HAAL AHWAL

Selected News on Food and Agriculture

May 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

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May 2026

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Roots for Equity

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Particular	May 2026 (PKR)		
	1st	**31st**	**Max Rate**
USD[1]	280	279.65	280 (1st day)
Gold[1] (1 Tola)	482,020	473,761.00	493917 (11th day)
Silver[1] (1 Tola)	7,642	7,857.00	9263 (14th day)
Petrol[2] (1 Litre)	399.86	381.78	414.78 (9th day)
Diesel[2] (1 Litre)	399.58	380.78	414.58 (9th day)
Kerosene[2] (1 Litre)	360.76	272.00	360.76 (1st day)

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

Preface

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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

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ADB: Asian Development Bank

AIIB: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

AKU: Aga Khan University

ATA: Anti-Terrorism Act

BNP: Benazir Nashonuma Programme

CAAS: Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences

CCRI: Central Cotton Research Institute

CDA: Capital Development Authority

CPI: Consumer Price Index

DC: Deputy Commissioner

DCFA: Dairy and Cattle Farmers Association

DIC: Dow Institute of Cardiology

DUHS: Dow University of Health Sciences

EAD: Economic Affairs Division

ECC: Economic Coordination Committee

EFF: Extended Fund Facility

EPO: Export Policy Order

EWR: Electronic Warehouse Receipt

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FBR: Federal Board of Revenue

FCEPL: FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FEA: Foreign Economic Assistance

FMPAC: Fertiliser Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council

FPCCI: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry

GAC: General Administration of Customs

GAIN: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council

GDA: Gwadar Development Authority

GHG: Global Greenhouse Gas

GIMS: Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences

GLOF: Glacial Lake Outburst Flood

GST: General Sales Tax

HACCP: Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points

HBWWF: Home-Based Women Workers Federation

IBCs: Institutional Biosafety Committees

IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

IDA: International Development Association

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

IFIs: International Financial Institutions

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IMO: International Maritime Organisation

IRSA: Indus River System Authority

IsDB: Islamic Development Bank

IWT: Indus Water Treaty

JUI-F: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl

JVAs: Joint Venture Agreements

KCA: Karachi Cotton Association

KCCI: Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry

KCR: Karachi Circular Railway

KPC: Karachi Press Club

KU: Karachi University

KUEWA: Karachi University Employees' Welfare Association

KUTS: Karachi University Teachers' Society

LHW: Lady Health Workers

PFF: Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

PFMA: Pakistan Flour Mills Association

LPG: Liquefied Petroleum Gas

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MSP: Minimum Support Price

NBC: National Biosafety Committee

NEET: National Eligibility cum Entrance Test

NOC: No-objection certificate

NPCs: Naya Pakistan Certificates

NSUI: National Students' Union of India

NTUF: National Trade Union Federation Pakistan

ODA: Official Development Assistance

PAC: Public Accounts Committee

Pak-EPA: Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency

PARC: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council

PBF: Pakistan Business Forum

PBS: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

PCA: Permanent Court of Arbitration

PEPA: Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency

PERA: Punjab Enforcement & Regulatory Authority

PFMA: Pakistan Flour Mills Association

PKI: Pakistan Kisan Ittehad

PMD: Pakistan Meteorological Department

PMO: Prime Minister's Office

PPMA: Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association

PPP: Pakistan Peoples Party

PSDP: Public Sector Development Programme

PTCL: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited

PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

RSF: Resilience and Sustainability Facility

SAB: Sindh Abadgar Board

SAU: Sindh Agriculture University

SBP: State Bank of Pakistan

SCB: Standard Chartered Bank

SLIC: State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan

TB: Tuberculosis

UNOPS: United Nations Office for Project Services

WB: World Bank

WHO: World Health Organisation

WtE: Waste-to-Energy

ZTBL: Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited

NEWS EXCERPTS

Back

NATIONAL NEWS

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

- The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) called for the return of the agriculture and industrial sectors to federal policymaking under the proposed 28th Constitution Amendment to correct the "missteps" made under the 18th amendment almost two decades ago.
- PM Shehbaz Sharif called for a major transformation of Pakistan's agriculture sector through enhanced cooperation with China, proposing that the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences take a leading role in revitalizing Pakistan's agricultural research institutions and modernizing farming practices.
- PM Shehbaz said both sides had agreed to accelerate cooperation under CPEC 2.0, with agriculture placed at the top of the priority list.
- National Wheat Policy 2026-30 has been finalised in consultation with all provinces to ensure food security, stabilise wheat production, and streamline procurement and pricing mechanisms nationwide.
- The establishment of a National Seed Development and Regulatory Authority to modernise the seed sector, enhance regulation, and promote development of high-yield and climate-resilient crop varieties.
- The Kisan Ittehad has announced a province-wide protest movement in June against what it termed anti-farmer policies, warning that growers are facing an unprecedented crisis due to flawed wheat, sugar and agricultural policies.
- Rising temperatures, extreme heat, and harsh working conditions are seriously affecting the mental and physical health of women cotton workers.
- With just 124,363 acres of state land identified for immediate rollout, the Punjab Board of Revenue has set the stage for operationalising the Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar (AKAR) scheme — an ambitious but contested land-leasing initiative of the provincial government that aims to bring unused land into cultivation while empowering landless farmers.
- The Punjab cabinet has approved the launch of the "Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar" (AKAR) scheme for residents of Cholistan and riverine areas under easy terms and conditions. 30,000 plots had been identified for this programme, while nearly 200,000 families had already submitted applications for the initiative.
- Pakistan expressed "utmost satisfaction" over a supplemental award by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), which it said affirmed Islamabad's position on the Indus Waters Treaty and places "substantive limits on India's water-control capability" over the western rivers of the Indus basin.
- The sizzling heat, which has been gripping the Cholistan desert for the previous one month, has caused an acute water shortage for the desert areas

residents and their livestock, as around one-third of the water ponds in the area have gone dry.

- Around one-third of the 2,000 open ponds, locally called 'toba', which are the main source of drinking water, besides very few water supply lines in some of the desert areas, for the locals and their livestock, have dried up, causing an acute water shortage in Cholistan.
- Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Sindh President Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has lodged a strong protest with the federal government over the Indus River System Authority's (Irsa) decision to impose a 27 per cent water shortage exclusively on Sindh during the Kharif season.
- Sindh as a major contributor to the national economy, producing 5.5 million tonnes of rice annually and generating $1.4 billion in rice exports.
- A 22pc water shortage has been persisting in Sindh for the last ten days as the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) continues to "equalise shortages between Punjab and Sindh".

AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

- Punjab produces 76 percent of the country's wheat, 62 percent rice, 54 percent cotton, 98 percent maize and 71.3 percent sugarcane, making it the backbone of Pakistan's agriculture sector.
- Pakistan has buffer stocks of more than 800,000 tonnes of urea, and fertiliser manufacturers have ruled out any shortage of the agricultural input during the Kharif season.
- DAP prices increased by PKR 1000 per bag and normal urea per bag by PKR 200-400, mainly because of an increase in freight charges. DAP bag now costs around PKR 15000 and the urea bag PKR 4500.
- Khalid Arian, President of the Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, said that the higher prices of DAP resulted in the shortfall of the wheat target by 3 million tonnes.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

- The cotton sector is facing an unprecedented supply crisis as stocks in the country have reportedly fallen below 10,000 bales before the start of the new ginning season, raising fears that some textile mills may partially shut down in the coming weeks due to cotton shortages.
- Pakistan has been facing recurring cotton shortages for several years now, because of the persistent decline in domestic production.
- Farmers have steadily shifted away from cotton towards more lucrative crops such as sugarcane in the traditional cotton-growing areas, severely undermining the cotton economy.

- Research institutions have consumed billions of rupees over the decades without producing any breakthrough in climate-resilient, pest-resistant or high-yield long-staple cotton varieties.
- Provincial Cabinet of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa approved procurement of 225,000 metric tons of wheat from public sector growers at the rate of Rs 3,500 per 40 kilogrammes involving a financial implication of Rs. 19.68 billion.
- President of Charsadda Flour Mills Association Murshid Ali Khan advocate has termed restriction on wheat supply from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa without any formal notification as unconstitutional act and demanded immediate restoration of wheat transportation to the province.
- He warned that if wheat supply was not restored, hundreds of flour mills in the province would shut down, leaving thousands of workers unemployed and triggering a severe food crisis along with an abnormal increase in flour prices.
- The association president said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa produced around one million metric tonnes of wheat annually, while its total requirement exceeded 5.3 million metric tonnes, making the province heavily dependent on Punjab for wheat supply.
- The Punjab government's new wheat procurement mechanism is struggling, as private firms are experiencing buying failures due to pricing disputes, financing issues, and farmer resistance.
- Under the 2026 strategy, the government aimed to procure 3 million tonnes of wheat through 11 private companies, shifting away from its traditional state-led buying model.
- A representative of one participating firm revealed that their financing bid was based on KIBOR [Karachi Interbank Offered Rates] plus 1 per cent, but talks between banks and the shortlisted companies failed to reach a workable agreement. As a result, firms were forced to arrange their capital under less favourable terms.
- Industry sources confirm that at least nine of the eleven firms have not purchased any wheat so far, effectively stalling the procurement drive.
- Pakistan Kisan Ittehad (PKI) President Khalid Khokhar said most farmers of South Punjab had already sold about half their produce at lower rates, averaging around Rs3,100 per maund, when prices dipped to between Rs2,800 and Rs3,200.
- Punjab has abundant wheat reserves, with a record production of more than 22 million metric tonnes achieved this year, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said.
- Floods, heat waves and changing weather patterns have adversely affected wheat production in Pakistan and the target initially fixed could not be achieved this year.

- Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain said wheat production target had initially been fixed at 30 million tonnes, but the estimates had subsequently been revised downward owing to climatic impacts.
- He said farmers' organisations had demanded a wheat support price of Rs3,200 per maund, while the government fixed the price at Rs3,500. According to the minister, the production cost of wheat currently stands at approximately Rs2,600 per maund.
- The mango season has entered markets later than usual, with an estimated 20 per cent drop in production.
- Agricultural experts have stressed the urgent need for value addition, food processing, and export promotion across Sindh's produce sector, focusing particularly on key commodities like tomatoes, mangoes, dates, chillies, and onions in order to significantly boost farmers' incomes.

SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

- The city faces the threat of an acute fresh milk shortage in the coming days as the Dairy and Cattle Farmers Association (DCFA) has warned that farmers will halt production unless authorities approve an immediate Rs100-per-litre increase in the retail price.

TRADE

- The trade deficit widened by 3.82pc to $4.07bn in April from $3.92bn over the corresponding month of last year. The trade deficit for FY25 widened by 9pc to $26.27bn against $24.11bn in the preceding year.
- Over a 20 per cent increase in the trade deficit to $32 billion during 10MFY26.
- During July-April FY26, Pakistan's import bill rose by nearly 7pc to $57.19bn, while exports declined by 6.25pc to $25.21bn from $26.89bn in the same period last year. Cumulative trade deficit up by 20.28pc to $31.99bn from $26.59bn a year ago. April recorded a 46-month high monthly trade deficit of $4.07bn.
- A sharp increase in trade deficit of as much as $32 billion threatens the balance of payments as the financial year is coming to a close and final payments are bound to be cleared before June 30.
- The prime minister said recently that the cost of imported oil was $300 million per week before the Gulf war, but it has now gone up to $800m.
- Pakistan's merchandise exports to North America posted a modest increase of 1.72 per cent to $4.921 billion in the first nine months of 2025-26, from $4.838bn a year ago. Imports from the region surged 33.44pc to $2.538bn during July-March FY26 compared to $1.902bn in the corresponding period.

- The US remained the dominant market, accounting for nearly 95pc of Pakistan's total exports to North America, with the remaining share going mainly to Canada and other countries.
- Pakistan's food import bill rose 13.81 per cent year-on-year to $7.848 billion in the first 10 months of 2025-26, mainly driven by higher purchases of sugar and edible oil.
- Exports of raw food products decreased 32.02pc to $4.190 billion in 10MFY26 from $6.164bn a year earlier.
- Overall rice exports in April dropped 9.33pc year-on-year.
- Pakistan imported 309,157 tonnes of sugar during July-April 2025-26, marking an unprecedented increase of 10,181.25pc compared to just 3,007 tonnes in the same period last year.
- Sugar imports jumped to $174.908m in 10MFY26 from $2.978m a year earlier, reflecting a sharp rise of 5,773.35pc.
- Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries widened by 30.18 per cent to $12.718 billion during the first 10 months of 2025-26 from $9.769bn in the corresponding period last year.
- In April, exports grew 14.03pc to $2.48 billion, compared with $2.17bn in the corresponding month last year. In the 10 months (July-April), export proceeds recorded negative growth of 6.25pc, falling to $25.21bn from $26.89bn in the corresponding period last year.
- Pakistan has lost $30 million in tobacco exports from July 2025 to March 2026, and in the remaining three months of the current financial year (FY26), the country is likely to face further difficulties as conditions in the international market have changed.
- Fish and fisheries product exports exceeded the $500 million mark for the first time in the first eleven months of the current fiscal year, mainly due to the opening of the Russian market.
- China remained the largest seafood market, importing nearly 59pc of total seafood exports.
- Exports to the Middle East fell by eight per cent year-on-year to $230.079 million in April, reflecting the impact of the ongoing conflict on the country's external trade with the region.
- In contrast, imports from the region revived, posting 5pc growth in April.
- Exports to the Middle East fell 2pc to $2.635bn in 10MFY26 from $2.676bn a year ago. At the same time, Pakistan's imports from the Middle East saw a negative growth of 3pc to $13.898bn in 10MFY26 from $14.370bn a year ago.
- Despite the continuation of the GSP+ status, Pakistan's exports to major Western and Northern European markets fell in the first 10 months of 2025-26 compared with the same period a year earlier.

- Official data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan showed that exports to European countries recorded a meagre 0.51 per cent year-on-year rise to $7.608 billion in the first 10 months of 2025-26.
- Pakistan may spend over $1 billion on cotton imports this year as domestic production has plunged to a four-decade low.
- Nearly half of cotton ginning factories across the country had already shut down due to declining domestic production, adding that cotton cultivation had dropped to its lowest level in four decades.
- Local textile mills have begun massive cotton imports from United States even before start of the new cotton ginning season, as country has virtually run out of cotton stocks, triggering a sharp surge in domestic cotton and phutti prices.

CORPORATE SECTOR

- Pakistan remains among countries facing challenges in effectively restricting aggressive marketing of formula milk and breast milk substitutes, as weak enforcement, loopholes in regulations and growing digital promotion by infant formula companies continue to undermine breastfeeding practices, says a new report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Unicef.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- Foreign assistance inflows to Pakistan increased by 19.73 percent during the July-March period of fiscal year 2025-26, reaching USD6.59 billion compared to USD5.50 billion during the corresponding period last year.
- Foreign economic assistance inflows to Pakistan surged by almost 20 per cent to $6.594bn in the first three quarters (July-March) of the current fiscal year.
- The World Bank emerged as the top multilateral lender, with $1.205bn in disbursements during the first nine months, up from $980m last year, reflecting a 23pc increase. In contrast, the Asian Development Bank slipped to second place, with disbursements falling 64pc to $727m from $1.190bn last year.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan declined sharply by 31 percent during the first 10 months of this fiscal year (FY26).
- The country attracted USD 1.409 billion in FDI during July-April FY26, compared to USD 2.035 billion in the same period last year (FY25).
- Inflows of foreign assistance into the country during July 2025 to April 2026 reached USD 11.068 billion, compared to USD 6.6 billion in the corresponding period last year, reflecting a 67.7 percent increase.
- Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, said that Pakistan and China had signed more than 300 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and over three dozen joint venture agreements (JVAs) during the last two years, with a cumulative value exceeding $13 billion.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- Asian Development Bank (ADP) is likely to finance a proposed agriculture project worth USD 239.13 million.
- The Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved the latest review of Pakistan's ongoing reform programme, clearing the way for the release of about $1.2 billion in financing under its existing arrangements.
- The International Monetary Fund has approved a new disbursement for Pakistan of about $1.3 billion, acknowledging the nation's resilience in maintaining economic stability while warning that continued reforms are essential to manage growing risks from the war in the Middle East.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slapped 11 new Structural Benchmarks (SBs) on Pakistan including parliamentary approval of a fiscal year 2027 budget in line with IMF staff agreement to meet programme targets.

POLICY

- Pakistan has moved to significantly liberalise its genetically modified organisms (GMO) regulatory regime by approving major amendments to the Pakistan Biosafety Rules 2005, including simplifying licensing procedures and facilitating laboratory research in universities and the private sector.
- A meeting of Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) decided that mega development projects worth around Rs280 billion will be launched in phases under the second phase of the Gwadar Master Plan (2025-35).
- At a time when Pakistan's economy is struggling to regain momentum, development spending has remained sluggish, with allocations reaching only 56 per cent and actual utilisation falling short by around 18pc during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year.
- Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has authorised a total of Rs833.34 billion (99.5 per cent) out of Rs 837.16 billion allocation for development projects from July to April under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP)-2025-26.
- Peshawar High Court has rejected multiple petitions challenging government's move to outsource 24 of its hospitals in the province to private companies.
- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is set to outsource 72 under-performing hospitals to private organisations to improve patient care.

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

- Pakistan's central government debt crossed Rs 80 trillion mark by the end of March 2026 mainly driven by higher long-term domestic borrowing.

- On the domestic side, debt stock increased by 5.6 percent, or Rs 3.1 trillion, during July-March FY26. It stood at Rs 57.566 trillion at the end of March 2026, up from Rs 54.472 trillion in June 2025.
- External debt recorded a slight decline. External debt fell by Rs 458 billion during the first nine months of the fiscal year, decreasing from Rs 23.417 trillion in June 2025 to Rs 22.959 trillion by March 2026.
- At a pre-budget consultation on structural reforms in the dairy sector, the government was urged to reduce the general sales tax on milk as safe milk is essential for child development.
- Livestock accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the agriculture sector and holds significant potential for both domestic nutrition and exports.
- 40pc of children in Pakistan suffered from stunting due to malnutrition, despite milk being the most widely consumed animal protein.
- Malnutrition costs Pakistan around 3pc of GDP annually, with over 40pc of children under five stunted.
- Consumer inflation returned to double digits for the first time in 21 months, with prices rising by nearly 11 per cent year-on-year in April.
- Average Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation during July-February of fiscal year 2025-26 stood at 5.5 percent, compared to 5.7 percent during the same period last year.

ENVIRONMENT

- A severe shortage of freshwater in Indus Delta has triggered a worsening humanitarian and environmental crisis, as advancing seawater from the Arabian Sea continues to devastate coastal communities.
- Nearly 85 per cent of groundwater has turned saline, making it unsafe for human consumption and pushing region towards an existential threat.
- Climate expert warned that Pakistan needs to treat water quality as a national emergency as pollution, salinity and untreated sewage continue to poison the country's rivers and irrigation system.
- In 2022, WWF-Pakistan said that 30 percent of all diseases and 40 percent of all deaths in Pakistan are due to poor water quality.
- According to Pakistan's National Drinking Water Policy of 2009, the burden of disease related to water, sanitation and hygiene costs the country about USD1.1 billion each year.
- Four in 10 children aged 12-36 months living in high-risk areas of seven cities in Pakistan were found to have lead metal in their blood.
- The study sampled over 2,100 children living in high-risk industrial areas.
- Children in Hattar, Haripur, were the most affected, where 88 per cent had high levels of lead in their blood, compared to 1pc of children in Islamabad.

- The report says global Official Development Assistance (ODA) fell by 23pc in 2025 and warns that continued aid cuts could cause millions of additional deaths worldwide by 2030.
- An estimated 400,000 people die of complications caused by high blood pressure every year.
- that around 1.4 billion people worldwide were living with hypertension, while nearly 10 million deaths annually were linked to the condition globally.
- over 285,000 dog-bite cases had been reported in Sindh during 2025, while more than 22 rabies-related deaths were recorded in major hospitals. 85,891 dog-bite cases had already been documented from January to April 2026.
- Tobacco use claims an estimated 164,000 lives every year in Pakistan and causes economic losses exceeding Rs1.8 trillion ($6.6bn) annually.
- More than 52 per cent of Pakistani adults and nearly 38 per cent of adolescents are believed to be afflicted with fatty liver disease.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Pakistan's workforce estimated at over 57 million was increasingly on the frontlines of climate vulnerability, from heat-stressed daily wage earners to flood-affected farmers.
- Around 43 per cent of its workers are employed in agriculture, leaving a significant portion directly exposed to erratic rainfall, drought and floods.
- Heatwaves have claimed hundreds of lives in recent years, including more than 568 deaths during the 2024 extreme heat event, while thousands suffered heatstroke. Studies suggest heat-related deaths could exceed 15,000 annually under current climate conditions.
- Around 3.3 million jobs were affected by the 2025 floods, with nearly 78pc of employment losses concentrated in rural areas.
- WB (2022) estimates show that Pakistan's GDP is projected to fall by 4.5-6.5pc by 2050 due to climate change in optimistic scenario, and by as much as 7-9pc in pessimistic scenario, with agriculture and industry most exposed sectors.
- Between 1995 and 2024, more than 9,700 global climatic events have led to direct economic losses of around $ 4.5 trillion (in real terms), affecting 5.7 billion people, and causing more than 832,000 fatalities worldwide.
- The impact of global climate change is pronounced in Pakistan, which is the 15th most affected country from climatic events between 1995 and 2024.
- Over 140,000 fatalities due to air pollution alone.

CLIMATE DISASTER

- At least 10 people died across city (Karachi) due to intense heat as the mercury surged to 44.1 degrees Celsius — the highest temperature recorded since 2018.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Back

SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

- Hundreds of fishermen in an Indonesian coastal town on the island of Java have been forced to stop going out to sea and told AFP their livelihoods are at risk due to soaring fuel prices.

TRADE

- Around 1,500 ships and their crews are trapped in the Gulf due to the Iranian blockade in the strait of Hormuz.
- Right now, we have approximately 20,000 crewmen and around 1,500 ships trapped.
- China's overseas shipments grew at a faster pace than expected last month, despite pressure on the global economy caused by war in the Middle East. Exports from the manufacturing powerhouse were up 14.1 percent in April compared to the same month last year.
- China and the United States have agreed to expand agricultural trade through tariff reductions and tackle non-tariff barriers and market access issues.
- India's merchandise trade deficit widened to USD28.38 billion in April, as the Middle East conflict continued to hinder shipments while disrupting energy imports and making them costlier.

INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

- French President Emmanuel Macron announced 23 billion euros (USD27 billion) of investment for Africa during a major summit on the future of the continent hosted by Kenya.
- Macron announced include 14 billion euros in private and public funds from French entities, and nine billion euros from African investors, focused on energy transition, digital and AI, the maritime economy and AGRICULTURE.
- They would create 250,000 direct jobs in France and Africa, Macron said.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

- Twenty-seven countries have moved since the Iran war started to put in place crisis instruments that could quickly access funding from existing World Bank programs.

SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

- Investors are showing signs of diversifying away from US Treasuries as global debt levels hit a record of nearly USD353 trillion by end-March.

- Tens of millions of people could face hunger and starvation if fertilisers are not soon allowed through the Strait of Hormuz, the head of a UN task force aimed at averting a looming humanitarian crisis said.
- The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned that the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz could “trigger a severe global food price crisis” in the coming months.
- A shipment of 15,000 tons of rice donated by the Chinese government to Cuba has arrived at the port of Havana.
- The communist Caribbean country has been under a US trade embargo since 1962, which is often blamed for shortages of food and medicine.
- Chinese ambassador Hua Xin said on Cuban television that the 60,000 tons of rice represent, “the largest food aid” from China to Cuba “in recent years.

ENVIRONMENT

- Tens of thousands of people were ordered to leave their homes in California after a huge chemical tank began to leak, sending toxic fumes over a heavily populated area and posing the risk of an explosion.
- An Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo that has caused at least 80 deaths has a “very high lethality rate” and no vaccine or specific treatment, the country´s health minister warned.
- A measles outbreak in Bangladesh has killed more than 500 children, marking the country’s deadliest surge in decades of the preventable disease.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said its advisory groups have recommended clinical trials for vaccines and treatments that could be useful against the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, as the agency’s chief visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo to help contain a deadly outbreak.

NATIONAL NEWS LISTING

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NATIONAL NEWS

1 # AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESOURCES

Agro-farms turned into residences, thanks to CDA's negligence

The Capital Development Authority has failed in helping citizens get fresh vegetables, poultry products and fruits from 551 agro-farms it had allotted to make Islamabad self-sufficient in fresh and dairy produce. Majority of the leased farms, instead of contributing to their original purpose, have been converted into palatial residences due to alleged negligence of CDA. On the other hand, the residents of Islamabad have become dependent on agri and poultry products from other cities at higher costs.

