

# ***HAAL AHWAL***

Selected News on Food and Agriculture

**January, 2026**

**Roots for Equity**

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

1 Hectare = 2.471 Acres

1 Acre = 4,840 Square Yards

1 Mann = 40 Kilo Grams (Kgs)

1 Ton = 25 Mann = 1000 Kgs

# ***HAAL AHWAL***

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**January, 2026**

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**Roots for Equity**

# Index

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Preface	I
Glossary	II
News Excerpts	V
National News	XIII
International News	XX

<b>Particular</b>	<b>January, 2026 (PKR)</b>		
	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Max Rate</b>
<b>USD<sup>1</sup></b>	283	282	283
<b>Gold<sup>1</sup></b> (1 Tola)	453,775	522,131	554958
<b>Silver<sup>1</sup></b> (1 Tola)	7,529	9,831	12000
<b>Petrol<sup>2</sup></b> (1 Litre)	253.17	253.17	253.17
<b>Diesel<sup>2</sup></b> (1 Litre)	257.08	257.08	257.08
<b>Kerosene<sup>2</sup></b> (1 Litre)	180.54	170.88	180.54

References: 1. <https://www.forex.com.pk>  
2. <https://psopk.com/fuel-prices/pol/archives?page=1>

# Preface

The publication addresses 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).

The publication is based on selected compilation of national and international news items, highlighting issues in this period, considered of importance by the editorial team. For both national and international news, we have provided a section based on excerpts that are a further condensation of the news items covered by the publication.

Please note, that both national and international news begins with a detailed listing of news sub-headings that help readers to find topics of interest. *Haal Ahwal* is based on news coverage from two major newspapers namely the "Dawn" and "Business Recorder." Only the Sunday newspaper is used for news coverage from "The News."

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

# Glossary

[Back](#)

**ADB:** Asian Development Bank

**AIAP:** Allama Iqbal International Airport

**AIOU:** Allama Iqbal Open University

**AJK:** Azad Jammu and Kashmir

**AKU:** Aga Khan University

**AKUH:** Aga Khan University Hospital

**APCA:** All Pakistan Clerks Association

**BAC:** Balochistan Agriculture College

**BBNJ:** Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

**BEGA:** Balochistan Employees Grand Alliance

**BHS-P:** Border Health Services-Pakistan

**BMP:** Businessmen Panel

**BoP:** Balance of Payment

**BOT:** Build-Operate-Transfer

**CCoP:** Cabinet Committee on Privatisation

**CDA:** Capital Development Authority

**CDWP:** Central Development Working Party

**CPEC:** China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

**CRM:** Centre for Regenerative Medicine

**DESA:** [United Nations] Department of Social Affairs

**DHO:** District Health Officer

**DLTL:** Drawback on Local Taxes and Levies

**DRAP:** Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan

**ECC:** Economic Coordination Committee

**ECMWF:** [European Union's] European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts

**ECNEC:** Executive Committee of the National Economic Council

**EDF:** Export Development Fund

**EFF:** Extended Fund Facility

**EMSC:** European Mediterranean Seismological Centre

**EOI:** Expression of Interest

**EPI:** Expanded Programme on Immunisation

**ESG:** Environmental, Social, and Governance

**FAO:** Food and Agriculture Organisation

**FBR:** Federal Board of Revenue

**FDI:** Foreign Direct Investment

**FESCO:** Faisalabad Electric Supply Company

**FMD:** Foot-And-Mouth Disease

**FPI:** Foreign Portfolio Investment

**FS&CP:** Punjab Food Safety and Consumer Protection

**FWO:** Frontier Works Organisation

**GEPCO:** Gujranwala Electric Power Company

**GPEI:** Global Polio Eradication Initiative

**HBWWFP:** Home Based Women Workers Federation Pakistan

**ICMA:** Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan

**ICT:** Islamabad Capital Territory

**IESCO:** Islamabad Electric Supply Company

**IFAD:** International Fund for Agricultural Development

**IFIs:** International Financial Institutions

**IHRA:** Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority

**IIAP:** Islamabad International Airport

**ILO:** International Labour Organisation

**IMF:** International Monetary Fund

**IRA:** Industrial Relations Act

**IWMI:** International Water Management Institute

**JIAP:** Jinnah International Airport

**JUI-F:** Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl

**KATI:** Korangi Association of Trade and Industry

**KKH:** Karakoram Highway

**KoFHA:** Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority

**KPT:** Karachi Port Trust

**KU:** Karachi University

**LHC:** Lahore High Court

**LoIs:** Letters of Interest

**LUH:** Liaquat University Hospital [Hyderabad/Jamshoro]

**MATP:** Mazloom Awami Tehreek Pakistan

**MDU:** Monthly Development Outlook

**MoM:** Month-on-Month

**MoU:** Memorandum of Understanding

**NARC:** National Agricultural Research Centre

**NbS:** Nature-based solutions

**NDC:** Nationally Determined Contributions

**NEET:** Education, Employment or Training

**NICVD:** National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases

**NIH:** National Institute of Health

**NPC:** Naya Pakistan Certificate

**NTUF:** National Trade Union Federation Pakistan

**NYSNA:** New York State Nurses Association

**OICCI:** Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**PAMRA:** Punjab Agricultural Marketing Regulatory Authority

**PAO:** Principal Accounting Officer

**PARC:** Pakistan Agricultural Research Council

**PASSCO:** Pakistan Agricultural Services and Storage Corporation

**PBA:** Pakistan Banks Association

**PBS:** Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

**PCGA:** Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association

**PDMA:** Provincial Disaster Management Authority

**PFF:** Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

**PFMA:** Pakistan Flour Mills Association

**PGT:** Pakistan Green Taxonomy

**PHJK:** Pasban-i-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir

**PIA:** Pakistan International Airlines

**PIDE:** Pakistan Institute of Development Economics

**PMD:** Pakistan Meteorological Department

**PPP:** Public-Private Partnership

**PSDP:** Public Sector Development Programme

**QAT:** Qaumi Awami Tehreek

**RBWRP:** Revival of Balochistan Water Resources Programme

**REAP:** Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan

**SALU:** Shah Abdul Latif University

**SBP:** State Bank of Pakistan

**SHT:** Sindh Hari Tehreek

**SIDH&RC:** Sindh Infectious Diseases Hospital & Research Centre

**SMU:** Chief Minister's Special Monitoring Unit

**SOFIA:** State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture

**SOPs:** Standard Operating Procedures

**SPS:** sanitary and phytosanitary

**SSGC:** Sui Southern Gas Company

**STP:** Sindh Taraqqi-Pasand Party

**STPs:** Sewerage Treatment Plants

**TCP:** Trading Corporation of Pakistan

**UNEP:** United Nations Environment Programme

**WEF:** World Economic Forum

**WFP:** World Food Programme

**WHO:** World Health Organisation

**YoY:** Year-on-Year

# NEWS EXCERPTS

## NATIONAL NEWS

Back

### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- Pakistan’s agriculture sector faced its worst year in history in 2025, dealing a severe blow to the economy and food security, farmers said.
- Pakistan Kisan Ittehad President Khalid Khokhar told a press conference that they were denied fair wheat prices despite assurances from the provincial leadership, resulting in losses estimated at Rs22 billion over two years, which also impacted other crops.
- Potato, kinnow and sugarcane growers described their situation as dire, saying production costs were not recovered.
- Wheat bought from farmers at around Rs1,900 per maund was allegedly sold to end consumers at nearly Rs4,000.
- Fertiliser costs in Pakistan are far higher than in neighbouring India, and raised concerns over future water shortages amid reports of dam construction on the Chenab River by New Delhi.
- PM Shehbaz Sharif in his drive to revive agricultural exports tasked a newly-established working group consisting mainly of private sector experts to align agricultural output with global requirements in order to boost exports.
- Farm output, including livestock and fisheries, suffered an estimated loss of USD 3.7 billion.
- 2025 floods affected more than 4.25 million people, displacing 1.8m. NDMA reported by the end of 2025 that Punjab bore the brunt of floods, with over 21 million people evacuated and nearly 2 million acres of farmland destroyed.
- 529 billion rupees out of the total federal budgeted subsidies — 587.3 billion rupees — has been earmarked for the energy sector defined as for mitigation measures marked as directly favourable. In contrast, agriculture was budgeted 22 billion rupees, which was noted as benefiting the sector indirectly.
- It is a foregone conclusion that climate change is eroding our food security and, given that agriculture accounts for nearly 40 percent of total employment and contributes 25 percent to country’s Gross Domestic Product.
- Pakistan and China are set to sign multiple MoUs for private-sector joint venture investments worth millions of dollars across 10 key sectors of agriculture.

- The sectors in which agreements are expected to be signed include agriculture, food processing, livestock, fisheries, agri-inputs, farm machinery, renewable energy, logistics, technology and value-added exports.
- The 10 priority sub-sectors identified for investment include agro-chemicals and inputs, agricultural machinery and solutions, food processing and value addition, meat and poultry, dairy inputs and processed products, fruits and vegetables, animal feed and related value chains, fisheries and aquaculture, cold chain systems and agricultural produce logistics, and food-grade packaging materials and equipment.
- Country faces an estimated productivity gap of \$95 billion due to low technology penetration and inadequate infrastructure.
- Professor Muhammad warned that agricultural production could decline by nearly 50 per cent by 2050
- Food security challenges are likely to intensify given the rapidly increasing world population; which is expected to reach 9.2bn by 2050 from 8.2bn today.
- In 2021, agrifood systems employed 40 per cent of working women globally—nearly equal to men.
- In Pakistan, approximately 74 percent of women and girls engaged in the labour force work in the agriculture sector, which generates about 40pc of household income.
- An FAO report on women farmers in Pakistan highlights the need to amend labour and agriculture policies at the federal and provincial levels to recognise all women performing work related to crops, fruits, vegetables, livestock, fisheries, poultry, dairy, forestry and post-harvest production as “farmers”, whether they work full-time or part-time, including those working on family farms without land ownership.
- The report recommends setting a minimum wage for women farmers and ensuring wage parity with male agricultural workers for work of equal value.
- It also calls for the allocation of unused federal and provincial land to landless rural women farmers, along with access to water and input subsidies to support sustainable livelihoods.
- Province (Balochistan) received nearly 52pc less rain than average in 2025.

## **AGRICULTURAL INPUTS**

- Private sector entities of Pakistan and China have signed 78 memoranda of understanding worth \$4.5 billion at conclusion of Pak-China Agriculture Investment Conference, marking agriculture’s elevation as a priority sector under the second phase of CPEC.

- Currently, Pakistan exports agricultural products worth \$8bn, and the government aims to double this figure over the next three years.
- Pakistan plans to introduce a new seed policy and a national agricultural biotechnology policy to create pathways for GMO seeds.
- Pakistan’s annual fruit production exceeds 10 million tonnes, while vegetable production stands at over 9m tonnes.
- The federal government has assured the Sindh government that necessary measures are being taken to introduce crop insurance in order to provide financial protection to farmers against crop failures and losses.
- The Sindh government has decided that instead of purchasing agricultural seeds from the private sector, it will provide farmers with its own government-produced seeds at affordable prices.
- The meeting was informed that compared to previous years, wheat cultivation had increased by 352 acres, with a total of 2242.85 acres under wheat cultivation.

## **AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS**

- Around 65 per cent of the population is directly or indirectly linked to agriculture, while 36pc of employment depends on this sector.
- Nearly 60pc of Pakistan’s agricultural economy is based on livestock, yet productivity remains low.
- The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture has made a shocking revelation that wheat cultivation in the province has declined by 32 percent, posing a serious threat of a food security crisis in the country.
- Punjab is leading the wheat sowing campaign for Rabi 2025-26, with sowing completed on time and 90 per cent achieved under early sowing
- The federal government has set a wheat production target of over 30m tonnes for Rabi season 2025-26, anticipating no shortage of water in Punjab & Sindh.
- The food department has decided to issue wheat stocks at the rate of Rs8,000 per a 100kg bag.
- Provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Balochistan have decided to engage private companies for procurement of wheat for their respective strategic reserves.
- The wheat price in the open market increased abruptly as the provincial government suddenly changed its policy regarding release of the commodity to roller flour mills and chakkies.
- The Punjab Food Safety and Consumer Protection Department has decided to retain wheat stocks of 2.5m metric tonnes on a public-private partnership basis.
- The PFMA levelled serious allegations against Punjab government, claiming widespread corruption and an ‘unfair’ wheat distribution system in province.

- Adviser to Chief Minister on Finance Muzzammil Aslam said that “The price of wheat has risen to 5,000, yet the government shows no concern for issue,”
- Punjab government claims to have supplied 850,000 metric tonnes of wheat to other provinces, of which a major chunk has been provided to KPK.
- Around 550,000 tonnes of these stocks belonged to imports made from Ukraine in 2021-22, most of which are now reportedly beyond category of human consumption.
- ECC decided to offload 800,000 tonnes at an estimated cost of about Rs70bn, which would still leave about one million tonnes in storage, largely in bad shape.
- The federal government had set a wheat cultivation target of 14,16,430 hectares (35, 00,140 acres) for Sindh for the year 2025–26. However, wheat has been cultivated on an area of 14,95,589 hectares (36,95,750 acres) across the province, which is 5.6 percent higher than the assigned target.
- Farmers owning or cultivating 1 to 25 acres of land were provided financial assistance of Rs 22,000 per acre for wheat cultivation in the form of support for DAP and urea fertilisers.
- Punjab’s potato-growing belt is heading towards a severe economic shock due to production surplus, stagnant domestic demand and shrunk exports, prompting the farmers and experts to call for urgent government intervention through subsidies and exports.

## **SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS**

- Pakistan’s fisheries and aquaculture sector has the potential to generate USD 10 billion per year with better management and value addition.
- Pakistan’s fisheries exports have outperformed those of fruits and vegetables, reaching USD500 million and accounting for 1.34 percent of the total national exports valued at USD 32.04 billion.
- In Pakistan, fisheries contribute about 1 percent to gross domestic product and 4% to the agriculture sector, providing direct employment to more than one million people and indirect livelihoods to around 1.5 million.
- Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry announced setting up of a 100-acre seafood processing and export zone at Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority, with an estimated investment of USD60-80m.

## **TRADE**

- The trade deficit swelled 34.57pc to \$19.204bn in July-December 2025-26 against \$14.271bn over the corresponding period last year.
- The trade deficit FY25 widened by 9pc to \$26.27bn from \$24.11bn over the preceding year.

- Pakistan’s sugar industry has exported USD1.6 billion while importing USD314 million during the past 10 years; i.e.; 2015-25.
- Area under sugarcane cultivation increased to 1.195 million hectares over the last 10 years. Annual sugarcane production in Pakistan stands at approximately 79 million metric tons.
- KP has lost nearly Rs2.5bn in revenue during the first five months of the current fiscal year exporters in the province were incurring losses exceeding \$4 million daily, with stranded goods worth billions of rupees.
- Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral trade had declined by 53pc year-on-year, falling to \$594 million during the first half of the ongoing fiscal year (2025-26) from \$1.26bn in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.
- The maritime sector posted a record Rs100bn profit in 2025, mainly due to reforms in port efficiency, cost reduction and clearing of long-delayed policies.
- Pakistan’s trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries widened by 44.42 per cent to \$7.683 billion in the first half of FY26 compared to \$5.320bn during the same period last year.
- In FY25, the trade deficit with these nine neighbouring countries widened by 29.42pc to \$12.297bn, up from \$9.502bn in the preceding year.
- Pakistan’s merchandise exports dipped 20.41 per cent to \$2.317 billion in December 2025 from \$2.911bn over the corresponding period last year, making it the fifth consecutive month of decline in the current fiscal year.
- Pakistan’s seafood exports recorded a growth of over 22 percent, reaching USD 253 million in the first half of Financial Year 2025–26.
- At a time when rice exports are steadily declining, the Ministry of Commerce has allocated around Rs15 billion for a rebate scheme on local taxes and levies for rice exporters, raising concerns about a potential rise in domestic prices.
- The country’s rice exports have plunged by a staggering 49.56pc in the first half of the 2025-26 financial year, slumping to just \$405 million from USD804.86 million during the same period in 2024-25.
- Overall food items export registered a decline of 22.06 percent from USD2.910 billion to USD22.68 billion dollars.

## **INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT**

- Inflation is projected to remain moderate, in the range of 5.5 to 6.5 percent in December, primarily due to the base effect.
- FDI declined sharply by 25.3 percent in the first five months (July-November) of fiscal year 2026, compared to the same period last year.
- FDI plunged by 43 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year.

- Data for July-December FY26 shows total FDI at \$808 million, down from \$1.425 billion in the corresponding period last year.
- Repatriation of profits and dividends by foreign investors rose sharply 27 percent in the first half of the current fiscal year (FY26).
- Foreign assistance inflows to Pakistan increased by more than 25 per cent to \$4.5 billion in July-December 2025-26, mainly on back of programme support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The total inflows (excluding IMF), both loans and grants, in the first six months of the current fiscal year, amounted to \$4.507bn, up from \$3.603bn last year, an increase of 25pc.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country declined sharply by 43.3 percent in July-December 2026.

## **POLICY**

- The Privatisation Commission has reportedly decided to offer two power distribution companies (Discos) — Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO).
- Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasised that privatising loss-making state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is a top priority of his government.
- In a significant policy shift, government, in collaboration with the farming community and sugar industry representatives, has decided to fully deregulate the sugar sector, marking a key step in implementing structural reforms recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Under the new policy, farmers will have complete freedom to cultivate sugarcane, without any restrictions on the varieties they grow or the zones in which they plant. They will also have the liberty to sell their sugarcane to any sugar mill or use it to produce jaggery, free from government control. The government will no longer regulate sugarcane prices.
- This marks a fundamental shift in agricultural pricing policy, moving towards a market-driven approach.
- As part of the deregulation, the government has also pledged to eliminate subsidies on sugar exports and remove the current export quotas on sugar mills. In a major liberalisation measure, the longstanding ban on both sugar imports and exports will be lifted, allowing for free trade in the commodity.
- Sindh cabinet formed a ministerial committee to review federal government's plan with regard to full deregulation of country's sugar sector.
- An alarming collapse in student enrollment has pushed eight public sector colleges in Attock district to the verge of outsourcing.

- The government has been actively considering a range of options for outsourcing operations at now three major airports — Islamabad International Airport (IIAP), Karachi’s Jinnah International Airport (JIAP), and Lahore’s Allama Iqbal International Airport (AIIAP).

## **SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION**

- Pakistan’s central government debt stocks declined by Rs 345 billion during the first five months (July-November) of FY26.
- Pakistan’s economy is expected to expand by a modest 3.5 per cent in 2026, as implementation of the reform programme under the IMF remains robust.
- Despite a 10pc year-on-year increase in revenue collection, the government borrowed net Rs1.192 trillion from scheduled banks in the first half of the current fiscal year against retirement of Rs1.255tr in the same period last year.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- A parliamentary body voiced serious concern over the continuous rise in medicine prices and urged the government to introduce effective regulatory measures to ensure the availability of essential drugs at affordable rates.

# **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

## **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES**

- The world is experiencing the dawn of an “era of water bankruptcy”, according to a United Nations report.

## **TRADE**

- Indian mills have signed export contracts for around 180,000 metric tons of sugar this season with a domestic price correction and weaker rupee belatedly driving overseas sales in recent weeks.
- The US trade deficit made a sharp and unexpected pullback in October, reaching its lowest level since 2009 as goods imports dropped while President Donald Trump’s tariffs took hold.
- European Union states gave go-ahead for bloc to sign its largest free trade accord with South American group Mercosur, despite opposition from farmers in France and some other countries. The approval came more than 25 years after talks began.
- India’s rice exports jumped 19.4 percent last year to the second-highest on record after New Delhi lifted all export curbs, making shipments more competitive, government and industry.

- US President Donald Trump announced a 25-percent tariff on any country doing business with Iran.
- China reported a strong export run in 2025 with a record trillion-dollar surplus, as producers braced for three more years of a Trump administration set on slowing the production powerhouse by shifting US orders to other markets.

## **INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT**

- The European Commission has allocated 126 million euros to address humanitarian needs in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan during 2026, part of an initial 1.9 billion euro aid budget aimed at combating global crises as major donors cut funds.

## **SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION**

- As nearly 300 million workers continue to live in extreme poverty, earning less than \$3 a day, a new report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- The ILO report, Employment and Social Trends 2026 finds that while the global unemployment rate is projected to stay at 4.9 per cent in 2026 — equivalent to 186 million people — millions of workers around the world still lack access to quality jobs.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- For every \$1 world invests in protecting nature, it spends \$30 on destroying it.
- The ‘State of Finance for Nature 2026’ report finds that total nature-negative finance flows stand at \$7.3 trillion. Of this, \$4.9tr comes from private sources.
- Public environmentally harmful subsidies — mainly for fossil fuels, agriculture, water, transport and construction — amounted to \$2.4tr in 2023.
- In 2023, finance directly harmful to nature reached \$7.3tr, while investments in NbS amounted to only \$220bn.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

- President Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw the United States from a bedrock climate treaty was slammed by the EU.
- The White House flagged the US exit from 66 global organisations and treaties — roughly half affiliated with the United Nations — it identified as “contrary to the interests of the United States.”
- Last year was among the planet’s three warmest on record.
- Nearly 3.8 billion people could face extreme heat by 2050 and while tropical countries will bear the brunt cooler regions will also need to adapt.

# NATIONAL NEWS LISTING

Back

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Farmers see 2025 ‘worst year’ for agriculture [P. 1]

Agri sector needs a meaningful boost [P. 1]

Pakistan, China set to ink MoUs in 10 agri-sectors [P. 2]

### 1.1 #Agricultural Policy

Agri transformation possible thru Chinese partnership: PM [P. 3]

Call for eco-smart agriculture to tackle rising food insecurity [P. 4]

### 1.2 # Farmer

FAO launches Year of Woman Farmer to highlight contribution to agriculture [P. 4]

‘Sindh giving financial help to farmers’ [P. 5]

### 1.3 # Land

Over 40-acre state land retrieved [P. 5]

### 1.4 # Water

Rainwater harvesting systems look promising [P. 6]

Conference on water opposes new dams, canals [P. 6]

CDA begins pre-construction work on two dams to address water shortage [P. 6]

## 2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

### 2.1 Agricultural Loan & Finance

Pak-China Agri Investment moot to be held later this month [P. 7]

Banks engage with ‘viable’ agri-loan initiative [P. 7]

MoUs for \$4.5bn agri investment with China [P. 7]

Centre assures Sindh govt on rolling out crop insurance for farmers [P. 8]

China-focused agri investment drive now moving from headline MoU to execution discipline: envoy [P. 9]

FAO to hold national agriculture investment summit in Islamabad on Feb 3 [P. 9]

### 2.2 # Seed

Sindh govt not to purchase seeds from private sector [P. 9]

### 2.3 # Subsidy

Balochistan govt approves Benazir card for farmers [P. 10]

### **3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS**

Govt launches reforms to modernise agri markets [P. 10]

Australian help sought to boost agri yields [P. 10]

#### **3.1 # Cash Crop**

Cotton prices set to rise on strong demand [P. 11]

Despite late gains, cotton arrivals slip 0.3pc YoY [P. 11]

Sindh ginners drive historic cotton shift [P. 12]

Farmers advised oil seed cultivation [P. 12]

Cotton supply at ginning factories indicates stagnant production [P. 12]

SCA demands govt fix sugarcane price at Rs600/maund [P. 13]

Sugarcane boom threatens cotton production [P. 13]

#### **3.2 # Food Crop**

Punjab leads wheat sowing as Rabi campaign nears completion [P. 14]

Millers, chakki owners agree to buy wheat from food dept at higher price [P. 14]

First speed breeding facility for wheat, pulses inaugurated [P. 15]

Provinces to procure wheat from private sector [P. 15]

Wheat price goes up as govt abruptly revises policy [P. 16]

Punjab to keep wheat reserves of 2.5m metric tonnes [P. 16]

PFMA accuses govt of 'unfair' wheat distribution [P. 17]

KP finance adviser slams federal govt over 'wheat crisis' [P. 17]

Punjab claims supply of 0.85m metric tonnes of wheat to provinces [P. 18]

Rain brightens hope for bumper wheat crop in Potohar region [P. 18]

Wheat stocks worth over Rs100m go missing [P. 18]

ECC okays offloading 0.8m tonnes of wheat [P. 18]

Sindh exceeds federal wheat cultivation target for 2025-26 [P. 19]

#### **3.3 # Fruit**

Rs750m initiative launched to 'revolutionise date palm sector' [P. 19]

#### **3.4 # Vegetable**

Stakeholders call for govt intervention after potato market crash [P. 19]

NA panel seeks PM's intervention to resolve potato crop crisis [P. 20]

## **4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS**

### **4.1 # Fishery**

PIDE seminar: ‘Fisheries & aquaculture sector has potential to generate USD10bn per year’

Fisheries exports outperform fruits, vegetables [P. 20]

Minister for new projects in blue economy sectors [P. 21]

\$60-80m seafood processing, export zone will be set up: minister [P. 21]

India arrests nine Pakistani fishermen, seizes their boat [P. 22]

Fishermen in Badin face livelihood crisis, say PFF leaders [P. 22]

### **4.2 # Livestock**

Over 300 animals perish as container overturns [P. 22]

Dept orders probe into administrative anomalies at Harichand cattle farm [P. 22]

## **5 # TRADE**

Trade deficit [P. 23]

Sugar: higher export value but inconsistent trade performance [P. 23]

KP business community raises alarm over prolonged border closure [P. 23]

Rs15bn for REAP from EDF: Losses hit all exports, not limited to rice trade: industries

Maritime sector posts record Rs100bn profit in 2025 [P. 24]

Trade gap with nine neighbours widens 44.4pc in first half [P. 25]

### **5.1 # Export**

Exports plunge over 20pc in December [P. 25]

Bolstering agri exports: PM orders crafting of ‘bold’ strategy [P. 26]

Punjab seeks alternative potato export routes amid price slump [P. 26]

Govt planning to impose ‘export emergency’ [P. 26]

Punjab seeks freight relief to boost potato, kinnow exports [P. 27]

1H seafood exports record 22pc growth [P. 27]

Basmati boom propels Pakistan past Viteman [P. 27]

Pakistan’s critical minerals need value addition to boost exports [P. 28]

Rs15bn tax rebate splits rice exporters [P. 28]

