

HAAL AHWAL

Monthly News Reviews on Food and Agriculture

August, 2024

Roots for Equity

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Roots for Equity

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1 Hectare = 2.471 Acres

1 Acre = 4,840 Square Yards

1 Ton = 25 Mann = 1000 Kg

1 Mann = 40 Kg

Preface

The *Haal Ahwal* was initiated in 2013 as an Urdu quarterly publication and came out with more than 20 journals till 2019. From 2020 onwards, due to Covid19's lockdown, and other resource gaps the publication was discontinued. The Urdu version of *Haal Ahwal's* was compiled as a fairly comprehensive resource bringing together current news and developments in the agriculture sector. Its aim was to provide readers with a chronological order of developments in various sub-sectors of agriculture and its interconnected domains to develop their understanding on the political economy of agriculture.

With the publication in hand, it's obvious that *Haal Ahwal* is being launched once again. However, after a gap of three years, it comes with some changes. The first most apparent is that, this time it's being published in English. The range of topics remain much the same, following the previous pattern of more coverage of Pakistan's domestic scene and sparingly international coverage. *Haal Ahwal* will now be on a monthly basis and not quarterly.

The publication covers a wide range of subjects, encompassing various aspects of agriculture and related fields. It delves into topics such as farmers, laborer, agricultural resources (including land, water, and inputs), seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, agricultural loans, agricultural machinery, and industrial production. News items on food and cash crops, fruits and vegetables, livestock, fisheries, and poultry are added. And then on more macro issues of neoliberal policies, trade, exports, imports, the corporate sector including agrochemical companies, food and fertilizer companies, corporate lobbies and foreign aid are also covered. Related issues such as environment, pollution, health and safety, climate change, and natural disasters, poverty, inflation, food security and people's and farmers resistance also have particular emphasis. All these topics will be covered more fully in the national context and where relevant to Pakistan, as part of international policies and politics. In addition, there is coverage of news on international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank,

Asian Development Bank; aid agencies such as the USAID and others as well as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Though the layout of the news items has been changed quite a bit, we are retaining our take on the news items covered under Points to Ponder, which is given in the very beginning of the publication. The next section is based on excerpts of what the editorial team considers the most important news items in this period. This is followed by table of contents making it easier for readers to look for their topics of interest. And then we have the meat of the publication based on abbreviated news items included in each sub-section. As was the case for the Urdu *Haal Ahwal*, two major newspapers have been used for the news items included, namely the “Daily Dawn” and the “Business Recorder.” Please note, only the Sunday newspaper is used for news coverage from “The Daily News.”

At the end, we would like to add that comments and critique for making the resource more useful to our readers is very welcome.

1,000	1 Thousand	1 Thousand	ایک ہزار
10,000	10 Thousand	10 Thousand	دس ہزار
100,000	100 Thousand	1 Lac	ایک لاکھ
1,000,000	1 Million	10 Lac	دس لاکھ
10,000,000	10 Million	1 Crore	ایک کروڑ
100,000,000	100 Million	10 Crore	دس کروڑ
1,000,000,000	1 Billion	1 Arab	ایک ارب
10,000,000,000	10 Billion	10 Arab	دس ارب
100,000,000,000	100 Billion	1 Kharab	ایک کھرب

Glossary

ACE: Anti-Corruption Establishment

ADB: Asian Development Bank

AKF: Aga Khan Foundation

AQLI: Air Quality Life Index

AWE: Academy for Women
Entrepreneurs'

BBFL: Big Bird Foods Limited

BISP: Benazir Income Support
Programme

BNP: Benazir Nashonuma Programme

BJP: Bilateral Political Consultations

BSWA: Bhattai Social Watch and
Advocacy

BYC: Baloch Yakjehti Committee

C3S: Copernicus Climate Change
Service

CAGR: Compound Annual Growth
Rate

CCI: Council of Common Interest

CCOP: Cabinet Committee on
Privatisation

CDC: Disease Control and Prevention

CMC: Chandka Medical College

CPEC: China Pakistan Economic
Corridor

CPI: Consumer Price Index

DAP: Diabetic Association of Pakistan

DDWPs: Departmental Development
Working Party's

DHA: Defense Housing Authority

DNC: Democratic National
Convention

DRAP: Drug Regulatory Authority of
Pakistan

DVCs: District Vigilance Committees

EAD: Economic Affairs Division

ECC: Economic Coordination
Committee

EFF: Extended Fund Facility

EPB: Export Promotion Bureau

FAO: Food and Agriculture
Organization

FCA: Federal Committee on
Agriculture

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FJMU: Fatima Jinnah Medical
University

FMPAC: Fertilizer Manufacturers of
Pakistan Advisory Council

FNF: Friedrich Naumann Foundation

FOPL: Front-of-Package Labels

FTA: Free Trade Agreement

GHAI: Global Health Advocacy
Incubator

GPI: Green Pakistan Initiative

GST: General Sales Tax

HBWWF: Home-Based Women Workers Federation

HWA: Hari Welfare Association

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

IFIs: International Financial Institutions

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IPC: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

IPPs: Independent Power Producers

IRS: Institute of Regional Studies

Irsa: Indus River System Authority

JPMC: Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre

KATI: Korangi Association of Trade and Industry

KWGA: Karachi Wholesale Grocers Association

KWSC: Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation

LHMTU: Latif Hariyani Mazdoor Trade Union

LSM: Large-Scale Manufacturing

MDCAT: Medical and Dental College Admission Test

MGD: Million Gallons per Day

MNS&R: Ministry of National Food Security and Research

MNVD: Main Nara Valley Drain

MoU: Memorandums of understanding

N4HK: Nestlé for Healthier Kids

NAB: National Accountability Bureau

NARC: National Agricultural Research Centre

NCDs: Non-Communicable Diseases

NCOC: National Command and Operation Centre

NFEH: National Forum for Environment and Health

NFML: National Fertiliser Marketing Limited

NHS: National Health Services

NTUF: National Trade Union Federation

OICCI: Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry

OPD: Outpatient Department

PA: Palestinian Authority

PBF: Pakistan Business Forum

PBICL: Pak-Brunei Investment Company Limited

PCGA: Pakistan Cotton Ginners' Association

PDMA: Provincial Disaster Management Authority

PDWP: Provincial Development Working Party

Pims: Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences

PMD: Pakistan Meteorological Department

PPEP: Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme

PPP: Public-Private Partnership

PSDP: Public Sector Development Programme

PSMA: Pakistan Sugar Mills Association

PSX: Pakistan Stock Exchange

RBOD: Right Bank Outfall Drain

REAP: Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan

SAB: Sindh Abadgar Board

SAB: Sugar Advisory Board

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SAU: Sindh Agriculture University

SBA: Stand by Arrangement

SBP: State Bank of Pakistan

SCA: Sindh Chamber of Agriculture

SCP: Sehat Card Plus

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SDPI: Sustainable Development Policy Institute

SEF: Strategic Economic Framework

SIFC: Special Investment Facilitation Council

SIRA: Sindh Industrial Relations Act

SLA: Staff-Level Agreement

SMBBMU: Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University

SMP: School Meal Programme

SOEs: State-Owned Enterprises

SPI&AIC: Saudi-Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company

STA: Sindh Tenancy Act

SWP: Sindh Water Policy

TDAP: Trade Development Authority of Pakistan

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

USC: Utility Stores Cooperation

VRE: Variable Renewable Energy

Wapda: Water and Power Development Authority

WB: World Bank

WFP: World Food Programme

WHO: World Health Organisation's

WMU: Women Mazdoor Union

WPC: Women's Parliamentary Caucus

WTO: World Trade Organization

YDA: Young Doctors Association

NEWS EXCEPTS

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National News

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- The Provincial government notified reorganisation of the Punjab Agriculture Commission to promote profitable & sustainable development in agriculture sector.
- The Punjab Agriculture Commission will make recommendations for food security and profitable farming, water conservation, increasing crop productivity, and climate change.
- Out of Balochistan's 34.7 million hectares, a mere 2.06m (5.9 percent) are cultivated, with 54pc lying fallow due to chronic water scarcity.
- The Sindh Abadgar Ittehad has expressed its grave concern over corporate farming for which millions of acres had been earmarked in the country. It termed the move detrimental to the interests of Sindh, considering the fact that the province was already facing a shortage of water.
- Federal government was planning to build six canals within the Indus river system. Such projects would be great injustice with Sindh.
- Members of National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research were given an in-depth briefing on Green Pakistan Initiative, led by SIFC, in driving advancements within country's agriculture and livestock sectors.
- In a significant step towards enhancing agricultural research and environmental monitoring, a flux tower has been installed at the experimental farm of Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) in collaboration with FAO.
- Climate change, low prices of crops and increase in cost of production are badly impacting agricultural production in Pakistan, demanding immediate declaration of 'Agriculture Emergency.
- Total cotton production was 2.11 million bales last year and it dropped to 1.07 million bales this year in Pakistan by August 15, 2024.
- Growth rate of agriculture sector was 6.2, higher than any other sector. But if policies of Government continue, growth rate is likely to drop to -2 percent in coming years.
- Millions of women farm workers in rural Sindh were without basic rights including health, education and wages. They were engaged in agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors but were denied their rightful entitlements.
- HWA's report on violence, abuse and exploitation of women in Sindh from Jan to June 2024 counted 837 cases -- 174 of suicide (suspected murder), 140 of abduction, 125 of rape, 118 of murders, 68 of domestic violence, 63 of

honour killing, 13 of forced marriage, six of child marriage, three of acid attacks and 127 cases of harassment in the agricultural sector.

- Due to non-implementation of Sindh Bonded Labour System Abolition Act of 2015 and the Sindh Tenancy Act of 1950, peasants and workers faced harsh conditions often without basic human rights.
- The minimum wage set by government was not being observed in agricultural sector, and women earned between Rs500 and Rs700 per day.
- STA 1950, meant to protect rights of peasants, was not implemented to protect peasants' rights despite a lapse of 75 years.
- This year, high temperatures and humidity have devastated not only human health but also livestock, with up to 15,000 cattle succumbing to extreme heat.
- The launch of 9th report on "The State of Peasants' Rights in Sindh, for 2023" have called for amending and implementing Sindh Tenancy Act for the protection of peasants' rights in the province.
- All crops grown on nearly 18,000 acres of forest land by illegal occupants in Ghotki district were destroyed using bulldozers in a sustained anti-encroachment campaign; and trees are now being planted on these lands.
- Provincial environment minister has said that fast conversion of farmlands near urban centres is posing a serious threat to Pakistan's food security.
- The speakers rejected the provincial government's plan to give 6,000 acres to Defence Housing Authority (DHA) for a housing scheme in the Hawkesbay area and demanded withdrawal of the decision.
- Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro has sought suggestions from the international and national experts for increasing the water capacity from 900,000 cusecs to 1.5 million cusecs at Sukkur Barrage.
- The sowing of paddy on over 200,000 acres has been delayed in Nasirabad and Jhal Magsi districts for the last two months as water share of Balochistan in Khirthar canal has not been released from Sukkur Barrage by Sindh govt.
- Due to extreme heat, people are struggling even to find drinking water and livestock are dying of thirst with people burying their dead without following proper procedure.
- Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) has called for a review of plan to develop six canals over Indus.
- Peshawar's (underground) water table had dropped 30 feet over past six years.
- Calling RBOD scheme a "failed project", Sindh Irrigation Minister demanded that federal government rebuild project as ill-planned structure had caused immense damages to the province.
- Sindh Chief Minister has approved Rs502 million for irrigation department to cover repair and replacement costs of the damaged gates of Sukkur Barrage.
- PM inaugurated three-day 2nd International Food and Agriculture Exhibition, FoodAg exhibition, which was organised by TDAP and ministry of commerce.

- Prime minister highlighted substantial opportunities for increasing agricultural exports. He stated that the target for agricultural exports should be set at \$7 billion for the upcoming year.
- This year around 650 plus foreign buyers/importers are visiting from more than 70 countries to participate in event where some 330 exhibitors have exhibited their products.
- MoU worth \$107 million were redeemed while MoUs worth \$434m were signed on the first day of FoodAg at Karachi Expo Centre,
- 2nd International Food and Agriculture Exhibition “FoodAg-2024”, successfully closed with more than \$1.2 billion deals.
- Attracted about 800 buyers from 75 countries, including international chains, buyers and MNCs as 330 exporters put “500 quality products” up for grabs.

AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

- From the beginning of the month of July, the Sindh agriculture department started action against warehouses, dealers and vendors over sale of substandard pesticides and seeds of various private companies in the province.
- The federal government is planning to raise sales tax on tractors from 10 to 14 percent. In the last budget (2024-25), a sales tax exemption was withdrawn on tractors, and a 10 percent sales tax was imposed.
- Punjab Agriculture and Livestock launched aggressive crackdown against fake and adulterated pesticides is ongoing across the province.
- The ECC meeting on August 2, 2024 has approved the proposal of Ministry of Industries and Production for import of 100,000 MTs of urea.
- The government has committed to providing an uninterrupted gas supply to all urea plants to ensure ample fertiliser availability at suitable rates during the upcoming wheat cultivation in the Rabi season.
- The provincial government has decided to implement licensing conditions for sale of agricultural pesticides, fertilisers, and seeds, which will now be issued to individuals holding an agricultural degree.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

- Rain with thunderstorm damaged dates, cotton and other crops in different areas of Sindh.
- With initial support from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the National Institute for Agriculture and Biology (Niab) has made significant strides in developing and planting salt-tolerant crops and implementing soil management techniques to combat salinisation.
- According to PCGA up till July 31, total domestic production of cotton remained 844,000 bales, which is 41 percent less than same period last year.

- PCGA revealed that a total of 1.075 million bales have been produced in the country till August 15 this season, compared to 2.11m bales during the same period last year, a drop of almost 50 per cent.
- The current monsoon rains will have a negative impact on the cotton crop in the country as rain causes various diseases in the crop.
- Rains would have a positive impact on other major Kharif Crops including sugarcane and rice but it will have a negative impact on cotton and maize.
- Government has set a target of \$25 billion for textile exports for 2023-24 but exports are expected to fall short of this goal.
- Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) during its previous meeting fixed the following production targets: cotton 10.8 million bales from 3.12 million hectares; rice 8.7 million tons from over 3.1 million hectares of land; sugarcane at 76.7 million tons over an area of 1.3 million hectares; and maize at 9.3 million tons' production from an area of over 1.5 million hectares of land.
- Sindh is responsible for producing over 50% of Pakistan's dates, which are integral to the province's cultural and agricultural heritage.

SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

- The Sindh government claimed that three seafood processing companies in Pakistan had been cleared for exporting their products to the European Union.
- Due to pollution, the sea from Keamari to Manora has turned black, causing severe damage to mangrove forests and leading to the disappearance or migration of over 27 species of fish, crabs, and shrimp. As a result, two million people involved in fishing have been severely affected, as fish is no longer found within 10 nautical miles of the coast.
- Due to marine pollution, Karachi's 129-kilometer coastline gradually turns into a dead zone.
- Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) sources said that Pakistan's seafood exports are steadily declining. In 1992, Pakistan earned \$120 million in foreign exchange from seafood, and in 1993, 500 metric tons of fish and shrimp were caught, which remains a record. However, EPB sources indicate that fish landings have decreased by 70%.

TRADE

- Pakistan's trade deficit in July 2024 has increased by 19.7 pc YoY to \$1.95bn as compared to a deficit of \$1.63 billion recorded in same month last year.
- The first month of the new fiscal year saw a surge of 68.72pc in country's trade deficit with 9 neighbouring countries, taking it to \$1.041bn from \$0.617bn.
- Pakistan's textile and clothing exports saw a slight increase of 0.93% in FY24, reaching \$16.55 billion from \$16.50 billion the previous year.

- A joint meeting of Cabinet Committee on Monitoring Sugar Export and Sugar Advisory Board, recommended exporting 40,000 tons of refine sugar to Tajikistan.
- After achieving an all-time high export of \$4 billion, rice exporters are now setting their sights on a \$6 billion rice export for the current fiscal year (FY25), buoyed by a bumper crop.
- Pakistani exporters have earned an all-time high \$3.93billion foreign exchange by exporting some 6 million tons of rice during the last fiscal year (FY24).
- The Ministry of Commerce and TDAP have managed to raise the trade market from \$5 billion to \$8.5 billion.
- Sugar Advisory Board (SAB), following permission by the Cabinet’s Economic Coordination Committee has approved export of up to 40,000 tons of sugar to Tajikistan on government-to-government basis.
- The decline in exports of textiles and clothing, which had the largest share of over 60pc in total exports for the second consecutive month after a negative growth of 0.93pc in June.
- Textile and clothing exports fell to \$1.27bn in July from \$1.31bn over the corresponding month of last year.
- The Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (Punjab Zone) reiterated its demand to allow the mills to export 1.5 million tons of sugar, which is more than the domestic need and can generate \$850 million for the country.
- Sugar Advisory Board recommended export of 100,000 tonnes of surplus sugar.
- ECC approved summary of Ministry of Industries and Production” regarding the export of a further 100,000 tonnes of sugar.
- In last fiscal year, sesame export was around \$423 million, and major market for export was China. MoU worth USD 28 million was signed.
- Strengthening trade ties between Pakistan and China and sets a promising foundation for future collaboration in sesame industry.
- ECC approved import of 100,000 tonnes of urea from a UAE-based firm

CORPORATE SECTOR

- LSM sector contracted 0.03 per cent in 2023-24 against a 0.92pc growth in the preceding year.
- Wheat and rice milling production declined by 0.82pc while vegetable ghee production fell by 4.14pc.
- The textile sector fell 5.23pc in FY24, compared to an 18.70pc contraction the previous year.
- Millat Tractors Ltd has stopped tractor production till further notice due to the government’s failure to issue a mechanism for payment of refund claims.

- A beverage firm has underscored its commitment in supporting to farmers, growing agricultural ecosystem and investing in the country's food security. PepsiCo Pakistan hosted an event, Seeds to Smile.
- Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain said urea fertiliser companies are making around 30 percent profit, higher than any other sector operating in the country.
- The minister said this year's urea production has improved in excess of 400,000 metric tons but the government has decided to import 100,000 tons more this year, despite its high cost.
- The price of imported urea is around Rs5,800 per bag, with handling and transport costs bringing the total to Rs7,000 per bag.
- Sindh-Balochistan Rice Millers and Traders Association has decided not to pay electricity bills.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb projected Pakistan's financial needs to be between \$3bn and \$5bn over next three years, assuring that government would manage these funds comfortably.
- A major IMF demand is for Pakistan to ensure the rollover of its annual \$12bn debt commitment to three key bilateral donors. Saudi Arabia has already extended \$5bn, China \$4bn, and the UAE \$3bn for one year.
- Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry member companies have injected \$22.6 billion into Pakistan's economy during the last 10 years.
- In 2023, these companies reported a cumulative profit before tax of Rs1.13tr and a turnover of Rs6.74tr.
- The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country rose by 64 percent during the first month of this fiscal year (FY25). Pakistan attracted net FDI amounting to \$136.3 million in July 2024, compared to net inflow of \$83.2 million during July 2023, showing an increase of \$53 million.
- Pakistan aims to raise up to \$4bn from Middle Eastern commercial banks by the next fiscal year as the country looks to plug its external financing gap.
- Pending approval of \$7 billion bailout by the IMF's executive board, the government made a poor take-off and received just \$436.4 million in foreign assistance and grants in July, almost 85pc lower than the same month last year.
- The government received 0.8 percent of the total budgeted non-project (budget support) assistance by multilaterals and bilaterals in July 2024 – \$128.93 million against the budgeted \$15986.21 million for 2024-25 while 9 percent of the total budgeted project assistance was received in July - \$307.46 million was disbursed against the budgeted estimate of \$3406.95 million.

- The country borrowed \$436.39 million from multiple financing sources during the first month (July) of the current fiscal year 2024-25 compared to \$2.890 billion borrowed during the same period of 2023-24.
- The repatriation of profit and dividend by foreign investors has significantly increased to \$139.13 million in July 2024 as compared to \$2.16 million repatriated in same month of last year.
- The profit outflow to UK was \$558.6 million and that to China \$193m in FY24.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- The government of Pakistan signed new agreements worth \$2.166 billion as commitments in the period July-Mar 2023-24.
- World Bank committed \$888m (41% of multilateral partners), ADB committed \$706 million (33 per cent of multilateral partners), and AIIB committed \$250 million (12 per cent of multilateral partners).
- Pakistan has paid interest amounting SDR 2.815 billion to IMF since 1984.
- Till date Pakistan has entered into 24 programmes with IMF. Pakistan signed its first programme in 1958 and last one was 2023 SBA.
- Pakistan has taken loan from IMF at a high interest rate of 5.09 percent in the year 2023 under Standby Arrangement (SBA).

SOCIO – ECONOMICAL CONDITION

- The salaried class contributed Rs367.8bn to income tax collection in FY24, a 39.42pc rise, from Rs263.8bn in FY23. Interestingly, this contribution exceeds that of wealthy textile exporters by Rs276.57bn, even though they exported \$16.655bn worth of goods in FY24.
- The central government debt surged by Rs8.07 trillion, or 13 per cent, during the previous fiscal year, bringing the total to Rs68.9tr by the end of June 2024.
- Pakistan’s total external debt and liabilities reached the \$130 billion mark as of June 30, 2024 compared to \$ 126.142 billion as of June 30, 2023, depicting an increase of \$4.6 billion.
- The government has planned to borrow Rs5.6tr from banks in August-October.
- Total public debt of Pakistan was Rs71.2 trillion including Rs47.2 trillion (66 per cent) domestic and Rs24.1 trillion (34 per cent) external debt at the end of June-2024. Total public debt is expected to reach Rs79.731 trillion by the end of the current fiscal year.
- Annual cost of managing diabetes soared to over \$2,640m in Pakistan in 2021.
- Over 41pc of adults in Pakistan were either obese or overweight. Additionally, more than 33 million people are currently living with diabetes, with another 10 million on the verge of developing the disease.

- Infant and young child feeding practices in Sindh are suboptimal as around 98 per cent of children under two years of age in the province are not receiving the minimum acceptable diets required for growth and development.
- Inadequate nutrition among mothers during pregnancy is one of main reasons of malnutrition among children leading to stunting.
- In Pakistan, four out of 10 children under five years of age are stunted while 17.7 per cent suffer from wasting.
- A spokesperson for the US mission in Islamabad has said Washington will continue working with Pakistan to address the malnutrition crisis.
- Over 41pc of women in Pakistan suffer from anaemia, with 14.4pc being underweight and 24pc overweight.
- The state of maternal nutrition is so bleak that 186 women die per 100,000 live births; suboptimal breastfeeding leads to 2,000 deaths in mothers due to breast and ovarian cancer and 1,100 deaths due to type-II diabetes annually.
- Malnutrition costs Pakistan approximately 3pc of its GDP.
- The headline consumer inflation eased to 11.1 per cent in July, the lowest in 33 months and significantly less than the 28.3pc reading in July 2023.
- IPPs have stolen two thousand billion rupees from consumers this year. In comparison, they are ready to steal 2800 billion rupees next year.

ENVIRONMENT

- Environment friendly solutions along with regulations/policies are required to make significant improvements in pollution levels in Lahore which has consistently featured in World's top 10 most polluted cities since 2017.
- Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) faces a significant reduction in its annual allocation for laboratory services.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- A looming stoppage of freight railway operations across Canada would disrupt North America's agricultural supply chain, snarling shipments of everything from wheat to fertilizer and meat.
- Unless last-minute labor agreements are reached, both Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Kansas City, an effective duopoly, will shut nearly all freight rail services in Canada for the first time.
- The US exported \$28.2 billion of agricultural products last year to Canada, its third-largest destination for agricultural exports behind China and Mexico.
- US imported \$40.1 billion of Canadian agricultural products last year, making Canada the second-largest origin of US agricultural imports behind Mexico.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

- World cotton prices have crashed by at least half over last 27 months, World consumption is still 3 percent below post-pandemic rally of 2021-22, and only 5 percent higher the pandemic year.

SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

- China opened an anti-subsidy probe into imported dairy products from European Union, stepping up tension with the bloc a day after Brussels published its revised tariff plan for China-made electric vehicles.

TRADE

- Last year, merchandise trade volumes fell by 1.2pc, after growing 3pc year before, as many countries dealt with lingering effects of inflation and high energy prices.
- Russia and China may begin using barter trading schemes.
- China’s exports grew at their slowest pace in three months in July.
- China’s trade surplus narrowed to \$84.65 billion in July, compared with the \$99 billion forecast and \$99.05 billion recorded in June.
- China’s economy grew 4.7% in the second quarter, below expectations.
- Russian government announced that it was reintroducing a ban on petrol exports for another six months to “maintain a stable situation” on the domestic fuel market after major price hikes.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- EU said it had begun paying 400 million euros (\$430 million) in emergency funding to Palestinian Authority.
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has approved sale to Israel of different military equipment worth over \$20 billion.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- Cash-strapped Sri Lanka plunged into its worst financial crisis in more than seven decades in 2022 with a severe dollar shortage sending inflation soaring to a high of 70%, its currency to record lows and its economy contracting 7.3%.
- The country also signed agreements with Japan, India, China and other creditor nations in June to restructure about \$10 billion in bilateral debt.
- Bangladesh’s new central bank governor said the country is seeking an additional \$3 billion from IMF.
- Bangladesh secured \$4.7 billion in funding from IMF last year. Bangladesh taka is down about 9.0 per cent since start of year.

- The World Bank has approved a \$1.5 billion financial package to support cash-strapped Ethiopia’s economic reform programme.
- The IMF board approved a four-year loan programme worth around \$3.4 billion to support the reforms, with around \$1 billion immediately disbursed.

SOCIO – ECONOMICAL CONDITION

- In Yemen number of children under age of five suffering acute malnutrition, or wasting, rose by 34% compared to previous year... affecting over 600,000 children, including 120,000 children who are severely malnourished.

ENVIRONMENT

- US, one of world’s biggest plastic makers, will support a global treaty calling for a reduction in how much new plastic is produced each year in a major policy shift.
- AQLI report notes pollution in South Asia dropped by 18pc in 2022 due to above-normal rainfall.
- After a consistent rise over the past two decades, air pollution in South Asia declined by 18 per cent in one year possibly on back of above-normal rainfall in that year but still was the biggest external threat.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Eastern China baked under a scorching heat wave, with temperatures in some areas reaching record highs.
- It is “increasingly likely” 2024 will be the hottest year on record, despite July ending a 13-month streak of monthly temperature records.
- Copernicus Climate Change Service said last month was the second warmest on record books going back to 1940, only slightly cooler than July 2023.
- Asia and Pacific region accounts for more than half of all global greenhouse gas emissions and is hit harder by disasters and other climate risks than any other region.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

- Extreme heat kills over 175,000 people a year in Europe, where temperatures are rising quicker than the rest of the globe.
- The 2023 death toll - below the more than 60,000 heat-related deaths estimated for the previous year - would have been 80% higher without measures introduced in the past 20 years.
- About 68 million people in Southern Africa are suffering the effects of an El Nino-induced drought which has wiped out crops across the region.

