

HAAL AHWAL

Monthly News Reviews on Food and Agriculture

November, 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glossary

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ADB: Asian Development Bank

AIDS: Immunodeficiency Syndrome

AiIB: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

AKU: Aga Khan University

APMDD: Asian Movement for Debt and Development

ATA: Anti-Terrorism Act

BTASP: Billion Tree Afforestation Support Project

BYC: Baloch Yakjehti Committee

CACs: Central Asian Countries

CCRT: Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust

CDREP: Climate Change and Disaster Resilience Enhancement Program

CDWP: Central Development Working Party

CPI: Consumer Price Index

CPS: Country Partnership Strategy

CSM: Chaudhry Sugar Mills

EAD: Affairs Division

EBA: Ecosystem-Based Adaptation

ECC: Economic Coordination Committee

Ecneec: National Economic Council

EFF: Extended Fund Facility

EU: European Union

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

FBR: Federal Board of Revenue's

FCA: Federal Committee on Agriculture

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FEA: Foreign Economic Assistance

FFC: Fauji Fertiliser Company

FFCL: Fatima Fertiliser Company Limited

FIA: Federal Investigation Agency

FMD: Foot-and-Mouth Disease

FPI: Foreign Portfolio Investment

GCF: Green Climate Fund

GHG: Green House Gas

GSM: Gulf Sugar Mills

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HRCP: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

HSM: Hamza Sugar Mills

HRCP: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

ICCBS: International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences

IDC: Infrastructure Development Cess

IFC: International Finance Corporation

IFIs: International Financial Institutions

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IPC: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

Irsa: Indus River System Authority

ISM: Ittehad Sugar Mills

JSM: Jamaldinwali Sugar Mills

KPK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

LDA: Lahore Development Authority

LUMHS: Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences

MDBs: Multilateral Development Banks

MFD: Marine Fisheries Department

MoM: Month-on-Month

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MWM: Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen Pakistan

NAB: National Accountability Bureau

NCDs: Non-Communicable Diseases

NCQG: New Collective Quantified Goal

NICs: National Incubation Centers

NPP: National People's Power

NRSP: National Rural Support Programme

NUST: National University of Sciences and Technology

NUTF: National Trade Union Federation

Ogra: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority

P&DD: Planning and Development Department

PAJCCI: Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry

PBF: Pakistan Business Forum

PBS: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

PCBL: Punjab Cooperative Board for Liquidation

PCCC: Pakistan Central Cotton Committee

PCGA: Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association

PCP: Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy

PCRWR: Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources

PDMA: Provincial Disaster Management Authority

PDWP: Provincial Development Working Party

PFF: Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

PIA: Pakistan International Airlines

PKRC: Pakistan Kisan Rabta Committee

PLCs: Public Listed Companies

PPP: Pakistan People Party

PPP: Public-Private Partnership

PSDP: Public Sector Development Programme

PSMA: Pakistan Sugar Mills Associations

PUCs: Public Unlisted Companies

PvLCs: Private Ltd Companies

QBA: Quetta Bar Association

QCCI: Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry

RMS: Risk Management System

RSM: RYK Sugar Mills

SAB: Sugar Advisory Board

SAI: Sindh Abadgar Ittehad

SAU: Sindh Agriculture University

SBP: State Bank of Pakistan

SCA: Sindh Chamber of Agriculture

SDC: Sustainable Development Conference

SDPI: Sustainable Development Policy Institute

SECP: Competition Commission of Pakistan

SHCBA: Sindh High Court Bar Association

SIE: Second Sustainability Investment Expo

SIFC: Special Investment Facilitation Council

SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises

SNGPL: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd

SPF: Strategic Partnership Framework

SSGC: Sui Southern Gas Company

SUP: Sindh United Party

TDAP: Trade Development Authority of Pakistan

TMSG: Trust for Malnutrition and Stunted Growth

UAE: United Arab Emirates

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

Unicef: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

WAF: Women Action Forum

Wasa: Water and Sanitation Authority

WB: World Bank

WHO: World Health Organisation

WMO: World Meteorological Organisation

NEWS EXCEPTS

NATIONAL NEWS

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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- The provincial government has approved the Balochistan Organic Agriculture Policy 2024, which focuses on environmental sustainability, economic growth, and strengthening farmers’ resilience to climate change.
- In collaboration with WWF-Pakistan, Balochistan’s Agriculture Extension Department is working with 12,000 farmers across 95,000 acres to advance organic farming practices.
- The US government launched a new five-year \$24 million ‘Climate Smart Agriculture’ project in Pakistan.
- Ambassador Blome said: Through the US-Pakistan “Green Alliance” framework, the US is making strategic investments in renewable energy, water management, and smart agriculture. We have also contributed \$1 billion to the Green Climate Fund and have unlocked millions of these dollars in climate mitigation and adaptation projects to enhance Pakistan’s resilience.
- In agriculture alone, US investments have benefited more than one million rural households, and have helped farms and firms increase the value of their sales by more than \$1.47 billion and create more than 100,000 new jobs.
- A large contingent of policemen, including elite force personnel, arrived at the farm afternoon, accompanied by revenue officials, heavy machinery, tractors, eight prisoner vans and 40 police vehicles. The operation aimed to vacate 528 acres of land currently held by peasants of Muhammad Nagar Seed Farm.
- The residents of 13 villages in Kabal tehsil declared that they would not give any portion of their land for the planned extension of cantonment.
- Landless tenants have decided to resist the takeover of their 4,193 kanal land at Muhammad Nagar Seed Farm at Chak 163/EB, tehsil Arifwala, saying they were the fourth generation of farmers cultivating the land legally and litigation in higher judiciary is going on against the cancellation of their lease and transfer of their land to a corporate farming company.
- The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) claimed to have recovered trillions of rupees’ worth of land across the country over the last six months.
- Sindh Taraqqi-pasand Party’s chairman Dr Qadir Magsi said construction of six canals over the Indus River would be tantamount to pushing 60 million people towards the edge of the precipice.
- The Pakistan Meteorological Department has cautioned farmers of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir to rely more on other means

of irrigation where available as below-normal rainfall will likely lead to reduced soil moisture during wheat sowing season.

- Farmers of Sindh’s southern region have vowed to oppose the six canals proposed to be built on the Indus River in Punjab’s Cholistan area, saying the project would render their lands “completely barren”.

AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

- 12 lakh 89 thousand applications have been received through the portal. The Bank of Punjab approved 4 lakh 87 thousand applications. The farmers have received more than 3 lakh 61 thousand cards. A senior officer of Agriculture department said that the number of Kissan Cards has been increased from 5 lakh to 7 lakh on the instructions of the chief minister Punjab.
- Punjab Assembly passed Punjab Agriculture Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2024.
- Urea prices are likely to increase by at least Rs100 per bag owing to the government’s commitment to the IMF to implement a semi-annual gas tariff adjustment by February 2025.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

- As of November 1, 2024, Pakistan’s cotton arrivals total 4,291,105 bales, a sharp 36.84% drop from the 6,794,006 bales reported on same date last year.
- The previous fiscal year had been especially successful, with Pakistan earning around \$500m from maize exports.
- Current year’s significant 40 percent drop in maize production, which fell from a robust 11 million metric tons to 7 million metric tons.
- The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research was informed about a sharp decline in cotton cess collection, which has plunged from Rs631.72bn in 2014-15 to just Rs211 million in 2023-24.
- Total arrivals touched 4.894m bales till Nov 15, which is 34% less year-on-year.
- In 2023-24, Sindh government had fixed sugarcane rate at Rs425 per 40kg but a notification fixing 2024-25 crop’s procurement rate has not been issued as yet.
- Federal government has set the wheat production target at 33.58 million tonnes for Rabi 2024-25 against last year’s 31.81m tonnes.
- Provincial governments proposed a sowing area of 9.263 million hectares with a production of 27.92m tonnes during a meeting of Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA), the highest forum that fixes crop targets.
- The Irsa Advisory Committee informed meeting that it anticipated an irrigation water shortage of about 16% for Punjab and Sindh during the Rabi season.
- The lowest price offered in the international tender from Indonesian state purchasing agency Bulog to buy about 500,000 metric tons of rice was

estimated at \$479 a ton cost and freight (c&f) for rice expected to be sourced from Pakistan.

- The initial forecast indicates that the production of wheat is expected to decline in the next Rabi season due to the lower price of wheat in the market. The committee was informed that last year the availability of wheat seed was 0.529 million metric tons.
- The country's wheat seed requirement this year is 1.1 million metric tonnes.
- The ministry officials informed that 0.592 million metric tons of wheat seed was available this year.
- MNFS&R further briefed the forum that at the start of the food year 2024-25, i.e., April 1 2024, Passco's carry forward wheat stock was 7.266 MMT including imported wheat stock of 0.678 MMT procured in 2021 and 2022 and domestic wheat stock of 0.588 MMT procured in 2022 and 2023. In 2024, new stock of domestic wheat of 1.785 MMT was procured.
- While rice cultivation area has increased by 29 per cent over the last 10 years, expanding production faces sustainability challenges, primarily due to its significant environmental impacts, particularly concerning carbon emissions and water usage, reveals a report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- Growers have cultivated wheat on 0.937m acres of land against target of bringing 1.82m acres under wheat crop in Multan division for season 2024-25.
- Pakistan has made a groundbreaking achievement in agricultural development by harvesting a record 15m metric tons of biofortified, zinc-enriched wheat.
- The zinc-enriched wheat variety, Akbar 2019, was cultivated on approximately 3.78 million hectares during the 2023-24 growing season.
- Wheat has been sown over 12 million acres of land in Punjab against the target of 16.5 million acres set for the current year.

SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

- The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has planned a formal legislation to regulate the manufacture, storage, supply and transport for sale and marketing of feed stuff and compound feed in the province in order to ensure standards of production and quality of feed stuff and compound feed.
- In a landmark achievement for Pakistan's aquaculture industry, M/s Arsala Seafood has shipped 21,600 kilograms of farm-raised shrimp from the Muzaffargarh farm to Vietnam.
- The Punjab Livestock Department and a public bank signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the issuance of interest-free loans worth Rs11 billion to farmers under the Livestock Card scheme.

TRADE

- Pakistan's merchandise exports rose 13.45 per cent to \$10.88bn in the first four months of the current fiscal year from \$9.59bn in the same period last year.
- Imports grew 5.17pc to \$17.85bn in July-October FY25 from \$16.97bn over the last year.
- The trade deficit in July-October FY25 decelerated by 5.59pc to \$6.97bn from \$7.38bn over the last year.
- Pakistan's trade deficit with the Middle East widened 19.16 per cent to \$3.706 billion in the first quarter of 2024-25 from \$3.110bn owing to the rise in petroleum imports from the region.
- Poland and Pakistan continue to work for the development of our bilateral relation as trade between the two friendly nations' approaches \$1 billion.
- KP produces between 15,000 and 20,000 tonnes of honey annually, though only a fraction is exported.
- The sugarcane production for 2024-25 would be 85.46 million tonnes. The sugar stocks would be around 1.08 million tonnes by Nov 21, including the export quota not utilised by the industry.
- The Pakistan Sugar Mills Associations (PSMA) has sought government's permission to export more sugar, arguing that the country has over 1.08 million tons surplus sugar stocks at the start of new crushing season.
- Pakistan this year has over 1.7 million tons of additional sugar which should have been exported. In past 11 months, a total 6.2 million tons of sugar was consumed locally and so far the exporters have managed to export a total of 186,934 million tons.
- In absolute terms, Pakistan's exports to the EU rose 7.88pc to \$2.204 billion in the July-September FY25 from \$2.043bn in the same period last year.
- Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Sami Saeed has said that the government's plan is to elevate Pakistan's exports from \$30 billion to \$100 billion in the next seven to eight years.
- The country's textile group exports increased by 10.44 per cent in first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year 2024-25 and remained at \$6.146bn as compared to \$5.565bn during the same period of last fiscal year.
- Exports of raw food items surged 21.73 per cent to \$2.36 billion in July-October from \$1.94bn in the corresponding period last year.
- Exports of non-textile products rose by 17.66 per cent to \$4.73 billion in the first four months of the current fiscal year, up from \$4.02bn during the same period last year.
- Raw food exports increased by 21.73 per cent in 4MFY25 over the preceding fiscal year. The value of raw food exports reached \$2.36bn in 4MFY25, up from \$1.94bn over the corresponding period last year.

- In absolute terms, the value of Pakistan’s exports to the five central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — rose by 1.09pc to \$67.11 million in July-October 2024-25 from \$66.38m during the same period last year.
- Imports from the region increased by \$39.05m to \$43.4m in 4MFY25 from \$4.35m during the same period last year.
- Pakistan has become largest buyer of American cotton for first time in history because of sales, tax-free imports and lower-than-expected production of local crop, whose quality has also been affected by adverse weather conditions.
- Pakistan Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Hasan Zaigham stated that Pakistan plans to import three million bales of cotton worth \$1.9 billion this year to offset the shortfall in its own production.

CORPORATE SECTOR

- The government stated that 30 brands of bottled water were unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination.
- A multinational company has unveiled its vision for packaged food exports for the next five years, saying that it plans to earn \$50 million in foreign exchange for Pakistan till 2030.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- The Danish international container shipping company — Maersk Line — has pledged to invest \$2 billion in Pakistan’s maritime sector, and the government has expressed its willingness to collaborate.
- The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported that the foreign direct investment (FDI) rose 32 per cent to \$904 million during July-October FY25 compared to \$683m in the same period last year.
- The inflows in October plunged almost 20pc year-on-year to \$132m, indicating the country’s economic conditions are not good enough to attract foreign investors.
- Qatar would invest \$3 billion in diverse sectors.
- Germany will provide 20 million euros to Pakistan for the second phase of ‘Billion Tree Afforestation Support Project’ (BTASP).
- Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif informed cabinet members that Qatar and Azerbaijan will invest \$5 billion in the country’s various sectors.
- UAE had committed \$10 billion to invest in promising economic sectors in Pakistan. Riyadh has also promised a \$5 billion investment package.
- Pakistan and Saudi Arabia also signed 34 MoUs worth \$2.8 billion last month.
- Information Minister has said that Pakistan’s trade agreement with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) worth over six billion dollars.

- UK has announced £108 million aid package to tackle climate change induced challenges in Pakistan.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- The Punjab government has submitted a \$329 million project proposal to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) through the federal government.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has seven projects for Pakistan this year, and there are 16 projects planned for the next year as part of an extensive and meaningful partnership and collaboration with Pakistan.
- The SBP has received US\$500 million from the Asian Development Bank as proceeds of a loan to the government of Pakistan for the Climate Change and Disaster Resilience Enhancement Program (CDREP).
- The International Monetary Fund's Pakistan mission chief Nathan Porter opened unusual talks with Pakistan over a \$7 billion bailout approved by its board in September.
- The Ministry of Commerce and the World Bank agreed that the working group would meet periodically to advance the goal of realising Pakistan's export potential of \$60 billion.

POLICY

- The Sindh government is planning to construct a new industrial enclave on 500 acres of land located next to the Hyderabad-Tando Muhammad Khan Road.
- The Blue World City consortium submitted its bid of Rs10 billion against the minimum price of Rs85.03bn, fixed by the Privatisation Commission.

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

- The central bank posted an all-time high surplus profit of Rs2.5 trillion, primarily due to the country's highest-ever policy rate of 22 per cent.
- Due mainly to the SBP's record profits, the country's fiscal balance — the gap between national revenues and expenditures — reached a surplus of Rs1.696tr, or 1.4pc of GDP, in the first quarter.
- The country's debt-to-GDP ratio dropped to 65.7 per cent in September, The data shows a substantial increase in central government domestic debt, which rose by Rs7.838 trillion over the past year to reach Rs47.536tr in September 2024, up from Rs39.698tr in September 2023.
- Pakistan's foreign assistance inflows fell by more than 55 per cent to about \$2.7 billion in the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year.
- The country borrowed \$1.723 billion from multiple financing sources during the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year 2024-25 compared to \$3.847 billion borrowed during the same period of 2023-24.

- About 8m people were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity during the first half of 2024.
- The International Monetary Fund has lowered its inflation forecast for Pakistan for the current year by 3.2 percentage points to 9.5%.
- The annual consumer inflation rate edged up to 7.2% in October from 6.9pc in September, driven by a modest increase in prices of perishable food items.
- The headline inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), had slowed to 9.6pc in August.
- The monthly consumer price index in October stood at 1.2pc.

ENVIRONMENT

- 5.2 million tonnes of lead entered the environment in 2022 alone, “Lead pollution endangers ecosystems and harms organisms across the food chain, from plants and animals to humans, contributing to 5.5 million premature deaths annually from cardiovascular disease and resulting in 765 million lost IQ points among children.”

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Pakistan might face the threat of substantial losses in the natural resource sector, encompassing agriculture, forestry and fisheries due to the effects of climate change by 2070, said a new report of Asian Development Bank.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- The global value added by agriculture, forestry and fishing grew by 89 per cent in real terms between 2000 and 2022, reaching \$3.8 trillion in 2022.

TRADE

- The China-Europe freight train service, a calling card of the Belt and Road Initiative, has reached a major milestone, with the 100,000th train now in operation.
- With this milestone, the China-Europe freight train has now transported over 11 million TEUs of goods, valued at more than \$420 billion.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- India's Adani Group will invest \$10 billion in US energy security and infrastructure projects, aiming to create up to 15,000 jobs.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- The International Monetary Fund should sell 4% of its gold to help offer debt relief to low income countries devastated by climate-related catastrophes.
- International Monetary Fund approved the third review of Sri Lanka's \$2.9 billion bailout but warned that the South Asian economy remains vulnerable.
- US President Joe Biden pledged a \$4 billion US contribution to the World Bank's International Development Association fund for the world's poorest countries.

SOCIO – ECONOMICAL CONDITION

- UN food agencies warned of deadly hunger levels in 16 “hunger hotspots” in coming months, with the Palestinian territories, Sudan and South Sudan, Mali and Haiti of most concern.
- Famine is looming in the northern Gaza Strip amid increased hostilities and a near-halt in food aid.
- Aid shipments allowed to enter the Gaza Strip were now lower than at any time since October 2023.
- On October 17, the body projected that the number of people in Gaza facing “catastrophic” food insecurity between November and April 2025 would reach 345,000, or 16 percent of the population.
- Global food prices rose in October to their highest level in 18 months.

ENVIRONMENT

- Almost all — 99pc — of the world's population breathes air that exceeds the World Health Organisation's guidelines for air pollution.
- At dawn, “hazardous” pollutant levels in parts of the sprawling urban area of more than 30 million people topped 806 micrograms per cubic metre.
- Air pollution caused by fires is linked to more than 1.5 million deaths a year worldwide, the vast majority occurring in developing countries.
- Around 450,000 deaths a year from heart disease were linked to fire-related air pollution between 2000 and 2019.
- A further 220,000 deaths from respiratory disease were attributed to the smoke and particulates spewed into the air by fire. A total of 1.53m annual deaths were associated with air pollution from landscape fires.

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Balochistan okays policy for organic farming [1]

Crop residue, other agri issues [1]

Climate change: Experts underscore need for strengthening agri infrastructure [1]

US launches \$24 million ‘Climate Smart Agriculture’ project in Pakistan [2]

1.1 # Land

Pakpattan police, peasants face off after farmland transferred to private firm [3]

Swat villagers unwilling to give land for cantonment [3]

Tenants to resist handover of land to corporate farming company in Sahiwal [3]

NAB claims to have recovered land worth billions in 6 months [4]

1.2 # Water

Six-canal project to push Sindh towards the edge of precipice, says STP chief [4]

Amid scant rainfall, farmers asked to find alternative means of irrigation [4]

Growers in Sindh oppose new Cholistan canals [5]

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

2.1 # Agricultural Loan & Finance

Agri loans [5]

Kissan Card will be game changer for agri development [5]

2.2 # Agricultural Machinery

Farmers advised to adopt modern technology to boost produce [6]

2.3 # Agricultural Taxes

Amended agri tax bill passed: Exemptions on farm income withdrawn, livestock also taxed

Agriculture tax [6]

2.4 # Fertilizer

Fake pesticide stock seized [6]

Urea prices to rise on gas tariff adjustment [6]

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

3.1 # Cash Crop

PCGA reveals significant cotton output decline YoY [8]
Maize can help country fetch over \$1bn annually: experts [8]
NA body informed Sharp decline in cotton cess collection witnessed
Cotton production tumbles 34pc [9]
Almost all sugar mills in Sindh start cane crushing by official date [9]

3.2 # Food Crop

Targets for Rabi crops fixed [9]
Pak rice offered lowest in Indonesia's tender [10]
Lower market price may hit wheat yield in next Rabi season [10]
Wheat procurement: Body formed to prepare plan as per IMF terms [11]
Rice production faces sustainability challenges [11]
Growers cultivate wheat on 0.9m acres of land [12]
Record 15MMT biofortified, zinc-enriched wheat harvested [12]
Wheat sown on over 12m acres of land in Punjab: well below target [12]
Sargodha meets 86pc of wheat sowing target [12]

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

KP plans law to regulate manufacturing, storage, supply of feed stuff [12]

4.1 # Fisheries

Pakistan marks first shipment of farm-raised shrimp [13]
World Fisheries Day celebrated with pledges to defend fishermen's rights [13]

4.2 # Livestock

Italian envoy shows interest in livestock, dairy projects [13]
Livestock breeding lab planned [13]
Interest-free loans for livestock farmers [13]
Sindh govt launches plan to tackle foot-and-mouth disease in cattle [14]

5 # TRADE

Exports rise 13pc to \$10.8bn [14]
Trade gap with Middle East balloons 20pc [14]
Pakistan-Poland trade approaches \$1bn mark: envoy [15]
GB traders ask Customs to facilitate trade through Khunjerab [15]

Türkiye ambassador for efforts aimed at boosting trade volume to US\$5bn [15]
Iranian envoy eyes \$10bn trade with Pakistan [15]
Eight MoUs signed with Belarus to boost trade [16]
Pakistan, Belarus sign 3-year roadmap to boost economic ties [16]

5.1 # Export

KP makes first honey shipment to Malaysia [16]
Nestlé unveils \$50m packaged food exports vision [16]
No more sugar exports; cane crushing to start from 21st [17]
PSMA seeks nod to export more sugar [17]
Exports to EU states rise 8pc in first quarter [18]
TDAP backs Reap's rice export expansion plan [18]
\$100bn exports in 7-8 years eyed: minister [19]
Jul-Oct textile group exports up 10.44pc [19]
KP's tax on exports, restrictions 'hurting' Pak-Afghan trade [19]
Non-payment of refunds hits export of seasonal fruits hard [19]
Food exports grow 22pc in July-October [20]
EU carbon tax: Export risks loom for Pakistan: experts [20]
Non-textile exports surge 18pc in four months [20]
Exports to central Asia grow modestly [21]
MoC asks provinces to prepare export growth roadmaps [21]

5.2 # Import

Pakistan becomes largest importer of US cotton [22]
Change in Green Channel rules harms importers [22]
Govt to import 3m bales of cotton from Kyrgyzstan [22]

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

30 brands of bottled water found unsafe [23]
Food Asia 2024: over \$10m business deals signed [23]
Firm sets ambitious goals for packaged food exports [23]
Corporates dole out Rs24bn for social causes [23]
'Fake' certification for dialysis machines: Rs20m penalty imposed on pharma co [23]
Sugar mill files Rs340m damages suit against growers [23]

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Pakistan seeks \$13m from WHO for climate resilience training [24]
Danish shipping giant plans \$2bn investment [24]

PBF signs MoU with Azerbaijan's private sector [24]
Foreign investment falls 20pc in Oct [24]
Foreign investors: Jul-Oct profit repatriation soars 66pc to \$807.2m YoY [25]

7.1 # Countries

PM holds trade, investment talks with Qatar's emir, counterpart [25]
Qatar to invest \$3bn in Pakistan: Tarar [26]
Germany pledges €20m for 'billion tree' project [26]
Qatar, Azerbaijan to invest \$5bn, PM Shehbaz tells cabinet [26]
Meat processing, alternate energy sectors Irish team exploring investment opportunities
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1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Balochistan okays policy for organic farming

The provincial government has approved the Balochistan Organic Agriculture Policy 2024, which focuses on environmental sustainability, economic growth, and strengthening farmers' resilience to climate change. The move is expected to boost local biodiversity and food security and reduce reliance on imported organic cotton, saving millions of dollars in foreign exchange. In collaboration with WWF-Pakistan, Balochistan's Agriculture Extension Department is working with 12,000 farmers across 95,000 acres to advance organic farming practices. In 2023-24, 67,067 acres of organic cotton have been globally certified in key districts, including Barkhan, Lasbela, Kohlu and Khuzdar. The organic certification has been carried out by the Control Union certified under the NOP (USDA) and EU standards, providing access to high-demand markets in the US and Europe. (*Dawn, November 5th, 2024, Page 5*)

Crop residue, other agri issues

Speakers at a panel discussion titled, "Inclusive Crop Residue Management and Sustainable Agriculture" have proposed the establishment of a SAARC Agriculture Centre among SAARC countries to address crop residue and other agricultural challenges in the region. They also emphasised the need for a robust national policy that involves farmers as key stakeholders in the decision-making process. In a session at the Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) and the Second Sustainability Investment Expo (SIE), organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

They emphasised that crop residue burning poses significant health risks, but it is essential to first consult farmers about their needs. It is important not to solely blame farmers; sending them notices and arresting them is not a viable solution. Instead, guidance should be provided to farmers on best practices. They advocated for the development of a national policy and the establishment of a SAARC Agriculture Centre at the regional level to foster joint ventures and cooperation, thereby, enhancing connectivity among SAARC countries. They also highlighted the need for political will to achieve these objectives. (*Business Recorder, November 7th, 2024, Page 4*)

Climate change: Experts underscore need for strengthening agri infrastructure

Scientists, academics and industry experts came together in a panel discussion and spoke on urgent need to strengthen country's agricultural infrastructure to withstand the increasing impacts of climate change. The session titled, "Transforming Food Systems for Climate-Resilient Food Security in Pakistan" was organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) for its annual flagship Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) event. (*Business Recorder, November 8th, 2024, Page 3*)

US launches \$24 million ‘Climate Smart Agriculture’ project in Pakistan

The US government launched a new five-year \$24 million ‘Climate Smart Agriculture’ project in Pakistan that is designed to support farmers with sustainable tools and practices – suitable for business and the environment. The five-year investment (2025-29) will equip farmers with climate resilient seeds, conservation practices and eco-friendly pest management to help communities adapt to a changing climate. The climate-smart agriculture concept reflects an ambition to improve the integration of agriculture development and climate responsiveness. It aims to achieve food security and broader development goals under a changing climate and increasing food demand.