1H rice exports plunge 49.56% YoY [P. 28]

### **5.2 # Import**

Smuggling curbs lift imports [P. 29]

Sost Dry Port: BMP slams FBR for allowing tax-free imports of Chinese goods for G-B

Misuse forces chloroform import ban [P. 29]

## **6 # CORPORATE SECTOR**

### **6.1 # Food Company**

Nestle recalls infant formula over toxin fears [P. 29]

Nestle plans \$60m business expansion [P. 29]

## **7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT**

FD outlook: Inflation may stay moderate at 5.5-6.5pc in Dec [P. 30]

Foreign direct Investment blunges 43pc [P. 30]

Profit repatriation rises 27pc in 1H FY26 [P. 30]

Foreign loan inflows surge by a quarter [P. 31]

1H foreign assistance rises 20pc YoY [P. 32]

1H FDI down 43.3pc YoY: FD [P. 33]

## **8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)**

Livelihoods & Entrepreneurship WB-funded Balochistan Project approaches closure in Feb

ADB flags census data gap on employment, climate impact [P. 33]

## **9 # POLICY**

### **9.1 # Developmental Policy**

Rs1 trillion tribal development package in the works [P. 33]

‘World-class’ uplift plan envisioned for Karachi in partnership with FWO [P. 34]

Development fund utilisation surges [P. 34]

CDWP clears Rs40bn health cover for AJK, GB, ICT [P. 34]

Dar approves key development projects worth Rs117bn [P. 34]

### **9.2 # Neo – Liberal Policy**

Govt urged to carry out swift privatisation of SOEs [P. 34]

PIA privatisation challenged in Lahore High Court [P. 35]

Privatisation: GEPCO, FESCO to go as starters [P. 35]

Privatising loss-making SOEs top priority: PM [P. 35]

Govt decides to fully deregulate sugar sector [P. 36]

Privatisation Commission wants Islamabad airport privatised [P. 37]

Sindh cabinet forms body to review plan to deregulate sugar sector [P. 37]

Eight Attock colleges face outsourcing due to low enrollment [P. 37]

Islamabad Airport added to active sell-off list [P. 37]

### **9.3 # Research & Technology**

Stem cell research opening new avenues for treatment: experts [P. 38]

### **10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION**

Govt debt stocks slump Rs345bn in 5 months [P. 38]

GDP seen growing 3.5pc in 2026 [P. 39]

WB projects GDP growth at 3pc [P. 39]

Govt borrows Rs1.19tr in 1HFY26 [P. 39]

FD issues FY27 budget call circular: 5.1pc GDP growth, 6.5pc inflation projected

#### **10.1 # Food**

Workshop held on hazardous acids in edible oil [P. 40]

#### **10.2 # Inflation**

Consumer inflation slows to 5.6pc in December [P. 40]

#### **10.3 # Poverty**

Palijo tells poor segments to stand up against oppressors [P. 41]

### **11 # ENVIRONMENT**

Climate minister directs to tackle Rawal Lake water contamination [P. 41]

#### **11.1 # Biodiversity**

Exotic fish species are threat to aquatic biodiversity, govt warned [P. 41]

#### **11.2 # Health**

First vaccine policy finalised to shift from imports [P. 42]

Senate panel for effective regulation to curb medicine price hikes [P. 42]

Two siblings die of measles [P. 42]

New polio case takes 2025 tally to 31 [P. 43]

Japan approves grant for improving child healthcare [P. 43]

Balochistan releases Rs2.25bn for health card programme [P. 43]

Five health development projects worth Rs69.35bn okayed by CDWP [P. 43]

36pc of patients don't get free medicines, 31pc get bad treatment [P. 44]

PM relaunches Sehat Card health insurance scheme in ICT, AJK, GB [P. 44]

103 people in Sindh lose battle against mosquito-borne diseases in 2025 [P. 44]

Rotary provides \$9.9m to WHO Pakistan [P. 44]

NICVD seeks Rs3.5bn from Sindh govt to cover rising operational costs [P. 45]

Measles kills 143 children in 2025 as fresh outbreaks reported across Pakistan [P. 45]

Second rabies case this month as girl bitten by stray dog in Sanghar brought to Karachi

Surveillance heightened on borders as Nipah virus threatens Asia [P. 45]

NA committee flags 300,000 HIV cases [P. 45]

## **12 # CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate resilience [P. 46]

Pakistan needs \$566bn to meet climate targets [P. 47]

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

Floods, heatwaves shaped climate response in 2025 [P. 47]

### **13.1 # Avalanche**

Two soldiers, civilian martyred in GB avalanche [P. 47]

### **13.2 # Drought**

34pc less rainfall in December: PMD [P. 47]

### **13.3 # Snowfall**

Nine dead as snow blankets northern parts [P. 48]

Five killed in GB, Balochistan amid cold wave [P. 48]

Displaced by security operation, caught in snowstorm, over 1,500 rescued in Tirah

NDMA issues avalanches alert: Heavy snowfall, landsliding kill 10 in KP [P. 48]

## **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

### **14.1 # Earthquake**

One killed as 5.8 magnitude quake hits parts of GB [P. 48]

### **14.2 # Landslide**

Eight killed in Kohat landslide [P. 48]

## **15 # RESISTANCE**

Protest against ‘illegal’ demolition of houses continues [P. 49]

Thousands rally in Mirali against military operations in N. Waziristan [P. 49]

Protests erupt in GB over caretaker cabinet appointments [P. 49]

US aggression against Venezuela condemned [P. 49]

Rallies across A JK mark Right to Self-Determination Day [P. 50]

Balochistan protesters demand action on Kech kidnappings [P. 50]

JUI-F holds rally against lawlessness in Qambar-Shahdadkot [P. 50]

Power utility workers hold rallies across Sindh against privatisation [P. 50]

Protesting UoP employees demand placing varsity under Centre’s control [P. 51]

Gas shortages trigger protests in Quetta amid severe cold [P. 51]

Protest held over ‘disappearance’ of labour leader in Karachi [P. 51]

Protesters block KKH over delay in water supply project [P. 51]  
Protest over police failure to recover two children missing for one year [P. 51]  
Protest held against shifting of AIOU campus from Kandhkot [P. 52]  
Protest against demolition of 'illegal houses' at Hala Naka [P. 52]  
Panjgur residents take to streets against rising kidnap cases [P. 52]  
Protesters seek release of their detained relatives [P. 52]  
Police action against APCA protesters condemned [P. 52]  
Protest held after police party kills septuagenarian man, nephew [P. 53]  
Civil society rallies in support of Imaan, Hadi [P. 53]  
Employees offer voluntary arrests during protests in Quetta and Khuzdar [P. 53]  
Makran shutters to protest against poor law & order [P. 53]  
Demo held in Quetta against low gas pressure, loadshedding [P. 53]  
Shutter-down in Sanghar against doctor's killing [P. 54]  
Displaced persons from Tirah protest delay in payment of transport fare [P. 54]  
STP rally against price hike [P. 54]

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

### *Farmers see 2025 'worst year' for agriculture*

Pakistan's agriculture sector faced its worst year in history in 2025, dealing a severe blow to the economy and food security, farmers said. Threatening a farmers' protest in the provincial capital on Jan 5, Pakistan Kisan Ittehad President Khalid Khokhar told a press conference that they were denied fair wheat prices despite assurances from the provincial leadership, resulting in losses estimated at Rs22 billion over two years, which also impacted other crops. He said there was a sharp decline in fertiliser use due to high compost prices, leading to reduced yields. Potato, kinnow and sugarcane growers described their situation as dire, saying production costs were not recovered. Wheat bought from farmers at around Rs1,900 per maund was allegedly sold to end consumers at nearly Rs4,000, fueling anger among growers, he added.

He accused the government of siding with 'mafias' rather than farmers, warning that when fair prices were paid in the past, agricultural growth remained positive, but the current pricing crisis has pushed growth into negative territory. Exports of several crops have also declined significantly. He said Pakistan is the only country where agriculture is politicised, while elsewhere governments and opposition jointly frame farm policies. He warned that agriculture and farmers are now "on a ventilator" and announced they were being forced to move towards protests. Highlighting regional disparities, he claimed that fertiliser costs in Pakistan are far higher than in neighbouring India, and raised concerns over future water shortages amid reports of dam construction on the Chenab River by New Delhi. He reiterated farmers' support for national institutions while urging immediate policy intervention to save agriculture from collapse. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### *Agri sector needs a meaningful boost*

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in his drive to revive agricultural exports tasked a newly-established working group consisting mainly of private sector experts to align agricultural output with global requirements in order to boost exports. This objective while salutary has been compromised by disruptions associated with climate change propelled by human caused gas emissions. In this context, however, it is relevant to note that while Pakistan's contribution is less than one percent to global greenhouse gas emissions the country remains one of the world's most vulnerable to climate change as evidenced from the 2022 floods that displaced around 33 million people with many of those affected struggling to recover more than a year later. Farm output, including livestock and fisheries, suffered an estimated loss of USD 3.7 billion.

The 2025 floods affected more than 4.25 million people, displacing 1.8 million and even though early reports suggested that farm output was not negatively impacted the

National Disaster Management Authority reported by the end of 2025 that Punjab, the nation's agricultural heartland, bore the brunt of the floods, with over 21 million people evacuated and nearly 2 million acres of farmland destroyed. The Pakistan authorities pledged to the IMF under the ongoing USD 7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme that climate change would be dealt with through budgeted subsidies in the current fiscal year. However, 529 billion rupees out of the total federal budgeted subsidies — 587.3 billion rupees — has been earmarked for the energy sector defined as for mitigation measures marked as directly favourable. In contrast, agriculture was budgeted 22 billion rupees, which was noted as benefiting the sector indirectly. Details on precisely what constituted the green component of earmarked subsidies were not provided in the budget documents. What is relevant to note is that agriculture is a provincial subject and information on mitigation or adaptation of subsidies to this sector were not identified in any of the four provincial budgets.

Pakistan's farm sector contributes significantly to the country's export revenue either through primary commodities (notably rice, cotton and fruits) and value-added goods (textiles and leather). It is a foregone conclusion that climate change is eroding our food security and, given that agriculture accounts for nearly 40 percent of total employment and contributes 25 percent to country's Gross Domestic Product, the Prime Minister's focus on resolving the crisis must be supported. The focus of the task force, like during previous administrations, is therefore to be on policies that envisage a rise in the yield per hectare, including dissemination of information and facilitating access of key inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, high yielding seed varieties) mainly to subsistence farmers that comprise the bulk of our farm base. (*Business Recorder, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***Pakistan, China set to ink MoUs in 10 agri-sectors***

Pakistan and China are set to sign multiple memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for private-sector joint venture investments worth millions of dollars across 10 key sectors of agriculture, it emerged from the Pakistan-China Agricultural Investment Conference. The sectors in which agreements are expected to be signed include agriculture, food processing, livestock, fisheries, agri-inputs, farm machinery, renewable energy, logistics, technology and value-added exports. The conference drew strong participation from the private sectors of both countries, with 119 companies from China and 191 companies from Pakistan in attendance, reflecting growing bilateral commercial interest. Agriculture has been officially elevated as a priority area of cooperation under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The 10 priority sub-sectors identified for investment include agro-chemicals and inputs, agricultural machinery and solutions, food processing and value addition, meat and poultry, dairy inputs and processed products, fruits and vegetables, animal feed and related value chains, fisheries and aquaculture, cold chain systems and agricultural produce logistics, and food-grade packaging materials and equipment. Making a comprehensive presentation on Pakistan's agriculture sector, the Ministry of National

Food Security and Research stated that it plans to sign more than 25 sanitary and phytosanitary and export protocols with key trading partners, including China, in 2026. Pakistan's agricultural landscape reflects a challenging paradox: despite fertile land, low labour costs and a large domestic market, country faces an estimated productivity gap of \$95 billion due to low technology penetration and inadequate infrastructure.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan, being an agrarian economy, held immense and largely untapped potential in agriculture and could transform the sector not in years, but in months, by adopting modern technologies, improving productivity and strengthening cooperation with China. He said Pakistan must aim to generate an agricultural trade surplus through higher yields, competitive costs and superior quality, with support from Chinese experts. (*Dawn, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### **1.1 #Agricultural Policy**

#### ***Agri transformation possible thru Chinese partnership: PM***

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan, essentially an agrarian economy, held immense and largely untapped potential in agriculture and can transform its agri-sector not in years, but in months by adopting modern technologies, improving productivity and strengthening cooperation with China. Addressing the Pakistan–China Agri Investment Conference, the prime minister noted that nearly 65percent of Pakistan's population still lives and works in rural areas, with agriculture remaining the backbone of the national economy. He stressed the need to enhance per-acre yield through modern techniques, efficient water management and optimal use of limited land resources.

The prime minister said sustainable growth in agriculture required coordinated efforts by the federal and provincial governments, the farming community, and scientists and researchers. He said Pakistan must aim to generate a trade surplus in agriculture through higher yields, competitive costs and superior quality, with Chinese experts providing support. Referring to improving economic indicators, he said inflation had fallen to 4.5 per cent, the policy rate to 10.5 per cent, and exports were rising, adding that Pakistan must now shift decisively towards growth. The prime minister also reiterated hope that President Xi Jinping will visit Pakistan soon and said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0) would be a new chapter, focusing on agriculture, IT, AI, mines and minerals, and youth development.

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong on the occasion said China wanted to increase the bilateral agriculture trade volume up to \$1 billion with Pakistan achieving trade surplus. He said, he was delighted to see that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's economy grew by over 3 per cent last year and recorded a growth rate of 3.7 per cent in the first quarter of the current year. He noted that many key economic indicators were showing improvement, with inflation easing to around 4 per cent. (*Business Recorder, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Call for eco-smart agriculture to tackle rising food insecurity***

At an international conference, which opened at the University of Karachi (KU), speakers underscored the need for exploring resilient crop varieties and adopting eco-smart agricultural practices to cope with food security challenges. The three-day conference, titled “Eco-Smart Agriculture: Effective Utilisation of Stress-Tolerant Plants for Food Security and the Future”, was organised by KU’s Dr Muhammad Ajmal Khan Institute of Sustainable Halophyte Utilisation (Dr-MAK-ISHU) in collaboration with SZABIST University.

Professor Muhammad Qaiser noted that climate change, biodiversity loss, soil degradation and rapid population growth were exerting unprecedented pressure on humanity’s ability to provide food sustainably. “Eco-smart agriculture is no longer optional, but essential for ensuring food security and resilience in the face of global challenges,” he said. Citing global concerns, Prof Qaiser warned that agricultural production could decline by nearly 50 per cent by 2050 that would severely affect staple crops such as wheat, maize, rice, and potatoes. “Food security challenges are likely to intensify given the rapidly increasing world population; which is expected to reach 9.2 billion by 2050 from 8.2bn today,” he said, while emphasising the urgent need to discover new methods, resources, and resilient crop varieties.

He explained that while historically around 3,000 plant species were used for food, today about 9,200 species contributed to human diets. “Yet only four to five crops, including wheat, rice and maize, constitute bulk of global food supply, leaving the gene pool dangerously narrow.” Prof Qaiser stressed that expanding genetic diversity was critical. “Wild relatives of crops are essential for future food security. Currently, however, only five to six percent of germplasm in global gene banks comes from these wild species. These plants naturally resist drought, extreme weather, and environmental stress, making them vital for developing resilient crops.” (*Dawn, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

## **1.2 # Farmer**

### ***FAO launches Year of Woman Farmer to highlight contribution to agriculture***

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has launched ‘International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026’, a global campaign aimed at recognising women’s indispensable yet often overlooked contributions to global agrifood systems and to galvanising efforts to close persistent gender gaps. Women make up a significant proportion of the world’s agricultural workforce and play a central role across agrifood value chains — from production and processing to distribution and trade — while also ensuring household food security and nutrition. In 2021, agrifood systems employed 40 per cent of working women globally— nearly equal to men.

Despite their vital role, women’s contributions remain undervalued and their working conditions are often more precarious: irregular, informal, part-time, low-paid work that is labour-intensive and highly vulnerable. Women continue to face systemic barriers,

including limited access to land, finance, technologies, education, extension services and participation in decision-making at all levels. In Pakistan, approximately 74 per cent of women and girls engaged in the labour force work in the agriculture sector, which generates about 40pc of household income. However, protection issues faced by women farmers remain poorly documented and insufficiently addressed.

An FAO report on women farmers in Pakistan highlights the need to amend labour and agriculture policies at the federal and provincial levels to recognise all women performing work related to crops, fruits, vegetables, livestock, fisheries, poultry, dairy, forestry and post-harvest production as “farmers”, whether they work full-time or part-time, including those working on family farms without land ownership. The report recommends setting a minimum wage for women farmers and ensuring wage parity with male agricultural workers for work of equal value. It also calls for the allocation of unused federal and provincial land to landless rural women farmers, along with access to water and input subsidies to support sustainable livelihoods.

Designated by the UN General Assembly in 2024, the International Year aims to highlight the challenges faced by women farmers and drive policy reforms and investment to advance gender equality, empower women and build more resilient agrifood systems. FAO, in collaboration with the Rome-based UN agencies — the IFAD and the World Food Programme (WFP) — will coordinate activities throughout 2026. Recent FAO reports, *The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems* and *The Unjust Climate*, reveal that women farmers typically cultivate smaller landholdings than men and face a 24pc productivity gap even on farms of equal size. Each day of extreme heat reduces the total value of crops produced by women farmers by three per cent compared to men. (*Dawn, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***‘Sindh giving financial help to farmers’***

The focal person of the Sindh Agriculture Extension Department, Hyderabad, has said the Sindh government is providing financial assistance to farmers through the Benazir Hari Card scheme. According to an official handout, under the Wheat Financial Assistance Programme 2025, farmers owning one to 25 acres of land have been provided financial support in two phases. In the first phase, funds were released through Sindh Bank on a per-acre basis for the purchase of DAP fertiliser. In the second phase, after verification of DAP fertiliser usage, two bags of urea fertilizer per acre are being provided at a subsidised rate of Rs8,000. (*Dawn, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

## **1.3 # Land**

### ***Over 40-acre state land retrieved***

Over 41 kanal government land worth millions, located in Chak 43 NB in the heart of city, was retrieved during a cleanup operation. Temporary and permanent encroachments were demolished with heavy machinery while crops were destroyed. The Liquidation Committee of the Colonies Department of the Board of Revenue

Punjab carried out a 'historic' crackdown against the influential encroachment mafia and ended illegal possession for 36 years. Land was owned by the banned Commercial Cooperative Development Corporation /Government of Punjab, which was illegally occupied by some influential people. (*Dawn, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

#### **1.4 # Water**

##### ***Rainwater harvesting systems look promising***

Rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge systems installed at two major educational institutions in Quetta have shown promising results amid one of Balochistan's worst droughts in recent years. The province (Balochistan) received nearly 52 per cent less rain than average in 2025, according to Pakistan Meteorological Department, intensifying pressure on groundwater resources that meet most of the provincial capital's water needs. In response to the growing water crisis, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), under the European Union-funded Revival of Balochistan Water Resources Programme (RBWRP), installed rainwater harvesting and recharge infrastructure at the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS) and the Balochistan Agriculture College (BAC). (*Dawn, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

##### ***Conference on water opposes new dams, canals***

A conference on Sindh's water share and its other resources rejected any new dam to be built over the Indus River or any new canal to be drawn from it. Participants of the conference adopted a set of resolutions seeking shelving of all moves for new dams or canals over the Indus; putting an end to 'conspiracies' to block flows of the river; compliance of the Indus Water Treaty; release of water to Sindh as per its share under the 1991 Water Accord; release of 30 million acre feet downstream Kotri; registration of unregistered villages in the province, especially in the coastal belt; and stopping all talk about creation of more provinces from within Sindh.

The event was organised by the Sindh Hari Committee, whose president Samar Jatoi paid rich tributes to the services of the late Hari leader. The speakers highlighted the "injustices being done to Sindh" in terms of resource allocations and denial of its rights by the Centre. They observed that peasants, labourers and women would have to play their due role for a change in society. The audience were told that if the pace of sea intrusion was not stopped now, then it might start eroding lands in Hyderabad city. (*Dawn, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

##### ***CDA begins pre-construction work on two dams to address water shortage***

Following a recent go-ahead by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, city managers have started pre-construction activities for two dams aimed at overcoming the growing water shortage. Capital Development Authority (CDA) plans to begin construction of two new dams, including Shahdara Dam, which will exclusively serve Islamabad, and Dotara Dam, which will be shared with Rawalpindi. (*Dawn, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

## **2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS**

### **2.1 Agricultural Loan & Finance**

#### ***Pak-China Agri Investment moot to be held later this month***

The upcoming Pakistan-China Agri Investment Conference, set to take place in federal capital later this month, is poised to significantly elevate the economic and agricultural ties between the two nations. Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperative Departments Balochistan, Noor Ahmed Pirkani expressed optimism that the conference would open new avenues for investment and collaboration in the agricultural sector. During a meeting at the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the officials urged stakeholders from Balochistan, including farmers, traders, transporters, and investors, to submit actionable proposals offering joint ventures & other investment opportunities for Chinese investors. “We aim to boost value-added processing of Balochistan’s agricultural products, including fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat, to gain access to international markets,” said Pirkani. (*Business Recorder, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

#### ***Banks engage with ‘viable’ agri-loan initiative***

Pakistan Banks Association (PBA) says banks are willingly engaging with the recently-launched Zarkhez-e (Asaan Digital Zarai Qarza) initiative because it is structured as a commercially viable incentive scheme. PBA spokesperson argued that a key distinction of Zarkhez-e is that eligibility of the borrower does not equate to entitlement. The decision of who to lend to and who not to lend to, rests squarely with banks. He said banks also remain free to obtain security and collateral in line with their internal risk policies. He insisted that the banking industry’s participation in this scheme was not a result of pressure from the State Bank or the Ministry of Finance.

The PBA, however, acknowledged that a weak recovery framework was indeed a challenge for the banking sector. But the Zarkhez-e scheme has been designed to mitigate these legal risks through government-backed incentives: a 10pc first-loss guarantee as a tangible buffer against default and optional crop loan insurance as a tool to de-risk the portfolio, though. The spokesperson maintained that combined with real-time Nadra ID verification, PMD mobile SIM verification against CNIC, and the Land Information Management System for digital agronomic data, these cogent incentives make participation a logical business decision. (*Dawn, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

#### ***MoUs for \$4.5bn agri investment with China***

Private sector entities of Pakistan and China have signed 78 memoranda of understanding worth \$4.5 billion at conclusion of Pak-China Agriculture Investment Conference, marking agriculture’s elevation as a priority sector under the second phase of CPEC. Cooperation across 10 priority sub-sectors of agriculture includes collaboration in seed production technology; export of heat-treated beef; construction of grain storages and warehouses; strengthening ties for cheese production and export; improvement of local milk processing machinery; export of heat-treated

offal; collaboration in buffalo UHT milk and camel milk powder; poultry machinery and technology; chemicals and bio-pesticides; feed mill equipment; renewable technologies in irrigation; value addition in mango pulp and tea; efficient fodder production; fish and shrimp feed technology; fruit processing; development of sweet and seedless Chinese citrus orchards in Pakistan; value addition of rice; soya milk packaging; and exchange of best citrus varieties with mango (chaunsa) variety.

Of the 78 agreements signed, 37 were business-to-business investment agreements, 24 joint ventures and 14 partnership agreements. The 10 priority sectors identified were agri-chemicals and inputs; agri-machinery; food processing and value addition; meat and poultry industry; dairy products; fruits and vegetables; animal feed; fisheries and aquaculture; cold chain systems; and food-grade packaging and equipment. Currently, Pakistan exports agricultural products worth \$8bn, and the government aims to double this figure over the next three years.

Documents revealed that the food security ministry plans to sign more than 25 sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and export protocols with key partners, including China, in 2026. Pakistan plans to introduce a new seed policy and a national agricultural biotechnology policy to create pathways for GMO seeds. Proposals are under consideration to allow the export of pesticides and fertilisers under specific conditions, particularly targeting regional and African markets. The participants of the conference were informed that Pakistan's annual fruit production exceeds 10 million tonnes, while vegetable production stands at over 9m tonnes. With a rising population, domestic demand is growing at more than 5pc annually. (*Dawn, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Centre assures Sindh govt on rolling out crop insurance for farmers***

The federal government has assured the Sindh government that necessary measures are being taken to introduce crop insurance in order to provide financial protection to farmers against crop failures and losses. During a meeting with Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Federal Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan said that previously, the concept of crop insurance did not exist in Pakistan. The chief minister stressed that crop financing and insurance were critically important, noting that without proper financing, farmers could not achieve better productivity. "The Sindh government is actively working to promote agro-based industries across the province," he said.

The meeting held to discuss development of important sectors including agriculture, livestock, insurance and Marble City projects. Special Assistant Qasim Naveed informed the meeting that the provincial government was transforming the Landhi and Gadap cattle colonies into disease-free zones. It was decided to further accelerate measures to protect livestock from diseases. The chief minister said that work on making cattle colonies disease-free was already underway and assured that complete eradication of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) would be ensured. (*Dawn, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***China-focused agri investment drive now moving from headline MoU to execution discipline: envoy***

China-focused agriculture investment drive in Pakistan is now moving from headline Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to execution discipline. Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, warned that Pakistan will keep losing serious investors unless it can put basic project economics "in writing" — from land pricing ranges and lease options to utility tariffs, tax treatment and customs-duty exemptions.

Hashmi described the agriculture investment conference organised by the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing as a deliberate, China-focused, private-sector-led pathway meant to convert Chinese capital, technology and standards into joint ventures on Pakistani soil, with profits and risks shared by both sides. He distinguished this model from the larger CPEC agriculture track, which he said is largely government-to-government and working-group driven, while the Embassy's initiative is "99 percent B2B" and broken down into ten sub-sectors spanning the value chain. (*Business Recorder, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***FAO to hold national agriculture investment summit in Islamabad on Feb 3***

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations will convene a National Agricultural Investment Summit in Islamabad on February 3 to showcase concrete investment opportunities in Pakistan's agriculture sector, particularly dairy and olive sectors. The one-day summit, being organised in collaboration with government, will showcase high-potential commodity specific investment opportunities, particularly in olive and dairy sectors. FAO's initiative will facilitate dialogue between government counterparts, development partners, financial institutions, investors, agribusiness companies and farmers. Building on the 'Hand-in-Hand' (HiH) initiative of FAO, the summit will serve as a matchmaking platform connecting producers, agribusinesses, startups, investors, commercial banks, and government institutions.

