699 with 11,150 shares changing hands.

Locally assembled auto sales rise 9% to over 22,000 units

"AGTL witnessed volumetric growth of 18%, however, decline in gross margins restricted earnings growth (in the quarter on a year-on-year basis)," BIPL Securities said in a communiqué to its clients.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 2nd, 2018.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1771383/2-al-ghazi-tractors-earnings-6-5/

September 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 24TH TO SEPTEMBER 30TH 2018
HALEEB FOODS PROVIDES SUPPORT TO DAIRY FARMERS
RECORDER REPORT SEP 29TH, 2018 LAHORE

In order to facilitate the growth of dairy sector of Pakistan, Haleeb Foods Ltd carried out support initiatives for the dairy farmers of Jhang by providing means to build sheds and conducting educational training sessions by its Milk Collection and Dairy Services (MCDS) Department.

This initiative by HFL demonstrates the company's long-term commitment to protect and restore the resources that its industry and communities heavily rely on. Billboard skins of HFL's Asli Milk campaign were reused for the construction of dairy farming sheds.

The aim of these sheds is to facilitate the farmers by providing them relief from the scorching heat and help them increase their business. Furthermore, the various training sessions which were carried out convinced farmers to grow their own green fodder as a means to cut their costs and add to their profits. Dr. Imdad, Head of Milk Collection and Dairy Services at Haleeb Foods Ltd., said, "These training sessions conducted by our MCDS division play a pivotal role in educating dairy farmers about various aspects of dairy farming

https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/09/20180929411352/

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 17TH TO SEPTEMBER 23TH 2018
GOVT RESTORES GAS SUPPLY OF CLOSED FERTILISER PLANTS AFTER A YEAR
The News, September 23, 2018

LAHORE: After suspension of over a year, natural gas supplies to closed urea plants have been restored, brightening prospects of meeting peak urea demand of upcoming Rabi season.

The newly elected federal government has finally been able to put things in order as far as ensuring resumption of gas supplies to closed urea manufacturing plants is concerned, effectively averting a fertiliser crisis amid high demand season of wheat cultivation.

It was learnt that gas supplies would continue to urea factories for the next four months.

For the next two months of supplies, federal government will share cost of regasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG), comprising one-third of total volume that will be blended with two third of locally produced gas.

For the ensuing two months, government would share 50 percent of the RLNG price. The combined impact of the subsidy on gas price will be around Rs5.0 billion.

Out of three closed plants, Fatima fertiliser (old-Dawood) and Agritech have started producing urea once again.

Their combined production is expected to reach at 79,000 tons per month.

In the next four months, it is estimated that both these manufacturing plants would produce some 300,000 tons of urea against the demand of 400,000 tons.

Arrangements are also being made by the federal government to import 100,000 tons of urea to meet balance demand of fertiliser.

The government is seriously considering a proposal to provide dedicated supply of gas to third plant from Mari as a permanent solution.

Industry insiders have greatly appreciated the role of the present government in revitalising the closed urea manufacturing industry.

The present government rightly worked on a feasible solution to get urea from local plants that had been closed for over a year.

The economic and industry managers positively involved all the key ministries including industry, food security, petroleum and finance and worked untiringly to make this proposal doable.

However, industry insiders observed that government still could not address the discrimination inherently prevailing in the fertiliser manufacturing system.

Although the incumbent finance minister questioned windfall profits of already working urea giants, he could not take any measures to rationalise their operations.

The tariff of their gas is still lower to the blended gas rate being charged to just operationalised urea manufacturing plants.

It may be noted that the government gave a green signal to provide a mix of local and imported gas to restore idle manufacturing capacity, instead of wholly opting for costly imports.

This step will greatly help in dealing with a likely urea shortage of about 0.5 tons, up to mid Rabi 2018-19.

In case closed plants are not run, against the demand of two million tons in early Rabi till January 2019, it is estimated that there will be less than 1.8 million tons of local urea production.

On the other hand, there should be about 0.2 million tons additional supply of fertiliser in the market to control its prices.

