HAAL AHWAL

Monthly News Reviews on Food and Agriculture

October, 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

Back

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	ايك لاكھ
1,000,000	1 Million	10 Lac	دس لا كھ
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

Back

Glossary

ADB: Asian Development Bank's

AFD: Agence Française de

Développement

AIIB: Asian Infrastructure Investment

Bank

AIT: Agricultural Income Tax

AJK: Azad Jammu and Kashmir

AKU: Aga Khan University

APHC: All Parties Hurriyat

Conference

AQI: Air Quality Index

BADC: Bibi Aseefa Dental College

BISP: Benazir Income Support

Programme

BNP: Balochistan National Party

CASs: Central Asian States

CCI: Council of Common Interests

CDREP: Climate and Disaster Resilience Enhancement Programme

CDWP: Central Development

Working Party

CHG: Council of Heads of

Government

CMO: Commodity Markets Outlook

CPEC: China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor

CPP: Communist Party of Pakistan

DBA: District Bar Association

EAD: Economic Affairs Division

ECC: Economic Coordination

Committee

ECNEC: Executive Committee of

National Economic Council

EFF: Extended Fund Facility

EPI: Expanded Programme for

Immunisation

FAO: Food and Agriculture

Organisation

FBR: Federal Board of Revenue

FCEPL: Friesland Campina Engro

Pakistan Ltd

FCY: First-Ever Foreign Currency

FDI: Foreign direct investment

FEA: Foreign Economic Assistance

FII: Future Investment Initiative

FUUAST: Urdu University of Arts,

Science and Technology

GCF: Green Climate Fund

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GHA: Grand Health Alliance

GM: Genetically Modified

GST: General Sales Tax

IAC: IRSA Advisory Committee

IBC: Islamabad Bar Council

ICC: International Criminal Court

IER: Education and Research

IFIs: International Financial

Institutions

IHCBA: Islamabad High Court Bar

Association

IIOJK: Illegally Occupied Jammu

and Kashmir

ILO: International Labour

Organisation

IMF: International Monetary Fund

Irsa: Indus River System Authority

IsDB: Islamic Development Bank

IUCN: International Union for

Conservation of Nature

JIT: Joint Investigation Team

JSQP: Jeay Sindh Qaumi Party

KEMU: King Edward Medical

University

KPK: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

LSM: Large-Scale Manufacturing

LWMC: Lahore Waste Management

Company

MAF: Million Acre-Feet

MNFSR: National Food Security and

Research

MoU: Memorandum of

Understanding

MWM: Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen

NAC: National Accounts Committee

NFP: National Fiscal Pact

NH&MP: National Highway and

Motorway Police

NIBAF: National Institute of Banking

and Finance

NRSP: National Rural Support

Programme

OBOR: One Belt, One Road

OPHI: Human Development Initiative

PAT: Profit-After-Tax

PBS: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

PCGA: Pakistan Cotton Ginners

Association

PDU: Pakistan Development Update

PDWP: Provincial Development

Working Party

PEFAC: Punjab External Financing

Assessment Committee

PkMAP: Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami

Party

PKMT: Pakistan Kissan Mazdoor

Tehreek

PMDC: Pakistan Mineral

Development Corporation

PPIB: Private Power and

Infrastructure Board

PPP: Pakistan Peoples Party

PPR: Pandemic Preparedness and

Response

PTM: Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement

PUSF: Punjab University Student Federation

rederation

REAP: Rice Exporters Association of

Pakistan

RIHS: Rawal Institute of Health Sciences

RST: Resilience and Sustainability

Trust

RUTF: Ready-to-use-Therapeutic-

Food

SAB: Sugar Advisory Board

SAFER: Indus-Sustainable Actions

for Ecosystems Restoration

SAU: Sindh Agriculture University

SBA: Stand-By Arrangement

SBP: State Bank of Pakistan

SCBA: Supreme Court Bar

Association

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation

Organisation

SDPI: Sustainable Development

Policy Institute

SFA: Sindh Food Authority

SHRC: Sindh Human Rights

Commission

SIFC: Special Investment Facilitation

Council

SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises

SNGPL: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited

STP: Sindh Taraggi-pasand Party

TDAP: Development Authority of

Pakistan

TEXPO: International Textile &

Leather Exhibition

TLP: Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan

UNEP: United Nations Environment

Programme

UNICEF: United Nations Children's

Fund

UPFL: Unilever Pakistan Foods Ltd

WACSA: Women Activist Group Action Campaign South Africa

WB: World Bank

WEO: World Economic Outlook

WFP: World Food Programme

WHO: World Health Organisation

WTO: World Trade Organisation

WWF-P: World Wildlife Fund-

Pakistan

ZTBL: Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited

Back

NEWS EXCEPTS NATIONAL NEWS

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- Pakistan's economy has posted a stable growth of 3.07 per cent during the fourth quarter of financial year 2023-24.
- The growth in agriculture, industry and services stands at 6.76 per cent, -3.59 per cent and 3.69%, respectively, in fourth quarter of financial year 2023-24.
- Sindh Assembly was informed that the government was taking measures to promote organic farming in the province as the whole world was moving towards organic vegetables.
- Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz approved allotment of 100,000 acres of land to landless farmers on lease for three and five years for the purpose of temporary cultivation across Punjab. 170,000 farmers in Punjab received Kisan cards.
- IRSA Advisory Committee (IAC) has projected water shortage of 19 per cent for Kharif 2024-25, started from October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.
- Pakistan is expected to get further technical and financial support from the Australian government to develop capabilities for intra-season water availability forecasting over a period of five years, ending 2029.
- Speakers at a 'Kisan conference' rejected the 26th constitutional package. It
 was held against amendments in IRSA Act 1992, corporate farming and six
 new canals over Indus river.
- Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti formally inaugurated project of converting agricultural tube wells to solar energy in Pishin district.

AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

- Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah allocated Rs8 billion in the budget for the development of the agriculture sector through Benazir Hari Card.
- Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Vice Chancellor Dr Fateh Marri has urged banking sector to invest in agricultural innovations alongside production.
- Loans of Rs500,000 and Rs1.5m were being provided for agricultural businesses without guarantees.
- The dialogue on strengthening agriculture innovation systems for agricultural machinery for small farmers in Pakistan, under the European Union-funded project.
- There is no specific or exclusive national agricultural mechanisation policy at federal or provincial levels.

- The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) increased sales tax from 10 to 14 percent on import and local supply of tractors, which would ultimately increase agricultural tractors' prices for the poor farmers/ growers.
- Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that tax on the agriculture sector would come into force from July 1, 2025, under the National Fiscal Pact (NFP) with provinces.
- The government can collect a maximum amount of Rs 300 billion from agriculture income tax with the help of provinces.
- The Punjab Seed Council has approved two new basmati rice varieties with a 50 per cent higher yield than those presently under cultivation.
- Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah called on agricultural universities to assist the government in researching and developing seeds that required less water but yielded higher productivity.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

- Sindh Agriculture Minister told that government is following the global divergence to organic and has taken steps to ensure valuable crops.
- A senior official from the World Wildlife Fund-Pakistan has emphasised the need to cultivate sustainable cotton varieties such as better cotton, organic cotton, and regenerative cotton, which can help reduce carbon footprint.
- There is global concern about environmental issues, especially those linked to conventional agriculture, which largely relies on synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and GMO seeds.
- Conventional cotton cultivation is associated with the extensive use of fertilisers, pesticides, and herbicides that adversely affect the natural environment and significantly contribute to global warming.
- Through the promotion of organic cotton farming, WWF-P is eliminating the use of chemicals, preserving the environment, and empowering cotton farmers for a healthier future.
- Discussing severe impacts of climate, growers have blamed heatwaves and rains for 50% decrease in cotton production this year as compared to last year's produce.
- Tomatoes have been cultivated on 1600 acres of land in the province (Punjab) out of the target of 2000 acres set under a project to promote off-season cultivation of the vegetables.

SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

• The government will extend all possible assistance to restore the fish farms that were either damaged or destroyed during the 2022 floods.

 The KP government will provide interest-free credit to livestock farmers and cattle herders to promote livestock farming, improvement productivity and make them financially stable.

TRADE

- Two agriculture companies from Russia and Pakistan have signed barter deals to trade chickpeas and lentils from Russia in exchange for rice, mandarins & potatoes.
- In August that the first agriculture barter deals between Russia and China would come this autumn.
- Pakistan's merchandise exports rose 14.11% to \$7.87bn in the first quarter of the current fiscal year from \$6.90bn in the same period last year.
- Imports grew 9.86pc to \$13.31bn in July-September FY25 from \$12.11bn over the last year.
- Pakistan's trade deficit with nine SCO countries widened by over 41 per cent to \$11.703 billion in FY24 from \$8.298bn in the preceding fiscal year due to a sharp increase in imports from China, Russia and India.
- The member states of the SCO have come together to "oppose protectionist actions, unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions that undermine the multilateral trading system and impede global sustainable development.
- The heads of delegations emphasised that the unilateral application of sanctions is incompatible with the principles of international law and has a negative impact on third countries and international economic relations.
- Oman will import products in 12 categories from Pakistan during the current fiscal year to increase bilateral trade volume.
- TDAP is delighted to announce that deals worth over \$910 million were successfully concluded.
- The country's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries swelled by 62 per cent to \$2.917 billion in the first quarter of the current fiscal year from \$1.80bn.
- In FY24, the trade deficit with these countries was \$9.506bn, up 49pc from \$6.382bn in the preceding fiscal year.
- The value of Pakistan's exports to nine countries Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives — rose 8pc to \$1.059bn in July-September FY25 from \$983.19m over previous year.
- Contrary to this, imports surged 43pc to \$3.976bn in July-Sept FY25 from \$2.783bn over the same period in the previous fiscal.
- The 5th International Textile & Leather Exhibition (TEXPO) at the Karachi
 Expo Centre concluded with orders amounting to \$1.875m placed for Pakistani
 textile products, signaling a positive uplift for the country's export industry.

- The annual bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia saw more than 50 percent increase last year, exceeding \$ 1 billion.
- Despite unfavourable weather conditions, Russian farmers have harvested over 132 million tonnes of grain this year that guarantees Russia's reliability as one of the world's key agricultural exporters.
- Developing international transport corridors, North South International Transport Corridor, is vital for our countries—we welcome Pakistan's interest in this project.
- Governor Sindh congratulated REAP for achieving a historic milestone of \$ 3.9 billion rice exports in the last fiscal year.
- Malaysia has agreed in principle to import 100,000 tonnes of halal meat and basmati rice from Pakistan. PM Shehbaz highlighted that the export of halal meat alone would generate \$200 million annually for Pakistan.
- Pakistan is likely to lift ban on the commercial export of sheep and goats imposed more than a decade back, mainly responding to the demand from Gulf countries.
- The MNFS&R has also approached various countries for investment in feedlot fattening farms of small and large ruminants, and serious interest has been shown by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE.
- Agriculture sector contributes around 24 per cent to gross domestic product.
 The livestock sector accounts for 60.84pc of the agricultural value added and 14.5pc GDP during 2023-24.
- As Pakistan holds a 25 per cent share of the European rice export market, significantly outpacing India's 16 per cent.
- Two federal ministers have forecast that Pakistan's exports will climb to \$100 billion from \$30bn in the next few years without outlining the pathway for achieving a three-fold increase in export proceeds.
- Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said that the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have the potential of \$40-60 billion export in the next three to five years.
- The Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) meeting decided to conditionally allow export of 500,000 tons of refined sugar.
- PSMA informed the government officials that Pakistan this year has around 1.6 million tons of additional sugar which should have been exported.
- While the government in June 2024, allowed PSMA to export 150,000 tons sugar which in August was further extended by 100,000 tons and 40,000 tons sugar export was allowed on government-to-government basis to Tajikistan. After conditional permission of 500,000 tons sugar export, the total quantity will reach 790,000 tons.
- ECC of the Cabinet allowed the export of another 500,000 tonnes of sugar with the condition to start sugarcane crushing by Nov 21.

- The exports of textile and clothing recorded an increase of nearly 9.51 per cent in the first quarter of FY25.
- Texpo 2024, 5th edition of Pakistan's premier textile and leather exhibition, is expected to generate export orders worth a staggering \$800 million, nearly double the \$420 million secured at last year's event.
- Total cotton arrivals at ginning factories as of Sept 30 stand at 2.039m bales
 a 60% drop from the 5.025m bales recorded on the same date last year.
- The province (Punjab) has produced just 726,000 bales so far, marking a 65pc decline from the previous year's 2.069m bales.
- Sindh has also seen a significant decline, with cotton production down 56pc to 1.313m bales compared to 2.956m bales in 2023.
- The Federal Committee on Agriculture had set a cotton production target of 10.8m bales for the year. The PCGA data suggests that this target is now unattainable, forcing the textile industry to rely heavily on imported cotton.
- Ihsanul Haq, chairman of Cotton Ginners Forum, fears that total cotton production may remain below five million bales, necessitating cotton imports worth over \$2bn. Textile mills have already signed agreements to import three million bales.

CORPORATE SECTOR

- Large-Scale Manufacturing sector contracted 2.65% year-on-year in August.
- Engro Corporation's revenue from continued operations grew by 12 percent to Rs. 279 billion, compared to Rs. 250 billion in the same period of 2023.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- The Bank of Punjab (BoP) has arranged a long-term on-lending facility of \$54.2m for green banking from the Agence Française de Développement.
- This credit facility is intended for onward lending to climate adaptation and mitigation projects and activities in Pakistan.
- In the investment sector there has been major development, according to which Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund will be established by heavy investment in financial sector.
- Country received \$771 million in FDI during July-Sept FY25 compared to \$520m in the same period last year, witnessing an increase of 48.2 per cent.
- The inflows from China were \$404m during the quarter against \$164m in the same period last fiscal year.
- Pakistan's foreign assistance inflows plunged by 60 per cent to \$2.3 billion in the first quarter of the current fiscal year (July-September), down from about \$5.73bn in the same period last year.

- The signing of agreements and memorandums of understanding for bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan, valued at US\$ 10.70 million.
- Pakistan and Chinese power companies are all set to sign pacts on re-profiling
 of debts and moratorium on payment of over \$ 16 billion for five and three
 years respectively.
- Pakistan is expected to sign agreements and memorandums of understanding worth \$2 billion with Saudi Arabia in various sectors.
- Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed 27 MoUs for over \$2.2 billion in investments in agriculture, IT, food, education, mining, health, petroleum and energy sectors.
- Saudi Arabia has agreed to invest another \$600 million in Pakistan as it signed seven more MoUs, taking their total number from 27, signed recently in Pakistan, to 34 MoUs.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- The ADB announced that it had approved a \$500 million policy-based loan to support climate change and disaster risk reduction and resilience in Pakistan.
- Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and disasters
 triggered by natural hazards in Asia and the Pacific. Average losses from
 disaster events exceed \$2 billion per year. ADB has also approved a technical
 assistance grant of \$1m to support implementation of the programme.
- The IMF report highlighted the country's significant lag behind similar nations, a stagnation that has compromised living standards and pushed over 40.5 per cent of the population below the poverty line.
- The IMF has urged Pakistan to invest one per cent of its GDP annually equivalent to over Rs1.24tr based on current estimates in climate resilience and adaptation reforms to prepare for recurring extreme weather events.
- Pakistan is targeting around \$1 billion in a formal request for funding from the IMF facility that helps low and middle income countries mitigate climate risk.
- The World Bank had pledged \$2bn, including \$1.55bn for new projects, as support to help government of Pakistan respond to the 2022 floods; however, the disbursement for housing reconstruction in Balochistan has yet to start.

POLICY

Amid criticism from IMF over SIFC and Sovereign Wealth Fund, government
has committed to drastically reduce PSDP, ensure timely tariff adjustments in
gas and electricity sectors, bring agriculture and retail sectors into effective tax net.

- Adaptation Fund Board approved a landmark \$10 million worth project for the Indus-Sustainable Actions for Ecosystems Restoration in Pakistan (SAFER) to reduce Pakistan's vulnerability to climate-driven impacts.
- Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated major road and energy projects worth Rs6 billion across the city.
- Provincial development working party (PDWP) has approved 12 development schemes worth Rs4.8 billion in different districts of Sindh.
- Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has authorised a total of Rs155bn (14%) out of Rs1.trillion budgeted allocation for development projects for the first quarter (July-September) under PSDP-2024-25.
- The government is preparing a transformation plan for all public sector universities to become self-sustainable corporate entities. This plan aims to free up public resources for investment in compulsory and elementary education, based on the advice of international lending agencies.
- The final bidding process for privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines attracted just one bid of Rs10 billion for a 60 per cent stake.
- Placing a bid that was below the government-set minimum price of Rs85bn.

SOCIO - ECONOMIC CONDITION

- Pakistan's economic growth of 2.52 per cent for 2023–24 missed the projected target of 3.5pc, primarily due to a slump in industrial production.
- ADB, in its outlook, also announced a 2.4pc growth for FY24. The bank also forecasts a 2.8pc growth for FY25.
- Federal government's total debt stock crossed the Rs 70tr mark to reach an alltime high level of Rs 70.362tr by the end of August 2024 compared to Rs 68.914tr as of June 2024, depicting an increase of Rs 1.448tr just in two month.
- The external debt in rupee terms rose by 1.2 percent or Rs 269 billion during the first two month of this fiscal year.
- Terming Pakistan's external debt repayment capacity as fragile, IMF has assessed Islamabad's external financing needs have ballooned to \$62.6 billion over three years period under Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme.
- IMF has forecast Pakistan's economy to grow by 3.2pc during current fiscal year, This growth rate is expected to be accompanied by a single digit inflation rate of 9.5pc and a current account deficit nearing 1pc.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected a significant increase of 2.1 percent in the government expenditure for Pakistan from 19.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024 to 21.4 percent in 2025.

- Pakistan has emerged as the lowest-risk country concerning food safety standards for the fiscal year 2023-24.
- Pakistan Kissan Mazdoor Tehreek (PKMT) leaders urged the government to formulate solid agricultural policies to ensure food security in the country and improve the living standards of small farmers.
- GM food poses serious risks not only to local consumers but also to the country's export markets, after contamination was found in consignment.
- Annual consumer inflation plunged to a 44-month low of 6.9% in September.
- With the poverty rate rising by 0.3 per cent within one year to 40.5pc in FY24, the World Bank warned that even the 2.8pc and 3.6pc economic growth rate it projected for current and next year was direly insufficient.
- Limited growth in real wages and employment will keep the poverty rate near 40pc through fiscal year 2026.
- Together with fiscal consolidation and high inflation, led to a poverty rate of 40.5 per cent in the fiscal year 2024 and an additional 2.6 million Pakistanis falling below the poverty line.
- The fiscal deficit is projected to rise to 7.6pc of GDP in the fiscal year 2025 due to higher interest payments.

ENVIRONMENT

- ADB says the livability of cities in Pakistan is decreasing, and urban centres
 in the country are becoming increasingly inefficient, scoring low on multiple
 competitiveness indexes, with congestion, unattractiveness and pollution.
- Expressing serious concern over the growing levels of air pollution affecting all major cities of Pakistan.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has called for "climate diplomacy" with India to mitigate smog impact in the province.
- The Green Climate Fund has committed \$15m to Pakistani venture capital firm Sarmayacar, the venture fund said, so it can help startups tackle the impact of climate change in the country that has been at the forefront of extreme weather.
- The Green Climate Fund has approved a project of Pakistan in the amount of \$50 million that will focus on developing local homegrown climate solutions by harnessing the country's dynamic and growing start-up ecosystem.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

 At least 16 farmers have been arrested in India's northern state of Haryana for illegally burning paddy stubble to clear fields.

TRADE

- Vietnam and China signed 10 agreements ranging from agriculture cooperation to cross-border QR code payments.
- China is Vietnam's largest trading partner and a vital source of imports for its manufacturing sector, with bilateral trade jumping 21% for the first three quarters from the same period last year to \$148 billion.
- India's trade with Canada is small in comparison to some of New Delhi's biggest trading partners, but it has grown steadily. Bilateral merchandise trade rose from US\$6.36bn to US\$8.27bn between the 2019 and 2023 fiscal years.
- The US has added more than two dozen entities to a trade blacklist over alleged support of weapons and drone development programmes in Pakistan and Iran, and other issues, including aiding Russia's war effort in Ukraine.
- Maritime trade should show modest growth this year, the UN said, warning though that geopolitical tensions, climate impacts and conflicts shaking global trade are threatening the functioning of maritime supply chains.
- Global maritime trade swelled 2.4 per cent in 2023 to a total of 12,292 million tonnes, as it began to recover after a contraction in 2022. For 2024, it projected "a modest 2pc growth.
- China will offer the Taliban tariff-free access to its vast construction, energy and consumer sectors, Beijing's envoy to Afghanistan said.
- Ireland's Prime Minister Simon Harris urged the EU to review trade ties with Israel over Israeli lawmakers' "despicable" ban of the UN's Palestinian aid agency UNRWA.
- India has removed the floor price for export of non-basmati white rice. Last
 month, India gave go ahead for exports of non-basmati white rice to resume. But
 New Delhi set a floor price for non-basmati white rice exports at \$490 a metric ton.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

 Global investors are preparing to stake bets on China again, in a major sentiment shift sparked by Beijing's drive to reverse its economic slowdown and revive long term interest in its stock markets.

- PM Keir Starmer, is expected to announce billions of pounds in investments. He has already unveiled £24bn (\$31.4bn) in green energy projects, including £12bn by Spanish giant Iberdrola and £8bn by Danish firm Orsted.
- Saudi officials lamented economic strain of regional conflicts as the country's sovereign wealth fund told an investor forum it was cutting the proportion of its overseas investments.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and WHO have agreed on a joint strategy to boost pandemic response and preparedness.
- Russia, which chairs the BRICS group this year, has called on its partners to
 create an alternative to the IMF to counter political pressure from Western
 nations ahead of the BRICS summit later this month.
- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) President Jin Liqun criticized advanced economies for creating trade barriers including for renewable energy goods, saying there was "no longer free trade" in global economy.
- Sri Lanka's new government has approved a controversial restructure of \$14.7 billion in foreign commercial credit tentatively agreed by its predecessor.
- Global growth is expected to ease slightly to 3.2 percent this year and remain at that level in 2025, the IMF announced.
- WB is looking to free up emergency funds for Lebanon, potentially including up to \$100 million through the use of special clauses in existing loan deals.
- The Washington-based development lender currently has \$1.65 billion in loans to country including a \$250 million loan approved this week to help connect dispersed renewable energy projects in the country.

SOCIO - ECONOMICAL CONDITIONS

- Global rice prices fell after India, the world's no.1 exporter of the grain, gave go-ahead for exports to resume, boosting global supply and helping poor Asian and African buyers secure more affordable supplies.
- Food supplies to Gaza have fallen sharply in recent weeks because Israeli
 authorities have introduced a new customs rule on some humanitarian aid and
 are separately scaling down deliveries organised by businesses, people
 involved in getting goods to Gaza said.
- Globally nearly two million children suffering from severe wasting, also known as acute malnutrition, are at risk of death due to funding shortages for lifesaving Ready-to-use-Therapeutic-Food (RUTF) to treat wasting.

- Levels of severe wasting in children under five years remain gravely high in several countries, fueled by conflict, economic shocks and climate crises.
- Almost 700m people, or 8.5% of the global population, live on less than \$2.15 daily threshold for extreme poverty. This is set to remain at 7.3% in 2030.
- And 44 percent of the world's population lives on below \$6.85 a day, which is the poverty line for upper-middle-income countries.
- More than one billion people are living in acute poverty across the globe.
- The report echoed last year's findings that 1.1 billion out of 6.1 billion people across 110 countries were facing extreme multidimensional poverty.
- India was the country with the largest number of people in extreme poverty, which impacts 234 million of its 1.4 billion population. It was followed by Pakistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The five countries accounted for nearly half of the 1.1 billion poor people.

ENVIRONMENT

- Wild populations of monitored animal species have plummeted over 70 percent in the last half-century.
- More than one in three species of trees are at risk of extinction worldwide, threatening life as we know it on Earth.
- The World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has termed the situation in northern Gaza 'catastrophic' with "intensive military operations unfolding around and within healthcare facilities".

CLIMATE CHANGE

- The pace at which oceans are warming has almost doubled since 2005 as global temperatures rise because of human-caused climate change.
- Any breach of what climate scientists agree is the safer limit on global warming would result in "irreversible consequences" for the planet.
- Greenhouse gas concentrations in atmosphere reached new record highs in 2023.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

Last month was second-warmest September ever registered globally in an
exceptional year "almost certain" to become the hottest on record, As global
temperatures rise due to climate change, September also saw "extreme rainfall
and destructive storms" across the world.

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NATIONAL NEWS

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Agriculture posts 6.76pc growth in Q4FY24: NAC [1]

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1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Agriculture posts 6.76pc growth in Q4FY24: NAC

Pakistan's economy has posted a stable growth of 3.07 per cent during the fourth quarter of financial year 2023-24, according to the estimates approved by the National Accounts Committee (NAC). The growth in agriculture, industry and services stands at 6.76 per cent, -3.59 per cent and 3.69 per cent, respectively, in fourth quarter of financial year 2023-24. The NAC also approved the updated provisional growth of GDP at 2.52 per cent during financial year 24, which was higher than previous estimates of 2.38 per cent. The updated growth rates in agriculture, industry and services are 6.36 per cent, -1.15 per cent and 2.15 per cent respectively in financial year-24.

During fourth quarter, crops have posted a double-digit growth of 14.03 per cent. The growth in important crops stands at 26.98 per cent mainly due to wheat (31.58 M.T) and partly due to low base effect of corresponding quarter i.e. -7.93 per cent during fourth quarter of financial year 2022-23. Due to decline in fruits, fourth quarter growth in other crops is negative i.e. -1.53 per cent as compared to -0.64 per cent in last year. While livestock has grown at 3.98 per cent vs 4.31 per cent in fourth quarter, a high-base effect of 15.12 per cent has resulted into negative growth of 0.35 per cent in forestry.