The FAO says the investment conference will identify priority value-chain bottlenecks requiring public, private and blended solutions, and identify and analyse investment bottlenecks, including policy, regulatory, financing and infrastructure-related constraints, through expert panels and stakeholder dialogues. Summit will help expand investor awareness and confidence in country's agriculture sector. The promotion of climate-smart and inclusive agri-business models by featuring scalable innovations from startups, smallholders, and agri-tech solutions aligned with sustainability goals, will also be discussed during summit. (*Dawn, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

## **2.2 # Seed**

### ***Sindh govt not to purchase seeds from private sector***

Sindh government has decided that instead of purchasing agricultural seeds from private sector, it will provide farmers with its own government-produced seeds at affordable prices. It has also decided to carry out geo-marking of all agricultural lands belonging

to the Sindh Seed Corporation. In this regard, an important meeting was held at Sindh Secretariat under the chairmanship of Sindh Agriculture Minister Muhammad Bux to review performance of Sindh Seed Corporation. Meeting was informed that compared to previous years, wheat cultivation had increased by 352 acres, with a total of 2242.85 acres under wheat cultivation. (*Business Recorder, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### **2.3 # Subsidy**

#### ***Balochistan govt approves Benazir card for farmers***

The Balochistan government has formally approved the launch of the Benazir Kissan Card in the province to provide financial assistance to farmers and has finalised an agreement with HBL Connect for its implementation. Under the agreement, farmers' bank accounts will be opened through HBL to ensure the transparent disbursement of financial assistance. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Balochistan Secretary Agriculture Noor Ahmed Pirkani, which was attended by Director General Agriculture (Extension) Masood Baloch and other officials.

The meeting was informed that the provincial government would provide financial assistance to farmers from time to time in the form of subsidies. These subsidies will cover the purchase of seeds, fertilisers, agricultural pesticides and farm machinery. To facilitate farmers, a dedicated webpage titled "Kissan Balochistan" has been developed, allowing farmers to register themselves online. Officials clarified that farmers who fail to complete the registration will not be issued the Benazir Kissan Card. The meeting was informed that so far, 80,000 farmers have been successfully registered across various districts of Balochistan. (*Dawn, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### **3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS**

#### ***Govt launches reforms to modernise agri markets***

The Punjab government has launched reforms initiative at agriculture markets to transform traditional market operations into a transparent, efficient, and farmer- and consumer-friendly system. Punjab Price Control and Commodities Management department secretary Dr Kiran Khurshid said that the Punjab Agricultural Marketing Regulatory Authority (PAMRA) was implementing the reforms to modernise and digitalise agricultural markets across the province.

As part of the digitisation process, the secretary told Dawn that the PAMRA was introducing geo-tagging to monitor markets and stakeholders, enabling real-time information sharing. She said Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) had been implemented in all 188 markets across the province comprising 92 fruit and vegetable markets and 96 grain markets. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

#### ***Australian help sought to boost agri yields***

Pakistan is seeking Australian expertise to establish foot-and-mouth disease (FMD)-free zones and improve animal weight and yield to ensure profitability for farmers. Food

Security Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain met Australian High Commissioner Timothy Kane and expressed government's desire to benefit from Australia's expertise to enhance productivity, particularly amid growing global food security challenges. Both sides held detailed discussions on improving agricultural and livestock yields, market access issues, biosecurity concerns, and expanding technical collaboration.

Mr Tanveer emphasised the central role of agriculture in Pakistan's economy, stating that around 65 per cent of the population is directly or indirectly linked to agriculture, while 36pc of employment depends on this sector. Nearly 60pc of Pakistan's agricultural economy is based on livestock, yet productivity remains low, he added. He informed Mr Kane that the government has allocated Rs7.35 billion for two years to control FMD and initiated the establishment of free compartments, and is importing vaccines from Russia and China. The minister also pointed out that Pakistan's average crop yield is around 30 maunds per acre, compared to 45 maunds per acre in India.

Referring to horticulture, the minister stated that Pakistan aims to increase mango exports to Australia. While Australia has shown willingness to import more mangoes from Pakistan, certain technical and regulatory requirements remain challenging. Pakistan is ready to resolve all pending issues promptly. Emphasising Pakistan's large livestock population, he stressed the need for new breeds, certified slaughterhouses, and value addition to make Pakistani products competitive in international markets. (*Dawn, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### **3.1 # Cash Crop**

#### ***Cotton prices set to rise on strong demand***

Domestic cotton prices are expected to firm up in the coming days as textile mills accelerate purchases, buoyed by rising cotton yarn and fabric prices in China during the last two weeks of December and stronger local demand. Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsanul Haq says market sentiment has improved despite cotton production being about 45 per cent below the official target. He noted that production is still likely to exceed earlier estimates by 100,000 to 150,000 bales, while aggressive buying by textile mills has provided price support. According to data released by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), total cotton arrivals at ginning factories stood at 5.434 million bales as of Dec 31, 2025, almost unchanged from 5.452m bales recorded during the same period last year. (*Dawn, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

#### ***Despite late gains, cotton arrivals slip 0.3pc YoY***

As many as 5.43 million bales of cotton arrived at ginning factories by December 31, 2025, with fortnightly arrivals rising to 0.132 million bales verses 0.084 million last year, but overall arrivals dipped 0.33 per cent year-on-year (YoY). The Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) reports that the decline is more pronounced in Punjab, where 2.54 million bales have been processed, which is 0.11 million bales fewer than the previous year, marking a decrease of 4.44 per cent. In contrast, Sindh's factories

have received 2.89 million bales, which is an increase of 0.09 million bales or 3.8 per cent compared to the same timeframe last year. This season, exporters and traders have acquired 0.176 million bales, while the textile industry has purchased 4.78 million bales of cotton. Notably, the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) has not made any cotton purchases during the 2025-26 season. (*The News, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 17*)

### ***Sindh ginnners drive historic cotton shift***

The number of active ginning factories in Sindh has risen sharply over the years. Pakistan Cotton Ginnners Association (PCGA) data show that as of Dec 31, 2023, only 31 ginning factories were operational across Sindh, rising to 67 by Dec 31, 2024, and reaching a record 82 by Dec 31, 2025. Traditionally, major cotton zones of Sindh, including Badin, Thatta, Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad, Umerkot, and Sanghar, used to begin sowing cotton in February-March, with the ginning season starting in June and ending in October-November. During this period, several Punjab-based ginnners would purchase cotton from Sindh to run their factories.

However, over the past two to three years, Sindh ginnners have increasingly started buying large quantities of high-quality cotton from major markets in Punjab — particularly Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Dera Ghazi Khan, Khanewal, and Vehari — as well as from Balochistan. This shift has led to a continuous rise in the number of active ginning factories in Sindh by the end of December each year. Meanwhile, the large-scale movement of cotton from Punjab to Sindh has led to a steady decline in the number of active ginning factories in Punjab. (*Dawn, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Farmers advised oil seed cultivation***

Agriculture Extension officials have informed farmers that the Sindh government has announced financial assistance to promote cultivation of sunflower and canola crops to help strengthen agricultural growth and improve farmers' livelihoods. They were addressing an awareness seminar organised by the agriculture department in Shaheed Fazil Rahu Taluka for farmers. Under the initiative, farmers possessing between one and 20 acres of land, who grow sunflower or canola, will receive Rs5,000 per acre, according to the officials. (*Dawn, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Cotton supply at ginning factories indicates stagnant production***

The Pakistan Cotton Ginnners Association (PCGA) has released provisional national cotton production figures, showing that by Jan 15, 2026, a total of 5.49m bales arrived at ginning factories across the country. This is only 7,000 bales higher than the output recorded during the same period last year, indicating near stagnation in cotton production. According to the PCGA report, 2.58m bales reached ginning factories in Punjab, while 2.91m bales arrived in Sindh. Compared to the same period last year, cotton arrivals in Punjab declined by 4pc whereas Sindh recorded a 4pc increase. (*Dawn, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***SCA demands govt fix sugarcane price at Rs600/maund***

The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture has declared sugar mill owners to be a mafia that economically exploits farmers, and has demanded that the Sindh government take strict legal action under the Sindh Sugarcane Act against sugar mills that are operating slowly in crushing sugarcane. It has also demanded that the price of sugarcane be fixed at Rs 600 per maund. The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture has made a shocking revelation that wheat cultivation in the province has declined by 32 percent, posing a serious threat of a food security crisis in the country. The organization has demanded that the government fix the support price of wheat at Rs 5,000 per maund and purchase at least 1.5 million metric tons of wheat directly from farmers.

On the occasion, farmers staged a strong protest against the sugar mill mafia and stated that sugar mills are deliberately operating at a slow pace and are crushing only 25 percent of sugarcane. Many sugar mills are shut down at night, while thousands of tractor-trolleys loaded with sugarcane are forced to wait outside mills for three to four days. As a result, the sugarcane dries up and deductions are made from the price, causing exploitation worth billions of rupees. This is open hooliganism by the sugar mills. The farmers demanded that the Sindh government take strict legal action against sugar mills that pay low prices and crush sugarcane slowly, and ensure a minimum price of Rs 600 per maund for sugarcane.

The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture also expressed serious concern over the drastic fall in prices of tomatoes and onions, and demanded that the government take immediate steps to enable their export. Farmers further stated that Pakistan imports edible oil worth \$4bn annually, and to save valuable foreign exchange, special attention should be given to mustard cultivation in Sindh, as the mustard crop is about to be harvested. They demanded a minimum price of Rs 10,000 per maund for mustard so that farmers are encouraged to cultivate it on a larger scale. (*Business Recorder, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Sugarcane boom threatens cotton production***

A record increase in sugarcane prices and incentives offered by sugar mill owners to growers has heightened fears of a further decline in cotton cultivation next year, even as environmental pollution caused by sugarcane farming continues to damage cotton quality. Despite an unprecedented fall in overall cotton production, lint consumption — rather than production — has now emerged as a major challenge for the country, while India has surprisingly raised its cotton production target for the 2025-26 crop year.

This trend has not only caused a record decline in cotton acreage and national output but has also adversely affected cotton quality due to environmental pollution linked with sugarcane farming. As a result, export-oriented textile mills have become increasingly dependent on imported cotton. He noted that despite national cotton production falling sharply from 14.8 million bales to around 5.5m bales, ginneries are still struggling to sell their entire produce. Mr Haq said sugar mill owners provide billions of rupees annually

to sugarcane growers in the form of loans for fertilisers, pesticides and agricultural machinery. This year, sugarcane prices have increased by at least 25 per cent, reaching Rs500 per 40kg, with further increases expected. This has raised concerns that sugarcane cultivation will expand further in the 2026-27 cotton year, forcing textile mills to import even more cotton and increasing edible oil imports, costing the country billions of dollars in foreign exchange.

Mr Haq pointed out that Pakistan is the only major cotton-producing country in the world where national output is declining every year, causing the country to slip from fourth to fifth or sixth position among global cotton producers. He said India had earlier set its cotton production target for the 2025-26 season at 30.95m bales, which has now been increased to 31.70m bales. In contrast, Pakistan's federal government fixed a target of 10.18m (170 kg) for the current year, while actual production is expected to remain around 5.6m bales (160 kg). He urged the government to restore the one-year-old income tax regime for the export-oriented textile industry to help boost Pakistan's exports significantly. (*Dawn, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### **3.2 # Food Crop**

#### ***Punjab leads wheat sowing as Rabi campaign nears completion***

Punjab is leading the wheat sowing campaign for Rabi 2025-26, with sowing completed on time and 90 per cent achieved under early sowing, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research announced. The second meeting of the National Wheat Oversight Committee reviewed wheat sowing progress, current wheat stocks and the status of implementation of the interim national wheat policy. The ministry has yet to finalise the national wheat policy, which has been under consideration for several months. Federal government has set a wheat production target of over 30 million tonnes for Rabi season 2025-26, anticipating no shortage of water in Punjab and Sindh — the two major wheat-growing provinces. Punjab's production target has been fixed at 26m tonnes from an area of about 20m acres. Sindh is expected to produce 4.43m tonnes, while targets for KPK and Balochistan stand at 1.71m tonnes and 1.69m tonnes, respectively.

The committee reviewed province-wise wheat sowing progress and noted that Punjab has witnessed a significant increase in the use of certified wheat seed, along with higher uptake of urea fertiliser, largely due to improved availability and comparatively lower prices. In Sindh, wheat sowing progress was described as satisfactory and has surpassed sowing targets. In Balochistan, sowing remains lower due to insufficient rainfall; however, the shortfall is expected to be covered following upcoming rains. In KP, a substantial portion of sowing has been completed, although sowing in snowbound areas is delayed. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

#### ***Millers, chakki owners agree to buy wheat from food dept at higher price***

The roller flour mills and chakki owners in the province have agreed to lift wheat from food department's godowns, though reluctantly, at a higher price. They have been

persuaded by the Sindh government to review their decision now when the issue price has been revised downward. The food department has decided to issue wheat stocks at the rate of Rs8,000 per a 100kg bag. Earlier, the rate was fixed at Rs9,500 which the roller flour mills and chakki owners had had not accepted arguing that the commodity was available at a lesser price, and also of a better quality, in the open market.

### *Quality of wheat*

There have been serious concerns over the quality of wheat stocked by the department in the last few years. The department did not procure wheat in 2025-26 season after the last procurement of 2024-25. Therefore, both flour millers and chakki owners were not sure about the quality of the stocked wheat. Rather, they were apprehensive about the quality. Open market has invariably been offering wheat for Rs9,600-Rs9,700 per 100kg bag, including transportation and labour charges so far, and that's why millers remained complacent about procuring wheat from there to avoid any hassle.

### *Chakki owners' issue*

A Hyderabad-based chakki owner told that some chakki owners were issued challans by the district food controllers for lifting of wheat at Rs8,000 per 100kg bag. "But the Chakki Owners' Welfare Association is reluctant to buy it from there because of the illegal gratification involved. Rs1,000 per bag is charged by some officials and Rs300 per bag by the godown incharge". (*Dawn, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***First speed breeding facility for wheat, pulses inaugurated***

Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain inaugurated country's first speed breeding for wheat and pulses, and Intelligent IoT-Based Smart Glasshouse facilities. The facility has been established at National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC). The minister said that these initiatives directly align with national priorities on food and nutritional security, climate-resilient agriculture, and farmer income enhancement. He said that accelerating breeding cycles in both cereals and pulses will strengthen domestic production, reduce pressure on imports, and ensure timely availability of improved varieties to farming communities. (*Business Recorder, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Provinces to procure wheat from private sector***

The provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have decided to engage private companies for the procurement of wheat for their respective strategic reserves. This was informed to the National Wheat Oversight Committee, chaired by Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain. The meeting reviewed progress on the establishment of provincial implementation units for the interim national wheat policy. The Sindh government has not shared details with the Ministry of National Food Security and Research regarding its mode of wheat procurement for strategic reserves. However, an official of the ministry said the provincial government is expected to procure wheat on its own. (*Dawn, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***Wheat price goes up as govt abruptly revises policy***

The wheat price in the open market increased abruptly as the provincial government suddenly changed its policy regarding release of the commodity to roller flour mills and chakkies. The increase is bound to push up prices of wheat flour of different quality and variants for consumers. “Until Friday [Jan 2], wheat had been selling at Rs9,500 to Rs9,600 per 100kg, but today [Jan 6] its price has increased to Rs10,500 to Rs11,100 a 100kg bag,” said a chakki owner. The increase has been effected through a Jan 6 notification, which also revises government’s wheat release policy.

### ***Food dept’s older stocks***

The food department is releasing older wheat crops stocked in its godown. This year’s procurement will begin by late March or early April when wheat is harvested. Chakki owners claim that they are being asked to pay an additional amount of Rs1,000 per bag as ‘gratification’. If we don’t, we will be provided damaged or adulterated stocks, they say. Chakki owners had last year decided not to lift their wheat quota fixed for them in December 2025. As a result, this old crop is likely to be supplied to traders for Rs8,000 per 100kg bag. This could enable traders to offer the wheat in the open market to chakki owners at Rs10,500 per 100kg and even a higher rate.

### ***Chakki owners’ grievance***

“It’s great injustice to us. We are being asked to pay bribe for the release of our quota. Secondly, our quota has been reduced from 20,000 tonnes to 10,000 tonnes,” said Haji Mohammad Memon, President of the Atta Chakki Owners Social Welfare Association, Hyderabad.

### ***Rate for consumers***

Market players appeared sure that flour price, which is Rs120-Rs122 per kilo will go up to Rs135 per kg soon on account of the increase in wheat release price. This surge is also attributable to the fact that the food department is also issuing wheat to traders and they have lifted a considerable tonnage of the commodity. “Since traders have stocked the crop and somehow obtained better quality crop, they are going to monopolise the market,” said a chakki owner.

Sindh government had not procured wheat crop in 2024-25 due to the conditions attached to a loan programme by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). An announcement for wheat procurement this year has already been made by the Sindh chief minister. Therefore, the food department wants to dispose of its carryover stocks which also include damaged crop of 2022-23 when heavy rainfall had battered Sindh. Around 0.4m tonnes of wheat from the 2022-23 season is available with the food department. (*Dawn, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Punjab to keep wheat reserves of 2.5m metric tonnes***

In order to maintain strategic wheat reserves, the Punjab Food Safety and Consumer Protection (FS&CP) Department has decided to retain wheat stocks of 2.5m metric

tonnes on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis. FS&CP Secretary Dr Kiran Khurshid said the procurement price for strategic wheat reserves would be fixed at the import parity price, set at Rs3,500 per 40kg. Wheat procurement would be carried out directly from farmers' farmhouses or from their doorsteps, and all payments and records related to wheat would be digitised. She said a fully digital monitoring system would be operationalized to ensure transparency in wheat quality, quantity and payments to farmers.

Dr Kirani Khurshid asserted that the pre-qualified private-sector aggregators would be responsible for arranging all primary financing and would be paid a guaranteed profit, with an upper limit ranging from 10pc to 16pc. The aggregators would be provided guaranteed profit (up to an upper limit of 10 to 16pc during supply months) and financing at an upper limit of KIBOR plus 1pc on 70pc of the primary financing. These payments would be made during the supply months, from September to March, at the time of utilisation of the reserves. (*Dawn, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***PFMA accuses govt of 'unfair' wheat distribution***

The Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) levelled serious allegations against the Punjab government, claiming widespread corruption and an 'unfair' wheat distribution system in the province. PFMA Central Chairman Asim Raza alleged that bribery was rampant in Punjab and that the chief minister was being misled through "all-is-well" reports. He said official wheat distribution mechanism was discriminatory, with government wheat quotas being allocated to 'favoured' flour mills, while many others were deliberately ignored.

He further alleged that millions of rupees were being demanded as bribes for inter-provincial transportation of wheat, adversely affecting flour supply and creating difficulties for public. PFMA demanded that government ensure transparency in wheat distribution system and take immediate steps to eliminate corruption, warning that failure to do so could further aggravate situation. (*Dawn, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***KP finance adviser slams federal govt over 'wheat crisis'***

Adviser to Chief Minister on Finance Muzzammil Aslam said that tractor sales across Pakistan had fallen to the lowest level in the past 20 years. He said that Punjab and Sindh were once the strongholds of agriculture, adding that 60 percent of the country's population was linked to agriculture. The finance adviser said that nothing was known about what happened to the tractors distributed with Maryam Nawaz's photographs on them, and the farmer cards bearing her image also disappeared from the scene. Muzzammil Aslam said that the livelihood of farmers has been snatched away and, at the hands of middlemen, wheat prices had reached historic high in the country. "The price of wheat has risen to 5,000, yet the government shows no concern for the issue," he added. He said the government remained engrossed in its private gatherings, and that during Shehbaz Sharif's four-year term in office, the country faced a wheat crisis for the second time. (*The News, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Punjab claims supply of 0.85m metric tonnes of wheat to provinces***

The Punjab government claims to have supplied 850,000 metric tonnes of wheat to other provinces, of which a major chunk has been provided to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Punjab Director Food Amjad Hafeez says transportation of wheat is being carried out through a transparent permit system and the total estimated inter-provincial movement of wheat from Punjab stands between 1.4 and 1.5 million metric tonnes, while more than 700,000 metric tonnes have been supplied to Islamabad alone. He clarified that there were no restrictions on the movement of wheat within Punjab, and inter-district transportation was fully allowed without any quota or administrative barriers. He claimed that allegations regarding restrictions on wheat transportation were baseless and contrary to ground realities. (*Dawn, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***Rain brightens hope for bumper wheat crop in Potohar region***

The recent rain spell brightens hope for wheat and mustard crops in the arid areas of Potohar but non-availability of fertilisers has dampened farmers happiness. Agriculture in Potohar areas of Gujar Khan, Sohawa, Chakwal, Kallar Syedan, Kahuta are largely dependent on rainfall before and after the sowing of wheat, corns and ground nuts seeds. With the already lowering of market price of wheat grains the farmers in the region are unhappy with high costs of fertilizers. (*Dawn, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***Wheat stocks worth over Rs100m go missing***

Officials of the food department in Kandhkot-Kashmore district have informed the higher authorities that 187,000 bags of wheat are unaccounted for. They revealed that the stocks, kept at the Kandhkot and Kashmore centres of the department, had gone missing. According to the officials, the missing wheat, worth around Rs102.8 million, is found nowhere in the district. “A report about the matter has been dispatched to the higher authorities,” they said, adding that the stocks were kept at the warehouses of the two centres for onward supplies. (*Dawn, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***ECC okays offloading 0.8m tonnes of wheat***

Amid the alleged waste of public funds on managing imported wheat stocks since 2021-22, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet decided to offload 800,000 tonnes of wheat — less than half of the total stock — and approved more than Rs66 billion in supplementary grants. The meeting of the ECC, presided over by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, was informed that around 1.8 million tonnes of wheat stocks were still lying with the Pakistan Agricultural Services and Storage Corporation (Passco), which is currently under winding up. Around 550,000 tonnes of these stocks belonged to imports made from Ukraine in 2021-22, most of which are now reportedly beyond the category of human consumption.

During the meeting, the ECC decided to offload 800,000 tonnes at an estimated cost of about Rs70bn, which would still leave about one million tonnes in storage, largely in bad shape. The ECC “approved the disposal of 500,000 metric tonnes of Passco wheat

stock through competitive bidding, with the objective of managing surplus stocks, reducing carrying and storage costs, and ensuring price stability in the domestic wheat market while safeguarding food security considerations,” an official statement said. (*Dawn, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Sindh exceeds federal wheat cultivation target for 2025-26***

The Director General of Agriculture Extension Department Sindh has clarified facts regarding a news item published in a daily newspaper and stated that the province has successfully exceeded the federal wheat cultivation target for 2025–26. According to official figures, the federal government had set a wheat cultivation target of 14,16,430 hectares (35, 00,140 acres) for Sindh for the year 2025–26. However, wheat has been cultivated on an area of 14,95,589 hectares (36,95,750 acres) across the province, which is 5.6 percent higher than the assigned target.

The director general attributed this achievement primarily to the Sindh government’s wheat growers support (subsidy) programme, introduced to support small and medium farmers. Under this initiative, farmers owning or cultivating 1 to 25 acres of land were provided financial assistance of Rs 22,000 per acre for wheat cultivation in the form of support for DAP and urea fertilisers. He added that the subsidy programme significantly reduced input costs, encouraged farmers to allocate more land to wheat cultivation, and strengthened farmer confidence amid rising agricultural expenses. As a result, wheat acreage increased beyond the federal target, contributing positively to food security and overall agricultural performance. (*Business Recorder, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### **3.3 # Fruit**

#### ***Rs750m initiative launched to ‘revolutionise date palm sector’***

In line with a decision taken at the Dec 5, 2024 meeting of National Assembly’s Standing Committee on Food Security and Research, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed for a Rs750 million project to transform date palm sector and conduct advanced research. Under the MoU, elite date palm varieties would be evaluated, optimal production ensured and post-harvest technologies introduced while keeping focus on value addition. A sub-committee of the NA Standing Committee has endorsed the plan for the strengthening of the Date Palm Research Institute, Khairpur, while signing the MoU with the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU). (*Dawn, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### **3.4 # Vegetable**

#### ***Stakeholders call for govt intervention after potato market crash***

Punjab’s potato-growing belt is heading towards a severe economic shock due to production surplus, stagnant domestic demand and shrunk exports, prompting the farmers and experts to call for urgent government intervention through subsidies and exports. The potato belt of the province includes Sahiwal, Okara, Pakpattan, Kasur and adjoining districts where the stakeholders, including the farmers, say that market has

crashed even before the complete arrival of the new crop. Wholesale prices of potato have fallen well below the production costs, forcing some farmers to plough their fields, destroying their crop to avoid further losses. Potatoes were sold at the rate of Rs20-25 per kg in three districts of Sahiwal division. (*Dawn, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

#### ***NA panel seeks PM's intervention to resolve potato crop crisis***

The National Assembly's standing committee on national food security and research sought the intervention of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for resolution of potato crop crisis and requesting the government to intervene and take measures to stabilise prices. The committee unanimously recommended that a letter be sent to the prime minister requesting a meeting in the coming week to apprise him of the severity of the potato crop crisis and present solutions for timely and effective action. An official of the Department of Plant Protection informed the committee that as compared to previous year, overall potato exports have gone up, noting that higher potato production this year is result of favourable weather conditions. (*Dawn, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### **4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS**

#### **4. 1 # Fishery**

#### ***PIDE seminar: 'Fisheries & aquaculture sector has potential to generate USD10bn per year'***

Pakistan's fisheries and aquaculture sector has the potential to generate USD 10 billion per year with better management and value addition. This was stated by speakers while discussing the pros and cons of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 2025–2035, at a seminar organised by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). The seminar was moderated by Dr Muhammad Faisal, research fellow at the PIDE. The speakers said that despite Pakistan's rich water resources, fisheries contribute less than 0.5 percent to the GDP. They added that Pakistan has so far captured limited value in both domestic and export markets.