To bridge this gap, official circles said the government decided to implement an out-of-the-box solution that involves provision of natural gas to closed urea fertiliser manufacturing plants.

https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/371740-govt-restores-gas-supply-of-closed-fertiliser-plants-after-a-year

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 10TH TO SEPTEMBER 16TH 2018
ENGRO FOODS PARTICIPATES IN ‘FOOD SAFETY & NUTRITION’ SEMINAR
RECORDER REPORT SEP 11TH, 2018 LAHORE

Engro Foods Limited participated in a resourceful seminar on Food Safety and Nutritional Policies, to enrich the discussions with its valuable experience as a leading provider of dairy products in Pakistan. The event held at the Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IAGS) attracted internationally reputed experts of nutrition.

Engro Food’s participation in this insightful forum reflects the commitment of this enterprise to improve the standards of nutrition in the society, while it inspires a white-revolution through tangible reforms that promise food-security and healthy nourishment for the masses.

The theme of this seminar was: “An Over-view of Food Safety & Nutrition Policies in the Western World: An Opportunity for Pakistan to Benefit from the Experience”. During the productive discussions, learned speakers like Dr. Atiq Rehman Senior Scientific Project Coordinator, Bureau of Nutritional Sciences & Health Canada, along with Engro Foods’ Manager Regulatory Affairs Dr. Muhammad Nasir, shared their wisdom with the audience. Notable policy-advisors like; Mustajab Ahmed also represented the Pakistan Society of Food Scientists & Technologists (PSFST) to enlighten the large number of distinguished personalities from the private sector, business community, regulatory institutions, academic faculty and students, who attended the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rehman said that Safe and Nutritious Food is a basic human right and is essential for a healthy nation. Government institutions play a key role in ensuring supply of safe and nutritious food. Pakistan’s food-regulators need to realign their strategy, with the evolving needs, to ensure a sustainable future. The agricultural sector is currently at the cross roads to take maximum advantage of newer technologies to ensure food-security.

The vast amount of data available in a digitized world can be smartly utilized to multiply agricultural output and optimize distribution and consumption of food products in every region, with more transparency.”-PR

https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/09/20180911406325/

October 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 22TH TO OCTOBER 28TH 2018
NESTLÉ RECORDS 1.8PC INCREASE IN REVENUE
RECORDER REPORT

LAHORE: Nestlé Pakistan recorded an increase in revenue of 1.8 percent for the nine months ended September 30, 2018 despite increasingly difficult economic conditions and competitive pressures.

The total revenue of the Company increased by Rs1.7 billion and stood at Rs94.1 billion. The results were announced upon the conclusion of the meeting of Nestlé Pakistan’s Board of Directors on October 23, 2018.

The Company reported profit after tax of Rs8.6 billion for the nine months ended on September 30, 2018, lower by 23.9% compared to the corresponding period of last year.

https://epaper.brecorder.com/m/2018/10/24/16-page/745697-news.html

FAUJI FERTILIZER BIN QASIM'S PROFIT DOUBLES

By Bilal Hussain

Published: October 26, 2018

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Bin Qasim (FFBL) posted a 104% rise in profit for the quarter ended September 30, 2018 which stood at Rs1.16 billion and was higher than expectations.

The company had registered a profit of Rs518 million in the same period last year.

"The year-on-year growth in earnings, which translated into EPS of Rs1.54 against last year's Rs0.76, is due to improved gross profit margins and a substantial increase in revenues by around 48%," Topline Securities' research analyst Shankar Talreja told The Express Tribune.

The exceptional increase in revenue came on the back of 30% YoY increase in DAP fertiliser consumption to 211,000 tons and 7% higher urea sales at 156,000 tons.