Ambassador Blome said: “Today, we are partnering with Pakistan to respond to climate change. Agriculture both affects -- and is affected by --climate change. Unpredictable weather, heatwaves, and irregular rainfall are making it harder for farmers to grow the crops that support their families and feed the nation.” Together, we are working to help Pakistan become more resilient to climate threats. Through the US-Pakistan “Green Alliance” framework, the US is making strategic investments in renewable energy, water management, and smart agriculture to help better position Pakistan to mitigate and adapt, to meet the threat of climate change head-on. We have also contributed \$1 billion to the Green Climate Fund and have unlocked millions of these dollars in climate mitigation and adaptation projects to enhance Pakistan’s resilience, he said.

In agriculture alone, US investments have benefited more than one million rural households, and have helped farms and firms increase the value of their sales by more than \$1.47 billion and create more than 100,000 new jobs. The project will ensure Pakistani farmers can access cutting-edge agricultural technology to improve productivity. This includes supporting partnerships among researchers, businesses, and farmers’ organisations to ensure that newly-developed, improved seeds are available to farmers. Under the new project, the US government will help farmers bring their goods to market and maximise their profits. This will be done by connecting farmers with financial services to help them buy better seeds, tools, and machinery.

The United States and Pakistan have a long and strong partnership in agriculture. Over half a century ago, a U.S. scientist partnered with Pakistani colleagues to revolutionize agriculture here and around the world. The story of Dr Norman Borlaug and his work with Dr Mohammad Manzur Bajwa is one of an enduring US-Pakistani partnership helping to bind our two countries together in friendship. The resulting strain of wheat enabled Pakistan to double its wheat production between 1965 and 1970. This extraordinary yield was known as the “Green Revolution” - a term coined in 1968 by USAID administrator William Gaud. (*Dawn, November 12th, 2024, Page 4*)

1.1 # Land

Pakpattan police, peasants face off after farmland transferred to private firm

A tense standoff between Pakpattan district police and about 700 peasants (*mazareen*), including women and children, from the Muhammad Nagar Seed Farm in Arifwala tehsil escalated into a full-blown police operation over the weekend. The peasants had been protesting for two days against the government's decision to reallocate their "ancestral land" — cultivated by them for nearly a century — to a private company.

A large contingent of policemen, including elite force personnel, arrived at the farm afternoon, accompanied by revenue officials, heavy machinery, tractors, eight prisoner vans and 40 police vehicles. The operation aimed to vacate 528 acres of land currently held by peasants of Muhammad Nagar Seed Farm. Reports suggested that the land was allocated to private firm by District Revenue Department on the Punjab government's directives on Feb 20. The 528-acre farm was designated an Agricultural Seed Farm in 1928 under Section 10 of the Colonisation of Government Land Act, 1912. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 3*)

Swat villagers unwilling to give land for cantonment

The residents of 13 villages in Kabal tehsil declared here that they would not give any portion of their land for the planned extension of cantonment. They pledged to resist any such attempt by government. They took the decision in a jirga, convened by elders and organised by local social organisation Sama Laar. Hundreds of people attended the jirga. They said that a large portion of their land had already been acquired over the years for projects like airport, cantonment, bypass and Swat Expressway.

The local elders recalled that several years ago, approximately 6,000-kanal of land was taken for the cantonment by invoking Section 4, with the government compensating them at a rate of just Rs250 per square foot. They said that the rate was far below the market price, which stood at around Rs1,700 per square foot for residential land and Rs25,000 per square foot for commercial areas. They added that many locals felt that their land had been forcefully seized. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 9*)

Tenants to resist handover of land to corporate farming company in Sahiwal

Landless tenants have decided to resist the takeover of their 4,193 kanal land at Muhammad Nagar Seed Farm at Chak 163/EB, tehsil Arifwala, saying they were the fourth generation of farmers cultivating the land legally and litigation in higher judiciary is going on against the cancellation of their lease and transfer of their land to a corporate farming company. They say they have been cultivating the land since 1928 and if this land is to be leased out, they have the first right to it and their land must not be handed over to 'the private company' for so-called corporate farming. A resolution was passed in a joint meeting called by Anjuman Mazareen Punjab, (Mahar Ghulam Abbas Group) & representatives of Pakistan Kisan Rabta Committee (PKRC) held at Chak 163/EB. More than 250 tenants and representatives of the AMP from Kot Addu, Sahiwal,

Hasilpur, Vehari, Jahanian, and Kahnewal, attended meeting. On other hand, Lahore High Court on Nov 5 transferred writ petition of tenants against govt and others to court of Justice Shams Mahmood Mirza who is already hearing a writ petition of same nature. The cases were filed by the landless tenants whose lease was cancelled by Board of Revenue and 3,979 kanals of same land was leased to M/s Green Corporate Initiative Private Limited for just Rs100,000 lease agreement. (*Dawn, November 9th, 2024, Page 2*)

NAB claims to have recovered land worth billions in 6 months

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) claimed to have recovered trillions of rupees' worth of land across the country over the last six months. This was announced during the 24th "DGs Conference" of the bureau, a three-day event that concluded at NAB headquarters in Islamabad. "It was informed that through the efforts of NAB during the last six months, NAB made direct and indirect recoveries of more than Rs4 trillion, which is a record," a press release said. (*Dawn, November 14th, 2024, Page 3*)

1.2 # Water

Six-canal project to push Sindh towards the edge of precipice, says STP chief

Sindh Taraqqi-pasand Party's chairman Dr Qadir Magsi said construction of six canals over the Indus River would be tantamount to pushing 60 million people towards the edge of the precipice. Pakistan Peoples Party always took anti-Sindh decisions and whenever the party came to power the province had to pay its price and this time it was paying a heavy cost for Asif Ali Zardari's presidency with its legitimate share in water.

Dr Magsi was speaking at a large sit-in organised by his party workers at Hatri bypass in protest against the construction of six canals on the Indus River. He said that Sindh had waged stiff resistance when Mian Nawaz Sharif had announced construction of Kalabagh Dam immediately after the country went nuclear in 1998. Mr Sharif had to face defeat at all levels and finally he had to withdraw that highly divisive announcement. Afterwards, he said, late Gen Musharraf dreamt of building the controversial reservoir but people of Sindh did not allow him to harbour such harmful thoughts on which he desired to act. The incumbent prime minister, Mian Shahbaz Sharif, too must learn a lesson from the past. (*Dawn, November 10th, 2024, Page 15*)

Amid scant rainfall, farmers asked to find alternative means of irrigation

The Pakistan Meteorological Department has cautioned farmers of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir to rely more on other means of irrigation where available as below-normal rainfall will likely lead to reduced soil moisture during wheat sowing season. The Met Office, in its outlook for November to January (2024-25), says reduced soil moisture as a result of below-normal rain would potentially impact early rabi crop sowing in KP, GB and Kashmir.

The federal government has set the wheat production target for 2024-25 at 33.58 million tons, to be sown on an area of 10.38 million hectares. The Irsa advisory committee has

anticipated a shortage of water to the extent of about 16 per cent for Punjab and Sindh. Meanwhile, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations says in its Crop Prospects and Food Situation Triannual Global Report that below-average precipitation amounts, forecast during the main cropping season could adversely impact the 2025 wheat production, the country's main food staple, and further aggravate acute food insecurity situation. (*Dawn, November 11th, 2024, Page 3*)

Growers in Sindh oppose new Cholistan canals

Farmers of Sindh's southern region have vowed to oppose the six canals proposed to be built on the Indus River in Punjab's Cholistan area, saying the project would render their lands "completely barren". They staged a rally under the aegis of Anti-Canals Action Committee, a conglomerate of three growers' bodies — Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB), Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) and Sindh Abadgar Ittehad (SAI). Sindh United Party's Sindh United Abadgar Forum is also part of the group. The protesters said that new canals, approved by Central Development Working Party, undermined the survival of millions of people living in Sindh. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 1*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

2.1 # Agricultural Loan & Finance

Agri loans

In pursuance of government's agenda for promotion of agriculture sector to increase the flow of credit to agriculture sector, State Bank allocated an indicative agricultural credit disbursement target of Rs2,250 billion for 2024, which was 26.7pc higher than preceding year's disbursement of Rs1,776bn. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 9*)

Kissan Card will be game changer for agri development

Kissan Card will prove to be a game changer for agricultural development and prosperity of the farmers. So far, 12 lakh 89 thousand applications have been received through the portal. The Bank of Punjab approved 4 lakh 87 thousand applications. The farmers have received more than 3 lakh 61 thousand cards. A senior officer of Agriculture department said that the number of Kissan Cards has been increased from 5 lakh to 7 lakh on the instructions of the chief minister Punjab. So far, the farmers have purchased agriculture inputs more than 18 billion rupees through Kissan Card. Farmers can purchase seeds, fertilizers and agro-medicines through Kissan Card.

Facility has been provided the farmers to purchase agricultural inputs on interest-free loan for wheat crop from 2600 registered dealers across the province. According to the director Public Relation, farmers of non-computerized areas will also be eligible for Kissan Card through Physical Verification. The farmers will be provided with the facility of withdrawing cash up to 30 percent along with purchase of agricultural inputs through Kissan Card from November 20. 136 delivery centers have been established at the tehsil level in Punjab. (*Business Recorder, November 18th, 2024, Page 2*)

2.2 # Agricultural Machinery

Farmers advised to adopt modern technology to boost produce

Agricultural experts have advised farmers to adopt modern technology to sustain and boost farm productivity, observing that traditional practices hinder significant agricultural growth while exposing the country to climate change and other vulnerabilities. They were speaking at a seminar on climate challenges held in Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam. They urged the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), provincial research bodies and farmers' organisations to play an active role in equipping farmers with essential skills and tools for climate resilience and agricultural advancement. Speaking from Rome via video link, Ms Anne-Sophie Poisot, global head of the FFS at the FAO, outlined food organisation's ambitious target of reaching 40 million farmers by 2040. She explained that digital technology was a critical tool for modernising the FFS programmes, allowing farmers to make independent, innovative decisions. (*Dawn, November 14th, 2024, Page 15*)

2.3 # Agricultural Taxes

Amended agri tax bill passed: Exemptions on farm income withdrawn, livestock also taxed

The Punjab Assembly passed the Punjab Agriculture Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2024 notwithstanding boycott of proceedings by the PML-N government's ally PPP and rejecting all seven amendments recommended by opposition Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. The bill, amending the 1997 law, omitted exemptions given on farm income, while also taxing income from the livestock sector. In case of default in tax payment, Rs10,000 fine will be imposed on income less than Rs1.2 million, Rs20,000 on income less than Rs40m and Rs50,000 on income above R40m. (*Dawn, November 15th, 2024, Page 2*)

Agriculture tax

The Punjab government has taken the lead in amending its agricultural income tax law, bringing existing AIT rates for individuals and businesses at par with federal income tax rates. Bill, passed by provincial assembly, also brought earnings from commercial or "income-generating" livestock into ambit of AIT and rescinded exemptions, such as the ones enjoyed by farmers with landholdings of less than 12.5 acres and absentee landholders — unless their annual income is below the tax threshold of Rs600,000. The changes also propose stringent and hefty penalties for defaulters. The amendments bring equity to the tax regime, do away with a big loophole for tax evasion, and meet the demand of economists, the corporate sector and other stakeholders to effectively tax farm incomes. Successive governments had baulked at the idea because of the clout of large landholders until the IMF made it a core component of its new \$7bn programme.

"[T]he provinces will take steps to increase their own tax collection efforts ... [on] agriculture income tax. ...[A]ll provinces are committed to fully harmonising their [AIT] regimes through legislative changes with the federal personal and corporate

income tax regimes and this will become effective from Jan 1, 2025,” said the lender, following the staff-level agreement with Pakistan in July. Other provinces, especially Sindh, are expected to make the required changes in their farm income tax regime in the next several weeks to meet the IMF deadline.

That said, the passage of the amendments to the law was the easier part. The harder part is their implementation, which starts from the beginning of the next fiscal year. For starters, the provinces — and even the FBR — have limited capacity to correctly assess farm incomes and collect tax accordingly. Besides, a large part of the agriculture market functions outside formal banking channels, and transactions are conducted in cash. Calculation of true value of farm output will require capacity building of tax officials.

Second, the responsibility of farm income assessment and tax recovery is assigned to revenue officials like patwaris who are notorious for their corruption. The land revenue law of 1967 gives enormous powers to revenue officials to penalise and detain defaulting farmers for up to 40 days. Smallholder farmers, who hardly have taxable incomes, fear this could be used by revenue officials and politicians from ruling parties to twist the arms of their opponents. The amendments made in the farm income tax law are crucial to make the system equitable in addition to boosting our abysmally low tax-to-GDP ratio of below 10pc. Nevertheless, it is critical to ensure that tax collectors are trained well and provided the tools to correctly assess farm incomes, build systems to plug loopholes for corruption and extortion, and prevent use of political clout. (*Dawn, November 16th, 2024, Page 6*)

2.4 # Fertilizer

Fake pesticide stock seized

About 300 suspicious pesticide bottles were seized from a shop in Kot Ghulam Muhammad Town. The action was taken by the deputy director of the Mirpurkhas agriculture extension department during an operation launched against unscrupulous firms selling fake, spurious and unregistered pesticides and fertilizer on a large scale in the district. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 15*)

Urea prices to rise on gas tariff adjustment

Urea prices are likely to increase by at least Rs100 per bag owing to the government’s commitment to the IMF to implement a semi-annual gas tariff adjustment by February 2025. In its recent report, the IMF revealed that the federal government has agreed to announce the adjusted tariff rates semi-annually to meet the revenue requirements of Sui companies. Recently, both Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SNGPL) submitted formal requests to the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) for a gas price increase of up to 50 per cent to cover their estimated revenue needs for 2024-25. Earlier this year, the caretaker government approved a 175pc price hike for fertiliser manufacturers on the SNGPL network, leading to a urea price increase of approximately Rs900 per bag. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 9*)

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

3.1 # Cash Crop

PCGA reveals significant cotton output decline YoY

The Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) released its latest data on cotton production, revealing a significant year-over-year decline. As of November 1, 2024, Pakistan's cotton arrivals total 4,291,105 bales, a sharp 36.84% drop from the 6,794,006 bales reported on the same date last year. In Punjab, production has decreased to 1,842,257 bales from last year's 2,996,921, reflecting a 38.53% decline. Sindh's production stands at 2,448,848 bales, down by 35.51% from last year's 3,797,085 bales, while Balochistan has recorded a production of 131,800 bales to date. (*Business Recorder, November 4th, 2024, Page 12*)

Maize can help country fetch over \$1bn annually: experts

With rising global demand, Pakistan's maize holds immense potential to surpass a billion dollars in export earnings annually. Speakers at virtual session titled "Unlocking the Maize Export Potential in the Philippines," organized by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) said that strategic investments and improved processing could make Pakistan a key player in the global maize market. Participants presented insights on the opportunities and challenges facing Pakistan's maize export sector, particularly in a time of fluctuating crop yields and global market dynamics.

Chairman CAP Muzzammil Rauf Chappal emphasised the immense potential of maize exports, suggesting that, with targeted efforts, Pakistan could surpass a billion-dollar revenue milestone in maize exports. He shared that the previous fiscal year had been especially successful, with Pakistan earning around \$500m from maize exports, thanks to favorable crop yields that year. The current year's significant 40 percent drop in maize production, which fell from a robust 11m metric tons to 7mn metric tons. This downturn had led to soaring domestic maize prices. Presently, maize prices in the international market are around \$300 per metric ton well above the international market rate of \$250 to \$260 per ton last year thus reducing Pakistan's competitiveness on the export stage. (*Business Recorder, November 9th, 2024, Page 5*)

NA body informed Sharp decline in cotton cess collection witnessed

The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research was informed about a sharp decline in cotton cess collection, which has plunged from Rs631.72 billion in 2014-15 to just Rs211 million in 2023-24. Yousaf Zafer, Vice President of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC), attributed the shortfall to the non-payment of cotton cess by a majority of textile mills, with outstanding liabilities now exceeding Rs3.44 billion. He noted that the cess rate has not been revised since 2012, further compounding the financial challenges faced by the PCCC. (*Business Recorder, November 14th, 2024, Page 4*)

Cotton production tumbles 34pc

Putti arrivals at ginning factories kept a promising trend for the third consecutive fortnight, strengthening hopes for harvesting over six million bales this season. Cotton production during the last three fortnights remained 22 per cent higher than last season's. However, the total arrivals touched 4.894m bales till Nov 15, which is 34pc less year-on-year, according to the data released by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association. In Punjab, 2.245m bales reached the ginning units, and 2.649m bales in Sindh, showing a fall of 35pc and 33pc, respectively, compared with the data for the last season in the two provinces. The PCGA report said the textile industry procured 4.14m bales from the ginners. (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 9*)

Almost all sugar mills in Sindh start cane crushing by official date

Out of a total of 38 sugar mills in Sindh, 31 have started cane crushing by Nov 21 – the date fixed by federal government – but this season's sugar cane crop procurement rate has not been fixed as yet. A few more sugar mills intend to start cane crushing in the next few days. Export of sugar was allowed by federal government on October 11, through Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), which set the export volume at 500,000 tonnes on condition that mills across the country would start cane crushing by Nov 21. In 2023-24, Sindh government had fixed sugar cane rate at Rs425 per 40kg but a notification fixing 2024-25 crop's procurement rate has not been issued as yet.

Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) President Mahmood Nawaz Shah said that the rate should have been announced by now. He said that when Sindh government had presented its price assessment for this year's sugar cane, he had not pressed SAB's demand of Rs490 per 40kg given the production cost of sugar cane. He described Sindh government's proposal for fixing the rate at Rs475 as somewhat logical. In Punjab also, no notification in respect of sugar cane procurement rate has been announced. Stakeholders there believed that provincial government appeared in no mood to fix the fresh crop's price.

Punjab's leading sugar mill owner Jehangir Khan Tareen is said to have decided to offer a rate of Rs400 per 40kg to cane growers realising that the cost of production had increased. Sindh had produced 2.02m tonnes of sugar and 19.28m tonnes of cane was crushed in 2023-24, recording a 10.37pc recovery percentage as per Sindh Cane Commissioner office's figures. When compared with figures of 2022-23 crop season, 16.79m tonnes of sugar cane crop were crushed to produce 1.74m tonnes of sugar with a lesser recovery percentage of 10.16pc. (*Dawn, November 22nd, 2024, Page 15*)

3.2 # Food Crop

Targets for Rabi crops fixed

Despite reservations expressed by provinces, the federal government has set the wheat production target at 33.58 million tonnes for Rabi 2024-25 against last year's 31.81m tonnes. Provincial governments proposed a sowing area of 9.263 million hectares with a production of 27.92m tonnes during a meeting of Federal Committee on Agriculture

(FCA), the highest forum that fixes crop targets. The Ministry of National Food Security and Research announced that target of 33.58m tonnes would be achieved from an area of 10.38m hectares to attain self-sufficiency. Last year, wheat production of 31.81m tonnes was achieved from an area of 9.74m hectares. The director general of the Federal Seed Certification and Research Department informed the meeting that the availability of certified seeds for Rabi 2024-25 would remain satisfactory. The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) Advisory Committee informed the meeting that it anticipated an irrigation water shortage of about 16 per cent for Punjab and Sindh during the Rabi season. Provinces have been allocated 31.136m acres feet, which will be reviewed next week. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 9*)

Pak rice offered lowest in Indonesia's tender

The lowest price offered in the international tender from Indonesian state purchasing agency Bulog to buy about 500,000 metric tons of rice was estimated at \$479 a ton cost and freight (c&f) for rice expected to be sourced from Pakistan, European traders said. The lowest offer was said to have been made for 26,000 tons. No purchase has yet been reported and price negotiations are expected to continue in coming days, traders said. A decision is expected next week. Reports reflect assessments from traders and further estimates of prices and volumes are still possible later.

Rice arrival in Indonesia is sought in November to December and the rice can be sourced from Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Pakistan or India. Two other offers of rice from Pakistan were the next lowest at \$484 and \$485 a ton c&f, traders said. The lowest reported offer for rice from Vietnam was \$515, from Thailand/Cambodia \$511, from India \$513 and from Myanmar \$517.50 all per ton c&f for consignments ranging from 25,000 to 30,000 tons. The tender continues heavy rice purchasing by Indonesia in global markets to cool domestic prices after a disappointing domestic harvest. (*Business Recorder, November 2nd, 2024, Page 1*)

Lower market price may hit wheat yield in next Rabi season

The initial forecast indicates that the production of wheat is expected to decline in the next Rabi season due to the lower price of wheat in the market. This was revealed by senior officials of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research while briefing the Senate Standing Committee. The board is mandated to ensure the availability of agricultural inputs for wheat growth and the evaluation of the cost of wheat crop production in consultation with the provinces. The committee was informed that last year the availability of wheat seed was 0.529m metric tons. The country's wheat seed requirement this year is 1.1 million metric tonnes. The ministry officials informed that 0.592m metric tons of wheat seed was available this year. Currently, the consumption of wheat in the country is more than 32 million metric tons. There are reserves in all four provinces of eight million metric tons and the decision will be made in March whether to export wheat or not. (*Business Recorder, November 13th, 2024, Page 3*)

Wheat procurement: Body formed to prepare plan as per IMF terms

PM Shehbaz Sharif has constituted a committee headed by Finance Minister Aurangzeb to prepare wheat procurement plan for Food Year 2024-25 in the light of IMF's viewpoint. MNFS&R further briefed the forum that at the start of the food year 2024-25, i.e., April 1 2024, Passco's carry forward wheat stock was 7.266 MMT including imported wheat stock of 0.678 MMT procured in 2021 and 2022 and domestic wheat stock of 0.588 MMT procured in 2022 and 2023. In 2024, new stock of domestic wheat of 1.785 MMT was procured. In order to dispose of the old imported wheat stock of 0.678 MT in food year 2024-25 (reduced to 0.555 MMT on October 1, 2024), Passco proposed that release ratio for agencies/regions should be 50% domestic and 50% imported in order to reduce higher risk of deterioration of quality of imported wheat due to pest infestation and other issues. (*Business Recorder, November 16th, 2024, Page 1*)

Rice production faces sustainability challenges

While rice cultivation area has increased by 29 per cent over the last 10 years, expanding production faces sustainability challenges, primarily due to its significant environmental impacts, particularly concerning carbon emissions and water usage, reveals a report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The report, "Transitioning to Low-Carbon, Resilient Rice Production in Pakistan", published in 'Development Asia' says the traditional practice of continuously flooding rice paddies creates a low-oxygen environment in soil, leading to substantial methane emissions — a potent GHG that accelerates climate change. This irrigation method also results in high evaporative water losses, making rice cultivation the largest consumer of freshwater in Pakistan.