The new policy seeks to change that by driving federal-provincial coordination, improving regulation, enhancing seafood exports, and meeting international obligations. The wide-ranging strategy includes priorities such as climate resilience, environmental safeguards, child protection, gender inclusion, labour rights, and incentives for adopting modern technologies. The minister called it an "evolving framework" whose success will rely on sustained commitment and collaboration across provinces. The seminar highlighted the policy's strong focus on revitalizing aquaculture as a key driver of alternative livelihoods and export growth, particularly in response to declining marine fish stocks. (*Business Recorder, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

#### ***Fisheries exports outperform fruits, vegetables***

Pakistan's fisheries exports have outperformed those of fruits and vegetables, reaching USD500 million and accounting for 1.34 percent of the total national exports valued at USD 32.04 billion. Minister acknowledging the importance of the sector and potential

stressed for urgent reforms in the fisheries sector, saying reliable energy supply and lower input costs were critical to boosting exports and generating sustainable revenue.

The meeting was told that Pakistani seafood is exported to more than 40 markets, including China, Gulf States, Southeast Asia, East Asia, the United States and the European Union. By volume, it ranks second among agricultural exports and generates about USD 500 million annually, although earnings fluctuate due to regional competition and pricing pressures. Officials told the meeting that more than 100 fish processing plants, ranging from small units to large commercial facilities, were operating across the country, backed by about 400 registered exporters. “Most facilities were concentrated in Karachi, with limited infrastructure in Balochistan, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab lagged significantly in sectoral development,” they added.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation’s State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2022 report, fish and fish preparations ranked 10th among Pakistan’s top export commodities, which in the 2024–25 fiscal year, accounting for 1.34 percent of total exports valued at USD 32.04 billion. Globally, fish and fish products are among the most traded food commodities, reaching around 230 countries with a total value of USD 195 billion in 2022. Average per capita consumption stood at 20.7 kilograms and is projected to rise further.

In Pakistan, fisheries contribute about 1 percent to gross domestic product and 4% to the agriculture sector, providing direct employment to more than one million people and indirect livelihoods to around 1.5 million. During 2024–25 fiscal year, approximately 300,000 tons of fish and fish products were processed, with 30 percent exported for human consumption, 40pc converted into fish meal for poultry, dairy and aquaculture, and the remainder used domestically. (*Business Recorder, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Minister for new projects in blue economy sectors***

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has called upon local industrialists and investors to actively partner with the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) in launching development-oriented projects, particularly in the fisheries and blue economy sectors. Addressing at Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), the minister said that KATI members could jointly form consortiums to establish modern fish processing plants, adding that Pakistan currently has confirmed export orders of 25,000 tons of tuna fish for this year. (*Business Recorder, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***\$60-80m seafood processing, export zone will be set up: minister***

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry announced setting up of a 100-acre seafood processing and export zone at Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority (KoHFA), with an estimated investment of USD60-80 million. The project will shift Pakistan’s seafood industry from raw exports to high-value processed products to position the country in Gulf, East African and Asian markets. This initiative will bridge medium-scale seafood processors and value-added plants with global buyers

by providing modern infrastructure, certification standards, and efficient export logistics. The zone will be developed under a public-private partnership or build-operate-transfer (BOT) concession model, with private investors handling development, operations, and maintenance while KoHFA retains regulatory oversight.

The planned facilities will include 20 to 25 medium to large-scale seafood processing units designed for fish, shrimp, and cephalopod processing, along with value addition and export-grade packaging capabilities. These units will support products ranging from primary processing to ready-for-market seafood items. Chaudhry emphasized that the initiative aligns with Pakistan's National Blue Economy Policy, Vision 2030, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 on life below water. (*Business Recorder, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***India arrests nine Pakistani fishermen, seizes their boat***

The Indian Coast Guards have arrested nine Pakistani fishermen and seized their boat, Al Madina. This is the second such incident within a month as Indian forces had detained another 11 Pakistani fishermen earlier on December 12, too. (*Dawn, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 13*)

### ***Fishermen in Badin face livelihood crisis, say PFF leaders***

Sources of fishermen's livelihood in Badin district are rapidly disappearing due to severe shortage of fresh water along the coastal belt and the continuous discharge of toxic effluent into the sea, said leaders of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF). In a press release, the PFF held two local sugar mills and the LBOD (Left Bank Outfall Drain) system responsible for releasing the polluted water directly into the sea while blocking the flow of fresh water.

They said the faulty design of the LBOD diverted water far into the open sea, destroying natural lakes that once supported thousands of fishermen. According to the PFF, 13 lakes that served as a major source of livelihood for local fishermen were completely destroyed after the devastating cyclone of 1999 when breaches in the LBOD allowed seawater to advance inland. At present, only Sada Bahar Lake remains, spanning hundreds of acres and serving as the sole source of income for thousands of fishermen. (*Dawn, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

## **4.2 # Livestock**

### ***Over 300 animals perish as container overturns***

Over 300 goats and sheep perished and five men were injured when a container-mounted trailer overturned near Qazi Ahmed town. (*Dawn, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Dept orders probe into administrative anomalies at Harichand cattle farm***

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa livestock secretary Zareeful Mani ordered an investigation into the alleged proxy attendance, questionable records of milk production, lack of

cleanliness and threats to animal health at the government-owned Harichand cattle breeding and dairy farm in Charsadda district. He also issued orders for the immediate introduction of a digital attendance system, improvement in cleanliness and adherence to biosecurity protocol at the farm. The development came following a visit of the secretary to the facility. Established in the early 2000s at more than 500 acres of land, the farm has cattle farm units, cow sheds, feed processing arrangements and cattle semen processing unit. (*Dawn, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

## **5 # TRADE**

### ***Trade deficit***

According to the PBS data, imports grew 2pc to \$6.022bn in December 2025 from \$5.904bn over the corresponding month of last year. Month-on-month, imports increased 13.49pc. In the first six months of 2025-26, the import bill posted a growth of 11.28pc to \$34.388bn against \$30.902bn over the corresponding months of last year. The import rose 6.57pc to \$58.38bn in July-June FY25 from \$54.78bn over the last year. The trade deficit rose 23.79pc to \$3.705bn in December 2025 from \$2.993bn over the corresponding month of last year. The trade deficit swelled 34.57pc to \$19.204bn in July-December 2025-26 against \$14.271bn over the corresponding period last year. The trade deficit FY25 widened by 9pc to \$26.27bn from \$24.11bn over the preceding year. (*Dawn, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Sugar: higher export value but inconsistent trade performance***

Pakistan's sugar industry has exported USD1.6 billion while importing USD314 million during the past 10 years; i.e.; 2015-25, official data revealed. The data reflected a higher export value but inconsistent trade performance. Despite being the seventh major global sugarcane producer, the country's sugar exports remained limited and irregular over the years as its share in global sugar production stands at only 6, highlighting underutilization of its production potential. The country remains heavily dependent on local sugarcane production, with minimal diversification in raw material sources.

Pakistan mainly exports raw/processed sugar to Tajikistan, China, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, while it imports raw sugar from UAE, Egypt, Brazil, Algeria, India, Saudi Arabia. The official data shows that area under sugarcane cultivation increased to 1.195 million hectares over the last 10 years. Annual sugarcane production in Pakistan stands at approximately 79 million metric tons. Sugar production rose from 4.8 million tons in 2019–20 to 7.8 million tons in 2021–22, reflecting significant year-on-year growth. The data revealed that sugar production from beet accounts for only 1.16 percent of total output in Pakistan. This indicates an overwhelming reliance on sugarcane rather than alternative crops. (*Business Recorder, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***KP business community raises alarm over prolonged border closure***

The prolonged closure of trade routes between Pakistan and Afghanistan for over three months inflicted massive economic losses running into billions of rupees at both

national and regional levels, business leaders said. They said that the suspension of cross-border trade severely affected exports, bilateral commerce, transportation businesses and government revenue, dealing a major blow to the country's economy in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's in particular, where the business community largely depended on trade with Afghanistan. More than 90 per cent of Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan passed through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Customs stations, primarily via the Torkham border crossing, they added.

According to the businessmen, the province has suffered an estimated export losses of Rs2.5bn due to halted shipments of goods including cement, textiles, pharmaceuticals, construction materials and agricultural produce. KP has lost nearly Rs2.5bn in revenue during the first five months of the current fiscal year owing to reduced trade activity and lower customs collections. They said exporters in the province were incurring losses exceeding \$4 million daily, with stranded goods worth billions of rupees. Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral trade had declined by 53pc year-on-year, falling to \$594 million during the first half of the ongoing fiscal year (2025-26) from \$1.26bn in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. (*Dawn, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

***Rs15bn for REAP from EDF: Losses hit all exports, not limited to rice trade: industries***

The country's export-oriented industries have reportedly reacted strongly to the government's decision to extend over Rs 15 billion to the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) from the Export Development Fund (EDF), arguing that the entire export sector is facing losses — not the rice sector alone. The decision was taken in a hurriedly-convened meeting of the EDF Board, chaired by the Minister for Commerce. Following the decision, several export associations are preparing to write to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, seeking fairness and transparency in EDF disbursements.

The sources said, the decision is part of government's strategy to focus on four countries, ie, China, Philippine, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Commerce Minister has already held meetings with the ambassadors of these countries to discuss strategy and enhance rice quotas. Rice exporters were of the view that they are not competitive in the markets of these countries due to higher tariffs, seeking relief in local taxes. (*Business Recorder, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

***Maritime sector posts record Rs100bn profit in 2025***

The maritime sector posted a record Rs100 billion profit in 2025, mainly due to reforms in port efficiency, cost reduction and the clearing of long-delayed policies. In its annual performance report, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs highlighted that these reforms ranged from modernising ports, shipping and fisheries sectors to unlocking the full potential of the blue economy. Karachi Port handled a record 54 million tonnes of cargo, while average vessel dwell time was reduced by 24 to 36 hours through closer coordination among port authorities, customs and other agencies, achieving an average turnaround of five days in line with regional benchmarks.

Cost-cutting measures delivered substantial savings. Reduced overtime at the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) saved about Rs70 million per month, while the abolition of 2,152 redundant posts across maritime entities lowered human resource costs by billions of rupees. The first bunkering facilities were also established at Karachi Port and Port Qasim, expected to save foreign exchange and attract transshipment traffic. The KPT and Port Qasim Authority reclaimed around 150 acres of encroached land, valued at roughly Rs110 billion. (*Dawn, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Trade gap with nine neighbours widens 44.4pc in first half***

Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries widened by 44.42 per cent to \$7.683 billion in the first half of FY26 compared to \$5.320bn during the same period last year. The soaring deficit was mainly due to a decline in Pakistan's overall exports to regional countries, led by a drop in shipments to China, followed by Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan has suspended all kinds of trade, including exports, with Afghanistan since Oct 10, 2025.

In FY25, the trade deficit with these nine neighbouring countries widened by 29.42pc to \$12.297bn, up from \$9.502bn in the preceding year. The value of exports to Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives dipped 18.56pc to \$1.965bn in July-December FY26 from \$2.413bn over the same period last year. Contrary to this, imports surged 24.76pc to \$9.648bn in 6MFY26 from \$7.733bn over the same period last year. Imports surged 20.66pc to \$16.698bn in FY25 from \$13.838bn over the preceding year. (*Dawn, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

## **5.1 # Export**

### ***Exports plunge over 20pc in December***

Pakistan's merchandise exports dipped 20.41 per cent to \$2.317 billion in December 2025 from \$2.911bn over the corresponding period last year, making it the fifth consecutive month of decline in the current fiscal year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) said. On a month-on-month basis, the export proceeds posted a negative growth of 4.26pc in December. The falling trend in exports has yet to raise alarm among policymakers because no meeting was held to identify the reasons. The negative growth in exports continued since August of the current fiscal year, barring July which saw proceeds growing 16.43pc from a year ago. Export earnings continued their downward trajectory for the fifth consecutive month, with proceeds declining by 14.54pc in November. This follows drops of 4.46pc in October, 3.88pc in September, and 12.49pc in August, reflecting persistent pressures on the country's external trade performance.

In the first half (July-December), the export proceeds recorded a negative growth of 8.70pc to \$15.184bn this year as against \$16.631bn over the corresponding months of last year. The persistent decline underscores mounting pressure on the country's trade performance, as exporters grapple with subdued global markets and the high cost of doing business in the country. The textile exporters have already complained about

contractions owing to the high cost of doing business. In FY25, export proceeds rose 4.67pc to \$32.106bn against \$30.675bn in the preceding year. The negative growth in exports is a major concern for the exporters. (*Dawn, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Bolstering agri exports: PM orders crafting of ‘bold’ strategy***

In a decisive move to revive the country’s struggling agricultural exports, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif tasked authorities with crafting a bold five-year strategy, demanding sweeping reforms and a crash course for farmers to meet international market demands. Newly-established working group, comprising private sector experts, the prime minister underlined the need for aligning the country’s agricultural output with global requirements in order to boost exports. The government was committed to advancing agricultural reforms both at the federal and provincial levels. He stressed that increasing per-acre crop yields through better access to seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides was a central goal, alongside raising awareness among farmers about international quality standards. (*Business Recorder, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Punjab seeks alternative potato export routes amid price slump***

Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani has assured the potato farmers that the provincial government has taken up the matter of export of potatoes through alternate routes to resolve the issue of low prices. Kirmani said the government viewed farmers’ problems as its own and acknowledged that surplus production often puts downward pressure on prices. He informed the delegation that the Afghan border remains closed under the National Security Policy, adding that the Punjab government has written to the federal authorities regarding alternative export routes. He further stated that the federal government has allowed exports to Central Asian states via Iran. (*Business Recorder, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***Govt planning to impose ‘export emergency’***

Government has planned to announce an ‘export emergency’ in country and create a special cell at PM Office to address problems and complaints of the business community on an urgent basis for increasing exports by 40pc in four years and by around 200pc by 2035 for sustainable economic growth and job creation. Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal conceded country’s export performance in first four months (July-October) was not satisfactory even though exports grew by around 1pc.

He also said there were genuine questions and impatience why GDP was not growing fast quickly but it was a pragmatism decision of the government not to rush for growth through consumerism as was done by the previous government in 2022. To gain quick growth to 6pc in 2022, the then government facilitated consumerism by opening imports which increased growth rate but created \$50bn trade deficit that evaporated the country’s foreign exchange reserves and then led to massive devaluation and inflation whose impacts are felt even today despite corrective measures. (*Dawn, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***Punjab seeks freight relief to boost potato, kinnow exports***

The Punjab government has approached the federal government to seek a reduction in freight charges for the export of potatoes and kinnow, particularly through Iran, as part of efforts to remove hurdles faced by growers and exporters. Punjab produces around 95 percent of the country's total potato and kinnow output, making the promotion of their exports critical not only for the provincial economy but also for national economic growth. (*Business Recorder, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***1H seafood exports record 22pc growth***

Pakistan's seafood exports recorded a growth of over 22 percent, reaching USD 253 million in the first half of Financial Year 2025–26, according to data released by the Marine Fisheries Department. Seafood exports rose to 122,629.11 metric tons valued at USD 253.24 million during the period from July to December 2025. He said Pakistan is poised to achieve its highest-ever seafood exports.

According to official data, exports during the corresponding period of FY2024–25 stood at 102,942.05 metric tons worth USD 208.25 million. This represents a year-on-year increase of 19.1 percent in volume and 21.6 percent in value. According to the data, frozen fish remained the leading export category, accounting for 26,669.37 metric tons valued at USD 53.33 million. Shrimps and prawns followed with earnings of USD 40.46 million, while frozen cuttlefish generated USD 36.13 million.

China retained its position as Pakistan's largest export destination, importing more than 83,602 metric tons worth USD 149.2 million—nearly 59 percent of total seafood exports—driven by steady demand for high-quality frozen products. Thailand ranked second with imports valued at USD 31.3 million, mainly shrimps and prawns, supported by Pakistan's HACCP-certified processing standards.

Monthly export figures showed consistent growth, peaking at USD 56.42 million in November and USD 55 million in December, aided by seasonal demand and logistical improvements. Non-tax revenue from the fisheries sector also increased to Rs127.7 million (approximately USD 460,000), up from Rs118 million a year earlier. (*Business Recorder, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Basmati boom propels Pakistan past Vietnam***

Pakistan's rice exports recorded a strong rebound in December 2025, registering a 14 per cent month-on-month (MoM) increase compared to November, primarily driven by a more than 50pc surge in Basmati shipments. The impressive performance enabled Pakistan to overtake Vietnam and emerge as the world's third-largest rice exporter, behind India and Thailand, during the month. According to trade data, Pakistan exported 489,000 tonnes of rice in December 2025, excluding shipments to Iran, compared to Vietnam's 387,000 tonnes. This marks Pakistan's best monthly rice export performance, underscoring renewed momentum in the sector. (*Dawn, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Pakistan's critical minerals need value addition to boost exports***

To boost foreign exchange and drive sustainable economic growth, Pakistan must focus on transforming its raw minerals into processed and value-added products that meet global Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards, rather than merely exporting raw critical minerals. In a policy note following Pakistan's first shipment of critical minerals to United States in October last year, Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA) said the export of critical minerals marked a historic milestone but its research emphasised that "real opportunity lies in turning raw minerals into processed, ESG-compliant products". (*Dawn, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Rs15bn tax rebate splits rice exporters***

At a time when rice exports are steadily declining, the Ministry of Commerce has allocated around Rs15 billion for a rebate scheme on local taxes and levies for rice exporters, raising concerns about a potential rise in domestic prices. Exporters remain divided over the government's decision, which has been presented as a support measure for the sector. Several industry players, however, argue that the move fails to address the structural problems confronting rice exports and instead risks shifting the burden onto domestic consumers.

Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) Chairman Faisal Jahangir told that the Drawback on Local Taxes and Levies (DLTL) scheme would help lower export prices and improve Pakistan's ability to compete with global suppliers. He said Indian rice was currently being offered at significantly lower prices, making it difficult for Pakistani exporters to maintain their foothold in international markets. (*Dawn, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***1H rice exports plunge 49.56% YoY***

The country's rice exports have plunged by a staggering 49.56 percent in the first half of the 2025-26 financial year, slumping to just \$405 million from USD804.86 million during the same period in 2024-25, according to the latest external trade statistics. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistic (PBS), during the period under review Pakistan exported basmati rice worth USD170.249 million against USD359.78 million exported in the previous year which reflects a reduction of 52.68 percent, similarly in 2025-26 the country exported USD37.24 million of Irri-6 rice as compared with USD47.7million dollars in corresponding year thus showing a decline of 21.93 percent.

According to data this year Pakistan did not export any volume of sugar which in previous year fetched USD145.85 million in exports. Overall food items export registered a decline of 22.06 percent from USD2.910 billion to USD2.268 billion dollars. Overall textile sector witnessed a negative growth of 8.56 percent from USD1.477 billion to USD1.350 billion during the period under review. (*Business Recorder, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

## 5.2 # Import

### ***Smuggling curbs lift imports***

Regular imports of smuggle-prone items grew significantly in first five months (July-November) of the current fiscal year, owing to tighter enforcement against products entering the domestic market duty-free and more effective measures at ports to curb under-invoicing. The shift has translated into higher customs duty and tax collection at the import stage, while also easing pressure on domestic manufacturers who have long struggled to compete with untaxed and under-priced goods entering the market through illegal routes. The import value of tyre imports increased 56.90 per cent to Rs4.383 million in 5MFY26 from Rs2.793m in 5MFY25. (*Dawn, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

***Sost Dry Port: BMP slams FBR for allowing tax-free imports of Chinese goods for G-B***  
Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel condemned Federal Board of Revenue's decision to allow tax-free imports of Chinese goods through the Sost Dry Port for GB, warning that the move would open floodgates of smuggling, under-invoicing, and institutional corruption, while further squeezing already struggling domestic industries. (*Business Recorder, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***Misuse forces chloroform import ban***

Government has restricted import of chloroform due to its excessive use, which poses serious health and environmental risks. (*Business Recorder, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

## 6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

### 6.1 # Food Company

#### ***Nestle recalls infant formula over toxin fears***

Swiss food giant Nestle announced a recall of batches of infant formula in several European countries, notably France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Italy and Sweden, as a precautionary measure. On its website, the group said it had detected a "quality issue" in an ingredient sourced from one of its major suppliers. Nestle said it was in contact with authorities in relevant countries "to ensure the necessary steps are taken". Nestle provided instructions for returning the products and obtaining a refund, as well as a phone number to answer consumer questions. (*Dawn, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

#### ***Nestle plans \$60m business expansion***

Nestle announced an additional \$60 million investment in Pakistan during a roundtable discussion on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the business round-table, bringing together CEOs and senior leaders of leading global corporations to discuss Pakistan's reform trajectory, investment climate, and long-term growth potential. The roundtable was part of the government's ongoing engagement with multinational investors to promote policy predictability, economic formalisation, and sustainable, export-oriented growth. Nestle intends to use Pakistan as a regional manufacturing hub to export products to 26 countries. (*Dawn, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

## **7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT**

### ***FD outlook: Inflation may stay moderate at 5.5-6.5pc in Dec***

Inflation is projected to remain moderate, in the range of 5.5 to 6.5 percent in December, primarily due to the base effect, the Finance Division said. In its ‘Monthly Economic Update and Outlook December 2025’, the Division noted that inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) declined sharply by 25.3 percent in the first five months (July–November) of fiscal year 2026, compared to the same period last year. FDI totaled USD927.4 million during the July–November fiscal year 2026, down from USD1.242 billion in the corresponding period of fiscal year 2025. The decline was also witnessed in November 2025 FDI when it came down to USD179.7 million against USD231.9 million in November 2024 – a decline of 22.5 percent. Main sources were China (USD308.4 million) and Hong Kong (USD143.3 million). Sector-wise, power (USD383.8 million) and financial services (USD327.6 million) attracted the most FDI.

Total foreign investment dropped substantially to USD313.7 million in July–November 2026, down from USD1.391 billion a year earlier. Portfolio investment swung back into negative territory at –USD613.8 million, compared with a positive USD148.7 million in the same period last year. During November, it decreased to USD-75 million, when compared to USD-37 million during the same month of last year. Private and Public Foreign Portfolio Investment recorded net outflows of USD192.2 million and USD421.6 million, respectively. As of December 19, 2025, foreign exchange reserves stood at USD 21.0 billion, including USD 15.9 billion with the SBP. (*Business Recorder, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Foreign direct Investment blunges 43pc***

Foreign direct investment (FDI) plunged by 43 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year, denting the government’s hopes of attracting overseas capital amid growing regional uncertainty. Data for July–December FY26 shows total FDI at \$808 million, down from \$1.425 billion in the corresponding period last year. Fragile sentiment was particularly evident in December, when net FDI turned negative. While inflows amounted to \$322.5m during the month, outflows stood at \$457.3m, resulting in a net outflow of \$135m. China remained the largest contributor, investing \$423m during the six-month period, followed by Hong Kong with \$164m. Together, the two accounted for 73pc, or \$587m, of total FDI. Other notable inflows came from the United Arab Emirates (\$112m) and Switzerland (\$107m). (*Dawn, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Profit repatriation rises 27pc in 1H FY26***

Repatriation of profits and dividends by foreign investors rose sharply 27 percent in the first half of the current fiscal year (FY26), highlighting stronger earnings outflows from Pakistan. State Bank of Pakistan reported that foreign companies operating in country repatriated USD 1.559 billion in profits and dividends during July–December of FY26 compared to USD 1.226 billion in the same period last year (FY25). The increase

translates into an additional USD 333 million sent abroad as returns on both Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI).

Analysts said that the higher repatriation of profit and dividend reflects improved profitability of some foreign-owned businesses as well as relatively smoother transfer of the foreign exchange compared to the previous year. The detailed analysis revealed that returns on FDI accounted for the bulk of the outflows, as multinational companies transferred profits generated from sectors such as power, telecommunications, and financial services. However, repatriation under the portfolio investment, indicating witnessed downward trend despite improved performance of the equity market. (*Business Recorder, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Foreign loan inflows surge by a quarter***

Foreign assistance inflows to Pakistan increased by more than 25 per cent to \$4.5 billion in July-December 2025-26, mainly on back of programme support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The total inflows (excluding IMF), both loans and grants, in the first six months of the current fiscal year, amounted to \$4.507bn, up from \$3.603bn last year, an increase of 25pc. Inflows in December alone amounted to \$1.475bn, uplifting total flows by more than 48pc from \$3.032bn in five months. Inflows in December 2025 were almost 59pc higher than the \$930m in December 2024 and significantly greater than the \$511m in November and \$471m in October 2025. These inflows do not include \$1.2bn disbursed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) earlier this month, bringing the cumulative inflows in 6MFY26 to \$5.7bn.

Of the total, foreign loan inflows in 6MFY26 amounted to \$4.445bn, up from \$2.673bn in the corresponding period last year, an increase of over 66pc. Grants, on the other hand, amounted to just \$62.5m, compared to \$99m in December last year, showing a 37pc fall. The target for total foreign inflows for FY26 has been set at \$19.9bn, up from \$19.4bn last year. The Ministry of Economic Affairs said it had received \$4.507bn in total foreign inflows in the first six months of the year, compared with \$3.603bn in the same period last year.

Against a full-year target of \$5bn from multilaterals (excluding IMF), Pakistan received only \$1.967bn in 6MFY26 from multilateral lenders, down from \$1.864bn in the same period last year, when the annual target was \$4.5bn. Total inflows from bilateral lenders (excluding three strategic friendly countries) in 6MFY26 amounted to \$1.072m, against an annual target of \$1.36bn, but were 235pc higher than \$312m in the same period last year, when the full-year target was \$523m. Total inflows from bilateral and multilateral lenders amounted to \$3.04bn in 6MFY26, against the annual target of \$6.4 bn. Last year, the government had secured \$2.172bn from bilateral and multilateral sources, falling short of the yearly target of \$5.05bn.

The World Bank took over the top multilateral lender, with \$802m in disbursements in the first half, up from \$492m last year, a 63pc surge. Conversely, Asian Development

Bank dropped to second place with \$609m in disbursements this fiscal year, a 63pc fall from last year's \$373m. The Islamic Development Bank increased its disbursements to \$535m in the first six months of this year, a 234pc increase, mostly (\$484m) in short-term credit to make up for lower commercial loans from foreign banks. Inflows from overseas Pakistanis increased to \$1.2bn in 6MFY26, up from \$928m last year, in the form of Naya Pakistan Certificates. (*Dawn, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***1H foreign assistance rises 20pc YoY***

Foreign assistance to the country in the first half of 2025-26 reached USD 4.51 billion registering an increase of 20 percent compared to the corresponding period of last year. According to data released by the Economic Affairs Division, the multilateral and bilateral loans and grants December remained USD 1.47 billion compared to just USD 511.49 million in the previous month of November. In the July-December 2025-26, the total bilateral loans and grants stood at USD1.07 billion; whereas multilateral grants and loans amounted to USD1.97 billion in the period in review.