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Punjab Agriculture Commission reorganised [1]

Taking the leap into organic farming [1]

Growers term corporate farming detrimental to Sindh's interests [2]

Green Pakistan Initiative role in agriculture sector discussed in NA committee [2]

SAU in collaboration with FAO installs Flux Tower [3]

PKI demands govt impose 'agri emergency' [3]

1.1 # Farmers

Govt urged to withdraw appeal against SHC's verdict on Tenancy Act [4]

Landlord accused of killing peasant couple's son arrested [4]

Abandoned farmers [5]

Sindh rife with debt bondage despite legislation, report on peasants says [5]

1.2 # Land

SHC seeks govt's land allotment policy, procedure to regularise old villages [6]

Nearly all of Ghotki forest land retrieved from encroachers, says official [7]

Loss of farmland to housing schemes a threat to food security [7]

Who reclaimed Rs2bn forest land in KP? [7]

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1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Punjab Agriculture Commission reorganised

The provincial government notified the reorganisation of the Punjab Agriculture Commission to promote profitable and sustainable development in agriculture sector. Agriculture and Livestock Minister Ashiq Hussain Kirmani has been appointed chairman of the 31-member body. The secretaries of agriculture, livestock, irrigation and finance, as well as some progressive farmers and other stakeholders, have also been made part of the commission, while the agriculture secretary will serve as its secretary. The Punjab Agriculture Commission will make recommendations for food security and profitable farming, water conservation, increasing crop productivity, and climate change. It will also advise the government on agro-ecology zones and improvement in farm research and development. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 9*)

Taking the leap into organic farming

Naeem Ahmed, a young farmer from Balochistan's Jaffarabad district, never imagined the tables would turn so dramatically. Once mocked by his neighbour for using organic fertiliser, Mr Ahmed now finds himself sought after for his farming methods. At just 21 years of age, he is part of an inspiring movement of nearly 300 farmers embracing organic farming after the devastating 2022 floods hit mineral rich Balochistan province. Official figures paint a stark picture: out of Balochistan's 34.7 million hectares, a mere 2.06m (5.9 per cent) are cultivated, with 54pc lying fallow due to chronic water scarcity.

In a province where 90pc of the population depends on agriculture and livestock, the lack of industrial activity compounds the struggle. Despite these odds, Mr Ahmed has completed three successful rounds of crop cultivation, which have gradually lifted him out of debt, helping him achieve financial stability. It was during his third round of rice cultivation that Mr Ahmed's neighbour, who had always ridiculed the former for his use of organic fertiliser, finally took notice.

The lush, healthy crops grown with organic methods stood in stark contrast to his neighbour's chemically treated fields. The same neighbour, once doubtful, began to see the tangible benefits of Mr Ahmed's approach. Mr Ahmed's neighbour was burdened by a crushing debt of Rs150,000, largely incurred from purchasing DAP and urea fertilisers from Sindh. He bought a bag of DAP for Rs18,000 and urea for Rs8,000. Mr Ahmed, on the other hand, spent only Rs12,000 on organic fertiliser. While Mr Ahmed made a profit of Rs95,000 from his crops, his neighbour was drowning in expenses due to exorbitant cost of chemical fertilisers. The tipping point came when the neighbour was faced with the looming threat of counterfeit chemical fertilisers that could ruin his six months of hard work. (*Dawn, August 6th, 2024, Page 3*)

Growers term corporate farming detrimental to Sindh's interests

The Sindh Abadgar Ittehad has expressed its grave concern over corporate farming for which millions of acres had been earmarked in the country. It termed move detrimental to the interests of Sindh, considering the fact that the province was already facing a shortage of water. The organisation of growers wanted an explanation from government as to where irrigation water flows are going to come from to irrigate the uncultivated lands. The meeting also regretted that federal government was planning to build six canals within the Indus river system. Such projects would be great injustice with Sindh. The meeting noted that Sindh's tail-end areas were getting no water. It said that if Indus River System Authority Act was amended, Sindh would face irreparable losses.

The SAI made it clear that it would not accept or approve any amendment to the Act. It also deplored federal government's plans to impose agriculture income tax, arguing that such tax was already being recovered by Sindh government. The meeting said that the farm economy was already taxed in several ways and if more taxes were imposed, this would destroy agriculture sector. The meeting demanded fixing per kilo procurement price of Rs8,500 for cotton, Rs4,000 for wheat and Rs500 for sugarcane. It demanded an inquiry into the recent breach in Rohri Canal and said it was a result of negligence on part of local irrigation officers. It demanded action against them and compensation to be paid to farmers. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 15*)

Green Pakistan Initiative role in agriculture sector discussed in NA committee

Members of the National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research were given an in-depth briefing on Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI), led by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), in driving advancements within the country's agriculture and livestock sectors. The committee's discussions at the Green Pakistan Initiative office in Rawalpindi covered several critical areas, emphasising the role of GPI in modernisation and sustainability of country's agriculture sector. Members were briefed on how GPI plans to revolutionise the sector by introducing modern farming practices. These include precision agriculture techniques, optimised fertiliser management, and advanced irrigation processes, all of which aim to significantly boost up crop yields. The move is a strategic effort to reduce country's dependence on food grain imports, thereby enhancing the country's capacity to increase agricultural exports.

The committee recognised the initiative's comprehensive approach to ensuring a sustainable and resilient food system for the country. Through its focus on sustainable agriculture, the GPI is addressing the immediate challenges posed by climate change and resource constraints while laying the groundwork for long-term food security. The GPI team demonstrated their ongoing efforts to empower local farmers with access to cutting-edge technologies and resources. These technologies are designed to enhance crop productivity and promote Climate Smart Agriculture practices. The committee was particularly interested in how these innovations are being tailored to meet the needs of the country's diverse agricultural regions. (*Dawn, August 27th, 2024, Page 5*)

SAU in collaboration with FAO installs Flux Tower

In a significant step towards enhancing agricultural research and environmental monitoring, a flux tower has been installed at the experimental farm of Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) in collaboration with FAO. The flux tower is designed to measure crucial environmental parameters, including the emission of gases, energy, temperature, rainfall, and humidity between the earth's surface and the atmosphere. The data collected from the tower will be transmitted to the Data Center, providing accurate and real-time information through Aqua Portal vital for agricultural planning and climate research. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 4*)

PKI demands govt impose 'agri emergency'

Climate change, low prices of crops and increase in cost of production are badly impacting agricultural production in Pakistan, demanding immediate declaration of 'Agriculture Emergency' and a dialogue between the stakeholders to overcome all these challenges and ensuring prosperity for the farmer and national economy. Climate change is severely affecting agriculture in Pakistan. The yields of sesame, rice, and cotton have drastically reduced due to the heat wave, with temperatures reaching 48°C and an unprecedented heat index of 60°C. This year, the yield of sesame is about 2-3 mounds per acre against 10-12 mounds per acre last year, while rice yields have dropped to 5-50 mounds per acre from 80-120 mounds per acre last year.

Similarly, cotton production has reduced to 392,768 bales compared to 636,848 bales last year in Punjab. Total cotton production was 2.11 million bales last year and it dropped to 1.07 million bales this year in Pakistan by August 15, 2024. Similarly, the prices of these commodities have also decreased, with rice prices falling from Rs.4400 per mound last year to Rs.2200 per mound this year, and cotton prices dropping to Rs.6000-7000 per mound. Prices of tractors have also increased, said Khalid Mahmood Khokhar, President of Pakistan Kissan Ittehad. Referring to the high input costs, Khokhar said fertilizer prices have risen to Rs.4600 per bag of urea and should be reduced to Rs.3000-3500 so that every farmer can afford it and increase their yields.

Similarly, potash and phosphorus fertilizers are becoming more expensive and out of reach for the common farmer. Electricity rate for agricultural tube wells has been set from Rs.55 per unit to Rs.70 per unit, while it is Rs.48 per unit for industry. This electricity rate for agriculture must be reduced and brought lower than the industrial tariff. It used to be half of the industrial rates in the past. Growth rate of agriculture sector was 6.2, higher than any other sector. But if policies of Government continue, growth rate is likely to drop to -2 percent in coming years. Farmers have started suicides as Imran Yousuf of Haroon Abad has done suicide because he could not pay the electricity bills and input costs. He asked for declaring an agricultural emergency in country and arranging a grand dialogue between experts to mitigate climate change and other challenges. Otherwise, situation will lead us to lower Pakistan's exports as well as cause a food security issue. (*Business Recorder, August 29th, 2024, Page 2*)

1.1 # Farmers

Govt urged to withdraw appeal against SHC's verdict on Tenancy Act

Leaders and activists of Haris' (peasants') rights organisations and groups urged Sindh government to withdraw the appeal it had filed in the apex court against Sindh High Court's judgement on the Sindh Tenancy Act and amend the law further to make it compatible with the present day conditions. They said millions of women farm workers in rural Sindh were without basic rights including health, education and wages. They were engaged in agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors but were denied their rightful entitlements. and Jamul Malokani of the Women Mazdoor Union (WMU).

Akram Ali Khaskheli, President of the Hari Welfare Association (HWA) said HWA's report on violence, abuse and exploitation of women in Sindh from Jan to June 2024 counted 837 cases -- 174 of suicide (suspected murder), 140 of abduction, 125 of rape, 118 of murders, 68 of domestic violence, 63 of honour killing, 13 of forced marriage, six of child marriage, three of acid attacks and 127 cases of harassment in the agricultural sector. He said police did not take women's issues seriously and reporting of cases was difficult in rural areas. Husna Chand, President of the Latif Hariyani Mazdoor Trade Union (LHMTU) said that due to non-implementation of Sindh Bonded Labour System Abolition Act of 2015 and the Sindh Tenancy Act of 1950, peasants and workers faced harsh conditions often without basic human rights. She said HWA recorded release of 11,130 peasants and workers from forced labour under court orders but the district vigilance committees under Sindh Bonded Labour System Abolition Act did not take action in any district.

Marvi Gambhir of the LHMTU, Matiari, said economic conditions of women peasants and workers were worsening due to no or low wages. The minimum wage set by government was not being observed in agricultural sector, and women earned between Rs500 and Rs700 per day. Jamul Malokhani said STA 1950, meant to protect rights of peasants, was not implemented to protect peasants' rights despite a lapse of 75 years. He said haris were evicted by landlords and deprived of their due share in crops. Khaskheli urged government to amend the STA in consultation with peasants' rights bodies, trade unions, lawyers and civil society. He called for establishing special peasants' courts in each district. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 15*)

Landlord accused of killing peasant couple's son arrested

The Husri police arrested a landowner, Agha Zubair, who is accused of shooting a 10-year-old son of his peasant family a few days back. The boy, Tahir Mallah, had suffered a fatal bullet wound when Agha allegedly opened fire at the peasant family apparently in a fit of anger following the loss he had suffered in his farming business. He was said to have been picked up by the police while trying to approach the sessions court to get his pre-arrest bail confirmed in the murder case lodged against him by the boy's parents. He had already obtained protective bail from a Karachi court and was required to get it confirmed. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 15*)

Abandoned farmers

The consequences of Pakistan's lackadaisical approach to climate change have become painfully evident. This year, high temperatures and humidity have devastated not only human health but also livestock, with up to 15,000 cattle succumbing to extreme heat. These losses highlight the broader failure of successive governments to prepare for and mitigate the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities. Livestock contributes significantly to farm output and GDP. Yet, farmers find themselves largely abandoned by the state. A recent report highlighted how the communication gap between the food security ministry and provincial livestock departments leaves farmers ill-equipped to protect their animals. Such negligence reflects the government's broader failure to coordinate and implement effective climate policies.

Pakistan is no stranger to climate disasters, ranging from deadly heatwaves to catastrophic floods. However, response remains reactive, driven by short-term measures rather than a long-term, proactive strategy. 2022 floods, which should have spurred state into action, have, instead, elicited continued apathy. Our environmental performance is slipping, as seen in the country's dismal rankings on global indices like Climate Change Performance Index and Environmental Performance Index. These rankings underscore a critical lack of coordination and a disturbing indifference to air pollution, climate mitigation and infrastructure resilience. (*Dawn, August 26th, 2024, Page 6*)

Sindh rife with debt bondage despite legislation, report on peasants says

Human rights activists, academics and journalists at the launch of 9th report on "The State of Peasants' Rights in Sindh, for 2023" have called for amending and implementing Sindh Tenancy Act for the protection of peasants' rights in the province. Addressing at the launching ceremony of the report, which is prepared by the Hari Welfare Association, the speakers voiced their deep concern over the persistent and widespread practice of debt bondage despite the enactment of the Sindh Bonded Labour Abolition Act of 2015. They said District Vigilance Committees (DVCs), established under the Act in every district, had failed to play any significant role in rescuing, protecting, and rehabilitating bonded labourers. Their lack of effectiveness remains a pressing issue, said the rights activists and academics.

Akram Ali Khaskheli, president of the Hari Welfare Association, said that in 2023, the data gathered by their association indicated that 542 peasants, including 185 children, 178 women, and 179 men, were liberated from bonded labour in the agriculture sector. Additionally, between 2013 and 2023, a total of 12,116 bonded labourers were freed from the clutches of landlords in Sindh, including 4,134 children and 4,037 women. He criticised the Sindh government for its 'anti-peasant stance', particularly its refusal to withdraw an appeal filed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan against a pivotal ruling by Sindh High Court in October 2019. This appeal challenges the nullification of regressive amendments to tenancy laws and the issues surrounding bonded labour, reflecting the government's "support for the entrenched feudal and tribal systems that hinder the

establishment of a just legal framework for peasants”. He said the Sindh Women Agriculture Workers Act of 2019, despite receiving international recognition, had not been implemented even after five years of passage as no women’s groups had been formed under this law.

Additionally, the Sindh Industrial Relations Act (SIRA) of 2015, which acknowledges peasants as workers and grants them the right to form unions, has not had its Rules of Business officially notified. This lack of clarity in defining the rights and scope of agricultural workers further complicates the legal landscape. He also noted that recently approved Sindh Water Policy (SWP), which aims to manage water resources effectively, faced implementation challenges due to “bureaucratic inertia and inadequate funding”. The report highlights that the Sindh government pledged to introduce ‘Hari Cards’ for underprivileged peasants with a subsidy of Rs3 billion. However, HWA expressed concerns about the lack of groundwork, inadequate documentation, and exclusion of landless sharecropping peasants from this programme.

The ‘State of the Peasants’ Rights’ report shared with the media on this occasion noted that on November 2, 2023, Sindh Labour and Human Resource Department announced a minimum wage of Rs32,000 per month for unskilled workers. However, this wage remains unimplemented in rural areas, where daily wages for male workers is around Rs700, with female workers earning even less. The report has recommended that the Sindh government must immediately withdraw its appeal against the Sindh High Court’s 2019 ruling to demonstrate support for progressive tenancy laws and the eradication of bonded labour, in alignment with the Constitution of Pakistan and international agreements.

The Sindh Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy (2022) should also be amended to include specific measures for land redistribution and livelihood restoration for landless peasants, especially those affected by natural disasters. Furthermore, the government should allocate necessary funding and provide technical assistance to activate and enhance the effectiveness of DVCs across Sindh and ensure that the Rules of Business for the Sindh Bonded Labour Abolition Act are framed in consultation with civil society organisations and published in the gazette as soon as possible. The HWA also demanded that government implement strict measures to prevent forced evictions, the demolition of huts, and the seizure of livestock, ensuring that any eviction processes respect the rights and dignity of the affected families. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 14*)

1.2 # Land

SHC seeks govt’s land allotment policy, procedure to regularise old villages

Sindh High Court asked provincial government to file its policy with regard to allotment of land to any authority as well as the procedure to regularise old villages. A division bench was hearing a petition filed against a provincial government’s plan to allot 6,000 acres in Hawkesbay to Defence Housing Authority. (*Dawn, August 6th, 2024, Page 13*)

Nearly all of Ghotki forest land retrieved from encroachers, says official

All crops grown on nearly 18,000 acres of forest land by illegal occupants in Ghotki district were destroyed using bulldozers in a sustained anti-encroachment campaign; and trees are now being planted on these lands. This was stated by Divisional Forest Officer Malik Dino Mallah. He claimed that almost entire forest land now stood retrieved from encroachers within the district's limits, adding that the remaining 1,910 acres would also be retrieved soon. He recalled that the Sukkur forest division had, in response to Sindh High Court's notices, submitted a detailed report regarding illegal occupation of the forest lands. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 15*)

Loss of farmland to housing schemes a threat to food security

Pointing out lapses in the state mechanism which are exacerbating climate change challenges for the country, provincial environment minister has said that fast conversion of farmlands near urban centres is posing a serious threat to Pakistan's food security. Minister Dost Muhammad Rahmoon was speaking at the nexus between climate change and food security, a conference organised by National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH). Linking the 2022 devastating floods with climate change, minister said the natural calamity badly damaged the economy and farming sector of Sindh. He invited all stakeholders including members of civil society to become partners with the Sindh government's drive to improve environmental conditions by upholding the relevant laws against harming the environment. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 13*)

Who reclaimed Rs2bn forest land in KP?

The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) has claimed credit for recovering 511 kanals of forest land worth Rs2 billion, though actual action was performed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). NAB had transferred this land to the Forest Department on July 31, with the help of Revenue department, but the provincial ACE claimed success in its 'recovery' on August 9, 2024. (*The News, August 11th, 2024, Page 1*)

Woman, three men killed in clash over land dispute

20-hour-long armed clash between two rival groups belonging to Shahani community left four people, including a woman, and 10 animals dead in Moundar village of Dadu taluka. The two sides have been at odds over control of a piece of state-owned land in the riverine area of the taluka for some time. In an earlier clash between them a few weeks back, two persons were gunned down. (*Dawn, August 13th, 2024, Page 15*)

Balochistan accepts CJP's land donation for environmental conservation

The Balochistan government accepted a gift from Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, who donated his personal land adjacent to the Quaid-i-Azam Residency in Ziarat for the establishment of an environmental centre. The donation, amounting to 31,680 square feet, was formally handed over by Qazi Azmat Isa, the CJP's brother, on the country's 77th Independence Day. (*Dawn, August 15th, 2024, Page 3*)

Three killed in clash over land in Shikarpur

Three men were killed and one was wounded when two groups of Lahar community clashed over possession of a piece of farmland near Begari Canal within the jurisdiction of Lakhidar police station in Shikarpur district. (*Dawn, August 24th, 2024, Page 15*)

Land ownership rights for coastal belt population demanded

Speakers at a seminar urged the provincial government to provide legal protection to the local population in the city's coastal belt by accepting that they had the first right to own land inhabited by them for centuries. The seminar, organised by the Sindh United Lawyers Forum of the Sindh United Party, also adopted a resolution demanding that the provincial government issue residential allotment Form-2 and Form-7 to all local residents of Deh Allah Banu, Deh Mendiari and Deh Chhatara in district Keamari by accepting that they have the 'first right' to own the land. The speakers rejected the provincial government's plan to give 6,000 acres to the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) for a housing scheme in the Hawkesbay area and demanded withdrawal of the decision. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 14*)

1.3 # Water

Minister seeks experts' help to increase capacity of Sukkur Barrage

Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro has sought suggestions from the international and national experts for increasing the water capacity from 900,000 cusecs to 1.5 million cusecs at Sukkur Barrage. International and national experts concerned were invited to suggest to reduce the sediment issue and increase water capacity at Sukkur Barrage. "Experts should advise for location of construction of new Sukkur Barrage". Irrigation expert Mohammad Ibrahim Samoo said that all income of the province depended on the Indus River and Sukkur Barrage was important for agriculture and economy of Sindh. He said that the province could not survive without Sukkur Barrage and would become desert without it. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 13*)

Sindh's water blockade hits Balochistan's paddy crop

The sowing of paddy on over 200,000 acres has been delayed in Nasirabad and Jhal Magsi districts for the last two months as the water share of Balochistan in Khirthar canal has not been released from Sukkur Barrage by the Sindh government. Officials of the Balochistan Irrigation Department told that due of shortage of water in the canal, vast area of Nasirabad is facing serious shortage of drinking water. They said that irrigation department officials of the Sindh government have been informed of the situation, but they are not releasing Balochistan's share of water in the Khirthar canal. Due to extreme heat, people are struggling even to find drinking water and livestock are dying of thirst with people burying their dead without following proper procedure. Sindh government and the federal water distribution agency for the loss to landowners. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 5*)

Sindh growers' body opposes addition of six canals to irrigation network

Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) has called for a review of plan to develop six canals over Indus, saying that such projects should be executed only after understanding water availability, economic and financial priorities; drainage and storm water drains' infrastructure and the existing irrigation network. It expressed its concern over plan to initiate such projects in the country without keeping these factors in minds. The meeting noted that current capacity of irrigation infrastructure was more than enough to carry and distribute allocations made under the Water Apportionment Accord, 1991.

It observed that at Irsa meetings, certain provinces complained that they were not getting proper water share whereas related issues were also being raised in the Council of Common Interest (CCI). The meeting discussed levy of agriculture income tax, and contended that agriculture income was already taxed which was in addition to plethora of provincial and federal taxes. Agriculture incomes were constrained by taxes, rising input costs, climate change effects, decreasing commodity prices, lacking institutional support etc and, therefore, required investments in agriculture sector to do value addition, new technologies and mechanisation. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 15*)

Peshawar water table falls 30 feet in six years

Members of the national and provincial assemblies from the provincial capital were informed that Peshawar's (underground) water table had dropped 30 feet over the past six years. They were informed that a large number of tube wells had been rendered dysfunctional due to dropping of the water table. The meeting was informed that the drinking water from under-construction Mohmand Dam could be supplied to the provincial capital at a cost of Rs16-20 billion, and the project was likely to take five years to be completed. (*Dawn, August 8th, 2024, Page 8*)

Irrigation minister asks Centre to rebuild RBOD

Calling Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) scheme a "failed project", Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro demanded that the federal government rebuild the project as the ill-planned structure had caused immense damages to the province. He said that he had already communicated to Wapda in June that the incomplete RBOD-I & III projects were "destroying" Manchar Lake. "RBOD-II project, initiated during the Musharraf era, aimed to divert water from the Indus River to sea through a channel from Sehwan to Thatta. However, the project was destroyed in the 2010 and 2022 floods due to poor planning". He said that both the LBOD and RBOD projects had caused immense damage to Sindh as their "flawed planning" had resulted in breaches and wreaked havoc on agricultural lands and cities. (*Dawn, August 11th, 2024, Page 15*)

Eight officials of irrigation, revenue depts booked in graft cases

Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) police registered two FIRs against four officials of revenue and as many of irrigation departments on charges of financial misconduct in development projects and land records. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 15*)

Tarbela Dam reaches maximum capacity level

The water level at the major reservoir Tarbela Dam is fast approaching the maximum conservation level due to significant monsoon rains in the upper parts of Pakistan. Filling of both Mangla and Tarbela dams to maximum storage capacity will be a good omen for under stressed agriculture sector and low-cost hydel electricity generation. (*Business Recorder, August 12th, 2024, Page 10*)

Murad gives Rs502m to irrigation dept for Sukkur Barrage repairs

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has approved Rs502 million for irrigation department to cover the repair and replacement costs of the damaged gates of Sukkur Barrage. The CM was informed that the emergency works cost Rs502m. The irrigation department was already facing a deficit, as the allocated funds were much less than the requirement according to the yardstick. (*Dawn, August 26th, 2024, Page 13*)

1.4 # International Food and Agriculture Exhibition

Pakistan looks to harvest marketing success through FoodAg

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated the the three-day 2nd International Food and Agriculture Exhibition, FoodAg exhibition, which was organised by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and the ministry of commerce. Besides locals, the exhibition was also visited by many foreign guests from various countries including China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, South Africa, Gambia, Senegal, Turkiye, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, etc., who showed much interest in Pakistani food and agriculture products and went about sampling various things while also gathering important information.

Prime minister highlighted substantial opportunities for increasing agricultural exports. He stated that the target for agricultural exports should be set at \$7 billion for the upcoming year. The prime minister emphasised the need for modern technology and research to enhance exports and supported the initiative to send 1,000 graduates annually to China for agricultural training. He affirmed the government's dedication to advancing the agricultural sector and increasing exports, citing recent projects and collaboration opportunities with China and Gulf countries.

