

HAAL AHWAL

Monthly News Reviews on Food and Agriculture

July, 2025

Roots for Equity

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Roots for Equity

Index

Topics	Page No.
Preface	I
Glossary	III
News Excepts	VI
National News	XV
International News	XXII

1 Hectare = 2.471 Acres

1 Acre = 4,840 Square Yards

1 Ton = 25 Mann = 1000 Kg

1 Mann = 40 Kg

Preface

[Back](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

1,000	1 Thousand	1 Thousand	ایک ہزار
10,000	10 Thousand	10 Thousand	دس ہزار
100,000	100 Thousand	1 Lac	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

[Back](#)

AAC: Awami Action Committee

ADB: Asian Development Bank

ADO: Asian Development Outlook

AFD: French Development Agency

AJK: Azad Jammu & Kashmir

APTMA: All Pakistan Textile Mills Association

AQI: Air, Air Quality Index

ARR: Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation

AT: Awami Tehreek

BISP: Benazir Income Support Programme

BMJ: British Medical Journal

BMR: Balancing, Modernization, and Replacement

BSI: Bara Siyasi Ittehad

BYC: Baloch Yakjehti Committee

C3S: Copernicus Climate Change Service

CACs: Central Asian countries

CAT: Competition Appellate Tribunal

CCP: Competition Commission of Pakistan

CPI: Consumer Price Index

CRC: Crop Reporting Centre

CRCP: Crop Reporting Centre Punjab

DBC: Delta Blue Carbon

DPP: Department of Plant Protection

DRA: Disparity Reduction Allowance

DTP: Diphtheria Tetanus and Pertussis

ECC: Economic Coordination Committee

EDO: European Drought Observatory

EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone

ESA: Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations

FACE: Food Security and Agriculture Centre of Excellence

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

FBR: Federal Board of Revenue

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FMPAC: Fertiliser Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council

GB: Gilgit-Baltistan

GBDMA: Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority

GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council

GHF: Gaza Humanitarian Foundation

GLOFs: Glacier Lake Outburst Floods

GM: Genetically Modified

HCSTSI: Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry

HWA: Hari Welfare Association

ICCB: International Convention City Bashundhara

ICJ: International Court of Justice

IFA: Islamabad Food Authority

IFIs: International Financial Institutions

IMF: International Monetary Fund

ISR: Implementation Status and Results Report

IWT: Indus Waters Treaty

JI: Jamaat-e-Islami

KKH: Karakoram Highway

KPC: Karachi Press Club

KPK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

LSM: Large Scale Manufacturing

LWMC: Lahore Waste Management Company

MASH: Mukhtar A. Sheikh Memorial Welfare Hospital

MNFS&R: Ministry of National Food Security and Research

NCHR: National Commission for Human Rights

NDMA: National Disaster Management Authority

NIH: National Institute of Health

NTUF: National Trade Union Federation

OICCI: Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry

PAC: Pakistan Agricultural Coalition

PBS: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

PCGA: Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association

PCPA: Pakistan Crop Protection Association

PFEA: Pakistan Fisheries Exporters Association

PFF: Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

PIACL: Pakistan International Airlines Company Ltd

PIMS: Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences

PKI: Pakistan Kissan Ittehad

PPP: Pakistan Peoples Party

PPP: Public Private Partnership

PSDP: Public Sector Development Programme

PSMA: Pakistan Sugar Mills Association

PSX: Pakistan Stock Exchange

RUTF: Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food

SAB: Sindh Abadgar Board

SAB: Sugar Advisory Board

SAI: Sindh Abadgar Ittehad

SBP: State Bank of Pakistan

SCA: Sindh Chamber of Agriculture

SCCI: Sialkot Chamber of Commerce
and Industry

SCF: Sindh Community Foundation

SCP: Supreme Court of Pakistan

SEA: Sindh Employees' Alliance

SEPA: Sindh Environmental
Protection Agency

SRB: Sindh Revenue Board

SRO: Statutory Regulatory Order

SWAT: Sindh Water and Agriculture
Transformation

SWAWA: Sindh Women Agriculture
Workers Act

TCP: Trading Corporation of Pakistan

TDAP: Trade Development Authority
of Pakistan

UAE: United Arab Emirates

UN: United Nations

UNCTAD: UN Trade and
Development

UNFSS: UN Food Systems Summit

USAID: US Agency for International
Development

USC: Utility Stores Corporation

WFP: World Food Programme

WHO: World Health Organisation

WPV1: Wild poliovirus type 1

YoY: Year-on-Year

ZTBL: Zarai Taraqiati Bank Ltd

NEWS EXCEPTS

NATIONAL NEWS

Back

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- In order to harness the potential in the agriculture sector for the benefit of Islamic countries, Pakistan has favoured a tri-party partnership among Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Sudan to launch joint agricultural ventures, using Sudan's fertile lands, Pakistani expertise and Saudi investment as a 'visionary' step towards regional food security.
- Pakistan and China have decided to form technical working groups to explore and implement projects focusing on high-yield cotton seed development, advanced water-saving irrigation technologies & modern farming techniques.
- Climate-resilient cotton seed variety capable of thriving in temperatures up to 50°C. The new seed, developed and successfully tested in Lahore while considering impact of climate change, has the potential to boost cotton yield from the current 15 maunds per acre to an impressive 40–50 maunds per acre.
- In 2024, a total of 1,012 bonded labourers were released from the custody of landlords and brick kiln owners in agriculture and brick kiln sectors in Sindh.
- Out of 1.7 million bonded labourers, approximately 700,000 are children suffering inhumane conditions, mainly in agriculture.
- The Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (PKI) President Khalid Mahmood Khokhar highlighted the severe losses suffered by wheat growers, estimating that they had collectively lost Rs2,200bn over the past two years due to low prices and high production costs.
- PKI chief also pointed to a sharp decline in agricultural exports, with rice shipments down by 11pc, corn by 70pc, and mangoes by 40pc.
- The poor cannot afford two meals a day, yet rulers are increasing their own salaries by 600 per cent.
- Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani highlighted that within just one month of taking office, the Chief Minister Punjab initiated multiple agricultural development programs worth Rs. 400 billion.
- Sindh Tenancy Act, 1950, has been in place for 74 years, but the amendments made over the years, particularly in 2013, favoured landlords (e.g., the Section 17 amendment shifted 100% of expenses to peasants).
- The rules for the Sindh Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act (SBLCAA), 1992, were not notified in 2024.
- The SWAWA, 2019 has been passed which aims to protect the rights and welfare of women agricultural workers in Sindh. The rules for this law have not been passed thus this law is not being implemented.

AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

- Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif unveiled a scheme for offering soft agricultural loans to farmers under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has approved to launch the second phase of the programme in which farmers will be given loans worth Rs100 billion through 628,000 Kisan Cards.
- Farmers owning up to 25 acres of land will be able to get diesel, fertiliser, seeds and agricultural chemicals through the Kisan Card. The processing fee of Rs1,000 has also been abolished for the Phase-II project and registration of 4,200 agricultural suppliers has also been completed.
- In a major development for Islamic finance and agricultural infrastructure, InfraZamin Pakistan, Sunridge Foods (Pvt) Limited and BankIslami Pakistan marked the launch of the country's first agri-infrastructure Sukuk with a ceremonial gong-striking at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).
- The fully subscribed Rs2bn Sukuk marks a pioneering milestone in Shariah-compliant, climate-resilient financing for Pakistan's agriculture sector.
- Engro Fertilizers and Bank Alfalah Limited has announced a strategic partnership to launch Rs 250 million financing for farmers across Pakistan.
- The pilot initiative will be launched with a total funding allocation of Rs 250 million (comprising both secured and unsecured components), offering average loan amounts of approximately Rs 0.6 million to 300–350 farmers.
- Current (Punjab) government has allocated a record Rs123bn for agriculture in the budget; a significant increase from the previous allocation of Rs20bn.
- The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has completely rejected the 45 percent agricultural income tax, declaring the act unconstitutional and illegal. They announced their decision to challenge it in court and called on farmers across Sindh to boycott wheat cultivation this year.
- Farmers are receiving only around Rs. 6,500 per maund for cotton, while the Sindh Agriculture Minister had promised a price of Rs. 11,000, which has not materialized.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

- The prime minister directed that agricultural research centres be made more effective to boost farm output. He further directed that modern research be ensured through public-private partnerships in research centres.
- A five-year policy framework preventing sudden tax or tariff changes should be implemented and special economic zones should also be established for cotton processing and value addition.

- The Prime Minister’s Committee on Cotton emphasises the development of next-generation genetically modified (GM) cotton varieties with stacked traits for heat tolerance and resistance to the cotton leaf curl virus.
- The committee is of the view that the government should establish cotton price support mechanism, and announce minimum support price of Rs9000 per 40kg and strengthen role of Trading Corporation of Pakistan in price stabilisation.
- Cotton production dropped from 14 to 7.1m bales over the past eleven seasons as there is no comprehensive policy in place.
- Pakistan’s cotton sector is grappling with a severe crisis as production has plummeted from a record 15 million bales to just 5.5 million, raising alarms across the textile value chain.
- Around 150 acres of hybrid cotton have already been sown in Punjab and Sindh, shortly after the federal government approved the import of hybrid cotton seed.
- Pakistan has witnessed a historic surge in the import of cotton and cotton yarn during FY25.
- During the fiscal year, textile mills imported around 4.5 million bales of cotton and yarn equivalent to 1.5m bales, despite domestic production standing at just 5.5m bales — the second lowest in Pakistan’s history.
- Pakistan’s cotton crop is facing a serious crisis, with latest figures showing a sharp 32 per cent drop in arrivals at ginning factories nationwide compared to the same period last year.
- Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsan-ul-Haq highlighted discrepancies in production data.
- A major controversy has emerged over the methodology used by the Crop Reporting Centre (CRC) Punjab in determining provincial cotton output, with serious allegations of inflated and misleading statistics surfacing.

TRADE

- The trade deficit in July-June FY25 increased by 9pc to \$26.27bn from \$24.11bn over the last year.
- Deputy High Commissioner Bangladesh, S M Mahbubul Alam, stated that the trade volume between Pakistan and Bangladesh currently stands at US 800 million dollars, with expectations that it will soon reach US one billion dollars.
- Pakistan’s trade deficit with the Middle East widened by 7.37 per cent to \$13.974 billion in FY25 from \$13.014bn a year ago.
- To address the growing imbalance, Pakistan has recently signed a free trade agreement with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, aiming to boost exports and diversify trade relations.

- Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries expanded by 29.42 per cent in FY25, rising to \$12.297 billion compared to \$9.502bn in the preceding year.
- In the past four months, Pakistan has exported more than 700,000 tonnes of sugar, mostly to Afghanistan.
- Pakistan's exports to five Central Asian countries (CACs) declined by 31.63pc during the outgoing fiscal year (FY25).
- Exports to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan fell to \$197.06 million in FY25 from \$288.23m in FY24. In contrast, imports from these countries jumped by 411pc to \$245.09m, compared to just \$47.94m in the previous year,
- Pakistan's merchandise exports declined by 0.59 per cent in June, marking a continued downward trend during the fiscal year 2024-25.
- The export proceeds recorded a negative growth for the past three consecutive months — June (0.59pc), May (10.07pc) and April (7.36pc).
- The country's textile exports for fiscal year 2025 clocked in at \$17.88bn, up by 7.22pc year-on-year (YoY) compared to \$16.68 billion in fiscal year 2024.
- Pakistan's seafood exports with 20.5 percent increase during 2024-25 has reached \$489.2 million against \$406 million of the past year which is the second highest volume behind \$496 million in 2022-23.
- Pakistan's merchandise exports to North America grew by 10.19pc to \$5.91bn during the first 11 months of the current fiscal year (11MFY25), up from \$5.363bn in the same period last year.
- Exports of food products showed a decline of 32 per cent in June 2025 on year-on-year basis and 37 per cent on month-on-month basis. Textile exports up by 7.59 per cent on year-on-year basis and decline less than one per cent on month-on month basis.
- Pakistan's seafood exports hit a historic high in volume during fiscal year 2024–25, yet the country once again fell short of its long-pursued \$500 million target, closing the year at \$465.4 million — an 11.44 percent rise over the previous year.
- Pakistan's raw food exports fell by nearly 4 per cent to \$7.116 billion in FY25 from \$7.369bn a year earlier, largely due to a sharp drop in rice exports. Rice exports fell by 14.72pc year-on-year to \$3.353bn from \$3.931bn.
- Meat exports also declined by 3.24pc in FY25. Exports of vegetables and fruits decreased by 14.53pc and 10.29pc, respectively. Fish and fish product exports grew by 13.44pc during the same period.
- In June 2024, the government allowed the export of 150,000 tonnes of sugar, but actual exports soared to 757,779 tonnes by March 2025. Since then, the government has imposed restrictions on further sugar exports.

- Pakistan's seafood exports rose to \$465m in FY25, reflecting a 13.4 per cent increase in value and an 8pc growth in quantity compared to the previous year,
- The high-level steering committee confirmed the decision to import 500,000 metric tonnes of sugar through both the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) and the private sector.
- Pakistan suffered a staggering loss of over Rs 300 billion owing to the import of 3.59 million metric tons of wheat during the financial year 2023–24, despite having ample domestic stocks. This was revealed in the Audit Report 2024-25, highlighting it as one of the most critical financial failures of the federal government in the reviewed period.
- The cumulative financial impact of these miscalculations was conservatively estimated at Rs 310 billion.

CORPORATE SECTOR

- The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) issued 12 major orders in FY25, imposing penalties exceeding Rs1 billion on businesses found guilty of anti-competitive conduct across key sectors, including fertilisers, poultry, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, real estate, food, hygiene products, paints, and education.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- Pakistan fetched FDI amounted to \$2.457 billion during July-June of FY25 as against \$2.347 billion in the same period of last fiscal year (FY24), depicting an increase of \$110 million.
- The government of Pakistan and French Development Agency have signed a grant agreement worth euro 12 million for a project aimed at strengthening water and sanitation service delivery across selected urban areas in Punjab.
- A senior US official acknowledged that President Donald Trump's closure of the US aid agency bore blame for the waste of nearly 500 tons of emergency food intended for hungry children.

POLICY

- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has prepared a policy to transform mountainous agricultural areas across the province into sustainable and climate-resilient regions to ensure food security and uplift livelihoods.
- Federal government utilised a large share Rs640 billion (61 per cent) of funds in development projects of infrastructure sector out of Rs1,094 billion authorisation under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for financial year 2024-25.

- For agriculture sector, (Balochistan) cabinet approved Green Tractor scheme, under which farmers will receive agricultural tractors at a 50pc subsidy. Cabinet also ratified upgrade of trained crop reporters in Agriculture Department from Grade 6 to Grade 11, in compliance with a Supreme Court decision.
- The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet has reaffirmed its stance on deregulating sugar prices, reiterating that no subsidy or tax exemptions will be available for sugar imports in FY 2025-26.
- The Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) has urged the government to completely deregulate the industry.

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

- Real GDP grew by 2.68 percent in fiscal year 2025, while inflation eased steadily, which is expected to remain within the range of 3-4pc for June 2025.
- Total expenditure increased by 18.5 percent to Rs 12,948.3 billion during July-April fiscal year 2025 compared to Rs 10,922.5 billion last year.
- Pakistan’s government debt climbed to Rs76.05 trillion (~\$270 billion) by May 2025, up 12.3 per cent year-on-year (YoY).
- The debt rose by Rs8.31 trillion in the 12 months ending May 2025. Notably, Rs1.1 trillion was added in May alone.
- The annual inflation rate dropped sharply to 4.49 per cent during the fiscal year 2024-25 from 23.41pc in the previous year, mainly due to high base effect, a decline in food prices and lower transport costs.
- The National Assembly Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety showed alarm over the country’s escalating poverty rate—now nearing 50 per cent – and stressed the need for steps to reverse the trend.
- Recent World Bank Report, 45 per cent of the country’s population is living below the poverty line. The population of people living in extreme poverty has risen from 4.9 per cent to 16.5 per cent.
- Over 1.6 million children, between five and 17 years of age, in Sindh have been found to be trapped in child labour, revealed the Sindh Child Labour Survey 2022–2024.

ENVIRONMENT

- Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has said Pakistan is home to the largest contiguous arid mangrove forest in South Asia — located in the Indus Delta region of Sindh — with the potential to generate up to \$50 million annually through carbon credit markets.
- “Land-based pollution, particularly the discharge of untreated sewage and solid waste, accounts for nearly 90 percent of marine pollution.

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has signed an agreement with Pakistan to facilitate free cancer medicines for at least 8,000 children annually diagnosed with the disease.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province’s forest sector has the potential to earn around Rs32 billion (\$113.1 million) from the carbon market annually due to its capacity to sell 11.8 million carbon credits.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

- According to NDMA, 234 people have lost their lives and 596 injured. Moreover, 826 houses have been damaged while 203 livestock killed since June 26.
- Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan appealed to the federal government for Rs7 billion in emergency funds to deal with climate-induced disasters that have caused damages exceeding Rs20bn across the region.
- The death toll includes 93 men, 47 women, and 132 children, while the injured comprise 257 men, 182 women, and 216 children. Furthermore, 1,192 houses have been damaged, and 367 animals have perished in rain-related incidents.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- China’s Premier Li Qiang announced construction had begun on what will be world’s largest hydropower dam, on the eastern rim of the Tibetan Plateau, at an estimated cost of at least \$170 billion.

TRADE

- United States President Donald Trump said that he was slapping 25 per cent tariffs on Japan and South Korea, in his first letters to trading partners ahead of a deadline to reach a deal with Washington.
- Global trade grew by around \$300 billion in the first half of the year due to US imports and EU exports, the United Nations said.
- US President Donald Trump has announced a “massive” trade deal with Japan, as China said it would send its vice premier to US trade talks next week to secure its own agreement ahead of a looming deadline.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- A Saudi delegation visiting Damascus inked investment and partnership deals valued at \$5 billion to help rebuild war-battered Syria, the oil-rich Gulf kingdom announced.
- More than 14 million of the world's most vulnerable people, a third of them small children, could die by 2030 because of the Trump administration's dismantling of US foreign aid.
- A recently updated tracker run by disease modeller Brooke Nichols at Boston University estimates that nearly 108,000 adults and more than 224,000 children have already died as a result of the US aid cuts.
- The Trump administration's decision to slash nearly all US foreign aid has left dozens of water and sanitation projects half-finished across the globe.
- A Former security contractor for controversial new Israel and US-backed aid distribution sites witnessed colleagues opening fire several times on hungry Palestinians who had posed no threat.
- Nearly 800 people have died trying to access aid in Gaza since late May, with most killed near the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's (GHF) sites, the United Nations said.
- The UN rights office said it had recorded at least 875 killings within the past six weeks at aid points in Gaza run by the US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation and convoys run by other relief groups, including the United Nations.
- Up to 11.6 million refugees and others forced to flee risk losing access to direct humanitarian assistance from the UN Refugee Agency following major cuts to humanitarian budgets.
- At least 115 people seeking aid were killed by Israel while they waited for UN aid trucks in northern Gaza, Gaza's health ministry said.
- The United Nations (UN) said Israeli forces have killed over 1,000 Palestinians trying to get food aid in Gaza since the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) started operations.
- The head of Gaza's largest hospital said 21 children have died due to malnutrition and starvation in the Palestinian territory in the past three days.
- Mass hunger haunts Gaza's 2.2 million people, with the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) saying that a third of the population of Gaza has not eaten for days, and 470,000 people are "enduring famine-like conditions".

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

- More than 600 malnourished children have died in northern Nigeria in six months after failing to receive proper care as foreign aid dries up.
- UNICEF said that from April to mid-July, 20,504 children were admitted with acute malnutrition. Of those patients, 3,247 were suffering from severe acute malnutrition, nearly triple the number in the first three months of the year.

- The besieged territory of Gaza is slipping into famine, UN aid agencies warned, as the death toll from Israel's nearly 22-month war surpassed 60,000.
- Climate change could significantly slow progress in poverty reduction and climate-induced income losses could push an additional 41 million people into extreme poverty by 2050.
- The projections show the number of poor could rise by up to 148.8 million, with those in South Asia projected to be at 48.8m by 2030.

ENVIRONMENT

- Emergency vaccination during outbreaks of diseases like cholera, Ebola and measles have over the past quarter-century reduced deaths from such illnesses by nearly 60 per cent.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

- High temperatures caused 1,180 deaths in Spain in the past two months, a sharp increase from the same period last year.

NATIONAL NEWS

Back

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Corporate farming termed conspiracy to snatch people's lands [P. 1]
Pakistan seeks partnership with Saudi Arabia, Sudan in agriculture [P. 1]
Pak-China to form panels for agriculture projects [P. 1]
There's urgent need to revitalise agri sector: minister [P. 2]
Report by farmers body sees Sindh 'reinforcing feudal system' [P. 2]
Punjab, China agree to boost agri cooperation [P. 4]
FAO urges Pakistan to adopt Brazil's agricultural transformation model [P. 4]
Pakistan Kissan Ittehad warns of agriculture collapse due to current govt policies [P. 5]
'Agri development, farmer prosperity are top priorities of CM' [P. 5]

1.1 # Farmers

LHC asks govt to protect farmers' interests in wheat pricing [P. 6]
Sindh Tenancy Act amendments favour landlords: Khaskheli [P. 6]
Farmers' distress [P. 7]

1.2 # Land

Minchan spur erosion on Indus damaging villages [P. 8]
Old dispute over land claims lives of six cousins [P. 8]
25,000 acres of farmland damaged by flood in Sahiwal division [P. 8]

1.3 # Water

Small dams transform lives in flood-prone areas of KP [P. 8]
Paddy seedlings drying up in Qambar-Shahdadkot for want of required water [P. 9]
Planning minister appraises World Bank official about India's 'water weaponisation' designs [P. 9]

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

2.1 # Agricultural Loan & Finances

PM unveils scheme for soft agricultural loans [P. 9]
CM gives nod to Rs100bn loans for farmers [P. 10]
Medium- and small-scale agri activities: PM for easy lending policy [P. 10]
Pakistan's first 'agri Sukuk' launched [P. 11]
Engro Fertilizers, Bank Alfalah to launch Rs250m financing for farmers [P. 11]

2.2 # Agricultural Machinery

Punjab launches green tractor distribution scheme under wheat initiative [P. 12]

2.3 # Agricultural Taxes

Growers' body refuses to pay tax to SRB until demands met [P. 12]

SCA rejects '45pc agricultural income tax' [P. 13]

2.4 # Pesticide

PCPA warns of pesticide shortages [P. 14]

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

PM seeks plan to boost farm output [P. 14]

3.1 # Cash Crop

Urgent reforms sought to enhance cotton cultivation [P. 14]

Concern expressed over decline in cotton productivity [P. 16]

Concerns persist over hybrid cotton's viability [P. 16]

Cotton decline [P. 16]

Cotton imports surpass domestic output [P. 17]

Cotton arrivals drop 32pc, alarming textile sector [P. 17]

Dispute erupts over Punjab cotton output data [P. 18]

Efforts afoot to achieve target of 6m cotton bales [P. 18]

Cotton prices fall on low demand, rain disruption [P. 19]

3.2 # Food Crop

'Wheat stocks sufficient until next harvest' [P. 19]

Sindh farmers to boycott wheat cultivation over imposition of farm tax [P. 19]

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

4.1 # Fisheries

FAO drafts policy for fisheries sector [P. 19]

5 fishermen drown as boat capsizes off Gwadar coast [P. 20]

4.2 # Livestock

SCF equips rural women with livestock, entrepreneurial skills [P. 20]

Livestock sector: Sindh, Balochistan agree to bolster cooperation [P. 20]

5 # TRADE

Trade deficit [P. 20]

Pakistan, US reach accord on trade and tariffs [P. 21]

Platform launched to boost digital trade [P. 21]

‘Pakistan-Bangladesh trade will soon reach \$1bn mark’ [P. 21]

Rising fuel imports widen ME trade gap [P. 22]

Trade gap with neighbours widens 29pc in FY25 [P. 22]

Trade with Central Asia shrinks amid rising imports [P. 22]

5.1 # Exports

Exports suffer third straight contraction in June [P. 23]

Textile exports rise 7.22pc YoY [P. 23]

FY2024-25 seafood exports reach \$489.2m mark [P. 24]

Exports to North America grow [P. 24]

June food products’ exports decline 32pc YoY, 37pc MoM [P. 24]

FY25 seafood exports soar 11.44pc to \$465.4m YoY [P. 25]

Rice slump drags down FY25 food shipments [P. 25]

Seafood exports rise 13pc to \$465mn [P. 25]

5.2 # Import

Sugar import decision confirmed [P. 26]

Trading Corporation of Pakistan to import 0.35m tonnes of sugar [P. 26]

500k MT sugar import: FBR exempts customs duty, reduces sales tax from 18% to 0.25% [P. 26]

Sugar import to spike import bill by \$280m [P. 26]

TCP invites bids for import of 0.3m tons of sugar [P. 26]

No bids in sugar tender [P. 27]

18pc tax levied on cotton imports [P. 27]

Duty relief on 479 items’ import scrapped [P. 27]

FY24: Wheat import caused massive loss [P. 27]

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Nestlé Pakistan inaugurates clean drinking water facility in Gilgit [P. 28]

Fatima Fertilizer’s Sarsabz Tabeer launches healthcare initiative [P. 28]

CCP slaps over Rs1bn fines [P. 28]

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

\$2.45bn FDI fetched in FY25 [P. 29]

7.1 # Countries / Regions

Azerbaijan to invest \$2bn in economic sector [P. 29]

Punjab water, sanitation project: Euro 12m grant pact inked with AFD [P. 29]

US firms eye investment in Pakistan's port sector [P. 29]

China willing to cooperate with Pakistan in agriculture and mining, minister says [P.30]

Pakistan, Afghanistan: US to burn expired biscuits meant for malnourished kids [P. 30]

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

8.1 # Asian Development Bank (ADB)

2022 flood victims: ADB, Sindh govt launch 'business recovery' initiative [P. 30]

ADB sees Pakistan's growth at 3pc [P. 30]

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF projects 3.6pc GDP growth [P. 31]

8.3 # World Bank

\$300m SWAT project progress unsatisfactory: WB [P. 31]

World Bank project ends with radars, weather stations scrapped [P. 32]

9 # POLICY

9.1 # Agricultural Policy

KP prepares policy for food security, livelihood uplift in mountainous areas [P. 32]

Agri reforms in Pakistan on the cards [P. 33]

Punjab plans agri reforms to boost productivity: minister [P. 34]

9.2 # Developmental Policy

Public Sector Development Programme: Govt spends major chunk of Rs640bn on infrastructure [P. 34]

Balochistan cabinet okays plans for security, development [P. 34]

9.3 # Neo – Liberal Policy

No subsidy or tax relief on imports: ECC sticks to sugar deregulation [P. 35]

NA panel endorses PIA privatisation [P. 35]

PSMA urges Pakistan govt to deregulate sugar industry [P. 36]

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Monthly update by FD: FY25: real GDP grows 2.68pc [P. 36]

Govt debt hits Rs76tr as of May, up 12.3% YoY [P. 37]

10.1 # Food

Subsidised wheat stocks exhaust in GB amid supplies delay [P. 37]

1,000kg donkey meat seized from farmhouse; foreign national arrested [P. 37]

10.2 # Inflation

Inflation slumps to 9-year low at 4.49pc [P. 38]

10.3 # Poverty

NA body fears poverty may rise to 50pc, seeks BISP overhaul [P. 38]

Over 1.6m children in Sindh trapped in child labour, survey finds [P. 39]

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Govt urged to ensure protection of mangrove forests [P. 39]

Pakistan signs UN agreement on ‘Law of Sea’ [P. 40]

Mangrove restoration yields \$40m in carbon credits [P. 40]

Biogas produced from animal waste [P. 40]