In the July-December period, the total bilateral grants amounted to USD31.68 million. A major amount of grants came from Japan (USD 11.86 million), followed by China (USD10.57 million) and Saudi Arabia (USD3.31 million). In six months of 2025-26, the total bilateral loans amounted to USD 1.04 billion. This includes Chinese guaranteed loans of USD255.6 million and USD72.28 million from China, USD71.15 million from Denmark, USD15.61 million from France, and a major loan of USD600 million received from Saudi Arabia under the oil facility to Pakistan.

The total multilateral grant received during the July-December period amounted to USD28.95 million. Out of this USD 15.40 million came from IBRD, USD8.18 million from the IDA, USD2.72 million from IFAD and USD265 million from the Asian Development Bank. The total multilateral loans in the same period reached USD1.97 billion. The IDA was top lender USD580.77 million followed by Asian Development Bank with USD549.24 million, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) short-term loan of USD483.78 million, IBRD USD221.73 million, IsDB USD 52.49 million, and IFAD provided USD21.39 million.

The financial year 2025-26 budget estimates for multilateral and bilateral grants are USD147.93 million, with multilateral and bilateral loans are projected at USD 6.4 billion. Disbursements against the Naya Pakistan Certificates in the July-December period amounted to USD 1.2 billion. To keep foreign exchange reserves at a comfortable level, Pakistan held USD 9 billion as a term deposit. Out of which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provided USD 5 billion, and China Safe Deposit of USD 4 billion. The IMF lending facility under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) is not reflected in EAD or Ministry of Finance accounts, as it constitutes the balance of payment (BoP) support and is recorded on the balance sheet of the State Bank of Pakistan. (*Business Recorder, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***1H FDI down 43.3pc YoY: FD***

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country declined sharply by 43.3 percent in July-December 2026; portfolio investment remained in the negative territory (-225.1 million USD against - 221.8 million USD in the same period last year) while Pakistan's Stock Market index rose by a whopping 64.2 percent, market capitalisation by 49.9 percent and incorporation of companies by 28.7 percent. This was revealed in the Finance Division's (FD's) 'Monthly Economic Update and Outlook January 2026' released. It said exports declined by 5 percent while current account deficit widened to USD1.174 billion in the first half (July-December) of current fiscal year 2026, compared to the same period of last fiscal year. Inflation is expected to remain within the range of 5-6 percent in January, while current account is projected to remain in a deficit. (*Business Recorder, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

## **8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)**

### ***Livelihoods & Entrepreneurship WB-funded Balochistan Project approaches closure in Feb***

The World Bank-funded Balochistan Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship Project has generated nearly 19,000 full-time jobs for rural communities and extended support to 45,000 beneficiaries, marking major progress as it approaches closure in February 2026. According to the official documents, project has installed 312 High Tunnel Systems to boost high-value agriculture, while 41pc beneficiaries are women, reflecting a strong gender focus. Community participation has translated into over USD2.1m in local capital investment for agri-business activities. (*Business Recorder, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***ADB flags census data gap on employment, climate impact***

The ADB has flagged a critical data gap in Pakistan's census, warning that the absence of employment status information hampers any meaningful assessment of how climate shocks affect workers. The Bank in its latest report "heat stress, air pollution risk, and population exposure evidence from selected Asian countries", stated that in the case of Pakistan, employment status is not reported in the available Census data, limiting us to study the population exposure to climate shocks while distinguishing the workers. In Pakistan, industrial and traffic-related emissions such as smog are more prevalent throughout the year and show less seasonal variability, leading to smaller fluctuations in overall PM2.5 concentrations. (*Business Recorder, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

## **9 # POLICY**

### **9.1 # Developmental Policy**

#### ***Rs1 trillion tribal development package in the works***

KPK CM Sohail Afridi said that his government was working on a Rs1 trillion Roshan Qabail development package for the merged tribal districts of the province. Officials told that under proposed package, significant investments would be made in six thematic areas for development of tribal districts. (*Dawn, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***‘World-class’ uplift plan envisioned for Karachi in partnership with FWO***

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah approved the Karachi Transformation Plan aimed at forging a partnership with the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) to achieve “world-class development” in the city. CM informed the meeting participants that six priority infrastructure projects worth Rs10.72 billion had been identified for immediate execution under the Karachi division to address chronic traffic congestion, improve connectivity, and strengthen urban mobility. (*Dawn, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 13*)

### ***Development fund utilisation surges***

The utilisation of federal development funds suddenly jumped to 21 per cent in the first six months of the current fiscal year, up from 9pc a month earlier, according to Ministry of Planning and Development. “During July-December 2025-26, ministries and divisions sanctioned Rs314.5bn under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), against which reported expenditure stood at Rs210bn,” the ministry said in its Monthly Development Outlook (MDU) for January 2026. A month earlier, the planning ministry had conceded modest spending in the first five months.

“Development spending remained modest, with Rs92bn utilised against Rs196bn sanctioned, led mainly by infrastructure,” it had reported in its Monthly Development Outlook for December 2025. Even this was aided by better utilisation in foreign-funded projects. “Foreign-funded projects also advanced, with Rs12.8bn spent out of Rs25.1bn sanctioned,” the ministry had said last month. (*Dawn, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***CDWP clears Rs40bn health cover for AJK, GB, ICT***

The government cleared a Rs40.188 billion Sehat Sahulat Programme to provide universal health coverage in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) for two years ending June 30, 2027. (*Dawn, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Dar approves key development projects worth Rs117bn***

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the ECNEC meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and approved key development projects worth over Rs117bn. According to a statement issued here, approvals included extension of the Sehat Sahulat Program up to 30 July 2026, along with major initiatives in energy, infrastructure and transportation to promote socio-economic development and improve service delivery. (*Business Recorder, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

## **9.2 # Neo – Liberal Policy**

### ***Govt urged to carry out swift privatisation of SOEs***

Mian Zahid Hussain, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum & All Karachi Industrial Alliance, Chairman National Business Group Pakistan and Chairman Policy Advisory Board FPCCI has urged for quick sale of loss-making state-owned enterprises, following the privatization of PIA, to reduce the fiscal burden on the

national treasury, noting that the resources saved could be better utilised for infrastructure development and social safety nets. He suggested that the government must capitalise on the potential of the year 2026 by focusing on high-growth sectors such as information technology and value-added textiles. (*Business Recorder, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***PIA privatisation challenged in Lahore High Court***

A constitutional petition has been filed in the Lahore High Court (LHC) challenging the recent privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Filed by Advocate Nabeel Javed Kahloon, the petition seeks to set aside the sale of the national carrier, describing it as illegal and unconstitutional. The Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCoP) had endorsed a Rs135 billion bid from an Arif Habib Group-led consortium for a 75 per cent stake in the airline. The winning bid was approximately 35pc higher than the government’s reference price of Rs115bn. The consortium has pledged to invest an additional Rs80bn to Rs125bn into the airline for fleet modernisation and operational restructuring. The petitioner argues that the privatisation process, specifically the Expression of Interest (EOI) published on May 7, 2025 and the subsequent sale on Dec 23 violates the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation (Conversion) Act, 2016. (*Dawn, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### ***Privatisation: GEPCO, FESCO to go as starters***

The Privatisation Commission has reportedly decided to offer two power distribution companies (Discos) — Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) — to the private sector in the first phase. However, there is still no clarity on the mode of privatization. Sources said the privatisation of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), whether through full divestment or a long-term concessional model, has been put on hold for the time being. Letters of Interest (LoIs) for GEPCO and FESCO are expected to be issued by the end of the current month, as the government aims to complete the transaction by the end of the current fiscal year. (*Business Recorder, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Privatising loss-making SOEs top priority: PM***

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasised that privatising loss-making state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is a top priority of his government, calling the recent “successful” privatisation of 75 percent of PIA shares the first step towards achieving this goal. PM directed that reforms in Privatisation Commission be expedited. In a briefing to the PM, Privatisation Commission officials stated that process of privatising electricity distribution companies would be divided into two phases. PM said the best talent from the private sector and the market should be appointed to the Privatisation Commission, adding that all appointments should be made in a completely transparent manner. He also directed the Privatisation Commission to digitise its processes and stressed that its projects should undergo a third-party audit by an internationally recognised firm. (*Business Recorder, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Govt decides to fully deregulate sugar sector***

In a significant policy shift, government, in collaboration with the farming community and sugar industry representatives, has decided to fully deregulate the sugar sector, marking a key step in implementing structural reforms recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to a comprehensive plan, the deregulation move will hand control of the sugar industry over to market forces, ending decades of state intervention. The decision follows the earlier deregulation of the wheat sector, with sugar now set to follow suit. The plan outlines a series of wide-ranging reforms aimed at eliminating government oversight.

Under the new policy, farmers will have complete freedom to cultivate sugarcane, without any restrictions on the varieties they grow or the zones in which they plant. They will also have the liberty to sell their sugarcane to any sugar mill or use it to produce jaggery, free from government control. The government will no longer regulate sugarcane prices. The document reveals that the existing minimum support price mechanism will be abolished, with prices instead determined by market demand and supply. This marks a fundamental shift in agricultural pricing policy, moving towards a market-driven approach. As part of the deregulation, the government has also pledged to eliminate subsidies on sugar exports and remove the current export quotas on sugar mills. In a major liberalisation measure, the longstanding ban on both sugar imports and exports will be lifted, allowing for free trade in the commodity. The plan further proposes lifting the ban on the establishment of new sugar mills across the country.

Mills that have been closed for up to eight months will now be allowed to import raw materials. The deregulation will also grant sugar mills the freedom to process both locally grown sugarcane and imported raw sugar. In an effort to boost industry capacity, sugar mills will be permitted to import raw sugar, refine it locally, and re-export the refined product. This is expected to increase capacity utilisation and enhance exports of refined sugar. While the plan aims to reduce government involvement in the sector, safeguards for farmers have been proposed. A list of prohibited sugarcane varieties will be issued before each sowing season to prevent the cultivation of low-yield or suboptimal varieties, helping to protect farmers' interests.

Officials believe this measure will strike a balance between encouraging market freedom and ensuring that farmers are not left vulnerable to the consequences of unregulated cultivation. The reform package signals a major shift towards a market-driven agricultural economy, in line with the IMF's structural reform requirements. By exiting the sugar sector, the government aims to reduce its fiscal burden, promote competition, and meet its international reform commitments. If implemented as planned, the changes will transform the country's sugar industry, making it more competitive on both the domestic and international fronts. The proposed reforms are expected to reshape landscape of country's sugar market, with significant implications for farmers, mills, and consumers alike. (*Business Recorder, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Privatisation Commission wants Islamabad airport privatised***

The board of the Privatisation Commission took key decisions on major transactions and recommended that Islamabad International Airport be included in the privatisation programme and that fresh expressions of interest (EoIs) be invited to appoint a financial adviser. The board also authorised the Privatisation Commission to engage in direct negotiations with the ADB for its appointment as financial adviser for the airport transaction. (*Dawn, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Sindh cabinet forms body to review plan to deregulate sugar sector***

The Sindh cabinet formed a ministerial committee to review the federal government's plan with regard to full deregulation of the country's sugar sector. The meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at the CM House, asked the committee to submit its detailed recommendations at the next meeting of the cabinet. According to a press statement, the cabinet was briefed on the federal government's plan to fully deregulate the country's sugar sector by 2026. The meeting was informed that Sindh contributes 26 per cent of national sugar cane production with 38 sugar mills across 16 districts. The meeting stressed the need for a phased transition. Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister directed that farmers' interests must be protected through third-party weighing, transparent payment timelines and advance notification of banned low-yield cane varieties. (*Dawn, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 13*)

### ***Eight Attock colleges face outsourcing due to low enrollment***

An alarming collapse in student enrollment has pushed eight public sector colleges in Attock district to the verge of outsourcing, as the Punjab Education Department moves to stem mounting financial losses and revive institutions that have all but fallen silent. (*Dawn, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***Islamabad Airport added to active sell-off list***

The Privatisation Commission included Islamabad International Airport in active privatisation list under long-term concession mode. According to the commission, the government has been actively considering a range of options for outsourcing operations at now three major airports — Islamabad International Airport (IIAP), Karachi's Jinnah International Airport (JIAP), and Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport (AIIAP) — through appropriate modes, including management contracts and long-term commercial concessions.

The primary objectives of the government are to enhance efficiency, improve service delivery, maximize revenue generation, upgrade infrastructure, and attract domestic and international private sector investments. This has involved constructive dialogue with entities from valued partner nations, including the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, as well as other international stakeholders. These efforts are in line with Pakistan's overarching economic vision to cultivate mutually beneficial collaboration to modernise the aviation sector. (*Business Recorder, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### **9.3 # Research & Technology**

#### ***Stem cell research opening new avenues for treatment: experts***

Senior health experts at a programme held discussed how cutting-edge stem cell and regenerative research is transforming the potential treatment of serious diseases, creating new hope for patients and medical innovation in Pakistan. The event titled ‘Redefining Medicine Through Stem Cells and Regenerative Research’ was organised by the Centre for Regenerative Medicine (CRM), Aga Khan University. The experts explained that stem cell research was at heart of regenerative medicine, a field focused on repairing or replacing damaged tissues rather than merely treating symptoms.

Around the world, they said, this approach was transforming how serious and complex diseases were studied and managed, with a growing emphasis on recovery and long-term patient outcomes. These advances were especially significant for people living with chronic or life-limiting conditions, for whom existing treatment options often remained limited. According to the speakers, some forms of stem cell therapy are already part of routine medical practice globally, such as bone marrow transplantation for blood cancers and inherited disorders. At the same time, new stem cell-based approaches are progressing through clinical research for a range of conditions, highlighting the importance of careful testing, regulation and patient safety. (*Dawn, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 14*)

### **10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION**

#### ***Govt debt stocks slump Rs345bn in 5 months***

Pakistan’s central government debt stocks declined by Rs 345 billion during the first five months (July–November) of FY26, aided largely by the transfer of a healthy profit from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The SBP reported that Pakistan’s total debt stocks, including domestic and external, decreased to Rs 77.543 trillion by the end of November 2025, compared to Rs 77.888 trillion in June 2025, depicting a decline of 0.44 percent. The reduction in central government debt was entirely driven by a contraction in external borrowing. Pakistan’s external debt dropped by Rs 492 billion to Rs 22.925 trillion by the end of November 2025, down from Rs 23.417 trillion in June 2025, underscoring a lower reliance on foreign financing during the period.

On the domestic front, however, government debt increased by Rs 147 billion in the first five months of this fiscal year to reach Rs 54.619 trillion. The rise was driven by a marked increase in long-term borrowing, which grew by 1.18 percent, or Rs 538 billion, to Rs 46.191 trillion in November 2025. In contrast, the federal government’s short-term domestic debt declined by Rs 393 billion to Rs 8.363 trillion in November, compared with Rs 8.756 trillion in June, indicating a shift toward longer-tenor financing. In addition, during the period under review, debt under the Naya Pakistan Certificate (NPC) also surged by Rs 2 billion to Rs 64 billion. (*Business Recorder, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***GDP seen growing 3.5pc in 2026***

Pakistan's economy is expected to expand by a modest 3.5 per cent in 2026, as implementation of the reform programme under the IMF remains robust, with economic recovery on track, says the 'World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026' published by the United Nations. The report, released by the United Nations Department of Social Affairs (DESA) notes that current account posted a surplus for the FY25, the fiscal primary balance exceeded targets, inflation remained contained, and external buffers strengthened. However, adverse shocks like the recent floods pose significant threats to economic and development progress, increasing risk to economic growth, fiscal consolidation and poverty reduction efforts. (*Dawn, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***WB projects GDP growth at 3pc***

Pakistan's GDP growth is projected to remain at 3 percent in fiscal year 2025–26 before rising to 3.4 percent in fiscal year 2026–27, driven by a recovery in agricultural production and reconstruction efforts following a series of floods in 2025, the World Bank said. However, Pakistan current account deficit is expected to widen in fiscal year 2026-27, with a rise in import demand, alongside the strengthening growth, and post-flood normalization of remittance inflows, the Bank stated in its latest report on Global Economic Prospects. (*Business Recorder, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Govt borrows Rs1.19tr in 1HFY26***

Despite a 10 per cent year-on-year increase in revenue collection, the government borrowed net Rs1.192 trillion from scheduled banks in the first half of the current fiscal year against retirement of Rs1.255tr in the same period last year. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) collected Rs6.159 trillion during July-December FY26 against the target of Rs6.490tr, a shortfall of Rs331bn. However, it is 10pc higher compared to the year-ago figure of Rs5.618tr. The borrowing in 1HFY26 means the government spent much higher than the last year. This is also interesting to note that the State Bank reported a net profit of Rs2.5tr for FY25, which was transferred to the federal government. Despite this additional liquidity, the government is borrowing heavily from banks. (*Dawn, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***FD issues FY27 budget call circular: 5.1pc GDP growth, 6.5pc inflation projected***

The Finance Division has issued the Budget Call Circular for fiscal year 2026-27, projecting GDP growth at 5.1 percent, inflation at 6.5 percent, besides, issued detailed instructions on green components of tax and non-tax revenues, climate-linked subsidies and disaster budgeting. The new instructions, circulated to all ministries and Principal Accounting Officers (PAOs), require federal entities to identify, classify and tag revenues and expenditures with climate and environmental relevance, alongside the submission of 2024-25 actuals, FY2025-26 revised estimates and FY2026-27 budget estimates.

The expanded climate and disaster budgeting framework comes alongside the government's Provisional Macroeconomic Framework, which projects GDP growth to rise to 4.0 percent in FY2025-26 and 5.1 percent in FY2026-27, with inflation contained at 6.1 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively, supported by easing global commodity prices and structural reforms. Officials said the strengthened tagging of revenues, subsidies and disaster-related spending will help policymakers better align fiscal policy with climate resilience, green growth and sustainability objectives, while improving accountability in the use of public resources as Pakistan navigates economic recovery amid mounting climate risks. (*Business Recorder, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### **10.1 # Food**

#### ***Workshop held on hazardous acids in edible oil***

Speakers at a programme held at Karachi University (KU) underscored the need for minimising use of industrially produced trans-fatty acids in making edible oil and ghee, linking its consumption to increased risk of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. The event – a training session aimed at supporting local industry in this regard – was organised by KU's department of food science and technology in collaboration with Nutrition International (NI), a non-profit organisation. Speaking at the programme, Sindh Food Secretary Ghulam Abbas Naich emphasised that Pakistan must align with globally recognised food standards by reducing industrial trans-fat to a maximum of two percent. (*Dawn, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 14*)

### **10.2 # Inflation**

#### ***Consumer inflation slows to 5.6pc in December***

Consumer inflation slightly eased to 5.6 per cent in December 2025 from 6.1pc in November due to a decline in perishable food products, official figures released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed. The monthly inflation has been gradually slowing down for the past two consecutive months, which was largely attributed to a sharp decline in the prices of essential perishable food items. On a month-on-month basis, inflation decreased by 0.4pc compared to the previous month.

The inflation during July-December was recorded at 5.15pc in 2025, the lowest compared to 7.22pc over the corresponding period of last year. This lower rate is also because of the high base effect of last year. The average annual inflation for FY25 dropped sharply to 4.49pc from 23.41pc in the previous year, aided by a high base effect, declining food prices, and lower transport costs. Economists describe the current trend as disinflation — a slowdown in the pace of rising prices, not a general decrease as seen in deflation — though the cost of living remains high for many households.

Inflation had previously fallen into single digits in August 2024 — at 9.6pc — for the first time in over three years, continuing a declining trend until the recent rebound. The government has projected an inflation target of 7pc for the current fiscal year. Food inflation in December increased by 3.2pc in urban areas and 3.8pc in rural areas.

The month-on-month basis, the food inflation dropped 1.7pc in urban areas while it fell by 1.9pc in rural areas, respectively. The non-food inflation reached 7.5pc in urban areas and in rural regions it stood at 6.9pc. This marks that non-food inflation is still very high. In December, core inflation — excluding volatile food and energy components — stood at 6.9pc in urban areas and 8.1pc in rural areas. The central bank has decreased the policy rate by 50 basis points to 10.5 percent effective from December 16, 2025. (*Dawn, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### **10.3 # Poverty**

#### ***Palijo tells poor segments to stand up against oppressors***

Qaumi Awami Tehreek (QAT) chief Ayaz Latif Palijo has said that it is unfortunate that the people of Sindh, especially farmers, peasants and labourers, are living in abject poverty despite the fact that the province is rich in natural resources. He was addressing the Sindh Hari Tehreek (SHT) workers' convention, held in memory of peasant leader Fazil Rahu, in Kario Ghanwar town of Badin district. Palijo said that Sindh has a vast coastline, oil & gas reserves and also fertile land and minerals, but its people are living in abject poverty due to flawed policies of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party. He said that the real power lies with peasants, workers and the oppressed masses who must not silently wait for their fate, but rise against the oppressive forces. "Our silence will only strengthen the corrupt," he remarked, and asked all the poor living in Sindh to actively resist injustices being done to them. (*Dawn, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### **11 # ENVIRONMENT**

#### ***Climate minister directs to tackle Rawal Lake water contamination***

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr Musadik Malik, chaired a high-level meeting to review the water quality situation of Rawal Lake and discuss measures to address contamination concerns. During the briefing, the minister was informed about the three major water streams flowing into Rawal Lake, Korang, Lake View, and Jinnah streams. Some of these streams had been contaminated due to the discharge of untreated sewerage from nearby residential areas and planning for the installation of three sewerage treatment plants (STPs) at Simli Road, Bari Imam, and Shadrah was underway to address and eliminate this contamination. (*Dawn, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### **11.1 # Biodiversity**

#### ***Exotic fish species are threat to aquatic biodiversity, govt warned***

The World Wide Fund for Nature-Pakistan (WWF-P) has called upon the government to keep a vigil on the introduction of exotic fish species in the country and to establish quarantine facilities for keeping fish species imported for aquaculture and aquarium trade. The organisation describing invasive fish species a looming threat to aquatic biodiversity and fisheries economy after an unusual fish was brought to the Karachi Fish Harbour from Sukkur and no one there was able to identify it.

“It was an Amazon sailfin catfish. This fish, which has thick armoured body covered with bony plates, is an exotic fish that has an exotic species accidentally introduced into natural water bodies and is spread in the provinces of Sindh and lower Punjab,” the WWF-P said, adding that the catfish is native to Latin America and is popular around the world as an aquarium fish. It said: This species is among the 26 invasive fish species that have been introduced in Pakistan accidentally or deliberately, and have become invasive, have a detrimental impact on the aquatic biodiversity of Pakistan, and are threatening the delicate balance and function of the ecosystem. (*Dawn, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 13*)

## **11.2 # Health**

### ***First vaccine policy finalised to shift from imports***

Pakistan’s first National Vaccine Policy has proposed creating a National Vaccine Alliance to reduce imports as a strategic and economic move, as all vaccines used in the country were currently imported. The draft policy estimates Pakistan’s annual vaccine requirement at 125 to 150 million doses in 2024-25 and suggests multi-year contracts of up to 10 years to reduce investment risks and cut reliance on imports. Prepared by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drap), the policy was finalised at meeting of a high-level committee formed by the prime minister. The policy would be forwarded to the premier for approval and implementation. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### ***Senate panel for effective regulation to curb medicine price hikes***

A parliamentary body voiced serious concern over the continuous rise in medicine prices and urged the government to introduce effective regulatory measures to ensure the availability of essential drugs at affordable rates. The Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination stressed the need for strong regulation in the public interest to curb medicine price hikes. The committee took up The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which aims to regulate medicine prices. However, discussion on the bill was deferred at the request of the health minister. (*Business Recorder, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***Two siblings die of measles***

Two siblings died of measles in Nazar Mohammad Malik village of Tangwani taluka in Kandhkot-Kashmore district. They expressed deep anger towards district health officer and the health administration, stating that despite multiple reports of the outbreak, no medical teams were dispatched to the village. Dozens of other children in the village are suffering from the disease. The affected villagers have appealed to the high officials of Sindh health department and the provincial government to immediately send vaccination teams to the area to save precious lives of their children. (*Dawn, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***New polio case takes 2025 tally to 31***

The tally of polio cases for 2025 reached 31 after a sample collected last year in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district tested positive. "This is the fifth case reported from North Waziristan in 2025, bringing the total number of polio cases in Pakistan for the past year to 31," it said. (*Dawn, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### ***Japan approves grant for improving child healthcare***

Japan will provide a grant of JPY 2.91 billion (USD18.62 million approximately) for the improving child health care facilities in South Punjab. A signing ceremony of the Grant Agreement, Exchange of Notes and Record of Discussion between the Governments of Pakistan and Japan under the project titled "Improvement of Child Health Care Facilities in South Punjab" was held at the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The Government of Japan has approved the grant through JICA under the Japanese Grant-in-Aid. The project is to strengthen the diagnostic and treatment systems in the Children's Hospital and ICH Multan and improve the function as an only specialized tertiary care hospital in the region. (*Business Recorder, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***Balochistan releases Rs2.25bn for health card programme***

The provincial finance department has released Rs2.25 billion for the Balochistan Health Card Programme, aimed at providing free medical treatment to poor and deserving patients at leading hospitals across all four provinces. The Balochistan Health Card Programme, launched by provincial government last year to ensure free healthcare for underprivileged families, had recently faced a serious setback after outstanding dues of Rs5bn accumulated with State Life Insurance. As a result, private hospitals in Karachi suspended treatment of Balochistan Health Card patients under the programme.