Earlier, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected Pakistan's GDP growth at 3.2 per cent during financial year 24-25, compared to 2.4 per cent recorded in the last fiscal year. The projection was higher than the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) projection, which expected GDP to grow by a moderate 2.8 per cent in the ongoing fiscal year. (Business Recorder, October 1st, 2024, Page 1)

'Organic farming being promoted in Sindh'

Sindh Assembly was informed that the government was taking measures to promote organic farming in the province as the whole world was moving towards organic vegetables. Agriculture Minister Sardar Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar said that his department had done a lot of research in the preparation of organic fertiliser. He said that organic fertiliser for improving soil fertility was being prepared at the Soil Salinity and Reclamation Research Institute, Tandojam. Besides, the minister said, biofertilizer was being prepared from plant material in the Biofertiliser Laboratory, established in the Agriculture Research Centre, Tandojam. He said that the Agriculture Research Wing had 13 soil and water testing laboratories in Badin, Thatta, Tandojam, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Shaheed Benazirabad, Nausherhro Feroze, Dadu, Khairpur, Sukkur, Shikarpur and Jacobabad districts.

The minister said that the laboratories used to analyse soil samples to explore organic matter content in soil and suggest measures for improving the content. "Every year, 45,000 to 48,000 samples are analysed at these laboratories". To another question asked by Dr Fouzia, he said that Agriculture Research Wing had reclaimed 17,500 acres of salinity-affected / marginal soil through application of gypsum and sulfuric acid. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 15*)

Agriculture DG, 6 others arrested in Rs1.2bn NAB reference

Director General (Finance & Cooperation) of Agriculture Department Imdad Memon and six other accused were arrested after the pre-arrest bail they were granted earlier was not confirmed by Sindh High Court. The accused are facing a NAB reference pertaining to alleged misappropriation of Rs1.2bn meant for the procurement of spare parts of bulldozers. Rs1.2bn fund was misappropriated through fake vouchers issued to dummy companies. (*Dawn, October 30th, 2024, Page 15*)

1.1 # Farmers

Climate safety of agriculture workers demanded

A two-day workshop on climate change adaptation and occupational health safety, organized by Sindh Community Foundation in collaboration with Feed the Minds, underscored the critical need for labor rights protection for women cotton workers in agriculture. Attended by 40 women from 20 villages in Matiari district, the workshop focused on adverse impacts of climate change on health, productivity, and livelihoods, while also addressing the importance of labor rights and occupational safety. The sessions explored the effects of climate change on women in agriculture, highlighting the principles of decent work, including equitable working conditions, social dialogue, social protection, and fair wages. (Business Recorder, October 21st, 2024, Page 5)

Call to finalise law to safeguard women farm workers' rights

Representatives of different governmental organisations, civil society activists, media personnel, academia and lawyers at a meeting emphasised the need for finalising provisions of the 'Sindh Women Agricultural Workers Act' to safeguard women farmers' rights. The meeting of the Provincial Stakeholders Alliance for Women Agricultural Workers in Sindh was organised by the Awaz CDS-Pakistan and Nari Foundation in collaboration with the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC).

SHRC Chairman Iqbal Detho highlighted the importance of enforcing provincial labour laws in line with constitutional provisions and International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, to which Pakistan is a signatory. He noted that Pakistan has ratified 34 ILO treaties and called for the implementation of Convention 138, which addresses the minimum age for employment; and Convention 182, which addresses the worst forms of child labour. (*Dawn, October 30th, 2024, Page 15*)

1.2 # Land

Cabinet's nod for mass marriage, land allotment to farmers

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz presided over the 17th meeting of the cabinet in which it approved allotment of 100,000 acres of land to landless farmers on lease for three and five years for the purpose of temporary cultivation across Punjab. The meeting was informed that 170,000 farmers in Punjab received Kisan cards. Some 1.1m farmers had applied for obtaining Kisan card and 1.2m applications received for the Green Tractor Scheme. Scrutiny of 700,000 applicants for green tractors has been completed. The proceedings of selection board meeting of Livestock and Dairy Development were approved. Nomination of Board of Directors of Punjab Livestock and Dairy Development Board was approved. Renewal of a helpline agreement between Livestock and Dairy Development and PITB was approved. (*Dawn, October 9th*, 2024, *Page 2*)

Man, nephew killed over land dispute

An assailant gunned down a man and his nephew over a land dispute in Imam Bux Bhand village. (*Dawn, October 16th, 2024, Page 15*)

1.3 # Water

Ample water availability boosts Rabi crop outlook

Despite some shortages in provincial shares, Pakistan is estimated to have sufficient water availability, slightly higher than 10-year average and 15pc over last year, during current Rabi season, raising hopes for a better crop output. It would be a challenge for federal and provincial governments to encourage farmers for greater sowing of wheat who faced precarious manmade conditions last season when policymakers could not ensure or withdrew committed wheat support price at peak of harvesting.

This had left the farming community high and dry and forced to sell their produce at throwaway prices to unscrupulous market elements. Farmers could opt for alternative crops like mustard, barley, gram, peas and oilseeds. Advisory Committee of the IRSA that met "approved the likely anticipated water availability at the four rim-stations of 21.98 MAF for Rabi 2024-25, which was about 15pc more than the previous year and also about 1pc more than 10-year average". (*Dawn, October 3rd, 2024, Page 9*)

IRSA projects 19pc water shortage for Kharif

IRSA Advisory Committee (IAC) has projected water shortage of 19 per cent for Kharif 2024-25, started from October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025. (*Business Recorder, October 3rd*, 2024, Page 16)

Balochistan joins Sindh, seeks more water from Punjab

In a major policy change, Balochistan has joined Sindh — instead of opposing it — to push for greater water share from Punjab through implementation of a provincial water

distribution mechanism held in abeyance for more than two decades. Sindh irrigation secretary Zarif Khero reiterated the government of Sindh's demand for distribution of provincial water shares under Para-2 of the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991, instead of 3-tier formula adopted by the water regulator purportedly to deal with water shortages. Mr Khero then insisted that the water distribution formula should be immediately shifted from 3-tier formula to Para-2 and the decision should be made then and there and alleged that Irsa had for far too long denied Sindh of its water share promised in the 1991 water accord. (*Dawn, October 8th, 2024, Page 6*)

CDWP approval of Punjab's water project irks Sindh

The Sindh government has expressed serious concerns over approval of a new irrigation project worth over Rs200 billion in Punjab. The two provinces have repeatedly come face-to-face over water sharing, with Sindh being a lower riparian province accusing Punjab of not allowing adequate water flow downstream. Now, the row over is set to escalate as the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) has approved an entirely new irrigation system for Punjab. The province plans to build a 176km-long Cholistan canal and a 120km-long Marot canal in the Cholistan area. The Sindh government has already submitted a complaint over this project to the Council of Common Interests (CCI), on which a decision is still awaited. (*Dawn, October 14th, 2024, Page 3*)

Australia to help Irsa improve water availability forecast

Faced with water estimation challenges in view of changing climate conditions, Pakistan is expected to get further technical and financial support from the Australian government to develop capabilities for intra-season water availability forecasting over a period of five years, ending 2029. Indus River System Authority said governments of Australia and Pakistan have signed a memorandum of subsidiary agreement for "Climate Resilient and Adaptive Water Allocation in Pakistan" project. "Under this agreement, Australia will provide AUD3 million for project which is to be completed in a period of five years, i.e., till 2029," said Irsa. (*Dawn, October 14th*, 2024, *Page 14*)

Cholistan canal plan referred to Ecnec amid Sindh's dissent

In an interesting move, CDWP has quietly referred the Rs231bon first phase of the Cholistan canal system project to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) for a decision on at least three major inter-provincial concerns. The CDWP meeting, held on Oct 12 under the chairmanship of Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, has yet to officially announce its decisions. Additionally, Ecnec will need to determine whether provincial water sector projects can proceed without clearance from the Council of Common Interests (CCI). (Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 1)

'Kisan conference' rejects 26th amendment

Speakers at a 'Kisan conference' rejected the 26th constitutional package, saying that it would compromise the rights of people. The conference was organised in memory of Comrade Hyder Bux Jatoi in Nawabshah by Sindh Hari Committee, the peasant wing of Communist Party of Pakistan. It was held against amendments in IRSA Act 1992, corporate farming and six new canals over Indus river. CPP secretary general Comrade Imdad Kazi chaired the conference. Kazi said the meeting approved six new canals over Indus river for corporate farming in desert area by introducing amendments to Irsa Act 1992 whereas Kotri downstream water flows were not available with the result that sea intrusion became permanent, people should reject that at all costs, Kazi noted.

He stated that agriculture had been completely destroyed in Sindh and price hike had killed people. He further said that 1.6m highly educated talented youth had left the country as there was no employment. He added that there was no planning about them. He maintained that people would have to organise themselves on basis of class to launch struggle for a revolution, otherwise regime change would not work like experiences of 60s & 80s when popular movements changed governments, but real power was enjoyed by armed elites and their sponsored waderas, seths and capitalists. Hari committee president Prof Mir Munawar Talpur said those people were given government to deface constitution & acquire millions of acres of land through corporate farming by killing Indus river like Sutlej, Ravi etc. (*Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 15*)

Moot opposes six canals project

Levelling an allegation that six new canals' project of Punjab is collusion between the federal and PPP governments, speakers at a 'water conference' stressed for prolonged struggle against the plan. Held at the local press club the other day, the conference was organised by the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Party (JSQP). (Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 15)

CM Bugti inaugurates tube well solarisation project in Pishin

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti formally inaugurated project of converting agricultural tube wells to solar energy in Pishin district. Under the programme, over 28000 registered tube wells will be solarised across the province in phases, fulfilling the promise made by the government to farmers of the province. The federal government has provided Rs51 billion for the solarisation programme of all the tube well of Balochistan. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 5*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

2.1 # Agricultural Loan & Finance

CM allocates Rs8bn through Benazir Hari Card for agriculture uplift

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah allocated Rs8 billion in the budget for the development of the agriculture sector through Benazir Hari Card. Presiding over a joint

meeting of the agriculture and irrigation departments at the CM House, he said growers needed to be incentivised so that they could grow wheat as a bumper crop apart from other crops as the Rabi season was starting. The CM said Rs8 billion had been allocated to support the growers, particularly the small ones. (*Dawn, October 9th*, 2024, Page 15)

Bilawal to launch Benazir Hari Card tomorrow

The Sindh government is set to launch the "Benazir Hari Card" on Monday (tomorrow). The initiative aims to provide relief to farmers across the province. Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will hand over the Benazir Hari Card to farmers. Minister Mahar further outlined that in the first phase, 298,000 registered farmers who own between 1 and 25 acres of agricultural land will be issued the Benazir Hari Card. (*Dawn, October 13th, 2024, Page 15*)

SAU vice chancellor urges banks to invest in agricultural innovations

Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Vice Chancellor Dr Fateh Marri has urged banking sector to invest in agricultural innovations alongside production. He highlighted the importance of microfinancing in promoting employment opportunities and entrepreneurship among agricultural graduates. He emphasised the crucial role of agricultural modernisation in view of its transition towards industrialisation. He was speaking at `Awareness & Training Seminar on Agri Financing and Entrepreneurship Skills Development for University Students` hosted by SAU`s Business Incubation Centre and department of agricultural economics in collaboration with State Bank`s National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF), Islamabad.

The VC stressed the importance of advancing agricultural modernisation to boost national development. He noted that various forums had emphasised significance of agricultural students in micro-financing related to agriculture, with the ongoing efforts to create employment and paid internship opportunities for SAU graduates. SBP's joint director Mohammad Mazhar Shehzad shared details about financial initiatives, explaining that loans of Rs500,000 and Rs1.5m were being provided for agricultural businesses without guarantees. He mentioned that the loans up to Rs1.5m were being offered at a 5pc interest rate while loans up to Rs7.5m were available at a 7pc interest rate to encourage young entrepreneurs. (Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 15)

2.2 # Agricultural Machinery

Use of tech can benefit farmers, enhance food security: experts

Pakistan's crop yields can be elevated to global averages through product innovation and the integration of technology into farming practices. These insights were shared during a webinar titled "Transforming Agriculture for a Food-Secure Pakistan" held to commemorate Global Fertiliser Day. (Business Recorder, October 21st, 2024, Page 4)

FAO calls for agri mechanisation policy

A national policy dialogue organised by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has proposed evolving a national policy on agricultural mechanisation for smallholder farmers in Pakistan. The dialogue on strengthening agriculture innovation systems for agricultural machinery for small farmers in Pakistan, under the European Union-funded project, identified that the absence of a national policy on agriculture mechanisation is a prime reason for slow progress in mechanisation and thus low farm productivity. There is no specific or exclusive national agricultural mechanisation policy at federal or provincial levels. The agriculture policies of Pakistan have a very minor portion related to agricultural mechanisation or do not mention it at all.

The Ministry of National Food Security and Research should set up a working group on agricultural mechanisation with representatives from all stakeholders. Additionally, the government should promote the formation of farmer cooperatives to pool resources, share knowledge, and jointly invest in machinery. Developing and disseminating low-cost mechanisation solutions through partnerships, cooperative models, and policy dialogue is recommended. The horizon of agricultural mechanisation now encompasses emerging and disruptive technologies. It is the right time to integrate advanced technologies like satellite imagery, artificial intelligence and drones into agricultural practices. (*Dawn, October* 23rd, 2024, *Page* 9)

Sales tax on tractors hiked to 14pc from 10pc

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) increased sales tax from 10 to 14 percent on import and local supply of tractors, which would ultimately increase agricultural tractors' prices for the poor farmers/ growers. The FBR has issued an SRO 1643(I) / 2024, fulfilling the demand of local tractor manufacturing companies. (Business Recorder, October 24th, 2024, Page 12)

2.3 # Agricultural Taxes

Tax on agri income from next July

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that tax on the agriculture sector would come into force from July 1, 2025, under the National Fiscal Pact (NFP) with provinces. He said that discussions with provinces over NFP were progressing well and uniform legislation for tax on agriculture income would be introduced by January that would become effective for collection from July 1, 2025. (*Dawn, October 10th, 2024, Page 9*)

Govt may collect Rs300bn from agri tax

The government can collect a maximum amount of Rs 300 billion from agriculture income tax with the help of provinces. Agricultural income tax has potential of nearly Rs300 billion. The FBR has asked the provinces to adopt federal schedule of income tax for collection of agricultural income tax. The provincial governments shall amend

the Agricultural Income Tax regimes to fully align them, through necessary legislative changes, with the Federal Personal Income (small farmers) and Corporate Income (Commercial Agriculture) tax regimes and begin taxation of agricultural income under this new regime from January 1, 2025. Provincial governments shall transition services GST from a positive list to a negative list approach to combat tax evasion to take effect from the start of 2025-26. Provinces aim to collectively raise revenues from corporate tax in agriculture and GST on services combined with provincial tax effort in expanding additional areas of revenue collection and develop, implement and collect revenue under a common approach to property taxation. (Business Recorder, October 14th, 2024, Page 1)

2.4 # Seed

Punjab approves two new rice varieties

Punjab Seed Council has approved two new basmati rice varieties with a 50% higher yield than those presently under cultivation. The new varieties have the potential to produce 60 to 65 maunds per acre against current average yield of 40-45 maunds per acre. Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan Founder Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik told Annual General Meeting that improved yield would help produce surplus production, pushing export earnings from \$4bn this year to \$10bn by 2030. He hoped new varieties would also help in checking invasion of hybrid coarse varieties into central Punjab's basmati-producing belt, which has already lost up to 15pc acreage to hybrid rice. He pledged to cross \$5bn rice export mark within a year. (*Dawn, October 2nd*, 2024, *Page 9*)

Murad wants researchers to develop high-yield seeds

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah called on agricultural universities to assist the government in researching and developing seeds that required less water but yielded higher productivity. He also requested similar research in the fields of livestock and fisheries. (*Dawn, October 18th, 2024, Page 15*)

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

Sindh PA told Introduction of sustainable, marketable crops stepped up

Recognizing the global shift towards organic farming, the government has stepped up efforts to introduce sustainable and marketable crops. Sindh Agriculture Minister Sardar Muhammad Bux Khan Mahar told the House that government is following the global divergence to organic and has taken steps to ensure valuable crops. Sindh government has conducted significant research in this area, he said that the province has a skilled team of researchers, whose expertise is being effectively utilized. The minister emphasized the need to increase organic produce, which can fetch a high return against the soaring demand. Mahar mentioned that a Seed Council is in place, and many new varieties have also been introduced. He stressed the need to educate farmers and said that crop yields have increased and will continue to grow further. He noted that there

are numerous agricultural research centers in Sindh, working round the clock on various projects. Currently, 46 centers are operational, and there is a need to expand this network. (Business Recorder, October 25th, 2024, Page 2)

3.1 # Cash Crop

WWF-P calls for cultivating sustainable cotton to reduce carbon footprint

A senior official from the World Wildlife Fund-Pakistan (WWF-P) has emphasised the need to cultivate sustainable cotton varieties such as better cotton, organic cotton, and regenerative cotton, which can help reduce carbon footprint. WWF-P DG Hammad Naqi Khan made this statement on World Cotton Day. He highlighted that Pakistan is the sixth-largest producer of cotton globally and has the third-largest cotton spinning capacity in Asia, with thousands of ginning and spinning units producing textile products from cotton. Cotton is one of the most resource-intensive crops but by adopting sustainable practices, cropping patterns can be transformed to protect natural resources.

There is global concern about environmental issues, especially those linked to conventional agriculture, which largely relies on synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and GMO seeds. Conventional cotton cultivation is associated with the extensive use of fertilisers, pesticides, and herbicides that adversely affect the natural environment and significantly contribute to global warming. Given these risks to ecosystems, need for producing organic cotton without harmful substances is paramount," it said, "Through the promotion of organic cotton farming, WWF-P is eliminating the use of chemicals, preserving the environment, and empowering cotton farmers for a healthier future." (*Dawn, October 8th, 2024, Page 14*)

Govt striving to address cotton sector challenges: Kamal

Commerce Minister Jam Kamal has voiced concerns that Pakistan is now facing the unpleasant reality of importing raw cotton owing to a lack of attention and resources in industry. Minister discussed challenges facing the cotton industry with a delegation of the Pakistan Ginners Association. Minister said that once a global leader in cotton production and exports, Pakistan now faces the harsh reality of importing raw cotton due to a lack of attention and resources. He deplored an alarming decline in ginning factories from 1,200 to just 400, which led to underutilisation of electricity resources and disruptions in the cotton supply chain. Cotton is not merely a commodity but a livelihood, with millions of people in Pakistan depending on its growth, harvesting, and processing. He acknowledged the heavy taxation across the cotton production cycle, from pesticides to ginning and oil extraction, that has made it difficult for cotton to compete with other crops. He stressed that government is urgently treating this issue, particularly given the \$3-4 billion spent annually on cotton imports, which could be saved by reviving domestic production. (*Dawn, October 10th, 2024, Page 9*)

Growers attribute 50pc drop in cotton produce to heatwave

Discussing severe impacts of climate, growers have blamed heatwaves and rains for 50 pc decrease in cotton production this year as compared to last year's produce. They were speaking at a meeting of Sindh Abadgar Board. The meeting said the growers were not able to invest in the post-rain scenario to manage cotton crop due to shortage of funds. It observed that a few growers could provide nutrition, bio-stimulants etc., to recover some of produce after rains. Harvesting of paddy had also started, barring earlier sown crop which was negatively impacted due to heatwave, otherwise yields were robust.

In addition to it, the growers already suffered due to widespread losses in Kharif vegetables such as chilies and onions, said the participants. The meeting said the issue of declining prices in both commodities was critical. The price of cottonseed in 2023 was Rs8,500 per 40kg and paddy price around Rs3,500 per 40kg. Since then the prices of inputs had increased and the prices of both commodities should have proportionally increased, but they dropped. (*Dawn, October 10th, 2024, Page 15*)

3.2 # Fruits / Vegetables

'Tomato cultivated on 1600 acres of land in Punjab'

Tomatoes have been cultivated on 1600 acres of land in the province (Punjab) out of the target of 2000 acres set under a project to promote off-season cultivation of the vegetables. Secretary Agriculture Punjab Iftikhar Ali Sahoo said the project has been launched to enable long-term availability of local tomatoes. Sahoo proudly claimed that for the first time in history, practical steps are being taken to increase the cultivation and production of vegetables, especially tomatoes and onions. He said the agriculture department has prepared a comprehensive strategy to increase vegetable cultivation and production. In the pilot phase, a target of 2,000 acres has been set for the off-season cultivation of tomatoes. (Business Recorder, October 17th, 2024, Page 4)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Fish farms damaged in 2022 floods to be restored

Minister for livestock, fisheries and cooperatives Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai has said that the government will extend all possible assistance to restore the fish farms that were either damaged or destroyed during the 2022 floods. He expressed these views while talking to delegations of trout fish farmers' association from Swat and other districts of Malakand division. The director general fisheries said that with the support of Japan International Cooperation Agency workshops would be organised in Swat soon to impart training to farmers on modern lines about trout fish feed, breeding and treatment of diseases to further promote the trout industry in the region. The members of the trout farmers' association expressed their thanks to the provincial minister for his cooperation in resolving their problems. (*Dawn, October 26th, 2024 Page 8*)

KP govt to disburse interest-free loans to livestock farmers

KP government will provide interest-free credit to livestock farmers and cattle herders to promote livestock farming, improvement productivity and make them financially stable. This was stated by KP Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai while presiding over a progress review meeting on ongoing and future plans of the Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives Department. Steps are being taken to implement this project. The government will bear cost of this project while the principal amount will be deposited in easy installments. The Director General Livestock and Dairy Development (Research) Dr Ijaz Ali said that research is being done on cattle and poultry diseases. Livestock Research Centres equipped with modern facilities are established at Peshawar, Abbottabad, Chitral, Swat, Kohat and DI Khan. In meeting, while informing about the steps taken regarding digitalization of livestock sector, animal identification and tracking system is being introduced which will increase management and monitoring of livestock. It will improve overall productivity and help control diseases. (*Business Recorder, October 21st*, 2024, Page 3)

5 # TRADE

Pakistan, Russia ink barter deal to boost agri trade

Two agriculture companies from Russia and Pakistan have signed barter deals to trade chickpeas and lentils from Russia in exchange for rice, mandarins and potatoes, Russia's *TASS* news agency reported. Grappling with payment issues due to Western sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow is pursuing barter deals that strip away the need for payment exchange, reduce the visibility Western countries have over its trade flows, and limit currency risk. Russian firm Astarta-Agrotrading agreed to supply 20,000 tonnes of chickpeas in exchange for 20,000 tonnes of rice from Pakistan's Meskay & Femtee Trading Company. Under another contract, Astarta agreed to supply 15,000 tonnes of chickpeas and 10,000 tonnes of lentils for 15,000 tonnes of mandarins and 10,000 tonnes of potatoes.

Payment issues are a particular issue for Russia with China, as bilateral trade soars. In August that the first agriculture barter deals between Russia and China would come this autumn. Russia's economy ministry published a document in February advising Russian companies on how to conduct barter transactions and pointing out pitfalls to avoid. A source in payment markets told that barter deals with China were now taking place, but at the level of individual companies. (*Dawn, October 2nd*, 2024, *Page 9*)

Exports rise 14pc in July-September

Pakistan's merchandise exports rose 14.11% to \$7.87bn in the first quarter of the current fiscal year from \$6.90bn in the same period last year, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The growth momentum picked pace in July owing to

improved orders from the international community and stability in the exchange rate. Exports grew 11.83pc in July, followed by 16pc in August and 13.52pc in September. The exports reached \$2.81bn in September against \$2.47bn in the corresponding month last year. On a month-on-month basis, exports rose a paltry 1.56pc. Global buyers have redirected clothing sourcing from Bangladesh and China and placed orders with Pakistan. It allows Pakistani exporters to capitalise on and capture the market. Pakistan Textile Exporters Association Patron-in-Chief Khurram Mukhtar said exports could have been surged by 25pc if issues related to liquidity and taxation had been resolved.

According to PBS data, imports grew 9.86pc to \$13.31bn in July-September FY25 from \$12.11bn over last year. Imports increased 16.08pc in September to \$4.58bn from \$3.95bn in same month last year. MoM, imports increased 16.08pc. In FY24, imports fell by 0.84pc to \$54.73bn compared to \$55.19bn in FY23. Trade deficit in July-September FY25 increased by 4.24pc to \$5.44bn from \$5.22bn over last year. In September, deficit increased by 20.35pc to \$1.78bn from \$1.48bn last year. Trade gap contracted to \$24.08bn in FY24 from \$27.47bn in preceding year. (*Dawn, October 3rd, 2024, Page 9*)

Trade deficit with nine SCO states widens 41pc

Pakistan's trade deficit with nine Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) countries widened by over 41 per cent to \$11.703 billion in FY24 from \$8.298bn in the preceding fiscal year due to a sharp increase in imports from China, Russia and India. Pakistan's exports to SCO countries, especially China, experienced a significant growth in FY24. However, exports to other countries continued to decline, according to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan. The value of Pakistan's exports to the nine SCO countries, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus, rose 32.4pc to \$3.076bn in 2023-24 from \$2.323bn in FY23.

Contrary to this, imports surged 39.14pc to \$14.779bn in FY24 from \$10.621bn over corresponding period of last year. This shows an increase in trade deficit with maximum countries in FY24. Imports from China also increased by 39.78pc to \$13.506bn in FY24 from \$9.662bn in the corresponding months of last year. The bulk of imports in the SCO countries are also sourced from China, followed by Russia, and India. The share of imports from China stood at 91.38pc in FY24. Pakistan's exports to China rose 33.68pc to \$2.707bn in FY24 from \$2.025bn in FY23.

Pakistan's regional share of exports to China was 63pc. The imports from Russia swelled by 36.58pc to \$1.011bn in FY24 from \$740.18m in FY23. Contrary to this, exports to Russia fell by 10.89pc to \$78.91m in FY24 compared to \$88.56m in preceding year. Imports from India rose 8.866pc to \$206.89m in FY24, up from \$190.04m in FY23. Meanwhile, exports to India amounted to \$3.669m in outgoing fiscal year, a significant increase from \$0.329m in FY23.