FoodAg is a sector specific trade event where buyers from all across world are invited to visit Pakistan and meet their business partners in country and see for themselves whole range of agro-food sector products showcased and offered by local companies to meet their procurement and sourcing needs. This year around 650 plus foreign buyers/importers are visiting from more than 70 countries to participate in event where some 330 exhibitors have exhibited their products. (*Dawn, August 10th, 2024, Page 13*)

Business and trade picking up in Pakistan, claims commerce minister

Memorandums of understanding (MoU) worth \$107 million were redeemed while MoUs worth \$434m were signed on the first day of FoodAg at Karachi Expo Centre,

federal Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan said. Almost 800 delegates and 350 Pakistani companies have taken part in the extravaganza. Around 75 countries are represented in the event. He said even though agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy, its full potential has yet to be realised. The event caters for small and medium-sized agricultural businesses from far-flung areas of the country. Earlier, Jam Kamal addressed a Pakistan-China trade conference at FoodAg where he called for commitment to strengthening agricultural trade and investment. With China's expertise in agricultural innovation and technology, there is immense potential to transform Pakistan's agro-based sector, boost productivity and improve quality of our exports. He outlined several initiatives aimed at enhancing agricultural collaboration, including establishment of Pak-China Agricultural Cooperation Centre, development of CPEC agricultural demonstration zones and investment in cold chain logistics to reduce post-harvest losses. (*Dawn, August 11th, 2024, Page 11*)

FoodAges secures \$1.2bn deals

The 2nd International Food and Agriculture Exhibition "FoodAg-2024", successfully closed with more than \$1.2 billion deals. According to TDAP, as result of 7,000 B2B meetings, business worth \$ 1.2 billion was finalised along with signing of more than 36 MoUs mainly in Rice, Processed Food, Sea Food, kinnow, potato, lentils, chickpeas, mangoes, Confectionery, Meat, Food and beverages, spices, Cereals and oil seeds by China, Malaysia, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Russia, Sri Lanka, Gambia and France. Some \$35 million export contracts were signed between Pakistani and Chinese companies in sea food sector. There were many MOUs and investment interests from HVA (Investment in dairy) & Bolynta (Investment in potato seeds from Netherlands, Huiyuan Beverages & Food Group from China and METAS from Qatar. Egyptian, Tajikistan and Malaysian delegates visited Tata Foods, Malaysian departments of BERNAS, DG MAQIS, Department of Veterinary Sciences was also joined the factory visit for finalization of export orders. (*Business Recorder, August 12th, 2024, Page 12*)

Reviving agriculture

The 2nd International Food and Agriculture Exhibition – "FoodAg-2024", organised by TDAP, which fetched more than \$1.2bn worth of deals – is just shot in arm that sagging agriculture sector needs to revive its fortunes. Three-day event attracted about 800 buyers from 75 countries, including international chains, buyers and MNCs as 330 exporters put "500 quality products" up for grabs. Most of deals would have been worked out ahead of time, no doubt, but event went many steps further & provided kind of B2B networking opportunities that have potential to provide Pakistani agri exporters precious footholds across continents. Indeed, TDAP reported that 36 MoUs were signed by countries, including China, Malaysia, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Russia, Sri Lanka, France and Gambia, and further possibilities were discussed in rice, processed foods, sea foods, oranges, potatoes, lentils, chickpeas, mangoes, confectionery, meat, spices, cereals and oil seeds. It's interesting that China, our biggest foreign investor, stood out for its

participation in FoodAg-2024 as well. It brought largest contingent, with 150 buyers, and Chinese companies signed some \$35m worth of export contracts with Pakistani counterparts, including MoUs in the sea food sector. Successive administrations have talked about increasing Pakistan's footprint in the international sea food and halal meat markets, but little has been done so far that stands out. Hopefully, that will start to change as countries other than China also begin to show interest because of long-delayed initiatives of commerce ministry. (*Business Recorder, August 17th, Page 4*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Action under way against substandard, unregistered pesticides and seeds

From the beginning of the month of July, the Sindh agriculture department started action against warehouses, dealers and vendors over the sale of substandard pesticides and seeds of various private companies in the province. Plant Protection Director and Federal Designated Inspector told that the purpose of the actions at district and tehsil level in province was to prevent sale of substandard agricultural drugs. He explained that so far, FIRs had been registered against three dealers and applications filed against two. More than 25 expired & sub-standard products of different companies were seized from dealers, four sale points were closed. (*The News, August 4th, 2024, Page 15*)

2.1 # Agricultural Machinery

Govt mulling raising GST on tractors to 14pc

The federal government is planning to raise sales tax on tractors from 10 to 14 percent. In the last budget (2024-25), a sales tax exemption was withdrawn on tractors, and a 10 percent sales tax was imposed. The tax department will increase the tax after the approval of the Cabinet. The finance ministry has forwarded the summary to the cabinet in this regard. Rationale behind increasing sales tax to 14 percent is that the 10 percent of their input is not fully consumed. (*Business Recorder, August 4th, 2024, Page 1*)

SCA approaches PM against rising tractor prices

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has approached Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif against abnormal increase in prices of agricultural tractors with imposition of 10 percent sales tax and also opposing the proposed sales tax increase of up to 14 percent on tractors. The chamber informed that prior to June 30, 2022, the goods were classified under Eighth Schedule of Sale Tax Act, 1990 and 5 percent sales tax was charged to the agricultural farmers of Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, August 19th, 2024, Page 12*)

SHC issues notice to tractor- manufacturing company

Sindh High Court (SHC) has issued a notice to a leading tractor manufacturer, who allegedly failed to timely provide details of 954 tractors to the SHC. The SHC had stopped from selling 954 tractors to any third party, as it was under the contractual obligation to sell these tractors to the original buyer. The company was legally bound to provide details of aforesaid tractors with model, chassis and engine numbers before the Court. (*Business Recorder, August 27th, 2024, Page 2*)

2.2 # Fertilizer

PAD launches crackdown against fake, adulterated pesticides

Punjab Agriculture and Livestock launched aggressive crackdown against fake and adulterated pesticides is ongoing across the province. Agriculture Department is following the zero-tolerance policy to eliminate fake and substandard pesticides. The team of Pest Warning, district Okara raided the Abdullah Agricultural Corporation and seized the illegal and unregistered company's agricultural drugs and referred them to the police as property and seized fake agricultural drugs. The value is 4,572,000 rupees. (*Business Recorder, August 12th, 2024, Page 10*)

No Cabinet approval to urea import proposal

Federal cabinet did not endorse Economic Coordination Committee for import of urea and directed to ensure uninterrupted gas supply to urea fertiliser plants even after September 2024. ECC meeting on August 2, 2024 has approved proposal of Ministry of Industries and Production for import of 100,000 MTs of urea. The federal cabinet also directed concerned ministries, institutions to ensure all kinds of measures to prevent the increase in prices of urea fertiliser. (*Business Recorder, August 14th, 2024, Page 1*)

Dar commits urea supplies to farmers

The government has committed to providing an uninterrupted gas supply to all urea plants to ensure ample fertiliser availability at suitable rates during the upcoming wheat cultivation in the Rabi season. An official announcement issued by the Foreign Office said that various measures were considered to ensure fertiliser availability in sufficient quantity and at a reasonable price. (*Dawn, August 18th, 2024, Page 9*)

Sindh to issue licences for sale of pesticides, fertilisers

The provincial government has decided to implement licensing conditions for sale of agricultural pesticides, fertilisers, and seeds, which will now be issued to individuals holding an agricultural degree. This was announced by Agriculture Minister Sardar Muhammad Bux Mahar. He said that graduates in agriculture would be supported financially for starting personal business ventures and start-ups. While talking to media at 3-day workshop organised by the agriculture department at a research centre, minister said that government's focus was on empowering female students in agricultural sector by providing them with relevant training. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 14*)

2.3 # Seed

China's hybrid chilli seeds to help multiply yield: WealthPK

China's hybrid chilli seeds hold potential to transform Pakistan's agriculture, promising enhanced yields and greater resilience against climate challenges," reports WealthPK. "China's hybrid chilli seeds, renowned for their high yield and resilience, offer a significant improvement over the traditional variety," Said M Nowsherwan, Senior Scientific Officer at National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), told WealthPK. (*Business Recorder, August 4th, 2024, Page 2*)

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

Crops worth billions damaged as heavy rains lash parts of Sindh

Rain with thunderstorm damaged dates, cotton and other crops in different areas of Sindh. Heavy rain with thunderstorm continued for 4th consecutive day, while there is fear of flooding in Sukkur and other low-lying areas. Severity of heatwave was reduced by rains. Villagers' belongings were swept away by flowing water, while onion and cotton crops were inundated by water as well. (*The News, August 4th, 2024, Page 13*)

Salt-tolerant crops

With initial support from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the National Institute for Agriculture and Biology (Niab) has made significant strides in developing and planting salt-tolerant crops and implementing soil management techniques to combat salinisation. Niab has now started sharing its expertise with other countries affected by soil salinisation, by offering training to their scientists, according to information released by IAEA. Pakistan has lost 5.7m hectares of arable land due to soil salinisation. This figure is growing by 40,000 hectares each year, Niab estimates. Most crops are unable to grow in soil with high salt levels, turning fields into desert landscapes & posing a serious threat to food security. (*Dawn, August 10th, 2024, Page 9*)

3.1 # Cash Crops

Bad weather conditions may hurt cotton crop

Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association has released cotton production data up to July 31, which shows that more than eight lac and forty four thousand bales were produced in the country. The report shows a decrease of more than five lac and eighty four thousand bales (40.90%) as compared to more than fourteen lac and twenty nine thousand bales produced during the same period last year. In Punjab, cotton production stood at more than two lac and ninety two thousand bales, a decrease of 96,013 bales (24.71%) compared to last year's production of more than three lac and eighty eight thousand bales. In Sindh, cotton production was more than five lac and fifty one thousand bales shows a decrease of more than four lac and eight thousand bales (46.96%) compared to last year's production of more than ten lac and forty thousand bales. During this period, exporters purchased 400 bales, a decrease of 7,100 bales (94.67%) compared to last year's 7,500 bales. (*Business Recorder, August 4th, 2024, Page 3*)

Punjab cotton production data shows discrepancy

The fortnightly ginners' seed cotton arrival data has exposed stark discrepancies in Punjab statistics. The inconsistency in seed cotton flow was discovered in consolidated statement issued by PCGA, showing cotton arrivals in various districts of Pakistan as of 31st July 2024. It provides detailed statistics on cotton arrivals, pressing, sales, and leftover stock for each district. The data also includes a comparison with the previous year's figures and the percentage changes. The PGCA data stands in sharp difference to the Punjab government's data. It declared Punjab's total arrivals at 0.292 million bales,

showing a decrease of 0.096 million bales or 24.71 percent from corresponding period of last year. In sheer contrast, according to the report by the Crop Reporting Service of Punjab Agriculture Department, 0.450 million bales were produced registering a 4.2 percent increase in the produce. This was an increment to the last year's produce that stood at 0.432 million bales in 2023-24. (*The News, August 4th, 2024, Page 12*)

Discrepancy in PCGA and agri dept's cotton data raises eyebrows

An unusual difference in the cotton production data released by PCGA and the Crop Reporting Service of the Punjab Agriculture Department has raised many eyebrows and caused a wave of concern in the cotton sector. According to the production data released by the PCGA up till July 31, the total domestic production of cotton in Pakistan remained 844,000 bales, which is 41% less than production during same period last year. Report says that this season 293,000 bales of them arrived at ginning factories in Punjab, and 552,000 bales in Sindh's units. When compared with the same period of last year, it is 47pc less in Punjab and 25pc less in Sindh. The main reason behind this drop in cotton production is stated to be a record decrease in crop cultivation as compared to last year's due to adverse weather conditions and lower cotton prices, contradictory to government's promise of maintaining it at Rs8,500 per maund. Punjab Crop Reporting Service figures show 'around 54 more production' than what ginning mills' data reflects. (*Dawn, August 5th, 2024, Page 2*)

Lawmakers urge comprehensive cotton policy

The National Assembly's Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research has called for a comprehensive approach to cotton policy, including targeted strategies to increase yields, improve seed quality, and secure better market access for growers. A meeting of the committee was briefed on the cotton policy for 2024-25 and its strategic aims, which are designed to rejuvenate and enhance cotton production in cotton-growing areas of the country. The committee recommended the adoption of advanced agricultural technologies, offering financial incentives for research and development, and establishing efficient channels for domestic and international market integration to increase quality cotton production. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 9*)

Cotton production plummets 50pc, textile sector in crisis

A drastic drop in cotton production and a significant variation in the crop production data of PCGA) and Punjab's Crop Reporting Service have worried local textile industry, which is hurrying towards foreign markets to meet its yarn requirements. The data released by the PCGA revealed that a total of 1.075 million bales have been produced in the country till August 15 this season, compared to 2.11m bales during the same period last year, a drop of almost 50 per cent. Punjab produced about 392,000 bales, Sindh 682,000 bales and Balochistan about 26,000 bales, as per PCGA statistics.

The Crop Reporting Service of Punjab, however, put the cotton production data at 636,000 bales in the province that is close to the output of Sindh and around 62pc higher

than what is reported by the ginners' body. However, even then the output is 19.4pc less than that of last year's for this period. Justifying the figures, a CRS official says that so far 40pc of crop has been picked in the province against 52pc picking by this time last year, whereas this year 0.87pc increase in the weight of cotton bolls (3.46g against 3.43g during 2022-23 crop year) has been recorded. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 2*)

Monsoon rains will cause negative impact on cotton crop: official

The current monsoon rains will have a negative impact on the cotton crop in the country as rain causes various diseases in the crop. A senior official of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNS&R) that rains would have a positive impact on other major Kharif Crops including sugarcane and rice but it will have a negative impact on cotton and maize. A senior official of MNS&R told the National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research meeting held last week that cotton production in the country is forecast to decline in 2024-25 due to high energy and financial costs which will constrain the textile sector's growth.

He further contended that government has set a target of \$25 billion for textile exports for 2023-24 but exports are expected to fall short of this goal. He said that the Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) during its previous meeting fixed the following production targets: cotton 10.8 million bales from 3.12 million hectares; rice 8.7 million tons from over 3.1 million hectares of land; sugarcane at 76.7 million tons over an area of 1.3 million hectares; and maize at 9.3 million tons' production from an area of over 1.5 million hectares of land. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 2*)

3.2 # Fruits

Date Palm Festival begins: 'Modern strategies are required to overcome challenges in production'

Modern strategies required to overcome challenges in date production, experts said at Date Palm Festival inaugurated in Karachi. During the first-ever Date Palm Festival, hosted by Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam to celebrate the agricultural heritage of Sindh, the experts highlighted the pressing challenges facing date production in Sindh, particularly due to monsoon rains. Provincial Minister for Universities and Boards, Muhammad Ali Malkani, emphasised that Sindh is responsible for producing over 50% of Pakistan's dates, which are integral to the province's cultural and agricultural heritage. He expressed concerns about the severe damage to Khairpur's dates during the monsoon season and called for research into climate-resilient varieties, the establishment of tissue culture labs, and the identification of new areas for date farming. (*Business Recorder, August 12th, 2024, Page 5*)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Climate change impacting aquaculture production activities: expert

The rising global temperature and weather pattern due to climate change is impacting the aquaculture production activities and affecting the ecological cycle of the rearing

ponds as well and the fluctuation of temperature results in stress to rearing living aquatic stock. The phenomena can cause mortality of stock and financial loss to the entrepreneurs, which may discourage other interested aqua-pruners.

The Provincial Fisheries Departments have to adapt new technologies to address this climate change problem in the long run, which requires collaborative research through academia of Engineering Universities and Biological Sciences with the support of federal and Provincial Fisheries Departments. New and cost-effective methods of mitigating the adverse effect of climate change needs to be addressed on priority basis. There are number of ecological effects of environmental changes on aquaculture activities in Pakistan. However, these impacts have not been documented on scientific methods on aquaculture in the country, said Omar Hayat Khan, an expert on aquaculture and fisheries sector. Aquaculture in Pakistan has immense potential to develop as it is not competing with any other agriculture activity. It utilizes waste land, with by-products of livestock and diary and agriculture by products to produce high value fish meat for human consumption. The inputs of production are cost effective and it is can provide multiple benefits to the economy of the country through import substitution and also income in rural areas of Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, August 5th, 2024, Page 7*)

Three seafood firms cleared for EU export, says adviser

The Sindh government claimed that three seafood processing companies in Pakistan had been cleared for exporting their products to the European Union. This announcement was made during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister's Adviser on Livestock, Fisheries & Katchi Abadies Najmi Alam regarding the sanitation of Karachi Fisheries Harbour Authority. The meeting was also attended by officials of the Chinese company Hengzhou Jingjing Private Group, which has been tasked with cleaning the harbours. Mr Alam informed the Chinese group that the Sindh government is making efforts to lift the ban imposed by EU on the export of fish. Currently, some companies producing and exporting seafood have been declared clear. (*Dawn, August 8th, 2024, Page 14*)

'Karachi's coastline could become dead zone for seafood if pollution is not checked'

Local and international non-governmental organisations have expressed concern over marine pollution and emphasized the need to reduce it. Due to pollution, the sea from Keamari to Manora has turned black, causing severe damage to mangrove forests and leading to the disappearance or migration of over 27 species of fish, crabs, and shrimp. As a result, two million people involved in fishing have been severely affected, as fish is no longer found within 10 nautical miles of the coast. Due to marine pollution, Karachi's 129-kilometer coastline gradually turns into a dead zone.

Marine experts report that pollution has dangerously reduced the population of fish species such as white pomfret, pampas, taro, pamto, makri and kergen fish, which were exported to Europe. Meanwhile, fish species like dandiya, dotar, danthi, bhanwar, boi, somai, mengartarli, bangara jerli, among 27 others, are no longer found within 10

nautical miles of the coast. These fish have either disappeared or migrated to deeper waters, causing small-boat fishermen to struggle financially. According to Environment Protection Agency sources, 450 million gallons per day (MGD) of sewage water from the Malir and Lyari rivers are being discharged into the sea, along with 600 MGD of industrial and 175 MGD of toxic water from tanneries. Additionally, untreated sewage from thousands of flats near the coastline, including Keamari, Shireen Jinnah Colony, Mauripur, Lyari, Machhar Colony, Clifton, Sea View, DHA Phase 8, and riverside restaurants, is also being dumped into the sea.

Furthermore, coal transported to port berths pollutes seawater through airborne particles, while foreign ships and hundreds of boats illegally dump used oil into the sea. Despite existing regulations, authorities need to enforce them. Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) sources said that Pakistan's seafood exports are steadily declining. In 1992, Pakistan earned \$120 million in foreign exchange from seafood, and in 1993, 500 metric tons of fish and shrimp were caught, which remains a record. However, EPB sources indicate that fish landings have decreased by 70%.

Pollution has also drastically reduced mangrove forests, which are the first barrier against marine floods and serve as nurseries for marine life. In 1977 these forests covered 263,000 hectares, but now they have shrunk to just 70,000 to 80,000 hectares. Since mangroves are nurseries for marine life, their decline has naturally led to significantly reduced marine biodiversity. Experts warn that if marine pollution is not controlled, Karachi's coastline could become a dead zone for seafood. (*The News, August 18th, 2024, Page 16*)

11 illegal fishing trawlers seized, Balochistan Assembly panel told

The Balochistan Assembly's Standing Committee on Fisheries was informed that the provincial fisheries department, despite having limited resources, has seized 11 illegal fishing trawlers since January this year in Makran waters. The committee was briefed on the alarming rate of exploitation of fisheries resources, highlighting the need for effective methods for improvement and restoration. (*Dawn, August 24th, 2024, Page 3*)

Manchhar Lake, fishermen still crying for freshwater flows

Dark clouds hovered over Bado Jabal, a range of mountains in Jamshoro, in mid-August to give a mesmerising view of its majestic beauty. Overcast conditions were making weather even more pleasant. Flows in surging Indus ran parallel with those travelling along Indus highway. Indus water had inundated vast rain-fed lands and riverine area, which is considered a boon for the communities inhabiting the area. Still, the river water maintained a safe distance from the highway. Indus was in a state of medium flood at Guddu and Sukkur barrages on August 10 to provide impetus to irrigation authorities for feeding Manchhar from the Indus River — something very rare — through Aral head regulator where Indus level stood at 112.20RL against Manchhar's 111.50RL.

The dying Manchhar cries for its rehabilitation which is only possible with plenty of freshwater discharges from river and hill torrents. As river flows end up in the lake, an air of euphoria — understandably though — was noticeable among fishermen living around the lake. They fear this euphoria would soon give way to despair again when Indus river flows into the lake are stopped and they would be at mercy of the Main Nara Valley Drain's highly toxic water. Fishermen' fear is not unfounded and their excitement proved short lived. Irrigation authorities closed Indus flows from going into Manchhar through the newly-built regulator called 'Aral head' amidst fears stemming from Sept 2022 flood devastation. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 15*)

5 # TRADE

Exports rise 12pc in July

Pakistan's merchandise exports rose 11.83 per cent to \$2.31 billion in the first month of new fiscal year from \$2.06bn in the corresponding month last year, according to data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). On a month-on-month basis, exports saw a decline of 9.77pc from June. In FY24, exports rose 10.54pc to \$30.64bn from \$27.72bn in the preceding year. Exports increased steadily from July 2023 until they turned negative in January. This negative trend persisted until April. After a temporary setback, growth regained momentum in May and continued into June. The country witnessed its highest-ever exports in 2021-22, reaching a staggering \$31.78bn. However, the following year saw a decline, with exports dropping to \$27.54bn. According to the PBS data, imports recorded a growth of 15.30pc to \$4.25bn in July from \$3.69bn in the same month last year. However, on month-on-month, the imports declined 14.27pc. In FY24, imports fell by 0.84pc to \$54.73bn compared to \$55.19bn in FY23. The trade deficit in July widened by 19.71pc to \$1.95bn from \$1.63bn over the last year. In FY24, the trade gap narrowed to \$24.08bn in FY24 from \$27.47bn over the preceding year. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 9*)

July trade deficit surges 19.7pc to \$1.95bn YoY

Pakistan's trade deficit in July 2024 has increased by 19.7 percent year on year (YoY) to \$1.95 billion as compared to a deficit of \$1.63 billion recorded in the same month last year, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). On a monthly basis, the trade deficit has narrowed 19 percent compared to a deficit of \$2.41 billion recorded in June 2024. Exports in July rose by 11.8 percent to \$ 2.31 billion compared to \$2.06 billion in July 2023. On a monthly basis, exports have decreased by 9.8 percent compared to the \$2.56 billion figure reported in June 2024. The country' exports declined by 9.77 percent on month-on-month basis and stood at 2.308 billion dollar in July 2024 compared to 2.558 billion dollars in June 2024. Pakistan's trade deficit contracts 12% YoY to \$24.1bn in FY24. The country's imports increased by 15.3% to \$4.26 billion in July 2024 compared to \$3.69 billion from a year ago. Compared to June 2024, imports declined by 14.3% compared to \$4.96 billion in June. (*Business Recorder, August 2nd, 2024, Page 1*)

BJP govt's actions adversely impact trade between Pakistan, India: PBF

Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Vice President Ahmad Jawad said BJP government's actions in the political domain directly impacted the trade relations between the Pakistan and India as it has adopted an inflexible and hardening stance towards Pakistan. The Pakistan Business Forum believes that India and Pakistan should consider resumption of trade and restoring the upgradation of diplomatic ties. He considered trade to be a vital stop on the re-engagement plan and also benefits for the trading and business communities on both sides. Jawad also said that the view in India on trade with Pakistan remains marked by suspicion owing to prejudice towards Pakistan in Modi's India, including India considers itself in a much-strengthened position as compared to Pakistan due to its economic size and evidently wishes to dictate its terms of engagement on trade matters. However we believed to be in an advantageous position as it could be a gateway for transit trade from India to Afghanistan, as Iran and Central Asia, areas that are rich in energy. (*Business Recorder, August 6th, 2024, Page 4*)

Moroccan envoy stresses need for enhancing trade

The bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Morocco is less than expected and has significant potential for growth, according to Moroccan Ambassador Mohamed Karmoune. He said the total trade between the two countries could be increased to over \$232 million. The ambassador shared these insights while addressing the industrialists during a visit to the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI). Ambassador Karmoune highlighted Morocco's strategic position as a gateway to the Europe with free trade agreements with African countries and the European Union. He emphasised that Pakistan could significantly benefit from these agreements through increased trade with Morocco. (*Business Recorder, August 7th, 2024, Page 4*)

Pakistan, Turkiye agree to remove trade barriers

After enforcing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), a high-level Turkish business delegation arrived to explore investment opportunities and remove barriers to increasing bilateral investment. Minister Bolat proposed measures to facilitate investment for Turkish companies to enhance investor confidence and recommended increasing flight connectivity between Pakistan and Türkiye to support greater economic exchange. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 9*)

Trade, pedestrian movement resume at Torkham

Bilateral trade and pedestrian movement between Pakistan and Afghanistan resumed after few days. The border crossing was reopened after relevant officials of both the neighbouring countries held successful negotiations. The closure of the border left hundreds of vehicles loaded with multiple goods, both import and export, stuck on both sides while a sizeable number of pedestrians too had to go back to their respective areas. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 8*)

No plan to resume trade with India: FO

The Foreign Office said trade with India was not on cards, citing the unchanged situation in held Kashmir since the 2019 events that led to the initial suspension. “The situation remains intact, and at this point there are no bilateral talks between the two countries with respect to bilateral trade between Pakistan & India”. Pakistan had suspended trade with India after it revoked special status of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir region in August 2019 in a controversial move. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 1*)

Jam, German minister discuss avenues to bolster trade ties

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan met with Germany’s Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation & Development, Svenja Schulze and discussed avenues to bolster economic and trade relations between the two countries. Meeting focused on advancing economic collaboration, with a particular emphasis on sustainable business practices and labour standards. (*Business Recorder, August 22nd, 2024, Page 3*)

Trade gap widens with nine states in July

The first month of the new fiscal year saw a surge of 68.72 per cent in the country’s trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries, taking it to \$1.041 billion from \$0.617bn over the last year. Experts attributed the jump mainly to an increase in imports from China and India. Since the rise in deficit remains unchanged from the previous fiscal year, it may cause big problems for policymakers. In FY24, the trade deficit was recorded at \$9.506 billion, up 49pc from \$6.382bn in the preceding fiscal. Exports to China, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka saw an upward trend in July, but exports to other countries in the region continued to decline during the month under review, according to State Bank of Pakistan. The value of Pakistan’s exports to nine countries — Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives — rose 23.85pc to \$464.75 million in July 2024 from \$375.24m over the previous year. In FY24, exports saw a 20.02pc increase to \$4.334bn from \$3.611bn in the corresponding period last year.

Contrary to this, imports surged 51.66pc to \$1.506bn in July 2024 from \$0.993bn over the same period in the previous fiscal. Imports surged 38.49pc to \$13.840bn in FY24 from \$9.993bn over the same period of last year. Imports from China grew by 53.63pc to \$1.478bn in July 2024 from \$0.962bn over the last year. In FY24, imports from China stood at \$13.506bn — up by 39.78pc from \$9.662bn over the previous year. The bulk of imports in the region are sourced from China, followed by India. Pakistan’s exports to China rose 5.77pc to \$160.10m in July 2024 from \$151.36m over the same month in the preceding financial year. In FY24, exports to China rose 33.68pc to \$2.707bn from \$2.025bn over the corresponding period of last year.

Pakistan’s imports from India saw an increase of 0.56pc to \$17.75m in July 2024 from \$17.65m over the last year. In FY24, imports from India rose 8.866pc to \$206.89m — up from \$190.04m in the same period last year. Meanwhile, exports to India remained

negligible at \$0.005m in July 2024 against \$0.019m over the last year. Exports to India stood at \$3.669m during FY24, as against \$0.329m in the same period the previous year. Exports to Afghanistan increased 108pc to \$88.06m in July 2024 from \$42.17m last year. Islamabad has allowed exports of maximum products in Pakistani rupee.