Meanwhile, average prices of DAP and urea in the quarter were Rs3,362 per bag and Rs1,610 per bag respectively, up 29% and 21%. Finance cost of the company rose 7% to Rs1.3 billion due to higher interest rates and working capital requirements.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 26th, 2018.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1834038/2-fauji-fertilizer-bin-qasims-profit-doubles/

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 15TH TO OCTOBER 21TH 2018
ENGRO CORP'S PROFIT SURGES 38% TO RS6.8B
By Our Correspondent

Published: October 20, 2018

KARACHI: Engro Corporation's consolidated profit surged 38% to Rs6.79 billion in the quarter ended September 30, 2018 mainly due to robust sales, according to a bourse filing on Friday.

The conglomerate had registered a profit of Rs4.92 billion in the same quarter last year.

Accordingly, earnings per share increased to Rs7.36 in the Jul-Sept 2018 quarter compared to Rs5.99 in the corresponding quarter of last year, the company reported to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

The board of directors recommended an interim cash dividend of Rs7 per share, which would be paid to the shareholders whose names appear in the register of members on November 26, 2018. The entitlement is in addition to a previous interim dividend of Rs12 per share that was already paid.

Engro Corp's share price dropped 1.24%, or Rs3.77, and closed at Rs300.68 with 1.32 million shares changing hands at the PSX where the benchmark KSE-100 index improved 1.18%, or 448.02 points, and closed at 38,430.27.

The corporation recorded net revenue of Rs42.91 billion, which was 25.5% higher than Rs34.18 billion in the corresponding period of previous year.

On the flip side, selling and distribution expenses surged to Rs2.05 billion compared to Rs1.83 billion last year. Administrative expenses rose to Rs1.69 billion compared to Rs997.88 million. Finance cost improved to Rs1.20 billion as opposed to Rs1.04 billion last year.

Besides, other income dropped to Rs1.45 billion compared to Rs2.01 billion. Share of income from joint ventures and associates dropped to Rs305.23 million in the Jul-Sept 2018 quarter compared to Rs445.81 million in the same quarter last year.

Topline Securities' analyst Shankar Talreja said, "Engro Corporation announced…higher earnings (on the back of) contribution from fertiliser and petrochemical businesses, up 81% year-on-year and 20% year-on-year respectively."

Fertiliser business (Engro Fertilizers) showed a robust performance on the back of improved urea prices coupled with lower discounts. Similarly, the petrochemical business performance improved due to cost efficiency where the company successfully curbed its breakeven level to $175 per ton, he said.

In addition to this, consolidated administrative expenses soared 70% where a substantial increase was seen in its core operations with a rise in cost of 124%. Higher admin cost was due to ongoing assignments of the company and the same cost will be recovered after completion of those assignments, he said.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 20th, 2018.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1829749/2-engro-corps-profit-surges-38-rs6-8b/

FAUJI FOODS AIMS TO KEEP AT LEAST 25% SHARES
By Shahram Haq

Published: October 21, 2018

LAHORE: Fauji Foods Limited, a sister concern of the Fauji Group, is looking to keep at least 25% shares in a forthcoming deal with Chinese food giant Inner Mongolia Yili Industrial Group.

Fauji Fertiliser Bin Qasim Limited (FFBL) officials said talks between the two sides for acquisition of up to 51% voting shares and control of Fauji Foods by the Yili Group are now at the advanced stage. However, Fauji Foods aspires to keep 25-35% shareholding in a bid to stay engaged in the dairy business both in domestic and export markets.

"Business models, based on joint ventures, are becoming successful globally and we also want a joint venture with the Yili Group through this acquisition," said FFBL Company Secretary Syed Mujtaba Tirmizi while talking to The Express Tribune.

He revealed that the Chinese company wanted a significant shareholding in Fauji Foods, adding "we also believe in long-term partnerships".

"This will be the biggest foreign investment in recent times in Pakistan; though Yili will have majority shares in the company, we will still make a great impact with our remaining shares," Tirmizi added.

The Fauji Group had acquired the food company by purchasing 51% shares from the Noon Group in September 2015 for Rs700 million. Total shares acquired by the Fauji Group now stand at 63.34%.

The Noon Group still has 11% stake in Fauji Foods. Company executives believe Yili will also have to buy shares from the open market (different funds) to get controlling rights in the company. This, they said, would merely leave around 10% shares in the open market.