Record shows civic body always adopted lenient approach, allowing owners even to increase covered areas of palatial houses As per the CDA by-laws, owners of orchards were required to plant fruit trees, 150 per acre, with cultivation of vegetables on 80pc of the land. Similarly, owners of poultry farms were required to produce 4,500 broilers per month besides 9,000 layer chickens with a daily production of 5,000 eggs.

Separately, 65 farms ranging from two acres to 12 acres were allotted for cattle farming in Dairy Farm Kahuta schemes in the 1970s. These farms were supposed to provide dairy and meat to the city but like the agri-farms, they also failed to comply with their purpose. The CDA has actively conducting operations to retrieve its acquired land and remove encroachments from markets -- also targeting small vendors. However, it seems the civic agency has ignored the violations in agro-farms owned by bigwigs and elites.

However, they said a very small number of agro-farms were being used in accordance with their original purpose of allotment. The CDA had allotted majority of the plots against nominal charges while a number of plots were also allotted to those whose land had been acquired by CDA and who were supposed to get alternative land from CDA). Besides, over two dozen plots were auctioned. However, instead of contributing to the needs of city's population for agriculture and poultry products, these farms, particularly those along Murree Road and in Chak Shahzad, are being used for luxury housing. *(Dawn, May 15th, 2026, Page 4)*

PBF pushes federal control on agriculture, industry

Pakistan Business Forum called for the return of the agriculture and industrial sectors to federal policymaking under the proposed 28th Constitution Amendment to correct the "missteps" made under the 18th amendment almost two decades ago. Punjab-based non-partisan body said the country's long-term economic interests could only be safeguarded through a national policy structure for both central sectors of economy. It asked major political parties to include comprehensive economic safeguards in proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment to ensure long-term economic stability and policy continuity. *(Dawn, May 15th, 2026, Page 9)*

China urged to help transform agri sector

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for a major transformation of Pakistan's agriculture sector through enhanced cooperation with China, proposing that the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) take a leading role in revitalizing Pakistan's agricultural research institutions and modernizing farming practices. Addressing a workshop on Pakistan-China agricultural cooperation during his visit to the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Beijing, the prime minister said Pakistan and China's "iron-clad brotherhood" was entering a new era of economic transformation, particularly in agriculture, research, innovation and rural development.

The PM described agriculture as the backbone of Pakistan's economy and stressed that modern research, innovation and technology were essential for achieving economic independence and empowering the country's youth. Pakistan Agricultural Research Council needed urgent revitalization and proposed that CAAS play a direct leadership role in reforming the institution and strengthening agricultural research in Pakistan.

The PM announced that Pakistan would continue sending 1,000 fresh agriculture graduates from all four provinces to Chinese universities for advanced training in modern agricultural sciences, technologies and practices. Highlighting his recent meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, PM Shehbaz said both sides had agreed to accelerate cooperation under CPEC 2.0, with agriculture placed at the top of the priority list. *(Business Recorder, May 27th, 2026, Page 1)*

1.1 # Agricultural Policy

National wheat policy has been finalised, NA told

The National Assembly was informed that the National Wheat Policy 2026-30 has been finalised in consultation with all provinces to ensure food security, stabilise wheat production, and streamline procurement and pricing mechanisms nationwide. During the question hour session, Parliamentary Secretary Farah Naz said the policy will be submitted for cabinet approval before the 2026-27 budget. She highlighted that the Ministry had implemented the Interim National Wheat Policy 2025-26, which marks a shift from a state-controlled system to a public-private partnership, while retaining a guaranteed indicative price of Rs3,500 per 40kg.

The policy, she explained, removes inter-provincial wheat movement restrictions, establishes a National Wheat Monitoring Committee, and provides for federal procurement to maintain strategic reserves. She added that the government's action plan for the next fiscal year emphasises a comprehensive agricultural roadmap, including mechanisation and the creation of the National Agri Trade and Food Safety Authority to boost exports. Naz also noted the establishment of a National Seed Development and Regulatory Authority to modernise the seed sector, enhance regulation, and promote development of high-yield and climate-resilient crop varieties. *(Business Recorder, May 23rd, 2026, Page 3)*

PTI farmers lash out at govt over 'flawed' wheat policy

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Farmers' Wing warned that Punjab's wheat crisis was deepening rapidly, claiming the growers are being forced to sell their yield at rates far below their production cost, while government's wheat policy had "completely failed," pushing farmers further towards financial ruin. Wheat growers suffered massive losses after being compelled to sell their yield at around Rs3,500 per maund, despite incurring a production cost of nearly Rs4,000 per maund. *(Dawn, May 26th, 2026, Page 2)*

Farmers to launch protest against agri policies

The Kisan Ittehad has announced a province-wide protest movement in June against what it termed anti-farmer policies, warning that growers are facing an unprecedented crisis due to flawed wheat, sugar and agricultural policies. The organisation also urged the government to focus on tackling the challenges posed by the climate change and ensuring protection to agriculture from its impacts in the coming annual budget.

Kisan Ittehad Central Chairman Khalid Hussain Bath alleged that in 2024 the Punjab government asked farmers to register for wheat procurement but did not purchase a single grain, while the Electronic Warehouse Receipt (EWR) system introduced in 2025 also failed to ensure wheat procurement. Bath questioned official claims of bumper wheat production and successful procurement, arguing that wheat was becoming scarce in markets and selling at around Rs4,000 per maund, while private companies had purchased wheat from farmers at prices as low as Rs2,800 to Rs3,500 per maund.

He also criticized reports of plans to import around three million metric tons of wheat, asking why imports were being considered if domestic stocks were sufficient. He said climate change had significantly affected wheat production and maintained that restrictions on the movement of wheat contradicted the government's deregulation policy. Referring to the sugar sector, he warned that allowing sugar exports could eventually lead to costly imports, repeating mistakes made in the past. The Kisan Ittehad chairman criticized ministers for using terms such as "seasonal farmers" and "farmer mafia," alleging that they were not presenting the true picture of the agricultural sector to Punjab Chief Minister. *(Business Recorder, May 31st, 2026, Page 1)*

1.2 # Farmers

Climate safety, decent conditions for women agri workers demanded

Women cotton workers and labour rights activists highlighted the urgent need for climate safety and decent working conditions for women agricultural workers in the face of increasing climate change impacts. They said rising temperatures, extreme heat, and harsh working conditions are seriously affecting the mental and physical health of women cotton workers. Speakers stressed that heatwaves and unsafe field conditions are damaging women workers' health and livelihoods and called for urgent measures including shaded rest areas, clean drinking water, climate safety kits, reduced working hours during extreme heat, and better health services in rural areas.

They also demanded action to address off-season poverty, unemployment, and seasonal occupational safety and health challenges faced by women agricultural workers. Speakers emphasized need for sustainable livelihood opportunities, social protection, and occupational health and safety measures for women workers throughout the year.

These issues were discussed during the Convention of Women Agricultural Workers organized in connection with International Labour Day under the theme "Decent Work Begins with Mental and Physical Safety," held by Sindh Community Foundation with support from Asian Venture Philanthropy Network. More than 100 women agricultural workers from five villages of Tando Adam, including members of five women agricultural workers' trade unions, along with labour rights activists, cotton growers, journalists, and representatives from government departments participated in the convention. *(Business Recorder, May 4th, 2026, Page 10)*

1.3 # Land

Two brothers killed, another injured in clash over land

Two brothers were killed and a third sibling was injured during a violent clash between rival groups of the Ogahi community in Sukkur district. The conflict allegedly erupted over cattle trespassing onto agricultural land near the village of Bagan Ogahi. Locals reported that the two groups were already at daggers drawn allegedly over a piece of agricultural land. *(Dawn, May 8th, 2026, Page 15)*

Two injured in armed attack over Talpurs' 112-acre land

Two persons received pellet injuries in Latifabad Unit-10 during an armed attack over a piece of 112-acre land belonging to the Talpur family of Latifabad Unit-4. *(Dawn, May 10th, 2026, Page 15)*

Situationer: Punjab set to launch land-lease scheme amid concerns

With just 124,363 acres of state land identified for immediate rollout, the Punjab Board of Revenue has set the stage for operationalising the Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar (AKAR) scheme — an ambitious but contested land-leasing initiative of the provincial government that aims to bring unused land into cultivation while empowering landless farmers. The initiative, spearheaded by the Punjab government led by Maryam Nawaz, is being described by officials as a data-driven intervention, relying on GIS-based land mapping and digital systems to identify, allocate, and monitor agricultural land across districts and parts of the Cholistan region.

However, even as the scheme promises opportunity, it has triggered debate among farmer groups and policy experts over its structure and long-term viability. According to official data, the identified land is being divided into mouza-wise agricultural lots of up to five acres, each approved by district collectors. These plots are being offered on a 10-year lease, extendable for another 10 years, with the state retaining ownership and no proprietary rights granted to the allottees. The financial model has been pitched as pro-poor. Each successful applicant will pay a nominal rent of Rs100 per acre annually, while receiving a one-time development grant of Rs50,000 per acre to support initial farming activities such as land preparation and inputs.

Farooq Tariq, representing Pakistan Kisan Rabita Committee, a network of 36 small farmer organisations, questioned the 10-year lease model, calling it an insufficient incentive for genuine peasants. He pointed out that farmers who have cultivated state lands for generations are being displaced — a reference to Okara military farms and other state-owned farms in Khanewal, Sahiwal, etc. — while these entrants are being offered only temporary tenure. He argued that ownership, rather than leasing, would create a stronger sense of responsibility and long-term investment among farmers.

Referring to the 83,000 acres identified in Cholistan, he noted that even large corporate farming ventures have struggled due to lack of water, raising doubts about how resource-poor farmers could make such land productive. Mr Tariq also criticised the financial support package, stating that the Rs250,000 grant for a five-acre plot is insufficient to develop barren land. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 3)*

Cabinet gives nod to agri land scheme for residents of Cholistan, Katcha areas

The Punjab cabinet has approved the launch of the "Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar" (AKAR) scheme for residents of Cholistan and riverine areas under easy terms and conditions. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz chaired the 34th meeting of the provincial cabinet, where a wide range of policy decisions, development projects and public welfare initiatives were approved. The meeting was briefed that 30,000 plots had been identified for this programme, while nearly 200,000 families had already submitted applications for the initiative. *(Dawn, May 12th, 2026, Page 2)*

Five of a family shot dead in Quetta over 'land dispute'

Five members of a family, including a woman, were gunned down allegedly by one of their relatives in the Kachhi Baig area of Sariab Road. Initial investigations revealed that the killings occurred over a longstanding land dispute. Following the incident, enraged relatives, residents and supporters of the victims placed the bodies on Sariab Road and staged a protest demonstration. *(Dawn, May 26th, 2026, Page 3)*

1.4 # Water

Indus Water Treaty violations by India threaten rice production in KP

As golden wheat fields disappear from the plains of Swabi after harvest, farmers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are once again preparing their lands for rice cultivation, but this summer, uncertainty hangs over their hopes following repeated Indus Water Treaty (IWT) violations by India since April last year. Besides thousands of poor farmers, women in rural areas are often the first to face hardship when crops fail because household food security is directly affected. Thousands of farming families depend on this water for their livelihood. *(Business Recorder, May 11th, 2026, Page 12)*

Arbitration limits Delhi's control over Indus waters

Pakistan expressed "utmost satisfaction" over a supplemental award by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), which it said affirmed Islamabad's position on the Indus Waters Treaty and places "substantive limits on India's water-control capability" over the western rivers of the Indus basin. The decision pertained to maximum pondage — a technical term for the maximum volume of water that could be stored in a reservoir — in Indus Waters Treaty proceedings, arising from design disputes concerning the Ratle and the Kishenganga hydroelectric projects, located in India-occupied Kashmir, a statement issued by the government said.

According to the statement, the supplemental award was issued on May 15. However, the verdict has not been publicly released by the PCA yet. India's foreign ministry, meanwhile, issued a statement rejecting the PCA's decision. New Delhi has historically refused to accept the composition of the Court of Arbitration. The IWT, brokered by the World Bank in 1960, allocates the three western rivers — Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — largely to Pakistan, and the three eastern rivers — Ravi, Beas and Sutlej — to India.

In April 2025, India announced a unilateral suspension of its obligations under the IWT following an attack on tourists in occupied Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 people — an incident New Delhi blamed on Islamabad without proof. This violated a supplemental award of competence, issued by the PCA in 2015, which provides a framework for international disputes, declaring India can't unilaterally put the treaty in abeyance. *(Dawn, May 18th, 2026, Page 1)*

Water win

The Permanent Court of Arbitration's supplemental award on Islamabad's decade-old petition challenging the design specifications of two Indian hydropower projects on rivers allocated to Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty is a definitive affirmation of the supremacy of international law over unilateral state actions. It places India in an increasingly untenable position — legally, diplomatically, and perhaps important, morally. The ruling removes whatever ambiguity India has been trying to exploit. By reaffirming that the IWT remains binding on both parties and that neither can unilaterally suspend it, the decision closes the door on India's irrational position that it can arbitrarily hold the treaty "in abeyance".

More significantly, the tribunal has constrained India's ability to control the western rivers in ways that disadvantage Pakistan's downstream entitlement by declaring that maximum pondage must be justified by actual operational necessity — such as site hydrology, hydraulic conditions and power system requirements. The ruling vindicates Pakistan's position that the IWT places limits on Indian hydropower infrastructure on its rivers. The award is also significant because it strengthens Pakistan's review rights, and explicitly places the burden to provide sufficient information for treaty compliance assessment on India. *(Dawn, May 19th, 2026, Page 6)*

Drying ponds force Cholistanis to opt for 'seasonal migration'

The sizzling heat, which has been gripping the Cholistan desert for the previous one month, has caused an acute water shortage for the desert areas residents and their livestock, as around one-third of water ponds in area have gone dry. Dawn has learnt that around one-third of 2,000 open ponds, locally called 'toba', which are main source of drinking water, besides very few water supply lines in some of the desert areas, for locals and their livestock, have dried up, causing an acute water shortage in Cholistan.

During the hot months in the desert areas, the high water evaporation rate, caused bythe scorching sunlight and high temperatures, turns these open ponds dry. These 2,000 open water ponds cater to water needs of around 0.3 million humans and their 1.5 million cattle heads. However, a number of tobas, including those at Chhoriwala, Kaliwala, Balochanwala, Nooriwala, Tootafan etc still have some quantity of drinking water, accumulating after last month's rain in the region, they say. They say that the acute water shortage is forcing many of the Cholistan residents, who were dependent on these dried-up ponds, to migrate from their native settlements to green areas, along with their livestock, in search of water and fodder. *(Dawn, May 27th, 2026, Page 2)*

Khuhro resents Irsa move to drastically slash Sindh's water share

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Sindh President Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has lodged a strong protest with the federal government over the Indus River System Authority's (Irsa) decision to impose a 27 per cent water shortage exclusively on Sindh during the Kharif season. Khuhro criticised the decision for maintaining zero cuts for Punjab, while continuing the release of 25,500 cusecs from the Indus River into the Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal and Tunsa-Panjnad Link Canal.

He further highlighted that 11,900 cusecs were being diverted to Jhelum–Chenab zone via the Chashma–Jhelum Link Canal and another 9,000 cusecs through the Taunsa–Panjnad Link Canal. This amounts to a combined diversion of 20,900 cusecs from the Indus water, he argued, should be reaching Sindh's agricultural fields. Khuhro described Sindh as a major contributor to the national economy, producing 5.5m tonnes of rice annually and generating $1.4bn in rice exports. Cutting the province's water share during Kharif, he argued, amounted to an "economic massacre" of downstream province. "Sindh produces 67pc of country's agricultural output, yet it is being deprived of its rightful water share. *(Dawn, May 27th, 2026, Page 15)*

Farmers seek early release of water in Marwat canal

Local elders have asked the irrigation department to release water in the Marwat canal to reduce the woes of farmers and enable them to have sufficient water for irrigation purposes. During a visit to the canal, Tehreek Haqooq-i-Lakki Marwat chairman Engineer Ihsanullah Khan and other elders said that the availability of water in the Marwat canal was a matter of life and death for local farmers, as they were fully dependent on the canal to irrigate their lands. Breaches and leakages at various points have delayed the release of water in the canal. *(Dawn, May 30th, 2026, Page 8)*

Irsa sticks to decision of 'equalising water shortage' despite Sindh's objection

A 22pc water shortage has been persisting in Sindh for the last ten days as Irsa continues to "equalise shortages between Punjab and Sindh". While Sindh has already conveyed its strong reservations over Irsa's decision, there has been no sign of flexibility in Irsa's attitude vis-a-viz Sindh's grievance. *(Dawn, May 30th, 2026, Page 15)*

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Digital banking products and services: ZTBL creates 900 jobs for graduates, postgraduates

Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited through digital banking products and services, has reached small farmers and created over 900 employment opportunities for fresh graduates and postgraduates across the country. ZTB President/CEO Tahir Yaqoob Bhatti shared that the bank follows a unique business model in which branch managers and mobile credit officers visit villages and far-flung areas to provide agri-financing and other banking services at farmers' doorsteps. *(Business Recorder, May 11th, 2026, Page 3)*

Chinese firms urged to set up agri machinery plants in Punjab

Punjab Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani invited Chinese companies to establish agricultural machinery manufacturing plants in Punjab, saying the province offers vast investment opportunities in agriculture, livestock and allied sectors. Punjab produces 76pc of country's wheat, 62pc rice, 54 percent cotton, 98pc maize and 71.3pc sugarcane, making it backbone of Pakistan's agriculture sector. He said the trend of manufacturing and use of agricultural machinery in Punjab was increasing continuously, adding that high-horsepower tractors, harvesters and other modern farm machinery were being imported from China.

The minister said Chinese investors could benefit from significant opportunities in seed development, fertilizer production, biotechnology and crop protection sectors. He said Punjab contributes around 60 percent of the country's milk production and 65 percent of meat production, while the provincial government was taking special initiatives for value addition and exports of milk and meat products. The Chinese delegation expressed keen interest in introducing innovation in Punjab's agriculture sector and said China was already playing an important role in supplying modern agricultural machinery to the province. They also showed interest in establishing manufacturing facilities for modern agricultural equipment in Punjab. *(Business Recorder, May 17th, 2026, Page 3)*

2.3 # Fertilizer

Govt has buffer stocks of over 800,000 tonnes of urea

Pakistan has buffer stocks of more than 800,000 tonnes of urea, and fertiliser manufacturers have ruled out any shortage of the agricultural input during the Kharif season, which began this month. Executive Director of the Fertiliser Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council (FMPAC), Brig Sher Shah Malik, told that manufacturers currently hold buffer stocks of 829,000 tonnes of urea to meet domestic demand. He said that only Fatima Fertilizer's Sheikhupura plant is not receiving gas, while Fauji

Fertilizer Company's Bin Qasim plant is receiving 32 mmcfd of gas against a requirement of 60 mmcfd. The combined production loss of these two plants is around 100,000 tonnes. He said the production capacity of fertiliser manufacturers is 6.3 million tonnes, which is equivalent to the local demand of urea.

He said that DAP prices increased by PKR 1000 per bag and normal urea per bag by PKR 200-400, mainly because of an increase in freight charges. He said the DAP bag now costs around PKR 15000 and the urea bag PKR 4500. According to market sources, the ban and curtailment of urea smuggling to Afghanistan improved the availability of urea in country and kept prices under check.

Khalid Arian, President of the Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, said that the higher prices of DAP resulted in the shortfall of the wheat target by 3 million tonnes. "The production of wheat is likely to remain in the range of 27 million tonnes against the target of 30 million tonnes. "Small farmers could not afford PKR 15000 per bag of DAP, and it reduced the crops' yield per acre. *(Business Recorder, May 5th, 2026, Page 12)*

PAC orders crackdown against sale of substandard fertilisers, pesticides in Sindh

The Sindh Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) ordered a province-wide crackdown against dealers selling adulterated and substandard fertilisers and pesticides, and directed authorities to seal their shops. Chairing a meeting, PAC Chairman Nisar Ahmed Khuhro also instructed the agriculture department to prepare a draft bill for legislation to establish testing laboratories in every district of the province for fertilisers and pesticides. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 15)*

PM orders uninterrupted supply of fertiliser to safeguard food security

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned to ensure the timely provision of fertiliser to farmers at all costs and ordered continuous monitoring of fertiliser supplies to safeguard the country's food security. Chairing a meeting on food security and fertiliser reserves in the capital, the prime minister said fulfilling the agricultural sector's requirements remained the government's top priority to ensure national food security, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). He directed the relevant ministries and institutions to formulate contingency plans for alternative fertiliser supplies from Central Asian states in view of possible disruptions in supply chains from Gulf countries. *(Dawn, May 13th, 2026, Page 1)*

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

3. 1 # Cash Crop

Cotton stocks at 'lowest ebb' ahead of ginning season

The cotton sector is facing an unprecedented supply crisis as stocks in the country have reportedly fallen below 10,000 bales before the start of the new ginning season, raising fears that some textile mills may partially shut down in the coming weeks due to cotton shortages. It is perhaps the first time in the country's history that cotton inventories had dropped to such critically low levels ahead of the new crop season. The closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border earlier prevented nearly 500,000 cotton bales from entering Pakistan from Afghanistan, while the subsequent US-Israeli-launched war against Iran disrupted cotton imports, worsening supply problems for domestic textile mills. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 1)*

Cotton crisis

Pakistan's cotton economy is once again facing a crisis that exposes the country's flawed agricultural and industrial policies. The reported fall in cotton stocks to below 10,000 bales before the start of the new ginning season is unprecedented and alarming for an economy whose largest export industry depends heavily on the availability of cotton. With some textile mills already fearing production cuts in the coming weeks, the crisis could not have come at a more precarious time for a country struggling to protect its balance-of-payments position amid a global energy price spike.

Pakistan has been facing recurring cotton shortages for several years now, because of the persistent decline in domestic production. Farmers have steadily shifted away from cotton towards more lucrative crops such as sugarcane in the traditional cotton-growing areas, severely undermining the cotton economy. The consequences of this shift have been significant for the textile industry that contributes roughly 55pc of Pakistan's total export revenues.

Research institutions have consumed billions of rupees over the decades without producing any breakthrough in climate-resilient, pest-resistant or high-yield long-staple cotton varieties. Rising input costs are now worsening matters even more. On the other hand, India, once producing cotton at levels comparable to Pakistan, has transformed its own sector through high-yield varieties and modernised processing. It now plans to raise annual production to 50m bales by 2031 while offering farmers billions in price support. National cotton production has fallen to less than half of its historical peak and we still lack a cotton strategy, effective seed technology and policies for cotton output. *(Dawn, May 12th, 2026, Page 6)*

Cotton prices surge as season starts early

The national cotton sector has entered a new phase with the new ginning season beginning in the second week of May for the first time in history. Cotton arrivals have started in Punjab and Sindh, and prices of phutti and lint are witnessing an unusual surge at the very outset of the season. Four ginning factories in Khanewal and one in Burewala started cotton ginning over the past two days after partial cotton picking began in Sindh's coastal areas. Punjab-based ginners started purchasing cotton from those areas where early sowing was carried out in February on a larger scale than in previous years. *(Dawn, May 15th, 2026, Page 9)*

Cotton growers urged to take steps to insulate their crops from heatwave

The Punjab Agriculture Department and the Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) have urged cotton growers to take immediate preventive measures to protect the crop from the ongoing severe heatwave, warning that the flowering and boll formation stages are highly sensitive and vulnerable to extreme temperatures. According to the latest forecast of the Pakistan Meteorological Department, temperatures in several areas of Punjab and Sindh are expected to range between 46°C and 50°C, posing a serious threat to cotton productivity, particularly early-sown crop.

Both institutions emphasised the importance of balanced nutrition and recommended the application of micronutrients, including boron, zinc and sulfur, to improve boll setting and crop vigour. CCRI further recommended a foliar spray comprising 300 grams potassium sulfate, 350 grams magnesium sulfate, 250 grams zinc sulfate, 200 grams copper sulfate and 200 grams borax dissolved separately and then mixed in 100 litres of water per acre, with repeat application after every 15 days. The advisory also highlighted the role of amino acids and biostimulants in improving the crop’s resistance against environmental stress. *(Business Recorder, May 24th, 2026, Page 7)*

3.2 # Food Crop

Section 144 imposed to restrict illegal movement of wheat in Balochistan

The Balochistan government has imposed Section 144 to restrict the movement of wheat and launched a crackdown against those who will be found involved in illegal transportation and hoarding of wheat in the province’s border districts, officials said. Authorities have been directed to take immediate action against violators and seize illegally stored wheat. *(Dawn, May 1st, 2026, Page 5)*

Public sector growers: KP cabinet approves of procurement of wheat

Provincial Cabinet of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa approved procurement of 225,000 metric tons of wheat from public sector growers at the rate of Rs 3,500 per 40 kilogrammes involving a financial implication of Rs. 19.68 billion. The cabinet further approved transfer of land to the Agriculture Department for establishment of a Temperate Rice Research Station in Malakand Division. The Cabinet also approved the introduction of digital reforms and online civil registration of vital statistics services for the public, including registration and certification of births, deaths, marriages, divorces and dissolution of marriages. *(Business Recorder, May 4th, 2026, Page 3)*

Flour millers term ‘Punjab ban’ on wheat supply unconstitutional

President of Charsadda Flour Mills Association Murshid Ali Khan advocate has termed restriction on wheat supply from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa without any formal notification as unconstitutional act and demanded immediate restoration of wheat transportation to the province. He warned that if wheat supply was not restored, hundreds of flour mills in the province would shut down, leaving thousands of workers unemployed and triggering a severe food crisis along with an abnormal increase in flour prices. Flour mill owners and other representatives of the association were also present on the occasion. Murshid Ali Khan said the Punjab government had halted wheat transportation to KPK without issuing any official notification or written order, calling it a clear violation of Article 151 of the Constitution, which guarantees free movement of goods between provinces.