However, the growth is mainly due to the government's decision to allow the export of sugar to Afghanistan. Kabul recently banned fruit exports to Pakistan following the revival of duty and taxes. Imports from Afghanistan stood at \$1.41m in July 2024, as against \$0.91m in July 2023. No trade was recorded with Iran on official channels as most of the trade with that country is conducted through informal channels. Exports to Bangladesh increased by 8.65pc to \$57.86m in July 2024 while the amount for July '23 was \$53.25m. Exports to Sri Lanka surged 59.92pc to \$32.72m in July 2024 from \$20.46m over the last year. Exports to Nepal increased 15.94pc to \$124.55m in July 2024 from \$107.43m in the previous year. (*Dawn, August 30th, 2024, Page 9*)

New Pakistani envoy to US aims for trade diplomacy

“In two words: trade diplomacy,” said Pakistan's new ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, when asked about his mandate. He emphasised the importance of maintaining strong connections with the Pakistani diaspora in the United States, highlighting that over a million Pakistanis reside in the US, which makes it a priority for Islamabad to foster close ties with this vibrant community. “Trade is the new diplomacy. Even during active conflicts, like the recent border tensions between China and India in Ladakh, countries continue to maintain trade relations”. “The United States is our largest trading partner, and we have maintained close strategic ties for over 70 years”. (*Dawn, August 31st, 2024, Page 12*)

5.1 # Exports

Indus Motor Company begins export of vehicles

Indus Motor Company announced the milestone achievement of exporting vehicles manufactured in Pakistan during a ceremony held at company's manufacturing facility at Port Qasim Authority. Company revealed plans to export Toyota Fortuner, Hilux and Corolla Cross models to Oceanian countries. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 9*)

'Textile sector exports struggle amid harsh taxation, high energy costs'

Pakistan's textile and clothing exports saw a slight increase of 0.93% in FY24, reaching \$16.55 billion from \$16.50bn previous year. This modest growth highlights the sector's struggle to compete with regional rivals due to the harsh taxation measures implemented during fiscal year. Talking to WealthPK, former commerce minister said textile and clothing exports remained static over past two years despite the sector's \$25bn installed capacity. Government needs to provide competitive energy rates, tax drawbacks, and sales tax refunds to boost exports. Textile and clothing exports saw a 3.91% year-over-year decline in June to \$1.41bn from \$1.47bn. This drop reflects burden of highest-ever energy costs on industry. (*Business Recorder, August 1st, 2024, Page 7*)

Pak Suzuki begins exporting vehicles

Hiroshi Kawamura, CEO of Pak Suzuki, revealed that the company has begun exporting vehicles to Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Speaking at an inauguration of the new Suzuki Vendor Cluster Area, he announced that the company has begun exporting vehicles to Bangladesh and Afghanistan. (*Business Recorder, August 1st, 2024, Page 12*)

Export of 40,000 tons of sugar to Tajikistan recommended

A joint meeting of Cabinet Committee on Monitoring Sugar Export and Sugar Advisory Board, recommended exporting 40,000 tons of refine sugar to Tajikistan. Ministry would present updates on the sugar industry to Cabinet's ECC for a decision regarding the sugar export. The minister also noted that SAB recommended increasing the export period from 45 to 60 days. (*Business Recorder, August 2nd, 2024, Page 2*)

Record earnings in FY24: Rice exporters now eying \$6bn exports

After achieving an all-time high export of \$4 billion, rice exporters are now setting their sights on a \$6 billion rice export for the current fiscal year (FY25), buoyed by a bumper crop. Chela Ram Kewlani, Chairman REAP, told that Pakistani exporters have earned an all-time high \$3.93 billion foreign exchange by exporting some 6 million tons of rice during the last fiscal year (FY24). This milestone was achieved mainly due to the ban on rice exports by India due to short crop. India is Pakistan's competitor in world market. Further growth in rice exports depends on the government's support. The federal government must address three major issues including tax system, rising power tariff and higher interest rate to continue this growth momentum in exports and achieve \$6 billion mark rice exports in this fiscal year, otherwise the rice exports may face some declining trend in coming months. (*Business Recorder, August 9th, 2024, Page 2*)

Reap, TDAP rejoice at \$4bn rice export achievement milestone

Reap, in association with TDAP, celebrated \$4 billion rice export achievement milestone. The event titled "FOUR - The Quadra Legacy" was held at the historic Mohatta Palace, marking the first sustainability-focused event of this magnitude taking place at this iconic venue. The celebrations honored the achievement of \$4 billion rice exports by Reap members, showcasing the remarkable success of Pakistan's rice export industry. In addition to rice, our members have also exported maize and sesame worth \$2 billion during the last fiscal year. Accordingly, the Reap members earned \$6 billion for the country. (*Business Recorder, August 11th, 2024, Page 3*)

Pakistan faces export challenges, says commerce minister

Federal Commerce Minister acknowledged that country's exports are facing significant challenges due to the high costs of electricity and gas, among other issues. He also added that Pakistan has seen a significant increase in exports for FY2023-24. Ministry of Commerce and TDAP have managed to raise trade market from \$5bn to \$8.5bn. He said that this positive response shows that trade and commerce in Pakistan are thriving, contrary to general perception of mistrust. (*The News, August 11th, 2024, Page 17*)

SAB approves sugar export to Tajikistan on G2G basis

The Sugar Advisory Board (SAB), following permission by the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has approved export of up to 40,000 tons of sugar to Tajikistan on government-to-government basis. The ministry has also directed the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) to clear outstanding payments of sugarcane growers at the earliest. It was further decided that locally, the district governments will fix the retail price of sugar. The meeting was told that currently, Pakistan has 2.8 million ton of stocks in storage. (*Business Recorder, August 14th, 2024, Page 10*)

Textile and clothing exports shrink in July

Textile and clothing exports contracted by 3.09 per cent in the first month of FY25, indicating that the sector may struggle to compete with regional rivals due to the implementation of harsh taxation measures in the current fiscal year. Impact of the new tax measures and the highest-ever energy costs is evident in the July export results. The decline in exports of textiles and clothing, which had the largest share of over 60pc in total exports for the second consecutive month after a negative growth of 0.93pc in June, was due to the government's announcement of export-biased measures in its recent budget, which the top textile exporters opposed. Textile and clothing exports have stayed the same in the last two years despite having a \$25 billion installed capacity. According to textile exporters, exports from same sectors have been static for past two years due to structural issues. In absolute terms, the textile and clothing exports fell to \$1.27bn in July from \$1.31bn over corresponding month of last year. On a month-on-month basis, exports dipped 10.13pc. The government has introduced various measures, including increasing the tax rate on exporters' personal income in 2024-25. The impact of these measures will be visible in coming months. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 9*)

PSMA Punjab demands govt allow export of 1.5m tons of sugar

Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (Punjab Zone) reiterated its demand to allow mills to export 1.5m tons of sugar, which is more than domestic need and can generate \$850 mn for country. PSMA claims that despite confirmation of surplus stocks in multiple meetings, government is delaying policy decisions. The huge financial resource of sugar mills is stuck in surplus stocks worth Rs210bn. "Current international price of sugar has gone down to \$510 per ton from \$750 per ton since time PSMA started requesting government to allow sugar exports. (*Business Recorder, August 20th, 2024, Page 2*)

Export of surplus sugar recommended

Sugar Advisory Board recommended export of 100,000 tonnes of surplus sugar. The recommendation was made at a meeting of the board, presided over by Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain. The meeting reviewed sugar stock and its prices in the country. He said the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association will ensure maintaining ex-mills price of the commodity as has been agreed earlier. He said a summary has been sent to the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the federal cabinet for the export of 100,000 tonnes of sugar. (*Dawn, August 22nd, 2024, Page 5*)

Sugar export

The ECC, at the request of Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, approved a major concession to sugar mills and their association — Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) — by exonerating them from potential increases in sugar prices in the local market that normally move up on lower domestic stocks. “The ECC approved the summary of the Ministry of Industries and Production” regarding the export of a further 100,000 tonnes of sugar, adding the benchmark for retail price of sugar would be “delinked from the permission to export sugar as retail price is not directly under the control of sugar mills”. (*Dawn, August 23rd, 2024, Page 12*)

MoC seeks details of Rs3bn SMEs export boost project

Ministry of Commerce has sought technical and conceptual details from the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives regarding Rs3 bn export acceleration for Small and Medium Enterprise project. (*Business Recorder, August 25th, 2024, Page 1*)

Sesame exporters secure \$28m MoU with Chinese firms

A delegation of 23 Pakistani sesame exporters has concluded a highly successful visit to China, which took place from August 18-24. This visit represents a pivotal step in enhancing trade relations between Pakistan and China in the sesame sector. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan has sponsored this delegation. In last fiscal year, sesame export was around \$423m, and major market for export was China. During this visit, MoU worth USD 28m was signed, marking a significant milestone in their trade negotiations. This visit represents a significant advancement in strengthening trade ties between Pakistan and China and sets a promising foundation for future collaboration in sesame industry. (*Business Recorder, August 30th, 2024, Page 4*)

5.2 # Imports

Economic Coordination Committee okays import of 100,000 tonnes of urea

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) approved import of 100,000 tonnes of urea from a UAE-based firm through open tender to ensure stable prices in the market. This will also ensure stability of prices of fertiliser during cropping season, according to an announcement issued later. The TCP reported that cost estimates for import of urea for 157,500 tonnes would be about Rs18.489 billion. The landed price of urea had been estimated at Rs5,832.59 per 50kg bag. After adding incidentals of National Fertiliser Marketing Limited (NFML) at rate of Rs1,500 per bag, the cost will be Rs7,332.59 per bag. This would entail a subsidy requirement of around Rs5.865bn when to be comparable with prevailing local price. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 12*)

No curbs on imports as reserves rise: SBP chief

State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad has stated that there are no import restrictions as foreign exchange reserves have substantially risen, with reserves rising to \$9.3 billion despite ongoing debt repayments. (*Dawn, August 15th, 2024, Page 9*)

Govt decides to bring in 50pc govt imports thru Gwadar port

The federal government has decided to divert 50 per cent of public sector imports to Gwadar Port destined for upcountry aimed at making Gwadar a financially viable project. (*Business Recorder, August 26th, 2024, Page 1*)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Big industry output contracts in FY24

Large-Scale Manufacturing (LSM) sector contracted 0.03% in 2023-24 against a 0.92pc growth in preceding year, showed data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. LSM had grown positively since December 2023 to May this year before entering negative territory in June. Contraction in FY24 was due to domestic and global challenges. Wheat and rice milling production declined by 0.82pc while vegetable ghee production fell by 4.14pc. Wheat and rice milling fell substantially less during period under review, owing primarily to improved crop harvests. Furthermore, despite decreased output and delays in beginning sugarcane crushing, sugar production rose marginally during this period. Textile sector fell 5.23pc in FY24, compared to an 18.70pc contraction previous year. Cotton yarn has declined by 8.07pc, while cotton cloth has decreased by 5.34pc, accounting for more than 80pc of textile sector. Primary cause of reduced production was a drop in export unit value in face of weak external demand for textiles & increased competition from China. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 9*)

Millat Tractors shuts plant on lack of GST refund mechanism

Millat Tractors Ltd (MTL) has stopped tractor production till further notice due to the government's failure to issue a mechanism for payment of refund claims. In a stock filing, MTL informed all the stakeholders that the general sales tax on tractors is 10 per cent and GST on all input raw materials is 18%, resulting in a continuous stream of refunds. Farm machinery maker said the government has yet to issue any mechanism for payment of refund claims despite MTL seeking clarification. As a result, the company is now constrained to stop production till further notice. In FY24, the company assembled and sold 30,187 and 30,203 units, as compared to 19,097 and 18,622 in FY23. Suspension in the production of tractors will put many auto part vendors, especially small and medium-sized units, in a deep financial crisis. Many vendors rely only on parts supplied to the tractor industry. (*Dawn, August 23rd, 2024, Page 9*)

Support to farmers

A beverage firm has underscored its commitment in supporting to farmers, growing the agricultural ecosystem and investing in the country's food security. PepsiCo Pakistan hosted an event, Seeds to Smile, where speakers engaged in an interactive dialogue centred on a commitment to regenerative agriculture and fostering a positive value chain, event featured a digital exhibit educating the visitors on journey of potato from seed to crop and workings of a Tissue Culture Lab. (*Dawn, August 24th, 2024, Page 14*)

6.1 # Fertilizer Companies

Urea makers suggest dedicated gas supply amid dip in offtake

Amid a slight decline in urea offtake in the first seven months of 2024, the fertilizer manufacturers have sought dedicated allocation of Mari Gas for the fertiliser industry. In a proposal to the Ministry of Industries and Production, the Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council underscored fertiliser sector's substantial contributions to Pakistan's economy. Local plants utilise non-pipeline quality and low-heating value gas for urea production via a dedicated distribution network, an initiative funded by the fertiliser industry with an investment of \$0.5 billion. The country's urea offtake in July 2024 clocked in at 611,000 tonnes, down 3pc YoY compared to 629,000 tonnes in July 2,023 but it increased by 27pc month on month (MoM) due to seasonality factor. According to Tanweer Ahmed of Top Line Securities, urea sales in 7M2024 fell by two per cent to 3.648mn tonnes from 3.730m tonnes in same period in 2023. Total DAP sales during July 2024 were around 161,000 tonnes, up 43pc YoY and 31pc MoM, taking 7M2024 sales to 706,000 tonnes, up 12pc YoY. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 9*)

Minister says 'high' profit margin of fertiliser companies to be trimmed

Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain said urea fertiliser companies are making around 30 percent profit, higher than any other sector operating in the country, adding that the fertiliser companies' profit margins will be reduced to around 20 percent. The minister responding to a question regarding low demand for urea and high prices which has put the farmers in a difficult situation, argued that urea companies' profits will be reduced from 30 percent to 20 percent to avoid fertiliser shortages and reduce pressure on farmers. The minister said this year's urea production has improved in excess of 400,000 metric tons but the government has decided to import 100,000 tons more this year, despite its high cost. The price of imported urea is around Rs5,800 per bag, with handling and transport costs bringing the total to Rs7,000 per bag. (*Business Recorder, August 7th, 2024, Page 2*)

Fertilizer plants will continue to get uninterrupted gas supply

An inter-ministerial meeting decided to ensure continuous supply of gas to fertiliser plants to avoid loss of imports and foreign exchange. Various measures were considered to ensure availability of fertiliser in sufficient quantity and at reasonable price for wheat sowing during the coming Rabi season. (*Business Recorder, August 18th, 2024, Page 3*)

6.2 # Food Company

PSX holds gong ceremony to mark listing of BigBird Foods Ltd

Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) held a gong ceremony to mark the listing of Big Bird Foods Limited (BBFL). Big Bird Foods was established in September 2011 as a poultry processing unit to provide quality chicken products in national and international markets. (*Business Recorder, August 10th, 2024, Page 3*)

SHC seeks mechanism to provide potable water to people

The Sindh High Court summoned the health secretary and the director general of Sindh Food Authority to inform it about the mechanism to provide safe drinking water to all citizens. It deplored that the state has not fulfilled its responsibility to provide safe drinking water to people. Court was hearing a petition filed by Nestle Pakistan Limited challenging regulation of Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation Act, 2023 about fee and permission for extracting subsoil water. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 13*)

Sindh, Balochistan rice millers not to pay electricity bills over increases in tariff

Sindh-Balochistan Rice Millers and Traders Association has decided not to pay electricity bills to SEPCO, HESCO and QESCO as a protest against high increase in fixed charges in the mills' bills. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 15*)

Nestlé inaugurates N4HK room at The Trust School Lahore

Nestlé Pakistan inaugurated the Nestlé for Healthier Kids (N4HK) room at The Trust School Lahore to foster and promote nutrition awareness. The N4HK program is part of Nestlé's global nutritional awareness initiative to ensure that children understand the value of nutrition as they grow older. So far the program has reached out to 360,000 kids, trained more than 2300 teachers and has developed 17 N4HK Rooms with 11 partners from private and public sector. (*Business Recorder, August 26th, 2024, Page 4*)

Ministry to clamp down on sugar mills behind price surge

The federal government has empowered Ministry of Industries and Production (MoI&P) to take action against responsible sugar mills if there is a spike in price of sugar in the wholesale market. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 1*)

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Debt rollover commitments secured from key lenders

Pakistan has secured commitments from China, Saudi Arabia and UAE to roll over debt for a year, a boost for Islamabad as it awaits final approval of a \$7 billion, 37-month loan programme with the IMF. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told that Pakistan has \$12bn in bilateral loans that have been extended for the past few years. Mr Aurangzeb also reiterated that the IMF's executive board is set to convene by the end of this month to finalise a staff-level agreement with Pakistan for new loan programme aimed at ensuring stability and inclusive growth.

He projected Pakistan's financial needs to be between \$3bn and \$5bn over the next three years, assuring that the government would manage these funds comfortably. The minister said government has also received offers from international commercial banks for concessional loans. A major IMF demand is for Pakistan to ensure the rollover of its annual \$12bn debt commitment to three key bilateral donors: Saudi Arabia, China, and the UAE. Saudi Arabia has already extended \$5bn, China \$4bn, and the UAE \$3bn for one year. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 1*)

\$22.6bn invested in a decade: OICCI

Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) member companies have injected \$22.6 billion into Pakistan's economy during the last 10 years, according to the chamber's 2023 annual economic contribution survey. With the contribution of \$22.6bn in the last 10 years, 139 OICCI member companies reported assets amounting to Rs29.6 trillion, capital expenditure of Rs482bn, government levies of Rs2.4tr and gross revenue of Rs10.4tr in the last fiscal year.

Among OICCI members, 51 are listed companies that have demonstrated remarkable growth in their financial performance. From 2019 to 2023, the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of profit before tax surged to 30.2pc compared to a CAGR of 18.9pc between 2018 and 2022. In 2023, these companies reported a cumulative profit before tax of Rs1.13tr and a turnover of Rs6.74tr. The sector-wise turnover for 2023 highlights the diverse contributions of various industries to Pakistan's economy with the oil, gas and energy recording Rs4.85tr and banking, insurance, finance and leasing Rs1.5tr. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 9*)

OICCI, UNDP forge alliance for sustainable Pakistan

OICCI has partnered with UNDP Pakistan to advance vision of a more sustainable and inclusive Pakistan. This partnership is set to spearhead initiatives focusing on gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and social impact investments, reflecting both organisations' commitment to United Nations' SDGs. The collaboration will focus on capacity building, policy research and advocacy, and public communication and campaigning around green finance, climate resilience, energy, diversity and inclusion, and digital transformation. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 9*)

July FDI soars 64pc to \$136.3m YoY

The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country rose by 64 percent during the first month of this fiscal year (FY25), the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. Pakistan attracted net FDI amounting to \$136.3 million in July 2024, compared to net inflow of \$83.2 million during July 2023, showing an increase of \$53 million. During the period under review, FDI inflows were \$198.3 million as against outflow of \$62 million. Most of investment arrived from China under CPEC related projects. FDI from China increased from \$ 21.2 million to reach \$45 million in the first month of current FY.

Hong Kong ranked second with \$ 44.4 million and Sweden third with \$24.2 million investment in Pakistan. Portfolio investment also surged by 45.4 percent or \$7.4 million to reach \$23.6 million in the first month of this fiscal year as against \$16.3 million investment in the same period of last fiscal year. The country's total foreign investment including FDI, portfolio investment and foreign public investment, recorded an increase of 189 percent during the period under review. Total foreign investment in the country rose to \$305 million in July 2024 up from \$105.5 million in July 2023. (*Business Recorder, August 20th, 2024, Page 1*)

Govt eyes \$2bn more in external financing: SBP chief

Pakistan is in “advanced stages” of securing \$2 billion in additional external financing required for IMF approval of a \$7bn bailout programme, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmad said. He also said Pakistan aims to raise up to \$4bn from Middle Eastern commercial banks by the next fiscal year as the country looks to plug its external financing gap. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 1*)

Govt fails to secure targeted loan in July

Pending approval of \$7 billion bailout by the IMF’s executive board, the government made a poor take-off and received just \$436.4 million in foreign assistance and grants in July, almost 85pc lower than the same month last year. The \$426m in foreign loans and \$10.5m in grants in the first month of the current fiscal year appeared a non-starter when seen in the context of the mammoth \$19.4bn target for the foreign assistance set for FY25 — even higher than last year’s \$17.4bn target that was missed by \$7.6bn. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 9*)

Govt received 0.8pc of budgeted non-project aid in July: EAD

The government received 0.8 percent of the total budgeted non-project (budget support) assistance by multilaterals and bilaterals in July 2024 – \$128.93 million against the budgeted \$15986.21 million for 2024-25 while 9 percent of the total budgeted project assistance was received in July - \$307.46 million was disbursed against the budgeted estimate of \$3406.95 million. The country borrowed \$436.39 million from multiple financing sources during the first month (July) of the current fiscal year 2024-25 compared to \$2.890 billion borrowed during the same period of 2023-24, revealed the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) data. The government has budgeted \$19.393 billion from multiple financing sources for the fiscal year 2024-25 including \$19.216 billion loans and \$176.29 million grants.

However, this does not include the expected US 7 billion dollars pending the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board approval. Time deposits were budgeted at \$9 billion including \$5 billion KSA time deposit and \$4 billion SAFE China deposit for the current fiscal year, however, there was no disbursement under these two heads in July. There is also no mention of assistance from UAE in data released by the EAD. The sum of \$3.779 billion was budgeted from foreign commercial banks for the fiscal year 2024-25 however there was no disbursement under this head in July either. The government budgeted \$1 billion from the issuance of bonds but the country did not issue any bonds last month and hence no amount was received during the first month of 2024-25. The country received \$127.70 million in July under the head of “Naya Pakistan Certificate” and \$201.01 million from multilaterals and \$107.68 million from bilaterals in July 2024. Non-project aid was \$128.93 million including \$1.23 million for budgetary support while project aid was \$307.46 million.

The Asian Development Bank disbursed \$54.05m during period under review compared to the budgeted \$1.651 billion for the fiscal year 2024-25 – 3.2 percent. IDA disbursed \$111.88 million in July against the budgeted \$1.525 billion for the fiscal year 2024-25 and IBRD \$20.54 million against the budgeted \$550.22 million. The IsDB (short-term) did not disburse any amount in July, however, the government budgeted \$500 million for the fiscal year 2024-25; AIIB disbursed \$8.54 million, while IFAD disbursed \$4.54 million against the budgeted \$40.45 million for the fiscal year 2024-25. China disbursed \$96.76 million in July against the government budgeted estimates of \$134.18million for the fiscal year 2024-25. Saudi Arabia disbursed \$2.69 million in the first month of fiscal year 2024-25 against the budgeted estimates of \$146.54 million for the entire fiscal year. The USA disbursed \$4.42 million in the first month against the budgeted \$20.87 million for the fiscal year 2024-25. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 1*)

July profit repatriation significantly rises to \$139.13m YoY

The repatriation of profit and dividend by foreign investors has significantly increased to \$139.13 million in July 2024 as compared to \$2.16m repatriated in same month of last year. According to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) data, foreign companies repatriated \$133.86m profit against the foreign direct investment (FDI) in different businesses in this month as compared to \$1.53m in the same month last year. In addition, repatriation of profit and dividend from portfolio investment increased to \$5.27m in July 2024 as compared to \$0.62m in same month in 2023. Analysts were of the view that removal of restriction on outflow of foreign exchange has largely contributed to a massive increase in repatriation of profit and dividend. During the last fiscal year, the federal government imposed some restrictions on foreign exchange to maintain the reserves at a reasonable level that resulted in lower repatriation of profit and dividend by the foreign companies. The highest repatriation was witnessed from power, tobacco, transport, financial business and chemical sectors. (*Business Recorder, August 29th, 2024, Page 1*)

7.1 # United Nations

Food and Agriculture Organisation launches scheme to help families cope with climate change

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has launched a cash assistance programme to provide financial support to vulnerable households in Tharparkar, Umerkot and Dadu. The programme, aimed to help them cope with adverse climatic conditions and protect their livestock, was launched in response to the long drought, rising temperatures and the impact of El Nino on agricultural communities in three districts of Sindh. FAO handed out cash in two instalments to 2,836 beneficiaries across three districts. A total of 1,836 households received Rs40,000 each, while 1,000 subsistence herder households received Rs50000 each. This amount included an additional Rs10000 as animal feed subsidy. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 5*)

7.2 # Countries

Highest profits repatriated to UK in FY24

The United Kingdom, not China, received highest amount of profits and dividends on foreign investments in FY24, showed State Bank of Pakistan's data. China has been in the media regarding profits of independent power producers as solid resistance from all sections of Pakistani society has emerged against staggering capacity payments to all IPPs. SBP data showed that profit outflow to UK was \$558.6m and that to China \$193m in FY24. In preceding fiscal year, outflow to UK was just \$20m and China \$83m. The second-highest amount was repatriated to UAE, surging to \$273m in FY24 compared to a meagre \$14.8m in FY23. Other countries also saw significant profits repatriated from Pakistan's foreign investments in FY24. The Netherlands received \$240m, the USA \$158m, France \$108.8m and Kuwait \$96m. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 9*)

Pakistan, Turkiye agree to elevate trade, investment

Pakistan and Turkiye agreed to further elevate bilateral trade volume and to enhance investment cooperation by pursuing full and effective operationalisation of existing agreements, early conclusion of agreements under discussion and upgrade the Pakistan-Türkiye Strategic Economic Framework (SEF). This was agreed in the 7th session of Pakistan-Türkiye Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) which was held here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (*Business Recorder, August 13th, 2024, Page 2*)

Minister, envoy to Russia discuss ways to bolster trade ties

Muhammad Khalid Jamali, Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia met with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss ways to bolster trade and investment ties between Pakistan and Russia. Jamali also stressed need for a diversified trade portfolio, encouraging greater exports of textiles, agricultural products, and other goods to Russia. (*Business Recorder, August 13th, 2024, Page 7*)

Maersk's \$2bn investment set to transform port infrastructure: minister

Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said that Danish shipping company Maersk will invest \$2 billion in Pakistan's port and transport infrastructure over the next two years. Investment comes as a result of efforts made SIFC. The minister is scheduled to visit Denmark this month to sign a MoU between Maersk and Karachi Port Trust, formalizing the investment plans. (*Business Recorder, August 18th, 2024, Page 1*)

Aurangzeb approaches Middle Eastern banks for \$4bn

Pakistan is in talks with Middle Eastern banks to secure about \$4 billion in loans required to meet external financial needs during the current fiscal year as part of the \$7bn Extended Fund Facility (EFF) currently pending approval of the executive board of IMF. For the current fiscal year, Pakistan has pitched about \$20bn in foreign borrowing in the budget, besides another \$3bn rollover from the UAE that was reported separately for the balance of payments. With this much borrowing, Pakistan's reserves were estimated to grow to about \$19-20bn by the end of the current fiscal year. Of the

\$20bn estimate, about \$4bn is again targeted to be arranged through foreign commercial borrowing during the current fiscal year and another \$1bn in international bonds. (*Dawn, August 23rd, 2024, Page 9*)

Pakistan seeks \$1.5bn increase in Saudi lending

Pakistan has reportedly requested Saudi Arabia to increase its lending by about \$1.5 billion from its existing \$5bn portfolio to help bridge the external financing gap needed for the IMF's 37-month bailout package pending its executive board approval. As a practice, all three friendly bilateral partners — Saudi Arabia, China and the UAE — must confirm to the IMF, through their executive directors, their \$12bn loan rollovers to Pakistan, informed sources said. The government officially confirmed last month that it had started process for reprofiling of more than \$27bn debt and liabilities with these three friendly countries. Reprofiling or rollover of \$12bn is a prerequisite set by IMF under \$7bn Extended Fund Facility, Saudi Arabia has \$5bn exposure to Pakistan, followed by China's \$4bn & UAE's \$3bn. Pakistan has requested an additional \$1.5bn from Riyadh, which is expected to come in the form of a bilateral commercial loan, though it could also be in form of a SAFE deposit. (*Dawn, August 24th, 2024, Page 1*)

Finnish financier appraised of Pakistan's potential investment scope

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Antti Partanen, a representative from Finn Fund, a Finnish development financier. The meeting focused on exploring potential investment opportunities in Pakistan. He noted that Pakistan's growing young population made it an attractive destination for financing and expressed Finn Fund's willingness to explore investments in various sectors of the country. The minister reiterated the commitment of the government for making Pakistan's investment climate favourable and conducive for foreign investors. (*Business Recorder, August 27th, 2024, Page 1*)

US embassy awards \$20,000 to women entrepreneurs

The US embassy in Islamabad announced the recipients of \$20,000 in seed grants as part of its 'Academy for Women Entrepreneurs' (AWE) programme. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 5*)

Govt eyes \$4bn from Mideast banks: SBP

Pakistan aims to raise up to \$4 billion from Middle Eastern commercial banks by the next fiscal year, the country's central bank chief told, as the country looks to plug its external financing gap. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 1*)

Oman invited to invest in multiple sectors

Pakistan invited Oman to invest in agriculture, minerals and information technology under Special Investment Facilitation Council, as two sides agreed to elevate bilateral trade volume and to enhance investment cooperation. According to a statement of the Foreign Office, eighth session of the Pakistan-Oman Bilateral Political Consultations was held in Muscat, Oman. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 4*)

Aurangzeb, representatives of JV investment cos hold talks

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a review meeting with representatives from Joint Venture Investment Companies, including Pak-Brunei Investment Company Limited (PBICL) and Saudi-Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company (SPI&AIC). The meeting centred on evaluating the progress, challenges, and future directions of these companies.