Kazakhstan had the highest export value of \$183.16m in FY24 among central Asian states (CASs) compared to \$95.22m in FY23, representing a 92.35pc rise. The value of imports from Kazakhstan fell 84.55pc to \$0.677m against \$4.383m in FY23. Pakistan's exports to Kyrgyzstan stood flat at \$9.56m in FY24 against \$9.86m in FY23, indicating a negligible decline. Imports from Kyrgyzstan grew 104pc to \$0.357m in FY24 against \$0.175m in the preceding year. Exports to Tajikistan dipped 37.38pc to \$14.46m in FY24 against \$23.26m in the previous year. However, imports from Tajikistan rose 65.67pc to \$6.13m against \$3.70m over the corresponding months last year. Pakistan and Tajikistan have already signed and implemented a transit trade agreement.

Under the agreement, Tajikistan will import goods via Pakistani seaports. Pakistani's exports to Uzbekistan fell 2.05pc to \$77.79m in FY24 against \$79.42m in FY23. The imports increased by 91pc to \$28.54m from \$14.94m. Uzbekistan has already implemented its transit trade agreement with Pakistan, under which 1,200 containers were imported in February. Pakistani's imports from Belarus stood at \$27.64m in FY24 against \$5.60m in FY23. The exports stood at \$1.79m against \$2.005m the previous year. Trade with Iran is barter-based chiefly, and no official data is available to register the full potential of trade. (*Dawn, October 16th, 2024, Page 9*)

Zardari for enhancing bilateral trade with Kyrgyzstan

President Asif Ali Zardari said that there is a need for enhancing bilateral trade in various sectors and economic activities between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan for the prosperity of the region. The president said Kyrgyzstan could also benefit from the Karachi and Gwadar ports. (Business Recorder, October 16th, 2024, Page 3)

Pakistan, Iran pledge to remove trade barriers

Pakistan and Iran have pledged to continue discussions and develop action plans to overcome the existing trade barriers and streamline regulations to realise the full potential of bilateral trade. They emphasised the need for boosting economic ties through increased bilateral trade and investment. They also explored avenues for collaboration in sectors of mutual interest. (*Dawn, October 17th, 2024, Page 9*)

Joint communique SCO urges end to protectionism, trade curbs

The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation have come together to "oppose protectionist actions, unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions that undermine the multilateral trading system and impede global sustainable development." "Heads of delegation consider it important to continue joint efforts to counter protectionist trade measures that are contrary to WTO rules and regulations, as well as to continue working on strengthening rules-based WTO, non-discriminatory, open, equitable, inclusive and transparent multilateral trading system, based on the WTO," read a joint communique

issued by top delegates from all 10 member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on the conclusion of two-day meeting of the SCO's Council of Heads of Government.

"The heads of delegations emphasised that the unilateral application of sanctions is incompatible with the principles of international law and has a negative impact on third countries and international economic relations," the joint communique read. All SCO member states' delegates, barring India, reaffirmed support for China's One Belt, One Road initiative, noted ongoing work on joint implementation of the project, including efforts to bridge the Eurasian Economic Union and OBOR. All the delegates advocated respect for "right of peoples to independently and democratically choose their political, social and economic development." (*Business Recorder, October 17th, 2024, Page 1*)

Pakistan holds first-ever trade expo in Oman

Oman will import products in 12 categories from Pakistan during the current fiscal year to increase bilateral trade volume. This resulted from a two-day first-ever Pakistan-Oman Expo and Business Conference, which concluded in Muscat and resulted in millions of dollars of export orders for Pakistani businessmen. An official announcement said that Pakistani companies signed export orders for home textile, sports, rice, children's garments, leather products, food, groceries, pharmaceuticals, plastics, and chemicals. (*Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 9*)

KP govt decides to establish trade corridor at Torkham

The KP government has decided to establish trade corridor at Torkham to facilitate and streamline trade activities with Afghanistan and Central Asian States and construction of a dedicated Cargo Railway Track from Peshawar to Torkham for this purpose. These initiatives are part of the seven flagship projects approved by the provincial government for the socio-economic development and welfare-oriented projects. The provincial government has also announced the construction of 365 Kilometres long Peshawar-D I Khan Motorway as an international trade corridor that will traverse through 12 districts of the province and connect the province with the provinces of Baluchistan and Punjab. As integral western route, it will provide direct access to Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. (Business Recorder, October 21st, 2024, Page 2)

TEXPO 24: deals worth over \$910m successfully signed

The 5th edition of TEXPO 2024 concluded at the Karachi Expo Centre. TDAP, took great pride in hosting an esteemed gathering of international stakeholders during the TEXPO exhibition. In addition to foreign buyers, TDAP extended its invitation to various trade promotion organisations, international chambers of commerce, and international associations, fostering an environment of global collaboration and partnership. Buyers from non-traditional markets also visited TEXPO diversifying the textile market base for Pakistani products.

The event proved to be an exceptional platform for forging business relationships, as evidenced by the successful deals finalized during the proceedings. TDAP is delighted to announced that deals worth over \$910 million were successfully concluded, reflecting the confidence and trust foreign buyers have in Pakistan's business potential. These agreements encompassed various sectors and are expected to contribute significantly to the growth of bilateral trade TDAP, also hosted Texpo Talks on "Green Threads: Weaving Sustainability into Pakistan's Textile and Leather Sectors," featured speakers Omar Hameed (Economic Minister, Brussels) and Bianca Seidel (MD, Bianca Seidel Consultancy), with a panel discussion. (Business Recorder, October 26th, 2024 Page 5)

Trade deficit with regional states balloons 62pc

The country's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries swelled by 62 per cent to \$2.917 billion in the first quarter of the current fiscal year from \$1.80bn. Trade experts attributed the surge mainly to increased imports from China, India and Afghanistan. Since the deficit rise remains unchanged from the previous fiscal year, it may cause policymakers big problems. In FY24, the trade deficit with these countries was \$9.506bn, up 49pc from \$6.382bn in the preceding fiscal year. Exports to Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka saw an upward trend in the July-September period FY25, but exports to other countries, especially China in the region, continued to decline during the months under review, according to data compiled by the 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 8pc to \$1.059 billion in July-September FY25 from \$983.19m over the previous year. Contrary to this, imports surged 43pc to \$3.976bn in July-Sept FY25 from \$2.783bn over the same period in the previous fiscal. Further details show that imports from China grew by 42pc to \$3.890bn in 3MFY25 from \$2.744bn over the last year. In FY24, imports from China stood at \$13.506bn — up by 39.78pc from \$9.662bn over previous year. The bulk of imports in the region are sourced from China, followed by India.

Pakistan's exports to China dipped 12pc to \$559.05m in 3MFY25 from \$633.64m over same month in preceding financial year. Pakistan's imports from India increased 771pc to \$57.480m in 3MFY25 from \$6.599m over last year. In FY24, imports from India rose 8.866pc to \$206.89m — up from \$190.04m in same period last year. Meanwhile, exports to India remained at \$0.277m in 3MFY25 against \$0.044m over last year.

Exports to India stood at \$3.669m during FY24, as against \$0.329m in same period previous year. Exports to Afghanistan increased 55pc to \$200.87m in 3MFY25 from \$129.22m last year. Imports from Afghanistan stood at \$6.38m in 3MFY25, as against \$1.05m in 3MFY24. No data available as most trade with Iran is conducted via informal channels. Exports to Bangladesh increased by 30pc to \$188.11m in 3MFY25. Imports

also grew 8pc to \$16.69m. Exports to Sri Lanka surged 49pc to \$108.62m in 3MFY25. Shipments to Nepal fell 29pc to \$0.565m. Exports to Maldives rose 20pc to \$2.35m in 3MFY25. No trade was observed between Pakistan and Bhutan during the first quarter of current fiscal year. (*Dawn, October 27th, 2024 Page 9*)

\$1.875m orders secured for Pakistani products at Karachi TEXPO

The 5th International Textile & Leather Exhibition (TEXPO) at the Karachi Expo Centre concluded with orders amounting to \$1.875 million placed for Pakistani textile products, signaling a positive uplift for the country's export industry. Organised by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), the 3-day event attracted both local and international delegates, marking another milestone in fostering trade ties and promoting Pakistani textiles globally. (*The News, October 27th*, 2024 Page 15)

Pakistan-Russia trade sees 50pc hike last year: Matviyenko

The annual bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia saw more than 50 percent increase last year, exceeding \$ 1 billion, the highest ever between the two countries. In the first eight months of the ongoing year, the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia has increased by 13 percent — from January to August — said Valentina Matviyenko, the Chairwoman/ Speaker of Russia's Federation Council of the Federal Assembly, addressing a special Senate session convened in her honour. She is leading a three day-visit of a Russian parliamentary delegation to Pakistan (27-29 October) on the invitation of Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gilani.

Despite unfavourable weather conditions, Russian farmers have harvested over 132 million tonnes of grain this year that guarantees Russia's reliability as one of the world's key agricultural exporters, she said. "Developing international transport corridors, the North South International Transport Corridor, is vital for our countries— we welcome Pakistan's interest in this project," the Russian parliamentary official said. Both Pakistan and Russia are interested in the settlement of key issues related to Afghanistan, she added. She supported Pakistan's interests in "deepening cooperation with BRICS, a centre of multi-polarity where all participants favour equality, good neighbourliness and mutual respect." (Business Recorder, October 29th, 2024 Page 3)

5.1 # Exports

Governor vows full support to rice exporters

Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor Sindh, has assured his full support to resolve the issues and problems of rice exporters to earn more foreign exchange for the country. Governor Sindh congratulated REAP for achieving a historic milestone of \$ 3.9 billion rice exports in the last fiscal year. He expressed his hope that with the focused efforts rice exports will be increased up to \$5 billion in next few years. (Business Recorder, October 3rd, 2024, Page 7)

Govt hopes to earn \$200m from meat exports to Malaysia

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced that his country would import meat and rice from Pakistan. He made announcement during a joint media conference with PM Shehbaz Sharif following their bilateral meeting, where both leaders discussed opportunities to enhance cooperation in key areas such as trade, investment, agriculture, tourism, education and defence. "As a result of our discussions, Malaysia has agreed in principle to import 100,000 tonnes of halal meat and basmati rice from Pakistan," said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. PM Shehbaz highlighted that export of halal meat alone would generate \$200 million annually for Pakistan. (*Dawn, October 4th*, 2024, *Page 12*)

Pakistan mulls lifting ban on livestock export

Pakistan is likely to lift the ban on the commercial export of sheep and goats imposed more than a decade back, mainly responding to the demand from Gulf countries. The Executive Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council has considered the matter and agreed to lift the ban on live animal export. According to the summary, several domestic investors have already started small- to medium-scale feedlot fattening farms, which are expected to create a surplus of goats and sheep in the coming years.

"The MNFS&R has also approached various countries for investment in feedlot fattening farms of small and large ruminants, and serious interest has been shown by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE," it added. The summary highlighted that the agriculture sector contributes around 24 per cent to gross domestic product. The livestock sector accounts for 60.84pc of the agricultural value added and 14.5pc GDP during 2023-24. The summary said that animal husbandry remains an important economic activity for rural dwellers, with over 8 million families engaged in livestock production and deriving around 35-40pc of their income from the sector.

In 2023-24, Pakistan's diversified inventory of food-producing animals stood at 224.7 million heads, including 57.5m cattle, 46.3m buffaloes, 32.7m sheep, 87.00m goats and 1.2m camels and produced a total quantity of around 70m tonnes of milk and 3.447m tonnes of meat including 2.630m tonnes of beef and 0.917m tonnes of mutton besides 2.363m tonnes of poultry meat. (*Dawn, October 6th*, 2024, *Page 9*)

Traders say 2pc cess affecting exports from KP

Traders and exporters claim that export from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had halted after imposition of two percent cess, fearing shifting of export to other provinces from KP if cess couldn't withdraw immediately. (Business Recorder, October 7th, 2024, Page 4)

Ministry seeks proposals from REAP with a view to achieving export target

Commerce Ministry has sought proposals from Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) to achieve ambitious export target of rice. Federal Minister for Commerce Jam

Kamal Khan called for measures aimed at enhancing Pakistan's rice exports and ensuring compliance with European food safety standards. As Pakistan holds a 25 per cent share of the European rice export market, significantly outpacing India's 16 per cent, the minister highlighted the need for greater collaboration between the government and exporters to maintain this competitive edge. Jam Kamal emphasised the critical role of rice exports in Pakistan's economy, noting that rice is second only to cotton in export value. He remarked that rice exporters were a primary source of revenue and employment, with the government aiming to increase exports from \$4 billion to \$6-7 billion in the near future. (Business Recorder, October 8th, 2024, Page 12)

Govt eyes \$100bn exports without outlining roadmap

Two federal ministers have forecast that Pakistan's exports will climb to \$100 billion from \$30bn in the next few years without outlining the pathway for achieving a three-fold increase in export proceeds. Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan painted a rosy export outlook while speaking at a dialogue on Governance Innovation Lab on the 'Export-Led Economy' theme. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) disputed the proposed export target figure surfaced in its first assessment during the caretaker government under the \$3bn Standby Arrangement, projecting a maximum export of \$39.46bn in FY28. (Dawn, October 9th, 2024, Page 9)

Ahsan reveals SMEs' potential of \$40-60bn export in next five years

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said that the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have the potential of \$40-60 billion export in the next three to five years. Addressing a roundtable consultation on "Export-led Economy - Race to \$100 billion", along with Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, he said the government would facilitate SME sector to achieve that potential target. (Business Recorder, October 9th, 2024, Page 10)

Conditional export of sugar allowed

The Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) meeting decided to conditionally allow export of 500,000 tons of refined sugar. The minister directed the PSMA to ensure the allowed quantity of sugar export within three months and local commodity prices must remain stable so that the consumers do not suffer as witnessed in the past. The representatives of the PSMA informed the government officials that Pakistan this year has around 1.6 million tons of additional sugar which should have been exported. While the government in June 2024, allowed PSMA to export 150,000 tons sugar which in August was further extended by 100,000 tons and 40,000 tons sugar export was allowed on government-to-government basis to Tajikistan. After conditional permission of 500,000 tons sugar export, the total quantity will reach 790,000 tons.

According to cane commissioner sugar off-take/ consumption report, in past 10 months a total of 5.595m tons of sugar was consumed locally and so far the exporters have managed to export a total 139,000m tons. The data shows that on average 545,000 tons sugar was used including local consumption and exported quantity. During 2023-24 crushing season, Pakistan has produced a total 6.841m tons of sugar, of which, 4.37 million tons was produced in Punjab, 2.022m tons in Sindh and 447,000 tons in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. While the country had a total 823,000m tons of carryover sugar stocks during the season, of which, 517,000 tons with Punjab mills, 191,000 tons with Sindh's mills and 115,000 stocks by KPK mills, thus, having a total quantity of 7.664m tons.

The PSMA officials said locally, the sugar production price was around \$503 per ton while in the international market, as of October 4, 2024, it stands at \$581.5 per ton, therefore, export permission will benefit both the industry and the country. The meeting was further informed that in Pakistan, industrial use of sugar stands at 85percent and the rest 15 percent was domestic use. Moreover, 18 percent general sales tax (GST) was imposed on sugar. (*Business Recorder, October 9th*, 2024, Page 12)

Economic Coordination Committee green-lights more sugar exports

On the demand of the sugar industry, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet allowed the export of another 500,000 tonnes of sugar with the condition to start sugarcane crushing by Nov 21. (*Dawn, October 12th, 2024, Page 9*)

Banks told to begin sugar export process for 0.5m tonnes

The State Bank of Pakistan has asked banks to process the export of half a million tonnes of sugar, which may destabilise domestic prices. The sugar industry has been seeking export permission for another 850,000 tonnes of sugar worth about \$485m. The Economic Coordination Committee of the cabinet had on Sept 21 allowed export of 140,000 tonnes of commodity. Market fears that rapid increase in exports could push local prices witnessed many times in the near past. (*Dawn, October 17th, 2024, Page 9*)

Textile exports rise 18pc in September

The exports of textile and clothing recorded an increase of nearly 9.51 per cent in the first quarter of FY25 amid concerns that industry was experiencing a slump, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data showed. The exports from the sector had a negative growth of 3.09pc in July, which rebounded 13pc in August and 17.92pc in September. 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 the same sectors have been static for the past two years due to structural issues. In absolute terms, textile and clothing exports surged to \$4.52bn in the first quarter (July-September) of FY25 from \$4.13bn over the corresponding months last year. (Dawn, October 18th, 2024, Page 9)

Pakistan all set to export donkey meat, hides to China

Pakistan is all set to export donkey meat and hides to China as the two countries have signed a protocol during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang. Pakistan has an estimated donkey population of 5.9 million, with China being a significant market for donkey meat, used both in cuisine and for the production of Ejiao, a traditional Chinese medicine gelatin. (Business Recorder, October 18th, 2024, Page 14)

SCCI demands withdrawal of 2pc cess on exports

Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry termed the imposition of a two per cent cess on exports from KP as an unjust step of the provincial government and asked for its withdrawal. SCCI Senior Vice-President Jalil Jan said exports had been shifted to other provinces after the imposition of cess. He expressed the fear that trade and exports would vanish if the cess wasn't withdrawn immediately, adding it would trigger massive unemployment in the province. (*Dawn, October 21st*, 2024, Page 9)

Texpo 2024 likely to attract \$800m in export orders

Texpo 2024, 5th edition of Pakistan's premier textile and leather exhibition, is expected to generate export orders worth a staggering \$800 million, nearly double the \$420 million secured at last year's event. Industry experts see this as an ideal opportunity for Pakistan to increase textile export from \$16 billion in F24 to \$19 billion by the end of this fiscal year. (Business Recorder, October 22nd, 2024, Page 7)

Pakistan exports tractors to Tanzania

The first consignment of Pakistani-made tractors reached Tanzania, marking a significant milestone in the country's trade relations with East Africa. The tractors were imported from Pak-Tractors House, a prominent manufacturing company based in Lahore. (*Dawn, October 31*st, 2024 Page 9)

\$120m earned through export of surplus sugar

The country has earned approximately \$120 million through the export of surplus sugar, according to the latest briefing to the Cabinet Committee on Monitoring Sugar Exports. (Business Recorder, October 31st, 2024, Page 14)

5.2 # Import

Cotton imports set to surge as output drops 60pc

The local textile industry is bracing for a financial crisis in the form of costlier cotton imports due to a sharp decline in the domestic production, with the output unlikely to exceed five million bales this year. According to figures released by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association, total cotton arrivals at ginning factories as of Sept 30 stand at 2.039m bales — a 60% drop from the 5.025m bales recorded on the same date last year. In Punjab, only 171 ginning units are currently operational, down from 385 last year.

The province (Punjab) has produced just 726,000 bales so far, marking a 65pc decline from the previous year's 2.069m bales. In Rahim Yar Khan district, which historically led cotton production, only 12,000 bales have reached the ginning units, representing a steep 95pc drop from last year. Sindh has also seen a significant decline, with cotton production down 56pc to 1.313m bales compared to 2.956m bales in 2023. The highest yield in Sindh, 0.852m bales, was reported from the Sanghar district. The Federal Committee on Agriculture had set a cotton production target of 10.8m bales for the year. However, the PCGA data suggests that this target is now unattainable, forcing the textile industry to rely heavily on imported cotton.

Ihsanul Haq, chairman of Cotton Ginners Forum, fears that total cotton production may remain below five million bales, necessitating cotton imports worth over \$2bn. Textile mills have already signed agreements to import three million bales. Additionally, Punjab only managed to sow cotton on 3.2m acres, falling short of the 4.3m-acre target. To boost cotton production, Mr Mahmood suggests that government allocate more funds to Pakistan Central Cotton Committee for research & development of heat-tolerant, high-yield cotton seeds. Mr Haq of Cotton Ginners Forum also advises government to make farm inputs tax-free rather than providing farmers with a relief package, while also setting support prices for all major crops and ensuring farmers receive these prices. (*Dawn, October 4th*, 2024, Page 9)

No restrictions on industries importing raw material, NA told

Under the prime minister's direction to prioritise an increase in exports, no restrictions had been imposed on industries importing raw materials following finalisation of IMF programme. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 3*)

Imported onions, tomatoes hit market amid shortage

Iranian and Afghan onions and tomatoes have entered local markets as domestic supply shortages push demand higher. Traders are charging similar rates for both imported and local produce, with prices ranging from Rs160 to Rs200 per kg. However, Pakistani vegetables enjoy an edge over imported ones due to their taste and quality. (*Dawn*, *October 30th*, 2024, *Page 9*)

6# CORPORATE SECTOR

Big industry output falls 2.7 per cent in August

The Large-Scale Manufacturing (LSM) sector contracted 2.65 per cent year-on-year in August, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The LSM enters a negative growth following a positive growth of 2.38pc in July. The LSM has grown positively for the last six months since December 2023 before entering negative territory in June. In FY24, the LSM witnessed a negative growth of 0.03pc. (*Dawn, October 18th*, 2024, *Page 9*)

MNCs essential good sales see mixed trend amid boycott

The manufacturers of essential foreign items in Pakistan have not experienced significant declines, unlike foreign soft drink, mineral water, and fast food sales, which have been adversely affected by consumer boycott in response to the massacre of thousands of Palestinians by Israeli forces over the past year. For example, Nestlé Pakistan's sales for the nine months ended Sept 30 stood at Rs149.2 billion, reflecting a decline of meagre 1.3pc compared to Rs151bn in the same period last year. However, the company's profit-after-tax (PAT) plunged 29.50pc to Rs12.2bn from Rs15.8bn the previous year. Nestle said this was a decline primarily influenced by the implementation of taxes in the Finance Act, passed on to consumers, leading to price hikes and reduced demand. Additionally, challenges such as rising commodity and energy prices and increased investment in the brands contributed to decreased operating profit.

However, the net sales of Friesland Campina Engro Pakistan Ltd (FCEPL) rose 12pc to Rs85.5bn during nine months ending on Sept 30 from Rs74bn in the same period last year, while PAT improved to Rs2bn from Rs1.6bn. Out of total sales, dairy-based segment revenue posted a growth of 12pc to Rs73.5bn, according to a press release. Effective July 1, an 18pc sales tax was imposed on the sale of UHT milk, which was previously zero-rated. Overall sales of Unilever Pakistan Foods Ltd (UPFL) declined by 6.2pc to Rs24.8bn from Rs26.4bn in the nine months of 2023. PAT fell to Rs5.43bn from Rs7.5bn. However, data of LSM showed no extraordinary manufacturing of soft drinks and mineral water as they produced 607m litres in July-August compared to 600m litres in the same period in 2023. (Dawn, October 27th, 2024 Page 9)

6.1 # Fertilizer Company

Engro Fertilizers launches 'UgAi' app

In a bid to revolutionize the agriculture sector, Engro Fertilizers has launched "UgAi", the first integrated agri e-commerce platform of Pakistan, to offer farmers relief by enabling direct purchase of fertilizers at official prices from the company, ensuring transparency and eliminating intermediaries. In the first phase, the free UgAi app has been launched for farmers in Sindh, with plans for a nationwide rollout in the near future. With the UgAi app, Engro Fertilizers will deliver fertilizers straight from its warehouses to farmers, tailored to their farms' size and specific needs. (Business Recorder, October 9th, 2024, Page 7)

Fatima Fertilizer and ZTBL sign MoU to enhance financial access for smallholder farmers

Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited and Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL) have entered into a groundbreaking partnership to promote financial inclusion and support for smallholder farmers in Pakistan. This collaboration aims to integrate farmers into the formal financial system while providing them with essential agricultural resources

and innovative solutions to enhance productivity and livelihoods. This is the first-of-its-kind agreement in the industry, pioneering a new way forward for agricultural financing and farmer empowerment. (Business Recorder, October 16th, 2024, Page 7)

Engro Corp reports solid 9-month results

Engro Corporation's revenue from continued operations grew by 12 percent to Rs. 279 billion, compared to Rs. 250 billion in the same period of 2023. Consolidated profit after tax (PAT) attributable to shareholders from continued operations stood at Rs. 10.6 billion (EPS: Rs. 19.68), up from Rs. 9.9 billion (EPS: Rs. 18.13) last year. Higher profitability is primarily driven by responsive pricing strategies and cost optimization. The Company also announced an interim cash dividend of Rs. 5 per share in third quarter. This payout is in addition to the Rs. 19 per share dividend already announced in the first half, bringing the cumulative nine-month dividend to Rs. 24 per share. (Business Recorder, October 30th, 2024, Page 2)

6.2 # Food Companies

${\it Bottlers\ not\ bound\ to\ remove\ all\ impurities\ from\ water\ under\ existing\ laws,\ SHC\ finds}$

The Sindh High Court has noted that under the existing laws at provincial and federal levels, removal of arsenic and fluoride were optional for bottled water firms and even multi-national companies were not required to treat and remove such chemicals, and directed the federal and the provincial governments to legislate on the matter in accordance with the standards set by of the World Health Organisation.

The SHC also ordered director general of Sindh Food Authority to continue campaign against such companies, including taking criminal action and cancelling their licences accordingly. The bench also said that as per the report of SFA, the authority issued licences to drinking water companies without inspection at the site and found 62 samples unfit for human consumption while products of 23 firms were also found unfit. It is admitted fact that companies with low standards, operating under licence of SFA, are providing/selling sub-standard water in Sindh. (*Dawn, October 9th*, 2024, *Page 13*)

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

BoP gets \$54m on-lending facility from AFD

The Bank of Punjab (BoP) has arranged a long-term on-lending facility of \$54.2m for green banking from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the French state development finance agency. This credit facility is intended for onward lending to climate adaptation and mitigation projects and activities in Pakistan. In addition to the credit facility, the AFD is also providing BoP with a grant facility of EUR 675,000 to support a technical assistance programme. This concessional credit facility marks the first-ever foreign currency (FCY) facility arranged by any commercial bank specifically tied to climate financing in Pakistan. (Dawn, October 7th, 2024, Page 2)

Heavy investment expected in 'Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund'

In the investment sector there has been major development, according to which Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund will be established by heavy investment in financial sector. In this regard, Alvarez Marsal Middle East Group will float financial investment in Pakistan and there will be huge investment in financial sector. Aleem Khan said that government is extending all possible support and facilities for investment while joint business projects are being starting with China, Russia, Central Asian states and other countries.

