

HAAL AHWAL

Monthly News Reviews on Food and Agriculture

May, 2025

Roots for Equity

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Roots for Equity

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1 Hectare = 2.471 Acres

1 Acre = 4,840 Square Yards

1 Ton = 25 Mann = 1000 Kg

1 Mann = 40 Kg

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glossary

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AGTL: Al-Ghazi Tractors Ltd

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AICS: Development Cooperation

AIIB: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

AJK: Azad Jammu and Kashmir

AMSL: Above Mean Sea Level

APTMA: All Pakistan Textile Mills Association

BFA: Balochistan Food Authority

BoG: Board of Governors

CAT: Competition Appellate Tribunal

CCP: Competition Commission of Pakistan

CD: Circular Debt

CDWP: Central Development Working Party

CEEW: Council on Energy, Environment and Water

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

CESVI: Cooperation Emergency Development SVI

CLIP: Climate Innovation Pakistan

DAP: Diammonium Phosphate

DCC: Double Contributions Convention

DCFA: Dairy and Cattle Farmers Association

DFAK: Dairy Farmer Association Karachi

DFIs: Development Finance Institutions

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

EAD: Economic Affairs Division

ECC: Economic Coordination Committee

ECNEC: National Economic Council

EFF: Extended Fund Facility

EFS: Export Facilitation Scheme

EU: European Union

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

FBR: Federal Board of Revenue

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FEA: Foreign Economic Assistance

FED: Federal Excise Duty

FUUA: Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology

GAM: Global Acute Malnutrition

GDA: Grand Democratic Alliance

GLOF: Glacial Lake Outburst Flood

GST: General Sales Tax

HBBWU: Home-Based Bengal Workers Union

HBWWF: Home Based Women Workers Federation

HDAP: Healthcare Devices Association of Pakistan

HDBA: Hyderabad District Bar Association

HWA: Hari Welfare Association

IAC: IRSA Advisory Committee

IFIs: International Financial Institutions

IIF: Institute of International Finance

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IOTC: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

IPC: Insecurity Phase Classification

IPC: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

IRSA: Indus River System Authority

IWT: Indus Waters Treaty

KDFA: Karachi Dairy Farmers Association

KHFA: Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority

KKH: Karakoram Highway

KPC: Karachi Press Club

KWSC: Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation

KWSSIP: Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project

LNG: Liquefied Natural Gas

LUMHS: Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences

ML: Machine Learning

MNFSR: Ministry of National Food Security and Research

MoM: Month-on-Month

MYC: Milli Yakjehti Council

NHRC: National Human Rights Commission

NIR: Net International Reserves

NTUF: National Trade Union Federation

PARC: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council

PASSCO: Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation

PBF: Pakistan Business Forum

PBS: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

PCGA: Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association

PDMA: Provincial Disaster Management Authorities

PDWP: Provincial Development Working Party

PECA: Prevention of Electronic Crime Act

PILER: Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research

PKRC: Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee

PLF: Palestine Foundation Pakistan

PMA: Pakistan Medical Association

PNA: Punjab Nurses Association

PNFWH: Pakistan National Forum on Women's Health

PNGO: Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations Network

PPMA: Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association

PPP: Pakistan Peoples Party

PRIME: Policy Research Institute of Market Economy

PSDP: Public Sector Development Program

PSX: Pakistan Stock Exchange

RAFAA: Fostering Anticipatory Action Project

RSF: Resilience and Sustainability Facility

SAPM: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister

SBP: State Bank of Pakistan

SBs: Structural Benchmarks

SCF: Sindh Community Foundation

SEPA: Sindh Environmental Protection Agency

SESSI: Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution

SFD: Sindh Food Authority

SHC: Sindh High Court

SIRM: Save Indus River Movement

STL: Shahzad Trade Link

STP: Sindh Taraqi-pasand Party

SUP: Sindh United Party

SWF: Sovereign Wealth Fund

TRACIT: Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade

UC: Union Committee

UNDROP: UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants

UNOCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

USA: United States of America

USPBC: US-Pakistan Business Council

WASA: Water and Sanitation Agency

WCK: World Central Kitchen

WFP: World Food Programme

YDA: Young Doctors' Association

YoY: Year-on-Year

NEWS EXCEPTS

NATIONAL NEWS

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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS RESOURCES

- Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said his government aims to implement several initiatives to develop overall agriculture system, which included farm mechanisation and subsidies on agricultural inputs for wheat and rice crops, and in this regard directed agriculture department to develop a four-year package for small growers.
- Key leaders of the Grand Democratic Alliance and several other political and nationalist parties have asked the federal government to do away with the corporate farming, new canals and certain other initiatives.
- The PBF has urged the government to abolish the 18 per cent General Sales Tax (GST) on locally produced cotton in the next federal budget and reduce customs duties on imported machinery used in the cotton ginning sector.
- Sindh Minister for Agriculture Sardar Muhammad Baksh Mahar has said that provincial government has decided to establish a special desk for women farmers in agriculture department to help resolve their farm-related problems.
- The Anti-Corruption Establishment's Special Investigation Wing has retrieved over 2,500 kanals of precious agricultural land that was reportedly illegally transferred to local landlords by the revenue officials, including collectors and tehsildars, from Lassan Nawab and Shakoki areas.
- The much-awaited Gilgit-Baltistan Land Reforms Act, 2025 has finally sailed through the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, with a majority vote.
- The Sindh Abadgar Board and Sindh Chamber of Agriculture, two major growers' bodies, have expressed concern over prevailing water shortage in the province despite availability of water flows in the system and demanded increase in supply of water to Sindh.
- IRSA Advisory Committee (IAC) declared a 21% water shortage for the early Kharif season, warning that the deficit could reach up to 70% in late Kharif.
- The water level in Khanpur Dam has plummeted to an alarming level amid a protracted dry spell, forcing the authorities to suspend water supply for irrigation purposes to both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces.
- Pakistan said that India's action to place Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) 1960 in abeyance is absolutely unacceptable as it is an act of war and an effort to destroy Pakistan's agriculture.
- Pakistan will not get water from rivers over which India has rights, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

- Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has approved the issuance of a wheat support price of Rs5,000 per acre to 600,000 farmers through Kissan Card programme.
- The farmers had utilised Rs36 billion to purchase agricultural inputs.
- The farmers have returned loans amounting to Rs22bn being obtained through Kissan Card.
- The promise of relief from soaring energy costs through the Punjab government's solar tube well scheme is fading for thousands of farmers across the province due to significant delays in its implementation.
- UBL and Shahzad Trade Link (STL) have signed an agreement to promote the mechanization of agriculture farms in Pakistan.
- Under the Farm Mechanization scheme, UBL and STL will collaborate to provide direct agricultural loans at flat mark-up rate of 9.5 percent, with repayment spread over five years' tenure.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

- After a hiatus of nearly two months, cotton prices in the country have witnessed a significant upswing.
- The Punjab government has set 3.5 million acres of target for cotton cultivation in the province.
- Target of 3.5 million acres has been set for cotton cultivation in Punjab while more than 2.2 million acres had already been cultivated.
- The federal government has permitted the import of cotton seeds for the first time in nearly 50 years.
- Wheat from Punjab has flooded the markets, having a far-reaching negative impact on the weak financial condition of local farmers. Farmers told that they couldn't compete with their counterparts in Punjab, who had a "perfect" irrigation system and financial support from their provincial government.
- During the 2024–25 cropping season alone, approximately 178,000 metric tons of certified zinc wheat seeds were planted.
- Wheat cultivation spanned over 9 million hectares, with estimated grain production reaching 28.42 million metric tons this year.
- Akbar 2019 accounted for 42pc of Pakistan's total wheat cropping area, contributing 15 million metric tons of zinc-enriched wheat grain production.

SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

- The Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has directed representatives of all three dairy farmer associations in Karachi to submit written undertakings pledging not to engage in milk price fixing in future.

- After securing a quota to harvest 25,000 tonnes of tuna fish from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Pakistan is preparing to introduce a comprehensive National Fisheries Policy, and consultations with relevant stakeholders have begun.

TRADE

- Pakistan's trade deficit with the Middle East increased 10.11 per cent to \$10.502 billion in the first nine months of FY25 from \$9.538bn in the same period last year due to higher petroleum imports.
- A Pakistani technology company has introduced AI Faceless Operations, a fully automated, round-the-clock system designed to digitalise and streamline cross-border trade processes. The solution aims to address major inefficiencies in the trade sector, which currently suffers an estimated annual loss of \$36 billion due to outdated, paper-based systems that threaten up to 3 million jobs.
- According to the PBS data, imports grew by 7.37pc to \$48.21bn in July-April FY25, up from \$44.90bn in the same period last year.
- The trade deficit for July-April FY25 widened by 8.81pc to \$21.35bn, up from \$19.62bn in the same period last year.
- The country's exports witnessed an increase of 6.25 percent during the first 10 months (July-April) of current fiscal year 2024-25, reaching \$26.859 billion, compared to \$25.278 billion in the same period of last year.
- Pakistan's food import bill surged to nearly \$7bn during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year, rising from \$6.82bn in the same period last year.
- The exports of Pakistan's raw food exports fell slightly by one per cent to \$6.16bn during July-April compared to \$6.23bn last year, mainly driven by a decline in sugar and non-basmati rice shipments.
- Pakistan has identified six potential trade corridors connecting Central Asia, Europe, and Russia through China, Afghanistan and Iran.
- Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries widened by 34.64 per cent, reaching \$9.787 billion in the first ten months of the current fiscal year (FY25), compared to \$7.269 billion during the same period last year.
- Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said that Pakistan's exports to United States of America (USA) is \$4.4 billion as compared to imports of US\$1.9 billion with the trade surplus of \$2.5 billion during current Financial Year 2024-25 (up to March).
- Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran which stood at \$3billion would be taken to \$10 billion volume in the next few years.
- Pakistan's trade gap with the Middle East widened by 9.89 per cent to \$11.731 billion during the first 10 months (July-April) of FY25 compared to \$10.675bn in the corresponding period last year due to higher petroleum imports.

- The country's merchandise exports recorded a negative growth of 8.93 per cent in April, marking the second such instance during the current fiscal year.
- Pakistan's exports to European countries grew 8.18 per cent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year from a year ago.
- Pakistan's merchandise exports to North America rose 11.24pc to \$4.837bn in first nine months of 2024-25 from \$4.348bn in corresponding period last year.
- In a major policy shift, Prime Minister has approved a comprehensive five-year tariff reform plan to be announced in the federal budget 2025-26.
- The country's textile and clothing exports fell by 1.35 per cent in April 2025 compared to the same month last year, marking the first monthly decline of the current fiscal year.
- Pakistan is set to begin mango exports from May 25, targeting 125,000 tonnes this season, with projected earnings of \$100 million in foreign exchange.
- Pakistan, which is clashing with India after a deadly attack on Indian tourists in the disputed territory of Kashmir, bought 225,000 metric tons of US soybeans for delivery in the crop year that begins on Sept.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- FDI in Pakistan declined by 3 percent during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year (FY25). FDI had been on an upward trend for several months, recording a 14 percent increase during the first nine months of FY25.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- IMF approved two major financing arrangements for the country — a \$1bn disbursement under the ongoing Extended Fund Facility and a new Resilience and Sustainability Facility aimed at supporting climate-related initiatives.
- The IMF has set eleven new structural benchmarks (SBs) for the ongoing \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme.

POLICY

- Chaos looms large for Pakistan's wheat farmers as the government told the National Assembly that it is officially pulling plug on Passco – the state-run grain procurement giant – and ditching wheat price controls, setting the stage for a free-market frenzy.
- PML-N government's move to outsource 6,000 government schools and 971 basic health units across 37 districts of the province.
- The Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) has welcomed the government's decision to deregulate the prices of non-essential medicines, saying it has ensured sustainability and would not lead to any indiscriminate increase in prices.

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

- Total revenue stood at Rs13.366tr (10.8pc of GDP) against total expenditure of Rs16.337tr (13.2pc of the GDP) during the first nine months of current fiscal year, hence budget deficit has been recorded at Rs2.970tr (2.4pc of GDP).
- Pakistan’s federal government debt stock surged to Rs 73.6 trillion by the end of March 2025.
- Pakistan received \$16.08 billion in foreign loans and grants in the first 10 months of 2024-25, compared to an annual target of \$19.2bn by June 30.
- 11 million people or 22 percent of analysed population are projected to face acute food insecurity in 68 flood-affected rural districts across Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- The Effects of Taxes and Transfers on Inequality and Poverty in Pakistan says the GST has the largest negative impact on poverty headcount; Benazir Income Support Programme has largest positive impact on inequality reduction.

ENVIRONMENT

- The Sindh government disclosed in a report that of 232,205.7 acres of encroached forest land across the province, 41,030.5 acres remained under illegal occupation, while 13,438.49 acres out of 34,713.05 acres of illegally allotted land remained unrevoked.
- The imposition of an 18% sales tax on essential medical devices and diagnostic equipment is inflating cost of healthcare in Pakistan and placing life-saving treatment out of reach for millions of patients.
- A child is born with thalassemia major every 90 minutes in Pakistan.
- Over 10 million Pakistanis are thalassemia carriers and an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 children are born with thalassemia major every year. Currently, more than 90,000 children across the country are living with the disease.
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation is awaiting approval from finance department for availability of budget to award contract to private organisations for outsourcing seven hospitals.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) will provide 4 million euros worth funding for a project that aims to strengthen resilience among vulnerable communities facing climate-related risks in Sindh.
- Due to rising global temperatures, nearly 10,000 glaciers in Pakistan are retreating at an alarming rate and glacial melts have led to the formation of 3,044 lakes, with 33 of them classified as highly volatile.
- These unstable lakes pose a grave threat to at least 7.1 million people living downstream.

- Pakistan Meteorological Department indicates that the country has received 40 per cent less rainfall compared to its 30-year historical average.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

- Growers demanded of the government to declare Swabi as a calamity-hit region and extend financial assistance to them as hailstorm and rain extensively damaged their tobacco crop, putting them in dire straits.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS RESOURCES

- Pakistan has warned the United Nations that India's unilateral decision to suspend the IWT represents a dangerous escalation that violates international law and threatens the survival of more than 240 million people.

TRADE

- Britain and India clinched a long-coveted free trade pact after tariff turmoil sparked by US President Donald Trump forced the two sides to hasten efforts to increase their trade in whisky, cars and food.
- European Union said it would review its trade cooperation deal with Israel over human rights abuses in Gaza.
- Britain paused free trade talks with Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu said Israel would take control of the whole of Gaza.
- Israel has blocked the entry of medical, food and fuel supplies into Gaza since the start of March and international experts have warned of looming famine.
- Egypt is working to integrate the country into a railway network connecting Asia and Europe, but a long-planned bridge that would link Saudi Arabia to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula has yet to be finalized.
- Israel and Iraq have likewise been spending billions of dollars on rail lines with an eye towards tapping the east-west trade.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- Bill Gates pledged to give away \$200 billion via his charitable foundation by 2045 and lashed out at Elon Musk, accusing the world's richest man of "killing the world's poorest children" through huge cuts to the US foreign aid budget.
- US President Donald Trump secured a \$600 billion commitment from Saudi Arabia to invest in the United States.
- The US agreed to sell Saudi Arabia an arms package worth nearly \$142bn.

- The president of the United Arab Emirates said his country planned to invest \$1.4 trillion in the United States over 10 years.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- The ADB announced it plans to expand its support for long-term food and nutrition security in Asia and the Pacific by \$26 billion, increasing its total funding commitment for such initiatives to \$40bn over the 2022-2030 period.
- The assistance will fund a programme covering the entire food production process, from farming and processing to distribution and consumption.
- Global agrifood systems generate hidden environmental, social and health costs estimated at \$13 trillion in 2023, or 10pc of global GDP, according to the Food System Economics Commission.
- IMF is set to release \$1.3 billion to Bangladesh in June, after completing a fourth review of its \$4.7-billion loan programme.
- The World Bank said it has earmarked more than \$1 billion to support job creation and private sector growth in Sri Lanka over three years.

POLICY

- Sri Lanka's leftist government said it was selling a failed hotel project, marking its first privatisation move in line with an IMF bailout.
- IMF, which extended Sri Lanka a \$2.9 billion loan in early 2023 after country defaulted on its \$46billion foreign debt in April 2022, had urged reforms of loss-making state-owned enterprises.

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

- Global debt rose by around \$7.5 trillion in first three months of the year to hit a record high of over \$324 trillion.
- Dozens of community kitchens in Gaza shut their doors due to a lack of supplies, closing off a lifeline used by hundreds of thousands of people in a further blow to efforts to combat growing hunger in the enclave.
- The closure of community kitchens would cause a drop of between 400,000 to 500,000 free meals per day for the 2.3 million population.
- Half a million people in the Gaza Strip face starvation, a global hunger monitor said, warning the Israeli-blockaded enclave faces a high risk of famine by the end of September.
- It forecast that 2.1 million people across Gaza — roughly the entire population — will likely experience high levels of acute food insecurity, with 469,500 projected at “catastrophic” levels — the most severe stage. The previous IPC analysis in October found 133,000 people in that category.

- Almost half a million children in Somalia face severe malnourishment and are at risk of dying from hunger.
- Number of severely malnourished children under five had increased to 1.8m.
- More than 295 million people faced acute hunger last year, a new high driven by conflict along with other crises.
- A total of 295.3 million people endured acute hunger last year — almost a quarter of the population in 53 of the 65 countries.
- Extreme weather was to blame in 18 countries and “economic shocks” in 15 nations, together affecting a total of 155 million people.
- Gaza is “the hungriest place on Earth”, the United Nations said, warning that the Palestinian territory’s entire population was now at risk of famine.

ENVIRONMENT

- Cautioning that there is a growing waste crisis, the World Bank said globally, waste generation is expected to rise by a whopping 73pc to 3.88bn tonnes by 2050, posing serious challenges for cities in low- and middle-income countries.
- On a per capita basis, however, projected waste generation in low-income countries would be a third of that in high-income countries as it is projected at only 0.62 kilograms per person per day as compared to 1.81 kilograms per person per day in high-income countries by 2050.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- United Nations warned that there is a 70pc chance that average warming from 2025 to 2029 would exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius international benchmark.
- The world’s wealthiest 10 per cent of individuals are responsible for two thirds of global warming since 1990.
- The richest 1 per cent contributed 26 times more to once-a-century heatwaves, and 17 times more to droughts in the Amazon.
- April 2025 was ranked 2nd warmest in past 65 years as the national mean temperature was significantly warmer than the country’s average by +3.37°C.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

- About 57pc of Indian districts, home to 76pc of India’s total population, are currently at high to very high heat risk, the study found, with the heat risk in the capital New Delhi among the highest.

NATURAL DISASTERS

- The total cost of disasters now exceeds \$2.3 trillion annually, factoring in cascading and ecosystem impacts, according to a UN report.

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS RESOURCES

Murad launches major agri-reform drive with 4-year package for small farmers [P.1]

GDA, other parties ask Centre to do away with canals, corporate farming plans [P.2]

SUP leader says anti-canals struggle will now focus on corporate farming [P.2]

Govt takes step towards agri sector reforms [P.2]

GDA rejects corporate farming, vows to protect Sindh's interests [P.3]

STP sees rulers' defeat on corporate farming issue [P.3]

Food minister assures agri sector of relief in budget [P.3]

1.1 # Farmers

Govt failed to protect rights of farm workers, peasants: HWA [P.4]

Legal recognition sought for farm workers [P.5]

Special desk for women farmers [P.5]

Farm workers suffer during extreme heat, moot told [P.6]

Aurangzeb for financing facilities to small farmers [P.6]

1.2 # Land

Man killed in clash over land dispute [P.7]

Clash over land dispute leaves two dead [P.7]

ACE retrieves 2,500 kanals of illegally transferred land [P.7]

Land Reforms Act sails through Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly [P.7]

Man, two sons shot dead over land dispute [P.7]

1.3 # Water

Threats to Sindh's water rights continue to exist: Save Indus [P.7]

Sindh growers worried over water shortage despite availability in system [P.8]

Water deficit could soar to 70pc in late Kharif [P.8]

SUP claims work on one controversial canal not stopped [P.9]

No water for Punjab, KP farmers from Khanpur Dam [P.9]

India's IWT abeyance action a move aimed at destroying Pakistan's agriculture, Senate body told [P.9]

No water for Pakistan from 'Indian rivers': Modi [P.9]

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

2.1 # Agricultural Loan & Finances

Rs5,000 per acre wheat support price for 0.6m farmers approved [P.10]

2.2 # Agricultural Machinery & Technology

Delays in Punjab solar subsidy scheme disappoint 450,000 farmers [P.10]

Agriculture: UBL, STL sign deal to promote mechanization [P.11]

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

3.1 # Cash Crop

Ginning set to begin early as Sindh harvests new crop [P.11]

Cotton prices witness surge, courtesy international market [P.11]

Punjab sets 3.5m acres target for cotton cultivation [P.11]

Cotton sector faces potential crisis amid tax-free imports [P.12]

Govt mulls tax break to avert cotton sector collapse [P.12]

13.2 # Food Crops

Growers worried as wheat from Punjab floods Swabi market [P.13]

Biofortified zinc wheat mobilised \$85m investment in agri sector [P.13]

3.3 # Vegetables

Balochistan govt launches crackdown on sewage-irrigated vegetables [P.14]

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

4.1 # Dairy

Dairy farmers told to file undertakings against milk price fixing [P.14]

4.2 # Fisheries

National fisheries policy soon [P.15]

Stakeholders consulted on national fisheries & aquaculture policy [P.16]

4.3 # Livestock

CM Bugti okays Rs150m to tackle lumpy skin disease [P.16]

4.4 # Poultry

Poultry industry urges govt to provide tax relief [P.16]

5 # TRADE

Trade deficit with ME crosses \$10bn [P.16]

AI system for cross-border trade [P.17]

Rs750bn revenue lost to illicit trade, smuggling yearly: report [P.17]

Trade deficit [P.17]

Jul-Apr exports up 6.25pc to \$26.859bn YoY [P.18]

Directive to improve trade volumes under barter system [P.18]

Apr exports down 17.66pc to Rs2.178bn MoM [P.18]

Food import bill nears \$7bn in July-April [P.19]

Kazan Forum: Six potential trade corridors identified [P.19]
Trade deficit with nine regional countries widens 35pc [P.19]
\$2.5bn surplus in trade with US: Aurangzeb [P.20]
PM says Iran-Pakistan trade to increase to \$10bn [P.20]
Trade deficit with Middle East swells to \$11.7bn [P.20]

5.1 # Export

Exports fall 8.9pc in April amid slowing growth trend [P.21]
PHDEC hosts training workshop to boost cherry exports to China [P.21]
Exports to Europe rise to \$6.8bn [P.21]
Exports to North America rise [P.22]
Govt okays five-year tariff reform plan to spur exports [P.22]
Textile exports down 1.35pc last month [P.22]
Pakistan to export 125,000 tonnes of mangoes [P.23]

5.2 # Import

hyPakistan, US agree to diversify trade partnership [P.23]
Pakistan makes large US soybean purchase [P.23]

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Rs40m fine imposed on Al-Ghazi Tractors [P.24]
Fertiliser makers upset at tax hike proposal [P.24]

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Pakistan, Russia agree to establish new steel mills in Karachi [P.24]
Japan approves \$3.5m grant for smart water meters [P.25]
Jul-Apr FDI down 3pc to \$1.784bn YoY [P.25]

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

8.1 # Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

AIIB okays \$240m for water, sewerage infrastructure [P.25]

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Indian ‘meddling’ fails to block IMF support [P.25]
SBP receives 2nd tranche of \$1bn from IMF [P.26]
IMF sets 11 new SBs under \$7bn EFF [P.26]

8.3 # World Bank

Reforms key to recovery, poverty reduction: WB [P.28]

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1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS RESOURCES

Murad launches major agri-reform drive with 4-year package for small farmers

Sindh Chief Minister has said his government aims to implement several initiatives to develop overall agriculture system, which included farm mechanisation and subsidies on agricultural inputs for wheat and rice crops, and in this regard directed agriculture department to develop a four-year package for small growers. Mr Shah directed officers of agriculture, food, and irrigation departments to collaborate in educating growers in the latest technology, water availability, and modern farming practices.