Fauji Foods has made an additional investment of Rs12 billion for equity and plant upgrade, which may have helped generate Rs6 billion in first three quarters of the current calendar year.

The Yili Group is the largest dairy producer in Asia and the eighth largest across the world. The Chinese company is principally engaged in the processing, production and distribution of Halal dairy products and mixed feedstuff.

Its market capitalisation as of December 2017 was 210 billion Chinese yuan or $30.3 billion, with annual sales of $8.66 billion. Yili expressed interest in acquiring up to 51% shares in Fauji Foods from FFBL and other shareholders in July this year.Last month, a high-level delegation from the Chinese company, led by its strategy head, visited Pakistan. It conducted a market survey by visiting milk plants, urban markets, farmers, etc to see what Pakistan market could offer.

Similarly, a high-powered delegation of FFBL will visit China at the end of October whereas in mid-November Yili's top management will come to Pakistan for meetings to discuss the future and modalities of the transaction.

Future strategy

The Yili Group has global expertise and a research and development wing. The company wants to establish dairy farms for future expansion to feed its growing supply chain.

Fauji Foods is looking to take advantage of Chinese expertise, which will help it remain competitive in the presence of two multinational food giants – Nestle and Engro Foods (Frieslandcampina Pakistan).

Tirmizi said through the acquisition, they found a bigger scope. "Pakistan's domestic market is still open as 90% of the market has to shift to UHT milk by 2021. It is a big market with the Middle East as a potential export market of dairy foods from Pakistan."

"We as a company will go for better business practices after the acquisition," he added.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 21st, 2018.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1830469/2-fauji-foods-aims-keep-least-25-shares/

November 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 19TH TO NOVEMBER 25TH 2018

FERTILIZER INDUSTRY RELUCTANT TO CUT UREA PRICES

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN | NOV 20TH, 2018 | ISLAMABAD

Fertilizer industry Monday showed reluctance to reduce urea prices by Rs 128 per bag on the pretext that the middlemen are making profits and not the industry as is being portrayed by the government, well informed sources told Business Recorder. The fertilizer industry took this stance at a meeting in the Ministry of Industries and Production represented by all the fertilizer plants and different concerned Ministries.

One of the participants told this scribe that there was a consensus that there was no need to import urea as local production will be enough to fulfill domestic requirements. The government would continue to provide gas (RLNG and natural gas mix) to two fertilizer plants till January 2019 after which both plants will operate on RLNG.

Fertilizer industry argued that urea prices are still at the level of three years ago and whatever increase was witnessed was due to withdrawal of subsidy and hike in gas prices.

Prime Minister"s Advisor on Commerce and Industries and Production and Investment will submit recommendations to the ECC on Tuesday (today).

The sources said both the government and domestic fertilizer industry are not on the same page with respect to resumption of subsidy on the same pattern as in the past. The industry argues that if the government wants to resume subsidy on urea, it should be disbursed directly to gas companies in lieu of price differential. This will restrict payment for gas increase to only old plants, as new ones with fixed gas price are not affected.

Official documents reveal that the ECC in its meeting held on November 7, 2018 had approved operationalisation of two fertilizer plants, ie, M/s Fatimafert and M/s Agritech for a further period of two months, ie, December 2018 and January 2019. And urged the Advisor to Prime Minister on commerce, Industries and Production and Investment to interact with the manufacturers to work out necessary modalities in this regard and make appropriate recommendations to the ECC.

The ECC had also allowed import of an additional 50,000 tons of urea by the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) to meet the shortage during Rabi season 2018-19. The Ministry of Industries and Production would keep the situation under constant review and import another 50,000 tons of urea through TCP, if so required.