He said despite uninterrupted supply of electricity and gas from KPK to Punjab, the province was being subjected to discriminatory treatment in return. The association president said KPK produced around one million metric tonnes of wheat annually, while its total requirement exceeded 5.3 million metric tonnes, making the province heavily dependent on Punjab for wheat supply. *(Dawn, May 9th, 2026, Page 8)*

Wheat procurement hits roadblock in Punjab

The Punjab government's new wheat procurement mechanism is struggling, as private firms are experiencing buying failures due to pricing disputes, financing issues, and farmer resistance. Under the 2026 strategy, the government aimed to procure 3 million tonnes of wheat through 11 private companies, shifting away from its traditional state-led buying model. To incentivise participation, authorities offered extensive support: negotiating bank loans, covering 70 per cent of markup costs, providing free storage in Food Department warehouses, and assigning around 400 experienced personnel to assist firms during procurement.

Despite these concessions, the initiative has struggled to take off. A representative of one participating firm revealed that their financing bid was based on KIBOR [Karachi Interbank Offered Rates] plus 1 per cent, but talks between banks and the shortlisted companies failed to reach a workable agreement. As a result, firms were forced to arrange their capital under less favourable terms.

According to officials, banks were initially expected to charge around 9pc markup until September, with an additional 1pc increase each subsequent month until repayment, a structure that raised concerns about mounting financial risk for companies holding large wheat stocks. The most immediate challenge, however, has come from the market itself. With wheat selling at around Rs3,700 per maund in open market, farmers have shown little interest in selling to procurement firms offering official rate of Rs3,500 per maund. As a result, many growers have either held onto their produce in anticipation of better prices or sold directly to private traders, including arhtis (middlemen).

Industry sources confirm that at least nine of the eleven firms have not purchased any wheat so far, effectively stalling the procurement drive. Authorities have attempted to control supply by cracking down on what they term "illegal transportation" of wheat from Punjab to other provinces. Enforcement teams from the Food Department and Punjab Enforcement & Regulatory Authority (PERA) have been intercepting shipments and redirecting them to state-linked storage facilities. Farmer groups have strongly criticised the government's handling of the wheat market. Pakistan Kisan Ittehad (PKI)

President Khalid Khokhar said most farmers of South Punjab had already sold about half their produce at lower rates, averaging around Rs3,100 per maund, when prices dipped to between Rs2,800 and Rs3,200.

He argued that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism is meant to protect farmers when prices fall — not to suppress the market when prices rise. "The government intervened when prices increased to Rs3,700, instead of when farmers were forced to sell at lower rates," he lamented. He also alleged that staff at the so-called procurement centres were deducting at least 15kg per bag of 100kg on the pretext that the wheat contained sand and other impurities, while the weighing machines there were also faulty to the disadvantage of the growers. Mian Umair Masood, the leader of another PKI faction, accused the government of mismanaging support schemes. He rejected official claims that Rs6 billion worth of gunny bags were distributed to farmers, alleging widespread misappropriation. *(Dawn, May 9th, 2026, Page 9)*

Over 1,000 tonnes of wheat missing from Bannu, Swat godowns

Serious irregularities have been uncovered in wheat storage system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa food department, where official inspection reports and correspondence reveal more than 1,000 metric tons of wheat have gone missing from provincial reserve centres in Bannu and Swat. *(The News, May 10th, 2026, Page 1)*

Punjab produced record 22m metric tonnes of wheat: CM Maryam

Punjab has abundant wheat reserves, with a record production of more than 22 million metric tonnes achieved this year, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said. She was presiding over a meeting that decided to establish an AI-based advanced live dashboard to safeguard every grain of wheat in the province. The meeting was informed that the live dashboard would play a pivotal role in ensuring foolproof food policymaking by monitoring wheat demand, supply, stock levels and price control mechanisms.

Meanwhile, Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari told that projects such as "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" and "Suthra Punjab" received strong appreciation from international delegates and global leaders at Baku. She said Punjab had successfully achieved all wheat production targets this year, while both cultivation area and output have increased significantly. She said that farmers were offered better returns than officially announced support price, and wheat-related trade has exceeded Rs100 billion, reflecting strong agricultural performance and economic activity. *(Dawn, May 22nd, 2026, Page 2)*

Wheat production target revised downward this year, says minister

Floods, heat waves and changing weather patterns have adversely affected wheat production in Pakistan and the target initially fixed could not be achieved this year. This was stated by Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research. The minister said wheat production target had initially been fixed at 30 million tonnes, but the estimates had subsequently been revised downward owing to climatic impacts.

He said farmers' organisations had demanded a wheat support price of Rs3,200 per maund, while the government fixed the price at Rs3,500. According to the minister, the production cost of wheat currently stands at approximately Rs2,600 per maund. Floods, heat waves and changing weather patterns have adversely affected production, Rana Tanveer tells Senate committee

The minister said provinces had failed to evolve consensus on wheat procurement targets, adding that the Sindh government had announced procurement of only 100,000 tons of wheat. "The provinces are not cooperating in the agricultural sector and problems have increased after devolution," he stated. He added that effective cooperation between the federation and provinces was indispensable for overcoming agricultural challenges and ensuring food security. *(Dawn, May 22nd, 2026, Page 4)*

3.3 # Fruits

Sindh Abadgar Board says climate change, price hike immensely impacting yield

Sindh Abadgar Board met to tackle dual challenges of a shifting climate and fluctuating prices of produce in local markets. Expressing grave concern over the increasing unpredictability of weather patterns, the board underscored the urgent need for a coordinated scientific response to safeguard the region's agricultural future. During the session, members highlighted the direct impact of environmental shifts on crop yields, which has contributed to the volatility of fruit and vegetable prices for consumers.

During the meeting, it was observed that the escalating climate crisis has led to increasingly severe pest and disease outbreaks during the critical mango flowering and fruit-setting stages. This year, certain regions suffered particularly devastating attacks which, in a troubling trend, have become sudden, rapid and intense. Such volatility leaves farmers with a dangerously narrow window of time to react, threatening the viability of one of the region's most vital crops. *(Dawn, May 4th, 2026, Page 15)*

Growers oppose change in commencement of mango export

Mango growers took to the streets to launch a protest against the mounting multifaceted pressures facing the agricultural sector. Demonstrators cited the crippling hike in fuel prices, a devastating surge in mango orchard diseases, and the controversial decision to change the mango export commencement date. The SAI leaders said the agriculture sector was faced with the intricate crisis. They argued that while growers were already struggling with inadequate crop prices, the situation had been further compounded by an exceptional hike in fuel costs. They demanded that the export of mangoes should be allowed from May 15 instead of June 1 because by early June Sindh's mangoes were not available in the market. They deplored the fact that mango orchards were facing diseases for the last several years but no research-oriented measures were taken by the agriculture department. They suggested that agriculture research department officials should visit mango orchards and guide the owners about disease-control measures. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 15)*

Late mango crop hits export prospects

Mango season has entered markets later than usual, with an estimated 20 percent drop in production. Exporters also fear that regional tensions, border closures and rising freight costs could severely affect overseas shipments this year. Industry stakeholders say unusual weather patterns damaged flowering during crop's early stages, reducing expected national output to around 1.5 million tonnes, down from nearly 1.8 million tonnes last year. The cultivation area has remained almost unchanged at about 160,000 hectares. The season has also been delayed due to cooler and wetter weather during March and April. Harvesting for the local market, which normally begins in late April, did not begin until the first week of May this year. Export programmes are now expected to commence from June 1 instead of around May 20. *(Dawn, May 12th, 2026, Page 9)*

Experts eye export markets for Sindh's fruit and vegetables thru value addition

Agricultural experts have stressed the urgent need for value addition, food processing, and export promotion across Sindh's produce sector, focusing particularly on key commodities like tomatoes, mangoes, dates, chillies, and onions in order to significantly boost farmers' incomes, fortify the regional economy, minimise post-harvest waste and open fresh avenues for young entrepreneurs. They were speaking at a seminar organised by the Institute of Food Sciences and Technology at the Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Tandojam. The findings of a research project titled "Development of Tomato By-Products as Functional Foods", funded by the Sindh Higher Education Commission under the Sindh Research Support Programme. *(Dawn, May 21st, 2026, Page 15)*

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

4.1 # Dairy

FCEPL, SLIC team up: Over 1,500 dairy farmers to get insurance coverage

FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited (FCEPL), has partnered with State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC), to introduce a dedicated life insurance programme for dairy farmers. The pioneering initiative aims to provide financial security insurance coverage for over 1,500 farmers and their families under the Dairy Farmers Programme. As part of the company's ongoing commitment to 'Doing Dairy Right'; that encompasses farmer welfare and sustainable livelihoods, the customized insurance "Dairy Farmers Insurance Programme." is designed to support farmers' families in the event of accidental death or permanent disability, ensuring financial protection and greater peace of mind for farming communities at no cost to the farmers. *(Business Recorder, May 6th, 2026, Page 2)*

Dairy farmers seek massive hike in milk price amid quality complaints in Karachi

The city faces the threat of an acute fresh milk shortage in the coming days as the Dairy and Cattle Farmers Association (DCFA) has warned that farmers will halt production unless authorities approve an immediate Rs100-per-litre increase in the retail price. The DCFA said that consumers, already struggling with repeated price hikes, would bear the brunt if supply disruptions hit the city. In a formal letter to the Karachi commissioner, the dairy farmers' body issued an urgent warning that the dairy industry faced collapse unless milk prices were increased by Rs100 per litre immediately, citing a 60-75pc surge in production costs "over the last two years". *(Dawn, May 14th, 2026, Page 13)*

4.2 # Fishery

PFF slams official hindrance in fishing

Badin chapter of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) has criticised "new restriction" being enforced to undermine their livelihood. Local PFF leaders claimed that Rangers personnel posted at several checkpoints along Badin's coastline were detaining fishermen for hours and being compelled to obtain entry pass, although the fishermen possessed valid fishing licence issued by the fisheries department. According to the forum, the move was affecting thousands of fishermen families. It recalled that after a long-running struggle, the fishermen community had succeeded in getting the contract system abolished in 2005. But now, they deplored, the same system was being enforced in the shape of entry pass restriction. *(Dawn, May 3rd, 2026, Page 15)*

Govt moves to curb overfishing, promote tuna harvesting

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has reiterated his commitment to promote sustainable fisheries management, protecting marine biodiversity and ensuring economic growth through responsible tuna harvesting. Junaid Chaudhry noted that tuna played a vital role in global food security, livelihoods and economic stability, calling for collective action by governments, industries, and consumers. Junaid Chaudhry said Pakistan has taken significant strides in aligning its fisheries sector with international conservation standards.

"For the first time, Pakistan has secured a quota of 25,000 metric tonnes from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, including 15,000 tonnes of yellowfin tuna and 10,000 tonnes of skipjack. This landmark achievement is expected to generate approximately $200 million in exports," he added. The minister acknowledged that despite annual catches exceeding 45,000 tonnes, a large portion had remained outside the formal economy due to unregulated practices. He said government is addressing this through implementation of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy. *(Business Recorder, May 3rd, 2026, Page 3)*

4.3 # Livestock

'Awam Dost' livestock market becomes operational

The modern "Awam Dost" livestock market, established at Karachi's Northern Bypass, has become fully operational as of April 5, marking the beginning of a high-octane trading season for sacrificial animals. According to market administration, over 65,000 animals from across the country have already reached the facility, drawing a massive influx of citizens in search of their preferred livestock. *(Business Recorder, May 2nd, 2026, Page 3)*

Punjab increases livestock budget eightfold to Rs40bn

The Punjab government is taking practical steps to develop the livestock sector, promote modern farming systems, value addition, processing, and increase meat exports. This was expressed by Special Parliamentary Committee on Religious Affairs Malik Iftikhar while presiding over a consultative meeting on the development of the livestock sector. On this occasion, Mr Iftikhar said that for the first time in Punjab, the budget of the Livestock Department has been increased from Rs5 billion to Rs40 billion so that this sector can be developed on modern lines. *(Dawn, May 10th, 2026, Page 4)*

5 # TRADE

Trade deficit

According to the PBS data, imports rose 7.46pc year-on-year and 28.41pc month-on-month to $6.55bn in April. In 10MFY26, the import bill grew by 6.94pc to $57.19bn $53.48bn in the corresponding period last year. The trade deficit widened by 3.82pc to $4.07bn in April from $3.92bn over the corresponding month of last year. It, however, swelled 20.28pc to $31.98bn in July-April 2025-26 from $26.59bn a year ago. The trade deficit for FY25 widened by 9pc to $26.27bn against $24.11bn in the preceding year. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 9)*

Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry flags worsening trade imbalance

Expressing grave concern over a 20 percent increase in trade deficit to $32 billion during 10MFY26, business leaders said the only sustainable way to stabilise country's fragile external account and protect foreign exchange reserves was to fast-track a comprehensive strategy to aggressively incentivise export sectors. They urged the government to curb unnecessary imports that were contributing to the widening trade imbalance.

Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Atif Ikram Sheikh said that during July-April FY26, Pakistan's import bill rose by nearly 7pc to $57.19bn, while exports declined by 6.25pc to $25.21bn from $26.89bn in the same period last year. "This shows that the country is importing more than double the value of its exports, pushing the cumulative trade deficit up by 20.28pc to $31.99bn from $26.59bn a year ago," he added. He said April recorded a 46-month high monthly trade deficit of $4.07bn. Although exports posted a 14.03pc year-on-year increase to $2.48bn during the month, the gain was outweighed by a sharp rise in import payments. *(Dawn, May 6th, 2026, Page 9)*

Swelling trade gap hurting balance of payments

A sharp increase in trade deficit of as much as $32 billion threatens the balance of payments as the financial year is coming to a close and final payments are bound to be cleared before June 30, according to industry sources. However, some financial experts said the "managed exchange rate" has produced negative results as it made the dollar cheaper, allowing importers of luxury items like costly new vehicles to exceed all limits.

The experts said that unlike Pakistan, the Indian rupee sharply fell by 10 per cent over the last 12 months and is still falling. The Indian rupee recorded its lowest rate of Rs95.40 to a dollar this week. India also faces heavy outflows of foreign capital, particularly after the start of the Gulf war. The equity market in Pakistan has also witnessed massive outflows. According to State Bank data, inflows in the equity market during the first 10 months were $247 million while outflows were $884m.

Fuel import bill

The prime minister said recently that the cost of imported oil was $300 million per week before the Gulf war, but it has now gone up to $800m. Most of the currency experts found it difficult to digest as it showed that the price of oil had shot up by 167 per cent. The import data show that the import bill of petroleum products in first 10 months of the current financial year FY26 was still less than the same period of last fiscal year. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 9)*

Imports from North America surge

Pakistan's merchandise exports to North America posted a modest increase of 1.72 per cent to $4.921 billion in the first nine months of 2025-26, from $4.838bn a year ago. Imports from the region, however, surged 33.44pc to $2.538bn during July-March FY26 compared to $1.902bn in the corresponding period, indicating a widening inflow of goods from North America. The rise in imports reflects Islamabad's efforts to ease trade imbalances with the region, particularly with the United States. However, exports to Canada declined.

The US remained the dominant market, accounting for nearly 95pc of Pakistan's total exports to North America, with the remaining share going mainly to Canada and other countries. Within the region, exports to the US increased 2pc to $4.634bn in 9MFY26 from $4.543bn a year earlier. In FY25, exports to the US stood at $6.028bn, compared to $5.444bn in the corresponding period of the previous year, registering an increase of 10.72pc. Pakistan's exports to Canada recorded a negative growth of 2.40pc to $286.88m in 9MFY26 from $293.94m over the corresponding months of last year.

The imports from North America stood at $2.538bn in 9MFY26 from $1.902bn over the previous year, showing an increase of 33.44pc. The imports from North America stood at $2.588bn in FY25 from $2.038bn over the previous year, showing an increase of 26.98pc. Of these, imports from US stood at $2.133bn in 9MFY26 from $1.724bn over the corresponding months of last year, reflecting an increase of 23.73pc.

Export to Latin America stood at $51.85m in 9MFY26 against $58.09m over the previous year, indicating a negative growth of 10.74pc. Pakistan's export to Latin

America stood at $73.521m in FY25 against $79.502m over the previous year, indicating a decline of 7.52pc. Shipments to Central America stood at $124.90m in 9MFY26 from $124.95m over the previous year, showing a paltry decline. *(Dawn, May 17th, 2026, Page 9)*

Food import bill swells 14pc, exports dip 32pc

Pakistan's food import bill rose 13.81 per cent year-on-year to $7.848 billion in the first 10 months of 2025-26, mainly driven by higher purchases of sugar and edible oil. The gap between food imports and exports has widened during the review period. This has increased the country's dependence on imported food items in the current fiscal year. Meanwhile, exports of raw food products decreased 32.02pc to $4.190 billion in 10MFY26 from $6.164bn a year earlier. The drop in exports was broad-based, with volumes declining across nearly all major food categories, except meat, which showed some resilience during the period.

Overall rice exports in April dropped 9.33pc year-on-year. However, exports of basmati rice surged 56.12pc in value and 62.36pc in quantity. By contrast, exports of non-basmati shrank by 27.97pc in value and 24.16pc in quantity in April. The government has announced a cash subsidy to boost rice exports. Similarly, meat exports grew 18.33pc in April. Exports of fish products rose 7pc. Most of the other food products record a negative growth. Vegetables registered the steepest fall, plunging by 78.38pc. However, exports of tobacco surged 80.29pc, and exports of spices rose 2pc in April. According to data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, palm oil constituted largest share among imported food items, followed by pulses, tea, soyabean oil and sugar.

Pakistan imported 309,157 tonnes of sugar during July-April 2025-26, marking an unprecedented increase of 10,181.25pc compared to just 3,007 tonnes in the same period last year. In value terms, sugar imports jumped to $174.908m in 10MFY26 from $2.978m a year earlier, reflecting a sharp rise of 5,773.35pc. The surge follows the government's decision to allow large-scale imports to address domestic shortages and contain rising prices in local markets. Retail sugar prices have remained volatile, hovering between Rs150 and Rs180 per kilogram in different cities.

Officials say the move was aimed at stabilising the market amid tight domestic availability, as the country increasingly relied on external supplies to meet demand. The value of palm oil imports rose 15.41pc to $3.313bn during July-April FY26 from $2.871bn a year ago. In terms of quantity, import of palm oil increased 11.77pc to 3.075 million tonnes in 10MFY26 from 2.751m tonnes a year earlier. However, Pakistan imported pulses worth $624.38m in 10MFY26, compared with $823.63m in the same period last year, representing a 24.19pc decline. Soyabean oil imports plunged 61.15pc to $108.683m in 10MFY26 from $279.768m recorded in the same period last year. The import bill for all other food items rose 35.81pc year-on-year to $2.525bn in 10MFY26. Tea imports rose to $554.889m from $527.80m. *(Dawn, May 21st, 2026, Page 9)*

Trade gap with neighbours widens by 30pc

Pakistan's trade deficit with nine neighbouring countries widened by 30.18 per cent to $12.718 billion during the first 10 months of 2025-26 from $9.769bn in the corresponding period last year. The soaring deficit reflects a contraction in Pakistan's exports to regional markets, largely due to reduced shipments to China, followed by Afghanistan and Bangladesh. On the import side, inflows from China recorded a strong increase during period under review, contributing significantly to widening imbalance. *(Dawn, May 22nd, 2026, Page 9)*

5.1 # Export

Exports rebound over 14pc in April

Pakistan's merchandise exports showed signs of recovery in April after two consecutive months of decline, but the trade deficit remained elevated due to a surge in imports and relatively slower growth in export proceeds. The rebound in April exports offered some relief. However, it was not sufficient to offset the widening gap caused by higher import payments, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) said. Trade analysts say the persistent rise in imports, driven by demand for energy and industrial inputs, continues to outpace export earnings, keeping pressure on the external account.

In April, exports grew 14.03pc to $2.48bn, compared with $2.17bn in the corresponding month last year. On a month-on-month basis, export proceeds increased by 9.5pc. Negative export growth has persisted since August of the current fiscal year, except in July, when exports grew by 16.43pc year on year. Export earnings have posted negative growth, with proceeds declining by 20.41pc in December. This follows a 14.54pc drop in November, 4.46pc in October, 3.88pc in September, and 12.49pc in August, reflecting persistent pressures on country's external trade performance. However, exports rose 3.3pc in January but contracted 8.76pc in February and 14.4pc in March.

In the 10 months (July-April), export proceeds recorded negative growth of 6.25pc, falling to $25.21bn from $26.89bn in the corresponding period last year. Three months ago, the government announced several measures, including a reduction in energy rates, to minimise pressure on the country's trade performance. The export sector had already been under pressure since February due to the conflict. The disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have pushed up shipping costs for exporters and disrupted supply chains. Analysts warn that ongoing war in Middle East could undermine export performance, particularly by disrupting trade routes, dampening demand in key regional markets, and adding uncertainty to global supply chains. In FY25, export proceeds rose 4.67pc to $32.106bn against $30.675bn in the preceding year. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 9)*

Donkey meat from Gwadar free zone will be allowed for export

The government has reportedly decided that donkey meat from Gwadar North Free Zone will be allowed for export strictly in accordance with import policy of the destination country, sources to close to Minister for National Food Security and

Research told. The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, in its recent meeting was apprised that the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950 empowered the federal government to prohibit, restrict, or otherwise control the imports and exports of goods and exports from Pakistan are regulated under the Export Policy Order (EPO), 2022, whereby certain goods are either banned or subject to specified conditions. *(Business Recorder, May 10th, 2026, Page 8)*

Global surplus hits tobacco exports

Pakistan has lost $30 million in tobacco exports from July 2025 to March 2026, and in the remaining three months of the current financial year (FY26), the country is likely to face further difficulties as conditions in the international market have changed, sources in tobacco companies told. They said that in FY25 (July-March), Pakistan's total tobacco exports to different countries stood at $144m, while in the current fiscal year the figure dropped to $114m, reflecting a decline of $30m.

Protest

Meanwhile, the tobacco business community and small cigarette manufacturers have continued their protest, holding several gatherings in Swabi district against what they termed the "victimisation policy" of the FBR. They demanded withdrawal of law enforcement personnel deputed at tobacco green leaf threshing units, an end to FBR raids and harassment of businessmen, withdrawal of "unjust taxes", restoration of previous year's tobacco quota, and a conducive working environment to enable growers to produce quality crops. *(Dawn, May 17th, 2026, Page 9)*

Seafood exports top $500 million

Maritime Affairs Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said the fish and fisheries product exports exceeded the $500 million mark for the first time in the first eleven months of the current fiscal year, mainly due to the opening of the Russian market. In a statement, the minister called it a landmark achievement for the maritime sector and the blue economy. Currently, the minister said 16 Pakistani companies have been authorised to export seafood to Russia. He was confident that access to Russia could pave the way into other Eurasian Economic Union markets and estimated that annual seafood exports could climb to $800m, with initial exports to Russia alone projected to reach about $300m. Frozen fish remained the top export category. Other exports, including shrimps, prawns, crabs, sardines, mackerel, flatfish and fish meal, helped broaden the product mix and increase value-added processing.

China remained the largest seafood market, importing nearly 59pc of total seafood exports. Thailand was the second-largest market, importing mainly Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) - processed shrimps and prawns valued at $31.3m. Recently, the minister announced a major infrastructure plan to establish a 100-acre seafood processing and export zone at the Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority to promote the blue economy and expand the authority's role in global seafood trade.

