The major objective of this seminar was to pave way for establishing close linkage between the academia and industry. With this, additionally, we also aimed that this activity will provide ground for advancement in scientific and industrial development. This also helped the newly established Pakistan Materials Society to further introduce itself to the scientific community that attended the event, so that the dimensions and scope of the society are brought to the notice of the researchers in the various disciplines and sub-disciplines of materials science and its related engineering.

The seminar covered a wide range of issues relating to Academia-Industry (A-I) interaction in the region and country, including the importance of A-I interaction for economical development, factors hindering such collaborations, the role of academia and industry, and the possible ways to establish such linkages. The seminar comprised 3 sessions, namely, the inaugural session and the two scientific sessions.

The inaugural session started with recitation from the Holy Quran by Mr. Shah Hussain. Prof. Yaseen Iqbal welcomed the distinguished guests, speakers and delegates in his welcome address. He thanked the HEC, particularly the University-Industry Interaction Project for the financial support which enabled holding of the event. After a brief history of University of Peshawar and its role in educating the region, he informed the audience about the importance and aims of the event. He emphasized that this event is not a routine activity but will prove a milestone in our journey towards a bright future. Keeping in view the intellectual ability of the local people and mineral potential of the land, a little effort is needed to bring about economical development which requires a systematic and organized approach. Need for a platform that will bring together our wisdom and expertise was also emphasized. This could be achieved by looking for the ways of improving the quality of education, enhancing the standards of research and making a culture of science & technology to prosper. Prof. Iqbal hoped that everyone of us will think seriously to utilize the event to its best. He thanked Dr. Rozina Tufail, MNA & Chairperson of the Committee for Popularization of Science for economical development, for her time and effort and honouring the session as the Chief Guest. Dr. Iqbal acknowledged the support of delegates and participants and the members of the organizing committee making the event successful and unique. He specially thanked Mr. Ashfaq Paracha, President Nowshera Industrial Estate, Risalpur for his untiring effort in motivating and bringing representatives from the industrial community.

After the welcome address, Prof. Javed Khan, VC, UOP, who was chairing the inaugural session, appreciated the organizers for their hard work. He said that though A-I interaction is a term too much talked about these days but to bring the two at one podium is something not easy to materialize. He also mentioned that a lot of work facilitating A-I interaction has been existing between various departments and industry at their individual level but their importance would be much better understood with such events. Academia would become easily noticed by the industry if they made their research activities of interest and relevant to them.

In this inaugural session, scientific papers by Prof. Irfan Mufti, Mr. Javed Khattak and Prof. Yaseen Iqbal, were also presented. Abstracts of their presentations are available in this issue.

The Chief Guest of this session, Dr. Rozina Tufail, MNA and Chairperson of the Committee for Popularization of Science for economical development, appreciated HEC and the present government for their efforts to enhance the quality and quantity of education and research in the country. Referring to the establishment of new engineering universities on modern lines, she said that the country was undergoing a transition period and we must change now if we were interested in our survival and development. She thanked the organizers for such a successful seminar which attracted delegates from various sectors.

A key note speech of the session was delivered by Dr Abdul Mateen an eminent
economist, educationist and intellectual of the land. He enlightened the audience about the local and global economic developments in his unique style. He appreciated the organization of such a unique event and advised on the continuation of such activities. He pointed out that there was no doubt about the interest of all to see industrial growth, however, most important is that this should happen within the framework of industrial development that takes place within our own parameters of progress. He envisioned the kind of progress and development to be compatible within the national, regional and global perspective. He was also critique of the approaches that are being tested and applied by individual sectors and authorities assigned and established for the purpose and thus emphasized for a coordinated and integrated approach. He outlined three important issues of concern that need urgent consideration within the context of development through industrialization. Firstly, the outsourcing of industrial units to international competitors must be seen with their environmental concerns, cost reduction and mutual bilateral benefits. Secondly, the local industries need to be made competitive by reducing their cost of production through easy and cheaper access to electricity, gas, oil and raw materials. Thirdly, the promotion of values, interests, pre-directions and preferences of foreign investors should be of no concern provided these are not in conflict with those of ours.