CEO Pak-Brunei Investment Company Limited (PBICL) gave a brief overview of the portfolio of the company and its major initiatives in Pakistan. He apprised the Minister about the role played by PBCIL in promoting economic cooperation between Pakistan and Brunei by facilitating investments in Industry and Agricultural sectors, through financial services, real estate, and SME's support, and how it has contributed to significant advancements in these areas, fostering bilateral trade and economic stability. Similarly, the CEO of Saudi-Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company (SPI&AIC), also gave a presentation about the major development initiatives of the company in the country for promoting Islamic finance, food security, digital finance, trade, and agriculture and livestock. (*Business Recorder, August 30th, 2024, Page 1*)

7.3 # China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

CPEC transformed Pakistan into attractive investment destination: minister

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan would have been on the brink of collapse had it not been for CPEC, which turned it into an attractive investment destination. Seminar titled, `CPEC 2.0: Prospects and Challenges` organised by Institute of Regional Studies, focused on CPEC, its second phase as well as emerging opportunities. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 4*)

\$8bn CPEC debt re-profiling plan being prepared

The Ministry of Finance is said to have constituted a task force that includes financial experts from China and Pakistan and government officials, to prepare an initial plan for re-profiling of existing debt stock of about \$ 8 billion of CPEC energy projects' foreign currency debt for five years. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 1*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

July-March: govt signs \$2.166bn loan commitments

The government of Pakistan signed new agreements worth \$2.166 billion as commitments in the period July-Mar 2023-24, says the Economic Affairs Division (EAD). Official data revealed that World Bank committed \$888 million (41 percent of multilateral partners), ADB committed \$706m (33 % of multilateral partners), and the AIIB committed \$250 million (12 per cent of multilateral partners). From July-March 2023-24, disbursements of \$6.904 billion were mainly under the project and program loans / grants from multilateral development partners, bilateral development partners and international financial institutions (IFIs). The World Bank, ADB and AIIB were the largest contributors among multilateral development partners contributing US\$ 1,482

million, US\$ 666m and US\$ 304m respectively. On the bilateral side, Saudi Arabia emerged as the primary contributor to the total disbursements during the specified period disbursing US\$ 657m followed by China with US\$ 576m disbursement.

During the period Jul-Mar 2023-24, the share of disbursements under energy and power were US\$ 404 million, floods-2022 US\$ 234 million, construction US\$ 200 million, agriculture US\$ 155 million, transport and communication US\$ 154, health and nutrition US\$ 144 million, governance research and statistics US\$ 105 million, water US\$ 97 million, and physical planning and housing US\$ 61 million in the total project assistance. As of 31st March 2024, Pakistan's total external public debt amounted to US\$ 86,683 million. The government paid US\$ 8,086m during the period July-March 2023-2024 on account of debt servicing of external public loans. Of this, principal repayments were US\$ 5,363m and interest payments were US\$ 2,723m. Furthermore, the net transfers to the government's external public debt resulted in a positive balance, amounting to US\$ 909m. (*Business Recorder, August 13th, 2024, Page 1*)

8.1 # Asian Development Bank (ADB)

ADB team, BISP official discuss proposed \$300m package

The Asian Development Bank Fact-Finding Mission, called on Secretary Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Amer Ali Ahmad, and discussed the proposed technical assistance package of \$300m from ADB to BISP. During the meeting, the ADB Fact-Finding Mission presented a detailed overview of programme's scope, according to BISP. This funding is intended to bolster various aspects of programme, including institutional strengthening, skill training education, and health and nutrition initiatives. (*Business Recorder, August 1st, 2024, Page 12*)

Plan urbanisation, optimise development: ADB

Planning and managing urbanisation are critical for Pakistan to optimise socioeconomic development, says the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The bank in its latest report, "Pakistan National Urban Assessment Pivoting Toward Sustainable Urbanization," stated that Pakistan's population and urbanisation challenges are increasing. The high-speed growth of Pakistan's urban population has led to a commensurate and hazardous urban sprawl. The growth of illegal developments and informal settlements that do not comply with planning rules or building codes delivers substandard living conditions, disrupts city functions, and degrades the urban environment. The associated encroachment into agricultural lands erodes future food security. With these mounting challenges of urbanisation, Pakistan needs to direct greater policy, planning, and investment support to transform its cities into safe, resilient, and livable spaces, as well as economic powerhouses that provide better income, education, and livelihood opportunities. (*Business Recorder, August 16th, 2024, Page 1*)

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF to approve \$7bn EFF by end of month: Aurangzeb

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that the government wants investment and not aid from the friendly countries and added the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board would approve US\$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) for Pakistan by the end of this month, (*Business Recorder, August 2nd, 2024, Page 1*)

Interest worth SDR 2.815bn paid to IMF since 1984

Pakistan has paid interest amounting SDR 2.815 billion to International Monetary Fund (IMF) since 1984. This was revealed before the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs which was further informed Pakistan has drawn an amount of SDR 21.789 billion against the sanctioned amount of SDR 29.673 billion since 1958 from the IMF. The Committee discussing the details of IMF funds received by Pakistan from the first program until June 2024, expressed disapproval with the details provided.

The committee was informed that till date Pakistan has entered into 24 programmes with the IMF. Pakistan signed its first programme in 1958 and the last one was the 2023 SBA. Apart from these programmes, Pakistan has also utilised several one-time facilities of the Fund, such as during the floods of 2010 and most recently during the Covid-19 pandemic. As per the records available, Pakistan has drawn an amount of SDR 21,789.28 million against the sanctioned amount of SDR 29,673.15 million since 1958 from the IMF. Outstanding principal amount is SDR6369.11 million. The Committee deliberated on the external debt project-wise, received by the Federal Government or Provincial Governments under multilateral, bilateral, and UN agencies. The Secretary for the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr Kazim Niaz, briefed that there are a total of 298 projects, with 146 being multilateral and 152 bilateral. He added that the number of multilateral projects is larger than the number of bilateral projects.

Of the multilateral projects, 63 are World Bank projects, 54 are Asian Development Bank projects, six are IFAD projects, 14 are Islamic Development Bank projects, and 21 are European Union projects. Among the bilateral projects, 16 are funded by China, 13 by Saudi Arabia, 60 by Italy, Germany, France, and the UK, and 15 by Korea. These projects are divided into two categories: Loan and Grant Projects. There are 58 World Bank loan-financed projects in the country, officials said. A commitment of 14,806 million dollars was made for 58 projects, said officials adding that for these projects, 6 thousand 162 million dollars have been released so far. The committee was further informed that 762 KV transmission line will be laid from Dasu to Islamabad. The World Bank has a \$700 million commitment for the project. An amount of 112m dollars has been released for this project, officials said. Dasu Islamabad Transmission Line Project to be completed by June 30, 2025. (*Business Recorder, August 2nd, 2024, Page 12*)

MoF, SBP inform Senate panel: Govt borrowed from IMF at 5.09pc interest rate in 2023

The Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs was informed Pakistan has taken loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at a high interest rate of 5.09 percent in the year 2023 under Standby Arrangement (SBA). This was stated by officials of Ministry of Finance and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) during meeting of the Senate Standing Committee of Economic Affairs held here on the details of the IMF funds received by Pakistan from first IMF programme till June 2024. The meeting was further informed that the country has taken loan from the IMF at a high interest rate of 5.09 per cent in the year 2023. Pakistan had received a standby arrangement of \$3 billion from the IMF in the year 2023. Why was Rs90 billion spent on political schemes after taking a loan from the IMF? The chairman of the committee inquired.

The committee sought details of the utilisation of the loan borrowed from the IMF. The meeting was told that the IMF has so far disbursed 2,126 million SDRs to Pakistan and the Fund has to be repaid over \$6.36 billion SDRs over next three to five years. Since 1984, SDRs and the country had paid \$2,439 million as interest to the IMF since 1984. As per the records available, Pakistan has drawn an amount of SDR 21,260.08 million since 1958 from the IMF. The outstanding principal amount is SDR 6,369.16 million as on 30th June 2024. The interest payments from 1984 until 30th June 2024 which represents interest payments on outstanding balance of the General Resources Account is SDR 2,439 million. The meeting was further informed that between 2008 and 2023, six programmes were done with the IMF. Agha questioned that in 1958, Pakistan lent loan to Germany than why did we need to go to IMF in 1958. The meeting was informed that reason for going to IMF was at that time trade balance and for balance of payments the country has taken IMF loan. (*Business Recorder, August 25th, 2024, Page 1*)

8.3 # World Bank (WB)

Balochistan must exploit renewables' potential, says World Bank

Balochistan should harness its vast potential of variable renewable energy to create a surplus of electricity that can be exported to other provinces or internationally, reducing its reliance on power imports, suggests a WB study released. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 9*)

9 # POLICY

9.1 # Developmental Policy

PDWP approves 24 development schemes

The Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) approved 24 development schemes of local government and urban development sectors for the fiscal 2024-25 with an estimated cost of Rs137 billion. The working party also approved IT-based monitoring system for improved service delivery in the entire local governments of Punjab at a cost of Rs695 million. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 2*)

Seven development schemes approved

The Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) approves seven development schemes worth Rs11 billion. The 15th meeting of the PDWP was held under the chairmanship of P&D Board Chairman Barrister Nabeel Ahmad Awan in which development schemes of roads sector approved with an estimated cost of Rs11.775 billion. (*Dawn, August 10th, 2024, Page 2*)

Ahsan fears Rs200bn-400bn cut in PSDP outlay

Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has expressed fear of a likely cut of Rs200-400 billion in development allocation for the current fiscal year due to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme as the Fund is not ready to give any relaxation in conditions. (*Business Recorder, August 10th, 2024, Page 1*)

Ministry against allocating funds to PSDP?

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special initiative is considering not to allocate funds in the PSDP for Departmental Development Working Party's approved and recommended projects simply because these are poorly designed and implemented. This was stated by Secretary Planning, Development and Special Initiative during a discussion in a parliamentary panel on allocation of Rs 5.414bn in PSDP for solar power plant in Sher Ghar Tehsil Layyah. (*Business Recorder, August 11th, 2024, Page 1*)

Projects over Rs2bn to be validated by third parties

PM has ordered third-party validation of all development projects with outlay exceeding Rs2bn to bring transparency to procurement process. He directed authorities to ensure third-party validation to make grievances and concerns redressal system effective in procurement process. Government is taking concrete steps to ensure transparency in all kinds of procurement procedures. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 9*)

9.2 # Neo – liberal Policy

Discos: Tarar says govt has embarked on sell-off plan

Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture, announced that government has embarked on privatisation of Distribution Companies as part of its ongoing reform agenda. This decision follows recent amendments to the State-Owned Enterprises Act. (*Business Recorder, August 2nd, 2024, Page 1*)

Another 24 state-owned enterprises to be sold off under new plan

Cabinet Committee on Privatisation convened to discuss the government's new phased privatisation programme for the period 2024-29 and approved the privatisation of 24 public sector entities. Meeting, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, also decided that additional public firms will be considered for privatisation following a review by Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 9*)

Two key thermal plants: PD ‘reluctant’ to share sell-off timelines

The Power Division is reportedly reluctant to share timelines of privatisation of two key thermal power plants, Nandipur Power Plant and Guddu Power Plant (NPP & GPP). (*Business Recorder, August 10th, 2024, Page 1*)

‘White elephant’ PIA has cost national kitty Rs830bn, says Aleem

Privatisation Minister Abdul Aleem Khan termed the national flag carrier “a white elephant”, claiming it had caused a loss of Rs830 billion to the national exchequer, so far. He said that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was a burden on the government, but was quick to point out that the process of its privatisation was progressing smoothly. “Private firms are taking interest in the privatisation of PIA,” he said. In reply to a question, Mr Khan said that six Pakistani companies interested in PIA have joint ventures with international firms from Malaysia, Turkiye and UAE. He alluded to Oct 1 as being a key date, saying that once the process was completed, Pakistanis would get an airline of international standards. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 3*)

Pims employees warn govt against outsourcing diagnostic services

The employees of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences have warned the government against going ahead with its plan to outsource diagnostic services in the hospital. They demanded that permanent employees should be appointed instead of outsourcing the pathology and radiology departments to companies. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 4*)

Balochistan’s young doctors oppose jobs on contract basis

The Young Doctors Association (YDA) has rejected the government’s decision to make appointments in the health department on a contract basis and warned of a sit-in if the cabinet’s move was not withdrawn forthwith. YDA president Dr Kaleemullah said the contract system would further damage the health department’s performance. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 5*)

Divestment of three Discos begins

Privatisation process for three electricity distribution companies began after a meeting jointly chaired by privatisation and power ministers gave its go-ahead. The Privatisation Commission has invited technical and financial proposals for appointment of financial advisers for private sector participation in three distribution companies — Islamabad Electric Supply Company (Iesco), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (Gepco) & Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (Fesco). (*Dawn, August 21st, 2024, Page 9*)

Young doctors to resist hospitals privatisation in Balochistan

The YDA Balochistan strongly rejected the government’s proposal to operate public hospitals in partnership with the private sector, vowing to resist any such move and stop the privatisation of healthcare facilities. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 5*)

Railways to outsource passenger trains in phases

With a view to attracting investment from the private sector, the Pakistan Railways (PR) has decided to outsource commercial operation of its passenger trains in phases. Under the first phase, the PR has offered 10 trains (up and down) to the interested parties to operate under model of public-private partnership. (*Dawn, August 27th, 2024, Page 2*)

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMICAL CONDITION

Salaried class overtakes textile exporters in income tax payments

The salaried class emerged as the third-largest contributor to income tax collection in the outgoing fiscal year (FY24), following closely behind banks and petroleum products, and still surpassing the country's affluent textile exporters. The salaried class contributed Rs367.8bn to income tax collection in FY24, a 39.42pc rise, from Rs263.8bn in FY23. Interestingly, this contribution exceeds that of wealthy textile exporters by Rs276.57bn, even though they exported \$16.655bn worth of goods in FY24. Textile sector contributed Rs111.23bn to income tax collection in FY24, a 7.4pc increase, from Rs103.56bn in previous year. Government modified the fixed tax regime for exporters and increased the rate in budget. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 11*)

Govt debt surges by Rs8tr last fiscal year

The central government debt surged by Rs8.07 trillion, or 13 per cent, during the previous fiscal year, bringing the total to Rs68.9tr by the end of June 2024, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The debt stock rose by 1.7pc in just one month, as it stood at Rs67.73tr by the end of May. The sharp rise in debt has exacerbated financial challenges for both the government and the public.

The government now faces increasing difficulties in servicing its debt and funding development projects while citizens bear the burden of new taxes. Much of the government spending has been financed through additional borrowing, with the government paying Rs8.3tr in debt servicing during FY24 alone. For the current fiscal year, the government has earmarked Rs9.78tr for debt servicing, which accounts for more than half of the total budget outlay of Rs18.9tr. Data indicates that the federal government's domestic debt increased substantially by Rs8.35tr, rising from Rs38.81tr in June 2023 to Rs47.16tr by the end of June 2024.

Foreign debt servicing

The country's foreign debt servicing decreased in FY24 compared to the previous year, primarily due to the rollover of repayments. According to SBP data, the country paid \$16.94 billion in debt servicing during FY24, down from \$20.82bn in FY23 — a reduction of \$3.89bn. Of the total debt servicing payments made in FY24, \$5.46bn was for interest, while \$11.48bn covered the principal amount. The rollover of debts resulted in lower interest and principal payments compared to FY23. Specifically, the payment of principal fell by \$4.92bn, and interest payments decreased by \$1.03bn year-over-year. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 9*)

External debt-to-GDP ratio hits 6-year low

Pakistan's external debt to GDP ratio fell to 6 years low, ie, 26 percent at the end of the last fiscal year (FY24), mainly due to lower increase in foreign currency borrowings. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported that the country's total external debt and liabilities recorded an increase of 3.4 percent during the last fiscal year (FY24). Pakistan's total external debt and liabilities reached the \$130 billion mark as of June 30, 2024 compared to \$ 126.142 billion as of June 30, 2023, depicting an increase of \$4.6 billion. (*Business Recorder, August 16th, 2024, Page 1*)

Govt plans to borrow Rs5.6tr in Aug-Oct

The government has planned to borrow Rs5.6 trillion from banks in August-October, reflecting the severity of the liquidity despite projecting an ambitious revenue collection target for the current fiscal year. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 9*)

Public debt stands at Rs71.2trn, Aurangzeb tells NA

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb revealed in the National Assembly that the total public debt of Pakistan was Rs71.2 trillion including Rs47.2 trillion (66 per cent) domestic and Rs24.1 trillion (34 per cent) external debt at the end of June-2024. He said that the total public debt is expected to reach Rs79.731 trillion by the end of the current fiscal year. This includes an estimated increase of Rs7.671 trillion in domestic loans and Rs818 billion in foreign loans. He said that for the year 2024, Pakistan is set to repay Rs18.7 trillion including Rs13.7 trillion domestic and Rs5 trillion external debt. He said that Pakistan would have to repay Rs8.7 trillion including Rs6.4 trillion domestic and Rs2.2 trillion external debt in 2025 and Rs7.6 trillion including Rs5.3 trillion domestic and Rs2.3 trillion external debt would have to be repaid in 2026. He said that a total of Rs4.3 trillion including Rs2.3 domestic and Rs2 trillion external debt would have to be repaid in 2027. He said that the repayment amounts would have to continue — Rs6 trillion (Rs4.4 trillion domestic and Rs1.6 trillion external) in 2028 and Rs8.4 trillion (Rs6.8 trillion domestic and Rs1.6 trillion external) in 2029. He said that a total of Rs2.4tr (Rs1.2tr domestic and Rs1.1tr external) would have to be repaid in 2030. The minister further said that Pakistan would have to repay Rs2.6tr in 2031, Rs1.tr in 2032, Rs1.2tr in 2033, Rs0.8tr in 2034, Rs0.9tr in 2035, Rs0.8tr in 2036, Rs0.6tr in 2037, Rs0.5tr in 2038, Rs0.5tr in 2039 and Rs0.8 trillion in 2040. (*Business Recorder, August 31st, 2024, Page 1*)

10.1 # Food

Murad says Sindh to provide free `nutritious, healthy` meals to schoolchildren

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) supported the Sindh government's plan to offer free breakfast / lunch and milk to schoolchildren under its School Meal Programme. CM urged the WFP to support pilot programmes that could eventually be scaled up over time. Provincial government intended to launch School Meal Programme on a public private partnership basis to provide nutritious, healthy and hygienic meals to students. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 13*)

Call to ensure labelling and warning signs on ultra-processed foods

The front-of-package labels provide crucial details about the nutritional content of ultra-processed foods, which are a significant contributor to the rising rates of obesity. Ultra-processed products, often laden with excessive sugar, salt, and trans-fats, significantly contribute to this health crisis. An unhealthy diet stands as a major modifiable risk factor for non-communicable diseases. Country Coordinator Global Health Advocacy Incubator said: “The annual cost of managing diabetes soared to over \$2,640 million in Pakistan in 2021. Ultra-processed food and beverage products particularly sugary drinks and junk foods are major contributors to diabetes, heart disease, cancer, kidney failure and other chronic diseases.” The general secretary of the Diabetic Association of Pakistan (DAP) said that over 41pc of adults in Pakistan were either obese or overweight. Additionally, more than 33 million people are currently living with diabetes, with another 10 million on the verge of developing the disease. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 4*)

10.2 # Food Scarcity

98pc of children under age 5 in Sindh don't receive minimum acceptable diets, says Unicef official

Infant and young child feeding practices in Sindh are suboptimal as around 98 per cent of children under two years of age in the province are not receiving the minimum acceptable diets required for growth and development, shared Unicef representative Abdullah A. Fadil. He said that the rates of early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding were only 48pc and 52.3pc, respectively. “Minimum dietary diversity and minimum acceptable diets for children aged 6-23 months are a mere 12.6pc and 2.2pc, indicating that around 98pc of children in this age group in Sindh are not receiving the recommended minimum acceptable diets for the growth and development of a child”. (*Dawn, August 13th, 2024, Page 13*)

Pakistan lags behind in fight against malnutrition: Pakistan Nutrition Cluster

Pakistan continues to lack progress in child malnutrition, a multi-sectoral problem that presents across a continuum of poor nutrition, from under-nutrition due to deficiencies in energy, protein, and micronutrients to problems of overweight and obesity. “The situation is quite dire in Pakistan, with stunting and wasting heavily prevalent in the country”, according to the latest report by Pakistan Nutrition Cluster and the ministry of national health.

Inadequate nutrition among mothers during pregnancy is one of the main reasons of malnutrition among children leading to stunting. Wasting is extremely high in Pakistan, with several areas in the country considered to be at emergency level of wasting. In Pakistan, four out of 10 children under five years of age are stunted while 17.7% suffer from wasting. The double burden of malnutrition is becoming increasingly apparent, with almost one in three children underweight (28.9pc) alongside a high prevalence of overweight (9.5pc) in same age group. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 3*)

US reaffirms pledge to help Pakistan address malnutrition

A spokesperson for the US mission in Islamabad has said Washington will continue working with Pakistan to address the malnutrition crisis. Millions of Pakistani children are at risk of dying from malnutrition, Jonathan Lalley said, adding that 2022 floods devastated the lives of millions, with women and children hit especially hard. The spokesperson said out of the \$215m provided by the US for flood relief and recovery, nearly \$100m has been spent on malnutrition. The US government has partnered with the UN's World Food Programme to provide emergency food and nutrition. With Unicef, "we treated nearly 135,000 malnourished children, provided pre-natal care to some 74,000 pregnant women, and offered essential healthcare services".

The US and WHO have established 12 nutrition stabilisation centres across Balochistan and Sindh to provide essential health services. Earlier, US Ambassador Donald Blome delivered 486 tonnes of ready-to-use therapeutic food to treat an additional 39,000 children, the official added. So far, the US has delivered emergency therapeutic food to more than 317,000 Pakistani mothers and children and enabled 779,000 front-line healthcare workers to provide nutrition counselling to parents and caregivers to prevent malnutrition. According to the UN, the malnutrition crisis in Pakistan is a complex, multi-sectoral problem, and the country's progress in addressing this issue over the last decade has not been encouraging. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 5*)

Over 41pc Pakistani women suffer from anaemia

Over 41pc of women in Pakistan suffer from anaemia, with 14.4pc being underweight and 24pc overweight, according to a new report. The state of maternal nutrition is so bleak that 186 women die per 100,000 live births; suboptimal breastfeeding leads to 2,000 deaths in mothers due to breast and ovarian cancer and 1,100 deaths due to type-II diabetes annually. Moreover, there are 1.4 million cases of low birth weight in Pakistan each year. This has been revealed in the 'Cost of Inaction Tool' developed by Nutrition International. The report was presented at the 'National Policy Dialogue on Economic Case for Maternal Nutrition', organised by the Ministry of National Health Services (NHS) in Bhurban.

There are 918,154 new cases of anaemia among pregnant women and adolescent girls (15 to 49) every year. Pakistan has the fourth highest prevalence of anaemia in adolescent girls and women in eight South Asian countries and the 35th highest in the 201 countries worldwide. Nutrition International stated Pakistan loses at least \$17bn every year — equivalent to 1pc of global income — due to undernutrition. The cost of low breastfeeding in Pakistan is \$28bn as the country reports 6.9m cases of diarrhoea, 19,000 cases of child obesity, 30,525 child deaths (due to diarrhoea and pneumonia), 3,196 maternal deaths (due to breast and ovarian cancer and Type II diabetes). (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 3*)

WFP to provide help in nutrition programme

The UN's World Food Programme will provide technical expertise in nutrition and logistics to the Benazir Nashonuma Programme (BNP). WFP and the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) have signed a two-year agreement at WFP headquarters in Rome. The programme is the largest government-funded programme in the WFP's history, showcasing an unparalleled commitment to prevent stunting in Pakistan, according to officials of BNP. Implemented through over 550 facilitation centres across the country, the programme provides a critical combination of cash assistance, nutrition education, health services, and specialised foods to prevent and reduce stunting and malnutrition. The programme is fully funded by the government and supported by WFP's technical expertise in nutrition and logistics, and has already improved the lives of 2.3 million vulnerable women and children and is set to empower another 1.7m over the next two years. (*Dawn, August 30th, 2024, Page 5*)

Malnutrition costs Pakistan around 3pc of GDP: speakers

Speakers expressed concerns over the significant impact of malnutrition, noting that it costs Pakistan approximately 3pc of its gross domestic product (GDP). These apprehensions were shared at a meeting hosted by Secretary of Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) Dr Shahida Rehmani. The gathering included representatives from Unicef and Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen) to discuss an upcoming consultative session scheduled for the first week of October. (*Dawn, August 31st, 2024, Page 4*)

10.3 # Inflation

Inflation hits 33-month low

The headline consumer inflation eased to 11.1 per cent in July, the lowest in 33 months and significantly less than the 28.3pc reading in July 2023. The deceleration is primarily due to falling food prices in urban and rural areas. During the month under review, there was a sharp drop in the prices of wheat, wheat flour, chicken, and vegetables like onions. In FY24, the annual inflation exceeded its budgetary target, reaching a staggering 23.41pc due to increased rates of electricity, gas, and essential kitchen items. The projected target was 21pc for the outgoing fiscal year. A basket of goods measures the headline inflation and services called CPI. The index slightly increased 2.1pc from June.

In July, urban inflation was 13.2pc year-on-year and 2pc month-on-month, slightly down from 14.9pc and 0.6pc in June. Rural inflation was 8.1pc year-on-year and 2.2pc month-on-month, going down from 9.3pc and 0.3pc in the previous month. Food inflation for July stood at 3.4pc in urban and 1.3pc in rural areas, whereas non-food inflation was 20.7pc in urban areas and 15.5pc in rural areas. Food inflation dropped to a single digit at 9.4pc in October 2021. Since then, it has progressively increased, hitting an unprecedented level at 48.1pc in May 2023. Core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, was recorded at 11.7pc in urban areas and 16.9pc in rural areas. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 9*)

'People feel insecure due to high inflation'

Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the vast majority of people are considering themselves insecure due to inflation and electricity bills. He said that the relationship between the people and the welfare state is constantly weakening, and the youth are eager to seek employment outside the country.