Unlike the current practice of continuous flooding, alternate wetting and drying is a water management method that involves periodically drying rice fields for a few days between periods of flooding. This process has been proven to reduce water use in intensive rice systems by 30 per cent and GHG emissions from 30pc and 70pc. However, the potential of alternate wetting and drying to save water and reduce GHG emissions has yet to be investigated in Pakistan. With the increase in production, rice exports surged by 95 per cent over the last decade, making it the country's second-largest export, contributing \$3.7 billion to the national foreign exchange reserves. The province of Punjab accounts for 69 per cent of total rice production. Despite these gains, expanding rice production comes with sustainability challenges due to its high environmental impact, particularly in terms of carbon emissions and water usage.

Rice is the largest consumer of irrigation water used in the country while contributing only one per cent to its GDP. Although recent reforms in Punjab shifted water pricing mechanisms to crop-specific rates from a flat rate per acre to promote crop diversification, the changes were ineffective. Low water prices failed to incentivize the adoption of water-saving technologies. Small landholdings without on-farm water storage systems further undermine efforts to improve water use efficiency, as farmers cannot store excess water for future use. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 9*)

Growers cultivate wheat on 0.9m acres of land

Growers have cultivated wheat on 0.937m acres of land against the target of bringing 1.82 million acres under wheat crop in Multan division for the season 2024-25. Secretary Agriculture Punjab Iftikhar Ali Sahoo assured that phosphorus and urea fertilizers are available in ample supply in the market, and for the first time, they are being offered at controlled prices. Professional guidance will be provided to farmers on modern wheat production technology. He disclosed from November 20, farmers will have the option to withdraw 30% of their cash benefits via the Kissan Card. Responding to the rising demand, the number of Kissan Cards has been increased from 0.5 million to 0.75 million. (*Business Recorder, November 17th, 2024, Page 3*)

Record 15MMT biofortified, zinc-enriched wheat harvested

Pakistan has made a groundbreaking achievement in agricultural development by harvesting a record 15 million metric tons of biofortified, zinc-enriched wheat. This breakthrough crop is now widely available in markets across the country; poised to tackle the wide spread zinc deficiency affecting millions of Pakistanis, particularly women and children. The zinc-enriched wheat variety, Akbar 2019, was cultivated on approximately 3.78 million hectares during the 2023-24 growing season. (*Business Recorder, November 18th, 2024, Page 11*)

Wheat sown on over 12m acres of land in Punjab: well below target

Wheat has been sown over 12 million acres of land in Punjab against the target of 16.5 million acres set for the current year. The Minister said all resources are being mobilized to meet the wheat cultivation target. Applications have been acquired from farmers sowing wheat in larger areas under the Chief Minister's "Grow More Wheat" Package. (*Business Recorder, November 27th, 2024, Page 2*)

Sargodha meets 86pc of wheat sowing target

Punjab Agriculture Minister Ashiq Kirmani has been informed that a target of 1.74m acres for wheat cultivation has been set for Sargodha division and of them staple food over 1.5m acres (86% of the target) has so far been sown. (*Dawn, November 29th, 2024, Page 2*)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

KP plans law to regulate manufacturing, storage, supply of feed stuff

The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has planned a formal legislation to regulate the manufacture, storage, supply and transport for sale and marketing of feed stuff and compound feed in the province in order to ensure standards of production and quality of feed stuff and compound feed. Under the draft law, the provincial government will also check adulteration and misbranding of livestock, poultry and fish feed stuff and compound feed ingredients and connected matters. An Act that may be called the KP Animals Feed Stuff and Compound Feed in Act, 2024 has already been tabled in the provincial assembly. (*Business Recorder, November 11th, 2024, Page 2*)

4.1 # Fisheries

Pakistan marks first shipment of farm-raised shrimp

In a landmark achievement for Pakistan's aquaculture industry, M/s Arsala Seafood has shipped 21,600 kilograms of farm-raised shrimp from the Muzaffargarh farm to Vietnam. This marks Pakistan's first-ever shipment of aquaculture shrimp, setting the stage for the country to become a competitive player in the international shrimp market. The success of this first shipment is a significant milestone for Pakistan's aquaculture sector, and it signals the beginning of many more success stories to come. The initiative reflects the government's commitment to diversifying Pakistan's seafood export portfolio and enhancing the country's role in global aquaculture. (*Business Recorder, November 19th, 2024, Page 12*)

World Fisheries Day celebrated with pledges to defend fishermen's rights

The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) celebrated World Fisheries Day with a renewed commitment to continue the struggle for the protection of fishermen' rights. The day, which is celebrated annually on Nov 21, aims at drawing attention to overfishing and habitat destruction to recognise the importance of fisheries, the people who work in them and the challenges they face. (*Dawn, November 22nd, 2024, Page 13*)

4.2 # Livestock

Italian envoy shows interest in livestock, dairy projects

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with Italian ambassador to Pakistan Marilina Armellini during which matters of mutual interest and prospects of enhancing trade ties and business opportunities came under discussion. She said that Italy wanted to promote cultivation of olive in Chakwal area and also wanted invest in livestock and dairy projects. (*Business Recorder, November 3rd, 2024, Page 2*)

Livestock breeding lab planned

The Sindh government has planned to establish a laboratory at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) of the University of Karach, to advance livestock breeding and boost agricultural productivity. Supported by a World Bank-assisted project, the Rs2 million initiative will focus on livestock genomics to improve livestock breeds through genomic selection. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 15*)

Interest-free loans for livestock farmers

The Punjab Livestock Department and a public bank signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the issuance of interest-free loans worth Rs11 billion to farmers under the Livestock Card scheme. Under the scheme, provincial government will bear interest for the loans to be offered to 80,000 livestock farmers for fattening 400,000 animals. Livestock and Agriculture Minister Ashiq Kirmani said the loan would be given at the rate of Rs27,000 per animal in equal quarterly installments and each farmer may apply for a maximum of 10 animals, while the livestock card would become operational from Dec 15. (*Dawn, November 6th, 2024, Page 2*)

Sindh govt launches plan to tackle foot-and-mouth disease in cattle

The Sindh livestock department has launched a comprehensive strategy for combating foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in animals and for promotion of sectoral development of the leather industry, and dairy and meat production with the support of the European Union (EU). (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 14*)

5 # TRADE

Exports rise 13pc to \$10.8bn

Pakistan's merchandise exports rose 13.45 per cent to \$10.88 billion in the first four months of the current fiscal year from \$9.59bn 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. The exports grew 11.83pc in July, followed by 16pc in August, 13.52pc in September and 10.64pc in October. The exports reached \$2.97bn in October against \$2.68bn in the corresponding month last year. On a month-on-month basis, exports rose a paltry 4.90pc.

According to the PBS data, imports grew 5.17pc to \$17.85bn in July-October FY25 from \$16.97bn over the last year. The imports dipped 8.02pc in October to \$4.47bn from \$4.86bn in the same month last year. Month-on-month, imports declined 3.33pc. The IMF revised its import forecast downward by \$3.3bn from \$60.5bn to \$57.2bn for the FY25, converging with the government's projection of \$ 57.3bn. In FY24, imports fell by 0.84pc to \$54.73bn compared to \$55.19bn in FY23. The trade deficit in July-October FY25 decelerated by 5.59pc to \$6.97bn from \$7.38bn over the last year. In October, the deficit decreased by 31.09pc to \$1.49bn from \$2.17bn last year. The trade gap contracted to \$24.08bn in FY24 from \$27.47bn in the preceding year. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 9*)

Trade gap with Middle East balloons 20pc

Pakistan's trade deficit with the Middle East widened 19.16 per cent to \$3.706 billion in the first quarter of 2024-25 from \$3.110bn owing to the rise in petroleum imports from the region. According to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan, the swelling trade gap would be a source of concern for policymakers. In FY24, the imbalance with the Middle East narrowed by 20.47pc to \$13.014bn from \$16.365bn over the preceding year, mainly due to lower petroleum imports amid falling consumption of petroleum products thanks to rising prices.

Pakistan's exports to the Middle East rose 15.44pc to \$814.2 million in July-September 2024 from \$705.27m over the same months last year. In FY24, the exports to the region grew 35.23pc to \$3.155bn compared to \$2.33bn in the corresponding period last year. At the same time, Pakistan's imports from the Middle East also saw an increase of 18.47pc to \$4.521bn in July-September from \$3.816bn over the same period last year.

In FY24, imports declined 13.53pc to \$16.16bn compared to \$18.69bn in same period preceding year. Exports to Saudi Arabia rose 17.66pc to \$175.64m in July-September from \$149.27m over the last year. In FY24, exports to Saudi Arabia rose 40.98pc to \$710.335m from \$503.851m in FY23. The imports from kingdom saw a decline of 6.49pc to \$1.065bn against \$1.139bn in same period last year. In FY24, imports from Saudi Arabia declined by 0.01pc to \$4.49bn against \$4.50bn in preceding year.

Exports to UAE increased 19.57pc to \$564.41m in July-September from \$472.02m over last year. In FY24, exports to UAE surged 41.15pc to \$2.082bn from \$1.475bn in FY23, primarily due to a significant rise in exports to Dubai. Pakistan's top export products to UAE include rice, bovine carcasses, men's and boys' cotton ensembles, guavas and mangoes. In July-September, imports from UAE also witnessed an increase of 31.99pc to \$2.009bn from \$1.522bn over last year month. (*Dawn, November 12th, 2024, Page 9*)

Pakistan-Poland trade approaches \$1bn mark: envoy

Poland and Pakistan continue to work for the development of our bilateral relation as trade between the two friendly nations' approaches \$1 billion. Polish Ambassador to Pakistan Maciej Pisarski told an event organised to celebrate independence and armed forces day. He said that Pakistan benefits from the trade preferences under the GSP plus scheme, which makes the single European market its greatest export destination. (*Business Recorder, November 14th, 2024, Page 3*)

GB traders ask Customs to facilitate trade through Khunjerab

Traders of Gilgit-Baltistan have urged Customs to clear consignments stuck on both sides before the Pakistan-China border was closed as per a bilateral agreement. In a meeting with Customs Chief Collector (North) Khawaja Khurram Naeem, the traders said the border would be closed in two weeks, and a large number of consignments were stuck on both sides. They said if these consignments weren't promptly cleared, local traders would lose billions of rupees. Under a border protocol agreement signed between two countries in 1985, pass only remains open for travel and trade between April and November. Traders also briefed chief collector on other issues related to business activities between China and Pakistan through Khunjerab Pass. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 3*)

Türkiye ambassador for efforts aimed at boosting trade volume to US\$5bn

Ambassador of Türkiye Irfan Neziroglu, while referring to a meeting between Türkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, stated that both leaders agreed on increasing the volume of trade between the two countries, hence, efforts were being made to improve the existing trade volume of US\$1.2 billion to at least US\$5 billion. (*Business Recorder, November 23rd, 2024, Page 5*)

Iranian envoy eyes \$10bn trade with Pakistan

The Iranian consul general in Quetta, Hassan Darwish Wand, has expressed hope that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran will soon reach \$10 billion. Mr Wand made

these remarks during a meeting with business leaders of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI). He said efforts were underway to boost the trade volume, which will soon cross the target of \$10bn per annum. The Iranian envoy also highlighted the significant increase in trade volume between the two countries in recent years. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 5*)

Eight MoUs signed with Belarus to boost trade

Pakistan and Belarus signed eight MoUs and agreements in various sectors to realise the true potential of bilateral trade. Both ministers witnessed the signing of these documents, which are expected to pave the way for deeper economic ties. The MoUs will involve a five-year collaboration arrangement between JCS Bellakt and Nutrifood & Pharmaceuticals and a product supply agreement between JSC Minsk Motor Plant and Shahzad Trade Links in 2025. (*Dawn, November 26th, 2024, Page 9*)

Pakistan, Belarus sign 3-year roadmap to boost economic ties

Pakistan and Belarus signed a three-year, wide-ranging ‘Roadmap for Comprehensive Cooperation’ agreement, aimed at strengthening economic ties between the two countries. The Roadmap for Comprehensive Cooperation between Pakistan and Belarus for 2025-27, described by the Pakistani government as a “key outcome” of the visit, was among 15 MoUs and agreements signed during talks between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko. These were followed by a delegation-level meeting. The roadmap “outlines a strategic framework for enhancing economic ties through high-level meetings, intergovernmental commissions, and targeted collaborative initiatives.” Other MoUs signed on occasion covered cooperation in e-commerce, science and technology, accreditation, auditing, vocational education, health services, and halal trade. (*Dawn, November 27th, 2024, Page 1*)

5.1 # Export

KP makes first honey shipment to Malaysia

In a shift from traditional Middle Eastern markets, the first consignment of Sidr honey from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has reached Malaysia, reviving hopes that the province’s honey harvesting industry will get a boost in the coming months. This new market opportunity is expected to boost KP’s beekeeping sector, which holds the second-highest export potential after carpet manufacturing, but growth has stagnated for the past many years due to several factors. KP produces between 15,000 and 20,000 tonnes of honey annually, though only a fraction is exported, primarily to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Dubai. There has been no direct route for exporting honey to Europe, as most Pakistani honey is repackaged in Yemen and then sold under Yemeni brands in Europe and the United States. (*Dawn, November 7th, 2024, Page 9*)

Nestlé unveils \$50m packaged food exports vision

Nestlé reaffirmed its commitment to government’s vision for Pakistan’s economic growth by unveiling its \$50mn packaged food exports vision till 2030. Announcement

came at a ceremony ‘Limitless Possibilities: Nestle Pakistan’s Exports Journey’ that showcased company’s exports journey over last few years, expanding to 26 countries and generating \$23 million in 2024. (*Business Recorder, November 7th, 2024, Page 2*)

No more sugar exports; cane crushing to start from 21st

The Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) has turned down the request for additional exports and warned that the export permits of mills that do not pay farmers’ dues would be revoked. The decision was made during a board meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain. The board was informed that the sugarcane production for 2024-25 would be 85.46 million tonnes. It was decided that cane crushing would begin on Nov 21, and action would be taken against mills that fail to start crushing by this date. The PSMA will provide the cane crushing schedule and the list of mills that do not comply with the directions for timely starting operations. The sugar stocks would be around 1.08 million tonnes by Nov 21, including the export quota not utilised by the industry. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 9*)

PSMA seeks nod to export more sugar

The Pakistan Sugar Mills Associations (PSMA) has sought government’s permission to export more sugar, arguing that the country has over 1.08 million tons surplus sugar stocks at the start of new crushing season. The government after receiving the PSMA’s fresh request for additional sugar export advised the sugar industry that the government is not going to consider any such request till the industry is not exporting already allocated export quota of 790,000 tons. The PSMA officials informed the meeting that China have annual import demand of six million tons, therefore, the government is requested for G2G or G2B facilitation for sugar export to China.

The minister directed the PSMA to ensure the allowed quantity of sugar export within the due time which was set for three months as decided on October 8, 2024, and local commodity prices must remain stable so that the consumers cannot suffer as witnessed in the past. Industry so far has exported only 186,934 tons out of 790,000 allocated quota for export as 603,066 tons of permitted quota for exports is yet not utilised. Pakistan this year has over 1.7 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 and on October 8, 2024, the government allowed the sugar industry to export 500,000 tons.

According to cane commissioner sugar offtake/consumption report in past 11 months, a total 6.2 million tons of sugar was consumed locally and so far the exporters have managed to export a total of 186,934 million tons. The data shows that on average, 545,000 tons of sugar was used including local consumption and exported quantity. During 2023-24 crushing season, Pakistan has produced a total of 6.843 million tons of sugar, of which, 4.37 million tons was produced in Punjab, 2.022 million tons in Sindh

and 447,000 tons in KPK. While the country had a total of 823,000 million tons of carryover sugar stocks during the season, of which, 517,000 tons with Punjab's mills, 191,000 tons with Sindh's mills and 115,000 stocks by KPK mills, thus, having a total quantity of 7.664 million tons. (*Business Recorder, November 8th, 2024, Page 12*)

Exports to EU states rise 8pc in first quarter

Pakistan's exports to European countries resurged in the first quarter of the current fiscal year primarily due to higher shipments to western states. In absolute terms, Pakistan's exports to the European Union (EU) rose 7.88pc to \$2.204 billion in the July-September FY25 from \$2.043bn in the same period last year, according to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan. The increase was mainly due to a slight increase in demand for Pakistani goods in western, eastern, and northern Europe. In FY24, Pakistan's exports to the EU dipped 3.12pc to \$8.240bn despite its GSP+ status, which allows duty-free entry into most European markets.

In October 2023, the European Parliament unanimously voted to extend the GSP+ status for another four years until 2027 for developing countries, including Pakistan, to enjoy duty-free or minimum duty on European exports. Western Europe, which includes countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Belgium, accounts for the largest portion of Pakistan's exports to the EU. The exports to this region increased by 12.04pc to \$1.088bn in 3MFY25, up from \$0.971bn in 1QFY24. While exports to western Europe increased and recorded a paltry growth to Eastern and northern Europe, there is a silver lining in the form of an uptick in exports to eastern Europe. The exports to northern Europe saw an increase of 9.89pc to \$165.500m in 3MFY25, up from \$150.602m in the corresponding months last year.

Exports to southern Europe saw a paltry decline of 0.144pc to \$772.633m in 3MFY25 from \$773.748m in the corresponding period last year. In this region, exports to Spain dipped 3.32pc to \$354.81m in 3MFY25 from \$367.03m in the preceding year. Exports to Italy declined 0.84pc to \$296.62m in 3MFY25 compared to \$299.16m in the same period last year. Exports to Greece recorded a marginal increase of 6pc to \$31.64m during the year under review. However, exports to eastern Europe witnessed a growth of 19.96pc. The export value to this region stood at \$178.252m, up from \$148.588m in the corresponding period last year. (*Dawn, November 10th, 2024, Page 9*)

TDAP backs Reap's rice export expansion plan

Trade Development Authority of Pakistan has assured to facilitate rice traders to strengthen the rice exports to earn more foreign exchange. The meeting focused on strategies to boost Pakistan's rice exports and address challenges facing the sector. Discussions centered on targeting untapped markets in Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, areas with high potential for growth. (*Business Recorder, November 15th, 2024, Page 2*)

\$100bn exports in 7-8 years eyed: minister

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Sami Saeed has said that the government's plan is to elevate Pakistan's exports from \$30 billion to \$100 billion in the next seven to eight years. "This growth trajectory is essential for Pakistan's survival and prosperity. We must transition from a traditional economy to a technology-driven economy, where research, development, and innovation provide a competitive edge on the global stage," the minister expressed these views, while addressing a conference held at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST). (*Business Recorder, November 15th, 2024, Page 2*)

Jul-Oct textile group exports up 10.44pc

The country's textile group exports increased by 10.44 per cent in first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year 2024-25 and remained at \$6.146 billion as compared to \$5.565 billion during the same period of last fiscal year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) said. The data of exports and imports released by PBS revealed that the country's overall exports during July-October 2024 (fiscal year 2024-25) totalled \$10.889 billion (provisional) against \$9.590 billion during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 13.55 per cent.

The exports in October 2024 totalled \$2.984 billion (provisional) as compared to \$2.836 billion in September 2024 showing an increase of 5.22 per cent over September 2024 and of 10.97 per cent as compared to \$2.689 billion in October 2023. The data showed that textile group exports increased by 13.11 per cent in October 2024 and remained at \$1.625 billion as compared to \$1.437 billion in October 2023 and increased by 1.30 per cent on month-on-month (MoM) when compared to \$1.604 billion in September 2024. Cotton yarn exports registered 45.59 per cent negative growth in July-October 2024 and remained \$221.759 million compared to \$2,407.564 million during same period of last year. (*Business Recorder, November 16th, 2024, Page 10*)

KP's tax on exports, restrictions 'hurting' Pak-Afghan trade

Local traders have said the imposition of a new tax on trade through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other restrictions were hurting bilateral trade with Afghanistan and Central Asian States. In a statement, Junaid Makda, the Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) president, said the two per cent infrastructure development cess (IDC) on trade through KP has impeded the growth of bilateral trade. The levy, imposed by the KP government earlier this year, has resulted in a "double taxation burden" on traders who now have to pay taxes on their imports in Karachi and Peshawar. This created a "competitive disadvantage" for KP-based businesses. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 9*)

Non-payment of refunds hits export of seasonal fruits hard

The exporters of seasonal fruits have failed to meet export orders during winter due to non-payment of sales tax refunds pending since 2022 and bureaucratic hurdles created

by Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) relevant field formations. Apparently, the exports of seasonal fruits have been stopped in view of shortage of cash flow and no facilitation by concerned Regional Tax Office. (*Business Recorder, November 18th, 2024, Page 1*)

Food exports grow 22pc in July-October

Exports of raw food items surged 21.73 per cent to \$2.36 billion in July-October from \$1.94bn in the corresponding period last year, according to data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. In FY24, the raw food exports touched \$8bn, up from \$5.8bn in the preceding year. As a result, consumers nationwide are paying higher prices for food items because of supply and demand gaps. Raw food exports have risen for the past 15 consecutive months despite unprecedented food inflation in country's history.

In the first four months, sugar exports reached 187,247 tonnes, compared to 33,101 tonnes in the same months last year, showing an increase of 413.46pc. Millers have mainly exported sugar to Afghanistan. Rice has played a significant role in boosting overall food exports. In the first four months of FY25, rice exports surged by 52.53pc year-on-year to \$1.08 billion. Notably, the quantity of basmati rice shipments rose by 47pc and its value by 66pc. Exports of non-basmati rice increased 55.11pc in value and 47.78pc in quantity in 4MFY25. (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 9*)

EU carbon tax: Export risks loom for Pakistan: experts

The upcoming carbon taxation measures in the European Union countries might endanger Pakistan's exports to those countries if we continue to insist on producing electricity from fossil fuels such as coal, speakers said an event, which observed that role of subnational and grassroots level groups is crucial in building resilience against climate resilience and ensuring a just transition to renewable sources of energy. (*Business Recorder, November 22nd, 2024, Page 4*)

Non-textile exports surge 18pc in four months

Exports of non-textile products rose by 17.66 per cent to \$4.73 billion in the first four months of the current fiscal year, up from \$4.02bn during the same period last year, largely driven by the growth of value-added products. The main driver of non-textile product exports is raw food items and a few value-added products, including leather, footwear and engineering, during 4MFY25, from a year ago, according to data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Non-textile product exports climbed by 24.95pc in FY24, reaching \$14.02bn from \$11.22bn the previous year. Exports of non-textile items continue to expand in the current fiscal year, building on the previous year's pace. The growth is a healthy sign of getting more orders from the international market. Raw food exports increased by 21.73 per cent in 4MFY25 over the preceding fiscal year. The value of raw food exports reached \$2.36bn in 4MFY25, up from \$1.94bn over the corresponding period last year. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 9*)

Exports to central Asia grow modestly

Pakistan's exports to five central Asian countries (CACs) witnessed a paltry growth of 1.09 per cent during the first four months of the current fiscal year over the corresponding period last year. Despite the existing prospects, the country's exports to the region have yet to attain their full potential. Similarly, imports from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other countries to Pakistan have not increased significantly despite regular high-profile visits.

In absolute terms, the value of Pakistan's exports to the five central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — rose by 1.09pc to \$67.11 million in July-October 2024-25 from \$66.38m during the same period last year. Imports from the region increased by \$39.05m to \$43.4m in 4MFY25 from \$4.35m during the same period last year. The majority of these imports came from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Pakistan's trade with CACs is between \$400 and \$500m annually via Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has already implemented its transit trade agreement with Pakistan. Under the agreement, Uzbekistan has started importing goods under the transit agreement as well.