11.1 # Atmosphere

Air quality issue persists in Lahore [P. 41]

11.2 # Pollution

Marine pollution board holds first meeting in 15 years [P. 41]

11.3 # Health

Govt allocates \$6.8m to deal with diabetes challenge [P. 42]

Another 30 samples found positive for polio [P. 42]

Poliovirus detected in GB [P. 42]

Thatta sees alarming surge in malaria cases [P. 43]

Dengue claims year’s first life in Sindh [P. 43]

Polio tally rises to 17 with three new cases in KP, Sindh [P. 43]

Pakistan, WHO sign deal for cancer medicine [P. 43]

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

KP forest dept can rake in Rs32 billion annually through carbon trading [P. 43]

OICCI shows concern over climate change impacts on Pakistan [P. 44]

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

13.1 # Rainfall / Flood

65 die, 118 injured in rain-related incidents across country [P. 44]
79 die in rain-related incidents: NDMA issues fresh flood warning [P. 44]
Extreme heat, rain trigger flooding in Punjab, GB [P. 45]
11 killed as rains continue to batter Punjab, Balochistan [P. 45]
Cloudburst-induced flash flood wreaks havoc in AJK village [P. 45]
One killed in Zhob thunderstorm [P. 45]
Cloudburst flooding damages homes, blocks roads in GB [P. 45]
13 injured in rain-related incidents in North Waziristan [P. 45]
111 deaths recorded since June [P. 45]
Children among 10 killed as rain lashes cities across KP [P. 46]
Three killed in rain-related incidents [P. 46]
Emergency in Punjab after record deluge [P. 46]
Punjab braces for more after rains claim 70 lives in 48 hours [P. 46]
180 dead as country faces intensified monsoon [P. 46]
Six people killed during widespread rains in most districts of Sindh [P.46]
Houses, crops damaged as new rain spell hits KP [P. 47]
Monsoon toll rises to 234; nearly half of them kids [P. 47]
Evacuation from hundreds of Punjab villages inundated by floodwater [P. 47]
Over 60 houses damaged as GB reels from flash floods [P. 47]
GB seeks Rs7bn aid; thousands displaced in Punjab [P. 47]
Death toll surges to 272 in rain-related incidents [P. 48]
Villages submerged as Punjab braces for more downpour [P. 48]
Fresh flood rips through GB's Ishkoman valley [P. 48]

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

14.1 # Earthquake

Terrifying fault lines that lie beneath Karachiites' feet [P. 49]
Two more quakes jolt parts of Karachi [P. 49]

14.2 # Landslide

Thousands stranded as more landslides block KKH [P. 50]

15 # RESISTANCE

Gridlock as police break up govt employees` march on CM House [P. 50]
Pims postgraduates protest over pay, facilities [P. 50]
Rally staged in Tirah against forced displacement [P. 50]
Protesters block KKH demanding release of ACC leaders [P. 51]
Protesters demand justice for girl killed after assault [P. 51]
Massive Bara rally opposes military operation in Tirah Valley [P. 51]
Businessmen rally against ‘anti-industry’ tax laws [P. 51]
Protesting Kukikhels demand release of jailed leader [P. 51]
Chaos on Karachi roads as Punjab Colony residents protest power cut [P. 52]
Thousands rally in Bajaur to condemn ‘lawlessness’ [P. 52]
JI holds ‘bike rally’ against new number plates [P. 52]
Housing scam affectees hold protest outside court [P. 52]
Massive rallies in Mohmand, Waziristan oppose fresh military operation [P. 52]
JI stages demos against price hike [P. 53]
BYC protest in Islamabad continues despite curbs [P. 53]
Nationalist groups plan protests against corporate farming [P. 53]
Traders block Sost Port over Khunjerab trade halt [P. 54]
Employees continue protest against USC shutdown [P. 54]
Seven lives lost as protest turns violent in Tirah [P. 55]
Workers’ rally condemns suppression of labour rights [P. 55]
Khunjerab route shut due to Sost protests [P. 55]
Bajaur people take to streets against military operation [P. 55]

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Corporate farming termed conspiracy to snatch people's lands

Awami Tehreek has claimed that northern districts of Sindh, especially Sukkur and Larkana divisions, have been handed over to bandits and that construction of Sindh barrage, Hasilpur barrage, Bhasha dam, Cholistan canal and similar water projects is killing Indus River. The party's central committee alleged that corporate farming was a conspiracy to snatch lands of Sindhis, Baloch, Saraikis and Pashtuns. It noted that a struggle was needed against black laws such as Board of Investment Amendment Act 2023, 26th constitutional amendment and Peca. It accused PPP of turning institutions into dens of corruption. It said the Sindh government had turned into an anti-people mafia and police had become personal servants of PPP. It said that dams were contributing to climate change in the region hence construction of dams should be stopped and required amount of water must be allowed to flow into sea to protect environment. Forests should be preserved and restored instead of cutting them down and giving land to corporate farming. (*Dawn, July 14th, 2025, Page 15*)

Pakistan seeks partnership with Saudi Arabia, Sudan in agriculture

In order to harness the potential in the agriculture sector for the benefit of Islamic countries, Pakistan has favoured a tri-party partnership among Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Sudan to launch joint agricultural ventures, using Sudan's fertile lands, Pakistani expertise and Saudi investment as a 'visionary' step towards regional food security. The sugar industry and meat export in Sudan, and encouraging Pakistani private sector stakeholders to explore investment in sugar processing, technology transfer, and slaughterhouse infrastructure are pivotal sectors in which Pakistan can join, Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, told Sudanese Ambassador to Pakistan, Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddig.

Reaffirming his commitment to transforming Pakistan into a hub of international agricultural cooperation, Mr Hussain said that such partnerships will not only contribute to regional prosperity but also align with Pakistan's broader agenda of achieving sustainable development through strategic diplomacy and innovation in agriculture. The minister enlightened the Sudanese envoy ministry's vision to forge new international agricultural alliances that align Pakistan's strategic objectives of enhancing food security, boosting investment, and promoting South-South cooperation. (*Dawn, July 19th, 2025, Page 12*)

Pak-China to form panels for agriculture projects

Pakistan and China have decided to form technical working groups to explore and implement projects focusing on high-yield cotton seed development, advanced water-saving irrigation technologies and modern farming techniques. The decision to form

technical working groups was taken at a meeting between Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, and a Chinese delegation on the sidelines of the China-Pakistan Economic and Trade Exchange Conference in Islamabad. He noted that Xinjiang's achievements in crop yield optimisation, irrigation management and mechanisation could serve as a model for transformation in Pakistan's agriculture sector. He appreciated Pakistan's proactive approach and openness to collaboration and highlighted the potential for long-term partnership in food security, technology transfer, and rural development. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 3*)

There's urgent need to revitalise agri sector: minister

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal has stressed the urgent need to revitalize Pakistan's agricultural sector, pointing out that the devolution of powers under the 18th Constitutional Amendment has not been implemented in its true spirit, especially with regard to agriculture. The minister said that although the 18th Amendment transferred authority and resources to the provinces, agriculture has not received the attention it deserves. "After the 18th Amendment, agriculture became a provincial subject, and it was the responsibility of the provinces to uplift the sector. Unfortunately, they failed to deliver tangible progress," he said.

He was accompanied by renowned agricultural expert Engineer Javed Saleem Qureshi, who has developed a new variety of cotton seed after 25 years of extensive research and experimentation. Prof Ahsan Iqbal said, "Due to lack of focus and commitment at the provincial level, we could neither improve per-acre yield nor introduce high-quality seeds for key crops. Our research institutions also failed to play an active role." The minister stressed the need for concrete planning to boost agricultural productivity, especially in critical crops like cotton, canola, and rice.

During the visit, Ahsan Iqbal lauded the groundbreaking work of Engineer Javed Saleem Qureshi, who has introduced a climate-resilient cotton seed variety capable of thriving in temperatures up to 50°C. The new seed, developed and successfully tested in Lahore while considering the impact of climate change, has the potential to boost cotton yield from the current 15 maunds per acre to an impressive 40–50 maunds per acre. (*Business recorder, July 21th, 2025, Page 4*)

Report by farmers body sees Sindh 'reinforcing feudal system'

Peasants, workers and trade union leaders expressed their serious concerns over the Sindh government's refusal to withdraw its application filed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) against a 2019's pro-peasant judgment passed by the Sindh High Court, at the launching ceremony of The State of Peasants' Rights in Sindh in 2024 — Hari Welfare Association (HWA) annual report at the Karachi Press Club. The speakers noted that a former Sindh Minister for Agriculture, Ismail Rahu, had pledged in January 2020 that the provincial government would not pursue an appeal against the judgment. Yet, the government of Sindh continued pursuing it in 2024, which indicates a lack of

concern for peasants' rights and rural workers, and continuing anti-peasant policies that reinforce the feudal system.

Member (Sindh) National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Anis Haroon said that the Sindh government had initiated a scheme to distribute public land among landless women. But that scheme was abruptly abandoned. Senior trade union leader Habibuddin Junaidi said that a pro-workers' legislation had been made in Sindh. "All laws are made by following the tripartite mechanism," he said, expressing his concern over the non-implementation of legislations. Kazi Khizar of HRCP demanded to implement the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act as thousands of agriculture workers are languishing in private jails.

Lawyer Shazia Nizamani said that women agriculture workers face multiple challenges, hence a dire need to implement the Sindh Women Agriculture Workers Act in order to provide them social security and other benefits, guaranteed to them by law. Academic and human rights activist Dr Riaz Sheikh said that a large number of workers are rendered jobless and there is no one to conduct a research on the impact of joblessness. He feared that the reported beggars who are arrested in Gulf countries may be such jobless agriculture workers.

Nasir Mansoor of National Trade Union Federation opposed corporate farming and demanded to introduce land reforms and give land to landless peasants. Labour Officer for the Sindh government Athar Shah said that district vigilance committees have been set up in each district of the province to monitor bonded labour. President of HWA Akram Khaskheli said that the Sindh Tenancy Act, 1950, has been in place for 74 years, but the amendments made over the years, particularly in 2013, favoured landlords.

"The high costs of inputs and limited or no irrigation water have created serious issues for sharecropping peasants. The rules for the Sindh Bonded Labour System [Abolition] Act, 1992, were not notified in 2024. The draft rules remained with the Provincial Law Department and were accessible to the Provincial Home Department, but were not made publicly available," Khaskheli said. He also highlighted that Sindh Women Agriculture Workers Act (SWAWA), 2019, which aims to protect the rights and welfare of women agricultural workers in Sindh, has been passed but the rules for this law have not been passed thus this law is not being implemented.

The annual report also highlights that most members of the Sindh assembly are feudal lords or originate from feudal families, and that they are often misrepresented as agriculturalists and businesspersons. As many as nine members are identified as agriculturalists and 23 as landlords. Many of the agriculturists are also landowners. Similar patterns are observed in National Assembly, particularly among PPP members, where many are actual landowners, but their true professions are concealed. A significant number of Sindh Provincial Assembly members represent feudal families, who form the core base of the PPP in Sindh.

In 2024, a total of 1,012 bonded labourers were released from the custody of landlords and brick kiln owners in the agriculture and brick kiln sectors in Sindh. Of these, 620 bonded labourers (children, women and men) were released from agriculture across various districts. Sanghar and Umerkot reported the highest numbers, with 194 and 206 individuals, respectively. Also in 2024 alone, 392 bonded labourers were released from the brick kiln sector, with Umerkot (125) and Sanghar (85) being the districts with the highest releases. Over 6.4 million children are out of school in Sindh, many engaged in severe child labour, depriving them of education, health and protection.

Out of 1.7 million bonded labourers, approximately 700,000 are children suffering inhumane conditions, mainly in agriculture. The report also highlights that rural Sindh is heavily affected by bandit culture and crime. Hari leaders blame feudal lords and landowners for contributing to this issue, claiming they have destroyed Sindh's agriculture sector, especially sharecropping peasants and farm workers.

HWA has also collected details of tribal conflict in Sindh and revealed that from October 1 to December 31, 2024, 88 murders and thousands of injuries occurred in approximately 60 reported cases. HWA raised concerns about the significant impact of tribal conflicts on the agriculture sector, especially affecting peasants (sharecroppers) and rural workers who rely on communal land use and labour, which are disrupted by the ongoing feuds and violent clashes. (*Dawn, July 25th, 2025, Page 14*)

Punjab, China agree to boost agri cooperation

The Punjab Agriculture Department hosted a high-level consultative session with representatives of 18 leading Chinese companies to enhance collaboration in agriculture between China and Punjab. The Chinese delegation, led by Guo Yuguo, included prominent companies such as Weifang Shengchuan, JOTEC, Weichai Lovol, PAISET, and SAIC. The meeting took place at Agriculture House, Lahore, and aimed to explore joint initiatives in agricultural mechanisation, smart farming, and digitalisation. (*Business Recorder, July 25th, 2025, Page 11*)

FAO urges Pakistan to adopt Brazil's agricultural transformation model

A senior official of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has recommended that Pakistan study Brazil's agricultural transformation model, citing its remarkable progress from food insecurity to becoming a global food exporter through research and innovation. Thanawat Tiensin, FAO's Assistant Director-General and Director of the Animal Production and Health Division, made the recommendation during a meeting with Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain in Islamabad. The two discussed ongoing collaborative efforts and explored future opportunities for enhancing Pakistan's agriculture and livestock sectors.

Brazil has become one of the major producers of a series of agricultural products by incorporating more land under cultivation through dramatic improvements in productivity led by technological research, which has helped develop methods and

inputs specifically suited to local conditions. Discussions revolved around FAO's longstanding partnership with Pakistan, which dates back to 1947 and now includes projects in 94 districts across the country. The minister appreciated FAO's extensive contributions, particularly in strengthening agriculture through the provision of global best practices, technical expertise and policy support. (*Dawn, July 26th, 2025, Page 3*)

Pakistan Kissan Ittehad warns of agriculture collapse due to current govt policies

The Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (PKI) has warned of imminent collapse of farming sector due to years of neglect and mismanagement and criticised the agricultural policies of the current government. During a press conference at the Multan Press Club, PKI President Khalid Mahmood Khokhar painted a bleak picture of the current state of agriculture, claiming that farmers across the country were facing unprecedented financial distress. "Agriculture in Pakistan is 100pc devastated. Farmers have no capital left to cultivate the next crop, and for the past two years, they have not been paid fair prices for their produce."

Mr Khokhar highlighted the severe losses suffered by wheat growers, estimating that they had collectively lost Rs2,200bn over the past two years due to low prices and high production costs. "The situation is equally dire for other crops, with cotton production halved compared to previous years. Cotton plants are struggling to grow beyond one-and-a-half feet, which shows how badly the sector has been neglected," he added. The PKI chief also pointed to a sharp decline in agricultural exports, with rice shipments down by 11pc, corn by 70pc, and mangoes by 40pc.

Khokhar reserved his harshest criticism for the government, accusing it of indifference towards farmers while benefiting the elite. "The poor cannot afford two meals a day, yet rulers are increasing their own salaries by 600 per cent," he said. "Farmers are being charged exorbitant electricity rates of 40 to 50 rupees per unit, while the government celebrates minor reductions in flour prices as if it has done farmers a great favour." The farmer leader dismissed recent government relief packages as insufficient, demanding instead a guaranteed 25pc profit margin on crops, reduced electricity tariffs, and fair prices for vegetables and other staples. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 2*)

'Agri development, farmer prosperity are top priorities of CM'

Minister for Agriculture Punjab, Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani, has stated that agricultural development and farmer prosperity are among the foremost priorities of the Chief Minister Punjab. Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani highlighted that within just one month of taking office, the Chief Minister Punjab initiated multiple agricultural development programs worth Rs. 400 billion — for the first time in the history of Province. These programs included interest-free loans worth of billions of rupees through Kisan Card, provision of thousands of tractors on subsidy under the Green Tractors Program, and provision of modern agricultural machinery with up to 60% subsidy and many other initiatives.

He clarified that, during the current season, all provincial governments ceased official wheat procurement under the IMF agreement; however, Punjab remains the only province that extended direct financial support of Rs. 14 billion to small wheat farmers. During just a short period of two months, more than Rs. 85 billion in interest-free loans have been disbursed to farmers across Punjab for the purchase of fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides for Kharif crops. Of this amount, farmers have already utilized over Rs. 45 billion for the purchase of fertilizers, pesticides, and diesel.

Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani further elaborated on the landmark programs launched during the current fiscal year for the welfare of farmers and agricultural advancement. These include Rs. 200 billion in interest-free loans through the Kisan Card, subsidized provision of 20,000 tractors, solarization of over 10,000 agricultural tube wells, establishment of 10 model agriculture malls, recruitment of 2,000 young agriculture graduates to provide technical support in field, improvement and lining of watercourses, and a Rs. 30 billion program for the distribution of modern agricultural machinery. (*Business Recorder, July 28th, 2025, Page 4*)

1.1 # Farmers

LHC asks govt to protect farmers' interests in wheat pricing

In a ruling addressing the economic hardships faced by wheat growers, the Lahore High Court has directed the provincial government to ensure the enforcement of the Punjab Price Control of Essential Commodities Act, 2024, to safeguard farmers' interests and prevent exploitation in wheat pricing. Justice Sultan Tanvir Ahmad, while disposing of a petition filed by Kissan Board Pakistan President Zafar Hussain Khan, observed that the state is constitutionally obligated to protect the livelihood of farmers and maintain fair pricing mechanisms for essential commodities, particularly wheat, which forms the staple diet of the country.

The petitioner, represented by Advocate Zubair Afzal Rana, argued that the indicative price of wheat for the 2024-25 crop was announced at Rs4,108 per 40kg by the agriculture department. However, no official price fixation was implemented, leaving farmers vulnerable to exploitation and forced to sell their produce at around Rs 2,000 per 40kg — significantly below their production costs. It was contended that this inaction, if continued, would discourage farmers from cultivating wheat in the future, threatening national food security. The federal and provincial law officers acknowledged that after the 18th constitutional amendment, price regulation of wheat falls under the domain of provincial governments. (*Dawn, July 26th, 2025, Page 2*)

Sindh Tenancy Act amendments favour landlords: Khaskheli

Peasants and rural workers in Sindh continue to face numerous challenges, including the absence of social security coverage and occupational health and safety protections. Despite existing laws prohibiting bonded labour, a total of 1,012 bonded labourers were released from the illegal captivity of landlords and brick kiln owners in 2024 alone.

These concerns were highlighted by Akram Khaskheli, President of the Hari Welfare Association. Khaskheli said that the Sindh Tenancy Act, 1950, has been in place for 74 years, but the amendments made over the years, particularly in 2013, favoured landlords (e.g., the Section 17 amendment shifted 100% of expenses to peasants).

The high costs of inputs and limited or no irrigation water have created serious issues for sharecropping peasants. The rules for the Sindh Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act (SBLSAA), 1992, were not notified in 2024. The draft rules remained with the Provincial Law Department and were accessible to the Provincial Home Department, but were not made publicly available. He also highlighted that the Sindh Women Agriculture Workers Act (SWAWA), 2019 has been passed which aims to protect the rights and welfare of women agricultural workers in Sindh. The rules for this law have not been passed thus this law is not being implemented. (*Business Recorder*, July 28th, 2025, Page 5)

Farmers' distress

The Pakistan Kissan Ittehad has painted an alarming picture of Pakistan's agricultural sector, highlighting neglect, rising production costs and poor policy implementation. A combination of these factors, the PKI leaders said, had caused unprecedented financial distress to farmers besides leading to a big decline in rice, corn and mango exports and, consequently, in foreign exchange earnings. They also warned of an increase in food insecurity due to a potential shortfall in the next wheat harvest — thanks to the abolition of the support price mechanism. Moreover, they predicted an increase in rural poverty and inequality, which could result in social and political instability.

The PKI analysis underscores that the farm sector has reached its tipping point — even if the group's rhetoric is seen as politically motivated, and policymakers can question it. Despite some government interventions, the sector continues to face major challenges such as water stress, low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, low levels of mechanisation, high production costs, poor seed quality, unregulated markets and flawed policymaking. Extreme weather events — such as erratic monsoons and heatwaves — induced by climate change have worsened these challenges in the last couple of decades. Hence, it is no surprise that agriculture has consistently lagged behind industry and services in driving economic growth as reflected by data for the past 15 years. The major field crops — wheat, cotton, maize, sugarcane and rice — dominate resources, but have delivered annual growth of just above 1pc. The same goes for fruit and vegetables. Growth in agriculture is being driven only by livestock.

The PKI has called for ensuring guaranteed 25pc profits on crop production, reduction in electricity tariffs for irrigation and fair market prices for staple crops and vegetables to help growers and revive yields. But one can detect in these demands a rent-seeking mindset. To unlock agriculture's full potential, the sector must shift from the traditional government-led model to a private sector-driven and tech-enabled model to become

globally competitive. The government must focus on systemic reforms, not short-term packages, for increasing farm productivity and profitability. Policies should aim at improving rural infrastructure, market access, crop diversification, investment in R&D, farm mechanisation and promotion of climate-smart agriculture to ensure the sector's full contribution to economic growth. (*Dawn, July 29th, 2025, Page 6*)

1.2 # Land

Minchan spur erosion on Indus damaging villages

The left bank of the Indus has been eroded by the flow of the river Indus, damaging the Minchan spur at Sonmiania and inundating several villages and agriculture land in the area. The unpaved road on the Minchan Bund along with agricultural fields near Luda Mor, downstream from Jamaldinwali area, are the worst affected and residents have migrated from the area and settled in temporary shelters in the fields. The affected area is close to the border of Rahim Yar Khan on the left bank of the Indus but lies in the jurisdiction of Rajanpur district. The Lund Mor is the most affected locality. (*Dawn, July 13th, 2025, Page 2*)

Old dispute over land claims lives of six cousins

Six cousins of Bhangwar community were shot dead near Keerio Mori (bridge) allegedly by their close relatives, who had a longstanding dispute with them over a piece of land. The victims came under attack at the bridge while they were on their way to court on their motorcycles. They were to attend hearing of a case about murder of Ishaque Bhangwar and Adam Bhangwar over a dispute on piece of land 10-12 years back. The sources revealed that the deceased were also accused in a double murder case in 2010. Police sources said that the two groups of Bhangwar clan had a longstanding dispute over a piece of land and distribution of water which began some 15 years ago. Four persons had so far been killed on both sides prior to this incident and a number of men were in jail in such cases. (*Dawn, July 18th, 2025, Page 15*)

25,000 acres of farmland damaged by flood in Sahiwal division

Around 25,000 acres of agricultural land has been affected in Sahiwal division following flooding in Sukhrawa and Beas drainage system caused by three-day rain last week. The two channels saw 300-400 percent increase in water flow which inundated more than 55 surrounding villages in the division, with six the most affected. (*Dawn, July 22th, 2025, Page 2*)

1.3 # Water

Small dams transform lives in flood-prone areas of KP

Before Kondal dam was built in Swabi district, even moderate rain would flood fields and inundate residential areas. Now, the reservoir not only stores rain and floodwater, but it also fulfils the irrigation needs of locals and has become a popular tourist attraction. Kondal is one of the many small dams being built in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces as vulnerable communities look for cost-effective

solutions to mitigate the impact of flooding, which has become more frequent due to climate change. For communities living in these areas, small dams are the bulwark in their fight against climate change and flash floods. (*Dawn, July 19th, 2025, Page 3*)

Paddy seedlings drying up in Qambar-Shahdadt for want of required water

Sudden reduction in water levels for Saifullah Magsi and Shahdadt branches, which irrigate around 200,000 acre paddy fields in Qambar-Shahdadt, has led to the dying up of paddy seedlings in the district. Talking to Dawn the other day, Mir Abdul Khaliq Khoso, president of the Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) Qambar-Shahdadt district, claimed that Saifullah Magsi Branch has the discharge capacity of 1,970 cusecs and SKT (Shahdadt) Branch of 2,200 cusecs. According to him, both were flowing in the bottom where the helpless growers were waiting to witness rise in water to save the recently-planted paddy seedlings. Water was quite enough initially when happy growers and tillers prepared paddy nurseries and continued transplantation. But unexpected receding of water in both big irrigation channels raised the eyebrows of the cultivators who relied only on single crop (rice) which they reap annually, he said. (*Dawn, July 24th, 2025, Page 15*)

Planning minister apprises World Bank official about India's 'water weaponisation' designs

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal called on the international community to ensure India adheres to the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). He warned that water weaponisation and violations of the treaty could trigger global food and water crises, posing serious risks to regional stability, adding that such actions can imperil the world peace. The minister shared these views in a meeting with Vice President of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa Osman Dione, who called on him in Planning Ministry, Islamabad.

In the meeting, matters regarding strengthening the collaborative partnership between the World Bank and the Ministry of Planning came under discussion. The minister asserted that adopting an export-led growth model is indispensable for sustainable development. He reaffirmed Pakistan's ambition to increase exports from \$32 billion to \$100 billion, aiming to boost economic growth and sustainability. During the meeting, the World Bank vice president lauded Professor Ahsan Iqbal's significant contributions towards improving Pakistan's economy. (*Business Recorder, July 26th, 2025, Page 2*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

2.1 # Agricultural Loan & Finances

PM unveils scheme for soft agricultural loans

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif unveiled a scheme for offering soft agricultural loans to farmers under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. Presiding over a review meeting on development of the agriculture sector, the prime minister directed authorities concerned to formulate a strategy for sustainable agricultural reforms in collaboration with provinces. The PM issued directives for urgent reforms in the Zarai Taraqqiati

Bank for transparent provision of easy loans to farmers. He said coming Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) would prioritise agricultural projects, focusing on mechanisation, digitisation, easy access to loans for farmers, and creating a business-friendly environment. Shehbaz Sharif said sustainable agricultural reforms would boost economy and reiterated government's commitment to an enhanced focus on reforming the livestock sector alongside agricultural commodities. He called for utilisation of agricultural zoning and value chain strategies to boost exports and introduce technology tailored to the needs of small landholders. The meeting was told that an "agriculture innovation and growth action plan", focused on increasing farmers' income, raising productivity and implementing reforms, was going ahead in the right direction. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 9*)

CM gives nod to Rs100bn loans for farmers

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has approved to launch the second phase of the programme in which farmers will be given loans worth Rs100 billion through 628,000 Kisan Cards. A meeting presided over by the CM reviewed the 500 mini-dams and 250 water reservoir projects in the Pothohar region under the Agriculture Transformation Programme. The meeting was told that the government would provide interest-free loans worth Rs100bn under the Phase-II of the Kisan Card. A briefing was also given on the Green Tractor, Model Agriculture, Tubewell Solarisation, Wheat Programme, Super Seeder, Citrus, Pothohar and Agri-Transformation schemes, and other issues.

The CM sought a plan for providing agricultural inputs to wheat farmers at subsidised rates. She said wheat farmers would not be left alone, a new project would be launched before the harvest. The meeting reviewed proposals for advance subsidy to reduce the input cost of wheat. "Farmers owning up to 25 acres of land will be able to get diesel, fertiliser, seeds and agricultural chemicals through the Kisan Card. The processing fee of Rs1,000 has also been abolished for the Phase-II project and registration of 4,200 agricultural suppliers has also been completed," the meeting was told. (*Dawn, July 11th, 2025, page 2*)

Medium- and small-scale agri activities: PM for easy lending policy

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for urgent measures to revitalise the country's struggling agricultural sector, stressing the need for a bold roadmap to provide easy loans and advanced technology to small and medium farmers, particularly those owning less than 12 acres. Chairing a high-level review meeting on national agricultural development and financing, Sharif directed officials to present a comprehensive plan by the end of the month aimed at facilitating farmers' access to easy-term loans for modern agricultural equipment, artificial intelligence technologies, and quality seeds.