He highlighted the importance of understanding water availability for crop planning and emphasised that growers should focus on cultivating profitable crops. He said that under farm mechanisation, laser land levelling and manual hand-push seeder should be introduced for small growers with landholdings of one to 25 acres, said a press release. He said that land levelling could be offered on rental basis and subsidies on agricultural inputs for wheat and rice crops could be provided, particularly for seeds, fertilisers, and herbicides/pesticides to small growers.

Shah explained that levelling land using laser technology could conserve 20 per cent to 30pc of irrigation water. This approach could also yield an increase of 6pc to 10pc, while reducing irrigation time by 50pc. The overall result would be a 20pc boost in income, along with the prevention of waterlogging and salinity, and a more balanced use of agricultural inputs, he said. Regarding the manual hand-push seed planter, the chief minister said that a study showed this tool could reduce planting time and labour by 20pc to 30pc. It would ensure 90pc to 95pc accuracy in seed placement and spacing, leading to a 40pc to 50pc decrease in physical strain on farmers.

Additionally, using this planter could increase crop yields by 10pc to 20pc, reduce soil disturbance and erosion by 20pc to 30pc, and lower planting costs by 5pc to 25pc. The chief minister was informed that there were 3,552,980 acres of land in the province owned by holders with 1 to 25 acres each. To level these 3.5 million acres, 2,961 laser levellers would be needed over three years. The chief minister was advised that the overall impact of subsidy on agricultural inputs could lead to a 13pc increase in the production of wheat and rice crops through seed subsidies, a 5pc increase in production from DAP and urea subsidies, and a 5pc increase in production from herbicide and pesticide subsidies, respectively. Additionally, the CM was informed that wheat was cultivated in Sindh over an area of 3.1 million acres, while rice covered 2.0 million acres, requiring 3.8 million maunds of seed for wheat and 0.99 million maunds for rice. Against this requirement, 3.2 million maunds of wheat seed and 0.942 million maunds of rice seed were available in the market, indicating a shortfall of 0.6 million maunds of wheat and 45,423 maunds of rice seeds. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 15*)

GDA, other parties ask Centre to do away with canals, corporate farming plans

Key leaders of the Grand Democratic Alliance and several other political and nationalist parties have asked the federal government to do away with the corporate farming, new canals and certain other initiatives. They also demanded restoration to their owners the lands doled out to investors for mega housing schemes. Through several resolutions adopted at the gathering, they asked the federal government to declare permanent shelving of the controversial six-canals project and corporate farming plan. Some resolutions demanded restoration of student unions, immediate “release” of all missing persons and cancellation of the allotments pertaining to the lands doled out to investors for mega housing schemes. They vowed to continue their struggle against the 26th constitutional amendment, Prevention of Electronic Crime Act (Peca), and the six-canals project. (*Dawn, May 6th, 2025, Page 15*)

SUP leader says anti-canals struggle will now focus on corporate farming

Sindh United Party (SUP) President Syed Zain Shah has said that the people of Sindh have already declared their decision against federal government’s six canals project. The sustained campaign that forced it to shelve, though temporarily, the plan was a referendum against the project, he said. Addressing members of the Hyderabad District Bar Association (HDBA), Zain Shah said the people of Sindh had with one voice rejected the canals project and also another initiative that was aimed at usurping its lands. “There is a need for a similar vigorous movement against corporate farming,” he added. (*Dawn, May 14th, 2025, Page 15*)

Govt takes step towards agri sector reforms

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed relevant authorities to formulate a long-term and sustainable policy aimed at advancing the country’s agro-industrial sector. The directive from the prime minister comes as part of a broader strategy to enhance agricultural productivity, combat climate change, and promote economic resilience. Chairing a high-level meeting on agricultural sector reforms, Sharif emphasised the importance of modernising the country’s agriculture through coordinated efforts involving provincial governments and key stakeholders.

“The agriculture sector holds immense potential for driving Pakistan’s economic development,” he added. “With fertile land, skilled professionals, and hardworking farmers, we must harness these resources to achieve self-sufficiency.” Sharif called for the development of a National Agri-Innovation Plan, with a focus on research and modern technology to increase crop yields and sustainability. He also urged the expansion of agricultural loans under favourable terms, and reforms to the existing seed certification system to promote the use of high-quality seeds. He also said that a regulatory framework for the agricultural sector is also to be developed, with an emphasis on facilitating technological integration and ensuring environmental sustainability. (*Business Recorder, May 16th, 2025, Page 3*)

GDA rejects corporate farming, vows to protect Sindh's interests

The Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) has reaffirmed its unwavering belief that the canal project in Sindh would never be acceptable to the people of the province. In a meeting of the alliance's core committee, the leadership also rejected corporate farming and the concept of public-private partnership and reiterated that the GDA would not shy away from any step or sacrifice necessary to protect Sindh's interests. The committee decided to maintain contact with other opposition forces in the future and reaffirmed its commitment to joint struggle on the national agenda alongside other parties. (*Dawn, May 17th, 2025, Page 14*)

STP sees rulers' defeat on corporate farming issue

Sindh Taraqqi-pasand Party (STP) Chairman Dr Qadir Magsi has said that people of Sindh would defeat the ruling clique on its controversial corporate farming plan through their peaceful movement, the way they recently forced it to suspend six canals project. He was addressing party workers on video link from the United States. The workers heard him at their gathering held at Naseem Nagar Chowk, where they were holding a demonstration against corporate farming. Dr Magsi said Sindh's lands were being doled out to different investors in the name of corporate farming. He remarked: "Sindh should not be made Palestine", and added that these lands belonged to Haris (farmers). (*Dawn, May 23rd, 2025, Page 15*)

Food minister assures agri sector of relief in budget

The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has urged the government to abolish the 18 per cent General Sales Tax (GST) on locally produced cotton in the next federal budget and reduce customs duties on imported machinery used in the cotton ginning sector. PBF Chief Organiser Ahmad Jawad led a delegation in a meeting with Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, where he advocated for targeted relief for the agricultural sector. "The government must take concrete steps to reduce the cost of cultivation. Fertiliser prices should also be brought down by offering tax relief," Mr Jawad said. He emphasised that the federal government still holds the authority to reduce the cost of production for farmers.

The food minister said his ministry was actively working on eliminating the 18pc GST on local cotton. He further noted that efforts are underway to resolve the pending cotton cess liabilities from the textile sector, ensuring the Central Cotton Committee does not face financial constraints. "We are also considering limiting tax-free imports of yarn and fabric under Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) to support local cotton," the minister said while noting that "this year, we are aiming to produce 10 million cotton bales, and making every effort to ensure that farmers receive relief in the upcoming budget.

The PBF delegation also recommended that new research and seed varieties developed by the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) be implemented at the district level through local agriculture departments. "At present, we are unaware of the latest

research being conducted in Islamabad. The ministry should work with provincial governments to bridge this gap,” he added. The PBF welcomed the government’s decision to allow the import of cotton seeds and proposed that legislation be introduced to ensure local banks provide loans to the SME sector. “Many banks are hesitant to lend to small industries. This matter should be raised at the federal cabinet level,” he concluded. (*Dawn, May 29th, 2025, Page 9*)

1.1 # Farmers

Govt failed to protect rights of farm workers, peasants: HWA

The government has failed not only to protect rights of farm workers and peasants in agriculture sector related to their occupational health and safety but has on the contrary created favourable conditions for big landlords to exploit and abuse their employees, according to the Hari Welfare Association (HWA). The association’s president, Akram Ali Khaskheli, said in a statement issued that rural workers and peasants were not adequately protected from hazards during work in agriculture sector. He said that an estimated number of over 10 million people in Sindh were engaged in agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors, who often faced occupational health and safety issues.

He said that under the Sindh Industrial Relations Act, 2013, rural workers were given right to form associations to negotiate with landowners or employers for collective rights, including their right to be compensated for the injuries or deaths occurring at the agricultural workplace. He said that due to a lack of awareness among and limited effectiveness of the workers’ associations, rural workers remained unorganised thus unable to advocate for their rights, including the right to be protected from occupational hazards such as pesticides, fertilisers, and insecticides.

He noted that many workers and peasants frequently suffered injuries and had their arms and legs cut by agricultural tools yet they received no compensation for the injuries or loss of limbs from landlords, employers or government agencies. He said that there was a lack of mechanism to record occupational health injuries in farm sector, which led to long-term disabilities for adults, who were breadwinners, resulting in increased dependency on charity and philanthropy.

He said the government failed not only to protect rights related to occupational health and safety in agriculture sector but created favourable conditions for big landlords to exploit and abuse workers and peasants. He called for increasing number of labour inspectors in Sindh to monitor implementation of agriculture-related laws, and establishment of a mechanism to support injured and deceased peasants and workers at agricultural workplaces. He urged the government to ensure registration of peasants in revenue record so that landlords could be held accountable for compensating workplace accidents. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 15*)

Legal recognition sought for farm workers

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (PKRC) demanded legal recognition of agricultural workers as formal labour, with full access to unionisation and collective bargaining rights. PKRC conducted rallies on May Day and demanded enforcement of minimum wage laws in agriculture, with accountability for wage theft and informal exploitation and special protection and programmes for women and youth in agriculture, including access to credit, land, education, healthcare and legal support.

They also demanded land reforms to ensure secure tenure for tenant farmers and landless peasants, and to curb corporate land grabbing, universal social protection — pensions, maternity benefits, accidental insurance, and climate-resilient safety nets for rural workers and incorporation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) into Pakistan's legal and policy frameworks.

They said that May Day is a reminder that the struggles of industrial and urban workers are deeply connected to those of rural and agricultural labourers. Yet agricultural workers in Pakistan are still excluded from labour laws, denied the right to unionise, and invisible in national policy-making. They said agriculture employs over one-third of the national workforce, most agricultural labour is informal, with no written contracts, legal protection, or access to social security.

They said women agricultural workers, who make up 70pc of the active labour force in rural agriculture, are not even recognised as formal workers. They earn significantly less than men, often paid in kind, and face systemic discrimination, gender-based violence, and exclusion from decision-making. Most women work without contracts, without access to social security, maternity leave, or medical care, and face widespread gender-based violence, both in the fields and in their communities.

They said the Sindh Tenancy Act and other protective laws remain largely unenforced, with powerful landlords exploiting tenants and sharecroppers through informal agreements that leave workers trapped in cycles of poverty and indebtedness. In provinces like Punjab and Balochistan, government negligence, corporate land grabs, and climate-induced disasters such as floods and droughts have further deepened rural inequality and undermined food sovereignty. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 2*)

Special desk for women farmers

Sindh Minister for Agriculture Sardar Muhammad Baksh Mahar has said that provincial government has decided to establish a special desk for women farmers in the agriculture department to help resolve their farm-related problems. He said at a seminar on food security and key role of women in agriculture held at a local hotel that Sindh government had also decided to provide farmers new solar-powered tube wells, crop insurance and watercourse linings under the Benazir Hari Card. (*Dawn, May 22nd, 2025, Page 15*)

Farm workers suffer during extreme heat, moot told

Speakers at a training workshop women farm workers and growers said that extreme heat caused menstrual irregularities, uterine health issues, dehydration, mental health challenges and increased breast cancer risks, impacting women's ability to work. They were sharing their views the two-day Training of Trainers workshop organised by SCF, a non-governmental organisation for climate change and health literacy, in collaboration with Commonwealth Foundation that concluded in Matiari. The programme was aimed at raising awareness among women farm workers and growers about rising risks to their health from climate change and urgent need for safer and dignified working conditions, said a press release. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 15*)

Aurangzeb for financing facilities to small farmers

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a key meeting at the Finance Division to review the progress and receive an update from the Task Force on un-collateralised formal credit to smallholding farmers. The meeting brought together senior representatives from Pakistan's financial sector, including commercial banks, development finance institutions (DFIs), regulators, and subject matter experts from the development sector who constitute the core of the Task Force. It focused on the recommendations presented as part of the National Subsistence Farmers Support Initiative, aimed at unlocking un-collateralised financing for small-scale farmers through innovative, technology-based solutions.

Designed as a federal programme with nationwide coverage, the initiative aims to align provincial and national efforts to boost agricultural productivity, enhance food security, and contribute meaningfully to GDP growth through inclusive agri-development. A revised scorecard was presented by Task Force with a greater emphasis on agronomic factors— raising the weightage of agronomy from 40 to 60pc— while maintaining a 40pc weight on financial indicators, thereby rebalancing priorities to better reflect realities of smallholder farming.

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed recommendations and emphasised the importance of making entire process time-bound and action-oriented to achieve lasting impact. He also highlighted the critical need to develop a parallel, tech-supported model for dairy and livestock segment, recognising that most smallholder farmers maintain herds but face difficulties in securing financing for livestock acquisition, maintenance, and dairy product marketing. Noting the dual economic and nutritional value of dairy for the rural population, the minister urged the Task Force to integrate crops and livestock under a unified financial framework. He stressed that the approach must keep the client experience at centre, prioritising ease, inclusivity, and accessibility through a robust digital journey that delivers benefits across the agricultural landscape. (*Business Recorder, May 28th, 2025, Page 1*)

1.2 # Land

Man killed in clash over land dispute

A man was killed and two others were wounded when an old land dispute between two rival groups of the Bhayo community turned violent within the limits of the Durrani police station in Kandhkot. Sources said that neither a case could be registered nor any arrest was made till filing of this report. (*Dawn, May 8th, 2025, Page 15*)

Clash over land dispute leaves two dead

An armed clash between two tribal clans over a land dispute claimed lives of two men and left as many others injured in the limits of Darkhawst Jamal Khan police station in Kot Chhutta tehsil. The clash erupted between Birmani and Jogiani clans of Leghari tribe over a land dispute at Mouza Bhakkar Wah. (*Dawn, May 12th, 2025, Page 8*)

ACE retrieves 2,500 kanals of illegally transferred land

The Anti-Corruption Establishment's Special Investigation Wing has retrieved over 2,500 kanals of precious agricultural land that was reportedly illegally transferred to local landlords by the revenue officials, including collectors and tehsildars, from Lassan Nawab and Shakoki areas. "This is a scam worth billions of rupees as collectors, tehsildars and other officials of the revenue department fraudulently transferred the government's thousands of kanals land to influential people," provincial head of ACE's Special Wing Farrakh Sher Khan told. (*Dawn, May 13th, 2025, Page 8*)

Land Reforms Act sails through Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly

The much-awaited Gilgit-Baltistan Land Reforms Act, 2025 has finally sailed through the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, with a majority vote. Opposition members in the assembly opposed the act, describing it as an attempt to deprive local people of their common lands, mountains, pastures and natural resources. GB Land Reforms Act, 2025 was moved by Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan in the assembly session, chaired by Speaker Nazir Ahmed. After a two-day-long debate on various clauses of the act by the opposition members, GB Assembly members finally passed it with a majority vote as opposition members abstained from voting. (*Dawn, May 22nd, 2025, Page 12*)

Man, two sons shot dead over land dispute

Three persons including a man and his two sons were gunned down over a land dispute in Garyala locality in limits of Shahbazgari police station. As per preliminary investigations, officials said that the deceased persons were working in their agricultural fields when their rivals armed with automatic weapons opened indiscriminate fire killing them on the spot. (*Dawn, May 23rd, 2025, Page 8*)

1.3 # Water

Threats to Sindh's water rights continue to exist: Save Indus

The Save Indus River Movement (SIRM), an alliance of different opposition parties formed to resist the controversial canals project, has announced a public rally in Karachi

on May 11 for the supremacy of the Constitution in response to the concerns about controversial irrigation projects. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting, hosted by the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 15*)

Sindh growers worried over water shortage despite availability in system

The Sindh Abadgar Board and Sindh Chamber of Agriculture, two major growers' bodies, have expressed concern over prevailing water shortage in the province despite availability of water flows in the system and demanded increase in supply of water to Sindh. The board, which met with its president Mahmood Nawaz Shah in the chair, called for enhancement in indented water supplies for Sindh at the earliest in view of severe water shortage to help the province avoid losses as crops of mangoes, sugar cane and vegetables had already faced damage.

The meeting noted that with rotation programme in force water remained closed for two to three weeks. This rotation had been continuing since March and resulted in 30pc of sowing when compared with corresponding period of last year. It said that already cultivated crops such as mangoes, sugar cane and vegetables faced losses. The water released by the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) was still reaching the system but demand for water continued to rise, it said. It feared this water might not be enough and would not clear backlog of last two months of severe shortage.

Agricultural economy would decline further due to current severe shortage of water in the backdrop of losses to agriculture last year, it said, adding the water released from Chashma Barrage today would take another 15 days to get to irrigation system across Sindh. The meeting said that whenever there was shortage in the system Sindh always suffered more and Punjab less and warned that water shortage would put the agriculture sector in jeopardy. It said that cotton production was becoming difficult with each passing day as cotton acreage had been converted to paddy, sugar cane and maize.

Of these crops, sugar cane and paddy were water guzzling crops while cotton consumed less water, provided raw material to ginning and oil extracting units and helped in saving billions of dollars required to import cotton for the textile sector, it said. It urged the government to play an active role to revive cotton production by creating viability for cotton farmers. There was no tax on imported cotton but 18pc tax on locally produced cotton dented viability of cotton production, it said. (*Dawn, May 5th, 2025, Page 15*)

Water deficit could soar to 70pc in late Kharif

IRSA Advisory Committee (IAC) declared a 21% water shortage for the early Kharif season, warning that the deficit could reach up to 70% in late Kharif amid concerns on sudden reduction in water flow from India in the Chenab River at Marala (Sialkot). IAC convened to approve the anticipated water availability criteria for the remainder of the Kharif season (May–September 2025), under the chairmanship of IRSA Chairman Sahibzada Muhammad Shabir. The committee reviewed the water situation for the remaining months of early Kharif (May–June 10) and late Kharif (June 11–September).

Members expressed unanimous concern over the abrupt drop in Chenab River inflows at Marala, attributing the shortfall to reduced upstream supply by India. However, IRSA noted that if the reductions continue, the shortage figures will be reassessed. For late Kharif, a 7% shortage is projected. (*Business Recorder, May 6th, 2025, Page 1*)

SUP claims work on one controversial canal not stopped

A meeting of Sindh United Party's central executive committee has noted with concern that work on one of the six controversial waterways, Jalalpur canal, is still continuing despite official announcement suspending the activity on all these canals. Sindh's share in the Indus water is being stolen and that is why, the province has been facing water shortage, according to a statement issued after the committee's meeting in Jamshoro. (*Dawn, May 19th, 2025, Page 15*)

No water for Punjab, KP farmers from Khanpur Dam

The water level in Khanpur Dam has plummeted to an alarming level amid a protracted dry spell, forcing the authorities to suspend water supply for irrigation purposes to both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces. A senior Wapda official told that the water level in the dam declined from 1,935 to 1,929 above mean sea level (AMSL), which is just 19 feet higher than the dead level of 1,910 feet. He said due to less rainfall in the dam's catchment areas and a persistent dry spell, the springs have dried up. The current inflows into the dam stand at a mere 42 cusecs, while the outflow is 160 cusecs per day. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 4*)

India's IWT abeyance action a move aimed at destroying Pakistan's agriculture, Senate body told

Pakistan said that India's action to place Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) 1960 in abeyance is absolutely unacceptable as it is an act of war and an effort to destroy Pakistan's agriculture. This was stated by Minister for Water Resources Moeen Wattoo during a meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources, presided over by the newly appointed Chairman Ahmad Atteeq Anwar. "India's move is an attack on Pakistan's sovereignty. We will go to every extent to protect our existence," he added. Secretary Water Resources, Syed Ali Murtaza informed the Committee that India has continuously violated the Indus Waters Treaty and is involved in tampering with water, adding that India also attacked Neelum-Jhelum Dam. India has been informed that it cannot unilaterally suspend the treaty." (*Business Recorder, 22nd, May 2025, Page 12*)

No water for Pakistan from 'Indian rivers': Modi

Pakistan will not get water from rivers over which India has rights, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, a month after a deadly attack in India-held Kashmir led New Delhi to suspend a key river water-sharing treaty between the neighbours. The attorney general for Pakistan, in an interview with *Reuters*, responded that Islamabad remained willing to discuss water sharing between the neighbours but said India must stick to the decades-old treaty. "Pakistan will have to pay a heavy price for every

terrorist attack ... Pakistan's army will pay it, Pakistan's economy will pay it," Modi said at a public event in the northwestern state of Rajasthan, which borders Pakistan. The Indus treaty provides water for 80 per cent of Pakistan's farms from three rivers that flow from India but Pakistan's finance minister said this month that its suspension was not going to have "any immediate impact". (*Dawn, May 23rd, 2025, Page 1*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

2.1 # Agricultural Loan & Finances

Rs5,000 per acre wheat support price for 0.6m farmers approved

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has approved the issuance of a wheat support price of Rs5,000 per acre to 600,000 farmers through Kissan Card programme. "Those farmers who do not have Kissan Card will also be granted a subsidy worth Rs5,000 per acre," the CM said. She said a subsidy of billions of rupees would be given to the farmers for the next crop as well. The participants in the meeting were informed that farmers had utilised Rs36 billion to purchase agricultural inputs. Some 60 percent of the loan being issued for purchasing agricultural inputs through Kissan Card had been completed. The farmers have returned loans amounting to Rs22bn being obtained through Kissan Card.