Mian Zahid Hussain said IPPs have stolen two thousand billion rupees from consumers this year. In comparison, they are ready to steal 2800 billion rupees next year. He said the biggest shock to the country's economy in recent years was IPPs and obsolete electricity systems. At the same time, the second major shock is the failure of government institutions, which consume 1200 billion rupees of public tax annually. (*Business Recorder, August 4th, 2024, Page 5*)

SBP chief warns of inflation spike, assures on debt

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad cautioned that budgetary measures are expected to increase inflation but assured that the external sector will remain manageable in the current fiscal year, thanks to debt rollovers from friendly countries. (*Dawn, August 8th, 2024, Page 9*)

Public outcry as KWSC hikes water, sewerage charges by 23pc

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) has increased the charges of water supply and sewerage services by 23 per cent (nine per cent for water supply and 14pc for sewerage services), triggering resentment among people already reeling from skyrocketing price hike. (*Dawn, August 22nd, 2024, Page 13*)

Govt expects single-digit inflation

Amid the drop in urea sales and cotton production, the government claimed that the national economy was setting a positive tone for the coming months, with inflation expected to decline to single digits or just above that in August. "On account of stability in economic indicators, inflation is expected to remain within the range of 9.5-10.5pc in August & further decline to 9-10pc in September", Ministry of Finance in its Monthly Economic Update & Outlook (August 2024). (*Dawn, August 31st, 2024, Page 9*)

10.4 # Poverty

Poverty and power costs cannot be fully eradicated: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said a complete freedom from poverty and the cost of electricity is not possible but the government is preparing a comprehensive plan in collaboration with the provinces to provide more reduction in electricity cost for the poor. (*Business Recorder, August 9th, 2024, Page 1*)

Denied salary, Lahore High Court Bar Association peon ends life

A peon of Lahore High Court Bar Association committed suicide by jumping into BRB Canal apparently due to financial & domestic issues. (*Dawn, August 23rd, 2024, Page 2*)

Woman throws herself, two kids in front of train

A woman allegedly took her own life, along with those of her two minor children, by throwing herself in front of a passing train near Dera Nawab railway station. According to initial police investigations, the woman was frustrated because of family disputes and financial constraints. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 2*)

Seven hospitalised as man poisons family over poverty

A man, his wife and five minor children were hospitalised when head of family administered them poison over poverty in Shahdara Town area. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 2*)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Air pollution in Lahore not just winter problem: experts

Environment friendly solutions along with regulations/policies are required to make significant improvements in pollution levels in Lahore which has consistently featured in World's top 10 most polluted cities since 2017. Last year, as per Air Quality Report 2023 by IQ Air, the city with the score of 99.4 on PM2.5 legend ranked 5th among the most polluted cities in the world. A general perception is that usually Lahore's air becomes more hazardous during winter season when the dust/smoke particles along with fog create a thick layer of 'smog', affecting visibility and breathing. The problem aggravates during winters (Nov to Feb) but an analysis of AQI monthly data reflects that this is no more of a winter phenomenon only because as per AQI guide Lahore's air quality remained "Very Unhealthy" from Jun to Aug while it was "Hazardous" for remainder of the year 2023. (*Business Recorder, August 11th, 2024, Page 3*)

11.1 # Health

Patients suffer as govt cuts grant for JPMC diagnostic services

Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) a key tertiary care public sector hospital in the city catering to thousands of poor patients daily from across Sindh as well as Balochistan faces a significant reduction in its annual allocation for laboratory services. Situation worsened recently when vendors failed to provide their committed diagnostic supplies in time, resulting in an almost complete closure of lab services for a few days. Provincial government usually enhanced hospital allocation for lab services by 20 to 25 pc every year. But, this hadn't been done this year. The year 2024 has also seen a dramatic increase in prices of basic commodities along with an 18pc government tax on all medical items that's affecting service delivery. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 13*)

Dengue cases on the rise in Punjab

Following rains, dengue cases are on the rise in Punjab as 20 people tested positive for the virus during the last week or so across the province. 57 positive dengue cases were reported across Punjab during the last 30 days. Some officials claimed that the health authorities were not properly reporting statistics pertaining to dengue fever cases. They feared that the number of dengue cases may be 30 times more than what is being reported officially. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 2*)

Govt to form new body to fix prices of medicines

In line with ongoing health sector reforms and efforts to streamline the federal health ministry, the government has decided to create a new body responsible for setting medicine prices, removing this duty from the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). “Following the caretaker government’s deregulation of non-essential medicine prices, the current administration has decided to relieve DRAP of its role in setting prices for essential medicines as well. DRAP currently regulates the prices of around 500 essential medicines, based on WHO’s latest list. The new body will take over this responsibility. (*The News, August 11th, 2024, Page 3*)

Govt hospitals get lion’s share in SCP income

Public sector hospitals continue to receive more patients and generate more revenue through Sehat Card Plus programme as part of government’s plan to benefit them from the cashless treatment initiative. Since March 2024 when programme resumed full-scale services, government hospitals have received 71pc of total patients admitted on SCP until July. Public sector health facilities received 259,049 patients of total 362,884, who sought free treatment services during this period. Number of people, who got treatment at private hospitals remained 103,835 or 29pc. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 9*)

Sindh gov launches free air ambulance service

The provincial government has launched a free air ambulance service for the public under the Local Government Council Association. They stated that the air ambulance would be crucial for transferring patients from Ghotki, Sukkur, and Khairpur to Karachi. The local government minister mentioned that an agreement would be signed between ASSL Aviation and the three local councils. (*Dawn, August 13th, 2024, Page 14*)

WHO declares global health emergency on mpox

The National Command and Operation Centre will meet today (Thursday) to take stock of measures in place to stem spread of mpox, after WHO declared it a global public health emergency. Worried by a rise in cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo and their spread to nearby countries, WHO hastily convened a meeting of experts to study the outbreak. (*Dawn, August 15th, 2024, Page 1*)

Surveillance ramped up after first mpox case confirmed

After the confirmation of first mpox case in Pakistan, PM’s coordinator for health directed Border Health Services to implement strict monitoring at all entry points, including airports, to prevent spread of the virus. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 1*)

Nutrition, immunisation programme launched in Pakistan

The Aga Khan Foundation has announced launch of a new \$7.2 million nutrition and immunisation programme in Pakistan. This initiative aims to support one million mothers and children in most marginalised areas. The programme is being implemented in partnership with federal and provincial governments, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and The Power of Nutrition (TPoN). (*Dawn, August 20th, 2024, Page 4*)

Country has reported 16 polio cases this year so far

Pakistan has reported 16 polio virus cases in 2024, of which, seven cases have been detected across the country in August, Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme (PPEP) said. According to the PPEP on June 8th, first polio virus case was reported in Quetta, provincial capital city of Balochistan, while the latest wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) case has been reported in Hyderabad city of Sindh province. Sixteen cases have been reported including 12 from Balochistan, three from Sindh and one from Punjab, while 62 districts are infected. (*Business Recorder, August 29th, 2024, Page 12*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

Sindh only province to avail, trade carbon credits, SC told

The Supreme Court was informed that the government of Sindh has made meaningful interventions regarding climate change that include launching a scheme of “afforestation and decarbonisation”. Sindh Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman highlighted before the Supreme Court the other day that Sindh is the only province that has successfully availed carbon credits and traded them in the international market, earning \$22 million. During the hearing, the chief secretary said that the mangrove forest cover has been expanded against the 2022 baseline to 1.5m acres besides forests have been restored on vacated lands through regeneration and planting and tree cover will also be enhanced by at least 300,000 acres. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 3*)

Punjab’s climate change policy ready for cabinet approval

Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb says the ‘Punjab Climate Change Policy & Action Plan 2024’ has been given a final shape and submitted to the cabinet for approval. Ms Aurangzeb said the policy, aimed at eliminating smog and the hazardous impacts of climate change, was being sent to all the relevant stakeholders. She said the ‘Plant for Pakistan’ campaign would be expanded. (*Dawn, August 11th, 2024, Page 2*)

NA body concerned over impact of climate change on agri sector

A parliamentary committee expressed concerns over increasing challenges posed by climate change and the urgent need for a coordinated action by the federal government and provinces with particular focus on protecting the agriculture sector. Agriculture, a sector heavily impacted by climate change, was a key focus of the meeting. Members were briefed on the changing patterns of crop growth, driven by shifts in monsoon timings and rising temperatures. Committee chairperson raised alarm over the declining production of key crops such as cotton and absence of heat-resistant seed varieties. Meeting underscored the urgency of developing new agricultural practices and cropping calendars to adapt to these climate-induced changes, warning of potential threats to food security if immediate action was not taken. The committee reiterated its commitment to overseeing the ministry’s efforts in combating climate change, with a particular focus on enhancing inter-provincial collaboration. It is expected to reconvene in the near future, with plans to explore the nexus between climate change and food security in greater depth. (*Dawn, August 21st, 2024, Page 4*)

Trans-boundary resilience must to preempt climate change impacts: Sherry

Senator Sherry Rehman stressed importance of regional cooperation and strengthening trans-boundary resilience for water management and climate change in order to preempt their adverse impacts. She expressed while speaking at a conference ‘Strengthening trans-boundary resilience: enhancing regional cooperation’ organised by Institute of Regional Studies. Senator Rehman unpacked importance of nature-based solutions, citing the “Living Indus” initiative as a significant project that requires community awareness and trans-boundary collaboration. (*Dawn, August 27th, 2024, Page 4*)

12.1 # Climate Crisis

GB rivers flood as heatwave melts glaciers

After almost a week-long heatwave in Gilgit-Baltistan, several streams traversing through the mountainous region are experiencing flooding due to a rapid melting of glaciers, with many a road and public and private property swept away. The localities situated downstream of these rivulets are living in a state of uncertainty due to a rise in water level which officials attributed to the melting of glaciers due to persistent heatwaves in the region. A flash flood in the Beraldu River in Shiger caused by a melting Baltoro glacier eroded agricultural lands, trees, and a road linking the region with Testun village. The flood created panic in the area, prompting people to take measures to mitigate the damage. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 1*)

12.2 # Climate Financing

Climate financing after IMF loan approval: Aurangzeb

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that that climate financing will be taken up after the approval of Extended Fund Facility by IMF Executive Board. Finance minister said this while addressing the “Climate Action of Pakistan” seminar. The minister said that climate financing will be discussed with the IMF and the World Bank during the annual meeting in October. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Climate Change are working together with the IMF and the World Bank. (*Business Recorder, August 7th, 2024, Page 1*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

13.1 # Cyclone

‘Rare’ cyclone brewing along Sindh coastline

With a deep depression lying at about 250km south/southeast of Karachi and set to move west towards Oman, the coastal areas of Pakistan are bracing for a ‘rare’ cyclonic storm likely over the northeast Arabian Sea along Sindh’s coast. Meanwhile, incessant rainfall across the country killed another nine people, induced flash floods, cut off road access, and filled major water reservoirs to the brim. The deep depression over Rann of Kutch, India, slowly moved west-southwestward over last 12 hours. It would move west towards Oman parallel to Pakistan coast, but can produce torrential rains in southern districts including Karachi and along Makran coast. (*Dawn, August 30th, 2024, Page 1*)

Thousands evacuated as cyclone builds off Pakistan, India's coast

Heavy rains battered India and Pakistan's coastal areas along the Arabian Sea, flooding cities in western India's Gujarat state and forcing thousands of people from their homes. At least 28 people have died this week in state, as meteorologists in India and Pakistan warned that more heavy downpours and strong winds were expected to lash coast. More than 18,000 have been evacuated. (*Business Recorder, August 30th, 2024, Page 1*)

Rains kill 24 as coasts brace for cyclone impact

Around two dozen people were killed as heavy monsoon rains caused widespread devastation across country, with coastal areas bracing for impact of a rare August cyclone. (*Dawn, August 31th, 2024, Page 1*)

13.2 # Rainfall

Lahore submerged as rain breaks 44-year record

As a rare spell of torrential monsoon rain inundated Lahore, breaking a 44-year record in just three hours, six people across the country lost their lives in rain-related incidents, while almost a dozen received injuries. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 1*)

Six killed as rains continue to lash parts of Balochistan

Different areas of northern and central Balochistan continued to receive heavy rains, causing floods in some areas of the province, including Sibi where floodwater entered some villages. At least six people were reportedly killed in rain- and flood-related incidents in different areas of the province. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 5*)

School's roof collapses as heavy rain pounds upper Sindh districts

Roof of a classroom in a primary school building in Digri taluka collapsed during heavy rain, which mostly pounded upper Sindh region. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 17*)

12 perish in KP as rains continue to batter country

At least twelve people were killed and 21 others were wounded in several rain-related incidents across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over past 24 hours as rains continued to lash large parts of KP, Balochistan & Gilgit-Baltistan. (*Dawn, August 5th, 2024, Page 1*)

Flooding worsens in Dadu amid more rainfall on Khirthar mountains

Heavy rainfall continued over Khirthar mountain range for a third consecutive day to aggravate flooding down into western parts of Dadu district. Hill torrents coming from the mountains, coupled with downpour, have already resulted in heavy flooding in several UCs of Johi and Sehwan talukas. (*Dawn, August 6th, 2024, Page 15*)

13 dead, 18 injured in KPK rain-related incidents: NDMA

The ongoing floods triggered by monsoon rains have brought massive death and destruction in KPK as in past 24 hours, 13 people have lost their lives and 18 have been injured owing to various rain-related incidents. Floods damaged 64 houses in KPK province and killed 87 livestock. (*Business Recorder, August 6th, 2024, Page 12*)

55 die, 145 injured during monsoon: Punjab PDMA

A report released by PDMA revealed that so far 55 persons have died and 145 others injured in rain-related building collapse and lightening incidents etc, during the ongoing monsoon season in Punjab. (*Dawn, August 8th, 2024, Page 2*)

Growers suffer losses as rains damage date crop in Khairpur

The ongoing downpour across the province has done considerable damage to date fruit in Khairpur district and growers fear large scale losses thanks to rain as well as middlemen mafia who take undue advantage of the situation and buy the rain-hit fruit at lowest rates. (*Dawn, August 10th, 2024, Page 15*)

Season's heaviest rainfall submerges Pindi

A record spell of monsoon rain during the ongoing season inundated houses and marketplaces, swelled Leh Nullah to a pre-alert level and damaged streets and graveyards across the garrison city. The downpour that lashed the city for almost four hours was the heaviest during current monsoon season, prompting the administration to summon army to deal with any untoward situation. (*Dawn, August 11th, 2024, Page 8*)

Rains, floods damage bridges, roads, maroon tourists in GB

Speedy melting of glaciers caused by heatwave and intermittent rains in different areas of Gilgit-Baltistan triggered flash floods in streams, nullahs and rivers, sweeping away a wooden bridge, damaging another, blocking roads and stranding local and foreign tourists in different areas of the region. Flash floods also damaged crops, agriculture land, uprooted trees and disconnected several villages from other GB areas. Officials of the local administration said a flash flood swept away a wooden bridge linking Finna village with other areas. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 5*)

Heavy rain claims two lives in KP

A local government representative was swept away by strong currents in a Swabi nullah, and a minor boy was killed in a Bannu wall collapse as heavy rains triggered flash floods in several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, sweeping away houses and shops and blocking roads. (*Dawn, August 18th, 2024, Page 8*)

Heavy rains, flooding wreak havoc with city life; damage utilities and crops in most districts of Sindh

Widespread heavy rains across most districts of the interior of Sindh played havoc with electricity network and drainage system, besides causing heavy flooding in both urban and rural areas alike. The downpour is reported to have caused great damage to standing crops and seedlings in upper and central Sindh regions. Four farmworkers were bitten by snakes during the rainfall in Larkana district. They survived due to timely treatment provided to them at Chandka Medical College Hospital. Landowners and farmers were equally affected as standing crops and seedling were inundated. Homes of farmers were also destroyed by downpour and flooding. (*Dawn, August 18th, 2024, Page 15*)

Three killed as rain batters parts of Balochistan

Heavy rains and thunderstorms have claimed three lives in Balochistan, rendering hundreds of people without shelter, while raging flash floods have swept away roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 3*)

Five killed as torrential rains batter most Sindh districts for second day

Up to 10 hours of torrential rains with brief pauses in Larkana and Qambar-Shahdadkot districts ravaged all utilities and caused heavy flooding, leaving municipalities totally helpless and confining most people to their houses. The upper Sindh districts of Sukkur, Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Ghotki and Kandhkot-Kashmore were pounded again with the same intensity as was witnessed. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 15*)

Heavy rain, flooding claim five lives across country

As heavy rains lashed parts of the country claiming at least five lives in three provinces and causing considerable damage to infrastructure, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said it anticipated more rains and thundershowers with isolated heavy falls from August 20-24 in several regions. While buildings of two schools and a basic health unit were swept away in Dera Ismail Khan and shops destroyed in South Waziristan, widespread damage was reported in Balochistan. Also, the situation in Dadu worsened following continued downpour. Rainfall likely in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir and at scattered places in Balochistan, and advised the relevant authorities to make preparations to avoid flood-like situation. (*Dawn, August 20th, 2024, Page 1*)

84 dead, 224 injured in ongoing monsoon in Punjab

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) flood alert fact sheet revealed that 84 people were killed, 224 others injured in rain-related building collapse and lightning incidents during the ongoing monsoon season in Punjab. The report revealed that 84 people were killed, 224 injured and 245 houses were affected due to monsoon rains during the current year. The deaths occurred due to lightning, electrocution of damaged houses and the collapse of dilapidated buildings. Up to 44 cattle also died due to monsoon rains and 100 houses were completely affected while 145 houses were partially affected. (*Dawn, August 20th, 2024, Page 2*)

Five dead as roof caves in during heavy rain in Islamabad

As rain lashed Islamabad and Rawalpindi, five deaths were reported in Model Town, Sihala, after the roof of a warehouse belonging to an automobile company caved in due to the downpour. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 4*)

Multan downpour breaks 48-year record

The monsoon rains continued to pour across the province with Multan receiving the heaviest rain of 172 mm, breaking the city's 48-year-old record of 134.5 mm rain in 1976. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 12*)

One dead, five injured as Punjab pounded by rain

Intermittent rainfall continued across Punjab causing urban flash flooding in several cities. In lightning strikes and roof collapses, one person died and five others were injured. Additionally, 45 cattle were reported dead in these weather-related roof collapse incidents over the past 24 hours. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 2*)

Locals breach farmland to drain out rainwater

Residents of at least six to seven villages in the city outskirts have made breaches to drain out the rainwater accumulated in their fields. Since Gujrat has witnessed an unprecedented rainfall in the current season making the city a worst example of urban flooding in the central Punjab, the citizens are still receiving the aftershocks of the rains, said a senior official of the administration. He said the agricultural land on at least 2,400 acres in villages like Loraan, Nathowal, Jhans, Qadir Colony, Malhu Khokhar, Madina Syedan and others have been inundated by the rainwater putting the freshly-sown crops by the farmers at stake who had created breaches by cutting the asphalt roads and pathways to steer the water towards the city. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 2*)

Seven killed, 18 injured in rain-related incidents

Seven people were killed and 18 were injured due to heavy rain as structures collapsed in various districts of the province (Punjab) during the last 24 hours. The report also revealed that 105 people died and 260 were injured due to monsoon rains in the last one month from June 30 to Aug 29. As many as 267 houses were damaged and 89 animals were killed. (*Dawn, August 30th, 2024, Page 2*)

13 killed in roof collapse as rain havoc hits Upper Dir

Thirteen members of a family were killed, including children and women, in a roof collapse incident, as heavy rain wreaked havoc in the Kohistan area of Upper Dir district. (*Dawn, August 31st, 2024, Page 8*)

KP: 68 dead in rain-related incidents

Sixty-eight people have died in different rain related incidents triggered by the monsoon in KP so far, said a report of PDMA. It said that 68 people have been died incidents such as roof and wall collapses across the province. The rains also damaged 786 houses, 200 of them completely damaged. The majority of the victims were children, as 32 such deaths were recorded from different areas of the KP. These incidents also caused injuries to 117 people. (*Business Recorder, August 31st, 2024, Page 7*)

13.3 # Flood

Families homeless as Glof destroys Chitral village

A glacial lake outburst flood devastated a large part of Sorech village in the Upper Chitral district, leaving 30 families homeless. The villagers rushed to safety after being alerted by announcements from mosques, but the flood still caught them off-guard. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 8*)

Flash floods continue to batter Kaghan, Manor valleys

Rains and flash floods continued to batter Kaghan and Manor valleys as torrents in the Mahandri area swept away eight more shops. The gushing waters of Manor stream brought heavy boulders with them, intercepting Kunhar River's flow and creating a lake in the Mahandri area, where over 20 shops have so far been swept away by floodwaters. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 8*)

Flash floods devastate Upper, Lower Chitral

The flashfloods triggered by glacial lake outburst floods (Glofs) in Upper Chitral and Lower Chitral swept away dozens of houses, bridges, roads, crops and fruit orchards. Dozens of families were affected by the floods in these areas while 20 families were displaced. Power pylons and water irrigation channels were also washed away by floods. (*The News, August 4th, 2024, Page 1*)

Flash floods cut off road links to several Balochistan areas

Flash floods triggered by heavy rains washed away human settlements and roads in Jhal Magsi, Ziarat and other areas of Balochistan. Hundreds have been left homeless in Sibi as gushing water in rivers and seasonal streams swept away homes after breaching protection dykes. Similar destruction has been reported in Bolan and Kachhi districts. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 5*)

Floods in Chitral: British High Commission says has funded essential items for 300 families

The British High Commission (HC) in Islamabad announced that it has funded essential items for around 300 families in Chitral as relief efforts are underway following the fresh floods hit parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Floods have already led to 141 deaths, 266 injuries and damage to over 1,000 houses in Pakistan this year. Climate change is a priority for the UK government. During the devastating floods of 2022, the UK helped over 2.3 million people, dedicating a total of £39 million in UK aid, the statement added. (*Business Recorder, August 7th, 2024, Page 3*)

Flash floods, landslides wreak havoc in Balochistan

Heavy monsoon rains continued to lash northern and eastern Balochistan, causing flash floods, landslides and widespread damage. Link roads have been washed out, and traffic on highways has been suspended, with the result that provincial capital, Quetta, has been cut off from many district headquarters. (*Dawn, August 8th, 2024, Page 5*)

34 villages evacuated in view of floods in Indus

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) rescued people in 34 villages of south Punjab in view of the floods in the River Indus. The villagers were flooded in Mianwali, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur. Pakistan Meteorological Department forecasted rain-wind / thundershower in Kashmir, Murree, Galiyat, Islamabad/Rawalpindi and Punjab districts. (*Dawn, August 10th, 2024, Page 2*)

Landslides, flash flood wreak havoc in Astore

Landslides and flash flood triggered by monsoon rains wreaked havoc in Kushnat, Pakora, Mominabad and other villages of Astore, killing two children of a family and destroying a veterinary hospital, a private school, several shops, cattle sheds, agricultural land, trees and crops. According to police, landslides and flash flood caused widespread destruction in upper areas of Pakora, Kushwant and Mominabad areas of Astoor district. Two children of a family died when they were hit by the landslide while other people of the affected area fled to Kushnat village to save their lives. In Pakora, two private hotels, as many homes, a private bank and standing crops on several acres were damaged. (*Dawn, August 13th, 2024, Page 5*)

KKH blocked as floods ravage GB

As flash floods fueled by rapidly melting glaciers continued to wreak havoc in GilgitBaltistan, Karakoram Highway was blocked at multiple points due to mudslides. The rapidly melting glaciers due to heatwaves have caused flooding in streams and rivers in various areas of Gilgit Baltistan. These floods have swept away crops and damaged dozens of houses in the region. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 1*)

Rangpur Canal breach floods houses, farmland

A 30-foot breach occurred in the Rangpur Canal at Basti Kumhara, 35 kilometres from the city, causing extensive damage to dozens of houses and flooding hundreds of acres of farmland. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 8*)

22 die; roads washed away, crops destroyed

As many as 22 people have so far lost their lives while water levels in rivers have risen and streams and nullahs have burst their banks as heavy monsoon rains have wreaked havoc in different parts of the country. (*Business Recorder, August 19th, 2024, Page 12*)

Breach in canal dyke causes flooding in villages

Rajwa Shakh developed over 30-foot wide breach inundating several villages and crops of chili and cotton on hundreds of acres. (*Dawn, August 20th, 2024, Page 15*)

Six killed, 228 houses destroyed in floods

The floods triggered by the monsoon rains have continued wreaking havoc countrywide as in the past 24 hours, at least, six persons were killed, 14 injured and 228 houses were destroyed, authorities said. In the past 24 hours, three persons lost their lives in KP, two in Sindh, and one in Balochistan. (*Business Recorder, August 22nd, 2024, Page 4*)

UN mission comes up with report on flood damages

A fact-finding mission of the United Nations and three relief agencies has reported extensive damages and displacement due to the recent floods in Sindh's Khairpur and Sukkur districts and Balochistan. Along with the UN, three relief agencies — Islamic Relief, Concern Worldwide, and Bhattai Social Watch and Advocacy (BSWA) — had sent their missions to the districts to identify the needs of the affected population, the

response to floods, and gaps in relief activity. Four union councils in the Kutcha areas of Khairpur district suffered significant damage, resulting in the displacement of 33,178 persons, including 11,060 men, 13,700 women and 4,209 children. Currently, 130 families live by the roadside, and 160 with their relatives.

In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the likelihood of Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding (Glof) events has increased due to the prevailing weather conditions and expected westerly weather system. Around 874 houses and seven schools have been damaged in the province. Timber smuggling through the Indus River, which intensifies during the monsoon season and flooding, poses a significant threat to human lives and violates flood-related instructions issued by the PDMA and the National Disaster Management Authority. (*Dawn, August 26th, 2024, Page 3*)

100 villages inundated in medium flood at Dadu-Moro bridge

One hundred villages were inundated in Dadu, Sehwan and Manjhand talukas in Katcho area along the River Indus when a medium flood passed from Dadu-Moro bridge. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 15*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

14.1 # Landslide

Huge landslide partially blocks Kunhar River in Mahandri area

A huge landslide partially blocked the Kunhar River, diverting water to the nearby human settlements and Mansehra-Naran-Jalkhad Road in the Mahandri area. Mahandri had been devastated after the flash floods swept away the central bridge on the MNJ Road on July 30, cutting the region off from rest of the country till August 13 when the Frontier Works Organisation installed a steel bridge connecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Gilgit-Baltistan. The residents said landslides from the alpine forest continued to fall into the Kunhar River entire day. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 9*)

15 # RESISTANCE

Protesters block China border over tax issue

The protest over the implementation of the GB Chief Court's order, which restrains the collection of income tax, sales tax, and additional sales tax on imported items from China through the Khunjerab Pass, intensified, with protesters disrupting immigration operations and blocking exit point to China from Pakistan through the Pass. Protesters threatened to block Karakoram Highway (CPEC), and extend the protest to other areas of the region if their demands are not met. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 1*)

Officials claim success in talks with Gwadar protesters

After days of simmering tensions in the port city of Gwadar, which has remained under a communications and road blockade over the past several days amid protests by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC), officials claimed a breakthrough in their talks with protesters, led by Dr Mahrang Baloch. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 3*)

Police briefly detain 16 activists of BYC near press club

Several activists belonging to the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) were `picked up` by police from the Karachi Press Club (KPC). However, the activists were released after a short while. The BYC organisers and police officials said that four women, including BYC leader Fauzia Baloch, were among those detained by the authorities. However, in the evening, DIG-South Syed Asad Raza said that the police detained some people from outside the KPC for `chanting anti-state slogans`. He said, however, all the detained persons were released. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 13*)

Grain market shut in protest against proposed withholding tax on pulses

The city's grain market remained shuttered in protest against government plans to impose withholding tax on pulses, which was to be recovered by millers from wholesalers and retailers. All shops in Anaj Mandi and Tower Market remained shut while office-bearers of the Hyderabad Daal Mills Owners Association also staged a protest in SITE area and later held a press conference. The association's president Salahuddin Qureshi told journalists that withholding tax was never imposed on pulses in any government during the last 75-year history of the country, considering the fact that pulses was the poor man's staple food. (*Dawn, August 1st, 2024, Page 15*)

Gwadar sit-in persists amid trust deficit between Baloch Yakjehti Committee, govt

Protest demonstrations, roadblocks and clashes between protesters and security personnel continued in Quetta, Gwadar and other parts of Balochistan amid an apparent trust deficit between the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) and the provincial administration over the implementation of a recently signed agreement. Balochistan government officials claimed that dozens of protesters and BYC supporters were released following the agreement, making it BYC's responsibility to end the protests. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 1*)

14 held as police break up BYC rally in Karachi

Police picked up several workers of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) when they gathered near the Arts Council roundabout to stage a rally in protest over incidents of alleged torture and detention in Gwadar. The BYC said in a statement that the police manhandled participants of the rally and detained around 50 workers, including women, when they tried to march on the Karachi Press Club. It said that the rally was aimed at highlighting the police high-handedness in Gwadar. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 13*)

Sit-in participants express solidarity with Palestinians

On the ninth day of its sit-in at Liaquat Bagh, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) observed as a solidarity day with the people of Palestine and held a rally at Committee Chowk, demanding the government support the Palestinians at the international level. A large number of people attended rally. The participants were carrying placards and chanting slogans against the Israeli brutalities in Gaza. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 4*)