Briefing the high-level meeting, Chief Investment Officer and Managing Director of Sovereign Wealth Fund Abdalla EI Ebiary and Senior Associate Amine Yaaqoubi said that the objective of this fund is to increase investment in the private sector while the GCC and Gulf countries are also participating in this Sovereign Fund. In the meeting, the proposal of 75 per cent and 25 per cent partnership between the Alvarez Marsal Group and the government also came under discussion. Participant threw light on the independent financial advisor and other aspects of this Pak Sovereign Wealth Fund. (Business Recorder, October 9th, 2024, Page 12)

FDI jumps 48pc with lion's share from China

Foreign direct investment (FDI) surged by over 48 per cent in the first quarter of FY25, reflecting improvement in investor confidence However, the inflows were dominated by China as it accounted for 52pc of the total FDI the country received in the July-September quarter. The State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) data showed country received \$771 million in FDI during July-Sept FY25 compared to \$520m in the same period last year, witnessing an increase of 48.2 per cent. The inflows from China were \$404m during the quarter against \$164m in the same period last fiscal year. No country is close to this volume of investment. In September, the FDI from China was \$244.8m.

Inflows from Hong Kong were \$98m during the quarter compared to \$67m in the same period of the last year. The UK and US inflows were \$72m and 28m, respectively. The inflows as FDI from the Arab countries remained negligible. The government has been persuading the Arab countries to invest in Pakistan. It has established a Special Investment Facilitation Council to provide maximum facilities, but significant results have yet to be achieved. "The government has failed to attract foreign investors, including close friends like Saudi Arabia and UAE, who are not ready to risk investing in Pakistan," said an expert on financial affairs. The FDI from Saudi Arabia was just \$1.8m and \$25m from the UAE. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 9*)

Pakistan seeks foreign investment

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has invited foreign companies to invest in Pakistan's agriculture, information technology, mines and minerals sectors to avail the opportunities that are emerging because of the improved investment climate in country.

Mr Aurangzeb, who is leading a Pakistani delegation to the annual meetings World Bank in Washington, attended a series of investor fora organised by Citibank, Standard Chartered and JP Morgan, highlighting positive trends of economy. He briefed investors on positive performance of economy during FY24 and expressed satisfaction that all economic indicators were moving in right direction. (*Dawn, October 26*th, 2024 Page 9)

SIFC for sharing 10 investible plans with KSA

Special Investment Facilitation Council has sought ten investible projects from Power Division by October 31, 2024, to be shared with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a follow-up of recent visit of over three dozen Saudi companies under leadership of Saudi Investment Minister, Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih. SIFC maintains that amid Pakistan's current economic challenges, including a high import bill & foreign exchange shortages, developing an investible project pipeline is crucial for boosting industrialisation, creating jobs, and enhancing exports. (Business Recorder, October 29th, 2024 Page 1)

DP World exploring investment opportunities

A high-level delegation from DP World, a renowned Dubai-based firm, visited SIFC in Pakistan to explore investment opportunities across multiple sectors. The delegation was led by Yuvraj Narayan, who discussed potential investments in Pakistan, showing a keen interest in infrastructure and logistics. One of the key areas of interest for DP World is the development of a corridor between Karachi Port and Pipri, a project that could enhance connectivity and bolster Pakistan's trade infrastructure. During visit, DP World officials expressed their appreciation for SIFC's efforts to facilitate investments and conveyed their trust in Pakistan's economic landscape. Reaffirming their commitment, DP World highlighted its plans to pursue joint ventures within Pakistan's logistics sector, seeking to uncover new avenues for collaboration and contribute to the country's economic growth. (Business Recorder, October 29th, 2024 Page 1)

Foreign aid drops 60pc in first quarter

Amid delays in securing an International Monetary Fund (IMF) support package, Pakistan's foreign assistance inflows plunged by 60 per cent to \$2.3 billion in the first quarter of the current fiscal year (July-September), down from about \$5.73bn in the same period last year. In its monthly report on Foreign Economic Assistance (FEA) the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) said the country received \$1.3bn in the first quarter against an annual target of \$19.4bn. This marks a significant decrease from the \$3.527bn received in the same period last year when the yearly target was \$17.6bn. The report does not account for around \$1bn disbursed by the IMF on the final day of September, which is recorded separately by the State Bank of Pakistan.

In the previous fiscal year, the IMF released \$1.2bn in early July, boosting Pakistan's inflows to \$2.9bn for the month. In contrast, inflows in July this year were a mere

\$436m. The EAD reported that inflows for September thisyear amounted to \$594m compared to \$321m in the same month last year. Out of \$1.3m inflows in the first quarter, about \$663m was received for budgetary support or programme loans and the remaining \$645m for project financing. During the same period a year ago, the EAD secured about \$875m as project aid and more than \$2.5bn as programme loans.

Of the total, inflows from multilaterals stood at \$493m this year almost the same level as last year while bilateral disbursements stood at \$250m in the first quarter of the current year against \$325m last year. The EAD reported receiving about \$200m in loans from foreign commercial lenders in the first quarter of the currentyear, showing a minor recovery from commercial banks that had stayed away from financing Pakistan last year. Pakistan also received \$375m inflows from overseas Pakistanis through the Naya Pakistan Certificates compared to \$204m a year ago.

The World Bank led the multilaterals with a \$277m disbursement in the first quarter of the current year, slightly lower than its \$300m releases last year. This was followed by \$114m from Asian Development Bank and \$62m from the Islamic Development Bank. Among the bilateral lenders, China stood out with \$97m disbursements, followed by \$90m from France and \$36m from United States. (Dawn, October 30th, 2024, Page 9)

7.1 # Countries / Regions

Breakthrough in trade relations through formation of Pakistan-Russia Trade, Investment Forum

A major breakthrough has come out in the trade and business sector of Russia and Pakistan and for the first time in the 76-year history, with the formation of the Pakistan-Russia Trade and Investment Forum. In Moscow, during scheduled business activities between the two countries mutual investment agreements have been signed to increase import and export and benefit from each other's experiences. Under the leadership of Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, the CEOs of more than 70 companies visited Moscow and attended 3-day Business Forum while the heads of about 100 Russian companies participated in joint activities. Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia Khalid Jamali and Trade Minister Shaukat Hayat also played an active role in organising the Pakistan-Russia Trade and Investment Forum on which Federal Minister of Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan expressed his satisfaction and said that Pakistan is committed to increase public, cultural relations and bilateral cooperation with Russia in future. (Business Recorder, 3rd, 2024, Page 4)

Kremlin talks: TAPI gas, trade & road transport pact top the agenda

Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, Alexey Overchuk and Russian ministers were called on by Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatisation and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan in Kremlin (Russia). In this meeting, both the delegations of Pakistan and Russia held a detailed discussion on agreement of international road transport while TAPI Gas, bilateral trade, communications, proposed rail track and other projects were also reviewed. (*Business Recorder*, 4th, 2024, Page 16)

Portuguese businesspeople urged to invest in Punjab's tourism sector

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "We value our diplomatic ties with Portugal and will strive to promote our mutual relations further." Chief Minister agreed to constitute bilateral teams to promote mutual relations and increase trade volume between Portugal and Punjab. She directed authorities concerned to redesign incentive package for foreign investors in Punjab, and highlighted, "Investors from Portugal will be welcomed to invest in Punjab tourism. Favourable investment environment has been ensured in Punjab." (Business Recorder, October 8th, 2024, Page 2)

Consulate General Indonesia celebrates signing of \$10.70m pacts

The Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Karachi hosted a business dinner on 11 October 2024, to appreciate the presence of approximately 25 Pakistani and Indonesian businesses and dignitaries at the Trade Expo Indonesia. The dinner marked the signing of agreements and memorandums of understanding for bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan, valued at US\$ 10.70 million. (*Business Recorder, October 13th*, 2024, Page 5)

Belarus delegation visits ZTBL, shows interest in multiple projects

A high-level delegation from the Republic of Belarus called on the President/CEO of Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL) at ZTBL Head Office, expressing keen interest to invest in multiple projects in Pakistan. The meeting was held during Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit 2024 in Islamabad, where delegations from various member and observer countries have gathered. Belarusian delegation provided detailed insights into Belarus' agriculture sector, which plays a pivotal role in country's economy. Agriculture and livestock exports are major contributors to Belarus' foreign exchange earnings.

They highlighted Belarus' strength in agricultural mechanization, heavy machinery production, and livestock development. Their agricultural exports, including dairy and meat products, contribute to their global trade footprint, and Belarus is recognized for its advanced farming practices and cutting-edge machinery such as tractors and agricultural equipment. They suggested that ZTBL's farmers benefit from Belarusian agricultural machinery to promote mechanization and productivity in Pakistan's agriculture sector. The President/CEO of ZTBL shared ZTBL's recent disbursement of Rs 33 billion agri loans to small & subsistence farmers under the Prime Minister Kissan Package with over Rs10 billion financed for farm mechanization. (*Business Recorder, October 17th, 2024, Page 4*)

Governor, German envoy discuss investment in mineral sector

Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail met Dr Ruediger Lotz, the German consul general in Karachi, and discussed with the latter investment opportunities in the province's minerals sector. The governor praised German government's support in the fields of education, health, technology, capacity-building and especially scholarships for the youth of Balochistan. He expressed the hope that Germany would continue its cooperation for the development of Balochistan. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 5*)

7.2 # China

Chinese firms express interest in EV manufacturing, waste-to-energy projects in Karachi

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that his government would welcome Chinese firms to invest directly in the projects of their choice or on a public-private partnership basis with the provincial government. He said this during a meeting with a delegation of Chinese investors led by Belt & Road Group chairman Wan Xiaowu. Mr Wan informed the CM that over 12 top Chinese firms were interested in investing in different projects in Karachi particularly the waste-to-energy, wastewater treatment, desalination plant, manufacturing of electric buses, manufacturing of kits to convert petrol motorcycles into electric energy and reconstructions of the city's sewerage system. (*Dawn, October 2nd, 2024, Page 13*)

CPEC power projects: All set to ink \$16bn debt re-profiling pacts during Li's visit

Pakistan and Chinese power companies are all set to sign pacts on re-profiling of debts and moratorium on payment of over \$ 16 billion for five and three years respectively during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang. On Pakistan side, Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) whereas on the Chinese side, Chinese Companies will ink Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) which will serve as a basis for further discussions regarding potential FCY debt reprofiling. Nine power generation projects and one transmission line project are setup and operational in Pakistan under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). (Business Recorder, October 8th, 2024, Page 1)

7.3 # Kingdom of Saudi Arab

Pakistan to sign deals worth \$2bn with Riyadh

Pakistan is expected to sign agreements and memorandums of understanding worth \$2 billion with Saudi Arabia in various sectors during an upcoming visit of a Saudi delegation to Islamabad, a move aimed at bolstering economic ties between the two nations. (Dawn, October 9th, 2024, Page 1)

Saudi team arrives to boost trade cooperation

A high-powered delegation of Saudi Arabia led by its Minister for Investment Sheikh Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Al Faleh arrived on a three-day official visit. Pakistan and Saudi

Arabia will sign several trade and investment agreements and some Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) during the Saudi minister's stay. The Saudi delegation will also visit Special Investment and Facilitation Council (SIFC) and discuss investment plans in various sectors. (*Dawn, October 10th, 2024, Page 1*)

Saudi firm to buy stake in Reko Diq in coming weeks, says kingdom's investment minister

Saudi Minister for Investment Sheikh Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Al Faleh confirmed that kingdom's Manara Minerals was set to buy a stake in Barrick Gold's Reko Diq gold and copper mine in coming weeks. Barrick Gold owns a 50% stake in Pakistan's Reko Diq mine, with remaining 50pc owned by governments of Pakistan and province of Balochistan. Barrick considers mine one of world's largest underdeveloped copper-gold areas.

In August, Barrick Gold's chief executive had said that company was open to bringing in Saudi Arabia's wealth fund as one of its partners in Pakistan's Reko Diq gold and copper mine. Manara Minerals Investment Company, backed by Saudi sovereign wealth fund, plans to invest at least \$1bn in Reko Diq project, controlled by Canadian mining firm. It is expected that \$5bn investment would be made in minerals sector especially the Reko Diq gold and copper mines as Saudi Arabia has already been studying the prospects of tapping into this sector, though the kingdom also has an interest in petroleum, agriculture as well as IT sectors. (*Dawn, October 11th, 2024, Page 1*)

MoUs for investment worth \$2.2bn with Riyadh

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed 27 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for over \$2.2 billion in investments in agriculture, IT, food, education, mining, health, petroleum and energy sectors. The PM highlighted the progress made through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which has been instrumental in accelerating foreign investment in Pakistan. (*Dawn, October 11th, 2024, Page 3*)

Saudis add \$600m to \$2.2bn investment pledge

Saudi Arabia has agreed to invest another \$600 million in Pakistan as it signed seven more memoranda of understanding (MoUs), taking their total number from 27, signed recently in Pakistan, to 34 MoUs. The announcement was made in a joint press stakeout by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Investment Minister Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih following their "very productive" meeting in Riyadh. The meeting discussed bilateral cooperation in trade, finance, agriculture, technology, and skilled labour among other sectors. Saudi minister said that some of MoUs had resulted in exports from Pakistan in agriculture and other fields. (*Dawn, October 31st*, 2024 Page 1)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

3 NTDC projects: WB, ADB and IsDB willing to finance

The World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) have reportedly conveyed willingness to finance three projects of National Transmission and Despatch Company and advised seeking private participation for Ghazi Brotha to Faisalabad West Transmission Line, sources in Economic Affairs Division (EAD) told. (Business Recorder, October 21st, 2024, Page 1)

8.1 # Asian Development Bank (ADB)

ADB EDs assure support to structural reforms, stabilise economy

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Executive Directors assured continuous support to Pakistan on government's agenda to implement structural reforms, generate fiscal space and stabilise the economy. The delegation is on Pakistan's visit from 6-12th October 2024 for consultations with the government and key stakeholders to better align ADB's support with Government's priorities. (Business Recorder, October 10th, 2024, Page 1)

BISP, ADB to focus on imparting skills to beneficiaries

Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and ADB have agreed to take initiatives for imparting technical skills to beneficiaries of the social protection system and their families. BISP Chairperson Rubina Khalid and ADB Country Director Emma Fan held a meeting at the BISP headquarters in which they discussed issues related to promoting a future partnership, identifying key sectors for skill training of deserving families, facilitating international certifications, providing overseas job opportunities and strengthening coordination with provincial poverty graduation programmes and awareness campaigns for deserving women. Development of beneficiaries and their families, international certifications and coordination with provincial poverty graduation programmes were also discussed. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 4*)

ADB okays \$500m loan to fight climate change

ADB announced that it had approved a \$500m policy-based loan to support climate change and disaster risk reduction and resilience in Pakistan. Climate and Disaster Resilience Enhancement Programme will strengthen Pakistan's institutional capacity for planning, preparedness and response; increase inclusive investment in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience; & support scale up of disaster risk financing using a risk-layered approach. Pakistan is one of most vulnerable countries to climate change and disasters triggered by natural hazards in Asia and Pacific. Average losses from disaster events exceed \$2bn per year. ADB has also approved a technical assistance grant of \$1m to support implementation of programme. (Dawn, October 30th, 2024, Page 3)

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF concerned at low investment in social sector

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised concerns over Pakistan's persistently low investment in the social sectors, warning that this underinvestment is perpetuating poverty and widening inequality across the country. This was stated in the Fund's latest report titled "2024 Article IV Consultation and request for an Extended Arrangement under The Extended Fund Facility". The government should continue to maintain substantial fiscal contingency reserves to ensure Benazir Income Support Program's capacity to disburse emergency cash transfers. This would be a crucial component of building climate resilience. (Business Recorder, October 13th, 2024, Page 1)

IMF asks govt to end tax breaks for agri, textile sectors

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has asked Pakistan to swiftly end preferential treatment, tax exemptions and other protections for the agriculture and textile sectors, which it says have stifled the country's growth potential for decades. In its staff report on the diagnosis of the factors behind Pakistan's struggling economy, the IMF blamed these two sectors not only for failing to contribute adequately to the national revenue but also for consuming large portions of public funds while remaining inefficient and uncompetitive. The report highlighted the country's significant lag behind similar nations, a stagnation that has compromised living standards and pushed over 40.5 per cent of the population below the poverty line.

It said Pakistan had struggled to develop more sophisticated export goods, and the share of knowledge-intensive exports remains low as it failed to innovate. As of 2022, Pakistan ranked 85th in the Economic Complexity Index, the same rank it held in 2000. "With an export basket strongly biased towards agriculture and textiles (cotton yarn, rice, woven fabrics, beef, leather apparel), country has struggled to reallocate resources towards more technologically complex products". (*Dawn, October 14th*, 2024, *Page 1*)

IMF urges Pakistan to invest Rs1.2tr a year in climate resilience

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged Pakistan to invest one per cent of its GDP annually — equivalent to over Rs1.24 trillion based on current estimates — in climate resilience and adaptation reforms to prepare for recurring extreme weather events, particularly floods, and sustain economic growth and reverse inequalities. In a special policy advisory, the IMF noted that ongoing reforms under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) — including fiscal, labour market, trade, and state-owned enterprise (SOE) reforms — could boost Pakistan's growth by 2pc over five years while significantly reducing inequality. Such investments would reduce the growth impact of natural disasters by about a third and return Pakistan to its previous GDP level more quickly. (Dawn, October 17th, 2024, Page 12)

Pakistan seeks \$1bn from IMF climate facility

Pakistan is targeting around \$1 billion in a formal request for funding from the IMF facility that helps low and middle income countries mitigate climate risk, its finance minister told. "We have formally requested to be considered for this facility," Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said. (Business Recorder, October 25th, 2024, Page 1)

8.3 # World Bank (WB)

WB places Pakistan in 4th quintile

The World Bank has placed Pakistan in the fourth quintile – ie, the group of economies which grapple with a challenging business environment characterized by relatively weak regulatory frameworks and public services, which constrains the operational efficiency of their businesses. The bank released a new report, Business Ready (B-READY), a new data collection and analysis project of the World Bank Group to assess the business and investment climate worldwide, accompanied by an annual corporate flagship report. It replaces and improves upon the World Bank Group's earlier Doing Business project and the first edition of Business Ready covers only 50 economies. As a new project, B-READY is in a three-year rollout phase, spanning 2024 to 2026. (Business Recorder, October 5th, 2024, Page 1)

WB pledges \$2bn to help govt respond to 2022 floods

The World Bank (WB) had pledged \$2 billion, including \$1.55 billion for new projects, as support to help government of Pakistan respond to the 2022 floods; however, the disbursement for housing reconstruction in Balochistan has yet to start. This was revealed by World Bank officials while briefing media regarding floods reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. Over \$2 billion has been made available for implementation to date through a three-pillared approach: Respond Immediately, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation, and Resilience. \$454 million were made available through existing projects, \$277 million as respond immediately, \$177 million reconstruction and rehabilitation, and resilience, while \$1.55 billion through new projects (Reconstruction and Rehabilitation, and Resilience). (Business Recorder, October 9th, 2024, Page 12)

World Bank to fund Pakistan's pandemic preparedness plan

The World Bank will fund Pakistan's pandemic preparedness programme to bolster the country's prevention, readiness and response capacity to deal with future disease outbreaks. The programme has been selected by the governing board of the World Bank-hosted Pandemic Fund for its second round of grants. The "Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR) through Operationalizing One Health Approach Programme" in Pakistan will receive grant aid that will be implemented by the Asian Development Bank, World Health Organisation and the UN's FAO, the Fund said. The Pandemic Fund's governing board approved grants worth \$418 million for 40 countries at its meeting in Washington. (Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 12)

9 # POLICY

9.1 # Agricultural Policy

Bilawal slams 'conspiracy' to deregulate agricultural sector

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari condemned what he called a conspiracy being hatched by "mafias, large business groups, industrialists and international forces" to deregulate the agricultural sector. "In a time when climate change poses a question of life and death, suggesting deregulation of the agricultural sector is a foolish idea and plan," he said, while speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Benazir Hari Card here at Sindh Chief Minister House. He described investment in agriculture as the only path to national development and demanded an immediate end to subsidies for fertilizer factories. (*Business Recorder, October 15th, 2024, Page 13*)

9.2 # Development Policy

PDWP approves four uplift schemes worth Rs8.5bn

The Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) approved four schemes related to different sectors worth Rs 8.5 billion. (Business Recorder, October 5th, 2024, Page 3)

Karachi set to receive Rs218bn this year: CM

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that approximately Rs1,000 billion is needed for the development of Karachi every year, however, the resources are limited, despite this, the city is set to receive Rs218 billion for development this year. (*Business Recorder, October 6th, 2024, Page 8*)

Govt pledges PSDP cuts, other reforms amid IMF criticism

Amid criticism from IMF over SIFC and Sovereign Wealth Fund, the government has committed to drastically reduce PSDP, ensure timely tariff adjustments in gas and electricity sectors, bring agriculture and retail sectors into effective tax net and immediately impose or increase withholding tax and excise duties on several items to meet any revenue shortfall. According to documents released by IMF as part of the recently approved \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility, Pakistan has stayed on course of its commitments through a total of 22 structural benchmarks until Sept 25, as the country required about \$110.5bn in foreign financing over the next five years (2025 to 2029) at an average of \$22bn per year. These needs generally remain funded with some minor gaps over the next two years. (*Dawn, October 12th, 2024, Page 1*)

Adaptation Fund Board approves \$10m worth project for Indus-SAFER

Adaptation Fund Board approved a landmark \$10 million worth project for the Indus-Sustainable Actions for Ecosystems Restoration in Pakistan (SAFER) to reduce Pakistan's vulnerability to climate-driven impacts. Adaptation Fund is an organization established in 2001 under UN Convention on Climate change to provide funding to countries for climate change programmes. With 90 percent of Pakistan's people and

more than three-quarters of its economy sited in the Indus Basin, climate-driven alterations to the river's flow are set to seriously impact Pakistan's economy and ecology, threatening hard-won gains in poverty reduction and inclusive development. SAFER aims to mitigate the risk of such climate shocks, leveraging the expertise of executing partners children's humanitarian and developmental aid organization United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and gender equality body UN Women. (Business Recorder, October 16th, 2024, Page 3)

`Inauguration of Rs6bn projects reflects our resolve to city uplift`

Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated major road and energy projects worth Rs6 billion across the city and declared that those initiatives reflected his government's commitment to improving infrastructure and embracing the idea of renewable energy to benefit the people of Karachi. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 13*)

Sindh okays 12 uplift plans worth Rs4.8bn

Provincial development working party (PDWP) has approved 12 development schemes worth Rs4.8 billion in different districts of Sindh. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 15*)

Development projects: MoPD&SI authorises 14pc of budgeted allocation for Q1

Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has authorised a total of Rs155 billion (14 per cent) out of Rs1.1trillion budgeted allocation for development projects for the first quarter (July-September) under PSDP-2024-25. According to the Ministry of Finance's notification, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives authorised 15 percent funds for the first quarter, 20 percent for the second quarter, 25 percent for the third quarter, and 40 percent for the fourth quarter under the PSDP. (Business Recorder, 30th October, 2024, Page 1)

9.3 # Neo – Liberal Policies

Senate panel opposes mineral corp's privatisation

The Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum rejected the government's decision to privatise Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC), saying its assets belonged to the provinces. (*Dawn, October* 2nd, 2024, Page 5)

Pakistan committed to reforms, Aurangzeb tells investors

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that government is committed to keeping Pakistan on track with structural reforms in key economic sectors, including energy, state-owned enterprises, privatisation, taxation, and government rightsizing. (*Dawn*, *October* 9th, 2024, Page 9)

Lenders ask govt to stop funding public universities

The government is preparing a transformation plan for all public sector universities to become self-sustainable corporate entities. This plan aims to free up public resources for investment in compulsory and elementary education, based on the advice of international lending agencies. Informed sources told that the Ministry of Finance has engaged with relevant stakeholders — the Higher Education Commission, Planning Commission, the Ministry of National Health and others — based on an initial study conducted by a leading international lending agency.

These sources said the study showed that 80pc of public sector universities — both in the conventional education and medical and health domain — would default within three to four years as many already survive on dole outs from the federal budget. The finance ministry was already trying to scale down its financing to the universities but had to allocate about Rs61bn for current fiscal year, up from Rs40bn the previous year.