The second installment has been issued to the farmers for the new crop through Kissan Card. The meeting was informed that 50pc of the applications being received for the wheat support programme had been verified. CM also chaired a meeting to review solarisation scheme for the agricultural tubewells. The proposals for the implementation of wheat support programme were reviewed. The proposal to include contractors along with agricultural land owners was also discussed. (*Dawn, May 13th, 2025, Page 2*)

2.2 # Agricultural Machinery & Technology

Delays in Punjab solar subsidy scheme disappoint 450,000 farmers

The promise of relief from soaring energy costs through the Punjab government's solar tube well scheme is fading for thousands of farmers across the province due to significant delays in its implementation. Small-scale farmers, holding between one and 25 acres of land, had pinned their hopes on this initiative. The government had announced subsidies — Rs0.5 million for tube wells up to 10kW, Rs0.75m for those up to 15kW, and Rs1m for capacities up to 20kW — offering a significant opportunity to escape the burden of hefty electricity bills and the volatile costs of diesel fuel. Over 450,000 farmers submitted their applications through the government portal. However, their initial excitement has now turned into disillusionment. Many are left wondering when, or even if, they will receive the promised support. As they continue to struggle with high operational costs, the vision of a cleaner, more affordable energy source remains frustratingly out of reach. (*Dawn, May 3rd, 2025, Page 9*)

Agriculture: UBL, STL sign deal to promote mechanization

UBL and Shahzad Trade Link have signed an agreement to promote the mechanization of agriculture farms in Pakistan. As per agreement, both entities have agreed to ensure the availability of Belarus Tractors to the farmers through subsidized financing rate and quick delivery. The agreement focuses on joint sales promotion to encourage small and medium sized land holders to adopt farm mechanization solutions. Under the Farm Mechanization scheme, UBL and STL will collaborate to provide direct agricultural loans at flat mark-up rate of 9.5 percent, with repayment spread over five years' tenure. The partnership between the two entities will help promote the financial inclusion and boost farmer-economics in the country. (*Business Recorder, May 14th, 2025, Page 4*)

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

3.1 # Cash Crop

Ginning set to begin early as Sindh harvests new crop

In a significant development, the picking of the new cotton crop has commenced in the coastal areas of Sindh. This early harvesting has also led to the initiation of forward trading of cotton, raising the possibility of earliest cotton ginning season in Pakistan's history, potentially starting in the first week of May. Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsanul Haq shared that advance deals for cotton produced from the new crop have begun. Initially, two ginning factories in Burewala and Mandi Bahauddin (Punjab) sold 600 bales of cotton for delivery between May 10 and 15, at Rs17,000 to Rs17,300 per maund. These factories have procured raw cotton from the coastal regions of Sindh at a rate of Rs8,300 to Rs8,500 per maund. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 9*)

Cotton prices witness surge, courtesy international market

After a hiatus of nearly two months, cotton prices in the country have witnessed a significant upswing, accompanied by a renewed purchasing interest from textile mills. This development has brought relief to cotton ginners are grappling with a prolonged period of low demand and declining prices. The recent slump in local cotton prices was primarily due to record imports of sales tax-free cotton, cotton yarn and grey cloth under Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS). This influx of imported material severely hampered local cotton sales, pushing numerous ginning factories and textile mills towards inactivity due to a severe financial crunch. (*Dawn, May 5th, 2025, Page 2*)

Punjab sets 3.5m acres target for cotton cultivation

The Punjab government has set 3.5 million acres of target for cotton cultivation in the province. Punjab Agriculture Department Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahoo chaired a review meeting on cotton cultivation at Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture, Multan. He said increase in cotton production was essential for enhancing volume of exports and a target of 3.5 million acres has been set for cotton cultivation in Punjab while more than 2.2 million acres had already been cultivated.

He stated that final phase of cotton sowing would continue until May 25 and a special incentive package was being provided to transform Bahawalpur division into a ‘Cotton Valley’. Mr Sahoo said the selection process of model farms for cotton was going on and adequate canal water supply was being ensured for cotton growing areas. Moreover, guidance for care of early-sown cotton was underway while specific tasks had been assigned to relevant formations to guide cotton growers. (*Dawn, May 11th, 2025, Page 2*)

Cotton sector faces potential crisis amid tax-free imports

Despite the early commencement of the new cotton ginning season in the second week of May — a first in the country’s history — concerns are mounting that the cotton industry could face its worst economic crisis ever. This apprehension stems from the tax-free import of raw cotton and yarn, which threatens the viability of the local industry. Industry insiders fear that during the crop year 2025-26, cotton ginning and textile sectors may operate at less than 50 per cent of their total production capacity. This drastic reduction could force Pakistan to once again import cotton worth billions of dollars, alongside billions of dollars of edible oil.

Initial deals for the new cotton are being finalised between Rs17,000 and Rs17,500 per maund, while new Phutti (seed cotton) is being traded between Rs8,300 and Rs8,500 per 40kg. The federal government has permitted the import of cotton seeds for the first time in nearly 50 years. However, reportedly some high-ranking officials and private seed companies had already conducted unsuccessful trial cultivation of cotton seeds from China, Australia, the US, and Brazil in various parts of the country. Despite the country’s second-lowest cotton harvest of only 5.5 million bales during crop year 2024-25, approximately 200,000 to 250,000 bales of unsold cotton remain lying with ginning factories. Also, the ginneries are still awaiting payments worth millions of rupees from some textile mills for the cotton sold on deferred. (*Dawn, May 19th, 2025, Page 5*)

Govt mulls tax break to avert cotton sector collapse

Pakistan’s cotton sector is facing its gravest financial crisis in decades, prompting swift government attention after urgent appeals from the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) and the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (Aptma). Both associations have launched a high-profile lobbying campaign, writing to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and initiating a nationwide media blitz, demanding the immediate abolition of the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) or the removal of sales tax on domestically produced cotton and its byproducts. The premier subsequently sought policy recommendations from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR). In response, the ministry has formally endorsed the industry’s proposals.

In a letter to PCGA President Dr Jassu Mal, Cotton Commissioner Dr Khadim Hussain stated that the government has recommended that the 18pc sales tax on domestic cotton, cottonseed, oilcake, and cottonseed oil be lifted immediately, or that imports of cotton, yarn, and grey cloth be taxed at same rate. The ministry’s recommendations, forwarded

to safeguard farmers' incomes, revive local production, and stem Pakistan's soaring dependence on costly cotton imports. Communiqué notes that Punjab has implemented targeted subsidies for farmers to increase their incomes and reduce production costs for various crops. Industry data reveals that textile mills have imported over 300 million kgs of cotton yarn and two million bales of cotton during the first nine months of 2024-25, draining billions of dollars in foreign exchange. (*Dawn, May 31st, 2025, Page 9*)

13.2 # Food Crops

Growers worried as wheat from Punjab floods Swabi market

Wheat from Punjab has flooded the markets, having a far-reaching negative impact on the weak financial condition of local farmers. Farmers told that they couldn't compete with their counterparts in Punjab, who had a "perfect" irrigation system and financial support from their provincial government. They complained that they suffered from the neglect of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, which was focused more on protests for the release of PTI incarcerated leader Imran Khan than on people's and their welfare.

"This issue cropped up last year as well when wheat was sold for Rs6,500 per 50kg bag but the arrival of Punjab wheat pushed the price down to Rs4,000. Now, the same is available for Rs3,000," said grower Zar Mohammad from Maneri Bala. Acknowledged that people prefer wheat from Punjab, he wondered how local farmers could prevent the impact of the price drop.

Farmers said that the cost they incurred on growing wheat wasn't being recovered, so their hard work of six to seven months would go to waste, causing financial problems for them. They said it was responsibility of the provincial government to take steps to protect financial interests of the local growers as whenever the flow of wheat flour was stopped by Punjab in past, it were KP's growers who played a "dominant role". (*Dawn, May 9th, 2025, Page 8*)

Biofortified zinc wheat mobilised \$85m investment in agri sector

Widespread cultivation of biofortified zinc wheat has mobilised considerable investment into the agricultural sector. During the 2024-25 cropping season alone, approximately 178,000 metric tons of certified zinc wheat seeds were planted, experts revealed. This initiative mobilised over \$85 million annually in public and private sector investments, with nearly 80pc coming from private companies. The resulting zinc wheat grain production is expected to reach around 15 million metric tons this year, generating an estimated market value of over \$5 billion.

Pakistan's widespread adoption of drought-tolerant, biofortified zinc wheat variety Akbar-2019 has helped avert a major food security crisis. Despite 10pc decline in total wheat production for 2024-25 Rabi season due to extreme drought-like conditions, zinc wheat's resilience maintained substantial yields and cushioned the impact on food supply. Wheat cultivation spanned over 9 million hectares, with estimated grain

production reaching 28.42 million metric tons this year. Akbar 2019 accounted for 42pc of Pakistan's total wheat cropping area, contributing 15 million metric tons of zinc-enriched wheat grain production. HarvestPlus played a crucial role in facilitating development and scaling of zinc wheat in Pakistan. Their collaborative efforts with partners have paved way for private sector investment, which is expected to drive further growth. (*The News, May 18th, 2025, Page 3*)

3.3 # Vegetables

Balochistan govt launches crackdown on sewage-irrigated vegetables

Complying with orders of the high court, the Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) has launched a strict crackdown against the cultivation of hazardous vegetables grown using toxic sewage water. In the first phase of the operation, vegetable crops irrigated with contaminated water on several acres were destroyed in Quetta's Sabzal Road area. The BFA chairman said: "On clear court directives and government bans, the cultivation of vegetables using sewage water will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This water poses serious health risks to the public." (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 5*)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

4.1 # Dairy

Dairy farmers told to file undertakings against milk price fixing

The Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has directed representatives of all three dairy farmer associations in Karachi to submit written undertakings pledging not to engage in milk price fixing in future. In December 2024, the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) had imposed penalties on the three Karachi-based dairy associations for colluding to manipulate fresh milk prices against the provisions of the Competition Act 2010 and imposed a Rs1 million fine on the Dairy and Cattle Farmers Association (DCFA) and Rs500,000 each on the Dairy Farmer Association Karachi (DFAK) and the Karachi Dairy Farmers Association (KDFA).

The associations moved the appellate forum and on their request the tribunal reduced the penalties imposed on them. The penalties imposed on Shakir Umer Gujjar, president of the DCFA, and Haji Sikandar Nagori of the KDFA were reduced from Rs1 million and Rs500,000, to Rs150,000 each. The CCP had launched an inquiry after some media reports highlighted a sharp surge in milk prices in Karachi.

Its investigation found that the associations were directly involved in raising prices at bandhi (future trading), mandi (auction), wholesale and retail levels. The associations used pressure tactics, including threats to halt milk supply, to enforce price hikes. The CCP obtained a video showing Shakir Gujjar addressing a gathering of dairy farmers to announce an increase in milk prices in Karachi. Additionally, the commission secured further evidence confirming that the announced prices were implemented across city.

The probe also revealed that milk was hoarded in ice factories to create artificial shortages, and later sold at inflated prices in rural Sindh. These actions disrupted the supply chain and burdened consumers, it observed. The CCP reiterates that business associations across the country must ensure their platforms are not used to share commercially-sensitive information or facilitate anti-competitive conduct. Mr Gujjar confirmed that the tribunal had reduced the penalties and asked the association to file written guarantees. (*Dawn, May 7th, 2025, Page 13*)

4.2 # Fisheries

National fisheries policy soon

After securing a quota to harvest 25,000 tonnes of tuna fish from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Pakistan is preparing to introduce a comprehensive National Fisheries Policy, and consultations with relevant stakeholders have begun. Maritime Affairs Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said that the country had obtained a quota to catch 25,000 tonnes of tuna from the Indian Ocean, which is expected to increase fish exports and enhance Pakistan's presence in international seafood markets.

The quota is established by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, which operates under the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. Its purpose is to promote cooperation among member countries in managing, conserving, and optimally utilising fish and seafood stocks. Additionally, it aims to encourage the sustainable development of fisheries based on these resources. "We are also working to strengthen aquaculture, an area with vast potential, and it is expected to contribute \$200 million in the next two years," said the minister in a meeting with the Fisheries Development Commissioner Mian Aftab Ali.

It was noted that a Fisheries Development Fund should be formed to provide financial stability and promote innovation across the sector. The Fisheries Development Commission has stressed the need to modernise infrastructure and technological support to harness aquaculture's capabilities in the country, and for that purpose, incentive packages for the fishing industry will be announced soon. This includes support for fishing vessels, aquaculture equipment, and value-added seafood products, and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs has finalised plans to revitalize the Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority (KHFA). While inland and coastal fishing was the domain of the provinces, the KFHA is a federal government entity.

The minister reaffirmed the government's resolve to create a policy framework that supports the fishing community and ensures environmental sustainability, export diversification, and economic resilience. The meeting underscored the ministry's renewed commitment to revitalising and modernising Pakistan's marine economy and a series of consultative workshops to be held in major cities of the country, including Karachi, Peshawar, Lahore and Islamabad next month to attract investments. (*Dawn, May 10th, 2025, Page 9*)

Stakeholders consulted on national fisheries & aquaculture policy

MoMA, in collaboration with UN FAO, held Stakeholder Consultation Workshop (for Sindh and Balochistan Provinces) on National Fisheries Policy at a local hotel on May 22. It was an outstanding workshop with productive feedback and input from more than 80 relevant and experienced participants, including high-level officials from both provinces and federal institutions. (*Business Recorder, May 27th, 2025, Page 4*)

4.3 # Livestock

CM Bugti okays Rs150m to tackle lumpy skin disease

Balochistan's Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti approved a Rs150 million summary to combat the growing threat of lumpy skin disease among livestock across the province. During a meeting, Mr Bugti emphasised economic importance of livestock and directed authorities to improve meat processing capabilities to meet international export standards, with a specific focus on Middle Eastern markets. "The inter-district movement of livestock is a primary cause behind the rapid spread of the disease," Livestock Secretary Muhammad Tayyab Lehri said at the meeting. He added that preventive camps have been established in districts bordering other provinces to control the outbreak. (*Dawn, May 24th, 2025, Page 5*)

4.4 # Poultry

Poultry industry urges govt to provide tax relief

The poultry industry has urged the government for provision of tax relief as in the presence of higher taxation the hotel industry as well as common consumers are buying meat from undocumented sources. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of K&N Khalil Sattar, during a meeting with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan, said that the poultry industry was not only paying taxes on inputs but also end products. He said that recently 10 percent tax was imposed on poultry feed and 17 percent on end products as a result sales are going down and consumers are opting for undocumented sources. During the meeting, they discussed crucial issues related to the meat export sector, poultry industry, and industrial growth initiatives in Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, May 6th, 2025, Page 3*)

5 # TRADE

Trade deficit with ME crosses \$10bn

Pakistan's trade deficit with the Middle East increased 10.11 per cent to \$10.502 billion in the first nine months of FY25 from \$9.538bn in the same period last year due to higher petroleum imports. The growing trade deficit raises concerns among decision-makers, mainly due to the rising influx of petroleum products. Meanwhile, export growth to select countries in the region remains minimal, according to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan. 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 owing to rising local prices. Exports to the

Middle East rose 4.47pc to \$2.381bn in July-March from \$2.279bn over the same period last year. In FY24, the exports to the region grew 35.23pc to \$3.155bn compared to \$2.33bn in the preceding year. At the same time, Pakistan's imports from the Middle East grew 9.02pc to \$12.883bn in 9MFY25 from \$11.817bn over the same period last year. In FY24, the imports declined 13.53pc to \$16.16bn compared to \$18.69bn in the same period the preceding year. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 9*)

AI system for cross-border trade

A Pakistani technology company has introduced AI Faceless Operations, a fully automated, round-the-clock system designed to digitalise and streamline cross-border trade processes. The solution aims to address major inefficiencies in the trade sector, which currently suffers an estimated annual loss of \$36 billion due to outdated, paper-based systems that threaten up to 3 million jobs. The tech company 'Galaxefi' has launched a multilingual, AI-powered virtual assistant that enables users to manage trade operations through simple voice or chat commands.

The assistant can automatically complete shipment details, generate customs and regulatory documents, provide real-time cargo tracking, and issue alerts in case of exceptions or delays. In a statement, company said that the new system is designed to operate without human oversight, making it ideal for around-the-clock logistics support. These AI agents allow businesses, particularly SMEs and logistics providers, to manage peak-season demand without hiring additional staff. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 9*)

Rs750bn revenue lost to illicit trade, smuggling yearly: report

Pakistan loses Rs750 billion in tax revenue per annum due to illicit trade and smuggling, reflecting that smuggling and illicit manufacturing expanding across key sectors including tobacco and petroleum products. Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (PRIME) and the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) jointly launched TRACIT's report "Pakistan's Battle Against Illicit Trade: An Analysis of Challenges and Pathways to Resilience". From smuggled petroleum and counterfeit pharmaceuticals to non-tax-paid cigarettes and under-invoiced consumer goods, illicit trade has entrenched itself across key sectors. The gravity of this issue is manifested by an estimated annual tax revenue loss of Rs. 3.4 trillion on account of an estimate of \$123 billion informal economy. (*Business Recorder, May 2nd, 2025, Page 1*)

Trade deficit

According to the PBS data, imports grew by 7.37pc to \$48.21bn in July-April FY25, up from \$44.90bn in the same period last year. In April alone, imports surged to \$5.53bn, compared to \$4.85bn last year — an increase of 14.09pc. Month-on-month, imports increased by 14.52pc. The IMF has revised its import forecast for FY25 downward by \$3.3bn — from \$60.5bn to \$57.2 billion — closely aligning with the government's projection of \$57.3bn. In FY24, imports fell by 0.84pc to \$54.73bn from \$55.19bn in FY23. The trade deficit for July-April FY25 widened by 8.81pc to \$21.35bn, up from

\$19.62bn in the same period last year. In April, the deficit jumped by 35.79pc to \$3.38bn, compared to \$2.49bn last year. The trade gap narrowed to \$24.08bn in FY24 from \$27.47bn in FY23. (*Dawn, May 3rd, 2025, Page 9*)

Jul-Apr exports up 6.25pc to \$26.859bn YoY

The country's exports witnessed an increase of 6.25 percent during the first 10 months (July-April) of current fiscal year 2024-25, reaching \$26.859 billion, compared to \$25.278 billion in the same period of last year. The trade data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed that trade deficit widened by 8.81 per cent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year and stood at \$21.351 billion compared to \$19.622 billion during the same period of last fiscal year. Imports also recorded a rise of 7.37 per cent during the first 10 months of current fiscal year, totaling \$48.210 billion, up from \$44.9 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

Pakistan's trade deficit in April 2025 widened by 55.20 per cent on a month-on-month (MoM) basis reaching to \$3.388 billion as compared to a deficit of \$2.183 billion recorded in March 2025. Exports declined by 19.05 per cent in April and stood at \$2.141 billion compared to \$2.645 billion in March. Imports registered a 14.52 per cent increase MoM in April and stood at \$5.529 billion compared to \$4.828 billion in March 2025. On year-on-year (YoY) basis, trade deficit widened by 35.79 per cent in April 2025 and stood at \$3.388 billion when compared to \$2.495 billion in April 2024. Exports registered 8.93 per cent decline YoY in April 2025 and stood at \$2.141 billion when compared to \$2.351 billion in April 2024. Imports registered 14.09 per cent growth YoY basis in April 2025 and stood at \$5.529 billion compared to \$4.846 billion in April 2024. (*Business Recorder, May 3rd, 2025, Page 1*)

Directive to improve trade volumes under barter system

Ministry of Commerce was directed to fast-track amendments to boost barter trade with Iran, Afghanistan and Russia. At its meeting, the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce, chaired by Senator Anusha Rehman, directed ministry to expedite necessary summaries for barter trade and the Import Policy Order. The meeting also discussed the mechanism to achieve the export target. The committee members directed ministry to resolve the confusion on trade with regional countries through a barter system compared to the parallel trade ongoing under the IPO. (*Dawn, May 7th, 2025, Page 9*)

Apr exports down 17.66pc to Rs2.178bn MoM

Pakistan exports witnessed a decrease in April whereas country's import increased, says Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The data of exports and imports released by PBS revealed exports from Pakistan during April 2025 amounted to Rs611,289 million (provisional) against Rs740,800 million in March 2025 and Rs653,957 million during April 2024 showing a decrease of 17.48 per cent over March, 2025 and of 6.52 per cent. The PBS data reveals that exports in April, 2025 totalled \$2,178 million (provisional) as compared to 2,645 million in March, 2025 showing a decrease of 17.66per cent over

March 2025 and of 7.36 per cent as compared to \$ 2,351 million in April 2024. Exports during July–April 2024-25 totalled Rs7,495,497 million (provisional) against Rs7,171,883 million during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 4.51 per cent. (*Business Recorder, May 17th, 2025, Page 1*)

Food import bill nears \$7bn in July-April

Pakistan's food import bill surged to nearly \$7 billion during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year, rising from \$6.82bn in the same period last year. The increase was primarily driven by higher imports of edible oil, tea and sugar to meet domestic demand. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, palm oil constituted the largest share among imported food items, followed by pulses, tea, soya bean oil and sugar.

Export bill

Contrary to this, the exports of Pakistan's raw food exports fell slightly by one per cent to \$6.16bn during July-April compared to \$6.23bn last year, mainly driven by a decline in sugar and non-basmati rice shipments. The food exports have increased for 20 straight months, despite unparalleled food inflation in the country's history. Because of supply and demand imbalances, consumers across the country are paying more for food items, particularly sugar, meat and poultry products. (*Dawn, May 18th, 2025, Page 9*)

Kazan Forum: Six potential trade corridors identified

Pakistan has identified six potential trade corridors connecting Central Asia, Europe, and Russia through China, Afghanistan and Iran. These include road networks from Karachi to Moscow via China and Kazakhstan, from Gwadar to Moscow via Afghanistan and through Turkmenistan and Iran to Azerbaijan and Russia. Addressing the closing session of the Kazan Forum, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan stated that Pakistan does not merely aspire to serve as a transit point between South Asia and Central Asia but rather aims to function as an economic bridge. He emphasized that Pakistan has been actively engaged in regional cooperation through various agreements signed in recent years and including proactive participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. (*Business Recorder, May 18th, 2025, Page 1*)

Trade deficit with nine regional countries widens 35pc

Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries widened by 34.64 per cent, reaching \$9.787 billion in the first ten months of the current fiscal year (FY25), compared to \$7.269 billion during the same period last year. Exports witnessed significant growth to Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, spurred by recent changes in the regional political landscape. However, trade with these countries continues to face considerable challenges, largely due to unfavourable government policies. Despite this positive development in exports, the overall trade gap with regional countries widened, primarily due to increased imports from China, India and Bangladesh during the period under review. In FY24, the trade deficit with these countries stood at \$9.506bn, up 49pc from \$6.382bn in preceding year. Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan,

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka saw a hefty growth in July-April FY25. Still, exports to other countries, especially China, continued to decline during the period. The value of Pakistan's exports to nine countries — Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives — rose 2.37pc to \$3.743bn in July-April FY25 from \$3.656bn over the same period last year. Contrary to this, imports surged 23.84pc to \$13.530bn in 10MFY25 from \$10.925bn over the same period of the previous fiscal year. (*Dawn*, May 22nd, 2025, Page 9)

\$2.5bn surplus in trade with US: Aurangzeb

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said that Pakistan's exports to United States of America (USA) is \$4.4 billion as compared to imports of US\$1.9 billion with the trade surplus of \$2.5 billion during current Financial Year 2024-25 (up to March). In written reply to a question to the National Assembly, minister said that Pakistan's exports to USA were US\$5.3 billion as compared to import of US \$2.2 billion with the trade surplus of US\$3.1 billion during financial year 2023-24. He said that Pakistan's major exports to USA are garments, medical instruments, PET-bottle grade, etc. He said that the major imports from USA are Cotton, iron and steel scrap, computers, petroleum products, soybean, almonds, etc. He said that the USA has imposed 30 per cent reciprocal tariffs on imports from Pakistan, which is currently suspended for 90 days. (*Business Recorder*, 22nd, May 2025, Page 1)

PM says Iran-Pakistan trade to increase to \$10bn

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran which stood at \$3billion would be taken to \$10 billion volume in the next few years, as there was immense potential of growth. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif departed to Iran after concluding his two-day official visit to Turkiye. In an interview with IRNA, prior to his visit to Tehran, the prime minister said bilateral trade between the two countries had witnessed a significant increase in the past three to four years. (*Business Recorder*, May 27th, 2024, Page 1)

Trade deficit with Middle East swells to \$11.7bn

Pakistan's trade gap with the Middle East widened by 9.89 per cent to \$11.731 billion during the first 10 months (July-April) of FY25 compared to \$10.675bn in the corresponding period last year due to higher petroleum imports. In FY24, the imbalance with the Middle East narrowed by 20.47pc to \$13.014bn from \$16.365bn in the preceding year, mainly due to lower petroleum imports amid falling consumption owing to rising local prices. Exports to the Middle East rose 4pc to \$2.624bn in July-April from \$2.523bn over the same period last year. In FY24, exports to the region grew 35.23pc to \$3.155bn compared to \$2.33bn in the preceding year. At the same time, Pakistan's imports from the Middle East grew 8.76pc to \$14.355bn in 10MFY25 from \$13.198bn over the same period last year. In FY24, imports declined 13.53pc to \$16.16bn compared to \$18.69bn in the preceding year. (*Dawn*, May 29th, 2025, Page 9)

5.1 # Export

Exports fall 8.9pc in April amid slowing growth trend

The country's merchandise exports recorded a negative growth of 8.93 per cent in April, marking the second such instance during the current fiscal year, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Export proceeds fell to a single-digit growth in October, with the growth pace progressively slowing in subsequent months, eventually turning negative in February with a 5.57pc decline, and now again in April with an 8.93pc drop. Although export growth briefly returned in March with a modest 3.08pc increase, it slipped back into negative territory in April. The continued slowdown in export proceeds may concern policymakers in the federal government. However, the Ministry of Commerce is not showing signs of alarm over the consistent decline.