Pakistan's exports to Turkmenistan stood at \$0.66m in 4MFY25 from \$0.42m over the corresponding months last year, showing an increase of 57pc. Imports from Turkmenistan recorded a growth of 114pc to \$3.48m during the period under review against \$1.62m over the corresponding months last year. The export proceeds to Uzbekistan reached \$21.61m in 4MFY25 against \$24.91m over the corresponding months last year, showing a decline of 13.25pc. Imports from Uzbekistan increased by \$29.98m to \$32.47m from \$2.49m over the corresponding months last year.

Kazakhstan has the highest export value, with \$27.96m in 4MFY25 compared to \$26.22m during the same period last year, representing a 6.63pc rise. The value of imports from Kazakhstan stood at \$0.32m during the months under review against \$0.13m over the corresponding months of last year. Pakistan's exports to Kyrgyzstan stood at \$1.65m in 5MFY25 against \$2.97m over the corresponding months last year, indicating a decline of 44.44pc. Imports from Kyrgyzstan stood at \$0.24m against \$0.06m, an increase of over 300pc. Exports to Tajikistan stood at \$15.23m in 4MFY25 against \$11.86m over corresponding months last year, showing an increase of 28.39pc. (*Dawn, November 27th, 2024, Page 9*)

MoC asks provinces to prepare export growth roadmaps

Commerce Ministry has asked provincial governments to start advance deliberations for the development of provincial export development plans. (*Business Recorder, November 28th, 2024, Page 1*)

5.2 # Import

Pakistan becomes largest importer of US cotton

Pakistan has become the largest buyer of American cotton for the first time in history because of sales, tax-free imports and lower-than-expected production of the local crop, whose quality has also been affected by adverse weather conditions. A report by the US Department of Agriculture suggests that a total of 1.192 million bales (160 kg each) have been shipped to Pakistan, the highest in the world. Vietnam is second, Turkiye third, Switzerland fourth, Mexico fifth, China sixth, and India is the seventh largest buyer of US cotton. According to a cautious estimate, Pakistan has signed contracts for 3.0m to 3.5m bales of cotton from the United States, Brazil and other countries, while more contracts are in the pipeline. Pakistani textile mills are expected to import up to 5.5m bales to meet their requirements this year. Cotton Ginners Forum chairman Ihsanul Haq believes that an 18 per cent sales tax on local white lint has encouraged millers to import tax-free lint to meet their requirements. (*Dawn, November 16th, 2024, Page 9*)

Change in Green Channel rules harms importers

A sudden change in Green Channel parameters by the Customs Department has left thousands of containers stuck at the port, causing importers heavy financial losses while shipping companies and terminal operators cash in on their plight. If delays in the clearance of consignments continue, the supply of medicines, including medical devices, steel, and pulses will be badly affected. This development has resulted in significant delays and inefficiency in the clearance of imports.

Changes to the Risk Management System (RMS) criteria have led to a drastic decline in Green Channel clearance rates, from over 47 per cent to below 26pc. This has brought about an unprecedented rise in the number of containers marked for examination and assessment, overwhelming terminal operators and assessment officers. Importers now face delays of up to four days in grounding containers, followed by another two to three days for examination and assessment. (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 9*)

Govt to import 3m bales of cotton from Kyrgyzstan

Pakistan Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Hasan Zaigham stated that Pakistan plans to import three million bales of cotton worth \$1.9 billion this year to offset the shortfall in its own production. This opens up new opportunities for Kyrgyz exporters, given that Kyrgyzstan's annual cotton production exceeds 600,000 tons. He said Kyrgyzstan demonstrated one of the highest economic growth dynamics in the world i.e. 9.2 percent this year. Regular visits of business delegations and participation in trade fairs in both countries will help achieve the set goals of increasing the volume of bilateral trade. It was shared that the volume of trade remains significantly below potential level due to lack of information about business opportunities. (*Business Recorder, November 22nd, 2024, Page 12*)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

30 brands of bottled water found unsafe

The government stated that 30 brands of bottled water were unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination. The government has mandated quarterly monitoring of bottled and mineral water brands by PCRWR to enhance public health awareness. (*Dawn, November 1st, 2024, Page 4*)

Food Asia 2024: over \$10m business deals signed

The 17th edition of the Plastic Packaging, Corrugated, and Food Asia International exhibition and conferences recorded over \$10 million business deals between foreign and local companies in different segments at Expo Center- Karachi. According to the organizers, various exhibiting companies from Vietnam, Thailand, Turkey, China, and Iran have received overwhelming responses from local delegates and visitors in the food and allied sectors, signing different business deals and MoUs for strategic partnerships in the future. (*Business Recorder, November 1st, 2024, Page 2*)

Firm sets ambitious goals for packaged food exports

A multinational company has unveiled its vision for packaged food exports for the next five years, saying that it plans to earn \$50 million in foreign exchange for Pakistan till 2030. Nestle Pakistan made this announcement at a ceremony, “Limitless Possibilities”, which showcased the company’s export journey over the last few years, expanding to 26 countries and generating \$23m in 2024. (*Dawn, November 10th, 2024, Page 9*)

Corporates dole out Rs24bn for social causes

Pakistan’s corporate sector donated about Rs23.65 billion for various social sector causes in 2023, up 41 per cent over Rs16.76bn in 2022, according to the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP). In its latest Corporate Philanthropy Report, PCP said the Public Listed Companies (PLCs) contributed largest share of Rs17.69bn while Public Public Unlisted Companies (PUCs) and Private Ltd Companies (PvLCs) also contributed Rs2.60bn and Rs3.36bn, respectively. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 9*)

‘Fake’ certification for dialysis machines: Rs20m penalty imposed on pharma co

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has referred a sensitive case to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and imposed a huge penalty of Rs 20,000,000 on a pharmaceutical company for using fake certification for kidney dialysis machines for patients in Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, November 24th, 2024, Page 3*)

Sugar mill files Rs340m damages suit against growers

In wake of a sit-in held by cane growers outside the Digri Sugar Mills for disbursement of their Rs140m dues, the mills management has filed a Rs360m damages suit citing the Mirpurkhas deputy commissioner, SSP and 26 farmers as respondents. The dues against mills pertained to the cane crop supplied to the mills during the 2022-2023 and 2023-24 seasons. (*Dawn, November 27th, 2024, Page 15*)

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Pakistan seeks \$13m from WHO for climate resilience training

Pakistan is seeking a \$13 million grant from the World Health Organisation (WHO) to enhance training programmes designed to bolster climate resilience within health systems. The demand for the grant arose after the country completed a vulnerability assessment survey with the support of international donors. Director of Nutrition at the Ministry of National Health Services Dr Mehreen Mujtaba announced plans to introduce a National Health Adaptation Plan a conference which evaluated climate-related risks across various provinces. The conference, titled, 'Building Resilient Health Systems in the Wake of Climate Crisis in South Asia' was organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). (*Dawn, November 11th, 2024, Page 3*)

Danish shipping giant plans \$2bn investment

The Danish international container shipping company — Maersk Line — has pledged to invest \$2 billion in Pakistan's maritime sector, and the government has expressed its willingness to collaborate. During a meeting with the officials of the shipping giant, Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh described the investment as a significant achievement for Pakistan's shipping and logistics industry, underscoring the potential for long-term economic benefits from enhanced cooperation. The officials of Maersk Line showed complete confidence in government and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs. They expressed their satisfaction in advance over the investment breakthrough. Mr Shaikh reassured Maersk officials of full support in facilitating their operations and addressing any challenges. (*Dawn, November 12th, 2024, Page 9*)

PBF signs MoU with Azerbaijan's private sector

In a pivotal move to bolster regional trade and investment, Amna Munawwar Awan, Senior Vice President of the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) and President of Matrix Global signed a MoU with Babak Huseynli, Director for Central Asia and Azerbaijan at Digital Diplomacy. The agreement, which aims to enhance economic diplomacy, will facilitate the export of high-quality food products from Sunridge Foods Pvt Ltd to Azerbaijan and the broader Central Asian region. The MoU lays the foundation for a comprehensive trading network between Pakistan and these countries. As part of the deal, Huseynli's firm will set up a state-of-the-art warehouse, a trade display center and an office in Azerbaijan, which will serve as a hub for showcasing Pakistan's products, including Sunridge Foods' renowned offerings. In parallel, Matrix Global's Islamabad office will play a crucial role in facilitating regional connectivity and ensuring smooth trade operations. (*Business Recorder, November 18th, 2024, Page 3*)

Foreign investment falls 20pc in Oct

Attracting sizeable foreign investment has always been a dream of successive governments. However, the situation has mostly stayed the same as inflows remained unimpressive despite significant growth in percentage terms. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported that the foreign direct investment (FDI) rose 32 per cent to \$904 million

during July-October FY25 compared to \$683m in the same period last year. The FDI volume is insignificant for experts. However, the inflows in October plunged almost 20pc year-on-year to \$132m, indicating the country's economic conditions are not good enough to attract foreign investors. The volume of inflows through FDI remained disappointing for the government, which has been striving to woo investors by offering several incentives.

The situation looks more bleak when it is found that China contributed \$414.5m or 46 per cent of the total FDI inflows during the period under review. Other significant inflows were \$99.7m from Hong Kong and \$94m from the UK. Trade and industry sources identified the deteriorating law and order situation as the key reason for this disappointing FDI total. They said the almost daily bomb explosions and killings in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other parts of the country are the key hurdle discouraging foreign investors. (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 9*)

Foreign investors: Jul-Oct profit repatriation soars 66pc to \$807.2m YoY

The repatriation of profits and dividends by foreign investors rose by 66 percent to \$807.2 million in the first four months of this fiscal year (FY25) compared to \$ 485 million in the same period of last fiscal year (FY24). According to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), return on FDI surged by 41 percent during July-Oct of FY25. Foreign investors repatriated \$772.5 million on account of return on FDI during the first four months as against \$456 million in corresponding period of last fiscal year.

During the period under review, payments on Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) stood at \$34.7 million up from \$25.2 million. Month-on-month basis, \$413 million were repatriated during October 2024 including \$413.8 million on account of FDI and \$12 million as return on FPI. With \$186 million, the food sector saw the biggest outflow of profits and dividends during July-October FY25, up from \$68.4 million last fiscal year. (*Business Recorder, November 27th, 2024, Page 1*)

7.1 # Countries

PM holds trade, investment talks with Qatar's emir, counterpart

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and his counterpart from the oil-rich Arab state in separate meetings, with both sides discussing the importance of strengthening bilateral collaboration in trade, investment, energy and other sectors. Sharif's visit to Qatar seeks to bolster economic cooperation as Pakistan looks to foreign investment to stabilize its economy. In 2022, the Qatar Investment Authority committed \$3 billion for projects in Pakistan, spanning airport management, renewable energy and hospitality. Qatar has also explored partnering with Pakistan in managing the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, owned by Pakistan International Airlines. (*Business Recorder, November 1st, 2024, Page 1*)

Qatar to invest \$3bn in Pakistan: Tarar

Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said Qatar would invest \$3 billion in diverse sectors, adding that the financing would have a significant impact on the national economy and ultimately benefit the masses. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 1*)

Germany pledges €20m for ‘billion tree’ project

Germany will provide 20 million euros to Pakistan for the second phase of ‘Billion Tree Afforestation Support Project’ (BTASP). The first phase of BTASP is already under implementation in partnership with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Climate Change, Forestry, Environment and Wildlife Department. It will support the protection and sustainable management of forests in KP. The project will focus on new plantation on 10,000 hectares, capacity building of forest departments, and developing a management information system. The project will support nature-based livelihoods generation geared to alleviate poverty. (*Dawn, November 3rd, 2024, Page 3*)

Qatar, Azerbaijan to invest \$5bn, PM Shehbaz tells cabinet

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif informed cabinet members that Qatar and Azerbaijan will invest \$5 billion in the country’s various sectors. The prime minister said he has held very productive meetings with leaders of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in which different subjects like solar energy, mines, minerals and IT sectors were discussed. He said a delegation of Qatar Investment Authority would soon visit Pakistan as Qatar has announced it will invest \$3 billion. (*Dawn, November 5th, 2024, Page 3*)

Meat processing, alternate energy sectors Irish team exploring investment opportunities

Pakistan’s Trade and Investment Attaché in Manchester (UK) Awais Hussain Farooqi said that the delegation has kicked off with its meetings in Islamabad and will move to three main cities in the country to explore targeted investment opportunities in meat processing and alternate energy sectors in Pakistan, with a special focus on solar panel manufacturing and refurbishing. According to him, the delegation has brought a potential investment range of €100–400 million, offering significant economic value to both nations, adding that the visit was made possible through the exceptional support of Pakistan’s Ambassador to Ireland and proactive engagement of Asim Sattar, a dedicated Pakistani businessman in Ireland. (*Business Recorder, November 7th, 2024, Page 2*)

Customs, rail, and airport, maritime sectors: Four MoUs signed with UAE

Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates signed four MoUs in sectors such as customs, rail and airport infrastructure, maritime shipping and logistics. In May this year, Pakistan said UAE had committed \$10bn to invest in promising economic sectors in Pakistan. Riyadh has also promised a \$5bn investment package that cash-strapped Pakistan desperately needs to shore up its dwindling foreign reserves and fight a chronic balance of payment crisis. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia also signed 34 MoUs worth \$2.8 billion last month. (*Business Recorder, November 9th, 2024, Page 1*)

Improvement in economic indicators: Govt alludes to ties with China, deals with KSA

Information Minister has said that Pakistan's trade agreement with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) worth over six billion dollars and strengthened relations with China are its clear evidence. (*Business Recorder, November 10th, 2024, Page 1*)

UK allocates £108m for Pakistan to meet climate change challenges

Reaffirmed his country's commitment to its longstanding ties with Pakistan, UK Minister and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Himesh Falconer has announced £108 million aid package to tackle climate change induced challenges in Pakistan. The announcement was made by the UK minister during a meeting with National Assembly Speaker with members of delegation comprising British parliamentarians. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 4*)

Tajik envoy underscores need for restoring Karachi's glory for investment

Ambassador of Tajikistan Sharifzoda Yusuf, while highlighting the glorious history of Karachi which was a completely peaceful and secure city for foreign tourists in the 80s and 90s, stressed upon the need to fully restore the former glory of Karachi to attract the same number of tourists and even more not only from Tajikistan but also from Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia. (*Business Recorder, November 20th, 2024, Page 4*)

USAID-supported SPF for SMEs officially launched in KP

The US Consul General in Peshawar Shante Moore and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Chief Economist Arifullah Awan officially launched the USAID-supported Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), developed in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Planning and Development Department (P&DD) Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, marking a milestone in fostering a sustainable and inclusive economic environment in the region. (*Business Recorder, November 27th, 2024, Page 4*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIS)

Development goals AIIB vows support to Pakistan

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has reiterated commitment to supporting Pakistan in meeting its development goals and overcoming climate-related challenges through policy and budgetary support. This was conveyed by a delegation of AIIB led by Vice President Client Region and Project Finance Global Konstantin Limitovskiy during a meeting with Finance Minister. The AIIB team said they view Pakistan as an important partner country. The AIIB team briefed the Minister about the Bank's portfolio investment in Pakistan, including projects initiated in the hydro power generation, building road and transport sector, urban infrastructure development, building climate resilience and dealing with adverse impacts of pandemics, conflicts and climate-induced flood disasters.

The status of ongoing projects and the need for diverting the Bank's financing from power generation to the transmission and distribution system in view of surplus capacity requiring evacuation were also discussed. Muhammad Aurangzeb acknowledged the Bank's support for Pakistan, particularly its funding and technical assistance in dealing with natural disasters and the impacts of climate change and disaster preparedness on a long-term basis. The Finance Minister expressed satisfaction over the progress of AIIB projects in Pakistan and emphasized further efforts to improve the disbursement of ongoing projects. (*Business Recorder, November 6th, 2024 Page 1*)

Punjab seeks \$329m Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank loan for Lahore water, sanitation overhaul

The Punjab government has submitted a \$329 million project proposal to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) through the federal government. The initiative aims to ensure a sustainable supply of clean water, mitigate environmental degradation and strengthen the institutional capacity of Lahore's Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) to improve service delivery. The project focuses on constructing surface water treatment infrastructure, upgrading Lahore's water supply networks and building wastewater management systems to address issues of untreated sewage, urban flooding and dwindling groundwater resources. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 5*)

8.1 # Asian Development Bank (ADB)

ADB says it has 7 projects for this year, 16 for the next

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has seven projects for Pakistan this year, and there are 16 projects planned for the next year as part of an extensive and meaningful partnership and collaboration with Pakistan. This was stated by Emma Fan, new country director of ADB in Pakistan, who held a meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. (*Business Recorder, November 5th, 2024, Page 1*)

Pakistan to benefit from new ADB plan for glacier preservation

The ADB has announced a regional programme for Central Asia and South Asia, including Pakistan to mitigate the impact of melting glaciers. The 'Glaciers to Farms' programme will invest in water and agriculture infrastructure and support vulnerable communities threatened by glacier melt, particularly in fragile mountain regions. The programme aims to mobilise funding of \$3.5bn from ADB, Green Climate Fund, governments, development partners, and private sector. The lending agency will conduct risk assessments of glacial melt in Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to for "scientific and technical basis for Glacier to Farms programme".

While citing the rationale for this programme, the statement said temperatures in the region are projected to rise by up to 6°C by 2100. This will result in the loss of glacial mass which threatens the "fragile balance of ecosystems". It also jeopardises water supply for agriculture and hydropower and risks the livelihoods of more than 380 million people. Moreover, with around 2 billion people in Asia relying on meltwater

from glaciers and snow, “accelerated glacial melt will affect the region’s water security”. According to ADB, glacial retreat, changes in snowfall patterns, and altered monsoon patterns contribute to shifts in water availability, affecting river flows and impacting water-dependent sectors such as water supply, irrigation agriculture and hydropower. (*Dawn, November 18th, 2024, Page 5*)

Pakistan needs \$390bn for low-carbon transition by 2050: ADB

Pakistan will require more than \$390 billion in additional investment by 2050 through the coal-to-gas transition in the industry, electrification of transport and the replacement of gas with electricity for cooking to meet international commitments on reducing carbon emissions, according to an Asian Development Bank (ADB) report released. The report, Pakistan Low-Carbon Energy Outlook and Technology Road Map, noted that the required energy expansion plans imply major investment commitments. In low-carbon scenario, hydropower generation requires an investment of \$153bn, nuclear power \$103bn, wind power \$62bn, and solar \$51bn. To handle growing power demand and maintain grid stability, \$22bn investment in transmission and distribution is also required. (*Dawn, November 18th, 2024, Page 12*)

ADB suggests steps to make schools climate resilient

A new report from the Asian Development Bank has stressed the need for adapting schools to the impacts of climate change since extreme weather is significantly increasing school closures and affecting learning outcomes and household incomes over the long-term. The report, ‘Climate Change and Education Playbook’, referred the 2022 floods in Pakistan which damaged some 17,000 schools, disrupting education of 2.6 million children. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 3*)

Climate programme: SBP receives \$500m loan from ADB

Pakistan received inflows amounting to \$500m as loan from the ADB. The State Bank of Pakistan has confirmed the receipt of the inflows. “The SBP has received US\$500m from the Asian Development Bank as proceeds of a loan to the government of Pakistan for the Climate Change and Disaster Resilience Enhancement Program,” SBP said. According to SBP, these proceeds will be reflected in SBP’s foreign exchange reserves for the week ending 29th November 2024 to be published on 05th December 2024.

This disbursement will help bolster the foreign exchange reserves held by the SBP and likely to cross the \$12 billion mark by the end of November 2024. The SBP’s reserves stood at \$11.42 billion as on November 22, 2024 and enough to cover the import bill of more than two months. Earlier this month, the SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed predicted that SBP’s reserves will continue to move upward side and will touch \$12 billion mark end of November and as per projection reserves are growing. (*Business Recorder, November 29th, 2024, Page 1*)

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF team holds ‘unusual’ talks over \$7bn bailout

The International Monetary Fund’s Pakistan mission chief Nathan Porter opened unusual talks with Pakistan over a \$7 billion bailout approved by its board in September, the finance ministry and sources said. The unscheduled visit of the IMF mission and talks beginning with meeting the country’s finance team are too early for first review of the IMF’s Extended Fund Facility (EFF), which is due in the first quarter of 2025. The chiefs of Pakistan’s central bank and federal board of revenue also attended the meeting besides other officials from both the sides, the statement said. (*Business Recorder, November 13th, 2024, Page 1*)

8.3 # World Bank (WB)

WB to help realise \$60bn export potential

The Ministry of Commerce and the World Bank have agreed to form a joint working group on trade to capitalise on the country’s true export potential. The understanding was reached during a meeting of Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan with a team from the World Bank. Both sides agreed that the working group would meet periodically to advance the goal of realising Pakistan’s export potential of \$60 billion. An official announcement said both sides discussed Pakistan’s export reform agenda, focusing on strategies to enhance export competitiveness and streamline enabling policies. (*Dawn, November 14th, 2024, Page 9*)

Govt seeks World Bank advice on agri tax, climate financing

Pakistan is seeking additional financial and technical support from the World Bank, including developing an effective and transparent budget-making process and a uniform provincial mechanism for agricultural tax and climate resilience. The bank has already committed to a financial pipeline of about \$10 billion over the next five years, with an average of \$2bn per annum, under the next Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), which will be finalised next month. (*Dawn, November 27th, 2024, Page 9*)

Govt tells WB: Agri tax legislation to be completed in next Jan

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb apprised the World Bank (WB) on progress towards implementation of Agricultural Income Tax Regime with the help of provinces. Aurangzeb held a meeting with Najy Benhassine, country director of the World Bank, and his team at the Finance Division. During the meeting, the issues related to Agricultural Income Tax Regime and GST harmonisation in coordination with provinces and enhanced focus on active role of National Tax Council also came under discussion. The finance minister informed that legislation for imposition of tax on agriculture sector would be completed by January next year that would become effective for collection from July 1, 2025. The Punjab government has passed the Punjab Agricultural Income Tax Bill, 2024, in the provincial assembly. (*Business Recorder, November 27th, 2024, Page 1*)

9 # POLICY

Sindh plans 500-acre ‘industrial enclave’ near Hyderabad

The Sindh government is planning to construct a new industrial enclave on 500 acres of land located next to the Hyderabad-Tando Muhammad Khan Road. This industrial enclave aims to serve as a valuable hub for industry and commerce for industrialists and traders in Hyderabad, the second-largest city in Sindh, as well as for neighbouring cities. On top of this, it will offer appealing investment opportunities for foreign investors. (*The News, November 24th, 2024, Page 17*)

9.1 # Development Policy

CDWP clears seven projects worth Rs560bn

The Central Development Working Party cleared seven development projects with an estimated cost of about Rs560 billion, including two foreign-funded schemes to secure \$1.7bn financing from World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Of them, three mega projects beyond the financial powers of the CDWP worth Rs545bn were referred to the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (EcneC) with recommendation for their formal approval. The remaining four smaller projects worth Rs15bn were approved at CDWP meeting presided over by Minister for Planning and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Ahsan Iqbal. (*Dawn, November 13th, 2024, Page 9*)

CDWP approves 3 projects worth Rs58.85bn

The CDWP approved three major development projects with a total cost of Rs58.857 billion relating to the energy sector. (*Business Recorder, November 16th, 2024, Page 1*)

PSDP: MoF approves Rs1.1trn against Rs2.9trn demand

Ministry of Finance approved Rs1.1 trillion development budget under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) against the requested development budget of Rs2.9 trillion. (*Business Recorder, November 19th, 2024, Page 3*)

Balochistan’s road infrastructure: Govt sets 3-year timeline for Rs400bn projects

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has directed the concerned authorities to complete Balochistan’s road infrastructure projects at a cost of Rs400 billion within next three years. (*Business Recorder, November 23rd, 2024, Page 1*)

EcneC clears 10 projects worth Rs172.7bn

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (EcneC) approved 10 out of 11 proposed development projects costing R 172.7 billion. Six of the approved projects belonged to the province of Balochistan, while the approved projects pertained to the infrastructure sector for improving connectivity in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Additionally, EcneC also approved a World Bank-funded project for developing solid waste infrastructure for Karachi costing Rs29.2bn. (*Dawn, November 26th, 2024, Page 9*)

Sindh okays 15 schemes worth Rs20.5bn

Sindh Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) has approved 15 schemes worth over Rs20.5 billion in the Planning and Development Department. (*Dawn, November 29th, 2024, Page 9*)

9.2 # Neo – Liberal Policy

PIA sale stalls as lone bid ‘too low to consider’

The much-anticipated privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) stalled as the sole bid was around Rs75 billion lower than the government’s expectations. The Blue World City consortium submitted its bid of Rs10 billion against the minimum price of Rs85.03bn, fixed by the Privatisation Commission. The government had pre-qualified six groups in June, but only the real estate development company participated in the final bidding process. Due to the huge difference between the expected and actual bids, the commission gave the consortium more time to reconsider its bid. However, Blue World City consortium chairman Saad Nazir kept the price unchanged. He said the bid price was “in accordance with our assessments” and that they would stand by the quoted price. “If the government does not privatise PIA, we wish all the best for them, and if they want to run the airline themselves, we pray for them”, Mr Nazir said. (*Dawn, November 1st, 2024, Page 1*)

ADB delegation meets minister ‘Investment needed to prepare Discos for privatisation’

Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari has sought investment from development partners to prepare power Distribution Companies (Discos) for privatisation. He floated this proposal with a delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) headed by Country Director Xiaoqin (Emma) Fan. The Power minister and ADB delegation discussed cooperation in energy sector. The government is closely working with the World Bank’s team to prepare financially strong Discos for privatisation, however, current negotiations with the IPPs will hit the privatisation programme as the top bosses of the IPPs have conveyed this message to the Task Force at the highest level, said an insider. (*Business Recorder, November 14th, 2024, Page 1*)

Discos’ sell-off: SIFC to play key role

The government has decided to give a central role to SIFC in expediting the privatisation process of power Distribution Companies (Discos) with Lt General Sarfraz Ahmed, National Coordinator of the SIFC’s inclusion as a member of the steering committee on Discos privatisation. (*Business Recorder, November 17th, 2024, Page 6*)

KP govt to outsource more public-sector hospitals

The KP government has decided to outsource more public sector hospitals through Health Foundation and has directed the Health department to present proposals in this regard under the public-private partnership (PPP) model by next month. (*Business Recorder, November 18th, 2024, Page 2*)

Services Hotel sale finalised after three-year hiatus

Auctioned during the era of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government in 2021, the formal transaction of the Services International Hotel in Lahore concluded in Islamabad with the signing of sale agreement. The sale agreement was signed between Punjab Cooperative Board for Liquidation (PCBL) and Civic Company (Pvt) Limited (CCCL), Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Privatisation Commission and the buyer, Faisal Town Ltd, a real estate developer, at the Privatisation Commission in Islamabad. The hotel was auctioned more than three years ago at the highest bid of Rs1.951 billion against the reserve price of Rs1.949bn. The hotel, a state-owned entity, is spread over 15 kanals on Upper Mall. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 2*)

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

Pakistan posts fiscal surplus for first time in 24 years

Unprecedented profits by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), driven by the highest-ever interest rates and record petroleum levy revenue — both non-tax sources — have helped the country convert its entrenched budget deficits into a fiscal surplus for the first time in at least 24 years. According to the Fiscal Operations report for the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year, released by the Ministry of Finance, the central bank posted an all-time high surplus profit of Rs2.5 trillion, primarily due to the country's highest-ever policy rate of 22 per cent. This gain was also supported by a record Rs262 billion earned from the petroleum levy, an 18pc increase from last year.