Following the publication in newspapers of the report, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti took notice of the non-release of funds and issued immediate directives for the release of the required amount. In compliance with the chief minister's orders, the finance department has now released Rs2.25bn for the programme. However, officials said that despite the latest release, the Balochistan Health Card Programme still carries outstanding liabilities of Rs2.75bn payable to State Life Insurance. Scheme faced disruption after Rs5 billion dues accumulated with insurance company. (*Dawn, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Five health development projects worth Rs69.35bn okayed by CDWP***

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) cleared five health development projects worth Rs69.35 billion, while voicing serious concern over the sharp escalation in project costs and stressing the need for realistic, evidence-based estimates at the PC-I stage. The CDWP approved three development projects with a combined cost of Rs12.524 billion, while two major projects amounting to Rs56.823 billion were recommended to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for further consideration. (*Business Recorder, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***36pc of patients don't get free medicines, 31pc get bad treatment***

A patient feedback report got by the Chief Minister's Special Monitoring Unit (SMU) has blatantly exposed the falling treatment standards at the teaching hospitals across the province when it transpired that 719 patients out of total 1,976 complained that they were not provided with free medicines while 622 said that the duty doctors didn't treat them properly. It means 36 percent complained of missing facility of free medicines while 31pc complained against lack of treatment by the doctors in public sector hospitals. The report reveals Mayo Hospital Lahore was at the top among others where the most number of patients (54) filed complaints of non-cooperation of the doctors, followed by 52 in the Nishtar Hospital Multan and 48 in the Children's Hospital Lahore. (*Dawn, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 2*)

### ***PM relaunches Sehat Card health insurance scheme in ICT, AJK, GB***

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reintroduced the state-run health insurance programme, popularly known as the Sehat Card Programme, in the federal capital, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit-Baltistan. The prime minister added that through the launch of the Sehat Card, his government had taken yet another swift step to serve the nation. (*Dawn, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***103 people in Sindh lose battle against mosquito-borne diseases in 2025***

As many as 103 people died from mosquito borne diseases across Sindh during 2025, with 23 of them losing their lives at a Karachi hospital due to malaria, according to data gathered from three hospitals in Karachi and one in Hyderabad. However, the figure contradicts the provincial health department's tally, which puts the death toll from dengue and malaria at 33. (*Dawn, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 13*)

### ***Rotary provides \$9.9m to WHO Pakistan***

Rotary International has provided a grant of US\$9.9 million to the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Pakistan to support the vaccination of 27 million children against polio in high-risk districts. The partnership will reinforce the operations of the Government of Pakistan-led Polio Eradication Initiative, which conducts multiple nationwide door-to-door campaigns and sub-national drives each year, reaching over 45 million children.

Rotary is a founding member of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) — a public-private partnership to eradicate polio worldwide led by national governments with six partners: WHO, Rotary International, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Unicef, Gates Foundation and Gavi, Vaccine Alliance. Since the launch of Pakistan's Polio Eradication Initiative three decades ago, Pakistan has reduced polio cases by 99.8pc — from 20,000 cases in 1994 to 31 cases in 2025.

Globally, since 1988, the GPEI has brought down polio cases by 99.9pc. As of today, wild poliovirus type 1 remains endemic only in two countries: Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to a statement, to date, Rotary has contributed US\$3 billion to

global polio eradication efforts and nearly US\$500 million to Pakistan, along with high-level advocacy and countless volunteer hours. (*Dawn, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***NICVD seeks Rs3.5bn from Sindh govt to cover rising operational costs***

Senior officials representing the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) sought immediate financial assistance of Rs3.5 billion from the Sindh government to help cover the operational shortfalls that have occurred due to rising administrative and service costs. The CM directed officials to finalise appointment of a firm to develop a comprehensive business plan for the merger and administrative streamlining of NICVD and Sindh Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases. (*Dawn, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 13*)

### ***Measles kills 143 children in 2025 as fresh outbreaks reported across Pakistan***

Measles cases have risen alarmingly at the start of 2026, signalling a worsening public health crisis after the disease killed at least 143 children across Pakistan in 2025, immunisation authorities and World Health Organisation data reveal. Citing new surveillance data, officials said statistics show higher suspected and confirmed measles cases in the first week of 2026 compared to the same period last year, despite the availability of an effective vaccine. (*The News, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Second rabies case this month as girl bitten by stray dog in Sanghar brought to Karachi***

An eight-year-old girl bitten by a stray dog in Sanghar was presented with full-blown rabies at the Indus Hospital, raising the total number of reported cases of the deadly infectious disease to two this month. The girl was bitten by a dog over a month ago and was initially treated at the civil hospital in Jhol city, district Sanghar, and then at another hospital in Hyderabad. (*Dawn, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 13*)

### ***Surveillance heightened on borders as Nipah virus threatens Asia***

Pakistan enforced “strict and enhanced health surveillance” at all entry points of the country after India confirmed two cases of the deadly Nipah virus, joining Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia in stepping up screening of travellers. Nipah, carried by fruit bats and animals such as pigs, can trigger a deadly brain-swelling fever in humans and can also spread directly from person-to-person through close contact.

The virus is classified as a priority pathogen by the World Health Organisation (WHO) because of its ability to spark fastmoving outbreaks and a fatality rate ranging from 40 per cent to 75pc. There is currently no approved vaccine or cure. To coordinate the national response, the Border Health Services-Pakistan (BHS-P) issued an advisory mandating new protocols at international airports, seaports and land crossings. Mandatory verification of travel history for the preceding 21 days will be carried out for every traveller, regardless of nationality. (*Dawn, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***NA committee flags 300,000 HIV cases***

The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C) expressed serious concern over the reported 300,000 HIV

cases in Pakistan, noting that only 87,000 have been diagnosed and just 34,000 patients are currently under treatment. The committee was informed that none of the private hospitals and dispensaries in Islamabad held a valid licence, despite the establishment of the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) in 2018. Serious concerns were raised over unregulated pricing by private hospitals, lack of charity care, detention of patients and dead bodies over unpaid bills, poor solid waste management, illegal clinics, unsafe abortions, and the over-the-counter sale of medicines by pharmacies without prescriptions. (*Dawn, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

## **12 # CLIMATE CHANGE**

### ***Climate resilience***

The Asian Development Bank's latest climate resilience financing for Pakistan should reinforce the country's efforts towards building longer-term resilience to protect its people and economy from the adverse impacts of climate change. The \$180.5m funding for Sindh addresses one of the country's most neglected climate frontiers along its coastal belt where recurrent flooding and sea intrusion have steadily eroded livelihoods, undermined food security and impacted biodiversity, forcing residents to migrate. By focusing on integrated water resource management, flood risk reduction and restoration of nature-based coastal defences, the project will embrace ecosystem-based solutions, benefiting over 3.8m people.

The project will simultaneously focus on institutional strengthening and community-level strategic planning for durable impact and continuity. The \$124m assistance for Punjab seeks to tackle a different structural problem. It will give small farmers access to climate-smart machinery, introduce circular agriculture practices to reduce residue burning, establish testing and training facilities and empower thousands of women to enhance farm productivity and climate resilience in 30 districts.

That both projects have been structured in such a way that the provincial governments also chip in from their own resources on top of ADB financing, no matter how modest that contribution (\$20m from Sindh and \$5m from Punjab), will ensure their buy-in to the schemes. Their limited scale notwithstanding, the schemes underscore what needs to be pursued for climate adaptation and where money must be put for making communities climate resilient. They have rightly been described as `transformative` for communities that stand to benefit.

However, for these initiatives to have a durable impact, the authorities must ensure that the funds are spent prudently and transparently. Our development history is littered with well-funded projects that faltered midway due to weak execution, opacity and corruption. The challenge now is to ensure that the promise of climate finance is matched by institutional reform, transparency and sustained political commitment. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 6*)

### ***Pakistan needs \$566bn to meet climate targets***

Pakistan will need a staggering \$565.7 billion in investment to achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 3.0 climate commitments by 2035. These include a 17 per cent unconditional and 33pc conditional reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a 30pc increase in electric vehicle adoption, and a shift to 60pc renewable energy. Meeting these ambitious goals will depend heavily on mobilising green-aligned investments, making frameworks like the Pakistan Green Taxonomy and robust ESG disclosure practices essential for guiding capital toward sustainable projects.

This was revealed during a session on Pakistan Green Taxonomy (PGT) and ESG Disclosure Guidelines hosted by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), which was attended by top business executives and industry stakeholders. According to OICCI's press release, the session was held in the backdrop of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's issuance of the revised ESG Disclosure Guidelines for listed companies, formally aligning them with the Pakistan Green Taxonomy. The move is aimed at strengthening sustainability reporting, enhancing transparency, and supporting Pakistan's climate transition and environmental commitments. (*Dawn, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

### ***Floods, heatwaves shaped climate response in 2025***

Confronted with recurring floods, prolonged heatwaves, and mounting water stress, Pakistan intensified its climate resilience efforts in 2025, with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination outlining a series of policy measures, response initiatives, and international engagements aimed at strengthening long-term preparedness. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### **13.1 # Avalanche**

#### ***Two soldiers, civilian martyred in GB avalanche***

Two Pakistan Army personnel and a civilian machine operator were martyred in an avalanche in Gilgit-Baltistan's Burzil Pass. (*Dawn, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### **13.2 # Drought**

#### ***34pc less rainfall in December: PMD***

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) stated that the country received 34 per cent less rainfall in December last year. According to data shared by the PMD, Pakistan received 10.3 millimetres of rain in December 2025, which was 34 per cent lower than the 15.8mm of rain the winter month normally experiences. Azad Jammu Kashmir recorded 28.2mm, Balochistan 11.8mm, Gilgit-Baltistan 8.1mm, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 15.5mm, Punjab 3.7mm, and Sindh 7.9mm. The mean temperature across the country was recorded at 13.8 Celsius. (*Dawn, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### **13.3 # Snowfall**

#### ***Nine dead as snow blankets northern parts***

At least nine members of a family were killed when a snow avalanche buried their house in Chitral, as heavy snowfall, avalanches and landslides brought life to a standstill across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, blocking roads, stranding travellers and disrupting electricity and relief operations amid freezing temperatures. (*Dawn, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

#### ***Five killed in GB, Balochistan amid cold wave***

Four people were killed in Gilgit-Baltistan when a tower collapsed on a house following heavy snowfall in Diamer, while one person died in Balochistan after a roof caved in due to downpour in Zhob. Police said a “clock/observation tower” near a residential home in Tangir Valley in Diamer collapsed on a house, resulting in death of four members of a family and injuries to two other members. (*Dawn, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

#### ***Displaced by security operation, caught in snowstorm, over 1,500 rescued in Tirah***

Heavy snowfall and a snowstorm left thousands stranded in the Tirah valley of Khyber district, where authorities said over 15,000 people had been rescued, as evacuation operations continued for residents fleeing their homes amid fears of a renewed military operation. (*Dawn, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

#### ***NDMA issues avalanches alert: Heavy snowfall, landsliding kill 10 in KP***

Northern areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) have been gripped by intense cold and heavy snowfall, leaving at least 10 people dead in incidents involving landslides, avalanches and roof collapses over the past two days. The deceased include seven children and one woman, while rain and snowfall have caused partial damage to at least five houses in different areas. (*Business Recorder, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

## **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

### **14.1 # Earthquake**

#### ***One killed as 5.8 magnitude quake hits parts of GB***

A 5.8-magnitude earthquake jolted Gilgit-Baltistan, killing one person, injuring four others and damaging dozens of homes, cattle sheds, and public and private properties. The quake also triggered landslides that blocked the Karakoram Highway (KKH) and several other roads. The earthquake struck at a depth of 10 kilometres, with its epicentre located in northwestern Kashmir. (*Dawn, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### **14.2 # Landslide**

#### ***Eight killed in Kohat landslide***

A landslide buried eight people in the Parshai area of Gumbat tehsil. Rescuers recovered eight bodies from the debris and shifted them to hospital. The area where the incident occurred is located near the Indus River and the deceased were searching for placer gold at the time of the landslide. (*Dawn, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

## 15 # RESISTANCE

### ***Protest against ‘illegal’ demolition of houses continues***

Dozens of women of Lashari community along with children staged a protest demonstration, third consecutive day of the protest, near the press club on Hyderabad-Mirpurkhas road against “illegal” demolition of their houses and arrest of “innocent” residents for interrogation. Various activists and workers of social welfare organisations also joined the protest sit-in. The protesters raised slogans against local authorities. They called for justice and demanded that they be provided with immediate compensation and plots for construction of their houses. The protesters also called for releasing their “innocent” relatives from “illegal captivity”. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Thousands rally in Mirali against military operations in N. Waziristan***

Thousands of people belonging to the Utmanzai tribe took out a rally in Mirali to demand concrete steps for restoring peace in the North Waziristan, and lifting restrictions on people’s movement, their ‘economic blockade’. The rally was held at the Noor Islam Shaheed Chowk. The speakers stressed that peace was a fundamental right of citizens, demanding that residents of North Waziristan be allowed to live peacefully. Addressing the gathering, elders said continued insecurity, restrictions on people’s movement, and their ‘economic blockade’ had made life unbearable for them. (*Dawn, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Protests erupt in GB over caretaker cabinet appointments***

A protest organised by GB Youth Movement was held outside the GB CM Secretariat in Chinabagh against appointment of alleged controversial personalities in the GB caretaker government. Political and civil society members also announced protests in Ghanche, Nagar and Shigar districts over the lack of representation in the caretaker cabinet. The protesters demanded representation of educated youth and neutral individuals in the caretaker cabinet. They announced a sit-in protest until the decision to appoint the cabinet members was revoked. During the protest, demonstrators blocked River Road in Chinabagh area. Later, Gilgit police arrested eight protesters, including the chairman of the GB Youth Movement. (*Dawn, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### ***US aggression against Venezuela condemned***

The National Trade Union Federation Pakistan (NTUF) and the Home Based Women Workers Federation Pakistan (HBWWFP), along with other organisations, have staged a protest demonstration against the ongoing armed aggression of the United States against Venezuela. The demonstration expressed solidarity with the anti-imperialist resistance of the Venezuelan people and strongly condemned what participants described as US war hysteria.

During the protest, participants carried Venezuelan flags and portraits of Latin America’s revolutionary leader, Hugo Chávez, and the abducted President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro. Addressing the gathering, NTUF General Secretary Nasir

Mansoor said that Donald Trump had imposed a “criminal war on Venezuela after the genocide in Gaza”. He termed it shameful and blatant terrorism that the president of a sovereign country had been abducted by force simply because he raised his voice against US domination in the region and used the country’s oil and gas revenues for the welfare of the masses. (*Dawn, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 14*)

### ***Rallies across A JK mark Right to Self-Determination Day***

Rallies and seminars were held across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to mark the Right to Self-Determination Day, with participants urging United Nations to implement its January 5 resolution on Kashmir as a prerequisite for lasting peace in South Asia. In Muzaffarabad, Pasban-i-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir (PHJK), an organisation of post-1989 migrants from Indian-occupied Kashmir, organised a rally that drew a large number of participants, including women, children and elderly citizens.

The march began at Burhan Wani Shaheed Chowk and proceeded to the UN Observers’ Office near Domel - the confluence of the Neelum and Jhelum rivers. Participants carried banners and placards highlighting flagrant human rights violations in Indian-occupied Kashmir and demanding the right to self-determination, which they said had repeatedly been pledged to the Kashmiri people by the international community and India itself. (*Dawn, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 4*)

### ***Balochistan protesters demand action on Kech kidnappings***

Leaders and workers from different political parties, along with civil society members, staged a rally in Turbat town against the worsening law-and-order situation and the recent rise in kidnapping-for-ransom incidents in Kech district. The rally was organised by All Parties Kech in collaboration with traders, the Doctors Association and civil society. (*Dawn, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***JUI-F holds rally against lawlessness in Qambar-Shahdadkot***

Leaders and workers of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) blocked the main road connecting Garhi Khero and Shahdadkot in protest against the deteriorating law and order situation in Qambar-Shahdadkot. Chanting slogans, they burnt tyres and staged a sit-in on the road, suspending the vehicular traffic. (*Dawn, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Power utility workers hold rallies across Sindh against privatisation***

Employees of power utilities took out rallies across Sindh under the aegis of the All Pakistan Wapda Hydro Electric Workers Union in protest against the proposed privatisation of power distribution companies by the federal government. According to their leaders, the CBA has already served a notice under the Industrial Relations Act (IRA) 2012, warning that if their demands regarding shelving of privatisation of distribution companies is not met by Jan 15, the union will shut computers and billing counters at all the power distribution companies across Pakistan. (*Dawn, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Protesting UoP employees demand placing varsity under Centre's control***

The joint action committee of the University of Peshawar's teaching and non-teaching employees accused the provincial government of failing to efficiently manage the affairs of the leading higher education institution and demanded placing it under the administrative and financial control of the federal government. The demand was made during a protest against the non-payment of the December salaries and pensions by the university. (*Dawn, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Gas shortages trigger protests in Quetta amid severe cold***

Prolonged gas shortages amid a severe cold spell triggered protests in parts of the provincial capital, as residents blocked roads and burned tyres against low pressure and supply suspensions, while Siberian winds continued to lash Quetta and other towns in northern and central parts of the province following rain and snowfall last week. The severe cold has reduced gas supply in several areas, causing serious difficulties for residents trying to keep their homes warm. The Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has been implementing loadshedding in Quetta and surrounding areas from midnight to 5am. People in Kalat, Mastung, Ziarat, Pishin and several other areas are also facing similar gas shortages amid the ongoing cold spell. (*Dawn, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Protest held over 'disappearance' of labour leader in Karachi***

Iqbal Abro, a young trade unionist, has gone missing in the Korangi Industrial Area, with trade union leaders alleging that he was taken away by the police at the behest of influential industrialists as he had raised his voice against forced retrenchment at an industrial unit, officials and activists said. However, the Korangi district police denied the allegation of detaining Mr Abro. The activists held a protest demonstration outside Karachi Press Club. The protest was organised on the call of the National Trade Union Federation Pakistan (NTUF-P). The participants carried portraits of Mr Abro, and demanded his release from an "illegal custody". (*Dawn, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 14*)

### ***Protesters block KKH over delay in water supply project***

Residents of Nasirabad in Hunza staged a protest sit-in, blocking the Karakoram Highway (KKH) against delays in the completion of a water supply scheme from Minapin in Nagar, Gilgit-Baltistan. Protesters alleged that thousands of fruit and non-fruit trees had dried up and crops over thousands of acres of agricultural land were damaged due to water shortages. A large number of local residents staged an indefinite sit-in at Nasirabad, blocking the KKH. (*Dawn, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### ***Protest over police failure to recover two children missing for one year***

Relatives and residents of the Garden area protested against the alleged failure of the police to recover two children who were reportedly kidnapped in January last year, officials said. The protesters drew the attention of police authorities to the case. (*Dawn, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 14*)

### ***Protest held against shifting of AIOU campus from Kandhkot***

People staged a demonstration in protest against the closure of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) campus in Kandhkot. A large number of citizens and students gathered outside the Deputy Commissioner's Office to protest the decision for shifting the AIOU campus from Kandhkot to Sukkur, calling the move an "anti-education" conspiracy. During the demonstration, the participants raised slogans against the shifting. The degrees offered in local colleges were extremely expensive, making the AIOU campus the only viable option for the underprivileged residents. The protesters demanded that the AIOU campus remain in Kandhkot and that campuses of other universities also be established in the area. (*Dawn, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Protest against demolition of 'illegal houses' at Hala Naka***

Residents of Islamia Colony and Mulla Ismail Goth continued their day-long protest near Hala Naka against what they termed an illegal demolition of their settlements under an anti-encroachment campaign by the district administration. The drive was launched to clear the area of encroachment for the construction of road on both sides of Pinyari Canal of Kotri Barrage. (*Dawn, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Panjgur residents take to streets against rising kidnap cases***

Hundreds of people, political workers, traders and members of civil society staged a protest rally in Panjgur town against rising incidents of kidnapping for ransom of traders and general people and worsening law and order situation in the area. The protest call was given by All Parties Citizen Action Committee of Makran against the abduction of prominent figure of the area Gul Jan Rind and many other people in the Panjgur district. Hundreds of protesters gathered at the main Bismillah Chowk of Panjgur and marched on roads and streets carrying placards and banners inscribed with their demands and anti-government slogans. (*Dawn, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Protesters seek release of their detained relatives***

Relatives of 'missing persons' staged a protest outside the Peshawar Press Club, demanding the release of their loved ones and an end to what they described as 'discriminatory' treatment. The demonstration was organised under the banner of Defence of Human Rights Pakistan and was attended by family members of people currently detained in Peshawar, Haripur and Mardan jails. The protesters said that despite a 2018 order by Peshawar High Court directing the release of their relatives, they continue to be held on various pretexts. (*Dawn, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Police action against APCA protesters condemned***

Local employees of the health department along with leaders and members of the All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA) held a noisy demonstration at the Civil Hospital Makli against the alleged manhandling and arrest of APCA leaders by the Balochistan police. They strongly condemned police for using force and allegedly subjecting them to excesses. (*Dawn, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Protest held after police party kills septuagenarian man, nephew***

A large number of people belonging to the Junejo community and their supporters placed the bodies of an elderly man and his young nephew at the Sukkur-Larkana Road near Mirzapur in Shikarpur, in protest against their killing at the hands of police. The protesters staged a demonstration, suspending vehicular movement on both sides of the road. (*Dawn, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Civil society rallies in support of Imaan, Hadi***

Lawyers and civil society rallied in support of activists Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha — who were recently sentenced to 17 years in prison over controversial social media posts — as several bar associations announced a strike. But while demonstration in capital went off without a hitch, protest in Karachi was virtually scuttled when law enforcement personnel blocked off all access to Karachi Press Club. The closure of roads slowed down movement of traffic on several arteries in downtown area, causing inconvenience for commuters from I.I. Chundrigar Road to Saddar and beyond. A small group of demonstrators who managed to reach the press club did stage a token demonstration to register their protest. (*Dawn, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 3*)

### ***Employees offer voluntary arrests during protests in Quetta and Khuzdar***

Workers of the Balochistan Employees Grand Alliance (BEGA) staged protest rallies in Quetta and Khuzdar in support of their demands, including the grant of the disparity reduction allowance, with 11 employees voluntarily offering their arrests during the demonstrations. In Quetta, the BEGA employees took out a rally from Bacha Khan Chowk to City Police Station via Liaquat Bazaar. Upon reaching the police station, the protesters staged a sit-in and raised slogans against the government over the non-acceptance of their demands. Police officials said 11 employees participating in the protest voluntarily presented themselves for arrest. In Khuzdar, government employees responded to the alliance's call by holding a large-scale protest in support of their demands. (*Dawn, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Makran shuts to protest against poor law & order***

A shutter-down strike was observed by traders in three Makran districts — Gwadar, Panjgur and Turbat — in protest against deteriorating law and order in the region and kidnapping incidents. The strike call was given by an alliance of major political parties, and all segments of society, including businesses, participated in it. (*Dawn, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Demo held in Quetta against low gas pressure, loadshedding***

A protest demonstration against severe reduction in gas pressure and loadshedding in several areas of Quetta was held outside the office of the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) under the auspices of the district wing of the Mazloom Awami Tehreek Pakistan (MATP). Workers of the MATP from various units participated in large numbers. (*Dawn, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Shutter-down in Sanghar against doctor's killing***

A complete shutter-down strike was observed in Sanghar on the call of traders against the alleged police failure in arresting the killers of a doctor. The strike was called by the Chamber of Commerce Sanghar against the targeted killing of Dr Saleem Arain who was shot by unknown armed motorcyclists near Rehmat Shah Chowk in town four days ago. All the main markets and bazaars remained closed in protest against the incident and increasing crime. The traders strongly criticised the poor law and order, and demanded immediate arrest of the killers. (*Dawn, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

### ***Displaced persons from Tirah protest delay in payment of transport fare***

Scores of displaced persons from Tirah Valley staged a demonstration in Bara against a delay in payment of transport fare to them with arrival of news families considerably reduced. Sources in Bara told that angry protesters resorted to pelting stones at gates of Alamgudar Registration Centre after they lost patience over slow cash distribution. They said that witnessed an influx of displaced families at Alamgudar Centre as they were eager to get the promised transport fare, with the staff members struggling to cope with a large number of newly-arrived internally displaced persons. (*Dawn, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***STP rally against price hike***

Sindh Taraqqi-Pasand Party (STP) staged a protest rally in Jacobabad against price hike. The rally set off from STP's district office and ended in front of the local press club, where the participants held a sit-in and raised slogans. They strongly criticised 'artificial' increase in the rates of common and essential commodities including wheat flour, sugar, ghee and rice. (*Dawn, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 15*)

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS LISTING

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Humanity faces era of water bankruptcy says UN report [P. 55]

## 2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

## 3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

Brazil farmers harvest 0.53pc of 2025/26 soybean area [P. 55]

## 4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

## 5 # TRADE

India sugar export deals gain traction on lower prices, weak currency [P. 56]

US trade gap shrinks to smallest since 2009 as imports fall [P. 56]

EU states ignore French opposition to back trade accord with S. America [P. 56]

India's 2025 rice exports surge to near record as curbs lifted [P. 57]

Trump hits Iran trade partners with tariffs [P. 57]

China's trade ends 2025 with record trillion dollar surplus [P. 57]

India close to EU trade pact as US trade talks drag on [P. 58]

China, Canada reach landmark deal on tariffs, visas [P. 58]

EU, Mercusur bloc ink major trade deal, reject tariffs and protectionism [P. 58]

EU lawmakers stall US trade deal in protest over Greenland [P. 59]

EU, India sign 'massive' trade deal to cut tariffs [P. 59]

## 6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

## 7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Saudi Arabia pledges \$500m for southern Yemen's uplift [P. 60]

EU commission pledges 126m euros for Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan [P. 60]

US to inject \$1.6bn into rare earths miner for 10pc stake, Financial Times reports

## 8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

## 9 # POLICY

Venezuela unveils plans to open oil sector to private investment [P. 60]

## 10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

World Bank sees resilient global growth in 2026 [P. 61]

IMF lifts 2026 global growth forecast but flags AI, trade risks [P. 61]

### **10.1 # Food**

Taliban contest UN report on malnourished women, children [P. 62]

Afghanistan's hunger crisis worsened by winter, aid cuts [P. 62]

### **10.2 # Inflation**

AI-driven inflation is 2026's most overlooked risk [P. 62]

### **10.3 # Poverty**

Trade and AI cloud job outlook: ILO [P. 63]

## **11 # ENVIRONMENT**

Plastics everywhere, and the myth that made it possible [P. 64]

World spends \$30 destroying nature for every \$1 spent protecting it [P. 64]

### **11.1 # Pollution**

Brick kilns blamed for worsening air quality in Nepal [P. 65]

### **11.2 # Biodiversity**

UN biodiversity treaty enters into force, aims to protect 30pc of oceans by 2030 [P. 65]

### **11.3 # Health**

Contaminated water kills nine, hospitalises 200 in Indian city [P. 66]

WHO sees low risk of Nipah spread amid tight screening [P. 66]

## **12 # CLIMATE CHANGE**

Temperature records broken across the world in 2025 [P. 66]

Britain records hottest, sunniest year ever [P. 66]

US withdraws from climate treaty, 66 global bodies [P. 67]

2025 among world's three hottest years on record, WMO says [P. 67]

World not ready for rise in extreme heat, scientists say [P. 67]

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

### **13.1 # Flood**

South Africa declares national disaster as floods batter region [P. 68]

### **13.2 # Snow**

Six die in weather accidents as cold snap grips Europe [P. 68]

Snow, ice hit western, central US as massive storm sweeps nation [P. 68]

Moscow records heaviest snowfall in over 200 years [P. 68]

### **13.3 # Storm**

Storms spark travel mayhem across Europe [P. 69]

Storms leave 100,000 French homes without power [P. 69]

Storms, heavy rain kill 14 across Afghanistan [P. 69]

Homes buried under ice as storm sweeps across US east coast [P. 69]

Historic winter storm kills at least 11 across US [P. 70]

US monster storm kills 30; one million without power [P. 70]

### **13.4 # Wildfire**

'State of disaster' declared in Australian region as bushfires rage [P. 70]

Scores of homes razed, one dead in Australian bushfires [P. 70]

Chile declares emergency as wildfires kill 15 [P. 71]

### **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

Two killed, many missing after NZ landslides [P. 71]

Indonesia landslide kills eight, more than 80 missing [P. 71]

### **15 # RESISTANCE**

Thousands stage Gaza rally in Istanbul [P. 71]

At least 16 dead in Iran during week of protests: Rights group [P. 72]

News Makers: Strasbourg (France): [P. 72]

French farmers block Paris streets in protest against Mercosur trade deal [P. 72]

Farmers march, block highways [P. 73]

Irish farmers protest against Mercosur trade deal [P. 73]

Thousands rally in support of Yemen's separatist group [P. 74]

Protests in US intensify over weekend after ICE shooting [P. 74]

Deaths from Iran protests reach more than 500, rights group says [P. 74]

Maduro loyalists stage rally as Venezuelan govt courts US [P. 74]

150,000 nurses on largest-ever strike in New York City [P. 75]

Furious farmers roll hundreds of tractors into Paris in fresh protests [P. 75]

Trump threatens to invoke Insurrection Act over Minnesota protests [P. 75]

Hundreds in London protest against Beijing mage embassy [P. 75]

Thousands join anti-Trump hands off Greenland protests in Denmark [P. 76]

Govt admits thousands of death' as Iran begins to restore internet [P. 76]

Farmers protest EU-Mercosur trade deal ahead of vote [P. 76]

Nationwide protests begin over ICE in Minneapolis [P. 76]

## 1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

### ***Humanity faces era of water bankruptcy says UN report***

The world is experiencing the dawn of an “era of water bankruptcy”, according to a United Nations report. The report invited leaders to facilitate “honest, science-based adaptation to a new reality” amid chronic depletion of groundwater, over-allocation of water, land and soil degradation, deforestation, and pollution — all compounded by global warming. Titled “Global Water Bankruptcy: Living Beyond Our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era”, the report was produced by the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health. It noted that in many regions, water systems were already in a “post-crisis state of failure”.