The lenders want all public sector universities to generate their resources by increasing the quality of education, student fees, and innovative use of their vast lands and reducing their staff, particularly in the administrative and accounting cadres. Not only should the federal government end funding, but the provincial government should also move away from subsidising the higher education sector. (*Dawn, October 15th, 2024, Page 9*)

PIA stake sale attracts sole bid of Rs10 billion below government minimum

The final bidding process for privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines attracted just one bid of Rs10 billion for a 60 per cent stake, the Privatisation Ministry said. The government had pre-qualified six groups in June, but only real-estate development company Blue World City participated in the bidding process, placing a bid that was below the government-set minimum price of Rs85bn. Pakistan was looking to offload a 51-100pc stake in debt-ridden PIA to raise funds and reform state-owned enterprises as envisaged under a \$7bn IMF programme. (Dawn, October 31st, 2024 Page 9)

10 # SOCIO - ECONOMIC CONDITION

Economy grows 2.5pc in FY24

Pakistan's economic growth of 2.52 per cent for 2023–24 missed the projected target of 3.5pc, primarily due to a slump in industrial production, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The moderate growth was achieved thanks to higher agricultural incomes and worker remittances. The National Accounts Committee (NAC) convened its 110th meeting and approved the revised quarterly GDP growth rates for Q1, Q2, Q3, and new estimates for Q4 in FY24, as well as updated annual growth rates for FY23 and FY24. ADB, in its outlook, also announced a 2.4pc growth for FY24. The bank also forecasts a 2.8pc growth for FY25. (*Dawn, October 1st*, 2024, Page 9)

Govt debt hits all-time high of Rs70.36trn by Aug-end

The federal government's total debt stocks crossed Rs 70 trillion mark at the end of August 2024 primarily due to massive borrowing to finance the fiscal deficit. The State

Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported that the central government's total debt (domestic and external) surged by 2.1 percent during the first two months (July-Aug) of this fiscal year (FY25). Overall, federal government's total debt stock crossed the Rs 70tr mark to reach an all-time high level of Rs 70.362tr by the end of August 2024 compared to Rs 68.914tr as of June 2024, depicting an increase of Rs 1.448trillion just in two month. The external debt in rupee terms rose by 1.2 percent or Rs 269bn during the first two month of this fiscal year. The total stocks of external debt rose to Rs 22.023tr at end of August 2024 as against Rs 21.754tr in June 2024. (Business Recorder, October 9th, 2024, Page 1)

Pakistan needs to repay external debt of \$18.8bn in current fiscal: IMF

Terming Pakistan's external debt repayment capacity as fragile, IMF has assessed Islamabad's external financing needs have ballooned to \$62.6 billion over three years period under Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme. The external financing needs will go up to \$110.5 billion if calculated for five years from 2024-25 to 2028-29. According to the IMF staff report, Pakistan will have external financing needs of \$18.813 billion in the current fiscal year, \$20.088 billion in 2025-26 and \$23.714 billion in 2026-27. The IMF data shows financing needs would not witness any reduction even after completion of three-year programme. It would be standing at \$24.625 billion in 2027-28 and \$23.235 billion in FY 2028-29. (*The News, October 13th*, 2024, *Page 1*)

Q1FY25: Govt pays off Rs1.2trn domestic debt

The federal government has successfully retired over one trillion rupees in domestic debt borrowed for budgetary support in the first quarter of fiscal year (FY25), supported by healthy foreign inflows and the SBP's record profit. Analysts said that this shift from borrowing to repayment has been facilitated by healthy foreign inflows including \$1 billion IMF tranche and Rs 3.4 trillion profit reported by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). These two segments have bolstered the government's financial position and helped to improve fiscal management. (Business Recorder, October 17th, 2024, Page 10)

IMF sees country's economic growth at 3.2pe, inflation at 9.5pc

IMF has forecast Pakistan's economy to grow by 3.2pc during current fiscal year, falling short of the government's budget target but surpassing projections by two other leading multilateral organisations. This growth rate is expected to be accompanied by a single digit inflation rate of 9.5pc and a current account deficit nearing 1pc. In its World Economic Outlook (WEO-October 2024) released IMF also estimated global economic growth to stabilise at 3.2pc after 'winning the battle against inflation', despite ongoing risks related to regional conflicts, a slowdown in China, and the lasting effects of tight monetary policies and financial market volatility. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 1*)

IMF projects 2.1pc increase in govt expenditure

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected a significant increase of 2.1 percent in the government expenditure for Pakistan from 19.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024 to 21.4 percent in 2025. According to the IMF report, "Fiscal Monitor, Putting a Lid on Public Debt", the government gross debt for Pakistan is projected to increase from 69.2per cent of GDP in 2024 to 71.4per cent in 2025. The Fund has projected an increase in the net debt for Pakistan from 63.5per cent of the GDP in 2024 to 65.6per cent in 2025. (*Business Recorder, October 24th, 2024, Page 1*)

Govt turns cautious on economic recovery optimism

Expressing concerns over cotton production and confusing signals from manufacturing sector, the government expressed "cautious optimism" about sustainable economic recovery and a further deceleration in inflation. "Inflation will remain within the range of 6-7 per cent in October and further down to 5.5-6.5pc in November," said the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in its Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for October. It said the country's economy demonstrated sustained recovery during the first quarter of FY25. (*Dawn, October 31*st, 2024 Page 9)

10.1 # Food

Pakistan ranked lowest-risk for food safety in FY24

Pakistan has emerged as the lowest-risk country concerning food safety standards for the fiscal year 2023-24, with rice exports making up 25 per cent of the European rice export market, significantly outpacing India's 16pc. Only 74 rapid alerts for pesticides and other issues were issued against Pakistani rice exporters last year, compared to 264 for India. Pakistan remains one of the lowest-risk countries concerning food safety standards, while countries like Turkiye, India, Spain, Italy and the UK face significantly higher numbers of alerts. Government aiming to increase exports from \$4 billion to \$6-7bn in the near future. (*Dawn, October 8th*, 2024, Page 9)

Students, govt officials hold rally to mark World Food Day

University students, members of civil society and representatives from food business and government institutions staged an awareness rally to mark World Food Day. The theme for this year's celebration was "Right to Food for a Better Life and a Better Future", emphasising the importance of ensuring access to adequate, nutritious and safe food for all. (*Dawn, October 16th, 2024, Page 14*)

Khanpur Dam water unsafe for consumption

After the contamination in Islamabad's Rawal Dam, the Khanpur Dam is also facing such issues, as a recent water quality test declared its water unsafe for consumption, while a rapid increase in development activities in the vicinity of the dam also poses a threat of sewage contamination. (*Dawn, October 17th, 2024, Page 4*)

PKMT seeks food security, uplift of small farmers

Pakistan Kissan Mazdoor Tehreek (PKMT) leaders urged the government to formulate solid agricultural policies to ensure food security in the country and improve the living standards of small farmers. Addressing an event and demonstration to mark the World Food Day, PKMT arranged a gathering at Hariyana Bala which was attended by a large number of farmers and agricultural labourers. The speakers said that the small farmers and labourers were facing food insecurity due to spiraling inflation in the country. Lal Khan, Nabi Jan and others said that only 5 per cent of landlord families had control of about 64 per cent of country's agricultural land as the feudal lords hampered attempts for introducing reforms towards fairer distribution of land.

They said, it was shameful that poverty rate in the country had increased from 38.6 per cent to 39.5 per cent during the last five years with sky-high food prices, making basic food items to be beyond the reach of poverty-stricken masses. While the peasants and labourers faced hunger and malnutrition, the government guarded the interest of traders and investors by continuing to import wheat which caused the price of local wheat to face severe reduction. PKMT leaders said that with more than 24 standby agreements with the IMF, the nation's debt touched the figures of around Rs 4.64 trillion in the past months. (Dawn, October 17th, 2024, Metro – Peshawar, Page No. 14)

Steps taken to make Punjab strong in terms of food security

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has taken steps to make Punjab a strong province in terms of food security. Sources said the recently formed new department, "Price Control and Commodities Management Department" has been directed to form the Strategic Management Unit to improve demand and supply forecasting chain. The department was created to control prices of essential commodities, end hoarding and to work for food security. The unit will include financial experts for decision-making, lawyers specialising in international in the province with Rs10 billion.

The Punjab government will give interest-free loans to eligible commission agents in all districts through the Agricultural Marketing Fund. These agents will make deals based on the demand for essential commodities before the season begins. When the time comes, neither there will be shortage of essentials nor any increase in their prices. For the first time in Punjab, it has been decided to create "agripreneurs". These agripreneurs will include educated persons and businessmen from other fields who will be given interest-free loans of up to Rs5 million to build digital platforms. This will allow the authorities to focus on digital markets. (*The News, October 20th, 2024, Page 12*)

GM foods pose serious risks to public health, export markets, claims agri expert

Genetically Modified (GM) food poses serious risks not only to local consumers but also to the country's export markets, after contamination was found in consignment.

This was stated by Khan Faraz, an agriculture expert. Faraz said seeds designed to thrive in specific local conditions have been developed for countries through conventional breeding, by crossing together plant with relevant characteristics and selecting the desired offspring. But as more severe weather creates hostile growing conditions for conventional seeds, multinational companies are promoting GMOs as more efficient and newer technologies can reduce development times for these heartier varieties by many years compared with traditional crop modified techniques.

Maize is the cash crop of the country and is abundantly available. It is the third most important cereal crop in the country after wheat and rice. It is the fifth biggest crop in terms of its economic value. An average yield of maize currently hovers around four tons per hectare, which is on of the highest in the whole region. Faraz said progress in maize production over the years have given Pakistan a distinction in achieving one of the biggest per acre yield across South Asia. Certain stake-holders in seed businesses have strongly opposed the introduction of genetically modified maize commercial cultivation, being an edible crop. It is in the best interest of the consumer and farmers that the country continues with hybrid maize which is abundantly being produced in the country as per the requirements.

He further said rice is a critical export commodity for Pakistan, and GM foods, including rice, maize and cereal items are banned in most of the countries of the world due to concerns over their impact on health and the environment. According to some media reports about the detection of genetically modified (GM) contamination in the consignment of organic basmati rice in certain European markets have sparked concerns in the country and abroad and voices have gained strength against the reported renewed efforts to introduce GM maize and other cereal products in the country. (Business Recorder, October 27th, 2024 Page 6)

10.2 # Inflation

Inflation plummets to 44-month low of 6.9pc

The annual consumer inflation plunged to a 44-month low of 6.9pc in September. The headline inflation, measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI), had slowed the previous month to 9.6pc, the first single-digit reading in more than three years, data released by PBS. Monthly CPI in September stood at -0.5pc, reflecting that overall prices dropped compared to previous month. The decline in inflation is partly attributed to a high-base effect from last year when annual inflation stood at 31.4pc. Inflation crossed 10pc in November 2021 and then remained in double digits for 33 consecutive months until July 2024. In between, it peaked at 38pc in May 2023. In first quarter of current FY (July to September), inflation averaged 9.19pc compared to 29.04pc during same period last year. (*Dawn, October* 2nd, 2024, *Page* 1)

NPMC notes significant decline in inflation

National Price Monitoring Committee meeting revealed significant declining trend in inflation over the year, 11.1pc in July, 9.6pc in August and 6.9pc in September 2024 from 38pc in May 2023. (Business Recorder, October 9th, 2024, Page 12)

10.3 # Poverty

Bodies of farmer, three children found hanging from tree

The bodies of a 32-year-old man and his three children aged between four and eight were found hanging from a tree, Umerkot district. The man was identified as Chaman Kolhi. Chaman was a farmer and had been at odds with his wife over insufficient income amid poor yield this season. (*Dawn, October 5th*, 2024, *Page 15*)

2.8pc growth insufficient to dent rising poverty, warns World Bank

With the poverty rate rising by 0.3 per cent within one year to 40.5pc in FY24, the World Bank warned that even the 2.8pc and 3.6pc economic growth rate it projected for current and next year was direly insufficient to dent poverty levels and improve living standards of the majority in Pakistan. At the launch of the Pakistan Development Update (PDU), World Bank officials also warned that despite some nascent economic recovery, vulnerability risks were very high for Pakistan in case of deep structural reforms falter and derail the recently secured International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout.

"The poverty rate is estimated to have increased to 40.5pc in FY24 from 40.2pc in FY23 (\$3.65 per day 2017 PPP [purchasing power parity] per capita) due to anaemic economic growth, high inflation, reduced public investment spending (which is linked to employment), and a decrease in the real value of social protection benefits," said the PDU, attributing higher poverty to slow growth, low market and business confidence, flood-related supply chain disruptions and high inflation rates. The bank projected inflation at 11.1pc in FY25 and 9pc in FY26 and estimated the current account deficit widening from 0.2pc in FY24 to 0.6pc in FY25 and further to 0.7pc in FY26 owing to recovering growth. Foreign exchange reserves are forecast to grow with IMF inflows and new external financing, said the bank, but estimated the fiscal deficit to be stubborn at 7.6pc in FY25 and then slow down a bit to 7.3pc in FY26. On the other hand, debt is projected to increase in the medium term to 73.8pc of GDP in FY25 and to 74.7pc in FY26. (*Dawn, October 11th, 2024, Page 9*)

High energy prices hitting the poor hardest: WB

The World Bank has revealed that high energy prices in Pakistan disproportionately impact the poor, as only 55 percent of electricity consumption in the poorest households is eligible for below-average tariffs from lifeline or protected meters, while 46-49 percent of middle-class and rich households also access low tariffs from these protected meters. The bank in its latest report, "Pakistan Development Update the Dynamics of

Power Sector Distribution Reforms", stated that at the end of June 2024, the total accumulated circular debt (CD) stock stood at around Rs2.4 trillion, equivalent to 2.3 percent of GDP. (Business Recorder, October 11th, 2024, Page 2)

Poverty rate to stay near 40pc until 2026: WB

Poverty reduction in the country is expected to gradually resume as the nation makes progress on reforms and macroeconomic stability, according to a new report from the World Bank. The "Macro Poverty Outlook for Pakistan", released by the World Bank, says limited growth in real wages and employment will keep the poverty rate near 40pc through fiscal year 2026. At the same time, monetary poverty will remain high, it says. Tepid growth in non-agricultural sectors led to falling real wages for construction, trade and transportation, while employment and labour force participation rates and job quality indicators have not risen. These, together with fiscal consolidation and high inflation, led to a poverty rate of 40.5 per cent in the fiscal year 2024 and an additional 2.6 million Pakistanis falling below the poverty line.

Presenting the outlook, the report says that with high-base effects and lower commodity prices, inflation will slow to 11.1pc in the current fiscal year but remain elevated due to higher domestic energy prices, expansionary open market operations and new taxation measures. These price conditions are likely to exert more pressure on poor and vulnerable households by limiting real labour income growth to less than one per cent in the fiscal year 2025. The fiscal deficit is projected to rise to 7.6pc of GDP in the fiscal year 2025 due to higher interest payments but is expected to decrease gradually as fiscal tightening measures and falling interest payments take effect. Fiscal consolidation will lead to continued high energy inflation and higher taxes on goods and services, which will worsen monetary poverty, welfare and human development outcomes. The recovery is expected to continue, with real GDP growth reaching 2.8pc in FY25, as economy benefits from availability of imported inputs, easing domestic supply chain disruptions and lower inflation. (Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 9)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

PM's aide calls for preserving marine ecosystems

Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam stressed the importance of preserving marine ecosystems and promoting sustainable practices along Pakistan's extensive coastline, a key focus of the government's 'clean ocean agenda'. She said this during her meeting with Danish Ambassador Jakob Linulf, which was held to discuss bilateral cooperation on green energy transition, climate resilience, water conservation and biodiversity protection. Ms Alam emphasised Pakistan's dedication to global climate action, highlighting the government's efforts to protect oceans, biodiversity, water and energy resources. (*Dawn, October* 2nd, 2024, *Page* 4)

UNEP places Lakhodair landfill emissions project on top priority

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has placed the Lahore landfill site's methane-to-natural gas & reducing carbon emission project on its top priority. A detailed feasibility of the project titled "Valorization of Lakhodair Landfill Emissions into Valuable Carbon Credits" would be launched soon, says Chief Executive Officer of the Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) Babar Sahib Din.

The methane gas has 56 times of global warming potential for 20 years and 21 times for 100 years more than carbon dioxide (CO2). The gas vents installed at the dumpsite are releasing approximately 1 cubic metre gas in 24 hours which is almost equal to eight kg CO2/day and 2,920 kg CO2/year. Comprising over 200 acres amid 70 acres sanitary landfill area and controlled dumpsite, the Lakhodair site receive almost 5,000 tonnes of solid waste and its remaining expected life will end in next two to three years. (*Dawn*, *October 14th*, 2024, *Page 8*)

Punjab plans clean air project with World Bank support

The Punjab External Financing Assessment Committee (PEFAC) discussed Punjab Clean Air Programme proposal to ensure that it meets development needs of province while adhering to environmental sustainability. Programme will be funded by World Bank. The Lahore Climate Action Plan (LCAP) aims to reduce emissions by 50pc in a year, with a focus on waste management, including addressing the absence of a proper landfill site. Spearheaded by the Urban Unit, initiative marks the first city-level climate project in the region, addressing Lahore's severe air pollution, rising temperatures, urban heat islands, and increased flooding. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 2*)

11.1 # Atmosphere

'Steps being taken under Smog Mitigation Plan'

As smog in Lahore gets worse from October to February, the Punjab government, under the 'Smog Mitigation Plan' has initiated a number of measures with a promise to address this menace. Over the past six years, Lahore has consistently ranked among the top 15 most polluted cities in the world, at times topping the list. From October to January, smog adds to the thick layer of pollution blanketing mostly industrialised cities. Climate-induced weather patterns, with low wind speed, high relative humidity and temperature inversion, have become significant drivers of the hazy conditions and smog in major cities of Punjab. (*Dawn, October 4th, 2024, Page 2*)

11.2 # Biodiversity

KP govt allowed cutting of 6m cubic feet of timber, SC told

KP government has informed Supreme Court that the forest department allowed cutting of six million cubic feet of timber and confiscated a total of 130,255 cubic feet of timber, which was illegally chopped off during last five years. However, the report remained a

mystery for the court as it was undated, did not carry names of the officials who prepared and signed it, and did not explain whether the statistics were specific to one division of Mardan or the entire province of KP. (*Dawn, October 31*st, 2024 Page 3)

11.3 # Health

32 health facilities sealed in Buner

KP Health Care Commission sealed 32 medical facilities, Buner district, over violations of relevant regulations during an operation. (*Dawn, October 1st, 2024, Page 8*)

Heart diseases on the rise among working women, seminar told

Heart diseases among Pakistani working women in urban areas are on the rise as they experience higher stress levels while managing both family life and professional responsibilities, shared an expert at a symposium. The event was jointly organised by the Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) and Help International Welfare Trust in connection with World Heart Day. While there has been an overall increase in heart ailments in Pakistani population due to multiple factors, including obesity, sedentary lifestyles, and poor dietary habits, the prevalence of these illnesses in women is a neglected subject. "One out of every three women worldwide suffers from high blood pressure. This rate is much higher in our country, where working women in urban areas have dual responsibilities. (*Dawn, October 1st*, 2024, *Page 15*)

'Health emergency' declared in Rawalpindi to curb dengue cases

As dengue cases continue to rise in the garrison city, the Punjab government has declared a health emergency in Rawalpindi to curb the spike after 103 new cases were reported in the city amid fears of an outbreak of the disease. So far, Rawalpindi has reported six deaths and a total of 1358 cases during the current season, out of which 1169 had been discharged after successful treatment, while 181 are under treatment in different hospitals. Lahore has merely reported 201 cases since Jan this year. (*Dawn, October* 2nd, 2024, Page 4)

KP at risk of dengue outbreak amid spike in cases

The rising dengue incidence has raised the threat of an outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Fifty-three new dengue cases have taken this year's tally of the infections in the province to 904. "This new wave of infections has baffled authorities, who fear violent outbreaks, especially in Peshawar, which has reported 244 cases, the highest in the province," an official told. He said currently, 17 dengue patients were hospitalised, but most cases couldn't be screened because they preferred treatment in their neighbourhoods, mostly from clinics run by unqualified medical practitioners. (*Dawn, October* 2nd, 2024, Page 8)

Govt begins spadework for Rs52.7bn cancer hospital in city

Following the approval from the Executive Committee of National Economic Council, Punjab government has issued an order to hire a consultancy firm for the development of the business model for the establishment of the first-ever public sector cancer hospital and research centre in Lahore. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz wanted groundbreaking ceremony of the 915-bed cancer hospital on Raiwnid Road, Lahore, next month. A senior official said approval from ECNEC was the final phase/step to start work on flagship multi-billion cancer hospital project in Lahore. He said ECNEC had approved establishment of the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment & Research in Lahore with an allocated budget of Rs52.7bn, making it the first mega government sector cancer hospital of the country to provide free-of-cost treatment to patients. The King Edward Medical University had provided the technical support and prepared the feasibility of the proposed cancer institute on Raiwind Road. (*Dawn, October 4th*, 2024, Page 2)

Experts sound alarm over rise in hepatitis A cases among children

A growing number of children reporting to health facilities these days with non-specific signs, such as sore throat, body pains and slight fever are being found infected with the hepatitis A virus, it has emerged. "Hepatitis A is the second most prevalent disease in the city after Chikungunya right now. Viruses flourish during the transition period when the weather is neither too hot nor too cold," senior general physician Dr Sajjad Siddiqui said, adding that adults are also being affected by the infection, though children affected in greater numbers. A highly contagious infection, hepatitis A is an inflammation of the liver that can cause mild to severe illness. Its virus, experts say, is mainly transmitted via the faecal-oral route through contaminated food or water. It's usually a self-limited illness with no specific treatment. (*Dawn, October 6*th, 2024, Page 13)

Season's dengue tally in Rawalpindi nears 2,000

As many as 62 more people went down with the mosquito-borne disease, taking the tally to 1,996 in the current season. Officials said 223 cases were reported to three government hospitals in last 24 hours, and 62 of them were confirmed dengue patients. (*Dawn, October 8th, 2024, Page 4*)

Efficacy of diphtheria vaccine questioned amid multiple outbreaks, deaths in Sindh As government attempts to tackle multiple outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases in the province, experts have called for a probe into the efficacy of diphtheria vaccine currently being used for prevention against the highly contagious bacterial infection. The experts have also emphasised the need for increasing the immunisation coverage age-bar (currently one day to two years) to five years — a recommendation long overdue — given the fact that a large number of children fail to get their vaccine doses. Sources said while the cases of measles have declined significantly in recent weeks, the cases of diphtheria are on the rise, particularly in Karachi.

According to the experts, although both infections are vaccine-preventable, the fatality rate in diphtheria is much higher — around 30 to 40 per cent in unvaccinated younger children. According to the EPI data, 55 children died of diphtheria in 2023 with three outbreaks reported in Karachi's Central, East and Keamari districts. This year, officials have declared death of at least 40 children with outbreaks reported in Karachi's West, Keamari and East districts, as well as Larkana and Dadu. Surprisingly, however, the department has confirmed only 30 diphtheria cases out of the "219 suspected cases reported this year". (*Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 13*)

'Awami Health Card' scheme in the pipeline

While much-touted health card has been completely suspended in Islamabad and Azad Jammu and Kashmir and some facilities have been withdrawn in Punjab, State Life Insurance Corporation-supported 'Awami Health Card' will be available for medical treatments soon. In this regard, a memorandum of understanding was signed. The card linked to Nadra database will be issued within two months to each family after payment of Rs12,500 premium and will allow them to avail treatment at private hospitals to tune of Rs1m. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 4*)

KP records 44 new dengue cases

The health department reported 44 new dengue cases as doctors urged patients to follow precautions against the mosquito-borne illness. As evidenced by the 193 cases of the 2,935 infections reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (*Dawn, October 27th, 2024 Page 8*)

Poliovirus detected in 16 districts on eve of vaccine drive

With the third nationwide polio vaccination campaign of the year scheduled to begin from Monday (today), poliovirus has been detected in environmental samples collected from 16 districts. The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health has confirmed the detection of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in sewage samples from 16 districts. (*Dawn, October 28th, 2024 Page 1*)

Poliovirus out of control as year's 43rd case reported

Poliovirus has all but gone out of control in Pakistan as cases are being reported pretty frequently, with a child from Balochistan's Chagai area becoming the latest victim of the crippling disease. The five-year-old girl took the number of cases so far reported in the country this year to 43. (*Dawn, October 31*st, 2024 Page 12)

Sindh govt blames climate change for surge in vector-borne diseases

Amid an alarming rise in chikungunya cases in the metropolis, the Sindh Assembly was informed that recent rainfall and climate change had led to an increase in vector-borne diseases (VBDs) across the province. (*Dawn*, *October 31st*, 2024 Page 13)

11.4 # Pollution

Lahore again becomes world's most polluted city with 394 AQI

The capital city has been declared most polluted city in world, with an alarming Air Quality Index (AQI) of 394. AQI is a measure of the concentration of various pollutants in the air, such as fine particulate matter (PM2.5), coarse particulate matter (PM10), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), and ozone (O3). An AQI above 100 is considered "unhealthy", and above 150 is considered "very unhealthy". (*Dawn, October 22nd*, 2024, *Page 2*)

Pakistani cities becoming 'least livable' with time: ADB

The Asian Development Bank says the livability of cities in Pakistan is decreasing, and urban centres in the country are becoming increasingly inefficient, scoring low on multiple competitiveness indexes, with congestion, unattractiveness and pollution. In an urban development analysis incorporated in the "Pakistan National Urban Assessment Report", the ADB pointed out that most urban centres lack a designated downtown area to host and encourage economic, social and cultural activities.