Export performance in the earlier months of FY25 showed stronger growth — 11.83pc in July, 16pc in August, 13.52pc in September, 10.64pc in October, 8.98pc in November, 0.67pc in December and 4.59pc in January. In April, exports stood at \$2.14 billion, compared to \$2.35bn in the same month last year. On a month-on-month basis, exports declined by 19.05pc. During the first 10 months (July-April) of FY25, export proceeds reached \$26.86bn, up from \$25.27bn in the same period last year, showing a growth of 6.25pc. In FY24, Pakistan's merchandise exports rose by 10.54pc to \$30.64bn, up from \$27.72bn the previous year. (*Dawn, May 3rd, 2025, Page 9*)

PHDEC hosts training workshop to boost cherry exports to China

Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company took a monumental step in the realm of horticulture by organizing a one-day training workshop focused on export-oriented outcomes of cherry nurseries project and associated value chain challenges. The event, which was held in Gilgit-Baltistan, emphasized the significance of enhancing cherry production and export opportunities in Pakistan, particularly to the thriving Chinese market. Pakistan ranked as the world's 49th largest cherry producer, boasts significant cherry clusters primarily located in Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan regions.

This initiative marks the initial phase of capitalizing on the tremendous potential for exporting cherries to China. In 2023, China imported approximately 350,000 tons of cherries, illustrating the immense opportunity that lies ahead. Over the years, cherry production in the region has witnessed substantial growth. In 2001, total cherry production stood at 2,678 tons, a figure that has now escalated to a remarkable 8,000 tons, generating annual revenue of approximately Rs600-700 million. (*Business Recorder, May 3rd, 2025, Page 2*)

Exports to Europe rise to \$6.8bn

Pakistan's exports to European countries grew 8.18 per cent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year from a year ago, mainly due to higher shipments to western and southern states. In absolute terms, Pakistan's exports to the European Union (EU) reached \$6.782 billion in July-March FY25 from \$6.269bn last year, according to data

compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan. The export resurgence was due to a slight increase in demand for Pakistani goods in western, eastern and northern Europe. The revival of export proceeds to these countries shows a rising trend for Pakistani textile and clothing products. 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. (*Dawn, May 11th, 2025, Page 9*)

Exports to North America rise

Pakistan's merchandise exports to North America rose 11.24 per cent to \$4.837 billion in the first nine months of 2024-25 from \$4.348bn in the corresponding period last year. The growth was primarily driven by higher shipments to US, reflecting strengthening of the trade relationship between the two countries. The US accounted for nearly 94pc of total exports to North America, with the remaining share going to other countries, particularly Canada. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the rise in exports to the region is primarily due to a surge in textile and clothing exports to the US. Pakistan's exports to the region dipped to \$5.432bn in FY24. The exports stood at \$5.17bn in FY23, down 23.28pc from \$6.74bn in FY22. (*Dawn, May 14th, 2025, Page 9*)

Govt okays five-year tariff reform plan to spur exports

In a major policy shift, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has approved a comprehensive five-year tariff reform plan to be announced in the federal budget 2025-26, aiming to drastically reduce customs duties, additional customs duties, regulatory duties on raw materials and semi-finished goods, and a phased reduction in overall tariff protections for select industries. The first phase of the reform, set to be launched with the next budget, introduces a simplified customs duty structure with slabs of 0, 5, 10, 15, and 20 per cent. The existing 16pc slab will be reduced to 15pc, while the 11pc rate will drop to 10pc. The 3pc slab will be abolished, with products either moved to a zero-duty category or the new 5pc slab.

The proposed tariff overhaul is set to eliminate the additional customs duty of 2pc on 4,294 tariff lines in the upcoming budget. The plan also includes a reduction of additional customs duty from 4pc to 2pc on 545 tariff lines, from 6pc to 4pc on 2,227 tariff lines, and from 7pc to 6pc for all products currently subject to a customs duty above 20pc. The government is set to slash regulatory duties, which currently reach as high as 90pc on various products, bringing them down to a maximum of 30pc. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has also supported the major overhaul of the tariffs to boost industrial production in the country. (*Dawn, May 16th, 2025, Page 1*)

Textile exports down 1.35pc last month

The country's textile and clothing exports fell by 1.35 per cent in April 2025 compared to the same month last year, marking the first monthly decline of the current fiscal year. Export growth in the sector had gradually tapered, registering 13pc in August, 17.92pc in September, 13.11pc in October, 10.81pc in November, 5.55pc in December, 15.85pc

in January, 9.31pc in February, and 9.97pc in March before dipping into the negative in April. In absolute terms, textile and clothing exports in April stood at \$1.22 billion, down from \$1.24bn in the same month last year. Despite the April drop, overall textile and clothing exports rose by 8.4pc during the first 10 months (July to April) of FY25, reaching \$14.84bn, up from \$13.68bn during the same period last year. (*Dawn, May 17th, 2025, Page 9*)

Pakistan to export 125,000 tonnes of mangoes

Pakistan is set to begin mango exports from May 25, targeting 125,000 tonnes this season, with projected earnings of \$100 million in foreign exchange. This was announced by Waheed Ahmed, patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters Association. He said the export target for the current season is 25,000 tonnes higher than last year's figure. However, he also warned that climate challenges may impact overall supply of mangoes. Mango production in Pakistan has been consistently declining due to climate change and water scarcity. "There is a risk of up to a 20 per cent reduction in total mango production this year as well," Mr Ahmed cautioned.

Pakistan typically produces around 1.8 million tonnes of mangoes annually, with Punjab contributing 70pc, Sindh 29pc and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa around 1pc. "After the projected 20pc decline, this season's total production may drop to around 1.4m tonnes," he added. In addition to regular buyers, exporters are now targeting Japan, the United States, South Korea and Australia, while placing special focus on expanding exports to Turkiye and China. South Africa is also expected to open its market to Pakistani mangoes this season. (*Dawn, May 23rd, 2025, Page 9*)

5.2 # Import

Pakistan, US agree to diversify trade partnership

The United States Charge d'Affaires in Pakistan, Ms Natalie A. Baker, said that the resumption of US soybean exports to Pakistan signifies the growing partnership between the two countries. Ms Natalie accompanied the delegation of the US Chamber of Commerce and the US-Pakistan Business Council (USPBC), which met Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan. An official announcement said that Ms Natalie emphasised that the renewed trade underscores ability of both countries to find pragmatic solutions for enhancing agricultural cooperation and diversifying trade. She appreciated positive developments in agricultural trade, such as the resumption of soybean exports from the US to Pakistan, demonstrating the strength of the partnership and the ability to find practical solutions and encouraging avenues for deeper agricultural cooperation and trade diversification. (*Dawn, May 7th, 2025, Page 9*)

Pakistan makes large US soybean purchase

Pakistan has made its biggest purchase of US soybeans in nearly three years, the US Department of Agriculture said, as the nation resumes imports of genetically engineered soy. The purchases will only partially offset US farmers' lost sales to top soy importer

China because of President Donald Trump's trade war with Beijing. More than half of US soybean exports are normally to China, while Pakistan's total imports in 2021 totaled just 1.4% of US shipments abroad, according to US government data. Pakistan, which is clashing with India after a deadly attack on Indian tourists in the disputed territory of Kashmir, bought 225,000 metric tons of US soybeans for delivery in the crop year that begins on Sept. 1, USDA said via its daily reporting system. It was the country's largest one-off deal for US soybeans since a 297,000-ton purchase in June 2022. Pakistan's large soybean purchase surprised market analysts. (*Business Recorder*, May 9th, 2025, Page 12)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Rs40m fine imposed on Al-Ghazi Tractors

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has imposed a penalty of Rs40 million on Al-Ghazi Tractors Ltd (AGTL) for violating competition law and misguiding consumers. The two-member bench headed by CCP Chairman Dr Kabir Ahmed took the decision after an inquiry over advertisements floated in January 2022 by AGTL claiming its new Holland tractor models offered "up to 30 per cent extra diesel savings compared to any competitor's tractors". (*Dawn*, May 14th, 2025, Page 9)

Fertiliser makers upset at tax hike proposal

Fertiliser makers are upset over reports that government intends to increase the federal excise duty on key ingredients to 10 per cent in budget for FY26. Fertilisers are currently subjected to a five per cent federal excise duty (FED), but no GST is levied. Diammonium phosphate (DAP) has an additional five percent sales tax levy and there are varying levels of taxes on inputs, which push up the cost of production. Fertiliser makers say they recognise government's fiscal constraints and broader objective of expanding the tax base in alignment with IMF recommendations, but at the same time call upon the government to reconsider this proposed policy measure in view of its potentially adverse effects on agriculture sector. Total DAP sales during April 2025 are anticipated to be around 104,000 tonnes, up 12pc YoY and 113pc MoM. In 4M2025, total DAP offtake is anticipated to clock in at 254,000 tonnes, down 33pc YoY. Closing inventory of DAP is likely to be around 186,000 tonnes in April 2025 compared to 187,000 tonnes in March 2025 and 117,000 tonnes in April 2024. (*Dawn*, May 15th, 2025, Page 9)

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Pakistan, Russia agree to establish new steel mills in Karachi

In a bid to boost-up bilateral relations Russia and Pakistan have agreed to establish a new steel mill in Karachi. The development came here during a follow up meeting between Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan and a Russian delegation led by Denis Nazaroff, a visiting representative of Russia. (*Business Recorder*, May 14th, 2025, Page 1)

Japan approves \$3.5m grant for smart water meters

The Japanese government has approved a grant assistance of \$3.50 million for Pakistan to provide smart water meters and related equipment to the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) in Faisalabad. An agreement to this effect was signed in Islamabad between the embassy of Japan and the Economic Affairs Division under the Economic and Social Development Programme. (*Dawn, May 15th, 2025, Page 3*)

Jul-Apr FDI down 3pc to \$1.784bn YoY

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan declined by 3 percent during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year (FY25). FDI had been on an upward trend for several months, recording a 14 percent increase during the first nine months of FY25. However, the momentum eased slightly in July–April period, primarily due to lower FDI inflows in April 2025 compared to the same month last year. According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan, the country attracted \$1.784 billion in FDI during July-April of FY25, compared to \$1.836 billion in the same period last fiscal year (FY24), reflecting a decrease of 3 percent or \$52 million. During this period, total FDI inflows stood at \$2.661 billion, while outflows amounted to \$876 million. On a month-on-month basis, FDI fell sharply by 64 percent in April 2025. SBP data showed that Pakistan received \$141 million in FDI in April 2025, compared to \$395 million in April 2024, marking a significant decrease of \$254 million. (*Business Recorder, May 17th, 2025, Page 1*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

8.1 # Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

AIIB okays \$240m for water, sewerage infrastructure

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved \$240 million in funding for the second phase of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project (KWSSIP). The new phase will increase water availability, improve the safety of water and sewerage services in Karachi, and improve financial and operational performance of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC). The project will deepen the reforms undertaken under the project's first phase and significantly scale up the infrastructure investments to improve water supply and sewerage services in Karachi. Under the first phase, AIIB provided \$40m for project. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 5*)

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Indian ‘meddling’ fails to block IMF support

Despite Indian attempts to derail Pakistan's loan programme, International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved two major financing arrangements for the country — a \$1 billion disbursement under the ongoing Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and a new Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) aimed at supporting climate-related initiatives. The approval unlocks a total of \$2.1bn for Pakistan, including the \$1.4bn under the RSF programme, which spans 28 months and is designed to bolster the country's resilience to climate-induced shocks. In March, the IMF reached a staff-level agreement with

Pakistan on this new climate financing arrangement, alongside the first review of 37-month, \$7bn EFF programme that was approved in September 2024 — Pakistan’s 24th IMF-supported programme to date. According to the IMF, this assistance is intended to help Pakistan build resilience and enable sustainable growth. During IMF Executive Board meeting, India abstained from the vote. Ahead of the decision, Indian officials had raised objections, alleging misuse of global funds by Pakistan — claims that Islamabad has consistently rejected as politically motivated. (*Dawn, May 10th, 2025, Page 1*)

SBP receives 2nd tranche of \$1bn from IMF

The State Bank (SBP) said it has received the recently approved \$1 billion from the IMF under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). This was the second tranche of \$1bn under the EFF, which supported the fragile reserves position of the central bank and also paved the way for other resources. The IMF has become the biggest source for inflows into the country after remittances. The financial sector said the IMF’s inflow had relieved the country’s finances of the stress it was facing because of the Indian aggression. (*Dawn, May 15th, 2025, Page 9*)

IMF sets 11 new SBs under \$7bn EFF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has set eleven new structural benchmarks (SBs) for the ongoing \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme including the parliamentary approval of a fiscal year 2026 budget in line with Fund staff agreement to meet programme targets. The Fund in its latest report “First review under Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement, requests for modification of performance criteria, and request for an arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainable Facility (RSF)”, noted that 11 new SBs have been set.

The SBs on fiscal side include: (i) parliamentary approval of fiscal year 2026 budget in line with IMF staff agreement to meet program targets and ensure achievement of fiscal objectives (end-June 2025), (ii) implement the new Agriculture Income Tax laws through a comprehensive plan, including the establishment of an operational platform for processing returns, taxpayer identification and registration, a communication campaign, and a compliance improvement plan to protect tax revenue (end-June 2025).

On governance side (i) publish governance action plan based on the recommendations of the Governance Diagnostic Assessment with the rationale to publicly identify reform measures to address critical governance vulnerabilities (end-October 2025).

On social side (i) annual inflation adjustment of the unconditional cash transfer (Kafaalat) program to maintain UCT real purchasing power (end-January 2026).

On monetary and financial side (i) prepare and publish a plan outlining government’s post-2027 financial sector strategy, outlining the institutional and regulatory environment from 2028 onwards to safeguard financial stability (end-June 2026).

On energy sector (i) notifications of the annual electricity tariff rebasing and gas tariff adjustment to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels (July 1, 2025), (ii) notification of the semi-annual gas tariff adjustment to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels (February 15, 2026), (iii) adopt legislation to make captive power levy ordinance permanent to promote uptake of electricity grid usage and incentivize more efficient use of energy sources (end-May 2025), (iv) adopt legislation to remove the cap on the debt service surcharge to ensure adequate financing is available for CD conversion operation (end-June 2025).

On trade, investment policy, and deregulation side (i) prepare a plan based on the assessment conducted to fully phase out all incentives in relation to Special Technology Zones and other industrial parks and zones by 2035 to improve efficiency and provide a level playing field for investment (end-December 2025), and (ii) submit to parliament all required legislation for lifting all quantitative restrictions on the commercial importation of used motor vehicles (initially only for vehicles less than five years old, subject to meeting minimum environmental and safety standards) to liberalize trade and increase vehicle affordability (end-July 2025).

The report noted the authorities met all seven quantitative performance criteria (PCs) for end-December 2024: the floors on (i) net international reserves of the SBP; (ii) targeted cash transfer spending; and (iii) the number of new tax returns from new filers; and the ceilings on (iv) net domestic assets of the SBP; (v) the SBP's FX swap/forward book; (vi) the general government primary budget deficit; and (vii) government guarantees. They also met both continuous PCs on (i) zero new flow of SBP credit to the government; and (ii) zero external public payment arrears.

The majority of Indicative targets (ITs) were met at end-December, including ceilings on: (i) the aggregate provincial primary budget deficit; (ii) net accumulation of tax refund arrears; and (iii) power sector payment arrears; and the floors on (iv) revenues collected by provincial revenue authorities; and (v) the weighted average maturity of local currency debt securities. However, the ITs at end-December were missed for the floors on (i) government health and education spending; (ii) net tax revenues collected by the FBR; and (iii) net tax revenues collected from retailers under Tajir Dost scheme.

Nine SBs were met, including on approval of a National Fiscal Pact, improving safeguards for monetary policy operations and approval of amendments to bank resolution and deposit legislation. Three continuous SBs on not granting tax amnesties, seeking ex-ante parliamentary approval for any non-budgeted expenditures, and the maximum average premium between the interbank and open market rates were also met.

The SB on provincial AIT legislation was not met at end-October, but this legislation was subsequently passed in February 2025, while another two SBs were missed due to delays in passing amendments to of the Civil Servants and Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) Acts, respectively. Finally, two SBs relating to resolving undercapitalized banks

and to captive power producers were missed, but subsequent policy actions are expected to accomplish the underlying objectives. (*Business Recorder, May 19th, 2025, Page 1*)

8.3 # World Bank

Reforms key to recovery, poverty reduction: WB

Pakistan's path to sustainable economic recovery and poverty alleviation rests on comprehensive reforms that prioritise human capital, macroeconomic stability, climate resilience, sustainable energy, and private sector growth. This was stated by the World Bank Managing Director for Operations, Anna Bjerde, at the conclusion of a two-day visit to Pakistan. She commended the authorities for the reform momentum and stressed the need for continuity in implementation to sustain economic stability and to elicit a stronger investment and growth response by the private sector.

Anna Bjerde met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and expressed her appreciation for the collaboration on the new 10-year World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework with Pakistan. They also discussed the need for coordinated reforms at the federal and provincial levels to ensure sustained and inclusive growth. The World Bank official said, "during my visit, we discussed the next steps on the reform agenda of the government, especially in the fiscal, digital, and energy sectors, as well as the potential of the country in terms of private-led growth and entrepreneurship, particularly to create quality jobs for women and youth." (*Business Recorder, May 25th, 2025, Page 1*)

9 # POLICY

9.1 # Developmental Policy

Ministry seeks Rs1.6trn PSDP: FY26 budget on June 2

The federal government announced that federal budget for fiscal year 2025-26 will be presented on June 2, with the Planning Ministry seeking a development allocation of at least Rs1,600 billion – significantly higher than the Rs921 billion ceiling proposed so far by the Finance Ministry. Speaking at a presser, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said Finance Ministry has shared a resource envelope of just Rs921 billion for development programme for budget 2025-26 against the least requirement of Rs1,600 billion compared to estimated Rs2,900 billion by Planning Ministry for overall development programmes. (*Business Recorder, May 9th, 2025, Page 1*)

PSDP spending in 10 months stands at paltry 41pc

Government only managed to spend around 41percent of development funds allocated for the fiscal year despite the passage of 10 months, the planning ministry has said. The development spending stood at Rs448.6bn in the first 10 months (July-April) of fiscal year 2025, accounting for less than 41pc of Rs1.1 trillion revised budget allocation for the whole year. (*Dawn, May 12th, 2025, Page 12*)

IMF targets: ECC orders Rs50bn reallocation from PSDP to PD

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet has directed Planning, Development and Special Initiatives to surrender Rs 50 billion from Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) to Power Division as subsidy to meet the Circular Debt (CD) targets agreed with the IMF. (*Business Recorder*, May 12th, 2025, Page 1)

Only uplift-oriented projects be included in PSDP: minister

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal emphasised that only those projects should be included in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) that aim to improve institutional performance and contribute effectively to national development. The minister chaired a high-level meeting regarding the “Uraan Pakistan” Priority Development Projects for the fiscal year 2025–26. (*Business Recorder*, May 14th, 2025, Page 1)

PDWP approves development schemes

In the 80th meeting of the fiscal year 2024–25, the Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP), chaired by Chairman P&D Board Barrister Nabeel Ahmad Awan, approved two development schemes totalling Rs3.73 billion. (*Business Recorder*, May 14th, 2025, Page 7)

ECNEC approves 9 uplift projects worth Rs355.736bn

Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved 9 development projects worth Rs. 355.736 billion in key sectors including transport, energy, education, water resources, trade facilitation, tourism, and post-disaster recovery. Other key approvals covered flood rehabilitation initiatives to restore critical infrastructure in Sindh, early learning classroom transformation in Sindh, and the construction of Mangi Dam with a water conveyance system in Quetta. (*Business Recorder*, May 15th, 2025, Page 12)

PDWP approves nine uplift schemes

Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) approved nine development schemes of roads sector with an estimated cost of Rs13.67bn. (*Dawn*, May 17th, 2025, Page 2)

FBR overhaul, laptop scheme among Rs143bn projects cleared by CDWP

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) cleared 10 development projects worth Rs143 billion, including a Rs41bn initiative to revamp the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), enabling the government to secure a \$150 million loan from the World Bank despite a more than 225 per cent increase in project costs. The CDWP meeting, presided over by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, also cleared Rs27bn expansion of laptop scheme in Punjab and Sindh’s Rs60bn worth of three major projects in the roads and education sectors. The meeting requested the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council to formally approve five projects worth Rs127.1bn and itself approved five other projects worth Rs15.9bn. (*Dawn*, May 17th, 2025, Page 3)

CDWP approves 5 uplift projects

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved five development projects at cost of Rs15.9 billion and referred five major projects amounting to approximately Rs127.1 billion to ECNEC for final approval. Five major projects, amounting to approximately Rs127.1 billion, were recommended to ECNEC for final consideration and approval. (*Business Recorder, May 17th, 2025, Page 1*)

CDWP clears 10 projects

Days before the unveiling of the federal budget for the next fiscal year, CDWP cleared a total of 10 new development projects at an estimated cost of Rs249 billion, mostly pertaining to PMLN's trademark road sector in Punjab. Presided over by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, the second meeting of the CDWP within a week requested Ecneec to formally approve six projects worth Rs227.34bn and itself approved four other projects at an estimated cost of Rs21.83bn. On May 16, the CDWP also cleared 10 projects worth Rs143bn. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 9*)

9.2 # Environmental Policy

SEPA accelerates operations to implement environmental laws

On the directives of Secretary Environment, Climate Change & Coastal Development the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has accelerated operations across province to ensure strict implementation of environmental laws. Following inspections of various factories, warehouses, hospitals, energy plants, and stone crushing units across Sindh, several establishments have been issued legal notices for violating environmental regulations. (*Business Recorder, May 19th, 2025, Page 5*)

9.3 # Neo – Liberal Policy

Price deregulation improves access to medicines, helps stabilise industry

The price deregulation of non-essential medicines in early 2024 has improved access to medicines and brought much-needed stability to pharmaceutical sector, creating space for sustainable and long-term industry growth. The policy shift, aimed to create a market-driven approach while addressing longstanding challenges in sector, provided flexibility to pharmaceutical firms, allowing them to adjust prices in line with market conditions. By aligning prices with inflation and currency fluctuations, companies have managed to stabilise production of medicines that were previously at risk of becoming unavailable due to pricing constraints. (*Business Recorder, May 12th, 2025, Page 4*)