Over decades, societies have extracted more water than climate and hydrology can provide, drawing down not only the annual ‘income’ of renewable flows but also the ‘savings’ stored in aquifers, glaciers, soils, wetlands, and river ecosystems. At the same time, pollution, salination, and other forms of degradation have reduced the fraction of water that is safely usable, latest UN report observed. In Middle East and North Africa, high water stress, climate vulnerability, low agricultural productivity, energy-intensive desalination, and sand and dust storms intersect with complex political economies.

In parts of South Asia, groundwater-dependent agriculture and urbanisation have produced chronic declines in water tables and subsidence; and in the American southwest, the Colorado River and its reservoirs have become symbols of “over-promised water”. “The consequences of water bankruptcy are now visible on every continent: rivers no longer reach the sea; lakes, wetlands, and glaciers have shrunk or disappeared; aquifers pumped down until land subsides and salt intrudes; forests and peatlands are drying and burning; deserts and dust storms are expanding, and cities are repeatedly brought to the brink of ‘day zero’,” the UN study said. Drawing on global datasets and recent scientific evidence, the report presented a stark statistical overview of trends, the overwhelming majority of which are caused by humans. (*Dawn, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

## 2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

## 3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

### ***Brazil farmers harvest 0.53pc of 2025/26 soybean area***

Brazilian farmers have harvested 0.53percent of the country’s expected 2025/2026 soybean area, compared to 0.05 percent at this time last year, consultancy firm Patria AgroNegocios said. The five-year average for the period is estimated at 0.39 percent. Mato Grosso state, Brazil’s largest soy producer, kicked off harvesting in the country

with a higher pace than recent years' average, but below 2024, Patria said. "In other Brazilian regions, harvesting is still in its early stages and concentrated in irrigated areas," it added. (*Business Recorder, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 7*)

#### **4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS**

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

#### **5 # TRADE**

##### ***India sugar export deals gain traction on lower prices, weak currency***

Indian mills have signed export contracts for around 180,000 metric tons of sugar this season with a domestic price correction and weaker rupee belatedly driving overseas sales in recent weeks. The federal government in November approved exports of 1.5 million tons of sugar from the current season, which opened on October 1. But high prices on the local market have led to sluggish export activity. That slower-than-expected pace of shipments from India, the world's second-largest sugar producer, could support global prices, which are trading near their lowest levels in five years. Five dealers told that mills have so far contracted shipments to Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and East African countries. (*Business Recorder, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

##### ***US trade gap shrinks to smallest since 2009 as imports fall***

The US trade deficit made a sharp and unexpected pullback in October, reaching its lowest level since 2009 as goods imports dropped while President Donald Trump's tariffs took hold. The overall trade gap plunged 39 percent to \$29.4 billion in October, said the Department of Commerce, as imports dropped by 3.2 percent. The deficit was significantly smaller than a \$58.4 billion median forecast from surveys of economists by *Dow Jones* Newswires and *The Wall Street Journal*. While US exports rose by \$7.8 billion in October to \$302.0 billion, imports dropped by \$11.0 billion to \$331.4 billion. This was largely due to a tumble in goods imports, with consumer goods declining \$14.0 billion. Within the category, pharmaceutical preparations fell sharply, the Commerce Department said. Imports of industrial supplies and materials like nonmonetary gold also dropped. (*Business Recorder, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

##### ***EU states ignore French opposition to back trade accord with S. America***

European Union states gave the go-ahead for the bloc to sign its largest free trade accord with the South American group Mercosur, despite opposition from farmers in France and some other countries. The approval came more than 25 years after talks began. With US President Donald Trump shaking up global trade, the European Commission and countries such as Germany and Spain argue the deal will help offset business lost from US import tariffs, and reduce reliance on China by securing access to critical minerals. Opponents led by France, the European Union's largest agricultural producer, say the agreement will jack up imports of cheap food products, including beef, poultry and sugar, undercutting domestic farmers.

The free trade agreement is set to be the European Union's biggest in terms of tariff reduction, removing 4 billion euros (\$4.66 billion) of duties on its exports. The Mercosur countries have high tariffs, such as 35pc on car parts, 28pc on dairy products and 27pc on wines. The EU and Mercosur will hope to expand evenly split goods trade worth 111 billion euros in 2024. EU exports are dominated by machinery, chemicals and transport equipment, and Mercosur's are focused on agricultural products, minerals, pulp and paper.

To win over deal sceptics, the European Commission has put in place safeguards that can suspend imports of sensitive farm produce. It has strengthened import controls, notably regarding pesticide residues, established a crisis fund, accelerated support for farmers, and has pledged to cut import duties on fertilisers. The concessions were not enough to convince Poland or France, but Italy shifted from a 'no' in December to a 'yes', swinging the overall balance. (*Dawn, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***India's 2025 rice exports surge to near record as curbs lifted***

India's rice exports jumped 19.4 percent last year to the second-highest on record after New Delhi lifted all export curbs, making shipments more competitive, government and industry. An improved flow of rice from the world's largest exporter of the grain curbed shipments from rivals Thailand and Vietnam and drove prices in Asia to their lowest in nearly a decade, easing costs for poor consumers in Africa and other regions. "Indian shipments rebounded quickly after the government lifted export restrictions" in March, said a government official, who asked not to be named as he was not authorised to speak to the media. As supplies improved with record production, India removed the last of the export curbs imposed in 2022 and 2023. Exports rose to 21.55 million metric tons from 18.05 million in 2024, near the 2022 record of 22.3 million tons. (*Business Recorder, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Trump hits Iran trade partners with tariffs***

US President Donald Trump announced a 25-percent tariff on any country doing business with Iran, ramping up pressure as a rights group estimated a crackdown on protests has killed at least 648 people. Iranian authorities insisted they have regained control after successive nights of mass protests nationwide that have posed one of the biggest challenges to the clerical leadership since the 1979 Islamic revolution ousted the shah. But rights groups accuse the government of using live fire against protesters and masking the scale of the crackdown with an internet blackout that has now lasted more than four days. International phone calls however have resumed in Iran after being blocked for days, an AFP correspondent in Tehran said, but only outgoing calls could be made. (*Business Recorder, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***China's trade ends 2025 with record trillion dollar surplus***

China reported a strong export run in 2025 with a record trillion-dollar surplus, as producers braced for three more years of a Trump administration set on slowing the

production powerhouse by shifting US orders to other markets. Beijing's resilience to renewed tariff tensions since President Donald Trump returned to the White House last January has emboldened Chinese firms to shift their focus to Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America to offset US duties.

With Beijing looking to exports to counteract a prolonged property slump and sluggish domestic demand, the record-shattering surplus risks further unsettling economies concerned about China's trade practices and overcapacity, as well as their overreliance on key Chinese products. The manufacturing powerhouse's full-year trade surplus came in at USD1.189 trillion - a figure on par with the GDP of a top-20 economy globally like Saudi Arabia - customs data showed, having broken the trillion-dollar ceiling for the first time in November. (*Business Recorder, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***India close to EU trade pact as US trade talks drag on***

India expects talks on a long-sought trade deal with the European Union to conclude this month, Trade Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said, in what would be New Delhi's largest agreement as it seeks new markets amid US tariff pressures. The deal, under discussion for years, is seen as a chance for both sides to deepen economic ties and cut reliance on China and Russia. Bilateral trade between India and the EU totalled 120 billion euros (\$140 billion) in 2024, making the bloc India's biggest trading partner. Agrawal said the two sides were "very close" to finalising the pact and were exploring whether it could be wrapped up before leaders meet in New Delhi this month. (*Business Recorder, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***China, Canada reach landmark deal on tariffs, visas***

Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed on a raft of measures from trade to tourism at the first meeting between the countries' leaders in Beijing in eight years. The Canadian premier hailed a "landmark deal" under a "new strategic partnership" with China, turning the page on years of diplomatic spats, retaliatory arrests of each other's citizens and tariff disputes. Carney has sought to reduce his country's reliance on United States, its key economic partner and traditional ally, as President Donald Trump has aggressively raised tariffs on Canadian products. (*Business Recorder, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***EU, Mercosur bloc ink major trade deal, reject tariffs and protectionism***

South American and European Union officials signed a major trade deal, which they hailed as sending a powerful message at a time of tariff threats, global uncertainty and protectionism. The deal between the 27-nation European Union and Mercosur bloc members Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay creates one of the world's largest free trade areas after 25 years of tricky negotiations. It was given fresh impetus amid sweeping use of tariffs & trade threats by US President Donald Trump's administration, which has sent countries scrambling for new partnerships. Trump threatened multiple

European nations with tariffs of up to 25 percent until he manages to gain control of the Danish territory Greenland. Accord creates one of world's largest free trade areas after 25 years of tricky negotiations. (*Dawn, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***EU lawmakers stall US trade deal in protest over Greenland***

European Parliament has decided to suspend its work on the European Union's trade deal with United States in protest at US President Donald Trump's demands to acquire Greenland and threats of tariffs on European allies who oppose his plan. The EU assembly has been debating legislative proposals to remove many EU import duties on US goods, a key part of the agreement struck in Turnberry, Scotland, at the end of July, as well as to continue zero duties for US lobsters, initially agreed with Trump in 2020.

The proposals require approval by the parliament and EU governments. Many lawmakers have complained that the trade deal is lopsided, with the EU required to cut most import duties while US sticks to a broad rate of 15pc. However, they had previously appeared willing to accept it, albeit with conditions, such as an 18-month sunset clause and measures to respond to possible surges of US imports. The trade committee of the European Parliament was due to set its position in votes on January 26-27. However this has now been postponed. (*Business Recorder, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***EU, India sign 'massive' trade deal to cut tariffs***

India and the European Union announced a huge trade pact to create a market of two billion people, reached after two decades of negotiations. The agreement will cut or eliminate tariffs on almost 97pc of European exports, saving up to four billion euros (\$4.75bn) annually in duties, the 27-nation bloc said. "A mother of all deals," Modi said in the capital New Delhi, where he met with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa. "This deal will bring many opportunities for India's 1.4 billion and many millions of people of the EU," Modi said, adding agreement "represents about 25pc of global GDP, and one-third of global trade". The EU has eyed India — world's most populous nation — as an important market for the future. "Europe and India are making history today," von der Leyen said in a statement, a day after she and Costa were feted as guests of honour at India's Republic Day parade. "We have created a free trade zone of two billion people, with both sides set to benefit."

EU officials said the deal was the most ambitious India had ever agreed, and European companies would benefit from so-called "first mover advantage". Europe's key agricultural, automotive and service sectors stand to gain. But sensitive agricultural sectors, such as beef, rice and sugar whose inclusion in an earlier deal struck with South American bloc Mercosur sparked farmers' anger in Europe, were left out of the agreement. New Delhi sees the European bloc as an important source of much-needed technology and investment to rapidly upscale its infrastructure and create millions of new jobs. It also includes a security partnership, providing "new opportunities" for defence companies, Modi said. (*Dawn, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

## **6 # CORPORATE SECTOR**

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

### **7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT**

#### ***Saudi Arabia pledges \$500m for southern Yemen's uplift***

Saudi Arabia has announced a sweeping \$500 million development package for southern Yemen following a government offensive against allied separatists, while Pakistan has urged the UN Security Council to push for an inclusive political settlement to the protracted conflict. The development initiative, spanning 10 provinces, signals an increasingly assertive posture by the Kingdom after recent volatility in the region. Last year, the separatist Southern Transitional Council swept through parts of the south, advancing near the Saudi border. Riyadh declared the manoeuvre a threat to its national security and backed a military offensive earlier this month that routed the STC from power. (*Dawn, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

#### ***EU commission pledges 126m euros for Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan***

The European Commission has allocated 126 million euros to address humanitarian needs in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan during 2026, part of an initial 1.9 billion euro aid budget aimed at combating global crises as major donors cut funds. The allocation comes at a time when 239m people require assistance, the commission said. Additionally, more than 415m euros has been reserved for responding to sudden-onset emergencies and maintaining a strategic supply chain. EC Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib took this commitment to the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos to seek private sector finance and innovative solutions that can complement public funding. (*Dawn, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

#### ***US to inject \$1.6bn into rare earths miner for 10pc stake, Financial Times reports***

The United States is planning to inject \$1.6 billion into Oklahoma-based miner USA Rare Earth and will receive a 10 per cent stake in the company, the Financial Times reported, citing people familiar with the matter. The government investment and a separate \$1 billion private financing deal are slated to be announced, the report said. The government would receive 16.1 million shares in the rare earths company, along with warrants for a further 17.6m, both priced at \$17.17, the report said. (*Dawn, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

## **8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)**

*Not any preferable news to be included in this month.*

## **9 # POLICY**

#### ***Venezuela unveils plans to open oil sector to private investment***

Venezuela's parliament begins debating plans to throw open the country's lucrative oil sector to private investment, less than three weeks after the US ouster of Nicolas Maduro. Until now, private companies were only allowed to operate in joint ventures

with state-owned oil firm PDVSA, which insisted on holding a majority. The bill under debate allows for “private companies domiciled in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela” to engage in oil exploration and extraction. The Trump administration is allowing China to purchase Venezuelan oil but not at “unfair, undercut” prices at which Venezuela sold the crude before the US removed its leader Nicolas Maduro, an administration official said. (*Dawn, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

## **10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION**

### ***World Bank sees resilient global growth in 2026***

The global economy is proving more resilient than expected, with 2026 GDP growth expected to improve slightly over forecasts from last June, the World Bank said while warning that growth is too concentrated in advanced countries and overall too weak to reduce extreme poverty. The World Bank’s semi-annual Global Economic Prospects report shows that global output growth will slow slightly to 2.6 percent this year from 2.7 percent in 2025 before edging back to 2.7 percent in 2027.

The 2026 GDP forecast is up two-tenths of a percentage point from the last predictions released in June, while 2025 growth will exceed the prior forecast by four-tenths of a percentage point. The World Bank said about two-thirds of the upward revision reflects better-than-expected growth in the US despite tariff-driven trade disruptions. It predicts US GDP growth will reach 2.2 percent in 2026, compared to 2.1 percent in 2025 - up two-tenths and half a percentage point from the June forecasts, respectively. After an import surge to beat tariffs early in 2025 held back US growth for that year, bigger tax incentives will aid growth in 2026, offset by the drag of tariffs on investment and consumption, the World Bank said. But if the current forecasts hold, the 2020s are on track to be the weakest decade for global growth since the 1960s and too low to avert stagnation and joblessness in emerging market and developing countries, the global lender said. (*Business Recorder, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***IMF lifts 2026 global growth forecast but flags AI, trade risks***

The IMF upgraded its 2026 global growth forecast, citing a boost from tech investments but warning that a reevaluation of AI productivity gains or renewed trade tensions could bring disruptions. World economic growth is projected to hold steady at 3.3pc this year, the International Monetary Fund said, raising its forecast by 0.2 percentage points from October. This would be same pace of growth as in 2025. But the Washington-based lender cautioned in its World Economic Outlook update that “the resilience exhibited so far is driven largely by a few sectors,” signaling vulnerability. While the global economy appears to be “shaking off the trade and tariff disruptions of 2025,” this does not mean they had no impact, said IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas. Instead, the challenges were offset by “tailwinds from AI and tech investment boom,” he told reporters. This was especially true in North America and Asia, IMF said. The private sector also showed adaptability in dealing with trade shocks, while fiscal and monetary support provided boosts. (*Business Recorder, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

## 10.1 # Food

### ***Taliban contest UN report on malnourished women, children***

Afghanistan's Taliban government said its goal was "to help all malnourished children and mothers", after the United Nations warned that millions would experience acute malnutrition this year. The World Food Programme's Afghanistan director John Aylieff said this week that five million women and children would experience life-threatening malnutrition in a worsening crisis in the country of 40 million people. The United Nations agency has said that nearly four million children would require treatment for malnutrition, a figure also supported by the UN-mandated Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. "These numbers are staggering," said Aylieff.

The Afghan public health ministry gave lower figures, saying that there were "around three million children and mothers suffering from malnutrition". "About 1.3 million children are moderately malnourished, 700,000 suffer from acute malnutrition and 900,000 mothers are moderately to severely malnourished," ministry spokesman Sharafat Zaman said. The ministry said the number of facilities offering treatment for malnutrition had grown from "800 to 3,200". The WFP is seeking \$390 million in an urgent appeal to feed six million Afghans over the next six months, although Aylieff described the chances of getting the funds as "bleak" after aid donations were slashed in recent years. (*Dawn, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***Afghanistan's hunger crisis worsened by winter, aid cuts***

In the dull glow of a single bulb lighting their tent on the outskirts of Kabul, Samiullah and his wife Bibi Rehana sit down to dry bread and tea, their only meal of the day, accompanied by their five children and three-month-old grandchild. "We have reached a point where we are content with death," said 55-year-old Samiullah, whose family, including two older sons aged 18 and 20 and their wives, is among the millions deported by neighbouring Iran and Pakistan in the past year.

"Day by day, things are getting worse," he added, after their return to a war-torn nation where the United Nations' World Food Programme estimates 17m battle acute hunger after massive cuts in international aid. "Whatever happens to us has happened, but at least our children's lives should be better." He was one of the returned Afghans speaking before protests in Iran sparked a massive crackdown by the clerical establishment, killing more than 2,000 in ensuing violence. (*Dawn, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

## 10.2 # Inflation

### ***AI-driven inflation is 2026's most overlooked risk***

Global stock markets, riding high on AI euphoria at the start of 2026 may be disregarding one of the biggest threats that could spoil the party: a surge in inflation driven partly by the tech investment boom. US stock indexes, where seven tech groups contributed half of all market earnings this year, made double-digit gains in 2025 to hit record highs as exuberance about AI and monetary easing also propelled European and

Asian equities to record peaks. Expectations for further rate cuts have buoyed bonds too, handing US Treasury investors the best annual performance for five years as inflation retreated, although it remains above the Federal Reserve's average 2% target. For 2026, waves of government stimulus in the US, Europe and Japan as well as the AI boom are expected to refuel global growth. This has money managers bracing for inflation to re-accelerate, prompting central banks to end their rate-cutting cycles, slamming the brakes on the easy money flow into AI-obsessed markets. Tighter money would reduce investors' appetite for speculative tech, raise funding costs for AI projects and reduce tech groups' profits and share prices, Greetham said. (*Business Recorder, January 6<sup>th</sup> 2026, Page 6*)

### 10.3 # Poverty

#### ***Trade and AI cloud job outlook: ILO***

As nearly 300 million workers continue to live in extreme poverty, earning less than \$3 a day, a new report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) says progress towards decent work has stalled, warning that young people continue to struggle, while artificial intelligence and trade policy uncertainty risk further undermining the job market. The ILO report, *Employment and Social Trends 2026* finds that while the global unemployment rate is projected to stay at 4.9 per cent in 2026 — equivalent to 186 million people — millions of workers around the world still lack access to quality jobs.

Despite the resilience of global unemployment rates amid economic uncertainty, the world continues to fall short in achieving meaningful reductions in decent work deficits. Given demographic shifts in global labour markets, decent work deficits are set to increase again after a prolonged period of improvement. Yet rising AI adoption, trade policy uncertainty, low foreign direct investment and stagnant trade growth render improvements in working conditions through an expansion of employment in trade-related sectors more difficult. Youth unemployment climbed to 12.4pc in 2025, with around 260m young people not in education, employment or training. In low-income countries, NEET rates are a daunting 27.9pc. Women still face entrenched barriers, largely driven by social norms and stereotypes. They account for just two-fifths of global employment and are 24pc less likely than men to participate in labour force. Gains in female labour force participation have stalled, slowing progress towards gender equality at work.

Despite an increase in employment of around 15.3 million people between 2024 and 2025, the employment-to-population ratio in Asia and the Pacific was estimated at 57.9pc in 2025. It is expected to decrease through to 2027, partly because of population ageing. Asia and the Pacific is one of the most exposed regions to the effects of climate change, while also being a major emitter of greenhouse gases. As a green transition advances in the region, green jobs are appearing more prominently in national development strategies and plans. Jobs in the renewable energy sector have been on the rise, but they represent only part of the broader green jobs landscape. (*Dawn, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

## 11 # ENVIRONMENT

### ***Plastics everywhere, and the myth that made it possible***

If there's one material that defines modern life more than any other, it's plastic: present from the moment we're born in newborn stool, in product packaging, in the soil beneath our feet and the air we breathe. Hard as it is to imagine, it wasn't always thus — and doesn't have to remain this way, argues Judith Enck in her new book, "The Problem with Plastics." "Half of all plastic ever produced was since 2007," the year the iPhone debuted, she said in an interview.

Last year, the administration helped derail a global plastics treaty and reversed a phase-out of single-use plastics in national parks. Nevertheless, she sees momentum building at the state and local level — hailing, for example, New Jersey's "Skip the Stuff" law enacted this week, which requires restaurants to provide single-use cutlery only upon request, a measure shown to significantly reduce waste.

Enck's book traces the history of plastic: from its earliest incarnation in 1909, when Belgian chemist Leo Baekeland invented Bakelite, through the "myth" of plastic recycling promoted by industry from the mid-20th century onward. Along the way, Enck argues that responsibility for the crisis has been systematically shifted onto consumers, even as plastic production continues to soar.

Around 33 billion pounds of plastic enter the ocean every year, "the equivalent of two large garbage trucks filled with plastic being dumped into the ocean every minute." Microplastics, along with ultra-tiny nanoplastics, can kill or severely sicken marine life before entering the food web and ultimately ending up on our plates. Research into the health effects is ongoing, and some findings are contested. But a 2024 study found that people with microplastics in their heart arteries face an increased risk of heart attack, stroke and premature death. (*Dawn, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***World spends \$30 destroying nature for every \$1 spent protecting it***

For every \$1 the world invests in protecting nature, it spends \$30 on destroying it. This stark imbalance is the central finding of a new report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The 'State of Finance for Nature 2026' report finds that total nature-negative finance flows stand at \$7.3 trillion. Of this, \$4.9tr comes from private sources, highly concentrated in a few sectors including utilities, industrials, energy, and basic materials. Public environmentally harmful subsidies — mainly for fossil fuels, agriculture, water, transport and construction — amounted to \$2.4tr in 2023.

Report called for a major shift in global financing towards nature-based solutions (NbS) and the phasing out of harmful investments to deliver high returns, reduce risk exposure, and enhance resilience. The report further finds that finance flows for NbS totalled \$220 billion, with nearly 90 per cent coming from public sources, reflecting a steady rise in domestic and international support. Globally, finance flows remain heavily skewed

towards nature-negative activities, threatening ecosystems, economies and human well-being. Nearly half of the global economy significantly depends on nature, yet governments, businesses and financial institutions continue to erode the world's collective natural capital.

In 2023, finance directly harmful to nature reached \$7.3tr, while investments in NbS amounted to only \$220bn. To meet global commitments under the Rio Conventions, NbS investment must increase by more than two and a half times to \$571bn by 2030, while harmful finance flows must be phased out and repurposed, emphasised the report. While finance for NbS has continued to grow, it remains far below the level required to meet global biodiversity, climate and land restoration goals. (*Dawn, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### **11.1 # Pollution**

#### ***Brick kilns blamed for worsening air quality in Nepal***

Nearly 1,200 brick kiln operators across the country are set to start seasonal firing, further exacerbating air quality, which is already worsening every day. Brick kilns began operations on Jan 15, a deadline agreed upon by the industry, government, and environmentalists. Brick kilns are among the major contributors to the country's deteriorating air quality, including in the Kathmandu Valley.