Due mainly to the SBP's record profits, the country's fiscal balance — the gap between national revenues and expenditures — reached a surplus of Rs1.696tr, or 1.4pc of GDP, in the first quarter. This is in sharp contrast to the 0.9pc deficit recorded for the same period last year and marks the first time Pakistan has achieved a budget surplus, breaking a 24-year cycle of consecutive fiscal deficits since FY2001, the earliest year for which public data is available. The country's primary surplus, which excludes interest payments from the fiscal balance, also touched a historic peak of more than Rs3tr, or 2.4pc of GDP, almost double the full-year target of 1pc of GDP, or about Rs1.24tr. During the same quarter of last year, the country posted a budget deficit of roughly Rs980bn and a primary surplus of Rs400bn, or 0.4pc of GDP. (*Dawn, November 1st, 2024, Page 1*)

Debt-to-GDP ratio drops to 65.7pc in September

The country's debt-to-GDP ratio dropped to 65.7 per cent in September, reversing last fiscal year's upward trend, according to the latest data released by SBP. The data shows a substantial increase in central government domestic debt, which rose by Rs7.838 trillion over the past year to reach Rs47.536tr in September 2024, up from Rs39.698tr in September 2023. However, between June and September 2024, domestic debt increased by only Rs376 billion. During the first quarter, government's borrowing needs were reduced due to surplus liquidity, largely due to a large supply of Rs2.7tr as SBP profits. (*Dawn, November 12th, 2024, Page 9*)

Debt inflows plunge 55pc in July-October

Pakistan's foreign assistance inflows fell by more than 55 per cent to about \$2.7 billion in the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year, apparently because of delays in securing a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and subsequent \$1bn disbursements. Last year, inflows had amounted to \$6.05bn in these four months. In its monthly report on Foreign Economic Assistance (FEA), the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) said against its annual target of \$19.4bn, total FEA in July-October amounted to \$1.72bn when compared to \$3.85bn of the same period last year with the annual target of \$17.6bn. This total doesn't include about \$1bn disbursed by the IMF on the last day of September, which is accounted for separately by the State Bank of Pakistan, thus putting the total inflows at \$2.72bn.

The government has also targeted \$1bn in international bonds for the current year. Another major projection worth \$9bn inflows from bilateral partners — China and Saudi Arabia — targeted for the current fiscal year has also not materialised yet. Still, these are mostly realised in the second half of fiscal year. These projections include a \$5bn time deposit from Saudi Arabia and \$4bn China's SAFE deposit. These projections are critical for Pakistan to meet its external financing gap as part of the IMF programme.

In addition, Pakistan also received \$542m inflows from overseas Pakistanis through Naya Pakistan Certificates compared to \$306m in the same period last year. The World Bank led the multilaterals with \$364m disbursement in 4MFY25, slightly lower than its \$370m releases last year, followed by the Islamic Development Bank with \$150m and Asian Development Bank with \$173m. Among the bilateral lenders, China stood out with \$97m disbursements, followed by \$90m from France and \$38m from the United States. (*Dawn, November 26th, 2024, Page 9*)

Jul-Oct: \$1.723bn borrowed from multiple sources

The country borrowed \$1.723 billion from multiple financing sources during the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year 2024-25 compared to \$3.847 billion borrowed during the same period of 2023-24, revealed the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) data. The \$1.723 billion does not include the first tranche of \$1.03 billion, received from the IMF. If the IMF inflows added, total inflows would reach \$2.753 billion during the first four months of the current fiscal year.

The data revealed that government has budgeted time deposits of \$9 billion including \$5 billion KSA time deposit and \$4 billion SAFE China deposit for the current fiscal year, however, no money was received in the first four months (July-October) under this head. There is also no mention of assistance from the UAE. The government had budgeted \$19.393 billion from multiple financing sources for the fiscal year 2024-25 including \$19.216 billion loans and \$176.29 million grants. However, this does not include any amount from the IMF. (*Business Recorder, November 27th, 2024, Page 1*)

10.1 # Food

Provinces question quality of Passco wheat stocks

At the onset of the wheat sowing season, concerns over wheat quality in the public sector have emerged, with provinces questioning its safety for public consumption. The issue arose during an Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) meeting chaired by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, which also approved about Rs36 billion in supplementary grants. The meeting was informed that about 550,000 tonnes of imported wheat, carried over since 2021-22, remains with the Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Services Corporation (Passco) at a carrying cost now totalling Rs87bn.

Although imported to meet provincial demands, the wheat remains unused as provinces are reluctant to collect their allocations, leaving Passco to bear the cost. To address this, Passco proposed supplying wheat to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan on a 50:50 basis of local to imported wheat due to the significant cost difference — imported wheat costs around Rs6,000 per 40kg, nearly double the domestic price. However, apparently because of the price differential, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s food secretary alleged that imported wheat was not fit for public consumption. When asked if the provincial government had got it checked by a laboratory and if it could provide its results, no evidence was presented. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 9*)

10.2 # Food Scarcity

Balochistan govt urged for steps to address malnutrition in kids

Civil society leaders and social activists have called on the government to take concrete steps to improve nutrition for malnourished children and ensure policies that support farmers who provide healthy food to communities. Speaking at a seminar organised by Hope Balochistan, in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe, a non-governmental organisation in Germany, to mark the World Food Day, they said that not only the government, but members of civil society should also fulfil their responsibility for improving the food quality for sake of children. (*Dawn, November 1st, 2024, Page 5*)

TMSG, Unicef sign pact to address child malnutrition

The Trust for Malnutrition and Stunted Growth (TMSG) and United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund signed a MoU in relation to World Children’s Day, aiming to address child malnutrition and stunted growth by combining resources, expertise, and outreach capabilities. It said that with Unicef’s support, the TMSG will be able to enhance its programmes in nutrition education, healthcare accessibility, and support for vulnerable mothers and children. (*Dawn, November 13th, 2024, Page 14*)

Acute food insecurity drops in year’s second half: report

With slightly improved availability of food, the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity has decreased during the second half of 2024, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis. The analysis projected improvement in food availability during the last half of 2024, between monsoon season

and post-harvest, decreasing the number of individuals expected to face acute food insecurity to 7.9 million. About 8m people were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity during the first half of 2024, largely attributed to climate shocks, food access constraints, livestock mortality, and reduced livelihoods.

According to the ‘Pakistan Assistance Overview’ released by the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance of USAID, the bureau provided nearly \$16m to Pakistan to support early recovery, risk reduction and resilience activities to strengthen vulnerable populations’ resilience to disasters induced by natural hazards. With this funding, the BHA of USAID supports livelihood-strengthening activities, including facilitating training on livestock management practices. (*Dawn, November 21st, 2024, Page 9*)

10.3 # Inflation

IMF cuts inflation forecast to 9.5pc: Aurangzeb

The International Monetary Fund has lowered its inflation forecast for Pakistan for the current year by 3.2 percentage points to 9.5%, the finance minister said. The IMF’s revised projection bring it closer to Pakistan’s own projections, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said. He said there was no need to introduce a mid-year budget, responding to local media reports saying the government needed to revise its budget to stay on track with an ongoing \$7 billion, 37-month programme with the IMF. (*Business Recorder, November 1st, 2024, Page 1*)

October inflation rises to 7.2pc amid food costs hike

The annual consumer inflation rate edged up to 7.2 per cent in October from 6.9pc in September, driven by a modest increase in prices of perishable food items. Despite this increase, the inflation rate remains much lower than the highs recorded earlier this year. The minor increase is mostly due to a rise in food items such as tomatoes, onions, and pulses. The headline inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), had slowed to 9.6pc in August, the first single-digit reading in more than three years, showed data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The monthly consumer price index in October stood at 1.2pc, reflecting an increase in perishable food prices compared to the previous month. The low inflation rate is partly attributed to a high-base effect from last year when annual inflation stood at 26.8pc in October 2023.

The annual CPI inflation has historically been driven by the food and energy sectors. Improved crop yields, particularly of wheat, rice and sugar, helped reduce food prices this year, alongside a lower reliance on imports. The government’s support for agriculture, including increased loans, and favourable weather played a crucial role in boosting production. 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 the first four months of the current fiscal year (July-October), inflation averaged 8.68pc compared to 28.45pc during same period last year. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 9*)

10.4 # Poverty

Karachi has 582 katchi abadis, PAC told

The Public Accounts Committee of the Sindh Assembly was informed that as many as 582 slums and shantytowns, better known as katchi abadis, out of total 1,400 across the province, were there in Karachi where occupants of 120-yard plots were generally given official land at rate of Rs250 per square yard. (*Dawn, November 1st, 2024, Page 14*)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Fire destroys hundreds of trees in Sararogha forest

A massive fire broke out in Khunkhela hilly area of Sararogha tehsil of Upper South Waziristan district, burning down hundreds of precious trees. However, intensity of the fire continues to increase, fuelled by strong winds, making it challenging for rescuers to control it. The official said the cause of the fire remained to be known. The incident marks the third such blaze hitting the area in the month of November, resulting in the destruction of thousands of valuable trees, leaving behind only ashes. The residents said that the authorities must take necessary measures to ensure the safety of the region's biodiversity and natural assets. (*Dawn, November 26th, 2024, Page 8*)

11.1 # Biodiversity

New species of cobia fish discovered off Gwadar coast

Two new species of cobia fish — the long, meaty variety often featured in Hollywood movies depicting fishing competitions — were discovered off the coast of Pakistan, according to a recently published study in peer-reviewed journal *Zoologischer Anzeiger*. The fish from Gwadar proved to be subtly yet consistently different, prompting the researchers to recognise that they had identified two new species. One has been named the Blotchy Cobia, a nod to the large grey blotches marking found on its body and the Balochi language spoken in the region.

The other is the Makran Cobia, named after the Makran coast where it was found. According to the study, Blotchy Cobia (*Rachycentron blochii*), are “torpedo-shaped”, weighing around eight pounds and are three feet long. They have “small eyes” which are masked by a greyish shade, “pointed” snouts and teeth on their mouth, jaw and tongue. The Makran Cobia (*Rachycentron makranensis*) are slightly smaller, weighing six pounds and are two and a half feet long. It features “short”, “pointed” eyes of “moderate size” and small teeth distributed across its jaws, tongue, and the roof of its mouth. (*Dawn, November 21st, 2024, Page 3*)

11.2 # Health

Study highlights devastating impact of lead on public health

A recent international study presents a compelling case for a swift global phase-out of lead, classified as a potent neurotoxin, endangering public health, ecosystems and economy worldwide. Led by Stanford University, the study is co-authored by experts from renowned institutions, including Aga Khan University (AKU), Johns Hopkins

Bloomberg School of Public Health, University of Southern California, and the Centre Scientifique de Monaco. In Pakistan, he points out, a substantial population remains at risk from contaminated soil, water, and food sources, especially those in urban centers. The paper reveals that 5.2 million tonnes of lead entered the environment in 2022 alone, largely driven by demand for low-cost lead-acid batteries. “Lead pollution endangers ecosystems and harms organisms across the food chain, from plants and animals to humans, contributing to 5.5 million premature deaths annually from cardiovascular disease and resulting in 765 million lost IQ points among children,” the paper says. (*Dawn, November 9th, 2024. Page 13*)

Vector-borne diseases rise in Sindh amid lack of fumigation

There is no let-up in cases of mosquito-borne diseases across the province with at least 17,000 cases of malaria reported in several cities within two weeks in various districts, it has emerged. According to the data released by the Vector Borne Disease Directorate General Health Services, a total of 267,389 cases of mosquito-borne illnesses had been reported in the province from January till the first week of November, with malaria reporting the highest number of infections (265,021) followed by dengue (2,179 cases and one death) and chikungunya (189 cases).

The division-wise breakdown for malaria showed that Hyderabad was the hardest-hit region with 126,584 cases, followed by Larkana with 59,752, Mirpurkhas with 35,248, Shaheed Benazirabad with 22,647, Sukkur with 18,718, and Karachi with 2,072. A total of 6,015,702 patients were screened for malaria in the province. During the same period (January-Nov 9), a total of 2,179 cases of dengue were reported in the province, with one death in Karachi. (*Dawn, November 11th, 2024, Page 13*)

Patient dies, 30 others test positive for HIV at Nishtar’s dialysis unit in Multan

In what appeared to be a distressing incident, a kidney-failure patient died while 30 others contracted Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDs) infections during dialysis treatment at the Nishtar Hospital, Multan. The largest public sector hospital in south Punjab came to the limelight in respect of gross negligence when the patients were reportedly put on three dialysis machines meant for HIV positive cases [patients]. An official privy to the information said that the patient who breathed his last due to onset of the HIV/AIDs complications was identified as Shah Nawaz (40). (*Dawn, November 14th, 2024, Page 2*)

Pakistan reports 50th polio case of the year

Pakistan has recorded its 50th polio case of the year, with the latest victim being a 20-month-old girl from Mullazai Union Council in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Tank district. An official from the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health, Islamabad, confirmed the detection of the wild poliovirus (WPV1) in the child. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 1*)

‘Negligence’ led to HIV outbreak at Multan’s largest hospital

An investigation team has alleged serious negligence by doctors and other staff of the Nishtar Hospital, where dozens of kidney patients have been infected with HIV/AIDS. The probe body was formed after reports that a patient suffering from kidney failure died while 30 others contracted Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome infections during dialysis treatment at largest public sector hospital in south Punjab. The fact-finding committee constituted by the Punjab government has confirmed the outbreak of HIV/AIDS in the hospital’s nephrology unit. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 3*)

5-year health security action plan launched

Pakistan has launched a five-year National Action Plan for Health Security (2024-28), marking a significant stride toward building a resilient health system capable of effectively addressing evolving public health emergencies. This strategic framework aims to enhance the country’s capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to health crises, with a strong focus on pandemic preparedness and the integration of human, animal, and environmental health through the One Health approach. The action plan was officially unveiled at a high-profile event led by Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. (*Business Recorder, November 22nd, 2024, Page 3*)

World Bank research finds depression, anxiety rising among KP mothers

A new research report from the World Bank has found the prevalence of three facets of mental health — depression, anxiety and parenting stress — among mothers of children aged up to 6 years in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Maternal mental health concerns are significantly associated with lower levels of early childhood development. The research also analyses how exposure to stress factors such as food insecurity, financial insecurity, being impacted by flooding, community crime, discrimination, and domestic violence exacerbate both maternal mental health and child outcomes. In KPK specifically, 28 per cent of women and 58pc of pregnant women seen at health facilities have been found depressed. An estimated 21pc of women in a study in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa were found to have generalised anxiety disorder.

The report is based on a household survey commissioned by the World Bank and carried out by Center for Evaluation and Development between December 2023 and February 2024 in KPK. A cross-sectional study in KPK found an association between women with low educational attainment and higher levels of maternal depression and anxiety. Data from Pakistan shows correlations with maternal depression in the antenatal and postpartum periods, there is less research showing relationships between mothers’ mental health status and ECD through the preschool-age years. Pakistan has one of the highest estimates of maternal postpartum depression in Asian countries, with rates ranging from 28pc to 63pc — as well as evidence of paternal post-partum depression. (*Dawn, November 25th, 2024, Page 12*)

11.3 # Pollution

Govt declares ‘smog calamity’ across Punjab

The Punjab government declared smog a calamity, as the provincial administration notified a host of measures, such as vacations for differently-abled children and a ban on all activities “causing or leading to smog formation” to improve the hazardous air quality across the province, particularly in Lahore. A day earlier, the provincial government imposed a green lockdown in several areas of Lahore it considered ‘smog hotspots’, but enforcement remained lax at best on the first day. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has now declared smog a calamity under Section 3 of the Punjab National Calamities (Prevention and Relief) Act, 1958. This law allows the government to “provide for the maintenance and restoration of order in areas affected by certain calamities and for the prevention and control of and relief against such calamities”. (*Dawn, November 1st, 2024, Page 1*)

Suparco launches project to track pollution sources

To further strengthen its air quality initiatives, Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) announced launch of a project to investigate the sources of fine particulate matter, a primary factor in urban smog. In a statement, the space agency said that leveraging its satellite monitoring and modeling capabilities, along with an Air Quality Monitoring Mobile Lab equipped with specialized analysers, Suparco aimed to identify and track pollution sources effectively. These mobile labs were stationed in key cities - Karachi, Lahore, and Gilgit - allowing a comprehensive monitoring across various regions. (*Dawn, November 7th, 2024, Page 4*)

Farmers, kilns flout smog SOPs

Farmers and kiln owners continue to flout smog SOPs day and night. Clouds of smoke rising from stubble burning in fields add to emissions from transport, industry and other urban sources. The district administration of Sialkot seems to be failing in implementing the SOPs and proceeding against farmers and kilns. Reports from all tehsils of the district suggest widespread crop residue burning. Brick kilns lacking zig-zag technology are also functioning, airing thick smoke. (*Dawn, November 11th, 2024, Page 8*)

Unicef seeks urgent action to reduce air pollution in Punjab

The Unicef has called for urgent and greater efforts to reduce air pollution and protect children’s health, as over 11 million children under five years of age are exposed to this smog in the worst affected districts in Punjab. Air pollution levels broke records in Lahore and Multan this past week with air pollution clocking in at over 100 times the World Health Organisation’s air quality guidelines. Hundreds have been hospitalised including dozens of children, and the air pollution is so severe it is now visible from space. (*Dawn, November 12th, 2024, Page 3*)

2 million seek treatment as smog chokes Punjab

Around two million people visited medical facilities across Punjab with breathing problems and other respiratory diseases in a month as record-breaking smog choked the province. Punjab healthcare department data showed that 19,34,030 cases were reported across the province, with 126,230 in Lahore. In the past 30 days, 119,533 complained of asthma, 13,773 of ischemic heart disease, 5,184 of stroke and 11,197 people suffered from conjunctivitis across Punjab. (*Dawn, November 15th, 2024, Page 1*)

'Fertiliser, sugar and ethanol mills contaminating water in RYK'

Two fertiliser plants, five sugar mills and two ethanol factories in the district Rahim Yar Khan and around it are draining wastewater either into the open or canals and small water channels, causing environmental disaster for the area, posing risks to the health of people and livestock and damaging crops. These factories and units include two fertiliser factories, Fatima Fertiliser Company Limited (FFCL) and Fauji Fertiliser Company (FFC), six sugar mills, namely RYK Sugar Mills (RSM) Janpur, Liaquatpur, Hamza Sugar Mills (HSM), Jetha Bhattha, Chaudhry Sugar Mills (CSM), Kot Samaba, Ittehad Sugar Mills (ISM), Iqbalabad, Jamaldinwali Sugar Mills (JSM) Unit 1, Jamaldinwali, Unit 2 in Machi Goth, and Gulf Sugar Mills (GSM) in Sindh close to Daowala area of Punjab. (*Dawn, November 28th, 2024, Page 2*)

Smog affects eight out of 10 Pakistanis, Ipsos survey reveals

Smog is becoming a permanent feature of life in Pakistan, as a recent survey by Ipsos revealed that almost 79 per cent (around eight out of 10) people have been exposed to its toxic effects once over the past month. The survey, conducted in the third week of November to gauge awareness and perceptions of this problem, deployed a 'CATI' interviews approach and had a sample size of over 1,000 participants, spread across four provinces and Islamabad. (*Dawn, November 30th, 2024, Page 3*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

Pakistan may face substantial losses in natural resources by 2070 due to climate change: ADB

Pakistan might face the threat of substantial losses in the natural resource sector, encompassing agriculture, forestry and fisheries due to the effects of climate change by 2070, said a new report of Asian Development Bank. The combined losses from these sectors in Pakistan are expected to be 12 per cent of GDP, which is the highest in the Asia-Pacific region, according to the Asia-Pacific Climate Report 2024, published by the Asian Development Bank. By 2070, climate change under a high-end emission scenario could cause a total loss of 16.9 per cent of GDP across the Asia and Pacific. Most of the region would face more than 20 per cent loss. Among the assessed countries and sub-regions, these losses are concentrated in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, the rest of Southeast Asia, high-income Southeast Asia, Pakistan, the Pacific and the Philippines.

The effects on labour productivity from heat waves are large and rank second or even dominate losses. While the GDP loss in 2070 from reduced labour productivity is found to be 4.9 per cent for the region, Pakistan is among the countries where the impact would be 10.4 per cent. The impact on India would be 11.6pc followed by Vietnam (8pc). Whereas the sea-level rise is the largest source of economic losses in 2070, in the 2030s, most economic losses are driven by effects on labour productivity and energy demand. Losses related to sea-level rise and storm surges accelerate over time, because of the combined effect of sea-level rise itself accelerating, storm surges exacerbating the acceleration effect, and the cumulative effect on economic growth of costs to rebuild damaged capital. The largest economic impacts of climate change will occur in areas with lower relative incomes, such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, the rest of Southeast Asia, Vietnam, and the Pacific, through increased coastal inundation, lower labour productivity, and lower natural resource productivity.

The poor communities are likely to be the most affected by these calamities, the ADB warned, adding that climate change will drastically alter the living conditions for people in developing Asia. The most pronounced impacts of climate change in the region will be felt in the frequency, duration and severity of heat waves, followed by shifts in precipitation patterns that will elevate flood risks and increase drought occurrences.