Estimated at $60-80 million, the project would house 20-25 medium- and large-scale processing units for fish, shrimp, and cephalopods, along with value-addition and export-grade packaging facilities. *(Dawn, May 17th, 2026, Page 9)*

Exports to Middle East fall 8pc in April

Exports to the Middle East fell by eight per cent year-on-year to $230.079 million in April, reflecting the impact of the ongoing conflict on the country's external trade with the region. Shipments to the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan declined in April, while exports to Saudi Arabia posted a paltry growth, reversing the bullish trend, according to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan. In contrast, imports from the region revived, posting 5pc growth in April, mainly led by the UAE, Kuwait and Jordan. However, imports from Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia declined. Exports to the Middle East fell 2pc to $2.635bn in 10MFY26 from $2.676bn a year ago. At the same time, Pakistan's imports from the Middle East saw a negative growth of 3pc to $13.898bn in 10MFY26 from $14.370bn a year ago. *(Dawn, May 19th, 2026, Page 9)*

Textile exports rebound 21pc

Pakistan's textile and clothing exports rebounded 21.27 per cent year-on-year in April, a signal of recovery in global demand following months of fluctuations. This much-needed rebound breaks the sluggish trend because exports had largely remained in negative territory since October 2025, barring an uptick in January, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Pakistan's textile and clothing exports fell by 7.06pc in March, 7.22pc in February, 8.56pc in December, 2.57pc in November and 0.57pc in October. In January, exports grew 3.14pc on a year-on-year. Official data showed that textile and clothing exports slightly rose to $1.480bn in April from $1.220bn a year ago. *(Dawn, May 20th, 2026, Page 9)*

Financial compliance rules: 4-month waiver granted on mango exports to Iran, C Asia

The Ministry of Commerce has granted a four-month exemption from the financial instrument requirement for mango exports to Iran and to Central Asian states via Iran, with the aim of promoting Pakistani mango exports and facilitating access to regional markets. According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Commerce, this exemption will be effective from June 1, 2026, to September 30, 2026. Under this decision, the requirement for a financial instrument under the State Bank of Pakistan's foreign exchange rules will not apply to mango exports to Iran and to CIS countries via Iran. *(Business Recorder, May 22nd, 2026, Page 12)*

Exports to EU stay sluggish despite GSP+

Despite the continuation of the GSP+ status, Pakistan's exports to major Western and Northern European markets fell in the first 10 months of 2025-26 compared with the same period a year earlier, raising serious questions for policymakers. However, the overall export to Europe grew modestly, with an uptick in shipments to Southern and

Eastern European countries during the July-April period. Trade analysts warn that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East could further dampen export demand, as rising energy costs are likely to squeeze consumer spending in Europe, which is already under strain from the economic fallout of the war in Ukraine.

Official data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan showed that exports to European countries recorded a meagre 0.51 per cent year-on-year rise to $7.608 billion in the first 10 months of 2025-26. In FY25, the exports to the EU rose 7.44pc year-on-year to $8.863bn. In FY24, exports to the EU dipped 3.12pc to $8.240bn. There will be a bigger challenge for exporters to retain market share following the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, coupled with rising input costs in the country. Exports to Northern Europe dipped 0.79pc to $618.52m in 10MFY26 from $623.47m a year ago. However, there is an uptick in exports to Eastern and Southern Europe. Exports to Southern Europe grew by 5.75pc to $2.705bn in 10MFY26 from $2.558bn in the corresponding period last year. In this region, exports to Spain grew 7.04 pc to $1.322bn from $1.235bn in the preceding year. *(Dawn, May 24th, 2026, Page 9)*

5.2 # Import

POL products: Country spends nearly one-fourth of total import bill: minister

Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that Pakistan spends nearly one-fourth of its total import bill on petroleum imports. He said that Rs 1.342 trillion was collected through the petroleum levy from July 2025 to April 2026. Minister said that during Jul-Mar FY2026, petroleum imports accounted for 22.2 percent. Given the share, the current account is sensitive to changes in oil prices. He said that in the first nine months of FY2026, the current account has registered a surplus of USD 8million, supported by an 8.2 percent growth in workers' remittances, amounting to USD 30.3 billion and IT exports that increased by 19.8 percent, reaching USD 3.4 billion. *(Business Recorder, May 16th, 2026, Page 1)*

Cotton crisis spurs import surge

Pakistan may spend over $1bn on cotton imports this year as domestic production has plunged to a four-decade low, prompting federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain to assure full government support for revival of cotton sector during budget consultations with Pakistan Business Forum. A PBF delegation led by Chief Organiser Ahmad Jawad met minister to discuss budgetary proposals aimed at providing a level playing field for Pakistan's cotton and agriculture sectors.

PBF Punjab Chairman Malik Talat Suhail said removing GST on cottonseed and oilcake could provide farmers with an additional benefit of at least Rs600 per maund while also boosting economic activity and enhancing revenue collection for the Federal Board of Revenue. He said nearly half of cotton ginning factories across the country had already shut down due to declining domestic production, adding that cotton cultivation had dropped to its lowest level in four decades. He warned that the country might need to import between 7 and 7.5 million bales of cotton this year as domestic production was expected to remain between 5 and 5.5m bales. He estimated that the cotton import bill could reach $1-$1.2bn, putting further pressure on foreign exchange reserves. *(Dawn, May 23rd, 2026, Page 9)*

Pakistan importing cotton from US, Brazil even before local ginning season

In an unprecedented development in Pakistan's history, local textile mills have begun massive cotton imports from the United States even before the start of the new cotton ginning season, as the country has virtually run out of cotton stocks, triggering a sharp surge in domestic cotton and phutti prices. Reports suggest that local textile mills have purchased an extraordinary 206,100 bales – around 95pc– of the total 216,000 bales of the US 2026-27 cotton crop sold during the past week. The millers are also importing cotton on a large scale from Brazil.

During fiscal year 2026-27, country may spend billions of dollars in foreign exchange on the import of cotton and edible oil, potentially the highest import bill in the country's history for these commodities. Despite repeated announcements regarding cotton revival, approval of another sugar mill in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan's largest cotton-producing zone, is undermining efforts to restore cotton cultivation. KCA, one of two major institutions representing Pakistan's cotton sector globally, is sealed since Dec 12, 2025 due to an alleged ownership dispute, leaving country without representation in international cotton markets. *(Dawn, May 25th, 2026, Page 2)*

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Milk production, packaging companies asked to install e-monitoring systems

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has directed companies engaged in the production and packaging of milk to install electronic production monitoring systems by June 30, 2026. According to a FBR's notification, all registered persons engaged in the production and packaging of milk, whether on their own account or as toll manufacturers, shall install the electronic production monitoring solution, in accordance with the provisions of the aforesaid Rules, with immediate effect. Production Monitoring System comprises hardware, as well as, the software.

The production monitoring system shall be supplied, installed and maintained by the vendors authorised by the Board. All the aforesaid registered persons are hereby directed under law to make necessary arrangements for installation of electronic production monitoring system by June 30, 2026. To ensure timely and effective implementation, the respective Chief Commissioners Inland Revenue shall designate and notify dedicated focal persons, who shall coordinate with packaged milk manufacturers and with authorised vendors to facilitate the installation and operationalisation. *(Business Recorder, May 25th, 2026, Page 2)*

'Pakistan still struggling to fully curb formula milk marketing'

Pakistan remains among countries facing challenges in effectively restricting aggressive marketing of formula milk and breast milk substitutes, as weak enforcement, loopholes in regulations and growing digital promotion by infant formula companies continue to undermine breastfeeding practices, says a new report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Unicef. The report, titled 'Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes: National Implementation of the International Code, Status Report 2026', warned that although many countries have introduced laws to regulate formula milk marketing, substantial gaps remain globally in banning advertisements, health claims, sponsorships and industry influence over healthcare systems.

While Pakistan was not specifically discussed in the report's executive findings, public health experts and child health advocates in the country have repeatedly expressed concern over widespread promotion of formula milk through hospitals, pharmacies, healthcare providers and retail outlets, and increasingly through social media and digital platforms. The WHO and Unicef report revealed that only 37 countries are substantially aligned with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, while 46 countries still have no legal measures at all to control unethical marketing of infant formula and related products.

According to the report, countries with stronger laws protecting breastfeeding report significantly higher exclusive breastfeeding rates. Exclusive breastfeeding rates reach 54 per cent in countries substantially aligned with the Code compared to just 24 per cent in countries with no legal measures. Continued breastfeeding at one year also remains much higher in countries with stronger legislation. Health experts in Pakistan say that the findings are highly relevant for the country, where exclusive breastfeeding rates remain below global targets and formula milk companies continue to market their products through indirect advertising, sponsorships and nutritional claims. *(The News, May 31st, 2026, Page 14)*

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

July-March foreign aid inflows up by 19.73%: EAD

Foreign assistance inflows to Pakistan increased by 19.73 percent during the July-March period of fiscal year 2025-26, reaching USD6.59 billion compared to USD5.50 billion during the corresponding period last year. According to statistics released by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), bilateral grants during July-March 2025-26 stood at USD43.61 million. Major contributors included China with USD10.57 million, Japan USD19.20 million, Germany USD9 million, and Saudi Arabia USD3.31 million.

Total bilateral loans during the period amounted to USD1.04 billion. Of this, USD910 million was provided by Saudi Arabia under the oil facility, followed by USD72.28 million from China, USD71 million from Denmark, USD47.72 million from France, USD23 million from Japan, USD22 million from Kuwait, USD12 million from Germany, and USD9.49 million from South Korea. Overall, bilateral grants and loans totalled USD1.169 billion during the July-March period.

Meanwhile, guaranteed bilateral loans from China increased by USD123.4 million on a month-on-month basis, reaching USD392.82 million during the period under review. Multilateral grants received during July-March totalled USD54.79 million, including USD26.03 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), USD10.76 million from the International Development Association (IDA), USD2.72 million from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and USD14.50 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Total multilateral loans during July-March 2025-26 reached USD2.58 billion. Major lenders included the IDA with USD829 million, ADB USD727 million, Islamic Development Bank (short-term) USD483.78 million, IBRD USD376.36 million, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) USD56.13 million, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) USD88.86 million, and IFAD USD21.39 million. Pakistan also received loans of USD201.90 million from Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) London and USD209.51 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). *(Business Recorder, May 10th, 2026, Page 1)*

Foreign economic assistance inflows rise nearly 20pc

Foreign economic assistance (FEA) inflows to Pakistan surged by almost 20 per cent to $6.594bn in the first three quarters (July-March) of the current fiscal year, mainly on the back of programme support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Total inflows (excluding IMF disbursements), comprising both loans and grants, amounted to $6.594bn during the first nine months of the current fiscal year, up from $5.507bn in the same period last year, reflecting an increase of 19.7pc. Inflows in March alone stood at $731.3m, compared to $692m in February and $555m in the corresponding month last year, marking a 32pc increase.

These inflows do not include the $1.2bn disbursed by the IMF in December and the additional $3bn in safe deposits from Saudi Arabia in March and April, bringing cumulative inflows in 9MFY26 to more than $9.7bn. Of the total inflows, foreign loan inflows in 9MFY26 amounted to $6.494bn, compared to $5.37bn in the corresponding period last year, showing an increase of almost 29pc. Grants, on the other hand, declined to just $100.3m during the nine-month period, compared to $135.6m last year, reflecting a 27pc decrease. The target for total foreign inflows for FY26 was set at $19.9bn in the 2025-26 budget, up from $19.4bn last year. The Ministry of Economic Affairs also confirmed that it had received $6.594bn in total foreign inflows during the first nine months of the fiscal year, compared with $5.507bn in the same period last year.

The World Bank emerged as the top multilateral lender, with $1.205bn in disbursements during the first nine months, up from $980m last year, reflecting a 23pc increase. In contrast, the Asian Development Bank slipped to second place, with disbursements falling 64pc to $727m from $1.190bn last year. The Islamic Development Bank disbursed $542m during the first nine months of the fiscal year, compared to $523m in the corresponding period last year. Becoming the single largest source of foreign loans, inflows from overseas Pakistanis rose to $2.037bn in the first three quarters of this fiscal year, up from $1.455bn last year, through Naya Pakistan Certificates (NPCs), registering a 40pc increase. This included $1.444bn in Islamic NPCs and $594m in conventional NPCs. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 3)*

Jul-Apr FDI slumps 31pc to USD1.409bn YoY

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan declined sharply by 31 percent during the first 10 months of this fiscal year (FY26). According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the country attracted USD 1.409 billion in FDI during July-April FY26, compared to USD 2.035 billion in the same period last year (FY25). During the period under review, gross inflows stood at around USD 3 billion, while outflows were recorded at USD 1.57 billion. The decline reflects ongoing governance and policy uncertainties that continue to weigh on foreign investor confidence, the SBP noted in a recently issued report.

Financial services and the power sector remained the main recipients of foreign direct investment. The power sector attracted the highest FDI, amounting to USD 786 million during the first ten months of FY26, followed by financial businesses with inflows of USD 659 million during July-April FY26. These FDI inflows were largely sourced from China worth USD 739 million, followed by Hong Kong amounted to USD 256 million and USD 80 million from Korea in the first ten months of this fiscal year.

The SBP said these inflows were primarily due to the expansion of Islamic banking, attracting capital inflows from Kuwait and UAE, and continued inflows related to the licensing of the digital banks. Total foreign investment in Pakistan was amounted to USD 32 million during July-April of FY26 compared to USD 1.46 billion in same period of last fiscal year. *(Business Recorder, May 19th, 2026, Page 1)*

Jul-Apr foreign assistance inflows soar 67.7pc to USD11.068bn YoY

Inflows of foreign assistance into the country during July 2025 to April 2026 reached USD 11.068 billion, compared to USD 6.6 billion in the corresponding period last year, reflecting a 67.7 percent increase. According to data released by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), the multilateral, bilateral loans and grants in April 2026 remained USD395.63 million compared to USD339.84 million in March 2026. According to the data, in April 2026, the country received a total of USD103.39 million on account of bilateral loans and grants, of which USD 101.68 million was a loan from Saudi Arabia and USD0.09 million from Germany. On account of multilateral loans, in April, Pakistan received a total USD 273.01 million in loans, of which the IDB provided a USD 203.93 million loan, ADB USD 35.27 million, IRBD USD 24.36 million, and AIIB USD 9.44 million.

In the July-April 2025-26, the total bilateral loans and grants stood at USD 1.27 billion, of which USD 2.62million stood as grants and USD 1.226billion as loans; whereas multilateral grants and loans amounted to USD 2.878 billion during the period under review, of which USD 74.01 million stood as grants and USD2.804 billion as loans. A major amount of grants came from Japan (USD 19.20 million), followed by China (USD 10.57 million), Saudi Arabia (USD 3.31 million), and USD 3.32 million from Germany. In 10 months of 2025-26, the total bilateral loans amounted to USD 2.804 billion. This includes Chinese guaranteed loans of USD292.82 million and a USD72.28 million loan from China, USD 71.15 million from Denmark, a USD49.99 million loan from France, and a major loan of USD 1.011billion received from Saudi Arabia.

The total multilateral grant received during the July-April period amounted to USD74.01 million. Out of this USD42.85 million came from IBRD, USD13.17 million from the IDA, USD 2.72 million from IFAD, and USD 15.16 million from the Asian Development Bank. The total multilateral loans in the same period reached USD2.804 billion. The IDA was the top lender with USD1.024 billion, followed by the ADB with USD 747.12 million, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) short-term loan of USD 483.78 million, the IBRD with USD374.76 million, AIIB with USD 98.30 million, IDB with USD 56.13 million and IFAD with USD 18.67 million.

A notable development during April was the recording of USD3 billion from Saudi Arabian time deposits, which significantly elevated the headline monthly financing figure. This single inflow accounted for the bulk of April's total disbursements. In terms of the purpose of financing, non-project aid in April amounted to USD4.21 billion, including USD4.075 billion in budgetary support and USD 100million through the SFD Oil Facility, underscoring continued reliance on programme-based inflows to support macroeconomic stabilisation. *(Business Recorder, May 20th, 2026, Page 1)*

7.1 # China

Pakistan, China ink $13bn deals

Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, said that Pakistan and China had signed more than 300 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and over three dozen joint venture agreements (JVAs) during the last two years, with a cumulative value exceeding $13 billion. Speaking at a meeting during the visit of a 70-member delegation from China's IBI Group to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), he said the government had established a comprehensive mechanism to ensure the effective implementation of MoUs and their conversion into practical business agreements. He said Pakistan's conversion rate from MoUs to formal contracts and agreements had reached nearly 30 per cent, reflecting the effectiveness of the government's follow-up and execution framework.

According to KCCI press release, Mr Hashmi said Pakistan was engaged in discussions with CATL, one of the world's largest battery manufacturers specialising in lithium-ion and sodium-based battery technologies. He said Pakistan was encouraging the company to establish investment and cooperation initiatives in the country and expressed optimism that progress could be made during the prime minister's forthcoming visit to China. The ambassador said the global market was gradually shifting from lithium-ion to sodium-based battery technologies, adding that Pakistan possessed abundant raw materials required for such industries. *(Dawn, May 12th, 2026, Page 9)*

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

8.1 # Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Pakistan to benefit from ADB's $70bn AI-based electricity trade

Pakistan, grappling with a paradox of surplus power generation and persistent electricity shortages, may benefit from an artificial intelligence-based cross-border electricity trade in the Asian region under a $70 billion initiative, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced. *(Dawn, May 4th, 2026, Page 1)*

ADB to provide $1bn for Karachi Circular Railway revival

After years of delays and failed revival attempts, the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project received a boost as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), giving a nod to the Sindh government's request, assured it of $1 billion support in funding, raising hopes for revival of the long-delayed transport scheme. *(Dawn, May 13th, 2026, Page 13)*

ADB to finance KP's agri sector project worth USD239.13m

Asian Development Bank (ADP) is likely to finance a proposed agriculture project worth USD 239.13 million. The project is named Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Resilient Irrigated Agriculture Livelihood Development Project (KPRIALDP). The project will cover the sectors of on-farm water management, soil and water conservation, agricultural extension, agricultural engineering, agricultural research systems, forestry and wildlife. *(Business Recorder, May 18th, 2026, Page 2)*

8.2 # International Monetary Fund (IMF)

IMF clears Pakistan's next $1.2bn tranche

The Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved the latest review of Pakistan's ongoing reform programme, clearing the way for the release of about $1.2 billion in financing under its existing arrangements. The approval followed a board meeting in Washington and reflects the Fund's assessment that Pakistan has made progress under its stabilisation and reform agenda, while still facing significant macroeconomic challenges. The disbursement includes roughly $1 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and about $210 million under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). With this tranche, total disbursements under the current programme rise to approximately $4.5 billion. Pakistan's 37-month EFF arrangement, approved in September 2024, is part of a broader $7bn stabilisation package aimed at supporting macroeconomic stability, rebuilding foreign exchange reserves, and advancing structural reforms. The RSF complements the programme with a focus on climate resilience and long-term sustainability. *(Dawn, May 9th, 2026, Page 1)*

IMF urges Pakistan to sustain reforms amid Mideast war risks

The International Monetary Fund has approved a new disbursement for Pakistan of about \$1.3 billion, acknowledging the nation's resilience in maintaining economic stability while warning that continued reforms are essential to manage growing risks from the war in the Middle East. The assessment and financing came as the IMF Executive Board completed its third review of Pakistan's economic reform programme under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

The decision paves the way for disbursements of about \$1.1bn from the EFF and \$220m from the RSF, bringing total payouts under the two arrangements to roughly \$4.8bn. While the funding provides crucial short-term support, the IMF's statement emphasised an evolving and uncertain outlook, cautioning that Pakistan's recent gains are exposed to heightened global volatility, particularly spillovers from the conflict in the Middle East. "The authorities' strong implementation, despite the Middle East war, has maintained economic stability and improved financing and external conditions," the Fund noted in its statement. *(Dawn, May 10th, 2026, Page 3)*

SBP receives USD1.3bn tranche from IMF

Pakistan has received inflows worth USD 1.3 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). Recently, the IMF Executive Board has completed third review under the EFF loan program and accordingly approved the disbursement of SDR 760 million for Pakistan under the EFF programme in its meeting held on May 8, 2026. In addition, the Board also approved the second tranche of SDR 154 million under the RSF. The country's total liquid foreign exchange reserves stood at USD21.293 billion as of April 30, 2026. Of this, the SBP held USD15.851 billion, while net reserves held by commercial banks amounted to USD5.443 billion. *(Business Recorder, May 14th, 2026, Page 1)*

IMF highlights 'Gulf exposure' as biggest external risk for Pakistan

Following the release of a \$1.1 billion tranche for Pakistan, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has identified Pakistan's economic exposure to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as its most acute external vulnerability. In its staff report, the lender warned that "the war weighs on the near-term outlook as Pakistan is highly exposed to energy imports and remittances from the Gulf countries as well as to global financial conditions". According to the report, 81 per cent of Pakistan's fuel imports originate in the GCC region, while 55pc of remittances — equivalent to about nine percent of the GDP — flow from these economies.

The IMF noted: "A significant disruption to GCC economies and/or return of migrant workers could weigh on these flows, a major source of financing for consumption and the balance of payments". According to Fund, the Iran war's impact has been formally embedded in Pakistan's macroeconomic projections. Under the IMF's baseline scenario, GDP growth is expected to slow by 0.2 percentage points in FY26 and 0.6 points in FY27, while inflation is pushed up by approximately half a percentage point this year and one and a half points in FY27. *(Dawn, May 15th, 2026, Page 12)*

IMF sets 11 new conditions, including parliamentary approval of FY2027 Budget

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slapped 11 new Structural Benchmarks (SBs) on Pakistan including parliamentary approval of a fiscal year 2027 budget in line with IMF staff agreement to meet programme targets, notification of the semi-annual gas tariff adjustment, the annual power tariff adjustment and enhancing NAB's autonomy and transparency by submitting to parliament amendments to the NAB ordinance to establish an open, merit-based, rigorous and competitive selection process of senior management. This was revealed in the report third review under the Extended Fund Facility and second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility, bringing the number to 55 condition under the program.

New SBs are proposed to monitor the program's structural agenda, including on approval of the FY27 budget, improving revenue administration, strengthening the anti-corruption and public procurement frameworks, continuing regular adjustments to gas and power tariffs, maintaining the generosity of the UCT program, preparing a roadmap for gradual FX liberalization and enhancing regulatory transparency and predictability.

On fiscal, new Structural Benchmarks included;

1 Parliamentary approval of a FY27 budget in line with IMF staff agreement to meet program targets, including an underlying primary balance of 2 percent of GDP. The rational is to ensure achievement of fiscal objectives. The timeline is end-June 2026, (2) Prepare an audit manual and audit policy centralizing the audit case selection process via administrative prioritization and and a report to monitor high-risk cases through the Compliance Risk Management system with the rational to align revenue administration with best international practices by end-August 2026, (3) Amend PPRA rules to eliminate SOE preferences in awarding public procurement contracts without competition to ensure transparency and a level playing field in all public procurement by end-September 2026.

On governance SBs included (4) Enhance NAB's autonomy and transparency by: (i) submitting to parliament amendments to the NAB ordinance to establish an open, merit-based, rigorous and competitive selection process of senior management, including adopting pre-determined qualification criteria and designating a multi- sectoral stakeholder committee to conduct selection in line with the recommendations of the Governance and Corruption Diagnostic report; and (ii) publishing NAB's investigation and prosecution rules and annual statistics regarding the investigation, prosecution, and conviction of corruption offences. The rational is to enhance transparency and accountability by end-January 2027.

On Social (5) Annual inflation and generosity adjustment of the unconditional cash transfer (Kafaalat) program quarterly benefit. Maintain UCT real purchasing power by end-January 2027. On Monetary and Financial (6) SBP to develop a roadmap for gradual foreign exchange regime liberalization, including appropriate sequencing (macroeconomic, financial stability, and other preconditions). The rational is liberalize FX regime by end-March 2027.

On energy Sector (7) notification of the semi-annual gas tariff adjustment. Maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels. July 1, 2026

(8) Notification of the semi-annual gas tariff adjustment. Maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels. February 15, 2027

(9) Notification of the annual power tariff adjustment. Maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels. January 15, 2027.

On Trade, Investment Policy, and Deregulation

(10) Enact amendments to: (i) the SEZ Act and phase-out existing fiscal incentives to SEZs (consistent with the FY26 Finance Bill) and shift from profit-based to cost-based incentives as per the agreed phase- out plan, and discontinue the rights and responsibilities of the BOA, BOI, and existing SEZ Authorities in granting tax incentives; and (ii) the STZA Act to phase-out all existing fiscal incentives to STZs by 2035. *(Business Recorder, May 15th, 2026, Page 1)*

IMF sets Rs17.1tr federal revenue target for 2026-27

With Rs430 billion in new budgetary measures and an 18 per cent higher petroleum levy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has targeted Pakistan's federal revenues at Rs17.145 trillion for 2026-27, along with a series of administrative and policy measures committed by the government for the federal and provincial budgets to be passed by the parliament. In its staff report on completion of third review of $7bn Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and second review of $1.4bn Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), the fund has projected total federal revenues for FY27 at Rs17.144tr — over Rs2.03tr higher than the current fiscal year, up 13.5pc.