He emphasised the importance of improving farmers' access to small-scale industrial machinery to process produce into export-ready products, underlining that agricultural development and value addition are critical to Pakistan's overall progress. During the

meeting, officials presented detailed briefing on ongoing reforms in the agricultural sector, the performance of the Zarai Taraqiati Bank Ltd (ZTBL), and loan disbursement efforts. Sharif instructed the development and timely submission of comprehensive plans to introduce a modernised agri-financing system that ensures farmers receive loans on easy terms. (*Business Recorder, July 18th, 2025, Page 1*)

Pakistan's first 'agri Sukuk' launched

In a major development for Islamic finance and agricultural infrastructure, InfraZamin Pakistan, Sunridge Foods (Pvt) Limited and BankIslami Pakistan marked the launch of the country's first agri-infrastructure Sukuk with a ceremonial gong-striking at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). The fully subscribed Rs 2 billion Sukuk marks a pioneering milestone in Shariah-compliant, climate-resilient financing for Pakistan's agriculture sector. Structured under a robust governance framework, the Sukuk is backed by a 100 percent principal credit guarantee from InfraZamin Pakistan and has received a long-term AAA rating from VIS Credit Rating Company.

Institutional investors led subscription, highlighting growing confidence in innovative Islamic finance instruments for infrastructure and development. BankIslami Pakistan acted as Mandated Lead Arranger, while AKD Securities served as Financial Advisor. Al-Hilal Shariah Advisors ensured Shariah compliance, and Pak Brunei Investment Company Limited was appointed as Investment Agent and Trustee. The funds raised through the Sukuk will finance Sunridge Foods' Balancing, Modernization, and Replacement (BMR) projects. These include the installation of 1 MW wind turbines and a 0.5 MW solar power plant to reduce carbon emissions, as well as the construction of silos and warehouses to expand food storage capacity.

A significant portion will also provide working capital support to Sunridge's wheat and rice processing units in Karachi and Lahore—facilitating enhanced production of essential staple foods. Analysts noted that The Sukuk launch represents a critical step in aligning Pakistan's capital markets with sustainable infrastructure development, climate goals, and food security priorities, reinforcing the role of Islamic finance in shaping an inclusive economic future. Chief Guest, Deputy British High Commissioner Lance Domm hailed the Sukuk as a significant step toward climate-resilient and sustainable economic growth. "This transaction demonstrates how partnerships can mobilize private investment for development," he noted, reaffirming the UK's commitment to support Pakistan's financial ecosystem through its collaboration with InfraZamin and others. (*Business Recorder, July 22th, 2025, Page 1*)

Engro Fertilizers, Bank Alfalah to launch Rs250m financing for farmers

Engro Fertilizers and Bank Alfalah Limited has announced a strategic partnership to launch Rs 250 million financing for farmers across Pakistan aimed at empowering farmers across the country through enhanced lending facilities. This collaboration will extend financing of up to Rs 1 million to farmers registered through Engro Markaz

outlets and UgAi - the first integrated agricultural e-commerce platform for Pakistan. The signing ceremony took place at Bank Alfalah's Head Office in Karachi and was attended by senior leadership from both the organizations, including Ali Rathore, CEO of Engro Fertilizers; Atif Bajwa, President and CEO of Bank Alfalah Limited; Atif Mohammad Ali, Vice President of Marketing at Engro Fertilizers; along with other senior executives. The pilot initiative will be launched with a total funding allocation of Rs 250 million (comprising both secured and unsecured components), offering average loan amounts of approximately Rs 0.6 million to 300–350 farmers. With an estimated reach of up to 2,000 beneficiaries, the programme marks a critical step in forging a direct value chain between the fertilizer provider, the financing institution, and the end-user farmer, ensuring resources flow efficiently from source to soil with a robust value-chain. Currently, the program will be accessible through four Engro Markaz locations across Pakistan: Sahiwal, Sargodha, Bahawalpur, and Muridke.

The project is designed to enhance financial access for farmers, providing them with clean and collateral-based lending solutions tailored to their needs. These credit facilities offer subsidized interest rates up to 4.5% lower than the market rates, enabling farmers to purchase high-quality Engro fertilizer products, directly contributing to improved crop yields, and a significant increase in their overall income and livelihood. (*Business Recorder, July 26th, 2025, Page 7*)

2.2 # Agricultural Machinery

Punjab launches green tractor distribution scheme under wheat initiative

The Punjab government launched the distribution of green tractors scheme among successful farmers selected through balloting under Chief Minister Punjab's 'Grow More Wheat' initiative in Okara district. Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani was the chief guest at the ceremony where keys were handed over to 26 farmers from the district. The government aims to distribute around 1,000 tractors under this scheme. Minister said free tractors are being provided to farmers across Punjab through a transparent e-balloting system. He emphasized that the current (Punjab) government has allocated a record Rs 123 billion for agriculture in the budget; a significant increase from the previous allocation of Rs 20 billion. For the first time in history, green tractors have been distributed to 10,000 farmers with a subsidy of Rs 1 million per unit. Additionally, interest-free loans worth Rs 75 billion have been issued to farmers through Kisan Cards. (*Business Recorder, July 9th, 2025, Page 2*)

2.3 # Agricultural Taxes

Growers' body refuses to pay tax to SRB until demands met

Sindh Abadgar Ittehad (SAI) has resolved that farmers will not register themselves with Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) and not pay tax to the department until the government meets growers' demands. The Ittehad leaders with their president Nawab Zubair Talpur in chair expressed concern over Sindh government's decision to increase agricultural

income tax from 15pc to 45pc. The meeting said that SAI rejected the government's decision and said that farm sector was facing tough time and farmers had been economically destroyed. Still, there was talk about new taxes which would not be accepted, it said. The meeting said that farmers were already paying taxes directly and indirectly, which included fertiliser and tube-wells. It resolved that farmers would not register themselves with Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) and would not pay tax to this department, and urged government to delegate such authority to revenue department.

The Ittehad, however, said that if support price of wheat was fixed at Rs5,000 per 40kg, paddy at Rs4,000 per 40kg, cotton at Rs12000 per 40kg and sugar cane at Rs600 per 40kg then farmers could review their decision to pay such income tax. The meeting slammed deduction in cotton's rate on the ground of rainfall and said that prices of agriculture produce were artificially controlled which affected farmers' economy. Wherever saline water drains were desilted they should be repaired immediately, it said. It expressed surprise over breach in Guni Canal and said rehabilitation work of the canal had been done lately still the canal developed such a huge breach, which left many villages inundated. The meeting noted that farmers lost their seed worth millions of rupees in addition to standing crops, which were already affected by diseases and water shortage. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 15*)

SCA rejects '45pc agricultural income tax'

The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has completely rejected the 45 percent agricultural income tax, declaring the act unconstitutional and illegal. They announced their decision to challenge it in court and called on farmers across Sindh to boycott wheat cultivation this year. The farmers argued that they are not receiving fair prices for their produce, so there is no justification for imposing such a tax. The Chamber urged all farmers across Sindh to refuse to pay the agricultural income tax and warned that if the government resorts to arrests for non-payment, millions of farmers in Sindh are ready to face imprisonment but will not pay the tax. They announced a complete boycott of the agricultural income tax and demanded the government provide tax exemptions to farmers, similar to those given to industrialists.

The farmers said that due to very low wheat prices, they cannot even recover the costs of production, and this year will be marked as a boycott year for wheat cultivation. The Chamber expressed deep concern over a 40% decline in cotton production this year, estimating that the yield will not exceed 4 million bales. Farmers are receiving only around Rs. 6,500 per maund for cotton, while the Sindh Agriculture Minister had promised a price of Rs. 11,000, which has not materialized. The Chamber demanded that the 18% local tax on cotton be eliminated and reduced to 0%, and that a 25% tax be imposed on imported cotton to discourage imports and promote local production. (*Business Recorder, July 23th, 2025, Page 4*)

2.4 # Pesticide

PCPA warns of pesticide shortages

The Pakistan Crop Protection Association (PCPA) has expressed serious concern over delays and inefficiencies at the Department of Plant Protection (DPP), warning that the slow processing of registrations and import permissions is threatening timely pesticide supply to farmers during key cropping periods. In a letter addressed to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research on June 30, PCPA Executive Director Muhammad Sarwar Rahi stated that the backlog of registration cases at the DPP has disrupted the industry's ability to import and market pesticides, particularly for the ongoing cotton and rice crops. The letter notes that a significant number of cases, including those for generic products, new chemistries, and renewals, remain pending with the regulatory authority. The association termed the level of pendency "alarming," saying it poses a direct threat to the availability of crop protection products in the local market. PCPA also alleged that repeated and unnecessary queries by DPP officials appear to be an attempt to pressure importers into making illicit payments or entering underhand deals to secure approvals. (*Dawn, July 6th, 2025, Page 9*)

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

PM seeks plan to boost farm output

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asked the authorities to present a comprehensive action plan to boost productivity and introduce reforms in the country's agriculture sector. "Improving agricultural productivity, value addition, and increasing exports of agricultural products are top priorities of the government," the prime minister said while chairing a meeting on the performance of the agriculture sector. He directed that a short- and long-term action plan be presented for introducing modern agricultural machinery, quality seeds, geographical distribution of crops, and provision of easy loans to farmers.

The prime minister directed that agricultural research centres be made more effective to boost farm output. He further directed that modern research be ensured through public-private partnerships in research centres. PM Shehbaz emphasised that the government should consult renowned experts for the effective use of artificial intelligence and modern technology in agriculture. He instructed that an action plan be presented for the development of small- and medium-sized agro-industries to enable the value addition of agricultural commodities and enhance export-ready products. To promote cultivation of profitable crops and make the country self-sufficient in food security, PM directed that all guidance and support be provided to farmers. (*Dawn, July 9th, 2025, Page 9*)

3.1 # Cash Crop

Urgent reforms sought to enhance cotton cultivation

The Prime Minister's Committee on Cotton has proposed to declare district Khanewal to lower Sindh and Balochistan as cotton crop areas where cotton production should be prioritised and incentivised. While suggesting to expand cotton cultivation in

Balochistan and Cholistan, the committee, in its draft recommendations, suggests implementation of zoning to protect core cotton areas, and promoting organic cotton in the province. Dedicated seed production centres should be developed in Balochistan to ensure a steady supply of quality seed, while investment was needed in water-saving irrigation infrastructure in Balochistan and Cholistan. Calling for immediate policy reforms, the committee recommends rapid seed and technology interventions by developing heat and drought tolerant varieties, introduction of tax parity between domestic and imported cotton, provision of soft plans for upgrading roller gin technology and struggling spinning mills.

It also suggested the government to develop price stability mechanism and enforce cotton grading standards. A five-year policy framework preventing sudden tax or tariff changes should be implemented and special economic zones should also be established for cotton processing and value addition, the committee proposed. Suggesting a strategy and action plan, it proposed that the cotton production window should be advanced by 45 to 60 days with short-duration crops that terminate by February. It also calls for enhancing wheat productivity to allow area reduction, and fostering public-private partnerships to fast-track the adoption of biotechnology tools.

The Prime Minister's Committee on Cotton emphasises the development of next-generation genetically modified (GM) cotton varieties with stacked traits for heat tolerance and resistance to the cotton leaf curl virus. It calls for strengthening research and extension services to encourage local product development for addressing local challenges. Under long-term reforms, the committee, which will submit its recommendations to the prime minister, suggests developing traceability framework for tracking cotton production, processing and export as well as compliance with global sustainability standards.

A report of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations says a growing number of Balochistan's cotton farmers are transitioning to organic production, motivated by the higher prices offered for organic certified fibre. Balochistan's main cotton-producing districts are Lasbela, Khuzdar and Kharan. Climatic stresses and extensive use of pesticides and fertilisers are affecting cotton production in the province. The committee is of the view that the government should establish cotton price support mechanism, and announce minimum support price of Rs9000 per 40kg and strengthen the role of Trading Corporation of Pakistan in price stabilisation.

Cotton production dropped from 14 to 7.1m bales over the past eleven seasons as there is no comprehensive policy in place. Key issues are low farmer profitability compared to sugarcane, rice and maize; combination with wheat delays production cycle, exposing cotton to extreme temperatures and monsoon which favour pest and disease development. (*Dawn, July 5th, 2025, Page 3*)

Concern expressed over decline in cotton productivity

The Ministry of National Food Security and Research has expressed concern over the decline in cotton productivity in recent years and emphasised the need for a coordinated and targeted strategy to address the structural challenges facing the crop. Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain chaired a high-level meeting to review and accelerate efforts for increasing cotton yield across the country. The meeting brought together senior officials of the ministry, representatives from provincial agriculture departments, research experts, and key stakeholders from the cotton-growing regions.

The minister said that cotton is a vital crop for Pakistan's agriculture sector and the backbone of the country's textile industry. He expressed concern over the decline in cotton productivity in recent years and emphasised the need for a coordinated and targeted strategy to address the structural challenges facing the crop. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to reviving cotton production through farmer-focused interventions, research-driven solutions, and improved service delivery in the agriculture sector. (*Business Recorder, July 5th, 2025, Page 2*)

Concerns persist over hybrid cotton's viability

Pakistan's cotton sector is grappling with a severe crisis as production has plummeted from a record 15 million bales to just 5.5 million, raising alarms across the textile value chain. The shortfall has significantly strained foreign exchange reserves as the country increasingly relies on imported cotton to meet the demands of its textile industry. Industry stakeholders are urging both federal and provincial governments to enforce crop zoning regulations, reduce input costs for farmers, and slash the high 86pc sales tax on the cotton ginning sector. At the same time, some voices within the sector are calling for a renewed push for hybrid cotton cultivation, a move met with both hope and scepticism. Around 150 acres of hybrid cotton have already been sown in Punjab and Sindh, shortly after the federal government approved the import of hybrid cotton seed. However, concerns persist about its viability, especially when compared to the more successful hybrid varieties of rice and maize. (*Dawn, July 6th, 2025, Page 9*)

Cotton decline

Pakistan's cotton economy is in a crisis. Production has fallen from a peak of 14m bales 10 years ago to 5.5m bales during the last crop cycle, increasing the reliance on imports to meet the textile industry's demand and, in the process, further straining Pakistan's meagre foreign exchange reserves. There are multiple reasons for the cotton crop's decline: climate change, poor quality seeds, higher input costs, invasion of traditional cotton areas by the more profitable sugarcane, price volatility, etc. Guided by the success seen with hybrid rice and maize in the country, several private firms have lately renewed efforts to introduce hybrid cotton to obtain higher yields at much lower costs. Nearly 150 acres of land in Punjab and Sindh are reported to have been planted with hybrid cotton, following the lifting of a ban on the import of hybrid seed imports a few

months back. However, some cotton sector stakeholders, including the agriculture scientist community, are sceptical of the success of hybrid technology. Their doubts stem more from past failed attempts to introduce this than the results of present trials, which will not be known before the start of the harvest.

There is no doubt that most hybrid cotton trials, conducted both in the public and private sector, failed to produce the desired results in the past. However, this failure was due primarily to the incompatibility of the hybrid varieties cultivated here under local climate conditions. Also, seed companies do not expect hybrid cotton production to fully match the success seen with hybrid rice and maize. Yet the new hybrid varieties being tried this year are expected to yield a significantly higher output than the local but weaker short-fibre varieties. While past failures must guide future efforts, they should not impede renewed efforts to revive the nation's cotton economy. Rather than oppose the push for hybrid cotton, our agriculture scientists must accept their failure to develop high-yield cotton varieties, which is a major factor responsible for driving farmers to other crops. Pakistan's dependence on cotton-based exports is no secret. We have seen textile export margins being squeezed in recent years due to the increased dependence on the fibre's import because of its falling domestic output. It is time that the efforts to introduce new high-yield, quality seed varieties — whether or not hybrid — are fully supported. (*Dawn, July 8th, 2025, Page 6*)

Cotton imports surpass domestic output

Pakistan has witnessed a historic surge in the import of cotton and cotton yarn during FY25, with the volume of imports surpassing total domestic production for the first time — a development attributed to policy distortions and adverse weather, sparking alarm among industry stakeholders. While textile exports posted a modest growth of 7.22pc, reaching \$17.88bn, imports of textile-related products jumped to \$4.24bn, reflecting a record increase of 61pc compared to the previous fiscal year, according to data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Industry sources say spike in imports is a direct outcome of multiple factors, including the earlier allowance of duty- and sales tax-free imports of cotton and yarn, high taxation on the domestic ginning industry, neglect of crop zoning regulations, and unfavourable climatic conditions that severely hampered local output. During the fiscal year, textile mills imported around 4.5 million bales of cotton and yarn equivalent to 1.5m bales, despite domestic production standing at just 5.5m bales — the second lowest in Pakistan's history. The steep 18pc sales tax imposed on local cotton is seen as a major disincentive for buyers. Adding to the concern, over 100,000 bales of unsold cotton reportedly remain stockpiled at ginning factories. (*Dawn, July 15th, 2025, Page 9*)

Cotton arrivals drop 32pc, alarming textile sector

Pakistan's cotton crop is facing a serious crisis, with latest figures showing a sharp 32 per cent drop in arrivals at ginning factories nationwide compared to the same period

last year, raising alarms for the economy and the crucial textile sector. According to data released by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), only 297,751 cotton bales had reached ginning factories by July 15, down from 442,041 bales during the corresponding period last year. The report presents a mixed picture across provinces. Punjab's performance has been relatively better, with 145,101 bales received so far — a 27pc increase from last year. In contrast, Sindh's situation is bleak.

The province reported 152,650 bales by mid-July, compared to 327,666 bales last year — a steep 53pc decline. Balochistan also fared poorly, recording only 5,100 bales against 11,200 last year — a decline of over 54pc. Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsan-ul-Haq highlighted discrepancies in production data. He noted that while the PCGA report showed 145,101 bales in Punjab as of July 15, the Crop Reporting Centre Punjab estimated production at 335,000 bales — 131pc higher. Of these, 84,000 bales were attributed to North and 251,000 to South Punjab. (*Dawn, July 19th, 2025, Page 9*)

Dispute erupts over Punjab cotton output data

A major controversy has emerged over the methodology used by the Crop Reporting Centre (CRC) Punjab in determining provincial cotton output, with serious allegations of inflated and misleading statistics surfacing. It has been revealed that CRC Punjab is allegedly estimating total cotton production using hypothetical calculations — extrapolating yields based on the number of bolls per plant across an acre or, in some districts, from small sample plots as small as eight feet by six feet. This has exposed a long-standing discrepancy between the figures reported by CRC Punjab and those of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), with the former consistently reporting significantly higher production.

Ihsan-ul-Haq, Chairman of the Cotton Ginners Forum, stated that this variance has long complicated decision-making for stakeholders in the cotton industry. He noted that while some attribute the CRC's inflated figures to unrecorded lint sales by certain ginners, the presence of two conflicting national datasets has damaged Pakistan's credibility in international cotton forums. "As of July 15, the PCGA reported Punjab's cotton production at 145,000 bales, while CRC Punjab claimed 335,000 bales — a staggering difference," Haq said, adding that such figures appear divorced from ground realities. "It is entirely inaccurate to determine provincial output from a handful of bolls or a couple of micro-plots," he stressed. (*Dawn, July 27th, 2025, Page 9*)

Efforts afoot to achieve target of 6m cotton bales

Field formations across Punjab are being further mobilized to achieve the provincial target of 6 million cotton bales. Technical committees established at the division, district, and tehsil levels are actively playing their role in ensuring proper crop care. Furthermore, 42 Farmers' Facilitation Centres have been set up to provide quality and affordable pesticides to the cotton growers. These views were expressed by Secretary Agriculture Punjab, Iftikhar Ali Sahoo. (*Business Recorder, July 27th, 2025, Page 2*)

Cotton prices fall on low demand, rain disruption

Cotton prices in Pakistan saw a decline of Rs300 to Rs400 per maund this week due to reduced purchasing interest from textile mills and intermittent monsoon rains that disrupted ginning operations in major cotton-producing regions of Sindh and Punjab. The influx of fresh cotton (phutti) has slowed significantly, with many ginning factories either partially operational or completely shut. Some factories are still holding old stock, which recently sold for Rs15,500 to Rs15,700 per maund, incurring heavy losses for the owners. (*The News*, July 27th, 2025, Page 17)

3.2 # Food Crop

‘Wheat stocks sufficient until next harvest’

The Cabinet Committee on Essential Cash Crops has noted that sufficient wheat stocks are available in the country to meet national demand until the next harvest. The committee said there is no shortage of the commodity in the country. The disclosure was made by Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, who chaired the third meeting of Cabinet Committee on Essential Cash Crops. The committee also reviewed wheat production projections for 2025, carry-forward stocks, and national requirements for the food year 2025–26. The committee held a detailed discussion on the Cotton Plan 2025–26, focusing on immediate, medium, and long-term policy measures essential for the revival of Pakistan’s cotton sector. (*Business Recorder*, July 10th, 2025, Page 3)

Sindh farmers to boycott wheat cultivation over imposition of farm tax

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has announced that it will challenge the 45pc agricultural income tax in court. It described the tax as ‘unconstitutional, illegal and unethical’, and asked its members and farmers across Sindh to boycott wheat cultivation this year. The decision was taken at meeting of the chamber under the chairmanship of its patron-in-chief, Dr Syed Nadeem Qamar. The meeting rejected the tax and claimed that it was imposed under directives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). (*Dawn*, July 23th, 2025, Page 15)

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

4.1 # Fisheries

FAO drafts policy for fisheries sector

Pakistan’s fisheries and aquaculture sector can significantly attract private sector investments and boost its export-based contribution to the national economy with focused attention on accelerated growth and sustainable management practices through a coherent policy and governance mechanism, says the policy drafted by FAO. The policy, titled National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 2025-2035, aims at responsible use of marine and inland fisheries and aquaculture resources through coherent governance at federal and provincial levels for sustainable management and resilient development, ensuring food security. Policy also aims to ensure livelihoods of people, poverty alleviation and comprehensive export-oriented growth of the fisheries sector.

With a 1,001-km coastline and 240,000 square km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the country's marine fisheries resources have shared rights for exploitation through clear jurisdiction of federal government and the governments of Sindh and Balochistan. These resources are crucial for the country's economy, livelihoods and food security. These resources have significant potential of developing into a multi-billion-dollar sustainable industry, with opportunities to earn over \$2 billion in exports and generate employment for over a million families. However, overfishing, overcapacity, and destructive practices have depleted fish stocks by 60 to 90 per cent. Responsible use of these resources is essential to prevent further depletion and ensure their long-term viability. (*Dawn, July 9th, 2025, Page 9*)

5 fishermen drown as boat capsizes off Gwadar coast

Five fishermen lost their lives after their boat sank in the open sea near the coastline of Gwadar. Officials said the ill-fated fishing vessel had set out from Karachi and capsized in deep waters. Local fishermen rushed to the scene after receiving distress reports and managed to rescue one survivor. Rescue teams, assisted by local fishermen, later recovered the bodies of the five deceased men. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 5*)

4.2 # Livestock

SCF equips rural women with livestock, entrepreneurial skills

Sindh Community Foundation (SCF), with the support of Pathfinder International under the SURMI project, organized a two-day training workshop on Climate-Smart Livestock Management and Entrepreneurship Skills for 30 rural women from coastal districts of Sindh. The workshop aimed to equip selected women beneficiaries with practical knowledge and skills to enhance their resilience and livelihood opportunities in the face of climate change. (*Business recorder, July 21th, 2025, Page 10*)

Livestock sector: Sindh, Balochistan agree to bolster cooperation

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, in his meeting with Balochistan's Livestock Minister Sardarzada Mir Faisal Jamali, decided to exchange superior livestock breeds and to bolster cooperation in livestock development between the two provinces. As part of this collaboration, an agreement was reached to organise a cattle show in Jacobabad, where CM Murad Ali Shah emphasised importance of joint research efforts between the livestock departments of both provinces. (*Business Recorder, July 22th, 2025, Page 7*)

5 # TRADE

Trade deficit

Imports grew 6.57pc to \$58.38bn in July-June FY25 from \$54.78bn over the last year. Imports surged to \$4.86bn in June from \$4.96bn last year, a decline of 1.97pc. Month-on-month, imports decreased 7.08pc. The trade deficit in July-June FY25 increased by 9pc to \$26.27bn from \$24.11bn over the last year. In June, the deficit decelerated by 3.45pc to \$2.32bn from \$2.41bn last year. The trade gap contracted to \$24.08bn in FY24 from \$27.47bn in the preceding year. (*Dawn, July 1st, 2025, Page 9*)

Pakistan, US reach accord on trade and tariffs

With less than a week to go before the July 9 deadline, Pakistan and the United States have concluded a critical round of trade negotiations, reaching an understanding on a deal that could shape the future of the country's key export sectors. The delegation arrived in Washington with the aim of finalising a long-term reciprocal tariff agreement that would prevent the re-imposition of a 29pc tariff on Pakistani exports — primarily textiles and agricultural products. The tariff relief, temporarily paused earlier this year, was at risk of expiring if no progress had been made by the July 9 deadline. Officials familiar with the negotiations say the talks were successful, with both sides agreeing to a broad framework. The agreement, when signed, could lead to increased Pakistani imports of US goods — notably crude oil — and potential American investment in Pakistan's mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors.

Projects like the Reko Diq copper and gold mine and related energy infrastructure were a focus of the discussions. The deal could also pave the way for expanded engagement through the US Export-Import Bank. Although US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had earlier indicated that Washington might allow limited flexibility on the deadline if meaningful progress was evident, Pakistani officials say they pushed for early completion to remove uncertainty for exporters and investors. Officials remain optimistic that the agreement will sustain Pakistan's access to the US market and help reset bilateral economic ties, which had been under strain since the high tariffs were introduced during the Trump administration. (*Dawn, July 5th, 2025, Page 1*)

Platform launched to boost digital trade

The Ministry of Commerce launched a dedicated platform aimed at accelerating Pakistan's digital trade and e-commerce ecosystem while enhancing regional business connectivity through digital corridors. The initiative was unveiled at the inaugural GLOBE Pakistan Summit, launched by Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). The event marks the country's first-ever formal platform focused on fostering digital trade and regional integration. (*Dawn, July 11th, 2025, Page 9*)

'Pakistan-Bangladesh trade will soon reach \$1bn mark'

Deputy High Commissioner Bangladesh, S M Mahbubul Alam, stated that the trade volume between Pakistan and Bangladesh currently stands at US 800mn dollars, with expectations that it will soon reach US one billion dollars. He mentioned that sixteen trade delegations from Pakistan have visited Bangladesh so far this year. He made these remarks while addressing the launching ceremony of the third Made in Pakistan Single-Country Exhibition and Business Conference, organised by Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, to be held from September 23 to 27 at the International Convention City Bashundhara, Dhaka, Bangladesh. (*Business Recorder, July 11th, 2025, Page 4*)

Rising fuel imports widen ME trade gap

Pakistan's trade deficit with the Middle East widened by 7.37pc to \$13.974bn in FY25 from \$13.014bn a year ago, primarily due to a sharp increase in petroleum imports. The growing deficit reflects the country's heavy reliance on energy imports from the region, while exports have shown only marginal gains to a limited number of Middle Eastern markets. Crude oil imports rose 15pc in quantity in FY25, contributing to higher trade imbalance. In contrast, previous fiscal year had witnessed an improvement, with trade gap narrowing by 20.47pc to \$13.014bn in FY24 from \$16.365bn in FY23, mainly due to a decline in petroleum imports amid reduced domestic consumption triggered by higher fuel prices.