Federal govt is no longer setting wheat prices, NA informed

Chaos looms large for Pakistan's wheat farmers as the government told the National Assembly that it is officially pulling plug on Passco – the state-run grain procurement giant – and ditching wheat price controls, setting the stage for a free-market frenzy. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary stunned the lawmakers by confirming that federal government is no longer setting wheat prices – leaving farmers

at the mercy of the open market. With wheat now tossed into the jaws of market forces, the once-mighty Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (Passco) is getting the axe – a move the lawmakers on both sides of the aisle slammed, warning it will leave farmers exposed to ruthless middlemen and global grain cartels ready to pounce. (*Business Recorder*, May 17th, 2025, Page 10)

Punjab governor opposes outsourcing of educational, health institutions

While expressing differences with PML-N government's move to outsource 6,000 government schools and 971 basic health units across 37 districts of the province, Punjab Governor Sardar Salim Haider Khan has said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leadership disagreed with the decision. He expressed these views at the inauguration of the Student Support Centre of Sarhad University of Science and Technology at the Sir Syed Education Foundation in Hassanabdal. Such a move would add to the miseries of the common man rather than providing them relief. (*Dawn*, May 19th, 2025, Page 4)

Deregulation won't cause indiscriminate price hike of medicines: PPMA

The Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) has welcomed the government's decision to deregulate the prices of non-essential medicines, saying it has ensured sustainability and would not lead to any indiscriminate increase in prices. PPMA Chairman Tauqueer ul Haq said the recent policy shift has helped restore stability in the market, revived stalled production lines and brought critical medicines back to shelves nationwide. He added that local production of medicines has started gaining momentum following the recent deregulation policy. "The intent is not to increase prices indiscriminately but to ensure sustainable production and eliminate dangerous alternatives. (*Dawn*, May 21st, 2025, Page 14)

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

2.4pc of GDP: Jul-Mar budget deficit stands at Rs2.97trn

Pakistan's budget deficit was recorded at Rs2.97 trillion (2.4 percent of the GDP) in the first nine months (July to March) of the current fiscal year 2024-25. A summary of consolidated federal and provincial fiscal operations for July-March 2024-25, released by Finance Division showed that total revenue stood at Rs13.366tr (10.8pc of the GDP) against the total expenditure of Rs16.337tr (13.2pc of GDP) during the first nine months of the current fiscal year, hence budget deficit has been recorded at Rs2.970 trillion (2.4pc of the GDP). The primary balance posted a surplus of Rs3.468tr (2.8pc of GDP). For the current fiscal year 2024-25, the government has projected a budget deficit at Rs7.3 trillion or 5.9 percent of the GDP. (*Business Recorder*, May 8th, 2025, Page 1)

Govt debt stock soars to Rs73.6trn by March-end

Pakistan's federal government debt stock surged to Rs 73.6 trillion by the end of March 2025, as rising domestic borrowings fueled by fiscal deficit financing pushed the debt burden up. (*Business Recorder*, May 13th, 2025, Page 1)

Pakistan gets over \$16bn in rollovers, new loans

Pakistan received \$16.08 billion in foreign loans and grants in the first 10 months of 2024-25, compared to an annual target of \$19.2bn by June 30. While half of this portfolio was legacy rollovers from China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, fresh loans and grant inflows amounted to \$6.086bn in July-April, almost 15 per cent lower than the comparable period of last fiscal year. In its monthly report on Foreign Economic Assistance (FEA) released, the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) said that against its annual target of \$19.4bn, FEA in July-April amounted to \$6.086bn compared to \$7.142bn in the same period last year with an annual target of \$17.6bn.

This does not include about \$1bn disbursed by the IMF in October as an upfront payment under the \$7bn ongoing Extended Fund Facility (EFF) that is accounted for separately by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). This also does not include the subsequent \$1bn IMF inflow last week. With three rollovers and fresh disbursements, the total external assistance in 10MFY25 amounted to \$16.08bn. This included \$3bn rollovers by Saudi Arabia, \$2bn by the UAE, and \$3bn by China. Pakistan has a total annual rollover portfolio of about \$12.7bn in safe deposits and loans from these three countries, leaving the country's net international reserves (NIR) at around \$3.3bn.

In addition, Pakistan also received \$1.61bn from overseas Pakistanis through Naya Pakistan Certificates compared to \$8861m in the same period last year. The Asian Development Bank disbursed \$1.253bn in 10MFY25 compared to \$708m a year ago, and \$1.07bn was received from the World Bank. (*Dawn, May 24th, 2025, Page 9*)

10.1 # Food

Rs527m plan to provide hot meals to 11,000 primary students in schools

The Sindh government and World Food Programme (WFP) will co-finance a one-year pilot School Meals Project in Malir District for 2025-26 academic session with Rs578.39 million. The plan aims at providing daily hot meals to 11,000 primary school students, till class five, to improve learning, attendance and nutrition. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 13*)

Milk samples collected from over 100 tea shops found `contaminated`

The milk and tea leaves used by almost every tea shop and stall across the city (Karachi) have been found to be alarmingly contaminated with harmful chemicals and substances, Sindh Food Authority (SFD) officials have said. "100 percent of samples of tea leaves and 90 per cent of milk samples collected in different areas have been found adulterated and contaminated with chemicals and added colours". (*Dawn, May 4th, 2025, Page 13*)

Lahore drug court directs urgent regulation of infant formula products

In a landmark judgment, the Drug Court Lahore has directed authorities to take urgent steps to regulate the manufacturing, sale, and quality of baby milk, baby food, infant formula, and related products. The court highlighted serious gaps in the oversight of

these products, which are widely consumed by infants and young children across Pakistan. The case was initiated on a petition expressing concerns over substandard and unregistered baby food products allegedly causing serious health issues among infants. (*Dawn*, May 9th, 2025, Page 2)

10.2 # Food Scarcity

11m people facing acute food insecurity in Pakistan: FAO

High levels of acute food insecurity persisted in Pakistan between November 2024 and March 2025, with 11 million people facing crisis or worse, says the ‘2025 Global Report on Food Crises’. The report published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, says these 11 million people or 22 percent of analysed population are projected to face acute food insecurity in 68 flood-affected rural districts across Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This include 1.7m people in emergency. The population coverage increased by 38pc between the 2024 peak and 2025 current analysis, from 36.7m people to 50.8m people, with 25 additional districts, making the 2024 peak and the projection for 2025 not comparable. The situation was better than the previous year’s lean season but weather extremes continued to affect livelihoods. The peak for 2024 in Pakistan remained the same as in 2023, with 11.8m people facing high levels of acute food insecurity between November 2023 and January 2024.

The report says Pakistan experienced persistently high levels of acute malnutrition between 2018 and early 2024 in analysed areas of Balochistan and Sindh, with global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence consistently above 10pc and reaching more than 30pc in certain districts. Insufficient funds also limited nutrition service coverage. In 2025, climate shocks and acute food insecurity risk further aggravated already high acute malnutrition levels. According to the report, 11.8m people or 32pc of the analysed population were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity in 43 rural districts of Balochistan, KP and Sindh during the winter lean season. Of them, 2.2m were in emergency under the Integrated Food Insecurity Phase Classification (IPC) during November 2023 to January 2024.

The report further said acute malnutrition burden during March 2023 and January 2024 affected 2.1m children aged 6 to 59 months. Children’s diets were of insufficient quality and quantity, exacerbated by acute food insecurity which worsened during the winter months (December–February) when food prices are higher, livelihood opportunities are restricted and access to markets is reduced. A high prevalence of acute malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding women was accompanied by a high proportion of children being born with a low birth weight, particularly in Sindh and KP. Levels of diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and malaria were high, worsening during the winter months. Inadequate coverage of sanitation facilities and safe drinking water was a significant concern, partly following the heavy monsoon floods in 2022.

These floods damaged most water systems in Sindh and, to a lesser extent, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Across all three provinces, poor healthcare-seeking behaviours and blocked roads limited access to healthcare. Insufficient funds also limited nutrition service coverage. In 2025, climate shocks and acute food insecurity risk further aggravated already high acute malnutrition, report says.

History of food crisis

A lower-middle-income country, Pakistan is susceptible to weather extremes, including floods and drought, especially in the provinces of Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. The geographical coverage of IPC analyses has varied but focused primarily on Sindh in 2017-2018, and Balochistan and Sindh in 2019 and 2021. Major floods affected all three provinces in 2022, with the highest share of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity reaching 49pc in 16 districts of Balochistan and Sindh. (*Dawn, May 18th, 2025, Page 12*)

Minister launches programme to tackle malnutrition among schoolchildren

A free school meal programme titled ‘School Khana Program’ has been launched in government schools located in underprivileged areas of Sindh. Sindh Minister for Education Syed Sardar Ali Shah recently inaugurated the programme in collaboration with the Allah Wale Trust and stated that this initiative would help improve children’s learning abilities and bring out-of-school children back to classrooms. The programme was inaugurated at the Government Boys Primary School in Murad Memon Goth, District Malir. (*The News, May 18th, 2025, Page 13*)

Famine in waiting

Food insecurity across world has reached unprecedented levels, with conflict, economic shocks, and climate extremes pushing millions to the edge of starvation, according to the Global Report on Food Crises. The situation is most harrowing in Gaza, where the entire population of 2.1m is facing high levels of acute food insecurity. As of March 2024, more than half the population was classified in IPC Phase 4 Emergency levels, while an alarming 50pc faced Catastrophe conditions (IPC Phase 5), the final stage before famine is officially declared.

This is not just a humanitarian failure but a result of deliberate policy and sustained conflict. Gaza’s economy has collapsed under a 17-year blockade and repeated military escalations. By the end of 2024, 75pc of cropland, 57pc of greenhouses, and 68pc of wells had been destroyed. In north Gaza and Gaza governorates, 70pc of the population was surviving under Catastrophe-level conditions, relying almost entirely on inadequate humanitarian aid. Food prices skyrocketed, with wheat flour prices increasing by 3,000pc between February and April 2025. Efforts at mitigation remain woefully insufficient. Humanitarian access has been severely restricted, with aid trucks entering Gaza far below pre-conflict levels, and the risk of famine remains persistent throughout 2025. The global community must push for an immediate ceasefire and unrestricted humanitarian access.

While Gaza's plight is the most severe, Pakistan too faces a worrying food security outlook. Although food inflation fell to 0.3pc by December 2024, down from double digits earlier in the year, poverty and unemployment continue to hinder access to food. The 2022 floods left lasting scars, and extreme weather events in 2023 and 2024 further eroded livelihoods, particularly in rural Balochistan, Sindh and KP. These regions also face deteriorating water security, further compounding agricultural losses and pushing subsistence farmers into deeper debt traps.

As of the latest assessments, 11m people in Pakistan remain in IPC Phase 3 Crisis or worse, with 2.2m in Emergency conditions. High levels of acute malnutrition are particularly alarming in Sindh and KP, with a significant number of children born with low birth weight and a large burden of diarrhoea and respiratory infections exacerbating the crisis. Compounding these challenges is the global reduction in humanitarian funding, which has curtailed food assistance programmes.

Immediate policy interventions are needed. The centre and provinces must strengthen social safety nets, ensure nutrition support for mothers and children, and invest in climate-resilient agriculture. Without decisive action, Pakistan risks falling deeper into a chronic cycle of hunger and poverty. In a world where millions go to bed hungry, and where children's futures are traded for geopolitical gains, we must ask: how long can humanity endure this? (*Dawn, May 19th, 2025, Page 6*)

10.3 # Inflation

'Rupee devaluation, inflation leave minimum wage wholly insufficient'

As workers worldwide commemorate International Labour Day, the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Piler) hosted a seminar to address one of the most pressing issues facing the country's labour force: the failure to implement minimum wage law. The meeting at the Karachi Press Club brought together trade unionists, government officials, and labour activists seeking solutions to protect workers' rights amid economic instability. Against the backdrop of spiralling inflation and currency devaluation that have eroded workers' purchasing power, the seminar tackled the systemic failures that have left millions of Pakistani workers without even the basic wage protections guaranteed by law.

Qamar ul Hasan, senior trade unionist, provided historical context that illustrated the dramatic erosion of purchasing power. "In 2001, 2.5 months of minimum wage would equal 1 tola of gold. Today, you need to work 8.5 months for the same gold," he stated. Hasan emphasised that the current official minimum wage of Rs37,000 is already insufficient, adding that still an estimated 800 million workforce of Pakistan don't even receive this legal minimum. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 13*)

Inflation hits all-time low of 0.3pc

Pakistan's consumer inflation rate plunged to an all-time low of 0.3 per cent year-on-year in April, driven mainly by a sharp decline in prices of perishable food items and electricity and fuel charges. The drop outpaced the Ministry of Finance's projection, which had forecast inflation to remain between 1.5pc and 2pc for the month. The reduction is primarily attributed to lower prices of key food staples such as wheat and its derivatives, onions, potatoes and certain pulses, as well as a cut in electricity and fuel charges. (*Dawn, May 3rd, 2025, Page 1*)

Flour price up by Rs100 for 20kg bag

Flour mills have increased ex-mill price of a 20-kg bag of flour by Rs 100, jacking up its price from Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,200. Consequently, at the retail level, the price of a 20-kg bag of flour has increased by Rs100, and its price has swelled from Rs1,250 to Rs1,350. Flour millers claimed that the increase in the price of a 20 kg bag of flour is due to the high cost of wheat in the open market. They added that the price of wheat in the open market has increased by Rs 200 per 40kg to Rs 2,200 from Rs 2,400. (*The News, May 4th, 2025, Page 2*)

10.4 # Poverty

Sales tax 'largest' contributor to inequality, poverty: World Bank

A World Bank study says General Sales Tax (GST) has largest marginal contribution to the national poverty increase, while GST payments account for over 7 per cent of households' pretax expenditure, which leads to further impoverishment among poor and vulnerable households. The Effects of Taxes and Transfers on Inequality and Poverty in Pakistan says the GST has the largest negative impact on the poverty headcount; the Benazir Income Support Programme has the largest positive impact on inequality reduction. Estimations of the marginal contributions of individual fiscal instruments — or the additional impact that individual fiscal instruments have on poverty or inequality when all other fiscal instruments are included — demonstrate that GST has the largest marginal contribution to the national poverty increase. (*Dawn, May 25th, 2025, Page 9*)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Sindh imposes blanket ban on plastic bags from June 15

The Sindh government imposed a complete ban on all types of plastic shopping bags across the province, effective from June 15. According to a notification issued by the environment, climate change and coastal development department, the manufacturing, storage, sale and use of all plastic shopping bags will be strictly prohibited across the province from June 15, 2025. The ban will apply to non-degradable, oxo-degradable, black-coloured and recycled plastic bags as well. (*Dawn, May 6th, 2025, Page 13*)

CM Punjab Green Credit Programme launched

To promote environment-friendly activities in the province, the Punjab government has announced incentives for the citizens carrying out green interventions in air, land, water, waste management, biodiversity, ecology and environmental awareness sectors. The scheme launched from Lahore in the first phase awards green credit hours for a certain level of activities and for each credit hour, the government will pay Rs10,000 as an incentive. Thus, e-bikers and those making green interventions in other sectors may earn five carbon credits along with financial support of Rs50,000 each by registering with Green Portal, announced Environment Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb while formally launching the CM Punjab Green Credit Programme. (*Dawn, May 7th, 2025, Page 2*)

Lower Sindh loses green cover thanks to illegal logging, encroachment of forests

Environmentalists have voiced deep concern over large-scale deforestation across Thatta, Sujawal, Badin and Tando Mohammad Khan districts thanks to unabated illegal logging by local timber mafias, conversion of forest land's status into agricultural and failure of reforestation initiatives. The situation has been further aggravated by natural factors such as recurring floods & soil erosion and widespread encroachments and unauthorised occupation of forest land that have continued unchecked for decades. Experts warn that if action is not taken immediately, region's ecological balance & biodiversity may face irreversible damage.

Official data gathered revealed that despite limited recoveries, only 800 acres in Thatta as of May 2013, thousands of acres of forest land still remained under illegal occupation. Forest officials disclosed on condition of anonymity that influential individuals with large landholdings had long used vast tracts land for unleased agricultural purposes in Baao Puran Daas, Veeran, Mulchand, and other forests. Two reports submitted to Supreme court in 2019 and 2023 showed Thatta accounted for 4,699 of Sindh's 145,300 acres of encroached forest land and 1,343 acres of 64,500 acres illegally allotted. Sindh government disclosed in a report that of 232,205.7 acres of encroached forest land across province, 41,030.5 acres remained under illegal occupation, while 13,438.49 acres out of 34,713.05 acres of illegally allotted land remained unrevoked. (*Dawn, May 29th, 2025, Page 15*)

11.1 # Atmosphere

Fire burns acres of trees in Lodhran jungle

A massive fire erupted in the Miranpur jungle near Lodhran. According to Forest Department officials, the fire burned trees and bushes over several acres. The cause of the fire could not be ascertained, but officials claimed that the unusually high temperatures and high-tension wires passing over the vast forest area may have caused it. (*Dawn, May 19th, 2025, Page 8*)

Massive forest fire erupts in S. Waziristan

A massive forest fire has erupted in the mountainous area of Ghorlama, located in the Sarveikai tehsil of Upper South Waziristan. According to initial reports, the fire broke out morning and rapidly spread across a wide area, fuelled by strong winds and dry vegetation. (*Dawn, May 19th, 2025, Page 9*)

Fire flares up on Margalla Hills again

A fire broke out once again in Islamabad's Margalla Hills, prompting an emergency response from CDA and the district administration. (*Dawn, May 20th, 2025, Page 4*)

Forest fire spreads across northern Balochistan's mountains

A massive fire, which erupted evening in the mountainous forests of Qila Saifullah district in northern Balochistan, was rapidly spreading across a large area despite efforts by local authorities to contain it. "The fire, which suddenly broke out in the Spin Ghar forests, is spread over an area of around two kilometres," said Deputy Commissioner Saeed Khan Dummor. "Hundreds of trees and bushes have been gutted by the blaze." However, strong winds in the area caused the flames to spread quickly, engulfing large swathes of forest land. (*Dawn, May 20th, 2025, Page 5*)

Stubble burning goes unchecked in Narowal

District administration and departments of agriculture and environment protection have failed to prevent the farmers from setting their wheat stubble on fire as the stubble over 570 acres was set on fire after wheat harvesting in areas of Narowal, Shakargarh and Zafarwal. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 8*)

11.2 # Biodiversity

Experts call for immediate steps to protect Sindh's biodiversity

Speakers at events held in connection with International Day for Biological Diversity called for urgent measures to protect Sindh's biodiversity that, they said, was being lost at a rapid pace due to multiple factors. They attributed the factors to the absence of an efficient waste management system contributing to growing land, and air and marine pollution. At a programme at the NED University of Engineering and Technology, the speakers also looked at current conservation efforts, the important role of universities in research and new ideas, and how technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and the internet of things (IoT) could help protect nature. The programme was co-hosted by the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) and the university's physics department. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 14*)

11.3 # Health

Punjab health dept to hire daily-wage doctors to keep hospitals functional

As the Young Doctors' Association (YDA) Punjab chapter threatened to shut down indoor services at all public sector hospitals across province, health department issued an order to hire doctors on daily wages to keep the healthcare facilities fully functional, besides terminating services of 12 more young doctors. The health authorities have already cancelled leaves of all doctors and nurses in the province. Holding a presser in Lahore, YDA Punjab leaders announced expanding their agitation province wide in response to terminations and suspensions of young medics and nurses by health authorities, saying they were not be afraid of departmental punishments, victimisation

and arrests by police. Meanwhile, senior representatives of Punjab Nurses Association and Pakistan Medical Association also came forward in YDA's support. Earlier, young medics shut down the OPD services at different public sector hospitals in province for the last 10 days, while government responded by terminating services of 17 doctors and nurses for denying treatment to patients. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 2*)

Rising taxes pushing health care beyond patients' reach in Pakistan: experts

The imposition of an 18% sales tax on essential medical devices and diagnostic equipment is inflating cost of healthcare in Pakistan and placing life-saving treatment out of reach for millions of patients, health experts and industry representatives warned. They say that before any medicine or surgical procedure is prescribed, accurate diagnosis through medical devices is the starting point—and taxing this critical first step is worsening an already fragile healthcare landscape.

Even charitable institutions like the Indus Hospital network, which provide free-of-cost care to thousands of patients every day, are struggling to cope with the financial burden passed onto them by suppliers due to the General Sales Tax (GST) regime. In a country where the public health expenditure has dropped to just 1% of GDP and most people pay out-of-pocket for healthcare, the GST on medical devices has become a bottleneck in delivering timely and affordable diagnosis and treatment.

The Healthcare Devices Association of Pakistan (HDAP), which represents suppliers of over 90% of essential medical technologies in the country, has taken up the issue directly with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) officials. (*The News, May 4th, 2025, Page 15*)

One child is born with thalassaemia every 90 minutes in Pakistan, warn experts

A child is born with thalassemia major every 90 minutes in Pakistan, but this entirely preventable disease can be eradicated within a generation through one simple step — mandatory pre-marital screening for all couples. This was the key message delivered by renowned paediatric hematologist Dr Saqib Ansari ahead of World Thalassaemia Day 2025. The press conference marked the start of a week-long awareness campaign being held in connection with World Thalassaemia Day, observed globally on May 8.

According to Dr Ansari, over 10 million Pakistanis are thalassemia carriers and an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 children are born with thalassemia major every year. Currently, more than 90,000 children across the country are living with the disease and rely on monthly or bi-weekly blood transfusions for survival. He said the overwhelming cause of this blood disorder is inter-family marriages without prior screening, compounded by a dangerous lack of public awareness and government enforcement of preventive laws. Dr Ansari said it was promising that all four provincial assemblies, the National Assembly, and the Senate have passed resolutions or bills regarding thalassemia prevention. In Sindh, a bill has already been signed into law by the governor. (*The News, May 4th, 2025, Page 16*)

‘Children among 24,000 living with Type 1 diabetes in Pakistan’

Highlighting the need to raise public awareness about diabetes, a public health specialist at a programme held at the Karachi Press Club (KPC) shared that the latest international data shows that 24,000 Pakistanis, the majority of them children, currently live with Type 1 diabetes, an incurable autoimmune disease. (*Dawn, May 7th, 2025, Page 14*)

89pc Pakistani patients fail to achieve controlled blood pressure: experts

A staggering 89 percent of Pakistanis diagnosed with hypertension are unable to bring their blood pressure under control, even while on prescribed medication, sparking fresh alarm among public health specialists who warn the unchecked “silent killer” is tightening its grip across the nation. Speaking at a press conference held at the Karachi Press Club (KPC) to mark World Hypertension Day, leading cardiologists and public health officials expressed deep concern over growing number of Pakistanis, especially young individuals, suffering from uncontrolled blood pressure, a condition often dubbed the “silent killer.” (*Business Recorder, May 18th, 2025, Page 5*)

KP Health Foundation awaits Rs3 billion funds to outsource seven hospitals

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation is awaiting approval from finance department for availability of budget to award contract to private organisations for outsourcing seven hospitals. Health Foundation (HF), a public sector entity established under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation Act, 2016, has been outsourcing those hospitals that are not performing well because doctors, nurses and paramedics don’t want to be posted there. Under the agreements, private organisations get funds and recruit doctors and other staff as per need to facilitate patients in the respective areas.