The report showed that Pakistan had to commit and deliver three major prior actions to make up for slippages on programme benchmarks before the IMF's executive board finally approved the disbursement of $1.3bn under both facilities. These included Rs136bn lower grants to the provinces, Rs322bn in recoveries following favourable court decisions relating to super tax, and full pass-on of fuel prices after the government's initial hesitation following the US-Iran war. This was despite the fact that authorities maintained that, besides those living in absolute poverty and getting social income supports, 40pc of the population was now facing vulnerability. The BISP support would be increased to Rs18,000 in the coming budget, up from Rs14,500 per family at present, the two sides have agreed. *(Dawn, May 16th, 2026, Page 9)*

Pakistan, IMF agree to tighten monetary policy

Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to maintain a tight monetary policy stance and treat the primary budget surplus target of two per cent of GDP as sacrosanct to build resilience through continued fiscal and monetary consolidation and broadening of the tax base. However, the two sides have yet to conclude talks on the finalisation of the 2026-27 budget, and discussions are expected to continue virtually over the next couple of days.

"The authorities reaffirmed their commitment to a primary surplus target of 2pc of GDP in FY2027, which will support fiscal sustainability and continue to build resilience," the IMF said in a statement after its staff mission, led by Iva Petrova, concluded its May 13-20 visit to Islamabad. "The envisaged gradual fiscal consolidation will be supported by efforts to broaden the tax base, improve tax administration, enhance spending efficiency and public financial management at both federal and provincial levels," it said. The staff visit focused on recent economic developments, reform implementation and the budget strategy for FY27. *(Dawn, May 22nd, 2026, Page 1)*

IMF wants GST hiked by 100bps to 19pc

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has asked Pakistan to raise the standard rate of General Sales Tax (GST) by 1 percentage point, raising it from 18 per cent to 19pc in the upcoming budget for 2026-27. However, Pakistani authorities have so far resisted it tooth and nail, arguing that it would further hike inflationary pressure. According to rough estimates, if the IMF convinces the budget makers, the GST will have a revenue impact of Rs250 to Rs300 billion. The IMF has proposed raising the GST rate by 1pc after witnessing a shortfall in the revised tax collection target for the outgoing fiscal year. The FBR might go close to Rs13 trillion mark, but at the moment, it seems hard that the tax machinery would achieve the target. *(The News, May 31st, 2026, Page 1)*

9 # POLICY

Pakistan moves to liberalise GMO regulatory regime

Pakistan has moved to significantly liberalise its genetically modified organisms (GMO) regulatory regime by approving major amendments to the Pakistan Biosafety Rules 2005, including simplifying licensing procedures and facilitating laboratory research in universities and the private sector. The development was announced by Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, which said amendments had been recommended for cabinet approval during a meeting of the National Biosafety Committee (NBC) held in Islamabad under the chairmanship of the ministry's secretary.

A statement issued by the ministry said the meeting was attended by senior officials, including the director general of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-

EPA), along with technical experts and members of the biosafety regulatory framework. Mohammad Saleem Shaikh, spokesperson for the by Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, said the reforms would have far-reaching implications for Pakistan's edible oil and poultry industries, which heavily relied on imported genetically modified soybean and canola for food, feed and processing purposes.

One of the key changes was the removal of the "sunset clause" imposed in 2024 that allowed GMO imports only until Jan 17, 2027. Under the proposed amendments, imports of GMO grains such as soybean and canola will continue without a cut-off date, the official said. The revised rules also formally recognised new gene-editing technologies and granted greater autonomy to institutional biosafety committees (IBCs) at universities and private research institutions to approve student-based laboratory research projects. Saleem Shaikh said the move aimed to promote science-based research and reduced bureaucratic hurdles in biotechnology innovation.

Pakistan's biosafety regime currently operated through a multi-tier committee system to ensure compliance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The amendments sought to streamline the structure and decision-making powers of these committees to ensure faster approvals and reduce delays. Another major reform relates to the licensing process for GMO grain imports. Under new framework, multinational biotechnology companies will be allowed to directly apply for licences for specific GMO events. Once approved by the NBC, the licences will be published on the Pak-EPA website, enabling private importers to import approved GMO grains without seeking separate licences, the ministry's spokesperson added. *(Dawn, May 25th, 2026, Page 4)*

9.2 # Developmental Policy

Punjab CM announces Rs23bn uplift package for Katcha areas

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced a development package worth Rs23 billion for the Katcha areas of the province, to improve infrastructure, security and socioeconomic conditions of the residents, saying that since the area has been cleansed of criminals, it will witness development. Presiding over a meeting, the CM announced allocation of 14,500 acres of state land for distribution among the residents of the Katcha belt. *(Dawn, May 1st, 2026, Page 2)*

Rs280bn Gwadar projects to be initiated in phases

A meeting of Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) decided that mega development projects worth around Rs280 billion will be launched in phases under the second phase of the Gwadar Master Plan (2025-35). The plan aims to turn Gwadar into a modern, smart, eco-friendly and globally competitive economic hub port city of the country. The meeting, which presided was over by GDA Director General Moeenur Rehman Khan reviewed, and finalised projects for Gwadar's upcoming 10-year development programme under Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 5)*

Public Sector Development Programme spending remains sluggish

At a time when Pakistan's economy is struggling to regain momentum, development spending has remained sluggish, with allocations reaching only 56 per cent and actual utilisation falling short by around 18pc during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year. The utilisation under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) reached 56pc despite a downward revision in the overall development outlay due to fiscal pressures, according to the Monthly Development Update (May 2026) released. Actual spending under the PSDP amounted to Rs469.9bn during 10MFY26 against releases of Rs571.2bn, indicating a significant shortfall of 18pc in utilisation during the period. The government has also scaled down the overall development outlay to Rs837.2bn from the originally projected Rs1,010bn for FY26, reflecting a cut of Rs172.8bn amid fiscal constraints. *(Dawn, May 14th, 2026, Page 9)*

PSDP-2025-26: Ministry releases Rs833.34bn for uplift projects (July to April)

Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has authorised a total of Rs833.34 billion (99.5 per cent) out of Rs 837.16 billion allocation for development projects from July to April under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP)-2025-26. Out of the total authorised/disbursed amount, the total amount spent so far on the development projects during the corresponding period stood at Rs469.85 billion. According to the Ministry of Finance's notification, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives authorised 15 per cent funds for the first quarter, 20 percent for the second quarter, 25 percent for the third quarter, and 40 percent for the fourth quarter under the PSDP. *(Business Recorder, May 18th, 2026, Page 12)*

9.2 # Environmental Policy

Waste-to-energy: 18-member task force to design policy

The federal government has constituted an 18-member task force to develop a comprehensive national policy on waste-to-energy, aimed at addressing regulatory gaps and promoting investment in the sector. *(Business Recorder, May 31st, 2026, Page 1)*

9.3 # Neo – Liberal Policy

High court rejects pleas against outsourcing of govt hospitals in KP

Peshawar High Court has rejected multiple petitions challenging the government's move to outsource 24 of its hospitals in the province to private companies. A bench consisting of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Farah Jamshed pronounced the order of rejecting six petitions on the matter after completion of arguments by all parties involved in the matter, declaring that it had limited powers to interfere in the government's policy matters. Last October, the court had granted status quo in the matter and directed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation that it could continue the process on the relevant advertisement, but no final order regarding outsourcing of the hospitals should be issued. *(Dawn, May 23rd, 2026, Page 8)*

Undoing deregulation policy will trigger drug shortages: Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association

Fearing reversal of price deregulation policy for non-essential medicines, pharma industry has warned that such a decision could lead to “medicine shortages, factory shutdowns, falling exports and loss of investor confidence”. In a statement, Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) claimed that the deregulation policy announced in 2024 has already led to a 34 per cent increase in pharmaceutical exports, improved medicine availability, expansion of internationally certified manufacturing facilities and higher tax contributions. *(Dawn, May 25th, 2026, Page 5)*

Government set to outsource 72 under-performing hospitals

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is set to outsource 72 under-performing hospitals to private organisations to improve patient care. Health Foundation, a public sector entity created under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation Act, identified hospitals few months ago for outsourcing to private organisations. The process was delayed owing to a stay order granted by court against it. “However, the court has now allowed the government to execute the plan due to which the outsourcing process has been started,” official sources told this scribe. Health Foundation has already contracted out 24 hospitals, mostly in tribal districts, since 2017. *(Dawn, May 25th, 2026, Page 9)*

Deregulation of non-essential medicines leads to 34pc increase in pharma exports

Deregulation of non-essential medicines in 2024 has led to a 34 percent increase in pharmaceutical exports, improved medicine availability, expansion of internationally certified manufacturing facilities and higher tax contributions, while any reversal of the policy could result in an industrial crisis and loss of investor confidence, pharmaceutical industry officials said. According to industry estimates, pharmaceutical exports increased from around USD336 million before deregulation to nearly USD450 million in 2025, while manufacturers also expanded investment in WHO, PIC/S and EU GMP compliant facilities aimed at accessing regulated international markets. Industry officials said deregulation also helped stabilize medicine supplies in the local market, improve quality standards and reduce the circulation of counterfeit medicines. *(Business Recorder, May 25th, 2026, Page 5)*

9.4 # Food Policy

Sindh Food Authority approves several key decisions

Sindh Minister for Food, Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman, chaired the 12th Board meeting of the Sindh Food Authority. The meeting also reviewed proposed amendments to the Sindh Food Authority Act, 2016, aimed at strengthening the authority’s legal framework, improving enforcement of food safety regulations, and providing greater legal support to field officers. The meeting approved a 40 percent increase in the Sindh Food Authority’s licence fee structure, citing the need to expand inspection operations, laboratory testing, sampling, legal enforcement and administrative capacity. *(Business Recorder, May 6th, 2026, Page 4)*

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

Govt debt crosses Rs80trn mark by March-end

Pakistan's central government debt crossed Rs 80 trillion mark by the end of March 2026 mainly driven by higher long-term domestic borrowing. According to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the country's total debt stock, comprising both domestic and external liabilities, increased by Rs 2.636 trillion during the first nine months (July-March) of this fiscal year (FY26). With this increase, the central government's debt stocks reached record Rs 80.524 trillion level at the end of March 2026, compared to Rs 77.888 trillion recorded in June 2025.

The sharp rise reflects accelerated borrowing from domestic sources by the federal government to meet financing requirements. However, external debt showed a declining trend during the same period. On the domestic side, debt stock increased by 5.6 percent, or Rs 3.1 trillion, during July-March FY26. It stood at Rs 57.566 trillion at the end of March 2026, up from Rs 54.472 trillion in June 2025. In contrast, external debt recorded a slight decline. External debt fell by Rs 458 billion during the first nine months of the fiscal year, decreasing from Rs 23.417 trillion in June 2025 to Rs 22.959 trillion by March 2026. *(Business Recorder, May 14th, 2026, Page 1)*

10.1 # Food

Govt urged to reduce tax on milk

At a pre-budget consultation on structural reforms in the dairy sector, the government was urged to reduce the general sales tax on milk as safe milk is essential for child development. Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, while participating in the consultations, organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and the Pakistan Dairy Association, claimed that reducing GST on milk was not difficult and called for tax rationalisation and structural reforms to boost the dairy sector. These measures would improve affordability and ensure safe nutrition besides supporting farmers across the country.

Safe milk cities proposal

He said proposals, like pilot projects for pasteurisation and the establishment of 'safe milk cities', were under consideration. Improving milk quality and formalising the sector would be key priorities going forward, he added. According to the minister, livestock accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the agriculture sector and holds significant potential for both domestic nutrition and exports. He acknowledged that taxation policies, particularly sales tax on dairy products, affected production and growth. "Softening of tax regime can help increase both production and revenue," he suggested.

Public health

Pakistan Dairy Association Chairman Usman Zaheer Ahmad highlighted that 40pc of children in Pakistan suffered from stunting due to malnutrition, despite milk being the most widely consumed animal protein. The sector remains 98pc informal, with limited quality controls, he said. He warned that 18pc GST in 2024 caused a 27pc decline in the formal dairy sector. He proposed reducing GST to 10pc and bringing part of the informal economy into the tax net, which could generate up to Rs250 billion in revenue.

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) Country Director Farrah Naz said malnutrition costs Pakistan around 3pc of GDP annually, with over 40pc of children under five stunted. She advocated reducing GST on milk from 18pc to 5pc. She also stressed the need for strengthening formal dairy systems, expanding processing capacity, and utilising by-products. *(Dawn, May 4th, 2026, Page 3)*

Benazir programme cuts child stunting rates: study

Pakistan has recorded a major decline in child stunting under the Benazir Nashonuma Programme (BNP), along with improvements in maternal and newborn health outcomes. An evaluation conducted by the Aga Khan University (AKU) revealed that stunting rates among beneficiary children were 22 per cent lower at six months of age and 18pc lower at one year of age. The study also reported a 6pc reduction in low birth weight cases, an 11pc decline in premature births, and a 7pc decrease in weak and vulnerable newborns. *(Dawn, May 8th, 2026, Page 3)*

KP millers see a crisis as wheat supply from Punjab suspended

The flour millers expressed grave concerns over suspension of wheat supply from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and feared a flour crisis if the ban on wheat movement is not lifted. The Flour Mills Association District Charsadda Chairman Murshid Ali Khan Advocate while talking to media demanded immediate action from the federal and provincial governments. He claimed that the Punjab government has unofficially stopped wheat supply to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, creating a serious shortage of wheat and flour in the province. He said the move is unconstitutional because Article 151 of the Constitution of Pakistan allows free trade and transport of goods between provinces. *(Business Recorder, May 11th, 2026, Page 1)*

SCCI, flour mills body threaten strike over wheat supply 'ban'

The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) warned of launching a province-wide protest campaign against what they termed an 'illegal and unconstitutional ban' on the movement of wheat from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *(Dawn, May 14th, 2026, Page 8)*

Flour millers in twin cities accuse Punjab govt of discrimination

Nearly 40 per cent of flour mills in the Rawalpindi-Islamabad region have shut down amid mounting losses, with millers warning that the remaining units may also close if the Punjab government does not immediately revise its wheat and flour policy. The warning came in a strongly-worded appeal circulating in flour millers' WhatsApp groups, addressed to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz by former vice chairman of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) Punjab, Chaudhry Afzal Mahmood

Advocate. The appeal claimed that inconsistent government policies, discriminatory wheat distribution mechanisms and administrative interference had pushed the flour milling industry to the brink of collapse in the Rawalpindi-Islamabad region. *(Dawn, May 20th, 2026, Page 2)*

10.2 # Inflation

Inflation hits double digits for first time in 21 months

Consumer inflation returned to double digits for the first time in 21 months, with prices rising by nearly 11 per cent year-on-year in April, driven by sharp increases in transport costs and essential food items. The last time inflation was above 10pc was in July 2024, when the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was recorded at 11.1pc. For consumers, the April spike reflects a growing squeeze on daily expenses, as higher fuel and transport charges, along with rising prices of perishable food items, continue to erode purchasing power, even as some relief in wheat and flour prices offers only limited respite.

The increase in prices during April was largely driven by a steep rise in transport, which surged by 15.47pc over the previous month at the national level. Perishable food items also recorded a sharp increase of 15.25pc, highlighting volatility in essential commodities. Housing, water, electricity, gas and fuels registered a 2.43pc increase, adding further pressure on household budgets. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) increased its policy rate to 11.50pc from 10.50pc in response to rising inflation. The central bank had kept the policy rate at 10.5pc unchanged, effective from Dec 16, 2025. *(Dawn, May 2nd, 2026, Page 9)*

Prices of different varieties of roti rise up to Rs10 in Karachi

Tandoor operators have raised the prices of various varieties of roti, citing increase in prices of flour varieties, ghee, fresh milk and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). In many areas, roti makers are charging Rs2 to Rs10 per piece extra in tandoor roti and sheermal rates followed by rise in chapati prices by Rs5 per piece. Recently, the commissioner of Karachi fixed the prices of chapati and tandoori naan weighing 120 grams, 140-150 grams and 180 grams at Rs14, Rs18, Rs21 and Rs27 but consumers hardly find these official rates implemented at any tandoor outlets. *(Dawn, May 4th, 2026, Page 13)*

July-February 2025-26: Average CPI inflation stands at 5.5pc: Ahsan

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation during July-February of fiscal year 2025-26 stood at 5.5 percent, compared to 5.7 percent during the same period last year. However, he noted that monthly inflation showed an upward trend, rising from 7.3 percent in March 2026 to 10.9 percent in April 2026. While briefing the media on the Monthly Development Update for May 2026, the Minister highlighted that during the first eight months of FY 2025–26, Pakistan's economy witnessed encouraging indicators, including lower inflation, recovery in Large Scale Manufacturing, stability in the exchange rate, record performance of the stock market, improved PSDP utilization, and rising remittances. *(Business Recorder, May 14th, 2026, Page 1)*

Inflation-hit Karachiites reel from further rise in flour prices

While inflation-hit Karachiites are already paying the highest price of flour in the country, the city administration's decision to further increase the prices of various flour varieties by Rs4 to Rs15 has compounded their problems. As usual, the new price list of various essential items issued by the Commissioner of Karachi has provided no relief to the masses as retailers continue to defy the official rates. Retailers also maintained an old habit of not displaying the price list of commodities at their shops. The rate increase, compared with the last rates fixed in March, was made without citing any reason. *(Dawn, May 16th, 2026, Page 13)*

CPI-based inflation to exceed 10pc in 4QFY26

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation will exceed 10 percent in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2026 and reach 8.4 percent in FY2027. This was stated in the "third review under the Extended Fund Facility and second review under Resilience and Sustainability Facility arrangement". The fund warned of renewed inflationary pressures from rising global oil prices and Middle East tensions and urged the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to keep policies tight, as reported on May 15, 2026. *(Business Recorder, May 16th, 2026, Page 1)*

11 # ENVIRONMENT

Sea intrusion continues to devastate delta, coastal communities

A severe shortage of freshwater in Indus Delta has triggered a worsening humanitarian and environmental crisis, as advancing seawater from the Arabian Sea continues to devastate coastal communities. Residents and local leaders warn that nearly 85 per cent of groundwater has turned saline, making it unsafe for human consumption and pushing region towards an existential threat.

Worst-affected areas include tail-end distributaries such as Khanani, Garho, Malirri, Bun Jhalo, Ghorabari, Darsi, Indo Khanani and Gaarho, which have remained deprived of freshwater for prolonged periods. What began as an agricultural crisis has now escalated into a struggle for survival, with acute shortages of drinking water for both humans and livestock, forcing communities to rely on unsafe sources.

Local stakeholders have urged the Sindh government and the Sindh irrigation department to take immediate action, including release of freshwater to the tail-end areas, measures to halt sea intrusion and the deployment of mobile health units. They cautioned that failure to respond on an emergency footing could lead to a humanitarian disaster of historic proportions. *(Dawn, May 4th, 2026, Page 15)*

Climate expert urges Pakistan to treat water quality as national emergency

Climate expert warned that Pakistan needs to treat water quality as a national emergency as pollution, salinity and untreated sewage continue to poison the country's rivers and irrigation system. Talking to media at national press club, Khan Faraz a climate expert warned that crisis is not merely environmental but also a growing public health disaster.

Without immediate action Pakistan risks losing one of its most vital natural resources, ensuring clean and safe water must become a national priority to protect public health, agriculture and the environment for future generations, he added. Faraz further added that Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has reportedly stated that deteriorating water quality due to pollution, salinity, odour, etc. in the Indus Basin Irrigation System. In 2022, WWF-Pakistan said that 30 percent of all diseases and 40 percent of all deaths in Pakistan are due to poor water quality.

According to Pakistan's National Drinking Water Policy of 2009, the burden of disease related to water, sanitation and hygiene costs the country about USD1.1bn each year. The IRSA has reminded the provinces and the PEPA that under the Indus River System Act, 1992, it is mandated to regulate and distribute the surface water resources of the Indus River System among provinces. *(Business Recorder, May 24th, 2026, Page 5)*

11.1 # Health

40pc children in seven cities have lead in their blood, study finds

Four in 10 children aged 12-36 months living in high-risk areas of seven cities in Pakistan were found to have lead metal in their blood, according to a new study by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination and Unicef. Lead exposure can stunt growth, cause anaemia, and weaken the immune system, while also lowering IQ, reducing attention span, and impairing memory, raising the risk of learning difficulties and behavioural problems. The study sampled over 2,100 children living in high-risk industrial areas in Haripur, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, and Rawalpindi, and found wide differences between locations. Children in Hattar, Haripur, were the most affected, where 88 percent had high levels of lead in their blood, compared to 1pc of children in Islamabad. *(Dawn, May 2nd, 2026, Page 3)*

Hiding HIV numbers proving disastrous for Pakistan, health experts warn

Accusing federal and provincial health authorities of "criminally hiding the actual HIV burden," infectious diseases experts and leading medical bodies warned that lack of transparency and weak prevention efforts are allowing the virus to spread rapidly across Pakistan. *(The News, May 3rd, 2026, Page 16)*

Five of a family hospitalised after consuming expired milk

The condition of five members of the same family became critical after taking tea made with expired packaged milk at village Talwandi Bhindran on Narowal-Muridke Road. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 8)*

Concern over rising TB cases in Mohmand
Health authorities in Mohmand district have expressed concern over the growing burden of tuberculosis (TB) in the region, warning that lack of public awareness and hesitation in seeking timely medical care were undermining efforts to control the disease. *(Dawn, May 12th, 2026, Page 8)*

Health risks mount as foreign funds dry up
As international funding for the health sector continues to decline and major foreign donors expected to suspend most grants by 2030, Pakistan could face serious health risks unless government takes urgent action. Shrinking foreign assistance could threaten disease control programmes, immunisation efforts, and institutional capacity across country. Once funding stops, it could significantly affect district-level monitoring, community outreach interventions, diagnostic testing capacity, and workforce training programmes.

These were the key findings of a report titled Beyond Dependence: Understanding the Impact of ODA Cuts on Pakistan's Health System. The report, prepared by Islamabad-based think tank Tabadlab, outlines the impact of declining Official Development Assistance (ODA) on Pakistan. ODA refers to grants and concessional loans provided to support development in low - and middle-income countries. The report says global Official Development Assistance fell by 23pc in 2025 and warns that continued aid cuts could cause millions of additional deaths worldwide by 2030. *(Dawn, May 13th, 2026, Page 5)*

Hypertension-related complications kill 400,000 Pakistanis every year, moot told
Expressing concern over the rising incidence of hypertension in the country, speakers at a seminar shared that the condition has emerged as one of the most pressing public health challenges in Pakistan where an estimated 400,000 people die of complications caused by high blood pressure every year. The event was organised by Dow Institute of Cardiology (DIC) in connection with the World Hypertension Day on Friday.