The documents further disclose that the ECC took serious notice of the sale of urea at higher prices, which has increased the cost of production for the farming community. The ECC maintained that unjustified increase in the urea prices will not be tolerated on the pretext of increase in gas prices and advised Advisor to Prime Minister to hold meetings with the fertilizer manufacturers on the issue of higher prices of urea and submit a report with recommendations for reduction in its price. In this regard, a cost sharing formula may be considered, if necessary, to ensure that fertilizer is made available to farmers at affordable rates.

https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/11/20181120425147/

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 29TH TO NOVEMBER 4TH 2018

FATIMA FERTILIZER'S PROFITS RISE 7% TO RS2.77 BILLION
By Our Correspondent

Published: October 31, 2018

KARACHI: Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited's profit improved 7% to Rs2.77 billion in the quarter ended September 30, 2018 compared to Rs2.58 billion reported in the same period of the previous year.

The increase in profit jacked up earnings per share from Rs1.23 to Rs1.32 in the period under review.

However, the rise in company's profit does not reflect the hike of 31.4% in revenues from Rs9 billion in the previous year to Rs11.9 billion in the period under review. The company's gross profit stood at Rs6.76 billion compared to last year's quarterly gross profit of Rs4.3 billion. However, the company paid Rs1.97 billion in taxes this year, which reduced the company's bottom-line.

Meanwhile, the company's profit for the nine-month period ended September 30, 2018 jumped 50% to Rs8.46 billion from Rs5.62 billion for the same period last year.

The company's cost of sales peaked at Rs21 billion last year compared to Rs15 billion this year despite sales remaining higher in the current year at Rs35.5 billion compared to last year's Rs33.2 billion.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 31st, 2018.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1837528/2-fatima-fertilizers-profits-rise-7-rs2-77-billion/

December 2018

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 10TH TO DECEMBER 16TH 2018

FATIMA GROUP, USAID-PATTA SIGN MOU

RECORDER REPORT | DEC 14TH, 2018 | LAHORE

Fatima Group, Pakistan's leading industrial conglomerate recently signed MoU with USAID-Pakistan Agricultural Technology Transfer Activity (PATTA). The MoU enables both parties to work together in uplifting the small-medium farmers of Pakistan through technology transfer and knowledge dissemination. USAID-PATTA has further expressed commitment in capacity building of Fatima Agri Sales and Services team and provide their expertise in various initiatives the company is taking such as formulation of high tech mechanization centers, development of model farms (where latest technology and best farming practices will be demonstrated) and marketing of specialized Nitrate based compound fertilizers. Special emphasis shall also be given in training and empowering women farmers.

The event took place at Fatima Fertilizer's Marketing office in Lahore where Dr Daney Jackson (Chief of Party PATTA Project), Aeyesha Gulzar (Business Development and Marketing Manager) represented USAID-PATTA, and Khurram Javed Maqbool (Director Marketing), Naseerullah Khan (Farmer Engagement Manager), Rabel Sadozai (Group Brand Manager) and Ali Nasir (Planning Manager) represented Fatima Group.-PR

https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/12/20181214431024/

MATCO FOODS PLANS TO FORM JOINT VENTURE WITH DUTCH COMPANY

The Globalization Bulletin
Corporation

By Usman Hanif

Published: December 16, 2018

KARACHI: Matco Foods, a 50-year old agribusiness which exports rice to over 150 countries, has announced plans to diversify its product range in collaboration with Dutch Barentz International.

The company has applied to the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) for a joint venture in Pakistan with Barentz International, according to a notification submitted to the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

“The investment in the joint venture corporation is subject to approval of CCP and completion of requisite compliance requirements under applicable law,” stated the notification. Barentz International deals in raw material for pharmaceutical, personal and homecare, food and nutrition and animal nutrition industries.

Apart from this, Netherlands’ Barentz group operates in 60 countries of Europe and Asia. It generated a turnover of €1.1 billion in 2017 while catering to thousands of customers in the 60 countries with over thousands of employees. “Matco is moving towards new business with Barentz International, which possesses vast experience,” BMA Securities analyst Faizul Sultan told The Express Tribune. “We hope the Pakistani market will take full advantage of its experience.”