The few green spaces in urban centres are disappearing, while any greening projects tend to be concentrated in affluent areas. It further pointed out that public space has been continuously shrinking with the increased sale of public property prompted by the high commercial value of urban land and growing financial needs of urban authorities, aided by the politician-developer nexus. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 9*)

Study raises alarm over harmful particles in Karachi's air

Expressing serious concern over the growing levels of air pollution affecting all major cities of Pakistan, a senior expert at a press conference at the Aga Khan University (AKU) shared findings of a recent study conducted in Karachi, demonstrating a substantial increase in hospital admissions and ER (emergency room) visits for respiratory issues due to short-term exposure to ambient fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and its components (which are air pollutants). The study titled 'Impact of fine particulate pollution exposures on respiratory health in a mega city of Pakistan' has recently been published in the journal Atmospheric Pollution Research. The study — the first evidence of PM2.5 association with pulmonary diseases in a mega city of Pakistan—reveals alarmingly high levels of harmful particles in Karachi's air. High levels of sulfate, ammonium, nitrate, and black carbon have also been found widespread across the city that contributed to poor air quality. (Dawn, October 26th, 2024 Page 13)

Lahore goes for `green lockdown` to tackle smog

The Punjab government imposed a `green lockdown` in designated smog hotspots across Lahore, imposing restrictions on barbecue joints, motorcycle-rickshaws and marriage halls measures described as insufficient and poorly planned by air quality experts. (*Dawn, October 31*st, 2024 Page 1)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

DawnMedia launching `Breathe Pakistan` to combat climate change

DawnMedia is launching an initiative to combat climate change, 'Breathe Pakistan' that aims to mobilise citizens to incorporate environmental sustainability in their daily lives. "As Pakistan faces an escalating challenge from unbridled climate change, and the country witnesses scorching heat waves, widespread glacier melt and extensive urban and rural flooding. (Dawn, October 5th, 2024, Page 12)

Punjab CM calls for 'climate diplomacy' with India

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has called for "climate diplomacy" with India to mitigate smog impact in province. "Both Indian and Pakistani Punjab should undertake joint efforts to combat smog. Stubble burning in Indian Punjab impacts here because of air direction. This issue needs to be taken up with India forthwith". The Air Quality Index was improving, but smog persisted not just from October to February but round year. "Obstacles to environmental improvement must be removed. Smog causes breathing difficulties and damages eyesight," chief minister said, warning that smog became so severe that schools and offices had to be closed in past. (*Dawn, October 10th, 2024, Page 3*)

NRSP launches \$50m 'Climaventures Programme'

The National Rural Support Programme proudly announces the launch of its USD 50m Climaventures Programme. NRSP has also acknowledged the role of the Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination for their unwavering support. The Green Climate Fund commits \$ 25mn to Climaventures at its 40th Board Meeting held in Korea. Henry Gonzalez, Chief Investment Officer of the Green Climate Fund, said. (*Business Recorder, October 26th, 2024 Page 3*)

12.1 # Climate Crisis

Sindh cities bake as no respite in sight from hot weather

The province of Sindh remains in the grip of hot and dry weather as mercury soared to 40 degrees Celsius in many cities, including Karachi. Nawabshah and Hyderabad become hottest places in the country as mercury surged to 42°C, followed by Karachi, Mithi and Turbat where maximum temperature recorded was 40°C. The Met department indicated no immediate respite from the hot weather conditions that are expected to prevail during the next three to four days. (*Dawn, October 27th*, 2024 Page 13)

12.2 # Climate Finance

Sarmayacar says Green Climate Fund pledges \$15m

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has committed \$15 million to Pakistani venture capital firm Sarmayacar, the venture fund said, so it can help startups tackle the impact of climate change in the country that has been at the forefront of extreme weather. Flooding in Pakistan, which scientists said was aggravated by global warming, affected at least

33 million people and killed more than 1,700 from the beginning of the monsoon season in mid-June 2022 until mid-November that year. At the same time, the country's challenging macroeconomic and political situation means cash to address the problem is in short supply. In particular, venture capital funding fell to \$16 million during the first nine months of 2024, a 57% year-on-year drop from the \$37 million recorded in the same period the previous year, according to data compiled by Data Darbar. Set up more than a decade ago, the GCF is part of UN efforts to help the world's poorer countries adapt to climate change. (Business Recorder, October 24th, 2024, Page 12)

Green Climate Fund okays \$50m to help Pakistan devise climate solutions

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved a project of Pakistan in the amount of \$50 million that will focus on developing local homegrown climate solutions by harnessing the country's dynamic and growing start-up ecosystem. In Pakistan, GCF is working with National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), to support local homegrown climate solutions by harnessing Pakistan's dynamic and growing start-up ecosystem. GCF will fund a venture accelerator and will also make a first-loss equity commitment as an anchor investor into the Climaventures Fund. This was one of the 16 projects approved by the GCF executive board at its meeting in Songdo, Incheon, South Korea.

The GCF board feels that Pakistan is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, particularly droughts and floods. The country's nationally determined contribution outlines an ambitious target for renewable energy, while its national adaptation plan focuses on agriculture, water resources, health and disaster risk reduction. The projected to be implemented by NRSP aims to kick-start the domestic market for innovative climate solutions, comprising grant financing for ideation-stage climate ventures and equity investment in scalable ventures. The approach represents a viable long-term alternative to local public sector funding which is constrained by high indebtedness. The GCF will fund a venture accelerator to offer grants and expert guidance to up to 100 start-ups at ideation stage. It will also make a \$15m first-loss equity commitment as an anchor investor into the \$40 million Climaventures Fund, which is managed by 'Sarmayacar' and targets investment in ready-for-investment climate ventures and promising ventures from the venture accelerator. (*Dawn, October 27th*, 2024 Page 12)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

Pakistan at risk of facing dry conditions due to La Nina

Pakistan has been listed among the 20 countries which are at risk of dry conditions, as the La Nina weather phenomenon is expected to emerge in late 2024 and persist into early 2025, bringing extreme weather events that could cause extensive agricultural damage and worsen food security conditions. A report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations says although La Nina has not yet been

officially declared, some countries are already experiencing some La Nina-like conditions. Between late August and September, floods occurred over large areas of West and Central Africa, as well as the Sudan, South Sudan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan, while early signs of drought are evident in southern parts of South America, including Argentina and Chile. (*Dawn, October 12th, 2024, Page 5*)

13.1 # Flood

EU concludes flood rehabilitation programme in three provinces

The European Union has concluded its 18-month-long rehabilitation project for the vulnerable population in districts most affected by the 2022 floods. The 'Enhanced Food and Nutrition Security for Vulnerable People in Flood Affected Areas of Pakistan', worth five million euros, was funded by European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments and implemented by the UN's World Food Programme. The project provided direct assistance to more than 97,000 people and indirect support to 700,000 people across seven vulnerable districts in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh, More than \$3.6m in cash assistance was distributed among the population, enabling their access to nutritious food in exchange for their involvement in community service. The funds were used for construction of 550 water structures and 650 flood protection walls; and protecting 76,000 acres of agricultural land and 40,000 houses. (*Dawn, October 1st*, 2024, Page 5)

13.2 # Windstorm

Man killed as windstorm hits parts of city

A man died and dozens of structures, including trees, roadside stalls and advertising boards, fell when a windstorm followed by a brief spell of heavy rain and hailstorm hit parts of the city (Karachi). (Dawn, October 11th, 2024, Page 13)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

15 # RESISTANCE

Visually-impaired protesters, cops injured in clashes on The Mall

A number of protesting visually-impaired persons were allegedly injured in clashes with police on The Mall as they attempted to march towards the Chief Minister House. Police claimed that some of the policemen were also injured in these clashes, which disrupted traffic on The Mall, resulting in congestion on other city arteries in the area, including Lytton Road, Fane Road, Temple Road etc. The protesters, who have been staging a sitin at Charing Cross, were intercepted by the police near Lawrence Garden, when they attempted to remove barriers placed on the road to block their movement towards the CM House. Despite police's efforts to disperse them, determined protesters continued their sit-in near Governor House, leading to further clashes. As a result, several visually-impaired protesters sustained injuries. (*Dawn, October* 2nd, 2024, *Page* 2)

Demo outside EOBI office against cut in pension rate

Workers from different factories staged a demonstration outside the Employees Old-Age Benefit Institution (North) office to protest against an alleged cut in the minimum pension rate through a circular by the outgoing EOBI chairman. Responding to the call of Trade Unions Action Committee, they assembled outside the EOBI offices to protest against the circular that said that workers whose institution did not pay full dues would be given less than Rs10,000 per month pension. (*Dawn, October 2nd, 2024, Page 2*)

Police uproot PTM camp in Khyber, fire teargas shells at resisting workers

Police in Khyber tribal district set on fire a camp of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) during multiple raids. The camp was established by PTM activists in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber for holding a jirga titled Awami Adalat on October 11. PTM activists present at the destroyed camp told that police of Peshawar and Khyber raided the camp twice. They said that police uprooted the camp, took away camping material an in a raid amid intense teargas shelling and firing in the air. (*Dawn, October 3rd*, 2024, *Page 8*)

Protest held at KU over unpaid salaries, 'dismissal' of teachers

A large number of Karachi University teachers held a demonstration at the Arts Lobby, calling on university administration to ensure timely payment of salaries, settle pending dues, and provide justice to their colleague, Dr Munawar Rasheed. They also raised their voices for colleagues whom they claimed had been "unfairly dismissed" during selection process, demanding a review of cases. (*Dawn, October 4th*, 2024, *Page 14*)

Constitutional amendment: Three bar bodies announce 'resistance'

Three major bar associations of the federal capital rejected constitutional package and announced to resist the proposed constitutional amendments. In this regard, representatives of Islamabad Bar Council (IBC), Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA), and District Bar Association (DBA) held a joint press conference and announced resistance to stop the proposed constitutional amendments. The bar associations said that after these amendments, the Supreme Court will have no more power than that of a "Sessions Judge". The lawyers' three representative organisations of Islamabad demanded from the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) to withdraw the 63A revision appeal from the Supreme Court. The lawyers declared that they will not only oppose the amendments but will also actively work to prevent them from being implemented. (Business Recorder, 4th October, 2024, Page 16)

Power riots erupt in many city areas

Residents' protests against the disruption of electric and water supplies to their localities caused severe traffic jams in major parts of the city. The residents of Jacob Lines, including women and children, took to the streets a little after noon in protest against disconnection of power supply in their vicinity and blocked the signal-free Corridor-III.

Protesters said that K-Electric had disconnected the power supply in their locality three days ago due to non-payment of bills, which they said were excessive and unjustified. In Korangi, residents took to the streets against water shortage in their area. They chanted slogans against the water utility and demanded that the water supply be restored in the locality. (*Dawn, October 5th, 2024, Page 13*)

Quetta rally condemns Karachi attack

Members of civil society held a protest in Quetta to condemn the attack on a Chinese convoy in Karachi near airport. Protesters marched along Adalat Road. They chanted slogans in support of Chinese nationals and against the attackers. The rally culminated in front of Quetta Press Club, where speakers strongly condemned the attack, attributing it to anti-national elements allegedly backed by India. (*Dawn, October 9th*, 2024, *Page 5*)

Rally staged in Quetta for recovery of kidnapped tribesmen

Members of the Bugti Rabita Committee staged a demonstration against the bandits of kacha area of Sindh, demanding recovery of abducted Bugti tribesmen. Members of Bugti Rabita Committee gathered in front of Quetta Press Club. Speakers at demonstration demanded that the government immediately secure the release of two young Bugti tribesmen. They warned that if their demands were not met, the Bugti tribesmen would expand their protests. They are now demanding Rs50 million as ransom for their release. (*Dawn, October 14th, 2024, Page 5*)

One killed, several hurt as TLP protesters, police fight pitched battles

A man was killed and several others were injured when police tried to break up two protest rallies organised by the Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and civil society organisations in violation of a ban imposed under Section 144 of the criminal procedure code across metropolis. TLP had announced a march from Teen Talwar to Karachi Press Club against rights bodies and activists for "favouring" blasphemy suspect Dr Shahnawaz Kunbhar who was killed by police in a staged encounter. Civil society organisations also planned to hold 'Sindh Rawadari March' against the killing of Dr Kunbhar and rising extremism in the province at the same venue. In a bid to avoid a potential law and order situation, government had imposed a complete ban on holding rallies, sit-ins, protest demonstrations, etc. (Dawn, October 14th, 2024, Page 15)

28 hurt as police come down hard on student protest in Lahore

Amid confusion within official circles over the alleged incident that sparked a student protest at a private educational institution, police moved brutally to disperse young demonstrators in the Gulberg area, leaving at least 28 injured. However, various government functionaries seemed to be at odds over whether the alleged rape of a young female student, which prompted the protest, had actually happened or not. (*Business Recorder, October 15th, 2024, Page 1*)

LCWU official suspended for 'harassing' student

The Lahore College for Women University suspended a senior official from service for harassing a student. A number of students launched a protest against the male workers in university for harassing students. The students gathered outside the vice chancellor office and chanted slogans against the administration for not taking any measure over the harassment application. The students were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans against male employees of the university. A student lodged a complaint against the official. The administration started an inquiry into the matter and suspended him from service. (Business Recorder, October 15th, 2024, Page 2)

SNGPL meter readers stage sit-in for pay raise

Dozens of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) meter readers staged a sit-in outside the company's head office on Kashmir Road against the management for not raising their salaries and depriving them of the medical and other allowances since long. They chanted slogans against the SNGPL management for turning a deaf ear to their demands, and threatening them for raising the issue. The protesters warned they would stage a sit-in in front of the Governor House or the Punjab Assembly along with their families if their demands were not accepted. On the other hand, the SNGPL management rejected the protesters' stance, saying the protesting workers were not, in fact, direct employees of the company. (Dawn, October 16th, 2024, Page 2)

Customs clearing agents halt work at Torkham border

Clearing agents halted the customs clearance of trade goods, both import and export, in protest against the new policy implemented recently by the authorities. The protesting clearing agents argued that the customs officials were insisting on being provided with all details of vehicles bringing in import items from Afghanistan prior to reaching the Torkham border, and without being weighed or undergoing electronic scanning. They said that they could not abide by the new rule as the customs authorities could implicate them in seizure of any contraband if found in any container later during electric scanning. (*Dawn, October 16th, 2024, Page 8*)

Student protest over fee hike intensifies at KU

Students' protest at the University of Karachi, going on for the past four days, got intense when a large number of students entered the admin block and chanted slogans in front of the vice chancellor's office while Rangers remained present outside the building. The protests are being held mainly against constant increase in tuition and late fees, deteriorated condition of university buses/points, poor security on the campus and its crumbling infrastructure. (*Dawn, October 17th, 2024, Page 13*)

Stalemate as students reject KU body formed to address late fee issue

Classes remained largely suspended and administrative offices shut at the University of Karachi as the students' protest, against semester fee hike and "phenomenal" rise in late fee among other issues. Although a committee was formed by the vice chancellor to address the issue of late fee, against which the students are mainly protesting, the same was rejected by the Students Alliance, which said that they would continue their protest and the strike will continue on the campus. At the same time, the university has also decided to implement the policy that defaulter students would not be allowed to sit exam. Meanwhile, a press release issued by the Karachi University Teachers Society said all issues of the protesting students should be resolved through negotiation only and no violence should take place. (Dawn, October 18th, 2024, Page 13)

Students, villagers stand up to women teachers' harassers in Khairpur district

A large number of schoolchildren, teachers and residents of villagers took out a procession in Hassan Phulpoto village, Khairpur district in protest against harassment of female teachers by local thugs, who tried to kidnap the teachers when they were returning home on a rickshaw a day ago. (*Dawn, October 19th, 2024, Page 15*)

BNP-M holds protests in Balochistan

Workers and supporters of Balochistan National Party (BNP-Mengal) blocked National Highway in different parts of province, cutting off Balochistan's road link with other provinces. This protest was sparked by alleged kidnapping of BNP senators' sons and proposed constitutional amendments. (*Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 5*)

PkMAP protests killing of coal miners in Duki

The Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) staged a rally in the Duki town of Balochistan to protest the killing of 21 coal miners in an armed attack by militants in the area last week. A large number of party workers, supporters and coal miners took part in the demonstration. (*Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 5*)

STP unveils plan for province-wide protest against canals project

Sindh Taraqqi-pasand Party (STP) chairman Dr Qadir Magsi has said that his party will stage a series of sit-ins across Sindh in protest against the federal government's plans to build new canals in Punjab over the Indus River, and against proposed amendments to Indus River System Authority (Irsa) Act, 1992. Magsi said that STP did not accept construction of any dam or canal over the Indus. (*Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 15*)

Lawyers boycott court over detention of colleague, family members

A group of lawyers staged a demonstration after boycotting court proceedings in protest against disappearance of a senior lawyer and leader of Democratic Lawyers Forum, his son and nephew. (*Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 15*)

Goods transport owners on strike

Local goods transport owners went on a strike against alleged highhandedness of officials of the National Highway and Motorway Police and imposition of "unjustified" heavy fines on them. On call of their province-level organisations, local office-bearers of Pakistan Mazda Association, Mazda Transport Association & Punjab Goods Transport Association staged a sit-in at a protest camp at Chowk Bahadurpur, announcing a wheel-jam strike for an indefinite period. They alleged that NH&MP officers also insult drivers and sometimes torture them, beating them with their shoes. They complained that NH&MP officers stopped their trucks without any reason and issue them fine slips up to Rs10,000 to 15,000 "illegally". Transport owners said they would continue strike till resolution of their issues. (*Dawn, October 21*st, 2024, Page 9)

Peace rallies across KP endorse PTM's Khyber jirga decisions

Activists of different political groups staged peace rallies in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, demanding of the "killers" of Pakhtuns to leave their region before being forced to do so. The rallies were held under the banner of 'Pakhtun Ulasi Pasoon' (Pakhtun public uprising), to show solidarity with the decisions and resolutions passed at the three-day Pakhtun Qaumi Jirga, which concluded in Khyber district on October 13. Besides activists of the banned Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement, people from different walk of life also participated in these rallies. (*Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 9*)

Police break up Karachi rally against 'enforced disappearances'

Police picked up several activists when a large number of people tried to go to the Karachi Press Club to protest against cases of enforced disappearances in Balochistan and the metropolis. The protesters, belonging to several organisations, including Baloch Yakjehti Committee, Voice for Missing Persons, etc, holding a banner inscribed with 'Ending silence on enforced disappearances', gathered near Zainab Market. They tried to march on the KPC but all roads leading to the venue were closed and contingents of police did not allow them to proceed further. (*Dawn, October 21st*, 2024, Page 13)

DCs allowed to ban rallies in Punjab districts for up to 30 days

The Punjab government has once again empowered deputy commissioners to impose a ban for up to 30 days on gatherings, rallies as well as pillion riding in their respective districts to maintain law and order. (*Dawn, October* 22nd, 2024, *Page* 1)

Kurram people protest closure of roads

All schools and bazaars in Parachinar, the headquarters of Kurram district, were closed as the residents staged protests in different areas against the closure of roads in the region. Various roads, including the main Peshawar-Kurram Road, have been closed to traffic for the last two weeks, causing problems to the people, forcing them to come onto the streets. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 8*)

Khyber councillors protest 'lack' of funds, powers

The local government representatives held a protest demonstration in Jamrud to press the provincial government for providing them with adequate development funds and their empowerment as per the Constitution. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 8*)

Thousands rally for peace in Bannu

Thousands of people gathered at the Paretee Gate in Bannu district to record their protest against lawlessness and raise a strong voice for peace. Call for the peace rally was given by Bannu Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Anjuman-i-Tajiran. The traders lowered their shutters and public transport remained thin on the roads. People from across the district reached the venue of the gathering in rallies, and within a short span they got spread over a vast area from Paretee Gate to Qasaban Gate, Lakki Gate and Bannu-Miranshah Road. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 8*)

Tharis hold rally against 'exploitation' by coal exploration firms

People coming from 13 villages situated in Tharcoal project's blocks 1 and 2 took out a rally to register their protest over what they called, 'systematic exploitation' of local residents by the companies engaged in exploration in the Tharparkar region. Raising slogans and holding banners inscribed with slogans against the companies, the protesters complained that residents of these areas were being displaced and deprived of their livelihoods. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 15*)

$30\ students\ injured\ as\ PU\ guards\ pounce\ on\ their\ protest$

Thirty students were injured in the torture by security guards of the Punjab University as they attacked the participants in 'Students Rights March'. The march was being held by the Punjab University Student Federation (PUSF), a body of different student organisations, including those of Pashtun, Baloch, Seraiki and Punjabi students, outside the Institute of Education and Research (IER) to press for its demands. The students' demands included reversal of recent fee hikes, student representation in harassment committees, construction of new hostels, resolution of scholarship issues, restoration of quotas for South Punjab tribal areas, and an investigation into the death of a female student found hanging in the university hostel. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 2*)

Protests over non-payment of salaries keep activities suspended at Urdu University

Academic activities as well as administrative work have been suspended for the past one week at the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST) due to protests and strike by teaching and non-teaching staff against non-payment of salaries and house rent ceiling. Most affected by the protest, however, are students who say that since the current semester has started, their classes are not taking place on a regular basis because of being affected by one protest or the other every few weeks. The strike, being held at the Saddar and the University Road campuses of the university,

continued as well, with teachers saying that they would continue their protest unless their demands were met by the university management. The teachers said that they also wanted a proper plan for the release of dues. Among their main demands is the payment of salaries based on the recent raise in the budget. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 13*)

Notices issued on plea for recovery of eight `missing` Baloch students

The Sindh High Court has directed a senior police officer to 'produce' eight missing students, all hailing from Balochistan, in court by Nov 4 and warned to pass an 'appropriate order' in case of failure. Protest rally at KU also, scores of students of the University of Karachi organised a rally on the campus in protest over the alleged enforced disappearances of the missing Baloch students. The protest rally began from Dr Mahmud Hussain Library and culminated at the UBL Bank roundabout. A number of students, a few faculty members as well as some non-teaching employees participated in the rally. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 13*)

BYC holds Turbat sit-in against enforced disappearance

The members and supporters of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee took out a protest rally and staged a sit-in for the recovery of forcibly disappeared persons in Turbat, the district headquarters of Kech district. On the call of central leadership of BYC, a large number of political activists, supporters of BYC, women and family members of 'missing persons' gathered at Fida Mohammad Shaheed Chowk. Carrying placards and banners inscribed with their demand for the recovery of 'missing persons'. The marchers later gathered at Fida Shaheed Chowk, where they staged a sit-in blocking traffic on the main roads. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 5*)

Traffic nightmare on streets after lawyers block Korangi Road

A lawyers' protest on Korangi Road near Kala Pull against alleged 'beating' of their colleague by Mehmoodabad police and non-registration of its FIR created painful gridlocks and prolonged snarl-ups on key arteries. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 13*)

Doctors at BADC protest for safety kits, outstanding stipend

House officers working at Bibi Aseefa Dental College have alleged that managements of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University and their college do not provide them safety kits, masks and gloves which are necessary to examine patients and perform surgeries. After boycotting their routine assignments, they were demonstrating outside the hospital related to the BADC. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 15*)

Media workers protest abduction of colleague's teenage niece

Journalists and other media workers held a noisy demonstration outside the Piryalo Press Club over abduction of their professional colleague's 17-year-old niece from his home by a group of armed men. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 15*)

BADC doctors continue OPD boycott despite warning of strict action

Doctors doing house job at the Bibi Aseefa Dental College continued with their boycott of duties for disbursement of their three months' stipend and withdrawal of the show-cause notices, issued to their three women colleagues for joining the protest. The protesters are also demanding updating of medical facilities at the hospital. Carrying placards inscribed with slogans in favour of their demands and calling for removal of the principal, they urged the Chandka Medical College Hospital administration to withdraw the show-cause notices. (*Dawn, October 27th*, 2024 Page 15)

Protest: Muzaffarabad (Picture Caption)

Participants of a demonstration gather around a banner featuring images of Narendra Modi and other Indian leaders. The demonstration was held to mark 'Kashmir Black Day', which commemorates Indian army's occupation of Srinagar in Oct 1947. Banner, laid out on main road at Burhan Wani Chowk, was set on fire amid anti-India slogans, before participants marched to Garhi Pan Chowk. (*Dawn, October 28th, 2024 Page 1*)

Large rallies, seminars mark Kashmir Black Day

Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam led a rally in the federal capital on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Addressing the rally participants at D-Chowk, Mr Muqam reminded people about October 27, 1947, when Indian forces illegally entered Jammu and Kashmir, saying "no Pakistani can forget this day". He honoured the courage of Kashmiris who, even after 77 years, continued their struggle for self-determination. (*Dawn, October 28th*, 2024 Page 4)

BNP-Mengal holds protest rallies in Balochistan against leaders' arrest

Workers and supporters of Balochistan National Party (BNP-Mengal) took out processions in Quetta and other cities of Balochistan to protest against registration of "fake" cases against Sardar Akhtar Mengal and other party leaders and arrest of former MPAs. (*Dawn, October 28*th, 2024 Page 5)

Climate march in Karachi calls for urgent action against worsening environment

'Save the Earth, save the generations' echoed as the loudest chant in Frere Hall, where people from across the city gathered under the scorching sun to advocate for the planet and especially for their country. The Climate March was organised by the Pakistan Maholiati Tahaffuz Movement in collaboration with the Climate Action Centre, run by Yasir Darya, who was present at the march, and other organisations. He appeared very hopeful about the future of climate activism. (*Dawn, October 28th*, 2024 Page 13)

'Black Day' observed across Sindh to condemn Indian brutalities in occupied Kashmir Rallies, demonstrations, debates, seminars, tableaux and other programmes were held in many cities and towns of Sindh to observe a 'Black Day' to condemn Indian forces'

illegal occupation of Jammu & Kashmir. In Karachi, All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) held a rally and vehemently condemned Indian cruelty and atrocities in the occupied territory. APHC leaders called upon the world community to play its due role in resolving the issue. (*Dawn, October 28th, 2024 Page 15*)

JIT ordered after family's protest over youth's custodial death

DIG Nasir Aftab has ordered formation of a joint investigation team (JIT) to ascertain facts about the death of a 22-year-old youth, Sahil Solangi, in the lock-up of the Waleed police station. Solangi was booked in a theft case lodged by an influential figure of the area, Ali Hassan Kaheri, a couple of days ago. The police claimed that the suspect died by suicide and that he used his waist-string to kill himself in the lock-up. (*Dawn, October 29th, 2024 Page 15*)

15.1 # Palestine

Karachiites throng Sharea Faisal to express solidarity with people of Palestine

Thousands of people, including women and children, staged a rally on Sharea Faisal to express solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemn Israeli brutalities against them in Gaza. The rally was organised by the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) to mark the year-long aggression of the Zionist regime. In a show of solidarity, leaders and workers of different political parties, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen (MWM), also participated in the march in support to the Palestinian cause. (*Dawn, October 7th*, 2024, Page 13)

Healthcare professionals observe Gaza Solidarity Day

Healthcare professionals across country observed Gaza Solidarity Day to mark first anniversary of Israeli aggression on Gaza. At 12 noon, doctors and healthcare workers gathered outside their clinics and hospitals, holding Palestinian flags and banners in a show of solidarity with the people of Gaza, particularly the healthcare workers who continue to serve under dire conditions. The day was observed on the appeal by the Pakistan Islamic Medical Association President Prof Dr Atif Hafeez Siddiqui and major events were held in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. (*Dawn, October 8th*, 2024, Page 4)

Rallies held across city against year-long Israeli aggression in Gaza

People across the city took out processions, staged rallies, organised conferences and held seminars to express solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemn Israeli brutalities in Gaza, marking one year of the ongoing aggression by the Zionist regime. In the Sindh Assembly, provincial legislators came out to express solidarity with Palestine and its people. At Power House Chowrangi in North Karachi, the Jamaat-i-Islami organised a rally. At the University of Karachi, the Islami Jamiat Talaba also organised a Palestine Solidarity Walk.