Sharing global data, Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) Pro Vice Chancellor Prof Jehan Ara Hasan said that around 1.4 billion people worldwide were living with hypertension, while nearly 10 million deaths annually were linked to the condition globally. In Pakistan, she pointed out, approximately 33m people suffered from high blood pressure. "But, only 12 per cent know about their condition and take medicines for keeping it under control. The rest are unaware that they are hypertensive," she said, while describing the situation dangerous. *(Dawn, May 17th, 2026, Page 14)*

Five children die within a week as measles outbreak hits Sujawal coastal belt
A severe measles outbreak has triggered widespread panic across the coastal belt of the Shahbunder taluka (sub-district) in Sujawal district, where five children have died within a week and more than 20 others are reportedly suffering from the highly contagious disease across various villages. *(Dawn, May 20th, 2026, Page 15)*

Cases of autism, Down's syndrome on rise in Thatta

Growing numbers of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and Down's syndrome in the coastal areas of Thatta district have emerged as a significant public health concern. Speaking to journalists, Thatta Deputy Commissioner Sarmad Baghat stated that the district administration has formally requested the provincial government to establish a dedicated rehabilitation and therapy centre in Thatta. The proposed facility would cater to children suffering from autism, Down's syndrome and other developmental disorders. *(Dawn, May 23rd, 2026, Page 15)*

26 children, two healthcare workers test positive for HIV in Khairpur

Fears of another HIV outbreak in Sindh intensified after 26 children and two healthcare workers at the Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) in Khairpur tested positive for HIV within the last 10 days, while fresh HIV cases continued to emerge from Ratodero and Larkana, the districts previously hit by Pakistan's worst paediatric HIV outbreak. Health officials said that five new paediatric HIV cases were detected at GIMS, while six more HIV cases, including four children and two adults, were reported from Ratodero during the day. In addition, two adults tested positive for HIV in Larkana, taking the total number of newly reported HIV cases from Ratodero and Larkana to eight over the last two days. *(The News, May 24th, 2026, Page 16)*

Sindh reports over 85,000 dog-bite cases in four months

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah launched a province-wide rabies prevention campaign, promising uninterrupted availability of anti-rabies vaccines and immunoglobulin at healthcare facilities across Sindh. Presiding over a meeting at the CM House, he declared that his government would adopt a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to eliminate "preventable rabies deaths" through mass awareness, improved treatment facilities, vaccination coverage and stray dog population management. During the meeting, the chief minister was informed that over 285,000 dog-bite cases had been reported in Sindh during 2025, while more than 22 rabies-related deaths were recorded in major hospitals. The meeting was informed that 85,891 dog-bite cases had already been documented from January to April 2026. *(Dawn, May 26th, 2026, Page 13)*

Dengue cases on the rise in Pasni

An alarming increase in dengue virus cases has been reported in Pasni city, where nine new cases were confirmed over the last 24 hours, raising concern among the people and health authorities. Dengue tests of patients were confirmed positive by laboratory officials of Pak-Oman Hospital. *(Dawn, May 27th, 2026, Page 5)*

Lakki reports first dengue case of year

The first confirmed dengue case of the year was reported in Lakki Marwat district, prompting health officials to expedite the efforts to contain the vector-borne disease. A health official said that the case was reported from the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in

Serai Naurang. He said that the district health office had put in place a comprehensive mechanism to conduct screening of suspects in hospitals and health facilities across the district. *(Dawn, May 27th, 2026, Page 8)*

Tobacco kills 164,000 Pakistanis every year: WHO

Tobacco use claims an estimated 164,000 lives every year in Pakistan and causes economic losses exceeding Rs1.8 trillion ($6.6bn) annually. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the economic loss is almost seven times greater than tobacco industry's total tax contribution of approximately Rs265 billion ($950m). To mark the World No Tobacco Day on May 31, WHO launched its 2026 global campaign under the theme "Unmasking the Appeal – Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction". *(The News, May 31st, 2026, Page 12)*

Gene therapy offers hope for thalassaemia treatment, seminar told

Hamdard University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Imran Amin has said that thalassemia remains a serious and life-threatening disease, and its complete treatment is currently not available in Pakistan at either government or private healthcare facilities. However, he expressed optimism that gene therapy could emerge as an effective treatment option in the future. *(The News, May 31st, 2026, Page 15)*

52pc adults, 38pc adolescents have fatty liver disease: experts

More than 52 per cent of Pakistani adults and nearly 38 per cent of adolescents are believed to be afflicted with fatty liver disease, gastroenterologists and liver experts have warned, describing the condition as one of the country's fastest growing health crises driven by obesity, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and metabolic disorders. *(The News, May 31st, 2026, Page 16)*

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is an unfolding labour crisis, ministry warns

Pakistan marked International Labour Day with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination warning that intensifying heatwaves and recurring floods are fast evolving into a nationwide labour crisis, exposing millions of workers to growing health and economic risks. Climate change is no longer an environmental issue alone; it is a labour crisis unfolding in real time, said Mohammad Saleem Shaikh, the ministry's media spokesperson and climate policy advocacy specialist.

He said Pakistan's workforce estimated at over 57 million was increasingly on the frontlines of climate vulnerability, from heat-stressed daily wage earners to flood-affected farmers. Despite contributing around one per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change. Around 43 per cent of its workers are employed in agriculture, leaving a significant portion directly exposed to erratic rainfall, drought and floods. Shaikh noted that the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, including heatwaves, floods and glacial lake outburst floods (Glofs), had increased sharply over the past two decades, disproportionately affecting informal and outdoor workers with limited safety nets.

When heat reduces workers' capacity or floods wipe out livelihoods overnight, the impact is immediate, personal and deeply economic, he said. The human cost is also rising. Heatwaves have claimed hundreds of lives in recent years, including more than 568 deaths during the 2024 extreme heat event, while thousands suffered heatstroke. Studies suggest heat-related deaths could exceed 15,000 annually under current climate conditions. Citing the World Bank's Country Climate and Development Report, Shaikh said rising temperatures and extreme weather were already eroding labour productivity and damaging public health, with climate impacts projected to reduce Pakistan's GDP by up to 1820 per cent by 2050 without accelerated adaptation measures.

Referring to a joint assessment by the International Labour Organisation, World Bank and Asian Development Bank, he said around 3.3 million jobs were affected by the 2025 floods, with nearly 78pc of employment losses concentrated in rural areas. We are witnessing a dangerous convergence; extreme heat is reducing productivity, floods are destroying jobs, and vulnerable workers lack safety nets, he said, warning that climate change could push millions into poverty and reverse development gains if urgent action was not taken. *(Dawn, May 2nd, 2026, Page 5)*

Cutting GHG emissions will require huge funding: SBP official

Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan Saleem Ullah has said Pakistan will require a huge financing to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, an amount beyond its capacity without support from multilateral and bilateral partners. He made these remarks while addressing the Breathe Pakistan International Climate Change Conference 2026. He noted that even though Pakistan contributes less than one percent to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, it has committed to reducing its emissions by 50 percent by 2035. *(Business Recorder, May 7th, 2026, Page 2)*

12.1 # Climate Crisis

Pakistan has fiscal space to fight climate crisis: Aurangzeb

Pakistan has adequate local financial capacity to address the impact of climate change, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said, stressing that the country should first utilise available domestic resources effectively instead of immediately seeking international support. He was speaking at a session titled 'Mobilising Climate Financing for Pakistan' during the Breathe Pakistan Climate Conference. Referring to the devastating floods of 2022, the finance minister said the 2025 floods were even more intense and widespread, with three rivers and almost the entire country affected. The minister said the "ball on climate funding" was now in Pakistan's court and stressed that macroeconomic stability was as essential as "basic hygiene" to unlock climate-related financing.

Explaining climate financing, he described it as an "innovative instrument" that can utilise revenues generated through carbon finance. "While we say $6.3 billion is required for climate, we know that more than $28 trillion was invested last year in long-term structured financing, so those resources are there in the global economy," he said. Dr Murtaza Syed of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank said fiscal risks and macroeconomic vulnerabilities made it "very difficult" for developing countries to access climate finance. "We do not have enough financing going for emerging markets and developing economies, and yet the global fight against climate change cannot be won without these countries on board," he said. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 1)*

'Vulnerable' Pakistan faces climate losses

Climatic disasters in Pakistan have been higher than both global and regional averages in 2000-2024, as well as in the preceding two decades, according to a detailed report by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) included in the half-yearly State Bank Economy report. Pakistan faces a particularly challenging position. On the one hand, it is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries despite contributing very little to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. On the other hand, it needs to develop its economy and increase GDP growth, while decreasing emission intensity.

"This is indeed a daunting challenge, considering that decoupling of GDP growth," said the SBP report. In the long term, World Bank (2022) estimates show that Pakistan's GDP is projected to fall by 4.5-6.5pc by 2050 due to climate change in the optimistic scenario, and by as much as 7-9pc in the pessimistic scenario, with agriculture and industry the most exposed sectors. "Without timely climate action, the output of both these sectors is estimated to drop by up to 17pc by 2050," said the report. Between 1995 and 2024, more than 9,700 global climatic events have led to direct economic losses of around $ 4.5 trillion (in real terms), affecting 5.7 billion people, and causing more than 832,000 fatalities worldwide.

The impact of global climate change is pronounced in Pakistan, which is the 15th most affected country from climatic events between 1995 and 2024," said the report. Moreover, signs of continued climate stress in Pakistan are increasingly evident in higher temperatures, erratic rainfall, rising sea levels, and rapid glacial retreat. The top 10 GHG-emitting economies together account for about 70pc of global GHG emissions. In contrast, Pakistan contributes only 1pc to total global GHG emissions. Similarly, Pakistan's per capita emissions remain notably low, ranking 147th globally.

However, Pakistan's emission intensity — measured as GHG emission per unit of GDP — is relatively high, despite modest improvement over time. Pakistan ranks 20th in global GHG emissions as against 45th rank in terms of nominal GDP. "Nearly 54pc of total global GHG are contributed by the top 4 emitting economies in 2024," said the report. Since the 1960s, total emissions have increased significantly, with the energy and agriculture sectors as the major contributors. Pakistan's high emission intensity puts the country at risk of materially increasing its emissions if its economy continues on a traditional development path. *(Dawn, May 21st, 2026, Page 9)*

12.2 # Climate Policy

Call for urgent action, equitable climate finance, stronger global-local coordination

Policymakers, experts and stakeholders on the second day of the Breathe Pakistan Climate Change Conference 2026 highlighted that despite contributing minimally to global emissions, Pakistan remains among the most climate-vulnerable countries, underscoring the need for coordinated, locally grounded and globally informed responses. Speaking at the event, Senator Sherry Rehman said that global frameworks overlook the environmental impact of conflicts, while Pakistan continues to bear disproportionate climate risks despite minimal emissions.

"The Kyoto Protocol did not include any conflict or war spending or even a military movement footprint. Neither did the Paris Agreement. This has been the great silence, and now it's time to talk about it," she said. She warned that these gaps would have direct consequences for Pakistan. "It will impact our coastline. It will impact the air we breathe, which is already among the most toxic in the world at certain times of the year. We have over 140,000 fatalities due to air pollution alone, and that number is going up," said Ms Rehman. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 2)*

'Women, youth must have a voice in climate policy'

Calling women and children the "frontline responders" to Pakistan's recurring natural disasters, speakers at Breathe Pakistan urged that they be given a central role in policymaking to address the escalating environmental crisis. The demand came during the 11th session of the international climate change conference "Unequal Burdens, Shared Futures: Reframing Climate Action Through Equity". Panelists argued that those most vulnerable to climate shocks are not just victims but are actively adapting with remarkable resilience and possess critical knowledge for future planning. *(Dawn, May 8th, 2026, Page 5)*

13 # CLIMATE DISASTER

13.1 # Flood

Flash floods wash away roads in Chitral

Flash floods triggered by torrential rains washed away roads and inundated crops in Bumburate and Rumbur valleys in Chitral. The floods also damaged several houses. However, no loss of life was reported from the valleys as the dwellers of flood-hit houses had shifted to safer areas with the help of volunteers. The roads leading to both the valleys remained blocked to traffic and pedestrian movement as big boulders blocked them. *(Dawn, May 25th, 2026, Page 9)*

13.2 # Heatwave

Over 20 suffer heat stroke in Mirpurkhas

Scores of people were affected by heat stroke and more than 20 of them admitted to various health facilities in Mirpurkhas division on Saturday as mercury shot up to 47 degrees Celsius. The victims included women and children. The extremely hot weather conditions badly affected business, trade and commercial activities as roads, street and public places wore a deserted look in the mid-day hours. The worst-hit segments appeared to be labourers and farmers. Doctors have advised people to remain indoors unless inevitable to escape effects of the heatwave. *(Dawn, May 3rd, 2026, Page 15)*

10 found dead as Karachi endures 'hottest day in eight years'

At least 10 people died across the city (Karachi) due to intense heat as the mercury surged to 44.1 degrees Celsius — the highest temperature recorded since 2018 — accompanied by gusts of continental winds that persisted throughout the day, officials said. According to the Edhi Foundation and Chhipa Welfare Association, 10 people died in the metropolis because of "extreme heatwave". They said most of the victims remained unidentified and appeared to be drug users, whose bodies were found in different areas. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 13)*

Intense heatwave puts much of country on alert

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) issued heatwave warnings for central, southern and upper parts of the country, with temperatures expected to soar as high as 50 degrees Celsius from May 7 through May 11. The Met Office said that due to the presence of high pressure in the upper atmosphere, heatwave conditions are likely to develop. The heatwave is forecast for the country's central and southern parts from May 7 to May 11 and for the upper parts from May 8 to May 10. Daytime maximum temperatures may rise to 46-50°C. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 3)*

Dadu sets new temperature record with 51.5°C

As a punishing heatwave gripped most districts of Sindh, a new maximum temperature record was set in Dadu, with a sizzling 51.5 degrees Celsius, PMD said. Previously, the highest temperature recorded in Dadu was 51.4°C on May 18, 2016, the PMD said. Temperatures surged to 50°C in four Sindh cities as Dadu and Jacobabad sizzled at 51°C, followed by Shaheed Benazirabad, Larkana and Mohenjo Daro (50°C). The maximum temperature recorded in Khairpur and Sakrand was 49°C, while Sukkur experienced 48°C. *(Dawn, May 30th, 2026, Page 13)*

13.3 # Lightening

Two boys among four die in lightning strikes in Jhang, Toba Tek Singh

At least 4 persons, including 2 boys, died after being struck by lightning in different incidents in Toba Tek Singh and Jhang districts. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 2)*

Lightning kills two women, injures five persons in Kohistan
Two women were killed after being struck by lightning and five persons sustained critical injuries during thunderstorm as the first spell of monsoon rains continued to batter Kohistan and Kolai-Palas districts. *(Dawn, May 14th, 2026, Page 8)*

13.4 # Rainfall

Roads, residential areas flooded in Swat, Shangla
Heavy rainfall, coupled with a hailstorm, damaged public property in Matta tehsil of Swat district, leaving residents, especially farmers, grapple with significant losses. The hailstorm in Kharerai and adjoining areas destroyed orchards of peach, plum, apricot and other seasonal fruits, dealing a major blow to farmers. Residents termed the event unprecedented, saying they haven't seen such a hailstorm during this time of year. Many declared the situation as shocking and deeply distressing. *(Dawn, May 1st, 2026, Page 8)*

Rains threaten country's north, heat scorches south
Pakistan is confronting a stark weather dichotomy this week, as a severe heatwave scorches southern parts of the country while central and northern regions brace for widespread dust storms, rain, and potential landslides triggered by an incoming weather system. In Karachi, maximum temperature may go up to 39 degrees Celsius over the weekend. *(Dawn, May 2nd, 2026, Page 1)*

Two killed as heavy rain, windstorm lash KP cities
Two people were killed and several others injured as heavy rain coupled with windstorm lashed various districts, uprooting trees, disrupting power supply, and damaging crops. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 9)*

4 dead, 16 injured in rain-related incidents in KP
Four people have died and sixteen (16) injured in houses walls collapse incidents due to rain and storm that struck various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *(Business Recorder, May 12th, 2026, Page 7)*

Three killed, 24 injured in rain, windstorm across province
At least three persons were killed and 24 were injured in rain and windstorm related incidents across Punjab during the last 36 hours. *(Dawn, May 16th, 2026, Page 2)*

Girl killed, four injured as rain lashes Bannu
A girl lost her life, and four other persons sustained injuries as a downpour coupled with a windstorm lashed the Bannu district, while light snowfall was recorded in the upper parts of Kaghan Valley of Mansehra district. *(Dawn, May 23rd, 2026, Page 8)*

One dead, four injured
A woman died and four persons were injured in heavy windstorm and rain in the districts while mango orchards and electricity installations were damaged in south Punjab. *(Dawn, May 31st, 2026, Page 2)*

13.5 # Wildfire

Kamalia forest fire burns trees on 200 acres

Hundreds of trees were reduced to ashes after a fire broke out in the Kamalia forest, spread over more than 14,000 acres. The firefighters said the fire erupted due to unknown reasons near Chak 741/GB and Chak 728/GB which spread over more than 200 acres. The windstorm helped fire spread to a vast area. Despite hectic efforts of the firefighters, the fire could not be controlled when this report was filed. There were also reports of the death of wild animals. *(Dawn, May 31st, 2026, Page 2)*

Wildfires continue to ravage Malakand forests for 2nd day

Forest fires that erupted in several mountainous areas of Malakand district continued to rage for a second consecutive day, as strong winds and intense heat hampered efforts to bring the blaze under control. According to sources, fires that broke out in mountainous regions of Meekh Band, Sangina and Ala Dhand Dheri in Batkhela tehsil were still burning at multiple locations. The fires engulfed large swathes of forestland, causing extensive damage to valuable trees and wildlife. *(The News, May 31st, 2026, Page 8)*

14 # NATURAL DISASTER

PMD warns of Glof risk as rains, landslides batter GB

Intermittent rain across Gilgit-Baltistan triggered landslides and road blockages, while the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) issued a fresh alert warning of glacial lake outburst floods (Glof) in the region due to an approaching westerly weather system. *(Dawn, May 3rd, 2026, Page 1)*

15 # RESISTANCE

May Day rallies held across Balochistan

Like elsewhere across the world, International Labour Day was observed with enthusiasm and a renewed sense of purpose across various parts of Balochistan. The day, which commemorates the historic struggle of workers for their rights, saw rallies, demonstrations, and awareness campaigns organised in multiple districts, including the provincial capital, Quetta. The events were spearheaded by trade unions, labour associations, and civil society organisations, drawing participation from workers belonging to diverse sectors.

Marchers carried banners and placards highlighting their demands for fair wages, improved working conditions, job security, and access to comprehensive social protection systems. Speakers at these gatherings stressed the urgent need for enforcing labour laws and ensuring that workers receive their due rights without discrimination or delay. Participants also voiced concerns about rising inflation, unemployment, and the lack of adequate safety measures in many workplaces. They called upon both the provincial and federal governments to take concrete steps to address these challenges and to formulate policies that prioritise the welfare and dignity of the labour force. *(Dawn, May 2nd, 2026, Page 5)*

Low wages, rising living costs spur May Day rallies in Sindh

Labourers, trade unions and political leaders across the province marked International Labour Day with rallies, seminars and public meetings highlighting the challenges faced by workers and calling for urgent reforms. At different events labour leaders, human rights activists and members of the civil society sought fair wages, job security and the protection of workers' rights in both formal and informal sectors. At a gathering held at the Arts Council, Pakistan Peoples Party Sindh president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro said the government must ensure that all workers were registered and given their due rights.

He said that nearly 96 per cent of workers in Sindh, including women, remained vulnerable. He pointed out that unemployment was rising and many industries, around 5,000 in the province alone, had shut down, calling for their revival. PPP leader and former Senate chairman Raza Rabbani presented a 13-point agenda for labour rights. He criticised privatisation policies, saying that they lead to job losses and demanded removal of restrictions on trade unions. He also called for a "Workers' Charter" and committees to ensure implementation of labour laws.

Separately, a large rally organised by the National Trade Union Federation Pakistan (NTUF) and Home-Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) marched from Regal Chowk to the Karachi Press Club where a large number of workers, including, journalists, teachers and lawyers joined the demonstration carrying red flags and banners. A large number of women participated in the rally. The protesters demanded an end to the contract labour system, withdrawal of fuel price hike and payment of a living wage instead of the minimum wage.

They called for written job contracts, social security, pensions and right to form unions. Speakers criticised privatisation and outsourcing, saying that these policies had weakened job security and increased exploitation. Labour leaders also linked workers' issues to global challenges. They said wars, economic crises, and climate change are affecting workers most. It was highlighted that rising temperatures and environmental damage could cause massive job losses worldwide, while unsafe workplaces continue to put lives at risk. Another rally was held by the All Lady Health Workers Programme Union. Women workers from across Sindh gathered to highlight their specific issues, including lack of service structure, low wages, and pension concerns.

Union leaders said women workers face additional challenges such as harassment and unequal pay. They stressed that unity among workers is essential to achieve their rights. The speakers demanded immediate steps to improve working conditions and ensure fair compensation, especially in light of rising inflation. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mines and General Workers Unions also organised a rally from Gul Plaza to the Karachi Press Club. Their leaders said May Day is not just a symbolic event but a reminder of the historic struggle for an eight-hour workday and fair treatment.

They said that workers in Pakistan are facing severe economic pressure due to inflation, low wages, and lack of social protection. The federation demanded strict implementation of minimum wage laws, abolition of contract system and provision of healthcare, pensions, and safe working conditions. They also warned that divisions within labour movements weaken their collective strength. In another demonstration, employees of Pakistan Post, under their union, marched from the General Post Office to the Karachi Press Club. They raised concerns about lack of facilities, low wages and rising living costs.

The workers demanded better support from the government, including fuel allowances for postmen and relief in the national budget. Labour Day rallies, demonstrations and seminars were also held in all district headquarters, as well as other cities and towns, of Hyderabad, Larkana, Sukkur, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Benazirabad, Naushahro Feroze, Jacobabad, Kandhkot-Kashmore, Shikarpur and Ghotki. The events were organised by the respective district administrations, besides different labour rights organisations and trade unions. Pakistan Wapda Hydro Electric Workers Union organised its major rally outside the Hyderabad Press Club where the CBA leader Latif Nizamani, addressed the participants.

The other organisers included All Pakistan Clerks Association, Mazdoor Ittehad Union, Mehran Mazdoor Federation, Watan Dost Mazdoor Federation, Mehnat Kash Labor Union, Highway Workers Union Revolutionary Group, Peoples Labour Bureau, Pakistan Trade Union Federation Sindh, Awami Workers Party and Sindh Taraqqi-Pasand Party. The participants saluted the Chicago martyrs and vowed to continue a vigorous struggle for the rights of workers. *(Dawn, May 2nd, 2026, Page 13)*

LHWs stage protest over unpaid salaries

Lady health workers (LHWs) staged a sit-in outside the provincial assembly against the non-payment of their salaries for the past 11 months. The demonstration took place at the Assembly Chowk, where protesters blocked the Khyber Road, leading to long queues of vehicles. A large number of LHWs and other health staff participated, saying that repeated promises by the provisional government to release their salaries have not been fulfilled.

The demonstrators said they were left with no option but to take to the streets. Women from Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, Malakand, Swat and Swabi joined the protest. They demanded immediate payment of pending salaries, introduction of a proper service structure, and implementation of court orders regarding their promotions. A heavy police presence was deployed at the site to maintain order, but the protesters continued chanting slogans and refused to disperse. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 8)*

Teachers boycott Karachi University exams over non-payment of dues

The growing rift between the Karachi University (KU) administration and teachers became more pronounced when the latter boycotted semester exams in large numbers, bringing campus academic activities almost to a halt. The boycott call was given by the Karachi University Teachers' Society (Kuts) last week over what the body described as prolonged failure of the university administration to address financial grievances of the faculty. *(Dawn, May 6th, 2026, Page 14)*

Quetta, other parts of province shut down

A complete shutter-down strike was observed across Balochistan, including the provincial capital Quetta, while protest rallies and demonstrations were also held on the call of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) against the police and other law enforcement agencies for raids on religious seminaries. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 5)*

48 protesters booked

The Ghotki police registered a case under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) against 48 villagers for blocking a road while holding a protest demonstration for the recovery of 10-year-old girl. The protesters, belonging to the Sial community, had held the demonstration at the Qazi Wah Bridge near Khanpur Mahar town after the girl had gone missing. The FIR against 18 nominated and 30 unknown persons accused them of taking the law into their own hands, blocking the road, interfering with state's affairs and posing resistance to the police. *(Dawn, May 8th, 2026, Page 15)*

JUI-F holds protest rallies across KP against cleric's killing

The Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) held a second round of protest rallies across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against the killing of leading cleric Maulana Mohammad Idrees. JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had announced that his party would hold two rounds of protest rallies against the "martyrdom" of the cleric. The party had also staged demonstrations. *(Dawn, May 9th, 2026, Page 8)*

Protests held across Sindh over killing of JUI-F leader Maulana Idrees

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam–Fazl (JUI-F) organised demonstrations and sit-ins across Sindh as part of its nationwide protest against the recent assassination of its senior leader and renowned religious scholar Shaikhul Hadees Maulana Muhammad Idrees in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to a press release issued by the party. Maulana Idrees was shot dead by unknown assailants, who opened fire on the vehicle he was travelling by in the Tariqabad area of Utmanzai, in KP province. *(Dawn, May 9th, 2026, Page 15)*

With curbs on 'objectionable' clothes, 'provocative' slogans, Sindh govt grants permission to hold Aurat March today

As the Sindh government finally granted permission for the holding of Aurat March at Clifton's Beach View Park today, the ludicrous restrictions, such as on wearing "objectionable clothing", set by the administration angered civil society and rights organisations. A no-objection certificate (NOC) was issued by South Deputy Commissioner (DC) Javed Nabi Khoso to organise "Aurat March in commemoration of Mother's Day" at Beach View Park.

Many conditions — like ban on raising anti-state, anti-religion slogans, banners, speeches or activities — are similar to the 'code of conduct' issued by the government for political or religious parties for their respective public meetings, rallies or other events. However, the conditions in the NOC that Aurat March participants would not "wear objectionable clothing" or carry out "promotion for the LGBTQ" community, which includes transgender persons, and that "no hateful, provocative, unethical or anti-social content shall be displayed on charts, banners or flexes" raised eyebrows. *(Dawn, May 10th, 2026, Page 13)*

Torghar tribes unite against takeover of forests by govt, warn of protests

A jirga attended by tribesmen, clerics and local government representatives announced plans to launch a protest movement and, if necessary, move the court of law if the government failed to revoke its notification regarding the takeover of forests in Torghar district. "Our forest land is spread over 21,000 acres and belongs to local tribes for centuries, but the government has issued a notification to take its possession, which is unacceptable to us," local elder Amir Zada Khan told the jirga held in Oghi. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 9)*

Galvanised by repression, fearless women speak out at Aurat March

It may not have been a very big ground with lush grass and tall shady trees. But Clifton's Beach View Park with its dried prickly grass and hard grounds was a place to gather. As the dark shadows cast on the ground multiplied, there were positions to be taken by the fearless, strong and determined women in black with many stories to tell, stories that may not have had happy endings, but stories that must be told as they carried important lessons. That was the Aurat March 2026 which happened despite all hurdles.