So far, it has contracted out 19 hospitals to private organisations, mostly in merged districts to improve services. Of these, the contracts of seven hospitals with HF expired in June 2023. The contracts were extended temporarily after the approval of provincial cabinet. The Board of Governors of HF has already approved selection of private organisations to run these seven hospitals but is awaiting approval of finance department to release about Rs3bn to sign contracts with organisations. Seven hospitals located in merged districts have been facing financial issues due to which they have restricted services and want government to hand over hospitals to newly-selected organizations so they could be run at a desired level. (*Dawn, May 19th, 2025, Page 9*)

CM Punjab launches ‘insulin card’ for diabetic children

CM Maryam Nawaz launched CM’s Insulin Card programme, aimed to provide free insulin and other paraphernalia to children suffering from type-I congenital diabetes through the Pakistan Post riders at their doorstep. (*Dawn, May 27th, 2025, Page 2*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIP launched to accelerate homegrown climate tech solutions

In the face of escalating climate threats, Renewables First and New Energy Nexus have jointly launched Climate Innovation Pakistan (CLIP), a first-of-its-kind national platform dedicated to accelerating homegrown climate tech solutions. Pakistan ranks high amongst the most vulnerable countries to climate change, despite contributing less than 0.9% to global greenhouse gas emissions. The groundbreaking ceremony at the National Incubation Centre marks a significant milestone in addressing this existential climate challenge through technology driven solutions.

The collaboration introduces two key components: a Climate Tech Incubator by Renewables First featuring a tailored curriculum for early-stage climate ventures, and a New Energy Academy established by New Energy Nexus to upskill the solar industry workforce. The discussion underscored urgent need for specialized incubation programs and targeted capacity-building curricula, supported by a balanced mix of global and local subject matter experts and experienced founders. With right policy environment in place, Pakistan's climate tech ecosystem stands at a pivotal juncture, presenting a ripe opportunity for disruption, innovation, and long-term impact. (*Business Recorder, May 2nd, 2025, Page 7*)

Debt management, climate funding: Malaysia's 'green finance model' being adopted: Aurangzeb

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb, said Pakistan is adopting the Malaysian Green Finance Model to enhance its debt management strategy and address climate change financing needs. He made these remarks while addressing a gong ceremony organized by the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) via video link from Karachi, marking the launch of the country's first-ever sovereign domestic green Sukuk. The finance minister highlighted that Pakistan stands to gain valuable insights from the Malaysian model and expressed confidence that the country can effectively move in that direction. (*Business Recorder, May 17th, 2025, Page 1*)

Italian agency pledges €4m for people vulnerable to climate-related risks

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation will provide 4m euros worth funding for a project that aims to strengthen resilience among vulnerable communities facing climate-related risks in Sindh. In this regard, an Italian humanitarian aid and development organisation, Cooperation Emergency Development SVI signed a partnership agreement with FAO of the UNs for launch Resilience and Adaptation by Fostering Anticipatory Action Project in Sindh. (*Dawn, May 18th, 2025, Page 15*)

Rising temperatures have led to formation of over 3,000 glacial lakes, NA informed

Due to rising global temperatures, nearly 10,000 glaciers in Pakistan are retreating at an alarming rate and glacial melts have led to the formation of 3,044 lakes, with 33 of them classified as highly volatile. This information was placed before the National Assembly

by Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Malik. According to minister, these unstable lakes pose a grave threat to at least 7.1m people living downstream. During this period of intensified glacial activity, Pakistan has already experienced 75 Glacial Lake Outburst Flood events, highlighting country's extreme vulnerability to climate disasters.

The lawmakers were further informed that Pakistan is also experiencing decline in rainfall, posing serious threats to its water security, agriculture, and overall climate resilience as a recent data from the Pakistan Meteorological Department indicates that the country has received 40 per cent less rainfall compared to its 30-year historical average. Providing statistical data, the minister said that the glacial regions of Pakistan, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, were home to an astonishing 13,032 glaciers. Indus Basin alone contains approximately 26,000 square kilometers of glaciers, representing around 26pc of the total glacier area within the broader Third Pole region, which includes Himalayas, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush Mountain ranges. (*Dawn, May 20th, 2025, Page 4*)

ADB to help govt with climate policy

TAsian Development Bank has agreed to assist Pakistan develop a strategy and climate policy framework aimed at enhancing environmental resilience and climate adaptability in country. The decision was taken in a meeting of ADB Director General Bruno Carrasco-led delegation with Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik and other officials. The meeting also explored avenues for joint ventures in climate financing and investments, with goal of mobilizing substantial resources towards sustainable development. (*Dawn, May 27th, 2025, Page 12*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

13.1 # Avalanche

Man killed, 21 rescued as avalanche hits people displaced from AJK

A man was killed and around two dozen others were rescued after an avalanche struck them while crossing over in Jalkhad area of Kaghan Valley after escaping India shelling in Azad Jammu Kashmir. (*Dawn, May 12th, 2025, Page 9*)

13.2 # Flood

Two swept away in Karak flash flood

A flash flood swept away two people in the Wargha Banda area of Karak district as heavy showers damaged harvested wheat crop in Swabi, where a lightning strike also destroyed three cars and solar system of a hujra. In Bajaur, a lightning strike damaged a house in Khar tehsil's Bai China but luckily no casualties were reported. (*Dawn, May 5th, 2025, Page 9*)

Flash floods damage roads, agricultural land in several KP districts

Heavy rain triggered flash floods in Mohmand, South Waziristan and Upper Kohistan districts, damaging roads and agricultural land. However, no casualty was reported from

any districts of the province. Heavy rainfall triggered flash floods in several areas of Halimzai tehsil in Mohmand district including Shanikhel, Tarikhel, Barokhel, Durbakhel and Babikhel. Flood, caused by overflowing mountain streams, swept away dozens of livestock and damaged houses and link roads. (*Dawn, May 9th, 2025, Page 8*)

13.3 # Heatwave

UN launches heatwave contingency plan as temperatures soar

The United Nations has launched a comprehensive ‘Heatwave Contingency Plan’ for Pakistan, targeting areas most vulnerable to extreme heat. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), which prepared the plan, anticipatory action efforts in Pakistan are closely aligned with the ‘Inter-sectoral Heatwave Contingency Plan’ and are being further reinforced through OCHA’s coordination role. By working in close collaboration with provincial disaster management authorities and humanitarian partners, the OCHA is facilitating joint planning, mapping of heatwave response efforts and fostering collective preparedness.

In 2025, pre-arranged fuel funding amounting to \$829,728 has been secured to support the readiness and activation phases of heatwave response activities. These interventions aim to reach around 776,000 people across 12 high-risk districts in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab. Anticipatory actions will be triggered based on pre-agreed thresholds and guided by established action plans. The ‘Global Climate Risk Index’ has ranked Pakistan as the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change, highlighting its high exposure to extreme weather events and the resulting economic and human impacts. This ranking indicates that Pakistan is significantly exposed to the effects of climate change, particularly extreme weather events, such as floods and heatwaves.

Urban areas — particularly Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukkur in Sindh and Jaffarabad, Sohbatpur, and Nasirabad in Balochistan — are at high risk and require heat management strategies and public awareness to protect vulnerable populations. Under the contingency plan, a total of 38 districts will be targeted in all the four provinces with an estimated affected population of 36.08 million. Sindh will be most affected by the heatwave, followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Based on the 2024 heatwave situation, the UNOCHA has observed that despite recurring heatwaves, urban areas like Karachi lack effective early-warning systems to mitigate heat-related deaths. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 12*)

Heatwave kills man, animals in Umerkot

A young man died from heatstroke in Kunri town as extreme heat paralyzed life in Umerkot district, with temperatures soaring to 46°C with 52°C “feel”. Besides, prolonged power outages and water shortages have further aggravated the situation for people. The extreme heat the arid region is witnessing these days has equally affected wildlife with dozens of peacocks and livestock, including goats and cows, reported dead from scorching heat and thirst. (*Dawn, May 27th, 2025, Page 15*)

Teenager dies of ‘heatstroke’ as mercury crosses 40°C in Karachi

A teenage boy reportedly died of heatstroke as temperature crossed 40 degree Celsius mark in parts of the city (Karachi). Meanwhile, the Met department’s data showed that the city’s average temperature was 40 degrees Celsius, though some areas, including Gulistan-i-Jauhar, were hotter (40.1 degrees Celsius). The relative humidity recorded in the morning was 60pc. The heatwave persisted in Sindh cities. Mohenjo-Daro became hottest place in country with maximum temperature surging to 48 degrees centigrade. According to Meet Office, maximum temperature recorded in Dadu, Jacobabad and Shaheed Benazirabad was 47 degrees Celsius. (*Dawn, May 31st, 2025, Page 13*)

13.4 # Lightning

Man, son die, two burnt as lightning strikes

A man and his teenage son died while two others were burnt as lightning struck them in Yazman. (*Dawn, May 5th, 2025, Page 8*)

Man dies after being struck by lightning in Sahiwal

A man dies after being struck by lightning in Sahiwal, says PDMA (Punjab) while advising people to take precautions given the heavy rainfall and thunderstorm hitting different districts. (*Dawn, May 12th, 2025, Page 2*)

Two die after being struck by lightning

PDMA (Punjab) said that at least three persons died and 25 others were injured in different incidents caused by windstorms and rains during the last three days in the province. (*Dawn, May 31st, 2025, Page 2*)

13.5 # Rainfall

Hailstorm, rains ravage Punjab, KP, Islamabad

At least 19 people were killed and over 90 others injured as powerful windstorms and heavy rains battered several parts of the country, paralysing road and air traffic, damaging infrastructure and triggering widespread power outages. Heavy rainfall accompanied by gusty winds and hail also struck Islamabad, leading to water accumulation in several low-lying areas and trees falling at multiple spots.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, strong winds and hailstorms caused extensive damage to crops and power lines but no fatalities were reported. Over 113 power feeders tripped across the province, with areas like Peshawar, Mardan, Khyber, Swabi, Swat and Abbottabad worst affected. According to PDMA of Punjab and Rescue 1122, three people died each in Lahore and Jhelum, two each in Sialkot and Muzaffargarh and one person each in Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Attock, Multan, Rajanpur, Hafizabad, Mianwali, Jhang and Layyah. About two dozen incidents of the fall of solar panels and billboards were also reported. (*Dawn, May 25th, 2025, page 1*)

19 die, 75 injured as windstorm, rain batter Punjab districts

At least 19 people died while about 75 were injured as the heavy windstorm followed by rain battered various districts of central and southern Punjab. (*Dawn, May 25th, 2025, Page 2*)

Heavy rain, hailstorm batter Swat

Torrential rain and hailstorm battered Mingora and adjoining areas in Swat district, causing flash floods and widespread disruption in the area. The intense downpour led to overflowing streams and nullahs, inundating several residential neighbourhoods and commercial properties. The rainwater entered homes and shops in many low-lying areas, damaging furniture and merchandise. (*The News, May 25th, 2025, Page 9*)

7 dead as rainstorms wreak havoc in parts of country

Seven people were killed and over two dozen others sustained injuries as severe rain and windstorms swept through parts of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as AJK). This is the second time in a week that a storm of such intensity wreaked havoc in many parts of the country, damaging crops, properties, and other infrastructure. At least 19 people were killed and over 90 others injured as powerful windstorms and heavy rains had battered many areas in Islamabad, Punjab and KP. (*Dawn, May 28th, 2025, Page 1*)

Downpour, lightning kill two in KP

Rain-related incidents killed two people and injured 11 in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. (*Dawn, May 28th, 2025, Page 8*)

Three killed as strong winds, rain pound Hyderabad, Kotri

A poultry farm worker and two children died and over 20 suffered injuries as several walls and roofs collapsed in strong winds, which accompanied by heavy rain, pounded Hyderabad and Jamshoro districts. (*Dawn, May 29th, 2025, Page 15*)

Rain, storms in country kill 32 in a week

At least 32 people have been killed and more than 150 injured in Pakistan in a week of storms that followed a heatwave, with officials reporting five more deaths. Five people including a child were killed in different districts of northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during heavy rains and strong winds, the province's disaster management authority said. Stormy weather is expected to continue in northern and central parts of Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, May 31st, 2025, Page 5*)

13.6 # Storm

Dust storm hits several districts

A dust storm followed by strong winds and light rain swept through different parts of Larkana, Qambar-Shahdadkot, Badin and some other districts blowing away hoardings and rooftops of fragile houses and shops. The affected cities and towns included Qambar, Shahdadkot, Sujawal Junejo, Ratodero, Mirokhan, Katchi Pul, Gaji Khuhawar,

Pakho and Badin. Some other towns of Badin district and their surrounding areas also received drizzle after a wind storm. (*Dawn, May 9th, 2025, Page 15*)

Hailstorm damages tobacco crop in Swabi

Growers demanded of the government to declare Swabi as a calamity-hit region and extend financial assistance to them as hailstorm and rain extensively damaged their tobacco crop, putting them in dire straits. The growers said tobacco crop was in critical stage as curing process of Virginia variety had already started and White Patta harvest had commenced in various parts of the district. However, they said hails badly damaged the leaves. (*Dawn, May 29th, 2025, Page 8*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

14.1 # Earthquake

Quake jolts KP areas

An earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale jolted various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the Rescue 1122, the tremors were felt in Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swat, Abbottabad and other cities, but caused no casualties. The epicentre was in the Hindu Kush region in Afghanistan and its depth was 230km. (*Dawn, May 11th, 2025, Page 5*)

14.2 # Landslide

Landslide kills two children in Mohmand

Two children were killed and a man was critically injured when a landslide struck a house in DawatKhel Dawezai area of Pandiali tehsil. (*Dawn, May 6th, 2025, Page 8*)

15 # RESISTANCE

Hindus protest Indian accusations over Pahalgam attack

Members of the Hindu community staged a protest rally in Quetta, condemning what they called baseless allegations against Pakistan by the Indian government regarding the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam in held Kashmir. Rally included men and women carrying placards and banners with anti-Modi and anti-India slogans. The protesters marched through various roads and streets of the provincial capital before gathering outside the Quetta Press Club. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 5*)

LUMHS students rally for Gaza

Students organised a rally at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), Jamshoro, to express solidarity with oppressed people of Palestine and Gaza, condemning the ongoing Israeli aggression and genocide. They urged the Pakistani government and public to boycott Israeli products and called on international community to take urgent action to stop genocide of hapless Palestinians. They appealed for unity and collective efforts to raise voice on global level in support of the Palestinian cause. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 15*)

May Day rally declares new labour code a threat to workers` rights

Labour leaders, industrial workers, women workers, youth, transgender people, social and political activists joined hands and raised their voices at a rally on International Labour Day or May Day, organised by the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) and Home Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) on a blazingly hot and sunny day. A sea of red flags took to the roads from Regal Chowk to the Karachi Press Club to highlight issues such as corporate farming and the six canals issue, third party contractual system, the urgent need for a living wage and an end to global capitalism.

The deepening crisis of global capitalism, it was said, has placed the very survival of humanity and the planet at risk. Peace, progress, and prosperity are impossible under capitalism. Until and unless the working class emerges as a genuine alternative political force, liberation from tyranny will remain an illusion. This was main message conveyed during the rally led by Zehra Khan of the HBWWF and Riaz Abbasi of the NTUF.

While addressing the rally, Nasir Mansoor, General Secretary of NTUF, remarked that International Workers' Day was being observed amid global turmoil. "Capitalist and right-wing governments have taken control across the world, pushing forth their anti-worker agendas. Their policies have given way to fear, poverty, war and unemployment," he said, while pointing to the ongoing economic instability caused by trade wars and protectionism among major imperialist economies and warning that capitalism was eroding from within. Nasir Mansoor also emphasised that re-division of markets signals to the rise of a new form of colonialism. "From the Israeli aggression in Gaza to the regime change in Syria, the Russia-Ukraine war, and China's global investments, none of the world's powers are bound by laws, treaties or ethics anymore. The capitalist system has promoted war, hunger, disease, and environmental catastrophe. We may be the last generation capable of saving the planet," he warned.

The rally concluded with a resolution which demanded the removal of all anti-worker clauses from the proposed Sindh Labour Code, abolishing the illegal contractual (third-party) system, declaring and implementing a living wage for all workers, ensuring a timely payment of government-declared wages, guaranteeing registration of all workers with social security and pension institutions, an end to workplace harassment of women, ensuring safe and healthy working conditions. It also sought an end to all environmentally destructive and anti-Sindh water projects, including corporate farming and restoring and protecting the natural flow of the Indus River to the sea. It was announced that a major workers' sit-in will be held in Karachi ahead of the federal budget. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 13*)

Thousands march on roads to seek workers` due rights on Labour Day

The International Workers' Day, also called Labour Day, was observed across Sindh by staging rallies and demonstrations on roads and holding seminars and declamation contests at educational and other institutions. The events were organised by trade

unions, political parties, human rights bodies and civil society organisations. Hundreds of thousands of public and private sector employees participated in the rallies held in different areas of Karachi and district headquarters including Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Sanghar, Mithi, Umerkot, Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Ghotki and Kandhkot. Rallies were also held in smaller towns and rural areas of Sindh. The participants paid homage to the workers who laid down their lives during their movement in Chicago in 1886 for the rights of workers.

They also paid tributes to all those who took active part in the Chicago Labour Movement. In most of the rallies, participants displayed banners and placards inscribed with demands of fair wages, social security, workplace safety and better working conditions at their workplaces. Labour leaders and activists of various trade unions highlighted issues like notorious contract system and denial of trade union activities at private business, trade and commercial institutions. They also called for due rights to be ensured for daily wage earners, farm workers, employees of formal and informal sectors, as well as all industrial workers. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 15*)

Protest held after highwaymen gun down van driver

A gang of dacoits sprayed the driver of a passenger van with bullets when he tried to speed through their barricades put up to stop vehicles and rob them. The barricades were put up in the middle of National Highway near Zorgar town in Bakhshapur, Kandhkot district. After a few hours of the protest, DSP and SHO of Bakhshapur reached there and persuaded the protesters to end the sit-in. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 15*)

Hundreds take to streets as Wana shuts down over 'poor' law, order

A shutter-down strike was observed with hundreds of people taking to the streets in Wana, the administrative headquarters of Lower South Waziristan district against the deteriorating law and order situation, rising incidents of abductions for ransom, extortion, and bomb blasts. The protest was organised by Muttahida Siyasi Aman Pashoon, an alliance of different stakeholders, and received overwhelming response from all major political parties, civil society, traders' associations, and the general public. (*Dawn, May 3rd, 2025, Page 8*)

USC employees observe strike against layoffs

Employees of the Utility Stores Corporation observed a pen-down strike and took out a rally here against the termination of the corporation's over 3,000 contractual workers. "The government first terminated 2,500 daily-wage employees and has now laid off another 3,000 contractual workers overnight. This act is totally unacceptable," central general secretary of the All Workers Alliance Association Syed Arif Shah told reporters at the end of the rally in the Pano area here. The protesters took out the rally from outside the central warehouse and then marched through the surrounding localities, shouting slogans against layoffs. (*Dawn, May 4th, 2025, Page 8*)

Delay in recovery of kidnapped teacher protested

The tribesmen of Nurar area staged a sit-in along the Bannu-Miryan Road to protest the delay in safe recovery of a government schoolteacher. A large number of tribesmen camped at the site and demanded of the local police and administration officials to expedite efforts for freeing the kidnapped teacher from his captors. (*Dawn, May 5th, 2025, Page 9*)

Fisherfolk's rally seeks end to LNG expansion plans

In a lead-up to World Environment Day, Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, in collaboration with Indus Consortium, organised a 'Youth Cycle Rally' near the Korangi Fish Harbour. The rally brought together youth as well as men and women from the fisherfolk communities. Holding placards, banners, and flags, they chanted slogans demanding an end to liquefied natural gas (LNG) expansion and called for sustainable, community-focused energy alternatives. They said such projects were wreaking havoc on the environment and devastating coastal communities. (*Dawn, May 5th, 2025, Page 14*)

Zaida residents protest power cuts

The residents of Zaida union council staged a demonstration and blocked Zaida-Swabi Road against the prolonged electric loadshedding, which they said had reached up to 16 hours a day. The protesters were chanting slogans against Peshawar Electric Supply Company, saying its employees failed to perform their duty. They alleged some Pesco employees encouraged theft of electricity. (*Dawn, May 6th, 2025, Page 8*)

Lawyers protest 'false cases'

A group of lawyers, part of the Action Committee agitating against controversial canals project, cautioned Sindh government against implicating their professional colleagues in false cases for taking part in the Babarloi sit-in. Speaking at a news conference at local press club, Hyderabad, former Hyderabad District Bar Association (HDBA) general secretary Khuda Bux Leghari, Aslam Leghari and others said the anti-canal movement by lawyers had achieved its objective and since then Sindh government had been targeting all those people who had peacefully protested or expressed solidarity with the lawyers at Babarloi. (*Dawn, May 7th, 2025, Page 15*)

AT holds protest against canals in Thatta

Activists of Awami Tehreek and their supporters staged a march to register protest against construction of canals on Indus River, corporate farming, destruction of Indus Delta and water scarcity in coastal belt. The protesters led by local AT leaders Razzak Chandio, Mitha Khan Lashari, Shah Mohammad Chang and others demanded complete cancellation of six canals project, which would deal a death blow to the already dying river. They condemned what they described as government's apathy towards the Indus Delta, which was rapidly deteriorating due to lack of freshwater flows. The government was squarely responsible for the destruction of the Indus delta, which was purportedly the fifth largest in the world, they said. (*Dawn, May 10th, 2025, Page 15*)

Rally held against canals project

Activists of Awami Tehreek organised a rally in Rajokhanani town as part of its ongoing protest against federal government's plan for the construction of canals on the Indus River, corporate farming projects and 'artificial' shortage of water. The party leaders, Noor Ahmed Katiar, Mehran Dars, and others said that at a critical time when Sindh was facing extreme drought-like conditions due to 'artificial' water shortage Punjab had started filling its dams and canals. They said that water shortage at Sindh's Guddu Barrage had reached 84 per cent, at Sukkur Barrage 26pc and at Kotri Barrage 55pc, still canals in the Punjab were flowing to the brim. They said that Punjab had increased flows in Chashma-Jhelum link canal to 12,000 cusecs and in Taunsa-Panjnad link canal to 7,255 cusecs. Sindh's water share was being stolen between Taunsa and Guddu barrages but no one was ever held accountable for Sindh's stolen water, they said.