The ADB said more severe storms and rising sea levels are expected to increasingly threaten low-lying coastal areas, including coastal megacities where populations and economic assets are heavily concentrated. If the climate crisis continues to accelerate, up to 300 million people in the region could be threatened by coastal inundation, and trillions of dollars of coastal assets could be damaged annually by 2070, the report further warned. The report cautioned that by 2070, climate change under a high-end greenhouse gas emissions scenario, rising to 41 per cent by 2100 that could cause a total of 17pc of GDP across the Asia Pacific region. Most of the Asia and Pacific region is expected to be wetter in the future, as warmer air can hold more moisture and increased temperatures increase oceanic evaporation.

However, this overall trend masks substantial variations by locality. In South Asia, precipitation would increase by around 50pc by 2100 under 4.7 centigrade of mean global warming and, in East Asia, it would increase by around 25pc, whereas Southeast Asia could expect a mixture of increases and decreases. According to the report, annual financing needs for adaptation in the region are estimated to be between \$102 billion and \$431 billion. Nearly half of modelled needs are for coastal and river flood protection. The needs far exceed the approximately \$34 billion of tracked adaptation finance that was committed in the region in 2021–2022. The policymakers must continually revisit and improve predictions of impacts and systematically test adaptation measures to ensure that adaptation policy addresses evolving challenges, the report emphasised. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 5*)

Pakistan suffers ‘\$100bn loss’ due to climate change

Amid political and economic challenges, environmental conflicts have further exacerbated the situation for Pakistan, inflicted loss of \$100 billion during the last two decades due to climate change compared to around \$130 billion total external debt since the country’s creation. This was the crux of a thematic session titled, “Environmental conflict and social dialogue in Pakistan” organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). Speakers were of the view that by disturbing environment security, multiple crises, including hindering economic growth and food security, were created. (*Business Recorder, November 8th, 2024, Page 3*)

12.1 # Climate Financing

Govt launches ‘Climaventures’: A \$50m push for climate innovation, investment

Pakistan took a significant step toward climate resilience and innovation with the launch of Climaventures, a pioneering initiative led by the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). Unveiled in Islamabad, this groundbreaking \$50 million project is designed to attract private investment in climate ventures, marking the first of its kind in Pakistan. The event drew a diverse audience, including government officials, foreign dignitaries, and key figures from organizations like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the World Bank. Together with local investors, National Incubation Centers (NICs), and climate entrepreneurs, attendees underscored the program’s collaborative approach to tackling Pakistan’s pressing climate challenges. With a core \$25 million funding commitment from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Climaventures aims to address Pakistan’s funding gaps for sustainable solutions by offering technical guidance, grants, and equity for climate-focused startups. (*Business Recorder, November 10th, 2024, Page 1*)

Pakistan aims to counter climate change with disaster risk finance

Romina Khurshid Alam, the PM’s aide on climate change, has called for integrating disaster risk finance into its loss and damage efforts as a step towards resilience and long-term recovery and managing the escalating costs of climate change. Speaking at an event titled ‘Pakistan and Global Shield’ at the Pakistan Pavilion, Ms Alam said extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and prolonged droughts underlined the urgent need for climate-vulnerable developing countries to formulate comprehensive strategies to address loss and damage. (*Dawn, November 21st, 2024, Page 12*)

12. 2 # Climate Policy

Country unveils first National Carbon Market Policy

Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam has said that Pakistan is now actively exploring the development of carbon markets as a key strategy to meet its climate goals, attract green investments and transition toward a low-carbon economy as a part of efforts geared towards achieving environmental sustainability and climate resilience in the country.

“Let me say this confidently that Pakistan is now ready to lead, innovate, and collaborate with local private sector as well as international partners for the development of carbon markets to attract investments in green initiatives for achieving climate goals under the Paris climate pact,” she announced while addressing a high-level event ‘Launch of Pakistan’s Carbon market Policy & Panel on Coordinated Access to Net Zero Development Financing Through Paris-Aligned Carbon Markets’ held here at Pakistan Pavilion on the sidelines of COP29 global climate conference in Baku. (*Business Recorder, November 17th, 2024, Page 1*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

Lightning kills two in Bajaur as rain lashes several districts

Two people were killed were killed as heavy rains lashed several districts of the province while a thick pall of smog engulfed the provincial capital for several hours. The deaths were reported from Salarzai tehsil of Bajaur district after lightning struck the area at 7.45am during heavy rain. (*Dawn, November 12th, 2024, Page 8*)

Pakistan unveils adaptation plans to counter floods

Devastated by floods year in and year out, Pakistan unveiled plans for ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and ensuring better water quality, as it looks for a transformative approach to turn the tide of these disasters. “While Pakistan continues to face escalating climate risks, including devastating floods, adopting and promoting EbA strategies in managing the growing flood risks and its adverse impacts on infrastructure, lives and livelihoods of the people is crucial to protecting vulnerable communities, restoring degraded ecosystems and building climate resilience across the country,” Prime Minister’s Climate Change Coordinator Romina Khurshid Alam said. She was speaking at an event ‘Recharge Pakistan as Life to Indus’ held at the Pakistan Pavilion on the sidelines of COP29. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 12*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTER

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

15 # RESISTANCE

Demo in Quetta for recovery of missing Balochistan University students

A demonstration was held to protest the forcible disappearance of two students from Balochistan University on the call of the Baloch Students Action Committee. A large number of students, political workers, human rights activists and members of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) — along with women, children, and family members of the missing Sohail Baloch and Faseih Baloch — participated in the rally, which began at Balochistan University Chowk. They claimed that in the last month alone, 53 students had disappeared in various areas, with only 10 taken into custody from a field in Rawalpindi, and no information on their current locations. They demanded the recovery of all missing persons. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 3*)

Journalists protest ‘police excesses’

Media personnel in Kandhkot, Shikarpur and Ghotki towns held protest demonstrations after a police team from Punjab broke into the Kandhkot Press Club and tried to take away its former president Baqa Mohammad Bangwar and his professional colleague Saleem Mirani without informing anyone about their crime. A large number of journalists and other media personnel offered resistance, forcing the police team to leave the premises. Speaking to the participants at the protest venues, leaders of the journalist community strongly condemned the fresh police action. They recalled that one of their professional colleagues, Khan Mohammad Shar, had been taken away by the Punjab police along with his family members in a similar action in Kashmore 10 days ago and their whereabouts were not known till date. They said such actions could not deter the journalist community from discharging its duty of disseminating facts through fair reporting. They acknowledged that the Sindh and Punjab police were annoyed over reporting of their utter failure to eliminate dacoit gangs in the riverine areas of the two provinces, as well as those of Balochistan. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 15*)

Wasa workers’ strike leaves Quetta without water

Water supply to many localities of the provincial capital has been suspended as hundreds of employees of the city’s utility company have gone on strike. The strike by employees of the Water and Sanitation Authority — responsible for supplying water to Quetta — entered into the second day. The striking workforce also included tubewell operators and wall men, due to which no water could be supplied to the city. The Wasa employees are demanding a 25 per cent ad hoc allowance and benefits. No water could be supplied to the city from over 400 tubewells due to the strike. The city was already facing a water shortage, and Wasa was supplying water from the tubewells to different localities on alternate days for just one hour. The employees have vowed not to call off their strike till their demands are accepted. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 5*)

Tharis demand justice amidst coal project’s expansion

Thousands of people affected by the Thar coal project held a significant protest at the Islamkot Press Club, urging the government and project authorities to address their long-standing grievances. Villagers from areas surrounding the coal mining site walked over six kilometers, carrying banners and placards, chanting slogans to echo their voices raised against displacement, environmental damage and economic injustice in the aftermath of the expansion in the coal mining project. Demanding fair treatment under the law with equitable share in the benefits derived from the coal project, they expressed frustration over the exploitation of their ancestral lands without proper compensation and concerns of their welfare. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 15*)

Hundreds of teachers demonstrate in Peshawar to demand upgradation

Hundreds of primary schoolteachers from across the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province staged a protest sit-in near Jinnah Park to press for their post upgradation demand. They warned that if the demand was not met, they would spend the night on the road and

march towards the nearby provincial assembly building today for a sit-in. The sit-in was staged on a service road next to the Jinnah Park on the Grand Trunk Road, accusing the government of forcing them into taking to the streets by not fulfilling its commitment on their post upgradation. (*Dawn, November 6th, 2024, Page 8*)

Shopkeepers, businessmen observe strike in Dadu against power outage

Shopkeepers and businessmen observed a strike in city by suspending their activities, and closing shopping and trade centers. They took out a protest rally against the unscheduled loadshedding by Hesco in commercial and industries areas. (*Dawn, November 6th, 2024, Page 15*)

Massive protest in Kurram against closure of roads

A massive protest was held in Kurram against the prolonged closure of roads leading to the district. Khurram Deputy Commissioner Javedullah Mehsud said the roads have been closed over security concerns after attacks on passenger vehicles on Oct 12. Dozens have lost their lives in violent clashes over tribal and sectarian disputes in the district over the past few months. The main Thall-Parachinar Road has been closed for three weeks which, according to media reports, has created a shortage of food, medicines and other essential commodities in the district, with over half a million population. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 1*)

Border trade at Mand suspended over protest against new post

A large number of men and women protested against the alleged turning of houses into security checkpoints and gathered on road linking Mand town of Kech with Iran border. The protesters stopped all kinds of traffic while cross-border trade was also suspended. The protesters placed barricades on road and set up a camp. While addressing a joint press conference along with Baloch Yakjehti Committee leader Wasim Baloch; a civil society leader, Gulzar Dost, strongly criticised the authorities for setting up a security post at the house of a woman, Munira. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 5*)

Lawyers go on strike against police action in Hub

The president of Quetta Bar Association (QBA), Advocate Qari Rehmatullah, has announced boycott of court proceedings to lodge their protest against police action against lawyers at Hub judicial complex. Speaking at a press conference along with senior lawyers, Mir Attaullah Lango, Asghar Khan Mandokhail and Akbar Shah, the QBA president said that the Sindh police entered the judicial complex and allegedly assaulted three lawyers, including Hub Bar Association president Hammal Mari. Demanding immediate action against the police officials responsible for the incident, Advocate Qari Rehmatullah said lawyers would boycott the courts and display black flags outside the bar room to protest the incident. The complex remains under Sindh police control, despite multiple appeals to senior officials, including the Inspector General of Police, for its release, he said. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 5*)

Fishermen's boat rally seeks end to use of fossil fuels

Holding up placards with messages such as “Don’t gas Asia,” “End fossil fuels,” “Gas is not a transition fuel,” and “Shift directly to renewable energy,” hundreds of men and women from Karachi’s fisherfolk community set out to sea to demand an end to fossil fuel expansion ahead of COP29. They departed from Jamot Jetty in Ibrahim Hydri as part of the “Global Day of Action Against Gas Expansion” ahead of the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan. This boat protest rally was held simultaneously in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, culminating in similar actions in eight coastal areas of the Philippines organised by climate advocates of the Asian Movement for Debt and Development. They aimed to send a strong message to world leaders attending COP29 about the dangers posed to people and the planet by massive investments in fossil fuels. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 13*)

Protest against inundation of residential areas

People of Siaal Colony and adjacent residential held a demonstration on road in protest against inundation of their houses after Mirpur minor overtopped its banks. They told local reporters that officials of the irrigation department had failed in desilting the Mirpur minor for the past various years and allegedly misappropriated the funds allocated for the cleaning. They deplored that the minor overflowed after its capacity for taking water reduced following accumulation of silt in a huge amount. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 15*)

AT demands action against traders for lowering paddy prices

Nasirabad chapter of the Awami Tehreek staged an eight-kilometre foot march in protest against falling paddy prices, land grabbing, controversial canals project, worsening lawlessness and proposed amendments to Irsa act. The protesters’ leaders including AT’s central general secretary Advocate Sajid Hussain Mahesar, Sindhi Hari Tehreek’s central president Comrade Ghulam Mustafa Chandio, Advocate Najeebur Rehman Mahesar and others said in their speeches that declining paddy crops were economically slaughtering poor farmers and growers.

They said that under the guise of corporate farming, 4.8 million acres of land in the country, including 1.3 million acres in Sindh, was being handed over to foreign investors. They said that corporate farming projects planned to seize fertile farmlands and amendments were being made to the Irsa Act to sell water of the Indus River to foreign investors. After amendments to the Irsa Act, Sindh’s water would be sold to foreign investors for corporate farming. Six new canals were also being constructed to divert water to the corporate farming projects after blocking Sindh’s water but people of Sindh would not allow this sheer injustice. (*Dawn, November 9th, 2024. Page 15*)

Trans people demand freedom to live life on their own terms at Karachi festival

Waving the transgender flag, which has the traditional colours for baby girls and baby boys, pink and blue with a white stripe in the middle, transgender people from all over

the country gathered for the second ‘Hijra Festival’ at the Frere Hall Gardens to raise a united voice for their rights while celebrating their identity and existence. Members of civil society and human rights activists also joined in to lend support. This year’s festival theme was ‘Identity, Existence and Empowerment’. Of course no one could dare deny their existence at the festival. They were so out there, making bold and beautiful fashion statements as they demanded freedom to live life on their own terms. (*Dawn, November 10th, 2024, Page 13*)

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Junior leads rally against new canals on Indus River

Thousands of Pakistan People’s Party workers, led by Junior Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, son of Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto and grandson of Z.A. Bhutto, took to the streets of Shahdadt. The protest rally, which began at Sabzi Mandi, saw participants carrying banners, placards, and pictures of Junior Bhutto, as they marched against construction of six new canals from the Indus River. (*The News, November 10th, 2024, Page 3*)

Demo held against closure of pathways in Mirpurkhas

Scores of youths staged a demonstration outside local press club in protest against closure of pathways in dozens of villages due to flawed design of LBOD drains project. The protesters led by Ali Hassan Leghari, Ravi Shankar, Raza Leghari and Dodo Panhwar, who staged demo under banner of Climate Strike Sindh, told media persons that government had acquired foreign funds purportedly for supporting farmers and villagers to help them combat climate change effects but funds had not yet reached them.

They expressed the fear the funds might be misappropriated. During removal of illegal encroachments from LBOD drains and government lands many pathways in several villages were deliberately closed by creating hurdles, which seriously inconvenienced the villagers. They demanded higher authorities ensure financial help of the affected farmers as their crops had been destroyed by climate change effects, and ensure opening the closed pathways. (*Dawn, November 11th, 2024, Page 15*)

Sehwan shut in protest against 14-hour loadshedding

A complete shutdown strike was observed in Sehwan and march was staged in protest against 14-hour long ‘unscheduled’ loadshedding in the town and its adjoining areas and registration of ‘bogus’ cases by Hesco officials against common townspeople and members of business community on charges of power theft. The call for the protest was issued by Sindh United Party and activists of Shia Ulema Council, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl, Sindhi Adadi Sangat, lawyers and business community also joined it. (*Dawn, November 12th, 2024, Page 15*)

LUMHS staff, students rally in Jamshoro against ‘outsiders’ seeking passage through campus

Faculty members, administrative staff and students of Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), Jamshoro, came together on the campus and staged a rally in protest against incidents of intimidation by some residents of the villages in the

vicinity of the university, who demanded passage through the campus. They said the university could not do this as it was a matter of security for students, staff and faculty members including females. (*Dawn, November 13th, 2024, Page 15*)

Bhan Sayedabad town shut to protest rise in criminal activities

Members of business community, their sympathisers and activists of Sindh United Party observed a shutdown strike in Bhan Sayedabad town and staged a demonstration at Shahani Chowk on the Indus Highway in protest against police failure to rein in criminals. (*Dawn, November 13th, 2024, Page 15*)

Rally demands climate justice, reduction of fossil fuels

Hundreds of protesters marched from the Motani Jetty in Ibrahim Hyderi to the Karachi Electric power plant near the Pakistan Air Force base to urge the government to take concrete steps towards the reduction of coal and fossil fuels and demanded a just transition to clean energy. The protest was organised by the Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum (PFF) where they demanded from the government to implement a permanent coal ban and end fossil fuel expansion in the country, which is a primary cause of environmental pollution and climate change. (*Dawn, November 16th, 2024, Page 14*)

Protest in Quetta over abduction of young student

Traffic between Quetta and northern Balochistan cities grounded to a halt when outraged tribesmen and relatives of a kidnapped 11-year-old boy blocked the Quetta-Chaman highway at the Baleli area of the provincial capital. Traffic jam was also witnessed on several roads in the city, as the protesters created hurdles in the movement of the traffic, rendering the Afghan transit trade and other import and export business suspended. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 5*)

Balochistan roads remain blocked for third day to protest boy's kidnapping

Tribesmen, family members and political workers continued their protest on the third consecutive day, blocking roads and highways in different areas against the kidnapping of 11-year-old student Mohammad Musawir as police and members of other law-enforcement agencies failed to recover or trace whereabouts of the kidnapped student. The boy was kidnapped by armed men while going home from school in a van in Patel Bagh area three days ago. He is the son of a prominent tribal elder. The protesters blocked Quetta-Chaman Highway which connects the provincial capital with northern areas of the province. (*Dawn, November 18th, 2024, Page 3*)

Rally rejects 'six canals', corporate farming initiatives

A large number of women activists belonging to the Sindhiani Tehreek staged a rally in protest over federal government's plan to construct six canals over Indus, declaring project against interests of Sindh. Participants started their march from Regal Chowk & reached Karachi Press Club, where they delivered speeches & passed several resolutions. Rally participants, including children, elders, writers, intellectual, poets, carried banners and placards inscribed with slogans against Cholistan Canal, corporate

farming, cutting of Karoonjhar Hills, injustices against womenfolk, rising extremism and increasing incidents of kidnapping for ransom. (*Dawn, November 18th, 2024, Page 13*)

Sindh erupts in protest against Centre's plan to dig six canals from Indus River

Almost all political and religious parties, nationalist groups & civil society organisations took part in widespread rallies held across Sindh against controversial plan of digging six canals to irrigate lands in Punjab. Although PPP stayed away from the street protests, it also rejected the plan in unequivocal terms. (*Dawn, November 18th, 2024, Page 15*)

Traders protest closure of Pakistan-Iran border points

A shutter-down strike was reported in various border towns of the Rakhshan and Makran divisions in protest against the restrictions on border trade and the closure of border points along the Pakistan-Iran border. The closure has disrupted the supply of Iranian petroleum products and goods into Pakistan, leading to widespread unrest and rendering thousands of people jobless. The Rakhshan and Makran Border Trade Alliance had called for a complete shutdown in towns such as Washuk, Panjgur, Nokundi, and other border areas to protest the three-day weekly halt in border trade and the restrictions on oil transportation. Markets, hotels, banks, and other businesses remained closed, severely crippling trade and business activities in these border towns. (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 3*)

Rallies continue in Quetta against student's abduction

Protest sit-in, rallies and roadblocks continued in different areas of the provincial capital against the abduction of an 11-year-old student who could not be recovered despite the passage of four days. Leaders of the business community have also given a strike call for today against the kidnapping incident and to express their solidarity with the affected family. (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 5*)

Complete shutdown in Quetta over student's kidnapping

A complete shutdown was observed in the provincial capital in protest against the kidnapping of an 11-year-old student, as authorities have failed to trace his whereabouts despite the passage of five days. The strike was jointly called by the sit-in committee and traders' association in solidarity with the family of the kidnapped child. Several political parties also backed the strike. The business community closed their establishments throughout the day. All major markets, bazaars, shopping plazas, and business centres remained closed. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 5*)

Students rally in Quetta as police find no clue to abducted boy's whereabouts

Boys and girls of different schools took out a protest rally in the provincial capital against the kidnapping of a school student who police and other law-enforcement agencies failed to recover despite the passage of six days. The students gathered at a point in the provincial capital and then marched through various roads and streets carrying placards and banners demanding immediate recovery of the kidnapped student. They also chanted slogans against government. (*Dawn, November 21st, 2024, Page 5*)

30 injured in AJK protest against ordinance

At least 30 people, including eight policemen, sustained injuries in clashes between police and protesters in Azad Jammu and Kashmir's southern town of Kotli, during demonstrations against a recent ordinance promulgated to "regulate public assemblies", officials said. They alleged that the protesters damaged or set fire to four vehicles, as well as other public property, in the district headquarters. The unrest followed a call for protests by some groups against the "Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Ordinance 2024" promulgated on Oct 29. (*Dawn, November 22nd, 2024, Page 8*)

250 protesters booked under ATA

Kandhkot police lodged a case on behalf of state against 250 protesters, who placed bodies of two slain litigants outside SSP office and staged a demonstration three days back, under sections of Anti-Terrorism Act. (*Dawn, November 22nd, 2024, Page 15*)

Protests sweep the country as Kurram toll rises to 43

The death toll from Thursday's attack on passenger vehicles in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district area rose to 43, authorities said as they imposed a curfew and suspended mobile service in the remote mountainous district. Businesses, educational institutions and markets remained closed across Parachinar and surrounding areas in Kurram, a district near the Afghanistan border with a history of sectarian violence. Thousands of people took to the streets in various cities. The convoy of around 200 vehicles, carrying Shia passengers between Peshawar and Parachinar, came under heavy gunfire in the densely populated Bagan town. (*Dawn, November 23rd, 2024, Page 1*)

HRCP supports farmers

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has announced its support for the tenants and small farmers against forcible occupation of the state land they have been ploughing since decades. HRCP stands in full solidarity with the Pakistan Kisan Rabita Committee, Anjuman Muzareen Punjab and all small farmers and landless peasants who oppose any forcible occupation by state of lands that belong to them or on which they depend for their livelihood, says a statement. (*Dawn, November 23rd, 2024, Page 2*)

Rallies held across Sindh to condemn terror attack in Kurram

Demonstrations and rallies were held across the province, similar to other major cities in the country, to condemn the attack on a convoy of passenger vehicles in Lower Kurram that resulted in the deaths of at least 42 people. The Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen Pakistan central chairman Allama Raja Nasir Abbas Jafri had announced a three-day mourning across country. The party held protest rallies and demonstrations in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur where MWM leaders strongly condemned the Parachinar tragedy. The Sindh High Court Bar Association (SHCBA) has also condemned the "inhuman and barbaric" gun attack on passenger vans in Lower Kurram. Meanwhile, the Karachi Bar Association observed a full-day suspension of judicial work in protest against the incident. (*Dawn, November 23rd, 2024, Page 13*)

Rawadari march reiterates demand for arrest of Dr Kunbhar's killers

Leaders of Rawadari march have reiterated their demand for the arrest of culprits involved in the murder of Dr Shahnawaz Kunbhar in a staged encounter and torching of his body on Sept 19, and vowed to oppose construction of six canals being built over Indus River. The march started from Old Campus roundabout and ended at local press club. Women peasants, home-based workers, labourers, activists of Pakistan Peoples Party-Shaheed Bhutto, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), National Trade Union Federation, Sindhiani Tehreek, transgender persons and activists of Women Action Forum participated in the protest. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 15*)

Demos against Parachinar tragedy

Protest demonstrations against killing of scores of men, women and children in Parachinar, a couple of days back, were held in different cities and towns of Sindh for a second consecutive day. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 15*)

Quetta rally slams Parachinar violence

A protest rally in Quetta, condemning the recent violence in Parachinar, in which over 60 people have been killed over past few days. (*Dawn, November 25th, 2024, Page 5*)

Sindh Moorat march in Hyderabad seeks equal opportunities for transgenders

Trans-gender persons staged 'Sindh Moorat March', raising demands for counting their community realistically in census and granting them equal opportunities in education, employment and health. March started from Rani Bagh, where transgenders who had come from different towns and cities of province, danced to different songs on a stage, & culminated at Shahbaz Building roundabout. (*Dawn, November 25th, 2024, Page 15*)

Protests continue against Centre's canals project

Rallies, demonstrations, sit-ins and a protest march were held in various parts of Sindh in the continuing agitation against Centre's plan to dig six canals from the Indus River and moves to amend the Indus River System Authority Act. Activists of Sindh United Party held a 30km-long march on foot from Mohenjo Daro to Larkana Press Club. It took them eight hours to cover the distance. (*Dawn, November 25th, 2024, Page 15*)

Life comes to standstill across Balochistan amid strike

Rail and road traffic in Balochistan remained suspended for hours as a complete wheel-jam strike was observed across the province on a joint call of political parties, traders and civil society against the abduction of a 10-year-old schoolboy. All government and private schools, colleges and universities in Quetta and other parts of the province remained closed, while several cases including the one pertaining to student's abduction scheduled for the day could not be heard in the Balochistan High Court due to the absence of judges. (*Dawn, November 26th, 2024, Page 12*)

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1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Global value added by agriculture, forestry and fishing grows 89pc by 2022

The global value added by agriculture, forestry and fishing grew by 89 per cent in real terms between 2000 and 2022, reaching \$3.8 trillion in 2022, according to an FAO report. Given its size, Asia was the main contributor to global agriculture, forestry and fishing value-added with 6pc of the world total in 2022: the continent's value added more than doubled from \$1.2tr in 2000 to \$2.5tr in 2022, according to the World Food and Agriculture — Statistics Yearbook 2024. The global contribution of agriculture to GDP declined marginally between 2000 and 2019. This is an expected consequence of the growth of total GDP. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the various restrictions put in place to contain it in 2020, the value added by the industry and services sectors declined while that of agriculture kept increasing, resulting in an artificial jump of the share of agriculture in the total in 2020.