The story of this year's Aurat March started one-and-a-half month ago when organisers of the March were made to run for pillar to post for a No Objection Certificate for holding annual gathering, which demands women be given their due rights, on Mothers' Day this year. With the NOC not yet in sight, but still expected to come by at the last minute, the organisers called a press conference at the Karachi Press Club on May 5 to share their demands for this year's Aurat March with the media. But all the organisers were not permitted to even enter the KPC for the press conference. They were arrested from outside the club gate. An uproar over the incident saw them released within one hour of their arrests but NOC, which finally came, was not without conditions and restrictions on what to wear, what to say or write on banners and placards.

There were just too many conditions, which made the organisers think again about holding the Aurat March. "We thought of not holding the Aurat March after all. But then we thought why not?", said Sheema Kermani from the Aurat March stage. Behind her was written in big bold Urdu 'March Tau Hoga'. "Every human being in a democracy deserves to demand his or her rights and this is exactly what we have been doing for the last eight years," she said. "We the women of this country will march on roads and wear what we fancy. We are half of Pakistan's population, gathering to speak about our rights is our right," Sheema added. *(Dawn, May 11th, 2026, Page 13)*

Police fire tear gas at Khyber 'peace marchers'

The police used batons and tear gas to stop a "peace march" heading from Khyber tribal district towards Peshawar to demand restoration of peace and the early return of the displaced families to the Tirah Valley. The Khyber residents had gathered here under the banner of the Bara Political Alliance. Activists of different political parties also attended the march.

When the protesters reached the Peshtakhara Chowk on the busy Ring Road, the police started firing tear gas shells to stop their further advance. The peace marchers observed a sit in on the Ring Road and blocked it for traffic. The alliance's president, Hashim Khan, led the protest. Addressing the protesters, Mr Khan alleged that residents of Khyber had been facing violence for the last many years. Realising the seriousness of the situation, the authorities held negotiations with the protesters, making them disperse. *(Dawn, May 13th, 2026, Page 8)*

Safe return of seamen held by Somali pirates demanded

Ambreen Fatima protested in Karachi with her children for the release of her husband, one of 10 Pakistani crew aboard an oil tanker seized by Somali pirates 23 days ago, and who is now drinking uncleaned tank water to survive, she said. The MT Honour 25, a Palau-flagged product tanker, was seized on April 21 approximately 30 nautical miles off Somalia's Puntland region with 17 crew members aboard, 10 of them Pakistani. Fatima said her daughter had been hospitalised for two days due to the stress. *(Dawn, May 14th, 2026, Page 12)*

Civil society stages rally to mark 'Nakba Day'

On the appeal of the Palestine Foundation Pakistan, 'Nakba Day' was observed across the country to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. Special prayers and demonstrations were held in mosques nationwide in support of the Palestinians' right of return and to condemn what participants described as Zionist oppression and acts of terrorism marking 78 years since the establishment of Israel. The central protest was staged outside the Karachi Press Club, where leaders of political and religious parties, lawyers, artists, teachers, students and members of civil society gathered in large numbers.

Protesters carried Palestinian flags, placards and banners featuring images of slain Palestinian, Iranian and Lebanese leaders and citizens. The banners carried slogans supporting the global campaign for Palestinians' right of return, condemning Israel and the United States, and calling for an end to American and Israeli aggression in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran. Addressing the gathering, speakers termed Israel's existence in Palestine as "illegal and illegitimate", stating that Quaid-i-Azam had foreseen the consequences of the creation of a Zionist state in Palestine and had maintained that Pakistan would never recognise Israel. *(Dawn, May 16th, 2026, Page 13)*

Women hold protest against practice of 'honour killing'

Women representing diverse schools of thought, leaders of political and social organisations, students and lawyers staged a protest rally in Larkana against the rampant killing of women under the pretext of karo-kari (accusations of extramarital relationships) in Sindh, harassment of women in various settings and the jirga (local court) system under feudal lords. The rally commenced from Begum Nusrat Bhutto Government Girls College and passed through various roads and streets of the city before culminating at the local press club, where participants carrying banners and placards raised slogans.

The speakers highlighted recent incidents in various cities of Sindh, including the killings of Khalida Chandio, Gulan Bharo and several other women, whose murders were labelled as karo-kari cases. They also condemned the practice of jirgas issuing verdicts to give women away as sang-chatti (settlement through women) or branding them as kari (dishonoured) to justify their killing, making Sindh a dangerous place for women. The protesters demanded that those responsible for such incidents be arrested, that women be granted the same right to life as men, and that the jirga system be abolished immediately. *(Dawn, May 16th, 2026, Page 15)*

PTCL retirees demand end to pension deduction

A large number of pensioners of the Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) staged a peaceful demonstration near Matric Board Office against deduction in their pensions. Federal Govt Pensioners Movement PTCL Chairman Feroz Bakht, Saad Ishraque and others said that the Pak Telecom Employees Trust had violated its charter by deducting pensions since 2010. They said that apex court had declared the deduction illegal on July 10, 2025. The speakers demanded action against those responsible for the unilateral deductions. They also demanded that pensioners be provided with improved healthcare facilities near their residences. *(Dawn, May 18th, 2026, Page 14)*

Over 200 protesting metro bus employees demand salaries in Rawalpindi

Termination of more than 200 employees by a new security company of the Metro Bus Service between Rawalpindi and Islamabad triggered a protest, leading to suspension of bus operations for around two hours. The Metro Bus Service employees came out onto the metro track in protest against their dismissal and non-payment of salaries for the last two months. The protesting workers blocked the track, due to which Metro Bus Service between the twin cities remained suspended, causing severe difficulties for students and office-going men and women during peak hours.

For this purpose, all dismissed male and female employees of the Metro Bus Service gathered at the Potohar Metro Bus Station and raised slogans against the Metro administration. The affected employees claimed that the Metro Bus administration had dismissed more than 200 employees without any prior notice. They said the dismissal process started from May 1 and that they had not been paid salaries for March and April.

The protesters said the Metro Bus Service contract had been awarded to a new company, which terminated the previous employees soon after taking charge and began hiring new staff, while salaries for the old employees remained unpaid. *(Dawn, May 19th, 2026, Page 4)*

Teachers protest abduction of Gwadar University VC, others

Leaders of Academic Staff Associations of Balochistan University, while expressing serious concern over non-recovery of kidnapped top officials of Gwadar University that a black day would be observed today and protest rallies would be held in all universities across the province. Vice Chancellor of Gwadar University Prof Dr Abdul Razzaq Sabir, pro-VC Dr Syed Manzoor Ahmed, lecturer Dr Irshad Ahmed and their staff members were kidnapped five days ago from the highway in Mastung district while on their way to Quetta. *(Dawn, May 19th, 2026, Page 5)*

Transporters announce strike over attacks on trucks in Balochistan

The Balochistan Goods Truck Owners Association has announced a complete strike on the loading and transportation of minerals across the province, citing severe financial losses due to targeted attacks on vehicles and a lack of government security. The announcement was made by the association's president, Haji Noor Muhammad Shahwani, during a press conference at the Quetta Press Club. Shahwani said that trucks transporting valuable minerals such as chromite and marble have been repeatedly targeted on national highways. He alleged that insurgents or other militants have been burning vehicles and damaging tyres, causing losses worth millions of rupees to the transport sector. *(Dawn, May 20th, 2026, Page 5)*

Protesters demand release of Saad Edhi from Israeli captivity

A large number of people staged a protest demonstration outside the Karachi Press Club (KPC) against the arrest and alleged brutal torture of Saad Edhi, grandson of Abdul Sattar Edhi, by Israeli security forces. Saad Edhi's mother, Saba, and father, Faisal Edhi, also participated in the demonstration alongside representatives of political, social and human rights organisations. Young Saad was leading a humanitarian aid convoy carrying relief supplies from the people of Pakistan for the oppressed Palestinians in Gaza when he was arrested by Israeli forces. *(Dawn, May 20th, 2026, Page 13)*

JUI-F rallies across Balochistan over rising inflation, 'lawlessness'

Workers and supporters of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-F staged protest rallies and demonstrations across Balochistan, including the provincial capital Quetta, against rising inflation, deteriorating law and order, unemployment, corruption, repeated increases in petroleum prices, and what the party termed the government's extravagant spending and anti-people policies. The protests were organised on the call of JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and under the directives of the party's provincial leadership. Thousands of party workers, religious scholars, tribal elders, traders, youth, and people from different walks of life participated in rallies and public gatherings held in almost all districts of the province. *(Dawn, May 23rd, 2026, Page 5)*

Rally held in Thatta against 'grabbing' of Sindh's lands, resources

A large number of political and nationalist activists, students, social workers and local residents participated in the rally organised by the Jeay Sindh Mahaz-Riaz in Thatta. The protesters were raising slogans against federal and Sindh government's policies and initiatives under which, according to them, lands in Kohistan and other areas of the province's coastal belt were being grabbed and Sindh's natural resources were being taken away.

The rally started from the Makli Public Park and culminated at Thatta rickshaw stand after passing through the nearby section of the National Highway. Addressing the participants, JSM-R Chairman Riaz Chandio alleged that influential groups, under the cover of development schemes, were grabbing the lands belonging to local communities in Kohistan and coastal areas forcing their owners to surrender their ancestral properties and vacate their settlements. Referring to the Gujju area, he claimed that residents of Samano Mahalla were dispossessed from their lands illegally while attempts were also being made to grab nearly 25,000 acres in Kohistan. *(Dawn, May 24th, 2026, Page 15)*

Protest erupts after teenager shot dead by bike snatchers in Karachi

A teenage boy was shot dead by armed robbers in Orangi Town within the remit of the Pirabad police station, police said. The police said that Ibrahim Kerry, 18, left his home in New Mianwali Colony and heading somewhere on his motorcycle when two armed men intercepted him and demanded his bike at gunpoint. They said that the victim put up resistance and one of the criminals fired at him and rode away with the snatched two-wheeler. *(Dawn, May 25th, 2026, Page 13)*

Employees' rally demands probe into KU's financial crisis

Frustrated over the prolonged delay in non-payment of their dues, teachers and non-teaching staff at Karachi University (KU) held a major protest rally on the campus, where they urged the chief minister to hold a transparent investigation into the university's financial crisis and grant immediate relief to employees. The striking employees, represented by Karachi University Teachers' Society (Kuts), KU Officers' Welfare Association and KU Employees' Welfare Association (KUEWA) have been on a boycott for their demands for almost a month, causing an absolute disruption of all academic activities, including the semester exams. *(Dawn, May 26th, 2026, Page 14)*

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Not any preferable to be included in this month.

2 # AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

3 # AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

4 # SUB – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Rising fuel prices strand hundreds of Indonesian fishermen

Hundreds of fishermen in an Indonesian coastal town on the island of Java have been forced to stop going out to sea and told AFP their livelihoods are at risk due to soaring fuel prices. The price of subsidised fuel has remained unchanged but the cost of non-subsidised fuel, including industrial diesel, surged as high as 30,000 rupiah (about $1.73) per litre since last month, a steep increase from 14,000 to 23,000 rupiah before the hike. Hundreds of fishermen held a protest in Pati, a coastal town in Central Java, demanding a lower price for the diesel that fuels their boats. A fisherman working in Pati, Zen Zen Al Wijaini, said he cannot work because his boss, boat owner, can't afford the fuel that accounts for 70pc of operational costs. *(The News, May 10th, 2026, Page 17)*

5 # TRADE

UK exports to US slump as tariffs bite

British exports to the United States have slumped since the introduction of US tariffs, a day after President Donald Trump lifted import taxes on Scottish whisky. Exports to the United States have "remained relatively low" since Trump's global tariffs onslaught in April last year, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. The value of goods exports to the US fell by £800 million ($1.1 billion), or around 14 percent, in April 2025 compared with one year earlier, the ONS said.

London and Washington concluded a trade agreement last year capping US tariffs at 10 percent on most British manufactured goods, including on cars. But a drop in car exports to the US was still a main driver of the overall decline, the ONS said. It added that car exports have "remained below pre-tariff levels… despite this tariff reduction," with a cyber attack on Jaguar Land Rover in September also weighing. A fall in pharmaceutical exports also contributed to the overall drop, possibly linked to US efforts to boost domestic drug production, the ONS said. *(Business Recorder, May 4th, 2026, Page 9)*

1,500 ships, their crews trapped in Gulf

Around 1,500 ships and their crews are trapped in the Gulf due to the Iranian blockade in the strait of Hormuz, the secretary general of the UN's International Maritime

Organisation (IMO) said in Panama. The war in the Middle East, unleashed February 28 by Israel and the United States against Iran, provoked reprisals from Tehran across the region and a shipping blockade in Hormuz, a crucial global trade route.

"Right now, we have approximately 20,000 crewmen and around 1,500 ships trapped," Arsenio Dominguez told the Maritime Convention of the Americas. Dominguez said that maritime shipping moves over 80 percent of total consumed products in the world. The stranded crew members "are innocent people who are doing their jobs every day for the benefit of other countries," but "are trapped by geopolitical situations outside their control," Dominguez told the gathering of industry executives and IMO representatives. Before the conflict's outbreak, a fifth of the world's total petroleum and gas passed through the Strait of Hormuz. The closure has led to a significant global surge in the price of hydrocarbons. *(Dawn, May 8th, 2026, Page 11)*

China records forecast-beating April trade figures

China's overseas shipments grew at a faster pace than expected last month, despite pressure on the global economy caused by war in the Middle East. Exports from the manufacturing powerhouse were up 14.1 percent in April compared to the same month last year, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) said. The growth outpaced a Bloomberg forecast of 8.4 percent based on a survey of economists, and significantly picking up pace from the 2.5 percent increase in March.

Ahead of the key summit, China's exports to the United States grew 11.3 percent year-on-year in April, returning to growth after dropping sharply by 26.5 percent in March. Economists argue that China should shift towards a growth model powered more by household consumption than traditional drivers including real estate and infrastructure investment. In a positive sign for domestic spending, imports into the world's second-largest economy grew 25.3 percent year-on-year last month. That figure beat a Bloomberg forecast of 20.0 percent but was slightly lower than the 27.8-percent surge in March. *(Business Recorder, May 10th, 2026, Page 1)*

China signals tariff cuts, advances in farm market access after Trump-Xi summit

China and the United States have agreed to expand agricultural trade through tariff reductions and tackle non-tariff barriers and market access issues, China's commerce ministry said after this week's summit in Beijing. The agreements are "preliminary" and will be "finalised as soon as possible," the ministry said following U.S. President Donald Trump's visit. China's farm imports from the U.S. still face an additional 10% levy after last year's rounds of tit-for-tat tariffs sharply curtailed trade, which fell 65.7% year-on-year to $8.4 billion in 2025, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data.

The commerce ministry said both sides aim to promote two-way trade, including in agricultural products, through measures such as reciprocal tariff reductions across a range of goods. It did not specify which products. China resumed purchases of some U.S. farm goods after an October meeting, fulfilling a U.S.-stated commitment to buy

12 million metric tons of soybeans by the end of February. It has also purchased some U.S. wheat cargoes and large volumes of sorghum. Market watchers expect a 10% cut in soybean tariffs, which could allow private Chinese crushers to resume purchases that were largely sidelined during last year's U.S. harvest, when state crop traders were the only buyers. *(Business Recorder, May 17th, 2026, Page 1)*

India's trade deficit widens to USD28.38bn in April

India's merchandise trade deficit widened to USD28.38 billion in April, as the Middle East conflict continued to hinder shipments while disrupting energy imports and making them costlier. Concerns that the energy shock from the months-long Iran war could slow growth, raise inflation, and hit India's balance of payments have led to a raft of interventions from policymakers as the rupee plummets to record lows, making it Asia's worst-performing currency this year. Economists had expected the trade deficit to be USD26.5 billion, according to a Reuters poll, compared with a deficit of USD20.67 billion in March.

India's merchandise exports rose to USD43.56 billion from USD38.92 billion in March, while imports rose to USD71.94 billion from USD59.59 billion, data showed. India, the world's third-largest oil importer and consumer, imports more than 80 percent of its crude oil needs and 60 percent of its cooking gas, with the Middle East accounting for a large chunk of the supply. *(Business Recorder, May 18th, 2026, Page 9)*

Britain clinches $5bn Gulf trade deal in shadow of Iran war

Britain said it had secured a trade deal with the Gulf Cooperation Council worth $5 billion a year in the long run, deepening economic ties with allies in a region dealing with the fallout from the Iran war. The deal with the GCC, which consists of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, comes after US-Israeli strikes against Iran in February triggering Iranian attacks on other countries in the region, putting strain on energy and food supplies.

"At a time of increased instability, today's announcement sends a clear signal of confidence — giving UK exporters the certainty they need to plan ahead, Britain's Trade Minister Peter Kyle said. The British government said the deal would be worth $4.96 billion each year in the long term as the final deal went further on both trade liberalisation and service sector commitments than previously expected. The deal will remove 93pc of GCC tariffs on British goods, equivalent to the removal of 580 million worth of tariffs by the deal's tenth year, with two-thirds of the tariffs being removed as soon as the deal comes into force. *(Dawn, May 21st, 2026, Page 11)*

European Commission vows tougher action on trade with China

The EU's trade and investment relationship with China is "not sustainable", the European Commission said, vowing a stronger response as commissioners discussed how best to shield Europe's industries from surging Chinese imports. Commissioners were pitching ideas ahead of an EU leaders' summit on June 18 to 19, and possible proposals could include forcing EU firms to diversify supply chains or introducing new trade mechanisms to curb China's access to the EU market in chemicals, metals and clean energy technology.

"As economic and security interests become ever more intertwined, both dimensions will require a more robust and coherent response," the Commission said. Any concrete proposals for the response are not expected to be announced until the third quarter of this year. Western governments are trying to reverse some of the offshoring to China that peaked in early 2000s, depleting industrial know-how and hubs in their countries, particularly in the US and EU members. *(Business Recorder, May 31st, 2026, Page 1)*

6 # CORPORATE SECTOR

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

7 # INTERNATIONAL AID / LOAN / INVESTMENT

Macron announces 23bn euros of investment at Africa summit

French President Emmanuel Macron announced 23 billion euros (USD27 billion) of investment for Africa during a major summit on the future of the continent hosted by Kenya. France has brought together dozens of heads of state and business leaders for the two-day Africa Forward summit in Nairobi, aimed at renewing France's engagement with the continent after years of strained ties with its former colonies. The investments Macron announced include 14 billion euros in private and public funds from French entities, and nine billion euros from African investors, focused on energy transition, digital and AI, the maritime economy and agriculture.

They would create 250,000 direct jobs in France and Africa, Macron said. "We are not simply here to come and invest on the African continent alongside you — we need the great African business leaders to come and invest in France," he told the audience at Nairobi's convention centre. "And that too is what underpins this relationship, now entirely free of hang-ups," he added. Ahead of the summit, Macron told The Africa Report that colonialism could no longer be blamed for all of Africa's challenges. "We must not exonerate from all responsibility the seven decades that followed independence," he told the magazine, calling on African leaders to improve governance. *(Business Recorder, May 12th, 2026, Page 5)*

Gaza aid flotilla sets sail again after Israeli interceptions

Ships from the Global Sumud Flotilla set sail for a third time from southern Turkiye, after earlier attempts to deliver aid to Gaza were intercepted by Israel in international waters. The flotilla had previously departed from Spain on April 12, but Israeli forces intercepted vessels in the group, taking more than 100 pro-Palestinian activists to Crete and detaining two others in Israel. Activists on the flotilla departing from the Turkish port of Marmaris said the flotilla needed to reach Gaza to provide much-needed aid to the enclave at a time when global attention had shifted elsewhere, including to the impact of the Iran war.

"It's very important that what's happening around the world is not allowing us to see Gaza for the situation as it is," said Susan Abdullah, a member of the flotilla's steering committee. "The blockade is still on. The aid is not coming in." Katy Davidson, an activist from the British delegation on the flotilla, said the group had previously been intercepted between Sicily and Crete. She criticised the response of the British government, which "did nothing". Davidson added that even if the flotilla failed to reach Gaza, any interception would still help draw attention to the situation. *(Dawn, May 15th, 2026, Page 11)*

8 # INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (IFIs)

World Bank document shows 27 countries seeking to ensure access to crisis funds

Twenty-seven countries have moved since the Iran war started to put in place crisis instruments that could quickly access funding from existing World Bank programs, according to an internal document viewed by Reuters. The World Bank document did not name the countries or the total amount of funds potentially being sought. The World Bank declined to comment. The document showed that three countries had approved new instruments since the Middle East conflict began on February 28 while the others were still completing the process.

The war and resulting disruption of global energy markets have hit global supply chains and prevented vital fertilizer shipments from reaching developing countries. Officials in Kenya and Iraq have confirmed they are seeking rapid financial support from the World Bank to deal with the war's fallout such as surging fuel prices hitting the African nation to a massive drop in oil revenue for Iraq. The 27 countries are among 101 that had access to some form of pre-arranged financing instrument that they could tap in a crisis, including 54 that signed up to the Rapid Response Option, which allows countries to use up to 10% of their undisbursed financing.

World Bank President Ajay Banga last month said the bank's crisis toolkit would allow countries to draw on pre-arranged contingent financing, existing project balances and fast-disbursing instruments to access an estimated $20 billion to $25 billion. He said the bank could also reorient parts of its portfolio to bring the total to $60 billion over six months, with further longer-term changes possible to bring the total to around $100 billion. At the time, the head of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, said she expected up to a dozen countries to seek $20 billion to $50 billion in near-term assistance from the global lender. But few requests have been logged, according to three sources familiar with the matter. *(Business Recorder, May 24th, 2026, Page 1)*

9 # POLICY

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

10 # SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION

Global debt hits record of near USD353trn, with signs of move away from US

Investors are showing signs of diversifying away from US Treasuries as global debt levels hit a record of nearly USD353 trillion by end-March, a report by the Institute of International Finance published found. IIF's quarterly Global Debt Monitor said that strengthening international demand for Japanese and European government bonds contrasted with broadly stable demand for US Treasuries since the start of the year. "These trends partly reflect diverging debt trajectories, which are increasingly influencing investor allocation decisions," Emre Tiftik, director at the IIF for Global Markets and Policy, wrote.

"Under current policies, the US debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to continue rising, and recent Congressional Budget Office projections indicate a further deterioration in the long-term fiscal outlook." This stood in contrast to debt ratios in the euro zone and Japan, which are projected to follow a more moderate path even with continued fiscal expansion, the report said. However, US corporate bond markets continue to boom, supported by AI-related issuance and strong overseas inflows.

Washington's borrowing push was one of the main drivers for global debt to rise by over USD4.4 trillion in the first quarter, the fastest increase since mid-2025 and the fifth straight quarterly increase, the IIF report said. Tiftik said the rise in US debt had been largely driven by government borrowing. He pointed to a sharp acceleration in debt at the start of the year by Chinese non-financial corporate borrowers - predominantly state-owned firms - which significantly outpaced borrowing by the country's government.

Outside the world's two biggest economies, debt across mature markets edged lower, while emerging markets, excluding China, saw levels rising modestly to a record USD36.8 trillion driven by government borrowing. Looking at key debt ratios, global debt stood at 305 percent of world economic output, broadly stable where it had been since 2023. However, debt ratios followed a similar pattern as debt levels - trending lower in mature markets and rising steadily in emerging economies.

Overall, the biggest increases over the past quarter were recorded in Norway, Kuwait, China, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia - each recording gains of more than 30 percentage points of GDP, the IIF report showed. The IIF predicted that structural pressures - including aging populations, rising spending on defence, energy security and diversification, cybersecurity and AI-related capital expenditure - would push both government and corporate debt levels higher over the medium- to long-term. "The recent conflict in the Middle East is set to further intensify some of these pressures," Tiftik said. *(Business Recorder, May 7th, 2026, Page 1)*

10.1 # Food

France launches one-euro university meals for all students

French university canteens began offering one-euro meals to all students regardless of income, in a measure designed to address financial hardship. The move follows a push by student unions to extend the one-euro rate ($1.17) for a three-course meal to all students, down from the usual 3.30 euros. The price, which covers a starter, main course and dessert, was previously only available to those with low incomes or receiving financial aid. *(Business Recorder, May 5th, 2026, Page 5)*

Millions face hunger amid Hormuz standoff: UN official

Tens of millions of people could face hunger and starvation if fertilisers are not soon allowed through the Strait of Hormuz, the head of a UN task force aimed at averting a looming humanitarian crisis said. Iran has had the strategic waterway — through which a third of the world's fertilisers normally pass — in a chokehold for months in retaliation for the war launched by the United States and Israel on Feb 28, disrupting a trade critical for farmers around the world in a race against the end of planting seasons.