Pakistan's exports to Middle East declined 1.52pc to \$3.107bn in FY25 from \$3.155bn in the preceding year. In FY24, exports to the region increased by 35.23pc compared to \$2.33bn in FY23. On import side, goods from Middle East rose 5.64pc to \$17.081bn in FY25, up from \$16.169bn a year earlier. This followed a decline of 13.53pc in FY24, when imports fell to \$16.16bn from \$18.69bn in FY23. To address growing imbalance, Pakistan has signed a free trade agreement with Gulf Cooperation Council states aiming to boost exports and diversify trade relations. (*Dawn, July 22th, 2025, Page 9*)

Trade gap with neighbours widens 29pc in FY25

Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries expanded by 29.42 per cent in FY25, rising to \$12.297 billion compared to \$9.502bn in the preceding year. Exports registered notable growth to Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka, largely attributed to recent shifts in the regional political landscape. In FY24, the trade deficit with these countries was \$9.506bn, up 49pc from \$6.382bn in the preceding year. Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka saw a hefty growth in July-June FY25. Still, exports to other countries, especially China, continued to decline during the period, according to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan.

The value of Pakistan's exports to nine countries — Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives — rose 1.49pc to \$4.401bn in July-June FY25 from \$4.336bn over the same period last year. Contrary to this, imports surged 20.66pc to \$16.698bn in FY25 from \$13.838bn over the same period of the previous fiscal year. Pakistan's main exports to Afghanistan include sugar in the current fiscal year. In the past four months, Pakistan has exported more than 700,000 tonnes of sugar, mostly to Afghanistan. No data is available as most trade with Iran is conducted via informal channels. However, Pakistan has opted for barter trade amid the thriving smuggling of Iranian petroleum products and LPG via a porous border of Balochistan. (*Dawn, July 23th, 2025, Page 9*)

Trade with Central Asia shrinks amid rising imports

Pakistan's exports to five Central Asian countries (CACs) declined by 31.63pc during the outgoing fiscal year (FY25), despite efforts to expand regional trade and implement

transit agreements. At the same time, imports from the region surged more than fourfold, deepening the trade imbalance. According to data compiled by State Bank of Pakistan, exports to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan fell to \$197.06 million in FY25 from \$288.23m in FY24. In contrast, imports from these countries jumped by 411pc to \$245.09m, compared to just \$47.94m in the previous year, with bulk originating from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

Despite multiple high-level visits and the operationalisation of transit trade agreements — particularly with Uzbekistan — trade volumes remain below potential. Uzbekistan has begun utilising its transit agreement with Pakistan, and Tajikistan last year imported three truckloads of potatoes under a similar arrangement. However, these developments have yet to translate into a significant boost in exports. Pakistan’s annual trade with the CACs, routed mostly via Afghanistan, ranges between \$400m and \$500m — a fraction of its overall trade volume. The figures highlight the persistent underperformance of Pakistan’s trade with Central Asia, despite diplomatic and logistical efforts to strengthen economic ties. (*Dawn*, July 27th, 2025, Page 9)

5.1 # Exports

Exports suffer third straight contraction in June

Pakistan’s merchandise exports declined by 0.59 per cent in June, marking a continued downward trend during the fiscal year 2024-25, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The export proceeds recorded a negative growth for the past three consecutive months — June (0.59pc), May (10.07pc) and April (7.36pc). This reflects that the government will have to consider measures to reverse the trend in export proceeds from the country. In FY25, export proceeds rose 4.67pc to \$32.106bn against \$30.675bn in the preceding year. The export proceeds fell to single digits in October, and the growth pace progressively slowed in the months that followed, eventually hitting negative growth in February 5.57pc and in April 7.36pc and May 10.07pc. Export growth returned in March, with a modest 3.08pc increase, but fell back to negative growth in April and the following months. The exports grew 11.83pc in July, followed by 16pc in August, 13.52pc in September, 10.64pc in October, 8.98pc in November, 0.67pc in December and 4.59pc in January. Exports reached \$2.54bn in June compared to \$2.56bn in the corresponding month last year. On a month-on-month basis, exports declined 4.79pc. (*Dawn*, July 2th, 2025, Page 9)

Textile exports rise 7.22pc YoY

The country’s textile exports for fiscal year 2025 clocked in at \$17.88 billion, up by 7.22 percent year-on-year compared to \$16.68 billion in fiscal year 2024. According to All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), textile exports were down by 7.36 percent compared to the peak of \$19.3 billion in fiscal year 2022. Textile exports stood at \$1.53 billion in June 2025, showing an increase of 7.75 percent on a YoY basis compared to \$1.42 billion in June 2024. (*Business Recorder*, July 8th, 2025, Page 1)

FY2024-25 seafood exports reach \$489.2m mark

Pakistan's seafood exports with 20.5 percent increase during 2024-25 has reached \$489.2 million against \$406 million of the past year which is the second highest volume behind \$496 million in 2022-23. Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, while sharing the details of Pakistan's seafood exports during 2024-25, said that China retained its position as the top importer, purchasing over 99,238 metric tons of seafood worth \$186 million. Thailand followed as the second-largest destination, importing seafood valued at \$105.7 million. Other key markets included the UAE, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and Indonesia which reflects Pakistan's wide and diversified global outreach.

Lauding the Marine Fisheries Department's seafood annual export progress, the minister attributed this strong performance to enhanced regulatory measures, export diversification, and sustained international demand. Chaudhry highlighted the sector's growth in export volumes, which rose by 19.8 percent to 242,484 metric tons, up from 202,400 metric tons in FY 2023-24. He said this volume growth reflects the sector's expanding production capacity and growing presence in global markets. The export value to the European Union surged by 44.4 percent to \$13 million. (*Business Recorder*, July 8th, 2025, Page 2)

Exports to North America grow

Pakistan's merchandise exports to North America grew by 10.19pc to \$5.91bn during the first 11 months of the current fiscal year (11MFY25), up from \$5.363bn in the same period last year, largely due to rising textile and clothing shipments to the United States. The growth in exports to the region was primarily fuelled by the US market, which accounted for nearly 94pc of the total exports to North America, with the remainder directed mostly to Canada. Data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) suggests that the export revival was partly driven by a slowdown in textile shipments from competing countries, particularly Bangladesh and Vietnam. In 11MFY25, exports to the US rose by 11.06pc to \$5.552bn from \$4.999bn a year earlier. However, full-year figures for FY24 showed a contraction of 8.26pc, with exports to the US falling to \$5.442bn from \$5.932bn in FY23. Notably, US-bound exports had stood at \$6.74bn in FY22, before plunging 23.28pc in FY23. (*Dawn*, July 15th, 2025, Page 9)

June food products' exports decline 32pc YoY, 37pc MoM

Exports of food products showed a decline of 32 per cent in June 2025 on year-on-year basis and 37 per cent on month-on-month basis. Whereas textile exports up by 7.59 per cent on year-on-year basis and decline less than one per cent on month-on month basis.

According to advance released of foreign trade figures of June 2025 issued by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the exports in June 2025 totalled \$2.48 billion (provisional) as compared to \$2.7 billion in May 2025, showing a decrease of 7.26 per cent over May 2025 and of 3.17 per cent as compared to \$2,56 billion in June 2024. Exports of food

products remained \$367.7 million, compared to \$584.5 million in previous month of May and \$544 million of June 2024, showing decline of 32 per cent on year-on-year basis and 37 per cent on month-on-month basis.

Rice exports declined by 51 per cent on year-on-year basis and 37.4 per cent on month-on-month basis. However, the export of tobacco jumped by more than 300 per cent on year-on-year basis and 16.3 per cent on month-on-month basis. Vegetables exports declined by 30 per cent and fruits by 25 per cent compared to corresponding period of previous year. The exports during July–June 2024-2025 totalled \$32.0 billion (provisional) against \$30.7 billion during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 4.45 per cent. In terms of US dollars, the imports in June, 2025, totalled \$4.87 billion (provisional) as compared to \$5.24 billion in May 2025, showing a decrease of 6.97 per cent over May 2025 and of 1.85 per cent as compared to \$ 4.94 billion in June 2024. (*Business Recorder, July 19th, 2025, Page 8*)

FY25 seafood exports soar 11.44pc to \$465.4m YoY

Pakistan's seafood exports hit a historic high in volume during fiscal year 2024–25, yet the country once again fell short of its long-pursued \$500 million target, closing the year at \$465.4m — an 11.44pc rise over previous year, market players said. Pakistan's seafood exports surged notably during fiscal year from July 2024 to June 2025, reaching a record volume of 216,350 metric tons. (*Business Recorder, July 19th, 2025, Page 8*)

Rice slump drags down FY25 food shipments

Pakistan's raw food exports fell by nearly 4 per cent to \$7.116 billion in FY25 from \$7.369bn a year earlier, largely due to a sharp drop in rice exports. The decline in raw food exports marks the end of a 20-month streak of uninterrupted growth, despite persistently high food inflation. Rice exports fell by 14.72pc year-on-year to \$3.353bn from \$3.931bn. While volume of basmati rice exports increased by 4.48pc to 808,643 tonnes, its value dropped by 5.3pc to \$830.57m. Non-basmati rice exports decreased by 17.42pc in value to \$2.522bn, with a 4.65pc decline in quantity to 5.009m tonnes.

Meat exports also declined by 3.24pc in FY25. Domestic meat prices have surged significantly, with buffalo meat prices more than doubling from Rs700 to Rs1,600 per kg over the past three and a half years. Exports of vegetables and fruits decreased by 14.53pc and 10.29pc, respectively. However, fish and fish product exports grew by 13.44pc during the same period. In June 2024, the government allowed the export of 150,000 tonnes of sugar, but actual exports soared to 757,779 tonnes by March 2025. Since then, the government has imposed restrictions on further sugar exports. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 9*)

Seafood exports rise 13pc to \$465mn

Pakistan's seafood exports rose to \$465 million in FY25, reflecting a 13.4 per cent increase in value and an 8pc growth in quantity compared to the previous year, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The country

exported 216,350 tonnes of fishery products during FY25, up from 199,738 tonnes worth \$410m in FY24. The Pakistan Fisheries Exporters Association (PFEA) attributed the increase to the dedicated efforts of fishermen and fish processors, who managed to expand the country's footprint in the global seafood market despite tough conditions. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 9*)

5.2 # Import

Sugar import decision confirmed

The high-level steering committee confirmed the decision to import 500,000 metric tonnes of sugar through both the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) and the private sector. Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar chaired a follow-up meeting of the steering committee on import of sugar. The DPM/FM emphasised government's commitment to ensuring a stable supply of essential commodities at affordable prices. (*Business Recorder, July 2nd, 2025, Page 16*)

Trading Corporation of Pakistan to import 0.35m tonnes of sugar

The government announced a two-phase plan to import 350,000 tonnes of sugar through the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP), aiming to stabilise domestic prices and ensure the availability of affordable, quality sugar. The decision was taken during a meeting of the Steering Committee on Sugar Import, chaired by Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain. The committee approved the issuance of a tender for 200,000 tonnes in the first phase, followed by another tender for 150,000 tonnes a week later. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 9*)

500k MT sugar import: FBR exempts customs duty, reduces sales tax from 18% to 0.25%

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has exempted customs duty on the import of 500,000 metric tons of sugar and also reduced sales tax rate from 18% to 0.25% and withholding tax up to 0.25% on the import of commodity by the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) or private sector. (*Business Recorder, July 10th, 2025, Page 1*)

Sugar import to spike import bill by \$280m

The government's decision to import 0.5 million tons of sugar will spike the import bill by \$275-280 million - 300,000 tons through Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) and remaining 200,000 tons via private sector - but is unlikely to bring price down in the near future. This was the consensus of an anecdotal survey carried out by this correspondent. Government's import decision will only stabilise price of sweetener at the current level of Rs 195-200 per kg rather than decrease it because the landed cost of sugar is projected to cost Rs 155 per kg. (*Business Recorder, July 12th, 2025, Page 1*)

TCP invites bids for import of 0.3m tons of sugar

In line with federal government directives, the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) has issued an international tender for the import of 300,000 metric tons of white refined

sugar. In order to stabilise the rising prices of the commodity and avoid shortage on the domestic market, the federal government has decided to import 0.5 million metric tons of sugar. (*Business Recorder, July 12th, 2025, Page 8*)

No bids in sugar tender

No trading companies were believed to have submitted price offers in international tender to buy 50,000 tonnes of sugar from Pakistan which closed, European traders said in initial assessments. Traders said the shipment and arrival periods were regarded as having too short notice for realistic offers. The tender from the state-run TCP sought loading from Aug 1-15. The entire volume purchased was sought for arrival in Pakistan by Aug 30. (*Dawn, July 23th, 2025, Page 9*)

18pc tax levied on cotton imports

FBR issued the much-delayed Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) imposing an 18 per cent sales tax on the import of cotton fibre, yarn, and grey cloth, following sustained pressure from the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (Aptma). The tax measure, which aligns with commitments made in the federal budget for 2025-26, comes nearly a month after the budget announcement and over three weeks after formal cabinet approval. The delay, industry stakeholders say, has created uncertainty in the market and hurt domestic cotton producers. (*Dawn, July 30th, 2025, Page 9*)

Duty relief on 479 items' import scrapped

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has withdrawn customs duty exemption on the import of 479 items including those covered under the category of miscellaneous goods from July 1, 2025. According to the FBR's instructions to the Collectors of Customs, to streamline and reduce the cost of exemptions, 479 entries in part-I, part-III, and part-II of the Fifth Schedule to the Customs Act, 1969, have been deleted. It has been taken care of to retain serial numbers in the Fifth Schedule to match previous year, or ease in data comparison and statistics. Second, Part-VII (miscellaneous goods) of the Fifth Schedule has been omitted. (*Business Recorder, July 31th, 2025, Page 1*)

FY24: Wheat import caused massive loss

Pakistan suffered a staggering loss of over Rs 300 billion owing to the import of 3.59 million metric tons of wheat during the financial year 2023–24, despite having ample domestic stocks. The was revealed in the Audit Report 2024-25, highlighting it as one of the most critical financial failures of the federal government in the reviewed period. According to the report, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research went ahead with the wheat import at a time when 4.12 million metric tons of locally produced wheat was already available in public sector storage facilities. This decision led to an oversupply in the domestic market, significantly reducing wheat prices and placing immense financial strain on local farmers who were already struggling to sell their harvest. The cumulative financial impact of these miscalculations was conservatively estimated at Rs 310 billion. (*Business Recorder, July 31th, 2025, Page 12*)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Nestlé Pakistan inaugurates clean drinking water facility in Gilgit

Nestlé Pakistan recently inaugurated a clean and safe drinking water facility in Jutial, Gilgit that aims to cater to more than 10,000 people in the region daily. Inaugurating the facility, Abrar Ahmed Mirza, Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan said “Access to clean and safe drinking water is an absolute necessity for all of us, and I am touched that Nestlé has focused so much of its community efforts for the people of Gilgit. It is a remarkable contribution, and I am hopeful that people will truly benefit from this.”(*Business Recorder, July 2nd, 2025, Page 4*)

Fatima Fertilizer’s Sarsabz Tabeer launches healthcare initiative

As part of its ongoing commitment to empower rural women and female farmers, Fatima Fertilizer, under its flagship Sarsabz Tabeer initiative, has launched a new health-focused intervention in collaboration with Mukhtar A. Sheikh Memorial Welfare Hospital (MASH) and the Government of Punjab. The first Free Medical Camp under this new health initiative was successfully held on June 26th at THQ Hospital Kehrorpaka, Lodhran, targeting underserved communities where access to quality healthcare remains a challenge. (*Business Recorder, July 2nd, 2025, Page 5*)

CCP slaps over Rs1bn fines

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) issued 12 major orders in FY25, imposing penalties exceeding Rs1 billion on businesses found guilty of anti-competitive conduct across key sectors, including fertilisers, poultry, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, real estate, food, hygiene products, paints, and education. In a landmark decision, the CCP fined six urea manufacturers and their trade association — the Fertiliser Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council (FMPAC) — a total of Rs375 million for engaging in price-fixing. Each manufacturer was fined Rs50m, while the association received a Rs75m penalty.

Another significant case involved eight poultry hatcheries, which were fined a cumulative Rs155m for colluding to fix prices of day-old broiler chicks. Among deceptive marketing cases, Kingdom Valley was fined Rs150m for making false claims about its housing project. Unilever Pakistan and FrieslandCampina Engro were fined Rs75m each for marketing frozen desserts as “ice cream” in violation of product labelling regulations. Unilever faced an additional Rs60m penalty for misleading advertisements related to Lifebuoy products.

Al-Ghazi Tractors was penalised Rs40m for making unsubstantiated fuel efficiency claims, while Hyundai Nishat Motors received a Rs25m fine for misleading promotional content concerning the Hyundai Tucson SUV. In the pharmaceutical sector, 3N Lifemed Pharmaceuticals was fined Rs20m for using fake certification in the promotion of dialysis machines. However, this fine was later reduced to Rs2m by the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT). (*Dawn, July 15th, 2025, Page 9*)

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

\$2.45bn FDI fetched in FY25

Foreign Direct Investment into Pakistan rose by five percent during the last fiscal year (FY25) supported by Chinese inflows. According to SBP Pakistan fetched FDI amounted to \$2.457bn during July-June of FY25 as against \$2.347bn in the same period of last fiscal year (FY24), depicting an increase of \$110m. During period under review, FDI inflows rose by 27pc to \$4.026bn as against \$1.569bn outflows, which rose by 92pc. Analysts said that with improved economic indicators, foreign investment in the country is gradually increasing as investor's confidence in the economy is strengthened.

With surplus current account and surge in the FDI, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves are also rising and reached the \$20 billion mark, they added. The country wise analysis revealed that China is the largest investing country with some 50 percent share in the overall FDI in the last fiscal year. Chinese investment in Pakistan rose by 91 percent or \$584 million to \$1.227 billion in the last fiscal year compared to \$643 million in FY24. Hong Kong is ranked second with foreign direct investment of \$470m in FY25 up from \$212m in FY24. During period under review, the UAE ranked third with an investment of \$283m, up by 114pc. MoM FDI slightly increased by \$1.6m to stand at \$206.6m in June 2025 versus \$205m in June 2024. (*Business Recorder, July 19th, 2025, Page 1*)

7.1 # Countries / Regions

Azerbaijan to invest \$2bn in economic sector

Pakistan and Azerbaijan in a major development signed a partnership agreement of \$ two billion investment in Pakistan. The agreement was reflective of the continuing flow of investment in Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. (*Business Recorder, July 5th, 2025, Page 1*)

Punjab water, sanitation project: Euro 12m grant pact inked with AFD

The government of Pakistan and AFD have signed a grant agreement worth euro 12m for a project aimed at strengthening water and sanitation service delivery across selected urban areas in Punjab. The agreement was signed by Kazim Niaz, secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Nicolas Galey, ambassador of France to Pakistan and Vincent Thevenot, director of AFD in Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, July 5th, 2025, Page 8*)

US firms eye investment in Pakistan's port sector

Over 65 US companies joined a landmark webinar to explore commercial opportunities at Karachi Port and Port Qasim. The webinar hosted by the US Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration and the US Department of State, in collaboration with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, part of the 'Gateways to Growth: South Asia Port Opportunities' series, has opened new doors for American commercial services in the port sector of Pakistan. The webinar served as a strategic platform for American companies to engage directly with Pakistani port officials and private operators. (*Dawn, July 17th, 2025, Page 9*)

China willing to cooperate with Pakistan in agriculture and mining, minister says

China's foreign minister said that China was willing to deepen cooperation with Pakistan in agriculture, industry and mining, as he met with his Pakistani counterpart in Tianjin, according to a Chinese statement. China "supports Pakistan in carrying out its anti-terrorism operations" and believes Pakistan would "do its utmost" to ensure safety of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Pakistan's Ishaq Dar. (*Business Recorder, July 17th, 2025, Page 1*)

Pakistan, Afghanistan: US to burn expired biscuits meant for malnourished kids

A senior US official acknowledged that President Donald Trump's closure of the US aid agency bore blame for the waste of nearly 500 tons of emergency food intended for hungry children. Officials said United States plans to incinerate high-energy biscuits, intended as emergency food for malnourished young children in Afghanistan and Pakistan, after they passed their July expiration date in a warehouse in Dubai. Under questioning by lawmakers, Michael Rigas, deputy secretary of state in charge of management, tied the decision to the dismantling of USAID, which closed its doors on July 1. "I think that this was just a casualty of shutdown of USAID," adding that he was "distressed" that food went to waste. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has slashed more than 80pc of US foreign assistance, saying it does not meet core American interests, and put remaining USAID functions under State Department. (*Business Recorder, July 18th, 2025, Page 12*)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

8.1 # Asian Development Bank (ADB)

2022 flood victims: ADB, Sindh govt launch 'business recovery' initiative

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in collaboration with Government of Sindh has launched a significant business recovery and empowerment initiative aimed at families affected by the 2022 floods. A delegation from ADB, led by Gender Specialist Judha Bukhari, visited Hyderabad and held a strategic meeting at the office of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry (HCSTSI). During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on a new Rs. 440 million project that focuses on business support, skills training, and financial assistance for flood-affected households. She informed participants that approximately 2.1 million families were impacted by the 2022 floods. In the initial phase, more than 6,000 families will be supported to start small businesses tailored to their needs and capabilities. "Each family will receive financial assistance ranging from Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 300,000 or more, depending on the viability of their business ideas," she stated. "The objective of this initiative is to empower vulnerable communities by enabling them to become self-sufficient through sustainable livelihoods." (*Business Recorder, July 3rd, 2025, Page 2*)

ADB sees Pakistan's growth at 3pc

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected Pakistan's economy to grow at a steady pace of 3pc in FY26, even as it lowered growth forecasts for the broader Asian region amid global trade uncertainty. In its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) July

2025, the ADB noted that Pakistan's provisional growth for FY25 was revised upward to 2.7pc, from its earlier projection of 2.5pc issued in April. However, the forecast for FY26 remains unchanged at 3pc—well below the government's target of 4.2pc.

The upward revision for FY25 reflects a better-than-expected performance in the industrial and services sectors, although agricultural output declined as anticipated. The report also noted a sharper-than-expected drop in food and non-food prices over the first 11 months of FY25, prompting a downward revision in Pakistan's inflation forecast for the fiscal year, while the FY26 outlook remains unchanged. Regionally, the ADB downgraded its growth forecasts for developing Asia and the Pacific due to expectations of weaker exports, higher US tariffs, and uncertain global trade conditions. The region is now expected to grow by 4.7pc in 2025, down 0.2pc points from the April forecast. Growth for 2026 is revised to 4.6pc from earlier 4.7pc. (*Dawn*, July 24th, 2025, Page 9)

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF projects 3.6pc GDP growth

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected GDP growth rate for Pakistan at 3.6 percent for the current fiscal year 2025-26 against the government target of 4.2 percent. The Fund in its latest report, “World Economic Outlook Update, Global Economy: Tenuous Resilience amid Persistent Uncertainty”, upgraded GDP growth estimates for the last fiscal year 2024-25 by 0.1 percent to 2.7 percent. The Finance Division in its monthly economic outlook for June 2025 claimed that real GDP grew by 2.68 percent in fiscal year 2024-25. The World Bank has projected GDP growth rate for Pakistan at 3.1 per cent for fiscal year 2026 and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at 3 percent for the current fiscal year. In its latest report ADB revised Pakistan's GDP growth estimate for fiscal year 2025 slightly upward to 2.7 percent from its earlier projection of 2.5 percent. IMF stated that global growth is projected at 3 percent for 2025 and 3.1 percent in 2026. The forecast for 2025 is 0.2 percentage point higher than the reference forecast of the April 2025 WEO and 0.1 percentage point higher for 2026. (*Business Recorder*, July 30th, 2025, Page 1)

8.3 # World Bank

\$300m SWAT project progress unsatisfactory: WB

The World Bank has rated the overall implementation progress of “Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation (SWAT)” project worth around \$300 million moderately unsatisfactory which envisaged to increase agricultural water productivity in selected farmers' organization command areas, improve integrated water resources management, and contribute to restoring crop production by small and medium-sized farmers affected by the 2022 floods. The Bank in its Implementation Status and Results Report (ISR) also termed the progress toward achievement of project development objective moderately satisfactory. (*Business Recorder*, July 6th, 2025, Page 1)

World Bank project ends with radars, weather stations scrapped

The World Bank-financed ‘Pakistan Hydromet and Climate Services Project’ has concluded, but without delivering several of its originally planned components, including weather radars, automatic weather stations and observatories, according to the project’s completion report. The report reveals that during in June 2020, the hydro-meteorological and climate change services component was initially scaled back and later dropped. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 5*)

9 # POLICY

9.1 # Agricultural Policy

KP prepares policy for food security, livelihood uplift in mountainous areas

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has prepared a policy to transform mountainous agricultural areas across the province into sustainable and climate-resilient regions to ensure food security and uplift livelihoods. The proposed Mountain Agriculture Policy will be sent to the chief minister for approval before being placed in a cabinet meeting for consent. The 54-page policy, prepared by the agriculture department and first of its kind, said that mountain, which covered over 60pc of province’s area and had received little attention with most of the population engaging in subsistence farming as over 90pcent of population engaged in farming livestock rearing. It added that mountainous parts of KP were well-suited for growing high-value crops of apples, cherries, nuts and persimmons and off-season vegetables that fetched a very high price in the market.

The draft said policy would focus on climate risk management in mountain agriculture to ensure resilience, sustainably and adaptation to climate variability and extremes. It will also ensure measures to enhance agricultural production with focus on mountain specific and climate resilient best framing practices, effective management of soil and water conservation through innovation and technology, sustainable development of livestock and fisheries through resource management, climate-resilient practices, value addition and promotion of modern tools and techniques for agro-forestry and reduction in post-harvest losses. The policy also promises establishment of a mountain agriculture board to ensure effective coordination with other stakeholders involved in mountain agriculture. The eight-member board will be headed by the minister for agriculture. The draft policy is also meant to focus on several development areas including climate resilience, research for mountain agro-ecological zones, crop prioritisation, soil and water conservation and management, and integrated livestock development to increase the resilience farming system and increase agriculture productivity.

“To ensure climate resilience of mountain agriculture, this policy will focus on supporting farmers and communities in adapting to new challenges, and promoting sustainable climate resilient agricultural practices. In order to better understand the area specific vulnerabilities and risks a complete study on multi hazard risk assessment will be conducted under this policy,” read the document. Regarding research, the policy said

that the University of Agriculture, Swat, placed in the northern part of the province and formerly declared as varsity on mountain agriculture would be strengthened to work on areas specified for mountain agricultural advancement.

“As a hub of agricultural education and research, it will design programs to work on all the relevant areas,” it said. Under the crop prioritisation, the most economical crops and fruits currently under cultivation, as well as those with high potential and market demand such as saffron will be introduced and promoted in climate-suited regions. Also, high-potential crops will be identified through a participatory approach involving farmers, researchers, extension workers and market players, according to it. In order to ensure soil conservation and management, the policy underlined emphasis on environment friendly practices to maintain soil health, moisture conservation and biodiversity preservation, and water conservation and management. It also focused on the improvement of integrated livestock development and sustainable mountain fisheries and aquaculture, as well as on collaboration with microfinance institutions, such as the Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited or any other bank, to provide agri-loans to smallholders at low interest rates and easy installments.

Policy also provided for value chain development to reduce post-harvest losses in mountain areas which currently range between 20 to 40pc for fruit and vegetables, amounting to Rs12bn per annum. “A systemic approach will be adopted to minimize losses through timely harvesting of crops, training on best practices in produce handling, and other relevant interventions. Farm-level interventions such as small solar dryers and appropriate packaging will also be introduced through developmental interventions to maintain quality and safe transportation,” the document read. The goals outlined in the document have been divided into three stages: short, medium and long-term goals, with short-term ones to be achieved in one to four years, medium-term from one to five years and long-term ones from two to five years. (*Dawn, July 6th, 2025, Page 8*)

Agri reforms in Pakistan on the cards

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif pledged sweeping reforms aimed at revitalising the country’s struggling agriculture sector, starting with measures to improve access to credit for farmers and the adoption of a public-private partnership model for agricultural financing. Chairing marathon meetings focused on agricultural development, Sharif said urgent reforms at the state-owned Zarai Taraqiati Bank Ltd (ZTBL) would be undertaken to ensure transparent and easy access to agricultural loans. He said agricultural projects would be prioritised under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) that began in July, with a focus on mechanisation, digitisation, and improving the business environment for farmers. The strategy aims to boost agricultural productivity, reduce costs, and support rural livelihoods, Sharif added. (*Business Recorder, July 10th, 2025, Page 1*)

Punjab plans agri reforms to boost productivity: minister

“The Punjab government is linking research institutions and universities and believes in supporting the private sector by providing maximum facilities with the aim to enhance agricultural productivity and profitability.” Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani stated this while speaking at a workshop “current state of agriculture and planning for Punjab 2025–26” held, with the collaboration of the Punjab Agriculture Department, the Food Security and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE), and the Pakistan Agricultural Coalition (PAC).