Journalists' protest

A large number of journalists marched from the Karachi Press Club to Governor House, condemning Israeli atrocities in Gaza in which dozens of journalists have been killed in a month-long bombing. The march, organised by the city's media fraternity and supported by journalist bodies, including Karachi Union of Journalists, Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and Karachi Press Club, asked the United Nations and human rights organisations to play their role in stopping Israel from the ongoing barbarism. They also called for a UN commission to investigate killings of journalists covering war-hit area.

Schoolchildren stage rally

The Markazi Muslim League staged a rally on Shahrah-i-Quaideen that was mainly organised for schoolchildren. A larger number of schoolchildren carrying Palestinian flags and posters of Hamas leaders participated in the rally which was later addressed by the leaders the party. Similarly, the Jamiat Ahl-i-Hadees staged a "National Palestine Conference" on Shahrah-i-Quaideen. It was attended by a large number of people. In their addresses, the leaders said that it is a misconception that Israel would reconsider its approach towards Islam and the Muslims after the Islamic countries reviewed their policies towards the Zionist regime.

Women hold march

Hundreds of women and children also walked from Numaish intersection to Tibet Centre on main M. A. Jinnah Road in a rally organised by Tehreek-e-Bedari-e-Ummate-Mustafa. Carrying placards and banners, and chanting slogans to condemn the Israeli brutalities, they called for unity of the Muslim countries. Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen organised a rally in solidarity with Palestine and defence of Gaza and held a candlelit vigil on Numaish intersection. leaders said that Israel's actions are based on its ideology which is against Islam and the Muslims. They called it a part of the Zionist ideology which doesn't even consider Palestinians humans. (*Dawn, October 8th*, 2024, Page 13)

'Palestine Solidarity Day' marked in Lahore

Like other parts of the country, 'Palestine Solidarity Day' was marked to raise voice against the ongoing oppression of unarmed Palestinians in Gaza. Rallies were held in which the people expressed support to Muslim brothers and sisters facing the worst brutalities of Israeli forces. The rallies were taken out in all small and major cities while seminars and other events were held to highlight atrocities being committed by Israeli forces against unarmed Palestinians. The speakers expressed complete solidarity with the Palestinians. Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "World's silence on the plight of oppressed people of Palestine is a human tragedy, the problem of Palestine is not only the problem of Palestinians, but of the entire world." The CM

noted, "The people of Palestine are fighting for their basic rights and the protection of their land. Pakistan has always fully supported the position of Palestine and will continue to do so." She added, (Business Recorder, October 8th, 2024, Page 2)

GHA holds rally at LGH to express solidarity with Palestinians

Grand Health Alliance (GHA) held a rally here at the Lahore General Hospital (LGH) to lodge protest against the ongoing Israeli terrorism, atrocities and barbarism in Palestine. A large number of health professionals participated in the rally the participants of the rally were carrying placards inscribed slogans to express solidarity with the Palestinians and Gaza brothers. They also chanted slogans against the Israeli aggression. (*Business Recorder, October 23rd, 2024, Page 4*)



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS



1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Dozens held for burning stubble in India, Pakistan

At least 16 farmers have been arrested in India's northern state of Haryana for illegally burning paddy stubble to clear fields, a practice that stokes air pollution in the region at the onset of winter. Police in the Kaithal region said that 22 complaints of stubble burning have been registered this year, and 16 people have been arrested though all were later released. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 12*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

Chicago wheat climbs as dryness affects crops

Chicago wheat rose for a fourth consecutive session to its highest level in one week, as concerns over dry weather conditions in key producing countries underpinned prices. Soybeans and corn edged higher on positioning ahead of a key US supply-demand report due. "Wheat production prospects are tightening and farmers are not selling," said one trader in Singapore. "We see an upside in prices." The most-active wheat contract on the Chicago Board of Trade was up 1.6% at \$6.08-3/4 a bushel, as of 0546 GMT, having hit its highest since Oct. 3 earlier in the session. Soybeans added 0.3% to \$10.23 a bushel and corn gained 0.7% at \$4.23-3/4 a bushel.

Harsh weather is reducing wheat production in major global exporters, cutting inventories that have already been projected to hit nine-year lows. The Rosario grains exchange trimmed its estimate for the 2024/25 wheat harvest to 19.5 million metric tons, down from a previous estimate of 20.5 million tons. Russia has sown 13 million hectares with winter grain so far this year and is aiming to sow 20 million hectares in total, the same area as last year, Agriculture Minister Oksana Lut said. The Sovecon consultancy warned on Sept. 25 that wheat sowing rates in Russia have fallen to an 11-year low, clouding the outlook for the 2025 grain harvest in world's top wheat exporter. (Business Recorder, October 11th, 2024, Page 9)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month

5 # TRADE

Vietnam, China sign 10 deals including agri trade

Vietnam and China signed 10 agreements ranging from agriculture cooperation to crossborder QR code payments, during Chinese Premier Li Qiang's three-day visit to Hanoi, as the two neighbours seek to boost ties. China is Vietnam's largest trading partner and a vital source of imports for its manufacturing sector, with bilateral trade jumping 21% for the first three quarters from the same period last year to \$148 billion. The signing ceremony followed Li's meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh. Li and Vietnam's Communist Party chief, President To Lam, agreed to boost economic ties, farm produce cooperation. The Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh asked China to boost agricultural trade with Vietnam, open doors to Vietnamese farm produce and enhance customs clearance at borders. Vietnam and China also signed a document on updating progress on cross-border railway links related to site survey. (Business Recorder, October 14th, 2024, Page 9)

India-Canada row overshadows growing trade ties, investment

A diplomatic falling out between India and Canada over allegations that New Delhi was behind the killing of a Canadian Sikh activist threatens to overshadow increasingly close trade and investment ties between the countries. India's trade with Canada is small in comparison to some of New Delhi's biggest trading partners, but it has grown steadily. Bilateral merchandise trade rose from US\$6.36 billion to US\$8.27 billion between the 2019 and 2023 fiscal years, according to India's commerce ministry. And so far it appears to have weathered the storm, rising again, marginally, to US\$8.4 billion in fiscal 2024. India's biggest exports to Canada include pharmaceuticals, steel and iron products and electrical machinery. (Business Recorder, October 17th, 2024, Page 11)

China boosts export controls

Chinese Premier Li Qiang has signed a decree of the State Council to unveil regulations on export control of so-called dual-use items, which will take effect on Dec 1, 2024. The regulations aim to improve transparency and standardisation of export control policies and to boost export control capabilities of items that may be used either for civilian or military purposes. The new regulations put in place a permit system for the export of dual-use goods and create a list of restricted goods. Exporters of such goods will have to disclose the ultimate user and the intended use of the exported goods. (*Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 9*)

US imposes curbs on Pakistani, Chinese and Emirati firms

The US has added more than two dozen entities to a trade blacklist over alleged support of weapons and drone development programmes in Pakistan and Iran, and other issues, including aiding Russia's war effort in Ukraine. The 26 targets, mostly in Pakistan, China and UAE, were said to have violated export controls, been involved in "weapons programs of concern," or evaded US sanctions and export controls on Russia and Iran, said the Commerce Department. Their addition to the so-called "entity list" restricts them from getting US items and technologies without government authorisation. Nine of entities from Pakistan were added for acting as front companies

and procurement agents for a Pakistan-based company added to the Entity List in 2014. The remaining seven Pakistani entities were added for contributions to Pakistan's ballistic missile programme, the US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security said. (*Dawn, October 22nd, 2024, Page 12*)

UN eyes modest maritime trade growth, but future uncertain

Maritime trade should show modest growth this year, the UN said, warning though that geopolitical tensions, climate impacts and conflicts shaking global trade are threatening the functioning of maritime supply chains. The United Nations' trade and development agency, UNCTAD, highlighted in its annual report on maritime transport that the global economy, food security and energy supplies were at increasing risk due to vulnerabilities along key maritime routes. "The sector is facing numerous challenges that threaten the efficiency, reliability, resilience and sustainability of maritime transport," UNCTAD chief Rebeca Grynspan said in the report.

"Just after recovering from the upheaval of the Covid-19 pandemic and having started to adjust to new shifts in trade patterns triggered by the war in Ukraine, global supply chains and trade are now grappling with an additional wave of disruptions," she warned. The report found that global maritime trade swelled 2.4 per cent in 2023 to a total of 12,292 million tonnes, as it began to recover after a contraction in 2022. For 2024, it projected "a modest 2pc growth, ... driven by demand for bulk commodities like iron ore, coal, and grain, alongside containerised goods". And for the period 2025-2029, UNCTAD said it expected total seaborne trade to grown on average by 2.4pc. (*Dawn, October 23rd, 2024, Page 10*)

Beijing offers tariff-free trade to Taliban

China will offer the Taliban tariff-free access to its vast construction, energy and consumer sectors, Beijing's envoy to Afghanistan said, as the ailing resource-rich but diplomatically-isolated regime looks to build up its markets. President Xi Jinping at a Beijing summit for more than 50 African leaders in September had announced that from December 1 goods entering his country's \$19 trillion economy from "the least developed countries that have diplomatic relations with China" would not be subject to import duties, without giving details. The policy was then repeated by vice commerce minister Tang Wenhong at a recent press conference in Beijing on the preparations for upcoming China's annual flagship import expo. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson confirmed the policy would apply to Afghanistan, adding it would promote mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation. (*Dawn, October 26th, 2024 Page 10*)

Ireland urges EU to review Israel trade ties

Ireland's Prime Minister Simon Harris urged the EU to review trade ties with Israel over Israeli lawmakers' "despicable" ban of the UN's Palestinian aid agency UNRWA. The

Irish leader criticised the Israeli parliament's "shameful" banning of the agency, which coordinates nearly all aid to Gaza. The move has stirred a growing international backlash, including from Israel's ally the United States and European powers. (Business Recorder, 30th October, 2024, Page 1)

5.1 # Export

India removes floor price for non-basmati white rice exports

India has removed the floor price for export of non-basmati white rice, government said in an official order, to help farmers and exporters sell various grades of rice on the world market. Buoyed by forecasts of higher rice output, farmers and rice exporters recently urged the government to remove the floor price for non-basmati white rice exports that was imposed partly to ensure security of supply. Last month, India gave the go ahead for exports of non-basmati white rice to resume. But New Delhi set a floor price for non-basmati white rice exports at \$490 a metric ton.

Higher rice shipments from India, the world's biggest rice exporter, would bolster global supplies and soften international prices by forcing other major exporters - such as Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam - to reduce their rates, trade and industry officials said. India will be able to sell 25% broken white rice, which is usually offered at a sharp discount to 5% broken rice and sought by some African countries. India scrapped export tax on parboiled rice, as inventories surged and country is set to produce a bumper crop after copious monsoon rains. (Business Recorder, October 24th, 2024, Page 1)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Not any preferable news to be included in this month

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Global investors gear up to go back into China

Global investors are preparing to stake bets on China again, in a major sentiment shift sparked by Beijing's drive to reverse its economic slowdown and revive long term interest in its stock markets. It is early days and few money managers expect a Chinese growth boom anytime soon. But government moves to entice more cash into equities and jolt consumer spending have boosted the appeal of still-low Chinese company valuations, said investors at groups overseeing more than \$1.5 trillion of client funds between them. China's factory activity shrank for a fifth straight month and the services sector slowed sharply in September, suggesting Beijing may need to move urgently to meet its 5% 2024 growth target. (Business Recorder, October 7th, 2024, Page 15)

UK's flagship investment summit suffers bumpy build-up

The UK government hosts international business leaders to try and secure much-needed investment for Britain but the build-up has been chaotic with a major firm reportedly

threatening to shelve a project. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the leader of the new Labour government, hopes the International Investment Summit in London will show the UK is "the best place in the world to do business". Starmer is expected to announce billions of pounds in investments. He has already unveiled £24 billion (\$31.4bn) in green energy projects, including £12bn by Spanish giant Iberdrola and £8bn by Danish firm Orsted. But his attempts to woo investors suffered a blow when an expected announcement by P&O Ferries of a £1bn port expansion was reported by UK media to be under threat. (*Dawn, October 13th*, 2024, Page 9)

Saudi fund plans to cut foreign investment

Saudi officials lamented economic strain of regional conflicts as the country's sovereign wealth fund told an investor forum it was cutting the proportion of its overseas investments. Despite a performance by South African opera singers and a remote appearance by Elon Musk, the mood at the glitzy Future Investment Initiative (FII), sometimes called "Davos in the desert", was clouded by the crises in Gaza and Lebanon. (*Dawn, October 30th, 2024, Page 11*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

IMF, WHO, WB join hands to boost pandemic response

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Health Organisation (WHO) have agreed on a joint strategy to boost pandemic response and preparedness. This cooperation will allow countries to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats through the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) and the financial and technical support fromthe World Bank and WHO, according to a joint press release of the world organisations. 'The RST allows eligible member countries to access long-term financing at low interest rates to help implement reforms that address structural challenges to the stability of the economy, such as those posed by pandemics, and to enhance countries' health systems resilience. The three organisations will collaborate to strengthen policy making and financial management reforms. 'In strengthening the pandemic preparedness framework, member countries will also work to improve the resilience of their health systems and their ability to respond better to all health emergencies. (*Dawn, October 6th*, 2024, *Page 12*)

Russia calls on BRICS partners to create alternative to IMF

Russia, which chairs the BRICS group this year, has called on its partners to create an alternative to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to counter political pressure from Western nations ahead of the BRICS summit later this month. BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, and China, has expanded to include South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. Top BRICS finance and central bank officials are meeting in Moscow this week. Russian Finance Minister

Anton Siluanov, who is hosting meeting, said global financial system is controlled by Western countries and that the group, which represents 37% of the global economy, needs to create an alternative.

"The IMF and the World Bank are not performing their roles. They are not working in the interests of BRICS countries," Siluanov said. "It is necessary to form new conditions or even new institutions, similar to the Bretton Woods institutions, but within the framework of our community, within the framework of BRICS". Russia had its forex reserves in dollars and euros frozen and its financial system heavily hit by sanctions by West after it invaded Ukraine in February 2022. The country is cut off from international capital markets. Russia has recently also experienced delays in international transactions with its trading partners, including BRICS member countries, as banks in these countries fear punitive actions from Western regulators.er emerging economies. (Business Recorder, October 11th, 2024, Page 5)

China-led AIIB head criticizes advanced nations for trade barriers

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) President Jin Liqun criticized advanced economies for creating trade barriers including for renewable energy goods, saying there was "no longer free trade" in global economy. The US last month locked in steep tariff hikes on Chinese imports, including a 100% duty on electric vehicles, to strengthen protections for strategic domestic industries from China's state-driven excess production capacity. EU and Canada also have announced new import tariffs on Chinese EVs, latter matching 100% US duties. (*Business Recorder, October 27th*, 2024 Page 1)

8.1 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF admonishes Colombo as it pleads for changes to \$2.9 billion bailout

Sri Lanka's painful austerity measures were "bearing fruit" and must be sustained, the International Monetary Fund said as the country's new president sought changes to its \$2.9 billion bailout. Leftist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake won last month's presidential election promising to reverse steep tax hikes, raise public servant salaries and renegotiate an unpopular IMF bailout secured by Colombo last year. But analysts say Dissanayake has little room to reshape the terms of the IMF deal. The avowed Marxist held talks with IMF representatives for a second straight day.

"President Dissanayake aims to achieve the objectives of the programme in partnership with the IMF, seeking alternative approaches that will alleviate the burden on citizens". Sri Lanka's new president has said he also wants to conclude a tentative deal his predecessor had negotiated to restructure \$12.5bn in international sovereign bonds, but wanted more concessions for the cash-strapped nation. Sri Lanka has already secured debt restructuring deals with its official creditors, including China, Japan and India, the top three bilateral lenders. (*Dawn, October 5th*, 2024, *Page 10*)

Sri Lanka approves controversial foreign debt deal

Sri Lanka's new government has approved a controversial restructure of \$14.7 billion in foreign commercial credit tentatively agreed by its predecessor, the finance ministry said. Former leader Ranil Wickremesinghe announced a deal with international sovereign bondholders and the China Development Bank just two days before he lost presidential elections last month. The new leftist President Anura Kumara Dissanayake had called for better terms, but after two days of talks with an IMF delegation in Colombo, his government said it would honour his predecessor's deal.

"Sri Lankan authorities confirm their endorsement of ... the agreement in principle terms as announced on Sept 19," the finance ministry said in a statement. The debt restructuring is a key International Monetary Fund demand to rebuild the island's economy, which suffered its worst crisis in 2022 when it shrank by 7.8 per cent. In June, the government concluded a deal with its bilateral lenders to restructure its official credit amounting to \$6bn. Under the deal announced on Sept 19, private creditors holding more than half of international sovereign bonds and foreign commercial loans to the South Asian nation agreed to a 27pc haircut on their loans. They also agreed to a further 11pc reduction on the interest owed to them. International sovereign bonds account for \$12.5 billion and the balance of \$2.2bn is owed to the China Development Bank.

Sri Lanka's external debt stood at \$46 billion at the time of its foreign debt default in 2022, when it ran out of foreign exchange to finance even the most essential imports such as food and fuel. The bond restructuring endorsed by the new government must still go to parliament for ratification. Dissanayake dissolved the assembly days after he was sworn in and called a snap election for Nov 14, a year ahead of schedule. The legislature is set to have its first session on Nov 21. Austerity measures in line with the IMF bailout loan of \$2.9bn secured last year helped stabilise the economy but also caused severe hardships for low income Sri Lankans. The IMF has said that Sri Lanka returned to growth in the wake of the crisis, but warned its economy was still not out of the woods. (*Dawn, October 6th, 2024, Page 9*)

IMF predicts slightly slower global growth in 2024 and 2025

Global growth is expected to ease slightly to 3.2 percent this year and remain at that level in 2025, the IMF announced, while warning that the stable figures masked "important" regional and sectoral shifts. In its new World Economic Outlook (WEO) report, the International Monetary Fund also estimates that global inflation will continue to ease, hitting 5.8 percent this year, before falling to 4.3 percent in 2025. The division is stark between advanced economies, where the IMF expects the inflation rate to fall to two percent next year, and emerging market and developing economies, where it expects inflation in 2025 to ease to 5.9 percent.

The Fund's WEO report noted that global growth is expected to trend to a lackluster 3.1 percent by 2029, and warned of growing risks to that metric. Beneath the relatively calm outlook for growth through 2025, "the picture is far from monolithic," the Fund said, warning of "important sectoral and regional shifts" taking place over the past six months. The WEO's publication comes a day after the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings got underway in Washington, bringing together finance ministers and central bankers from around the world for meetings on the health of the global economy.

The report finds that the United States has remained an engine of global growth — in sharp contrast with the euro area, where expansion remains slow. The world's largest economy is now expected to grow by 2.8 percent this year, down ever-so-slightly from the 2.9 percent seen in 2023, but still a shade better than the Fund's previous estimate in July. It is then expected to ease somewhat to 2.2 percent in 2025 — up 0.3 percentage points from July — as fiscal policy is "gradually tightened and a cooling labor market slows consumption," the IMF said. (Business Recorder, October 21st, 2024, Page 5)

8.2 # World Bank (WB)

WB looking to free up emergency funds for Lebanon

The World Bank is looking to free up emergency funds for Lebanon, potentially including up to \$100 million through the use of special clauses in existing loan deals, its managing director of operations told. The Washington-based development lender currently has \$1.65 billion in loans to country including a \$250 million loan approved this week to help connect dispersed renewable energy projects in the country. Amid fighting across southern Lebanon, the bank was currently discussing ways in which it could help support economy, including through use of so-called Contingent Emergency Response Component clauses. (*Business Recorder, October 8th*, 2024, Page 1)

9 # POLICY

Not any preferable news to be included in this month

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMICAL CONDITIONS 10.1 # Food

Global rice prices drop

Global rice prices fell after India, the world's no.1 exporter of the grain, gave go-ahead for exports to resume, boosting global supply and helping poor Asian and African buyers secure more affordable supplies. India allowed exports of non-basmati white rice. That came a day after it cut export duty on parboiled rice to 10pc, buoyed by a new crop in the offing and higher inventories in state warehouses. "Everyone's trying to stay competitive to hold their spot in the market." Global rice prices soared to their highest level in over 15 years following India's decision last year to ban the export of white rice and impose a 20pc duty on parboiled rice exports. (Dawn, October 1st, 2024, Page 9)

Food aid to Gaza falls as Israel sets new aid rule

Food supplies to Gaza have fallen sharply in recent weeks because Israeli authorities have introduced a new customs rule on some humanitarian aid and are separately scaling down deliveries organised by businesses, people involved in getting goods to Gaza said. The new customs rule applies to truck convoys chartered by the United Nations to take aid from Jordan to Gaza via Israel, seven people familiar with the matter said. Under the rule, individuals from relief organisations sending aid must complete a form providing passport details, and accept liability for any false information on a shipment. As a result, shipments have not been getting through the Jordan route — a key channel in Gaza supplies — for two weeks.

In a parallel move, Israeli authorities have restricted commercial food shipments to Gaza. UN data shows that in September, deliveries of food and aid sank to their lowest for 11 months. The twin restrictions, which have not been previously reported, have reignited concerns among aid workers that pervasive food insecurity will worsen for the 2.3 million Gazans trapped in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The number of trucks carrying food and other goods to Gaza fell to around 130 per day on average in September, according to Cogat statistics. That is below about 150 recorded since the beginning of the conflict, and far off the 600 trucks a day that the US Agency for International Development says are required to address the threat of famine in wartime. Food insecurity has been one of most fraught issues of the conflict that began after Oct 7 raid. In May, International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors asked court to issue an arrest warrant against Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, saying they suspected Israeli authorities had used "the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare." (*Dawn, October 3rd, 2024, Page 11*)

Nearly 2m malnourished children at risk of death worldwide: Unicef

Globally nearly two million children suffering from severe wasting, also known as acute malnutrition, are at risk of death due to funding shortages for lifesaving Ready-to-use-Therapeutic-Food (RUTF) to treat wasting, Unicef warned. It stated that Pakistan is included in 12 hardest-hit countries along with Mali, Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Sudan, Madagascar, Kenya, South Sudan, Congo and Uganda. This year, only 262,000 severely wasted children in Pakistan (one third of those in need) have received lifesaving RUTF treatment. The current supply of RUTF in Pakistan is projected to end in March 2025, threatening ongoing treatment efforts. According to a statement, levels of severe wasting in children under five years remain gravely high in several countries, fueled by conflict, economic shocks and climate crises.

In the past two years an unprecedented global response has allowed the scale-up of nutrition programmes to contain child wasting and its associated mortality in countries

severely affected by conflict, climate and economic shocks, and the resulting maternal and child nutrition crisis,` said Unicef Director of Child Nutrition and Development Victor Aguayo. `But urgent action is needed now to save the lives of nearly two million children who are fighting this silent killer. (*Dawn, October 16th, 2024, Page 3*)

Global commodity prices set to hit five-year low in 2025: World Bank

Global commodity prices are set to tumble to a five-year low in 2025 amid an oil glut that is so large that it is likely to limit the price effects even of a wider conflict in the Middle East, said the World Bank. In its latest Commodity Markets Outlook (CMO), the bank said that despite this drop, the overall commodity prices will remain 30 per cent higher than they were in the five years before the Covid-19 pandemic. From 2024 through 2026, global commodity prices are projected to plummet by nearly 10pc, the CMO said. `Global food prices are set to fall 9pc this year and an additional 4pc in 2025 before leveling off. That would still leave food prices nearly 25pc above the average level from 2015 through 2019,` it added. (Dawn, October 30th, 2024, Page 9)

10. 2 # Poverty

Goal to end extreme poverty by 2030 'out of reach': WB

A global target of ending extreme poverty by 2030 is "out of reach," said the World Bank, adding it could take three decades or more to do so. "Global poverty reduction has slowed to a near standstill, with 2020-30 set to be a lost decade," according to a new report assessing progress on eliminating poverty after the Covid-19 pandemic. The world is experiencing serious setbacks after decades of progress. This comes amid overlapping challenges including slow economic growth, the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as climate shocks. He warned that with these crises, "a business-as-usual approach will no longer work." Almost 700 million people, or 8.5 percent of the global population, live on less than \$2.15 daily — the threshold for extreme poverty. This is set to remain at 7.3 percent in 2030.

Today, extreme poverty remains concentrated in countries with low growth and fragility, many in Sub-Saharan Africa. And 44 percent of the world's population lives on below \$6.85 a day, which is the poverty line for upper-middle-income countries. "The number of people living under this poverty line has barely changed since 1990 due to population growth," the bank noted. It added that "future poverty reduction requires economic growth that is less carbon emissions-intensive than in the past." Nearly one in five people are expected to be hit by a severe weather shock in their lifetime, and will struggle to bounce back from it. (*Business Recorder, October 16th, 2024, Page 5*)

UN report says 1.1bn people in acute poverty

More than one billion people are living in acute poverty across the globe, a UN Development Program report said, with children accounting for over half of those

affected. The paper published with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) highlighted that poverty rates were three times higher in countries at war, as 2023 saw the most conflicts around the world since the Second World War. The UNDP and the OPHI have published their Multidimensional Poverty Index annually since 2010, harvesting data from 112 countries with a combined population of 6.3 billion people. It uses indicators such as a lack of adequate housing, sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, nutrition and school attendance.

"The 2024 MPI paints a sobering picture: 1.1 billion people endure multidimensional poverty, of which 455 million live in the shadow of conflict," said Yanchun Zhang, chief statistician at the UNDP. "For the poor in conflict-affected countries, the struggle for basic needs is a far harsher and more desperate battle," Zhang told. The report echoed last year's findings that 1.1 billion out of 6.1 billion people across 110 countries were facing extreme multidimensional poverty.