"We have a few weeks ahead of us to prevent what will likely be a massive humanitarian crisis," Jorge Moreira da Silva, executive director of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and leader of the task force, said in an interview in Paris. "We may witness a crisis that will force 45 million more people into hunger and starvation." The UN secretary general created the task force in March to spearhead a mechanism to allow fertilisers and related raw materials such as ammonia, sulphur and urea through the strait. For weeks, Moreira da Silva has been working to convince the belligerent parties to allow even a few ships through, and has met with "more than 100 countries" to rally UN member state support around the mechanism. *(Dawn, May 12th, 2026, Page 11)*

Strait of Hormuz blockade: FAO warns of global food crisis

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned that the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz could "trigger a severe global food price crisis" in the coming months. Hormuz accounted for a fifth of global oil shipping before the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran, which prompted Tehran to effectively shut down the strait to tanker and cargo traffic. A third of the world's fertiliser supply also passed through the strait before the war, and officials have warned that farmers could face shortages during the summer growing season.

The Rome-based FAO said there should be more attention on alternative land and sea routes, including across the Arabian peninsula to the Red Sea. It also called for countries to avoid export restrictions on energy and fertilisers and to exempt food aid from trade curbs. The time has come to "start seriously thinking about how to increase the absorption capacity of countries, how to increase their resilience to this choke", the FAO's chief economist Maximo Torero said. In a statement, the agency said the

Hormuz blockage was “not a temporary shipping disruption” but “the beginning of a systemic agrifood shock”. It warned a full-blown global food crisis could come within six to 12 months. “The shock is unfolding in stages: energy, fertiliser, seeds, lower yields, commodity price increases, then food inflation,” it said. The FAO said its global food price index had risen for three consecutive months since the start of the conflict. *(Business Recorder, May 21st, 2026, Page 1)*

Cuba receives shipment of rice donated by China

A shipment of 15,000 tons of rice donated by the Chinese government to Cuba has arrived at the port of Havana, the island’s president said. The shipment is the first batch of a promised 60,000 tons that China says it will donate to Cuba, which is grappling with dire shortages. “That noble gesture of solidarity will reach millions of consumers throughout all the provinces and the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud, in addition to our health and education institutions,” President Miguel Diaz-Canel wrote.

The communist Caribbean country has been under a US trade embargo since 1962, which is often blamed for shortages of food and medicine. In January, Cuba stopped receiving oil from its ally Venezuela, when the United States overthrew Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and began directing energy policy. Meanwhile, the US has threatened sanctions on anyone selling oil to the country. The effective energy blockade has significantly worsened blackouts that have long plagued the country. “The heartfelt ties of friendship and cooperation that unite us are strengthened in crucial moments,” Diaz-Canel wrote on X about the rice shipment.

Chinese ambassador Hua Xin said on Cuban television that the 60,000 tons of rice represent, “the largest food aid” from China to Cuba “in recent years.” Earlier this week, China denounced a US decision to indict former Cuban president Raul Castro over the gunning down of planes in 1996. *(Business Recorder, May 25th, 2026, Page 1)*

11 # ENVIRONMENT

11.1 # Atmosphere

Thousands ordered to evacuate around leaking California chemical tank

Tens of thousands of people were ordered to leave their homes in California after a huge chemical tank began to leak, sending toxic fumes over a heavily populated area and posing the risk of an explosion. The tank contained 7,000 gallons (26,000 liters) of methyl methacrylate, a volatile and flammable liquid used to make plastics, with firefighters warning the situation was serious. “There are literally two options left,” Incident Commander Craig Covey said.

“The tank fails and spills a total of about 6-7,000 gallons of very bad chemicals into the parking lot in that area or, two, the tank goes into a thermal runaway and blows up, affecting the tanks around them that have fuel or chemicals in them as well. “We are setting up these evacuations in preparation for these two options: it fails, or it blows up," he said. The incident unfolded in the Garden Grove area of Orange County, southeast of Los Angeles. Garden Grove Police Chief Amir El-Farra said about 40,000 people were affected by the evacuation order, with several thousand refusing to leave their homes. Aerial footage filmed by local TV stations showed jets of water being sprayed at the tank, which has a capacity of 34,000 gallons. *(Business Recorder, May 24th, 2026, Page 10)*

11.2 # Biodiversity

Climate change threatens global plant species as habitats shrink

Some of the plants that make familiar landscapes recognisable may not survive by century's end as climate change becomes an increasingly important driver of species loss, according to scientists, reshaping and often shrinking suitable habitats that the plants need to survive. Researchers modelled future ranges for numerous species of vascular plants, a category that accounts for almost all the world's plants — those with water — and nutrient-carrying tissues. They looked at more than 67,000 species, meaning about 18pc of the world's known vascular plants.

They found that 7pc to 16pc could lose more than 90pc of their range, placing them at high risk of extinction. Examples include Catalina ironwood, or island ironwood, a rare endemic California tree, bluish spike-moss from a plant lineage dating back more than 400 million years, and roughly one third of Eucalyptus species, one of Australia's most recognisable plant groups. The researchers came to their estimates after examining millions of records on plant locations as well as greenhouse-gas emissions scenarios for 2081-2100. A plant's habitat is not simply a place on a map, but the full array of conditions it needs: temperature, rainfall, soils, land use and landscape features such as shade. *(Dawn, May 24th, 2026, Page 10)*

11.3 # Health

Two die in 'respiratory illness' outbreak on Atlantic cruise ship

An outbreak of "severe acute respiratory illness" on board a cruise ship in the Atlantic has left two people dead and a third in intensive care in Johannesburg, South Africa's health ministry told. The outbreak occurred on the MV Hondius, travelling from Ushuaia in Argentina to Cape Verde. The patient being treated in Johannesburg tested positive for a hantavirus, a family of viruses that can cause hemorrhagic fever, South African spokesperson Foster Mohale said. Hanaviruses are spread by rodents, in particular contact with their urine, droppings and saliva, according to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *(Business Recorder, May 4th, 2026, Page 9)*

Three dead, nearly 150 trapped on virus-hit cruise ship

Three people died and nearly 150 others remained trapped on a luxury cruise ship, off West Africa, due to a suspected outbreak of hantavirus, as passengers were not allowed to disembark in Cape Verde where it is anchored, authorities said, expressing concern for the local population. Mostly people from Spain, Britain and the United States are among 23 nationalities of the 149 people aboard the MV Hondius, which was travelling from Ushuaia in Argentina to Cape Verde off the coast of west Africa. The island nation's denial to disembark came even through WHO Europe said the risk to the wider public remained low.

Two died on board and one after disembarking the ship earlier. One passenger is in intensive care in Johannesburg and two others "require urgent medical care". Hantavirus, an illness usually transmitted to humans from rodents, has been confirmed in the passenger currently in intensive care in Johannesburg, the operator said. As the ship "was not granted authorisation to dock at the port of Praia", off which it is anchored, Spain's Canary Islands are under consideration for disembarkation, "where further medical screening and handling could take place", the operator said. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 12)*

No vaccine for latest Ebola outbreak, DRC warns as toll hits 80

An Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo that has caused at least 80 deaths has a "very high lethality rate" and no vaccine or specific treatment, the country´s health minister warned. Nearly 250 suspected cases of the highly contagious haemorrhagic fever have been recorded in DR Congo, according to the health ministry, with one death reported in neighbouring Uganda. Medical aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said it was preparing a "large-scale response", calling the rapid spread of the outbreak "extremely concerning".

"The Bundibugyo strain has no vaccine, no specific treatment," DR Congo´s Health Minister Samuel-Roger Kamba said. "This strain has a very high lethality rate which can reach 50 percent." Ministry officials said the death toll had reached 80, up from 65 the previous day. The strain has also claimed one life in neighbouring Uganda, officials said, that of a Congolese national. That correlated with an announcement by Uganda´s health ministry, which said a 59-year-old man from the DRC had died in Kampala after being admitted earlier in the week. His body was repatriated the same day. Tests showed the victim in Uganda was infected with the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, first identified in 2007. *(The News, May 17th, 2026, Page 12)*

WHO declares Ebola outbreak in Congo, Uganda 'public health emergency'

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a public health emergency of international concern, after the rare viral strain led to 80 suspected deaths. The WHO said the outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, does not meet the criteria for a pandemic but warned that countries sharing land borders with the DRC are at high risk of further spread. UN health agency said that 246 suspected cases, eight laboratory-confirmed cases and 80 suspected deaths had been reported in the Ituri province of Congo.

The cases span at least three health zones, including Bunia, Rwampara and Mongbwalu. Another case was confirmed in the eastern city of Goma, a statement by M23 rebels said. In Uganda's capital Kampala, the WHO said, two apparently unrelated lab-confirmed cases, including one death, were reported involving people who had travelled from the DRC, though a previously reported case in DRC's capital Kinshasa had tested negative after secondary testing. The WHO called the outbreak "extraordinary", noting that there are no approved therapeutics or vaccines specific to the Bundibugyo virus, unlike for the more common Zaire strains that caused all but one of the country's previous 16 outbreaks. *(Dawn, May 18th, 2026, Page 12)*

Ebola risk high regionally, low worldwide, says WHO

The risk from a deadly Ebola outbreak is high in central Africa but remains low globally, the World Health Organisation said, adding that the virus had likely been spreading for months. The outbreak of the highly contagious haemorrhagic fever was declared in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Ebola has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa in the past half-century, and the UN health agency has declared the latest surge an international health emergency. The 17th Ebola outbreak to hit the DRC is already suspected of having caused 139 deaths from around 600 probable cases. *(Dawn, May 21st, 2026, Page 10)*

Measles outbreak kills over 500 children in Bangladesh

A measles outbreak in Bangladesh has killed more than 500 children, marking the country's deadliest surge in decades of the preventable disease. Hospitals in the capital Dhaka have been overwhelmed with cases and set up dedicated wards to take patients, but are scrambling with a shortage of intensive care beds. Deaths are still rising, with 13 children dying in the past 24 hours alone, taking the toll from the disaster to 512, according to health department figures since March 15.

The South Asian nation has rolled out a mass vaccination drive to combat the outbreak, and Unicef country chief Rana Flowers said this week that the campaign has now reached 18 million children. But the health department said the full impact of the vaccinations would take months to be felt. Unicef said that gaps in immunisation worsened during and after the chaos of a 2024 uprising that toppled the country's autocratic government, leaving large numbers of children unprotected. Measles is highly contagious, spreading through coughs and sneezes, and has no specific treatment once caught. *(Dawn, May 24th, 2026, Page 10)*

Ebola outbreak spreads fast as violence hits treatment sites

A fast-moving Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda that has caused 220 suspected deaths is outpacing response efforts, the head of the World Health Organisation said, urging neighbouring countries to take immediate action to counter the deadly virus. Addressing an online meeting of the African Union about the outbreak, WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that a delay in detecting the cases meant responders were now "playing catch-up" and the epidemic was likely to get worse before it gets better, he said. *(Dawn, May 26th, 2026, Page 12)*

WHO chief in Congo as experts urge trials for Ebola treatments

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said its advisory groups have recommended clinical trials for vaccines and treatments that could be useful against the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, as the agency's chief visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo to help contain a deadly outbreak. No vaccine or treatment currently exists for the strain behind the outbreak gripping eastern Congo. In response, WHO convened expert groups to evaluate potential vaccines and therapeutics for prioritised evaluation in human trials.

The groups reviewed several promising products, recommending that "all the products identified and considered be used exclusively within clinical trials to generate robust data and ensure safe, ethical, and effective research", the UN health agency said in a statement. The WHO recommended prioritising three experimental treatments: Mapp Biopharmaceutical's MBP134, Regeneron's maftivimab, and Gilead Sciences' antiviral remdesivir. For prevention, Gilead's experimental oral antiviral obeldesivir was highlighted for post-exposure use, although its effectiveness will depend on robust contact tracing. *(Dawn, May 30th, 2026, Page 12)*

12 # CLIMATE CHANGE

Not any preferable news to be included in this month.

13 # CLIMATE DISASTER

13.1 # Flood

Kenya flood death toll hits 10 as dam overflow risk raises alarm

At least 10 people have died across Kenya after heavy rains triggered flooding and landslides in several regions, police said, as authorities warned rising river levels could threaten communities downstream from a major hydropower dam system. Seven of the deaths were reported in eastern Kenya. Police said two bridges were damaged in Kwale county on the coast and in Kitui in the east, while landslides were reported in parts of Elgeyo Marakwet county in the Rift Valley.

The rains fall within Kenya's normal March to May wet season, but authorities say intense downpours and saturated ground have increased the risk of flooding and landslides. Transport was disrupted after a landslide blocked the Iten–Kabarnet road near Kolol, the Kenya National Highways Authority said, adding that repairs were under way and traffic had been diverted. The Kenya Red Cross said there were unconfirmed reports of missing persons and marooned households in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, a densely populated area of Nairobi, and that it was providing relief assistance. *(Business Recorder, May 3rd, 2026, Page 8)*

13.2 # Heatwave

Heatstroke kills 16 in India as temperatures climb

At least 16 people have died of heatstroke in southern India so far this summer, officials said, as a heatwave grips swathes of the country following official health warnings.

India is no stranger to scorching summers but years of scientific research have found climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. Temperatures in several cities across the South Asian country of 1.4 billion people have recently hovered well above 45C. The deaths were reported in the southern state of Telangana, with revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy calling for "statewide vigilance" to safeguard public health. *(Business Recorder, May 25th, 2026, Page 9)*

Record temperatures as spring heatwave bakes Europe

Residents of western Europe turned to fans and fountains as they sweltered through a record-breaking heat wave, with temperatures set to soar even further. Hit by a so-called "heat dome" of warm air from northern Africa that is pushing the mercury well above normal levels for May some Europeans even admitted they were considering getting air conditioning, in a region famously averse.

Baking in a bright London sun, 47-year-old Gurjit Gill, who works in banking, said he was happy to be going into work — because of the air con. "I'm thinking about actually maybe getting an AC unit, because the bedrooms at nighttime are quite unbearable," he said. People across western Europe swarmed beaches, braved the streets clutching handheld fans and umbrellas to fend off the sun, and went for a dip or splashed themselves wherever they could — including Rome's Barcaccia fountain and the bubblers in the Jardin du Palais Royal in Paris. *(Dawn, May 27th, 2026, Page 10)*

13.3 # Rainfall

21 killed as rains drench southern, central China

Torrential rain continued across southern and central China with at least 21 people killed in widespread flooding that also closed schools and businesses, and disrupted transport and power supplies, authorities said. China's weather agency said areas of Jiangxi, Anhui, Hunan, Hubei, Guizhou, Guangxi, Guangdong and Hainan faced a high risk of rain-related disasters, including landslides, flash floods and severe urban flooding and waterlogging. Authorities said they have allocated 150 million yuan ($22.04 million) for disaster relief and launched emergency responses in several affected areas. *(Dawn, May 20th, 2026, Page 10)*

13.4 # Tsunami

Huge 2025 tsunami in Alaska fjord was second-highest on record: experts

Tracy Arm Fjord, in southeastern Alaska within the Tongass National Forest, presents a majestic vista, with a narrow sea inlet surrounded by towering granite cliffs, waterfalls and glaciers. One morning last year it also was the site of a powerful landslide that triggered a huge localised tsunami. Researchers have now determined that the tsunami on August 10, 2025, was the second-highest ever recorded, with a wave reaching up to 1,578 feet (481 meters) tall — higher than New York City's Empire State Building. The tsunami surged through the fjord, violently stripping vegetation from the steep rock walls. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 10)*

14 # NATURAL DISASTER

Two dead in Indonesia volcano eruption

Two Singaporean nationals who had been reported missing were confirmed dead in the eruption of Mount Dukono on Indonesia's Halmahera island, the head of the local rescue agency told. *(Business Recorder, May 11th, 2026, Page 9)*

15 # RESISTANCE

Hundreds arrested at Istanbul May Day rallies

Turkish police fired tear gas and arrested hundreds of people holding May Day demonstrations in Istanbul, as thousands rallied nationwide. A statement from the office of the governor of Istanbul said that as of 6:00 pm (1500 GMT), police had arrested 575 people, describing them as people who had defied security decisions. Earlier, the CHD Lawyers' Association said police had arrested at least 550 people by mid-afternoon in Istanbul, where police fired tear gas from riot-control vehicles into the crowd, *AFP* journalists observed. Large numbers of police, many in riot gear, had set up metal barricades to cut off access to central neighbourhoods of Istanbul, including Taksim Square, the site of many gatherings. *(Dawn, May 2nd, 2026, Page 10)*

Newsmakers: New York City (United States)

Activists project protest messages, highlighting issues of wealth inequality, climate accountability, and labour rights, onto the facade of a building which is hosting the Met Gala. The fundraiser is known for extravagant fashion and high-profile guests. *(Dawn, May 5th, 2026, Page 10)*

Newsmakers: Boulder (United States)

Tree limbs fall atop a snow-covered car in the US state of Colorado during one of the largest May snowstorms in decades. Colorado is in the midst of the worst drought it has seen since 1883. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 10)*

Newsmakers: Jozefow (Poland)

Vehicles drive past smoke rising from a forest fire as a helicopter carries water during firefighting operations. *(Dawn, May 7th, 2026, Page 10)*

Newsmakers: Nairobi (Kenya)

Activists for reproductive rights hold placards and chant slogans during a march advocating access to reproductive healthcare and protesting laws that criminalise abortion. A Kenyan appeals court overturned a landmark ruling last month that accessing abortion was a fundamental right.-AFP *(Dawn, May 8th, 2026, Page 10)*

Newsmakers: London (England)

People from Republic, an anti-monarchy group, rally outside Buckingham Palace calling for the monarchy to be abolished. *(Dawn, May 10th, 2026, Page 10)*

Protests erupt in India after key college entrance test is cancelled

Dozens of members of the student wing of India's opposition Congress party protested in New Delhi against the cancellation of a key undergraduate college entrance test after authorities discovered its questions had been leaked. About 2.3 million students across India took the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) on May 3 for admission to undergraduate medical programmes. The federal National Testing Agency scrapped the test, saying the process could not be allowed to stand and a new date would be set. Visuals from news agency ANI showed dozens of protesters from the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) chanting slogans, with some also trying to jump police barricades. *(Business Recorder, May 13th, 2026, Page 12)*

Newsmakers: Berlin (Germany)

Environmental activists attend a demonstration in response to a proposal being debated by the German cabinet. A coalition of Greenpeace, Soziale Waermewende and GermanZero is protesting in anticipation of a cabinet approval of a controversial amendment to the Building Energy Act proposing a rollback of climate and consumer protections.-AFP *(Dawn, May 14th, 2026, Page 10)*

London streets swell with rival protests over Gaza, immigration

Tens of thousands of people rallied in London for two duelling demonstrations — one a march organised by anti-Islam far-right activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, known as Tommy Robinson, and the other a protest supporting Palestinians and opposing racism. Amid heightened tensions and the city concurrently hosting the FA Cup Final, the Metropolitan Police mounted one of its largest public order operations in recent years. Authorities deployed 4,000 officers, alongside horses, dogs, drones and helicopters, to keep the rival groups apart. The force pledged a zero-tolerance approach to violence and hate speech. *(Dawn, May 17th, 2026, Page 12)*

Four killed in Kenya protests over rising fuel prices

Four people died in protests in Kenya over fuel price hikes triggered by the Middle East war, while the public transport system was paralysed by demonstrators barricading roads. One of many African countries dependent on fuel imports from the Gulf, Kenya has been heavily hit by Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil normally passes. Last week, the Kenyan government announced price hikes in response to rising global oil prices, including a 23.5-percent increase for diesel — triggering a call for the strike by transport workers. *(Dawn, May 19th, 2026, Page 10)*

Thousands clash with police in Bangladesh over alleged child rape

Thousands of protesters in Bangladesh clashed with police in a bid to seize a man suspected of raping a four-year-old girl. In recent months, the country has seen a spike in reported cases of violence against women and children, fuelling widespread anger. Police said the suspect, Monir Hossain, was detained by locals in Chattogram, Bangladesh`s second-largest city, and was handed over to the authorities when tensions boiled over among the roughly 5,000 people present. Crowds surrounded the police vehicle and attempted to seize Hossain, prompting officials to deploy reinforcements and fire tear gas. *(Dawn, May 23rd, 2026, Page 10)*

Tens of thousands march in Madrid to demand PM's resignation

At least seven police were injured in clashes with protesters, officials said, as tens of thousands of people marched through Madrid, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez after a series of corruption scandals. A small group of protesters tried to break through barriers around Sanchez's residence during the rally which was otherwise largely peaceful. Police detained a group of masked people on the main road approaching the Moncloa Palace, where the Socialist leader lives with his family, images on Spanish television showed. Three people were arrested, police said. *(Dawn, May 24th, 2026, Page 10)*

Outrage in Spain after police beat Gaza flotilla activists

Around two thousand protesters took to the streets of the Spanish city of Bilbao to condemn the Basque police's treatment of activists from a Gaza aid flotilla on their return from detention in Israel. When a relative of one of the six returning activists tried to approach them at Bilbao airport, a police officer forcefully prevented him from doing so, leading to scuffles between both sides, images from state broadcaster *TVE* showed. Images showed police striking people with batons and pinning others to the ground while being jeered by onlookers. Before this, activists appeared to have blocked the exit for other passengers and police tried to move them.

Four people were arrested for serious disobedience, resisting arrest and assaulting law enforcement officers, the Basque regional police force, Ertzaintza, said in a statement. Two of those arrested were activists who had just arrived from Turkiye, *TVE* reported. The police force also launched an investigation into the incident. "Following what happened at airport, the Ertzaintza internal affairs division has launched an investigation to determine whether the officers' conduct complied with procedures," it added. On march, pro-Palestinian demonstrators carried banners criticising the Basque police force and accusing the local government of being complicit with Zionism.

The activists were released from Israeli custody after being detained on a flotilla trying to bring aid to Gaza. Organisers said that the activists were subjected to abuse while in Israeli detention, with several hospitalised with injuries and at least 15 reporting sexual assaults, including rape. The group included 44 Spanish nationals, according to Spain's foreign ministry. Around 20 other activists from the flotilla landed at Barcelona airport, where they were welcomed by supporters, including Culture Minister Ernest Urtasun. Spain was among a series of Western governments which expressed their anger after Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir posted a video of himself mocking the activists as they were pinned to the ground in a prison. *(Dawn, May 25th, 2026, Page 12)*

Newsmakers: Hyderabad (India)

Members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) hold banners and placards during a protest over a hike in fuel prices. India's state-run fuel companies raised petrol and diesel prices for the fourth time in 10 days. *(Dawn, May 27th, 2026, Page 10)*

Austrian protest shuts key European highway

A protest in Austria against noise and pollution blocked one of Europe's most important highways connecting Germany and Italy but early reports showed traffic disruptions were not as bad as feared. The Brenner Pass links northern and southern Europe, with the Austrian stretch providing trans-Alpine access into Italy. Communities in Austria's western Tyrol province have long complained about traffic on the route, especially trucks passing through the province. Several thousand protesters gathered on a stretch of the road at Matrei am Brenner. *(Dawn, May 31st, 2026, Page 10)*

India exempts all customs duties on cotton imports, notification shows

India has exempted all customs duties on cotton imports, the government said in a notification. The Indian government said the move would help boost availability of cotton for India's textile sector. *(Business Recorder, May 31st, 2026, Page 1)*

Dublin protest urges probe into 'George Floyd'-style death

Protesters in Dublin demanded "justice" for a Congolese man who died after he was restrained by security guards, in an incident likened to George Floyd's murder in the United States six years ago. Around 100 people demonstrated in Ireland's capital to call for an independent and transparent probe into the death of 35-year-old Yves Sakila earlier this month. Video footage widely shared on social media showed Sakila being held on the ground for almost five minutes by security workers outside a department store on a busy shopping street in central Dublin on May 15. *(The News, May 31st, 2026, Page 10)*

About Us

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

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

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Our Objectives

(i) Organizing and mobilizing grass root communities and movements for attaining basic rights;

(ii) Action research in collaboration with impacted vulnerable communities on issues and impacts of globalization, patriarchy, and feudalism;

(iii) Capacity building of grass root leaders and creating a grass roots knowledge base for attaining social justice;

(iv) Engaging with people's organizations and movements to amplify the voices of the most marginalized sectors of our society, locally, nationally and internationally.

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