“The size of investment will be about Rs1 billion, we are forming joint venture under the title of Business Pakistan,” said Matco Foods Limited Chairman Jawed Ali Ghori while talking to The Express Tribune. “The company will be registered in Pakistan with 49% share of Matco.”

The joint venture will import raw material and sell in line with Matco Foods’ existing rice glucose and rice protein business, commented Matco Company Secretary Muhammad Latif Qureshi in the notification. Barents International will market Matco’s glucose, which it extracts from rice in Karachi and Matco will import the raw material and provide it to fast moving consuming goods (FMCGs) companies, like Nestle and Lotte Corporation.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 16th, 2018.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1867861/2-matco-foods-plans-form-joint-venture-dutch-company/

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 3RD TO DECEMBER 9TH 2018
MILLAT TRACTORS MARK COMPANY’S SUCCESS IN EXPORTS OF PRODUCTS
RECORDER REPORT

LAHORE: Prime Minister’s Advisor on Commerce, Textile, Industry & Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood while speaking at a celebration ceremony organized by the Millat Tractors Limited in its factory premises to mark the company’s success in exports of its products has said that value added engineering products could earn plenty of much needed foreign exchange for the country besides making it self-sufficient locally.

Millat Group’s Chairman Sikandar Mustafa Khan and Millat Tractors Limited’s Chief Executive Officer S M Irfan Aqueel were also present on the occasion.

Abdul Razak Dawood in a ribbon cutting ceremony also inaugurated the export consignments of tractors being sent to Tanzania and Madagascar. He said that it was heartening to note that Millat had taken the lead in the automobile sector by setting up a broad vending base and exporting its products successfully in the global markets, which had resulted in saving and earning of foreign exchange meanwhile projecting a positive image of the country worldwide.

He was briefed that the company products including Millat made Massey Ferguson tractors, tractor engines, electro pack engines, assemblies and sub-assemblies of spare parts are being exported to Europe, Africa, South Asia, Turkey and Australia.

The exports have been a result of Millat's agreement with their Principal AGCO, signed in 2015.

It was worth noting that Millat made products were competing in the global markets not only on account of price competitiveness but also for good quality.

Abdul Razak Dawood also examined two newly developed tractor models,

MF 360-4wd and MF 375-4wd manufactured by the company for export and local markets.

Speaking on the occasion, Sikandar Mustafa Khan said that the company's exports are a testament of technical strength of its products, competing the global markets successfully.

He also paid tributes to all the stakeholders including foreign partners of the company which stood by it all the way.

https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/12/08/5-page/752947-news.html

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 26TH TO DECEMBER 2ND 2018
'PEPSI CO TO INVEST $1.2BN'
Reuters Updated November 29, 2018

ISLAMABAD: Pepsi Co is set to invest $1.2 billion in Pakistan in coming years, a statement from Prime Minister Imran Khan's office said on Wednesday.

Pepsi planned to make " a further investment of $1.2bn" in next five years, the statement said, after the company's chief executive for Asia, Middle East and North Africa, Mike Spanos, led a Pepsi delegation that met Mr Khan. Pepsi could not be reached for comment.

Khan, who assumed power in August, has inherited a wobbly economy reeling from a ballooning current account deficit, which has prompted the government to seek loans from allies China and Saudi Arabia, as well as enter bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

But many consumer companies see Pakistan, the world's sixth most populous country, as a hot consumer market due to its fast-growing population of 208 million people.

Published in Dawn, November 29th, 2018

https://www.dawn.com/news/1448342/pepsi-co-to-invest-12bn

BAYER TO CUT 12,000 JOBS AFTER MONSANTO TAKEOVER
RECORDER REPORT | NOV 30TH, 2018 | BERLIN

German chemical and pharmaceutical giant Bayer said Thursday it would slash 12,000 jobs in a major restructuring following the mammoth takeover of Monsanto, enabling it to save 2.6 billion euros ($3 billion) a year from 2022. The planned job cuts will affect about one in every ten of the group's 118,200 posts, "a significant number of them in Germany", said the group in a statement.