In 2022, the global agricultural land area was 4.78 billion hectares (ha), down 2pc, or 0.09 billion hectares, compared with 2000 and between 2000 and 2022, and roughly two-thirds of agricultural land was used for permanent meadows and pastures (3.21bn ha in 2022, down 5pc, or 0.17bn ha from 2000). One-third of the total agricultural land was cropland (1.57bn ha in 2022, up 5pc, or 0.08bn ha from 2000). Cropland area per capita decreased in all regions between 2000 and 2022 as population increased faster than the cropland area. The world average was declined by 19 percent, reaching 0.20 ha per capita in 2022. Other reasons for high values of cropland area per capita include the intense use of agricultural inputs and dependencies on agricultural imports or food aid. The development of irrigation is one aspect of agriculture intensification that has allowed total production to grow much faster than the cultivated area.

The yearbook says the global land area equipped for irrigation reached 354m ha in 2022, an increase of 22pc from the 289m ha of 2000 and more than twice the land area equipped for irrigation in the 1960s. The vast majority is located in Asia (70pc), where irrigation was a key component of the green revolution. The share of the area equipped for irrigation in cropland area increased to 22.5pc in 2022, up 3.1 percentage points compared with 2000. The higher levels in Asia compared to the rest of the world are partly attributable to the prevalence of irrigation-intensive rice cultivation in the region.

Countries with low shares of equipped area for irrigation are more dependent on rain-fed agriculture, which tends to be overall more extensive than irrigated agriculture and is affected by changing rain patterns. The number of people working in agriculture worldwide, including forestry and fishing, went down 13pc between 2000 and 2022, reaching 892m in 2022, or 133m less than in 2000. Employment in agriculture declined between 2000 and 2019 (to 863m).

Employment in agriculture declined between 2000 and 2019 to 863m. The Covid-19 pandemic reversed this long-term decline, as people went back to rural areas and entered into agricultural work, especially in Africa and Asia, resulting in an increase of 5m workers between 2019 and 2020. Between 2000 and 2022, agricultural employment has declined from 786m people to 592m in Asia: this means that more than one out of every four agricultural workers has left the sector for another job outside agriculture in region.

Global pesticide use increased between 2000 and 2022 by 70pc to 3.7m tonnes in 2022. Most of this increase took place between 2000 and 2016, with a small decline until 2018 and renewed growth afterwards. Total agricultural use of inorganic fertilisers, expressed as the sum of the three nutrients nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, was 185m tonnes in 2022, down 7pc compared with 2021. Decrease is mainly due to significantly higher fertiliser prices linked with higher natural gas prices and conflict-related supply chain disruptions. Asia represented 55pc of world total agricultural use of inorganic fertilisers in 2022, followed by Americas (28pc), Europe (11pc), Africa (4pc) and Oceania (2pc). This ranking of regions is same for all nutrients. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 9*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

BD issues another tender to buy 50,000 tons of rice

Bangladesh's state grains buyer has issued another international tender to purchase 50,000 metric tons of rice, traders said. The deadline for submission of price offers is Dec. 2. A previously issued tender from Bangladesh also seeking 50,000 tons of rice closes. Floods in Bangladesh have destroyed an estimated 1.1m metric tons of rice, according to data from agriculture ministry, prompting country to expand imports of staple grain amid soaring food prices. (*Business Recorder, November 19th, 2024, Page 9*)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Scientists seek miracle pill to stop methane cow burps

A scientist guides a long tube into mouth and down to the stomach of Thing 1, a two-month-old calf that is part of a research project aiming to prevent cows from burping methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Paulo de Meo Filho, a postdoctoral researcher at University of California, Davis, is part of an ambitious experiment aiming to develop a pill to transform cow gut bacteria so it emits less or no methane. While fossil fuel industry and some natural sources emit methane, cattle farming has become a major climate concern due to sheer volume of cows' emissions. (*Dawn, November 25th, 2024, Page 11*)

5 # TRADE

Peru sees free trade pact with India in 2025, trade minister says

Peru aims to finalize negotiations for a free trade agreement with India in 2025 and is advancing talks to have a similar trade pact with Indonesia in the future, said Peruvian

Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism Ursula Leon. A new pact with India would enable the South American country to have free trade with the world's top two most populous nations, as Peru has had free trade with China since 2009. Leon said negotiations with India had stretched to eight rounds and had to be paused previously during the country's elections earlier in 2024. "We hope to advance the negotiations now that we have resumed and that next year in 2025, we can have a free trade agreement with India," Leon said. Trade between Peru and India has increased in recent years on gold sales from the Andean country. Peruvian exports to India were worth about \$3.5 billion between January and September of this year, an increase of 77% from the same period a year earlier, according to Peruvian government data. (*Business Recorder, November 10th, 2024, Page 8*)

China-Europe freight trains reach 100,000

The China-Europe freight train service, a calling card of the Belt and Road Initiative, has reached a major milestone, with the 100,000th train now in operation, according to China State Railway Group, which manages and oversees the service. With this milestone, the China-Europe freight train has now transported over 11 million TEUs of goods, valued at more than \$420 billion. Since its launch in 2011, the service has significantly transformed global trade, fostering enhanced connectivity between China and Europe. The service has maintained a strong record of safe, stable, and efficient operations, becoming a vital part of the international logistics system. This achievement underscores the rapid growth of the rail corridor connecting China and Europe, facilitating seamless and reliable movement of goods across continents.

Over the past seven years, the service has seen an almost tenfold increase in operations, with annual train numbers rising from 1,702 in 2016 to over 17,000 in 2023. While it took 90 months to reach the 10,000th train, only six months were needed to surpass the 90,000th and 100,000th train milestones. Since March of this year, monthly operations have consistently exceeded 1,600 trains. (*Dawn, November 18th, 2024, Page 10*)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Environment groups lose appeal in Shell climate case in the Netherlands

Dutch judges ruled against climate groups who said oil giant Shell was not doing enough to curb its greenhouse gas emissions, striking down a landmark judgement three years ago. The Appeals Court ruling, which shocked environmental groups including Milieudefensie who steered the case, reverses a landmark decision three years ago. Back then, a lower Dutch court ruled that Shell must reduce its carbon emissions by 45 percent by 2030, as it was contributing to the "dire" effects of climate change. Both Shell and environment groups appealed, with Shell appealing the ruling itself and climate activists saying the oil giant was not implementing the ruling. (*Business Recorder, November 13th, 2024, Page 5*)

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

China and Indonesia sign multiple cooperation deals

Chinese President Xi Jinping signed multiple cooperation deals with his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto, Chinese state TV CCTV reported, as the two countries seek increased partnerships in key areas. The deals covered issues including water conservation, maritime resources and mining, the report said, and come ahead of a meeting Prabowo is scheduled to attend between Indonesian officials and a number of top Chinese companies, where the Indonesia presidential office said investment agreements worth more than \$10 billion will be signed.

In a visit to China by Prabowo just a few weeks after taking office, the two sides also jointly published a statement on “Promoting Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and Building a China-Indonesia Community with a Shared Future”. Xi told Prabowo that China was willing to cooperate with the new Indonesian government to the countries’ mutual benefit. (*Business Recorder, November 10th, 2024, Page 1*)

Adani Group to invest \$10bn in US energy following Trump win

India’s Adani Group will invest \$10 billion in US energy security and infrastructure projects, aiming to create up to 15,000 jobs, chairman Gautam Adani said. The billionaire announced the investment, with no specific timeline, while congratulating US President-elect Donald Trump on his election win. Trump has vowed to make it easier for energy companies to drill on federal land and build new pipelines, and law firms with strong traditional energy practices could benefit under his second administration. Adani Group was accused by US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research in January 2023 of improper use of offshore tax havens and stock manipulation that sparked a \$150 billion rout in shares of the group’s companies. (*Business Recorder, November 14th, 2024, Page 11*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIS)

8.1 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF urged to cash in on gold price to help poor countries hit by climate change

The International Monetary Fund should sell 4% of its gold to help offer debt relief to low income countries devastated by climate-related catastrophes, a study said as climate financing dominates early talks at the COP29 summit. From the Caribbean to Africa, low income countries have turned to the IMF in recent years for support in the face of shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic, driving up repayments to the lender of last resort in subsequent years. Although the IMF has a facility known as Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust (CCRT), this only covers 30 poor countries and has just \$103 million available, said researchers from the Boston University Global Development Centre. The CCRT is used to pay off an eligible member state’s loans to the IMF for up to two years, providing immediate relief and allowing those funds to be targeted at other priorities. (*Business Recorder, November 14th, 2024, Page 5*)

IMF okays review of Sri Lanka's \$2.9bn bailout

The International Monetary Fund approved the third review of Sri Lanka's \$2.9 billion bailout but warned that the South Asian economy remains vulnerable. In a statement, the IMF said it would release about \$333m, bringing total funding to around \$1.3bn, to the crisis-hit nation. It said signs of an economic recovery were emerging. The country still needs to complete a \$12.5bn bondholder debt restructuring and a \$10bn debt rework with bilateral creditors including Japan, China and India to take the programme forward, the IMF said. The IMF bailout secured in March last year helped stabilise economic conditions after cash-strapped Sri Lanka plunged into its worst financial crisis in more than seven decades in 2022. Staying in line with tax revenue requirements and continuing reforms of state-owned enterprises will remain crucial to hitting a primary surplus target of 2.3pc of gross domestic product next year, said IMF Senior Mission Chief Peter Breuer, wrapping up a delegation visit to capital Colombo.

“The authorities have committed to staying within the guardrails of the programme,” Breuer said. “We have agreed on a package for them to achieve their priorities and objectives and as soon as that is submitted to parliament it will then be possible to go ahead with the fourth review process.” During Sri Lanka's crisis, a severe dollar shortage sent inflation soaring to 70pc, its currency to record lows and its economy contracting by 7.3pc during the worst of the fallout and by 2.3pc last year. In recent months, the rupee has risen 11.3pc and inflation disappeared, with prices falling 0.8pc last month. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 9*)

Sri Lanka kicks off much-delayed \$12.5bn bond deal

Sri Lanka said it would honour a deal secured by its predecessor to restructure \$12.55 billion in international sovereign bonds, a key condition to maintain an IMF bailout loan. The leftist government of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who came to power two days after the bond deal was announced in September, said it will implement the restructuring immediately. A majority of private creditors of the South Asian nation agreed two months ago to a 27 percent haircut on their loans, but it needed approval of the new administration. Dissanayake's National People's Power (NPP) party had criticised the restructuring as being unfavourable to the impoverished nation and vowed to renegotiate after coming to power. However, since party went onto win a landslide at November 14 parliamentary elections he has made a U-turn, saying the recovery was too fragile to make any changes. (*Business Recorder, November 28th, 2024, Page 5*)

8.2 # World Bank (WB)

Poorest countries: Biden pledges record \$4bn to WB fund

US President Joe Biden pledged a \$4 billion US contribution to the World Bank's International Development Association fund for the world's poorest countries, two sources with knowledge of the commitment said. Biden announced the US pledge during a closed session of the Group of 20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The amount is a record and substantially

exceeds the \$3.5 billion Washington committed in the previous IDA fund replenishment round in December 2021. World Bank President Ajay Banga is aiming for a record amount exceeding the \$93 billion refunding in December 2021, amid rising demands from poor nations in Africa and elsewhere that are struggling with crushing debts, climate disasters, conflict and other pressures. Banga told in October that a \$120 billion replenishment is possible, but that goal would require some substantial increases in country commitments. Biden's new US commitment is about 14.3% higher than its 2021 contribution. At the IMF-World Bank annual meetings in October, Spain announced plans to boost its contribution by 37% to 400 million euros (\$423 million). Denmark in September announced a 40% increase in its contribution to about \$492 million. (*Business Recorder, November 19th, 2024, Page 1*)

9 # POLICY

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMICAL CONDITION

G20 summit kicks off with global pact to fight hunger, poverty

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva opened the summit of the Group of 20 major economies with the launch of a global alliance to combat poverty and hunger that more than 80 countries have agreed to back. As G20 leaders met at Rio de Janeiro's Modern Art Museum for two days of talks, their agenda highlighted a shifting global order as US president-elect Donald Trump returns to power. Their discussions of trade, climate change and international security will run up against the sharp US policy changes that Trump vows upon taking office in January, from tariffs to the promise of a negotiated solution to the war in Ukraine. (*Dawn, November 19th, 2024, Page 11*)

10.1 # Food

UN agencies fear hunger deaths in Gaza

UN food agencies warned of deadly hunger levels in 16 "hunger hotspots" in coming months, with the Palestinian territories, Sudan and South Sudan, Mali and Haiti of most concern. Conflict is driving most of the acute food insecurity in all those areas analysed by the FAO and the World Food Programme. Extreme weather was a major factor in other regions, while economic inequality and high debt in many developing countries are hurting governments' capacity to react, according to the joint report covering forecasts for Nov 2024 to May 2025. Humanitarian action was urgently needed to prevent starvation and death in the Palestinian territories, Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti and Mali, said the report, based on research by experts from the two Rome-based United Nations agencies. "Without immediate humanitarian efforts and concerted international action to address severe access constraints and advocate for the de-escalation of conflict and insecurity, further starvation and loss of life are likely" in those spots. Of "very high concern", are Nigeria, Chad, Yemen, Mozambique, Myanmar, Syria and Lebanon. (*Dawn, November 1st, 2024, Page 11*)

Famine looming in north Gaza: UN-backed report

Famine is looming in the northern Gaza Strip amid increased hostilities and a near-halt in food aid, a UN-backed assessment said. Israeli forces have intensified their operations in large swathes of devastated northern Gaza since early October, where evacuation orders are in place. Aid shipments allowed to enter the Gaza Strip were now lower than at any time since October 2023, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report. The alert from the Famine Review Committee warned of “an imminent and substantial likelihood of famine occurring, due to the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip”.

On October 17, the body projected that the number of people in Gaza facing “catastrophic” food insecurity between November and April 2025 would reach 345,000, or 16 percent of the population. The IPC report classified that figure as Phase 5 -- a situation when “starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident”. Since that report, conditions have worsened in the north of Gaza, with a collapse of food systems, a drop in humanitarian aid and critical water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, the committee said. “It can therefore be assumed that starvation, malnutrition, and excess mortality due to malnutrition and disease, are rapidly increasing in these areas,” it read. The Israeli military questioned the UN-back report’s credibility. The body expressed concern over Israel’s cutting ties last month with the UN aid agency for Palestinians, warning of “extremely serious consequences for humanitarian operations” in Gaza. (*The News, November 10th, 2024, Page 11*)

102. # Inflation

Global food prices reach 18-month high: FAO

Global food prices rose in October to their highest level in 18 months, with a sharp increase in the cost of vegetable oil, the Food and Agriculture Organization said. The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in international prices of a basket of food commodities, reached 127.4 points last month, a two-percent increase from September. It was the highest since April 2023 but still 20.5 percent lower than the peak reached in March 2022 following Russia’s invasion of agricultural powerhouse Ukraine. Vegetable oil prices increased by 7.3 percent in October, reaching a two-year high due to lower production. Sugar prices rose 2.6 percent, dairy was up 2.5 percent and cereals gained 0.8 percent. Meat was the only commodity to fall, down 0.3 percent from the previous month. (*Business Recorder, November 9th, 2024, Page 1*)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Heat, air pollution, disease: how climate change affects health

Record-breaking heat, extreme weather events, air pollution and the spread of infectious disease: climate change poses an already vast yet rising threat to the health of humans around the world, experts warn. The latest round of UN climate talks begin next week during what is expected to be the hottest year in recorded history — and in shadow of

climate sceptic Donald Trump’s re-election as US president. The COP29 negotiations will be held in Azerbaijan as the world continues to emit increasing levels of planet-heating fossil fuels, even as many nations have been lashed by devastating floods, droughts, heatwaves and storms. “Climate change is making us sick, and urgent action is a matter of life and death,” the World Health Organisation warned this week. Here are some of the ways that global warming affects health.

The EU’s climate monitor said this week that 2024 is “virtually certain” to surpass last year to become the hottest year in recorded history. It is also expected to be the first year that is more than 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average. Out of 15 ways that climate change impacts health being tracked by experts as part of The Lancet Countdown, 10 have now “reached concerning new records”, according to the group’s latest report. The number of over-65s who died from heat has risen by 167 per cent since the 1990s, just one of the recent all-time highs. Extreme heat leads to numerous health risks such as kidney disorders, strokes, adverse pregnancy outcomes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, organ failure and ultimately death.

Almost all — 99pc — of the world’s population breathes air that exceeds the World Health Organisation’s guidelines for air pollution. This pollution has been found to increase the risk of respiratory diseases, strokes, heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes and other health problems, posing a threat that has been compared to tobacco. Almost seven million premature deaths a year are linked to air pollution, according to the WHO. Just last week, Pakistan’s second-biggest city Lahore recorded air pollution at 40 times the level deemed acceptable by the WHO. (*Dawn, November 10th, 2024, Page 10*)

Toxic smog surges past 50 times WHO limit in New Delhi

Residents of India’s capital New Delhi choked in a blanketing toxic smog as worsening air pollution surged past 50 times the World Health Organisation’s recommended daily maximum. Many in the city cannot afford air filters, nor do they have homes they can effectively seal from the misery of foul smelling air blamed for thousands of premature deaths. Cooler temperatures and slow-moving winds trap deadly pollutants each winter, stretching from mid-October until at least January.

At dawn, “hazardous” pollutant levels in parts of the sprawling urban area of more than 30 million people topped 806 micrograms per cubic metre, according to monitoring firm IQAir. That is more than 53 times the World Health Organisation recommended daily maximum of fine particulate matter — dangerous cancer-causing microparticles known as PM2.5 pollutants that enter the bloodstream through the lungs. By midday, when air usually is at its best, it eased to about 25-35 times above danger levels, depending on different districts. (*Dawn, November 14th, 2024, Page 10*)

Air pollution from fires blamed for 1.5m deaths a year

Air pollution caused by fires is linked to more than 1.5 million deaths a year worldwide, the vast majority occurring in developing countries. This death toll is expected to rise

in the coming years as climate change makes wildfires more frequent and intense, according to a study in *The Lancet* journal. The international team of researchers looked at existing data on “landscape fires”, which include both wildfires that rage through nature and planned fires such as controlled burns on farming land. Around 450,000 deaths a year from heart disease were linked to fire-related air pollution between 2000 and 2019. A further 220,000 deaths from respiratory disease were attributed to the smoke and particulates spewed into the air by fire. From all causes around the world, a total of 1.53m annual deaths were associated with air pollution from landscape fires. More than 90pc of these deaths were in low and middle-income countries, it added, with nearly 40pc in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

The countries with the highest death tolls were China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Indonesia, and Nigeria. A record amount of illegal burning of farm fields in northern India has been partly blamed for noxious smog that has recently been choking the capital New Delhi. The authors of the *Lancet* study called for “urgent action” to address the huge death toll from landscape fires. The disparity between rich and poor nations further highlights “climate injustice”, in which those who have contributed the least to global warming suffer from it the most. Some of the ways people can avoid smoke from fires — such as moving away from the area, using air purifiers and masks, or staying indoors — are not available to people in poorer countries.

So they called for more financial and technological support for people in the hardest-hit countries. The study was released a week after UN climate talks where delegates agreed to a boost in climate funding that developing countries slammed as insufficient. It also came after Ecuador declared a national emergency over forest fires that have razed more than 10,000 hectares in the country’s south. The world has also been battered by hurricanes, droughts, floods and other extreme weather events during what is expected to be the hottest year in recorded history. (*Dawn, November 29th, 2024, Page 12*)

11.1 # Biodiversity

Rare karachi fish faces threat from lithium mining project

At more than 3,700 meters above sea level, the “karachi” swims happily in dense salt flat waters, but locals worry a future lithium project will endanger this extreme-environment fish. The *Orestias ascotanensis* is a small ray-finned fish that grows to just 7.5 centimeters, but has adapted to the Ascotan salt flat’s high concentrations of heavy metals and variable salinity. (*Dawn, November 21st, 2024, Page 10*)

11.2 # Health

‘Records broken, action delayed’ on health & climate change

As people across the world face record-breaking threats to health due to rapidly changing climate, Lancet Countdown in its annual report on health and climate change called for a global health-centred transformation of financial system to deliver rapid

health and economic benefits. The eighth annual indicator report of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change revealed that people in every country face record-breaking threats to health and survival from the rapidly changing climate, with 10 of 15 indicators tracking health threats reaching concerning new records.

The report, developed in close collaboration with the World Health Organisation, represents the work of 122 leading experts from 57 academic institutions and UN agencies globally, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). Published ahead of the 29th UN Conference of the Parties (COP), the report provides the most up-to-date assessment of the link between health and climate change. It also called out governments and companies for adding fuel to climate change and urged them to redirect investments from fossil fuels to drive a rapid and fair transition to a net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) economy.

According to the report, people were exposed, on an average, to an “unprecedented 50 more days of health-threatening temperatures” whereas extreme drought affected 48 per cent of the global land area - the second-highest level recorded. The higher frequency of heat waves and droughts was associated with 151 million more people experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity than annually between 1981 and 2010, it said. The report noted that 2023 was the hottest year on record, plagued by persistent droughts, deadly heat waves, and devastating forest fires, storms and floods, and disastrous impacts on the health, lives and livelihoods of people worldwide.

The report feared heat-related deaths were expected to exceed cold-related deaths in a high-warming scenario, adding such deaths among those over age 65 increased by a record-breaking 167 per cent above deaths in the 1990s, substantially above the 65 per cent increase that would have been expected had temperatures not changed (accounting only for changing demographics). The Lancet Countdown report revealed that spike in temperature led to a record 512 billion potential hours of labour lost globally last year (a 49 per cent increase above the 1990-1999 average), with global potential income losses equivalent to US\$835 billion. Besides heat, 61 per cent of the global land area saw an increase in extreme precipitation events during the last decade, compared to the 1961-1990 average. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 11*)

Unhealthy eating drives \$8tr in annual hidden costs: FAO

A refined study by the FAO involving 156 countries confirms that hidden costs within global agrifood systems amount to approximately \$12 trillion annually. Of this figure, around 70 per cent (\$8.1tr) arise from unhealthy dietary patterns and are linked to alarming non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, far exceeding the costs related to environmental degradation and social inequalities. The study details how global hidden costs are largely driven by health hidden costs, followed by environmental hidden costs, in more industrialised agri-food systems in upper-middle- and high-income countries, FAO announced.