Due to delays in establishing minimum standards, many kilns use low-quality, low-cost coals that further degrade the air quality. Officials at the federation said the Department of Industry had asked the Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology to set minimum coal standards a year ago, but the standards have yet to be drafted. (*Dawn, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### **11.2 # Biodiversity**

#### ***UN biodiversity treaty enters into force, aims to protect 30pc of oceans by 2030***

A landmark global treaty to safeguard biodiversity in the high seas came into effect, providing countries with a legally binding framework to tackle threats such as overfishing and meet a target to protect 30 percent of the ocean environment by 2030. The UN treaty, also known as Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), was finalised in March 2023 after 15 years of negotiations, and will allow the creation of a global network of "marine protected areas" in vast and previously unregulated ocean ecosystems lying in international waters.

The treaty reached the threshold of 60 national ratifications on September 19 last year, meaning that it would go formally into operation within 120 days. The number of ratifications has since risen to more than 80, with China, Brazil and Japan adding their names to the list. Others, including Britain and Australia, are expected to follow soon. The United States signed the treaty during the previous administration but has not yet ratified it. (*Business Recorder, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### **11.3 # Health**

#### ***Contaminated water kills nine, hospitalises 200 in Indian city***

At least nine people have died and more than 200 have been hospitalised in the central Indian city of Indore after a diarrhoea outbreak that officials said was linked to contaminated drinking water, according to a lawmaker and local health authorities. (*Dawn, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

#### ***WHO sees low risk of Nipah spread amid tight screening***

The risk of the spread of the Nipah virus is low, a World Health Organisation official said, even as several Asian nations tightened airport screenings in a move experts called more about reassurance than a scientific step to spread stop. Anais Legand, an official with the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, said none of the more than 190 contacts of the two people infected in India had tested positive or developed symptoms. Carried by fruit bats and animals such as pigs, the Nipah virus can cause fever and brain inflammation. It does not spread easily between people but has a fatality rate ranging from 40pc to 75pc. There is no cure and vaccines are still being tested. (*Dawn, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### **12 # CLIMATE CHANGE**

#### ***Temperature records broken across the world in 2025***

Central Asia, the Sahel region and northern Europe experienced their hottest year on record in 2025, according to analysis based on data from the European Copernicus programme. Globally, the last 12 months are expected to be the third hottest ever recorded after 2024 and 2023, according to the provisional data, which will be confirmed by Copernicus in its annual report in early January. But the average, which includes land and oceans, masks overall records for certain parts of the world. Since many poorer nations do not publish detailed climate data, experts completed the global picture by independently analysing Copernicus data from climate models, measurements from about 20 satellites, and weather stations. The data spans the whole world, hour by hour, since 1970. (*Dawn, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

#### ***Britain records hottest, sunniest year ever***

Britain experienced its hottest and sunniest year on record in 2025, surpassing the previous high set in 2022, the national weather service said, as persistent high-pressure systems and unusually warm seas drove up temperatures. The Met Office said the average annual temperature was 10.09 degrees Celsius (50.16 degrees Fahrenheit), topping the 2022 average of 10.03C and marking only the second year since detailed records began in 1884 that the annual mean temperature has exceeded 10C. The reading also placed four of the last five years in the top five warmest years since 1884, an indication of just how fast the climate is changing, the Met Office said last month when it first flagged the possibility of a new record. (*Dawn, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***US withdraws from climate treaty, 66 global bodies***

President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from a bedrock climate treaty was slammed by the EU, which vowed to keep tackling the crisis with other nations. The White House flagged the US exit from 66 global organisations and treaties — roughly half affiliated with the United Nations — it identified as “contrary to the interests of the United States.”

Most notable among them is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the parent treaty underpinning all major international climate agreements. The treaty adopted in 1992 is a global pact by nations to cooperate to drive down planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. European Union climate chief Wopke Hoekstra said the UNFCCC “underpins global climate action” and brings nations together in the collective fight against the crisis. (*Dawn, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***2025 among world's three hottest years on record, WMO says***

Last year was among the planet's three warmest on record, the World Meteorological Organisation said, as European Union scientists confirmed average temperatures have exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming for the longest period since records began. The WMO, which consolidates eight climate datasets from around the world, said six of them — including the European Union's European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and the British national weather service — ranked 2025 as the third warmest. Two datasets placed it as the second warmest in the 176-year record. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also confirmed in data released that 2025 was the third-warmest year in its global temperature record, which dates back to 1850. All eight datasets confirmed that the last three years were the planet's three hottest since records began, with 2024 ranking as the warmest year on record, the WMO said. (*Dawn, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***World not ready for rise in extreme heat, scientists say***

Nearly 3.8 billion people could face extreme heat by 2050 and while tropical countries will bear the brunt cooler regions will also need to adapt. Demand for cooling will “drastically” increase in giant countries like Brazil, Indonesia and Nigeria, where hundreds of millions of people lack air conditioning or other means of beating the heat. But even a moderate increase in hotter days could have a “severe impact” in nations not used to such conditions like Canada, Russia and Finland, said scientists from the University of Oxford.

In a new study, they looked at different global warming scenarios to project how often people in future might experience temperatures considered uncomfortably hot or cold. They found “that the population experiencing extreme heat conditions is projected to nearly double” by 2050 if global average temperatures rise 2C above preindustrial times. Prolonged exposure to extreme heat can overwhelm the body's natural cooling

systems, causing symptoms ranging from dizziness and headaches to organ failure and death. It is called a silent killer because most heat deaths occur gradually as high temperatures and other environmental factors work together to undermine the body's internal thermostat. Climate change is making heatwaves longer and stronger and access to cooling, especially air conditioning, will be vital in future. (*Dawn, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

## **13 # CLIMATE DISASTER**

### **13.1 # Flood**

#### ***South Africa declares national disaster as floods batter region***

South Africa declared a national disaster after widespread flooding that destroyed homes and killed dozens, while thousands sought shelter in neighbouring Mozambique. Heavy rains and storms have battered the two southern African countries for weeks, claiming more than 30 lives in South Africa's northeastern Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. Rivers burst their banks and swallowed entire neighbourhoods in several regions of Mozambique, displacing thousands including a woman who was forced to give birth on a roof as she sheltered from flood waters. According to the latest figures released by the Mozambican government, more than 173,000 people had been affected by the floods across the country. (*Business Recorder, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### **13.2 # Snow**

#### ***Six die in weather accidents as cold snap grips Europe***

Icy temperatures plunged swathes of Europe into a second day of travel chaos, with weather-related accidents causing six deaths from the continent's bitterest cold snap this winter so far. Five of those deaths since the mercury dropped were in France alone, while a woman died in Bosnia as heavy snow and rain sparked floods and power outages across the Balkans. (*Dawn, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

#### ***Snow, ice hit western, central US as massive storm sweeps nation***

A massive winter storm dumped snow and freezing rain on New Mexico and Texas as it spread across the United States towards the northeast, threatening tens of millions of Americans with blackouts, transportation chaos and bone-chilling cold. Shoppers stripped supermarket shelves as the National Weather Service forecast huge snowfall in some areas and possibly "catastrophic" ice accumulations from freezing rain. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy warned that up to 240 million Americans could be affected by the storm. At least 16 states and the US capital Washington declared states of emergency. (*Dawn, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

#### ***Moscow records heaviest snowfall in over 200 years***

Russia's capital Moscow has this month seen the largest snowfall in more than 200 years, Moscow State University meteorologists said. Images from the city of around 13 million people showed residents struggling to make their way through heavy piles of snow on the streets in its central district. Commuter trains in the Moscow area were

delayed, reporters witnessed, and cars were stuck in long traffic jams. “January was a cold and unusually snowy month in Moscow,” the university said on social media. (*Dawn, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### **13.3 # Storm**

#### ***Storms spark travel mayhem across Europe***

Gale-force winds and storms barrelled through northern Europe, causing travel mayhem, shutting schools, cutting power to hundreds of thousands in freezing temperatures. Some 50 flights were cancelled in London’s Heathrow airport, affecting thousands of passengers, with air travel disrupted across Europe from the Czech Republic to Moscow, where over 300 flights were cancelled at four airports serving the Russian capital. Forecasters from Britain to Germany urged people to stay indoors as they issued weather warnings, including the rare, highest-level red wind alert for the British Isles of Scilly and Cornwall in southwestern England. All trains were cancelled in Cornwall. (*Dawn, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

#### ***Storms leave 100,000 French homes without power***

A man was killed after a tree fell on a caravan in England after record winds brought by Storm Goretti, as 100,000 homes in France were still without power. Some 15 people have died in weather-related accidents this week across Europe as gale-force winds and storms caused travel mayhem, shut schools, and cut power to hundreds of thousands in freezing temperatures. The storm barrelled through southwestern Cornwall and parts of Wales, with gusts of up to 160 kilometres per hour (100 miles per hour) downing trees and leaving tens of thousands of homes without power. A man was found dead in the town of Helston in Cornwall after a tree fell onto a caravan, UK police said. (*Dawn, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

#### ***Storms, heavy rain kill 14 across Afghanistan***

Severe storms and a rain-triggered landslide have killed at least 14 people across Afghanistan, officials said, with residents facing further risks as heavy snow hit the country. Strong wind and heavy rain in Kandahar killed six children, damaging homes and causing significant financial losses in several districts, the emergency department in the southern province said. An avalanche also killed one person in Parwan province, west of the capital Kabul. In total, “owing to the snow and rain, 11 people” were killed across six provinces in the country’s north, centre and south, including the Kandahar and Parwan incidents, a spokesperson for the National Disaster Management Authority said. (*Dawn, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

#### ***Homes buried under ice as storm sweeps across US east coast***

The snow could be heard before it was seen — falling with urgency, muffling the city, softening the hard edges of streets and rooftops. A streetlamp blinked through the white, uncertain. A silhouette lingered at the corner — a snowman, perhaps, or a trick of shadow. Footprints appeared and vanished almost instantly, swallowed by fresh layers.

The city seemed to exhale, and for a moment, nothing moved. From the Mid-Atlantic to New England, states of emergency were declared as a powerful winter storm spread north and east, forcing the closure of government offices and schools, disrupting transportation and straining power supplies. (*Dawn, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***Historic winter storm kills at least 11 across US***

A monster storm barreling across the United States had killed at least 11 people, prompting warnings to stay off the roads, mass flight cancelations and power outages after a weekend of misery. The storm dumped snow, sleet and freezing rain across swathes of the country from Texas to New England, with temperatures set to fall dangerously low this week. New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani said five people were found dead outside over the weekend, telling reporters “there is no more powerful reminder of danger of extreme cold.” (*Business Recorder, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***US monster storm kills 30; one million without power***

More than half a million Americans woke up without power, as freezing temperatures gripped swathes of country in a monster storm that has killed at least 30 people. A frigid, life-threatening Arctic air mass could delay recovery as municipalities from New Mexico to Maine tried to dig out following the storm, which dropped a vicious cocktail of heavy snow and wind, along with freezing rain and sleet. (*Dawn, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

## **13.4 # Wildfire**

### ***‘State of disaster’ declared in Australian region as bushfires rage***

Australian authorities declared a state of disaster after bushfires destroyed houses and razed vast belts of forest in the country’s southeast. Temperatures soared past 40C as a heatwave blanketed the state of Victoria this week, with hot winds fanning some of the most dangerous fire weather since the “Black Summer” bushfires of 2019-2020.

One of the most destructive bushfires ripped through almost 150,000 hectares (370,000 acres) near Longwood, a region cloaked in native forests. State premier Jacinta Allan declared a state of disaster, giving fire crews emergency powers to force evacuations. “It’s all about one thing: protecting Victorian lives,” she said. PM warns of extreme and dangerous weather “And it sends one clear message: if you have been told to leave, go.” Three people missing inside one of the state’s most dangerous fire grounds had been found, Allan said. (*Dawn, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***Scores of homes razed, one dead in Australian bushfires***

Bushfires have razed hundreds of buildings across southeast Australia, authorities, as they confirmed the first death from the disaster. Temperatures soared past 40C as a heatwave blanketed the state of Victoria, sparking dozens of blazes that ripped through more than 300,000 hectares (740,000 acres) combined. Fire crews tallied the damage as conditions eased. A day earlier, authorities had declared a state of disaster. Emergency Management Commissioner Tim Wiebusch said over 300 buildings had burned to the ground, a figure that includes sheds and other structures on rural properties. More than

70 houses had been destroyed, he said, alongside huge swathes of farming land and native forest. (*Business Recorder, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***Chile declares emergency as wildfires kill 15***

Wildfires burning out of control in southern Chile have killed at least 15 people and forced more than 50,000 to evacuate. Security Minister Luis Cordero gave the tolls for 14 blazes burning for two days now in the Nuble and Biobio regions about 500 kilometers (300 miles) south of Santiago. President Gabriel Boric declared a state of emergency as nearly 4,000 firefighters battled flames fueled by gusting winds and hot weather in the southern hemisphere summer. “We face a complicated situation,” Interior Minister Alvaro Elizalde said. (*Dawn, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

## **14 # NATURAL DISASTER**

### ***Two killed, many missing after NZ landslides***

Landslides ploughed into a home and a campsite in rain-swept northern New Zealand, killing at least two people and leaving others missing under tonnes of mud. Rescuers used heavy machinery to dig through the mass of earth that moved after heavy overnight rain in New Zealand’s North Island. Emergency workers retrieved two bodies from the remains of a buried home in the harbourside city of Tauranga. (*Dawn, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***Indonesia landslide kills eight, more than 80 missing***

Indonesia: A landslide killed at least eight people and left more than 80 missing on Indonesia’s main island of Java, a disaster official said. Triggered by heavy rainfall, it struck villages in Java’s West Bandung region in early hours and buried residential areas. Floods and landslides are common across the vast archipelago during the rainy season, which typically runs from October to March. (*The News, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

## **15 # RESISTANCE**

### ***Thousands stage Gaza rally in Istanbul***

Thousands joined a New Year rally for Gaza in Istanbul, waving Palestinian and Turkish flags and calling for an end to the bloodshed in the tiny territory. Demonstrators gathered in freezing temperatures under cloudless blue skies to march to the city’s Galata Bridge for a rally under the slogan: “We won’t remain silent, we won’t forget Palestine”. More than 400 civil society organisations were present at the rally, one of whose organisers was Bilal Erdogan, the youngest son of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Police sources and *Anadolou state news agency* said some 500,000 people had joined the march at which there were speeches and a performance by Lebanese-born singer Maher Zain of his song Free Palestine. (*Dawn, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

***At least 16 dead in Iran during week of protests: Rights group***

At least 16 people have been killed during a week of unrest in Iran, rights groups said, as protests over soaring inflation spread across the country prompting violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces. Deaths and arrests have been reported through the week both by state media and rights groups, though the numbers have differed. Reuters has not been able to verify the figures independently. The protests are the biggest in three years and while smaller than some previous bouts of unrest to rattle the Islamic Republic, they come at a moment of vulnerability with the economy in tatters and international pressure building.

US President Donald Trump has threatened to come to the protesters' aid if they face violence, saying "we are locked and loaded and ready to go" but without specifying any actions he was considering. Kurdish rights group Hengaw reported that at least 17 people had been killed since the start of the protests. HRANA, a network of rights activists, said at least 16 people had been killed and 582 arrested. Iran's police chief Ahmad-Reza Radan told state media that security forces had been targeting protest leaders for arrest over the previous two days, saying "a big number of leaders on the virtual space have been detained". (*Business Recorder, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

***News Makers: Strasbourg (France):***

A placard reading "Europe, Do you still want your agriculture?" is on display on a tractor as farmers take part in a rally to protest the EU-Mercosur deal and French government's agricultural policy. (*Dawn, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

***French farmers block Paris streets in protest against Mercosur trade deal***

French farmers blockaded roads into Paris and landmarks like the Arc de Triomphe with tractors in protest against a sweeping trade deal the European Union is due to sign with South American nations. Farmers from the right-wing Coordination Rurale union called for the protests in Paris amid fears the planned free trade agreement with the Mercosur bloc will flood EU with cheap food imports. They also protested against high costs and excessive local regulation and demanded an end to a government policy of culling herds of cows in response to a highly contagious cattle disease, which they consider excessive.

The farmers overran police checkpoints to enter the city, driving along the Champs Elysees avenue and blocking the road around the Arc de Triomphe before dawn, before gathering in front of the National Assembly. National Assembly President Yael Braun-Pivet was booed and jostled when she stepped outside of the assembly's gates to talk with the Coordination Rurale protesters. Dozens of tractors obstructed highways leading into the capital ahead of the morning rush hour, including the A13 leading into Paris from the western suburbs and Normandy, causing 150 km of traffic jams, the transport minister said. (*Dawn, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***Farmers march, block highways***

Farmers have launched protests across the EU, blocking highways in France and Belgium and marching in Poland. France voted against the deal, but a sufficient majority of EU members backed the accord. An EU diplomat and Poland's agriculture minister said that 21 countries supported the agreement, with Austria, France, Hungary, Ireland and Poland against and Belgium abstaining. A minimum of 15 countries representing 65 per cent of the bloc's total population was required for approval. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz hailed the vote as a "milestone" and said the deal would be good for Germany and for Europe.

"But 25 years of negotiations is too long. It's vital that the next free trade agreements are concluded swiftly," he said in a statement. The approval clears the way for Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to sign the agreement with Mercosur partners - Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay - in Asuncion. Argentina's foreign ministry said the signing ceremony would take place on Jan 17. The European Parliament will also need to approve the accord, finally concluded a year ago, before it can enter into force. (*Dawn, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***Irish farmers protest against Mercosur trade deal***

Thousands of Irish farmers, many of whom travelled across the country on tractors, protested against the European Union's Mercosur trade deal after a majority of EU states gave a provisional go-ahead for its largest ever free-trade accord. Opponents led by France, the EU's largest agricultural producer, failed to convince enough fellow member states that the deal with South American nations would flood the market with cheap food products and undercut domestic farmers.

Under pressure from opposition parties, farming groups and members of its own coalition, the Irish government argued the deal lacks safeguards on what it says are weaker food safety standards in South America. "It's an absolute disgrace on behalf of the farmers and people that have put Europe where it is today," said Joe Keogh, a farmer from the central village of Multyfarnham at the protest in the nearby town of Athlone. "It's going to close down the whole countryside." Protesters held placards reading "Don't sacrifice family farms for German cars", "Our cows follow the rules, why don't theirs", and "Sell out".

The demonstration, large by Irish standards, followed similar protests in Poland, France and Belgium. While Ireland is a small exporting nation that aims to diversify away from its reliance on the US market, it has large beef and dairy industries that are major employers. Opponents of the deal have secured some concessions and compensation for EU farmers. The European Parliament must approve the accord before it can take effect, and like France, Ireland has pledged to fight for its rejection in what could be a tight vote. (*Dawn, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***Thousands rally in support of Yemen's separatist group***

Thousands of people took to the streets of Aden in southern Yemen in support of the country's main separatist group, the Southern Transitional Council, which denied it was planning to disband. Some held up photos of STC leader Aidarous al-Zubaidi, who has fled the country, while others chanted "southerner, raise your voice, independence or death", a witness said. People took to the streets despite Saudi-backed groups urging them not to do so. The STC seized parts of southern and eastern Yemen in December in advances that heightened tensions with Saudi Arabia. "We have taken to the streets again... No one can silence us... Not Saudi Arabia, nor any other party or country," one man who took to the streets said. (*Dawn, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***Protests in US intensify over weekend after ICE shooting***

Protests across United States intensify over weekend with more than a thousand demonstrations planned in the wake of the fatal shooting of a woman by an immigration officer, as local officials slammed federal agencies for locking them out of the investigation. Tensions have reached a boiling point as civil society organisations and advocacy groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union, are planning hundreds of protests after the killing of motorist Renee Good, 37, by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent. Cell phone footage, apparently recorded by the officer who fired the fatal shots, shows him interacting with Good as he approaches and circles her car. "I'm not mad at you," Good says in the recording. (*Dawn, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***Deaths from Iran protests reach more than 500, rights group says***

Unrest in Iran has killed more than 500 people, a rights group said, as Tehran threatened to target U.S. military bases if President Donald Trump carries out threats to intervene on behalf of protesters. With the Islamic Republic's clerical establishment facing the biggest demonstrations since 2022, Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene if force is used on protesters. According to its latest figures - from activists inside and outside Iran - U.S.-based rights group HRANA said it had verified the deaths of 490 protesters and 48 security personnel, with more than 10,600 people arrested in two weeks of unrest. Iran has not given an official toll and *Reuters* was unable to independently verify the tolls. (*Business Recorder, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 1*)

### ***Maduro loyalists stage rally as Venezuelan govt courts US***

Several hundred supporters of deposed Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro staged protests in the capital, a week after his capture by US forces, as the interim government moved to revive ties with Washington and slowly released some prisoners. Waving flags and placards with the face of the mustachioed ex-leader and his wife Cilia, around 1,000 protesters rallied in the west of Caracas and a few hundred in the eastern Petare district — far smaller than demonstrations Maduro's camp has mustered in the past. (*Business Recorder, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 9*)

### ***150,000 nurses on largest-ever strike in New York City***

Some 15,000 nurses went on strike in New York City at three large private hospital groups over pay and conditions. Officials declared a state of emergency over the work stoppage, which the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) said on its website came after months of bargaining for a new contract reached a deadlock. The association says it is the largest strike by nurses in the city's history. Picket lines were set up at several private hospitals across New York including facilities of New York-Presbyterian, Montefiore Bronx, and Mount Sinai. (*Dawn, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***Furious farmers roll hundreds of tractors into Paris in fresh protests***

More 350 tractors parked near the French parliament building after driving down the Champs-Elysees avenue, as farmers protested a litany of woes including the EU-Mercosur trade deal. The protests reflect a deep sense of malaise afflicting France's agricultural sector, with the planned signing of an accord between the European Union and Mercosur bloc seen as last straw. French farmers have complained about economic uncertainties and environmental rules, and have since December staged protests and set up roadblocks over government's handling of a lumpy skin disease outbreak. Arriving from towns around Paris and beyond, protesters parked their tractors not far from the National Assembly in central Paris. (*Business Recorder, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 5*)

### ***Trump threatens to invoke Insurrection Act over Minnesota protests***

US President Donald Trump threatened to invoke an emergency law that allows domestic deployment of the military, as protests roil Minnesota after a federal agent shot dead a woman last week. Tensions rose further overnight and more protests broke out as another person was shot and wounded by a federal agent in the frigid northern city that is a Democratic stronghold. Trump reacted on his social media platform Truth Social with his latest threat to invoke the Insurrection Act, a 19th century law that allows the president to deploy soldiers for law enforcement purposes to put down unrest deemed to be an insurrection. It has not been used in more than 30 years. (*Dawn, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 10*)

### ***Hundreds in London protest against Beijing mega embassy***

Hundreds of people rallied in London against Beijing's new "mega" embassy, days ahead of a decision on the plan. Protesters, their faces mostly covered with scarves or masks, chanted "No to Chinese embassy" and waved flags reading "Free Hong Kong. Revolution now". Others held up placards with slogans such as "MI5 warned. Labour kneeled", referring to the UK's domestic intelligence agency and Prime Minister Keir Starmer's ruling party. Others read: "CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is watching you. Stop the mega embassy." China has for several years been trying to relocate its embassy, currently in the British capital's upmarket Marylebone district, to the sprawling historic site in the shadow of the Tower of London. The move has sparked fierce opposition from nearby residents, rights groups and critics of China's ruling Communist Party. (*Dawn, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***Thousands join anti-Trump hands off Greenland protests in Denmark***

Thousands of people took to the streets of Denmark's capital to protest against US President Donald Trump's push to take over Greenland. The protest followed Trump's warning that he might put tariffs on countries that oppose his plans to take over mineral-rich Greenland, which is an autonomous territory of Denmark. However, a delegation from US Congress held talks with Greenlandic and Danish politicians in Copenhagen determined to make it clear that many Americans oppose Trump's stance. The protesters waved the flags of Denmark and Greenland as they gathered outside Copenhagen city hall chanting "Kalaallit Nunaat!" — vast Arctic island's name in Greenlandic. (*Business Recorder, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

### ***Govt admits thousands of death' as Iran begins to restore internet***

Acknowledging thousands of deaths in the recent protests that swept the country, Iran's supreme leader blamed the United States and Israel for organising the deadly violence. "At least 5,000 people have been killed, including about 500 security personnel," an Iranian official said, as authorities ordered gradual restoration of internet access after a 10-day shutdown aimed at quelling riots. Demonstrations sparked in late December by anger over economic hardship exploded into protests widely seen as the biggest challenge to the Iranian leadership in years. Officials said the protests were peaceful until foreign influence turned them violent. (*Dawn, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Page 12*)

### ***Farmers protest EU-Mercosur trade deal ahead of vote***

Thousands of farmers driving tractors and waving flags descended on the European parliament in Strasbourg in protest at a major trade deal signed with South America, ahead of a vote on whether to refer it to the courts. The deal inked earlier this month between the 27-nation European Union and Mercosur bloc members Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay creates one of the world's largest free trade areas after 25 years of tricky negotiations. But the 4,500 farmers and their supporters from France, Italy, Belgium and Poland protesting, according to police estimates, fear it will cause an influx of cheaper goods produced with lower standards and banned pesticides. European exports to Mercosur are expected to rise by 39 percent, while Mercosur exports to the EU could increase by 17 percent. By 2040, the agreement is projected to boost EU GDP by 77.6 billion euros and Mercosur GDP by 9.4 billion euros. (*Dawn, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 11*)

### ***Nationwide protests begin over ICE in Minneapolis***

Student organisers called for walkouts and protests across the United States to demand that federal immigration agents withdraw from Minnesota, where the fatal shootings of two US citizens have sparked public outrage. The planned national day of protest, which saw students and teachers walking out of schools from Arizona to Georgia, came amid mixed messages from the Trump administration on the future of Operation Metro Surge, which has sent some 3,000 federal agents to the Minneapolis area in an immigration crackdown. (*Business Recorder, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Page 8*)

## **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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