JI sit-in demands review of contracts with IPPs

The city chapter of the Jamaat-i-Islami staged a sit-in outside the Sindh Governor House, aiming to continue it “for an indefinite period” and demanded the cancellation of agreements with independent power producers (IPPs) and revision of the tax regime mainly on the salaried class. The JI also took the opportunity to raise Karachi-specific issues, seeking cancellation of the agreement with K-Electric, devolution of power in local government system and transparency in the spending of billions of rupees “in the name of development” that has “failed to improve city’s infrastructure and fix decades-old problems of water supply and drainage system.” (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 15*)

Over 40 BYC activists picked up in pre-dawn raid on protest camp

More than 40 activists of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) were picked up in a pre-dawn action on their protest camp set up outside the Karachi Press Club. Police and the BYC said that protesting Baloch activists, including women, staged a sit-in following a police action against their rally. A judicial magistrate remanded 13 BYC activists in police custody in a case pertaining to raising provocative slogans against state institutions. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 15*)

JI holds sit-in outside Sindh governor’s house

Following the protest call by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) the party’s Karachi leadership staged protest outside Governor House against the inclusion of taxes on the electricity bills, slab system and IPPs issues. (*Business Recorder, August 4th, 2024, Page 2*)

Doctors, politicians protest shifting of Nishtar wards to tertiary hospital

Politicians and doctors started protesting against the Punjab government for shifting two departments of the Nishtar Hospital Multan to Tertiary Care Hospital Nishtar-II, Shujabad. The protesters claimed that the transfer of the departments from the Nishtar Hospital was an injustice to the students, the public and the doctors of these departments. (*Dawn, August 5th, 2024, Page 2*)

Workers’ rally demands end to contractual system

Labour leaders and activists staged a rally at the conclusion of their three-day protest camp and demanded that the government be declared every form of the contractual system a crime and ensure its eradication. The protest camp and the rally against the contractual system were, jointly organised by National Trade Union Federation Pakistan and Home-Based Women Workers Federation. (*Dawn, August 5th, 2024, Page 14*)

Petrol shortage hits Quetta amid ongoing protests

The city of Quetta is experiencing a severe petrol shortage, causing significant inconvenience for residents. Many petrol pumps across the city have closed, leaving people struggling to find fuel. The petrol supply to Quetta has been halted due to ongoing protests since July 27. As a result, petrol production in the city has come to a standstill. Amid the shortage, black market for Iranian petrol has surged, with prices skyrocketing to 300 to 350 rupees per litre. (*Business Recorder, August 5th, 2024, Page 5*)

Pak-China trade, travel suspended as GB traders' protest intensifies

The ongoing protest by Gilgit-Baltistan traders against the Federal Board of Revenue and Pakistan Customs has intensified, with protesters blocking the Kara-koram Highway (KKH), also a key CPEC route, suspending travel and trade between Pakistan and China through Khunjerab Pass. A large number of foreign passengers, including tourists from the United Kingdom, Spain, France, as well as China, who were travelling to China from Pakistan, have been stranded at Sost. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 3*)

Gwadar sit-in continues despite 'successful' talks

While the government claimed that negotiations with the protesting Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) remained successful, no headway has been reported in ending the prolonged sit-ins in Gwadar, Quetta, and other parts of Balochistan. The protests by supporters and workers of BYC continued, with no sign from the leadership of BYC regarding calling them off before all their demands are met. Their demands include the release of all arrested participants of sit-ins, withdrawing of all cases, and registration of FIRs against those involved in the recent shooting in Gwadar and Noshki. Both sides are accusing each other of not implementing the agreement signed by government and BYC's central leadership after negotiation last week. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 5*)

Women join JI sit-in to lodge protest against inflated power bills

Hundreds of women activists of the Jamaat-i-Islami thronged Aiwan-i-Saddar Road to take part in the sit-in being held by their party to protest high electricity tariff, capacity payments to independent power producers (IPPs) and inflated power bills. Carrying placards, chanting slogans and wearing armbands, the women from almost all age groups and children participated in the sit-in that continued for more than five hours, keeping vehicular traffic suspended on the busy road in front of the Sindh Governor House for the fourth consecutive day. The protesters demanded immediate cut in power bills, relief in taxes mainly to salaried class and an effective local government system in Karachi. (*Dawn, August 7th, 2024, Page 13*)

GB traders warned against continuing protest

Pakistan Customs advised the protesting traders to lift restrictions on consignments lying at the Sost dry port after having been imported from China. Besides, the Gilgit-Baltistan customs announced approaching the GB Chief Court with a request to vacate its orders halting the collection of taxes, sales tax and additional sales tax from traders on items imported from China. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 2*)

Madyan residents protest delay in road construction

A large number of residents of Chail Bashigram blocked the main Madyan-Kalam Road in protest against the delayed construction of the Chail Bashigram Road. Chail Bashigram is a major tourist area in the Madyan Valley, known for trout fish, lush green mountains and crystal clear glacial water. (*Dawn, August 10th, 2024, Page 8*)

'Missing' person's sister to protest in Quetta's Red Zone

The sister of Abdul Hai, who allegedly went missing from Awaran, announced that if her brother was not recovered by August 16, she would hold a protest rally from the University of Balochistan to the Red Zone in Quetta on August 20. Addressing a presser along with Mama Qadeer Baloch, the vice chairman of Voice for Baloch Missing Persons, outside of the press club, she expressed serious concern over the alleged forced disappearances of her brother and other people. She said her brother went missing on June 1 from the Awaran district hospital where he was on duty. She appealed to security forces to recover his brother, who worked at hospital as an operation theatre assistant and claimed he had nothing to do with politics. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 5*)

Khyber teachers seek regularisation

The district chapter of Young Teachers Association has demanded of government to regularise the services of those teachers, who were appointed in 2022. Addressing a press conference at Landi Kotal Press Club, YTA ditric president Mubarak Shah Afridi said that young teachers were guarantors of the future of the young generation and denial of their due rights was a criminal neglect on part of provincial government. Elaborating his association five-point demand list, he said that YTA was against the abolition of pension for teachers recruited before June 2022, implementation of contributory provident fund (CP fund), ad-hoc appointment of senior science teachers (SST) and deduction of Retirement Benefits and Death Compensation (RB & DC) and wanted regularisation of ad-hoc teachers appointed in 2022. He said that YTA also rejected inclusion of teachers appointed nine years ago in Government Provident (GP) fund while abolishing their pension. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 9*)

Minorities Day celebrated with call for safeguarding rights

A large number of people gathered at Frere Hall to voice their concerns on National Minorities Day. The government declared August 11 as National Minorities Day in 2009. The date coincides with the historic speech made by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah on August 11, 1947 to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Mr Jinnah spoke of an inclusive and impartial government, religious freedom, rule of law, and equality for all. He said that the state would protect the rights of every individual regardless of religion, caste or creed. The people at Frere Hall called for urgent solutions to the pressing challenges faced by minorities, asking the government to protect their rights. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 13*)

Professors, others seeking salaries face action for holding demo in Larkana university

Management of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SMBBMU) has issued show-cause notices to leaders of the varsity's teachers' association and workers' organisation over holding a demonstration on August 6 to demand timely release of their salaries. (*Dawn, August 12th, 2024, Page 15*)

Trade with Afghanistan via Torkham comes to halt

Trade with Afghanistan via Torkham came to a complete halt when agitated truckers and customs clearing agents closed the road leading to the border ‘Zero Point’ against imposition of the condition of Temporary Admission Document for transporters of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Protesters placed containers on the main road and burnt tyres to prevent movement of trade goods vehicles from either side of the border before staging a sit-in. Hundreds of transporters, custom clearing agents, local traders and daily wagers gathered at the venue of protest and chanted slogans to demand abolishing of the TAD condition for transporters and easement in visa policy between the two neighbouring countries. (*Dawn, August 13th, 2024, Page 8*)

Kukikhels refuse to end protest in Khyber

Talks between the government officials and the Kukikhel elders failed with the tribe announcing to stage a demonstration at the Bab-i-Khyber to protest the authorities’ failure to issue a schedule for the return of the remaining displaced families to their homes. The Kukikhel tribesmen have established a protest camp at the Bab-i-Khyber for the last nine days, demanding an immediate announcement of the schedule for the return of remaining displaced families of their tribe. (*Dawn, August 14th, 2024, Page 8*)

Kukikhels protest delay in return of IDPs to Tirah

Scores of Kukikhel tribesmen protested a long delay in return of hundreds of displaced families to Tirah valley. They gathered at historic Bab-i-Khyber in Jamrud here carrying black flags, and stayed put for several hours amid humid weather. The tribal elders had given the call for protest and observance of a black day on country’s 77th Independence Day after their talks with Peshawar’s commissioner ended in a deadlock. They called for announcement of an early schedule for return of the remaining internally displaced persons from their Kukikhel tribe to their homes. (*Dawn, August 15th, 2024, Page 8*)

Labourers resume sit-in at Pak-Afghan border

Daily wage labourers resumed their sit-in at Chaman in protest against the government’s decision to make possession of passport mandatory for crossing the Pakistan-Afghan border. The labourers had called off the months-long sit-in earlier this week after their representatives reached an agreement with the government allowing them to cross the border upon showing national identity cards. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 5*)

Students protest increase in MDCAT fee

The Balochistan Students Alliance staged a protest against the increase in Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) fee. A large number of students gathered in front of the Quetta Press Club carrying placards and banners inscribed with their demands. The protesters stated that the MDCAT fee has been fixed at Rs8,000, making it difficult for poor students from Balochistan to register for the test. As a result, they lamented, many have been unable to take the test. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 5*)

Police brutality sparks protest in Dadu

A large number of people staged a demonstration on railway tracks in Murad Colony in protest against what they described as violent abduction of an ailing young man by police and a retired SSP. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 15*)

Unrest over `trespass` on girls` hostel cripples Chandka Medical College

A large number of Chandka Medical College students took to the streets, blocked the entrance and road leading to the institution and paralysed the administration. Police had to be called in to get the gate reopened and the road cleared for free movement of faculty, officers and other employees. The students were protesting against issuance of notices to many students and an FIR lodged by the college administration at Rehmatpur police station against 13 agitating students for allegedly disturbing academic atmosphere on campus and crippling the administration. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 15*)

Balochistan Protest

Relatives of missing persons, including a large number of women and children, hold a demonstration demanding recovery of their loved ones. Protesters complained they had no information about their family members and demanded that those facing criminal charges be produced before a court of law. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 1*)

Protesters block highway over Sadiq Public School fee hike

A large number of parents of students staged a sit-in and blocked the national highway for hours in front of the Sadiq Public School (SPS) against the administration's decision to increase fees by 100pc. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 8*)

Benazir varsity accepts students' demands to bring end to week-long agitation

The week-long agitation by students of Chandka Medical College and Bibi Aseefa Dental College over alleged trespass on girls' hostel by a suspect on Aug 13 ended after administration of the SMBBMU accepted the demands put forward by the All Students Action Committee. "The SMBBMU (Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University) vice chancellor has constituted an inquiry committee regarding the agitating students' allegations against the hostel's provost. (*Dawn, August 20th, 2024, Page 15*)

Outrage at Ganga Ram as medics protest against rape bid on minor girl

Tension escalated at the Fatima Jinnah Medical University and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital when hundreds of lady doctors and medical students took to the streets to condemn the rape attempt on a minor girl on the hospital's premises. The medics came to the support of the five-year-old victim for the 'delayed' response by the institute's management, calling Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to take notice of the incident for exemplary punishment to the attacker. Doctors and students were carrying banners inscribed with slogans 'stop raping girls' and 'punish the rapists'. (*Dawn, August 21st, 2024, Page 2*)

Varsity employees in Balochistan hold protest for salary payment

Hundreds of employees of the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (Buitems) took out a rally against the non-payment of their salaries for several months. The protesters marched on the Airport Road and gathered at the Markhor Chowk where the Buitems Staff Association president, Sohail Anwar, and others addressed the rally and criticised the university administration for not paying their salaries. (*Dawn, August 23rd, 2024, Page 5*)

Young Abbasi Shaheed Hospital doctors in Karachi protest against non-payment of salary

A large number of patients did not receive treatment at emergency ward and outpatient department (OPD) of Abbasi Shaheed Hospital as young doctors shut facilities and boycotted emergency section in protest over non-payment of their stipend for months. At least 153 house officers, who were appointed in April this year, have been deprived of their monthly salary for the past four months. (*Dawn, August 24th, 2024, Page 13*)

KP traders demand withdrawal of 2pc tax on exports

Traders and exporters asked the provincial government of KP to immediately withdraw recently imposed 2 percent tax on exports from the province. The business community also asked for abolishment of fixed tax of Rs 1,000 on commercial and domestic consumers in the electricity bills. They also called for immediate withdrawal of the fixed tax imposed by FBR on shopkeepers from Rs 10,000 to Rs 45,000. Business community strongly opposed the collection of double cess on imports and demanded to immediately withdraw it. (*Business Recorder, August 26th, 2024, Page 2*)

North Waziristan people hold peace rally in Mirali

A large number of tribesmen staged a peace rally in Mirali tehsil of North Waziristan district. The people came out onto the roads and passed through the Mirali Bazaar, demanding peace in their region. The participants were holding white flags, huge banners and placards. They were chanting slogans for peace. The protesters demanded steps to arrest the deteriorating law and order situation. They also demanded ownership on their resources. (*Dawn, August 26th, 2024, Page 9*)

Malir villagers demand action against ‘polluting’ mills in Karachi

Residents of Saleh Muhammad Goth in Malir demanded immediate action against three textile mills allegedly polluting air, water and soil in their area by emitting hazardous gases and discharging chemical waste. They organised a rally, which was also joined by women and children in large numbers who raised slogans against the “illegal factories” and official indifference towards their plight. Highlighting villagers’ suffering, Baloch said the air had become increasingly suffocating especially for ailing, children and elderly. “Children often complain of burning sensation in throat while many of us have developed skin infections. These health challenges are a huge burden on poor families, barely surviving on two meals.” (*Dawn, August 26th, 2024, Page 13*)

Women, children among six injured as police try to dispossess residents of Jamshoro village
Nooriabad section of M9 Motorway remained blocked for more than four hours during course of a protest demonstration over police action against villagers, who had earlier resisted their eviction from land which, according to them, has been in their possession for decades. Six persons, two of them women & two children, were injured when police applied baton charge on villagers while they were resisting police attempt. villagers said police also hit some villagers with rifle butts. (*Dawn, August 26th, 2024, Page 15*)

Red Zone sealed as USC employees protest

The law enforcement agencies put security on high alert in city and sealed the Red Zone in wake of a protest by Utility Stores Cooperation employees against the government's plans to close the organisation. The capital police sealed the Red Zone and kept open only one gate of the Zone for the entry of motorists as the USC employees announced to stage a protest outside parliament against the proposed closure of the organisation. The administration has sealed the Red Zone by placing shipping containers in order to avert the entry of protesters to the Red Zone. However, the USC employees staged a sit-in outside their head office and did not move towards Red Zone. Protesters chanted slogans against government; workers expressed their frustration and concerns over potential loss of their jobs. (*Business Recorder, August 27th, 2024, Page 4*)

Wapda CBA observes 'demands day', opposes privatisation of Discos 'under IMF dictate'

The All-Pakistan Wapda Hydro Electric Workers Union (CBA) and its different chapters observed Youm-e-mutalibaat (demands day) to reiterate its demands, urging the government not to privatise profit-making power distribution companies "under IMF dictate". In Hyderabad, the CBA president Abdul Latif Nizamani said while speaking to a rally at a local press club that in the first phase, the power distribution companies, which were earning 100pc profit were being sold off, and in the next phase more companies would be outsourced. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 15*)

Traders stick to guns, go on strike as planned

Despite FBR's assurance to traders' community to amend the "Tajir Dost Scheme" including a reduction in tax rates, the traders backed by political parties such as JUI-F, Jamaat-e-Islami and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have decided to observe country-wide strike on August 28. (*Business Recorder, August 28th, 2024, Page 1*)

Traders' protest cripples businesses across country

In a rare show of unity and widespread discontent, traders across the country observed a nationwide strike, bringing major markets and shops to a grinding halt in protest against the skyrocketing power bills and recently-announced 'tax reforms' by the government aimed at bringing more and more retail sector into the tax net. Reports pouring in from different parts of the country suggest that the strike remained largely successful. The strike call given by various bodies of the traders also received support from some political parties. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 1*)

No headway in talks between KP govt, Kukikhel protesters

Talks between authorities and protesting Kukikhel tribesmen made no headway as the protesters refused to end the blockade of the main Torkham Highway despite an official promise to sympathetically consider their demand for the immediate return of internally displaced persons. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 8*)

Nationwide shutter-down inflicts colossal economic losses

The economy suffered substantial trade losses due to a countrywide strike called by the business community against high power bills and increasing tax burden, overshadowing claims of a major victory, while industrial activities exhibited a mixed trend due to various factors. Industrialists' bodies supported the strike by traders, while also urging the government to revise contracts with independent power producers (IPPs) without committing to keep their units closed. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 9*)

Strike shuts down businesses, industries across Sindh

Economic and business activities across Sindh, particularly in Karachi, came to a halt as traders kept their businesses closed on a "shutter-down strike" call given in protest against skyrocketing inflation, inflated electricity bills, Tajir Dost Scheme and various taxes. The nationwide shutter-down strike call was given by almost all associations and bodies of businessmen and traders in the country and supported by Jamaat-i-Islami. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 13*)

Activists stage rally against enforced disappearance

Rights activists, members of civil society and a good number of people staged a rally in metropolis to mark International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Carrying banners of their loved ones who have been forcibly disappeared or killed, rally began from Teen Talwar in Clifton & ended at Karachi Press Club. (*Dawn, August 31st, 2024, Page 13*)

Power Supply to Lines Area restored after protest

Residents of Lines Area blocked main Preedy Street for vehicular traffic and staged a sit-in in protest over disconnection of power supply by the K-Electric. Traffic remained choked at the key road until successful negotiations between KE officials and residents' representatives. Power supply to the locality was restored late in the night after disruption for several hours. (*Dawn, August 31st, 2024, Page 13*)

Additional WHT on edibles: KWGA says will observe strike today

Karachi Wholesale Grocers Association has announced to hold a shutter-down strike against the 2.5% additional withholding tax on essential kitchen items. Chairman of KWGA, Abdul Rauf Ibrahim that supply & sale of basic edible items such as rice, wheat, pulses, ghee, and cooking oil will be halted today, August 31, due to strike. Retailers are also observing strike. Strike is initially being observed in Karachi and Hyderabad against government's arbitrary taxing of essential commodities by an additional 2.5% withholding tax. "We (traders) are already paying 3.5%". (*Business Recorder, August 31st, 2024, Page 2*)

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1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Canada rail stoppage poised to disrupt N American agriculture

A looming stoppage of freight railway operations across Canada would disrupt North America's agricultural supply chain, snarling shipments of everything from wheat to fertilizer and meat. Unless last-minute labor agreements are reached, both Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Kansas City, an effective duopoly, will shut nearly all freight rail services in Canada for the first time. Canada is the world's top exporter of canola, used in food and biofuel, and of potash fertilizer, as well as the No. 3 wheat exporter. CPKC ships grain from the Dakotas and Minnesota to west-coast export terminals via Canada. The US exported \$28.2 billion of agricultural products last year to Canada, its third-largest destination for agricultural exports behind China and Mexico, USDA said. US imported \$40.1bn of Canadian agricultural products last year, making Canada second-largest origin of US agricultural imports behind Mexico. About 85% of 13m metric tons of US potash imports last year came from Canada, nearly all of which crossed by rail. (*Business Recorder, August 21st, 2024, Page 1*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

World cotton demand: recession beckons

World cotton prices have crashed by at least half over last 27 months, without so much as recording a nascent recovery in mill consumption across world. World consumption is still 3 percent below post-pandemic rally of 2021-22, and only 5 percent higher the pandemic year. At 80 cents per lb, prices are now flirting with psychological, long-term bottom, and a further slippage could only mean scarier things for most cotton producers. Remember, at 72pc stock-to-use ratio, global cotton stocks are now at a decade high level (minus pandemic year). (*Business Recorder, August 8th, 2024, Page 2*)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

China opens anti-subsidy probe into EU dairy imports

China opened an anti-subsidy probe into imported dairy products from European Union, stepping up tension with the bloc a day after Brussels published its revised tariff plan for China-made electric vehicles. EU revised its proposed punitive duties on imports of Chinese EVs to 36.3% from an initial planned duty of 37.6%, but fell short of abandoning them, as Beijing had called on Brussels to do. The revision drew rebuke from China's commerce ministry, which in response said it is "firmly opposed to and highly concerned" about findings, and vowed to take all necessary measures to protect Chinese firms. The anti-subsidy investigation on dairy announced by China's commerce ministry will focus on various types of cheeses, milks and creams intended for human

consumption. It was prompted by a complaint submitted by the Dairy Association of China and the China Dairy Industry Association on July 29 on behalf of the domestic dairy industry. China will examine 20 subsidy schemes from across the 27-strong bloc, specifically those from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Ireland, and Romania, it said in a statement. Of the countries listed, Ireland is by far the biggest exporter of dairy products to China, having sold \$461 million worth of goods to the Asian nation last year. The EU was China's second-largest source of dairy products with at least 36% of the total value of imports in 2023, behind only New Zealand. The EU exported 1.7 billion euros (\$1.84 billion) in dairy products to China in 2023, down from 2 billion in 2022. China already launched an anti-dumping probe into imports of EU pork in June, which mainly affects Spain, Netherlands and Denmark, in a tit-for-tat move against EV tariffs. (*Business Recorder, August 22nd, 2024, Page 1*)

5 # TRADE

WTO chief sees 'troubling times' for trade

The head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) said global commerce was going through troubling times, with protectionism on the rise. WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the future of trade lay in services, digitalisation and the green economy, in the global trade body's annual report. "These are troubling times for global trade. Amid geopolitical tensions and the backdrop of the climate crisis, we see increased protectionism and unilateral policy measures," she said. The WTO's annual report looked back at the Geneva-based organisation's activities in 2023, and early 2024. The WTO's 13th ministerial conference was held in Abu Dhabi in late February and ran on into early March, ending with a temporary extension of an e-commerce moratorium but no deals on agriculture and fisheries, highlighting sharp divisions between members amid geopolitical tensions and economic headwinds threatening global commerce. Okonjo-Iweala said that last year, merchandise trade volumes fell by 1.2pc percent, after growing 3pc year before, as many countries dealt with the lingering effects of inflation and high energy prices. The decline was partially offset by strong growth in services trade, which increased by nine percent in value terms, boosted by a post-pandemic tourism surge. The report said the value of total goods and commercial services trade was \$30.4 trillion last year, close to record highs. Digital commerce is growing far faster than its traditional counterpart. (*Business Recorder, August 1st, 2024, Page 12*)

First Russia-China barter trade may come this autumn

Russia and China may begin using barter trading schemes, three trade and payments, with two expecting deals involving agriculture as soon as this autumn, as Moscow and Beijing try to limit using banking systems monitored by USA. Bilateral payment delays were high on agenda when President Putin visited China in May. Barter trading would allow Moscow and Beijing to circumvent payment issues, reduce visibility Western regulators have over their bilateral transactions, and limit currency risk. China and Russia have a history of barter deals. In 2019, China agreed to trade palm oil worth

nearly \$150 million from Malaysia for construction services, natural resources products, and civilian and defence equipment. In 2021, a Chinese company exported auto parts worth \$2 million to Iran in exchange for pistachios. Barter deals between Moscow and Beijing were common before the Soviet Union collapsed and continued into 1990s, but deals now under discussion would be first in around 30 years. Russia's economy ministry published a document in February advising Russian companies how to conduct barter transactions. (*Business Recorder, August 9th, 2024, Page 1*)

China's exports growth slows to 3-month low in July

China's exports grew at their slowest pace in three months in July, missing expectations and adding to concerns about the outlook for the nation's vast manufacturing sector even as imports swung back to resume solid growth. Outbound shipments climbed 7.0% in July from the year earlier, a slower pace of growth than June's 8.6% rise and missing forecasts of a 9.7% increase. Imports rose at robust 7.2% rate, reversing a 2.3% decline in June and marking the strongest performance in three months. It also beat analysts' expectations of a 3.5% rise. The brighter imports figures were underpinned by Chinese firms' rush to purchase chips ahead of expectations of further United States curbs on chips exports to the Asian giant, said Xing Zhaopeng, senior China strategist at ANZ. China's trade surplus narrowed to \$84.65 billion in July, compared with the \$99 billion forecast and \$99.05 billion recorded in June. The United States has repeatedly highlighted the surplus as evidence of trade advantages enjoyed by Chinese firms. China's economy grew 4.7% in the second quarter, below expectations, keeping alive calls for policymakers to roll out more support to hit the government's full-year growth target of around 5%. Chinese leaders pledged last week that the stimulus measures will be directed at consumers and the country will make "countercyclical adjustments" during the rest of 2024. (*Business Recorder, August 12th, 2024, Page 9*)

Russia reintroduces ban on petrol exports till year end

The Russian government announced that it was reintroducing a ban on petrol exports for another six months to "maintain a stable situation" on the domestic fuel market after major price hikes. Government said that it has "brought in a restriction on exports of petrol from Sep 1 to Dec 31, 2024". Russia in March introduced a six-month ban on petrol exports, but then suspended it temporarily between May and July, saying the domestic market was saturated. (*Business Recorder, August 15th, 2024, Page 1*)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

EU begins paying 400m euros aid to Palestinian Authority

EU said it had begun paying 400 million euros (\$430 million) in emergency funding to Palestinian Authority to help address its "critical" budget problems. Brussels said first 150-million-euro tranche includes grants to help pay salaries of civil servants in West

Bank and support vulnerable families. The rest of the funds will be disbursed in August and September “subject to progress in the implementation of the reform agenda of the Palestinian Authority (PA)”, EU said. (*Business Recorder, August 1st, 2024, Page 1*)

\$20bn US package for Israel

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has approved sale to Israel of different military equipment worth over \$20 billion, Pentagon said. (*Dawn, August 14th, 2024, Page 11*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

8.1 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Sri Lanka needs to raise fiscal revenue to maintain stability: IMF

Sri Lanka must make further efforts to raise fiscal revenue if it is to maintain economic stability and restore debt sustainability, IMF said, after wrapping up a staff visit to the country. After September’s presidential election in the Indian Ocean nation, the global lender will discuss the timing for a review of progress in meeting key commitments as part of a \$2.9bn bailout. IMF has also provided Colombo and financial advisors of the country’s bondholders an assessment on a provisional deal Sri Lanka reached last month to restructure \$12.5bn in debt. Cash-strapped Sri Lanka plunged into its worst financial crisis in more than seven decades in 2022 with a severe dollar shortage sending inflation soaring to a high of 70%, its currency to record lows and its economy contracting 7.3%. IMF bailout secured in March last year helped to stabilise economic conditions. The rupee has risen 7% in recent months and inflation slowed to 2.4% in July. The economy is expected to grow 3% this year for first time since the crisis. The country also signed agreements with Japan, India, China and other creditor nations in June to restructure about \$10 billion in bilateral debt. (*Business Recorder, August 5th, 2024, Page 9*)

Bangladesh seeks \$3bn IMF emergency aid: report

Bangladesh’s new central bank governor said the country is seeking an additional \$3 billion from IMF as it looks to recover from recent political turmoil, and is buying dollars from local banks to meet unpaid debt. The South Asian country has begun talks with Washington-based IMF for the additional loan. Bangladesh secured \$4.7 billion in funding from the IMF last year. Bangladesh is also in talks with World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency for funds to help repay the debt it owes suppliers of critical services. The Bangladesh taka is down about 9.0 per cent since start of year. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 18*)

8.2 # World Bank

World Bank offers roadmap to avoid ‘middle-income trap’

More than 100 countries, including China, are at risk of entering a “middle-income trap” and failing to become wealthy nations, World Bank said as it unveiled a “comprehensive roadmap” to reach high-income status. In its 2024 World Development Report, the Bank said countries usually hit such a “trap” when they reach around 10 percent of annual US GDP per capita — roughly \$8,000 today — which can prove tough to move past. With

more than 100 countries representing more than 75 percent of the world's population currently classified as middle-income, tackling the issue will prove key for economic development in decades ahead. (*Business Recorder, August 2nd, 2024, Page 1*)

World Bank approves \$1.5bn Ethiopia rescue package

The World Bank has approved a \$1.5 billion financial package to support cash-strapped Ethiopia's economic reform programme after officials loosened curbs on local currency. The decision comes after the Horn of Africa country broke with decades of managing the birr, a move that unlocked long-negotiated funding with international lenders including IMF. The World Bank's financing is the first in a series and will include a \$1 billion grant and a \$500 million concessional loan. The World Bank said it expected to provide an additional \$6 billion in new commitments over the next three fiscal years. The IMF board approved a four-year loan programme worth around \$3.4 billion to support the reforms, with around \$1 billion immediately disbursed.