The government is committed to securing fair prices for farmers’ produce. Highlighting the “Transforming Agriculture Punjab” programme, he said a zero-interest loan of Rs 30 billion has been introduced to promote mechanization. The government is constructing 10 agri malls next year to provide agricultural machinery on a rental basis while construction of four agri malls is already 98 percent complete.

The minister further stated that the chief minister is focusing on high-efficiency irrigation systems, research, and the supply of climate-resilient seeds. Under Phase I of the Kissan Card programme, Rs 57 billion in loans have been distributed to 525,000 farmers, out of which 98 percent have repaid their loans. Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Usama Khan Leghari said that it is imperative to reduce crop production costs and increase per-acre yield. He noted that the Kissan Card programme has reduced input costs by 70 percent. He urged the government to focus more on agricultural research. (*Business Recorder*, July 11th, 2025, Page 2)

9.2 # Developmental Policy

Public Sector Development Programme: Govt spends major chunk of Rs640bn on infrastructure

Federal government utilised a large share Rs640 billion (61 per cent) of funds in development projects of infrastructure sector out of Rs1,094 billion authorisation under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for financial year 2024-25. According to a document shared by the Ministry of Planning, there was Rs1,100 billion budgeted allocation for financial year 2024-25. A total of Rs1,094 billion (99.5 per cent) were authorised and Rs1,045 billion (96 per cent) were utilised for development projects. About sector-wise utilisation, Rs640 billion (61 per cent) for infrastructure sector, Rs179.5 billion (17 per cent) for social sector, Rs20.4 (2 per cent) for governance sector, Rs57.8 billion (6 per cent) for science and IT sector, Rs5.5 billion (0.5 per cent) for industries and production sector, and Rs141.3 billion (13.5 per cent) for special areas and merged districts. (*Business Recorder*, July 11th, 2025, Page 1)

Balochistan cabinet okays plans for security, development

After reviewing the overall law and order situation in the province, the Balochistan cabinet has approved a series of security enhancements, economic initiatives, and public welfare projects, including the establishment of new police stations and a major subsidy

for farmers. For agriculture sector, the (Balochistan) cabinet approved the Green Tractor scheme, under which farmers will receive agricultural tractors at a 50 per cent subsidy. Cabinet also ratified upgrade of trained crop reporters in Agriculture Department from Grade 6 to Grade 11, in compliance with a Supreme Court decision. Cabinet approved establishment of a Balochistan Mineral Development Fund to ensure transparent use of mineral resources and encourage investment. (*Dawn, July 31th, 2025, Page 5*)

9.3 # Neo – Liberal Policy

No subsidy or tax relief on imports: ECC sticks to sugar deregulation

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet has reaffirmed its stance on deregulating sugar prices, reiterating that no subsidy or tax exemptions will be available for sugar imports in FY 2025-26. The Finance Ministry communicated this clearly on financial position and commitments with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). On June 27, 2025, Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) sought emergency approval from the ECC Chairman and Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb to present a summary due to urgent market concerns. Approval was granted. The MNFS&R briefed the ECC that a meeting of the Prime Minister's Committee, formed on March 16, 2025 under the Deputy Prime Minister, was held on June 19. The committee noted that sugar prices remain high, and current stock levels are inadequate to stabilize the market.

The committee concluded that demand-pull inflation in the sugar market could only be mitigated by increasing supply. Despite multiple appeals, the sugar industry has refused to reduce ex-mill prices to agreed range of Rs.154–159/kg. As a result, the committee recommended importing up to 500,000 metric tons (0.500 MMT) of white sugar. A subsequent Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) meeting on June 23 reviewed stock levels, reported at 2.575 MMT, and evaluated consumption trends. The average monthly consumption, net of exports since the start of the crushing season (November 21, 2024), is 0.541 MMT, a level that may only just meet domestic demand through next season, leaving no surplus stock for FY 2025-26. (*Business Recorder, July 2nd, 2025, Page 1*)

NA panel endorses PIA privatisation

The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Defence reaffirmed its support for the government's decision to privatise Pakistan International Airlines Company Ltd (PIACL), while underscoring the need to preserve the airline's heritage and protect the rights of its employees. Committee emphasised that any future operator must ensure that PIA aircraft continue to display the Pakistani flag and the iconic PIA logo, symbols regarded as representations of national pride and continuity. Members urged that employees be treated with fairness and compassion throughout the privatisation process, with their rights and livelihoods protected. (*Dawn, July 18th, 2025, Page 9*)

PSMA urges Pakistan govt to deregulate sugar industry

The Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) has urged the government to completely deregulate the industry. In a statement, a spokesman for the PSMA said the Association made this request during a general body meeting held today. It requested the federal government to consider deregulating the sugar sector, as has already been done by the provinces in the case of sugarcane. It said the sugar industry is the second largest agro-based industry in Pakistan after textiles. During the crushing season, it generates direct and indirect business activity worth Rs. 1,000 billion in agriculture, transport, allied industries, wholesale, and retail markets. It pays approximately Rs. 225 billion in direct and indirect taxes to federal, provincial, and local governments, and provides \$4 billion worth of import substitution to the national economy. (*Business recorder, July 21th, 2025, Page 12*)

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Monthly update by FD: FY25: real GDP grows 2.68pc

Real GDP grew by 2.68 percent in fiscal year 2025, while inflation eased steadily, which is expected to remain within the range of 3-4 percent for June 2025, said Finance Division. The Division in its monthly “Economic update and outlook June 2025” stated that cumulatively, Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) declined by 1.5 percent during July-April fiscal year 2025, in contrast to a marginal growth of 0.3 percent recorded in the comparable period of last year. For the Kharif season 2025-26, the federal government has set targets of 2.2 million hectares for cotton cultivation area and 10.18 million bales for production. During July-April 2025, agricultural credit disbursement reached Rs 2,066.6 billion, an increase of 15.7 percent, moving steadily toward the annual target of Rs 2,572.3 billion.

Total expenditure increased by 18.5 percent to Rs 12,948.3 billion during July-April fiscal year 2025 compared to Rs 10,922.5 billion last year. This growth in expenditure is driven by a significant increase in development spending, relative to moderate growth in current expenditures. Current spending grew by 17.8 percent, while PSDP expenditure increased by 40.6 percent. Overall, the fiscal deficit reduced to 3.2 percent of GDP during July-April 2025 from 4.5 percent last year. While primary surplus increased to Rs 3,648.9 billion (3.2 percent of GDP) during July-April 2025 from Rs 1,611.5 billion (1.5 percent of GDP) last year. With ongoing efforts, the fiscal deficit is expected to stay well below the level observed last year. The external account position continued to improve during July-May fiscal year 2025 on account of rising remittances and exports. The current account posted a \$1.8 billion surplus, reversing the deficit of \$1.6 billion last year.

Goods exports rose 4 percent to \$29.7 billion, while imports increased 11.5 percent to \$54.1 billion, widening the trade deficit to \$24.4 billion from \$20.0 billion last year. Gains in key exports were observed in knitwear (14.5 per cent), garments (16.4 per cent), and bedwear (10.6 per cent). Increases in major imports were recorded in palm

oil (26.3 per cent), electrical machinery (13.6 per cent), while crude oil imports decreased (1.7 per cent). Service exports grew 8.5 percent to \$7.6 billion; imports rose 6.6 percent to \$10.3 billion, resulting in a service trade deficit of \$2.7 billion. IT exports increased by 18.7 percent to \$3.5 billion. (*Business Recorder, July 1st, 2025, Page 1*)

Govt debt hits Rs76tr as of May, up 12.3% YoY

Pakistan's government debt climbed to Rs76.05 trillion (~\$270 billion) by May 2025, up 12.3 per cent year-on-year (YoY). According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the debt rose by Rs8.31 trillion in the 12 months ending May 2025. Notably, Rs1.1 trillion was added in May alone. Domestic debt surged 15.9 per cent YoY to Rs53.46tr, accounting for nearly 70pc of total liabilities. In contrast, external debt grew 4.5 per cent to Rs22.59 trillion, reflecting the government's growing reliance on local financing amid tight global credit conditions and limited multilateral support.

The further analysis of domestic debt profile reveals a pivot towards longer maturities. Long-term debt rose 23.9 per cent to Rs45.26 trillion, driven largely by a 27.3 per cent jump in federal government bonds, which reached Rs41.37 trillion. Meanwhile, short-term debt fell 14.6 per cent to Rs8.14 trillion -- reducing rollover risk but locking the government into higher long-term servicing costs in a high-rate environment. The sharp rise in borrowing has coincided with a challenging macroeconomic landscape, marked by persistent inflation, a narrow fiscal base, and the need to meet IMF-backed reform commitments. (*The News, July 6th, 2025, Page 1*)

10.1 # Food

Subsidised wheat stocks exhaust in GB amid supplies delay

A severe wheat shortage is intensifying across Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), depleting the region's reserve stocks and raising fears of a food crisis after the federal government failed to release subsidised supplies more than two weeks into the new fiscal year, GB food department has said. Officials with the food department said that wheat stocks have been completely exhausted. GB residents rely almost entirely on the subsidised wheat supplied annually by the federal government.

While the federal government allocated Rs20 billion in its budget to procure over 170,000 tonnes of wheat for Gilgit-Baltistan for the current fiscal year, officials said not a single sack has been delivered. The delay is putting immense strain on locals who say they cannot afford to buy flour from the open market. "Local people make their monthly expenditure budgets according to the subsidised rate," Imtiaz Hussain, a local resident, told *Dawn*. "The current shortage is causing trouble." (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 3*)

1,000kg donkey meat seized from farmhouse; foreign national arrested

In a major crackdown on illegal meat trade, the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has seized about 1,000kg donkey meat from a farmhouse located in Tarnol. Over 50 live donkeys were also confiscated during a raid on the premises and a foreign national was

taken into custody on the spot. According to a spokesperson for the Islamabad district administration, an FIR has been registered against the foreign national following the recovery. Authorities believe the meat was being prepared for supply to foreign restaurants and individuals. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 4*)

10.2 # Inflation

Inflation slumps to 9-year low at 4.49pc

The annual inflation rate dropped sharply to 4.49 per cent during the fiscal year 2024-25 from 23.41pc in the previous year, mainly due to high base effect, a decline in food prices and lower transport costs. This marks the lowest inflation rate since FY16, when it stood at 2.9pc — a nine-year low. Pakistan is currently experiencing disinflation, which reflects a slowdown in the rate of inflation, as opposed to deflation, which indicates a general decline in overall price levels. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), average cumulative inflation over the past 53 months has risen by 83pc, significantly affecting retail prices of consumer goods. Despite the recent decline in inflation, the cost of living remains elevated.

The State Bank of Pakistan has revised its inflation target for FY25 to a range of 5-7pc, down from the government's initial projection of 12pc. The International Monetary Fund has also lowered its inflation forecast for the same period to 9.5pc, compared to its earlier estimate of 12.7pc. For FY26, the government has set an inflation target of 7.5pc. The inflation rate in June recorded a growth of 3.2pc, slightly eased from 3.5pc recorded in May. This decline was mainly contributed by a slight decrease in the prices of food items during the month under review. The headline inflation, measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased by 0.2pc in June on a month-on-month basis, according to data released by the PBS. The inflation rate in June 2025 was the lowest mainly due to the high base effect from the previous year (June 2024 — 12.6pc).

The CPI inflation dropped to 9.6pc in August 2024, marking the first single-digit figure in over three years, and the downward trend continued in the following months. Food inflation for June recorded a positive growth of 4.2pc in urban areas and 2.4pc in rural areas, whereas non-food inflation was 2.2pc in urban areas and 4.7pc in rural areas. The food prices rebounded to a positive trend after a decline in four consecutive months. Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, was recorded at 6.9pc in urban areas and 8.6pc in rural areas in May. (*Dawn, July 1st, 2025, Page 1*)

10.3 # Poverty

NA body fears poverty may rise to 50pc, seeks BISP overhaul

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety showed alarm over the country's escalating poverty rate—now nearing 50 per cent – and stressed the need for steps to reverse the trend. The committee underlined the need for making the social protection system, especially the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), more effective to check rise in poverty. It directed to expedite transition of

social protection mechanisms towards more transparent, technology-driven system with minimal human intervention. The Committee was dissatisfied with delay in launching the digital banking pilot project, which was initially scheduled for rollout by June. It is worth mentioning that according to the recent World Bank Report, 45 per cent of the country's population is living below the poverty line. The population of people living in extreme poverty has risen from 4.9 per cent to 16.5 per cent. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) says most technical work for the pilot project is complete, with final approvals pending. (*Dawn, July 4th, 2025, Page 4*)

Over 1.6m children in Sindh trapped in child labour, survey finds

Over 1.6 million children, between five and 17 years of age, in Sindh have been found to be trapped in child labour, revealed the Sindh Child Labour Survey 2022–2024. Conducted by the provincial labour department with technical support from Unicef and the Bureau of Statistics Sindh, the survey also revealed that over half (50.4pc) of child labour victims aged 10-17 worked in hazardous conditions, exposing them to excessive hours, extreme weather and unsafe tools. Labour Director General Muhammad Ali Shah, who is also the project director of the survey, told that the survey had been submitted to the provincial government. He said that the incidence of child labour has seen a significant decline, reduced by nearly 50pc compared to the 1996 baseline.

According to Pakistan's first and only National Child Labour Survey, conducted in 1996, the prevalence of child labour in Sindh was recorded at 20.6pc of the total child population at that time. The latest survey also revealed that school attendance among working children is significantly lower (40.6pc) compared to non-working peers (70.5pc), with attendance declining steeply with age. According to the survey, girls aged 14 to 17 years bear a heavier burden of household chores, averaging 13.9 hours per week and face higher school dropout rates. The survey stated that child labour was strongly linked to poverty, with 33.7pc of the poorest households reporting at least one working child. It stated that 20.1pc of children in child labour report symptoms of depression, nearly double the rate among children not in child labour. The survey highlights significant variations in child labour rates across districts. Qambar Shahdadt has the highest rate at 30.8pc, followed by Tharparkar (29pc), Shikarpur (20.2pc) and Tando Muhammad Khan (20.3pc), while Karachi has the lowest rate at 2.38pc. (*Dawn, July 5th, 2025, Page 13*)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Govt urged to ensure protection of mangrove forests

A mangrove plantation campaign was organised in coastal areas through a collaboration between the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) and the Mangrove Biodiversity Park in which dozens of young people from Rehri Goth and Ibrahim Hyderi actively participated with great enthusiasm and highlighted the message of environmental conservation. The young participants also provided a detailed presentation, explaining how mangrove forests play a crucial role in sustaining the marine ecosystem, preserving

biodiversity and ensuring the economic stability of fishing communities. They elaborated that mangrove trees act as a natural shield against ocean waves and storms, provide shelter to marine life and help maintain ecological balance.

The youth emphasised that due to climate change and human activities, mangrove forests are facing severe threats that must be addressed through immediate action. The participants strongly urged the Sindh government to ensure effective protection of existing mangrove forests and to launch large-scale plantation campaigns to safeguard coastal areas from increasing environmental risks. On the occasion, PFF Chairman Mehran Ali Shah said: “Mangrove forests are the backbone of our coastal life, vital not only for the survival of marine biodiversity but also for the economic future of local fishing communities. We appreciate the efforts of these young people and urge the Sindh government to take practical steps for the protection of these forests and large-scale plantations.” (*Dawn*, July 22th, 2025, Page 13)

Pakistan signs UN agreement on ‘Law of Sea’

Pakistan signed an agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) that establishes a legal framework for all marine and maritime activities. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar signed the agreement at the United Nations Headquarters here, during his eight-day visit to the United States of America. Pakistan played a leading role during the BBNJ negotiations, serving as Chair of the Group of 77 and China during the two main sessions in 2022. (*Business Recorder*, July 23th, 2025, Page 1)

Mangrove restoration yields \$40m in carbon credits

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has said Pakistan is home to the largest contiguous arid mangrove forest in South Asia — located in the Indus Delta region of Sindh — with the potential to generate up to \$50 million annually through carbon credit markets. In a message marking the International Day for the Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem, the minister highlighted that the Delta Blue Carbon (DBC) project in Sindh, covering over 350,000 hectares, has already generated \$40m in carbon credit sales and is expected to yield billions in the coming decades.

The DBC project, a public-private partnership between Government of Sindh and Indus Delta Capital, was launched in 2015. It aims to restore and conserve mangrove forests across more than 3,500 square kilometres of the Indus Delta. The minister noted that while Balochistan’s mangrove cover is considerably smaller, around 4,058 hectares, its contribution to carbon sequestration remains significant and forms a meaningful part of Pakistan’s broader carbon market strategy. (*Dawn*, July 27th, 2025, Page 9)

Biogas produced from animal waste

The Punjab government said that a successful experiment for making biogas from biodegradable animal waste was conducted at Lakhodair in the city for the first time in

history. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz presided over a meeting on biogas production from the waste project of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) and directed the authorities concerned to start the `waste-to-value` project under `Suthra` Punjab Programme at the earliest. The meeting was briefed that some 20,000kg of gas could be produced from 1,000 metric tonnes of waste, and a revenue of Rs6 million could be generated from biogas production from the waste of sacrificial animals. It was further informed that 275,000 tonnes of carbon credits and \$4.2m income would be earned from the rehabilitation of the disposal site annually.

A pilot project for producing biogas from waste in Lahore at a cost of just a few hundred thousands had been successful. `A 50 MW waste-to-energy plant will be able to convert 3,000 tonnes of waste into electricity daily. In 10 years, the gas obtained from the landfill site will generate \$2.5m. The CM also reviewed a model of a recycling park, which could generate an annual revenue of Rs190m. There will be a 60 per cent reduction in waste from landfills through municipal solid waste treatment. The waste-to-value Incubation centre will provide technical support, seed funding, research and development opportunities for start-ups. (*Dawn, July 29th, 2025, Page 2*)

11.1 # Atmosphere

Air quality issue persists in Lahore

Lahore continues to suffer from high levels of air pollution, with the city regularly ranking at the top of IQAir AirVisual's live pollution rankings of major global cities," states the website of IQAir, a US-based organization that has evolved into a global leader in air quality management innovation. In the second week of July, during the monsoon rains, at 9am on July 8, 2025, as per IQ Air, Air Quality Index (AQI) in Lahore was recorded at 63 where PM2.5 concentration was 3.1 times the WHO recommended limit. (*Dawn, July 21th, 2025, Page 2*)

11.2 # Pollution

Marine pollution board holds first meeting in 15 years

Federal Minister Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has issued a stark warning over the growing threat of marine pollution, stressing its far-reaching impacts on Pakistan's blue economy, climate, biodiversity, and public health. Chairing the fifth meeting of the Marine Pollution Control Board here, the first in 15 years, the minister emphasized that unchecked pollution is not only degrading marine life and coastal ecosystems but also undermining fisheries, tourism, and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Marine Pollution Control Board works under the Maritime Ministry. "Land-based pollution, particularly the discharge of untreated sewage and solid waste, accounts for nearly 90 percent of marine pollution. If targeted effectively, this can be reduced significantly," the minister stated. He highlighted the cascading effects of marine degradation, including contaminated seafood, economic losses, increased coastal erosion, and damage to harbor infrastructure, and potential extinction or migration of marine species.

During session, officials revealed that Karachi generates over 472m gallons of sewage daily, including nearly 100 million gallons of industrial effluent, which is largely discharged untreated into the Lyari and Malir rivers and eventually into Arabian Sea. The city's stormwater drains also carry significant quantities of solid waste, including plastics, directly into coastal waters. To counter this, board discussed various mitigation strategies such as installing nets on stormwater drains, fencing riverbanks, deploying trash removal systems in harbors, and expediting the completion of treatment facilities in critical areas like Manora, Baba Bhit, and Kalri and Phitti nullah catchment zones.

The minister also called for stronger enforcement of environmental laws. He proposed invoking strict penalties under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act and the Merchant Shipping Ordinance against polluting vessels and industries. He further urged for empowering the SEPA with enhanced operational authority to implement environmental safeguards more effectively. The meeting additionally addressed sea-based sources of pollution — estimated to contribute 10 percent — including ballast water discharge, ship breaking activities, fishing operations, and offshore drilling. The Karachi Port Trust and other maritime authorities were urged to enforce regulations stringently to curb these practices. (*Business Recorder, July 18th, 2025, Page 12*)

11.3 # Health

Govt allocates \$6.8m to deal with diabetes challenge

The federal government has allocated \$6.8 million under five-year initiative to tackle the alarming rise in diabetes cases across the country. The government has budgeted allocation of Rs3bn for the programme in current fiscal year, with an additional Rs800m planned for next year. Implementation agencies are currently being shortlisted to roll out programme components efficiently. (*Business Recorder, July 2nd, 2025, Page 2*)

Another 30 samples found positive for polio

Despite ongoing efforts to control and eradicate the poliovirus, the latest survey reveals that out of a total of 102 environmental samples collected across the country, 30 tested positive for the virus while 72 tested negative. The samples, collected from 69 districts, were tested at Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at National Institute of Health, Islamabad. A breakdown of results shows that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 23 environmental samples tested negative and four tested positive. In Balochistan, 17 samples tested negative while three tested positive. Punjab reported 20 negative samples and six positive ones. Sindh had eight samples test negative and 14 positive. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, one sample each tested negative and positive. In Islamabad, three samples tested negative and two positive. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 12*)

Poliovirus detected in GB

Wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) has been detected in an environmental (sewage) sample from the Diamer district, the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health confirmed. The special polio vaccination campaign was

conducted in the Diamer district and adjoining districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from July 14 to 18, vaccinating 159,525 children. (*Dawn, July 21th, 2025, Page 3*)

Thatta sees alarming surge in malaria cases

An alarming surge in the cases of malaria in Thatta district has raised serious concerns among local people and health professionals, highlighting what many describe as a lack of proactive measures by administration to curb disease. According to official figures, 1,445 malaria cases were reported in June alone. (*Dawn, July 23th, 2025, Page 15*)

Dengue claims year's first life in Sindh

The Sindh health department reported the province's first dengue-related death of the current year in the metropolis. Female patient was under treatment at a private hospital. They said that she was 48 years old and a resident of district East. So far, over 400 cases of the mosquito-borne viral infection have been reported across the province, with the majority emerging from Karachi. (*Dawn, July 27th, 2025, Page 13*)

Polio tally rises to 17 with three new cases in KP, Sindh

The National Institute of Health (NIH) confirmed three new polio cases in the country — two from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one from Sindh — bringing the total number of cases this year to 17. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 1*)

Pakistan, WHO sign deal for cancer medicine

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has signed an agreement with Pakistan to facilitate free cancer medicines for at least 8,000 children annually diagnosed with the disease. The WHO and the Ministry of Health formalised the participation in the Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines to provide quality-assured medicines to children affected by cancer in the country, where over 8,000 new cases are diagnosed annually. The agreement, signed by Health Minister Mustafa Kamal and WHO representative in Pakistan Dr Dapeng Luo, will remain in force till Dec 31, 2027, and may be extended by written agreement of the parties. According to a statement, the agreement brings new hope to children suffering from the disease in Pakistan and aims to increase their survival rate from 30pc to 60pc by 2030. Limited access to treatment is one of the main factors behind the low survival rate in the country, compared to a survival rate of 80pc in higher-income countries. (*Dawn, July 30th, 2025, Page 5*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

KP forest dept can rake in Rs32 billion annually through carbon trading

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's forest sector has the potential to earn around Rs32 billion (\$113.1 million) from the carbon market annually due to its capacity to sell 11.8 million carbon credits, show official documents. The forest department's documents said carbon credits were tradable certificates, which could be used by companies, governments and businesses to offset their emissions. According to them, one metric ton of CO2 equivalent (CO2eq) removed from the atmosphere or avoided from releasing

into the atmosphere is called one carbon credit and carbon credits are traded through the voluntary carbon market or compliance market. The potential of the capabilities to earn such a huge amount surfaced in the recent feasibility study conducted by the forest department that has divided carbon credits into three categories along with the potential and its worth. The documents said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had the capacity to earn \$19.14 million by marketing 0.84 million carbon credits through afforestation, reforestation and revegetation (ARR) on 66,496-hectare area. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 8*)

OICCI shows concern over climate change impacts on Pakistan

The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry deeply saddened by tragic loss of lives and widespread devastation caused by recent flash floods and torrential rains in various parts of Pakistan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, and the many communities facing hardship as a result of these catastrophic events. These recurring climate-related disasters are no longer isolated incidents, they are a reflection of a troubling new normal. As highlighted at the OICCI's 3rd Pakistan Climate Conference held earlier in 2025, and echoed by World Bank, Pakistan requires an estimated \$348 billion in climate investment by 2030 to effectively adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. (*Business Recorder, July 19th, 2025, Page 2*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

13.1 # Rainfall / Flood

65 die, 118 injured in rain-related incidents across country

The flash floods and other heavy monsoon rain-related incidents have resulted in the deaths of 65 people and injuries to 118 others, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said. The majority of the deceased and injured are children. NDMA while issuing multiple impact-based nationwide weather alerts in light of the forecasted severe weather conditions expected from 2nd to 8th July 2025, has warned of a growing risk of flash floods, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), and urban flooding in various parts of the country.

According to the NDMA, the highest toll was in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) with 24 dead, including 11 children. Fourteen of the victims were swept away in a flash flood in the Swat Valley last week. Out of 65 deaths 31 are children, 21 men and 13 women. Flash floods and homes collapsing in heavy rain killed 21 others in Punjab, including 11 children, the authority said. In Sindh, 15 people were killed, while five people died in Balochistan. Of the 118 injured persons, 63 in Punjab, 16 in KPK, 34 in Sindh, two in Balochistan and three in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK). Out of 118 injured persons, 46 are children, 41 men and 31 women. (*Business Recorder, July 3rd, 2025, Page 3*)

79 die in rain-related incidents: NDMA issues fresh flood warning

With death toll surging to 79 and injuries to 140 countrywide by flash flood triggered by monsoon rains and in other rain-related incidents, NDMA has issued a fresh flood warning for the next 48 hours. (*Business Recorder, July 8th, 2025, Page 12*)

Extreme heat, rain trigger flooding in Punjab, GB

Record-high summer temperatures in Gilgit-Baltistan have accelerated the melting of glaciers, leading to heavy flooding in districts across the region. The melting of ice, which resulted in glacier lake outburst floods (Glofs), blocked roads, damaged homes and left people stranded across GB. According to Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), high temperatures were recorded across GB last week. Last week, the maximum temperature in Chilas was 48.5°C, the highest since July 17, 1997, when it was recorded at 47.7°C. In Bunji, the temperature jumped to 46.1°C, the highest since July 1971. (*Dawn, July 9th, 2025, Page 1*)

11 killed as rains continue to batter Punjab, Balochistan

At least 11 people lost their lives and many others sustained injuries as heavy monsoon rains lashed Lahore, its surrounding districts and some parts of Balochistan. In Lahore, the heavy rainfall submerged low-lying areas and major roads, exposing the city's inadequate drainage infrastructure. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 1*)

Cloudburst-induced flash flood wreaks havoc in AJK village

A cloudburst-triggered flash flood caused widespread damage in an Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) village, damaging around two dozen houses and six shops and leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 4*)

One killed in Zhob thunderstorm

Thunderstorm and hailstorms struck vast areas of Zhob district, killing one man, injuring several others and causing extensive damage to homes, crops and livestock. (*Dawn, July 12th, 2025, Page 5*)

Cloudburst flooding damages homes, blocks roads in GB

Extremely high summer temperatures and erratic weather patterns continue to cause destruction in GB, as a cloudburst-induced flood damaged 13 homes, agricultural land, crops, and other properties in Gilgit and Ghizer. (*Dawn, July 13th, 2025, Page 3*)

13 injured in rain-related incidents in North Waziristan

At least 13 persons, including children, were injured after a powerful windstorm and torrential rain struck the Razmak sub-division of North Waziristan. In addition to human injuries flash floods swept away livestock and caused severe damage to veg gardens and crops, raising concerns of food shortages. (*The News, July 13th, 2025, Page 8*)

111 deaths recorded since June

Monsoon rains in Pakistan have been linked to more than 110 deaths including dozens of children since they arrived in late June. Data from the national disaster agency between June 26 and July 14 showed that electrocution was the leading cause of fatalities, followed by flash floods. In late June, at least 13 tourists were swept to their deaths while sheltering from flash floods on a raised river bank. In its latest report, the

disaster agency said 111 people, including 53 children, have been killed, with the highest number of deaths in the most populous province of Punjab.