Bayer swallowed Monsanto in one of Germany's biggest ever corporate takeovers at a cost of $63 billion in June. But barely two months later, a court ruling in the US left Bayer with multi-million-dollar damages to pay as the judge found that its newly acquired subsidiary Monsanto should have warned a user about cancer risks from its herbicide Roundup.

Announcing details of the restructuring, Bayer said it planned to exit its animal health business, in order to concentrate resources on its core businesses of pharmaceuticals, consumer health and crop science. It is also looking at letting go of its Coppertone sun care brand and Dr Scholl's foot care product line.

Following the tie-up with Monsanto, the group's crop science division will be among the hardest hit by the job cuts, with 4,100 posts to go. The company said it expected to complete trimming its headcount by the end of 2021. "These changes are necessary and lay the foundation for Bayer to enhance its performance and agility. With these measures, we aim to take full advantage of the growth potential for our businesses," said Werner Baumann, Bayer board chairman. Investors gave a muted response to Bayer's announcement, with shares in the group closing down 0.72 percent to 63.77 euros against a flat DAX index.

https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/11/20181130427581/

ADDITIONAL EARNINGS: SUGAR MILLS MAKE EXTRA PROFIT BY PRODUCING ELECTRICITY
By Zafar Bhutta

Published: November 30, 2018

ISLAMABAD: Some sugar mills have installed additional plants for producing ethanol and electricity which provide them with extra profit, revealed the Ministry of Industries during a recent meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC).

According to the ministry, sugar stock in the 2017-18 crushing season, which ran from October to September, stood at 7.158 million tons, of which 3.856 million tons were in Punjab, 2.281 million tons in Sindh, 0.470 million tons in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the leftover was 0.541 million tons.

At present, the government is locked in the process of initiating crackdown on the sugar industrialists which are involved in hefty tax evasion on the sale of sugarcane byproduct – molasses. They have also defaulted on payments to farmers. The government has estimated the ex-mill sugar price at Rs45.86 per kg. It is also presumed that at the recovery level of 9.96%, 4.4% extra molasses are produced which fetches an additional profit of Rs21.12 per 40kg. However, the millers do not pay any tax on the sale of molasses. This means the millers are making billions of rupees by selling sugarcane byproducts, but are avoiding tax payment, which hits the national exchequer.

The Ministry of National Food Security and Research told the ECC that the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics had reported that the wholesale price of sugar was Rs54.88 per kg on November 15, 2018.

On the other hand, the International Sugar Organisation said sugar prices were fluctuating in the range of $335 to $353 per ton during the period November 1 to 15, 2018.

The Sugar Factories Control Act 1950 authorises provincial governments to fix the indicative price of sugarcane. The cost of sugarcane production in the 2018-19 season has been estimated at Rs179 per 40 kg in Punjab against Rs169.22 last year and Rs178.08 per 40 kg in Sindh compared with Rs171.96 in the previous year.

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa uses the indicative price of sugarcane set by the Punjab government.

Furthermore, the ECC meeting was told that 82 sugar mills were running in the country with production capacity of 6.8 million tons per annum compared to national consumption of 5.3 million tons. In the past seven years, the area sown with sugarcane crop expanded 9% whereas production rose 22%. However, the sugarcane production is expected to fall to 68.25 million tons in the 2018-19 season because of multiple factors.

The Ministry of National Food Security regularly works out the cost of sugarcane production. In order to determine an appropriate indicative price for the next crop, all factors are taken into account including the cultivated area, world market outlook, cost of production, imports and exports, local and international prices and domestic requirement.

Sugarcane is a high-value food cash crop. Its production accounts for 3.6% of value addition in the agriculture sector and 0.7% in the overall GDP.

It is mainly cultivated for the production of sugar and related products like ethanol, molasses and press mud for the paper and board industry.

The ECC directed that defaulter mills commit to the State Bank of Pakistan that they would first repay the dues of farmers and bank loans from earnings through sugar export.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 30th, 2018.

https://tribune.com.pk/story/1856923/2-additional-earnings-sugar-mills-make-extra-profit-producing-electricity/