In examining health impacts, the report identifies 13 dietary risk factors. These include insufficient intake of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables; excessive sodium consumption; and high intake of red and processed meats, with notable differences across various agrifood systems. To facilitate analysis, the research introduces a typology that categorises agrifood systems into six distinct groups: protracted crisis, traditional, expanding, diversifying, formalising, and industrial. This framework allows for a targeted understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities inherent to each system, enabling the development of tailored policies and interventions. According to the study, high sodium intake is another significant concern, exhibiting an upward trend as agrifood systems evolve from traditional to formalising, peaking in the latter and then decreasing in industrial systems. Conversely, high consumption of processed and red meat steadily increases throughout the transition from traditional to industrial systems, where it ranks among the top three dietary risks. (*Dawn, November 10th, 2024, Page 9*)

Global diabetes rate has doubled in 30 years: study

The percentage of adults suffering from diabetes across the world has doubled over the past three decades, the biggest rises coming in developing countries. The serious health condition affected around 14 per cent of all adults worldwide in 2022, compared to seven per cent in 1990, according to the new analysis in *The Lancet* journal. Taking into account the growing global population, the team of researchers estimated that more than 800 million people are now diabetic, compared to less than 200 million in 1990. These figures include both main types of diabetes. Type 1 affects patients from a young age and is more difficult to treat because it is caused by an insulin deficiency. Type 2 mainly affects middle-aged or older people who lose their sensitivity to insulin. Behind the global numbers, national figures varied widely. The rate of diabetes stayed the same or even fell in some wealthier countries, such as Japan, Canada or Western European nations such as France and Denmark, the study said. “The burden of diabetes and untreated diabetes is increasingly borne by low-income and middle-income countries,” it added. (*Dawn, November 15th, 2024, Page 10*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

1.2 billion people at ‘high risk’ from climate change: World Bank

1.2 billion people around the globe are at high risk from the impacts of climate change, the World Bank said, adding that the poorest countries face the toughest challenges. These challenges include hazards like heat waves, flooding, hurricanes and drought, the Bank announced in a new report, which found that boosting economic growth could reduce the number of people impacted by climate change. “The sobering reality is that every country can be hit by climate change, but this challenge is gravest for the world’s poorest countries,” World Bank senior managing director Axel van Trotsenburg said. The report’s authors estimated that raising economic output by 10 percent per capita “will reduce the number of people who are most vulnerable by about 100 million.” (*Business Recorder, November 1st, 2024, Page 5*)

UN urges leveraging carbon markets to help poorest states

United Nations suggested that the world's poorest nations could benefit far more from carbon offset projects, supporting their development while contributing to global climate action. A report from UN trade and development agency UNCTAD highlighted the potential of carbon markets, which enable corporations and countries to offset their greenhouse gas emissions through climate change-battling projects abroad, to catalyse capital flows to developing countries and help boost sustainable development. (*Business Recorder, November 5th, 2024, Page 1*)

Leaders from key countries to skip climate summit

World leaders from major economies including the United States, the European Union and Brazil are planning to skip this year's United Nations climate change summit, known as COP29, in Baku, Azerbaijan. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will not attend the COP29 climate summit because of political developments in Brussels, a Commission spokesperson said. There, EU lawmakers are vetting the members of her new European Commission, who will lead EU policymaking for the next five years. "The Commission is in a transition phase and the president will therefore focus on her institutional duties," the spokesperson said. US President Joe Biden will also not travel to the event, a Biden administration source said. COP29 begins on Nov 11, a few days after the US presidential election. (*Dawn, November 6th, 2024, Page 10*)

2024 'virtually certain' to be hottest year on record

This year is "virtually certain" to be the hottest in recorded history with warming above 1.5C, EU climate monitor Copernicus said, days before nations are due to gather for crunch UN climate talks. The European agency said the world was passing a "new milestone" of temperature records that should be a call to accelerate action to cut planet-heating emissions at the UN negotiations in Azerbaijan next week. Last month, marked by deadly flooding in Spain and Hurricane Milton in the United States, was the second hottest October on record, with average global temperatures second only to the same period in 2023. (*Dawn, November 8th, 2024, Page 10*)

New UN report calls for swift scaling of climate financing

A new report has called for the urgent need of increasing climate financing to help at-risk nations better prepare for future calamities. The report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) called for significantly scaling up adaptation this decade to address the impact of climate change. It said these adaptation strategies are being hampered by the "huge gap" between the financial requirements and existing flows. The report called upon nations to pledge their commitment to climate financing at the COP-29, opening in Baku on November 11. The UNEP report said international public adaptation financing to developing countries increased from \$22 billion in 2021 to \$28bn in 2022 which was the "largest absolute and relative" year-on-year increase since the Paris Agreement. (*Dawn, November 9th, 2024. Page 12*)

On COP29 eve, EU monitor says 2024 set to be hottest year on record

On the eve of crunch UN climate talks, the EU's climate monitor says this year is "virtually certain" to be the hottest in recorded history with warming above 1.5C. The Copernicus agency said the world was passing a "new milestone" of temperature records that should be a call to accelerate action to cut planet-heating emissions at the COP29 negotiations in Azerbaijan next week. Last month, marked by deadly flooding in Spain and Hurricane Milton in the United States, was the second hottest October on record, with average global temperatures second only to the same period in 2023. Climate scientists say the period being lived through right now is likely the warmest the Earth has been for the last 100,000 years. (*Dawn, November 11th, 2024, Page 12*)

ADB increases climate finance after US, Japan give world's first sovereign guarantees

The Asian Development Bank will increase its climate-related lending by up to \$7.2 billion after the United States and Japan agreed to underwrite risk for some existing loans, an ADB executive said, marking the first ever sovereign guarantees for climate finance. The new strategy, shared exclusively with Reuters, offers a potential template for other development banks to follow as the UN's COP29 climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, starting this week focuses on ramping up the amount of finance available to developing nations. The ADB has set a long-term cumulative climate finance lending target of \$100 billion between 2019 and 2030. In 2023, it lent \$9.8 billion.

The US election victory last week of Donald Trump, who has vowed to remove the United States from the Paris Agreement on climate, has overshadowed the start of the Baku talks, adding pressure on Europe and China to help get a strong result, negotiators said last week. Under the ADB plan, the world's richest country would guarantee up to \$1 billion of existing loans from Asia's top development institution, while Japan would underwrite \$600 million – freeing the bank to lend more for climate-related projects. (*Business Recorder, November 12th, 2024, Page 6*)

Time running out to stop the melting in Hindu Kush, Himalaya

Hindu Kush Himalaya region may experience up to 80pc ice loss under high emissions scenario, a study released on COP29 sidelines says. As climate change threatens the cryosphere — the frozen parts of the Earth — at an alarming rate putting almost a quarter of humanity at risk, Pakistan has advocated for coordinated regional efforts and international support to save the eco-system and build climate resilience, particularly across Hindu Kush and Himalaya region. 'The State of Cryosphere 2024', on sidelines of COP29 in Baku, urged urgent action to control emissions to save glaciers, which are melting at a rapid pace due to global warming. (*Dawn, November 13th, 2024, Page 1*)

Leaders urge climate action at COP29

Leaders of nations beset by climate disasters appealed at the COP29 summit for greater urgency in fighting global warming, while others defended fossil fuels and their right to

exploit them. More than 75 leaders are expected to speak over two days in Baku, but the heads of many top polluting nations are giving the crunch UN climate talks in the Azerbaijan capital a miss. The conference comes at the end of what scientists say is almost certainly the hottest year on record, with warming driven mainly by burning coal, oil and gas. (*Dawn, November 13th, 2024, Page 11*)

Poorer countries: Lenders set \$120bn climate finance goal

The world's top multilateral banks pledged to ramp up climate finance to low and middle income countries to \$120bn a year by 2030 as part of efforts at global talks in Azerbaijan to agree an ambitious annual target. Reaffirming a goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average by 2050, the new figure is a more than 60% increase on what group of 10 multilateral development banks had funnelled to poorer nations last year, according to a statement released during the UN climate summit in Azerbaijan's capital Baku. The new figure includes \$42bn to help adapt to the impacts of extreme weather, a 70% increase over 2023 number. (*Business Recorder, November 13th, 2024, Page 1*)

Azerbaijan defends fossil fuels at COP29 as big names skip summit

The host of the UN climate summit in Azerbaijan defended fossil fuels and the right of countries to exploit them as dozens of world leaders arrived for the COP29 conference. More than 75 leaders are expected, but the heads of many top polluting nations are skipping the crunch climate talks, where the impact of Donald Trump's election victory is being digested. Just a handful of leaders from G20 nations — which account for nearly 80 percent of the world's planet-heating emissions — are expected over two days in Baku. (*Business Recorder, November 13th, 2024, Page 5*)

COP29 climate talks grapple with trillion-dollar task

Developing countries need at least \$1 trillion per year by the end of the decade to cope with climate change, economists told UN talks in Baku, where early efforts to reach a finance deal risk being overshadowed by diplomatic disputes. Money is a focus at COP29 whose success is likely to be judged by whether it can agree a new target for how much richer countries, development lenders and the private sector must provide each year to help developing countries finance the transition to greener energy and protect against extreme weather. (*Business Recorder, November 15th, 2024, Page 1*)

Fragile countries make \$20bn climate finance push at COP29

A group of conflict-affected countries is pushing at COP29 to double financial aid to more than \$20 billion a year to combat the natural disaster and security crises facing their populations, a letter seen by Reuters showed. The group is one of several pitching at the climate talks in Azerbaijan this week for funds to better prepare for the impacts of extreme weather as countries seek to agree a new annual target on financing. (*Business Recorder, November 16th, 2024, Page 1*)

COP29: Rich nations pressed to cough up \$1 trillion

Pressure mounted on wealthy nations to put a figure on the table as time runs out at COP29 to strike a deal on climate assistance for poorer countries. With two days left to break the impasse at the UN talks in Azerbaijan, rich nations have still not revealed how much they are ready to provide the developing world to fight climate change. “We need a figure,” said Adonia Ayebare, chair of the G77+China group of developing nations. “Then the rest will follow. But we need a headline,” the Ugandan negotiator told reporters. Developing nations, from islands imperilled by rising seas to drought-afflicted states, contribute the least to global warming but have called for \$1.3 trillion annually to prepare for its impacts. They say rich historic polluters have a duty to help, and are clamouring for an existing commitment of \$100 billion a year to be increased many times over at COP29. (*Dawn, November 21st, 2024, Page 10*)

COP29 draft rejected

Negotiators raced against the clock at UN climate talks to broker a potential trillion-dollar deal to help poorer nations tackle global warming after rich and developing countries roundly rejected a draft proposal. The UN climate summit is supposed to conclude but is almost certain to run into overtime as nations from the United States to China panned a text released by the Azerbaijani hosts. The main priority at COP29 in Baku is agreeing a new target to replace the \$100 billion a year that rich nations provide poorer ones to reduce emissions and adapt to disaster. Developing countries plus China, an influential negotiating bloc, are pushing for \$1.3 trillion by 2030 and want at least \$500 billion of that from developed nations. Major contributors like the European Union have balked at such demands, and insist private sector money must be counted toward the goal. (*Business Recorder, November 22nd, 2024, Page 1*)

COP29 summit overruns as \$250bn draft deal stalls

The COP29 climate summit ran into overtime, after a draft deal that proposed developed nations take the lead in providing \$250 billion in annual climate finance by 2035 drew criticism from all sides. COP29 presidency released what it hopes will be a final deal for resolving rules around carbon markets. But world governments at the UN climate summit were still working into the night on the contours of a sweeping funding plan to tackle climate change. (*Business Recorder, November 23rd, 2024, Page 1*)

\$300bn for climate finance falls short of expectations

The \$300 billion package, agreed upon at COP29 in Baku as the new finance goal, is nothing to write home about and many from the developing world and civil society organisations fear it will jeopardise their efforts to adapt to the changing climate. For context, Pakistan alone needs \$380 billion by 2030 to meet its climate goals, and the delegation expressed its disappointment at the closing plenary. The Global South had demanded \$1.3 trillion annually, but after almost a week of delaying tactics, the first draft agreement only mentioned ‘X’ trillion instead of an actual number. Subsequently, \$250bn was offered, which was termed ‘insultingly low’ by developing bloc.

Eventually, \$300bn a year by 2035 was offered in revised draft agreement, which was shared after midnight, and despite reservations on its quantum and quality, it was adopted by the plenary. The agreement for new collective quantified goal highlighted that “costed needs reported in nationally determined contributions of developing country parties are estimated at \$5.1–6.8tr for up until 2030 or \$455–584bn per year and adaptation finance needs are estimated at \$215–387bn annually for up until 2030”. (*Dawn, November 25th, 2024, Page 1*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

Ferocious cyclone pounds northwest US, leaves 600,000 without power

A powerful storm was clobbering Washington state, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands while wreaking havoc on road travel and causing at least one death and two injuries. (*Dawn, November 21st, 2024, Page 11*)

13.1 # Flood

Deaths top 200 after worst floods for a generation devastate Spain

Rescuers raised the death toll in Spain’s worst floods for a generation to 205 as the government deployed more troops in an increasingly desperate search for survivors. The floods that have tossed vehicles, collapsed bridges and covered towns with mud are the European country’s deadliest such disaster in decades. The organisation coordinating emergency services in the hardest-hit eastern Valencia region said 202 people had been confirmed dead there. (*Dawn, November 2nd, 2024, Page 10*)

6 children among 8 missing after Sri Lanka floods

Heavy rains lashed southern India with coastal regions bracing for a likely cyclonic storm, as rescue teams in neighbouring Sri Lanka searched for eight people missing in floods. Cyclones the equivalent of hurricanes in the North Atlantic or typhoons in the northwestern Pacific are a regular and deadly menace in the region. In eastern Sri Lanka, which saw torrential rains, government rescue teams were searching for six children and two men swept away by flash floods. (*Dawn, November 28th, 2024, Page 10*)

13.2 # Storm

Super Typhoon Man-yi pounds Philippines

Super Typhoon Man-yi battered the Philippines, with the national weather forecaster warning of a “potentially catastrophic and life-threatening” impact as huge waves pounded the archipelago’s coastline. More than 650,000 people fled their homes ahead of Man-yi, which is the sixth major storm to hit the disaster-weary country in the past month. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 12*)

Winter storm brings chaos to Ireland, Britain & France

Ireland, Britain and France faced travel chaos and one person died as a winter storm battered northwest Europe with strong winds, heavy rain, snow and ice. Hampshire

Police in southern England said a man died after a tree fell onto a car on a major road near Winchester early in the day. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 12*)

Rainstorms hit tents of Gaza's displaced

Heavy rains flooded tent encampments of displaced Palestinians across the Gaza Strip, adding seasonal winter misery to communities already devastated during the past 13 months, as Israeli forces stepped up strikes in enclave. Downpours overnight inundated tents and in some places washed away the plastic and cloth shelters used by displaced Gazans, most of whom have been uprooted several times during the conflict between Israel and Hamas militants. Suad Al-Sabea, a mother of six from northern Gaza, now lives inside a classroom with broken windows at a school housing displaced families in Khan Yunis in the south of the Strip. She sells the bread she bakes in a wood-fuelled earth oven to make a living for her children, but rainwater spoiled the flour and damaged the oven, threatening to put her out of work. (*Dawn, November 26th, 2024, Page 12*)

13.3 # Wildfires

Rare brushfire in New York stoked by heat

Over a hundred firefighters battled a rare brushfire in New York City's Brooklyn borough as prolonged drought and unusually high temperatures have fuelled a series of blazes in the northeast United States. There were no immediate reports of damage to buildings in the blaze in the Prospect Park area, and all but a few hot spots had been extinguished. (*Dawn, November 10th, 2024, Page 10*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

14.1 # Earthquake

Eastern Cuba rocked by earthquake of magnitude 6.8

A 6.8 magnitude earthquake rocked eastern Cuba, according to the US Geological Survey, shaking buildings in Santiago de Cuba, the island's second-largest city, and the surrounding countryside. The quake struck Cuba's southeastern coast in Granma province near the municipality of Bartolome Maso, the home of former Cuban leader Fidel Castro's headquarters during the Cuban Revolution. (*Business Recorder, November 11th, 2024, Page 10*)

14.2 # Volcano eruption

Volcano eruption leaves 10 dead in Indonesia, sets houses aflame

A volcano in eastern Indonesia erupted overnight, killing at least 10 people as it spewed fireballs and ash on surrounding villages, officials said as they raised the alert to its highest level. Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki, a 1,703-metre (5,587-foot) twin volcano located on the popular tourist island of Flores, erupted shortly before midnight, forcing authorities to evacuate several villages. Residents described their horror when the crater started shooting flaming rocks at their homes. (*Dawn, November 5th, 2024, Page 10*)

15 # RESISTANCE

Bangladesh rally says govt failing to protect Hindus

Hundreds marched in Bangladesh's capital to demand protections for Hindus and other minorities who say they have suffered violence and threats since the ouster of autocratic premier Sheikh Hasina. Hasina's toppling in an August student-led uprising saw a spate of reprisals on Hindus, who were seen as disproportionate supporters of her regime. The caretaker government that replaced her, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, has acknowledged and condemned attacks on Hindus but said in many cases they were motivated by politics rather than religion. Regular protests in the months since claim that attacks are continuing and have demanded action from Yunus' administration, an "advisory council" tasked with implementing democratic reforms and staging fresh elections. (*Dawn, November 3rd, 2024, Page 10*)

Thousands take to London streets demanding cleaner water

Thousands of people marched through central London demanding action on cleaning up Britain's rivers and seas. Environmental activist and singer Feargal Sharkey and adventurer Bear Grylls were among those planning to join The March for Clean Water, which was backed by groups including Greenpeace, the Wildlife Trusts and British Rowing. Protesters are demanding reviews of water regulator Ofwat and the Environment Agency along with stricter enforcement for water companies who break existing pollution rules. River Action said that there were around 15,000 marchers, who were encouraged to wear blue and to bring a sample from a body of water close to their heart. Many wore elaborate costumes, while others held signs reading "tides not turds", "cut the crap" and "water for life". (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 10*)

News Makers: Belgrade

Demonstrators protest to commemorate an accident at a railway station for which they blame negligence and corruption by the authorities. Fourteen people were killed when the roof of the train station in the northern Serbian city of Novi Sad. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 10*)

14 killed by lightning strike in Uganda

At least 14 people, including several children, were killed in a Ugandan refugee camp when lightning hit a makeshift church where they were sheltering. Around 50 people took shelter in the church in Palabek refugee camp in northern Uganda when a heavy storm hit the area. Fourteen people died when lightning hit its metal roof, including five girls and nine boys aged between 14 and 18, said William Komech, resident district commissioner for Lamwo region, said. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 11*)

Iran stages rallies to mark 1979 hostage crisis

Thousands of Iranians rallied by the former US embassy in Tehran to mark the 1979 hostage crisis, ridiculing Joe Biden and Donald Trump just two days before the US presidential election. "There's no difference between Biden and Trump, between the

donkey and the elephant,” said protester Saber Danaie, 23, of the animal mascots that represent the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States. “They both follow the same policy,” said the construction worker, as a giant puppet meant to represent US President Joe Biden hung over the crowd. A picture of his predecessor Donald Trump, who hopes to beat his rival Kamala Harris and win the American presidential election, lay trampled on the ground. (*Dawn, November 4th, 2024, Page 11*)

Dutch police arrest dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters

Dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters were arrested after they defied a ban on demonstrations put in place in Amsterdam in the wake of recent violence involving supporters of an Israeli football club. Holding placards that said “We want our streets back” and chanting “Free Palestine”, hundreds of peaceful protesters gathered in the city’s Dam central square, where Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters had burned a Palestinian flag, and vandalised a taxi last week. Following violence sparked by Maccabi supporters’ provocative actions, such as the burning of a Palestinian flag, some were briefly hospitalised. As a result, Mayor had banned protests in the city. (*Dawn, November 11th, 2024, Page 12*)

Sporting keffiyehs, climate protesters at COP29 demand end to militarisation

A demonstration held on the sidelines of COP29 demanded an energy embargo on Israel. Organised as part of the ‘Defund Genocide Action’ by the Climate Justice Coalition, around 50 activists with keffiyehs wrapped around their necks held up signs proclaiming ‘no climate justice with blood on our land’. The number of participants was small because of restrictions imposed by the UN. One of the slogans that dominated the gathering was ‘demilitarisation, collective liberation’. Speakers at demo said ‘genocide’ was not limited to a single jurisdiction and compared it to a ‘virus’ consuming livelihoods and destroying humanity. (*Dawn, November 15th, 2024, Page 12*)

Protesters hold pro-Palestinian march in Rio ahead of G20

Hundreds of protesters marched in support of Palestinians in Rio in a demonstration aimed at world leaders about to converge on the city for a G20 summit. The march, held peacefully under constant rain along Copacabana Beach, was watched by dozens of police and soldiers deployed as security. The meeting will see heads of state and government, including US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, discuss coordination on international issues. The Rio protesters, a few wearing Arabic keffiyeh scarves, held aloft Palestinian flag and banners, including one reading “Break Brazil-Israel Relations” and demands that Israeli allies stop financing its military offensives in Gaza and in Lebanon. (*Business Recorder, November 17th, 2024, Page 8*)

Protesters refuse to leave parliament in Abkhazia

Protesters in Georgia’s Russia-backed breakaway region of Abkhazia declined to leave parliament building which they stormed previous day, a departure proposed by region’s

president as a condition for resigning. Protesters had occupied parliament in protest at an investment agreement with Moscow. (*The News, November 17th, 2024, Page 12*)

Farmers target Starmer in protest against new UK tax rules

Hundreds of farmers, many in tractors, gathered in Wales to protest against UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his government's decision to change inheritance tax rules for farms. Finance minister Rachel Reeves announced last month that farming assets worth more than 1.0 million (\$1.26 million) will be liable for 20-percent inheritance tax from next year. Farmers have warned that family farms may have to be split up, although Starmer says that only a "small number" will be affected. Farming unions have called the planned changes "disastrous", and around 200 farmers gathered outside Welsh Labour conference in Llandudno. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 10*)

Protesters storm parliament in Georgian region

Protesters in Georgia's Russia-backed breakaway region of Abkhazia declined to leave the parliament building which they stormed the previous day, a departure proposed by the region's president as a condition for resigning. Protesters had occupied the parliament in protest at an investment agreement between the Black Sea region and Moscow. (*Dawn, November 17th, 2024, Page 11*)

Massive crowds protest against bill to alter Maori rights

Tens of thousands of New Zealanders rallied in front of parliament in one of the country's largest ever protests to oppose a bill, which opponents say seeks to dilute the rights of Maori and threatens to set race relations back decades. Massive crowds estimated by police at 42,000 gathered at parliament where Treaty Principles Bill was introduced earlier this month by legislators who want to reinterpret a 184-year-old treaty signed between British and Indigenous Maori. (*Dawn, November 20th, 2024, Page 10*)

Thousands of British farmers protest against 'tractor tax' on inheritance

Thousands of farmers protested at Britain's parliament and some drove tractors through central London to demand the scrapping of an inheritance tax that they say will destroy family farms and threaten food production. The measure, dubbed the tractor tax by critics and unveiled in the new government's budget last month as it sought to raise funds, has sparked an angry backlash from farmers who say the ruling Labour Party does not understand rural communities. The protesters held placards stating "no farmers, no food, no future" and "Starmer the farmer harmer", in reference to Prime Minister Keir Starmer. (*Business Recorder, November 20th, 2024, Page 5*)

General strike in Greece against cost of living

Thousands of people demonstrated in Athens and other cities as a 24-hour general strike against the rising cost of living shut down public services and part of the transport network. Some 15,000 people marched in the capital, while another 4,000 demonstrated in Greece's second city Thessaloniki, police said. The Greek General Confederation of

Labour said the strike was a “riposte to the government’s refusal to take measures to guarantee a decent life for workers. (*Business Recorder, November 21st, 2024, Page 5*)

Mass rape trial sparks demonstrations across France

Thousands demonstrated in major French cities against violence targeting women, as campaigners push for country to learn from a mass rape trial that has shocked the public. Prosecutors will in coming week ask court in southern city Avignon to sentence 51 men, one who drugged his wife over course of a decade & several of others who accepted his invitations to abuse her at their home. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 10*)

News Maker: Busan (South Korea):

Climate activists march on a street to demand global commitment to fight plastic waste at an upcoming session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. (*Dawn, November 24th, 2024, Page 10*)

Survivors, sniffing dogs join anti-mine march at Cambodia’s Angkor Wat

Survivors and sniffing dogs joined hundreds of people at Cambodia’s Angkor Wat for a march against landmines after the US decision to send anti-personnel mines to Ukraine. Participants, including landmine victims and deminers, repeatedly chanted for “a mine-free world” during the four-kilometre walk. The march was held a day before an anti-landmine conference convenes in Cambodia, which is awash in unexploded ordnance as a legacy of civil war. (*Dawn, November 25th, 2024, Page 10*)

News Makers: Berlin (Germany)

Protesters march with a placard reading "Rest in peace art" during a symbolic funeral march to demonstrate against planned cuts in the German capital's cultural budget. The Berlin Senate plans to cut around 12 per cent of the cultural budget million euros. (*Dawn, November 30th, 2024, Page 10*)

Thousands strike in Italy over low purchasing power

Thousands of Italians took part in a general strike to protest low wages and purchasing power, although its impact on transport was limited. The strike, called by two union confederations, was set to last eight hours in all sectors except transport, where far-right Transport Minister Matteo Salvini ordered it halved it to four hours. (*Dawn, November 30th, 2024, Page 11*)

About Us

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

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

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Our Objectives

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

Roots for Equity

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