Monsoon season brings South Asia 70 to 80pc of its annual rainfall, arriving in early June in India and late June in Pakistan, and lasting through until September. The annual rains are vital for agriculture and food security, and livelihoods of millions of farmers. In 2022, unprecedented monsoon floods submerged a third of Pakistan and killed 1,700 people, with some areas yet to recover from the damage. In May, at least 32 people were killed in severe storms, including strong hailstorms. (*Dawn, July 15th, 2025, Page 1*)

Children among 10 killed as rain lashes cities across KP

Ten people, including eight children, were killed in separate rain- related incidents across the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. (*Dawn, July 15th, 2025, Page 8*)

Three killed in rain-related incidents

Two women and a man were killed and several others injured in rain-related incidents in different areas of Badin and Hyderabad. (*Dawn, July 15th, 2025, Page 15*)

Emergency in Punjab after record deluge

At least 60 people were reported dead due to floods and rain-related incidents as a record day-long rain spell lashed several districts of Punjab, while several swept away by currents remained missing. A number of villages in Rawalpindi, Chakwal, and Jhelum were flooded due to heavy downpour that burst mini dams, flooded streams, and severed road links in several parts of the province. Data from PDMA showed that 61 people were killed and 268 injured in the last 24 hours. (*Dawn, July 18th, 2025, Page 1*)

Punjab braces for more after rains claim 70 lives in 48 hours

After ten more people lost their lives across Punjab, it emerged that more than half of all rain-related deaths in the province have occurred in just the last 48 hours. So far, 123 people have been killed and 462 injured since June 25 as the province received record rainfall, triggering urban flooding which inundated residential areas, PDMA. Of these, 71 deaths were reported in the past two days alone. (*Dawn, July 19th, 2025, Page 1*)

180 dead as country faces intensified monsoon

As the country grapples with a monsoon season that has intensified by up to 60 per cent over previous years, the national and provincial disaster management authorities have predicted further rains in the coming days. At least 180 people have already been killed and more than 500 injured so far since the rains began unusually early in July. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 1*)

Six people killed during widespread rains in most districts of Sindh

At least six persons lost their lives in different incidents of roof collapse, electrocution and drowning during widespread rains in many districts of Sindh. (*Dawn, July 21th, 2025, Page 15*)

Houses, crops damaged as new rain spell hits KP

A new spell of monsoon rains hit several parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, damaging houses and crops and suspending traffic. The high flood in Chitral River triggered by the fast melting of Chiantar and other glaciers of Broghil valley washed six houses and a large chunk of the farmlands of Junali Koch village near Upper Chitral's district headquarters Booni. (*Dawn, July 22th, 2025, Page 8*)

Monsoon toll rises to 234; nearly half of them kids

At least 11 more people were killed due to heavy monsoon rainfall in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) as the national death toll surged to 234 since late June. The monsoon rains, battering the country since late June, have resulted in widespread devastation. According to NDMA, 234 people have lost their lives and 596 injured. Moreover, 826 houses have been damaged while 203 livestock killed since June 26. Of the 234 deaths, 79 were men, 42 women and 113 children. The highest number of casualties was reported from Punjab, where 135 people lost their lives. In KP, 56 people were killed; Sindh recorded 24 fatalities; and Balochistan 16. Two fatalities have been reported from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while one child has been killed in Islamabad. No loss of life has been reported so far from Gilgit-Baltistan, according to NDMA. Two fatalities have been reported in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, involving one man and one child. In Islamabad, one child was killed due to heavy rain and flooding. (*Dawn, July 23th, 2025, Page 1*)

Evacuation from hundreds of Punjab villages inundated by floodwater

A large number of residents of the affected villages were displaced, while evacuation was underway in many others as water levels in the rivers, including the Ravi, Sutlej and Indus continue to rise. Residents are being evacuated from the katcha areas of Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rahim Yar Khan due to the rising water levels in the Chenab and Indus rivers. Over 20 villages were witnessing floods and hundreds of acres of crops were affected in Jhang district because of the rising water levels in the river Jhelum. (*Dawn, July 23th, 2025, Page 2*)

Over 60 houses damaged as GB reels from flash floods

Dozens of houses were damaged after heavy rainfall and 'cloudburst' triggered flash floods in multiple villages of Gilgit-Baltistan, severing road links and destroying agricultural land. Flash floods caused damage in Tangir, the hometown of the Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister, Ghanche, and Gilgit's Sikarkoi and Kundas villages. Police said flash floods damaged public and private properties, including administrative offices, markets, power infrastructure, and communication systems in Tangir Valley. (*Dawn, July 25th, 2025, Page 1*)

GB seeks Rs7bn aid; thousands displaced in Punjab

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan appealed to the federal government for Rs7 billion in emergency funds to deal with climate-induced disasters that have

caused damages exceeding Rs20bn across the region. Speaking at a press conference at the CM House in Gilgit, the chief minister said the GB government lacks the financial capacity to handle the unprecedented disasters. He said unprecedented floods had impacted seven districts, with Diamer being the worst affected. He said that so far, 10 fatalities and four injuries have been reported. The chief minister said that 300 homes were destroyed, 200 were partially damaged, 40 water channels in 30 villages were swept away and 15 km of roads, bridges, agricultural land, crops and public and private infrastructure were severely damaged. He noted that only Rs1bn was allocated in the GB budget for emergencies and that the local government is also burdened with Rs3bn in liabilities from past disaster rehabilitation efforts. (*Dawn, July 27th, 2025, Page 1*)

Death toll surges to 272 in rain-related incidents

As relentless monsoon rains continue to batter large swathes of the country, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said that the death toll from weather-related incidents has surged to 272, with the majority of fatalities reported from Punjab. The PMD has urged provincial and district authorities to implement urgent precautionary measures in light of the impending weather system. In its report, the NDMA detailed the extensive damage caused by the ongoing rains, noting that 655 individuals have sustained injuries across the country. The hardest-hit province has been Punjab, where 145 deaths have been recorded, in addition to 514 people being injured. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 64 fatalities have been confirmed, including one woman in the past 24 hours, with 80 others injured. Sindh has reported 25 deaths and 40 injuries, while Balochistan has witnessed 20 fatalities, alongside four individuals being wounded. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), two fatalities were reported, while Islamabad accounted for eight deaths and three injuries. The death toll includes 93 men, 47 women, and 132 children, while the injured comprise 257 men, 182 women, and 216 children. Furthermore, 1,192 houses have been damaged, and 367 animals have perished in the rain-related incidents. (*Business Recorder, July 28th, 2025, Page 1*)

Villages submerged as Punjab braces for more downpour

Floods in the Indus and Chenab rivers have inundated over a dozen villages in several districts of Punjab, prompting the authorities to evacuate thousands of people to safer locations, while the government has asked rescue departments to brace for urban and riverine floods as well as landslides in light of the new monsoon spell starting today. In the southern districts of Punjab, district administrations issued emergency alerts across different villages as floods in the Indus and Chenab destroyed houses and crops. In Rajanpur, standing crops were destroyed by the Indus, which also impacted Taunsa and D.G. Khan districts. (*Dawn, July 29th, 2025, Page 1*)

Fresh flood rips through GB's Ishkoman valley

A cloudburst-induced flood swept through the Ishkoman valley of Ghizer district, damaging dozens of homes, shops and critical infrastructure, including a power station, the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority said. According to the GBDMA,

flash floods occurred in eight various places in Faizabad and Dadaabad villages. The authority reported flash flood completely destroyed 22 homes and 18 shops, while 42 homes were partially damaged and floodwaters entered another 65. Thousands of kanals of agricultural land, orchards, and forests suffered damage, alongside two timber factories, a pair of garages, a Jamaat Khana, and DJ High School building. Additionally, a two-kilometer stretch of main road and a three-kilometer water channel serving a powerhouse were affected, as well as numerous livestock, cattle sheds, and 18 irrigation channels.

Experts said GB has experienced unprecedented disasters this year, noting that the frequency of cloudburst-triggered floods, glacial lake outburst floods (Glofs) and rapid glacier melting has increased. At least 10 people have died and 12 tourists have gone missing in various recent events across the region. The Babusar valley and Thore in Diamer have been the worst-hit areas. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Meteorological Department issued an alert warning of more potential flooding. The department said a wet spell is likely to affect GB in the current week, with scattered rain, thunderstorms and isolated heavy falls expected. It warned that the weather increases the risk of Glofs, flash floods and landslides in the region's vulnerable glaciated areas. The PMD suggested all concerned authorities "remain alert and take necessary measures to avoid any untoward situation". (*Dawn, July 31st, 2025, Page 1*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

14.1 # Earthquake

Terrifying fault lines that lie beneath Karachiites' feet

While the recent seismic activity affecting parts of the city seems to have settled down to an extent, indicating what some experts describe as an "increasing stability" of the reactivated fault line after release of built-up energy, a sense of unease still exists in the people, who repeatedly experienced low-intensity tremors for over three weeks in June, it has emerged. The residents of Quaidabad, Landhi and Malir — the localities most affected by a series of low-intensity tremors starting from June 1 and ending on June 22 — say that the fear of being hit by a potentially a high intensity earthquake constantly grips their hearts. (*Dawn, July 3rd, 2025, Page 13*)

Two more quakes jolt parts of Karachi

Two earthquakes occurred just over a minute apart in two different parts of the city, creating fear in the affected localities. With the latest tremors, the total number of low-intensity earthquakes in Karachi since June 1 rose to 60. According to details available with the seismic centre of the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the first earthquake of 3.4 magnitude originated at a depth of 20km. Its epicentre was located 14km northwest of Malir. It was followed by a 2.7-magnitude tremor originated at a depth of 10km. Its epicentre was located 10km east of DHA City on Superhighway. The department's data shows that the city has so far experienced 60 low-intensity tremors since June 1, with most of them near Malir and areas near Quaidabad, Gadap, DHA City, DHA and Korangi. (*Dawn, July 17th, 2025, Page 13*)

14.2 # Landslide

Thousands stranded as more landslides block KKH

Thousands of people, including foreign tourists, remained stranded at multiple locations in Gilgit-Baltistan due to blocked roads, including the Karakoram Highway (KKH), due to landslides. Mobile and internet services across the region were also disrupted after fibre optic cables were damaged in several areas. (*Dawn, July 24th, 2025, Page 1*)

15 # RESISTANCE

Gridlock as police break up govt employees' march on CM House

Police fired tear gas, used water cannons, and briefly detained 87 protesters who attempted to march towards the Chief Minister House to demand salary increases, promotions, allowances and provident fund. The protest and subsequent police action caused severe traffic congestion in Karachi's South district as roads leading to the Chief Minister House and the Karachi Press Club (KPC) remained closed to vehicular traffic for several hours. South DIG Syed Asad Raza told that the Sindh Employees' Alliance (SEA) had put forward three major demands: a 70 per cent increase in salaries and pensions for all Sindh government employees from grade 1 to 22; a 50pc Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA) for employees in the same grades; and the provision of group insurance and a benevolent fund after retirement, in line with the Balochistan government's model. (*Dawn, July 1st, 2025, Page 13*)

Pims postgraduates protest over pay, facilities

Postgraduate residents at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) held a protest demanding a pay raise, which, according to them, has not been increased since February 2020. They also demanded resolution of residential issues, improved hospital security, paid house jobs for all and better patient care. They claimed that despite repeated applications to Pims Executive Director Dr Rana Imran Sikander and the Ministry of Health, their concerns had been ignored, prompting them to take action. The protest, which lasted for an hour and a half, saw participation from all doctors. The protesters' demands included a salary increase for postgraduate residents and house officers, which has been pending since 2020. They also claimed that 70 per cent of residents lacked hostel facilities. They demanded a health risk allowance along with a health insurance policy. (*Dawn, July 2th, 2025, Page 4*)

Rally staged in Tirah against forced displacement

A protest rally rejected forced displacement of residents in case of a military operation in Tirah Valley of the Khyber district. Scores of residents converged at the historic Bagh Markaz to express their rejection of the forced displacement in anticipation of a proposed military operation in parts of the valley where militant groups have recently intensified their unlawful activities. (*Dawn, July 6th, 2025, Page 8*)

Protesters block KKH demanding release of ACC leaders

Protesters blocked the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in Nagar to demand the release of imprisoned Gilgit-Baltistan Awami Action Committee (AAC) leaders. The demo announced by the family members of imprisoned AAC leader Mumtaz Nagari was attended by a large number of people from all walks of life, including the members of the religious outfits. They organised a rally from Budulas Nagar and staged a protest at Harapu, the district headquarters of Nagar, blocking the highway for all kinds of traffic. (*Dawn, July 11th, 2025, page 3*)

Protesters demand justice for girl killed after assault

A large number of people demonstrated demanding justice for 13-year-old girl, who was assaulted and brutally murdered in her employer's home. The incident took place earlier this month wherein a minor domestic worker was killed after being assaulted. Doctors confirmed that the minor was murdered after assault. The police have arrested prime accused, Haris Latif. The protesters, including leaders from various political and religious parties, condemned it as a horrific tragedy. (*Dawn, July 12th, 2025, Page 8*)

Massive Bara rally opposes military operation in Tirah Valley

Thousands of peace campaigners from the restive Tirah Valley and Bara tehsil of Khyber tribal district staged a rally, opposing an imminent military operation in Tirah and forcible displacement of the residents. Organised under the banner of Bara Siyasi Ittehad at Minara Jumaat Chowk, the peace rally, which later turned into an anti-military operation demonstration, was attended by thousands of people from all parts and corners of Bara and Tirah with parliamentarians, tribal elders, political parties' representatives and civil society activists also in attendance. (*Dawn, July 12th, 2025, Page 8*)

Businessmen rally against 'anti-industry' tax laws

Business leaders across Punjab called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to intervene against what they described as "anti-business" policies introduced in the federal budget for 2025-26, warning of nationwide protests and industrial shutdowns if their demands are not met. Hundreds of businessmen and industrialists staged demonstrations under the banner of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), supported by several prominent trade bodies, expressing strong resentment over the government's new tax measures. Industrialists-cum-exporters, typically absent from strikes or sit-ins, gathered in and around the SCCI building following Juma prayers despite the sweltering heat. (*Dawn, July 12th, 2025, Page 9*)

Protesting Kukikhels demand release of jailed leader

Scores of agitated Kukikhel tribesmen held a protest demonstration in Jamrud to demand the unconditional and immediate release of their incarcerated elder, Malak Naseer Ahmad Kukikhel. The protesters demonstrated outside the Jamrud Press Club, and later established a protest camp at the historic Bab-i-Khyber. (*Dawn, July 13th, 2025, Page 8*)

Chaos on Karachi roads as Punjab Colony residents protest power cut

Residents' protest against prolonged power outage at a 10-storey residential building in Punjab Colony piled miseries on commuters as traffic remained clogged for hours on Defence Road and surrounding areas. The residents of the affected building staged a sit-in blocking the road leading to Defence Mor from Punjab Chowrangi. (*Dawn, July 13th, 2025, Page 14*)

Thousands rally in Bajaur to condemn 'lawlessness'

Thousands of people from all walks of life attended Bajaur Aman Pasoon to condemn lawlessness and targeted killings in the district. The rally, which had been scheduled about a week ago and jointly organised by local politicians, elders, traders, and peace activists, later turned into a massive gathering. It was held on the main Khar-Nawagai Road outside Bajaur Sports Complex in Khar. The rally was held three days after the killing of Maulana Khan Zeb, a renowned peace campaigner and central leader of Awami National Party, who was killed along with a policeman during an attack on his vehicle by unidentified assailants near the rally venue. (*Dawn, July 14th, 2025, Page 9*)

Ji holds 'bike rally' against new number plates

In a dramatic display of public discontent, thousands of motorcyclists rallied through Karachi to protest what they described as a "corrupt and illogical" government drive to enforce new number plates. The Sindh government's move, part of a broader vehicle documentation campaign, has drawn sharp criticism for allegedly enabling "harassment and extortion on the city's roads". The rally, organised by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi chapter. (*Business Recorder, July 14th, 2025, Page 5*)

Housing scam affectees hold protest outside court

Affectees of the Bin-Alam Housing Society staged a protest outside the accountability court, calling for the return of their money. Despite the passage of several years, the affectees — many of them widows and low-income individuals — are still waiting for compensation and delivery of promised plots, homes or return of their invested money. The protesters appealed to the chief justice of Pakistan, the National Accountability Bureau chairman, the chief minister and other powerful circles to take notice and ensure justice. According to NAB sources, the Bin-Alam Housing Society began public bookings in 2016-17, offering plots on easy installments in Lahore, Pindi and Islamabad. (*Dawn, July 15th, 2025, Page 2*)

Massive rallies in Mohmand, Waziristan oppose fresh military operation

Thousands of people, including tribal elders, political leaders, civil society members, and citizens, participated in massive rallies held in Mohmand and North Waziristan districts, opposing any fresh military operations on their soil and the resultant displacement of local communities. A huge peace march was held in Mian Mandi Bazaar in Halimzai tehsil of Mohmand district. The participants declared that the state had failed to ensure peace in the tribal belt. (*Dawn, July 19th, 2025, Page 8*)

JI stages demos against price hike

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) staged over 100 protest demonstrations across Karachi against soaring prices of petroleum products, electricity, and sugar. The protests were part of a nationwide campaign called by JI Pakistan Chief Engr Hafiz Naeemur Rehman. A large and diverse crowd, representing multiple professions and backgrounds, took to the streets at key locations throughout the city. Demonstrators carried placards and banners while chanting slogans against the government, accusing it of shielding powerful mafias behind the current price hikes. Local JI leaders led the demonstrations in their respective neighborhoods, demanding immediate withdrawal of the recent fuel price hike, decisive action against the sugar mafia, and urgent reforms in the power sector. Protesters blamed the government for deliberate electricity generation shortages, an aging distribution network, and tariff policies that continue to burden the common citizen. (*Business Recorder, July 19th, 2025, Page 2*)

BYC protest in Islamabad continues despite curbs

The Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) continued its ongoing sit-in on the road leading to the National Press Club as the route had been blocked by police with barbed wire, preventing its activists from returning to their original protest site, Dawn.com reports. The Islamabad sit-in began on July 16, with BYC demanding the release of its activists. Political leaders, journalists and activists have joined the sit-in over the past few days. As the demonstrators were not allowed to set up their camp outside the press club, they would leave in the evening and return to protest in the afternoon. A Dawn.com correspondent at the scene reported when they arrived, they found the route to the press club blocked. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 1*)

Nationalist groups plan protests against corporate farming

Awami Tehreek (AT) has announced that it will hold a protest demonstration in Pannu Aqil against corporate farming and ‘dacoits’ rule’ in upper Sindh. An educational workshop will be held in Sukkur on August 14 and the protest demonstration in Pannu Aqil on Aug 27. The leaders said that corporate farming was a conspiracy aimed at systematically occupying the lands of Sindh.

As long as these corporate farming projects existed, the threat of new canals and dams would continue to loom over Sindh, they said. They alleged that ‘record corruption’ had been committed in the maintenance work of the Sukkur Barrage. Funds allocated for the cleaning of canals and water channels have also been devoured by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), they further alleged. They lamented that even light rainfall resulted in major destruction due to official negligence. (*Dawn, July 21th, 2025, Page 15*)

Traders block Sost Port over Khunjerab trade halt

Pakistan-China traders launched a protest against the suspension of border trade via the Khunjerab Pass, blaming the federal government’s inaction over unresolved tax-related issues that have inflicted heavy losses on importers and exporters over the past year.

Organised by the Pak-China Tajeer Etihad Action Committee — a coalition representing Gilgit-Baltistan’s (GB) importers, exporters, small traders, customs clearing agents, and local chambers of commerce — the protestors announced a sit-in at the Sost Dry Port gate, vowing to block all trade activities until their demands are met. Protesters called for the immediate clearance of Chinese consignments that have been stranded at Sost Dry Port for nearly a year, exemption from income and sales taxes for GB residents, and the provision of special incentives under the 1985 Pakistan-China border agreement. They also demanded a one-time amnesty scheme for the clearance of the stuck consignments.

Protesters said that around 60pc of GB’s population depends on cross-border trade with China through the Khunjerab Pass — a centuries-old commercial route. They alleged that since December last year, new trade policies have disrupted this lifeline, causing widespread economic hardship. “Billions of rupees worth of goods have remained stranded at Sost Dry Port for the past year. Many items have expired, and traders are burdened with escalating port charges and other expenses,” the protestors said. They argued that GB residents are constitutionally exempt from federal taxes due to the region’s disputed status, and that imposing such taxes would violate the principle of “no taxation without representation.” They also called for the withdrawal of cases registered against local traders. (*Dawn*, July 22th, 2025, Page 9)

Employees continue protest against USC shutdown

Employees of the Utility Stores Corporation of Pakistan (USC) continued their protest against the shutting down of Utility Stores by the federal government across the country. Organised under the Joint Action Committee of USC, hundreds of workers staged a sit-in outside the USC headquarters in Islamabad, demanding an immediate reversal of the closure decision. Protesters chanted slogans against the government and vowed to continue their demonstration until their demands are met.

The demonstrators warned that closing down Utility Stores would worsen inflation and push thousands of workers into unemployment. “Shutting down Utility Stores would be like handing over 260 million citizens to the mafias of inflation,” one protester said. They also alleged that the government’s move violates national labour and privatisation laws. Due to the protest and heightened security measures, heavy traffic congestion was witnessed on roads leading to the Red Zone, particularly around the Parliament House, as authorities braced to avert possible movement of protesters towards the Red Zone. (*Business Recorder*, July 24th, 2025, Page 4)

Seven lives lost as protest turns violent in Tirah

A protest over the killing of a minor girl in Tirah took a turn for the worse, as seven people were shot after a demonstration outside a military installation took a violent turn, eye-witnesses and sources told. Following the incident, security officials met with tribal elders and announced compensation for the victims, assuring that medical treatment

would be provided to the injured. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has announced separate compensation for the deceased and injured. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 1*)

Workers' rally condemns suppression of labour rights

Efforts to suppress the democratic right of unionisation are tantamount to sabotaging industrial peace and stability, declared the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) during a protest rally held from Regal Chowk to the Karachi Press Club. The rally witnessed participation from workers across various industrial zones, as well as representatives from political, social, and human rights organisations. The leaders and representatives from various organisations denounced the increasing retaliatory measures against workers struggling to unionise.