IMF was demanding several reforms of Ethiopia's state-controlled economy, including floating currency, in order to unlock funding. Battered in recent years by several armed conflicts, Covid pandemic and climate shocks, country has about \$28 billion of external debt and is grappling with sky-high inflation at around 20 percent and a shortage of foreign currency reserves. The landlocked country's credit rating was downgraded to a partial default in December by international agency Fitch after it missed a \$33 million coupon payment on a Eurobond. (*Business Recorder, August 4th, 2024, Page 1*)

9 # POLICY

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMICAL CONDITION

Famine has taken hold in Sudan's Darfur: monitor

The war in Sudan and restrictions on aid deliveries have caused famine in at least one site in North Darfur, and have likely led to famine conditions in other parts of the conflict region, a committee of food security experts said. The finding, linked to an internationally recognised standard known as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), is just the third time a famine classification has been made since the system was set up 20 years ago. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 10*)

UN warns of surging child malnutrition in Yemen

UN task force warned of soaring child malnutrition in Yemen's government-controlled areas, reporting "extremely critical" levels of malnutrition in parts of the country's south for the first time. "The number of children under the age of five suffering acute malnutrition, or wasting, rose by 34 per cent compared to the previous year... affecting over 600,000 children, including 120,000 children who are severely malnourished," Unicef said of the latest report by Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) initiative, of which it is a part. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 11*)

10.1 # Inflation

US inflation still ‘uncomfortably’ high: Fed official

US inflation remains “uncomfortably” above Federal Reserve’s target despite progress it has made in recent months. US central bank has held interest rates at a two-decade high for past year as it battles to return inflation to its long-term target of two percent following a pandemic-era surge in prices. Fed’s favored inflation gauge now sits at an annual rate of just 2.5%, well below peak reached in 2022, while US economy is still growing and labor market has weakened somewhat. (*Business Recorder, August 11th, 2024, Page 1*)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

‘Bees starving’ in disastrous year for French honey

Beekeepers across France say it has been a disastrous year for honey, with bees starving to death and production plummeting by up to 80 per cent. Mickael Isambert, a beekeeper in Saint-Ours-les-Roches in central France, lost 70pc of his honey and had to feed his colonies sugar to help them survive after a cold, rainy spring. “It has been a catastrophic year,” said Isambert, 44, who looks after 450 hives. A beehive typically produces 15 kilos of honey a year, but this time, Isambert said his farm had only produced between five and seven kilos. When it rains, bees don’t fly, they don’t go out, so they eat their own honey reserves. Low temperatures and heavy rainfall have prevented bees from gathering enough pollen, and flowers from producing nectar — which the insects collect to make honey. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 10*)

11.1 # Pollution

In shift, US backs global target to reduce plastic production

The United States, one of the world’s biggest plastic makers, will support a global treaty calling for a reduction in how much new plastic is produced each year in a major policy shift. The change away from its earlier calls to leave such decisions up to each country puts US in direct opposition to countries like Saudi Arabia and China. Those countries have argued that the hoped-for United Nations treaty, which negotiators are scheduled to conclude at a November summit in Busan, South Korea, should ignore questions of production and focus on downstream measures, such as encouraging recycling and changing packaging design. (*Business Recorder, August 15th, 2024, Page 4*)

Air pollution declines slightly but still the ‘biggest threat’

AQLI report notes pollution in South Asia dropped by 18pc in 2022 due to above-normal rainfall. After a consistent rise over the past two decades, air pollution in South Asia declined by 18 per cent in one year possibly on the back of above-normal rainfall in that year but still was the biggest external threat, said the 2024 report by the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI). Despite this slight decline which also led to a drop in global air pollution levels, South Asia remains one of the most polluted regions, accounting for 45 percent of total life years lost due to high pollution. The report stated that the average person living in the region would gain 3.5 years in their lives if WHO guidelines of 5 g/m³ were met. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 12*)

11.2 # Health

Mpox kills 548 in DR Congo this year

The Democratic Republic of Congo said an mpox outbreak has killed 548 people there this year, as the first case outside Africa of the virus's more dangerous variant was recorded in a traveller in Sweden. WHO declared the mpox surge in Africa a global public health emergency, worried by the rise in cases in the DRC and the spread to nearby countries. (*Dawn, August 16th, 2024, Page 10*)

18,737 mpox cases detected in Africa since Jan

A total of 18,737 suspected or confirmed cases of mpox were reported in Africa since the beginning of the year, including 1,200 cases in one week alone. To date, 3,101 confirmed and 15,636 suspected cases have been reported from 12 African Union member states, resulting in 541 deaths — a fatality rate of 2.89pc, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said. (*Business Recorder, August 18th, 2024, Page 1*)

Mpox is not the new Covid, WHO official stresses

A World Health Organisation official stressed that mpox, regardless of whether it is the new or old strain, is not the new Covid, as authorities know how to control its spread. (*Dawn, August 21st, 2024, Page 12*)

Germany to donate 100,000 mpox vaccines to Africa

Germany will donate 100,000 mpox vaccine doses to countries in Africa suffering from a surge in cases. (*Dawn, August 27th, 2024, Page 12*)

Floods spark cholera crisis in Yemen

A clinic in western Yemen has been inundated with suspected cholera patients after heavy rains and flooding sparked fears of a major outbreak in the impoverished and war-ravaged country. There are nearly 164,000 suspected cholera cases across Yemen, a figure that could climb to 250,000 in the coming weeks if the response is not bolstered. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 11*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

Net zero goal critical to Earth's stability: study

Bringing planet-heating emissions to net zero by 2100 is critical to avoid triggering “tipping points” that could destabilise the systems that keep Earth in balance, a new study said. If left unchecked, global warming could set in motion dangerous and irreversible changes to planetary systems such as the disappearance of ice sheets or a collapse of ocean currents. The level of global action on climate change is currently insufficient to avoid the risk of at least one of Earth's critical systems from tipping into collapse. Global warming is on track to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times. Under 2015 Paris climate agreement, nearly 200 countries committed to keeping warming “well below” 2C and to strive for safer goal of 1.5C by the end of century. World is not on track to achieve this. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 10*)

Extreme heat breaks records in China

Swathes of eastern China baked under a scorching heat wave, with temperatures in some areas reaching record highs. China is enduring a summer of extreme weather, with unseasonable heat searing parts of the north and east while torrential rains have triggered floods and landslides in central and southern regions. The mercury rose to 41.9°C in the eastern city of Hangzhou. The figure “broke the record for the (city’s) highest air temperature in the history of observation”. The previous record was 41.8°C in August 2022. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 12*)

Regional energy cooperation needed to mitigate climate change in South Asia: study

Experts at the launch of study ‘Energy Security in South Asia: A case of Transitioning to Sustainable Sources’ have stressed the need for efforts to address energy challenges in South Asia through regional cooperation to ensure energy security. The launch saw the participation of organisations such as the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and the German-based Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Over next 30 years, South Asia is expected to add over 600m people, significantly increasing energy needs. However, 66pc of region’s energy is imported, with fossil fuels accounting for 80pc of total energy production. (*Dawn, August 5th, 2024, Page 4*)

2024 ‘very likely’ to be hottest on record: EU

It is “increasingly likely” 2024 will be the hottest year on record, despite July ending a 13-month streak of monthly temperature records, the EU’s climate monitor said. The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said last month was the second warmest on record books going back to 1940, only slightly cooler than July 2023. Between June 2023 and June 2024, each month eclipsed its own temperature record for the time of year. Last month the global average temperature was 16.91 degrees Celsius, only 0.04C below July 2023. From January to July global temperatures were 0.70C above the 1991-2020 average. This anomaly would need to drop significantly over the rest of this year for 2024 not to be hotter than 2023 — “making it increasingly likely that 2024 is going to be the warmest year on record”, said C3S. (*Dawn, August 9th, 2024, Page 12*)

Data gap hits climate response in Asia-Pacific

Policymakers in Asia and the Pacific are struggling to collect and analyse the data they need to effectively respond to climate change, hampering efforts in a region considered world’s most vulnerable to effects of a warming planet, ADB said in a survey. The Asia-Pacific region is enduring severe and complex impacts of climate change. These include heat waves with temperatures above 45°C, catastrophic floods, destructive typhoons, prolonged droughts, and ravaging bushfires. The findings of the ADB’s survey, which covered 29 national statistical offices in Asia and the Pacific, were released as part of Key Indicators for Asia and Pacific 2024. Asia and the Pacific region accounts for more than half of all global greenhouse gas emissions and is hit harder by disasters and other climate risks than any other region. (*Dawn, August 23rd, 2024, Page 9*)

UN chief issues ‘global SOS’ over fast-rising Pacific Ocean

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres sent out a global climate “SOS” at a Pacific islands summit, unveiling research that shows the region’s seas rising much more swiftly than global averages. Sparsely populated and with few heavy industries, the Pacific islands collectively pump out less than 0.02 per cent of global emissions every year. A new report by top UN climate monitoring body showed seas had risen by around 15cm in some parts of the Pacific in the last 30 years. The global average was 9.4cm. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 11*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

Extreme heat claims 175,000 lives a year in Europe, says WHO

Extreme heat kills over 175,000 people a year in Europe, where temperatures are rising quicker than the rest of the globe, the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) European branch said. Of the some 489,000 heat-related deaths recorded each year by the WHO between 2000 and 2019, the European region accounts for 36 per cent or on average 176,040 deaths. The health body noted that temperatures in the region are “rising at around twice the global average rate.” WHO’s European region comprises 53 countries, including several in Central Asia. WHO noted that “heat stress” — which occurs when the human body is no longer able to maintain its temperature — “is the leading cause of climate-related death” in the region. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 10*)

More than 47,000 people died in Europe last year due to heat, report says

More than 47,000 people died in Europe due to scorching temperatures in 2023, with countries in region's south hit hardest, according to Barcelona Institute for Global Health. Last year was world's hottest on record. As climate change continues to increase temperatures, Europeans live in world's fastest-warming continent, facing growing health risks stemming from intense heat. 2023 death toll - below the more than 60,000 heat-related deaths estimated for the previous year - would have been 80% higher without measures introduced in past 20 years to help people adapt to rising temperatures. Researchers used death and temperature records from 35 European countries. They estimate that 47,690 died from causes related to high temperatures. Adjusting data for population, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain were countries with highest mortality rates related to heat. (*Business Recorder, August 13th, 2024, Page 5*)

13.1 # Drought

Nearly 68m suffering from drought in Southern Africa

About 68 million people in Southern Africa are suffering the effects of an El Nino-induced drought which has wiped out crops across the region, the regional bloc SADC said. The drought, which started in early 2024, has hit crop and livestock production, causing food shortages and damaging the wider economies. Heads of state from the 16-nation Southern African Development Community were meeting in Zimbabwe’s capital Harare to discuss regional issues including food security. Some 68 million people, or

17% of the region's population, are in need of aid, said Elias Magosi, SADC executive secretary. It is Southern Africa's worst drought in years, owing to a combination of naturally occurring El Nino - when an abnormal warming of the waters in the eastern Pacific changes world weather patterns - and higher average temperatures produced by greenhouse gas emissions. Countries including Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi have already declared the hunger crisis a state of disaster, while Lesotho and Namibia have called for humanitarian support. The region launched an appeal in May for \$5.5 billion in humanitarian assistance to support the drought response, but donations have not been forthcoming. (*The News, August 18th, 2024, Page 11*)

13.2 # Rainfall / Flood

12 die as heavy rains lash Delhi, other parts of northern India

Emergency workers rescued nearly 1,000 people who were stranded in different parts of Himalayas following torrential rainfall in northern India, which caused widespread damage and left at least 12 people dead. (*Dawn, August 2nd, 2024, Page 10*)

Thousands without power as Ernesto makes landfall in Bermuda

Hurricane Ernesto lashed Bermuda with heavy rains and strong winds, leaving much of the British Atlantic Ocean territory without power, with meteorologists warning of a dangerous storm surge and floods. (*Dawn, August 18th, 2024, Page 10*)

Over 300,000 still in shelters as floods ease in Bangladesh

River waters in low-lying Bangladesh are receding after days of deadly floods but 300,000 people are still in emergency shelters requiring aid. The heavy floods, which killed at least 18 people in Bangladesh, have added to challenges of a new government that took charge this month after a student-led revolution. The flood situation is improving as the flood water started to recede. More than 307,000 people are in shelters and more than 5.2 million have been affected. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 12*)

Floods kill 13 in Indonesia's North Maluku province

Thirteen people were killed and two injured in Indonesia's North Maluku province after floods in the east of the sprawling archipelago. The country's disaster management agency BNPB said the floods, caused by heavy rain, also badly damaged 10 houses in Ternate city. In May, flash floods and mud slides in Indonesia's West Sumatra province killed more than 60 people. (*Dawn, August 26th, 2024, Page 10*)

Floods kill 28, leave 30,000 homeless in Gujarat

Intense monsoon rains and floods in India's Gujarat state killed at least 28 people in the past three days, some drowning and others hit by falling trees. The Weather department warned more heavy rain is expected in western coastal state. Rivers have burst their banks and more than 30,000 people fled their homes. People waded through waist-high waters that partly submerged vehicles & roads in parts of state. The Indian Express newspaper said 35 people had died so far across state. (*Dawn, August 30th, 2024, Page 10*)

13.3 # Typhoon

Powerful typhoon nears Japan, prompts evacuation

Southwestern Japan braced for what officials say could be one of the strongest storms to ever hit the region, as some residents in the path of Typhoon Shanshan were ordered to evacuate, for more than 800,000 residents. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 10*)

Powerful Typhoon Shanshan slams into southern Japan

One of Japan's strongest typhoons in decades dumped torrential rain across southern regions, with one person missing and at least 80 injured as authorities warned of life-threatening flooding and landslides. (*Dawn, August 30th, 2024, Page 10*)

13.4 # Wildfires

Athens suburbs on fire as Greece seeks EU help

A massive wildfire blazed into Athens' northeastern suburbs as hundreds of firefighters battled to contain it, forcing thousands of residents to flee their homes and sparking a Greek government appeal for international help. (*Dawn, August 13th, 2024, Page 10*)

Wildfires rage across 5 regions in Turkiye

Firefighters were battling to contain wildfires in five Turkish provinces though a blaze in the western Izmir region that broke out had eased somewhat and residential areas were no longer at risk. The fire was burning inside a valley which is hard to reach from land. Around 1,600 hectares have been affected. (*Dawn, August 18th, 2024, Page 10*)

Wildfires affect 30 cities in Brazil, leave two dead

Brazil's Sao Paulo state said that wildfire outbreaks were affecting or closing in on 30 of its cities, adding two people had died in an industrial plant trying to hold back the flames. The cities have been affected by dry, hot weather in recent days. The state government also warned that forest fires could spread rapidly from gusts of wind, potentially razing large areas of natural vegetation. (*Dawn, August 25th, 2024, Page 10*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

14.1 # Earthquake

Strong quake, small tsunamis hit southern Japan with minor damage

A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.1 shook southern Japan but no major damage was reported and only relatively minor tsunami waves lashed the coast. The USGS had initially reported two strong quakes, with magnitudes of 6.9 and 7.1, but later said there had only been one tremor. (*Business Recorder, August 9th, 2024, Page 5*)

Japanese urged to avoid panic-buying as megaquake fears spread

Authorities in Japan urged people to avoid hoarding as anxiety over a possible mega quake triggered a spike in demand for disaster kits and daily necessities. In its first such advisory, the weather agency said a huge earthquake was more likely in the aftermath of a magnitude 7.1 jolt in the south which left 14 people injured. (*Dawn, August 11th, 2024, Page 14*)

7.2 magnitude quake hits Russia's far east region

A magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck off the east coast of Russia's Kamchatka region at a depth of 51km. The peninsula lies on a seismically active belt surrounding most of the Pacific Ocean known as the "Ring of Fire", and is home to more than two dozen active volcanoes. (*Dawn, August 18th, 2024, Page 11*)

15 # RESISTANCE

Protesters seek Hasina's resignation; 20 injured in fresh Bangladesh clashes

Twenty people were injured in clashes and police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse crowds as thousands protested in the Bangladeshi capital and other parts of the country, calling on PM Sheikh Hasina to resign. Clashes came after thousands of people heeded a call by six top members of the group which organised protests last month, to return to streets, defying torrential monsoon rains. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 10*)

Amnesty accuses Nigerian police of killing 13 demonstrators

Nigerian police fired shots in the air to break up protests in the capital Abuja as rights group Amnesty International accused security forces of killing at least 13 demonstrators during nationwide rallies against economic hardship. Curfews were in place across several northern states and there was a heavy security presence on the second day of the demonstrations. (*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 10*)

Sicilians protest water shortages

Hundreds of Sicilians protested against water shortage and poor water management on the Italian island, hit by a severe drought this year. People in the city of Agrigento demonstrated to draw the attention of local authorities, holding a banner reading "we want water", and shouting "shame, shame" and "water is a right for all, water is a fundamental right".(*Down, August 3rd, 2024, Page 11*)

Bangladeshi forces killed 32 children during protests, says Unicef

At least 32 children have been killed during student protests that engulfed Bangladesh last month, the UN's children's agency has said. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 12*)

Hundreds march for Palestinians held in Israeli jails

Hundreds of Palestinians marched to protest the treatment of prisoners held in Israeli jails, following reports of abuse and even torture. Relatives held up pictures of prisoners and waved Palestinian flags during separate demonstrations in Ramallah and Nablus in the occupied West Bank. "Even if the whole world submits, we will not recognise Israel," chanted the protesters in Ramallah. Thousands of Palestinians have been detained in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel since the start of fighting between Israel and Hamas, the United Nations human rights office said this week. They have mostly been held in secret and in some cases subjected to treatment that may amount to torture, the OHCHR said in a report. About 9,700 Palestinians are currently in Israeli jails, including hundreds under administrative detention. (*Dawn, August 4th, 2024, Page 13*)

Nigerian president calls for end to protests, 'bloodshed'

Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu called for the suspension of nationwide protests and an end to "bloodshed" after security forces cracked down on rallies over economic hardship. Thousands of demonstrators began taking to streets last week to protest government policies and high cost of living. Rights group Amnesty International has accused security forces of killing at least 13 protesters, while police say seven people died and deny responsibility. (*Business Recorder, August 5th, 2024, Page 9*)

How student protests ousted so-called 'iron lady' Sheikh Hasina

Protests in Bangladesh that began as student-led demonstrations against government hiring rules in July culminated in the prime minister fleeing and the military announcing it would form an interim government. At least 300 people were killed in more than a month of deadly protests that ended the autocratic rule of 76-year-old Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. (*Dawn, August 6th, 2024, Page 11*)

Kenya police fire tear gas at Nairobi protests; journalists hurt

Kenyan police fired volleys of tear gas in capital Nairobi, injuring several journalists, as small groups of protesters gathered on what was billed as a fresh day of action against embattled President William Ruto. (*Business Recorder, August 9th, 2024, Page 5*)

Anti-racism protesters rally across UK

Thousands of anti-racism demonstrators rallied across the UK to protest recent rioting blamed on the far-right in the wake of the Southport knife attack that killed three children. Crowds massed in London, Glasgow, Belfast, Manchester and numerous other towns and cities, as fears of violent confrontations with anti-immigration agitators failed to materialize. (*Dawn, August 11th, 2024, Page 12*)

News Makers: Hyderabad, India

Junior doctors protest the rape and murder of a young medic from Kolkata, during a candle light demonstration at the Gandhi Hospital. Doctors in government hospitals across several Indian states halted services "indefinitely to protest the young medic's murder. (*Dawn, August 13th, 2024, Page 10*)

Indian hospitals hit by doctors' protest

Hospital services were disrupted in several Indian cities after a doctors protest spread nationwide following the rape and murder of a trainee medic in the city of Kolkata. Thousands of doctors marched in Kolkata and the surrounding West Bengal state to denounce the killing at a government-run hospital, demanding justice for the victim and better security measures. Protests spread, with more than 8,000 government doctors in western Maharashtra state. (*Dawn, August 14th, 2024, Page 10*)

News Makers: Tunis

Activists chant slogans during a rally on "national women's day", calling for release of women detained for criticising Tunisia's president. (*Dawn, August 15th, 2024, Page 10*)

Tens of thousands to join ‘March for Palestine’ during Democratic convention

This year’s planned March on the Democratic National Convention (DNC) has been rebranded as the March for Palestine, with organisers calling for the US government to “stand with Palestine” and “end aid to Israel.” The coalition behind the march is also critical of Democratic leadership. Democrats are currently divided on this issue. While some members advocate for a change in US policy towards Palestine, others support maintaining a close military and diplomatic relationship with Israel. Organisers of the March for Palestine expect 25,000 to 30,000 people to participate in the march, significantly more than the 3,000 who protested at the Republican convention in Milwaukee last month. Chicago has seen consistent protests against Israel’s actions in the Gaza war every weekend since October. (*Dawn, August 15th, 2024, Page 11*)

India’s doctors march, plan strike over colleague’s murder

Thousands of Indians marched through the streets of Kolkata demanding justice after the rape and murder of a doctor, channelling nationwide outrage at the chronic issue of violence against women. Alongside the fury of ordinary Indians, doctors stepped up their own demonstrations and strikes, with protests also held in the capital New Delhi and other cities over the brutal killing. The discovery of the 31-year-old’s bloodied body on August 9 at a state-run hospital in Kolkata sparked nationwide protests. (*Dawn, August 17th, 2024, Page 12*)

Protests spread over Indian doctor’s rape and murder

Some Indian junior doctors remained off the job as they demanded swift justice for a colleague who was raped and murdered, despite the end of a strike called by a big doctors’ association, while some other people held street protests. Doctors across the country have held protests, candlelight marches and refused to see non-emergency patients in the past week after the killing of the 31-year-old postgraduate student of chest medicine in the early hours of Aug 9 in the eastern city of Kolkata. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 10*)

Climate activists delay cruise ship arriving in Amsterdam

Environmental activists tied themselves to a lock at Port of Amsterdam, halting an incoming cruise ship for several hours, the port and the climate group said. The “Serenade of the Seas” with a thousand cabins was finally able to resume its route to the popular tourist city. (*Dawn, August 19th, 2024, Page 11*)

Pro-Palestine protesters breach Democratic convention fence in Chicago

Thousands of mostly peaceful pro-Palestinian protesters marched in Chicago on the opening day of the Democratic National Convention, in a show of anger against the Biden administration’s support for Israel in the Gaza conflict. After hours of peaceful demonstrations, several protesters broke through part of the perimeter security fence, drawing riot police to the site. (*Dawn, August 21st, 2024, Page 10*)

Sexual abuse of minors: Schools, internet shut near Mumbai as protests grow

Internet services were cut off and schools were closed for a second straight day in a town near India's financial capital Mumbai, as protests over the alleged sexual abuse of two, four-year old girls intensified. The protests in Badlapur, about 50 km (31 miles) from Mumbai, come amid nationwide demonstrations over rape and murder of 31-year-old doctor in the eastern city of Kolkata. A janitor was arrested for allegedly sexually abusing the students in a school in Badlapur. Angry protesters blocked railway tracks for hours, demanding justice for the children, echoing similar protests across country by doctors and women's groups. (*Business Recorder, August 22nd, 2024, Page 12*)

Canada's freight rail network shut down as labour deals fail

Canada's freight rail network shut down operations, locking out close to 10,000 workers after the country's two operators failed to reach labor agreements, the union said. The union representing close to 10,000 workers had given a midnight deadline to reach a deal. It is the first time the country has faced simultaneous work stoppages at the two companies, which in the past have negotiated labor deals in alternate years. (*Business Recorder, August 25th, 2024, Page 5*)

Kolkata protests against rape turn ugly

Police fired tear gas and water cannon as they clashed with thousands of protesters in India seeking justice for a doctor who was raped and murdered in Kolkata. The discovery of the 31-year-old doctor's body at a state-run hospital in the eastern city stoked nationwide anger at the chronic issue of violence against women. Demonstration saw thousands march to a government building in Kolkata to demand the resignation of Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal state. They shouted slogans and clashed with police, who charged the crowd with batons in an effort to disperse it. (*Dawn, August 28th, 2024, Page 12*)

Afghan women filmed singing in protest against ban on their voices

An Afghan woman sings in a video showing just a sliver of her face, one of dozens of women taking part in an online protest against a law that bans women from raising their voices in public. Taliban authorities last week announced law, which includes rules that women's faces, bodies and voices should be "covered" outside their home, among 35 articles dictating behaviour and lifestyle. In response, Afghan women inside and outside country have posted videos on social media of them singing, along with hashtags such as "My voice is not forbidden" and "No to Taliban". (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 10*)

Indian rape protests spiral into political street clashes

Thousands of protesters clashed in India's eastern city of Kolkata, where demonstrations seeking justice for a murdered doctor spiralled into violent street skirmishes between political rivals. (*Dawn, August 29th, 2024, Page 12*)

About Us

Roots for Equity was formed in 1997 and formally registered in 2000. The organization works with the most vulnerable, marginalized communities that include small and landless farmers, women and religious minorities in the rural and urban sector. The inequities in society are a result of the oppression and exploitative forces of feudalism, imperialist corporate hegemony often termed as globalization, and patriarchy.

We believe that a democratic base is essential for the social and economic development of the country. This is not possible without mobilization of communities themselves; no doubt only socially conscious and politically active communities can demand and achieve social justice. Roots remains committed to being an active part of communities' struggle to achieve political, social, environmental and economic justice.

Our Mission

Our mission is to strengthen communities and movements for attaining political, economic, social and environmental justice.

Our Vision

Our vision is a genuinely democratic society with its people free from inequities, marginalization and exploitation.

Our Objectives

- (i) Organizing and mobilizing grass root communities and movements for attaining basic rights;
- (ii) Action research in collaboration with impacted vulnerable communities on issues and impacts of globalization, patriarchy, and feudalism;
- (iii) Capacity building of grass root leaders and creating a grass roots knowledge base for attaining social justice;
- (iv) Engaging with people's organizations and movements to amplify the voices of the most marginalized sectors of our society, locally, nationally and internationally.

Roots for Equity

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