Of the two scientific sessions, the first started with the presentation of Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal, which was followed by Eng. Zahid Arif. Subsequent speakers were Dr. Farrukh Seir and Prof. Fazal Ghani. Mr. Muhammad Ashfaq Paracha gave a brief account of his pioneering A-I project with the Department of Pharmacy, UOP, and appreciated the academia for promoting this culture. He informed the audience that the pharmacy industry in NWFP and especially Delta Pharma and Department of Pharmacy, UOP were the founders of A-I interaction in 1995. Being an educated industrialist, he appreciated the efforts of Prof. Yaseen Iqbal, Principal Organizer of the event and affirmed his commitment to collaborate with academia in other industrial sectors including ceramics manufacturing and research.

Mr. Liaqat Ahmad Khan, President Sarhad Chambers of Commerce, was the Guest of Honour for the session. He thanked the organizers for their significant role in promoting the A-I interaction culture. He informed the audience that there are a total of 1964 industrial units in NWFP of which only 1227 are operational. He said that the region is blessed with enormous mineral wealth but the development made so far is not matching the requirements. He was of the opinion that high population growth was the main cause of problems. The knowledge locally given was not applicable for industrial use. He gave an example that in contrast, 50% of the science graduates could be accepted by industries in USA. The demand of export requires academia support which is not possible without practical training in academic institutions. He appreciated the efforts of Mr. Ashfaq Paracha for mobilizing the industrial community to contribute in such activities.

This session was chaired by Prof. Mohammad Daud Khan, Vice Chancellor, Khyber Medical University who thanked HEC, UOP and Prof. Yaseen Iqbal for their generous support and organization of the event. Discussing the role of chamber of commerce and academia, and challenges and opportunities in the country, he informed the audience that research and development both require strong A-I linkages. He added that we must include government as the third pillar in such linkages and stressed upon the need for an Industry-Academia-Government Interaction Forum. This should include all the universities in NWFP. The academia should contribute their share and a similar amount by the chambers of commerce. The goal of the forum should be the identification of vital projects of mutual interest for young graduates.

The second scientific session of the seminar started after lunch and prayers break. The speakers were Prof. Jehangir Mirza, Mr. Afzal Khan, Mr. Safeer Ahmad and Prof. Muhammad Ullah. Prof. Haroon Rasheed, Professor of Chemistry and ex-VC, UOP who chaired this scientific session, informed the audience about the pioneering efforts of the principal organizer for bringing the academia and industry closer than ever and then presented a visionary talk on the future of research at global level.

Last but not the least, Prof. Dr. Badshah Khan, Chairman, Department of Physics, UOP, being a strong supporter of the event, thanked HEC for the financial support and the organizers especially Prof. Dr. Fazal Ghani, Prof. Abaseen Yousefzai, Mr. Ashfaq Paracha, Mr. Anwarul Haq, Mr. Safeer Ahmad and Representatives of Local Media and all the contributors and participants. He said that this day of 27th October 2007 is pushing us towards joint research activities which are distend at utilizing them for the welfare and betterment of the mankind. This
day is reminding us that without collective thinking our efforts would bear no mentionable fruits. We have learnt a lot about the subject. The organization of an event like this in which the Academia and Industry mutually share each others’ expertise is the most encouraging factor for the environment of all the industries involved. We have a long way to go. The foundation of “Pakistan Materials Society” is the manifestation of the intentions of working together with vigour and zeal incessantly. He considered the launching of the Journal of the Pakistan Materials Society (JPMS) as another landmark in this direction. Hurdles are always there, but we will never stop. We will do whatever we can to iron-out difficulties faced by all of us. He also assured of his full and continued support for all such activities.