The protest concluded with a list of key demands, including an immediate halt to the suppression of unionisation efforts, investigation and punishment of those involved in forming fake unions, reinstatement of dismissed workers, cessation of threats and harassment against union leaders and an end to police bias in favour of factory owners. They also demanded abolition of exploitative contractual employment, consultation with labour organisations regarding the 2025 Labour Code, enforcement of labour standards under GSP+, the Pakistan Accord, and Due Diligence laws, and investigation and prosecution of alleged corruption in labour welfare institutions. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 13*)

Khunjerab route shut due to Sost protests

Traders in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) blocked Sost dry port, halting all trade and travel between Pakistan and China to protest inaction on federal taxes and demand the release of hundreds of shipping containers they say have been stalled for months. The protest on the Karakoram Highway, which began last week, has paralysed the regional economy and stranded travellers, including Chinese nationals who also staged a protest demanding passage into China through Khunjerab pass. The demonstration is led by the Pak-China Tajeer Etihad Action Committee, a coalition representing importers, exporters, customs agents, and chambers of commerce from across Gilgit-Baltistan. (*Dawn, July 29th, 2025, Page 5*)

Bajaur people take to streets against military operation

People from all walks of life took to streets to protest the ongoing military operation in several areas of Lowi Mamund tehsil in Bajaur that was launched. The residents of different areas of the district, mostly youth and political and social activists, attended the demonstration held at Umary Chowk, the junction linking Lowi Mamund and War Mamund tehsils. The protesters, some wearing black ribbons and holding copies of the Holy Quran, expressed deep concerns over suffering of local population during the ongoing anti-militant operation in Lowi Mamund tehsil. Describing the operation as unannounced, they alleged that authorities launched the action without issuing prior notice to locals. (*Dawn, July 31th, 2025, Page 8*)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

1.1 # Farmer

One killed, hundreds arrested in California farm raid as judge halts tactics [P. 56]

EU unveils bigger long-term budget but risks fight with farmers [P. 56]

1.2 # Water

China embarks on world's largest hydropower dam [P. 57]

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

5 # TRADE

Trump dispatches letters outlining new tariffs on foreign nations [P. 58]

Trump announces 50pc tariff on copper imports [P. 58]

Global trade grew in first half of 2025: UN [P. 58]

Washington, Tokyo clinch 'massive' trade deal [P. 58]

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Saudi announces \$5bn in Syria investments [P. 59]

7.1 # American Aid

Over 14m people could die from US foreign aid cuts [P. 59]

Curtain falls on USAID after six decades [P. 60]

US Congress okays \$9bn in cuts to foreign aid, media [P. 60]

Trump's funding cut stalls water projects, increasing risks for millions [P. 60]

7.2 # Gaza Aid

Switzerland to close Geneva branch of Gaza aid group [P. 61]
Israel-backed aid group shooting Palestinians at will, ex-contractor reveals [P. 61]
Nearly 800 killed seeking aid from GHF in Gaza [P. 61]
17 killed in shooting near Gaza aid centre [P. 61]
UN says 875 Palestinians have been killed near Gaza aid sites [P. 62]
UNHCR fears 11.6m refugees risk losing access to aid [P. 62]
Israel targets aid sites again; 90 killed across Gaza [P. 62]
Israeli forces kill 115 Palestinians waiting for UN aid [P. 62]
Western aid cuts cede ground to China in Southeast Asia: study [P. 63]
UN says Israeli forces kill over 1,000 aid seekers; 21 die from starvation [P. 63]
Over 100 aid, rights groups call for action as hunger spreads in Gaza [P. 63]
Britain ‘taking forward’ Gaza food airdrop plan [P. 64]
Aid airdrops will not stop starvation: UNRWA [P. 64]
Aid finally arrives as starvation haunts Gaza [P. 64]
WHO chief says continuous medical aid into Gaza ‘critical’ [P. 64]
UAE begins pipeline project to ease Gaza water shortage [P. 65]

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

WB, Spain launch Global Hub for debt swaps [P. 65]

9 # POLICY

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

10.1 # Food

Moscow blames sanctions for Russia-UN food deal collapse [P. 65]

10.2 # Food Scarcity

Over 600 malnourished children die in six months in Nigeria: MSF [P. 65]

Hunger must never be ‘weapon of war’: UN [P. 66]

10.3 # Gaza Starvation

Acute hunger in Gaza [P. 66]

Gaza hospital says 21 children dead from malnutrition and starvation [P. 67]

Gaza running out of specialised food to save malnourished children [P. 67]

WHO says malnutrition reaching ‘alarming levels’ in Gaza [P. 67]

Trump warns of ‘real starvation’ in Gaza [P. 68]

With 60,000 lives lost, Gaza stands on brink of famine [P. 68]

Gaza reminiscent of Ethiopia, Biafra famines: UN [P. 68]

10.4 # Inflation

World food prices tick higher in June [P. 68]

10.5 # Poverty

Climate change may push 41m more into extreme poverty by 2050 [P. 69]

11 # ENVIRONMENT

11.1 # Health

Emergency vaccines slash deaths by 60pc: study [P. 69]

Aid cuts, misinformation threaten child vaccination progress, says UN [P. 70]

WHO sounds alarm on risk of chikungunya epidemic [P. 70]

Non-communicable diseases pose new challenge to S. Asian countries: WB report

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

ICJ to deliver landmark climate ruling [P. 70]

States can sue one another for climate crisis: UN top court [P. 71]

12.1 # Climate Crisis

June was hottest on record in western Europe [P. 71]

Turkish city calls for help after heat tops 50C [P. 71]

12.2 # Climate Financing

World’s biggest climate fund ramps up investment plans [P. 71]

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

Climate shocks could cost eurozone 5pc of GDP, economists warn [P. 72]

13.1 # Drought

Drought hits Mediterranean basin and Europe [P. 72]

13.2 # Flood

Flash floods claim 27 lives in Texas [P. 72]

Flash floods kill three in New Mexico [P. 72]

13.3 # Heatwave

Thousands evacuated in Turkey as Europe is hit by early summer heatwave [P. 73]

World will have to learn to live with heatwaves: UN [P. 73]

Germany swelters as European heatwave moves eastwards [P. 73]

Heatwaves in Spain caused 1,180 deaths in past two months [P. 73]

13.4 # Rainfall

South Korea rain death toll surges to 17, with 11 missing [P. 74]

Heavy rain, landslides kill over 30 in China [P. 74]

13.5 # Wildfires

Greece on high alert as heat and wind fuel fire outbreaks [P. 74]

Greece battles major wildfires amid persistent heatwave [P. 74]

Turkey evacuates thousands as firefighters battle wildfires [P. 74]

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

Japan urges evacuation of small island after 1,000 quakes [P. 74]

Mega-quake off Russian coast triggers Pacific-wide tsunami alert [P. 75]

15 # RESISTANCE

Activists charged over UK military base break-in [P. 75]

Travel chaos in France as air traffic controllers go on strike [P. 75]

Ten killed in nationwide Kenya protests [P. 75]

Malaysians protest against Trump's nominee for envoy [P. 75]

UK police arrest scores of Palestine Action supporters [P. 76]

Thousands in Morocco call for end to Gaza war [P. 76]

Students protest in Bangladesh after air force jet crash kills 31 [P. 76]

Hundreds protest against water shortage in Iraq [P. 77]

Malaysians protest rising living costs, 'lack of reform' [P. 77]

Trump plays golf in Scotland as protesters rally [P. 77]

Several arrested at Berlin pro-Palestinian demonstration [P. 77]

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

1.1 # Farmer

One killed, hundreds arrested in California farm raid as judge halts tactics

A California farm worker died after US immigration agents raided a cannabis nursery and arrested hundreds. The same day, a federal judge ordered the Trump administration to temporarily stop some of its most aggressive tactics targeting undocumented immigrants. The Trump administration has made conflicting statements about whether immigration agents will target the farm labour workforce, about half of which is unauthorised to work in the US. The Department of Homeland Security said approximately 200 people in the country illegally were arrested in the raid, which targeted two locations of the cannabis operation Glass House Farms. Agents also found 10 migrant minors at the farm. The facility is under investigation for child labour violations. (*The News, July 13th, 2025, Page 9*)

EU unveils bigger long-term budget but risks fight with farmers

The EU executive proposed a two-trillion-euro long-term budget bazooka focused on tackling overseas competition and Russian aggression at Europe's borders — at the risk of a new showdown with farmers. Presenting the \$2.3-trillion 2028-2034 budget blueprint to reporters in Brussels, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said it “will be the most ambitious ever proposed”. (*Business Recorder, July 17th, 2025, Page 12*)

1.2 # Water

China embarks on world's largest hydropower dam

China's Premier Li Qiang announced construction had begun on what will be world's largest hydropower dam, on the eastern rim of the Tibetan Plateau, at an estimated cost of at least \$170 billion. Commencement of the hydropower project, China's most ambitious since the Three Gorges Dam on Yangtze, was seized by Chinese markets as proof of economic stimulus, sending stock prices and bond yields higher.

Made up of five cascade hydropower stations with the capacity to produce 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, equal to the amount of electricity consumed by Britain last year, the dam will be located in the lower reaches of the YarlungZangbo. India and Bangladesh have already raised concerns about its possible impact on the millions of people downstream, while NGOs warned of the risk to one of the richest and most diverse environments on the plateau. Beijing has said the dam will help meet power demand in Tibet and rest of China without having a major effect on downstream water supplies or the environment. Operations are expected sometime in the 2030s. “Assuming 10 years of construction, the investment/GDP boost could reach 120 billion yuan (\$16.7 billion) for a single year,” said Citi in a note. “The actual economic benefits

could go beyond that.” China has not given an estimate on the number of jobs the project could create. The Three Gorges, which took almost two decades to complete, generated nearly a million jobs, state media reported, though it displaced at least a similar number of people. Authorities have not indicated how many people would be displaced by the YarlungZangbo project. The YarlungZangbo becomes the Brahmaputra River as it leaves Tibet and flows south into India and finally into Bangladesh. NGOs say the dam will irreversibly harm the Tibetan Plateau and hit millions of people downstream. The chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu, said earlier this year that such a colossal dam barely 50km from the border could dry out 80pc of the river passing through the Indian state while potentially inundating downstream areas in Arunachal and neighbouring Assam state. Some experts also express concerns for a project in a seismically active zone. (*Dawn, July 22th, 2025, Page 10*)

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

5 # TRADE

Trump dispatches letters outlining new tariffs on foreign nations

United States President Donald Trump said that he was slapping 25 per cent tariffs on Japan and South Korea, in his first letters to trading partners ahead of a deadline to reach a deal with Washington. Trump had said on the weekend that starting from today, he would send a first batch of up to 15 letters to countries informing them that he would reimpose harsh levies that he had postponed in April. In near-identically worded letters to the Japanese and South Korean leaders, Trump said the tariffs would apply from August 1 because their trading relationships with Washington were “unfortunately, far from reciprocal”. Trump warned the countries, both key US allies in East Asia, of an escalation if they responded to the new US tariffs.

But he also said he was ready to modify levies “downwards” if Japan and South Korea changed their trade policies. Later, Trump also announced the US will impose 25pc tariffson Malaysia and Kazakhstan,30pc on South Africa and 40pc on Laos and Myanmar in letters posted on Truth Social. Japan’s Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said that he “won’t easily compromise” in trade talks with Washington. Trump originally announced sweeping tariffs on world economies on what he called “Liberation Day” on April 2, claiming the United States was being “ripped off”. Amid market turmoil, Trump then suspended the initial tariffs for 90 days, a deadline that expires. But the Trump administration has said that the duties will not “boomerang”

back until August 1, apparently extending the deadline despite denials from officials. While the Trump administration has signalled hopes of striking dozens of deals by early July — at one point boasting of “90 deals in 90 days” — there have been limited results so far. (*Dawn, July 8th, 2025, Page 12*)

Trump announces 50pc tariff on copper imports

US President Donald Trump broadened his global trade war as he announced a 50% tariff on imported copper and said long-threatened levies on semiconductors and pharmaceuticals were coming soon. One day after he pressured 14 trading partners, including powerhouse US suppliers like South Korea and Japan, with sharply higher tariffs, Trump reiterated his threat of 10% tariffs on products from Brazil, India and other members of the BRICS group of countries. He also said trade talks have been going well with the European Union and China, though added he is only days away from sending a tariff letter to the EU. (*Business Recorder, July 9th, 2025, Page 1*)

Global trade grew in first half of 2025: UN

Global trade grew by around \$300 billion in the first half of the year due to US imports and EU exports, the United Nations said. Despite the commercial war ignited by US President Donald Trump with his sweeping tariffs, global trade increased by around 1.7 percent compared to the second half of 2024, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) economist Alessandro Nicita told. “But persistent policy uncertainty, geopolitical tensions and signs of slowing global growth pose risks for trade in the second half of the year,” UNCTAD said in a statement.

Global trade grew by about 1.5 percent in the first quarter of 2025 and is expected to have accelerated to about two percent in the second quarter. “Developed economies outpaced developing countries in the first quarter of 2025, reversing recent trends that had favoured the Global South,” the report said. “The shift was driven by a 14 percent surge in United States imports and a six percent jump in European Union exports.” However, imports dropped by two percent in developing countries. (*Business Recorder, July 10th, 2025, Page 5*)

Washington, Tokyo clinch ‘massive’ trade deal

US President Donald Trump has announced a “massive” trade deal with Japan, as China said it would send its vice premier to US trade talks next week to secure its own agreement ahead of a looming deadline. In an attempt to slash his country’s trade deficits, the US president has vowed to hit dozens of countries with punitive tariff hikes if they do not hammer out a pact with Washington by August 1. The Japan agreement, along with another pact with the Philippines also announced, means Trump has now secured five agreements since his administration promised “90 deals in 90 days” from April’s tariff delay. The others are with Britain, Vietnam and Indonesia, which the White House said would ease critical mineral export restrictions. Negotiations are still ongoing with much larger US trading partners China, Canada, Mexico and the European

Union. Representatives from China and the United States will meet next week in the Swedish capital Stockholm to try and hammer out a deal before an August 12 deadline agreed in May. As the clock ticks down, China said it would seek to “strengthen cooperation” with Washington at the talks, and confirmed vice premier He Lifeng would attend. (*Dawn*, July 24th, 2025, Page 10)

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Saudi announces \$5bn in Syria investments

A Saudi delegation visiting Damascus inked investment and partnership deals valued at \$5 billion to help rebuild war-battered Syria, the oil-rich Gulf kingdom announced. Saudi Arabia has been a major backer of the new Syrian government, which seized power after Islamist-led rebels toppled longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December following 14 years of civil war. The delegation of some 150 investors and representatives of the Saudi public and private sectors, led by Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih, attended a forum in Damascus. “The announced investments, valued at 19 billion Saudi riyals (about \$5 billion), span vital and strategic sectors, including real estate, infrastructure, communications and IT, transportation and logistics, industry, tourism, energy, trade” and more, a statement from the investment ministry said. (*Business Recorder*, July 24th, 2025, Page 5)

7.1 # American Aid

Over 14m people could die from US foreign aid cuts

More than 14 million of the world’s most vulnerable people, a third of them small children, could die by 2030 because of the Trump administration’s dismantling of US foreign aid, research projected. The study in the prestigious *Lancet* journal was published as world and business leaders gather for a United Nations conference in Spain this week hoping to bolster the reeling aid sector. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) had provided over 40 percent of global humanitarian funding until Donald Trump returned to the White House in January. Looking back over data from 133 nations, the international team of researchers estimated that USAID funding had prevented 91.8m deaths in developing countries between 2001 and 2021. That is more than estimated number of deaths during World War II, history’s deadliest conflict.

The researchers also used modelling to project how funding being slashed by 83 percent — the figure announced by the US government earlier this year — could affect death rates. The cuts could lead to more than 14 million avoidable deaths by 2030, the projections found. That number included over 4.5 million children under the age of five — or around 700,000 child deaths a year. For comparison, around 10 million soldiers are estimated to have been killed during World War I. Programmes supported by USAID were linked to a 15-percent decrease in deaths from all causes, the researchers

determined. For children under five, the drop in deaths was twice as steep, at 32 percent. A recently updated tracker run by disease modeller Brooke Nichols at Boston University estimates that nearly 108,000 adults and more than 224,000 children have already died as a result of the US aid cuts. That works out to 88 deaths every hour, according to the tracker. After USAID was gutted, several other major donors, including France, Germany and the UK, followed suit in announcing plans to slash their foreign aid budgets. These aid reductions, particularly in the European Union, could lead to “even more additional deaths in the coming years,” study co-author Caterina Monti of ISGlobal said. (*Business Recorder*, July 2nd, 2025, Page 16)

Curtain falls on USAID after six decades

The US foreign aid agency formally closed down, with President Donald Trump’s administration trumpeting the end of the “charity-based model” despite predictions that millions of lives will be lost. Founded in 1961 as John F. Kennedy sought to leverage aid to win over the developing world in the Cold War, the US Agency for International Development has now been incorporated into State Department — after Secretary of State Marco Rubio slashed 85pc of its programming. (*Dawn*, July 3rd, 2025, Page 10)

US Congress okays \$9bn in cuts to foreign aid, media

Republicans approved US President Donald Trump’s plan to cancel \$9 billion in funding for foreign aid and public broadcasting, vowing it was just the start of broader efforts by Congress to slash the federal budget. The cuts achieve only a tiny fraction of the \$1 trillion in annual savings that tech billionaire and estranged Trump donor Elon Musk vowed to find before his acrimonious exit in May from a role spearheading federal cost-cutting. (*Dawn*, July 19th, 2025, Page 10)

Trump’s funding cut stalls water projects, increasing risks for millions

The Trump administration’s decision to slash nearly all US foreign aid has left dozens of water and sanitation projects half-finished across the globe, creating new hazards for some of the people they were designed to benefit. Reuters has identified 21 unfinished projects in 16 countries after speaking to 17 sources familiar with the infrastructure plans. Most of these projects have not previously been reported. With hundreds of millions of dollars in funding cancelled since January, workers have put down their shovels and left holes half dug and building supplies unguarded.

As a result, millions of people who were promised clean drinking water and reliable sanitation facilities by the United States have been left to fend for themselves. Water towers intended to serve schools and health clinics in Mali have been abandoned, according to two US officials who spoke on condition of anonymity. With an annual budget of \$450 million, the US water projects accounted for a small fraction of the \$61 billion in foreign aid distributed by the United States last year. (*Business Recorder*, July 20th, 2025, Page 4)

7.2 # Gaza Aid

Switzerland to close Geneva branch of Gaza aid group

Switzerland said it would close the Geneva branch of US and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation because it had neither a Swiss address nor a representative in the country. An officially private effort, GHF began operations on May 26 after Israel halted supplies into Gaza for more than two months, sparking famine warnings. GHF operations have been marred by chaotic scenes and near-daily reports of Israeli forces firing on people waiting to collect rations in the Palestinian territory, where the Israeli military is seeking to destroy Hamas. GHF is based in the US state of Delaware, with a subsidiary registered in Geneva. In the Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce, the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations (ESA) published “a call for creditors following the liquidation” of the GHF. (*Dawn, July 3rd, 2025, Page 11*)

Israel-backed aid group shooting Palestinians at will, ex-contractor reveals

A Former security contractor for controversial new Israel and US-backed aid distribution sites witnessed colleagues opening fire several times on hungry Palestinians who had posed no threat. Speaking to *BBC News*, contractor recalled one occasion when a guard had opened fire from a watchtower with a machine gun because a group of women, children and elderly people were moving away from site too slowly. Although Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has denied allegations, claiming no civilians ever came under fire at their distribution sites, the *BBC* recorded 24 incidents where aid seekers were killed in large numbers. The GHF began its operations at the end of May after an 11-week total blockade of Gaza by Israel, during which no food entered the territory. Since it started, Israeli forces have killed more than 400 Palestinians trying to retrieve food aid from its sites, UN and local doctors say. (*Dawn, July 5th, 2025, Page 10*)

Nearly 800 killed seeking aid from GHF in Gaza

Nearly 800 people have died trying to access aid in Gaza since late May, with most killed near the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation’s (GHF) sites, the United Nations said. An officially private effort, the GHF began operations on May 26 after Israel halted supplies into Gaza Strip for more than two months, sparking warnings of imminent famine. GHF operations, which effectively sidelined a vast UN aid delivery network in Gaza, have been marred by chaotic scenes and near-daily reports of Israeli forces firing on people waiting to collect rations. (*Dawn, July 12th, 2025, Page 12*)

17 killed in shooting near Gaza aid centre

In Gaza, medics said 17 people trying to get food aid were killed when Israeli troops opened fire, latest mass shooting around a U.S.-backed aid distribution system that U.N. says has resulted in 800 people killed in six weeks. Witnesses who spoke to Reuters described people being shot in head and torso. Reuters saw several bodies of victims wrapped in white shrouds as family members wept at Nasser Hospital. The Israeli military said its troops had fired warning shots, but that its review of incident had found no evidence of anyone hurt by its soldiers’ fire. (*The News, July 13th, 2025, Page 11*)

UN says 875 Palestinians have been killed near Gaza aid sites

The UN rights office said it had recorded at least 875 killings within the past six weeks at aid points in Gaza run by US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation and convoys run by other relief groups, including the United Nations. The majority of those killed were in vicinity of Gaza Humanitarian Foundation sites, while remaining 201 were killed on routes of other aid convoys. The GHF did not immediately respond to a request for comment on latest UN figures. (*Business Recorder, July 16th, 2025, Page 5*)

UNHCR fears 11.6m refugees risk losing access to aid

Up to 11.6 million refugees and others forced to flee risk losing access to direct humanitarian assistance from the UN Refugee Agency following major cuts to humanitarian budgets, according to a report published by UNHCR. The report, “On the Brink: The devastating toll of aid cuts on people forced to flee” says these cuts coincide with rising forced returns of Afghans from Pakistan and Iran, with 1.9 million people returning or forced to return to Afghanistan from the two countries so far this year. Financial aid for refugee returnees has also been cut, now just \$156 per household and \$40 per person for transport — barely enough for food, let alone rent.

Compared to 2024, when UNHCR supported 36.4m people, around 11.6m people forced to flee are at risk of losing direct assistance this year. Altogether, \$1.4bn of essential programmes are being cut or put on hold, according to analysis of UNHCR programmes and funds received this year. Millions now face deteriorating living conditions, heightened risks of exploitation and abuse, and may be pushed into further displacement. In several operations, severe funding gaps have curtailed investments in digitising and strengthening asylum systems and promoting regularisation efforts. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 5*)

Israel targets aid sites again; 90 killed across Gaza

At least 90 people, including 36 who were seeking aid, were killed across Gaza as *Al Jazeera* reported Israeli forces continued to attack aid sites. The Israeli military said it had fired warning shots at suspects who approached its troops after they did not heed calls to stop, about a kilometre away from an aid distribution site that was not active at the time. Civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said the deaths happened near a site southwest of Khan Yunis and another centre northwest of Rafah, both in the south, attributing the deaths to “Israeli gunfire”. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 12*)

Israeli forces kill 115 Palestinians waiting for UN aid

At least 115 people seeking aid were killed by Israel while they waited for UN aid trucks in northern Gaza, Gaza’s health ministry said, as Israel issued new evacuation orders for areas packed with displaced Gazans, some of whom began to leave. The ministry said dozens of people were also wounded in the incident in northern Gaza, in one of the highest reported tolls among repeated recent cases in which aid seekers have been killed. Six other people were killed near another aid site in the south, it said. In total, health authorities said 88 people had been killed by Israeli gunfire and airstrikes across Gaza. (*Dawn, July 21th, 2025, Page 12*)

Western aid cuts cede ground to China in Southeast Asia: study

China is set to expand its influence over Southeast Asia's development as the Trump administration and other Western donors slash aid, a study by an Australian think tank said. The region is in an "uncertain moment", facing cuts in official development finance from the West as well as "especially punitive" US trade tariffs, the Sydney-based Lowy Institute said. "Declining Western aid risks ceding a greater role to China, though other Asian donors will also gain in importance," it said.

Total official development finance to Southeast Asia — including grants, low-rate loans and other loans — grew "modestly" to US\$29bn in 2023, annual report said. But US President Donald Trump has since halted about US\$60bn in development assistance — most of United States' overseas aid programme. Seven European countries — including France and Germany — and European Union have announced US\$17.2bn in aid cuts to be implemented between 2025 and 2029, it said. And the United Kingdom has said it is reducing annual aid by US\$7.6bn, redirecting government money towards defence. Despite substantial economic development across most of Southeast Asia, around 86m people still live on less than US\$3.65 a day. (*Business recorder, July 21th, 2025, Page 9*)

UN says Israeli forces kill over 1,000 aid seekers; 21 die from starvation

The UN said Israeli forces have killed over 1,000 Palestinians trying to get food aid in Gaza since the US- and Israel-backed GHF started operations. An officially private effort, GHF began operations on May 26 after Israel halted supplies into the Gaza Strip for more than two months, sparking famine warnings. GHF operations have been marred by chaotic scenes and near-daily reports of Israeli forces firing on people waiting to collect rations in the Palestinian territory, where the Israeli military is seeking to destroy Hamas.

"Over 1,000 Palestinians have now been killed by the Israeli military while trying to get food in Gaza since the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation started operating," UN human rights office spokesman Thameen Al-Kheetan told. "As of July 21, we have recorded 1,054 people killed in Gaza while trying to get food; 766 of them were killed in vicinity of GHF sites and 288 near UN and other humanitarian organisations' aid convoys." Kheetan added: "Our data is based on information from multiple reliable sources on ground, including medical teams, humanitarian and human rights organisations."

Meanwhile, the head of Gaza's largest hospital said 21 children have died due to malnutrition and starvation in the Palestinian territory in the past three days, while Israel pressed a devastating assault. Gaza's population of more than two million people is facing severe shortages of food and other essentials, with residents frequently killed as they try to collect humanitarian aid at a handful of distribution points. (*Dawn, July 23th, 2025, Page 12*)

Over 100 aid, rights groups call for action as hunger spreads in Gaza

More than 100 largely aid and rights groups called for governments to take action as hunger spreads in Gaza, including by demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire

and the lifting of all restrictions on the flow of humanitarian aid. In a statement signed by 111 organizations, including Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Refugees International, the groups warned that mass starvation was spreading across the enclave even as tons of food, clean water, medical supplies and other items sit untouched just outside Gaza as humanitarian organizations are blocked from accessing or delivering them. (*Business Recorder, July 24th, 2025, Page 1*)

Britain ‘taking forward’ Gaza food airdrop plan

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke to his French and German counterparts and outlined UK plans to get aid to people in Gaza and evacuate sick and injured children, his office said. “The prime minister set out how the UK will also be taking forward plans to work with partners such as Jordan to airdrop aid and evacuate children requiring medical assistance,” a statement said. (*Business Recorder, July 27th, 2025, Page 8*)

Aid airdrops will not stop starvation: UNRWA

The head of UN agency for Palestinian refugees said that planned airdrops of aid into the Gaza Strip would not solve severe food shortages caused by months of restrictions on the entry of supplies. “Airdrops will not reverse the deepening starvation. They are expensive, inefficient & can even kill starving civilians,” UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini wrote on X, calling the wave of hunger affecting Gaza “manmade”. An Israeli official told that aid drops in Gaza would resume soon, adding they would be conducted by the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. (*Business Recorder, July 27th, 2025, Page 8*)

Aid finally arrives as starvation haunts Gaza

At least six more people succumbed to starvation, as food supplies finally trickled into the Gaza Strip after Jordan and the United Arab Emirates parachuted 25 tonnes of aid into the besieged enclave, the first airdrop in months. According to aid groups, mass hunger haunts Gaza’s 2.2 million people, with the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) saying that a third of the population of Gaza has not eaten for days, and 470,000 people are “enduring famine-like conditions”.

Since Israel imposed a total blockade on aid entering Gaza on March 2, the situation inside the territory has deteriorated sharply. More than 100 NGOs warned last week of “mass starvation” in the war-ravaged Palestinian territory. Six deaths were reported over the past 24 hours due to malnutrition, bringing the total toll from hunger to 133, including 87 children. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 1*)

WHO chief says continuous medical aid into Gaza ‘critical’

The World Health Organization’s chief said getting a continuous flow of medical supplies into Gaza was “critical”, as WHO trucks carrying aid headed for the border. (*Business Recorder, July 31th, 2025, Page 5*)

UAE begins pipeline project to ease Gaza water shortage

The United Arab Emirates has begun construction on a major pipeline to carry desalinated water from Egypt to southern Gaza, according to multiple sources. Technical teams sent by UAE have started transporting equipment needed for project, Emirati state news agency WAM reported. Access to clean drinking water is extremely limited across Gaza, forcing its 2.4m residents to rely on salty, often undrinkable water or irregular aid deliveries. More than 80 percent of Gaza's water infrastructure has been damaged during the war between Israel and Hamas, according to estimates from the Palestinian Water Authority. (*Business Recorder*, July 31th, 2025, Page 5)

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

WB, Spain launch Global Hub for debt swaps

Spain has partnered with the World Bank to help countries free up money to spend on sustainable development projects via debt swaps, the country's Ministry of Economy said. With rich governments cutting official development aid and many countries spending more on servicing debt than on development, nations are turning to creative ways to find cash to support projects ranging from protecting coral reefs to paying for water sanitation projects and schools. The Global Hub for Debt Swaps for Development, launched at the Finance for Development summit in Seville, southern Spain, will provide countries with technical and financial assistance as they look to reallocate finance to projects like food security and climate adaptation, the Spanish government said. (*Business Recorder*, July 2nd, 2025, Page 1)

9 # POLICY

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

10.1 # Food

Moscow blames sanctions for Russia-UN food deal collapse

Russia said that its agreement with the United Nations to facilitate exports of Russian food and fertilisers had collapsed due to Western sanctions over Moscow's offensive in Ukraine. A day earlier, UN said three-year agreement, signed in 2022 in a bid to rein in global food prices, would end on July 22. A source close to the discussions, who asked not to be named, told AFP the deal "will not be renewed" due to disagreements. The UN signed the agreement with Russia on July 22, 2022, with aim of facilitating exports of Russian food and fertilisers, despite Western sanctions on Moscow. Russia's foreign ministry said that extending deal was not "envisaged". (*The News*, July 13th, 2025, Page 2)

10.2 # Food Scarcity

Over 600 malnourished children die in six months in Nigeria: MSF

More than 600 malnourished children have died in northern Nigeria in six months after failing to receive proper care as foreign aid dries up, a medical charity has said. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said northern Nigeria, which already is struggling with an

insurgency, is “currently facing an alarming malnutrition crisis”. Cases of the most severe and deadly form of malnutrition among children jumped by 208 percent between January and June compared with the same period last year. “Unfortunately, 652 children have already died in our facilities since the beginning of 2025 due to a lack of timely access to care,” the charity, which is known by its French initials, said in a statement. Huge cuts in foreign aid sparked by US President Donald Trump’s decision to slash spending overseas have combined with spiking living costs and a surge in jihadist attacks to create a dire situation in northern Nigeria. Ahmed Aldikhari, country representative of MSF in Nigeria, said the cuts from the United States -- but also from the United Kingdom and European Union -- were hampering treatment and care for malnourished children.