They criticised the Sindh government for its gross negligence and said the Pakistan Peoples Party was not ready to utter even a single word about the nagging water shortage. They said that Sindh chief minister was silent on the burning issue of the province and appreciated lawyers' sit-in at Babarloi while reminding all that the decision regarding the canals had not been fully reversed. They said the Awami Tehreek did not accept any federal institution, including the Council of Common Interests, where Punjab held majority. (*Dawn, May 11th, 2025, Page 15*)

Protest

A protest demo was staged against the alleged kidnapping of a dumper driver by armed gang near Barda border military police station, in Rujhan tehsil, Rajanpur district, blocking the Indus Highway for traffic. Following the incident, fellow drivers and the victim's family blocked the Indus Highway in protest, causing severe traffic disruption and public inconvenience. (*Dawn, May 12th, 2025, Page 8*)

STP rally for water

The local chapter of the Sindh Taraqqi-Pasand Party took out a rally in Digri taluka to protest against an acute shortage of water. Leading rally, STP leaders strongly criticised irrigation department for causing "an artificial shortage of water". They said no water had been supplied to the Digri subdivision for over two monthsh. (*Dawn, May 13th, 2025, Page 15*)

Nakba Day rally supports Palestinian right of return

The Milli Yakjehti Council (MYC) and Palestine Foundation Pakistan (PLF) organised a protest demonstration outside the Karachi Press Club on the occasion of Nakba Day, commemorating 77 years of Palestinians' displacement and Israeli occupation. The Nakba means "catastrophe" in Arabic — which refers to the flight and expulsion of an estimated 700,000 Palestinians during creation of State of Israel in 1948. Hundreds of citizens in Karachi participated in the rally, condemning Israel's illegal occupation and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people. (*Dawn, May 16th, 2025, Page 14*)

Urdu varsity's retired faculty, staff protest non-payment of pension

Retired faculty members and non-teaching staff of the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST) staged another protest outside the Karachi Press Club to demand payment of their long-pending pensions and other dues. Demonstrators held placards and chanted slogans against the university administration, particularly the vice chancellor. Protesters claimed that despite the university having Rs670 million in Pension Funds funds and receiving Rs320 million in recent federal grants, dozens of employees who retired as far back as 2017 had yet to receive their pending dues and pension payments. According to them, at least eight retired employees have passed away while awaiting their rightful entitlements. (*Dawn, May 16th, 2025, Page 14*)

Lawyers launch movement against corporate farming, 26th Amendment and Peca

The All Sindh Lawyers Action Committee, which had run a successful campaign in Sindh against controversial canals issue, has said that it has now launched a similarly vigorous struggle against corporate farming. The fresh struggle will also forcefully resist the 26th Constitutional Amendment and the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), according to leaders of the committee. Lawyers held a protest demonstration, sit-in and token hunger strike on the premises of the Sindh High Court (SHC), Larkana, to formally launch the struggle. (*Dawn, May 16th, 2025, Page 15*)

Jl stages citywide protests against water shortage

The Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) staged protest demonstrations at more than a dozen key locations across the city to condemn worsening water crisis in the metropolis (Karachi). (*Dawn, May 17th, 2025, Page 13*)

P&T Colony residents stage protest against power outages

Residents of P&T Colony staged a protest against prolonged power outages in their locality at the local office of the K-Electric in Defence. They chanted slogans against the power utility and besieged the customer care office, known as IBC. In a statement, the KE condemned “the mob attack” on its Defence IBC and said that “miscreants from the P&T Colony surrounded the IBC, hurled bricks to shatter its windows, and forced staff including women to seek refuge inside the office premises”. It said that “pending dues from defaulters have already exceeded Rs52m”. (*Dawn, May 20th, 2025, Page 13*)

Workers protest over non-issuance of social security cards

A peaceful protest was organised by the unions of home-based workers and informal self-employed workers at the Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution (SESSI) head office against the non-issuance of social security cards. Women home-based workers and informal workers' unions from Sindh — including the Home-Based Bengal Workers Union (HBBWU), Zardozi Women Workers Union, United Home Workers Union, Home-Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) and the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) — gathered in front of the SESSI head office.

Parveen Bano of the HBBWU said that SESSI had introduced a portal for workers' registration years ago, on which many home-based women and self-employed workers had registered themselves. However, they have still not been issued social security cards. She added that the amended Social Security Act of 2021 clearly defines the criteria for a qualified registered worker, but SESSI is using delaying tactics by shifting the responsibility to the Labour Directorate, which, she claimed, has no role in the process. (*Dawn, May 20th, 2025, Page 14*)

Canal protest turns violent; one dead, over dozen hurt in Sindh's Moro

A protester was killed and over a dozen others, including a DSP and six other policemen, were injured during clashes in the Moro city of Naushahro Feroz — the home district of Sindh Home Minister Zia Lanjar. Mr Lanjar's house was also attacked, along with two trailers on Moro bypass road. Violence erupted when police attempted to disperse a protest reportedly organised by Sindh Saba against the proposed construction of new canals on the River Indus. The protesters had blocked the Moro bypass road to record their protest. A similar programme was scheduled by Sindh Saba at press club in Hyderabad, but police authorities did not allow it and cordoned off main road leading to club. Police also picked up two activists of party. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 3*)

Tail-end growers continue protest in Mirpurkhas

Tail-end abadgars of Buggi minor of Jamrao canal continued their sit-in in Jhuddo town in protest against non-supply of irrigation water for the past few months. Protesters were carrying banners and placards while raising slogans against the irrigation department officers. They have been staging the sit-in at Main Jhuddo Mithi road by installing tents for last two days. Talking to local reporters, they alleged that the irrigation department staff had sold their share of water to big landlords having their land at the head of the Jamrao canal and Buggi minor. (*Dawn, May 22nd, 2025, Page 15*)

Jl rally seeks devolution of powers to local govts

The elected local government representatives belonging to the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) marched on the Sindh Assembly, demanding devolution of administrative and financial powers from the Sindh government to the town and union committee (UC) levels. The party also criticised the Sindh government for centralising all powers at the cost of city development. Chanting slogans against PPP government in Sindh, LG representatives gathered at Masjid-i-Khizra and marched on towards the assembly building to highlight a range of civic issues affecting the city, including prolonged electricity outages, water shortages and governance problems. (*Dawn, May 24th, 2025, Page 13*)

Residents block roads at Karachi's Sakhi Hassan hydrant to protest water crisis

Driven to desperation by water crisis in the city, Karachi, and mainly in Central district, a large number of residents of North Nazimabad, Buffer Zone, Nusrat Bhutto Colony and Shadman Town gathered at the Sakhi Hassan water hydrant to protest against the prolonged disruption in water supply to their areas. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 13*)

Strike observed in several Sindh towns

Most Sindh towns remained shuttered in response to Jeay Sindh Rahbar Committee's call for strike against deaths of nationalist parties' workers in action against protesters in Moro on May 20, and subsequent police conduct with regard to their bodies. Shaheed Benazirabad and Naushahro Feroze districts remained completely shut. All main bazaars remained shuttered throughout the day in the two districts and their adjoining towns of Qazi Ahmed, Sakrand, Daur, Jam Sahab, Bandhi, Moro, Kandiaro, Halani, Padidan and Mehrabpur. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 15*)

GB traders protest suspension of Pakistan-China trade

Traders affiliated with import and export between Pakistan and China through Khunjerab Pass announced protest against the suspension of trade between the two countries for the last six months. Addressing a press conference, Pakistan-China Traders Action Committee leaders said transporters, hotel owners, labourers and shopkeepers had become jobless. (*Dawn, May 27th, 2025, Page 4*)

Death of minor girl in crossfire sparks protest in Karachi's Korangi

A girl was killed when she was caught in the crossfire between a citizen and fleeing robbers in Korangi. The death of the 10-year-old girl sparked protest from her family and area residents, who staged a sit-in on the main Korangi road, suspending vehicular traffic till late in the night. (*Dawn, May 27th, 2025, Page 13*)

Protest against canals

Hundreds of the Sindh Taraqi-pasand Party (STP) activists of Badin district staged a rally from Mehran Chowk to Awan-i-Sahafat in protest against construction of canals on River Indus and the corporate farming project. They marched carrying banners and placards at the main thoroughfares and held a demonstration in front of Awan-i-Sahafat. Protest leader said construction of the canals was a matter of life and death for the Sindhi nation. They demanded the government stop its deceptions and cancel all canal projects being built on the Indus River. They said that thousands of acres of land in Badin district was being given to outsiders and companies instead of local farmers. The land must be distributed among landless farmers, they added. (*Dawn, May 29th, 2025, Page 15*)

Govt school teachers in GB continue protest, boycott classes for 4th consecutive day

Government school teachers in Gilgit-Baltistan continued their protest, boycotting classes for the fourth consecutive day to demand promotions. For the past five days, school teachers in the region have organised protest demonstrations and rallies outside education department offices in Hunza, Nagar, Astore, Skardu, Diamer, Ghanche, Shigar, Kharmang and Ghizer. A protest sit-in has also been organised outside the Gilgit-Baltistan Directorate of Education in Gilgit City. The protesting teachers blamed the education department's mismanagement for creating a crisis in schools. They said government teachers have been demanding promotions for many years. (*Dawn, May 30th, 2025, Page 4*)

GB protesters block Karakoram Highway amid Khunjerab trade halt

Local traders involved in Pakistan-China trade via Khunjerab Pass launched an indefinite protest sit-in, blocking the Karakoram Highway (KKH) at Pissan in Nagar, stranding thousands of local and international travellers on both sides of the route. The protest call was issued by Pak-China Traders Action Committee, an alliance comprising Gilgit-Baltistan Importers and Exporters Association, Nagar Chamber of Commerce, and small trade associations from Nagar, Hunza, and Gilgit. Protesters chanted slogans against Pakistan Customs and the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) government. Primary grievance is the suspension of customs clearance for imported consignments from China at Sost Dry Port for the last six months, effectively halting Pak-China trade. (*Dawn, May 31st, 2025, Page 3*)

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India's water move threatens millions, UN told

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Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

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1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS RESOURCES

India's water move threatens millions, UN told

Pakistan has warned the United Nations that India's unilateral decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) represents a dangerous escalation that violates international law and threatens the survival of more than 240 million people. Speaking at a UN meeting on protecting water in armed conflict, Pakistan urged the world community to act before such actions triggered a humanitarian catastrophe or destabilised the region. "This is a grave violation of international law, including human rights law, the treaty law and customary international law," said Ambassador Usman Jadoon, Pakistan's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Arria Formula meeting convened by Slovenia. "We strongly condemn India's unlawful announcement to hold the Treaty in abeyance and call upon India to strictly abide by its legal obligations and refrain from stopping, diverting or restricting rivers that are a lifeline for 240 million people of Pakistan. We will never accept any such moves," Ambassador Jadoon said. Pakistan used the UN forum to appeal for international consensus against the weaponisation of water. (*Dawn, May 25th, 2025, Page 1*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

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5 # TRADE

Britain and India clinch free trade deal

Britain and India clinched a long-coveted free trade pact after tariff turmoil sparked by US President Donald Trump forced the two sides to hasten efforts to increase their trade in whisky, cars and food. The deal, between world's fifth and sixth largest economies, has been concluded after three years of stop-start negotiations and aims to increase bilateral trade by a further 25.5bn pounds (\$34bn) by 2040. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said trade deal was "ambitious and mutually beneficial". British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the strengthened alliance would reduce trade barriers in a "new era for trade". Trump's tariffs have prompted countries across world to redouble efforts to seek new trade partners and people familiar with UK-India talks said turmoil had sharpened focus to get a deal done. The deal, which will lower tariffs on goods such as whisky, allow British firms to compete for Indian contracts and Indian workers to

more easily work in Britain, is significant for both economies. It marks India opening up its long-guarded markets, including automobiles. It also represents Britain's most significant trade deal since it left EU in 2020, though projected boost to British economic output from deal, of 4.8bn pounds a year by 2040, is small compared to country's gross domestic product of 2.6tr pounds in 2024. (*Dawn, May 7th, 2025, Page 11*)

UK dismisses idea that British workers being sold out in India trade deal

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer dismissed the idea that he had sold out British workers by giving a tax break to some Indian workers as part of a free trade agreement with India, calling the claims "incoherent nonsense". The trade deal announced, which includes a range of tariff cuts on British imports to India, also exempts some short-term workers from India from paying into Britain's social security system for three years. The exemption under so-called Double Contributions Convention (DCC) also applies to British workers in India, but while Britain barely made mention of this element of trade deal, India hailed it as a "huge win". (*Business Recorder, May 8th, 2025, Page 5*)

US, China reach deal to cut trade deficit

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent reported "substantial progress" in US talks with China's top economic officials to de-escalate a damaging trade war, but offered no details of an agreement reached as two days of negotiations wrapped up in Geneva. Bessent told reporters that details would be announced and that US President Donald Trump was fully aware of the results of the "productive talks." US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, who participated in the talks with Bessent, Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng and two Chinese vice ministers, described the conclusion as "a deal we struck with our Chinese partners" that will help reduce the \$1.2 trillion US global goods trade deficit. (*Business Recorder, May 12th, 2025, Page 12*)

EU to review trade deal with Israel

European Union said it would review its trade cooperation deal with Israel over human rights abuses in Gaza. following a foreign ministers' meeting. The bloc's top diplomat Kaja Kallas said "a strong majority" of its 27 member states backed the move at a meeting of foreign ministers, adding "the countries see that the situation in Gaza is untenable... and what we want is to unblock humanitarian aid". Sweden said it would press EU to level sanctions against Israeli ministers. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 11*)

UK pauses trade talks with Israel to protest Gaza action

Britain paused free trade talks with Israel, summoned its ambassador, and announced further sanctions against Jewish settlers in occupied West Bank after Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was horrified by the military escalation in Gaza. After the Israeli military's new operation last week, Prime Minister Netanyahu said Israel would take control of the whole of Gaza. Israel has blocked the entry of medical, food and fuel supplies into Gaza since the start of March and international experts have warned of looming famine. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 12*)

Egypt working to integrate railways into Asia-Europe trade

Egypt is working to integrate the country into a railway network connecting Asia and Europe, but a long-planned bridge that would link Saudi Arabia to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula has yet to be finalised, transport minister Kamel al-Wazir said. Egypt has been expanding its railways along seven separate axes. These include three high-speed lines that would connect Sokhna Port on the Red Sea with the Mediterranean and Alexandria in the north and with Aswan in the far south. Israel and Iraq have likewise been spending billions of dollars on rail lines with an eye towards tapping the east-west trade. All the plans involve loading cargo onto ships for part of the journey. (*Business Recorder*, May 26th, 2025, page 1)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Bill Gates to give away \$200bn by 2045, says Musk is 'killing' world's poorest children

Bill Gates pledged to give away \$200 billion via his charitable foundation by 2045 and lashed out at Elon Musk, accusing the world's richest man of "killing the world's poorest children" through huge cuts to the US foreign aid budget. The 69-year-old billionaire co-founder of Microsoft said he was speeding up his plans to divest almost all of his fortune and would close the foundation on December 31, 2045, earlier than previously planned. Gates said he hoped the money would help eradicate diseases like polio and malaria, end preventable deaths among women and children, and reduce global poverty. (*Business Recorder*, May 9th, 2025, Page 5)

Trump secures \$600bn Saudi investment pledge

US President Donald Trump secured a \$600 billion commitment from Saudi Arabia to invest in the United States after the oil power accorded him a gala welcome at the start of a tour of Gulf states. Prince Mohammed bin Salman later signed an agreement with president in Riyadh on energy, defence, mining and other areas. The US agreed to sell Saudi Arabia an arms package worth nearly \$142bn, according to a White House fact sheet that called it "the largest defense cooperation agreement" Washington has ever done. The agreement covers deals with more than a dozen US defence companies in areas including air and missile defense, air force and space advancement, maritime security and communications. "Today we hope for investment opportunities worth \$600bn, including deals worth \$300bn that were signed during this forum," Saudi crown prince said in a speech during a US-Saudi Investment Forum session held in Riyadh on the occasion of Trump's visit. (*Dawn*, May 14th, 2025, Page 11)

UAE to invest \$1.4tr in US over 10 years

The president of the United Arab Emirates said his country planned to invest \$1.4 trillion in the United States over 10 years, lauding a "strong partnership" that flourished under US President Donald Trump. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed announced the "UAE's

plan to invest \$1.4 trillion in the United States... over the next 10 years,” in fields including technology, artificial intelligence and energy, speaking from the presidential palace in Abu Dhabi alongside Trump. (*Dawn, May 16th, 2025, Page 11*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

8.1 # Asian Development Bank (ADB)

ADB boosts Asia-Pacific food security fund to \$40 billion

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced it plans to expand its support for long-term food and nutrition security in Asia and the Pacific by \$26 billion, increasing its total funding commitment for such initiatives to \$40bn over the 2022-2030 period. ADB President Masato Kanda announced the new target during the bank’s annual meeting in Milan, Italy. The expansion builds on the ADB’s September 2022 pledge to provide \$14bn by 2025 to ease a worsening food crisis in the region and improve long-term food security. By the end of 2024, the ADB had committed \$11bn — about 80 per cent of the original allocation — with an additional \$3.3bn programmed for 2025, the bank said. “Unprecedented droughts, floods, extreme heat, and degraded natural resources are undermining agricultural production, while at the same time threatening food security and rural livelihoods,” Mr Kanda said.

The assistance will fund a programme covering the entire food production process, from farming and processing to distribution and consumption. Through financing and policy support for governments and companies, the programme aims to help the region generate diverse and nutritious food, create jobs, reduce environmental impacts and promote resilient agricultural supply chains. The additional \$26bn announced will include \$18.5bn in direct ADB support for governments and \$7.5bn in private sector investments. The ADB aims for private sector investments to account for more than 27pc of the total \$40bn programme by 2030.

The programme will work to modernize agricultural value chains to improve access to affordable and healthy food, especially for vulnerable populations. It will also invest in improving soil quality and conserving biodiversity, which the ADB noted are essential for productive agriculture but increasingly threatened by climate change, pollution, and habitat loss. Support for digital technology and analytics aims to improve decision-making for farmers, agribusinesses and policymakers. More than half of the world’s undernourished people live in developing Asia, according to the ADB. Food systems account for 70pc of global water use, 50pc of habitable land, and 80pc of biodiversity loss, while employing 40pc of the region’s workforce, the bank said.

Global agrifood systems generate hidden environmental, social and health costs estimated at \$13 trillion in 2023, or 10pc of global GDP, according to the Food System Economics Commission. These costs stem from emissions, land-use changes, water depletion, poverty among workers and diet-related health issues. The commission noted

that productivity losses from poor diets rose 14pc globally since 2016, with South Asia seeing a 20pc increase, highlighting the need for reforms beyond traditional production-focused strategies. (*Dawn, May 5th, 2025, Page 12*)

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Bangladesh to receive \$1.3bn from IMF

IMF is set to release \$1.3 billion to Bangladesh in June, after completing a fourth review of its \$4.7-billion loan programme and a key breakthrough in talks on exchange rate reforms, the finance ministry said. The funds, covering both fourth and fifth tranches, had been held up as the IMF pressed for greater exchange rate flexibility, particularly the adoption of a crawling peg mechanism. The fourth review in Dhaka in April was followed by further discussions during the Bank-Fund Spring Meetings in Washington DC that month, focused on critical reforms in revenue management, fiscal policy, and the foreign exchange regime. (*Dawn, May 15th, 2025, Page 10*)

8.3 # World Bank

Sri Lanka gets \$1bn from World Bank

The World Bank said it has earmarked more than \$1 billion to support job creation and private sector growth in Sri Lanka over three years. “The initiative aims to expand economic opportunity, strengthen local industry, and attract private capital to support long-term growth,” the bank said in a statement. The World Bank estimates a shortage of some 700,000 jobs in the island nation over the next decade with a million young people entering the workforce. (*Business Recorder, May 8th, 2025, Page 5*)

9 # POLICY

Sri Lanka’s leftist govt begins privatisation

Sri Lanka’s leftist government said it was selling a failed hotel project, marking its first privatisation move in line with an IMF bailout. Government spokesperson Nalinda Jayatissa said cabinet had agreed to revive the previous administration’s stalled process “of disposing of shares in Canwill”, a fully state-owned company established in 2011 to operate hotels. The sale of Canwill marks first major privatisation under government of President Anura Kumara Disسانayake, a self-avowed Marxist. Jayatissa told reporters the government had decided to retain Deloitte, a leading professional services firm, to manage the sale. IMF, which extended Sri Lanka a \$2.9 billion loan in early 2023 after country defaulted on its \$46billion foreign debt in April 2022, had urged reforms of loss-making state-owned enterprises. (*Dawn, May 28th, 2025, Page 10*)

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

Global debt hits record of over \$324trn: IIF

Global debt rose by around \$7.5 trillion in first three months of the year to hit a record high of over \$324 trillion, data from a banking trade group. The Institute of International Finance (IIF) said China, France, and Germany were largest contributors to the global

debt increase, while debt levels declined in Canada, the UAE, and Turkey. “While sharp depreciation of US dollar against major trading partners contributed to increase in the USD value of debt, the Q1 rise was more than quadruple the average quarterly increase of \$1.7 trillion observed since the end of 2022,” the IIF said in its Global Debt Monitor.

The global debt-to-output ratio continued to slowly crawl lower, standing just above 325%. However, in emerging markets the ratio hit a record high at 245%. Total debt in emerging markets rose by over \$3.5 trillion in the first quarter to a record high of more than \$106 trillion. China alone accounted for over \$2 trillion of the rise according to the IIF. China’s government debt to GDP is at 93% and expected to hit 100% before the end of the year. (*Business Recorder, May 7th, 2025, Page 1*)

10.1 # Food

100 children fall sick after eating snake-mixed lunch in India

India’s human rights body said it was investigating reports more than 100 children fell sick after eating a school lunch served after a dead snake was found in the food. “Reportedly, the cook served the food to the children after removing a dead snake from it,” National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said. The meal was served last week in a government-run school in the city of Mokama in Bihar, one of India’s poorest states. The commission demanded local government officials and police investigate media reports that “more than 100 children fell ill” after eating the school lunch. The incident sparked angry demonstrations from the children’s families. Free lunches are offered to millions of children in government schools throughout India, seen by authorities as a way to encourage children to continue their education. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 10*)

10.2 # Food Scarcity

Dozens of kitchens in Gaza shut as supply runs out

Dozens of community kitchens in Gaza shut their doors due to a lack of supplies, closing off a lifeline used by hundreds of thousands of people in a further blow to efforts to combat growing hunger in the enclave. The move followed hours after the US-based World Central Kitchen (WCK) charity announced that it had run out of the ingredients necessary to provide much-needed free meals and had been prevented by Israel from bringing in aid. Amjad al-Shawa, director of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations Network (PNGO) in Gaza, told that most of the enclave’s 170 community kitchens had shut down after running out of stock due to Israel’s continued blockade on Gaza. Shawa said the decision by the WCK and the closure of community kitchens would cause a drop of between 400,000 to 500,000 free meals per day for the 2.3 million population. (*Dawn, May 9th, 2025, Page 12*)

Gaza faces ‘critical risk of famine’: UN report

Half a million people in the Gaza Strip face starvation, a global hunger monitor said, warning the Israeli-blockaded enclave faces a high risk of famine by end of September.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report cited a significant deterioration since October. It forecast that 2.1m people across Gaza — roughly the entire population — will likely experience high levels of acute food insecurity, with 469,500 projected at “catastrophic” levels — most severe stage. The previous IPC analysis in October found 133,000 people in that category. “Immediate action is essential to prevent further deaths, starvation and acute malnutrition, and a descent into famine,” report urged. Famine declaration requires at least 20 per cent of people facing extreme food shortages, high child malnutrition, and elevated death rates from starvation or related diseases. .