Paper showed that some 584 million people under 18 were experiencing extreme poverty, accounting for 27.9 percent of children worldwide, compared with 13.5 percent of adults. It also showed that 83.2 percent of the world's poorest people live in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Sabina Alkire, director of the OPHI, told AFP that conflicts were hindering efforts for poverty reduction. India was the country with the largest number of people in extreme poverty, which impacts 234 million of its 1.4 billion population. It was followed by Pakistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The five countries accounted for nearly half of the 1.1 billion poor people. (Business Recorder, October 18th, 2024, Page 14)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Wildlife numbers have plunged 73pc since 1970, says WWF

Wild populations of monitored animal species have plummeted over 70 percent in the last half-century, according to the latest edition of a landmark assessment by WWF. Featuring data from 35,000 populations of more than 5,000 species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish, the WWF Living Planet Index shows accelerating declines across the globe. In biodiversity-rich regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, the figure for animal population loss is as high as 95pc. The report tracks trends in the abundance of a large number of species, not individual animal numbers. It found that populations under review had fallen 73pc since 1970, mostly due to human pressures. The index has become an international reference and arrives just ahead of the next UN summit on biodiversity, which will spotlight the issue when it opens in Colombia later this month. (*Dawn, October 11th*, 2024, Page 10)

11.1 # Atmosphere

Diwali fireworks could worsen air in Indian capital, despite fewer farm fires

Fireworks set off during celebrations for Diwali could further worsen air quality in the Indian capital this week, offsetting a reduction in burning of farm waste in nearby states. Rated the world's most polluted capital by Swiss group IQAir for four years in a row, New Delhi was the world's second most polluted city, the group's live rankings showed, after Lahore in neighbouring Pakistan. Delhi's air quality was 273, the Central Pollution Control Board's index showed, far exceeding a rating below 50 that is considered to be 'good'. (Business Recorder, October 30th, 2024, Page 14)

11.2 # Biodiversity

UN biodiversity summit opens under guerrilla threat in Colombia

The world's biggest nature protection conference gets a ceremonial kickoff in Colombia with host city Cali on high alert after threats from a guerrilla group. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres will make a video address to guests gathered for the event attended by Colombian President Gustavo Petro said he was `nervous` about security. The high-stakes UN biodiversity gathering officially opens under the protection of thousands of Colombian police and soldiers, aided by UN and US security personnel. Themed `Peace with Nature, it has the urgent task of coming up with monitoring and funding mechanisms to ensure that 23 UN targets agreed in 2022 to halt and reverse species destruction can be met by 2030. (*Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 11*

Climate change a worry for Greece's hungry butterflies

In a controlled enclosure in a zoo outside Athens, multi-coloured butterflies suck sweet juice from orange slices, free from the hazards of a changing climate outside that are threatening populations in Greece and across the world. Warmer temperatures are making life harder for butterflies in Greece, home to some 237 species. Food is scarcer, flowering periods are shorter, and experts now suspect the butterflies may be getting smaller. The problem is echoed globally, including in Mexico and Britain where numbers of some species have declined sharply.

"Climate change is impacting butterflies ... that rely on temperature to perform essential activities such as mating, reproduction, growth, and feeding," said Konstantinos Anagnostellis, an agronomist. It involves measuring body weight of more than 50,000 butterfly specimens over a century to model their decreasing body size in response to climate change. Heat forces butterflies to fly to cooler places where there is less food. Worsening wildfires in Greece also reduce access to food because of the loss to grasslands. "If these plants are burned, there is a risk of direct mortality for larvae, and we may not have adult butterflies to reproduce, forcing them to migrate to other areas." (Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 10)

One in three tree species at risk of extinction

More than one in three species of trees are at risk of extinction worldwide, threatening life as we know it on Earth. The warning came in the Global Tree Assessment, contained in an update of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. Issued to coincide with the UN's COP16 summit on biodiversity, held in the Colombian city of Cali, the report said over 16,000 tree species are at risk of extinction. More than 47,000 species were assessed for the study, out of an estimated 58,000 species thought to exist in the world. Trees are felled for logging and to clear land for farming and human expansion. Climate change poses an additional threat through worsening drought and wildfires. (*Dawn, October 29th, 2024 Page 10*)

11.3 # Health

WHO certifies Egypt as malaria-free

Egypt was certified as malaria-free, with the World Health Organisation calling the achievement "truly historic" and culmination of nearly a century of work to stamp out disease. "This certification of Egypt as malaria-free is truly historic, and a testament to the commitment of people and government of Egypt to rid themselves of this ancient scourge." Globally, 44 countries and one territory have now been certified as malaria-free. (*Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 11*)

WHO chief says situation in Gaza 'catastrophic'

The World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has termed the situation in northern Gaza 'catastrophic' with "intensive military operations unfolding around and within healthcare facilities", warning that "a critical shortage of medical supplies, compounded by severely limited access, are depriving people of life saving care". His statement came a day after Israeli forces raided the last functioning hospital in northern Gaza and detained hundreds of staff, patients and displaced people during the raid, while the death toll in the territory rose to 42,924, most of them women and children. Tedros lamented that the whole health system in Gaza has been under attack for over a year. "WHO cannot stress loudly enough that hospitals must be shielded from conflict at all times," he said, stressing that "any attack of healthcare facilities is a violation of international humanitarian law". (Dawn, October 27th, 2024 Page 12)

Tuberculosis cases hit record 8.2m high in 2023: WHO

A record 8.2 million new tuberculosis cases were diagnosed worldwide last year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the highest number since it began global TB monitoring in 1995. The WHO said its Global Tuberculosis Report 2024, highlights "mixed progress in the global fight against TB, with persistent challenges such as significant underfunding". While the number of TB-related deaths declined from 1.32m in 2022 to 1.25m last year, the total number of people contracting the infectious disease increased from 7.5m to 8.2m. The disease disproportionately affects

people in 30 high-burden countries. Five countries — India, Indonesia, China, Philippines and Pakistan — account for more than half of the global TB burden, with more than a quarter of the cases found in India alone. According to the report, 55pc of people who developed TB were men, 33pc were women and 12pc were children and young adolescents. (Dawn, October 31st, 2024 Page 12)

11.4 # Pollution

New Delhi chokes as 'hazardous' air pollution returns

Acrid clouds engulfed India's capital as air pollution fuelled by fireworks and farm stubble burning was ranked "hazardous" by monitors for the first time this winter. New Delhi is home to more than 30 million people and is regularly ranked as one of the most polluted urban areas on the planet. Commuters walking to work cough through poisonous smog that kills thousands each year, according to health experts, although few in the sprawling city wear masks.

Levels of fine particulate matter — cancer-causing microparticles known as PM2.5 pollutants that enter the bloodstream through the lungs — surged to nearly 23 times the World Health Organisation recommended daily maximum. The pollutants topped 344 micrograms per cubic metre, according to monitoring firm IQAir, which listed air in the sprawling megacity as "hazardous", ranking it as the world's worst. Air pollution is expected to worsen during the Hindu festival of lights, which falls on Nov 1 this year when smoky fireworks spewing hazardous toxins are part of celebrations. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 10*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

Rate of ocean warming has nearly doubled since 2005: study

The pace at which oceans are warming has almost doubled since 2005 as global temperatures rise because of human-caused climate change, a report from the EU monitor Copernicus said. The findings by the Copernicus Marine Service underscore the consequences of a warming planet on oceans, which cover 70 per cent of earth's surface and acts as a major regulator of the climate. Ocean warming has "increased continuously" since 1960s but sharply accelerated in years since 2005, oceanographer Karina von Schuckmann from Copernicus told. (*Dawn, October 1st*, 2024, *Page 10*)

Overshooting 1.5C risks 'irreversible' climate impact

Any breach of what climate scientists agree is the safer limit on global warming would result in "irreversible consequences" for the planet. Even temporarily exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius before bringing temperatures back down — a scenario known as an "overshoot" — could cause sea level rises and other disastrous repercussions that might last millenia. This "does away with the notion that overshoot delivers a similar climate outcome" to a future where more was done earlier to curb global warming, said Carl-

Friedrich Schleussner, who led the study co-authored by 30 scientists. The findings, three years in the making, are urgent, as the goal of capping global temperature rises at 1.5C above pre-industrial levels is slipping out of reach. Emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases must nearly halve by 2030 if the world is to reach 1.5C — the more ambitious target enshrined in the 2015 Paris climate accord. Currently however, they are still rising. Some kind of overshoot of 1.5C is increasingly being seen as inevitable by scientists and policymakers. This new study, published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature, cautions against "overconfidence" in such a scenario when the dangers are not fully appreciated. (*Dawn, October 10th, 2024, Page 10*)

Little progress made at key meeting ahead of climate summit

A key meeting ahead of the UN COP29 climate summit ended in frustration with countries making little progress over how to fund a new finance deal for poorer nations. Delegates were urged to put aside differences and move negotiations forward during the two-day "pre-COP" in Azerbaijan, which is hosting the major climate talks in November. Not all countries were represented so smaller gains, rather than concrete breakthroughs, were hoped for during the Baku meet. But the gathering wrapped with nations no closer to resolving the same sticking points that have hindered the talks for months, attendees said. (*Dawn, October 12th, 2024, Page 10*)

World on deadline for carbon-cutting 'quantum leap': UN

The United Nations said nations have just months to supercharge their climate plans and called for massive global action to avoid devastating warming. UN Environment Programme's annual Emissions Gap report was released ahead of COP29 climate talks in Azerbaijan and a looming deadline for countries to update and improve their carbon-cutting commitments. New targets matter because the current crop of climate plans put the world on track for catastrophic warming, risking devastating consequences for humanity and irreversible tipping points on land and in the oceans. Emissions are still rising when they need to be falling. (*Business Recorder, October 25th, 2024, Page 1*)

Carbon cuts 'miles short' of 2030 goal, says UN agency

Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere reached new record highs in 2023, UN warned, with countries falling "miles short" of what is needed to curb devastating global warming. Levels of the three main greenhouse gases — heat-trapping carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide — all increased yet again last year, said the World Meteorological Organisation, the United Nation's weather and climate agency. Carbon dioxide was accumulating in the atmosphere faster than ever, up more than 10 per cent in two decades, it added. And a separate report by UN climate change found that barely a dent is being made in the 43pc emissions cut needed by 2030 to avert the worst of global warming. Action as it stands would only lead to a 2.6pc reduction this decade from 2019 levels. (*Dawn, October 29th, 2024 Page 10*)

12.1 # Climate finance

Climate finance billions at stake at COP29

Rich countries will be under pressure at next month's UN COP29 conference to increase by hundreds of billions of dollars how much money they give to poorer countries as "climate finance". But there is deep disagreement over how much is needed, who should pay and what should be covered, ensuring that climate finance will top the agenda at COP29 in Baku. It is the buzzword in this year's negotiations, which run from November 11-22, but there is not one agreed definition of climate finance. At COP29, nearly 200 nations are expected to agree on a new finance goal beyond 2025. India has called for \$1tr a year and some other proposals go higher, but countries on hook want other major economies to chip in. They argue times have changed and big industrialised nations of early 1990s represent just 30% of historic greenhouse gas emissions today. In particular, there is a push for China — world's largest polluter — and Gulf countries to pay. They do not accept this proposal. (Business Recorder, October 10th, 2024, Page 6)

Public money 'must be at core' of new climate pact: UN

The UN's climate chief said that money from rich countries "must be at the core" of a new deal to increase funding for poorer nations to combat global warming. The developing world needs trillions of dollars to help fund clean energy and prepare for climate change, but the world cannot agree how to raise the money. It is hoped nations can resolve this at next month's UN COP29 climate summit despite rifts over how much is needed, what is covered, who pays for it, and how. Wealthy nations most responsible for global warming to date, like the United States and European Union, are obligated to pay and face pressure to raise their existing commitment of \$100 billion a year. But they say they cannot foot the bill alone, and want others to help meet whatever 'climate finance' goal is inked when nearly 200 nations gather for COP29 in Azerbaijan. (Business Recorder, October 18th, 2024, Page 1)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

13.1 # Cyclone

More than one million Indians flee as cyclone approaches

At least 1.1 million people on India's eastern coast hunkered down in storm shelters ahead of a powerful cyclone set to hammer the low-lying region. Cyclone Dana is likely to hit the coasts of West Bengal and Odisha states — home to around 150 million people — as a "severe cyclonic storm". (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 12*)

13.2 # Flood

17 die as floods wreak havoc in Bosnia

The search for several people reported missing in floods that have claimed at least 17 lives in Bosnia continued, after torrential rains inundated towns and triggered

landslides. The waters are receding after the floods that struck Bosnia, but many roads to affected towns remain blocked, and large areas are still covered in debris. The city was buried under mud, rocks and landslides. (*Dawn, October* 6th, 2024, *Page* 10)

Nepalis fear more floods as climate change hits glaciers

It took just moments for freezing floodwaters to engulf Thame in the foothills of Mount Everest, a disaster that climate change scientists say is an ominous sign of things to come in the Himalayan nation. Nepal is reeling from its worst flooding in decades after ferocious monsoon rains swelled rivers and inundated entire neighbourhoods in capital Kathmandu, killing at least 236 people. Last weekend's disaster was the latest of several disastrous floods to hit the country this year. (*The News, October 6th*, 2024, *Page 11*)

Floods in Bangladesh leave five dead

At least five people have died and more than 100,000 remain stranded as devastating floods, triggered by heavy rains and upstream torrents, continue to ravage northern Bangladesh. In Sherpur, one of the hardest-hit northern districts, the water levels of major rivers have surged, submerging new areas and displacing thousands of families. Local authorities fear widespread damage to agriculture, with crops and farmlands, particularly rice fields, facing potential devastation. (*Dawn, October* 7th, 2024, Page 11)

Floods, landslides leave 15 dead in Meghalaya

At least 15 people have been killed in floods and landslides triggered by heavy rainfall in India's northeastern state of Meghalaya over the last four days. More rain is expected in parts of the state through this week. (*Dawn, October 8th, 2024, Page 10*)

Rescuers scramble to save victims as floods kill 95 in Spain

Spanish rescuers scrambled to save people trapped by surging tides of muddy water in floods that killed at least 95 people, tossed cars and wreaked transport havoc. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez urged citizens to remain vigilant as the danger persisted and three days of mourning were declared in the European nation's worst such disaster in more than 50 years. (*Dawn, October 31*st, 2024 Page 12)

13.3 # Hurricane

Hurricane Helene claims 100 lives, leaves part of US in ruins

The southeastern United States continues to reel from the deadly storm with over 100 people dead and over 600 others unaccounted after Hurricane Helene knocked out power for millions, destroyed roads and bridges and caused dramatic flooding from Florida to Virginia. Damage estimates ranged from \$15 billion to more than \$100bn, insurers and forecasters said over the weekend, as water systems, communications and critical transportation routes were affected. (*Dawn, October 1st*, 2024, Page 12)

Fresh US hurricane threat on heels of deadly Helene

Florida's governor declared a state of emergency as forecasters warned the US state — still reeling from deadly Hurricane Helene — could be slammed by another major storm next week. Tropical Storm Milton, currently churning in the western Gulf of Mexico, was "forecast to strengthen into a major hurricane as it moves toward Florida into midweek next week," the National Weather Service said. Helene moved inland up through Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, bringing historic flooding and killing at least 220 people. In Florida, where Helene left at least 14 dead, Governor Ron DeSantis said he had declared a new state of emergency in 35 counties ahead of Milton's arrival. (Business Recorder, October 7th, 2024, Page 18)

Hurricane Milton could cost insurers up to \$100bn

Hurricane Milton could result in losses of up \$100 billion for the global insurance industry, creating a surge in 2025 reinsurance prices that could boost some insurance companies' shares. The Category 5 hurricane is expected to make landfall on the Gulf Coast of Florida. It is potentially one of the most destructive yet to hit the region, which is recovering from devastation caused by Hurricane Helene less than two weeks ago. (Business Recorder, October 10th, 2024, Page 5)

13.4 # Rainfall

Second-warmest September sees extreme rainfall: EU body

Last month was second-warmest September ever registered globally in an exceptional year "almost certain" to become the hottest on record, EU climate monitor Copernicus said. As global temperatures rise due to climate change, September also saw "extreme rainfall and destructive storms" across the world, events that are occurring with greater severity and frequency. Pakistan was "severely" impacted by the monsoon while wetter than average conditions were also witnessed in parts of Africa, Russia, China, Australia and Brazil, said Copernicus, which uses billions of measurements from satellites, ships, aircraft and weather stations to aid its calculations. (*Dawn, October 9th*, 2024, Page 12)

13.5 # Storm

14 killed as storm batters Philippines

Philippine rescuers waded through chest-deep floodwaters to reach residents trapped by Tropical Storm Trami, which has killed 14 people and forced thousands to evacuate as it barrels toward the east coast. At least 32,000 people have fled their homes in the northern Philippines, as the storm edges closer to the Southeast Asian country's main island of Luzon. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 10*)

Tropical storm kills 76 in Philippines

Homeowners in the northern Philippines used spades and rakes to clear out debris left by Tropical Storm Trami while rescuers trawled through thick mud looking for the missing as the death toll rose to 76. Tens of thousands of people were displaced by floods fuelled by a torrential downpour that dumped two months' worth of rain, or 391.3 millimetres, over just two days in Batangas. (*Dawn, October 26th, 2024 Page 12*)

13.6 # Typhoon

Two more found dead in Taiwan after Typhoon Krathon

Two people who went missing amid the destructive wind and torrential rains of Typhoon Krathon were found dead in Taiwan, doubling the death toll for the storm that lashed the island this week. Krathon dissipated into a tropical depression after slamming into the island the day before, bringing mudslides, flooding and record-strong gusts. (*The News, October 6*th, 2024, Page 10)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month

15 # RESISTANCE

600 Samsung workers held in India

Indian police said it has detained around 600 Samsung Electronics workers and union members for organising a street protest, as a strike at the South Korean firm's home appliances plant in Tamil Nadu state entered its fourth week. More than 1,000 workers have disrupted operations and protested in a makeshift tent close to the factory near the city of Chennai since Sept 9. They have demanded higher wages and union recognition at the plant, which accounts for roughly a third of Samsung's annual Indian revenue of \$12 billion. (*Dawn, October 2nd, 2024, Page 11*)

US dockworkers launch mass strike month before election

Tens of thousands of workers at major ports on US East and Gulf Coasts went on strike in action that could drag on the world's largest economy just ahead of the November presidential election. International Longshoremen's Association said walkout was the first "coast wide strike in almost 50 years." The shutdown would halt shipments at 36 ports, impacting an array of goods from food to electronics and potentially costing US economy billions of dollars a week. (*Business Recorder, October 2nd, 2024, Page 5*)

News Makers: Kolkata (India)

Doctors and social activists carry posters during a rally to condemn the rape and murder of a medic. Tens of thousands of people packed the streets of one of India's biggest cities after doctors resumed a strike and called fresh rallies over the rape of a colleague in August. (*Dawn, October 3rd*, 2024, *Page 10*)

Climate activist Greta Thunberg detained at Brussels demo

Climate activist Greta Thunberg was among several of protesters detained for blocking a road in the Belgian capital at a demonstration against fossil fuel subsidies. Thunberg

was part of a smaller group of demonstrators who broke away from a march organised by United for Climate Justice movement that began outside the European Parliament. (*Dawn, October 6th, 2024, Page 10*)

Thousands march in London, other European cities for Palestinians ahead of Oct 7 anniversary

Thousands of protesters marched in London and other cities across the world calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon as the conflict in the Palestinian territory neared the one-year mark. At the start of a planned wave of protests worldwide, pro-Palestinian supporters gathered in cities in the UK, France, South Africa, Ireland and Switzerland to demand an end to the conflict, which has killed nearly 42,000 people in Gaza. Several protests and commemorations are set to take place ahead of the anniversary against Israel's military offensive that has killed at least 41,825 people in Gaza, most of them civilians. (*Dawn, October* 6th, 2024, *Page* 11)

Thousands worldwide demand ceasefire in Middle East

Tens of thousands of protesters marched in cities around the world over the weekend calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon as the conflict in the Palestinian territory neared one-year mark. In Washington, more than a thousand protesters demonstrated outside the White House, demanding US, Israel's top military supplier, stop providing weapons and aid to Israel. Thousands of pro-Palestinian supporters also gathered in cities across Europe, Africa, Australia and Americas to demand an end to the conflict, which has killed nearly 42,000 people in Gaza. (Dawn, October 7th, 2024, Page 12)

News Makers: Cape Town (South Africa)

A women activist group Action Campaign South Africa (WACSA) holds a silent protest and hands a petition to a parliamentary committee calling upon the government to take action against conflict-related sexual violence. (*Dawn, October 8th, 2024, Page 10*)

Thunberg leads pro-Palestinian rally in Milan

Swedish activist Greta Thunberg attended a climate change and pro-Palestinian rally in Milan, days after her criticism of Israel sparked a row over protests in Germany. More than 1,000 people, many of them teenagers, joined a peaceful march in the northern Italian city organised by Fridays For Future, the climate change movement Thunberg helped found. (*Dawn, October 12th, 2024, Page 11*)

Thousands march in Spain to demand affordable housing

Thousands protested in Madrid to demand more affordable housing amid rising anger from Spaniards who feel they are being priced out of the market. Under the slogan "Housing is a right, not a business", residents marched in the Spanish capital to demand lower housing rental prices and better living conditions. Twelve thousand people took to the streets. (Business Recorder, October 14th, 2024, Page 9)

News Makers: London (England)

Activists demonstrate during a protest against the construction of a nuclear plant. The protest took place outside Guildhall, the venue of an international investment summit. (Business Recorder, October 15th, 2024, Page 10)

Jews hold anti-Israel protest outside NYSE

Police arrested several Jewish anti-Israel protesters after hundreds of them staged a sitin outside the New York Stock Exchange. According to New York Post, pro-Palestinian demonstrators sporting red shirts besieged building in Manhattan, chaining themselves to doors just before the opening bell sounded at the exchange. A handful of protesters, belonging to the Jewish Voices for Peace group, removed their jackets as they camped in front of the building. The group shouted "Free Palestine" and brandished signs reading "Jews for Palestine's freedom". They called upon the US government to "fund FEMA, not genocide", referring to the federal emergency management agency. (Business Recorder, October 15th, 2024, Page 11)

News Makers: Manila (Philippine)

Activists concerned about environment and climate change take part in a demonstration outside the venue of the ongoing Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on disaster risk reduction. (*Dawn*, *October* 16th, 2024, *Page* 10)

News Makers: Kolkata (India)

Activists chant slogans during a protest against the rape and murder of a trainee med at a government-run hospital in August. (*Dawn, October 16th, 2024, Page 10*)

News Makers: Panama City (Panama)

A woman shouts slogans as she takes part in a march against reform of the pension system. Thousands of Panamanians took to the streets against proposals to privatise pensions and increase retirement age, while the government advances in negotiations to reform the system. (Dawn, October 19th, 2024, Page 10)

Protesters storm office linked to Saudi TV channel in Iraq

Supporters of pro-Iran armed groups in Iraq, angered over "terrorist" references, ransacked offices affiliated with a Saudi TV channel in Baghdad. Iraq's media regulator said it would suspend the channel over the broadcast, which aired with regional tensions soaring between pro-Iran groups and Israel, which is at conflict with both Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. (*Dawn, October 20th, 2024, Page 11*)

Boeing offers 35pc pay hike over four years to end machinists' strike

Boeing and its striking Seattle-area workers have reached a tentative deal to end a more than month-long stoppage. Boeing said it includes a 35 percent pay raise over four years and a one-time signing bonus of \$7,000. (*The News, October 20th, 2024, Page 10*)

News Makers: Arona (Canary Islands, Spain)

A protester holds a sign reading 'Canary Islands have a limit' as thousands march on Las Americas beach during a demonstration against mass tourism, in Arona on the Spanish Canary island of Tenerife. Thousands of flag-waving demonstrators hit the streets to demand changes to the model of mass tourism they say is overwhelming the Atlantic. (*Dawn, October 21st, 2024, Page 10*)

30 injured in protests calling for Bangladesh president's resignation

A protest outside the Bangladesh president's home demanding his resignation ended when demonstrators clashed with riot police while trying to storm the compound, with 30 injured in the melee. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 10*)

News makers: Athens (Greece)

Greek school teachers shout slogans as they take part in demonstration to demand better wages and a smaller number of pupils per class. (*Dawn, October 24th, 2024, Page 10*)

Rival London marches pass off peacefully

Right-wing, anti-immigrant protesters and opposing anti-racism demonstrators held large rallies in London, with both passing off peacefully amid a beefed-up police operation to prevent any clashes between the rival groups. A counter-protest of anti-racism campaigners and trade unionists also took place nearby, with marchers carrying banners saying "Refugees Welcome" and "Smash the Far Right". Police officers were drafted in from around the country to avert possible unrest, but only a handful of arrests had been made. (*Dawn, October 27th*, 2024 Page 10)

Thousands rally in Lisbon against racism in policing

Thousands took to Lisbon's streets to protest against police use of force and racism, following a week of unrest sparked by the shooting of a black man by officers. Chanting "No peace without justice" and "Police violence, colonial heritage", the demonstrators marched peacefully on Portuguese capital, brandishing placards with messages including "Racism kills" and "Black lives matter". (Dawn, October 27th, 2024 Page 10)

News Makers: Brussels (Belgium)

Demonstrators wearing paint suit gather on railway tracks as they take part in a protest called by environmental rights group Code Rouge, to oppose fossil fuel subsidies. (*Dawn, October 27th, 2024 Page 10*)

News Makers: Cantel (Guatemala):

Indigenous people take part in a protest against construction of a 'Templo Santa Muerte'. Protesters reject the prayer centre because they consider it to be built by gang members who are imprisoned in the jail of that place. (*Dawn, October 28th, 2024 Page 10*)

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.

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