He said “the true scale of the crisis exceeds all predictions”. Pregnant and breastfeeding women have not been spared, as an MSF survey on 750 mothers showed that more than half of them were “acutely malnourished, including 13 percent with severe acute malnutrition”. Across the country a record nearly 31 million people face acute hunger, according to David Stevenson, chief of the UN’s food agency (WFP) in Nigeria. WFP warned earlier this week it would be forced to suspend all emergency food and nutrition aid for 1.3 million people in northeast Nigeria at the end of July because of critical funding shortfalls. (*The News*, July 27th, 2025, Page 12)

Hunger must never be ‘weapon of war’: UN

UN chief Antonio Guterres said food must not be used as a weapon of war as world leaders gathered for a food summit in Africa, where 280 million people face hunger and starvation. The African Union, for its part, urged donors to provide greater support for the world’s poorest continent, which is struggling with poverty, unrest and the effects of climate change. “Hunger fuels instability and undermines peace. We must never accept hunger as a weapon of war,” Antonio Guterres told the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa via video link. “Climate change is disrupting harvests, supply chains and humanitarian aid,” he said. “Conflict continues to spread hunger from Gaza to Sudan and beyond,” he warned amid a severely deteriorating crisis in Gaza, whose population of more than two million is facing famine and malnutrition. (*Business Recorder*, July 29th, 2025, Page 12)

10.3 # Gaza Starvation

Acute hunger in Gaza

Doctors without Borders warned that its teams on the ground in Gaza were witnessing surging levels of acute malnutrition in the besieged and war-ravaged Palestinian territory. The medical charity, known by its French acronym MSF, said levels of acute malnutrition had reached an “all-time high” at two of its facilities in the Gaza Strip. (*Business Recorder*, July 12th, 2025, Page 8)

Gaza hospital says 21 children dead from malnutrition and starvation

The head of Gaza's largest hospital said 21 children have died due to malnutrition and starvation in the Palestinian territory in the past three days, while Israel pressed a devastating assault. Gaza's population of more than two million people is facing severe shortages of food and other essentials, with residents frequently killed as they try to collect humanitarian aid at a handful of distribution points. (*Business Recorder*, July 23th, 2025, Page 5)

Gaza running out of specialised food to save malnourished children

Olivia Le Poidevin, Charlotte Greenfield and Jennifer Rigby Gaza is on the brink of running out of the specialised therapeutic food needed to save the lives of severely malnourished children, United Nations and humanitarian agencies say. "We are now facing a dire situation, that we are running out of therapeutic supplies," said Salim Oweis, a spokesperson for UNICEF in Amman, Jordan told, saying supplies of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), a crucial treatment, would be depleted by mid-August if nothing changed. "That's really dangerous for children as they face hunger and malnutrition at the moment," he added. Oweis said UNICEF had only enough RUTF left to treat 3,000 children. In the first two weeks of July alone, UNICEF treated 5,000 children facing acute malnutrition in Gaza.

UNICEF said that from April to mid-July, 20,504 children were admitted with acute malnutrition. Of those patients, 3,247 were suffering from severe acute malnutrition, nearly triple the number in the first three months of the year. Severe acute malnutrition can lead to death, and to long-term physical and mental developmental health problems in children who survive. The WHO said 21 children under the age of five were among those who died of malnutrition so far this year. Two more Palestinians died overnight from starvation, the Gaza health ministry said, bringing the total number of people who have starved to death to 113, most of them in recent weeks as a wave of hunger crashes on the Palestinian enclave.—Reuters (*Business Recorder*, July 26th, 2025, Page 4)

WHO says malnutrition reaching 'alarming levels' in Gaza

Malnutrition rates are reaching "alarming levels" in the Gaza Strip, the World Health Organization warned, saying the "deliberate blocking" of aid was entirely preventable and had cost many lives. "Malnutrition is on a dangerous trajectory in the Gaza Strip, marked by a spike in deaths in July," the WHO said in a statement. Of the 74 recorded malnutrition-related deaths in 2025, 63 had occurred in July — including 24 children under five, one child aged over five, and 38 adults.

"Most of these people were declared dead on arrival at health facilities or died shortly after, their bodies showing clear signs of severe wasting," the UN health agency said. "The crisis remains entirely preventable. Deliberate blocking and delay of large-scale food, health, and humanitarian aid has cost many lives." Nearly one in five children under five in Gaza City is now acutely malnourished, the WHO said, citing its Nutrition

Cluster partners. It said the percentage of children aged six to 59 months suffering from acute malnutrition had tripled in the city since June, making it the worst-hit area in the Palestinian territory. (*Business Recorder, July 28th, 2025, Page 9*)

Trump warns of ‘real starvation’ in Gaza

US President Donald Trump warned that the people of Gaza are facing “real starvation”, as aid agencies sought to take advantage of an Israeli “tactical pause” in fighting to rush in food aid. Speaking in Scotland after meeting Britain’s leader, Trump contradicted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who had earlier dismissed fears of famine in Gaza as Hamas propaganda. Trump said the United States and its partners would help set up food centres to feed the more than two million Palestinians in Gaza facing what UN aid agencies warn is a deadly wave of hunger and malnutrition. (*Business Recorder, July 29th, 2025, Page 10*)

With 60,000 lives lost, Gaza stands on brink of famine

The besieged territory of Gaza is slipping into famine, UN aid agencies warned, as the death toll from Israel’s nearly 22-month war surpassed 60,000. The World Food Programme (WFP), Unicef and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned that time was running out and that Gaza was “on the brink of a full-scale famine”. Meanwhile, the Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) air-drops will not be enough to avert the “humanitarian catastrophe”. “The worst-case scenario of famine is now unfolding in the Gaza Strip,” said the IPC, a grouping of NGOs and institutions that serves as the world’s main monitor for gauging malnutrition, in a statement. The IPC said its latest data shows that “famine thresholds” have been reached in most of Gaza and hunger-related deaths of young children were rising fast. (*Dawn, July 30th, 2025, Page 12*)

Gaza reminiscent of Ethiopia, Biafra famines: UN

The humanitarian disaster in Gaza is reminiscent of last century’s famines in Ethiopia and Nigeria’s Biafra region which jointly claimed over two million lives, UN food agency warned. The World Food Programme joined warnings that famine is underway in Gaza Strip. “This is unlike anything we have seen in this century,” WFP emergency director Ross Smith told reporters in Geneva. “It reminds us of previous disasters in Ethiopia or Biafra in past century,” speaking from Rome. Ethiopia’s 1983-84 famine killed more than one million people and the famine resulting from the 1967-1970 Biafra war also contributed to over a million deaths. (*Business Recorder, July 30th, 2025, Page 11*)

10.4 # Inflation

World food prices tick higher in June

Global food commodity prices edged higher in June, supported by higher meat, vegetable oil and dairy prices, the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization said. The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in a basket of internationally traded food commodities, averaged 128.0 points in June, up 0.5% from

May. The index stood 5.8% higher than a year ago, but remained 20.1% below its record high in March 2022. The cereal price index fell 1.5% to 107.4 points, now 6.8% below a year ago, as global maize prices dropped sharply for a second month. Larger harvests and more export competition from Argentina and Brazil weighed on maize, while barley and sorghum also declined. Wheat prices, however, rose due to weather concerns in Russia, the European Union, and the United States. The vegetable oil price index rose 2.3% from May to 155.7 points, now 18.2% above its June 2024 level, led by higher palm, rapeseed, and soy oil prices. (*Business Recorder*, July 6th, 2025, Page 7)

10.5 # Poverty

Climate change may push 41m more into extreme poverty by 2050

Climate change could significantly slow progress in poverty reduction and climate-induced income losses could push an additional 41 million people into extreme poverty by 2050, according to a new World Bank report. The projections show the number of poor could rise by up to 148.8 million, with those in South Asia projected to be at 48.8m by 2030. As per the findings — part of report titled ‘The Future of Poverty’: Projecting the Impact of Climate Change on Global Poverty through 2050 — the number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide could be nearly doubled due to climate change.

According to the report, climate change-induced rising food prices may significantly increase global poverty, particularly in the developing world, where food consumption accounts for a large share of household expenditures. If nothing changes, the projections suggest that global economic output could be reduced by 23pc by 2100 compared to a world without climate change. In most scenarios, projected global income losses exceed 20pc, underscoring potentially severe economic consequences of inaction. The report said even though rich and poor countries respond similarly to temperature changes, the economic impacts are substantially larger for the latter, as these are predominantly located in already warm regions. (*Dawn*, July 20th, 2025, Page 12)

11 # ENVIRONMENT

11.1 # Health

Emergency vaccines slash deaths by 60pc: study

Emergency vaccination during outbreaks of diseases like cholera, Ebola and measles have over the past quarter-century reduced deaths from such illnesses by nearly 60 per cent, according to a new study. A similar number of infections are also believed to have been prevented, while billions of euros have been generated in estimated economic benefit. The Gavi vaccine alliance, which backed study, said it collaborated with researchers at Burnet Institute in Australia to provide world’s first look at the historical impact of emergency immunisation efforts on public health and global health security. The study, published this week in the *BMJ Global Health*, examined 210 outbreaks of five infectious diseases — cholera, Ebola, measles, meningitis and yellow fever — in 49 lower-income countries between 2000 and 2023. (*Dawn*, July 13th, 2025, Page 12)

Aid cuts, misinformation threaten child vaccination progress, says UN

Global infant vaccination levels have stabilised after shrinking during the Covid crisis, the UN said, but it warned that misinformation and drastic aid cuts were deepening dangerous coverage gaps and putting millions at risk. In 2024, 85 per cent of infants globally, or 109 million, had received three doses of the vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP), with the third dose serving as a key marker for global immunisation coverage, according to data published by the UN health and children's agencies. That marked an increase of one percentage point and a million more children covered than a year earlier, in what the agencies described as "modest" gains. At the same time, nearly 20 million infants missed at least one of their DTP doses last year, including 14.3 million so-called zero-dose children who never received a single shot. (*Dawn, July 16th, 2025, Page 10*)

WHO sounds alarm on risk of chikungunya epidemic

The World Health Organisation warned a major chikungunya virus epidemic risks sweeping around the globe, calling for urgent action to prevent it. The WHO said it was picking up exactly the same early warning signs as in a major outbreak two decades ago and wanted to prevent a repeat. Chikungunya is a mosquito-borne viral disease that causes fever and severe joint pain, which is often debilitating. In some cases it can be deadly. "Chikungunya is not a disease that is widely known, but it has been detected and transmitted in 119 countries globally, putting 5.6 billion people at risk," said the WHO's Diana Rojas Alvarez. (*Dawn, July 23th, 2025, Page 10*)

Non-communicable diseases pose new challenge to S. Asian countries: WB report

South Asia is transitioning from communicable diseases and maternal health challenges to confronting non-communicable diseases as the leading cause of death and disability, according to a World Bank report. Addressing obesity through food systems in South Asia, 'Nourishing Tomorrow', says the ratio of overweight individuals and prevalence of obesity is rising rapidly among both adults and children in all South Asian countries.

Between 2000 and 2022, overweight and obesity rates increased to 27.5pc from seven per cent in Bangladesh, 48.4pc from 22pc in Bhutan, 30.5pc from 11.5pc in India, 55pc from 28pc in Maldives, 31.6 pc from 11pc in Nepal, 56.3pc from 24pc in Pakistan, and 39.4pc from 15.9pc in Sri Lanka. Overweight and obesity are estimated to cost global economy \$1.96 trillion, a figure that is expected to rise to \$4.32tr by 2035. Economic losses related to obesity are estimated at 3.58pc to 8.73pc of GDP in developing Asian countries, but a lack of studies in this region means that the true value of economic losses is likely to be far higher, the report says. (*Dawn, July 27th, 2025, Page 4*)

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

ICJ to deliver landmark climate ruling

The top United Nations court will hand down a landmark global legal blueprint for tackling climate change that also sets out top polluters' responsibilities towards the

countries suffering most. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has been tasked with crafting a so-called advisory opinion on countries' obligations to prevent climate change and the consequences for polluters whose emissions have harmed the planet. Experts say this is the most significant in a string of recent rulings on climate change in international law, with major potential repercussions for states and firms around the world. (*Business Recorder*, July 22th, 2025, Page 5)

States can sue one another for climate crisis: UN top court

The United Nations' top court, in a landmark decision, cleared the way for countries to sue each other over climate change, including over historic emissions of planet-warming gases. However, the judge at the International Court of Justice admitted that untangling who caused which part of climate change could be difficult. The ruling, which is non-binding though legal experts say it could have wide-ranging consequences, underlined "the urgent and existential threat posed by climate change". The non-binding opinion by the International Court of Justice, also known as the World Court, is likely to determine the course of future climate action across the world as it gave its opinion on the legal obligations of states to take action. (*Dawn*, July 24th, 2025, Page 12)

12.1 # Climate Crisis

June was hottest on record in western Europe

Western Europe sweltered through its hottest June on record last month, as "extreme" temperatures blasted the region in punishing back-to-back heatwaves, the EU climate monitor Copernicus said. Globally, this past June was the third warmest on record, continuing a blistering heat streak in recent years as the planet warms as a result of humanity's emissions of greenhouse gases. The previous hottest June was in 2024 and the second hottest was in 2023, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said. Sweltering extremes were particularly pronounced in Europe, which is warming several times faster than the global average. (*Dawn*, July 10th, 2025, Page 10)

Turkish city calls for help after heat tops 50C

A choking heatwave left astonished locals in south-eastern Turkiye calling for state help to pay their air conditioning bills after the temperature surged past 50C. (*Dawn*, July 31th, 2025, Page 10)

12.2 # Climate Financing

World's biggest climate fund ramps up investment plans

The world's biggest multilateral climate fund said it will make its largest ever series of investments and speed up dealmaking as it looks to help poorer nations respond to global warming. The Green Climate Fund's plan to release about \$1.2bn for 17 projects mostly in Asia and Africa follows approval by shareholders including the United States at a meeting this week, against a fractious political backdrop that has seen development aid slashed. Official development assistance could fall 17pc this year after a 9.0pc drop in 2024, OECD said in a June report, led by hefty cuts to US aid by President Donald Trump.

“At a time when collective climate action is more needed than ever, GCF is stepping up to deliver on its mandate,” GCF Co-Chair SeyniNafo said in a statement. GCF disbursement includes \$227m for an initiative to expand green bond markets in 10 countries. Green bond markets are where companies raise capital for projects that limit climate change or otherwise benefit the environment. In South Asia, it will invest \$200m in India Green Finance Facility to scale renewables and energy efficiency, while in East Africa it will invest \$150m in food system to support nearly 18m people. All projects will bring GCF investment portfolio to \$18bn across 133 countries. So far, countries have pledged \$29.9bn to GCF and paid in \$21bn. (*The News, July 6th, 2025, Page 17*)

13 # CLIMATE DISASTERS

Climate shocks could cost eurozone 5pc of GDP, economists warn

Climate disasters such as droughts, wildfires, floods and storms could slash up to five percent off the eurozone’s GDP by 2030, economists warned in an ECB blog post. Under a severe scenario, the 20-member eurozone would suffer an economic hit not only from a series of natural hazards at home but also those abroad that would hit its supply chains. Under most severe scenario, dubbed “Disasters and Policy Stagnation,” Europe would face back-to-back waves of extreme heat, droughts and wildfires starting in 2026, as well as destructive floods and storms. (*Business Recorder, July 10th, 2025, Page 5*)

13.1 # Drought

Drought hits Mediterranean basin and Europe

Europe and the Mediterranean basin has been hit by a long-lasting drought covering over 45 percent of the region since mid-March, according to an analysis of European Drought Observatory (EDO) data. It is the first time since data collection began in 2012 that such an extensive part of the region has been hit by a drought for more than three consecutive months, heightening the risk of wildfires. A series of fires broke out in Türkiye and Greece at the start of the summer, where on average 72pc and 56pc of soils have been dry since mid-March. (*Dawn, July 9th, 2025, Page 10*)

13.2 # Flood

Flash floods claim 27 lives in Texas

Rescuers searched for 27 girls missing from a riverside summer camp in the US state of Texas, after torrential rains caused devastating flooding that killed at least 27 people — with more rain on the way. “So far, we’ve evacuated over 850 uninjured people, eight injured people and have recovered 27 deceased fatalities at this time,” said Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha, adding that nine children were among the dead. (*Dawn, July 6th, 2025, Page 11*)

Flash floods kill three in New Mexico

Three people were killed by flash floods in the US state of New Mexico just days after a devastating deluge claimed more than 100 lives in neighbouring Texas. The “historic” flash floods struck Ruidoso, a small town about 150 miles (240 kilometers) south of

Albuquerque, New Mexico. Fears grew that the death toll of 110 in the Texas floods could still surge as hopes fade of finding survivors among the many reported still missing several days after the disaster. More than 170 people remain unaccounted for after the flash flooding on the Fourth of July holiday, a tragedy that shocked many Americans. (*Dawn, July 10th, 2025, Page 11*)

13.3 # Heatwave

Thousands evacuated in Turkey as Europe is hit by early summer heatwave

Fire-fighters battled wildfires in Turkey and France and more than 50,000 people were evacuated as an early summer heatwave hit Europe. Health alerts were issued in France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Germany. Even the Netherlands, used to a milder climate, issued a warning for high temperatures in the coming days, coupled with high humidity. (*Business Recorder, July 1st, 2025, Page 12*)

World will have to learn to live with heatwaves: UN

The world will have to learn to live with heatwaves, UNs' weather and climate agency said, as much of Europe roasted in high summer temperatures. World Meteorological Organisation said that in future, people could expect heatwaves to occur more often and be more intense because of human-induced climate change. WMO spokeswoman Clare Nullis said July was traditionally the hottest month of the year in the northern hemisphere, but it was exceptional, though not unprecedented, to have episodes of extreme heat this early in the summer. (*Dawn, July 2th, 2025, Page 11*)

Germany swelters as European heatwave moves eastwards

A punishing early summer heatwave that has already scorched western and southern Europe spread east, bringing extreme weather warnings to Germany and reportedly causing motorways to buckle. But some relief is due to arrive from the Atlantic and spread across the continent. Germany's national weather service (DWD) warned of "exceptionally high" temperatures reaching close to 40C degrees (104F) in places. (*Dawn, July 3rd, 2025, Page 10*)

Heatwaves in Spain caused 1,180 deaths in past two months

High temperatures caused 1,180 deaths in Spain in the past two months, a sharp increase from the same period last year, the Environment Ministry said. The vast majority of people who died were over 65 and more than half were women. Like other countries in Western Europe, Spain has been hit by extreme heat in recent weeks, with temperatures often topping 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). Last summer, 2,191 deaths were attributed to heat-related causes in Spain, according to data from Carlos III Health Institute. The data from Spain follows a rapid scientific analysis published on July 9 that said around 2,300 people died of heat-related causes across 12 European cities during a severe heatwave in the 10 days to July 2. (*Dawn, July 15th, 2025, Page 10*)

13.4 # Rainfall

South Korea rain death toll surges to 17, with 11 missing

Heavy rain in South Korea has killed at least 17 people in recent days, government records showed, while 11 remain unaccounted for in intense downpours. South Korea typically experiences monsoon rains in July and is usually well-prepared. But this week, country's southern regions were hit with some of the heaviest hourly rainfall on record, according to official data. There was also a dangerous deluge in north, with close to 170 millimetres (6.7 inches) of rain hitting Gapyeong county in Gyeonggi province, east of capital Seoul, leaving at least two dead and five missing. (*Dawn, July 21th, 2025, Page 11*)

Heavy rain, landslides kill over 30 in China

Heavy rain killed more than 30 people and forced authorities to evacuate tens of thousands as swaths of northern China were lashed by torrential downpours that sparked landslides and flooding. Weather authorities have issued their second-highest rainstorm warning for the capital Beijing, neighbouring Hebei and Tianjin, as well as 10 other provinces. More than 80,000 people have been evacuated in the capital alone. (*Dawn, July 30th, 2025, Page 10*)

13.5 # Wildfires

Greece on high alert as heat and wind fuel fire outbreaks

A fire broke out near the Greek capital, Athens, as the country was put on high alert for wildfires due to increased temperatures and strong winds. Thousands of tourists and locals were forced to flee hotels and guesthouses in a resort on the popular island of Crete. Hot, dry weather _ not unusual for this time of year _ has heightened the risk of summer fires and scientists say human-driven climate change is making them more frequent and more intense. (*Dawn, July 5th, 2025, Page 10*)

Greece battles major wildfires amid persistent heatwave

Greek emergency services were battling many wildfires as a week-long heatwave peaked with temperatures surpassing 45C degrees. (*Dawn, July 27th, 2025, Page 10*)

Turkey evacuates thousands as firefighters battle wildfires

Firefighters battled wildfires across Turkey amid a searing Mediterranean heat-wave, with authorities evacuating more than 3,600 people from settlements in two provinces. (*Business Recorder, July 28th, 2025, Page 9*)

14 # NATURAL DISASTERS

Japan urges evacuation of small island after 1,000 quakes

Japanese authorities urged the 89 residents of a small southern island to evacuate after a strong earthquake, the latest of more than 1,000 recent jolts to hit the area. Residents were urged to evacuate to "a school playground in Akuseki Island", a municipal official said. Akuseki is part of the Tokara island chain south of Kyushu region, which has been rattled by 1,031 quakes since June 21. No major damage has been reported. (*Dawn, July 4th, 2025, Page 10*)

Mega-quake off Russian coast triggers Pacific-wide tsunami alert

A very powerful magnitude 8.8 earthquake off Russia's Far Eastern Kamchatka coast, which triggered tsunami warnings as far away as French Polynesia, Chile, Hawaii, Peru and California, was followed by an eruption of the most active volcano on the peninsula. The shallow quake damaged buildings and injured several people in the remote Russian region, while much of Japan's eastern seaboard - badly damaged by a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami in 2011 - was ordered to evacuate, as were parts of Hawaii. (Dawn, July 31th, 2025, Page 12)

15 # RESISTANCE

Activists charged over UK military base break-in

Four pro-Palestinian activists have been charged after breaking into a military air base in central England last month and damaging two planes in protest against Britain's support for Israel. Counter-terrorism police said the charges were for conspiracy to enter a prohibited place knowingly for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the UK, and conspiracy to commit criminal damage. The four, aged between 22 and 35, remain in custody and are due to appear in a London court. Police said they will present evidence to court linking the offences to terrorism. The campaign group Palestine Action has said it was behind the incident on June 20, when the air base in Oxfordshire in central England was broken into and red paint was sprayed over two planes used for refuelling and transport. (Dawn, July 4th, 2025, Page 11)

Travel chaos in France as air traffic controllers go on strike

A strike by French air traffic controllers brought a second day of chaos to European skies, with flights for hundreds of thousands of people cancelled as the summer holiday season gathered pace. More than 1,100 flights arriving or leaving France and hundreds that were to fly over the country were cancelled. Paris airports were even more severely affected than on the first day of the strike, which was called by two unions protesting against understaffing and "toxic management". (Dawn, July 5th, 2025, Page 10)

Ten killed in nationwide Kenya protests

Kenyan police fired to disperse demonstrators in Nairobi marking the 35th anniversary of pro-democracy rallies, as Kenya's rights watchdog reported 10 dead and 29 injured nationwide in the latest anti-government protests to end in bloodshed. The death of blogger Albert Ojwang in police custody last month has given the protests fresh impetus, fuelling anger against the authorities and bringing hundreds onto the streets. (Dawn, July 8th, 2025, Page 10)

Malaysians protest against Trump's nominee for envoy

Dozens of Malaysians protested near US embassy in the capital, calling for President Donald Trump's nomination as envoy to the Southeast Asian nation to be rejected. Trump nominated right-wing commentator Nick Adams, known for his outspoken views and strong pro-Israel stance, as ambassador to multicultural, Muslim-majority

Malaysia a week ago. Protesters chanted “Reject Nick Adams” and “Destroy America”, holding up posters depicting Adams with a red cross over his face. They urged the US government to withdraw Adams’s nomination and “consider a candidate who is more professional, moderate, and attuned to the importance of Southeast Asia’s regional stability”. (*Dawn, July 19th, 2025, Page 10*)

UK police arrest scores of Palestine Action supporters

UK police arrested scores of people in London and other cities for supporting Palestine Action in a third consecutive weekend of protests over the government’s decision to ban the activist group using anti-terror laws. Some 55 people were held at a demonstration in London’s Parliament Square under the Terrorism Act 2000 for displaying signs supporting Palestine Action, the Metropolitan Police said. The protesters held up placards reading: “I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.”

Another eight were detained at a separate London march. A further eight were held in Truro in Cornwall. Other protests were held in northwestern Manchester where 18 people were detained, in western Bristol where another 17 were arrested, and in Scottish capital Edinburgh. The rallies were organised by campaign group Defend Our Juries, which had said they were intended to “defy” ban. Since the Palestine Action ban kicked in on July 5, police have warned that expressing support for group was now a crime, after a last-ditch High Court challenge failed to stop its proscription becoming law.

The government announced plans for the ban under the 2000 Terrorism Act days after activists from the group claimed to be behind a break-in at an air force base in southern England. Two aircraft there were sprayed with red paint, causing an estimated 7 million (\$9.55 million) in damage. Four people charged in relation to the incident remain in custody. Palestine Action has condemned its outlawing — which makes it a criminal offence to belong to or support the group, punishable by up to 14 years in prison — as an attack on free speech. (*Dawn, July 20th, 2025, Page 11*)

Thousands in Morocco call for end to Gaza war

Tens of thousands of Moroccans demonstrated in the capital Rabat against the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, calling for the reversal of the kingdom’s normalisation deal with Israel. Protesters gathered in the city centre, brandishing Palestinian flags and placards calling for the free flow of aid to the war-ravaged Palestinian territory. “It’s a disgrace, Gaza is under fire”, “Lift the blockade”, “Morocco, Palestine, one people” and “no to normalisation”, chanted the demonstrators. (*Business recorder, July 21th, 2025, Page 9*)

Students protest in Bangladesh after air force jet crash kills 31

Police used tear gas to disperse angry students in Bangladesh who demanded answers from the interim government after an air force fighter jet crashed into a Dhaka school and killed 31 people, at least 25 of them children. The children, many aged under 12, were about to return home from class when the Chinese-manufactured F-7 BGI

Bangladesh Air Force jet ploughed into their school and burst into flames, trapping pupils in the fire and debris. (*Business Recorder, July 23th, 2025, Page 5*)

Hundreds protest against water shortage in Iraq

Hundreds of Iraqis protested in the central province of Babylon against severe water shortages exacerbated by the summer's sweltering heat. Iraq's 46 million inhabitants have been intensely impacted by the effects of climate change, experiencing rising temperatures, year-on-year droughts and reduced river flows. Authorities also blame upstream dams built in Iran and Türkiye for dramatically lowering the flow of the once-mighty Tigris and Euphrates, which have irrigated Iraq for millennia. In the village of Al Majriyeh near the city of Hilla, more than 300 angry protesters urged the government to take action and solve the long-standing water issue, a day after police dispersed a similar protest. (*Dawn, July 26th, 2025, Page 10*)

Malaysians protest rising living costs, 'lack of reform'

Tens of thousands of Malaysians took to the capital's streets to protest rising living costs and a perceived lack of reform by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's unity government. The rally organised by opposition parties marked the first major protest in Southeast Asia's sixth-largest economy since Anwar was propelled to power after general elections in 2022. (*The News, July 27th, 2025, Page 10*)

Trump plays golf in Scotland as protesters rally

US President Donald Trump played golf under tight security on the first full day of a visit to Scotland, as hundreds of protesters took to the streets in major cities. Trump played at his Turnberry resort with son Eric and US ambassador to the UK Warren Stephens, waving to photographers following his arrival in his mother's birth country. (*The News, July 27th, 2025, Page 12*)

Several arrested at Berlin pro-Palestinian demonstration

Berlin police said they arrested 57 people during a pro-Palestinian demonstration on the fringes of the city's yearly Pride march a day earlier, adding that 17 police officers sustained injuries. According to police, about 10,000 demonstrators participated in the rally in support of Palestinians, but authorities moved in to disperse the crowd as organisers struggled to restore order. The arrests were related to public order disturbances, including resisting police and throwing bottles or physical altercation, but also the use of anti-Semitic slogans as well as "symbols of anti-constitutional and terrorist organisations", police said on social media. (*Dawn, July 28th, 2025, Page 11*)

About Us

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

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

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Our Objectives

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

Roots for Equity

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