The report projected that nearly 71,000 cases of acute malnutrition, including 14,100 severe cases, among children, aged 6 to 59 months, were expected to occur between April 2025 and March 2026. The report “really demonstrates that the situation in Gaza has deteriorated quite dramatically in recent months,” deputy director of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. She noted the blockade since early March “has really prevented delivery of essential humanitarian and even commercial supplies.” The key findings showed that 1.95m people, or 93pc of population in the coastal enclave, are living through high levels of acute food insecurity, including 244,000 experiencing the most severe, or “catastrophic”, levels. (*Dawn, May 13th, 2025, Page 12*)

Half a million Somali children risk dying from hunger: NGO

Almost half a million children in Somalia face severe malnourishment and are at risk of dying from hunger, an NGO warned, just as international aid operations are scaled back. Country only recently began to recover from a long-running drought, while widespread flooding in 2023 saw almost one million people displaced. CARE International said the number of severely malnourished children under five had increased to 1.8 million, citing projections by a UN-backed monitoring body dated March 29. “Of these, 479,000 are expected to be severely malnourished and at risk of dying without urgent help,” it said. CARE International said the country’s “malnutrition crisis is accelerating faster than predicted” thanks to “seasonal challenges and the fallout from 2024’s drought”. As a result, in the hardest-hit areas across the country the number of people in “emergency conditions surged by 50 percent”. (*Business Recorder, May 13th, 2025, Page 5*)

Lots of people in Gaza are starving, warns Trump

US President Donald Trump said that “a lot of people are starving” in the besieged Gaza Strip, where rescuers reported more than 70 people killed in Israeli air strikes since midnight. Trump’s brief comments on Gaza came as he capped the first foreign tour of his second term, which saw him visit several Gulf countries but excluded key ally Israel. A two-month ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed in March, shortly after Israel reimposed a total blockade on Gaza that aid agencies say has sparked critical food shortages. “We’re looking at Gaza. And we’re going to get that taken care of. A lot of people are starving,” Trump told reporters in Abu Dhabi. The health ministry in Gaza said 2,876 people have been killed since Israel resumed strikes on March 18, taking the war’s overall toll to 53,010. (*Dawn, May 17th, 2025, Page 12*)

Global acute hunger has hit new high: report

More than 295 million people faced acute hunger last year, a new high driven by conflict along with other crises — and the outlook is “bleak” for 2025 as humanitarian aid falters, a UN-backed report said. It was the sixth consecutive annual increase in the number of people hit with “high levels” of acute food insecurity, according to the Global Report on Food Crises. A total of 295.3 million people endured acute hunger last year — almost a quarter of the population in 53 of the 65 countries analysed for the report. This was up from 281.6 million people in 2023, according to the report, which is drafted by a consortium of international organisations and NGOs. The number of people facing famine reached 1.9 million, more than double from the previous year.

A food security monitor warned that Gaza was at a “critical risk of famine” after more than two months of an Israeli aid blockade. “From Gaza and Sudan, to Yemen and Mali, catastrophic hunger driven by conflict and other factors is hitting record highs, pushing households to the edge of starvation,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in the report. “The message is stark. Hunger and malnutrition are spreading faster than our ability to respond, yet globally, a third of all food produced is lost or wasted,” he said. Conflict and violence were the primary drivers in 20 countries and territories, where 140 million people faced acute hunger, the report found.

Extreme weather was to blame in 18 countries and “economic shocks” in 15 nations, together affecting a total of 155 million people. The deteriorating situations in Gaza, Myanmar and Sudan outweighed improvements in Afghanistan and Kenya. The report warned that the outlook was “bleak” for 2025 as major donor countries have substantially reduced humanitarian funding. “This is more than a failure of systems — it is a failure of humanity,” Guterres said. “Hunger in the 21st century is indefensible. We cannot respond to empty stomachs with empty hands and turned backs,” he said. The “abrupt termination” of funding in 2025 has disrupted humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen, the report said. (*Dawn, May 17th, 2025, Page 12*)

UN says no aid distributed yet in Gaza

No humanitarian aid has been distributed yet in Gaza Strip, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said, despite more supplies being dropped off on the Palestinian side of the Kerem Shalom crossing. “Today, one of our teams waited several hours for the Israeli green light to access Kerem Shalom area and collect nutrition supplies. Unfortunately, they were not able to bring those supplies into our warehouse,” Dujarric said. Israel allowed limited aid deliveries to Gaza. (*Business Recorder, May 21st, 2025, Page 5*)

UN aid body calls Gaza ‘hungriest place on Earth’

Gaza is “the hungriest place on Earth”, the United Nations said, warning that the Palestinian territory’s entire population was now at risk of famine. Negotiations to end nearly 20 months of war have so far failed to achieve a breakthrough, with Israel

resuming operations in Gaza in March, ending a six-week truce. “Gaza is the hungriest place on Earth,” said Jens Laerke, a spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency OCHA. “It’s the only defined area — a country or defined territory within a country — where you have the entire population at risk of famine. 100 per cent of the population at risk of famine”, rejecting claims to contrary by Israeli authorities. In recent days, Israel has partially eased a total aid blockade on the Palestinian territory that it imposed on March 2, leading to severe shortages of food and medicine. (*Dawn, May 31st, 2025, Page 12*)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Global waste to grow 73pc by 2050, warns World Bank

Cautioning that there is a growing waste crisis, the World Bank said globally, waste generation is expected to rise by a whopping 73 per cent to 3.88 billion tonnes by 2050, posing serious challenges for cities in low- and middle-income countries. Globally, 23pc of waste goes uncollected, and 33pc is openly dumped. In low-income countries the issue is even more acute as 60pc of solid waste remains uncollected, and 93pc is improperly managed - either dumped, buried, or thrown into waterways, says a new World Bank report. On a per capita basis, however, projected waste generation in low-income countries would be a third of that in high-income countries as it is projected at only 0.62 kilograms per person per day as compared to 1.81 kilograms per person per day in high-income countries by 2050.

Moving forward, World Bank will continue assisting low- and middle-income countries to create and adopt integrated, locally tailored solid waste management strategies, policy reform and investment. This includes prioritising waste reduction, recycling, resource recovery, and sanitary disposal while strengthening policies, institutions, infrastructure, financial sustainability, community engagement, and social inclusion of informal waste pickers and women.

The effect of land-based solid waste extends to the ocean: 80pc of plastic in oceans comes from poorly managed municipal solid waste on land, with devastating effects on marine environments and ecosystems. As the largest financier of municipal solid waste management, the World Bank Group provided \$5.13bn — equivalent to about 35pc of global official development financing for solid waste management from 2003 to 2021. By combining infrastructure financing with policy loans and results-based payments, this support helps in enhancing local health, economic growth, and resilience while cutting GHG emissions and plastic pollution. (*Dawn, May 6th, 2025, Page 3*)

11.1 # Biodiversity

Invasive species cost trillions in damage: study

From river-clogging plants to disease-carrying insects, the direct economic cost of invasive species worldwide has averaged about \$35 billion a year for decades. Since 1960, damage from non-native plants and animals expanding into new territory has cost

society more than \$2.2 trillion, 17 times higher than previous estimates, they reported in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*. The accelerating spread of invasive species — from mosquitoes to wild boar to tough-to-eradicate plants — blights agriculture, spreads disease and drives the growing pace of species extinction.

Earlier calculations based on highly incomplete data were already known to fall far short of reality. To piece together a more accurate picture, an international team of researchers led by Ismael Soto, a scientist at the University of South Bohemia in the Czech Republic, compiled data on 162 invasive species whose costs have been well documented in at least a handful of countries. They then modelled the economic impact for 78 other countries such as Bangladesh and Costa Rica, for which no data was previously available. (*Dawn, May 27th, 2025, Page 10*)

11.2 # Health

Trump announces 59pc drug prices cut

President Donald Trump said he would slash drug prices by 59 percent, a day after he unveiled a new policy on pharmaceuticals in United States. “Drug prices to be cut by 59%, plus! Gasoline, Energy, Groceries, and all other costs, down. No inflation!!!” The announcement came after the president said he planned to sign an executive order that would reduce US prescription drug prices “almost immediately” by between 30 and 80 percent. (*Business Recorder, May 13th, 2025, Page 5*)

WHO adopts landmark pandemic agreement

The UN health agency adopted a landmark Pandemic Agreement on tackling future health crises, struck after more than three years of negotiations sparked by the Covid-19 crisis. The accord aims to prevent the disjointed response and international disarray that surrounded the Covid-19 pandemic, by improving global coordination and surveillance, and access to vaccines, in any future pandemics. World Health Organisation’s decision-making annual assembly adopted the plan at its Geneva headquarters. The text of the agreement was finalised by consensus last month, following multiple rounds of tense negotiations. The United States pulled out of those talks, following US President Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw his country from the WHO, a process that takes one year to complete. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 10*)

Lack of quality healthcare services: 2m women suffer from fistula in developing countries: experts

The world is observing “International Day to End Fistula”, while an estimated two million women are forced to live with fistula in developing countries due to lack of quality reproductive healthcare services. Holding a press conference at the Lahore Press Club under the banner of Pakistan National Forum on Women’s Health (PNFWH), the senior obstetrics and gynecology professors said that thousands of other women simply suffering from condition in silence are unaware that they can seek medical assistance. (*Dawn, May 24th, 2025, Page 2*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

England sees driest spring since 1956

England has seen the driest start to spring for 69 years, UK government's Environment Agency said, amid concerns over possible drought in coming months. For England as a whole, April was "the third consecutive month of below average rainfall, and the driest February to April period since 1956". (*Dawn, May 15th, 2025, Page 10*)

Average warming may top 1.5°C in next four years: UN

The United Nations warned that there is a 70 per cent chance that average warming from 2025 to 2029 would exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius international benchmark. The planet is therefore expected to remain at historic levels of warming after the two hottest years ever recorded in 2023 and 2024, according to an annual climate report published by the World Meteorological Organisation, UN's weather and climate agency. WMO's latest projections are compiled by Britain's Met Office national weather service, based on forecasts from multiple global centres. Agency forecasts that global mean near-surface temperature for each year between 2025 and 2029 will be between 1.2C and 1.9C above the pre-industrial average. It says there is a 70pc chance that average warming across the 2025-2029 period will exceed 1.5C. (*Dawn, May 29th, 2025, Page 12*)

12.1 # Carbon Emission

World's richest 10pc caused two-thirds of global warming

The world's wealthiest 10 per cent of individuals are responsible for two thirds of global warming since 1990, researchers said. How rich consume and invest has substantially increased the risk of deadly heatwaves and drought, they reported in the first study to quantify the impact of concentrated private wealth on extreme climate events. "We link the carbon footprints of the wealthiest individuals directly to real-world climate impacts," lead author Sarah Schoengart, a scientist at ETH Zurich, said. "It's a shift from carbon accounting toward climate accountability." Compared to the global average, for example, the richest 1 per cent contributed 26 times more to once-a-century heatwaves, and 17 times more to droughts in the Amazon, according to the findings, published in *Nature Climate Change*. Emissions from the wealthiest 10pc in China and the United States — which together account for nearly half of global carbon pollution — each led to a two-to-threefold rise in heat extremes. Burning fossil fuels and deforestation have heated Earth's average surface by 1.3 degrees Celsius, mostly during the last 30 years. (*Dawn, May 8th, 2025, Page 10*)

12.2 # Climate Crisis

April 2025 ranked 2nd warmest in 65 years

April 2025 was ranked 2nd warmest in past 65 years as the national mean temperature was significantly warmer than the country's average by +3.37°C. A report released by the MET office said the national mean temperature recorded in April 2025 was 27.91°C while country-average temperature was 24.54°C. The daytime (maximum) temperature

of 36.40°C at country-level happened to be significantly warmer by +4.66°C than the country-average of 31.74°C and ranked 2nd highest in the past 65 years while the country-level nighttime (minimum) temperature of 19.36°C too was significantly warmer by +2.57°C than the countrywide average of 16.80°C and ranked the 3rd highest in the past 65 years. During month, Pakistan experienced some moderate to heavy rainfall accompanied by few hailstorms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and some light intensity rain/drizzle in Northwest/Northeast Balochistan. (*The News, May 4th, 2025, Page 1*)

UAE hits record May temperature of 51.6°C

The United Arab Emirates breached its May temperature record for the second day in a row, hitting 51.6 degrees Celsius, within touching distance of the highest ever temperature recorded in the country. “The highest temperature recorded over the country today is 51.6C in Sweihan (Al Ain) at 1345 UAE local time (0945 GMT),” the National Centre of Meteorology said in a post on X, just 0.4°C off the overall heat record in the Gulf country. (*Dawn, May 25th, 2025, Page 10*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

13.1 # Flood

More than 100 dead after flooding in eastern Congo

More than 100 people have died after flooding in a village near the shores of Lake Tanganyika in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a local official said. The flooding, which affected the village of Kasaba, comes at a vulnerable moment for the Central African nation. Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have intensified an offensive in the eastern region since the start of the year, with thousands killed in fighting in the first two months of the year. (*Business Recorder, May 12th, 2025, Page 11*)

Record floods devastate eastern Australia

Record floods cut a destructive path through eastern Australia, caking houses in silt, washing out roads and separating 50,000 people from help. Four bodies have been pulled from vast tides of floodwater engulfing parts of northern New South Wales, a fertile region of rivers and valleys some 400kms up coast from Sydney. Salvage crews launched a major clean-up operation as waters receded a bit, surveying the damage from half a year’s worth of rain dumped in just three days. (*Dawn, May 24th, 2025, Page 12*)

13.2 # Heatwave

Heatwave

Nearly 60pc of Indian districts, home to three-quarters of the population, face a “high to very high” risk from extreme heat, with rising night-time temperatures and humidity compounding the health impact, a study has found. The report, published by the New Delhi-based Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) think tank, analysed climate, health, and infrastructure data to calculate a heat-risk score. “About 57pc of

Indian districts, home to 76pc of India's total population, are currently at high to very high heat risk," the study found, with the heat risk in the capital New Delhi among the highest. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 10*)

13.3 # Rainfall

Four die as heavy rains, gusty winds batter New Delhi

Four members of a family were killed during a thunderstorm in New Delhi after a tree collapsed on top of the room in which they were sleeping, and one person was injured, the capital territory's chief minister said. The city experienced wind speeds ranging between 70-100 kph, along with lightning and its heaviest May downpour since 2021, according to the India Meteorological Department. (*Dawn, May 3rd, 2025, Page 10*)

At least 14 dead due to heavy rain in India's Gujarat

At least 14 people died and 16 others were injured in the past two days as heavy pre-monsoon showers lashed India's western state of Gujarat, Television visuals showed fallen trees and damaged crops as heavy lightning and thunderstorms impacted several districts. The unseasonal rain across most of state was driven by a cyclonic circulation in the neighbouring parts of Pakistan and India's Rajasthan state, according to India's Meteorological Department. Weather forecaster has forecast more rain, thunderstorms, lightning, & gusty winds across Gujarat. (*Business Recorder, May 7th, 2025, Page 5*)

One killed as rains choke Bengaluru

Torrential rains have swamped parts of India's tech capital Bengaluru, killing at least one person, an official said, and exposing long-standing infrastructure failures in a city that has expanded at breakneck speed. Rapid growth of the southern city dubbed India's Silicon Valley has left many waterways covered over or used as dumps, leading to water stagnating every year during heavy rains. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 10*)

13.4 # Storm

Three die as thunderstorms hit south-eastern France

At least three people died, including a couple in their eighties, when thunderstorms hit southeast France, leaving behind what one official described as "scenes of war". According to local authorities, the elderly couple died in the seaside town of Le Lavandou and one other person in the town of Vidauban. The couple's vehicle was swept away by floodwaters. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 10*)

13.5 # Tornadoes

Tornadoes kill 25 in south-central US states

At least 25 people were killed overnight in Kentucky, Missouri and Virginia when severe storms that spawned tornadoes ripped across the two states and the death toll is expected to rise. In Kentucky, Governor Andy Beshear said early at least 14 people were killed in his state. (*Dawn, May 18th, 2025, Page 10*)

13.6 # Wildfire

Raging wildfires near Jerusalem trigger army deployment

Thick plumes of smoke billowed above highways near occupied Jerusalem as firefighters rushed to control wildfires that have injured several people and prompted Defence Minister Israel Katz to declare the situation a “national emergency”. Israel’s Magen David Adom rescue agency reported that hundreds of civilians were at risk from the worst brushfires in years, with Katz ordering troops to deploy to support firefighters. (*Dawn, May 1st, 2025, Page 11*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

Cost of disasters exceeds \$2.3 trillion annually: UN report

The total cost of disasters now exceeds \$2.3 trillion annually, factoring in cascading and ecosystem impacts, according to a UN report. “Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2025” by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction finds that while direct disaster costs averaged \$70 billion to \$80bn a year between 1970 and 2000, these figures surged to \$180bn to \$200bn annually from 2001 to 2020. The growing economic burden highlights the intensifying impact of disasters worldwide.

The “big five” disasters — earthquakes, floods, storms, droughts and heatwaves — have accounted for over 95pc of direct recorded losses over the past 20 years. In 2023 alone, these hazards caused direct economic losses of more than \$195.7bn, or about 0.015pc of global GDP. Extreme heat, once overlooked, is now included among these primary hazards due to its role in fatalities, reduced productivity, and lower well-being.

Between 1970 and 2023, geophysical disasters such as earthquakes caused approximately \$1.59tr in economic losses. Another \$5.18tr in losses came from 24,433 reports of floods, storms, droughts, and extreme heat, with other disasters contributing an additional \$100bn. Despite the overwhelming evidence, only 2pc of development aid is allocated to disaster risk reduction. “Under-estimating the risk of disasters means under-valuing the benefits of risk reduction,” the report says. As populations and development increasingly concentrate in vulnerable areas, the exposure and vulnerability to hazards grow significantly. Climate-induced school disruptions are also rising. In 2024, at least 242 million students across 85 countries faced school closures due to climate events. Of these, 74pc were in low- and lower-middle-income nations, exacerbating educational inequalities and long-term impacts.

From 2000 to 2023, earthquakes, extreme heat, storms, floods, and droughts were responsible for 90pc of disaster deaths — with earthquakes alone accounting for half. Since 1900, 12 earthquakes have killed more than 50,000 people each, five of which occurred after 2000. Water-related hazards dominated from 1970 to 2019, making up 50pc of all disasters and 45pc of disaster-related deaths. Floods have increased by 134pc since 2000, with Asia recording most of the associated deaths and economic losses. The

number of people exposed to floods rose from 28.1 million in 1970 to 35.1m in 2020 — a 24.9pc increase. Droughts are similarly widespread. Between 2007 and 2017, they affected at least 1.5bn people and caused \$125bn in losses. Most drought-related deaths since 2000 have occurred in Africa. As of 2025, over 920m children — more than one-third of the global child population — are highly exposed to water scarcity. “Agriculture is the most vulnerable sector to climate impacts,” the report notes, with 82pc of all drought-related losses between 2008 and 2018 occurring in agriculture in low- and lower-middle-income countries. Between 1984 and 2023, regions such as central U.S., Argentina, Turkey, northwest India, Pakistan, the Horn of Africa, Central Asia, and parts of Australia experienced the highest frequency of severe agricultural droughts — around 8 to 12 events over the 40-year span. Much of this variation is linked to El Niño and La Niña cycles. (*Dawn, May 30th, 2025, Page 12*)

14.1 # Earthquake

Quake triggers tsunami alert in Chile

A magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck off the coast of Chile in the Drake Passage between Cape Horn and Antarctica at a depth of just 10 km (6 miles), United States Geological Survey said, sparking evacuations due to a tsunami threat. Chile’s disaster agency said there was no damage to critical infrastructure or people, but called for evacuations along the southern coast due to the risk of a tsunami. (*Dawn, May 3rd, 2025, Page 11*)

15 # RESISTANCE

400 arrested in Istanbul May Day showdown

Police arrested more than 400 people in Istanbul amidst a massive show of force to prevent May Day demonstrations in Türkiye’s biggest city. More than 50,000 police were deployed and key metro, bus and ferry services were shut down as part of the operation. May Day came with the government embroiled in a battle with the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP), following the detention of its presidential candidate Ekrem Imamoglu, mayor of Istanbul. Imamoglu is the biggest political rival of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. More than 400 people were arrested, a day after 100 people were detained for allegedly planning to protest in the central Taksim Square, where demonstrations have been banned since 2013. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 10*)

News Makers: Paris (France)

Ant-Tech Activats chant along 14 with megaphones behind a banner making *against AI and its world anti tech resistencia" during a May Day (Labour Day! rally marking International Workers' Day. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 10*)

`We are the people of this land, Palestinians mark Nakba

About 300 Arab Israelis gathered in the ruins of a village that Palestinians fled during the 1948 war that led to the creation of Israel, to commemorate what Palestinians call the “Nakba”, or catastrophe. As Israel celebrated Independence Day, the demonstrators

— men, women, and children — marched through the ruins chanting, “Your independence is our Nakba”. The place where the demonstrators gathered was previously the village of Al-Lajjun. The site, once home to thousands of Palestinians, has now been partly taken over by kibbutz Megiddo, an Israeli farming community.

This year’s remembrance unfolded against the backdrop of the war in Gaza, where more than 18 months of Israeli aggression has displaced nearly all of the territory’s 2.4 million people at least once, according to the United Nations. Clad in traditional keffiyeh headscarves and garments, marchers sang the Palestinian anthem and shared memories of loss and resilience. (*Dawn, May 2nd, 2025, Page 11*)

Women protest gender-based violence in Bangladesh

Around 3,000 women rallied in Bangladesh for country’s interim government to openly support a commission tasked with addressing gender-based violence. The Women’s Affairs Reform Commission was set up by the caretaker government of Nobel Peace prize winner Muhammad Yunus in November as part of its efforts to reform systems established during the iron-fisted rule of former PM Sheikh Hasina. An influential coalition of hardline religious parties has called for the commission to be abolished, saying the reforms it suggested were against Islam. (*Dawn, May 17th, 2025, Page 10*)

News Makers: Dhaka (Bangladesh)

Garment workers protest outside the residence of Chief Adviser Mohammad Yunus, demanding the payment of their overdue wages. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 10*)

Ride-hailing drivers hold protests in Indonesia

Hundreds of taxi and delivery drivers joined protests in several cities across Indonesia over low wages and to oppose a planned merger between the country’s largest tech company GoTo and US-listed ride-hailing rival Grab. Ride-hailing and delivery services, especially by motorcycle, are a critical part of transport landscape in Southeast Asia’s largest economy, especially in big cities. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 10*)

News Makers: Melbourne (Australia)

Thousands of farmers and volunteer firefighters gather outside Victoria’s parliament to protest against the imposition of a new emergency services tax targeting cultivators. (*Dawn, May 21st, 2025, Page 10*)

News Makers: Imphal East (India):

Activists of Meira Paibis, a women’s social movement, hold torches as they take part in a protest against the alleged concealing of Manipur state in a map displayed on a government bus. The demonstrations took place during a state-wide strike called by a party New Delhi’s policies in the region.-AFP (*Dawn, May 24th, 2025, Page 10*)

News Makers: Imphal (India)

Police charge at demonstrators during a protest led by a Meitei civil society organisation in north-eastern India's Manipur state against the imposition of President's Rule on the state. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 10*)

News Makers: Dhaka (Bangladesh)

Employees protest inside secretariat building, demanding repeal of a government order giving it vast powers to sack workers for disciplinary breaches. (*Dawn, May 26th, 2025, page 10*)

Hunger-striking mother of jailed Egyptian activist ‘close to death’

The mother of jailed Egyptian-British activist Alaa Abdel Fattah is close to death after eight months on hunger strike, her daughter warned. Laila Soueif, 69, was hospitalised in London with “critically low” blood sugar, having resumed her full hunger strike last week. (*Dawn, May 31st, 2025, Page 10*)

About Us

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

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

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Our Objectives

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

Roots for Equity

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